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Political leadership in Visegrád Group during the Refugee Crisis

Master`s Thesis

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MASTER'S THESIS FLYLEAF

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Summary

The thesis explores another possible cntributing factor to the explanation of following puzzle: collective action is response to the migration crisis: Visegrád Group`s emergence as a collective actor with unified position on highly politicized issue. The thesis tries to explore the factor based on Visegrád`s political leaders` perspectives, who directly shape the decision-making of the cooperation.
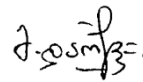
The content analysis of political statements and speeches given by the Prime Ministers of V4 member states in the time frame of September 2015 – September 2017 was conducted. The research yielded the following conclusion: V4 political leaders had revealed single political will on migration issue, which is necessary condition for providing political leadership in regional organization.

Confirmation

I confirm that I am the author of submitted thesis: *Political Leadership in Visegrád Group during the Refugee Crisis,* which has been prepared independently and has never been presented for any other course or used in another educational institution, neither in Lithuania, or abroad. I also provide a full bibliographical list which indicates all the sources that were used to prepare this assignment and contains no un-used sources.

Name, Surname   Signature

Mariam Darchia

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Introduction

Visegrád Group[1] is a political entity of Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary and Poland, operating since 1991. The original purpose of the V4 was to support and facilitate its member states Euro-Atlantic integration. Visegrád strived for this goal and based it on the new and very specific Central European identity, which stressed the importance of returning back to Europe i.e. rejoining the European family as its lost cousin. After having achieved its primary goal of EU and NATO membership in 2004, V4 faced the phases of justified skepticism about its meaningfulness and future viability.

Although many doubted it would remain active cooperation, assessments of V4`s ten years of EU membership indicate that the V4 emerged as a regional lobby within the EU. (Fawn, Visegrad: Fit for purpose?, 2013, p. 339) The political leaders understood that they would have better chances at pursuing regional interests if they coordinated positions, hence since EU accession the V4 schedules always ensure that the member states` Prime Ministers meet prior to European Council meetings. The V4 uses "the benefits of subregional multilateralism by combining the weights of individual national positions in order to multiply their impact". The raison d'être for V4 collaboration in the post-accession period is based exactly on the idea of attaining political leverage in European matters through their unified stances and actions. (Törő, Butler, & Grúber, 2014, p. 389) It was actual EU membership that has revitalized the V4 agenda and has provided it with multiple areas for cooperation within the EU affairs. (Dangerfield, 2014, p. 71) However, while the V4 has been successful in advancing smaller-scale policies and influencing EU policy towards the Western Balkans and Eastern Partnership (EaP) countries, (Fawn, Visegrad: Fit for purpose?, 2013, p. 339) before 2016 they could not manage to cooperate on highly politicized issues and present unified position, (Walsch, 2014, p. 25) which can partially be a result of peculiar structure of the Visegrád Cooperation.

While speaking of the peculiar V4 structure, the most important characteristics are the absence of institutionalism and flexible cooperation mechanism. The V4 is not institutionalized cooperation, the only institution is International Visegrád Fund which receives an annual budget to finance projects in various areas of regional cooperation and it does not represent a political decision-making institution in any manner. According to academic literature, IVF indicates to only formal cooperation between V4, not a true working cooperation. (Cabada, 2018, p. 174) Decision making in the V4 is based on the principle of periodical meetings of its representatives at various levels, from the high-level meetings of prime

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[1] Alternative names of Visegrád Group such as: Visegrád Cooperation, Visegrád Four, V4, VG or simply Visegrád are all used in this thesis.

ministers and heads of states to expert consultations. (Visegrad Group) Hence, the V4 represents the flexible cooperation mechanism, which means there are not any binding rules or norms, based on which decision-making would be mandatory. Member states have absolute freedom both in choosing the issues for the agenda and then making decisions regarding them. If a member state does not want to even discuss the matter, let alone come to an agreement with other states, it has every right and condition not to do so.

Due to the apparent lack of policy convergence on highly politicized issues the V4 has been of marginal political relevance over the past years. And the skeptical attitudes towards the Visegrád Group were especially reinforced by the Ukrainian Crisis, because as scholars indicate the internal flexibility of the group was tested to the limit by deep divisions at the outset of the crisis in 2014. (Nič, 2016, p. 284) The Ukrainian Crisis demonstrated that Visegrád Group countries are not able to create a unified vision, or even collectively respond to the contemporary threats. (Elżbieta, Bartnicki, & Skarzyński, 2015, p. 158)

In this context it was highly unexpected of Visegrád Group to respond to the 2015 migration crisis by unified and consistent position. (Strnad, 2018, p. 1) In 2015 more than 911,000 refugees and migrants who mostly fled conflict and persecution in Syria, Afghanistan or Iraq had arrived on European shores. (Spindler, 2015) In response to the migration crisis in September 2015 the European Commission proposed a mandatory system of relocating 120,000 refugees across the European Union states. It was accepted by a majority of countries, but met with an opposition from the Visegrád Group, which successfully vetoed the implementation of a relocation scheme in 2016 and caused one of the most important political disagreements in the history of the Union, termed in the public debate as 'migration/refugee crisis'. (Duszczyk, Podgórska, & Pszczółkowska, 2019, p. 1)

Migration crisis demonstrated the emergence of V4 as a collective actor (Koß & Séville, 2020, p. 1) and its resurgence as one political voice on the European political scene. (Bedea & Kwadwo, 2020, p. 2) The Visegrád Group successfully managed to cooperate on highly politicized issue such as migration, which never happened before. Refugee crisis proved to be the turning point and created an interesting puzzle. Visegrád`s collective action and unified position on the migration crisis is interesting phenomenon in its essence. Answering the question what contributed to its emergence as a collective actor is important for defining cooperation`s current state as well as its future prospects. Therefore, my research object is Visegrád`s collective action in response to the refugee crisis. There already exists several explanations of this phenomenon in the literature, but my research objectives are following: 1) to find the factor which contributed to V4 collective action towards migration crisis, and 2) this factor

should account the role of the political leadership provided by individual political leader(s). Existent theoretical and empirical scholarship establishes that one of the factors which enables member states of regional organizations to overcome the problems and reach common position is exactly the political leadership (a set of actions, and decisions of an actor to guide the behaviours of others towards a common goal, as well as to shape a particular outcome). (Pero, 2019) And while political leadership can be provided by different actors, V4 structure and past experiences ensure that the individual political leaders, particularly Prime Ministers of the member states have every opportunity and condition for claiming political leadership on behalf of the Visegrád Group. These are the grounds for my choice of individual decision-maker level of analysis. My research problem is based on the literature review and is the following: the existent studies fall short of taking into consideration the role of political leadership provided by individual political leader(s) as one of the possible contributing factors to Visegrád Group`s collective action in response to the refugee crisis.

The challenge for entirely solving the research problem is theoretical and methodological. Theoretical framework about political leadership`s role in regional organizations, is only concerned with conceptual definitions of the necessary conditions for providing political leadership, and is nowhere near suggesting how to prove if actors provided political leadership or not. Therefore, there are no grounds based on which I could measure and prove if individual political leader(s) provided political leadership in the EU during the refugee crisis and this contributed to the successfulness of their stance and collective action in response to the migration crisis. This reduces but not eliminates the value of my research, because my thesis can still contribute to narrowing down the existing gap in the literature. The analytical framework suggests that political will and determination on behalf of individual leaders are necessary conditions for providing political leadership. If there is no political will on behalf of decision makers, they can not provide political leadership. Thus, my research will focus to determine whether the necessary condition for providing political leadership i.e. single political will existed on behalf of the most important political leaders and decision makers of V4 - Prime Ministers of member states. This will be a step forward in accounting the role of political leaders of Visegrád cooperation in emergence of V4 as collective actor on migration issue within the EU.

The research question of my thesis is based on the research problem and also takes into account limitations of the analytical framework. Hence, it formulates as following: Did V4 Prime Ministers reveal political will with regard to the refugee crisis?

The variable – political will needs to be defined conceptually. Political will exists when the sufficient set of decision makers with a common understanding of a particular problem on the formal agenda is committed to supporting a commonly perceived, potentially effective policy solution.

Answer to the research question will demonstrate whether Prime Ministers had revealed or not single political will towards migration policy. And, in addition to this, it will further indicate if V4 political leaders had the necessary condition for providing political leadership with regard to refugee crisis.

Overall, the study contains five chapters. The first one is literature review which explores the academic scholarship around the topic and detects existing research gaps. It discusses the studies and academic pieces of various scholars about the V4 peculiar structure, the role of political leadership in regional organizations and V4 response to the refugee crisis. Second chapter provides two theoretical frameworks, the first one is concerned with explaining the link between political will and political leadership in regional organizations, while the second one, suggests detailed conceptual definitions and operationalization how to research the existence of single political will. The chapter further suggests application of these two analytical frameworks to the following research. Third chapter provides detailed information about the research methods that are used for assessing the political will and explains how the qualitative content analysis as well as secondary data analysis are methods which correspond to the suggested operationalization of assessmnet criteris in the best possible way. Fourth chapter demonstrates the detailed evaluation process of each assessment target under every component of conceptually defined and operationalized variable - political will. Research results reveal the existence of single political will on behalf of V4 Prime Ministers in office during the refugee crisis. The last chapter provides final conclusions and finalizes the study with the notion that the national political leaders of V4 member states had the necessary condition for providing political leadership in Visegrád Group during the refugee crisis.

1. Literature Review

Literature review will be divided into three parts based on the nature of my research topic. First, I will discuss the peculiarities of the V4 structure, then demonstrate how the scholarship explains V4 response to the refugee crisis and finally, what academics claim about the political leaders` role in regional organizations in general and particularly in EU and Visegrád cooperation itself. However, before starting to address these issues separately, it should be stressed that in general, the scholarship which revolves around V4 researches it either as a regional organization/cooperation and from the perspective of EU integration theories or as a Central European (sub)region and applies regionalism theories.

1.1 V4 Structure

Across almost 30 years of its existence the V4 assumed a distinct blend of characteristics that sets it apart from other similar groups. Existing literature on the structure of the Visegrád Group clearly manages to define the most important features of the cooperation. The description of characteristics slightly varies from one scholar to another. Some claim that the main characteristics include: regular coordination without formal organization; institutionalization without standing structures; regional interest group behaviour with a broad range of issues on which to cooperate, but without the obligation of block solidarity on every area of shared interest; and a limited circle of participants with periodic opportunities for consultation in extended formats. (Törő, Butler, & Grúber, 2014, p. 368) Dangerfield claims that essential characteristics of the contemporary V4 are that it has no supranational governance; cooperation remains strictly intergovernmental; it has fixed membership and lack of scope for expansion; and it represents a flexible platform for cooperation around its wide-ranging areas of action. (Dangerfield, 2014, p. 74) According to Schmidt, this system of cooperation lacks the following elements: an organized structure; fixed and written rules of cooperation; official headquarters; a strict agenda; and more than one functioning organization. (Schmidt, 2016, p. 120) Taking into consideration all sets of characteristics and the nature of my research, I will focus on the following two features of the V4 structure: absence of institutionalization and being flexible platform for cooperation, i.e. cooperating only when appropriate.

