

The Czech Singers Critical of Islam and Refugees on Facebook in the Age of the “Migration Crisis” (2015–2017)¹

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Abstract: *The article analyses through qualitative textual analysis and manual coding Czech singers known for their critical attitudes to the “migration crisis” as presented on their Facebook walls (2015–2017). This major focus on the singer’s Facebook posts was reinforced by the analysis based on the two theoretical concepts – celebritisation of politics and post-truth politics. In sum, analyses across theoretical approaches found that a majority of singers – although not all of them – have been judging the problem through the lenses of a black-and-white “Clash of Civilizational” approach. Only a few singers run for political office and political agenda-setting linked to the “migration crisis” was not frequented as expected. Many of the investigated singers expressed support or political endorsement to xenophobic and anti-islamic political parties. Although the “Russian footage” could be denied, the style and characters of communication via Facebook revealed that in many aspects the singers’ strategy is in consonance with current Kremlin propaganda.*

Keywords: *Singers; migration crisis; refugees, Islam, Facebook; celebritization of politics; post-truth era.*

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Introduction

In the Czech Republic, public debate over the past few years has been framed within the context of events revolving around the term “migration crisis”, a term which the author of this study places between quotation marks because the country in question has long stood and continues to stand far removed from the interest of migrants coming from the Middle East and the North Africa. The same applies to Europe generally. It is true that the old continent has and continues to contend with an unprecedented wave of migrants, but in contrast to the high number of people removed from their homes across the world at present, as noted by the UNHCR, whether locally displaced persons or immigrants beyond the borders of their home countries, the number of people arriving to Europe is still relatively low.

The aim of this text is threefold:

Firstly, the goal is to analyse publicly shared Facebook statuses posted by the popular Czech singers which were identified as critics of the present “migration crisis” within the wider context in the period from the beginning of June 2015 till the end of June 2017. In addition to examining these posts using manual coding within the framework of qualitative textual analysis, the author will also take into account interviews related to the present “migration crisis”, in cases where the singers chose to share them on “their” Facebook walls and new songs they introduced and sang as the interpreters of that period.

Secondly, those singers identified as critics of the refugee crisis, Islam and Muslims will be tested within the theoretical framework of the celebritisation of politics in the following three dimensions: (a) whether singers utilize political agenda-setting fields related to the issue of the “migration crisis”; (b) whether singers support or endorse publicly political candidates and/or political parties with a strong anti-immigration profile, and, (c) whether they run for legislative offices in the elections during the investigated period.

And finally, these singers will also be assessed within the theoretical framework of post-truth politics. In this context, there are two aspects in focus which are considered relevant: (a) the major characteristics and style of singers’ communication on the Facebook, and, (b) their sympathy to Russian policy during Putin’s epoch.

Theoretical Approaches: The Celebritisation of Politics and Post-truth Politics

The word celebrity means fame, status or reputation (Ferri 2010: 403), but the actual process of creating a celebrity is not necessarily linked to talent or diligence as much as it is to image, PR or even controversial behavior (Millner 2010: 379–387). In an era of mass media and social networks, the process of

celebritisation steps out of the cultural domain and is instead often linked to the public sphere (Wheeler 2013: 6, Street 2004: 438). Celebrities do not hesitate to engage with politics (Street 2012: 350–351, Piknerová – Rybáková 2017) — a field that in the present day is de-ideologised, but as a result more personalised and celebritised (Wheeler 2013: 6). This process of personalisation and celebritisation of politics (Ekman–Widholm 2014: 519–520)² is accelerated by the opportunities social media offers these celebrities and their PR for direct communication with the public and their fans (Ferri 2010: 407, Ekman–Widholm 2014: 518). The immediate, accessible and interactive nature of social media, besides other factors, further enables the rise of a viral celebrity (Ferri 2010: 404). Social media — and by this Ferri largely means Facebook — forces celebrities to maintain “their name, face and their product on the entertainment and information market” (Ferri 2010: 404). Another reason for the engagement of celebrities, or more precisely, their PR teams, in the role of “gatekeepers” is the mediation between celebrity information and fans as a result of frequent complaints towards the mass media and the misinterpretation of their professional and private lives (Ferri 2010: 407).

There is a vast academic discussion on the typologies of celebrity politicians (eg. Street, 2012, Wheeler 2013, Piknerová – Rybáková 2017), nevertheless, for the purpose of this text, it will be an applied categorisation reduced to originally non-political figures from the cultural background which was first introduced by Marsh et al (2010: 327) in which the main emphasis was put on “high-visibility figures” from “traditionally non-political spheres”, differentiated according to the “nature of the relationship with other sphere”. For that modified categorisation, the following three subcategories were defined:

- (a) the celebrity advocate in which these figures make their way to the political arena through “political agenda-setting and/or policy-seeking behavior”;
- (b) the celebrity activist/endorser who is “offering financial and/or public support for a specific political candidate and/or party”;
- (c) the celebrity politician who is a figure running for “legislative or executive offices” (Marsh et al. 2010: 327, see also Mann 2015).

* * *

The post-factual (interchangeable frequently with post-truth) world became a phenomenon in 2016 (Fukuyama 2016) due to Donald Trump’s successful campaign in the American presidential elections. Post-truth is a state where objective facts lose their hold on politics and public opinion at the expense of emotion and personal trust (Tsipursky 2017). The post-truth era is characterised

2 Although Ekman and Windholm (2014) have mainly Twitter in mind, the author of this text believes that their basic thesis can be applied to all other social media platforms, including Facebook.

by a gamble on emotions as well as by an absence of the checking of the sources of consumed information. Rational socio-economical issues are not attractive to the media and recipients, but the easy slogans of populists, that for instance target immigrants, successfully flourish. Journalism, if it can still be said to exist, adapts to the taste of its consumers and it accordingly becomes important for the news to be emotionally in tune with its audience and achieve a high number of shares on social media platforms (Suiter 2016: 25–27). In this new, hybrid media model, based to a large extent on social media, the activity of bloggers as well as reality TV shows, widespread skepticism towards the political elite and established mainstream media continues to grow (Tsipursky 2017, Tallis 2016: 9). The world of social media erodes the power and authority of the mainstream media and ‘gatekeepers’, bringing hoaxes, trolls and hackers into the arena of political communication (Fukuyama 2016). This strongly fragmented spectrum of news sources creates “an atomised world where lies, rumours and gossip spread with alarming speed” (The Economist 2016). Stories rather than facts have greater potential to gain viral success. Narratives that are coloured by emotions such as fear or anger can produce stories capable of inciting irrational group behaviour (Hendricks 2016). Social media users often can’t differentiate between an authentic source of information and fake webpages. This tendency is seen across generations, although older rather than younger generations are more susceptible to these tricks (Tsipursky 2017). A majority of users never even click on the link they wish to share with others on social media (Dewey 2016, DeMers 2016). This was confirmed by researchers from Columbia University and the French National Institute (Ibid).

