



FROM
REPORTING STYLES
TO
PROPAGANDA

Migration Portrayal in Selected Czech, German,
Hungarian and Polish TV news
in 2015 and 2018

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1 Introduction

Aims, limitations and structure of report

This report illustrates how market changes and differing organizational practices alluded to below can contribute to actual variations in news content. We chose a methodology that was feasible financially and allowed us to fulfil the aim of a broader project co-funded by the Visegrad Fund, which was to “provoke a reflection” on compliance with content standards in newscasting “in the wake of rising concern about migration”.

This report compares the content traits pertaining to agenda setting, diction, framing, visual language and other discursive means of portraying migration on eight major television news programs in September of 2015 and July of 2018. We paid special attention to the phenomena of conflict: How do diction and discourses more broadly assist in the construction of cleavages between various actors including in-groups and out-groups? What role does visual language play?

As will be apparent from our effort to contextualize the study of content, our underlying aim was to gain insight into organizational and editorial practices in the newsrooms. We conducted follow-up interviews with the editors and reporters who created the news described in this study. By way of an **executive summary** of the report, a short article featuring quotes from these interviews can be accessed at www.datalyrics.org under the headline “*Four countries, eight styles of reporting*” (Datalyrics 2019).

Given the rather small size and limited focus of the sample, the conclusions expressed in this report may naturally be affected by a sampling bias. The conclusions are not necessarily applicable to the broadcasters’ reporting on topics other than migration, nor to current affairs programming, nor should they be understood as representative of migration portrayal by all broadcasters in the given country. The report, however, should provide practitioners with inspiration to improve the accuracy of their reporting.

The report is structured into four main chapters. First, we outline the differences in market environments in which the inspected broadcasters operate and describe methodology of the study. In the second chapter, we summarize the main findings of the study in relation to existing research.

Readers interested in a more detailed description may like to continue through the longest, third chapter. In it, we give details about agenda setting, terminology and framing. The chapter shows how most broadcasters’ coverage effectively supports outsourcing of migration policies to third countries (so-called migration externalization), how the typical coverage fails to portray migration in an adequate international context, or, on the other hand, how a focus on causality can make the news more informative.

Finally, the fourth chapter focuses on outright propaganda and cases of reporting that have been, or, should have been addressed by (self-)regulatory institutions.

Media market differences

According to the V-Dem index of varieties of democracy, all countries under study except Germany have been autocratizing between 2008 and 2018, with Poland and Hungary reaching a particularly low quality of democracy at the end of the period (Lührmann et al. 2019). Kornai (2016) has already considered Hungary an autocracy. In the media landscape, the situation differs correspondingly.

In the Reporters Without Borders' 2019 World Press Freedom Index, Germany ranks 13th, the Czech Republic 40th, Poland 59th and Hungary 87th.

Most broadcasters in Central Europe have never reached full autonomy and the degree of editorial independence took a further hit after the departure of transnational media corporations following i.a. the financial crisis (Stetka 2012). If the Hungarian TV2 is a typical example of such change of ownership to local business tycoons with primary interests in industries other than media, then the Polish TVN remains an exception.

Of all the countries under study, it was the Hungarian media system that has undergone the most dramatic transformation in the last decade. In 2010, the Hungarian government has begun to mould the system on the basis of the Russian model. "Berlusconization" (media subdued to political loyalties) has given way to "Putinization" (see Sükösd 2014). The ruling party's expansion in the media market has accelerated during the party's second term between 2014 and 2018.

Exhibits of loyalist journalism like avoidance of certain topics, irregular attacks on political and business opponents and PR journalism were compounded by the consolidation of a tiered, "coordinated propaganda machine" which had absorbed much of the private market by late 2016 (Máriás et al. 2017).

Both Hungarian broadcasters under study form a part of the "government's immediate circle" whose editors have been reported to attend regular strategic meetings with government's representatives, typically headed by the Minister of the Prime Minister's Cabinet Office Antal Rogán since 2016 (Máriás et al. 2017; Rényi 2017). These meetings resemble their analogue held in Russia under the leadership of the Deputy Chief of Staff Alexey Gromov (Rubin, Zholobova, and Badanin 2019).

The Fidesz government has resorted to preferential treatment of loyal media through the allocation of state advertising (Bátorfy and Urban 2019) and other ways of misappropriating state power (Bátorfy 2019a; Datalyrics 2020). TV2, the Hungarian private channel under study, for instance, commanded slightly lower audience shares than RTL-Klub in seven out of eight years between 2010 and 2017 but it received at least four times more state advertising seconds each year from 2014 to 2017 (Bátorfy and Urban 2019).

According to testimonies of four former or current MTVA employees, journalists at the Hungarian public-service media have been receiving editorial instructions from the Prime Minister's office starting in 2012 and reaching a high degree of specificity by 2015 (Nolan 2018; Datalyrics forthcoming; see also Dunai 2014). Hence, MTV became a "government mouthpiece" (Bognár, Sik, and Surányi 2019). According to documents seen by The Telegraph, Hungarian embassies, too, were asked to solicit negative stories about migration (Foster and Cseko 2018).

The Polish media market, meanwhile, remains comparably free but highly polarized. The Polish public television experienced collective dismissals in early 2016 after the Law and Justice (PiS) party came to power, that is, *after* the first period under study. A number of former TVP journalists then moved to the TVN.

Unlike in Hungary and Poland, in Germany and the Czech Republic, public televisions (ARD, ČT) retain distance from political influence. The principle of editorial autonomy, however, remains unembraced by many players on the media market, too. A recording leaked from an editorial meeting held on September 7th 2015 at Prima, the third most-watched television in the Czech Republic, revealed the editor-in-chief and an owner's representative had jointly instructed the reporters to portray refugees as a threat in the news (Břešťan 2016).

After this became known, Prima defied the national regulatory authority by arguing that the authority previously “confirmed impartiality” of Prima’s reporting. In fact, the authority’s analysis referenced by Prima stated: “Theme of [migration] is ... perceived through ... catastrophic discourse” ..., which “colours or shifts [all perspectives]” (RRTV 2015). The regulatory authority did not consider an option to clarify this obfuscation publicly (Datalyrics 2020).

Like the German public broadcaster under study, the private one, too, appears boringly independent. Finally, two further differences among the countries under study should be noted. First, a debate on migration has regularly featured in German media since the 1990s. In all V4 countries, meanwhile, migration discourse was largely absent prior to 2015. Second, Germany and Poland – unlike the Czech Republic and Hungary – have been and remain a significant host as well as, in the case of Poland, a source country.

Methodology

TV channels¹ from four countries were put to study: the Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary and Poland. In each country, we studied the main public channel and the most-watched private channel according to the Reuters Digital News Report 2018 (Newman et al. 2018). That is, unless another influential private channel has been previously documented to portray migration in breach of professional or legal standards and/or its editorial independence has been reported to be compromised (Győri and Bíró-Nagy 2014). Based on these criteria, we included the second most-watched private channels in the Czech Republic (Prima instead of Nova TV) and in Hungary (TV2 instead of RTL-Klub).

In the end, we included the following programs under study.

¹ In this report, we use “channel” as a synonym for “broadcaster”. Some of the newscasts under study were simulcast on several channels.

Czech Republic		Germany		Hungary		Poland	
ČT	Prima	ARD	RTL	MTV	TV2	TVP	TVN
<i>Události</i>	<i>Hlavní zprávy</i>	<i>Tagesschau</i>	<i>RTL aktuell</i>	<i>Híradó</i>	<i>Tények</i>	<i>Wiadomości</i>	<i>Fakty</i>

We have harvested primetime news items broadcasted in two fourteen-day periods. We chose the beginning of the first period to coincide with the Extraordinary V4 Summit on migration held on September 4th 2015 and the beginning of the second period to coincide with the first day of the European Council Meeting dubbed as the ‘EU Migration Summit’, that is, June 28th 2018. We limited this pool to news items containing any of the following keywords: “migration” (noun, adjective), “immigrant”, “migrant”, “refugee”. This rendered a total of 713 news items for the 2015 period and 216 news items for the 2018 period.

A researcher responsible for a given country conducted an overview and assigned a theme code to each news item in the pools. From these pools, we then selected five news items from each channel and each period that we subjected to an in-depth analysis (see Attachment 1). We chose three distinct news items addressing a topic that was present at each country’s channel in the given period, prioritizing the most frequent theme codes. We added two news items not yet sampled that appeared most frequently in the pools of each country in the given period. We always selected the chronologically first news item matching the criteria, excluding the news items featuring only an anchor speaking from the desk.

Note that only three instead of five news items fulfilled the above criteria for the Polish commercial channel TVN in the second period. Hence, four researchers produced detailed analyses of verbal and visual components of in total 78 news items and summary country reports. Another researcher conducted a synthesis and reviewed recordings or transcripts of news items with unclear interpretation as well as those particularly relevant for international comparison. The synthesis was then reviewed by all researchers.

Typically, we make conclusions applicable to the news items from the sample subjected to the in-depth analysis. We only speak of all the news items when it is either clear from the context or it is marked by reference to the “pool”.

2 Main Findings in Context of Past Research

Reporting styles compared

Agenda setting

On both Hungarian channels, the number of news items dedicated to migration stood out in both periods (4. 9. 2015 – 17. 9. 2015, 28. 6. 2018 – 11. 7. 2018). On either MTV or TV2, agenda setting was not driven by newsworthiness in the traditional sense (Galtung and Ruge 1965) in either period. Far from mirroring the actual refugee and migration trends, Hungarian channels retained the **highest total number of news items dedicated to migration** through the 2018 period, making other important issues likely to be crowded out from the newscasts. This relates to the findings of the REMINDER project which on a corpus of over 2,790,000 articles in print and online media from seven European countries found that by far the highest relative salience of migration coverage was manifest in Hungary from 2015 through 2018 (Eberl et al. 2019).

In our study, agenda setting as well as framing corresponded with the focus of the government's taxpayer-funded advertising campaigns of which TV2 has been the largest receiver during both periods under study (Bátorfy 2019b). 'Crime', 'terrorism' and – in 2018 – 'plotter George Soros' were systematically associated with migration and featured prominently. No news items in our pool addressed the issue of emigration.

Diction

On all but one channels, unnecessary use of **passive voice** was a common habit that typically led to (1) portrayal of refugees as **depersonalized, passive and sometimes vulnerable objects**, or, to (2) removal of accountability from actors instrumental in the given action, including conflict (Hungarian police, humanitarian organization).

Just like the less esteemed televisions MTV and TV2, ČT has portrayed refugees as objects to whom 'things are done' and for whom 'things are provided' ("buses took [migrants] to Nickelsdorf", "[refugees] are getting food"). This observation was already noted in research by Tkaczyk, Pospěch, and Macek (2015).

Through both framing and syntax, ARD was the only broadcaster who have **put both parties of asymmetrical conflict** (refugees and Hungarian authorities) **on an even-level playing field** ("In Hungary, the conflict between refugees and the authorities is intensifying", "some refugees broke out, police responded with tears"). This contrasted with deference to state authority in ČT's description of events ("Hungary has not succeeded in solving the *situation with refugees*", "police managed to catch" the escaping refugees).

The Hungarian broadcasters used passive voice to report that migrants "were persuaded" [by police] to get off the train for which they had previously been sold tickets and "were taken" to a refugee centre (MTV). The active voice was used to report that migrants "rile each other up" (TV2), "attack", "break out"

from camps and “go through everything” (MTV), accentuating migrants’ **determination and aggressivity**. In 2015, this was still nuanced at TV2.

Despite that ČT unnecessarily used passive, it also thematized **resourcefulness of past migrants** through attention to their work activity (volunteering pregnant Muslim woman, interpreter “born in Syria”). This was in line with the general practice in the European press where identifying migrants’ profession was rare in 2015 (Chouliaraki et al. 2017).

Terminology

Depersonalization also resulted from **metaphors suggesting that ‘refugees are water’**. ARD was the only channel to have avoided terminology like “flood..”, “wave..”, “endless stream..” (of refugees). ČT continued to use naturalizing terminology in the 2018 sample despite that earlier research by Tkaczyk, Pospěch, and Macek (2015) pointed out its past bad practice. This further illustrates that calling refugees and migrants ‘water’ is a practice common in multiple media types in many countries (see Bernáth and Messing 2016; Blinder and Allen 2015; Doherty 2015; ICMPD & EJM 2017; Riesigl and Wodak 2001; Szalai and Góbl 2015).

Czech and Polish channels used **terms for the target population like “refugees”, “migrants” and “illegal migrants” arbitrarily and interchangeably**. In the Hungarian media, this has already been documented earlier (Bernáth and Messing 2015; Kiss 2016). The absence of terminological rules has been apparent also in regard to refugee facilities which were often called arbitrarily “refugee camps” or “detention facilities”, typically without any sign as to whether the reception centre at hand was open, semi-open or closed. The distinction between primary and secondary (typically irregular) migration was often lacking, too.

We recorded several particularly derogatory expressions. The term “illegals” that emerged in the Australian discourse in the 1990s (Doherty 2015) was used once by a Frontex official cited by RTL, effectively resulting in the continuing confusion of criminals and irregular migrants (see Gotsbachner 2001). A Prima’s reporter long known for vile vocabulary spoke of “refugee invasion”.

According to Kiss (2016), TV2 used the legal oxymoron “illegal refugee” regularly in 2016. In our study, we found ČT to have used it, too.² In fact, ČT appears to have introduced this term into the Czech discourse in early 2015.³ These are not matters of linguistic subtlety: Blinder and Allen (2015) used methods of corpus linguistics to demonstrate on the example of the UK that the pervasive **use of terminology that depicts migrants as violators of law** may have a profound impact on the public perception of the spectrum, and propriety of, migration.

We observed a notable change of practice at TV2 which commonly used the term “refugee” in the 2015 period (“asylum seeker” was also used once). In the 2018 period, however, by the time the “coordinated

² “[Krizový stav vyhlášený maďarskou vládou] umožňuje povolvat armádu k ochraně hraniční bariéry, kterou se do země snaží dostat příliv ilegálních uprchlíků” (Jakub Železný, anchor)

³ The Newton media archive records 37 uses by ČT in 2015 and 19 uses in 2016. The only media company that used the term more frequently was ParlamentníListy.cz, a website producing news-like content with hyperpolitical agenda. In the first quarter of 2015, only 2 uses are recorded in the archive and both originated at ČT.

propaganda machine” was long consolidated in Hungary (Máriás et al. 2017), TV2 joined MTV in the practice of **strict avoidance of the terms “refugee” and “asylum seeker”**.

In the 2018 period, **neither Hungarian channel featured an independent expert or an NGO professional** who would be likely to choose such terms. This further contributed to the **uniformity in the use of language hostile to migrants** that was typical for the Hungarian official discourse after January 2015 (Bernáth and Messing 2015; Szalai and Göbl 2015).

MTV and, to a lesser degree, TV2 adopted **conspicuously technical jargon** of János Lázár in a report about the fence on the Hungarian-Serbian border, effectively mitigating the introduction of the measures restricting access to asylum in Hungary in September 2015. Both channels avoided the term “fence”. Instead, TV2 referred to it as “border closure” while MTV spoke of a “security module that closes down the railroad tracks” (anchor);⁴ “technical border barrier” (anchor); “temporary technical border closure” (reporter); “security border barrier” (minister).

Actors

Unlike the remaining five channels, ARD, RTL and ČT did thematize refugees’ limbo and otherwise made motives of refugees understandable. If the voices of refugees and migrants were not absent from reporting altogether, many run-of-the-mill broadcasters still did not use the voices to offer a **meaningful perspective**. Prima, for instance, tried to balance Péter Szijjártó’s decontextualized claim about “migrants’ unwillingness to follow the host country’s rules” with a statement from an agitated refugee interviewee with apparently bad English: “Germany good, Hungaria no”. Tkaczyk, Pospěch, and Macek (2015) earlier observed “scrappy” refugee commentaries were common also in ČT’s newscasting in 2015. More worryingly, TV2 **mistranslated, or, left untranslated** statements of agitated refugees. All of the above contributed to a threatening portrayal of refugees.

MTV in both periods and TVP in the 2018 period typically did not offer a meaningful perspective of the ruling party’s opponents or targets. The channels used footage of leaders targeted in verbal attacks as mere symbolic illustrations, typically for “Brussels” or “Soros”, while attacking the displayed leaders in the voiceover. At MTV, some of the visualized opponents were not even introduced, their views were cut short and/or left untranslated and, serving purely as a **symbolic illustration for an enemy**.

Chouliaraki et al. (2017) have shown in a content analysis of the press in eight European countries that in late 2015, on average at least every tenth article featured a quote from an inter-governmental organization (IGO). While our samples are too small to reach a conclusion on this matter, **we suspect voices of IGOs were rarely present in V4 broadcasting**. By the time of the 2018 period, both Hungarian channels and the Polish TVP did not feature any voices of independent experts whatsoever.

⁴ “a vasutat lezáró biztonsági elem”

Basic framing

Most channels under study maintained continuity in their treatment of the subject matter in both periods. The Hungarian private television TV2 and the Polish public television TVP were exceptions. In 2015, both channels reported broadly in line with what can be expected from an ordinary public and a commercial broadcaster. **By 2018, they have taken a markedly progovernment turn in their reporting.**

During the 2015 period, TV2 painted an unnerving portrayal of refugees as part of securitizing discourse but this resulted largely from dramatization emotions typical for tabloid media. In other words, TV2 stayed broadly in line with legal requirements on commercial broadcasters.

A content analysis carried out by Mérték suggests that the pro-government shift of TV2's reporting on migration was significant (already) by September 2016 when only 11% of airtime supported position different from that of government. Notably, though, at the time TV2 placed virtually all the news items on migration at sixth or later position in the newscast sequence, compared to 86% of MTV news items placed first⁵.

In the Czech Republic and Germany, a more nuanced coverage featuring a wide range of framings was provided by the public televisions. In Hungary in both periods and in Poland in the 2018 period, relatively more colourful portrayal of migration was provided by the commercial channels.

Prima's framing was heavily negative. 'Crisis', 'disturbance', **distrust of the West (Germany and the EU) and sweeping anti-Islamism** were recurring components in Prima's frames. Especially the more self-servingly hostile frames were typically not introduced by the TV alone but through interviewed citizen and politicians, often from the Hungarian government.

Disregard of other than migration-externalizing solutions, coupled with repeated portrayals of the EU as incapable, characteristic for Prima, MTV and TVP in the latter period enhanced connotations of a critical and hopeless situation. ČT did not inquire into the applicability or concretization of simple migration-externalizing proposals like "help in source countries" and protection of the Schengen border either. However, ČT did feature proposals of concretized solutions (e.g. improving the language skills of the Czech police).

