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PASSPORTISM: XENOPHOBIA FROM DISCOURSE TO POLICY

Abstract

The beginning of the twentyfirst century has brought an intensifying rise of what is commonly known as xenophobia on a worldwide scale. Xenophobic sentiments are nowadays commonly used in a propagation of a discriminatory discourse, commonly as a means to achieving electoral support, eventually reaching the status of official state policy. This article explores several discursive cases regarding contemporary xenophobia, as well as xenophobic policy. In addition, it argues a lack of an appropriate designation referring to policies of discrimination based on a person's citizenship – that is, passport – offering the term *passportism* as a viable solution.

Keywords: passportism, xenophobia, immigration, migrants, refugees, discourse, policy

Als die Nazis die Kommunisten holten, habe ich geschwiegen; ich war ja kein Kommunist. Als sie die Sozialdemokraten einsperrten, habe ich geschwiegen; ich war ja kein Sozialdemokrat. Als sie die Gewerkschafter holten, habe ich geschwiegen; ich war ja kein Gewerkschafter. Als sie mich holten, gab es keinen mehr, der protestieren konnte.¹

Martin Niemöller

On April 20, 2015, an article by Peter Walker in The Guardian spoke about “Europe’s worsening migrant crisis” after a boat of approximately seven hundred “would-be illegal immigrants” from Libya capsized, resulting in what is commonly designated by the euphemism “humanitarian catastrophe”.² *Migrant Voice* reported that EU kept “turning a blind eye to refugees”.³ This instance, however, is one of those in which the EU, due to its policies (or lack thereof) towards migrants sat on the side. Other cases are, nevertheless, much more troubling. On February 5,

2015, Helena Maleno Garzón wrote an article for the *Open Society (Why Violence is Flaring at Europe's Border Crossings)*.⁴ The article wrote about several hundreds of migrants from Africa embarked upon a journey via the Mediterranean sea in order to reach Europe, when they were attacked by the Moroccan armed forces, resulting in fifteen deaths.⁵ The report clearly stated that the would-be migrants were killed by Moroccan security forces. However, there was more to the story about what happened when some of the migrants actually succeeded in reaching Spain, that is, the European Union. They reported meeting "violence and brutality ... and then ... the bodies of the dead floating in water". The Spanish Minister of the interior spoke about migrant groups "as the enemies".⁶

In short, the migrants were maltreated both by the Moroccan and the Spanish government. Needless to say, this is only one example of today's treatment of immigrants; the United Nations Refugee Agency stated that a staggering number of at least 3500 immigrants perished at sea in 2014,⁷ with an increase of deaths rising after Thomas de Maiziere revoked the *Mare Nostrum* rescue policy. The phenomenon can be dubbed as "xenophobic policy", with the ever increasing iteration of the phrase "Fortress Europe" (Polly Toynbee wrote that if "Europe becomes a fortress against migrants, it fails humanity"⁸).

In addition to policies that directly or indirectly either fail to help immigrants or, on the other side, function against them, there is an ever growing discriminative *discourse* aimed against immigrants arriving to the EU, or simply against "foreigners", immigrants who have already settled down. The press iteratively represents "the alarming figure ... of almost 900,000 irregular immigrants"⁹ in the UK, the French Front National speaks up against immigration more often and often, while the German PEGIDA attracts a rather fair number of followers. It is more than common to represent immigrants as "swamping" or "besieging" either Europe, or a particular country.

Xenophobic discourse(s) and policies are related, as discourse leads to the creation of policy. This article will explore some of the contemporary European immigration/xenophobia discourse, as well as some policies of/against immigration.

The topic

From the point of view of party politics, it can be said that every political party or individual intent on gaining social and political power (or, if they are *in power*, on *keeping* it) enters a particular *discourse* through which his/their main ideas – that should, once in power, become policy, i.e. method(s) of governance) – are propounded and expulsed. After all, from the point of view of political science, the very definition of a political party (at least one of the definitions) is that it represents a group of people intent on gaining political and social power. This discourse is then accepted by like-minded individuals and often put forth vigorously through the media, most commonly the press, television and the Internet.