Notes on Methodology

The first step of the analysis was to identify singers who are also Czech celebrities and are linked to the criticism of Islam, Muslims, or immigrants within the context of the “migration crisis” and on the Internet. Using qualitative analysis, with an emphasis on Internet news, singers critical of Islam were then identified with the help of the Google search engine and Mozilla Firefox browser. This was done on the basis of the following terms and their combinations: “singer”, in male and female variants, as well as the synonyms “songster” or “vocalist” with the connection to terms such as “Islam”, “Muslim”, “refugees”, “migrant”, “migration crisis”, and “refugee crisis”. The first 100 search results for all the above-mentioned terms and their combinations were chosen in order. These findings were then organised chronologically to demonstrate how singers chosen in the above-mentioned process established – in some cases quite unintentionally – their anti-immigration agendas on the Internet. In concrete, the following names of singers appeared to be linked by various aspects negatively to “migration crisis” and – in that context – with the terms “Islam”

and/or “Muslims”: Lucie Bílá, Aleš Brichta, František Ringo Čech, Vilém Čok, Ondřej Hejma, Daniel Hůlka, Jana Yngland Hrušková, Slávek Janoušek, Karel Gott, Daniel Landa, Janek Ledecký, Ivan Mládek, Dominika Myslivcová, Jarek Nohavica, Pepa Nos, Tomáš Ortel, Helena Vondráčková and Olivie Žižková. Afterwards, the above-mentioned list (in alphabetical order) had to still be ‘cleared’ of the singers not actively critical of (Islamic) immigration on Facebook.

The second, key step of the analysis, which is simultaneously the objective of this text, consisted of researching the public Facebook posts of the chosen singers. This took place in the second quarter of 2017 and included comments posted during and prior to this time.

No mention of the “migration crisis” was made on any of the accounts before July 2015, with the sole exception of Pepa Nos’s Facebook profile, on which, even before 2015, several public posts were shared that criticised the nature of Islam. It is safe to assert that the number of Facebook posts culminated in late summer and autumn of 2015, and partially continued into 2016. Throughout 2017, the number of posts decreased sharply. Some users, who were previously very active, only published comments about the “migration crisis” sporadically, sometimes not at all.

All of the singers included in the study, with the exception of František Ringo Čech, were Facebook account holders, and were actively posting comments. However, during the period monitored, some of the singers used their accounts solely for the purpose of publishing their artistic works, or for sharing their (personal/private) lives, but never as a means of discussing the “migration crisis”. This applies to Lucie Bílá, František Ringo Čech, Karel Gott, Daniel Hůlka, Jarek Nohavica, Helena Vondráčková and Tomáš Ortel. Some of the singers mentioned the “migration crisis”, or a similar topic, only once (Jarek Ledecký), or twice (Josef Pepa Nos). A few others posted about the “migration crisis” several times (Dominika Myslivcová, Slávek Janoušek). Many others, however, posted critical comments about the “migration crisis” regularly and devoted a lot of attention to the topic on their Facebook pages. Between 20–40 posts were recorded on the accounts of Olivie Žižková, Vilém Čok, Ondřej Hejma and Daniel Landa. From our chosen sample of singers, two Facebook profiles stand out among the others for having shared a far higher number of posts, those belonging to Aleš Brichta and Jana Yngland Hrušková, which shared well over 100 posts each.

Table 1: Facebook* & Negative Posts on Various Aspects of the "Migration Crisis"

singer	number of followers	publicly accessible FB posts		
		general	"migration crisis"	
Aleš Brichta	17 952	✓	✓	197
Vilém Čok	6 535	✓	✓	21
Ondřej Hejma	1 130**	✓	✓	24
Jana Y. Hrušková	2 675	✓	✓	77***
Slávek Janoušek	2 442**	✓	✓	5
Daniel Landa	304 744	✓	✓	38
Janek Ledecký	10 139	✓	✓	1
Dominika Myslivcová	46 144	✓	✓	5
Pepa Nos	276**	✓	✓	2
Olivie Žižková	no data	✓	✓	20
Methodology: qualitative textual analysis and manual coding				Σ 390

* A (formerly famous) singer František Ringo Čech was excluded from this research for public non-accessibility of his Facebook account. The following singers were excluded from this research for non-occurrence of negative posts to various aspects of the "migration crisis" on their Facebook walls: Lucie Bílá, František Ringo Čech, Karel Gott, Daniel Hůlka, Jarek Nohavica, Helena Vondráčková, Tomáš Ortel.

** Number of friends on their Facebook accounts.

*** Due to its high frequency, the posts of Jana Y. Hrušková were analysed only for the period of the 2Q in 2017.

It should also not be overlooked that due to numerous Facebook posts and commentaries under scrutiny, Facebook posts and Facebook commentaries under posts made by the singers can be found by readers directly in the text – the Facebook posts in the form of the surname of the singer and exact date (e.g. Hejma 22 Jun 2015) and the text commentaries under the posts are adequately cited (e.g. Nos commentary 22 Oct 2015 in: Nos 21 Oct 2015). In public Facebook posts, the words written in CapsLock form are referred to in this text identically.

Analytical Section

In the Czech Republic, the anti-islamic era in music started as early as 2013 when a controversial Czech band called Ortel became the first successful music group to sing a song criticizing Islam in its track entitled "The Mosque". The

strong anti-immigration discourse which has resonated in Czech politics, society and culture in recent years, found an outlet in five known songs with texts pointing at negative image of refugees, Muslims or Islam newly introduced at the peak of the “migration crisis” (2015–2017). However, only the three texts of songs qualified for the purpose of analysis in this text, because these texts were both critical to the “migration crisis”, Islam and the threat of subsequent Islamification and to Muslims and were shared and eventually commented on on the Facebook accounts of the singers (see table):³

Table 2 Singers and Songs Which Emerged in the Investigated Period (2015–2017)

singer	name of the song	presented	no. of views*
Dominika Myslivcová	<i>We Want no Change Here</i>	August 2016	332 102
Vilém Čok	<i>Crowds of Crowds</i>	August 2016	38 226
Olivia Žižková	<i>Breathe, Europe</i>	August 2016	559 378

* Number of viewers on YouTube channel up to 31. 7. 2017

For the purposes of our research, public posts on the Facebook accounts of singers mentioned in the table which dealt directly with the “migration crisis” were analysed, from the beginning of its rapid and forceful rise in Czech political discourse in 2015, until the end of June 2017 (In addition to this, the most frequent comments made by the singers were randomly monitored.).

As mentioned in the introductory section, the following passage of this text will be divided into three major sections:

- 1) Analysis of the singers’ communication on their Facebook walls linked to (a) the “Migration crisis” and to (b) the image of Middle Eastern Refugees.
- 2) Analysis through the theoretical concept of the celebritisation of politics focused on singers’ activities related to (a) their potential endeavor to run for a political office, (b) their attempt to influence political agenda-setting with

3 The song critical of refugees from Syria titled *Baraba is Touching My Woman* introduced by Jarek Nohavica in the summer of 2016 would also qualify by its content, however, it was never posted on Facebook by this singer.

The song *Tutti Frutti Ramadan* introduced by Slávek Janoušek already at the outbreak of the current „migration crisis” on September 2015 was posted on Facebook but can not be considered as not an anti-islamic but as a satiric one as the text is stressing at ‘littleness’ of the Czech nation (similar to the song ‘*Mosques of Prague*’ introduced by Ivan Mládek as early as in 2000). Interestingly but contrary to the will of both these singers – Slávek Janoušek and Ivan Mládek – the songs were widely misused and disinterpreted as anti-islamic in the time of migration crisis. See interview with Ivan Mládek (Český rozhlas 2016).

items related to the “migration crisis”, and to (c) their potential public support and/or endorsement of political candidates or parties.

3) Analysis through the theoretical concept of the post-truth world linked to (a) singers’ styles and characteristics of communication on Facebook and (b) their sympathy to Russian policy in Putin’s era.