The Polish private TVN, on the other hand, did **transparently challenge politicians**; irrespective of the political party. Albeit TVN's reporting was not particularly analytical and it frequently featured **evaluative commentaries and political criticisms** ("In this selfishness, the rulers are not isolated", "politicians are making anti-immigrant hysteria", "It is hard to resist the impression that nobody here thinks about refugees and everyone thinks only about survey polls"), TVN clearly separated such views from news and the reporter was clearly marked as the author. Through direct quotes, TVN then offered **a rich pallet of views antipathetic to refugee acceptance.**

The Polish private TVN and the German public ARD were the two broadcasters which did not let politicians drive individual frames. Instead, they confronted politicians' views. At ARD, this was the result

⁵ Research cover the period of September 8th – 22th 2016 (Democracy Reporting International 2016).

of making **the search for underlying causalities central to its reporting** and it manifested in both framing and diction.

ČT repeatedly juxtaposed (a dramatic portrayal of) escalation of tensions with (a sympathetic portrayal of) refugees' perspective and, at times, their feelings (“Walking in the dark, their power dwindles away with every kilometre”). ARD was much more analytical and its reporting was thus **better suited to provoke a vigorous policy-oriented public debate**. ARD focused on reporting motives rather than feelings of refugees. Reporting on the overburdening of the Greek island of Lesbos in September 2015, for instance, ARD embraced an almost logistical point of view through the frame of Administrative challenge. When reporting on the outcomes of the 2018 ‘EU Summit on migration’, ARD was the only broadcaster to offer an independent framing, contrary to all the other broadcasters’ tacit celebrations of Angela Merkel’s claim of “substantial progress”, or, of a ‘surprising agreement’, or, of ‘a success of the V4’ following a lengthy negotiation. We recognized a **tendency to balance securitizing framings with those sympathetic to refugees** on several channels.

Interesting differences were observed in broadcasters’ treatments of conflicts among refugees, between refugees and authorities, as well as between V4 and the EU. In the newscasting of all V4 channels under study, the **frame of power struggle** was the most prominent in reporting on the interaction between V4 and the EU. Whether the broadcasters construed the interaction as straightforward bargaining, or, cast their country as a victim, or, played a blame game, this approach prevailed over a portrayal of substantive differences in policy proposals. In the Hungarian online media, the prominence of the frame of power struggle was identified earlier by Bognár, Sik, and Surányi (2019).

In contrast, if any entity was (indirectly) blamed for some failure at either of the German channels, they provided a substantive description of the argument instead of finger-pointing. Specifically, at ARD, this appeared to be the result of its consistent focus on substantive descriptions of policy differences.

Clarity

Problematic reporting was often associated with lack of clarity, exhibited in a content ranging from dispensable ramble (TVN’s comment “wave of people is like a wave of hate”) to quotes as well as reporter’s statements that could be interpreted in multiple ways:

Some advanced an argument marked by **incoherent syntax**: Prima, for instance, explained motivations of one actor by advocating actions of another actor (“[R]efugees set on a journey to Austria by foot because the Hungarians adhered to the rules and could not let them out of the country”). Similarly, when TV2 described border measures intended for German-Austrian border in 2018 (in passive voice throughout), it contradicted itself by suggesting inadmissible asylum seekers will (and yet will not in effect) be returned to the country legally responsible.

MTV and Prima made **statements left open to particularly egregious interpretations**. MTV did not make clear what “looks life-threatening” about a crowd of immigrants: the immigrants themselves or the circumstance that the immigrants were walking on a highway pose a threat to themselves and/or the drivers? Reporting on arson in German refugee facilities, Prima tacitly put civic disobedience (protest against refugee acceptance) and a criminal offence of arson on an equal footing. **All this can be avoided mechanically, by using active voice.**

By stitching together a humanitarian frame with a security frame free of context, RTL repeatedly both devalued the humanitarian perspective and muddled the security issues involved. Tilting sympathetic views of migrants into negative through arbitrary recontextualization was already earlier identified as a typical trait of “normalized xenophobic discourse” by Gotsbachner (2001). In one report, TV2 devoted 30 seconds to a distressed Serbian woman yelling she needs a doctor and adding the “migrants” probably infected many “innocent children” when they all were waiting to cross the border.

The quality of TVP’s reporting dramatically deteriorated from 2015 to 2018. In 2015, TVP did separate news and views and provided relatively sound reporting overall that is expected of a public channel. Even during the 2015 period – to a lesser extent than TVN but still – it appeared to succumb to the polarized Polish landscape in terms of diction, often using poetic and sweeping rather than substantive language (“[refugees’] life stories could be made into movies”, “Germans do not run away from the responsibility”).

Visuals

Overall clarity of ARD's reporting was further increased by the unique **unity of visual and verbal content** that resulted in the provision of rich information in a simple way. A refugee holding a registration document, for instance, was paired with a reporter’s voiceover speaking about the requirement for refugees and migrants to obtain the document before leaving Lesbos.

ČT provided rich visuals corresponding to the verbal content. ČT enhanced a frame of solidarity, for instance, by having shown positive interactions of refugees, locals and policemen. Instead of consistently providing the richest possible information in the simplest possible form, ČT repeatedly aimed for literary playfulness (e.g. reporter pointing at a German flag when speaking of Germany).

While ARD often depicted refugees as families, it did not shy away from scenes of turmoil featuring young men. It **personified actors involved, whether policemen or refugees, through close-ups** (as did, less consistently, RTL). This contrasted starkly with MTV, TV2, TVP, TVN and Prima which frequently used decontextualized ‘stock migrant’ imagery that depersonalized refugees and decontextualized situations in which refugees were pictured (‘migrants on a boat’, ‘migrants in a queue’), often from distance.

In the end, many channels to a varying degree resorted to the well-known **“ambivalence of the refugee as either a sufferer or a threat, yet never a human”, pervasive in refugee imagery** (Chouliaraki and Stolic 2017). The unnecessary implicit emphasis of refugees’ victimhood, on one hand, and a threat to security and order, on the other, was common in both visual and verbal parts of reporting.

Prima and the Hungarian channels repeatedly **featured crowds of people filmed from behind**. High prevalence of such imagery in Hungary has been noted earlier by Bernáth and Messing (2015).

In the 2015 period, both Polish broadcasters frequently depicted refugees and migrants as families. In the latter period, they both used refugee footage perfunctorily as **a background for reporting on domestic political bickering**. This included imagery of dark-skinned migrants arriving at European shores and ‘coming after us’.

MTV, TV2, TVP and once TVN created sequences from quick cutaway shots, often shown no longer than a second or two – too short to be informative but long enough to create an emotional impression, evoking

an impression of chaos and danger. MTV, TV2, TVP and Prima re-used imagery in a re-arranged sequence and often left archive footage unmarked.

Prima's catastrophic commentaries about political problems in the EU in the 2018 period did not correspond with the calm and cooperative atmosphere of archive materials Prima (re-)used.

Beyond style: from binarity to subject-specific propaganda

Prima's favourable treatment of opponents of refugees during its grossly unbalanced reporting from the site of demonstrations in opposition to, and in support of, refugees on September 12th 2015, included the following two views irreconcilable with religious freedom: "Islam *is* unfreedom", "Islam *is* concentrated evil". Thus, Prima did not merely portray emotions seen in society or simply favoured a meaningful criticism of the content of a belief. Instead, it *favoured* views that imply denigration of a group of believers as such. It is our view that this amounts to **incitement to hatred**. The Czech regulatory authority had, in fact, inquired into this case but decided not to take regulatory action (Datalyrics 2020).⁶

Prima also featured interviewees who made comments plainly derogatory to out-groups ("We don't want any '*Arabáci*' [derogatory term for Arabs] here"), some of which may or may not have been primed by suggestive questioning of Prima's reporters.

We have, however, not found any other instances that would qualify as incitement (hate speech). Instead, we have seen MTV and, to a lesser degree, TV2 to repeatedly feature speech, text and imagery likely to increase the risk of targeted violence motivated by the target's membership in a group, or, what is becoming known as **dangerous speech**.

MTV's employees, for instance, used **patronising language to describe violence against, or, death of, a refugee**. The channel aired a wilfully mitigating description of the attack on refugees and migrants by football hooligans at Keleti train station on September 4th 2015. Hooligans who were referred to as "ultras" throughout the newscast became "football fans" in the news item about their attack on refugee families, men and children. The attack itself was described neutrally as "a clash". After the hooligans' actual provocation, "migrants" were reported to have been "soothed" and "calmed down". Referring to "migrants" who "broke out" from Bicske refugee camp, MTV reporter said: "several of them got away, one of them *even* died."

These were the instances of arguably the most worrying content, outbidding relatively common framing, diction and imagery that 'only' depersonalized refugees.

Binarity

Needless binarity was common on many channels but most pronounced on the Hungarian ones. Based on a sample of texts from the Hungarian parliament and online media, Bognár, Sik, and Surányi (2019) already

⁶ Based on its own earlier analysis which included the same news item, the Czech national regulatory authority solicited Prima's explanation. Prima's response was brief and inaccurate. The response, however, did satisfy the authority and no administrative proceedings were started.

noted that binaries constructed by the government define the actors within “a moral system far beyond mere policy” and “divide entire populations into camps of good/bad, strong/weak, realist/naïve”. In our sample, a strict/naïve dichotomy was tacitly but consistently adopted also by Prima.

All of these channels – MTV, TV2 and Prima – were repetitive in the Manichean assertions, the Hungarian channels being most explicit. Neither MTV or TV2 distinguished between, for instance, primary and secondary migration. Instead, it aligned with the government’s implicit assertion that **migration is a phenomenon that one can be ‘for’ or ‘against’**. Zoltán Kovács articulated this idea succinctly on June 28th 2018 at TV2: “Migration should be stopped and not managed”. This was mirrored in the framing of particularities. The best example is MTV’s report from July 2nd 2018 about a story earlier disseminated by Breitbart. MTV implied that in exchange for George Soros’ financial support, economically-struggling Spain took in “two boats full of migrants”.

Another result of binary conceptions of migration, compounded by a desire **to make an argument in the news**, was exemplified in Prima’s repetitive reporting between June 30th and July 2nd 2018 about the Czech Republic’s, Hungary’s and Poland’s rejections of repatriation accords outlined in a document circulated by Merkel after the EU Summit. Prima adopted and exaggerated Andrej Babiš’s framing, accusing Merkel – who “wanted to save her skin” – of lying and spreading “fake news”. The parochialism of Prima’s reporting becomes apparent in direct comparison with RTL whose reporter called the issue “perhaps a misunderstanding”, adding that only [13] of the 16 countries gave the alleged commitment.

ČT’s reporter reframed the issue altogether, noting perceptively: “(...) But what is important is that on the list of [16] countries [said to made commitment], there isn’t Italy which is where by far the most migrants coming to Europe are registered these days.”⁷ TVP also referred to Angela Merkel’s “fake news” but it functioned as a mere background for the recurring leitmotif: “Europe pays the price of an open-door policy that Jarosław Kaczyński warned against”.

Conflict

Binarity, often stemming from deferential adoption of politicians’ framing, also manifested in many broadcasters’ framing of conflicts. Whereas ČT stressed bad conditions as triggers of the conflict between asylum seekers in Czech detention facilities, Prima **suppressed narrative looking for causes in asylum seekers’ circumstances** and instead stressed their otherness.

As for the conflict between the V4 and the EU, **all V4** broadcasters under study addressed the issue as a **power struggle**. Instead of describing policy perspectives of various parties that come together in a conflict, the channels focused on how various actors were successful in convincing or strong-arming others to ‘get their way’. MTV’s frame of power struggle portrayed Hungary as **a resilient victim, rather than a participant**, of European politics (Orbán: “EU has no solution, we have to help ourselves”).

TVP routinely played the blame game (“caused *as well* by the previous government”) in the 2018 period. Prima, too, infused its frames with a blame game, often through quotes of Hungarian politicians. While ČT did not engage in a blame game, neither did it supplement politicians’ simplistic and provincial framing.

⁷ “Co je ale důležité, že v seznamu těchto zemí chybí Itálie, kde se v současnosti registruje zdaleka nejvíc migrantů, kteří přijíždějí do Evropy”

Rather, it adopted both Andrej Babiš's framing and diction. In other words, all V4 channels framed the conflict of the V4 and the EU **in the language of interests, not ideas.**

Populism

Preoccupation with power struggles, associated with inadequate descriptions of the ideational substance of conflicts, found its culmination in the Hungarian channels' emphasis on cleavages between 'us' and them' and designation of various enemies. In the 2018 period, both MTV and TV2 compounded the Manichean visions with exclusionary populist tropes accentuated by Kazin (1995), Mudde (2004) and Müller (2016). The channels *adopted* government politicians' framing, whereby the government was presented as the representative of (all) "the people" in opposition to the EU elites. TV2 implied it *is democratic* to "stop, not manage migration"; it used this idea, introduced to its reporting by Zoltán Kovács, three times in a given news item with identical wording.

The language employed particularly by both Hungarian channels resembled that of online media in 2016 earlier described by Bognár, Sik, and Surányi (2019):

"When speaking of the power struggle and the 'freedom fight' led by the Hungarian government against the European elite, the language used by the media (quoting politicians) is often passionate, employing tropes of war and combat. On the other hand, there was an emotional detachment when discussing the details of [a policy] and the style often turned technical".

Loyalist versus subject-specific propaganda

Propaganda, as opposed to political marketing, was recognized by Bajomi-Lázár and Horváth (2013) as the Hungarian ruling party's favoured method of political persuasion employed already since 2011. We have found all the elements of propaganda as defined by Brown (1971) – like repetition, outright lying, double standards, pinpointing of the enemy – in our samples of MTV's content and most criteria were fulfilled, in the 2018 period, also by TVP and TV2.

In both periods, the Hungarian broadcasters alluded to conspiracy theories, the advent of which in the Hungarian political communication after 2015 was already described by Vidra (2017) and an allusion to which was recognized by Kopper et al. (2017) as one of three discursive strategies in Viktor Orbán's speeches since 2010, employed arguably to maintain a high degree of vigilance among party supporters. **Both channels under study repeatedly dramatized the role of George Soros as a sinister plotter who enables mass migration to Europe.**

On September 12th 2015, MTV evoked **an anti-Hungarian conspiracy** and cited a single progovernment blogger and high-school teacher to engineer a claim that "*Austrian historians* are protesting" Austrian Chancellors' implicit comparison of a bluff on refugees by the Hungarian authorities to the logistics of the holocaust. This alone appears contrary to the "objective" of **accuracy** formally required of the public-service media by the Hungarian law. Still, this was a minor issue in the whole of MTV's reporting.

Not only either of the Hungarian channels featured only progovernment experts and no NGO professionals in the 2018 period in our sample, neither did they feature a leading opposition politician. MTV repeatedly aired a ruling party's marketing footage without any indication of it, with the anchor and

reporter adopting the promotional message and not featuring any other, let alone opposing views in the given news item. This, in turn, appears to constitute an **infringement of the principle of impartiality**, or, to be precise “balanced reporting” required of all linear media services by the Hungarian law. Again, this was a minor issue in the whole of Hungarian channels’ reporting.

As documented throughout the report, Prima’s reporting in our sample was not as political. Rather, Prima **inserted often implicit arguments in the news** (in favour of the Hungarian government, against refugees, against the EU and against Angela Merkel). Prima did not consistently pander to any government.

TVP’s propaganda consistently cheered for the government, translating myriad issues as the incumbent government’s success and regularly gesturing to the previous government as the designated culprit. Although MTV and TVP may have in the past exhibited a similar practice such as portraying violent attacks of varied provenience as religious terrorism or introducing asylum seekers as “Muslim immigrants” with negative undertones, TVP still chiefly spin-doctored issues of migration, which functioned as a **convenient background motif**.

TVP’s brand of slant against migration was shallow. The phrase “open-door policy ended in disaster” featured in many news items and was combined with unelaborate progovernment cheering (“V4 countries are just right” in their dispute with “the EU dictatorship”).

The Hungarian channels, on the other hand, persistently portrayed refugees and migrants as *a singular threat* to Hungary. In other words, the Hungarian propaganda was not loyalist (simple cheering for a government) but intensely **subject-specific** (exploiting a campaign topic). It corresponded to the past descriptions of instrumentalization of migration to create a so-called moral panic, that is,

“a major threat to [Hungary’s and Hungarians’] values and lifestyle, not least because most of [the refugees] come from a different cultural and religious background” (Bajomi-Lázár 2018).

Much like in the past research on the quota debate in online media, the reporting by both Hungarian channels in the 2018 period corresponded with the broadcasters’ presumed unacknowledged aim to manufacture moral panic:

“In Hungary, the quota debate has been captured by politics. Politicians are the main actors in the media; the main frames used are embedded in and serve the political interests of the government; the framing of the problem and the solutions offered all revolve around power struggles and are based on deploying the moral panic button” (Bognár, Sik, and Surányi 2019).

Van Dijk (2008:59) described typical migration reports to be

“stereotypical or negative, focusing on immigration difficulties and illegality, emphasizing perceived cultural differences and the problems entailed by them” but typically “very subtle” in negativity.

If for most news items in our sample, van Dijk’s description of “subtlety” applied, then for practically all the Hungarian items in the sample it did not. Having said that, cultural framing was repeatedly surpassed by frames of disturbance in the sampled news: traffic jams, long waiting times at the border, cancelled trains.

In addition to hostile terminology, biased allocation of active/passive voice and diction more broadly that was described earlier, the following characteristics assisted in the creation of full-blown moral panic that differentiated the Hungarian from the other broadcasters under study.

Examples of **(1) subject-specific propaganda** at MTV included a worrying double standard: **“ultras” became “football fans”** when they attacked “immigrants” or an eyebrow-raising stereotype: a footage of a brass band in *Lederhosen* as a representation of German lifestyle was contrasted with chaotic scenes featuring refugees (see page 67).

(2) An anti-Hungarian conspiracy was evoked when MTV materially misinterpreted Soros’s speech from the 2017 Brussels Economic Forum that the government spokesman Zoltán Kovács later called “a declaration of political war on Hungary”. MTV lied when it claimed Soros said in the speech that “Hungarian sovereignty” is a bulwark against “organizing migration” (see chapter *Beyond Style*). Another report alluding to a Soros conspiracy was effectively based on one source, after having been **previously proliferated by Breitbart and outlets owned by the Russian government**.

A study by Corruption Research Center Budapest (2018) based on methods of corpus linguistics showed a commonality between terminology and implicit arguments of the Hungarian progovernment online media and a Kremlin-controlled Hungarian website Hidfo.ru. In that study, the Russian propaganda was shown to have typically associated migration with “terror” while the Hungarian propaganda has associated migration with “violence”.

