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Dead-end of Argumentation: The Holocaust Analogy

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ABSTRACT: This paper explores the utilisation of Holocaust analogies in media discourse, focusing on their ethical and moral implications. It acknowledges the lasting impact of the Holocaust on the Jewish population while discussing the disregard for ethics in favour of effective arguments. The study analyses Holocaust analogies from Twitter and journalistic publications using a pragma-dialectical approach and Moral Judgement Theory. By examining contextual factors and subject matters, the research evaluates the plausibility and moral standing of these analogies. The findings provide insights into the various contexts in which the Holocaust analogy is employed and its potential links to the rise of anti-Semitism, contributing to a better understanding of its portrayal in public discourse and the media.

KEYWORDS: analogy argumentation, media, moral judgement, pragma-dialectics, the Holocaust analogy

1. INTRODUCTION¹

The excessive and habitual use of Holocaust analogies in public discourse is a growing concern. While this concern is often discussed among activists, opinion makers, academics, journalists, and comedians, it is based on anecdotal evidence (Friedberg, 2018; Clark, 2021; Baddiel, 2021; Sawkins & Rollison, 2022). Historical analogies, including the Holocaust analogy, serve the purpose of providing a deeper understanding of reality by comparing past and present events that share significant similarities (Desch, 2006; Temkin, 2023). These analogies can shape decision makers' perceptions of the costs and benefits of various actions, especially if one believes that history repeats itself (Desch, 2006; Spinney, 2012; Temkin, 2023). Argumentation theory allows for the use of any argument, including the Holocaust analogy, as long as there is sound reasoning and evidence (Drury, 2019). However, the utilisation of the Holocaust analogy often leads to a cessation of reasonable argumentation.

The concern arises from the potential distortion of the memory of the Holocaust through its extensive and inappropriate use (Gerstenfeld, 2009). This analogy's usage can undermine its emotional weight and contribute to the reported increase in anti-Semitism,

¹ Disclosure statement: This research paper, including all analyses, interpretations, and conclusions presented herein, is based on data and information collected and processed, as well as written and submitted for publication prior to the events that transpired on the 7th of October, 2023. As such, the findings and discussions contained within do not reflect or take into account the developments or data emerging from these events. The author acknowledges that these subsequent events may have significant implications for the subject matter of this research. However, any analysis or interpretation of such events falls beyond the scope of this paper. The readers are therefore encouraged to consider the specified timeframe when evaluating the relevance and applicability of these findings.

as identified by the Center for the Study of Contemporary European Jewry (2021) (BBC News, 2022a). Literature suggests a strong connection between expressed opinions and their manifestations in physical reality, particularly regarding the use of violent language and subsequent actions (Silva, 2017).

Analogies establish a relationship between unlike things and involve argumentative choices (Bates, 2009). In pragma-dialectics, van Eemeren and Garssen (2014) differentiate between descriptive and normative analogies, as well as figurative analogies. Analogy argumentation is thus suggesting a resemblance or similarity between two things, the argument and the standpoint (van Eemeren & Grootendorst, 1992). Within the Moral Judgement approach, Cowie (2019) posits that arguments from analogy are based on the thought that moral judgments and epistemic judgements are the same kind of thing, linking beliefs to truth and evidence and what one ought to do (Cowie, 2019). However, Holocaust analogies should primarily be understood as political statements in a market-driven media environment, exploiting the emotional impact of extreme formulations (Bischoping & Kalmin, 1999; Mukherjee et al., 2022; Citron et al., 2019; Moore, 2018).

This paper aims to examine the influence of Holocaust analogies and argumentation from analogy on public discourse, specifically exploring their broader implications and consequences in various contexts. It seeks to answer the research question: *How are Holocaust analogies used in public discussions on various events and issues, in the media?* Building upon existing knowledge of analogies and argumentation, this paper analyses Holocaust analogies in the media, identifying the objects or situations to which the Holocaust is being analogised. It takes an exploratory and interpretative approach, systematically examining a curated corpus of analogies and analogy arguments from journalistic articles and Twitter artefacts. The research investigates the presence of analogies in public discourse, evaluates the arguments, and explores the moral soundness and plausibility of these analogies. Additionally, it explores whether these analogies serve other purposes, such as diverting attention or eliciting strong emotional responses.