Public (Facebook) Posts

There was a great disparity in the matter of comments about the “migration crisis” on the Facebook accounts analysed for the purposes of our research. The exception to this was the musician Slávek Janoušek, whose Facebook profile was focused on defending the argument that his song, *Tutti Frutti Ramadan*, performed during the Good Morning show on *Česká televize*, was sung “in role” and meant only as a parody; he further emphasised that he is not a racist. However, generally speaking, we can assert that major differences exist between the subtexts and styles of communication, and that the Facebook posts of the singers in question can be further divided into seven distinct topics: a) the “migration crisis”; b) the image of Middle Eastern refugees (usually understood as “Muslim immigrants”); c) criticism of those “welcoming” immigrants; d) the defence of the ‘xenophobe’ label; e) criticism of the political elite; f) political support and political engagement; and g) the relationship with the media and media strategy on Facebook. However, given the subject and scope of our research, only the first two of these topics – the “migration crisis” and the image of Middle Eastern refugees will be of our interest in the following part of this text.

a) The “Migration Crisis”

Posts levelled directly at the “migration crisis”, and not at its wider context, are those that appear most frequently on the analysed accounts. The “migration crisis” itself is interpreted by some of the singers in terms of an apprehension about European civilisation and its cultural heritage, as well as a fear for personal and family safety and the safety of other citizens.

For example, Ondřej Hejma does not express his views in his posts using his own language, but instead refers to his interviews on the matter. In one of these interviews (Böhmová 2015 in: Hejma 16 Dec 2015), Hejma labeled the “migration crisis” as “the invasion of the year”, which “if repeated... could lead to many possible scenarios, each worse than the other”. In another interview (Hejma 22 Jun 2015). Hejma expressed a sceptical attitude towards the wave of migrants, saying: “If someone really thinks that Europe needs to be genetically refreshed or offered public slave labor in the 21st century, then we are finished”. On his Facebook profile, and in capital letters, Vilém Čok warned against the “migration crisis”, which “has the ability to disintegrate and sub-

sequently destroy Europe, as such huge numbers of people are unmanageable” (Čok 16 Nov 2015).

Daniel Landa, Jana Yngland Hrušková and Aleš Brichta were the most active in expressing themselves and sharing their opinions on the overall “migration crisis”. Vilém Čok, Olivie Žižková and Dominika Myslivcová introduced and posted on their Facebook accounts new songs which were directly linked to the “migration crisis” and/or to the image of Middle East refugees.

One of Aleš Brichta’s posts reflected the skepticism, even gloom, of the author: “An Arab spring, a migrant summer, a terrorist autumn and a nuclear winter? I’m really not into that” (Brichta 22 Mar 2016). Brichta’s other posts were similar in tone; he warned against invaders, invoking Europe’s historical victory over the Ottomans (Brichta 11 Sep 2015): “Civilizations have always defended themselves against invaders, and we are facing the very same situation right now. We can either, under some pretences, be little brown-nosers and betray our civilization, or we can begin to defend ourselves. There’s no third option.” (Brichta 21 Jul 2015). In his interview, shared on Brichta’s Facebook profile, he stated that: “There’s a difference between a natural migration and assimilation of cultures and forcible attempts to integrate invasions of hoards from a different social sphere (Stop Multikulti 2015 in: Brichta 3 Jul 2015). The expression “hoards”, in connection with an invasion, was also used by Brichta in other Facebook posts, for example, when discussing the “hoards of expanding Arabs” (Brichta 19 Sep 2015) or when warning that from his point of view, “the invasion of Islamic hoards into Europe is dangerous and an effort to liquidate our nation, culture and traditions” (Brichta 12 Sep 2015). Brichta labels the present “migration crisis” as “an attempt to annex our territory through resettlement (*hijra*)” (Brichta 27 Sep 2015), comparing it to the German and Russian occupations (Brichta 1 Mar 2016).

A similar attitude was expressed by Jana Ynglang Hrušková, according to whom the “migration crisis” “is dragging Europe down into (economic and social) destruction” (Hrušková 25 Apr 2017) and is an intentional war being conducted against Europe (Hrušková 26 Apr 2017). In her posts she repeatedly warned against the millions of illegal immigrants rolling into Europe and against the passivity of the old continent: “There are more and more illegal immigrants coming into Europe (Hrušková 2017), apparently millions of illegal immigrants are completely fine, just as if nothing is happening” (Hrušková 25 Apr 2017).

Daniel Landa, on the other hand, considered another angle of the problem, and deems “the masses of immigrants a safety issue”, because some of those who are heading to Europe do not have good intentions (see Landa – Černoch 2016 footage 23:50 min. in Landa 10 Feb 2016). According to Landa, young and well-organised men predominate (Ibid. 53:30 min.). His main message, however, is a warning against the future threat of even larger waves of immigration than

those being experienced now. The best defence against this is in: “education, job opportunities and cultivation of the environment”; it isn’t armed conflicts but rather: “water resources and their disappearance that will pose the greatest danger for migration and the future” (Landa 12 Aug 2016).

The lyrics of a song presented and sung by Vilém Čok, “*Crowds of Crowds*”, recalls with apprehension the avalanche of immigrants coming to Europe, as is already obvious in the song’s title. He promoted the video clip on his Facebook page, writing: “I produced the video as conscientiously as I could, in light of the present situation not only in ČR [Czech Republic] but in the whole of Europe. In this day and age, it is necessary for the people to realise where they are, who they are and what they want. From life, from their governments and from their countries”. The very name of the song, which evokes an enormous wave of immigrants, culminates in the chorus:

One, two, three, four, five / One, two, three, four, hundred / One, two, three, four, million / One, two, three, four, million / Crowds of laws / Crowds of fallacies / Crowds of offspring / Crowds of immigrants / Let’s keep our nation’s identity / Each spring will bring new patriots / The state is the proof and you know it/ Let’s all the more get together / Let’s all the more get together / With the CROSS let’s get closer together (see Čok 29 Aug 2016).

Similarly, Olivie Žižková, in her song “*Breathe, Europe*”, calls the “migration crisis” an “invasion” (in: Žižková 3 Aug 2016):

“The invasion is growing, we need to get stronger. / We’ll have to get up and start to fight hard. (...) / Breathe, Europe and look into the future. (...) We refuse to be mere sheep / And to our own slaughter voluntarily march.”

Finally, Dominika Myslivcová linked the question of mass migration and radical Islamism in the lyrics of her song appropriately entitled: “*We Want No Change Here*” (Myslivcová 9 Aug 2016, Myslivcová 2016) which is however more related to fear of Islamification by Middle Eastern Refugees (see next chapter).

b) The Image of Middle Eastern Refugees

Generally speaking, we can assert that in the comments influenced by the “migration crisis” we often find passages describing immigrants as rapists, terrorists, burdens on the state, uneducated people, animals, and carriers of contagious diseases who — if “we” do not by our collective effort prevent them from entering — will wish to transform “our” country into their image. It is important to note that such descriptions of immigrants were rarely found on the accounts of Pepa Nos or Ondřej Hejma. Muslim immigrants were discussed much more often on the accounts of Vilém Čok and Olivie Žižková and more often still on the Facebook profiles of Jana Yngland Hrušková and Aleš Brichta.