The 'absence of institutionalization' can be further clarified based on the existing scholarship. What V4 represents institutionally is defined in various terms. Some say there is an absence of institutional arrangements. (Fawn, 2013, p. 343) Others call the cooperation very light in institutional terms and some claim it has "quasi institutional" character. (Lázár, 2014, p. 26) While the official website states that "Visegrád cooperation is not institutionalized in any manner". (Visegrad Group) However, whatever the term, the reality is one and the same. The only permanent body is the International Visegrád Fund (IVF), which facilitates grassroots activities and allows a sense of common Visegrád identity to develop. (Fawn, 2013, p. 342). This institution has nothing to do with the political decision-making process, which is based on the principle of organized periodical meetings of its representatives at various levels (from the high-level meetings of prime ministers and heads of states to expert consultations). Official summits of V4 prime ministers takes place on an annual basis. And since EU accession the Prime Ministers of member states always meet prior to European Council meetings for coordinating their positions. After the meetings they publish official joint statements declaring their decisions. (Visegrád Group) This means that the main decision-makers are the Prime-Ministers, the heads of governments. This is also determined by the fact that other political leaders, such as the heads of states/presidents in all V4 countries

are only figureheads or have limited roles in foreign-policy making based on the respective national constitutions. (Marton, 2012, p. 8) Visegrád prides itself on not having institutions. The politicians "who oversee Visegrád routinely state that personal communications among them not only suffice but provide flexibility and efficacy." (Fawn, 2013, p. 343) This part of the academic literature clearly establishes that the Prime-Ministers directly shape decision-making in Visegrád and there are no binding norms, rules or institutions stemming from the V4 that can limit their power in the process.

Another important feature which is also stemming from the absence of institutionalization is flexible cooperation mechanism of the V4. It implies that V4 is a loose partnership in which members cooperate when appropriate, but are not bound by exclusive, centralized policy positions or a need to always agree. (Törő, Butler, & Grúber, 2014, p. 365) There is no formal obligation for member states to discuss any policy or undertake joint action, as the group is a platform of choice and not of necessity. Participants are not bound "to work through Visegrád or to achieve consensus." (Fawn, 2008, p. 684) This means there is twofold flexibility in the Group. First, V4 is flexible in its choice of themes and objectives i.e. it decides whether to put the particular matter on the Visegrád agenda. (Törő, Butler, & Grúber, 2014, p. 391) Second, V4 is flexible in decision-making process, which Nič labels as the 'art of disagreeing', and which implies that when countries do not share the same opinions, they do not have to reach agreement and it does not mean an end to the cooperation. (Nič, 2016, p. 284) Or as Cabada puts it the absence of any institutional demand for "permanent" consensus among the member states makes decision-making flexible. (Cabada, 2018, p. 167)

This particular feature has often been argued to be a weakness of the Group, preventing it from achieving greater success and a collective voice in the EU. It has often been described as a reason why highly politicized issues are profoundly circumvented and cooperation has remained a formality. (Walsch, 2014, p. 25) However, on the other hand there is common sense between scholars, that while this feature may have prevented the V4 from achieving the status of collective actor, it has been exactly this flexibility which proved to be the source of survival and longevity of the Visegrád cooperation over the years, at least in the political sector. This particular mechanism is the reason why the Group did not cease to exist every time they could not formulate common position and ensured its viability. (Fawn, 2008, p. 684) To summarize, even though V4 is effective platform for coordinating positions in particular areas, its framework i.e. flexible cooperation mechanism has never been a warrant of adopting a united stance or univocal representation of member states` positions. (Törő, Butler, & Grúber, 2014, p. 390)

1.2 Role of Political Leadership

The literature about regional organizations suggests that the political leadership can be either driver of or impediment to the regional integration (Pero, 2019, p. 5) Political leadership is defined itself as a set of actions, and decisions of an actor to guide the behaviours of others towards a common goal, as well as to shape a particular outcome. (Pero, 2019, p. 7) In essence this means that political actor`s decisions can influence in which direction particular region/regional organization develops. Leadership is regarded as one of the main factors in promoting institution-building process and multilateral cooperation in the international system. (Yoshimatsu, 2005, p. 209) Mattli identifies the demand, supply and subsidiary conditions for successful regional integration. The supply condition is leadership provided by a benevolent leading actor(s) which enables other countries to overcome collective action problems. Such an actor is expected to play a central role in the coordination of rules, and policies, mitigating tensions. (Mattli, 1999, pp. 99-100)

While discussing leadership in regional organizations, scholars suggest that different actors can claim political leadership: 1) the member-states leadership, either single or dyadic (such as the leadership roles provided by France and Germany in the EU); 2) institutional leadership through formal organizations; and 3) the leadership provided by national individual leaders (Pero, 2019, p. 43)

Although there is a number of actors who contribute to regional integration, some scholars claim that it is the individual political leaders who ultimately have the final say in any decision-making, thus individual political leaders are the most important actors in strengthening regional organizations. It is the choices, and decisions of individual political leaders that lead to policymaking. Among all agents, individual leadership does play a crucial role as the driver of a particular region-building project. (Pero, 2019, p. 43)

Scholars have examined the relationship between political leadership and the development of regional integration not only theoretically but also empirically. For instance, the past experiences of the regional organizations such as EU and ASEAN demonstrate that these organizations were established because of the strong commitment of their leaders. It was the actions and decisions of EU's 'founding fathers' such as Jean Monnet, Robert Schuman, Paul-Henri Spaak, and Konrad Adenauer, which enabled the establishment of the EU through the ECSC in 1952. (Griffiths, 2012, p. 182) (Yoshimatsu, 2005, p. 210) Likewise, in the establishment of ASEAN, the literature often defines the political leaders such as president Suharto of Indonesia and the Thai foreign minister, Thanat Khoman, as the central actors whose

strong political will and courage determined the community-building in Southeast Asia (Pero, 2019, p. 48)

When proceeding with the literature about political leadershipparticularly inside V4, the clear focus here is on the individual political leaders. It is the above-mentioned absence of institutionalization that increases the role of individual key politicians of member states in shaping Visegrád cooperation. As Lázár puts it "in the absence of institutionalization and automatized, binding mechanisms of cooperation, the place that the Visegrád Cooperation has in the mind-set of the Visegrád states' political leaders represents an important lead in assessing the Cooperation's prospects…" (Lázár, 2014, p. 24) Lázár claims that the V4 initiative's course will primarily be determined by the perceptions and decisions of actors who influence the Visegrád states' politics: first and foremost the countries' political leaders. Therefore, a comprehensive analysis about the Group should include the examination of V4-related communication of the most influential actors. (Lázár, 2014, p. 31)

Schmidt shares above-mentioned idea and according to her, "the success of the Visegrád Group has also been the result of its active politicians." And "personal connections and relations among prime ministers and presidents could easily affect the success or failure of the cooperation." (Schmidt, 2016, p. 125) Nič also contends that diplomatic infrastructure and other structural factors of the Visegrád Group are here to stay, but the key drivers of its stances are domestic politics and the role of the countries' leaders. (Nič, 2016, p. 281) Other scholars have claimed that on several occasions, the necessity of this cooperation and its effectiveness have been questioned because leading politicians have put the success of the Group at risk by subordinating it to their personal ambitions, for instance, Vaclav Klaus and Vladimír Mečiar. (Ślufińska & Nitszk, 2017, p. 12)

This sort of literature also suggests three empirical cases of key individual political leaders that have boosted or hindered the V4 cooperation. The first example is of former Czech prime minister Václav Klaus, who served in office first between 1992 and 1997. Klaus was outspokenly critical and sceptic about Visegrád, he considered the V4 as an "artificial product of the West", and he "openly opposed the concept of any such political grouping, preferring instead to focus exclusively on economic cooperation". He called the V4 a "tenth rate initiative at best" from the Polish and Czech perspective. (Lázár, 2014, p. 33) The domestic disinterest and even contempt for the V4 put its agenda far out of the foreign policy priorities and determined the Czech position under his governance. (Kořan, 2012, p. 205) As Klaus was unconvinced of the need for the Visegrád Group, he made political decisions that undermined the cooperation. (Dangerfield, 2014, p. 76)

The former Slovak prime minister Vladimír Mečiar was not a Visegrád fan either. The challenge posed by him to Visegrád was also ideological but had different content. The nationalistic Mečiar antagonized the Hungarian minority in Slovakia and damaged the relations with Budapest. His regime altered the foreign policy direction of the country, distanced itself from Euro-Atlanticism and even made surprising overtures to Russia. The nationalist and authoritarian leaning of the Slovak government under Prime Minister Vladimir Mečiar excluded the possibility of V4 cooperation almost by definition between 1994 and 1998 (Schmidt, 2016, p. 126; Kořan, 2012, p. 205).

When it comes to the establishment of the Visegrád cooperation, the third example of key politician's role kicks in. The importance of the visionary founding father of the VG, Vaclav Havel, needs to be stressed. If not Havel, the cooperation might not exist at all. After the fall of the Iron Curtain, Central European countries faced the enormous task of integrating their young democracies into European and transatlantic structures. He understood that four countries couldn't achieve such ambitious goals if they were to compete with each other on the international stage. On the contrary, they could only reach their aims through close cooperation. Therefore it took Havel`s strong political will and commitment to persuade the leaders of other Central European countries in the need of the Visegrád cooperation. (Dangerfield, 2014, p. 75; Schmidt, 2016, p. 118)

This part of the literature review reveals that political leadership provided by the actor enables member states to overcome collective action problems and reach unified and common position, thus contributing to the regional integration. And while political leadership can be claimed by either states, institutions or individual political leaders, in the absence of institutionalization the latter proves to be the most important source of political leadership in Visegrád case.

So far, first two sections of the literature review discussing V4 structure and political leadership role clearly demonstrates why generally political leadership matters in regional organizations and why particularly the role of individual key politicians is one of the most important factors in successful implementation of V4 policies. Hence, it explains and justifies the focus of my thesis on micro, individual decision-makers level of analysis.