This research aims to gain a comprehensive understanding of how Holocaust analogies are used in argumentation in public discourse. The analysis remains impartial, focusing solely on factual open-source information and the intended meanings conveyed by the analogies. The paper consists of five themed sections: introduction, theoretical dimensions, methodology, analysis and findings, and discussion and conclusion.

By examining the use of Holocaust analogies and their argumentative function, this research contributes to the understanding of the prevalence and implications of this analogy, as well as of the Holocaust itself, in public discourse, while also identifying limitations and suggesting areas for future research.

2. ANALOGY AND ANALOGY ARGUMENTATION

Analogies have garnered significant interest from various disciplines, including law, ethics, artificial intelligence, argumentation theory, and mathematics (Guarini et al., 2009). Analogies offer a means to compare different things within diverse contexts and for various purposes (Guarini et al., 2009). Although the classical Greek term for analogy, "analogia" or *αναλογία*, translates to "proportion," it now refers to "extents of similarity" (Guarini et al., 2009). Analogies simplify the understanding of complex phenomena by defining them

through more familiar concepts, bypassing the need for unique definitions and meanings. The complexity of the cognitive processes involved in analogy construction has contributed to their extensive study (Guarini et al., 2009).

Analogical reasoning and argumentation are commonly employed to solve problems, describe, learn, or explain things by expanding our understanding through known phenomena (Juthe, 2005). Bates (2009) argues that analogies present relationships between dissimilar entities by highlighting possible comparisons, making them choices in argumentation. Making an argument from analogy suggests a resemblance, agreement, likeness, parallel, or other types of similarity between the argument and the standpoint (van Eemeren & Grootendorst, 1992; Walton, 2010). Not all analogies, however, are argumentative; some are simply explanatory statements (van Poppel, 2021). An analogy becomes argumentative when connected to a particular claim in a context of disagreement (Schellens, 1985, as cited in van Poppel, 2021).

The general argument scheme for analogical argumentation consists of a standpoint, an argument, and a linking premise (van Eemeren et al., 2002; van Eemeren et al., 2007). A basic analogy argument structure comprises a standpoint, the argument expressing the determining relation, and the unexpressed linking premise representing the one-to-one relation between the elements (Juthe, 2016).

Within the pragma-dialectical approach, various types of analogical argumentation have been identified, including same-domain analogies, figurative analogies, descriptive analogies, and normative analogies (van Eemeren et al., 2007; van Eemeren & Garssen, 2014). Same-domain analogies compare elements within the same field of knowledge, while figurative analogies compare concepts from different domains. Descriptive analogies focus on relevant similarities, and normative analogies rely on systematic categorical differences (van Eemeren & Garssen, 2014). Figurative analogies involve comparing elements situated in different levels of experience, spheres, or kinds, often utilising figurative language like metaphors or similes (van Eemeren & Garssen, 2014).

The Moral Judgement Theory emphasises the role of analogical argumentation in ethical discussions, as analogies contribute to our knowledge and involve moral choices (Smith, 2002). Analogies based on moral judgments can have normative implications in establishing moral norms or principles, but not all analogies based on moral judgments are inherently normative (van Eemeren & Garssen, 2014).

The analysis of analogies necessitates considering factors that bridge the acceptability gap between the argument and the point of view, such as prior knowledge, moral and ethical codes, intelligence, political convictions, and demographics (Guarini et al., 2009). Analogical argumentation is susceptible to fallacies, particularly the fallacy of false analogy, which arises when one falsely assumes that things similar in one respect must be similar in others (Guarini et al., 2009; Walton, 2010).