In a public post on Facebook, Pepa Nos commented on a text giving evidence for the beneficial impact of red wine with the following words: “Yeah, I regu-

larly buy myself a demijohn of red wine. Besides other things, it also kills both male and female Islamists” (Nos 15 Aug 2016). Here he denotes both male and female forms of the word “Islamist”. In one of the comments made on the post, he equates Islamists with terrorists: “Such an Islamist really has no fear of being blown into a thousand little pieces after blowing his little elegant semtex waistcoat up” (Nos commentary 22 Oct 2015 in: Nos 21 Oct 2015). With regards to immigration from the Middle East, only one of Ondřej Hejma’s comments was found relevant — his response to an inquiry about why immigrants do not aim for the Gulf States. According to Hejma it is because: “they would have to work there...” (Hejma commentary 5 Sep 2015 in: Hejma 3 Sep 2015).

Vilém Čok published two videos about “the true colours” of present-day immigrants from the Middle East and Africa. One of them shows a man dressed as a Nomad who is trying to collect and later drink camel’s urine. In his commentary, Čok says: “It is very telling to observe all the beautiful habits they are bringing to Europe” (in: Čok 3 Feb 2016). In the second video, we can see an elderly black man speaking to a group of younger men and hitting them occasionally. Čok comments: “I’m glad the visitors from Africa will cure us” (in: Čok 19 Jan 2016). Čok also shared a song called “*The Sun*” which is introduced on YouTube as the first Czech Islamic children’s song. In it, children’s voices sing in Czech: “It was Allah The Mightiest, The Greatest, The Wisest...” (in: Čok 10 Jan 2016). Čok’s comment follows: “So it has begun...the influence on children... We insist on the tolerance of Muslims towards us as well. If they cannot rid themselves of their superiority and hatred towards us, they should live in a country that shares their values. Not only must we not share these values, in this case we must not even tolerate them. THIS IS OUR HOME.” (Čok 10 Jan 2016). According to Čok, the cultures of the people that will “flood Europe” are different and unadaptable on every level (Špulák 2016 in: Čok 16 Jun 2016). This is why he is worried that Europe’s culture and people will “mix with cultures and peoples from elsewhere and thus lose their identity and traditional values” (Ibid.). Čok is afraid that this cultural non-adaptability powered by the masses of the incoming immigrants with a much higher birth rate (which he also refers to as a war of vaginas) will lead to “the dismantling of the original population by immigrants. It’s true what they say – the vaginas of their women would in the long run overwhelm the European population... After all, this is the very threat that Islamists are propagating” (Böhmová 2016 in: Čok 4 May 2016).

Olivie Žižková shared several photographs on her profile – one of a black man attempting to stuff a gramophone record into a notebook (Žižková 10 Mar 2016), and another illustrating a radical and a moderate Muslim, the radical one saying: “Follow Allah or I shall kill you” and the moderate one pointing at him and saying: “Follow Allah or He will kill You” (Žižková 27 Jun 2017). Another photograph depicts a man wearing a noose around his neck, representing Europe, as he waters a tree, representing Islam, intending to suggest that one day

the tree will be the cause of his hanging (Žižková 16 Mar 2017). Olivie Žižková labels the Middle Eastern immigrants as “animals” and applies for their immediate return to countries of origin (“Let’s reverse it, the animals have to go home”). Subsequently, contemporary mass immigration from the Middle East to Europe may result, according to Žižková, in Islamification and therefore she demanded through her lyrics an active defence of Europe (Boomba!cz. 2016 in Žižková 3 Aug 2016, see also Žižková 2016).

There’s no time to wait, why be afraid of them. / Islamic burqas, Jihad pulling the strings. / (...) / Don’t let them thrash you, return of democracy! / We are strong and we have faith. / We can’t even laugh or fall asleep in peace. / Resist, Europe, don’t let them shoot you. / Their task is to go on a bloody trip. /

Similarly, the threat of Islamification mirrors the song introduced by Dominika Myslivcová. She links the question of mass migration and radical Islamism in the lyrics of her song appropriately entitled: “*We Want No Change Here*” (Myslivcová 9 Aug 2016, Myslivcová 2016, see also Karaoketexty.cz):

(...) I don’t want to go out covered in a robe and scarf/ why change my pink traditions because of someone else / I want to live this dream life for some time to come/ don’t want to change it because of those who come to our republic/ I speak for all women/ who like to doll themselves up/ who decide for themselves what to wear/ who don’t want these changes/ we want no changes here./ it’s us who were born here/ we want to decide what happens in our country/ I voice my opinion and refuse to be mute/ I want to peacefully drink my frappe on the beach wearing my bikini/ and see one man with one woman only.

Jana Yngland Hrušková called for the closing of borders because: “there are too many of them already” (Hrušková 25 May 2017). She argues that “their integration [in Europe] is impossible” (Ibid.) which was supposedly already demonstrated by the Turkish referendum, in which “their second generation proved to be more aggressive and dangerous than the first” (Ibid.). Present-day immigration is characterized by “rapes, robberies and murders” (Hrušková 21 June 2017), and these immigrants are “contributing RIGHT NOW to higher criminal rates in all of Europe” (Hrušková 25 May 2017). Hrušková also unequivocally connects the migration wave with terror or terrorism – “not all of them are terrorists but there are increasingly more and more of them” (Hrušková 7 Apr 2017). “He who sows Islam reaps terror” (Hrušková 4 Jun 2017). “The direct correlation is clear. The more Muslims in a country the more terror” (Hrušková 7 Jun 2017) – and if nothing changes, there is a danger that all the negative aspects of immigration in the West will spread to our country as well – conflict (Hrušková 17 Jun 2017), and soon we will become “an oppressed minority in our own country” (Hrušková 21 Jun 2017).

Aleš Brichta defended the policy of refusing immigrants on the basis of the following three reasons: they could potentially spread contagious diseases, they are an absurd financial burden on the state, and they are neither culturally nor

religiously adaptable (Brichta 27 Sep 2015, see also 2 Jul 2015). On another occasion, Brichta emphasizes the risks stemming from terrorism (Stop Multikulti 2015 in: Brichta 3 Jul 2015). He too sees a direct correlation between (Muslim) immigration and terrorism. Shortly after one terrorist attack in the West, he published the following post: “So which city is next? What is really sad is the fact that the attacker could be your neighbour whom you might have taken for an idiot, but not as big an idiot as he turned out to be” (Brichta 23 Mar 2017). He attributes the immigrants’ inability to adapt to the fact that “a refugee is not capable of loyalty towards the state, culture and religion in which I wish to live” (Brichta 1 Mar 2015). Another problem, according to Brichta, is the non-adaptability of immigrants in the job market. In an interview for the conspiratorial *Svobodné Rádio* [Free Radio], which he shared a link to on his Facebook profile (9 Nov 2016), Brichta described “simpletons from North Africa” as uneducated people who “have never seen a screwdriver in their life, though they might hold a camel driver’s license, might know how to tie it to a palm tree... and might know how to milk a goat” (see Brichta in: Svobodné radio 2016).

In stark contrast, Daniel Landa, in one of the most widely discussed posts on Facebook or any other social media platform at the time of the “migration crisis”, published a photograph of himself surrounded by a group of Muslims along with a comment in which he categorically refutes the sweeping condemnation of all Muslims.

“These people around me are Muslims. They are my wonderful friends (...) We are united by shared human values and long-term friendship. I’m honoured to march hand in hand with these patriots in the fight against the goblins of this world (...) I’m certainly not a Muslim agent, neither am I a Russian or American one. I’m our man. Landa/Žito” (Landa 16 Nov 2015).