On several occasions in the 2018 period, both Hungarian channels aired particularly similar content, illustrating the **(3) centralized** nature of the progovernment media system.⁸ MTV, for instance, four times ran Orbán’s marketing footage from the PM’s Facebook page. Both channels reported on a “secret” meeting between George Soros and the Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez.

Both Hungarian channels consistently **(4) associated refugees and migrants with crime and terrorism**, using unverified as well as wilfully misleading content. To this end, they amplified articles of questionable newsworthiness by pro-government media – demonstrating the **(5) self-referential** nature of the Hungarian progovernment media system, – used and/or appeared to use websites producing news-like content with hyperpolitical agenda without revealing them as a source, or, produced its own content:

Within the broader pool of news items, on July 8th 2018, TV2 showed unverified, low-quality footage published by “an Austrian website” to warn of an “invasion” of Europe by “migrants”. The report failed to mention that the source website, Unzensuriert.at, is controlled by the Austrian radical-right party FPÖ. As part of this news item, TV2 reported that the situation is “terrible” in Sweden, using the same footage that MTV used on July 1st reporting on a shooting in Helsinborg.

In the news items from July 5th and July 6th 2018 reporting on how “immigrants” make Balkan locals miserable, TV2 re-run Origo’s footage with a misleading voiceover: “As you can see, they are beating each

⁸ Journalist Daniel Pál Renyi (2017) demonstrated the centralized self-referential quality of the Hungarian media system by showing that an Origo article referring to a Ripost article has, in fact, been published earlier than the allegedly original article.

other up". The imagery was slowed down (manipulated) which made it appear more threatening. In fact, it showed a scuffle, not a fistfight.

All this suggests an existence of a multi-channel strategy of enemy creation described elsewhere as a "moral panic button" – referring to continued button pressing despite relative disappearance of the 'threat' (Barlai and Sik 2017; Bognár, Sik, and Surányi 2019) and corresponds to the observation of Máriás et al. (2017), that is, that the Hungarian "coordinated propaganda machine" was consolidated by the end of 2016.

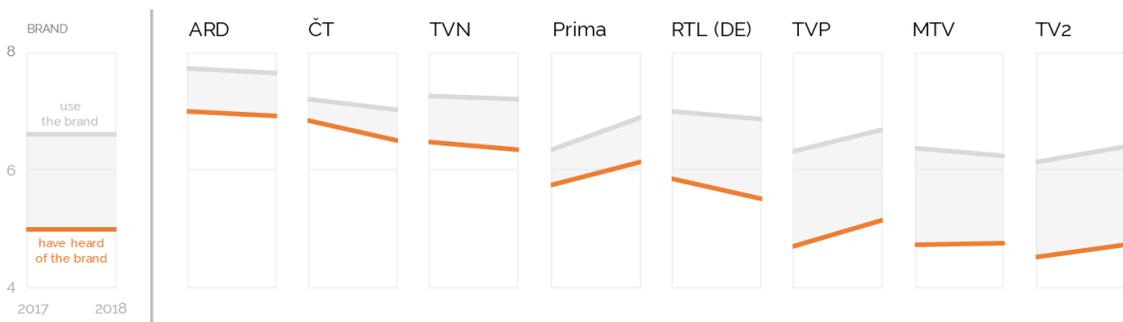
Impact on audience and questions for further research

In general, the effectiveness of Hungarian propaganda has been documented. The question of impact of Prima's more subtle reporting may be more intriguing. Prokop and Michalová (2017) showed that the share of the Czech public who perceived **refugees as a major threat** increased from 32% in 2014 to 66% in 2015. Meanwhile, audiences with more frequent exposure to Prima were significantly more likely to reject refugees.

An interesting hypothesis to be tested would be whether in comparison with fully developed subject-specific propaganda, a consistent, largely implicit tilt in reporting that can be seen in Prima's newscasting is more effective in manipulating the viewers to *adopt* desired positions while conversely, propaganda could be more effective in *deepening* hard-line beliefs of its dedicated audience.

partizans' or everyone's' trust?

average trust in brand's newscasting of a representative sample in the relevant country (respondents could choose 1-10)



www.datalyrics.org

source: Reuters Digital News Report

The distinction between **subject-specific propaganda** and **loyalty propaganda** is important since the subject-specific propaganda (1) effectively crowds out newsworthy topics from reporting more forcibly than its loyalist counterpart; (2) it will continue to affect public discourse on the given subject long after its demise; (3) if the subject includes an in-group/out-group cleavage, then it is likely to increase the probability of targeted violence against the out-group. Research taking advantage of spatial differences

showed that years of propaganda in Rwanda prompted Hutus to view Tutsis as less than human: so dangerous indeed that they must be eliminated from the country.⁹

Regarding the impact of a normal kind of newscasting on audiences, Blinder and Allen (2015) used methods of corpus linguistics to demonstrate on the example of the UK that the **pervasive use of terminology that depicts migrants as violators of law** may have a profound impact on the public perception of the spectrum of, and propriety of, migration.

Intentional creation of physical reality?

In September 2015, both MTV and TV2 signalled the seriousness of the situation by not merely covering the largely unprecedented numbers of refugees and migrants but paid attention to the extraordinary protection worn by the Hungarian police including bulletproof vests on and after September 4th 2015. Given the Hungarian government-coordinated “campaign to demonize migrants as a threat to national security”, launched after the Charlie Hebdo attacks in January 2015 (Szalai and Góbl 2015) as well as seemingly endless extensions of the state of emergency under Act CXL of 2015, it would be reasonable to investigate a suspicion of state authorities intentionally arming police officers in 2015 disproportionately to the given risks as well as the exact level of coordination with the specific media to contribute to the manufacture of moral panic.

⁹ A research on the Rwandan genocide by (Yanagizawa-Drott 2014) used differences in radio reception between villages to document a significant effect of direct exposure to broadcast propaganda – and of spillover effects in neighbouring villages – on participation in state-sponsored violence.

3 Case-based Description of Reporting Styles

Agenda setting

In a comparison of the respective pools, the sheer volume of content about migration aired by the two Hungarian channels stood out in both periods. In the 2015 period, MTV dedicated on average two-thirds of its main newscast to the refugee crisis every day. The extraordinary focus on migration in 2015 can be explained in part by the country's unique position on the migration route. As a country on the outer EU border, Hungary faced 177,135 asylum applications in 2015 – more than in any other EU country per capita and four times more year-on-year in the country. However, the number of people applying for asylum in Hungary decreased 264-times between 2015 and 2018.¹⁰ Despite by far the most rapid decrease of asylum applications of all the countries under study, the number of news items focused on migration on both Hungarian channels decreased significantly *less* than on the Czech and Polish channels.

In comparison with Hungary, Germany awarded protection to ten times more people per capita in 2015, 15-times more in 2016, 19-times more in 2017 and at least 22-times more in 2018.¹¹ Yet, the absolute number of news items decreased only 1.4-times and 1.7-times faster in comparison of German and Hungarian public and private channels, respectively. It follows the reports about migration were likely to crowd out other important issues from the newscasts on Hungarian channels in both periods.

Particularly in the 2015 period, the channels under study addressed broadly similar events given the country differences with respect to actual migration flows, albeit in starkly different framings. This did not quite apply to Hungarian channels which frequently associated migration with crime and George Soros. Other than that, 'event creation' in journalists' considerations about newsworthiness was apparently limited.

Theme code "Escalation of tensions" stood out most in Hungary with 94 total occurrences in 2015, relative to 15 in the Czech Republic, 17 in Germany and 31 in Poland. This could, however, be explained by newsworthiness, given the unique Hungarian position. Both German channels were the only ones to have provided a detailed description of an asylum procedure. The subject of political correctness was addressed by the Czech Prima and in Poland. Help to refugees by volunteers and NGOs was reported on in 6/105 news items by ČT compared to 1/50 by Prima.

Reports about migration were likely to crowd out other important issues from the newscasts on Hungarian channels in both periods.

¹⁰ Own calculations based on Eurostat's "Asylum and first-time asylum applicants by citizenship, age and sex Annual aggregated data (rounded)"

¹¹ Own calculations based on Eurostat's "First instance decisions on applications by citizenship, age and sex Annual aggregated data (rounded)" and "Final decisions on applications by citizenship, age and sex Annual data (rounded)"

Remarkably, “European treatment” theme code, suggesting some option of a common European solution, was absent on both Hungarian channels. The most singular theme code was “Soros runs the world”, with multiple occurrences on both the Hungarian public and private channels in the 2018 pool.

Foreign correspondents were used by both Hungarian channels. In Poland, foreign reporters were most extensively used by the public TVP in 2015 (Balkan Route, Hungarian-Serbian border, Austrian and Bavarian towns). The most global outlook which was used to contextualize offerings of local politicians, such as a brief mention of Egypt’s refusal to set up refugee centres, was provided by the ARD (see Figure 1).

Curiously, MTV featured a self-congratulatory segment about its live domestic reporting ‘close to the action’ on 16th September 2015.



Figure 1: ARD, 1. 7. 2018

Depiction of refugees

Agency

ČT depicted refugees and migrants in a more nuanced way than Prima. Besides crowds, it showed both men and women speaking on the camera. As is illustrated below, ČT thematized the resourcefulness of migrants, too. This was, however, limited to the migrants from the past. The current refugees’ statements were accompanied with a caption featuring only their first name and no information was provided about their role on the job market.

For instance, a volunteering pregnant Muslim woman was shown; a professional of Syrian origin was interviewed: “For example, the Syrian-born Loal Jarkas studied in Prague and had stayed in the Czech Republic. Now, he helps to overcome language barriers” (5. 9. 2015).

At the same time, ČT repeatedly spoke of refugees and migrants in passive: “Buses took [the migrants] to Nickelsdorf. From there, their journey continues further to the West”, “people are given food”, “this Afghani family ... waits for a train which will move them closer to their dream”.¹² The frequent use of syntax that put refugees and migrants into a position of objects to whom ‘things are done’ and for whom ‘things are provided’ contrasted, for instance, with ARD’s wordings. ČT’s syntax emphasized refugees’ and migrants’ vulnerability rather than capacity which the broadcaster previously elevated by thematizing migrants’ work activity.

¹² “autobusy [běžence] odvezli do Nickelsdorfu, odkud jejich cesta pokračuje dál na západ”, “lidé dostávají jídlo”,

Prima, on the other hand, typically depicted refugees as young men or as part of a crowd. Instead of having their motives described, refugees and migrants were sometimes described implicitly as aggressive (8. 9. 2015), unwilling to follow the host country's rules (5. 9. 2015), as people with different hygienic habits (6. 9. 2015) or as 'needy grumblers' (8. 9. 2015).

ČT thematized resourcefulness of past migrants through attention to their work activity. Yet, it also frequently used a syntax that put current refugees and migrants in the position of passive actors.

Both German channels portrayed the structure of refugee and migrant flows in a wide scope. Even the commercial channel has shown and spoke of "whole families, men, women, children, even very little ones" (4. 9. 2015).

At both Hungarian channels, refugees and migrants were typically shown as passive actors to whom and with whom politicians 'do things' (news items that had migrants involved in a conflict were an exception). This resulted from the chosen syntax (passive voice), morphology (metaphors suggesting that 'refugees are water'), semantics ("*gyűjtőpont*") as well as plain lack of refugees' and migrants' voice from reporting. Many of the news items coded as "escalation of tensions" depicted refugees as aggressive, in addition to migrants' alleged association with crime and terrorism (see Breaching standards).

MTV and Prima portrayed refugees and migrants as unwilling to follow the host country's rules. Both channels reinforced a hostile depiction of refugees by a skewed portrayal of the public opinion.

In the 2015 period, both Polish channels paid significant attention to refugees' and migrants' stories and perspective. In the 2018 period, refugees and migrants were usually shown as a crowd, or, young men only on both channels.

Terminology

Albeit media are often "forced to rely" on the "official version of events supplied by governments", they are not "mere regurgitators of government rhetoric" (Doherty 2015). A good litmus test of media's autonomy is provided by looking at to what extent they adopt, challenge or ignore terminology used by the official representatives.

On most channels, the use of terminology associated with refugees and migrants appeared not to be guided by any conscious effort at accuracy or consistency. Both Czech and Polish channels used the terms "refugees", "migrants" and "illegal migrants" arbitrarily. The same applied for "refugee camps" and "detention facilities". These terms were used without any indication whether the reception centre at hand was open, semi-open or closed. ČT and RTL, for instance, used the terms "refugees", "migrants" and "people" interchangeably in one news item.

Tellingly, ČT alternated in the use of terms "illegal migrant" and "refugee" in line with the prevalent usage associated with the topic at hand in the public discourse. In the newscast from September 15th 2015, for

instance, the term “refugees” is (fittingly) used in a news item about the Emergency Relocation Quotas whereas the terms “illegal refugees” (sic), “migrants” and “refugees” are used interchangeably in a news item about the introduction of state of emergency in Hungary.¹³

The Article 31 of the 1951 Refugee Convention stipulates that signatory states should “not impose penalties” on account of refugees’ “illegal entry”.¹⁴ By implication, the term “illegal refugee” is inherently incorrect. Albeit ČT typically appeared to accommodate the terminology already prevalent in the Czech public discourse, the expression “illegal refugees” may have been an exception since the public television itself appears to have introduced it into the discourse in early 2015.¹⁵

Both German channels used neutral, or, even emphatic terminology for the target population. Like some other channels, ARD titled “refugees” alternatively as “humans”. ARD was also the only television under study that has not used common aquatic metaphors such as “wave of” or “flood of” refugees. TVP featured expression “flood of people”, which in the diction of TVN was “never-ending”. MTV, meanwhile, spoke of “endless stream of migrants” and “torrent of immigrants” and TV2 of “a flood of refugees”, or, “of migrants”. ČT mentioned “a flood of illegal refugees”, Prima “a wave of migrants rushing forward”.

All channels but ARD referred to refugees and migrants with metaphors suggesting that ‘refugees are water’. They did not appear to be guided by any conscious effort to use the terms “refugee”, “migrant” or ‘irregular migrant’ accurately or consistently.

We found only one instance of the use of the term “illegals”: by RTL, citing a Frontex official, on July 7th 2018. “Refugee invasion” should be considered as the most incoherent term used in the news items under study and was presented by a Prima’s reporter on September 5th 2015.¹⁶

In the Hungarian pool of news items, the term “refugee” was used in some form altogether 57 times; 44 of uses originated in the 2015 period. TV2 did commonly use the term “refugee” for the target population in the 2015 period (“asylum seeker” was used once, too).

By the time of the 2018 period, TV2 adopted MTV’s practice of strict avoidance of the terms “refugee” and “asylum seeker” for the target population (to be precise, we did record one use). The remaining 12 uses of the term in the 2018 period feature expressions like “refugee camps” or “refugee policy”. The

¹³ “[Krizový stav vyhlášený maďarskou vládou] umožňuje povolvat armádu k ochraně hraniční bariéry, kterou se do země *snazí dostat příliv ilegálních uprchlíků*” (Jakub Železný, anchor)

¹⁴ The condition of a “direct” arrival from a territory where refugees were at threat is discussed in detail in Goodwin-Gill (2001).

¹⁵ The Newton media archive records 37 uses by ČT in 2015 and 19 uses in 2016. The only media company that used the term more frequently was ParlamentníListy.cz, a website producing news-like content with hyperpolitical agenda. In the first quarter of 2015, only 2 uses are recorded in the archive and both originated at ČT.

¹⁶ “Kdy uprchlická invaze vlastně skončí, to se nedá vůbec odhadnout” (Bohumil Roub, reporter)

term “migrant”, meanwhile, was used 61 times in the whole corpus: 23 times in the 2015 period and 38 times in the 2018 period.

Within the news items sampled from the 2018 period, neither channel featured any independent experts or NGO professionals who would be likely to choose these terms. That further contributed to the uniformity in the use of language hostile to migrants that was typical for the Hungarian official discourse after January 2015 (Szalai and Góbl 2015). MTV did not edit out uses of the term “refugee” by Horst Seehofer and Ewa Kopacz.

By the time of the 2018 period, TV2 adopted MTV’s practice of strict avoidance of the terms “refugee” and “asylum seeker”.

János Lázár, the Minister of the Prime Minister’s Office, appeared to go to some lengths to avoid the legal terms when in a press conference relayed by the MTV on September 10th 2015. Lázár spoke of “those who are waiting [in Serbia].”¹⁷

MTV adopted Lázár’s technical jargon that mitigated the restrictive measures comprised of erecting a border fence on the Hungarian-Serbian border, the establishment of a transit zone and the associated declaration of a state of emergency (see chapter *Beyond Style*). Within the sampled news items, MTV avoided using the term “border fence”. Instead, in one striking report on 10th September 2015, it was referred to as a “security module that closes down the railroad tracks” (anchor);¹⁸ “technical border barrier” (anchor);¹⁹ “temporary technical border closure” (reporter);²⁰ “security border barrier” (minister).²¹

In 2015, MTV featured strikingly technical language that mitigated the introduction of measures restricting access to asylum.

“Collection point” (“*gyűjtőpont*”) became a commonly used name by both channels for the field near the village of Röszke where refugees and migrants were directed in September 2015. This is a term usually reserved to waste recycling centres and no previous use in Hungarian for areas designated to gather people is known to us.

¹⁷ “a szerb területen várakozók”

¹⁸ “a vasutat lezáró biztonsági elem”

¹⁹ “műszaki határzár”

²⁰ “ideiglenes technikai határzár”

²¹ “biztonsági határzár”

Framing by country

There are two broad categories of the understandings of framing – more general and more fine-grained. One popular, more general definition defines frame as the “central organizing idea or storyline that provides meaning to an unfolding strip of events” (Gamson & Modigliani, 1987:143). In the more fine-grained definition by Entman (1993), to frame means „to select some aspects of a perceived reality and to make them more salient”, specifically “[...] to promote a particular (1) problem definition, (2) causal interpretation, (3) moral evaluation and/or (4) treatment recommendation”. We adhered to the former definition when choosing a formal frame label and to the latter when describing a frame in detail.

Czech Republic

News items aired at Prima in both periods portrayed migration through overwhelmingly negative lenses with crisis, disturbance and distrust being the central motives of the frames. In part, this resulted already from the choice of topic: Prima reported on the subject of enhanced border controls more frequently than ČT. Both Czech channels portrayed border controls as disturbing to the lives of ordinary people but both channels also featured interviewed locals and drivers who understood the measures as good and necessary.