In the words of Van Dijk, “politicians participate in more subtle forms of elite racism when they present immigration and minority relations as essentially problematic, if not threatening, while defining refugees, immigrants, or minorities as a main cause of many societal problems.”¹⁰ In other words, they promote a particular type of derogatory, exclusive and discriminatory discourse that is presented as the mode of governance/policy. According to Van Dijk, we are talking about “a complex societal system of inequality in which immigrants and other ethnic/racial minorities (mostly from the South) systematically have less access to, or control over, society’s power resources such as adequate conditions of residence, housing, employment, welfare, education, safety, knowledge, and status”¹¹, which is a problem that many have pointed out.¹²

Nominal issues

Xenophobia is defined by the Merriam-Webster dictionary as “fear or hatred of strangers or foreigners”. Xenophobic sentiments are often, however, referred to as “racist”, in both academic and public discourse, as there is a clear problem with terminology. Similar to *homophobia*, the term *xenophobia*, however, fails to properly denote the phenomenon. Namely, the use of the Greek stem “phobia” *primarily* denotes *fear*, while in reality we tend to analyze and combat the *hatred* towards foreigners and immigrants.

The subject, the ontological ground on which racism – as a mode of discrimination – is being founded upon, *skin color*, is nonetheless being replaced with one’s place of origin, that is, one’s *citizenship*, the primary

means of identifying which is nowadays the *passport*. In other words, instead of “racism”, for the sake of lucidity and clarity, I propose another term in addition – *passportism*.

Passportism can thus be broadly defined as the *speech, policy or act of a discriminative nature, in which an individual or a group of individuals are discriminated against on the basis of their citizenship, i.e. passport*. Poetically said, whilst racism discriminates on the basis of the color of a person’s skin, passportism discriminates on the basis of the person’s “passport color”. The importance of having such a term and studying it is further backed by the very fact that there is an increasing number of “passport evaluation” texts that categorize passports by their “power”. The Independent published a piece on the “most powerful passports in the world”, where the passports were “deemed the most valuable with (the) access to countries” they can provide. In addition, the time spent in applying and going through the visa process, depending on one’s citizenship, was also taken into consideration. For instance, “Afghan passport holders must also work 183 hours before they can obtain the document, compared to the one hour of work required in Sweden. British passport holders need to have 11 hours of work under their belts before they can apply,”¹³ making the British passport more “powerful” than the Afghan. The transport search comparison site, GoEuro, created an “Ultimate passport ranking”, accounting for visa-free access to countries, the price, and required hours worked at minimum wage to purchase.¹⁴ Sweden made the top of the list, followed by Finland, Germany, United Kingdom and the USA, while countries such as Afghanistan, Liberia and Iraq were positioned at the bottom, indicating that possessing such a passport (citizenship) will disable its holder from travel much more efficiently. In other words, the Afghan passport/citizenship is the most discriminated one in the world – a classic instance of extreme passportism. Passport holders were also asked about what – in their opinion – makes a passport powerful; 75% replied by stating a “visa-free access to countries”, while 25% saw the cost of the passport as the most important instance.¹⁵

The necessity of such a nominal endeavor is further backed by the fact that the very term “xenophobia” is very often (in academic research as well) used interchangeably with the term “racism”, which is the practice of discriminating on the basis of skin color. Tonči Kuzmanić wrote about “racism (xenophobia) / understanding racism and xenophobia” by simply putting the two as synonyms, claiming also how “in order to produce racist difference today, it is no longer necessary to be of ‘different colour’”.¹⁶

Even Van Dijk often puts the two together, often within the very same semantic field (“xenophobia and/or racism”¹⁷). Reisigl and Wodak even ask whether it is at all “possible to distinguish racism from adjacent or possibly overlapping discriminatory phenomena like antisemitism, nationalism, ethnicism and sexism” in a volume where several chapters are dedicated to xenophobia.¹⁸ Albert Memmi defines *racism* in a very broad sense,¹⁹ referring to the “generalised and absolute evaluation of real and fictitious differences ... advantageous to the the ‘accuser’ and detrimental to his or her victim”.²⁰ However, “in this characterisation, the meaning of racism in the very strict sense is lost”, and the same goes to xenophobia.²¹ His own neologism – *heterophobia* – on the other hand (coined in analogy to the term “xenophobia”), “is designated to denote all ‘phobic’ and aggressive constellations that are directed against others, and that are legitimised by different psychological, cultural, social or metaphysical arguments”.²² Nevertheless, the problem with the term “heterophobia”, as noticed by Reisigl and Wodak, is exactly the “phobia” contained within, as

the literal meaning of the term ‘heterophobia’ – and this critique is valid for terms like ‘xenophobia’ as well – is rather problematic. First, it neglects the active and aggressive aspect of discrimination and, second, it pathologises racism (and all the other forms of discrimination covered by ‘heterophobia’) through the ‘disease metaphor’ of ‘phobia’, which, as such, plays down racism and, at least implicitly, exculpates racists.²³