There are no posts on Daniel Landa’s Facebook account disparaging Islam, immigrants or Muslims. In an interview with Marek Černoč, he stated: “I cannot and will not identify myself as someone who is against Islam when I travel to the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan to resolve various issues” (Landa – Černoč 2016 39:30 min.). On two other occasions on Facebook, Landa uses the term “scumbag”, seemingly to denote the “goblins” he mentions, together with the adjective “fanatic scumbags” (Landa 30 Nov 2015), or with reference to “people who might not have any good intentions” (Landa 30 Nov 2015). However, generally speaking he does not refer to Muslims, but rather to radical Islamists against whom we, together with the Muslims, must fight by any means possible. Landa’s opinion on Muslim integration in the Czech Republic cannot be found on his Facebook profile, but rather in the conversation with the parliamentarian Marek Černoč which was referred to earlier. Landa does not, in this debate, express agreement with the building of mosques in the Czech Republic (Landa – Černoč 2016 39:43 min.). He considers mosques “a means of infecting people with things that are not good but rather sinister”

(Landa – Černocho 2016 40:00 min. in: Landa 10 Feb 2016). “The growth of the Islamic population in our country would surely devour our way of life” (Landa – Černocho 2016 7:40 min. in: Landa 10 Feb 2016). Landa expressed his scepticism towards Muslim integration by comparing it to the problematic integration of the Roma population, which has long plagued the Czech Republic, saying: “...if an enormous group of people from elsewhere suddenly appears here, how will they integrate? Someone rightly said, why would they integrate at all, they have a right to their own culture. Integration? That’s an insult” (Landa – Černocho 2016 50:50 min. in: Landa 10 Feb 2016).

Celebritisation of Politics – Findings

It is important to point out that in the context of the above-mentioned definition and theoretical concepts of the celebritisation (of politics) all of the singers analysed in our study – apart from Hrušková, Myslivcová and Žižková, perhaps – fulfil the status of a singer-celebrity although the exact term shall be “a local celebrity” or “a regional celebrity” as neither of the figures under analysis in this text could be by no means ranked as a global celebrity or a celebrity on the European level (see table):

Table 3: In a Search for a Celebrity Status

Singer	Number of Followers***			Youtube Viewers*** / The title (year) & number of viewers of the most-watched video’s	The Czech Nightingale Awards* & The Best Placing (1997–2017)	Popularity Peak (decade) & Genre
	FB	TW	IG			
A. Brichta	17952	–	–	<i>Barák na vodstřel</i> (1994) / 3 183 537	10th (1997)	peaked around 1990 rock music celebrity
V. Čok	6535	795	–	<i>Zachraňte Ježíška</i> (2011) / 258 967	26th (1997)	peaked around 1990 rock music celebrity
O. Hejma	1130**	–	–	<i>Sametová</i> (1994) together with <i>Žlutý pes</i> / 3 693 814	44th (1997)	peaked around 1990 rock music celebrity
J. Y. Hrušková	2675	1584	–	<i>Moře</i> (1989) together with Petr Novák / 64 438	–	peaked in the late 1980’s
S. Janoušek	2442**	–	–	<i>Imaginární hospoda</i> (1986) / 51 393	–	peaked around 1990 folk music celebrity
D. Landa	304744	14k		<i>Bílá Hora</i> (2004) / 7 688 229	2nd (2004–5)	popular singer

J. Ledecký	10139	1725	–	<i>Proklínám</i> (1994) / 5 095 267	3rd (1998–9, 2000, 2008)	popular singer
D. Myslivcová	46144	183k	126	<i>Barbie girl</i> (2011) / 73 083 044	–	peaked after 2010 occasional singer celebrity for teens
P. Nos	276**	–	–	<i>Agent Sí Aj Ej</i> (1990) / 124 069	–	peaked around 1990 folk music celebrity
O. Žižková	no data	1307	4	<i>Evropo dýchej</i> (2016) / 727 045	29th (2017)	peaking now occasional singer

* An annual music award in the Czech Republic similar to the American Grammy Award.

** The number of friends on the Facebook accounts of the singers was recorded by the summer 2017.

*** FB = Facebook, TW = Twitter, IG = Instagram. Youtube, Instagram and Twitter followers were recorded by the end of February 2018.

Moreover, only a few of the “high-visibility figures” mentioned at the beginning of this text fall into the first category of celebrity in the Czech music scene (e.g. Karel Gott, Lucie Bílá), and furthermore, not all of the figures analysed here remain singers to the present day. In fact, some have in the meantime shifted their careers to a different art field, and are more likely to be primarily considered painters, for instance (i.e. František Ringo Čech).

In the following part, the findings are divided into three categories outlined above in the text related to the celebritisation of politics: (a) celebrity politician; (b) celebrity advocate; (c) celebrity activist/endorser.

a) The Celebrity Politician

A celebrity politician is by definition a figure running for “legislative or executive offices”. The celebritisation of politics by the singers analysed in this text appeared in various forms but there was only a single case, Dominika Myslivcová, as a candidate running for political party and therefore suitable to the “celebrity politician” subcategory which might be a singer running for legislative offices, as she appeared on the ballot of the extremist, xenophobic and anti-immigration party of *Úsvit – National Coalition* at the end of the 2014 regional elections in northeastern Moravia. In that short period of electoral campaigning between the summer and fall 2014, she used her surveyed Facebook account several times as a platform for political communication with voters. Nevertheless, she was not elected and afterwards she totally drove her agenda on Facebook away from her short political engagement.

Interestingly, there was yet another (potential) candidate, Jana Yngland Hrušková, who acted as a “candidate for the presidential elections in 2018” on

her Facebook profile for a period under analysis and as such she gave many interviews to various media. Nevertheless, Hrušková never qualified officially into the candidate status as she gave it up before the term by which candidates must be registered by the Ministry of the Interior of the Czech Republic and prove support either by 50 thousand voters, 20 Czech deputies or 10 Czech senators.

Table 4: Singers & a Type of Running for “Legislative or Executive Offices”

Dominika Myslivcová	• candidate of the anti-immigrant party of <i>Úsvit – National Coalition</i> for the 2014 regional elections
Jana Yngland Hrušková	• candidate for the presidential elections in 2018*

* Hrušková barely managed to set up a legally-binding transparent bank account in the required term but her candidacy terminated shortly afterwards as she failed to collect the demanded number of voters' signatures or members' of the Czech Parliament nominations.

b) Celebrity Advocate

A celebrity advocate is by definition a figure which makes its way to the political area through “political agenda-setting and/or policy-seeking behavior”. All of the singers surveyed in the text can fall into the category “celebrity advocate” due to their political engagement on Facebook critical to Islam and refugees. Among the most frequented items discussed by singers on Facebook involved a suggested ban on Islam, better protection of national borders or were against mandatory quota system on refugees demanded by the EU. Most of the investigated singers did not exceed their “Facebook” political engagement beyond the “migration crisis”.

Nevertheless, in several cases singers' policy-seeking behavior via their Facebook walls was focused on political agenda-setting beyond the issue of the “migration crisis” although they strongly differed as to the items and intensity of their political activities.

Aleš Brichta promoted via the Facebook, both mainstream and “alternative” media and in the Czech parliament his personal engagement – in cooperation with the anti-immigration party SPD of Tomio Okamura – in a petition calling for a referendum to exit the EU (4 Jan 2016, 6 Jan 2016, 3 Jan 2016).