As should be expected from a public channel, ČT offered comparatively more multi-perspective and nuanced framing. It emphasised the European treatment of migration crisis; through the crisis frame, it described inadequate capacities to cope with the increase in the scale of migration flows; through the frame of solidarity and victim frame, it provided a perspective of refugees and those who help them; through frame of power struggle, it provided the views of the political leaders of V4.

In Prima’s news item from September 8th 2015 primarily addressing the overburdening of the Greek island of Lesbos, a constituent frame of the EU in crisis can be described this way:

Frame component	Specification	Origin
Issue definition	riots in Hungary	TV
Problem diagnosis / causal interpretation	EU still doesn't have any plan on how to cope with a flood of refugees; for now, Hungary has to help itself alone	Orbán
Description of consequences / moral judgement	Hungary builds 4m high border fence (no moral judgement)	TV
Recommendation of solution (treatment)	None	N/A

Remarkably, pivotal components of Prima’s frames were often introduced through interviewed politicians and citizen rather than the TV alone. Prima chose domestic politicians from the ministries corresponding to the portrayed issues. Prima’s frequent employment of the Hungarian PM Viktor Orbán and the Hungarian government spokesman Zoltán Kovács led to frames characterized by securitization and distrust of the West. The quotes of the Hungarian government figures were, however, up-to-date. In the example above, for instance, Orbán’s speech originated at an event in Budapest a day earlier.

Whereas ČT described basic polls on refugee acceptance through graphics on September 4th 2015 (STEM/MARK), Prima did not report public opinion polls. Asking a commercial broadcaster to accurately portray public opinion constitutes an ambitious demand and a broadcaster's active search for a respondent with a desired opinion amounts to a manipulation. Yet precisely because of this concern, it should be noted Prima featured a number of problematic quotes by the interviewed citizens.

Firstly, Prima appeared to consistently accentuate anti-refugee segments of public opinion. According to an Infratest Dimap poll, 55% Germans supported the acceptance of the same or higher number of refugees in September 2015.²² Yet, in a news item from September 13th 2015 that set the German government against German municipalities, Prima aired commentaries by two respondents: One man commented that "too many Muslims" were in schools and that "many families fear for their children". Another man merely said he "understood" accepting those coming from war zones but stressed that Germany "should not accept economic migrants".

If this is interpreted within the context of the Czech discourse at the time in which refugees were routinely labelled as economic migrants by leading political representatives, the views aired by Prima did not illustrate the public opinion in Germany plausibly. Also, the views bolstered Prima's narrative of conflict between "Merkel's" Germany and the municipalities of Munich and Hessen.

Secondly, frequently uneasy answers of interviewed citizens give rise to a suspicion whether they have been primed by suggestive questioning of Prima's reporters that was not necessarily broadcasted. An indication of this can be observed in the report about a town hall in Břeclav from September 8th 2015. In a live interview aired after the town hall about a planned establishment of a refugee camp in Břeclav, Prima's reporter proposed an interpretation of the debate to the mayor of the city: "We have heard the reactions. They are quite clear. We don't want a [refugee] camp here. We have fear."²³ The mayor responded: "I would not like to exaggerate ...". Prima, however, did accompany its reporter's suggestion with imagery of two agitated citizens during the town hall, vaguely supporting the reporter's account of the meeting.

Prominent components of Prima's frames – disturbance of everyday life, securitization of migration, sweeping anti-Islamism, distrust of the West – were introduced through interviewed citizen and politicians rather than the TV alone.

Thirdly, Prima repeatedly featured views derogatory to out-groups. We recorded, in our opinion, one instance when this amounted to incitement to hatred (see chapter *Beyond Style...*).

Within the sample, Prima favoured measures that outsourced migration policies to third countries (migration externalization). Moreover, it introduced measures only generally, implicitly recommending help in conflict areas and Schengen border protection instead of mandatory quotas that the V4 refused.

²² Infratest Dimap for ARD, Sept 2015 <https://www.infratest-dimap.de/umfragen-analysen/bundesweit/umfragen/aktuell/bereitschaft-mehr-fluechtlinge-als-bisher-aufzunehmen-sinkt/>

²³ "Ty reakce jsme slyšeli: jsou poměrně jasné. Tábor tady nechceme, máme strach." (Michal Janotka, reporter)

In some contrast, ČT described a specific policy response meant to alleviate conflicts in detention facilities (“Czech policemen will learn better English”). Prima’s neglect of direct solutions, coupled with the portrayal of the EU as incapable and the V4 as cornered enhanced connotations of a critical and hopeless situation.

ČT raised doubts, too, about the morality of criminal proceedings with a captain of a Search and Rescue vessel. ČT’s abbreviatory wording was, however, unnecessarily evaluative: “Vessels of [humanitarian organizations] save migrants – who could drown on their journey to Europe – from sea, *arguing that human life has more weight than political points*. [Malta and Italy], however, don’t let the vessels to dock and put one of the captains on trial.”²⁴

In Prima’s reporting, on the other hand, a general distrust of non-profits was a recurrent element. On July 7th 2018, Prima reported that “various NGOs pick up” migrants “directly at Libya’s seashore”. It added that “for the policy” of refusing the disembarkation of the Search and Rescue vessels, Italians “usually” express “gratitude and appreciation” to Salvini. In the news item about the outcomes of the ‘EU Summit’, Prima provided generous space to PM Babiš who spoke of “strange behaviour” of non-profits (plural) “*there*” (in the Mediterranean).

Prima’s disregard of other than migration-externalizing solutions, coupled with repeated portrayals of the EU as incapable enhanced connotations of a critical and hopeless situation.

A number of Prima’s news items did not radiate clarity. On June 28th 2018 in a report about the run-up to the ‘EU Summit’, PM Andrej Babiš said on the camera: “Some of the countries believe the refugees must arrive at our continent. We refuse this because it is not true.”²⁵ It was not clear whether Babiš referred to African countries the report spoke about before this segment, or, about the Western countries about which the report spoke after: did Babiš refer to a disagreement within the EU, or, beyond?

Later in the same news item, a reporter stated: “Angela Merkel wants to create a coalition of the willing with whom [it is possible] to agree on common European asylum policy, *that is* migrant relocation.” The reporter thus effectively narrowed down multiple aspects of the asylum policy to the Relocation Quota, a policy detested by virtually every Czech political party. Such careless diction contributed to binary portrayals of migration by Prima.

Use of passive voice let Prima’s reporting be open to particularly egregious interpretations on September 13th 2015. Prima reported: “Not everyone likes [that the German government wants to accept more immigrants]. About every week, some refugee facility *is* on fire in Germany.”²⁶ By not using the active

²⁴ “loďe [humanitárních organizací] zachraňují z more migranty, kteří by cestou do Evropy mohli utonout, s argumentem, že lidský život má větší váhu než politické body. [Malta a Itálie] ale plavidla nenechávají přistát a jednoho z kapitánů soudí.”

²⁵ “Některé ty země k tomu přistupují tím, že ti uprchlíci musí přijít na náš kontinent a my to odmítáme, protože to není pravda.”

²⁶ “Ne všem se ale líbí [že chce německá vláda přijímat další imigranty]. Zhruba každý týden *hoří* v Německu některá z ubytoven pro běžence.”

voice (“set on fire”) in combination with some nominative describing the perpetrators, which might discredit the opponents of migration in the eyes of some viewers, Prima tacitly puts civic disobedience and a criminal offence on an equal footing.²⁷

Prima’s visuals repeatedly did not correspond with the verbal content. Catastrophic commentaries from the 2018 period on the EU and German government coalition crisis were illustrated with archive materials that emanated calm, cheerful and cooperative atmosphere. ČT, in contrast, portrayed its verbal content plausibly and richly through visuals, whether it was portraying escalation of tensions or the refugees’ and migrants’ perspective. On September 5th 2015, for instance, a solidarity frame was enhanced by showing positive interactions of refugees, locals and policemen (refugees with banners expressing gratitude, locals as volunteers of varying age, smiling children, young dark-skinned boy playing with an Austrian policeman, woman in a scarf feeding a child, migrant men carrying children).

At the same time, if ČT were compared to the other eminent public broadcaster under study, ARD, ČT’s visual and verbal content was less in tune. ČT did not appear to coordinate visual and verbal content to



Figure 2 ČT, 28. 6. 2018, Brussels

provide the richest possible information in the simplest possible form in the news items in the sample. If anything, pairing visual and verbal content was done for the sake of literary playfulness. On June 28th 2018, for instance, ČT paired its neutral metaphor “Europe doesn’t play in the same jersey” with visuals showing the Belgian PM Charles Michel unboxing a football jersey and laughing together with the British PM Theresa May and the French president Emanuel Macron. The neutral designation “on the same boat” was said to

be “true in case of refugees on Lifeline but probably not for Europe” and was paired with imagery of the Lifeline in the background. When the reporter spoke of Germany, walking alongside a row of flags and approaching the German one, he notably pointed at it (see Figure 2).

Interesting re-use of footage was observed in Prima’s news reports from June 30th, July 1st and July 2nd 2018. A number of the same visual materials (about ten) were re-used, arranged in a different sequence and only supplemented by a few additional shots.

Germany

Both German channels provided a broad range of framings. News items featuring a frame of solidarity and dignity frequently also included a frame of an administrative challenge. The latter was the most common frame in the 2015 sample. Immense challenges of local authorities in multiple countries were plausibly and colourfully illustrated: in Germany by ARD on September 6th, 9th and 13th and by RTL on September

²⁷ The Federal Criminal Police associated most of these fires with far-right extremism. See BKA (2015) *Kriminalität im Kontext von Zuwanderung*. Wiesbaden: BKA.

5th, 9th, 11th and 13th, in Lesbos, Greece, by ARD on September 4th and 8th and by RTL on September 4th, in Hungary by ARD on September 4th, 9th and 11th and in Austria by RTL on September 11th. RTL used more dramatic terms to describe both refugee hardship and risks of migration than ARD did.

Singularly, ARD displayed appeals for donations between reports on refugees throughout the 2015 period. An interactive map of German neighbourhoods seeking volunteers was shown on the ARD homepage.

ARD's reporting was remarkably conceptual. In both focus and diction, a reconstruction of causalities was frequently central to ARD's reporting. Consider the second independent public television under study for comparison. Reporting on the migration routes and escalation of tensions, for instance, ČT described *immediate needs* of refugees and migrants and used a corresponding language: "Bavarian government [says] its main priority is to let refugees eat and rest as soon as possible" (September 5th 2015),²⁸ "refugees want only one thing: get on the ferry to Athens" (September 8th 2015).²⁹ Reporting on the situation at the Greek island of Lesbos, ČT used graphic language, using a metaphor of "an overheated boiler just before the blast" to describe the severity of the situation and praising "superhuman performance by police".³⁰ Then, it featured a less than informative quote from a local resident: "It's not their [asylum seekers'] fault. Despite it, the locals take a stance against them" (September 8th 2015). In other words, ČT juxtaposed (a dramatic portrayal of) escalation of tensions with (a sympathetic portrayal of) refugees' perspective and, at times, feelings.

ARD's focus on forces behind events, in contrast to ČT's comparable focus on escalation of tensions and immediate refugee needs, made ARD's reporting better suited to provoke a policy-oriented public debate.

In contrast, when ARD reported on the chaotic situation in Lesbos on September 8th 2015, it focused on a logistical point of view and described conditions faced by refugees and migrants rather than their needs. ARD's constituent frame of an administrative challenge can be then described this way:

Frame component	Specification	Origin
Issue definition	high numbers of refugees arriving on Lesbos every day	TV
Problem diagnosis / causal interpretation	insufficient resources (shelter, food, ferries) and infrastructure (sanitation, administrative officers) for an ever-increasing number of people	TV
Description of consequences / moral judgement	North Aegean Governor Christina Kalogirou blames Greek govt for not sending help; EU stopped help to Greek govt because of its "inefficiency"	Kalogirou + TV
Recommendation of solution (treatment)	left open (more resources and infrastructure needed?)	N/A

²⁸ "Bavorská vláda dopředu ohlásila, že nepřipustí opakování scén z Budapešti. Její hlavní priorita, aby se mohli uprchlíci co nejrychleji najíst a odpočinout si"

²⁹ "uprchlíci chtějí jediné: dostat se na trajekt do Atén"

³⁰ "přetopený kotol těsně před výbuchem", "nadlidský výkon policie"

ARD stood out also in high correspondence of visual and verbal content that contributed to overall clarity of its reporting: map visualisations were consistently featured, shot of a refugee holding a registration document was paired with a reporter's voiceover speaking about the requirement for refugees to obtain it before leaving Lesbos (see Figure 3), footage of Angela Merkel initiating a handshake with Viktor Orbán was paired with a verbal commentary about the resignation of heads of governments on considerations about human rights.

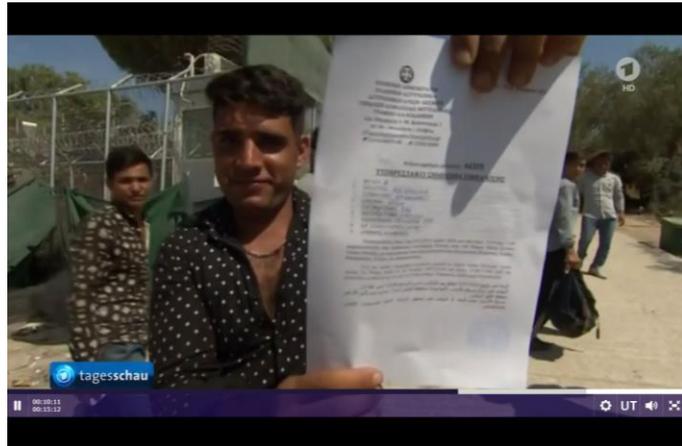


Figure 3 ARD, 8. 9. 2015, Lesbos

Clarity was, on the other hand, not always the defining feature of RTL's reporting. In a news item reporting about "3,000 people in Budapest" camping "under unworthy conditions" in front of the Keleti train station, the visuals provided only a cursory illustration of what exactly was "unworthy" about the conditions. RTL used expressive language to describe, for instance, food distribution at Röszke, reporting: "Hungarian police threw food into the crowd like in a zoo". However, RTL did provide imagery that typically justified its wording, like in the case of "zoo-like" food distribution in a hall compartmentalized by Heras fencing (see Figure 4).

More significantly, RTL repeatedly stitched together a frame of solidarity with a threat to security frame, which led to a devaluation of the humanitarian perspective and muddling of the security issues involved as is described next.

ARD stood out in high correspondence of visual and verbal content that contributed to overall clarity of its reporting.



Figure 4 RTL, 11. 9. 2015, Röszke

In a caption from September 4th 2015, the solidarity-inducing predicament of having flown from the war was re-contextualised to effectively imply an inclination for violence of Afghani and Syrian refugees: “They flee from war and beat each other”.

In the news item from September 13th 2015, RTL reported that regular passengers had to leave an ICE train in Munich because the authorities rescheduled the train for refugee transport. This message as a voiceover was coupled with visuals that showed cheering Berliners to welcome asylum seekers at the train station while asylum seekers respond by waving and blowing kisses (see Figure 5). Both Berliners and asylum seekers may thus appear disdainful of the trouble caused.



Figure 5 RTL, 13. 9. 2015

In the news item aired on September 11th 2015, RTL first reported on “catastrophic conditions” in the Hungarian camp Röszke where “only thanks to volunteers nobody yet died of hunger or freezing”. Then, RTL changed perspective and reported on “extreme rush” of refugees who “literally ran over” Nickelsdorf, the Austrian border village of 1,700 inhabitants. This somewhat threatening characterisation appeared to legitimize the middle segment: “the Hungarian PM Orbán will [soon] finish building the ... fence” on the Serbian-Hungarian border and irregular border crossing will become a crime.

In the news item from July 7th 2018, the anchor’s introduction read: “Boats on this [new main] route [to Europe] are used to smuggle drugs, says Frontex. *At the same time*, refugee helpers warn against more deaths in the Mediterranean and demand a safe passage.” The rest of the report continued in the outlined fashion, devaluating humanitarian concerns by mixing up refugees, irregular migrants and drug traffickers.

Laws and professional ethics typically expect commercial channels to capture emotions in the public population and not to provide a full context, nor civic education. The degree of irony repeatedly used by the RTL, however, did lead to needless lack of clarity.

On both channels, asylum seekers spoke for themselves on the camera. Both channels reported on the public opinion broadly in line with the polls. Concern of local population was reported only in relation to the situation on the Greek island of Lesbos when RTL showed a local woman on September 4th 2015 saying under tears that she and her family are “endangered every day, every minute, [their] children cry from fear, [they] couldn’t sleep for a month now”. Within the narrow sample, ARD did not report on concerns of local citizen and it reported motives rather than feelings of refugees.

By stitching together a humanitarian frame with a security frame free of context, RTL repeatedly both devalued the humanitarian perspective and muddled the security issues involved.

Hungary

An overwhelming majority of news items featured a decidedly negative undertone, with the notable exception of the report on the outcome of the 2018 EU Summit that both channels framed as a great victory for Hungary and the V4. In the 2015 period, disturbance to the lives of ordinary Hungarians was the most frequent framing motive. In reports on transnational policy responses from the later period, a frame of power struggle gained prominence.

In the news items addressing an escalation of tensions, both Hungarian channels consistently associated refugees and migrants with crime and terrorism. In a news item aired on July 5th 2018, for instance, TV2 quoted a local Croatian girl: “Migrants are just coming and coming, and nobody is doing anything. I've heard they have knives and bombs, too. The police flooded the area.”³¹ Police, meanwhile, was described as helpless. A constituent frame of crime can be described this way:

Frame component	Specification	Origin
Issue definition	migrants make the lives of locals in the Balkans miserable	TV
Problem diagnosis / causal interpretation	police can't hold them responsible because they have no IDs	TV
Description of consequences / moral judgement	they fight, they threaten and rob people (tv); they rape and kill and stab (local)	TV + actor
Recommendation of solution (treatment)	we need to defend the EU's borders (implied)	TV

A recurrent element in MTV's reporting was the motive of *an anti-Hungarian conspiracy* – an allusion to which was earlier recognized by Kopper et al. (2017) as a discursive strategy in Viktor Orbán's speeches after 2010. In a news item from September 12th 2015, for instance, MTV thematized the response of Hungarian progovernment actors to the Austrian Chancellor Werner Faymann's implicit comparison of a bluff on refugees by the Hungarian authorities to the logistics of the holocaust:

The anchor first quoted Faymann's original comment: “When refugees are put on a train thinking they are going someplace else, it recalls the darkest days of the history of our continent”. Intriguingly, MTV showed imagery of Faymann in a crowded church, talking to people and then praying. Meanwhile, anchor's voiceover introduced the response. The Hungarian Minister of Foreign Affairs Péter Szijjártó was shown, holding an outdoor press conference, calling Faymann's words “nonsensical and witless libel that causes horrible pain to tens of millions of people”.³²

A Fidesz politician, Szilárd Németh was shown holding a press conference, saying: “I believe this is an orchestrated attack against Hungary.”³³ As proof, he showed the covers of a Hungarian and a Serbian

³¹ “A migránsok csak jönnek-jönnek Horvátországon át, de senki nem tesz semmit. Azt hallottam, hogy kések vannak náluk és bombák is. A rendőrök ellepték a környéket.”