Even “Teun van Dijk does not neatly distinguish between ethnicism, racism, and adjacent forms of discrimination, as he believes these are fuzzy and overlapping concepts”.²⁴ Jager’s own view somewhat equates Memmi’s heterophobia with a general view of racism, stating that

We always then call something racism when persons who look differently and practice different customs and traditions and/or speak a different language – they are, all in all, considered to be different from the majority of the population – are judged negatively, and if, in addition, this judgement is in accord with the hegemonic discourse of the respective society.²⁵

A discourse analytical perspective

In the words of Žagar, “there is still an ever-widening gap between ‘us’ and ‘them’. The only forum of analyzing how ‘they’ are seen by ‘us’ involves speech, language, tongue.”²⁶ This is why a discourse analytical approach might be one of the more efficacious ways in addressing these issue. After all,

what is strikingly absent from conventional studies of politics is attention to the fact that the micro-level behaviours ... are actually kinds of linguistic action – that is, discourse. Equally, the macro-level institutions are types of discourse with specific characteristics – for example, parliamentary debates, broadcast interviews. And constitutions and laws are also discourse – written discourse, or text, of a highly specific type.²⁷

Habermas already wrote about the language as a “medium of domination and social force”, one that can “legitimize relations of organized power”.²⁸ Drawing on Hague and Miller, Chilton concluded that there is a need to explain “how use of language can produce the effects of authority, legitimacy, consensus”, instances all “intrinsic to politics”.²⁹ In such a manner, there is only one rung on the ladder that leads from discourse to policy, which we will confront further on.

The *discourse historical approach* may be one of the more successful ways in approaching the issues at hand, as it dissects “written and spoken language as a form of social practice”,³⁰ that is, discourse *and* the policies it creates. A discourse will be defined as “a way of signifying a particular domain of social practice from a particular perspective”,³¹ as well as “a complex bundle of simultaneous and sequential interrelated linguistic acts that manifest themselves within and across the social fields of action as thematically interrelated semiotic, oral or written tokens, very often as ‘texts’”.³² These texts can be found in the public and political arenas, from political speeches and agendas to critical articles and media coverage of passportism.

Passportist discourse and the media

The media are nowadays “for most people the only way in which they ever encounter politics”.³³ The interplay and high connectedness

between the media and the political – having in mind that the majority of the political and social discourses are promulgated through the media – has been analyzed aplenty.³⁴ What is more,

media discourse can be seen as one of the centres for formulating the ‘reality’ of an immigrant ‘policy’, and immigrant politics in the broadest sense. It does not set the tone merely for the state and institutional attitude towards immigrants, but also the ‘policy’, conceived as a web of established and emerging relationships between people with regards to the issue of their general framework, it is not the only one and is not independent of other public discourses which make up the content of political consensus.³⁵

In short, the discourse promulgated by the media has a strong tendency of becoming “popular opinion”; without the severe effect the media possess over the population, passportist discourse would probably not be as potent as it is. The discourse is promulgated often by professionals (lobbyists, publicists, PR specialists), after which it enters the public sphere and becomes all-permeating. As Chilton noticed,

political parties and government agencies employ publicists of various kinds, whose role is not merely to control the flow of, and access to information, but also to design and monitor wordings and phrasings, and in this way to respond to challenges or potential challenges. The terms ‘spin’, ‘put a spin on’ and ‘spin doctor’ are terms that reflect the public belief in the existence of and significance of discourse management by hired rhetoricians. The proliferation of mass communication systems has probably simply amplified the importance of a function that is found not only in contemporary societies but in traditional societies also.³⁶

That is why the media are nowadays more often seen as the so-called “fourth power”,³⁷ as they “media people act according to their own interests and, for different reasons, very selectively pick out events thought to be worth communicating to the public, thereby strongly influencing the perception and activities of all social actors involved in the system of public communication.”³⁸

In other words, the media create a solipsistic problem, a separate “version” of reality in which immigrants and immigration are presented as “problematic”.