Daniel Landa advertised repeatedly a petition against the regulation of weapons of the EU and self-defence products from the EU side (22 Dec 2016, 3 Dec 2015) and expressed support to the Czech Firearms Rights Association (26 Nov 2015). Secondly, Landa promoted his own foundation Aria Boiohaemum which was focused primarily (though not only) on water system infrastructure improvements in Afghanistan (e.g. 21 Dec 2015, 12 Aug 2016).

And finally, Jana Yngland Hrušková constantly appealed to exit the EU (18 Apr 2017, 7 May 2017, 8 May 2017, 30 May 2017).

Table 5: Singers & Political Agenda Setting/Policy-Seeking Behaviour

Aleš Brichta	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • petition for a referendum on exiting the EU
Jana Yngland Hrušková	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • exiting the EU
Daniel Landa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • petition against the regulation of weapons
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • promoting the <i>Aria Boiohaeum</i> foundation for assistance in Afghanistan

c) Celebrity Activists / Endorsers

A celebrity activist/endorser is by definition a person “offering financial and/or public support for a specific political candidate and/or party”. In this regard, there are mixed results as for subcategorisation of singers into the “celebrity activist/endorser” group. The most common case among singers under investigation in this text was a public support or even clear political endorsement of certain politicians and – in some cases – also the political party of that leader.

Concretely, several singers expressed via Facebook support or even direct political endorsement to the xenophobic, anti-immigration (and mainly anti-Islam) politician Tomio Okamura and some of them also to the SPD–TO party (*Svoboda a přímá demokracie Tomia Okamury* [*Freedom and Direct Democracy of Tomio Okamura*]) which is led by the above mentioned populist politician Okamura.

Hereby, Aleš Brichta worked the most extensively and intensively for Tomio Okamura of all the singers surveyed here. Brichta regularly posted on Facebook promotions of politician Tomio Okamura (7 Oct 2016) or of anti-immigration demonstrations co-organized by the SPD and usually held at Wenceslas Square in the centre of Prague (1 Nov 2015, 6 Jan 2016, 14 Jan 2016). Brichta was often a speaker. Afterwards, Brichta commented on these events on his Facebook wall in a positive way (2 Jul 2015, 15 May 2016). In September 2016, Brichta openly supported the SPD party before the regional elections (4 Sep 2016). Moreover, singer Brichta was a face on the petition to exit the EU organised by the SPD party. In joint cooperation with the chairman of the SPD Tomio Okamura, Brichta appeared in public on several popular TV programmes (“*Máte slovo*” a public broadcast of Czech Television and “*Nikdo není perfektní*” from commercial TV Barrandov) and regularly posted these events on his Facebook account (Brichta 3 Feb 2016, 7 Mar 2016). Brichta expressed support also to extremist and at that time highly visible anti-Islam politician Martin Konvička (24 Nov 2015, 15 May 2016).

Apart from Brichta, there were three other singers investigated here who publicly – although not as extensively – manifested promotion of the SPD party and its leader Tomio Okamura – Olivie Žižková, Jana Yngland Hrušková and Pepa Nos.

Olivie Žižková even introduced the videoclip titled “Já volím SPD” [I vote for the SPD] in which she together with her husband expressed direct endorsement of Tomio Okamura (13 Jun 2017). In another Facebook post, she shared her husband’s post of a man wearing t-shirt with “Freedom” and a badge linked to the SPD party (19 Jun 2017). Formerly Žižková posted on her Facebook wall a poster with the logo of National Democracy which was an invitation to a joint demonstration of the SPD, ND, DSSS and other groups organizing a protest in the center of Prague against the “blunt government” appealing that national borders must be closed (14 Nov 2015).

Jana Yngland Hrušková published a photo with the SPD leader Tomio Okamura (19 Apr 2017) after inviting the Facebook community via a poster to a joint meeting with Tomio Okamura in Prague (17 Apr 2017).

Pepa Nos openly supported the populist, xenophobic and strongly anti-immigration and anti-Islamic party SPD–TO on his Facebook account by adding a badge of the SPD on his Facebook profile picture (21 Oct 2015) and by posting rather favourable comments on Okamura to his own Facebook page (see Nos comment 22 Oct 2015 in: Nos 21 Oct 2015). Additionally, Pepa Nos sang at Okamura’s public demonstrations.

The other investigated singers expressed support or even endorsement to various political figures or parties. In sum, similarly to Okamura and SPD, all of these political players can be also classified with strong anti-immigration profiles.

There was only one singer, Dominika Myslivcová, who publicly promoted another populist radical right party, *Úsvit*. Nevertheless, it applied only to the relatively short period of her political campaign during candidacy in regional elections from July to October 2016. As already mentioned, after that period her Facebook page returned to be totally depoliticised as it used to be before her candidature.

Ondřej Hejma expressed support for former president Václav Klaus (21 Sep 2015, 3 Sep 2015) or for political figures linked to him as e.g. Václav Klaus jr. (7 Sep 2015) who is also strongly against current immigration from distanced cultures. Hejma gave strong political endorsement via Facebook to Petr Robejšek (15 Jun 2015, 3 Aug 2015, 14 Jun 2016) who decided to run with the anti-immigration political party *Realisté* (Realists) in the 2016 parliamentary elections in the Czech Republic.

Finally, two of investigated singers expressed – though only once and rather incidentally – sympathy with the Czech President Miloš Zeman – Jana Yngland Hrušková and Janek Ledecký.

Hrušková indirectly expressed support for Zeman when she posted on Facebook (13 Jun 2017) Zeman's speech critical towards multiculturalism and Islam held at a commemorative gathering in the village of Lidice (The massacre and complete destruction of Lidice in 1942 came in reprisal for the assassination of Reich Protector Reinhard Heydrich). Janek Ledecký supported – although rather reluctantly – Zeman for his interview with the popular online news server idnes.cz, critically aimed at current immigration from the Middle East (26 Nov 2015).

There are a few singers remaining who – taking into consideration their Facebook accounts during the investigated period between the beginning of June 2015 till the end of June 2017 – did not show open support neither to any politician nor to a political party: There is absolutely no sign of any kind of political endorsement or support expressed by Vilém Čok. Daniel Landa discussed immigration on Youtube with Marek Černoch, parliamentary deputy of the strongly anti-immigration party of *Úsvit* (10 Feb 2016). Nevertheless, Landa refused to openly advocate for any politician neither on his Facebook nor in that long interview (see Landa – Černoch 2016).

Table 6 Singers & Public Support / Public Endorsement

Aleš Brichta	• Tomio Okamura / SPD	• SPD
	• Martin Konvička	
Olivie Žižková	• SPD	• SPD / Tomio Okamura
	• ND, DSSS, (SPD)	
Pepa Nos	• Tomio Okamura	• SPD
Jana Yngland Hrušková	• SPD	x
	• Miloš Zeman	
Dominika Myslivcová	• Úsvit	• Úsvit
Ondřej Hejma	• Václav Klaus jr.	x
	• Petr Robejšek	
Janek Ledecký	• Miloš Zeman	x

The post-truth Era – Findings

As already mentioned above, testing the field in post-factual politics, there are two areas of analysis: the ways of collecting news sources and subsequently the relationship of the singers to Putin's Russia.

a) *Media Bias*

There were number of characteristics with which the singers can be in full accord with the post-truth era. However, their communication styles sometimes differ significantly. In sum, the following characteristics were found:

- There is clear evidence of singers' harsh criticism aimed at public TV and radio broadcasting in particular (e.g. Brichta 23 Apr 2017, 11 Jan 2016, 11 Sep 2015), however, in a few cases the severe criticism is targeting "all the media" en bloc (Nos 19 Nov 2016, Hrušková 17 Apr 2017).