1.3 V4 Response to the Refugee Crisis

Due to the above mentioned low degree of institutionalization (Karolewski & Benedikter, 2018, p. 43) and apparent lack of policy convergence (Bedea & Kwadwo, 2020, p. 2) the V4 has been of marginal political relevance over the past years. And the Visegrád phenomenon was equally overlooked by

academic literature. However, unexpected V4 stance on the refugee crisis proved to be a turning point and resulted in the revival of academic interest too. "The high profile of the V4 on the migration crisis from mid-2015 has earned it more coverage than ever before in the 25 years of its existence." (Nič, 2016, p. 282)

Despite the recent mushrooming of research in this academic field, relatively little attention has been given to establish whether there is any logic to changing scope and intensity of the cooperation. Some of the recent studies capturing the Visegrád reaction to the migration crisis manage to explain as Bedea and Kwadwo put it the "why`s" behind the stance of the Visegrád Group (Bedea & Kwadwo, 2020, p. 4), but they still remain elusive regarding the nature of the cooperation. First, I will discuss what reasons scholars provide as explaining factors of the V4 stance and then what they claim about the future nature of the cooperation and its further cohesiveness. To clarify, what I mean under the V4 stance on the refugee crisis is a major shift in the relationships between the four Central European countries, their collective action and unified position on highly politicized issue. In matters related to migration, the members of the alliance have worked together in Brussels as a cohesive bloc throughout 2016. They formulated common position which resulted in successful veto on the implementation of a relocation scheme for migrants within the EU in 2016 (Nič, 2016, p. 281)

The scholarship explaining the reasons "behind strengthening the V4's cohesion as well as consolidation of the joint V4 position in European politics" (Strnad, 2018, p. 3) revolves around 3 main factors: 1) identity shift 2) window of opportunity for claiming regional actorship 3) shared economic interest of keeping free movement under the Schengen acquis.

Koß & Séville try to explain the emergence of the V4 as of collective actor on the European political scene by synthesizing postfunctionalist and liberal intergovernmentalist views as individually neither integration theory can prove to be able to explain why V4 was successful. (Koß & Séville, 2020, p. 96)

From postfunctionalist perspective, the authors introduce the concept of politicization which "explains the shift from a permissive consensus to a constraining dissensus on European integration." This process results in transnational cleavage,[2] focal point of which is "the defense of national political, social and economic ways of life against external actors who penetrate the state by migrating..." They claim that because transnational cleavage between V4 and the EU already existed prior to the refugee crisis, the crisis triggered the politicization of migration politics. Consequently, politicization of

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[2] the conflict between green-alternative-libertarian (GAL) and traditional-authoritarian-nationalist (TAN) values

migration politics stemming from refugee crisis has led to closer cooperation among V4 alliance. It caused V4 governments to cooperate. But when authors ask "why would governments of different partisan compositions[3] cooperate to express common positions on a highly politicized issue such as migration", postfunctionalism can not explain that. (Koß & Séville, 2020, p. 99)

In an attempt to answer the question authors introduce intergovernmentalist perspective. They conduct a sequence elaboration of press statements following the meetings of V4`s Prime Ministers since EU-accession, and conclude that the V4 refusal of irregular immigration and mandatory relocation of migrants primarily aimed to maintain the principle of free movement within the EU. In November 2015 the Netherlands launched the idea of narrowing 'Schengen land' if the entire Schengen zone did not agree to share the burden of hosting. The fear for the V4 in this context was the possibility of the so called 'mini-Schengens' i.e. of reintroduction of border controls inside the Schengen area. In this case free movement would be preserved, but for a smaller group of core member states, the V4 being left out. (Reuters Staff, 2015) The data analysis shows that in the immediate run-up to the establishment of V4 as a cohesive bloc, four countries` primary preferences were economic which is in compliance with liberal intergovernmentalist view. Governments appeared as the main actors of politicization irrespective of their partisan composition because primarily they focused on economic rather than identity issues. However, the V4 only managed to politicize this economic preference because they could simultaneously politicize an identity issue. (Koß & Séville, 2020, p. 103)

By combining postfunctionalist and liberal-intergovernmentalist perspectives, authors conclude that the V4 governments did indeed increasingly commit themselves to pursue common policy goals after 2015 because the post-2015 V4 cooperation is a case of politicized transnationalism – "cooperation to achieve transnational aims such as the maintenance of freedom of movement under the condition of politicization." (Koß & Séville, 2020, p. 104)

Braun also grasps the importance of postfunctionalism based on which he suggests that when integration process starts influencing topics that are very sensitive for a country,s perceived identity, it leads to the increased politicization of the integration process. The migration crisis served as a postfunctinalist moment for V4 but in addition to V4`s general turn to EU criticism this postfunctionalist moment has also strengthened the shared identity of the group. (Braun, 2020, pp. 925-926) His article

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[3] At the outset of refugee crisis, both Poland and Hungary were governed by Eurosceptic nationalist and populist parties. In contrast, similar parties were in opposition in the Czech Republic and in Slovakia.

suggests that the group`s handling of the refugee crisis contributed to the development of a specific and exclusive Visegrád identity. (Braun, 2020, p. 928)

He analyzes V4 legitimation narratives in relation to the migration crisis. A detailed examination has been made of all communications from the group during the period January 2015 to December 2018 that include the term migration. In the Visegrád narrative on the migration crisis the V4 is described as being different from the EU at large. The V4 is portrayed as being the doers that manage to reduce migration by cooperation, whereas the EU is viewed as being partly responsible for the situation. The V4 narrative, however, is largely about protecting the past achievements of the European integration process. Therefore, the narrative does not necessarily imply a radical break with the countries' previous "back to the Europe" discourse. What has changed is the way the position of V4 in relation to EU is described. Based on their narratives V4 tends to accept the membership of the EU as such but challenges aspects of the EU's current form and proposed future direction. (Braun, 2020, pp. 929-931)

Kazharski also analyzes how migrant crisis and the simultaneous rise of right wing parties in Visegrád countries affected the Central European identity. He argues that migration crisis acted as a catalyst for redefinition of the shared identity of V4 which shifted from normative conformity and full identification with the West to only partial identification of Western values and subversion. He claims that based on the strategy of counter-hegemonic subversion V4 actors identify with the notions of the dominant discourse, but try to redefine them to their advantage. (Kazharski, 2018, pp. 765-766) This is in line with Braun`s view that V4 accepts EU membership as such, but challenges its aspects. These new identity of V4 favours a conservative interpretation of the nation and rejects Western liberalism, which was manifested by the European Union's decision to accept the refugees. (Kazharski, 2018, p. 754)

Bedea and Kwadwo are also stressing that V4 shifted from firm identification with the West to partial identification and that the V4 is now following a counter-hegemonic strategy in relation to the EU. (Bedea & Kwadwo, 2020, p. 5) Bedea and Kwadwo are researching the V4 stance during migration crisis from the theoretical perspective of sub-regionalism and their main argument is that outburst of the migration crisis opened a window of opportunity for V4 to claim regional actorship. Grasping this opportunity by V4 is defined as re-affirmation of subregionalism. In order to research whether there was indeed a reaffirmation of sub-regionalism, the analysis is concerned with the redefinition of V4's perspective of regional actorship. (Bedea & Kwadwo, 2020, p. 8)

The paper established that a "(sub)region's ability to influence the external world, or by derivation the EU, is captured by the concept of regional actorship which can be propelled when there is a critical

juncture." (Bedea & Kwadwo, 2020, p. 14) The analysis focused on the three dimensions surrounding the concept of regional actorship: regionness, presence and actorness. Presence shows that the actor is conscious about its presence as well as willing and well-prepared to make use of it. Actorness presupposes a scope of action and certain room for maneuver. While regionness refers to the position of a particular region in terms of its cohesion i.e. the overlap of interests and identities. (Bedea & Kwadwo, 2020, p. 7)

Following the study of the Hungarian discourse during the country's presidency of the Visegrád Four, it becomes evident that the migration crisis indeed served as a catalyst to a process of identity redefinition within the V4, and a different approach of the group's reading of regionness, presence and actorness. Thus, V4`s perspective of regional actorship changed. Visegrád Four transitioned from a reality of passive existence and normative conformity with the West to active participation and partial resistance to EU promoted values. However, V4 do not promote themselves as an alternative to the EU but rather aims at altering current policy dynamics. (Bedea & Kwadwo, 2020, pp. 11-12)

Bedea and Kwadwo conclude that in the process of searching for alternatives to exert some form of influence on the migrant quota relocation scheme, the Visegrád countries took advantage of their historic cooperation, and utilized it to affirm their position and consequently claimed a sub-regional actorship. They conclude that new form of (sub)regionalism indeed evolves in V4 but it`s current position can not fit in any of the existing categories for sub-regional groupings in the EU previously determined by Dangerfield: neither pioneering, substituting nor complementary (sub)regionalism. Therefore, they coin the new category - "opportunistic sub-regionalism". This implies particular actions which revives a level of actorship without formal institutionalization when there is a critical moment. The analysis has shown that, in the case of the Visegrád Four, their attempt at actively pursuing regional actorship was determined by a 'window of opportunity' opened by the outburst of the migration crisis. (Bedea & Kwadwo, 2020, pp. 14-15)

Braun also stressed the need for the new category of (sub)regionalism in literature. He claimed that from the categories pinpointed by Dangerfield, the group "can be described as serving a complementary function to the European integration process, but the term complement does not fully capture the nature of many of the V4's activities that are intended to influence the policies and future direction of the EU." (Braun, 2020, p. 927)

When it comes to the further cohesiveness and future prospects of the Group, Kazharski argues that Central Europe does not need conformity with the West anymore in order to win recognition, because

as once Central Europe by using "returning to the West" narrative successfully moved to the "in" group of the EU now it can seek recognition not only via compliance but non-compliance as well. Which means the viability of the group is not anymore linked to its normative conformity with the West. (Kazharski, 2018, p. 762) This is in line with the argument of Alex Etl. He claims that external recognition alongside with internal dimension was essential for Visegrád Group to establish a brand in the last decades. West was and is the essential for recognition of the V4 brand. The only difference is that before 2015 V4 had positive branding in the EU, while after migration crisis negative branding of V4, as famous Economist article framed it "Big, Bad Visegrád" became more and more visible. He argues that whether positive or negative, V4 brand has a recognition from the West and it supports the cohesive image of the group. (Etl, 2019, pp. 284-285)

Kazharski also pinpoints to the fact that the migration crisis contributed to the emergence of a new form of regional cohesion and consensus in the V4 which is rooted in similar conservative ideologies of the member states, ideologies which are embraced by the establishments and public masses that are very responsive to the rhetoric. He assumes that the securitization of migration politics points to the possibility of new regional cohesion which can be based on some kind of a "radical right nationalist international cemented by an external other." (Kazharski, 2018, p. 772)

While focusing on identity-building in (sub)regions, Braun contends that the identity is one of the reasons why subregions have maintained and developed some political relevance and that perceived common identity could increase the relevance of a particular subregion. (Braun, 2020, p. 931) Particularly, perceived shared identity can facilitate the domestic legitimation process of the V4 cooperation and in the long run this could allow the V4 to develop their cooperation further. (Braun, 2020, p. 936)

To summarize the last part of the literature review, scholars claim that V4 collective stance on the migration crisis and the rejection of relocation mechanism was caused 1) by the shift in Central European identity from full identification to only partial conformity with the western values 2) by the common national interest of preserving free movement under the Schengen area, which migration crisis put in danger and 3) by the sudden opportunity for V4 to claim regional actorship i.e. chance to alter political processes in Europe and become active and recognized regional cooperation.