3. HISTORICAL ANALOGIES & THE HOLOCAUST ANALOGY

Historical analogies, such as the Holocaust analogy, attract significant research interest (Walton, 2010). Historical analogies link well-known past events to current situations and are based on underlying arguments from analogy. However, a distinction should be made between historical analogies and historical comparisons. An analogy oversimplifies and

distorts the differences between events, while a comparison critically considers the similarities and differences (Rozett, 2022). Historical analogies often evoke strong emotional responses and have political implications. They are utilised in various contexts, including public representation, media, and individual memory (Ariely, 2020).

The Holocaust analogy is a specific type of historical analogy that refers to a wide range of political issues (Steinweis, 2005). Equating rivals or enemies with Nazis and making comparisons to the Holocaust are not uncommon (Ariely, 2020). Holocaust analogies are used by various actors, including political establishments, human rights activists, NGOs, writers, and artists (Ariely, 2020). Bates (2009) concludes that the use of a historical analogy such as the analogy to the Holocaust encourages over generalised and superficial conclusions. However, these analogies can contribute to the distortion of the Holocaust's historical record (Crane, 2022; Panisson et al., 2018; Kirmayer et al., 2014). The use of Holocaust analogies often leads to a focus on dramatic events, superficial conclusions, and neglect of historical context and motives (Bates, 2009). The Holocaust analogy carries the premise that standing by and doing nothing is akin to being an accomplice to genocide (Desch, 2006). Yet, the fairness and validity of the analogy remain subjects of debate.

The use of Holocaust analogies has become somewhat normalised or trivialised over time. While it is assumed that the analogy carries deep meaning and influence, studies suggest that it may not significantly influence public opinion or moral judgments (Valentino & Weinberg, 2017). Despite this, the analogy continues to be used. The power and purpose of the Holocaust analogy may not align with people's expectations, yet its usage persists.

4. CONTEXTUAL BACKGROUND

The Holocaust, also known as the Shoah, refers to the genocide of European Jews during World War II by the Nazi regime in Germany (Moore, 2008). It is important to note that not only Jews but also other marginalized groups, such as Roma people, gays, and lesbians were targeted (Moore, 2008). Yet, despite its extensive documentation, there is no shared memory of the Holocaust, as different societies present and remember the history of World War II and the crimes against Jews in diverse ways shaped by national, cultural, ideological, religious, and political interests (Moore, 2008; Wodak & De Cillia, 2007). The Holocaust holds significant importance in Jewish identity today and remains a topic prone to discussions, controversies, and distortions (Ariely, 2020; Gerstenfeld, 2009).

The Holocaust analogy, when evoked, can refer to various aspects of the event, politics surrounding it, or other cruel occurrences (Ariely, 2020). The understanding of the analogy depends on individuals' knowledge of the Holocaust and their awareness of its facts, which can range from strong and accurate analogies to abstract and emotionally provocative uses (Ariely, 2020). The Holocaust has influenced political relationships and policies worldwide, leading to discussions and controversies that can distort its memory (Desch, 2006; Gerstenfeld, 2009).

The Jewish experience extends beyond the Holocaust, with a long history of discrimination that predates the genocide (Behar, 2022). Jewish identity is fragile, and there is an unspoken consensus that because the Holocaust already happened, this does not mean

it could not happen again (Radney, 2019). Jewish people face what is called 'double-status racism,' experiencing both low-status racism and high-status racism, such as conspiracy theories (Baddiel, 2021).

The analysis of the Holocaust analogy in modern day discourse demands placement of Jewishness within the paradigm of Identity Politics, as a lot of the discourse on social media nowadays happens through its lens, regardless of where on the political spectrum it comes from (Crenshaw, 1989; Cook et al., 2014; Miller, 2020). Competitive victimhood, a concept related to identity politics, contributes to anti-Semitism and the distortion of the Holocaust (Rozett, 2022). The Holocaust analogy can be weaponized within the framework of oppression competition and can be used to question, judge, scrutinise, and insult Jewish people (Schechter, 2016)

The habitual use of the Holocaust analogy raises concerns about the distortion of Holocaust memory and the potential increase in anti-Semitism (Gerstenfeld, 2009). Language plays a significant role in shaping perceptions and can have violent consequences, although the connection between language and physical manifestations is complex (Silva, 2017). The Holocaust analogy itself is not inherently anti-Semitic or violent unless explicitly intended as such or interpreted that way by the audience (Leezenberg, 2017; Taddei, 2017). However, the analogy can be seen as an example of 'soft-core anti-Semitism,' as it is the event most frequently alluded to in public discourse, opening the possibility of debate and inviting malicious actors (Heni, 2008).