- Facebook also became a target of criticism for censorship and for eventually taking down pages with hate and racist comments in relation to the "migration crisis" (Brichta 24 Mar 2016, Žižková 24 Jun 2017).

- On the contrary, singers under scrutiny in this text can be usually characterised by their uncritical trust in news on the "migration crisis" spread from hybrid media, doubtful sources or Facebook communities presumably linked to – or to satisfy at least – the interests of the Russian propaganda machinery (e.g. Čok 3 Feb 2016, 19 Jan 2016, 24 Nov 2015, Hrušková 16 May 2017, 14 May 2017, Žižková 10 Mar 2016). There is some evidence of sharing news directly from disinformation websites, Facebook communities and openly pro-Russian media bodies such as *Svobodné rádio* (Brichta 9 Nov 2016), *WeAreHereAtHome* (Brichta 16 Nov 2015, 26 Feb 2016), *svobodnenoviny.eu* (Brichta 25 Sep 2015), *kriminalitauprchliku.com* (Brichta 20 Jul 2015), *deutsch.rt.com* (Hrušková 12 Jun 2017) and *AC24.cz* (Hrušková 28 Apr 2017). Additionally, in a videoclip to the song *Breathe, Europe* which calls the migration crisis an "invasion" and is sung by Olivie Žižková and advertised on her Facebook page (Olivie Žižková 3 Aug 2016) is a short track portraying a man, a wild black immigrant, taken directly from the Russian *RT Rupty* (Žižková 2016: 1:09–1:12 min.). In some cases, singers upheld false information on various events related to the "migration crisis" which was deliberately spread to deceive the public by mainstream media networks, as was the case of Aleš Brichta defending the influential commercial company *TV Prima* which secretly took a strategy to report on the "migration crisis" strictly in negative terms; one of its controversial coverages on the refugees from the Middle East reported on immigrants' dissatisfaction with flats provided by the city of Jihlava, supposedly saying in Arabic that the flats were "painted over cow-sheds" (see Brichta 12 Feb 2016, 3 Jun 2016). In a manner similar to the previous case there was evidence of shared information

fabricated on the “migration crisis” by *Novinky.cz* which is the most popular website for news online (Čok 2 Jan 2017, Landa 10 Jan 2016) and during the “migration crisis” used it to take advantage and strengthen its leading position among domestic online news servers. In a number of cases, singers shared bloggers critically portraying the “migration crisis” in Europe which matched their opinions published in *lidovky.cz* (Brichta 28 Dec 2015), *blogspot.cz* (Čok), *aktualne.cz* and *idnes.cz* (both shared by Hejma 7 Sep 2015).

- Worth special notice is the relationship of some singers investigated in the text to the hoax-news industry focused on manufacturing negative myths on migrants in the time of the “migration crisis”. A hoax is by definition an attempt “to trick into believing or accepting as genuine something false and often preposterous” (See Merriam-Webster since 1828). As already mentioned, distrust in public broadcasting services and in some cases to all media strongly contrasts with the singers’ credence of alternative news regardless of the reliability of their original sources. In several absolute cases, singers approved of a hoax, or denied that a hoax they posted on Facebook was a problem at all. Given the fact that two singers (Aleš Brichta, Ondřej Hejma) could not resist posting – in a different period – on Facebook the current Czech version of the one of the most known hoaxes which had already spread around the world by 2008 in an e-mail version stating that the “Australian Prime Minister John Howard [the name being flexibly replaced by the current one] told the media that immigrants should adapt to Australian culture, language and belief or leave the country...” (Hejma 6 Jun 2015, Brichta 19 Aug 2017).

Hejma did not correct himself for spreading the hoax after one of the comments explicitly warned him on that. On the contrary, Hejma even replied “hoax or not, in my opinion, it is said correctly, and that is the main point!” (Hejma comment 7 Jun 2015 in: Hejma 6 Jun 2015). Vilém Čok repeatedly posted hoaxes on his Facebook page. Čok propagated a link *Welcome to Reality* (2016 in: Čok 29 Dec 2016) referring to videos and information on NGO’s in collaboration with Frontex smuggling thousands of immigrants from Africa to Europe in order to pump the grants from the EU budget. The identical video, news and headline appeared on the Kremlin’s propaganda website Aeronet a week before (AE News 2016). In another case, Čok posted a picture allegedly from the Bulgarian border with an emphatic poster declaring “Dear Immigrants, Welcome to Bulgaria! No Work, No Money, No Future, Proceed Back. Thank You” (6 Nov 2015) but it was impossible to verify that from any reliable sources of information. Third, as a consequence of negative videos on current immigration in the Russian language with Czech subtitles shared by Čok on his Facebook page, he was criticised by other Facebook users that the translation from Arabic to Russian was not accurate and that Čok’s initiative serves Russian interests. Čok initially even admitted that the translation of that video he shared was without guarantee but did not delete the controversial Facebook post and only added

that it would be appropriate if anybody would put a correct translation there (Čok comment 24 Nov 2015 in: Čok 24 Nov 2015).

- The sharing of videos and photos on singers' Facebook walls displaying immigrants, muslims or Islam in one-sidedly negative ways from unknown or unreliable sources, used for communication with their fans and the wider public came under frequent investigation (Aleš Brichta, Vilém Čok, Jana Yngland Hrušková, Olivie Žižková).

- The Facebook posts can be also characterised by the expertisation or academisation of the reasoning in the various negative aspects of the “migration crisis” with the goal to legitimise the negative opinions of the singers on that issue. There are various scientific authorities and publishers which are favoured by the singers:

- Ondřej Hejma applauded the opinions of former Czech President Václav Klaus, his son and member of the parliament Václav Klaus Jr. and close co-worker of the former president Jiří Hájek. Hejma further praised the “political scientist from Hamburk” and the politician representing anti-immigration issues Petr Robejšek, controversial politician Jana Bobošíková and intellectual Benjamin Kuras and the American academic Walter Russell Mead.
- Aleš Brichta liked and shared the opinions of the intellectual Alexander Tomský, publisher Jiří X. Doležal, and lawyer and pro-Putin figure Miroslava Hustáková, who was named by the online hybrid news medium *Parlamentní listy* as “a genuine friend of Russia”, writer and comedian Pat Condell known for criticism of Islam in Youtube videos of which perhaps *The Trouble with Islam* is the most famous.
- Pat Condell's opinions were shared by Vilém Čok at the outbreak of debates on the “migration crisis” in the Czech Republic (9 Jun 2015). Čok was further inspired by the political analyst Roy Beck, an anti-immigration figure and author of the book *The Case Against Immigration* and founder of the think-tank NumbersUSA lobbying for the reduction of both legal and illegal immigration to the USA.
- In other cases, Daniel Landa shared an interview with the historian Vlastimil Vondruška given to the server *Novinky.cz* in which he was concerned about the Islamification of Europe due to the current wave of immigration and Jana Yngland Hrušková published the opinions of the anti-Islam publicist Soeren Kern with a link to the anti-Islamic Gatestone Institute.