The literature review leads to my research problem. The migration crisis made V4 a collective actor with regard to the migration crisis, and as up to 2016 the Visegrád never managed to formulate common position on highly politicized issue, this creates an interesting puzzle for research. While already existent

scholarship suggests several explanations of this phenomenon, it neglects the role of the political leadership in the process, which as demonstrated in the previous parts of the literature review can play an important role and guide the behaviours of others towards a common goal, as well as to shape a particular outcome. It is highly possible that in addition to the shift in perceived shared identity, economic interest of keeping free movement and a window of opportunity for claiming regional actorship, political leadership provided by individual political leader(s) of V4 also contributed to the successful implementation of V4 collective migration policy within the EU.

Therefore the research problem of my thesis can be formulated as the following: the existent studies fall short of taking into consideration the role of political leadership provided by individual political leader(s) as one of the contributing factors to Visegrád Group`s collective action in response to the refugee crisis.

2. Theoretical Framework

In this chapter the theoretical premises of the research will be discussed. In the first part I will discuss the theoretical model based on which political will of individual decision-makers can be connected to the political leadership in regional organizations. In the second part I will present the analytical framework suitable for detecting the existence of political will on behalf of key decision makers. The chosen framework will suggest clear conceptual definitions as well as provide plausible ways for operationalization.

2.1. Political Leadership in Regional Integration

The regional integration as well as regionalism theories fall short of accounting political leadership role in regional integration or regionalization processes. And the number of analytical frameworks drafted for analyzing the political leadership in the regional organizations or (sub)regions is excessively limited to giving clear conceptual definitions and does not grant much of a possibility for empirical research. The most refined and clearly defined framework, created in 2019 by Mohamed Pero will serve as the theoretical point of departure in my research. This framework was developed to research the role of political leadership in the regional organizations and integration process. Pero puts together several explanatory factors of political leadership which are examined at three different levels of analysis: the individual level (political will of the individual leader), state level (state capacity), and systems (institutional) levels of analysis (legitimacy and summitry). My research does not account the state and systems levels of analysis, thus the conditions necessary for political leadership at these levels will not

be further discussed. The provision of political leadership at the individual level of analysis takes into consideration following factor: the political will. (Pero, 2019, p. 45) To further clarify, in her framework, political will refers to the determination of political leaders to act, and to embark on bold move(s), and take risks, while being decision-makers in regional organizations. Pero argues that the political will of individual leaders is the driver of regional organizations both at the initiation of, and in maintaining the progress of it. (Pero, 2019, pp. 61-62)

The suggested framework is based on the comparative study of political leadership in regional organizations such as EU and ASEAN and examines the role of numerous political leaders in these organizations in the long continuum. The challenge posed by the framework is twofold: 1) it is only concerned with defining the necessary conditions for providing political leadership, and is nowhere near suggesting how to empirically examine political leadership provided by actors in particular cases; 2) the necessary conditions are only conceptually clarified and explained, there are no given possible ways in which these factors can be operationalized. This is the reason why my research is based on Pero`s framework to limited extent and takes into consideration Pero`s claim that the existence of political will on behalf of the individual national leaders is the necessary condition for providing political leadership in the regional organization.

2.2 Defining and Analyzing Political Will

In order to be able to operationalize and measure the political will my research introduces the analytical framework developed by Lori Ann Post, Amber and Eric Railes in 2010. The framework was created as a tool for public policy analysis in order to examine particular policy outcomes. Authors acknowledge the centrality of political will to policy outcomes and the necessity for creating a refined analytical approach to examine the political will. Their analytical framework includes a conceptual definition of the political will dissected into essential components, alongside with corresponding means of operationalization and targets for assessment. (Post, Raile, & Raile, 2010, p. 653)

Definition component	Operationalization	Assessment targets
Sufficient set of decision makers	Sets of actors capable of approving,	Institutions and factions

	implementing and enforcing public policies	
With a common understanding of a particular problem on the agenda	a) Use of similar frame and terminology;	Commonality and convergence in statements of decision makers with regard to problem;
	b) Status as "problem" on formal agenda;	Importance and prominence of decision makers discussing problem; volume of discussion.
Is committed to supporting	Distribution and strength of specific decision-maker preferences	• Incentives and disincentives for political actors (institutional, electoral, and others);
		• Allocation of analytical resources;
		• Credibility and obligation of statements (based on reputational costs);
		• Positions of key constituencies (domestic and international) and accountability relationships;
		• Bargaining mechanisms;
		• Cultural characteristics and constraints.
A commonly perceived, potentially effective policy solution	a) Use of similar frame and terminology;	• Commonality and convergence in statements of decision makers with regard to proposed solution;
	b) Avoidance of known sources of ineffectiveness;	• Nonuse of short-term "fixes," knowingly ineffective policies, and diversionary tactics;
	c) Capacity for policy effectiveness.	• Funding commitment;
		• Inclusion of potentially effective sanctions and enforcement mechanisms;
		• Implementation resources and support of implementers.

Table 1 Analyzing Political Will ((Post, Raile, & Raile, 2010)

Based on the previous existing literature authors suggest a refined conceptualization of political will. The detailed definition of political will provided in this research breaks the concept down into four components : (1) A sufficient set of decision makers (2) with a common understanding of a particular problem on the formal agenda (3) is committed to supporting (4) a commonly perceived, potentially effective policy solution

2.2.1. Component 1 – Sufficient set of decision makers

The first basic component of the conceptual definition is a sufficient set of decision makers who intend to support the policy. Given the political institutions of a jurisdiction, there is a need to identify

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which decision makers must refrain from blocking the initiative and its implementation as well as actors who must provide positive assent for a successful outcome. With the designation of "decision makers" authors limit consideration to "those individuals or groups capable of approving, implementing, and enforcing public policies in a geographic area". Based on the Veto players theory, authors propose that a crucial element in understanding policy change is determining the players whose agreement or indifference is necessary to change the status quo policy position. (Post, Raile, & Raile, 2010, pp. 660-661)

2.2.2 Component 2 - Common understanding of a particular problem on the formal agenda

Let us turn to the second component which is a common understanding of a particular problem on the formal agenda. It implies that the decision makers agree on: 1) that a particular issue or condition has reached problem status, 2) the nature of the problem, and 3) that the problem requires action. An issue or condition becomes a "problem" when there is a belief that action needs to be taken in a relatively short order. At this point, an issue also typically obtains a place on the "formal agenda" or the "list of items which decision makers have formally accepted for serious consideration". In order to effectively address a problem on the formal agenda there is a need for a common frame of reference or understanding of the problem. Otherwise, different views of a problem would finally lead to the suggestion of different solutions. Thus, the process of "issue definition" is a driving force in the policy-making process. (Post, Raile, & Raile, 2010, pp. 662-663)

2.2.3 Component 3 – Commitment to support

The third component is that a sufficient set of decision makers is committed to supporting a particular policy. Authors claim this particular component to be the core determinant of political will but also to be the most problematic to determine. The most challenging aspect is to ascertain the preferences of decision makers and their intention to act on those preferences, as well as making sure these intentions are genuine or strong. While figuring out actual intention is often impossible, indirect signals of intentions and/or influences on these intentions can be observed.

Authors identify six of these signals and influences, out of which three are basic and another three additional. First one from the basic set is the allocation of analytical efforts and other resources, for instance willingness to apply effective sanctions, second is incentives and disincentives which decision makers are facing for adopting a particular position. And the third indication of commitment is visible in cases where decision makers make credible, binding statements or undertake actions of a similar nature.

To be more specific, authors introduce the idea of the reputational costs which belongs to game theorists and is associated with advocating one and then later switching to another option. These reputational costs are one of the consequences of bargaining in front of an audience. A case involving high reputational costs (e.g., a high attention problem) can make the statements of decision makers more credible and more constraining. Authors suggest that these three assessment targets are credible for detecting decision makers` commitment to support. However, if these three can not determine the commitment, additional set of signals and influences can be applied to the narrower assessment of this particular component.

From the additional set, the accountability relationships between decision makers and their constituencies are an important element in determining intent. Who are a decision maker's key constituents? What position do they advocate? How much leverage do they have over the decision maker? The answers to these questions provide solid clues as to a decision maker's intentions.

Institutional incentive structures and bargaining mechanisms within a government also influence intent. For example, is it possible to determine whether taking a specific position would be harmful or helpful to career prospects for political actors within the institutional framework?

And finally, cultural characteristics and constraints may provide clues about the intentions of decision makers. For example, cultures exhibit different tolerances for uncertainty and ambiguity. (Post, Raile, & Raile, 2010, pp. 663-665)

2.2.4 Component 4 - A commonly perceived, potentially effective policy solution

The fourth and final component in the chosen framework is that support should be aimed at a commonly perceived, potentially effective solution. The point of departure for this component is that the sufficient set of decision makers supports the same general policy to address the commonly understood problem. This does not necessarily imply that all relevant decision makers should agree completely on the details but rather that the decision makers should share a perception about the type of necessary outcome. If the common perception of the solution is excluded from the definition, it would be impossible to talk about a singular political will.

Authors suggest that operationalization of the final component, convergence on a commonly perceived solution, at some point would parallel assessment of a commonly perceived problem i.e. second component. First, it should be detected if there is an evidence of a common frame and common language for the solution. The next step involves assessing whether key political actors are intentionally trying to sabotage a policy by denying to provide appropriate capacity and resources for its success, for

instance, funding, implementation resources, effective sanctions, etc. The idea is to exclude the possibility for the appearance of "false" political will manipulated by key decision makers. (Post, Raile, & Raile, 2010, pp. 665-668)

2.3 Applying Analytical Framework

The above mentioned analytical framework can be applied to my research as my research object V4 collective action and united response to the refugee crisis can be discussed as a particular policy, to be specific, as V4 policy on migration. Basically, V4 collective action, its united response to the refugee crisis and V4 policy on migration mean one and the same thing, they are only termed differently. By incorporating the four components of this framework, my thesis will examine the existence of political will with regard to the V4 migration policy.

First step is to detect sufficient set of decision-makers in Visegrád Group. As it was discussed in details in literature review, because of the specific V4 structure, the sufficient set of decision makers capable of approving, implementing, and enforcing policies in Visegrád Cooperation is absolutely clear and does not require any further research. Key decision makers whose agreement or indifference is necessary to change the status quo with regard to particular policy are Prime Ministers of member states.

Next, the common understanding of migration problem between V4 Prime Ministers should be examined. This means researching if Prime Ministers used similar frame and terminology while communicating the problem and if the migration issue gained a "problem" status on their agenda.

In my research I will slightly change the order of the given alaytical framework and first will examine the fourth component, then the third one. I belive it will be easier first to determine a commonly perceived, potentially effective solution to migration problem on behalf of V4 Prime Ministers ((4th component) and then assess their commitment to support this particular solution.

3. Methodology

The research question is formulated in a following manner: How V4 Prime Ministers revealed political will with regard to implementation of their migration policy during the refugee crisis? Because of the theoretical limitations, the study is simply concerned with detecting the necessary condition (political will) for providing political leadership by V4 Prime Ministers within the EU on migration issue. Theoretical framework suggested four basic components which can be used to identify the political will

of decision- makers. The research is descriptive in its nature and by combining a variety of research methods measures those four components.