In the analysis of the Holocaust analogy in public discourse, it is crucial to consider the argumentation processes, the events or issues being analogised with the Holocaust, the intentions of the speakers, and the possible conclusions drawn by the audience (Gerstenfeld, 2009). Moreover, understanding the complex relationship between language and violence is essential for analysing and interpreting the Holocaust analogy and its implications (Silva, 2017).

5. METHODOLOGY

The process of assembling the corpus presented challenges in achieving systematic outcomes. To ensure manageability within the timeframe of this thesis, the research focused on Holocaust analogies from 2022 to the beginning of 2023. Explicit analogies were selected, and the main search term used was "the Holocaust," excluding other domain-specific terms to maintain a narrow and specific corpus assembly process.

Regarding data sourcing, the final corpus was compiled from Twitter and LexisNexis. Twitter was chosen for its capacity to provide immediate opinion sharing in a concise format, allowing access to a diverse population. The platform's Advanced Search feature facilitated straightforward data collection. In contrast, LexisNexis (NexisUni) offered access to journalistic material from official publications, capturing opinions expressed within a narrower professional social layer. These platforms were considered representative of the media space where public debates occur, offering a wide range of data reflecting the diversity of Holocaust analogy contexts.

To gather a corpus encompassing various analogy uses, trending keywords were selected based on the significant global topics of recent years. These keywords were obtained from isidewith.com, a platform that lists the most discussed political and social

issues derived from public polling. Examples of these keywords included *Abortion*, *Police*, *Covid-19*, *Vaccine*, *Trans/gender*, *Colonialism*, and *Ukraine*. It is important to note that the gathered analogies were not exclusively tied to these search terms, as they also appeared in tags due to Search Engine Optimization practices. This approach allowed for a structured diversification of the corpus, creating a representative sample.

During the search process on both Twitter and LexisNexis, methodological choices were made to ensure contextual diversity. The location parameter was set to 'Worldwide,' and a broad range of outlets and authors were included. However, the language limitation was English, encompassing sources written in English or available in English.

The corpus collection methodology involved data gathering from Twitter and LexisNexis within the period of 2022-2023, utilising the search term '(the) Holocaust.' By applying various search operators, hashtags, and exact phrases related to the search terms, the Twitter search was refined, resulting in up to 20 tweets for analysis. For LexisNexis, a search within the database for journalistic articles containing '(the) Holocaust' aimed at assembling up to 10 relevant articles. Preprocessing of the data involved removing duplicates and filtering out tweets and articles that were not relevant to the research focus. The final corpus consisted of 13 Tweets and 8 journalistic articles, providing a sufficient number of cases to analyse the variety of subjects with which the Holocaust is analogized within the designated time frame. Each analogy was examined individually, considering its argumentative structure, underlying standpoints, and the similarities and differences between the analogized events or phenomena. The methodology employed a combination of the pragma-dialectical approach and the moral judgement theoretical approach, drawing from best practices in analogy analysis to facilitate a thorough critical evaluation (Govier, 1989; van Eemeren et al., 2002:137; Smith, 2002; Juthe, 2005; van Eemeren et al., 2007; van Eemeren & Garssen, 2014:40; Desch, 2006; Cowie, 2017).

6. ANALYSES

The analogies were assigned to specific domains based on their contextual relevance. The domains represent the broader themes or topics within which the analogies are found. Table 1 provides an overview of the identified domains, their corresponding contexts, and the distribution of corpus artefacts within each domain.