The media construction of reality, which signifies the active creation of a public and political agenda, does not here simply formulate the dominant public opinion and the apparent consensus on the subject, but also – in the mutual complementing of media and other discourses – actively lays down the foundation, the primary principles and the legitimacy for the implementation of national and local policies. The media *poiesis*, one of the main components for creating public policy, acts as a motor for the discourse of ‘normality’ and the normalization of certain problematic methods of public acting. Through methods of differentiation and distinction it successfully delineates the boundaries of ‘acceptability’ for the main line of collective political acting – both by individuals and institutions.³⁹

In such a manner did a plethora of ways by which foreigners and immigrants are discriminated against enter not only public and political discourse, but also *policy*, which we are going to concentrate on in the pages to come.

The phenomenon of racism is even more threatening today, as one follows the development of populist parties throughout Western Europe and collects the slogans and arguments that are used to create or reinforce fears in the population. Fear of unemployment, of criminality, of drug abuse, of ‘inundation by foreigners’, of ‘overforeignisation’ are prevalent and are exploited successfully by the media and by politicians.⁴⁰

Passportist discourse example – the case of Slovenia

In a volume about xenophobia in Post-Socialist European countries, Vlasta Jalušič gave a collection of discursive elements regarding immigrants in Slovenia, collected from the press. Among other iterations, there was talk about immigrants “crowding”, “escaping”, “swamping”, “pressing”, “besieging” and “flooding”. From a discourse critical perspective, it is useful to observe the powerful connotation play in such a discourse. The abovementioned lexical choices are laden with primarily negative connotation. *Flooding*, for instance, denotes an extremely uncomfortable (in its weakest intensity) or highly pernicious (at its worst) event – people die in floods. Insinuating that the immigrants are “flooding” a country implies, on the level of the subconscious, that they are no better than an elementary disaster. “Besieging”, on the other hand, has a strong

implication of the existence of an *attack*, its primary meaning being “occupation”. Attackers besiege, after which “defense” is needed. And indeed, an article by K. Klanjšek stated that the local residents should “resist occupation”.⁴¹ The word “swamping”, again, possesses a strong negative connotation, similar to “flooding” (that this is a perennial discursive instant in *mysoxenia* worldwide can be seen in the Australian documentary about Australia’s border patrol, where it was called “Australia’s first line of defense”, implicating that somewhere, there is an “attack”).

That such discourse creates policy is even linguistically visible, such as in the example of the Slovenian “Centre for the Removal of Aliens”. As Žagar wrote, “we usually eliminate or remove insects, filth, litter or garbage, stains, heaps of snow, peels, pips, stalks, tumors and other malfunctioning body parts”. Once again, passportist discourse (similar to almost any other discourse of exclusion) thrives on connotation. Nevertheless, “to remove or eliminate people is hardly acceptable for any society that wants to be called or calls itself ‘civilized’”.⁴² There is, in addition, a clear parallel between passportist discourse and Anti-Semitism in the use of derogatory lexemes referring to “dirt”.⁴³ Discourse analysts have already noticed that, among other discriminatory discursive instance, those of *natural disasters* (immigration and migrants as avalanches or floods), *water* (as a “flood that has to be damned”⁴⁴) and *growth* (“increasing immigration and increasing conflict as growing”) are very common.⁴⁵ After all, “the naturalising reference “flood of immigrants” implicitly carries at least two conclusion rules. If something is a flood, it is dangerous and threatening. If something is dangerous and threatening, one should do something against it (the topos of danger or threat, and this is an example of it, will be discussed as the next topos). The conclusion goes as follows: one should prevent the flood from inundating the endangered area. To be precise: one should take measures in order to prevent the immigrants from becoming too many.”⁴⁶

The Slovenian case alone can yield myriad examples more. The refugees from the 1990 wars of the Yugoslav secession were said to “cause more and more disorder”, described as “potential law breakers”.⁴⁷ This is yet another common discursive practice within the realm of *mysoxenia* – see in the foreigner as “aggressive and criminal. They endanger public order and security and tend to have fraudulent marriages”.⁴⁸ News articles and snippets in which a person’s criminal activity is reported often concentrates on the fact that the crime was perpetrated by a foreigner. One would, however, seldom put the title “blond person robbed a kiosk”,

indicating that there is a criminal background in the very fact that someone is a foreigner.