3.1 Research Methods

As it is visible, the analytical framework is quite complex and requires the assessment of various components. Thus, there will be more than one research method used in order to ensure the appropriate one is chosen for each component and it corresponds to the given operationalization in the best way possible.

Definition component	Operationalization	Assessment targets	Applicable Research Methods
Sufficient set of decision makers	Sets of actors capable of approving, implementing and enforcing public policies	Institutions and factions	—
With a common understanding of a particular problem on the agenda	c) Use of similar frame and terminology;	Commonality and convergence in statements of decision makers with regard to problem;	Qualitative Content Analysis
	d) Status as "problem" on formal agenda;	Importance and prominence of decision makers discussing problem; volume of discussion.	—
Is commited to supporting	Distribution and strength of specific decision-maker preferences	• Incentives and disincentives for political actors (institutional, electoral, and others);	Secondary Data Analysis
		• Allocation of analytical resources;	Secondary Data Analysis
		• Credebility and obligation of statements (based on reputational costs);	Secondary Data Analysis
A commonly perceived, potentially effective policy solution	d) Use of similar frame and terminology;	• Commonality and convergence in statements of decision makers with regard to proposed solution;	Qualitative content Analysis
	e) Avoidance of known sources of ineffectiveness;	• Nonuse of short-term "fixes," knowingly ineffective policies, and diversionary tactics;	Qualitative Content Analysis

	f) Capacity for policy effectiveness.	• Funding commitment;	Qualitative Content Analysis
		• Inclusion of potentially effective sanctions and enforcement mechanisms;	Qualitative Content Analysis
		• Implementation resources and support of implementers.	Qualitative Content Analysis

Table 2 elaborated based on Table 1

One of the methods used in my research is qualitative content analysis. The analyzed data includes the statements and speeches of the four Prime-Ministers` of Visegrád countries. The time frame for the collected data is starting from September 2015, when the European Commission started discussions regarding the migration crisis until the end of September 2017, when the EU`s relocation scheme ended. (Nyzio, 2017, p. 49) . Therefore the political statements and speeches of three Prime-Ministers in the office in the given time frame were used for content analysis. These Prime-Ministers are: Bohuslav Sobotka - Czech Republic; Robert Fico – Slovakia; Viktor Orbán – Hungary; The primary sources of speeches and political statements by Poland`s Prime Minister in office Beata Szydło are not available in English, thus the content analysis will be based on secondary source such as daily newspaper articles in this case.

The official political statements and speeches which referred to migration issue made by above mentioned political leaders in the given time frame were coded with the aim of researching one particular set of components of political will. The data was collected from the official websites of the Prime Ministers offices. Research exclusively focused on the statements and speeches made separately by Prime-Ministers and excluded the joint statements of V4 which are the representation of already agreed positions and these statements do not account the initial differences in the stances of Prime-Ministers. In total there are 29 political statements and speeches analyzed, plus daily newspaper articles

Qualitative content analysis of speeches and statements of V4 Prime-Ministers was chosen because it allows to "focus on interpreting and describing meaningfully the topics and themes that are evident in the contents". (Williamson & Johanson, 2018, p. 464) Hence, in my thesis qualitative content analysis will help not only to detect but also to describe and interpret various components of political will.

In its nature the content analysis type is hybrid which means it is a mix of directed and conventional content analysis. The feature of the directed content analysis incorporated in my coding process is that categories are preconceived and stem from analytical framework. However, the codes are derived from the data itself and defined during data analysis, which is characteristic for the conventional content analysis. Hence, the combination of deductive (directed) and inductive (conventional) approaches is used as a research method. The data is hand-coded.

Another research method used for measuring other set of components in the analytical framework is the secondary data analysis. Secondary data includes newspaper articles as well as official documents of Visegrád Group and its member states regarding the migration issue.

4. Research Findings

In this chapter the research results will be portrayed, discussed and analyzed. Research findings will reveal existence of political will on behalf of individual political leaders of V4 member states with regard to migration policy. As it was already established, research part is completely based on the conceptual definitions and operationalization suggested in the analytical framework developed by Lori Ann Post, Amber and Eric Railes. Once the existence of political will of V4 Prime Ministers is researched, based on the explanation suggested by Pero it will further be detected whether V4 national leaders had the necessary condition for providing political leadership in the EU during the refugee crisis.

4.1 Sufficient set of decision makers

The first component is sufficient set of decision makers. The process of measuring this set of decision-makers who are capable of approving, implementing and enforcing policies in Visegrád Cooperation is quite easy and does not require applying any further research method rather than taking into consideration peculiar structure of V4 and the way it is organized. As the Group is not institutionalized in any manner and there are no institutions concerned with the political decision-making process, this process is simply based on the principle of organized periodical meetings of its representatives at various levels (from the high-level meetings of prime ministers and heads of states to expert consultations). And the main decision-makers are the Prime-Ministers of respective member states, the heads of governments. This is also determined by the fact that other political leaders, such as the heads of states/presidents in all V4 countries are only figureheads or have limited roles in foreign-policy making based on the respective national constitutions. (Marton, 2012, p. 8) Another peculiar characteristic of V4 being a flexible cooperation ensures that if there is an important decision to make,

especially decisions with regard to the "high politics" issues, it requires the unanimous agreement between the four Prime Ministers. Therefore, it can be established that the set of sufficient decision makers of V4 during the refugee crisis who could change the status quo with regard to V4 migration policy was represented by the Prime Ministers of Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia in office between 2015-2017. These Prime Ministers were:

- Bohuslav Sobotka - served as the Prime Minister of the Czech Republic from January 2014 to December 2017;
- Robert Fico - served as the Prime Minister of Slovakia from April 2012 to March 2018;
- Viktor Orbán - has been in office as Prime Minister of Hungary since May 2010;
- Beata Szydło - served as the Prime Minister of Poland from November 2015 to December 2017.

4.2 Common Understanding of a Particular Problem on the Agenda

In order to detect a common understanding of migration crisis by V4 Prime Ministers, the study observed the use of similar frame and terminology by PMs regarding the migration issue and migration crisis having a "problem" status on their agenda. As suggested in the framework in order to detect these conditions the research should focus on the 1) commonality and convergence in statements of decision makers with regard to refugee crisis and 2) importance and prominence of decision makers discussing the migration issue.

Content analysis of Viktor Orbán`s communication regarding migration problem revealed several frames using which Orban communicated the migration issue as a serious problem and issue for Hungary, Central Europe and the whole EU. He securitizes the migration crisis and presents it as a threat for Christianity, existence of nation, or either as a security and economic risk.

In his opinion if somebody takes masses of non-registered immigrants from the Middle East into a country, this also means importing terrorism, criminalism anti-Semitism and homophobia. Orban perceives that Eurocrats distributing illegal migrants upon their arrival among the Member States with mandatory resettlement quotas calculated on the basis of the "Juncker Formula" is a serious threat to every European nation. And at least Hungarians believe that it is a threat to the Hungarian nation, and a major challenge. Orban believes that Hungary would lose its Christian identity, competitiveness, and the hope of full employment if the Muslim refugees were to enter the country as designated by migrant relocation scheme. Orbán stresses the Muslim faith of the migrants is one reason why Visegrád countries

should act against migration crisis. Muslim migrnats pose the threat to the very existence of Christian values in the Europe.

Orban points out that Hungary is the only country which is under mass migration pressure not only from the South, but also from the East. He fully sympathises with the Ukrainians, and the stabilisation of the Ukrainian state is his interest. He claims that he would be happy if the economy in Ukraine recovered, but at this point in time the situation is extremely negative. There are almost one million migrants from Ukraine in Poland. In the Czech Republic there are more than one hundred thousand, and in Hungary there are more than fifty thousand Ukrainian migrants – and this will soon reach one hundred thousand. So due to the difficult situation in Ukraine Orban claims that Hungary and Central Europe is simultaneously affected by enormous bodies of mass migration from both the East and the South.

Content analysis of speeches and political statements by Slovak Prime Minister Robert Fico also reveals the securitization of the migration issue and presents it as a threat to the religion, cultural identity and as a precondition for the biggest security risk - terrorism. In his perception the problem is not that the migrants are coming, but that they are changing the character of the country. And Fico does not want to change the country that is built on Cyril-Methodist traditions. He openly claims that Islam has no space in Slovakia and he does not want a comprehensive Muslim community to emerge inside the country, which will begin to promote Muslim affairs eventually.

Fico also mentiones the issue of migrants stemming from East. The number of internally displaced people in Ukraine is growing. It is supposed to be more than 1.7 million people. And most of them are coming to Central European countries. In face of migration flows from East, new wave of migrants and migration crisis seems as utterly complicated challenge.

Content analysis of speeches given by Bohuslav Sobotka of Czech Republic did not reveal that the political leader tried to frame the migration problem in any manner, he rather focused on providing solutions to the problem. However his one statement ("there are only a small Muslim community in Czechia and it is not radicalized. When we look at the terrorism problems in other European countries, we in Czechia do not want more Muslims") demonstrates his perception of security threats stemming from migrants and indications to importance of religious homogenity that exists in the country.

Summary

The content analysis of political speeches and statements made by Prime Ministers of Hungary, Czech Republic, Slovakia and of daily newspaper articles regarding Polish Prime Minister`s positions between 2015-2017 with regard to framing migration crisis as a problem yielded following results:

All the Prime Ministers securitized the refugee crisis and perceived it as a threat for religious, cultural identity of nation, or either for the existence and survival of the nation. It was also presented as a serious economic challenge and a security risk serving as a precondition for increasing terrorism cases.

To finalize, there was the absolute commonality and convergence in statements of decision makers with regard to how they perceived the migration crisis as a problem.

4.3. A commonly perceived potentially effective policy solution

The next component in the framework to be analyzed is that support should be aimed at a commonly perceived, potentially effective solution. The sufficient set of decision makers which are Prime Ministers of V4 member states should support the same general policy to address the commonly understood migration problem. This does not necessarily imply that all Prime Ministers should agree completely on the details but rather that the decision makers should share a perception about the type of necessary outcome. If the common perception of the solution is excluded from the definition, it would be impossible to talk about a singular political will.

4.3.1. Use of similar frame and terminology

First, it should be detected if there is an evidence of a common frame and common language for the solution based on the qualitative content analysis of Prime Ministers` speeches and political statements. In the beginning, possible effective solutions perceived by decision makers will be discussed separately for each Prime Minister and then it will be summarized whether there is a commonality and convergence in their perceptions.

The content analysis of Viktor Orban`s speeches and statements revealed several thematic categories in which Prime Minister framed the possible effective solutions to the migration crisis.

One of the solutions offered by Orban is physical protection of external Schengen borders. He stresses the importance for buiding border fences, which are effective to stop migrants and send them back, building 1st and 2nd defence lines between Greece and Turkey and then on the northern border of Greece with Balkan states, between Bulgaria and Greece, Macedonia and Greece. And Orban also claims

that physical protection of external Schengen border is a responsibility of each national state separately and no member state should wait for common European solution.

