

Resistance to neoliberal citizenship in Hungary: Acts of Radical Cosmopolitics

Jan Blažek

Since 70s and 80s the Europe has seen a new trend of securitization of migrants and refugees¹, while making it more open for the wealthy tourist and businessman. New technologies and mechanisms have been introduced to manage and control existence of one of the world's most marginalized people. This trend of rising exclusion of "outsiders" who came to look for help and instead are being dominated through practice of citizenship is especially strong in Central Europe. Current elites in our region share exclusivist understanding of political community and are not willing to share solidarity with neither migrants/refugees nor other European countries which have been overwhelmed by high numbers of arriving people.

Hungarian elites under the lead of Victor Orban are exceptionally nationalistic in this regard. Recent "national consultation" on the topic of migration and terrorism², Orban's remarks on irreversible damage done to European civilization³ or billboard campaign warning migrants (in Hungarian) not to take the jobs of the locals⁴ are some of the most openly xenophobic moves done in Europe.

But power relations of domination produce its own resistance and this is what we have seen in Europe at least since mid-90s when *Sans-papiers* movement in France started their fights for self-emancipation. Both migrants and refugees themselves and "native" Europeans acting in solidarity with them have been questioning the securitization practices on the basis of radical equality. Social movements fighting for mobility rights have been challenging legitimacy of national and European border policies and hierarchical binaries of Citizen/Non-Citizen or European/Non-European.

These acts can be perceived and analyzed in many ways. The focus of the policy paper is to analyze pro-mobility struggles in Hungary as acts of Radical Cosmopolitics. Radical Cosmopolitics is perspective developed by James Ingram as a bottom-up approach to cosmopolitanism⁵. Cosmopolitanism which is focused on democratization of hierarchical world order, yet approach it "from below". It seems this approach is especially valid as neoliberal citizenship can be seen as cosmopolitan system of top-down elitism, hierarchy and exclusion. Radical Cosmopolitics can be therefore perceived as bottom-up localized acts of questioning of this way of domination and as acts of empowerment.

The policy paper shall be divided into three main parts. The first section introduces changes that citizenship has undergone in neoliberal era of cosmopolitanism of elites and how it has been used as

¹ See e.g. Huysmans, Jef. 2006. *Politics of Insecurity: Fear, migration and asylum in the EU*. New York: Routledge, pp. 63 – 85.

² Prime Minister's Office. 2015. „National consultation on immigration to begin.“ Accessed June 8. <http://www.kormany.hu/en/prime-minister-s-office/news/national-consultation-on-immigration-to-begin>

³ „Migration threatens European civilisation, says Hungary PM.“ 2015. *The Telegraph*, June 2. Accessed June 8. <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/hungary/11646416/Migration-threatens-European-civilisation-says-Hungary-PM.html>

⁴ Novak, Benjamin. 2015. "Hungarian government launches xenophobic billboard campaign." *The BUdapest Beacon*, June 4. Accessed June 8. <http://budapestbeacon.com/public-policy/hungarian-government-launches-xenophobic-billboard-campaign/>

⁵ Ingram, James. 2013. *Radical Cosmopolitics. The Ethics and Politics of Democratic Universalism*. New York: Columbia University Press.

an instrument of domination. In second part Radical Cosmopolitics shall be elaborated upon. In the final section case study of struggles of Hungarian pro-mobility rights movements shall be examined through the lenses of Radical Cosmopolitics.