Besides “connotation play”, a second prominent discursive instance in discriminative speech is its very *denial*. As Van Dijk wrote, a typical discursive moment in racist discourse is very commonly the denial of racism itself.⁴⁹ In racist discourse,

given general social norms that prohibit explicit discrimination and outgroup derogation, white group members usually do not want to be seen as racists. When they want to say something negative about minorities, they will tend to use denials, disclaimers or other forms that are intended to avoid a negative impression with their listeners or their readers. That is denials have the function of blocking negative inferences of the recipients about the attitudes of the speaker or writer.⁵⁰

The same discursive practice is found in passportist, that is, xenophobic discourse. The Slovenian example can again be used.

The *Mag* journalist, I. Guzelj, wrote about the “absence” of xenophobia in Slovenia.⁵¹ In his view, the protests of the local population against the immigrants from the Yugoslav wars were justified, as they “testify to the healthy logic that the maintenance of the current level of security and order” can be described as “a basic civilizational right of any member of an ordered society”.⁵² Instead, there is a “so-called xenophobia” promulgated by “certain sociologists”.⁵³ Such individuals, according to deniers of xenophobia, claim that they are “scared someone might accuse us of chauvinism, racism and whatever else is in that package”.⁵⁴ As Jalusic explained, deniers of xenophobia claim that it has “been produced by the “self-proclaimed”, “free-spirit” and “progressive” civil society and self-proclaimed scientists.”⁵⁵ In other words, “we” are not passportists, “we” are just reacting to a societally detrimental instance.

Contemporary passport policies – the case of Austria

As David Wearing wrote about the death of the (over) seven hundred migrants in April 2015, these “deaths in the Mediterranean were directly linked to xenophobic politics in Britain.”⁵⁶ And indeed, there is but a single step from discourse to practice, as discourse serves as a tool for social and political promotion of myriad sociopolitical practices, such as “the political

administration of social exclusion, the attempt to legitimise as well as to delegitimise institutional manners of ration control – strictly speaking the expulsion of ‘aliens’ ... within the framework of modern nation-states”.⁵⁷ In short, discourse, according to Fariclough, can be seen as a series of social practices that are related to various forms of social activities.⁵⁸

Discursive practices

play a decisive role in the genesis and production of certain social conditions. This means that discourses may serve to construct collective subjects like ‘races’, nations and ethnicities. Second, they might perpetuate, reproduce or justify a certain social status quo (and ‘racialised’, ‘nationalised’ and ‘ethnicised’ identities that are related to it). Third, they are instrumental in transforming the status quo (and ‘racialising concepts’, nationalities and ethnicities related to it). Fourth, discursive practices may have an effect on the dismantling or even destruction of the status quo (and of racist, nationalist and ethnicist concepts related to it). According to these general aims one can distinguish between constructive, perpetuating, transformational and destructive social macro-functions of discourses.⁵⁹

Another instance that is too large to fit within this framework of research is strictly policy-oriented, and comes from the point of view of law, as laws are being made to match policies that have been promoted by discourse. In an ideal world, according to Habermas, legality needs to be based on legitimacy⁶⁰ – yet the proverb attributed to Cicero, *summum jus, summa injuria* (the highest law may be the greatest injustice), often describes reality. Nevertheless, this aspect of passportist policies cannot be adequately described and analyzed here. Yet at least a nod towards the policy-oriented analyses needs to be mentioned. As Habermas wrote,

the unobjectionable manner in which a norm comes into being, that is, the legal form of a procedure, guarantees as such only that the authorities which the political system provides for, and which are furnished with certain competencies and recognised as competent within that system, bear the responsibility for valid law. But these authorities are part of a system of authority that must be legitimised as a whole if pure legality is to be able to count as an *indication* of legitimacy. In a fascist regime, for example, the legal form of administrative acts can have at best a masking function. This means that the technical legal form alone, pure legality, will not be able to guarantee recognition in the long run if the system of authority cannot be legitimised independently of the legal form of exercising authority.⁶¹

It is exactly these “indications of legitimacy” that are promoted via public/political discourse, presented and promulgated by the media that we need to take into consideration.