Another possible solution in Prime Minister`s mind is to create effective asylum and return policies, which will allow nation states to register migrants, separate them into emergency cases and economic migrants. The overall idea is for nation states to be able to identify, intercept and turn back migrants.

In Orban`s perception another effective solution is the joint action by Central European countries. In the absence of common European strategy agains migration crisis, Orban claims it is in the best interests of Hungarian state to have alternative Central European stategies, which means providing each other with mutual border protection assisstance and each country reinforcing the others at meetings in Brussels.

One relatively ineffective solution to the migration challenge in Orban`s perception is Turkey deal. He claims that the agreement can not be enough on its own, also the EU approaches Turks as a beggar for security and in return offers money and promises which is not a good policy because it makes Europe`s future and safety dependent on Turkey`s goodwill. And the possible alternative is to build a new line of defence on southern and northern borders of Greece.

Content analysis of Robert Fico`s political speeches and statements aslo revealed several categories in which Prime Minister frames his idea of possible effective solutions to the migration challenge.

Fico claims that the most effective protection in the fight against illegal migration is the protection of Schengen's external borders and for ensuring that border is physically protected he supports the idea of building defence lines across the various routes, would it be Turkish-Greek road, Mediterranean to Italy, etc. He also mentions the importance of having asylum and return policies to make distinctions between refugees and economic migrants. In addition to physical protection of EU`s external borders, fico names the cooperation with the countries from which migrants come as the utmost priority. Fico declares the absolute necessity for working closely with third countries, particularly countries of transit and origin, as it is vital to fight not only consequences but the cause of the whole problem.

Fico positively looks at the solution offered by Turkey Deal. He thinks that the protection of external border will work at the level of Greece and Turkey and that the EU-Turkey action plan will work. However, he still considers the possibility of failure of this deal and suggests an alternative plan B which concerns the protection of the borders of Bulgaria and Macedonia

Content analysis of Bohuslav Sobotka`s speeches and statements also detected several thematic categories in which Prime Minister frames his perceptions of effective ways for coping with migration crisis. He also elaborates on the need of thorough protection of the external border of the Schengen Area, setting up of a common European Border and Coast Guard and building defence lines across the Greek border. He perceives it absolutely essential to designate an end to military conflict in Syria and Libya as a categorical priority of EU foreign policy and to provide focused assistance from EU member states to the countries from which people ar migrating. As he claims it is necessary to focus on addressing real causes, and that the cooperation between the EU and Syria's neighbours hardest hit by the migration crisis – especially Turkey, Jordan and Lebanon – should be intensified.

Sobotka also thinks of asylum and return policy mechanism as effective tool for fighting against migration waves. In his opinion asylum and return policy will bring the possibility for setting up registration points, separating legitimate refugees from economic migrants, the rapid establishment of hotspots on the Schengen area's external borders.

Sobotka looks positively to EU-Turkey Joint Action Plan and thinks this agreement brings EU closer to a solution for the migration crisis. However, he declares that he wants "to prepare a backup solution that could be employed in the event that the agreements with Turkey fail and Greece continues to provide deficient protection of its borders." As a possible alternative he discusses reinforcing security on the borders between Greece and Macedonia and between Greece and Bulgaria so as to create conditions facilitating the regulation of the strong pressure exerted by people migrating to Europe.

Czech Prime Minister also mentions the effective Visegrad Group cooperation as a tool in fight against illegal migration. He states that it is not easy for V4 to always coordinate joint positions vis-à-vis the European Council sessions and he values this ability which brings important results and helps all of four countries.

Content analysis of daily newspaper articles determined to reveal the Polish Prime Minister`s perception of effective solutions to the migration crisis, suggests that she finds it utterly important to focus on external border protection. She perceives it as a job which should be done by national member states which are binded by treaties to protect Schengen external borders. Moreover she claims that focusing on providing assistance for third countries will be affective solution as it will adress the root cause of the problem.

Summary

All of the Prime Ministers agree that the ensuring physical protection of EU external borders by building border fences and defence lines, effective asylum and return policy, cooperation with third countries of transit and origin and Turkey deal are the major possible effective solutions in the fight against migration. There are slight variation with regard to Turkey deal, some of them look at it more negatively than others, however the alternative plan B if EU-Turkey deal fails is one and the same for everyone, building defence lines between Greece and Bulgaria, Greece and Macedonia. The content analysis demonstrated that the basic perception about the necessary outcome is one and the same for all the Prime Ministers of V4 member states.

The commonality and convergence between the Prime Ministers are clearly demonstrated by the qualitative content analysis of their speeches and political statements.

4.3.2 Avoidance of known sources of innefectiveness

The next step involves assessing whether key political actors are intentionally trying to sabotage a policy by using short-term fixes, knowingly ineffective policies and diversionary tactics.

In order to detrmine whether V4 Prime Ministers were trying to sabotage their chosen possible effective solution, qualitative content analysis focused on revealing and interpreting ineffective policy solutions in V4 Prime Ministers perceptions.

Content analysis revealed that Viktor Orban names two ineffective solutions and criticizes them. First such ineffective solutions is internal border control within the Schengen area. He claims that there is no place for fences and defence lines within the Schengen, it results in the loss of free movement for citizens of EU member states. He claims it is a result of member states` failure to protect external borders and if national states managed to protect external border, freedom within the Schengen area would be preserved.

Another ineffective solution which Orban highly opposes and criticizes is the relocation quotas. He claims that it is nonsense and absolutely not working mechanism. Th fact that it is a failure is vivid once you look at the numbers of relocated migrants. He rejects the implementation of relocation scheme in Hungary and claims there are no legal or political grounds to make this kind of relocation mechanism compulsory for nation states and that the Hungary will file a law suit against it.

When speaking of innefective solutions, it will not be surprising that relocation quota deserves the most of the criticism overall. Fico also terms the introducing of the quotas as a nonsense and claims that "when you look at the numbers how many people have been relocated under quotas, you see two big

zeros there." He clearly states that he refuses to accept relocation mechanism and will not bear any consequencies for the rejection of quotas and that Slovakia will file a lawsuit against it.

While considering ineffective solutions to the refugee crisis, relocation quota comes to Sobotka`s mind first as well. He calls the mechanism non-functioning and hindrance to effective and conceptual solution of the migration crisis. He does not only state that mandatory refugee relocation quotas are not working, but also claims that they rather act as an incentive for illegal migration to Europe.

In the category of ineffective solutions relocation mechanism takes number one position for Beata Szydło as well. In her opinion the relocation scheme extends invitation to migrants, it can not solve the problem and Poland has no intention of recieving designated number of migrants decided by European Commission.

Summary

Content analysis clearly demonstrates that all the Prime-Ministers have the perception of same ineffective policy, precisely relocation mechanism and that decision-makers are strongly determined and committed not to accept the relocation quota.

Therefore, there definitely exists avoidance of known sources of ineffectiveness on behalf of Prime Ministers and there is absolutely no will for sabotaging their commonly perceived effective solution.

4.3.3 Capacity for policy effectiveness

The last step implies assessing whether Prime Ministers of member states have capacity to provide resources for success of policy, for instance, funding, implementation resources, effective sanctions, etc.

In order to answer the given question, qualitative content analysis focused on detecting the determination of Prime Ministers to provide resources for success of migration policy.

Orban`s statements and speeches contain indications to actual cases where the determination to support migration policy with all the available resources is clearly visible. He claims that Hungary protects the EU's southern border without any financial support from Brussels, that Hungary has paid 250 million euros for border security only by themselves and that Hungary provides aid in the Balkans, without the EU reimbursing even a single euro of its expenses. Moreover, Orban mentiones that although it was rejected from the Greek side Hungary offered all kinds of help, would it be money, staff, technical support. And last but not least he directly demonstrates the commitment to dedicate resources to the fight

against migration when he declares that in the interest of establishing a second line of defence, Hungary can make all of its financial instruments, military force, border protection capacities and technical equipment available to those who are prepared to establish a second line of defence south of Hungary

There were not many indications to the mobilization of resources in the data on behalf of Slovak and Polish Prime Ministers. However while talking about Slovakia being criticized for quota rejection, Fico definitely claimed that while they may have a different view of quotas, it should not matter because they are committed to offer money and people. The same was the case with Beata Szydło. She mentioned that the criticism towards Poland for refusing to accept relocation mechanism can not be justified, as Poland is commited to finding common European solution and ready to provide material and technical support.

What concerns the Czech PM Sobotka, his dedication to use all the available resources is vividly demonstrated by his statements. As he declares Czechs have been helping the most affected Member States and third countries on the basis of solidarity, providing financial, technical and personal assistance and they are ready to continue their efforts. According to Sobotka, during the refugee crisis, the Czech Republic has been one of the most active countries, present at the conflict sites and in the countries along main migratory routes. Czech experts have been helping directly in Greece and Italy. Czech police officers have taken part in border patrolling in Hungary, Slovenia or the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. They have also been sending material and financial assistance to Serbia and Croatia. Czech Republic provides humanitarian aid directly in Syria and refugee camps in the surrounding countries and they have also financially supported the formation of the Libyan Coast Guard.

Summary

Funding commitment, inclusion of potentially effective enforcement mechanisms and mobilization of implementation resources is absolutely characteristic feature for V4 Prime Ministers as revealed by content analysis.

To sum up the research results of all assessment targets in the fourth component, the study concludes that the Visegrad Group Prime Ministers definitely had in mind a commonly perceived, potentially effective solution for migration crisis.

5. Conclusion

The study was concerned with researching the regional cooperation of Visegrad Group of Central European countries which managed to gain importance from 2015 when the migration crisis started in EU. The research focused on an interesting puzzle with regard to V4, triggered by refugee crisis. During the migration crisis V4 emerged as a collective actor and managed to present united stance on highly politicized issue such as migration which was highly unexpected of the group.

As literature review demonstrated there exists several explanations what led V4 to collective action in response to refugee crisis, however the aim of this research was to narrow down the existing gap in the literature and take into consideration the role of individual national leaders of Visegrad Group while assessing the Visegrad cooperation. The peculiar structure of V4, which implies the absence of institutionalism and the flexible cooperation mechanism ensure, together with respective national constitutions of member states that the national political leaders are the key decision makers inside the group. Therefore, the idea was to explore the role of individual political leaders of member states in the emergence of V4 as a collective actor in response to refugee crisis.

Study took into consideration the limitations of theoretical frameworks and is more of a descriptive nature rather than explanative. The research question was the following: Did V4 Prime Ministers reveal political will with regard to V4 collective stance to the refugee crisis? Based on two analytical frameworks and using mainly qualitative content analysis as well as secondary data analysis study yielded the following conclusion: The Prime Ministers of V4 member states revealed single political will with regard to migration crisis. While it can not be further determined whether national political leaders provided political leadership during the refugee crisis or not, the study can claim that the necessary condition for providing political leadership i.e. political will existed on behalf of individual political leaders of V4 member states.