Context refers to the specific topic or subject that is being analogized with. In some cases, the context can be the broader theme of the Tweet or article. Determining the context was relatively easier for journalistic articles due to the availability of more information. However, for Tweets, which had limited framing information, special attention was given to the timeline and consideration of the external events or issues that the Tweet might be associated with. Despite this challenge, identifying the contexts of each analogy was not difficult. The domains were inductively established prior to the analysis. The analysis found that the analogies largely conformed to at least one of the predetermined domains, aligning with the initial predictions.

Domain	Context	Twitter	Articles
	(Teaching of) Transatlantic Slave Trade	2	
	Australia day	1	
	Nakba	1	
	Surinamese Slavery		2
Analogy to a current/ongoing (<i>geo-political conflict</i>)	Ukraine	1	2
	China and Uyghurs	1	1
Analogy to a (current) social issue	Body politics		1
	Police brutality	1	
	Mass shooting & 2nd amendment	1	1
	Burning of the Qur'an	1	
	Covid-19	1	
	'Pride flag'	1	
	Abortion		2
	Transgender 'debate'	1	

Table 1 – Overview of Domains and Contexts

Example analysis 1:

A cool fact about the police is that one of the first heads of Interpol, the international police agency, was Reinhard Heydrich, architect of the Holocaust.

Domain: Analogy to a (current) social issue, Context: Police Brutality, Source: Twitter

The Tweet is identified as containing the Holocaust analogy in the context of the ongoing discussion of police violence and brutality in the US. The author, an American journalist, presents a fact stating that Reinhard Heydrich, the architect of the Holocaust, was one of the first heads of Interpol, the international police agency. This analogy falls within the broader domain of *Analogy to a (current) social issue*, specifically discussions of police violence in the US.

The argument in the Tweet suggests that the ideas and practices of the Holocaust are present in the police system today, based on the shared association of Reinhard Heydrich with both Interpol and the Holocaust. However, the author does not provide further reasoning or references to support the argument or clarify the logical connections. The analogy relies on the interpretation of the audience and lacks specific details or clear definitions of the similarities.

The identified similarity claim is based on the fallacy of generalisation, suggesting that the entire category of "police" shares the qualities of Reinhard Heydrich as a perpetrator of the Holocaust. However, there are critical differences between the purpose and intent of the Holocaust and the actions of the police (Welzel, 2006). While police violence in the US disproportionately affects non-white minorities, it is not explicitly part of their mission to commit violent acts against these groups (Desmond et al., 2016; *Mapping Police Violence*, 2022). The suggestion of a direct and explicit similarity between Interpol under the Nazi Regime and the US Police is inconsistent and far-fetched.

Overall, the argument from analogy in this Tweet is not strong and does not withstand scrutiny. However, it effectively captures public attention and provokes discussions, which may be the intended goal of such opinions shared on social media.

Example analysis 2:

<...>For example, the cabinet wants Minister for Legal Protection Franc Weerwind to travel to Suriname. The choice for Weerwind, himself a descendant of enslaved people and of Surinamese descent, is unfortunate, as if you let a Jew make excuses for the Holocaust.<...>

Domain: Analogy to a (past) historical event, Context: Surinamese Slavery, Source: NexisUni

The argument from analogy in this case is presented within the discussion of European Colonialism and Surinamese slavery, falling under the domain of Analogy to a (past) historical event. While acknowledging baseline categorical differences between the Holocaust and Surinamese slavery, the analogy aims to deepen the understanding of historical injustices and their legacies. It is made with the normative claim that the oppressed should not make excuses for their oppression to the same extent that a Jew should not make excuses for the Holocaust.

The analogy highlights the quality of systematic oppression in both the Holocaust and Surinamese slavery, where marginalised groups experienced dehumanisation and brutal treatment, resulting in lasting social, economic, and political impacts. Franc Weerwind is seen as analogous to a Jew in terms of being a victim or descendant of victims

of systematic oppression, with comparable long-lasting impacts. The analogy stands when considering these respects, as reasonable grounds for comparison exist.

However, there are problematic aspects to using the Holocaust analogy in this context. Comparing Weerwind, a government-elected politician, to an abstract individual of Jewish heritage is illogical, as it implies equal significance in their words or actions (den Hartog, 2022). Additionally, the analogy fails to account for the diversity of the world's Jewry, which is not a single organised political body. The author's choice to employ the analogy instead of making a straightforward statement suggests a preference for a stronger and more emotionally evocative argument.