Austria was home to an intense passportist campaign in 1992/3, when the question of “Überfremdung” was put forth by the Austrian Freedom Party. A significant discourse historical instance was noticed already here by Reisigl and Wodak, pointing towards Nazional-Socialist propaganda administered by Joseph Goebbels, who himself used the term “Überfremdung”. A strong reminiscence of the Nazi period was also seen in the stupendous discourse that ensued, with “leaflets with incredible racist statements, like the infamous claim that female foreigners were obtaining free hormone treatment in Viennese hospitals in order to be able to produce more children than ‘real Austrians’, and that they would thus ‘take over’, whereas the hormones were, in fact, being administered for therapeutic reasons to severely traumatised women who had been victims of rape during the war in Kosovo”.⁶² In 1999, Jörg Heider and his FPÖ won 26.92 per cent of the votes.

In the 1990s, Austria saw the resurgence of an extremely discriminatory discourse that introduced the attempt to “satisfactorily resolve the foreigner question”, strongly reminiscent of the “Jewish question”.⁶³ “The populism of the FPÖ is a complex mixture of anti-governmental opposition, an attempt to influence the law-making procedure as well as the formation of public opinion, and of propagandist political advertising that aims at canvassing as much voter support as possible – and all of that on the back of the scapegoat of ‘foreigners’.”⁶⁴

A petition entitled “Austria first” was launched in January 1993, signed by 417,278 people – more than a marginal group. Austrian immigration laws were severe even beforehand; among other instances, immigrants were required to “integrate” (a vague idea almost never fully explained; even the Global Commission on International Migration defines “integration” in a more than equivocal manner: “a long-term and multi-dimensional process, requiring a commitment on the part of both migrants and non-migrant members of society to respect and adapt to each other, thereby enabling them to interact in a positive and peaceful manner”⁶⁵), as well as “required to file their application for residency in Austria from their native land, irrespective of where they currently resided. Moreover, the application, filed from abroad, had to show proof of permanent employment in Austria, and that one had already arranged for housing sufficient to provide a minimum of 10 square

metres per person.”⁶⁶ This is problematic from several points of view. First of all, applying for a residence permit from one’s native land can oftentimes be either impossible (in times of war and strife) or financially daunting, time-consuming and exhausting, provided that the immigrants was already in Austria or a neighbouring country. Secondly, “proof of permanent employment” is yet another discriminative passportist measure that holds only for immigrants, having in mind that there are numerous citizens of Austria that cannot provide it (the unemployed), yet it is asked only of immigrants. Additionally, housing of at least “ten square meters per person” is also not something required by the state of Austria for its own citizens. As Reisl and Wodak noticed, “the provision concerning the size of flat was particularly ironic: not only were thousands of ‘guest workers’ affected; thousands of indigenous citizens lived, and still do live, in apartments with an area of fewer than 10 square metres per person”.⁶⁷

In addition, even mistakes and/or lack of efficiency of *Austrian* authorities fell onto the backs of foreigners, as

according to the 1993 law, if the Austrian immigration authorities failed to complete work on the request by the end of six weeks after the expiry of the current permit, the applicant lost her or his authorisation to remain in the country, even if the delay was due only to the slowness or inefficiency of the immigration authorities. And with no legal right to remain in the country, he or she could be expelled at the discretion of the authorities.

What ensued was, among other policy instances, the so-called Alien Act, which made changes to the then legal system by subjecting foreigners who have already lived in Austria for years, as well as their children and step-children (*sic!*) to the exact same requirements as current, “new” immigrants.

The most vocal within the Austria First petition were the FPÖ.

This party has, more than any other Austrian party, persuasively set the ‘xenophobic’ anti-foreigner tone in Austrian domestic policies and, for a decade, has almost always made electoral profit out of the populist business of sowing uncertainty and irrational ‘xenophobic’ anxieties, which, for different reasons, were and are harboured or willingly adopted by a considerable proportion of voters.⁶⁸

Scapegoating immigrants has become a common instance, as a “well-known example is governmental and/or media discourse about immigration and immigrants, so that ordinary citizens blame the bad state of the economy, such as unemployment, on immigrants and not on government policies”.⁶⁹

Numerous moments within the *Austria first*⁷⁰ petition beg for clarification and analysis. Even the very subtitle speaks volumes, as it “justifies and elaborates the aims of the petition: legal measures are needed, which secure the “right to a fatherland/home” for all Austrian citizens and which also ensure a reluctant Austrian immigration policy. The evaluative, polysemous and, very often, geographically localised notion of “fatherland/home” (*Heimat*) woos much more emotional connotations – not least from before and during the Nazi era – and for specific conservative addressees it is much more evocative and solidarity-promoting than the terms “nation” or “state”.⁷¹ The whole document pleads the conclusion that Austria is not – or that it should not be – a land of immigrants. However, as Mitten stated, “its initial provision ... was not only demagogic, but also unmitigated nonsense. As the studies of the Austrian demographers Heinz Faßmann and Rainer Münz have shown, Austria has always been a country of immigration and emigration”, and the population and economy would stagnate and decline without immigration.”⁷²