³² “Egy olyan képtelen és esztelen rágalmat fogalmazott meg az osztrák kancellár, amely emberek tízmillióiban vált ki borzasztó fájdalmakat”

³³ “Megkomponált – véleményem szerint – támadásról van szó Magyarország ellen”

newspaper having a picture of the Hungarian Prime Minister with Hitler's moustache. Since "Hungary" was attacked by, among others, the Hungarian left-wing weekly Magyar Narancs that Németh held in his hands, Németh symbolically deprived the weekly of its Hungarian-ness. Németh continued to say: "The leftist attack on Hungary and on the Hungarian Prime Minister personally is shocking."³⁴ In Németh's comment, Hungary was identified with its Prime Minister Viktor Orbán. The anchor adopted Németh's framing of the event as 'a left-wing attack on Hungary' when he emphasised that the German Vice-Chancellor Sigmar Gabriel, another critic, is a social democrat.

MTV quoted Elmar Forster, an unknown progovernment blogger and a German-language and history high-school teacher, who presented himself as a representative of "historians". MTV's caption stated: "Austrian historians are protesting Faymann's words, too".³⁵ The reporting only referred to Forster. The anchor called Forster first "an Austrian teacher", later "historian Elmar Forster". Forster's comment was quoted: "Historian Elmar Forster wrote that as a historian and teacher he was shocked to hear that Faymann drew a parallel between the Holocaust and Orbán's policy."³⁶ Thus, the viewers were misled in regard to the extent of academic authority behind the argument. The impression of independence of Forster's judgement was bolstered by the claim that he was an "Austrian" teacher.

Before the incident involving the 'train bluff', on September 6th 2015, TV2 cited another Faymann's critique: "If you think you can solve the refugee issue with a wire fence and cause chaos with it, you disqualify yourself from politics." This news item showed Foreign Secretary Levente Magyar and the PM Viktor Orbán who thematised two coalitions, respectively: Hungary against Austria and Hungary against the EU. Orbán offered a patronising argument: "I understand that [EU leaders'] emotions, too, are influencing them; we are no different in this regard. But we must act to stop them [migrants] from coming."³⁷ TV2, unlike the MTV, did not adopt the ruling party's implicit suggestion that Hungary, unlike the EU, managed to do what is needed. Instead, it interviewed Gábor Gyulai, a programme director at the Hungarian Helsinki Committee, who called the situation "muddled".³⁸ Representatives of NGOs were no longer interviewed by TV2 in the 2018 period.

To shake off Austrian Chancellors' implicit comparison of a bluff on refugees by the Hungarian authorities to the logistics of holocaust, MTV misled viewers about academic credentials of a quoted source and evoked an anti-Hungarian conspiracy.

Already in the 2015 period, both Hungarian channels featured ambiguous messages that left open a possibility for interpretation of migrants as an extraordinary threat.

Already in the 2015 period, both Hungarian channels featured ambiguous messages that left open a possibility for interpretation of migrants as an extraordinary threat.

³⁴ elképesztő ez a baloldali támadás, ami Magyarországot és személyesen a magyar miniszterelnököt éri

³⁵ <https://www.linkedin.com/in/elmar-forster-92b68772/?originalSubdomain=hu>

³⁶ "Elmar Forster történész azt írta: Történészként és tanárként megdöbben azon, hogy Faymann összehasonlított a holokauszt és Orbán politikája között."

³⁷ "Én értem, hogy az érzelmeik is befolyásolják őket, mi sem vagyunk ezzel másképp"

³⁸ zavaros helyzet

At MTV on September 4th 2015, the anchor suggested to the reporter reporting on a crowd of “immigrants” walking on the highway: “From here, what I see is absolutely shocking and looks life-threatening/dangerous.”³⁹ The anchor did not make clear what does look life-threatening – walking on a highway, or, a crowd of immigrants? Given the same news item provided a mitigating description of an attack on refugees by football hooligans, the viewer could hardly know what the anchor meant.

Reporting from a long car queue at the Austrian-Hungarian border on September 5th 2015, TV2 devoted 30 seconds of a three-and-half-minute report to a distressed Serbian woman. She cried and yelled that she needs a doctor, adding that the “migrants” probably infected many “innocent children” when they all were waiting to cross the border. Her remarks were not contextualised in any way.

Visual reporting by both Hungarian channels were characterized by quick cutaway shots, often shown no longer than a second or two. Such shots may have been too short to be informative but long enough to create an emotional impression. In the 2018 period, more agency footage was used which was in line with the decrease of migration flows. Reports on the Balkans route in which MTV used its local reporters and TV2 used footage from Origo.hu were an exception.

MTV, TV2, TVP, TVN and Prima frequently used decontextualized ‘stock migrant’ imagery that depersonified refugees. Such imagery was re-used in different sequences and archive footage was often left unmarked.

Archive material was often unmarked and sometimes re-used as if the channels had some stock footage of ‘refugees on boats’ or ‘refugees waiting in a line’. Such shots were decontextualized: it was not clear why refugees were waiting in line, where they were going to, or, from, what they were doing, or even what country they were in. Interestingly, one such ‘stock footage’ of people disembarking from a big ship was used by both TV2 and MTV on June 28th and on July 2nd 2018, respectively. In the former case, the footage was used in two different news items.

Before turning to chapter *Contextualizing conflict* where MTV’s use of visuals will be described in detail, consider the case of Poland.

Poland

In the 2015 period, both Polish broadcasters frequently depicted refugees and migrants as families. Correspondingly with the increased prominence of frames of power struggle and the relative lack of international migration context in the latter period, both channels used refugee footage perfunctorily as a background for reporting on domestic political bickering. This included imagery of dark-skinned migrants arriving at European shores who may appear to be literally ‘coming after us’ (see Figures 6 and 7).

³⁹ “Innen kívülről egészen elképesztő, amit látok a képeken, és életveszélyesnek tűnik”

In the 2015 period, framing on both TVP and TVN revolved around motives of 'crisis' and 'solidarity'. In the 2018 period, TVN retained emotional language typical for commercial media and the framing appeared to change in line with the course of real events ('crisis' yielded to 'European treatment'). In TVN's report about the infamous Hungarian 'children-kicking camerawoman' from September 9th 2015, TVN provided a lengthy description of the woman's political loyalties: "The woman is famous for her relationship with a Hungarian party that she calls right-wing but which has clear national-socialist features"⁴⁰ and asked a suggestive, if clearly valid, question: "Why is she even called a journalist?". TVN further featured evaluative statements such as "the end of German hospitality", or, "strong speech by the head of the European Commission."⁴¹



Figure 6 TVN, 2018



Figure 7 TVP, 2018

A remarkable feature of TVN's coverage was a frequent presence of evaluative commentaries and political criticisms: "In this selfishness, the rulers are not isolated", "politicians are making anti-immigrant hysteria", "It is hard to resist the impression that nobody here thinks about refugees. And everyone thinks only about survey polls."⁴² Commentaries like this were, however, clearly separated from news and the reporter was clearly marked as the author. At the same time, TVN provided a pallet of direct meaningful quotes that were antipathetic to refugee acceptance and countered TVN's in-house framing.

A TVN reporter pressed a ruling party's representative to give a number of refugees the government is ready to accept, accusing the representative of "dodging" a question. The reporter accused the ruling party *as well as* opposition party leaders of ostrichism. Rather than being an expedient government critique, this active framing independent of politicians increased the number of featured perspectives.

⁴⁰ "Kobieta słynie ze związku z węgierską partią, siebie nazywającą prawicową, ale mającą wyraźny narodowo-socjalistyczny rys."

⁴¹ "mocne wystąpienie szefa Komisji Europejskiej"

⁴² "I jeszcze politycy nakręcają antyimigrancką histerię", "Trudno oprzeć się wrażeniu, że tutaj nikt nie myśli o uchodźcach. A wszyscy myślą tylko o sondażowych słupkach."

TVP's reporting from the 2018 period stands out from all the other Polish sets of news items since it fulfils the basic criteria of propaganda (see chapter *Beyond Style*). A lot of footage from this set of news items was used repeatedly. Orban's hony testimony to his Facebook followers after the 2018 EU summit, for instance, was broadcast three times in different days and in different contexts (the same Facebook footage was aired four times by the Hungarian MTV). A single speech by PM Mateusz Morawiecki was aired three times. TVP mixed archive and current material, making a kind of a collage that may be difficult to follow for a viewer but give an impression of chaos and/or danger. This was supplemented by a blunt progovernment narrative that regularly featured simple blame allocations characterized by a phrase "caused *as well* by the previous government" (see chapter *Contextualizing conflict*).

TVN used active framing independent of politicians that was evaluative rather than explanatory. At the same time, it was contrasted transparently with direct quotes of criticized leaders.

In the 2015 period, in contrast, TVP provided a plurality of views, giving voice to an array of actors including refugees, politicians and church representatives. Still, much like TVN's journalists, TVP's journalists appeared to have succumbed to the atmosphere of the polarized Polish discourse and repeatedly used poetic or sweeping rather than substantive language. TVP featured a number of evaluative commentaries with emotional overtones ("their [refugees'] life stories could be made into movies", "Germans do not run away from the responsibility"). Dreary conditions induced sympathy rather than they would explain events.

In a report from September 7th 2015, a TVP's reporter claimed that the question "the whole of Europe is thinking about today" is "how to distinguish those who really need help, who flee from hunger, from death, from those who do not want to work and want to simply have money. Today ... it is impossible to answer this question."⁴³ Through this binary diction, the reporter implicitly stated the group of incomers falls between deserving refugees and non-deserving lazy 'benefit scroungers'; further suggesting literal non-existence of economic migrants.

Unlike in the 2018 period, TVP did provide a plurality of views in the earlier period. Still, TVP much like TVN frequently used poetic or sweeping rather than substantive language in the 2015 period.

⁴³ "To jest pytanie, nad którym dziś zastanawia się cała Europa. Jak odróżnić tych, którzy naprawdę potrzebują pomocy, którzy uciekają przed głodem, przed śmiercią, od tych, którzy nie chcą pracować a chcą mieć po prostu pieniądze. Dzisiaj na tym etapie nie da się na to pytanie odpowiedzieć."

Contextualizing conflict

Particularly the news items coded under theme codes “on the move” and “escalation of tensions” revealed radically different ways in which the channels contextualized conflicts: from (1) varying degree of impartiality to (2) attention to causality to (3) capacity to develop a robust in-house framing to (4) a preference for an idea-based or interest-based reporting (relative focus on policy substance or power struggle).

In a varied level of detail, depth and accuracy, both German broadcasters and ČT described the conditions which at times that did, or, could serve as explanations for refugees’ and migrants’ actions, actions of authorities and forces behind events. If ARD was more explanatory in relation to events, RTL and ČT focused more on refugee hardships.

In the news items featuring conflicts, both Hungarian channels more frequently used active voice. Refugees suddenly were not on the receiving end of the decisions by authorities (“must be dealt with”) but they actively formed their fate (“rile each other up”, “break out”).

Conflicts involving refugees and migrants in Hungary

Between September 4th and 5th 2015, all but the Polish channels featured in-house reporting from Hungary, addressing conflicts between refugees, migrants and the authorities. Of the six channels, only MTV and Prima did not attempt to describe reasons for why did the refugees and migrants set off to Austria by foot. The remaining four channels portrayed refugees’ and migrants’ motivations with a varying level of poignancy and detail:

On the situation at Keleti train station, ČT reported: “For five days, migrants waited for a train in vain. Thousands of them, *therefore*, left the centre of Budapest and set off on a journey to Western Europe by foot”. ARD reported: “Some were stuck for several days in Budapest at the eastern train station with no prospect of boarding a train to the West. *Because of that*, now they march by foot”.⁴⁴ ARD also illustrated the motivations of refugees to leave by characterizing the “situation” (*Lage*) of refugees in front of the Keleti station as “unbearable” (*unerträglich*). RTL spoke of “3,000 people camping outside of Keleti” in “unworthy conditions” (*unwürdigen Verhältnissen*) and added that refugees “want to get out of Hungary where they feel mistreated”. TV2 reported: “They [refugees] had been waiting for days for a train to take them to Austria. Then they made up their minds and took off.”⁴⁵

⁴⁴ “(...) *Deshalb* jetzt der Fußmarch“

⁴⁵ “Napok óta várták, hogy elviszi őket egy vonat az osztrák határig vagy Ausztriába. Majd döntöttek, és elindultak.”

On the situation at Bicske train station, ČT used a strong wording without due explanation: “Hungarian authorities lured” refugees in the train by the prospect of “a journey to Austria but then stopped the train next to a refugee camp.”⁴⁶ ČT’s report was accompanied by dramatic imagery of a shouting migrant (see Figure 8). Both ČT and ARD mentioned the “hunger strike” of several men in the train in Bicske. Overall, RTL provided perhaps the most detailed description of the inconveniences experienced by refugees and migrants: Those in the train “stopped by police” in Bicske “slept in baggage carriers” and “some of them rejected food”.



Figure 8 ČT, 4.9.2015, Bicske

All of the aforementioned messages could serve as explanations of refugees’ and migrants’ motivations. Still, they significantly differed in framing. ARD’s focus and syntax consistently made causality the centrepiece of the reports. ČT instead rather juxtaposed (a relatively more dramatic portrayal of) escalation of tensions associated with the high number of migrants with (a sympathetic portrayal of) perspective and, at times, feelings of refugees (“Walking in the dark, their power dwindles away with every kilometre”⁴⁷). ČT’s depictions of causality then appeared to be an unintentional result of this juxtaposition. As in some other reports, RTL combined frames empathetic to refugees with a securitizing frame in a way that decreased the overall lucidity of the message.

Reporting by TV2 in the 2015 period was particularly conflicting. While TV2 featured a combination of dramatization of emotions typical for tabloid media and an unnerving portrayal of refugees complementary with the securitization of migration, TV2 repeatedly did describe the conditions the refugees faced.

Reporting on the situation in an improvised refugee camp at Röszke, for instance, TV2 showed the footage of migrants pushing at the line of police officers three times (at the beginning of the programme, when introducing the report from the studio, and in the report itself). Yet, the conditions of the refugee transit and refugee perspectives were thematized, too. Viewers were told that the “collection point” was an empty field with no running water, no electricity, no building and that the refugees did not understand why they had to wait here for days instead of the camp, just a ten-minute walk away. The reporter mentioned the night was “very cold” and a lot of people were “sick”. TV2 interviewed two refugees – a pregnant Syrian woman who used to be an accountant, fleeing together with her four-year-old child and

⁴⁶ “Maďarské úřady je nalákaly na cestu do Rakouska, ale soupravu zastavily u azylového tábora.”

⁴⁷ “Ve tmě kráčí stovky lidí. S každým kilometrem jim ale síly ubývají.” In a news item from September 4th 2015 about two asylum seekers released from a Czech detention facility, one of the refugees is shown quoting a letter from his wife in Syria: “I hope you will never forget me, I love you so much because you are in my soul and in my heart”

her husband, and an economist from Homs, Syria. An aid worker talked about how dangerous staying in the cold field is for pregnant women.

Covering the departure of refugees to Austria, TV2 started the news item describing “refugees” as “igniting”, or, “riling each other up” (*hergelték egymást*) “all morning”.⁴⁸ They were reported to “drag up those who were sleeping and resting” (*fel is rángatták az alvó, pihenő embereket*) – see Figures 9 and 10. This meant TV2 implicitly suggested a few of the refugees worked to get everyone moving. At the same time, the “refugees” were said to do this to each other *and* to “sleeping, resting people”, as if the sleeping people were not refugees. The negative connotation was thus carried over to the whole group.

But then the report became somewhat sympathetic when stating the reason why the refugees set off and showing a “one-legged boy on crutches” who was described by the anchor to be “leading the march” from Budapest: “He said if he can walk, so can others.”⁴⁹

To several refugees, TV2 literally did give voice but none of them was named. A young migrant woman was asked how she will walk 200 km and she responded in English: “I’m gonna have to walk. I’m gonna have to fight.” TV2 dubbed her response in Hungarian as: “This is my job, I will fight.”⁵⁰

Anchor continued: “They say this 200 km is nothing compared to the distance they’ve already covered.”⁵¹ This suggested determination on the part of the refugees, At the same time, TV2 further neglected translation while featuring expressive language which resulted in unnerving portrayal of refugees:

In the coverage from Bicske, TV2 displayed a man showing his ticket and saying in English that he paid for



Figure 9 TV2, 4. 9. 2015, Keleti



Figure 10 TV2 4.9. 2015, Keleti



Figure 11 TV2, 4. 9. 2015, Bicske



Figure 12 TV2, 4. 9. 2015, Bicske

⁴⁸ “Egymást hergelték a menekültek egész délelőtt”

⁴⁹ “Azt mondta, ha ő tud gyalogolni, akkor mások is.”

⁵⁰ “Ez a dolgom, harcolni fogok”

⁵¹ “Szerintük ez a csaknem 200 km már semmi ahhoz képest, amit eddig megtettek.”

a ticket to Austria. Since TV2 left his words untranslated, a viewer who didn't speak English had only seen a stranger yelling and showing a piece of paper to the camera (see Figure 11 and 12).

When addressing the escape from the camp in Röszke and the departure to Austria, both TV2 and MTV used untypical syntax that bestowed refugees and migrants with agency: migrants “attack”, “break out” (MTV), or at least “get up and leave” (TV2). TV2 portrayed migrants on the scale ranging from active to obstinate. Much of the TV2's report 4th both visually and verbally resembled an action movie (see Figures 13 and 14).

Albeit TV2 depicted refugees as obstinate, in the 2015 period, it also provided a description of the conditions they faced.



Figure 13 TV2, 4. 9. 2015



Figure 14 TV2, 4. 9. 2015



Figure 16 TV2, 4. 9. 2015



Figure 15 MTV, 4. 9. 2015 Röszke

Both Hungarian channels paid attention to the extraordinary gear worn by police including shields, helmets and bulletproof vests. For an example from TV2, see Figure 15. At MTV, in a clearly scripted set from September 4th 2015, the anchor asked the field reporter about the heavy protective gear the police wears to which the cameraman responded by panning over from a sitting group of calm migrant families (see Figure 16) to the police (see Figure 17).