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Appendices
Appendix 1

Framing Migration Crisis as a Problem (Viktor Orban)

Thematic Category	Code	Quote
Migrants are not welcome	Zero migrants	We think that the best immigrant is one who does not come here at all, and therefore the best number is zero. Therefore we pursue a migration policy which of course grants political refugees all the possibilities afforded by

		international law, but which does not allow anyone else in. The Austrians have taken a decisive step in this direction.
		Unfortunate souls now living in refugee camps, where the conditions may be bad, but where they are safe. Staying there is still better than setting out on a journey involving all sorts of hardships – from the risk of drowning to potential violence – to countries where in fact they are not at all welcome and from which they will be sent back, sooner or later
	No to importing Western problems	We do not want to divide Europe, but rather protect our citizens. This means that we do not want migrants to come to us. Why would we want to import the problems of Western states?
		We do not want these illegal migrants. We do not want to import problems that appeared in Germany. And we do not accept anyone trying to force us to so
Migrants securitization	Security and economic	Today, in the context of the migration issue, everyone can now see its serious risks: security and economic risks.
		If somebody takes masses of non-registered immigrants from the Middle East into a country, this also means importing terrorism, criminalism anti-Semitism and homophobia.
	Existence of nation	The migrant situation – the refugee crisis, the mass arrival of new peoples in Europe – raises the most important questions of the nation, the most important questions of the existence of European nations.
		They are effectively organising the transportation to Europe of countless migrants from thousands of kilometres away in an unregulated and uncontrolled manner, in order for Eurocrats to distribute them upon their arrival among the Member States with mandatory resettlement quotas calculated on the basis of the "Juncker Formula". This is a serious threat to every European nation – at least we Hungarians believe that it is a threat to the Hungarian nation, and a major challenge.
	Christianity	We, Central Europeans expect that if things go on like this, there will be a dominant Muslim presence in the western half of Europe even in the lifetime of our generation. I understand that the Left is putting us under ideological pressure, for the West to feel guilty for the crusades and colonialism, but this leftist policy is intellectually disarming Europe against the invasion of the Muslim migration.
		We would lose our Christian identity, lose our competitiveness, and lose the hope of full employment.
Migration from Ukraine		We Hungarians saw it as important to point out that Hungary is the only country which is under mass migration pressure not only from the South, but also from the East. We fully sympathise with the Ukrainians, and they have our

| | | solidarity. The stabilisation of the Ukrainian state is our most sincere wish. We would like them to observe and implement the Minsk Protocol. We would be happy if the economy in Ukraine recovered, but at this point in time the situation is extremely negative. There are almost one million migrants from Ukraine in Poland. In the Czech Republic there are more than one hundred thousand, and in Hungary we have more than fifty thousand Ukrainian migrants – and this will soon reach one hundred thousand. So due to the difficult situation in Ukraine we are simultaneously affected by enormous bodies of mass migration from both the East and the South. |
| | | while we receive no support, we are protecting the western part of the European Union from the burdens of migration originating in Ukraine |

Appendix 2

Framing Effective Solutions to Migration Crisis (Viktor Orbán)

Thematic Category	Code	Quote
External Border protection	Security fences	"What the countries on the Balkan migrant route are now doing, including Austria, is in fact the Hungarian solution. They are building fences – even though they may call them something else by coining highly amusing linguistic terms. They are building fences, stopping the migrants and sending them back. This has always been the Hungarian position. I am sure that the southern borders of Europe cannot be protected any other way."
	Border protection on a national basis	"The protection of borders is one such problem. It was completely obvious right from the beginning that in Europe borders are traditionally protected on a national basis, and that if the nations fail to protect the external borders of Europe, we can talk about a European solution for hours on end; there is nobody, there is no mechanism, there is no law which could take over this responsibility from the nation states overnight."
		"Whenever a problem emerges, the first reflex is that they immediately say we need a European solution: we must withdraw powers, and we must create a common European migration policy, instead of leaving each state to perform its duty and protect its own external borders. If they had done what we suggested – with everyone protecting their external Schengen borders – in Europe today we would have perhaps some tens of thousands of real political refugees who had been genuinely persecuted, rather than one point six million illegal immigrants.
	1st and 2nd defence lines	"To this end, we must build lines of defence; … I think that the next line of defence which must be built should be on Greece's

		northern border: a European line of defence must be built on the border between Bulgaria and Greece and between Macedonia and Greece. …We must strengthen Macedonia: we must send money, personnel and equipment there, so that we can build a European line of defence".
		"We would be glad if the first line of defense functioned properly – meaning that we succeeded in blocking this migration flow between Europe and Turkey; and we are doing everything possible – and will continue to do everything possible – to ensure that this is successful."
		"Just to be clear, the European Union already has a second line of defence, running along the Hungarian, Slovenian and Austrian – the Austrian-Italian – borders. The question is whether we want to establish a second line of defence between Turkey and the current connected external border sections of the Schengen Area."
Asylum & return policies		From the start, we were demanding: halt migrants, register them and separate them – into actual emergency cases and economic migrants.
		Unidentified and unknown people in their millions emerged on the southern borders of Hungary and the European Union. In the autumn of 2015 the Hungarian response was clear and unequivocal: controls, identification, interception and turning back. This was precisely as is laid down in the Schengen Agreement. This was a difficult and costly policy, but a successful one in terms of protecting Hungary.
Internal border control	No border control within Schengen	Because they were unable to protect the Schengen Area's external borders – no one, apart from the Hungarians was able to do so – defence structures, visa schemes, border controls and fences are being introduced within the Schengen Area.
		Fences and defence lines should not have been erected within the Schengen Area and within Europe, but on the external border of the Schengen Area – as Hungary has done. Freedom within the area would then have been preserved. But as we failed to protect this zone of freedom from the outside, it is now shrinking on the inside, and we are increasingly losing the opportunity for free movement.
Relocation quotas	Rejecting quotas	"Indeed, I was initiating a referendum in Hungary for rejecting compulsory settlement quotas. We cannot decide disregarding the people in case of decisions that strongly change their life and also determinate upcoming generations. Also, the quota is reframing the ethnic, cultural and religious profile of Hungary and Europe. I have not decided this way against Europe, but for protecting European democracy."
		"Those who are in favour of the quotas were extremely vocal at the summit, despite the fact that I am convinced that there are neither legal nor political grounds for such compulsory resettlement quotas. This is an extremely serious issue, however.

		Therefore preventing and taking action against the quotas will be the number one task."
	Ineffective quotas	"We, like the Slovaks, are filing a suit against it. Plus, how many of those 160,000 have been distributed so far? Only a few hundred. This distribution key is nonsense, it does not work. But no one in Brussels wants to admit that."
Not slowing down, stopping migration		"The crucial question for 2016 will be whether the others, too, will finally realise that slowing down immigration is not enough: it must be stopped."
		"It is a fine thing that the Turks have promised that there will be a line of defence there, but using our own resources we must build a new European line of defence one country further in: on the northern border of Greece. And that is where we must stop – not just slow down, but stop – immigration."
		"Our standpoint continues to be that the mass migration flow must be brought under control and must be halted."
		If you read the document being issued, you will see that we have assigned top priority to protecting the borders and halting the masses of migrants. In other words we declared that they must be stopped, the external borders must be protected and the terms of the Schengen Agreement must be fully observed by everyone.
Central European joint action		"So Central Europe chose to take action, built border fences, set up cooperation schemes, and organised its joint border protection."
		"Therefore, together with the other Central European countries – primarily with the Visegrád countries – we concluded that protest is not enough; we decided we must also take action, and we formed our joint positions, with each country reinforcing the others at meetings in Brussels. We also agreed to provide each other with mutual border protection assistance. This is why today Slovaks, Poles and Czechs are also providing military and border policing services on Hungary's southern borders. This is why Hungarians are currently serving in Slovenia, and this is why Hungarian border patrol forces will soon appear in Macedonia as well."
		"As there is no European solution or strategy to address most problems – whether problems of an economic nature, or the problem of mass migration – it is in our best interest, the best interest of the Hungarian people, to have Central European strategies."
Turkey Deal	Ineffective solution	"Our relationship to Turkey is close and trusting. Nevertheless, I am of the opinion, that the EU, is now approaching the Turks rather like a beggar. We are humbly begging Mr Erdogan for security, since we can no longer protect ourselves. In return, we give him money and promises. That is not a good policy because it makes Europe's future and safety dependent on Turkey's goodwill."

		"I have no illusions that the agreement concluded with the Turks will be enough on its own."
		"Brussels is now making promises to Turkey that we will not be able to keep – or will not want to keep. The plan to take up hundreds of thousands of migrants from Turkey into Europe and to distribute them is an illusion. No EU country can, nor wants to implement this plan."
	Alternative plan	"It is a fine thing that the Turks have promised that there will be a line of defence there, but using our own resources we must build a new European line of defence one country further in: on the northern border of Greece"

Appendix 3

Providing Resources for Policy Effectiveness (Vitkor Orban)

Thematic category	Code	Quote
Provided resources	Financial assistance	Hungary protects the EU's southern border – without any financial support from Brussels. We have paid 250 million euros for border security by ourselves. We also provide aid in the Balkans, without the EU reimbursing a single euro of our expenses.
	Financial and technical assistance	We have spelt tears for Greece a long time ago. We have plead with Greece for long enough. We have offered all kinds of help: money, staff, technical support. 300 officers for border security would have been deployed. Everything was rejected. You can only help someone who wants to be helped. Now it is up to the Greeks to act.
	Financial, technical, and military assistance	What Hungary can do in the interest of establishing a second line of defence is to make all of its support, financial instruments, military force, border protection capacities and technical equipment available to those who are prepared to establish a second line of defence south of Hungary.

Appendix 4

Framing Migration Crisis as a Problem (Robert Fico)

Thematic Category	Code	Quote

Migration securitization	Traditions and religion	"Islam has no space in Slovakia. After all, perhaps we are a country that somehow came into being. Let's not make complete idiots out of ourselves. If someone here wants to tell me that Slovakia wants to be multicultural, that everyone here will do what they want, that traditions will change here and that Slovakia will change, then it goes against the essence of this country. I think it is the duty of politicians to talk about these things very clearly and openly. I said that I do not want a comprehensive Muslim community to emerge in Slovakia, and I say that again. I do not want there to be tens of thousands of Muslims here who will gradually begin to promote their affairs. I have spoken about this several times with the Prime Minister of Malta, who has told me that the problem is not that they are coming, but that they are changing the character of the country. And we do not want to change the traditions of a country that is built on Cyril-Methodist traditions."
	Security risk	"Fear of our citizens related to migration due to possible loss of cultural identity, fear of terrorism related to doubts on security."
Migration from East		"The number of internally displaced people in Ukraine is growing. It is supposed to be more than 1.7 million people. The V4 therefore calls on the EC to make the protection of these people a political priority for the EU."