The whole petition draws heavily from a forced binary opposition of Austrian versus non-Austrian, it is a “dichotomous black-and-white portrayal [that] implicitly and explicitly constructs a two-part world and insinuates a rather clear frontier between an Austrian world of “law and order” and a non-Austrian world of “crime and disorder”. Foreigners are depicted as aliens who are illegal and criminal and who do not speak or understand German.”⁷³

The Austria First petition serves as a clear duality of discourse and policy, in which policy is promoted via a certain discourse, in this case, of a passportist orientation.

Other instances of passportism

The examples above were just a few among a panoply of similar ones in contemporary Europe. The United Kingdom, for instance, sports a very strict immigration policy which gets even stricter as the time goes by. In other words, “Britain’s immigration policy is bureaucratic, costly and

difficult to navigate, and a visa application can take months to process.⁷⁴ Visitors who wish to enter the UK need to submit applications for visitor's visas as well as to give their biometric data (a facial image and fingerprints scan).⁷⁵ The sheer immensity of the number of visa types is mind-boggling, as one can apply under a *visitor* scheme, *work* scheme or a *student* visa scheme. All the different visa types – indicating different documents and fees that vary – are the following: *standard visitor visa*, *marriage visitor visa*, *permitted paid engagement visa*, *parent of a Tier 4 child visa*, *visa to pass through the UK in transit*, *entrepreneur visa*, *exceptional talent visa*, *general Tier 1 visa*, *general Tier 2 visa*, *general Tier 4 visa*, *graduate entrepreneur visa*, *investor visa*, *intra-company transfer visa*, *minister of religion visa*, *sportsperson visa*, *charity worker visa*, *creative and sporting visa*, *government authorised exchange visa*, *international agreement visa*, *religious worker visa*, *youth mobility scheme visa*, *domestic workers in a private household visa*, *representative of an overseas business visa*, *Turkish businessperson visa*, *Turkish worker visa*, *UK ancestry visa*, *Croatian national registration certificate visa*, *short-term study visa*, *child visa*.⁷⁶ The very fact that there are special types of travel certificates for some Turkish and Croat citizens open up an immense new area of interest – for which there is no space in this analysis – in racism. In a state with such a complex, chaotic and discriminatory passportist policy, it is of small wonder that extreme passportist, such as UKIP's Nigel Farage, ever so often utter statements such as:

I actually want us to have an immigration policy that is non-discriminatory, because at the moment we discriminate in favour of people from Poland, or Romania, or Bulgaria, regardless [of] who they are, and we discriminate against people from New Zealand ... or from India, or Canada, or whatever else it may be. We've got our, I think, our priorities completely wrong here. And we should not be discriminating on grounds of nationality.⁷⁷

To make the situation worse, the forced UK attempt to diminish immigration has landed on the backs of *students*:

In 2010, the prime minister pledged to cut net migration from around 216,000 to below 100,000 a year by 2015 - an ambitious goal. The Home Office can't stop residents in the European Union coming and going as they please, so it has targeted non-EU workers and foreign students to achieve its current tally of 180,000.⁷⁸

At the beginning of the summer of 2015, Hungary has proposed a daunting “solution” to its own “immigrant problem”, as Péter Szijjártó, the Hungarian Minister of Foreign Affairs, unveiled Hungary’s plan to physically separate Hungary from Serbia by building a four-meter wall on the borders with its southern neighbor. In his own words, “the Hungarian government has instructed the interior ministry to physically close the border with Serbia”.⁷⁹ Daniel Nolan of the Guardian wrote:

Leaching voters to the far-Right party Jobbik, the government has increasingly lost patience with efforts in Brussels to reach a solution to the surging inflows into the EU. Prime Minister Viktor Orbán has said that a proposal to distribute migrants evenly throughout the 28 member states ‘borders on insanity’, while Mr Szijjártó dismissed the EU’s ‘rather long and time-consuming’ negotiations as he announced the Hungarian move on Wednesday. But the fence plan drew immediate condemnation at home and abroad, evoking memories of the days of the Iron Curtain. The United Nations Refugee Agency said it would ‘place too many barriers’ to the ‘inalienable human right’ to seek asylum.⁸⁰

Instead of a conclusion

(Im)migration is, and ever has been, a reality. People have been wandering around the globe since the dawn of mankind, and it is safe to say that most people are at least offsprings of immigrants, having in mind the first human wandering tribes left from Easter Africa and populated the world. Migration has recently come under the spotlight due to the rise of passportist policies worldwide, as well as a generally increasing populist discourse commonly related to the Right Wing in which immigrants are scapegoated for the sake of electoral support.