Figure 17 MTV, 4. 9. 2015 Röszke

The MTV anchor who took an active role in framing the story and pointed out the “serious gear” the police was wearing and commented: “This is no longer a child's game”. MTV presented the migrants’ departure to Austria as part of the “day of rebellions”. The anchor introduced the report when reading headlines at the beginning of the newscast by saying: “They go through everything” (*mindenen átmennek*).

TV2, meanwhile,

reported on a clash between refugees and police: “We understand that first, they [refugees] threw rocks at the police”, “They [refugees] allegedly threw rocks at the police earlier”, “We understand that they [refugees] got angry because...”⁵² Given that no source for the claims was given, the TV2’s account of the event was effectively equivalent to a rumour.

In another MTV’s report, from September 7th 2015, MTV showed the viewers angry, rushing and yelling masses of dark-skinned people (see Figure 18 and 20), most of whom, the reporter says, were “men from Afghanistan”.⁵³ They were pushing against the line of police officers and trying to run away, while the voiceover said they have hurled water bottles, food and tin cans at the police. MTV further featured another undocumented, more incendiary claim: “some of the men held up their children in front of them when charging at the police” (see Figure 19).

Both Hungarian channels signalled and effectively legitimized the extraordinary protection worn by the police on and after September 4th 2015. At MTV, one such news item was clearly scripted.



Figure 19 MTV, 7. 9. 2015



Figure 18 MTV, 7. 9. 2015



Figure 20 MTV, 7. 9. 2015

⁵² “Úgy tudjuk, először kövekkel dobálták a rendőröket”, “Előtte állítólag kövekkel dobálták a rendőröket”, “Úgy tudjuk, azért dühödtek fel”

⁵³ This footage is available at <https://nava.hu/id/2306076/>, starting at mark 13.00.

Of all the channels, two did not make any attempt whatsoever to explain why refugees and migrants set off to Austria by foot: MTV and Prima.

When refugees set on a journey by foot to Austria, Prima reported they had done so “because the Hungarians adhered to the rules and could not let them out of the country”.⁵⁴ That is, firstly, Prima explained the actions of refugees by describing actions of *another* actor, namely the Hungarian authorities.

Secondly, Prima’s framing featured an evaluation suggesting that Hungary “adhered to the rules” whereas Austria and Germany did not (implicit). By referring to “rules”, Prima presumably referred to the Dublin III regulation. Given that i.a. Article 16 (1) of the Dublin III regulation presumes a discretionary assumption of responsibility for asylum assessment, Prima’s evaluation was also inaccurate.⁵⁵

Yet, Prima also maintained a pretence of balance. The anchor introduced the news item: “[Migrants] complain about aggressive Hungarian authorities and the [authorities], in turn, about aggressive migrants.”⁵⁶ Péter Szijjártó, the Hungarian Minister of Foreign Affairs, was quoted: “The people could not go anywhere and were increasingly aggressive. They did not want to cooperate, declined to register, declined fingerprints as well as photographing.”⁵⁷

Despite Prima represented the voice of the Hungarian government as well as that of refugees and migrants, no mention was made of the refugees’ motivations not to cooperate – that is, typically to avoid having Hungary recorded as the country of the first registration in the EURODAC system. Given that the



Figure 22 Prima, 5. 9. 2015



Figure 21 Prima, 5. 9. 2015

⁵⁴ “Když se včera vydali [uprchlíci] z Budapešti na cestu pěšky, protože Maďaři se drželi předpisů a pustit ze země je nemohli, Rakousko a Německo oznámili, že je přijmou. Cesta je tak volná.”

⁵⁵ The article 16(1) of the Dublin III regulation from June 26th 2013, that is, known at the time of the broadcast, anticipates the possibility of states to assume responsibility for examining applications for international protection on a discretionary basis.

⁵⁶ „Stěžují si na agresivní maďarské úřady a ty zase na agresivní migranty.”

⁵⁷ “Ti lidé nikam nemohli a byli stále agresivnější. Nechtěli spolupracovat, odmítali se registrovat, odmítali otisky prstů i fotografie. Nechtěli do uprchlických táborů.”

case law from across Europe later assessed Hungary's asylum system had systemic flaws, a revelation of this kind of motivation would have been in order.⁵⁸

Instead, to represent the migrants, Prima's reporter showed an agitated gesticulating migrant speaking bad English: "Germany good, Hungaria no" (see Figure 23). Refugees' perspective was thus effectively not explained. Visual language of the reporting heavily featured crowds of people, repeatedly filmed from behind (see Figures 21, 22 and 24).



Figure 23 Prima, 5. 9. 2015

In some contrast with Prima's claim of Hungarian deference to rules, the question of legality of the Hungarian handling of refugees was addressed by ČT in a later news item from September 16th 2015 when the Czech European Commissioner Eva Jourová was quoted: "Some [Hungarian] procedures in criminal proceedings could be in conflict with EU principles (...)."

ARD, RTL and ČT thematized limbo and otherwise made motives of refugees understandable. MTV and Prima did not offer a meaningful perspective and description of the conditions, resulting in a threatening portrayal of refugees.

All public broadcasters provided coverage of a conflict with refugees provoked by football hooligans in front of the Keleti train station on September 4th 2015. The conflict's portrayal by MTV constitutes a concerning case of clear use of double standards and nonchalance towards violence:

ČT reported: "After thousands of migrants left, hundreds of people remained in front of the [Keleti] station, mostly families with children. After 4 o'clock, Hungarian Neo-Nazis threw some firecrackers between sleeping refugees. Young migrants briefly clashed with them."

ARD gave a concise account: "Football hooligans provoked refugees in front of the station before today's international match of Hungary against Romania." Both ARD and ČT (more so the latter) provided only long-distance shots in which the hooligans were scarcely identifiable.

MTV, on the other hand, did not blame the hooligans. Albeit it did call the hooligans "ultras" in a report from the same newscast about their rioting in downtown Budapest, in the report from Keleti, it switched and consistently called them "football fans" and "supporters" (*szurkolók, drukkerek*). The hooligans'

⁵⁸ A short review of European case law is provided in e.g. Rozsudek Nejvyššího správního soudu ze dne 12. září 2016, 5 Azs 195/2016 – 22.

attack on refugees and migrants was described neutrally as a “fight”, or, “clash” between “immigrants and football fans”.⁵⁹

The hooligans tossed firecrackers between the people many of whom were escaping the war. The MTV’s anchor reported dispassionately: “The football *supporters* arriving for a match of Hungary versus Romania tossed firecrackers between the migrants who stayed at Keleti.”⁶⁰ With a patronising undertone, the reporter added that “immigrants” have been “soothed” and “calmed down” (*lecsitít, lenyugtat*) after the provocation.

TVP, which did not have a reporter on the ground in Hungary on September 4th 2015, reported: “For several hours there has been a *rebellion of refugees* who camped at the Keleti railway station in Budapest. *Clashes with the police and Hungarian nationalists took place, and some of the refugees set off on foot in the direction of Vienna.*”⁶¹ At TVP, this mention was used only as a background for the rest of the news item which focused on a political meeting in Luxembourg, Alan Kurdi’s death and a funeral.

A common habit within diction that led to (1) putting refugees in the position of passive actors and (2) deprivation of accountability of one of the parties in an asymmetrical conflict was the pervasive use of passive voice.

In MTV’s report from Bicske, migrants were usually described in passive (they “were persuaded” to get off the train, they were “put on the bus” and they “were taken” to the reception centre. Those still on the train “will be taken off” and taken to the refugee centre). The actors who persuaded the migrants to do so, much like those who directed the migrants into the train, remained anonymous.

As the refugees were “breaking out” of the camp, MTV switched to active voice: “Several of them got away, one of them *even* died.”⁶² The reporter referred to the death unironically as a “regrettable event” (*sajnálatos eset*). The anchor, however, steadily continued by asking about trains running late “because of the migrants”. Like in other reports, MTV’s patronising tone was aided by the practice of the reporters relaying thoughts of the refugees instead of quoting them, even if the reporter is right on-set with them.

MTV aired a wilfully mitigating description of the attack on refugees by football hooligans and its anchor and reporter used patronising language to describe violence against, or, a death of, a refugee.

⁵⁹ “verekedés, összecsapás, összetűzés volt tehát a bevándorlók és drukkerok között”

⁶⁰ “A magyar-román meccsre érkező szurkolók petárdákat dobtak azok közé a migránsok közé, akik még ottmaradtak a Keletinél.”

⁶¹ “Od kilku godzin trwa bunt uchodźców koczujących na dworcu Keleti w Budapeszcie. Doszło do starć z policją i węgierskimi narodowcami, a część uchodźców na piechotę wyruszyła w kierunku Wiednia”

⁶² “A bicskei vasútállomásról is kitörtek a bevándorlók, többen elmenekültek, közülük egy meg is halt.”

An interesting difference within the domain of active/passive voice and diction introduced above was observed in the coverage of the two independent public televisions with correspondents on the ground. Compare the following introductions by ARD's and ČT's anchor, respectively:

"In Hungary, the *conflict between* refugees and the authorities is intensifying. ... [Refugees] escaped from strictly guarded camps and broke through police blocks in Röszke, on the border with Serbia, and in Bicske, where hundreds at first refused to be detained in a camp."⁶³

"Hungary has not succeeded in solving the *situation with* refugees. Hundreds of people continue to *occupy* the train station in Budapest ... The Prime Ministers of V4 discussed the crisis today in Prague."⁶⁴

Through both framing and diction, ARD put state and non-state actors on an even-level playing field, whereas ČT's reporting lent state authority an advantage and spoke of refugees as of objects:

ARD portrayed actions by both refugees and police as understandable reactions. This was aided by close-up visuals (see Figure 24). The Hungarian police were mostly characterized by images, often with medical breathing protection and gloves, predominantly not armed. Police did not appear violent and its struggle to maintain order was described as if it acted appropriately to the situation. At the same time, ARD treated both groups of actors with the same language and the same measure of scrutiny. "Use of teargas" by the Hungarian police was mentioned as a response to refugees and migrants escaping from "strictly guarded camps" in Röszke. In contrast, ČT's reporter implicitly exhibited deference to authority when he reported that "police managed to catch all" the refugees who escaped.



Figure 24 ARD, 4. 9. 2015

Use of passive voice was a pervasive habit that led to portrayal of refugees as passive actors and removal of accountability from one of the parties to an asymmetrical conflict.

⁶³ "In Ungarn, spitzt sich der Konflikt zwischen Behörde un Flüchtlingen zu ... [Flüchtlinge] brechen aus streng bewachten Lager aus und überwinden Polizeisperren in Röszke, an der Grenze zu Serbien, und in Bicske, wo Hunderte sich geweigert hatten überhaupt erst in ein Lager gebracht zu werden"

⁶⁴ "Maďarsku se nedaří vyřešit situaci s uprchlíky. Stovky lidí stále okupují nádraží v Budapešti ... O krizi dnes v Praze jednali v Praze premiéři zemí Vyšegrádské čtyřky" (Jakub Železný).

Conflicts in Czech detention facilities

In the news items from September 5th and 6th 2015 respectively, ČT and Prima addressed conflicts between asylum seekers in the Czech detention facilities. Whereas ČT stressed bad conditions as triggers of the conflict, Prima suppressed such narrative and stressed refugees' and migrants' otherness.

On ČT, two interpreters with foreign origin (one of them introduced as Syrian) spoke about the tough conditions for refugees in detentions and the mental strain such conditions can cause. ČT's reporter followed this framing. The reporter referred to "doctors and interpreters" who belong to the few people having access to these facilities and who have also witnessed examples of "bad conditions": no privacy, ban on using cell phones. In the narrative, these conditions functioned as an explanation of why "small conflicts occur almost on a daily basis" among the asylum seekers. Thus, bad conditions were stressed, while conflicts (and asylum seekers' traits) were mitigated.

Prima first reported about the tensions in the refugee facilities. Through Milan Chovanec, the Minister of Interior, Prima relayed a *topos of reality*.⁶⁵ "Because some clients do not follow the hygienic habits that we are used to, that is the way it is, it will be ... tidied up after them. We don't have any other option."⁶⁶ To the problems caused by the "migrants", Prima added an example of Vyšší Lhoty, a facility where "a group of refugees attacked one of the guards".

Robert Pelikán, the Minister of Justice, spoke on the camera about the difficult situation of asylum seekers who have been "locked up" and don't understand the administrative procedure they had been "somewhat informed about". During Pelikán's speech, Prima offered a long-distance shot of a group of people praying (standing and bowing down) in a fenced corridor. Interpreted within the context of the 2015 Czech public debate, the shot of praying people may have mitigated the verbal content, stressing cultural differences rather than illustrating the circumstances of asylum seekers.

TV reporter followed up: "that is why ministers decided to visit the camps." However, subsequent framing focused neither on the conditions in the camps nor on feelings of the refugees. Rather, it focused on refugees as a burden that must be coped with (that is, controlled), or, on 'refugees as numbers'.

Whereas ČT stressed bad conditions as triggers of the conflict between asylum seekers, Prima suppressed narrative looking for causes in asylum seekers' circumstances and stressed their otherness.

⁶⁵ We understand *topoi* as a "shortcut appealing to existing knowledge" that serves as an argument for/against a specific course of action (Wodak 2017) that can be formalized as if x then y or y because x (Riesigl and Wodak 2001). *Topoi* must not necessarily be fallacious. Rubinelli (2019:13) thinks of *topoi* as of "strategies of argumentation for gaining upper hand and producing successful speeches".

⁶⁶ The quote in Czech: „Protože někteří ti klienti nedodržují hygienické návyky, na který jsme zvyklí, to tak prostě je, tak se to ... prostě po nich uklidí.“

EU and V4

In matters of EU-V4 relations, Prima, both Hungarian broadcasters and TVP in the 2018 period frequently evoked national sovereignty and engaged in various forms of a blame game. In Hungary, previous research of online media has shown that a frame of power struggle, “pushed hard by the Hungarian government”, was “reinforced by the media” in the discourse about quotas in 2015 and 2016:

“Some of the articles [use] the ‘power struggle’ frame to construct the events as a straightforward bargaining process; others play the blame game and indulge in finger-pointing. Even media outlets critical of the Hungarian government interpreted events in the context of the interests of various governments/statespersons/the EU and how successful they were at manipulating/convincing/strong-arming others to push their agenda” (Bognár, Sik, and Surányi 2019).

The frame of power struggle was frequent in the portrayals of interaction between Hungary and the EU and ‘the West’ more broadly also in our Hungarian samples. In a news item from early into the migration policy crisis, on September 14th 2015, MTV thematized “Eastern Europe’ against ‘Western Europe’ and assumed a **vindicating ‘I told you so’ attitude**: “More and more people, now Western politicians, too, are saying that defending the EU's external borders would be important.”⁶⁷ “The flood of immigrants have by now reached western countries, too; some member states are now realising this.”⁶⁸

This way, MTV vindicated Orbán and other non-Western politicians who have been ‘saying this all along’. This kind of framing persisted through the 2018 period. On the day when the outcomes of the EU Summit were reported, that is, on June 29th 2019, both Hungarian channels twisted the views of EU politicians if these were presented at all, to fit into the narrative of a Manichean opposition to migration and a vindication of the Hungarian government.

MTV introduced its reporting with a retrospective. It reminded viewers of the disturbance resulting from the irregular migration flows in 2015 (“For two weeks, [migrants] flooded the area by the Keleti train station”, “At the border crossings, drivers were met with a huge line and several hours of waiting”).⁶⁹ It reminded of the resolve of the Hungarian government (“The Hungarian government decided to use physical and legal border closure to stop the flood”).⁷⁰ It continued with a reminder of the country’s victimhood (“The Hungarian prime minister was time and time again questioned in Brussels”, “In the domain of migration, Hungary became Brussels' number one target”).⁷¹

In a remarkably creative way encompassing a visual metonymy, MTV’s narrative culminated in the creation of a coalition between the complete trinity of the designated enemies of the state: migrants, the EU politicians and George Soros:

⁶⁷ “Egyre többen mondják, most már nyugati politikusok is, hogy fontos lenne az Unió külső határainak védelme.”

⁶⁸ “A bevándorlók özöne már a nyugati országokat is elérte, ezzel szembesül most néhány uniós állam”

⁶⁹ “Két hétre még a Keleti pályaudvar környékét is ellepték”, “Az átkelőknél óriási sor és több órás várakozás fogadta az autósokat.”

⁷⁰ “A magyar kormány végül úgy döntött, hogy fizikai és jogi határárral állítja meg az áradatot.”

⁷¹ “Magyarország a migrációs kérdésben Brüsszel első számú célpontja lett”, “A magyar miniszterelnököt Brüsszelben újra és újra kérdőre vonták.”

“Immigrants and EU politicians alike” were said to have reacted “extremely”. To illustrate the “extreme” reactions the voiceover talks about, MTV showed footage from the Rösztke incident of September 16th 2015 (a group of refugees tries to get into Hungary over a closed border gate and hurls water bottles and rocks at police).

When the voiceover says, “Hungary became Brussels’ number one *target*,” viewers are presented with visuals of dark-skinned men taking aim at (*targeting*) and throwing rocks at the border, or, symbolically, at Hungary (see Figure 25, the man in a red T-shirt on the left side is shown lifting a rock, taking aim and hurling it).



Figure 25 MTV, 29. 7. 2018

In a segment on “Brussels”, Soros was shown at the Brussels Economic Forum, embedded in a series of statements by EU politicians that were cut short, not meant to convey meaning but symbolize an enemy. Thereby, Soros was metonymically made to be part of “Brussels” and completed the trinity of the designated enemies of the state.

Timmermans said in English: “There are serious doubts about the compatibility with EU law [cut short]”; Juncker spoke in French about “solidarity”, that is, a key theme of disagreement between Hungary and Poland and was cut short; Pittella spoke in Italian; Soros was allowed to say “Hungarian sovereignty” in English; Verhofstadt said: “It’s like Stalin or Brezhnev” and “Do you want to continue the money of the European funds, the funds of the European Union, but not the European values” in English; Sargentini said: “Dealing with Article 7 [cut short]” in English.

Of these, Timmermans, Verhofstadt and Sargentini were not verbally introduced at all. Juncker and Pittella were referred to *by their titles*. Opinions of Juncker, Pittella, Soros and Sargentini were supposedly summarised by the reporter in Hungarian; the words of Timmermans and Verhofstadt were not.