Appendix 5

Framing Effective Solutions to Migration Crisis (Robert Fico)

Thematic Category	Code	Quote
External border protection		"That is why we are faced with the challenge of explaining to citizens that a common currency is only possible if we also increase joint supervision, that the free movement of people is not possible without ensuring the protection of external borders."
	1st and 2nd defence lines	"The issue of migrants is not resolved, I expect that in June there will be many preparatory talks of the Slovak government with our partners, because it turns out that the Turkish-Greek road is secured, but a new road across the Mediterranean to Italy is emerging."
	Focus on countries of origin and transit	"Our main priorities are protecting the EU's external borders, improving the security and functioning of the Schengen area and eradicating the causes of migration. The European Border and Coast Guard should be 'born' during our Presidency. At the same time, we have to work closely with third countries, particularly with countries of transit and origin."
		"We have always argued that the most effective protection in the fight against illegal migration is the protection of Schengen's external borders and clear open cooperation with the countries from which

		migrants come, as well as with countries that can help us in the regions."
Asylum & return policies		"They agree with the aforementioned strengthening of border protection, the distinction between refugees and economic migrants, as well as agreements with the countries from which migrants come or pass."
Relocation quotas	Rejecting quotas	"Slovakia will not be affected by this, because it did not agree with this mechanism and filed a lawsuit against it, similarly to Hungary."
	Ineffective quotas	"We have said from the beginning that quotas are nonsense, that we do not implement them, that we have been taking this position all along and that we have also brought an action against quotas. If I saw the other countries fighting so hard for those quotas that they are meeting their quotas, our position would not be so strong. But at least we say no and stick to our positions. And someone criticizes us for allowing us to say no, but when you look at how many people have been relocated under quotas, you see two big zeros there."
Turkey Deal	Effective solution	"We trust that the protection of the Schengen border will work at the level of Greece and Turkey and that the EU-Turkey action plan will work. I would like our Greek friends to pleasantly surprise us. But I am pessimistic, we may be surprised again by some economic problems, "said Slovak Prime Minister Robert Fico after the meeting.
	Alternative plan	"In the event of its failure, Plan B should come in, which concerns the protection of the borders of Bulgaria and Macedonia. In the case of its implementation, Slovakia offers a total of 300 Slovak police officers for both mentioned countries."

Appendix 6

Provided Capacity for Policy Effectiveness (Robert Fico)

Thematic category	Code	Quote
Provided resources	Financial assistance; Assistance by personnel	"We are very active and European, because we are clearly talking about European solutions and we do not want to adopt any solutions that would disrupt the European context. While we have a different view of quotas, we continuously offer support by money and people."

Appendix 7

Framing Migration Crisis as a Problem (Bohuslav Sobotka)

Thematic category	Code	Quote
Migration securitization	Security risk	"There are only a small Muslim community in Czechia and it is not radicalized. When we look at the terrorism problems in other European countries, we in Czechia do not want more Muslims."

| | | "In Europe we see too often problems with the integration of people from other cultural or religious backgrounds, we don`t want to witness that in Czechia as well." |

Appendix 8

Framing Effective Solutions to Migration Crisis (Bohuslav Sobotka)

Thematic category	Code	Quote
External Border protection		"At the extraordinary summit, the prime ministers of Hungary, Poland, and Slovakia and I will therefore debate measures that will lead to the establishment of thorough protection of the external border of the Schengen Area. We urgently need to reinforce the external protection of the Schengen border, set up a common European Border and Coast Guard as soon as possible, and launch the measures agreed to regulate migration in Greece and Turkey."
	Focus on countries of transit and origin	"I believe it is absolutely essential to designate an end to military conflict in Syria and Libya as a categorical priority of EU foreign policy and to provide focused assistance from EU Member States to the countries from which people are migrating."
		"It is necessary to focus on addressing real causes, including protection of the EU's external borders, cooperation with third countries and making return policies more effective."
		"Cooperation between the EU28 and Syria's neighbours hardest hit by the migration crisis – especially Turkey, Jordan and Lebanon – will be intensified."
Asylum & return policies		"From a Czech point of view, the summit touched on priorities such as reinforcing the protection of the EU's external borders and setting up registration points, as well on assistance for those countries with refugee camps. We discussed the priorities pursued by the Czech Republic since the very beginning of the migration crisis."
		"Assistance for Member States in the registration of refugees in the country of first entry into the EU with a view to separating legitimate refugees from economic migrants. Assistance for Western Balkan countries as they cope with the current wave of refugees will not be overlooked either.
		"The Czech Government believes that more rigorous Schengen border protection, the rapid establishment of hotspots on the Schengen area's external borders, the definition of safe countries, and effective asylum and return policies are particularly important."
Turkey Deal	Effective solution	"One of the Visegrad region's priorities remains the implementation of the EU-Turkey Joint Action Plan, the achievements of which have not been satisfactory. It is equally important for Greece to stick to the obligations arising from its Schengen area membership. If another wave of migration sweeps in this spring, we need to be ready to help not only Greece, but also Macedonia, Bulgaria and other countries along the Balkan route to protect their borders.

		"Today's agreement has brought us closer to a solution for the migration crisis. Europe and Turkey have today taken a big step forwards in tackling smugglers, curbing illegal migration and coping with migratory pressures."
		"A series of measures – the agreement with Turkey, closing the Balkan migration route for illegal migration, and setting up reception centres on the Greek islands – helped to manage this situation to a considerable degree."
	Alternative plan	"One possibility is to reinforce security on the borders between Greece and Macedonia and between Greece and Bulgaria so as to create conditions facilitating the regulation of the strong pressure exerted by people migrating to Europe. Together with our friends from the other V4 countries, I want to prepare a backup solution that could be employed in the event that the agreements with Turkey fail and Greece continues to provide deficient protection of its borders."
		"I believe that one of the possible solutions will be to reinforce border protection between Bulgaria, Macedonia and Greece. V4 and other EU countries could actively help those states to reinforce border protection. Strengthening the protection of Macedonian and Bulgarian borders could also – with those states' cooperation – drastically curtail migratory pressures faced by countries such as Austria and Germany
Central European joint action		"In general I greatly value our ability to coordinate our joint positions vis-à-vis the European Council sessions, which naturally was not always easy; but the results were evident and helped all out four countries. The ability to formulate and defend our joint positions has also contributed to the fact that today the Visegrad Group is regarded in the European Union as a strong actor, which needs to be counted with in every case."
Relocation quotas	Rejecting quotas	"The Czech Republic does not agree with the redistribution system according to refugee quotas. In view of the deteriorated security situation in Europe, as well as the failure of the quota system, the Czech Republic will not participate in the mechanism. We are ready to defend our position within the EU and in front of relevant judicial institutions."
	Ineffective quotas	"In spite of the progress made, the European Commission adheres blindly to the enforcement of non-functioning quotas that have lowered citizens' confidence in the EU's capacity to act and hindered effective and conceptual solution of the migration crisis."
		"The development over the two last years proved us right, as it showed that mandatory refugee relocation quotas are not working as they rather act as an incentive for illegal migration to Europe."

Appendix 9

Provided Resources for Policy Effectiveness (Bohuslav Sobotka)

Thematic category	Code	Quote

		"We have been helping the most affected Member States and third countries on the basis of solidarity, providing financial, technical and personal assistance. We are ready to continue in our efforts."
Provided resources	Assistance by personnel	"Facing the refugee crisis, the Czech Republic has been one of the most active countries, present at the conflict sites and in the countries along main migratory routes. Czech experts have been helping directly in Greece and Italy. Our police officers have taken part in border patrolling in Hungary, Slovenia or the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia."
	Financial and technical assistance	"We have also been sending material and financial assistance to Serbia and Croatia."
		"We provide humanitarian aid directly in Syria and refugee camps in the surrounding countries."
		"We send ammunition and weapons to fight the Daesh/IS, and. We have also financially supported the formation of the Libyan Coast Guard."

Appendix 10

Framing Migration Crisis as a Problem (Beata Szydło)

Thematic category	Code	Extract from secondary source
Migration Securitization	Security risk	"I hear in Europe very often: do not connect the migration policy with terrorism, but it is impossible not to connect them," Polish Prime Minister Beata Szydlo told private broadcaster TVN24.
		"The priority of the government is the safety of Poles … We understand the previous government … signed commitments which bind our country. We cannot allow a situation in which events taking place in the countries of Western Europe are carried over to the territory of Poland."
	Religious life	Refugees could bring chaos to Poland, which is staunchly Roman Catholic and has very few Muslim immigrants."
	National sentiment	In our troubled times, Auschwitz is a great lesson that everything must be done to defend the safety and the lives of citizens," Szydlo said at a ceremony marking the 77th anniversary of the Nazis' first transport of Polish prisoners to the camp. Polish Prime Minister Beata Szydlo used Auschwitz speech to defend refugee reticence

Appendix 10

Framing Effective Solutions to Migration Crisis (Beata Szydło)

Thematic category	Code	Extract from secondary source

	Focus on countries of origin and transit	"Rather than taking in migrants, the EU should concentrate on providing aid to refugee camps in the Middle East and North Africa."
Protecting external border		"We would really like to see Europe better protect its external borders. The reception of refugees should always be within the jurisdiction of nation-states.
Relocation quotas	Rejecting quotas	Poland's rightwing premier said that her country would not be "blackmailed" by its "largest" EU partners into accepting thousands of asylum seekers under a quota system for spreading them throughout the bloc.
		We don't agree to the forced relocation of migrants from North Africa and the Middle East," Prime Minister Beata Szydło said in an excerpt of an interview with Sieci, a rightwing news magazine

Appendix 12

Provided Resources for Policy Effectiveness (Beata Szydło)

Thematic category	Code	Extract from secondary source
Resources provided	Material and technical assistance	The criticism towards Poland for refusing to accept relocation mechanism can not be justified, as Poland is commited to finding common European solution and ready to provide material and technical support.

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Summary

The study was concerned with researching the regional cooperation of Visegrad Group of Central European countries which managed to gain importance from 2015 when the migration crisis started in EU. The research focused on an interesting puzzle with regard to V4, triggered by refugee crisis. During the migration crisis V4 emerged as a collective actor and managed to present united stance on highly politicized issue such as migration which was highly unexpected of the group.

As literature review demonstrated there exists several explanations what led V4 to collective action in response to refugee crisis, however the aim of this research was to narrow down the existing gap in the literature and take into consideration the role of individual national leaders of Visegrad Group while assessing the Visegrad cooperation. The peculiar structure of V4, which implies the absence of institutionalism and the flexible cooperation mechanism ensure, together with respective national constitutions of member states that the national political leaders are the key decision makers inside the group. Therefore, the idea was to explore the role of individual political leaders of member states in the emergence of V4 as a collective actor in response to refugee crisis.

Study took into consideration the limitations of theoretical frameworks and is more of a descriptive nature rather than explanative. The research question was the following: Did V4 Prime Ministers reveal political will with regard to V4 collective stance to the refugee crisis? Based on two analytical frameworks and using mainly qualitative content analysis as well as secondary data analysis study

yielded the following conclusion: The Prime Ministers of V4 member states revealed single political will with regard to migration crisis. While it can not be further determined whether national political leaders provided political leadership during the refugee crisis or not, the study can claim that the necessary condition for providing political leadership i.e. political will existed on behalf of individual political leaders of V4 member states.