As passportism increasingly becomes a grim reality of the twentieth century, so does the interest in immigration and xenophobia – both discourse- and policy-wise – is bound to rise. Nevertheless, more detailed analyses that will propose the means to combat such discourses and policies of discrimination are yet to come. They are a necessity, lest we soon add a whole new verse to pastor Martin Niemöller’s short poem – “*then they came for the immigrants, but I did not speak out, for I was not an immigrant*”.

NOTES

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- ³ CALANDRA, C. G, EU turns a blind eye to refugees, *Migrant Voice*, 2015, at: <http://www.migrantvoice.org/migration/news/eu-turns-a-blind-eye-to-refugees.html>
- ⁴ MALENO GARZÓN, H, Why Violence is Flaring at Europe's Border Crossings, Open Society Foundations, 2015, at: <http://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/voices/why-violence-flaring-europe-s-border-crossings>
- ⁵ "On February 6, 2014, several hundred migrants from sub-Saharan Africa launched themselves off the coast of Morocco in an attempt to make their way around a breakwater and onto Ceuta's El Tarajal beach. For us at Caminando Fronteras—a rights group based at the borders that has advised the Open Society Foundations on migration issues—this was just another day of monitoring the crossings and documenting any rights violations. We had no idea what we were about to witness. "Three hundred of us left early that morning," says E., a Cameroonian national who was part of the attempt and wishes to remain anonymous. "We wanted to get to the water en masse. We all had floatation devices. ... About a hundred of us were stopped by the Moroccan forces before we reached the water, but the rest of us made it. We got into the water, and then all hell broke loose." E. says the migrants were attacked by security forces as they desperately tried to make their way toward Ceuta. "The Civil Guard lobbed smoke grenades, but even worse, they shot at us with rubber pellets, aiming at our rafts and our bodies," he says. "The water turned into an inferno." When all was said and done, 15 were dead and many more injured." At: MALENO GARZÓN, H, Why Violence is Flaring at Europe's Border Crossings, Open Society Foundations, 2015, at: <http://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/voices/why-violence-flaring-europe-s-border-crossings>
- ⁶ "According to N., another of the migrants, 23 of them actually made it onto the El Tarajal beach in Ceuta that day. "We had already reached the Spanish beach, and we thought they would attend to us and we would stay in Spain," he says. "I thought I had reached the Europe of rights, but no. I was only met with violence, brutality, and then ... the bodies of the dead floating in the water and strewn over the beach." The chaos that day at Ceuta exemplifies the increasing violence occurring on Europe's southern border as externalization agreements take effect between Europe and its so-called partner countries. These agreements seek to outsource the responsibility for enforcing border control to North African countries with dubious human rights records such as Morocco and Algeria. "We are subjected to ongoing

institutional violence when we reach the border,” says M., a female refugee from Liberia who has tried to scale the fence surrounding Melilla. “This can range from denial of access to basic rights, to torture, physical abuse, and even sexual violence. What you see on the Melilla fence is only a fraction of what we suffer in transit.” An example of this suffering took place on October 15, 2014, when Spanish border authorities again employed excessively violent tactics. During an attempt by about 200 people to cross the 20-foot razor-wire fence into Melilla, border guards beat at least one man unconscious. Social organizations that work on the southern border are concerned with the deterioration of human rights in the zone, where migration control takes precedence over respect for basic rights, even the right to life. This lack of respect can be seen in the way the Spanish government has portrayed the events at El Tarajal. Spain’s Interior Minister has normalized the violence by describing the southern border as being in a state of emergency, with migrant groups as the enemies.” At: MALENO GARZÓN, H, *Why Violence is Flaring at Europe’s Border Crossings*, Open Society Foundations, 2015, at: <http://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/voices/why-violence-flaring-europe-s-border-crossings>

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