Overall, while the analogy draws meaningful similarities, its use in this context is contentious due to the specific comparisons made and the potential for misrepresentation of individuals and groups involved.

Example analysis 3:

We must not let China get away from Uyghur genocide as Uyghur genocide model exported elsewhere rapidly as something so great when it's purely evil. If "Never Again" declared to Never repeat holocaust, we must never let Uyghur genocide go away without China taking responsibility.

Domain: Analogy to a current/ongoing (geo-)political conflict, Context: China & Uyghurs, Source: Twitter

The analogy presented in the Tweet draws a parallel between the Holocaust and the ongoing atrocities against the Uyghur population in China, emphasising the need to hold China accountable. It is normative in nature, suggesting that the Uyghur genocide is evil and comparable to the Holocaust. The analogy is used descriptively, employing the reality of the Holocaust to highlight the reality of the Uyghur genocide (BBC News, 2022b).

The argument asserts that China should not be allowed to escape scrutiny for its actions against the Uyghurs, paralleling the commitment of "Never Again" in preventing the Holocaust from recurring. It calls for the international community to take action against the Chinese authorities responsible for these crimes. The analogy is supported by two justifications: the historical context of the Holocaust and the potential for the Uyghur genocide model to be exported elsewhere.

However, there are aspects of the argument that warrant scrutiny. The interpretation of "Never Again" as an imperative vow made by the global society to prevent genocides is called into question. While the phrase emerged as a commitment following the Holocaust, it has been criticised for often being used as a cliché and for the failure to effectively prevent genocides. The Jewish community's understanding of "Never Again" differs, focusing on preventing victimisation rather than a global imperative (Kellner, 1994). Therefore, extrapolating the principle of "Never Again" to other groups may not be as useful in preventing genocides and genocidal practices altogether.

In summary, while the analogy between the Holocaust and the Uyghur genocide seeks to emphasize the importance of holding China accountable, the interpretation of "Never Again" and its application to other groups raises questions about its effectiveness in preventing future atrocities.

7. DISCUSSION

The analysis of Holocaust analogies reveals their diverse types, forms, and objectives within different domains. Same-domain analogies, both descriptive and normative, and figurative analogies are identified, aligning with the proposed categorisations (van Eemeren, 2007; van Eemeren et al., 2002; Renardel de Lavalette, 2019). Analogies to the Holocaust within the domain of "Analogy to a (past) historical event" predominantly fall under the normative category. These analogies utilise the Holocaust as a benchmark to address consequences or treat events with a similar level of seriousness. In the domain of Analogy to a current/ongoing geo-political conflict, limited factual information hinders evaluation, and the strength of the analogy may vary over time. Analogies in this domain primarily serve to convey urgency and moral obligation to intervene. Within the domain of Analogies to a (current) social issue, emotive parallels are drawn, often employing hyperbolic use of the Holocaust analogy, and primarily relying on its symbolic significance as a great tragedy.

While the prevalence of Holocaust analogies across domains underscores their influence in shaping discourse and prompting discussions on various events and issues, the analysis reveals that most analogies are not reasonable upon critical examination. Many analogies exploit the significance of the Holocaust for dramatic effect or exaggeration, but fail to meet the requirements for unquestionable acceptance (Botting, 2022; Temkin, 2023). Despite the lack of reasonable arguments, individuals who use the Holocaust analogy are deeply passionate about their cause and often do not place themselves in the position of someone for whom the Holocaust carries equivalent emotional significance. In many instances the Holocaust analogy is used because the arguer (perhaps) cannot find a better argument, as it is not for the presence of extensive knowledge on the subject or willingness to argue reasonably that the arguers often leave the analogy to speak for itself, effectively facilitating for the argument to reach a dead end (Pander Maat, 1987). Consequently, the Holocaust analogy does not contribute to the resolution of disagreements or promote learning among participants (Goode & Wettersten, 1982; Desch, 2006).