The only person who was allowed to speak at length, and do so in Hungarian, was Viktor Orbán. George Soros, as the only one of the designated enemies who had been *named*, was weaved into the narrative through willful misrepresentation of his views suggesting the “unbreakable sovereignty” of the Hungarian government had been preventing him from “organizing migration” (this is described further in chapter *Beyond style*).

On TV2, meanwhile, Macron was quoted. This could have been an opposing view to Orbán's but Macron was quoted as if he had been convinced by the V4, too: “After the summit, it appears that Western-European leaders who have supported migration until now are changing their minds. French President Emmanuel Macron said the Summit Conclusions reflect the French views.”⁷²

⁷² “A megbeszélést követően az eddig bevándorlást támogató nyugat-európai vezetők véleménye is megváltozni látszik. Emmanuel Macron francia elnök arról beszélt, hogy a zárónyilatkozatban a francia álláspont jelenik meg.”

Both Hungarian channels *adopted* common exclusionary populist tropes accentuated by Kazin (1995), Mudde (2004) and Müller (2016).

In the news item about the run-up to the ‘EU Summit’ aired on June 28th 2018, MTV effectively claimed that “We” – that is, the Hungarian government – “belong to the democrats’ camp” because the government represents people’s true views on migration. TV2 effectively claimed that “a European solution must be based on the will of the European people”, which is, it implied, “to stop, not manage migration ”.⁷³

MTV’s frame of power struggle portrayed Hungary as a resilient victim, rather than a participant, of European politics. Both channels misinterpreted views of EU politicians to support its conclusion that the Hungarian government’s Manichean opposition to migration was finally vindicated at the ‘EU Summit’ in 2018.

Both tropes were introduced into MTV’s framing by government politicians. The MTV’s claim was included in a four-minute-long news item comprised half-and-half of Orbán’s press conference speech and its re-narration by the channel. MTV did not add any context, nor other views in this news item. The TV2’s claim was presented by the government spokesman Zoltán Kovács and repeated word-for-word, first by an anchor and then by a reporter in the three-minute-long news item.

Both Hungarian channels adopted common exclusionary populist tropes, claiming that the Hungarian government represents the ‘will of all the European people’.

Still, TV2 differed from MTV by presenting multiple framings. Having said that, all of the frames were general and none contradicted the government’s line concretely (views of Angela Merkel and Pedro Sánchez were characterized as ‘a need for a common European solution’; Giuseppe Conte’s criticism of the EU was cited and his demand for acceptance of Italy’s proposal was reported).

The frame of the EU in crisis was driven exclusively by Orbán and Kovács at both MTV and TV2, respectively. MTV’s frame can be summarized this way:

Frame component	Specification	Origin
Issue definition	European democracy has faltered	Orbán
Problem diagnosis / causal interpretation	EU leaders don't keep migrants out even though this is what people want	Orbán
Description of consequences / moral judgement	N/A	--
Recommendation of solution (treatment)	EU leaders must follow the will of the people and keep migrants out	Orbán

⁷³ “Európai megoldás csakis az európai emberek akaratán nyugodva jöhet létre”

In their framings, both Orbán and Kovács used a *topos of numbers* ('majority of Europeans want to stop migration, therefore migration must be stopped'). Orbán added a *topos of definition* ('the demand to stop migration is democratic, therefore democracy should be exercised and migration stopped').

In the 2015 period, MTV employed a double standard when it did not describe the V4 as simply 'helping' with the border defence but as "doing their bit", as if it was V4's job, too. Meanwhile, it did not thematize assistance to Southern Europe at all.

Like the Hungarian channels, both Czech channels commonly employed the motive of national sovereignty in its reporting on the interaction between the EU and member states, but they did so with contrasting attitudes to international cooperation. ČT typically portrayed the V4 as formulating its own strategy and actively aiming to contribute to the development of a European policy response. In a report from the European Council meeting on September 4th 2015, for instance, ČT's main frame of power struggle may be described in the following way:

Frame component	Specification	Origin
Issue definition	V4 against mandatory quotas	TV
Problem diagnosis / causal interpretation	EU should employ agenda other than quotas to resolve migration crisis (majoritarian decision-making instead of unanimous consent to quota mechanism is not thematized as a problem; V4 does not feel 'weak' in the decision-making process)	TV
Description of consequences / moral judgement	chaos undermines the trust of people to the EU; some people demonstrate in front of Government office against migration politics of the EU	Sobotka + TV
Recommendation of solution (treatment)	joint EU 'solution' according to V4: external border protection to stop the flood of migrants, fight against smugglers and so-called Islamic state instead of mandatory quotas; eventually make train corridors from Hungary to Germany	Orbán + TV

Both ČT and Prima typically portrayed the V4 as a relatively proactive player. Yet Prima often added implicit distrust of the EU. At times, Prima's frame of power struggle took the form of straightforward bargaining (28. 6. 2018, 29. 6. 2018). On other occasions, Prima coquetted with finger-pointing: "Austrians promised they will take care of illegal migrants. We will see how that goes" (Kovács quoted, 5. 9. 2015),⁷⁴ "Although [the EU] has faced a massive immigration wave already since the spring, it still does not have a [European] solution. And hundreds of migrants are *again* heading to Germany"⁷⁵ (5. 9. 2015), "EU still does not have a plan on how to deal with the influx, ... hence our country ... must help itself alone"⁷⁶ (Orbán quoted, 8. 9. 2015).

⁷⁴ "Rakušané slíbili, že se o ilegální migranty postarají. Uvidíme, jak to dopadne."

⁷⁵ "[EU] still [Evropské] řešení stále nemá, přestože masivní imigrační vlně čelí už od jara. A stovky migrantů zase míří pěšky do Německa"

⁷⁶ „EU stále nemá plán jak k přílivu přistupovat, ... naše země si tak ... musí pomoci sama“

While ČT did not engage in a blame game, neither did it supplement politicians' simplistic and provincial framing. Rather, it adopted both Andrej Babiš's framing and diction:

In ČT's news item about the run-up to the 'EU Summit' aired on June 28th 2018, ČT quoted Babiš: "it's necessary to stop migration, that means to prevent the ships from departing actually" and reported: "the position of [the Czech Republic] is to do everything to stop migration, that is to stop the flow of people that ... hits the European shores".⁷⁷ The difficulty of 'doing so' was not thematized. The Brussels correspondent reported that the German government would like to strike a deal similar to the Turkish one with "African states". He implied that the reason this will be difficult is that "many of [the African countries] are mired in civil wars". In ČT's news item about the outcome of the 'EU Summit' aired on June 29th 2018, it quoted Babiš: V4 "achieved a great success" and reported: "Europe celebrated a victory". It quoted Babiš: "atmosphere was heavy" and reported: "Is anyone a loser? The loser is the way in which European politicians were used to negotiating until now."⁷⁸ That is, the atmosphere was heavy.

In stark contrast to both Babiš's framing revolved around "a success", adopted by ČT, as well as to Angela Merkel's conclusion of "substantial progress", ARD used a robust in-house framing described below, quoting Donald Tusk: "It's far too early to speak of a success".

Frame component	Specification	Origin
Issue definition	The compromise on asylum policy reached at the EU summit	TV
Problem diagnosis / causal interpretation	Main points of the agreement on asylum policy are unlikely to be realized while also opening up problems (both ethical and practical) which are ignored by "heads of governments"	TV, supported by two interviews
Description of consequences / moral judgement	the agreement to lock up asylum seekers in camps to stop their migration to and through Europe raises ethical concerns; establishment of the camps is rejected by North African countries	TV, supported by two interviews
Recommendation of solution (treatment)	The rather clear positioning manifest in the report's framing implicitly suggests that a different policy is needed, or, at least that the outcome should not be understood as a real success	TV

Singularly, ARD did not quote only politicians but also an NGO professional. Amnesty International's Iverna McGowan: "Moving in the direction of politics of isolation (*einsperren*) has nothing to do with EU's *raison d'être* or Human Rights." The reporter contextualized Tusk's and McGowan's remarks: "But that plays barely any role with today's heads of governments. They were happy to have reached an agreement at all" – a statement that was paired with footage of standing Angela Merkel initiating a handshake with sitting Viktor Orbán. ARD's reporter Markus Preiß continued: "The agreement mainly helps nationally: For Germany, it may save the government, Hungary's trophy is voluntary reception of refugees, and Italy can say to have been heard."

If any entity was implicitly blamed for some failure, both ARD and RTL provided a substantive description instead of some framing heavily based on interests, nor finger-pointing. Specifically at ARD, this appeared

⁷⁷ "[Pozice Česka] je udělat vše proto, aby se ... zastavil proud lidí, který ... doráží ke břehům Evropy" (Lukáš Dolanský)

⁷⁸ "atmosféra byla hustá", "poražený je ... způsob jakým evropští politici byli zvyklí dosud jednat"

to be the result of its consistent focus on substantive descriptions of policy differences and forces behind events.

This can be contrasted with the reporting of the second esteemed public television under study. ČT's reporting was heavy on the side of interests. Compare, for instance, the reports aired on the first day of the Summit, June 28th 2018.

Like RTL, ARD, too, focused on domestic government conflict in its newscast on this day. To this, ARD added a frame of European treatment, characterizing Angela Merkel's position as (1) "rejection of national solo runs" exemplified by her government minister Horst Seehofer, (2) rejection of indifference to the main entry countries and/but also (3) demand for "clear rules".

ČT, rather, thematized multiple rifts between negotiating parties: (1) all countries agree to "stop migration ... that is to stop" [irregular migration in the Mediterranean] but (2) Germany and Italy, [among others], disagree about secondary migration, (3) Italy wants other than coastal European countries to take their share of responsibility, (4) Germany wants an agreement with African states.

Reporting on the Summit outcomes the next day, ARD provided a rich description of substantive conclusions:

(1) markedly strengthened border protection, (2) rescued refugees should be brought in central reception camps in the EU and distributed to other countries if those countries voluntarily state they are ready for it, (3) collections points (*Sammelstellen*) in North Africa will be considered, and (4) Germany initiated bilateral deals on refugee repatriation.⁷⁹

As described above, ČT instead, much like Prima, diagnosed majoritarian decision-making pertaining to the Emergency Relocation Quotas as the core problem.

Ultimately, some view challenging indifference in relation to southern countries was featured by two channels only, ARD and, to an extent, ČT. The difficulty of addressing migration "over there" in source and transit countries and a detailed description of the problems associated with the proposals to set up refugee camps in North Africa was

ARD was the only broadcaster to have provided a robust in-house framing in the reports about the outcomes of the 'EU Summit', contrary to tacit celebrations by all the other channels of a 'surprising agreement' or 'success of the V4' following a lengthy negotiation.

Prima's implicit distrust of the EU as well as ČT's lesser distance from views of politicians – in contrast with more conceptual reporting of ARD – resulted in the idea of outsourcing migration policies to third countries being left as the only option on the viewer's table.

⁷⁹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z9q0TG1oyDo>

featured on ARD only in our sample. In a run-up to the summit On June 28th 2018, ARD provided a report challenging the idea of setting up the refugee camps in Libya. On July 1st 2018, ARD provided a simple, 15-seconds-long report by the anchor from the desk, reporting that Egypt does not want to set up reception centres for refugees.

The Polish TVP reported on the Summit with its usual lenses, highlighting the V4 countries' opposition to the countries of "the old" EU, with a strong Polish leadership thanks to the standing government. The V4 countries are presented as proud and morally right defenders of their interests against the weak EU policy, represented mostly through Angela Merkel and Germany. The problem of relocation is used by TVP to create an atmosphere of threat "caused as well by the previous government", which only the current government is able to neutralize and provide the citizens of Poland with safety.

The main frame from TVP's report from June 29th 2018 can be described this way:

Frame component	Specification	Origin
Issue definition	Agreement over refugee relocations is a great success of the Polish government	TV
Problem diagnosis / causal interpretation	Without resolve and solidarity of V4, compromise would not be possible	Actor
Description of consequences / moral judgement	V4 created new discourse in EU	TV
Recommendation of solution (treatment)	Establishment of centres in North Africa to be agreed by politicians	TV

4 Beyond Style: Case-based Description of Manipulation and Propaganda

Laws of all countries under study place legal obligations on news content pertaining to its internal plurality. The specific requirements and their application, however, vary greatly. In Poland, the only clause that can effectively result in a sanction for the broadcaster in this domain, in addition to incitement to hatred, is a 1992 self-styled prohibition of broadcasts that “encourage actions contrary” to “Poland’s *raison d’Etat*” (Article 18 of the 1992 Broadcasting Act).

In Hungary, linear services are required to provide “*balanced coverage*” (Article 13 of Act CIV Freedom of the Press); “opinion or evaluative explanation added to the news” should be distinguished from the news and the opinion’s “author” should be “identified” (Article 12 of Act CLXXXV); one of the objectives of public media is set to be accuracy (Article 83 m of Act CLXXXV). That is, in theory.

In the Czech Republic, the requirements mentioned literally mentioned in the law are “objectivity”, “balance”, “separation” of “views and evaluative commentaries” from “information of news-like nature”. The case law then brings these terms closer to the more usual “accuracy” and “impartiality”. The Supreme Administrative Court stipulated in 2010, for instance, that (internal) “transparency” and “correspondence of information with reality” are two of the decisive criteria for assessing “objectivity”.

Despite in Hungary and the Czech Republic, some news content standards are formally part of the statutory regulation, they have not been enforced methodically, nor transparently. Self-regulation has been either non-existent or ineffective. The enforcement of standards pertaining to internal plurality is thus not predictable, nor trustworthy (see Datalyrics 2020). If such standards were dully enforced, many of the cases described on the following pages would likely be classified as regulatory offences.

Far beyond breaching standards or doing so routinely, three of the broadcasters under study aired outright propaganda compliant with Brown's (1971) criteria. All criteria were fulfilled by MTV, most by TV2 and TVP in the 2018 period. Propaganda has been recognized as a method of political persuasion preferred by the Hungarian government already since 2011. Bajomi-Lázár and Horváth (2013) gave the following examples of the fulfilment of Brown’s criteria by the government:

“(1) the use of stereotypes (‘speculative capital’, ‘traitors’); *(2) double standards* (equating the European Union with the late Soviet Union, see Orbán’s speech about ‘comradely assistance’); *(3) the substitution of names* (‘colonizers’ to describe the EU); *(4) outright lying* (see claims regarding the alleged demands of the IMF); *(5) repetition* (blaming all responsibility for the economic crisis on the previous government, repeatedly using the words, ‘the past eight years’); *(6) assertion* (including the refusal to engage in dialogue with the opposition about legislation and the dismissal of claims undermining the official line of communication); *(7) the pinpointing of the enemy* (with various enemy groups identified, including the ‘liberal philosophers’, foreign capital, the European Union and the IMF); *(8) the appeal to authority* (such as Hungary’s ‘Holy Crown’, God and the country’s Christian traditions); *(9) frequently associated with censorship* (especially on public service radio and television; see also the measures taken against Club Radio).”

We have found the following examples in the content from the two fourteen-day periods under study.

	MTV (2015 and 2018)	TV2 (2018)	TVP (2018)
Use of stereotypes	brass band in <i>Lederhosen</i> as a representation of German lifestyle; “(illegal) migrants”	“(illegal) migrants”	“Muslim migrant”
Double standards	“ultras” became “football fans” when they attacked “immigrants”; refugees were syntactically deprived of agency unless they were rioting; V4 is expected to “do their bit” with border protection but assistance to Southern Europe is not thematized at all	Through diction, refugees were deprived of agency unless they were rioting (2015)	“old EU” is biased against V4 (led by Poland); yet “more and more” unspecified (presumably Western) countries agree the EU’s migrant policy was wrong
Substitution of names	visual metonyms for ‘Brussel’		“EU dictatorship”, “EU dictators”
Outright lying	willful misinterpretation of Soros’s speech at the Brussels Economic Forum	depicting a scuffle among migrants as a fistfight	
Repetition	Increasing number of leaders now agree <i>with Orbán</i> that past EU migration policy was wrong although “three years ago, [convincing them] seemed like a mission impossible”; ‘Merkel invited migrants’; retrospective from July 29 th 2018 Migrants make Balkan people’s lives miserable; Orbán’s after-summit Facebook footage	Migrants make Balkan peoples’ lives miserable	Increasing number of countries now agree <i>with the Polish government</i> that the past EU migrant policy was wrong; “open-door policy turned out to be a disaster”; Orbán’s after-summit Facebook video
Assertion	foreign left-wing forces engaged in a coordinated attack against Hungary; “Europe without borders is coming to an end”; “The left counts on migrants’ votes”	“The European Parliament is under Soros’s spell”, “Soros has people everywhere”, “NGOs transport illegal migrants from Africa to Europe”; “Migrants would invade Europe”	those who come to Europe „don’t respect the Christian civilization“; „don’t want to integrate“; only V4 countries were able to solve the problems and find compromise during the 2018 EU Summit
Pinpointing of enemy	‘migrant’ (misbehaved; criminal or terrorist), ‘Soros’, ‘old EU’/‘Brussels’	‘migrant’, ‘Soros’	main enemies are “the old EU”, with Germany at its lead and the previous Polish government (Civic Platform)
Appeal to authority	‘Democracy’ (as a warrant to ‘stop migration’); academic authority (misrepresented ‘Austrian historians’)	‘Will of the (European) people’ (as a warrant to ‘stop migration’)	current government presented as leading and <i>the only</i> authority in migration policy-related issues, recognized abroad by V4 and Austria
Frequent association with censorship	No leading opposition politicians, no NGO professionals	No opposition politicians, no NGO professionals	No NGO and other professionals; only loyal party academics

Newsworthiness

On neither of the Hungarian channels, agenda setting was driven by newsworthiness in the traditional sense (Galtung and Ruge 1965) in either period. ‘Crime’, ‘terrorism’ and – in the 2018 period – ‘speculator George Soros’ were systematically associated with migration and featured prominently. The channels typically favoured these topics by amplifying the news from progovernment websites, demonstrating the (1) self-referential nature of the Hungarian progovernment media system.

During the 2018 period, MTV aired seven and TV2 aired three reports about George Soros. On July 7th and 8th 2018, TV2 featured conspiratorial captions with no quotation marks: “The European Parliament is under Soros’s spell”, “Soros has people everywhere” (see Figures 26 – 28).

In the news item about the outcomes of the ‘EU Summit’ from June 29th 2018, MTV materially misinterpreted a speech by Soros at the 2017 Brussels Economics Forum.

“In a speech last summer, the billionaire speculator [Soros] explicitly said that one of the greatest obstacles in organising migration is Hungary's unbreakable sovereignty.”⁸⁰ Judging from the visuals, MTV referred to a speech given at the Brussels Economic Forum on June 1st 2017 – a speech that Zoltán Kovács, the government spokesman, later called “a declaration of political war on Hungary”. This was the only prominent speech given by George Soros in the summer of 2017.