- On the other hand, there is rather scarce evidence on the “tabloidisation” of the whole debate. Tabloid online media was not as frequently shared by the singers but, on the other hand, was also not totally overlooked by them either. Aleš Brichta sometimes shared articles on immigration issued in the Czech tabloid newspapers *Blesk.cz* (16 Sep 2016, 31 Jan 2016). Jana Yngland Hrušková

became a major figure sharing tabloid content, usually from German online newspapers (e.g. *Bild.de* and the headline “München immer bunter”; *The Star Online* and the headline “Eight detained, 30 injured in Good Friday mayhem in Seville” which was however not about Muslims attacking the paschal procession in Sevilla as Hrušková misleadingly claimed in her Facebook posts (16 Apr 2017). The reserach brought no another evidence of working with the tabloid press by the singers.

- Another characteristic feature of singers sharing “information” was to persuade their followers and the public with the (alternative) sources of news from the West which circled around two key arguments: (1) they have serious problem with multiculturalism there already and (2) mainstream media are fully engaged in political correctness and are quiet or censored in respect to the negative side of co-existence with Islam in the West. Jana Yngland Hrušková held the leading position in this way of argumentation against Islam, while Olivie Žižková argued the same way. Interestingly, this reasoning against immigration is backed by long-time experience living in the West (Hrušková) or by having friends there in the West who keep us informed. Olivie Žižková argues that relatives from Germany and Austria who are writing to us that they are afraid and people write letters daily mentioning some rapes which are intentionally not covered by the mainstream media and the TV. “People are sending me links and that will do”, says Žižková in an interview for Czech online media DVTV (2016).

- In the end, it should not be overlooked that it is common that some of the singers gave interviews on the “migration crisis” and shared them on their Facebook walls (similar to their songs on that issue). These were with the mainstream media network, however, in some cases the singers agreed to be interviewed on the issue by the hybrid and controversial online medium *Parlamentní listy* (e.g. Aleš Brichta, Vilém Čok, Ondřej Hejma, Jana Yngland Hrušková, Janek Ledecký, Pepa Nos) or by the tabloid media (Aleš Brichta, Dominika Myslivcová) and in a rare case even in the conspiratorial medium *Svobodné Rádio* (Aleš Brichta).

b) Relationship to Putin’s Russia

After thorough analyses of all the Facebook posts, there are absolutely no key words based on “Putin” or “Russia” on any of the singers’ accounts during the examined period with one exemption.

Daniel Landa (27 Jan 2016) mentioned Russia in the context that “some people would prefer to go back into the arms of Russia.” Landa however does not seem to follow that persuasion. On the contrary, on the same occasion, Landa called for the Czech Republic to be as much as sovereign state “as a bridge between the West and East surrounded by loyal and stable partnership states” in the Central European realm (27 Jan 2016). On another occasion, Landa

denied being neither a Muslim nor a Russian nor even an American agent (16 Nov 2015). In an older Facebook post beyond the time limit for the investigated period, Pepa Nos commented on the danger of immigration from the Middle East for Europe and Denmark in particularly, equating Islamists to Satan, Hitler and Putler, of which the latter is certainly merger of words Putin and Hitler (11 Sep 2014). There is no other “Russian footage” on the investigated Facebook accounts.

Conclusion

The analysis of the first part of the text focused on the Facebook posts of the singers, interviews given to media if shared on “their” Facebook walls, and on their new songs about the “migration crisis” they sang, and if shared on Facebook revealed – though jointly concerned about the consequences of the “migration crisis” – a rather diffused picture of how the singers viewed that issue. A black-and-white judgment on the “migration crisis”, Islam and the consequent refugees appeared particularly on the Facebook walls of Aleš Brichta and Jana Yngland Hrušková. To a lesser degree, the same can be concluded about Vilém Čok, Olivie Žižková and Ondřej Hejma. Findings related to Dominika Myslivcová brought mixed results as she was politically engaged only for a limited period for a few months and manifested her concern about the current “migration crisis” and the subsequent Islamification and at the same time she rejected the idea that she was against people of different colour. Moreover, she did not view her prior engagement in the humanitarian NGO Hate Free Culture as strongly contrasting to her later involvement with the xenophobic party *Úsvit*. For that reason, the activism of Myslivcová can most likely be judged as politically naïve. Daniel Landa is a different case as – unlike the above mentioned singers – he was very active on Facebook in an original way far unsuited to the black-and-white “Clash of Civilization” approach. Janek Ledecký appeared active only once and therefore it is not possible to evaluate his approach. After initial findings, Slávek Janoušek was excluded from the research as he was not linked to criticism of Islam.

Analysis based on the theoretical concept of the celebritisation of politics only partially confirmed the fact that Facebook is not just a platform for PR within the music scene, but that it also offers an opportunity for local celebrities to engage in the political scene and political debate beyond the posts concerning the “migration crisis”. There is quite rare evidence that any of the singers running for legislative political office (Dominika Myslivcová) and only one piece of evidence of a proclaimed but then dropped effort to run (formally) for executive office (Jana Yngland Hrušková). Apart from the rather harsh criticism of the “migration crisis”, singers only scarcely used Facebook as a platform for political agenda-setting in a related context: behind the proposal to exit the

EU (Aleš Brichta, Jana Yngland Hrušková) or the fight for more rights for owners of weapons and self-defence products (Daniel Landa) stands the strongly criticized institutional framework and policy of the EU. Finally, there is no surprise that overwhelming numbers of singers openly support (Aleš Brichta, Olivie Žižková, Pepa Nos, Jana Yngland Hrušková) or even gave endorsement (Aleš Brichta, Olivie Žižková, Pepa Nos) to the populist, xenophobic and anti-immigrant *SPD* headed by highly controversial political figure Tomio Okamura or to the similarly xenophobic party of Úsvit (Dominika Myslivcová). It is not surprising either that the singers further expressed their support to strong anti-immigration political figures as e.g. the current Czech president Miloš Zeman (Jana Yngland Hrušková, Janek Ledecký) or to the group of people around the former Czech President Václav Klaus (Ondřej Hejma).

And, finally, despite the fact that there was not any direct or indirect evidence of pro-Putin sympathy by the singers investigated in this text, they were not – although perhaps unintentionally – in discordance with the post-truth malaise formed presumably by the Kremlin which was targeting EU citizens with various forms of disinformation campaigns directed against Western interests. Apart from backing populist radical right parties and a critical approach towards Islam and refugees from countries with a Muslim majority, there were other common areas of interest amongst the singers which overlap with the issues frequented by the Russian propaganda machine – incapability of political elites in Western Europe to cope effectively with the “migration crisis”, which applies particularly to the malfunction of EU institutions, the irresponsible welcoming policy of the Chancellor of Germany Angela Merkel and to the negative consequences of irresponsible and naïve multicultural political strategies pursued by political elites in West European democracies during the previous decades. Humanitarian NGOs and volunteers keen to help refugees were often also targets of criticism (Aleš Brichta, Vilém Čok). Furthermore and again in accord with Russian propaganda goals, some of the singers pointed to the serious danger of security, terrorism, Islamification and growing “no-go areas” in Western European cities and wanted to ban Islam and/or exit the EU (Aleš Brichta, Jana Y. Hrušková). In addition to that, the singers under survey here hold a sceptical or very critical view to sources of information broadcast by the public media network and usually have no antipathy to the tabloid or hybrid media industry. Moreover, the singers often interpreted the “migration crisis” and its wider context while relying on emotionally coloured news from untrustworthy, unreliable and unbalanced sources (Vilém Čok, Jana Yngland Hrušková, Aleš Brichta, Olivie Žižková) and in some cases they did not hesitate to post on Facebook news which originated on influential disinformation websites, came from their Facebook friends or that they took for granted the information from their friends living abroad.

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