The relevance of the Holocaust analogy to current social developments and discourse is evident, particularly in relation to ongoing cultural shifts and military conflicts. However, the reliance on the analogy may indicate a lack of alternative or new terminology to describe these events. An anecdotal distinction can be observed between analogies found on Twitter and those in journalistic artefacts. Journalistic analogies tend to be more complex, sophisticated, and challenging to disprove, potentially due to the nature of the text and the expertise of the writers.

The developed analytical methodology provides an in-depth understanding of each case of analogical argumentation in the corpus. It can serve as a valuable tool for studying individual instances of analogies and can be adapted to explore different topics or themes in future research.

8. CONCLUSION

This analysis provides a limited but insightful understanding of the use of the Holocaust analogy in public discourse and the media landscape. It demonstrates that the Holocaust analogy is utilised in a wide range of contexts by different individuals and segments of society worldwide. The analysis examines several cases that exemplify this variety to some

extent. However, it is important to note that the sample size is not representative, and therefore, it is not possible to determine statistically significant fluctuations in the use of the analogy or its correlation with societal or political changes.

Nevertheless, the methodology employed in assembling the corpus reveals that the Holocaust analogy can be found in discussions related to any trending topic or issue. This indicates that there are always individuals who rely on the Holocaust analogy to support their arguments, even if in small quantities. The fact of the analogies being present, both in the Twitter discussions, as well as embedded into the journalistic narratives, demonstrates that the analogy use does take place to an extent some would still see as significant – after all, there has been enough concern, raised by academics, comedians and journalists. It is essential, however, to recognise that this analysis represents only a fraction of the broader understanding of the Holocaust's place in public discourse.

It is key to understand that the Holocaust analogy is not inherently anti-Semitic or violent, unless it is explicitly used in an anti-Semitic manner. The goals behind the use of the analogy are primarily attention-grabbing, exaggeration, and using a well-known event as an example. While it is unfounded to attribute the rise in anti-Semitism solely to individuals who use the Holocaust analogy, the pervasive use of the analogy in public discourse draws more attention to the Holocaust, which can invite discussions that are not always favourable or respectful (Johnson, 2018).

The use of the Holocaust analogy can be seen as an example of what Heni (2008) describes as "soft-core anti-Semitism," as it is frequently brought up in public discourse without being explicitly offensive. It raises ethical concerns to base one's argument on a tragic event related to a specific group. Initially, it was hypothesised that the use of the Holocaust analogy reflects a moral choice made by the speaker. However, the analysis indicates that those who employ the analogy do not necessarily hold specific beliefs about the Holocaust itself. Instead, their moral judgments pertain to the issues they are analogizing with the Holocaust.

While these individuals may genuinely care about the causes they are advocating for and seek to draw attention to them through extreme analogies, it also reflects a certain level of egotism (Kaci et al., 2018). They are highlighting their cause at the expense of another cause and another group that is foreign to them (Kaci et al., 2018).

It is also of use to address the limitations of the present research. Firstly, the analysis is constrained by the limited scope and timeframe, resulting in a small number of analysed tweets and articles. A more comprehensive study would require a larger corpus and the application of social theories to understand the motivations behind the Holocaust analogies. Secondly, the analysis is limited by the choice of media channels. Twitter and NexisUni were chosen for their advanced search options and the potential for diverse results. Twitter provided raw opinions, while NexisUni represented more deliberate and well-thought-out argumentation. Other media platforms and genres should be considered in future research to compare the differences in analogy use.

The analysis also does not account for the potential audience size or the number of impressions that analogies may have. The consequences of using the Holocaust analogy may vary depending on the platform and the visibility of the speaker.

Additionally, the analysis is focused on content produced in English or formally translated into English, limiting the topics to those relevant to English-speaking countries. The use of the analogy may differ in different languages and cultural contexts, and future research should explore this further.

Overall, the limitations of the paper underscore the need for a more comprehensive

and nuanced analysis of the Holocaust analogy in the media, taking into account a larger corpus, different media platforms, and diverse cultural contexts.

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