The speech, in fact, addressed several topics and it did not either explicitly, or, implicitly claim anything to the effect of “organization of migration”, or some exclusivity of the Hungarian decline of common European solutions. Soros, however, did touch on both issues. On the former, Soros said that “[Viktor Orbán] cast himself in the role of the defender of Hungarian sovereignty and me as a shady currency speculator who uses his money to flood Europe--particularly his native Hungary--with illegal immigrants



Figure 26 TV2, "Soros has people everywhere"



Figure 27 TV2, "Soros has people everywhere"



Figure 28 TV2, "Soros has people everywhere"

⁸⁰ “A milliárdos spekuláns egy tavaly nyáron tartott beszédében már azt is nyíltan megfogalmazta, hogy Magyarország törhetetlen szuverenitása az egyik legnagyobb akadály a migráció megszervezése előtt.”

as part of some vague but nefarious plot.”⁸¹ On the latter, Soros stated that “member states want to reassert their sovereignty”.

On July 2nd 2018, both Hungarian channels reported on a “secret” meeting between Soros and the Spanish PM Pedro Sánchez that supposedly happened on June 27th 2018 at the Palace of Moncloa (that is, the official residence of the Spanish PM). This may be an example illustrating the centralized nature of the Hungarian clientelistic media system.

Albeit both channels source their story to “a Spanish website” OKdiario whose journalist Raquel Tejero originally wrote about the alleged meeting, the channels reported on it with a four-day delay. The genealogy of the story was interesting: on June 28th 2018, the same day that OKdiario published it, the story was proliferated by Russian government-owned outlets RT and Sputnik. On July 1st 2018, it was published by Breitbart, an outlet producing news-like content with hyperpolitical agenda.

MTV presented the meeting as if two Spanish news sources reported on it independently (“according to news reports...”, “OKDiario writes...”, “In turn, La Gaceta writes... ”). In fact, the story originated effectively in one source since La Gaceta’s reporting was based on OKdiario’s article (notably, both were mentioned by Breitbart). OKdiario is one of the most popular Spanish websites which was, according to an analysis by El País, is a website publishing “partisan or biased content, or outright hoaxes” (Peinado and Muela 2018).⁸²

MTV added an original in-house framing suggesting, a *quid pro quo* conspiracy between George Soros, the EU and the Spanish government:

Frame component	Specification	Origin
Issue definition	Spain is in financial trouble	TV
Problem diagnosis / causal interpretation	None suggested	N/A
Description of consequences / moral judgement	Soros and the European Commission provide financial support for Spain	TV
Recommendation of solution (treatment)	To get the money, Spain must become pro-migration	TV

Soros was described as a tycoon “who has great influence in Brussels, and who finances pro-migration campaigns and NGOs supports mass immigration all over the world.”⁸³ Spain was thematized in opposition to Italy, which under the new government (and the new interior minister) no longer allows migrants to come. Sánchez was portrayed as representative of left-wing, pro-migrant politicians, leading “a country

⁸¹ SOROS, G. Remarks at the Brussels Economic Forum, June 1st 2017

http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/bef2017/media/speech/2-soros-bef_en.pdf

⁸² “OkDiario es el “medio de comunicación” peor valorado de España.” DigitalSevilla, 21 November 2017, “<https://digitalsevilla.com/2017/11/21/okdiario-medio-comunicacion-peor-valorado-espana/>

⁸³ “akinek nagy befolyása van Brüsszelben, és aki migrációpárti kampányokat és a tömeges bevándorlást támogató NGO-kat finanszíroz szerte a világban”

facing serious budgetary problems”. In a boorish wording, MTV suggested that in exchange for financial support, Spain “took in “two boats full of migrants”⁸⁴.

TV2’s anchor and reporter reiterated the meeting was “secret”⁸⁵. Enhancing the sinister connotation, TV2 noted that Soros was accompanied by “two unknown men”. The TV implied that Soros wants migrants to come to Europe. The TV’s causal interpretation was that Italy no longer allows migrants in. And the consequence, the TV suggested, was that Soros held secret meetings with pro-migration European leaders, possibly to persuade them to keep their borders open and to influence EU policy. TV2 further asserted that “NGOs transport illegal immigrants from Africa to Europe”⁸⁶ and added that “experts think it is telling that the meeting took place right before the EU summit.” While István Kovács, a pundit from the Századvég’s Migration Research Institute features in the report, no one is named as a source for the above claim.⁸⁷

MTV re-run the same story on July 3rd as part of a longer report entitled “Italy gives new boats to Libya”. The wording was the same, albeit shortened; visuals the same. Referevisuals, and with no reference to OKdiario, only to La Gaceta.

Both Hungarian channels dramatized the role of George Soros as a sinister plotter who enables mass migration to Europe. On one occasion, they used a story based on one source, proliferated by Breitbart and outlets owned by the Russian government, without further verification.

Another notable case of adoption of a story with genealogy marked by hyperpolitical nationalist websites was observed at TV2 on July 8th 2018. In a report with a caption “Migrants would invade Europe” TV2 showed footage published by “an Austrian website”. The reporter claimed the video shows migrants on a boat heading to Europe, cheering for Allah and yelling that Europe is theirs. The low quality of the video makes it impossible to determine what is being yelled, or, where and when it was shot. The report failed to mention that the source website, Unzensuriert.at, is controlled by the Austrian radical-right party FPÖ. As part of this news item, TV2 reported that the situation is “terrible” in Sweden, using the same footage that MTV used on July 1st reporting on a shooting in Helsingborg.

In the news items addressing the escalation of tensions, both Hungarian channels associated refugees and migrants with crime and terrorism, often using other progovernment media as sources. It can, of course, be legitimate to report on an exclusive reporting by another media title. In addition to questionable newsworthiness of the news items in this category, however, they often were unverified, misleading or materially manipulated.

⁸⁴ “két, migránsokkal teli hajót is befogadtak”

⁸⁵ “The meeting was kept secret from the public to such a degree that it was not even listed in the Prime Minister’s official weekly agenda” [“A megbeszélést annyira eltitkolták a közvélemény elől, hogy az nem is szerepelt a kormányfő heti programjában.”]

⁸⁶ “civil szervezetek illegális migránsokat szállítanak Afrikából Európába”

⁸⁷ “Szakértők szerint sokatmondó az, hogy az egyeztetés közvetlenül az uniós csúcson történt.”

In the 2015 period, for example, news items based on Magyar Idők articles were aired by both MTV and TV2 on September 8th ('ISIS terrorists coming to Europe') and by MTV on September 9th ('The left counts on migrants' votes'). A news item based on a Mandiner.hu article was aired by MTV on September 10th ("Migrants were aggressive with a young girl in Budapest").

In the 2018 period, news items based on Origo.hu articles were aired by MTV on July 1st ('Crime and migration in Sweden')⁸⁸ and by TV2 ('Migrants make lives of ordinary people miserable in the Balkans'). The latter news item, that included Origo's footage, was aired on July 5th and re-run on July 6th 2018.

Some of the migrants claimed to be terrorists by both MTV and TV2 were demonstrated not to be terrorists by the BBC; neither of the remaining accusations above was verified either by MTV nor TV2.⁸⁹

The Mandiner.hu article, reporting on an incident of four migrants assaulting a Hungarian girl (who is a folk dancer to boot) in Budapest was covered selectively. MTV quoted the girl telling Mandiner.hu that she lost sympathy to refugees, thinking they should be "anywhere but here". In the original article, however, she went on to say that the aggressivity of four refugees cannot be blamed on other refugees. She added the refugees still need assistance and took home-baked cookies to the Keleti train station a few days after the attack.

Both Hungarian channels consistently associated refugees and migrants with crime and terrorism, using unverified as well as wilfully misleading content and often amplifying articles of questionable newsworthiness by pro-government media.

In the news items reporting how "immigrants" make Balkan locals miserable from July 5th and July 6th 2018, TV2 re-run Origo's footage that was slowed down (that is, manipulated) with a materially misleading voiceover: "As you can see, they are beating each other up". The visuals, however, showed a scuffle, not a fistfight (see Figure 29). The reported featured strong unverified claims from locals of Velika Kladusa, a Bosnian village. One of them says: "Some [migrants] use drugs, rob people, harass/rape people, kill people, and stabbings have also happened."⁹⁰ Another local is reported to say that "she is afraid because she has heard that some migrants have bombs."



Figure 29 TV2, 5. 7. 2018

⁸⁸ The piece covered "another shooting" in Sweden among migrants, where, according to Origo.hu, crime and migration are closely related – of the 21 most dangerous criminals in Sweden only four have Swedish names.

⁸⁹ "Laith Al Saleh: This viral photo falsely claims to show an IS fighter posing as a refugee" , 7 September 2015, <https://www.bbc.com/news/blogs-trending-34176631>

⁹⁰ "Páran közülük drogoznak, rabolnak, erőszakoskodnak, gyilkolnak, és kérelések is történtek."

Reporter says migrants “have also threatened Origo's crew and they robbed an Austrian crew” without giving any details. The story gave more agency to smugglers than migrants: “human smugglers arrange the migrants' trips in an organised manner”. All visuals were shot from distance; in a number of cases, they appeared as if secretly filmed. The goal clearly seems to be to make people afraid. The reporter concluded: Once these dangerous people are inside the Schengen zone, “nothing will stop them.”

News from progovernment websites was used to pass on other messages. An idea based on a Magyar Idők article was aired by both channels within our pools – by MTV on September 9th 2015 and by TV2 with a four-day delay on September 13th 2015. MTV effectively claimed that “in recent years, the elections in several EU countries have been decided by immigrants and their children” because ‘migrants, such as black people, voted for left-wing parties’.

In addition to the amplification of stories by progovernment websites, both channels run further news items connecting “immigrants” and crime. A number of these, too, were materially misleading.

MTV run the following stories: ‘many people in Sweden are afraid that the Muslim migrants will rape Swedish women; they already raped more than 1,500 women this year’ (September 12th 2015), ‘a migrant from Iraq murdered a 14-year old German girl and, with a 13-year old migrant, raped an 11-year old German girl’ (July 4th 2018).

TV2 run the following stories: a migrant attacked a police officer in the Hungarian town of Kiskunhalas (September 9th 2015), ‘women and children are reportedly raped in German refugee centres’ (September 16th 2015), ‘migrants are rioting in Nantes, France’ (July 9th 2018).

TV2's reporting on alleged rapes of women and children in German refugee centres was particularly misleading. A caption of TV's news item from September 16th 2018 said: “Migrants accused of rape”.⁹¹ Yet, TV2 told a story of migrant women and children being the *victims* of rape in refugee camps. It is possible that the perpetrators were also migrants, but this was not discussed in the report.

Impartiality

Former broadcast executive David Cox defined *impartiality* in practice as an “attempt to regard different ideas, opinions, interests or individuals with detachment”, further gesturing to the lesson of legal philosopher Ronald Dworkin: “everyone need not receive equal treatment, but everyone should be treated as an equal” and adding that impartiality is to be distinguished from *balance*, as “the allocation of equal space to opposing views” (Cox 2007). Balance is regarded as a constituent requirement of impartiality by, for instance, the British regulator (Ofcom 2013).

Laws in the Czech Republic and Hungary speak only of “balance” but in the case law of higher courts, this requirement typically translates into some approximation of “impartiality”. The key criteria for assessing “balance” in the Czech Constitutional Court's reasoning, for instance, is “representation of particular

⁹¹ „Migránsokat vádolnak erőszakkal”

interests that come to conflict in the [broadcaster's] message according to their significance".⁹² Below, we describe the most prominent instances of suspect breaches of impartiality.

Within the sample, Viktor Orbán received most airtime on both Hungarian channels in both periods, with Péter Szijjártó coming second. In 2015, MTV provided the opposition parties with space for expression. By 2018, Jobbik, the strongest opposition party, was not mentioned at all and three left-wing parties were

By the 2018 period, TV2 did no longer interview any opposition party representative or other than pro-government expert.

given space in total only in 3 out of 63 news items. Albeit TV2 was less party-political in both periods, in the 2018 period, no opposition party was provided airtime (Fidesz, in comparison, was quoted in four news items) within the sample. The accentuation of TV2's progovernment tilt was also apparent in the type of experts featured. On September 6th 2015, TV2 did interview a representative of the Hungarian Helsinki Committee in a report about criticism of the Hungarian

government from abroad. But by 2018, only progovernment experts were interviewed (Nézőpont Intézet's Ágoston Sámuel Mráz on June 29th, István Kovács from the Centre for Fundamental Rights on July 2nd, "security expert" György Nógrádi on July 5th, constitutional lawyer Zoltán Lomnici on July 8th).

MTV routinely conjured news items by *adopting* messages from public government speeches. News items from September 10th 2015 and June 28th 2018 represent the most poignant examples. The first instance was an over three-minute-long news item edited from a press conference given by János Lázár, Head of the Cabinet Office of the Prime Minister. Lázár was the only actor speaking and no opportunity was given to anyone to counter his words. Instead of the predominant 'the government is defending Hungary from mass migration' rhetoric, the government was presented as benevolent, solving a logistical problem and increasing the orderliness in the processing of asylum claims. This framing downplayed the meaning of the measures announced by Lázár that effectively prevented the vast majority of refugees from applying for asylum in Hungary.⁹³

The presentation of the measures by Lázár and, in turn, by MTV was replete with technical and circuitous language. Lázár said: "We are hoping that we are able to reduce the time period until the date of 31 October to a significant degree, maybe even by a month";⁹⁴ the border barrier is being constructed "at a priority speed".⁹⁵ Lázár "invites three charities to participate".⁹⁶ He further

MTV repeatedly aired a ruling party's marketing footage without any indication of it, with the anchor and reporter adopting its message and not featuring any other, let alone opposing views in the given news item.

⁹² Nález sp. zn. III. ÚS 4035/14 ze dne 30. ledna 2018 čl. VI, odst. 54

⁹³ Asylum applications were regularly dismissed on the basis of inadmissibility only since the summer of 2018 but already back in September 2015, only two asylum seekers a day were allowed to log an application, for instance.

⁹⁴ "reményeink szerint az október 31-ig szóló időpontot jelentős mértékben, akár egy hónappal is képesek vagyunk lerövidíteni."

⁹⁵ "kiemelt sebességgel zajlik"

⁹⁶ "három karitatív szervezet közreműködését szeretnénk megkérni"

spoke of “putting a roof above their [migrants’] head”⁹⁷ – an expression that has a solemn and archaic undertone in Hungarian. Instead of ever using the word ‘fence’, the minister, the anchor, and the reporter used technical jargon (see chapter *Terminology*).

The border closure was also described as an administrative process with Lázár reported as saying: “From Tuesday on, migrants will be able to submit their asylum applications at the newly established administrative points at the Hungarian border. ... Those who arrive will have to wait for their turn at the administrators of the Office of Immigration and Nationality. Those who are done can wait either at the border or at one of the reception centres for their application to be decided by the Szeged Court.”⁹⁸ By conjuring the image of people waiting in an orderly line to submit documents to administrators, Lázár normalised the process as a mere administrative procedure.

At TV2, in comparison, the ‘benevolent government’ theme was missing and the issue was framed merely as an administrative issue: “There, at the border, there will be an opportunity, the government will provide for them the conditions to submit their asylum applications, so the Office sets up an office there, accepts their asylum applications, and they will be under protection while their claim is processed.”⁹⁹

Another instance of MTV’s adoption of messages contained in ‘public’ government speeches were Viktor Orbán’s homy testimonies from the Summit to his Facebook followers. These were aired repeatedly by both MTV and, remarkably, the Polish TVP, without Orbán’s views being distinguished from reporting.

On June 28th 2018, MTV began the primetime newscast with a four-minute-long news item based on Orbán’s Facebook video, about a minute of which comprised of Orbán speaking directly; in the rest of the item, the anchor and reporter’s voiceover summarized, quoted and paraphrased the Prime Minister’s testimony to his Facebook followers. The overt aim of the promotional video, adopted by MTV, was to orchestrate Orbán as an active actor at the EU Summit. The visuals chronicled ‘a day in the life of a busy leader’: Orbán received leaders and gave speeches while others listened intently (Emanuel Macron nodded). Note Orbán spoke in the first person singular and said to have “received” the French president,



Figure 30TVP, 29. 6. 2018

⁹⁷ “Fedélt biztosít a fejük fölé”

⁹⁸ “Jövő hét keddtől a magyar határon kialakított ügyintézési pontokon adhatják be menekültkérelmeiket a migránsok, mondta Lázár János. A miniszterelnökséget vezető miniszter hozzátette: az oda érkezőknek ott helyben kell megvárniuk, míg sorra kerülnek a Bevándorlási és Állampolgársági Hivatal ügyintézőinél, aki pedig már túl van ezen, az vagy a határsávban vagy pedig valamelyik befogadóállomáson várhatja meg, míg a Szegedi Törvényszéken elbírálják a kérelmét.”

⁹⁹ “Ott, a határsávban rendelkezésre fog állni az a lehetőség, hogy a kormány biztosítja számára a menekültkérelem benyújtásának a feltételeit, tehát ott a hivatal kitelepül, átveszi a menekültkérelmét, és a menekültkérelem jogerős elbírálásáig ő védelemben részesül.”

rather than meeting with him: “I have met and negotiated with the Austrian chancellor, and I have also convened the V4, and we *received* the French president.”¹⁰⁰

On June 29th, MTV used another Orbán’s Facebook video (entitled by Orbán “After the battle”) to report that “three years ago”, getting other leaders on Orbán’s side “seemed like a mission impossible” and “Hungarian proposals were called the hooded devil in Brussels”.¹⁰¹ MTV did not make clear whether these were quotes or interpretations. If it was the former, the author was not marked. If it was the latter, it was a progovernment evaluative commentary. No other opinions, let alone opposing views were heard, and Orbán’s words were not put into any context, either.



Figure 31 TVP 9. 7. 2018

Parts of this promotional footage from the Summit was re-used without any indication of the source in other news items aired on June 29th 2018, June 30th 2018 and July 1st 2018.

On TVP, the latter video was also broadcast repeatedly. On June 29th, it was featured in the introduction to the newscast and later on in the news item itself; then again on July 9th 2018. At TVP, a caption noted the video was dated (see Figures 30 and 31); Facebook was, however, not noted as a source and views were not separated from views either.

In a report from July 10th 2018, TV2 did ultimately signal that its stated message was a political statement from a press conference but only after a lengthy exposé of the message that seemed like the TV’s own reporting:

MTV, TV2 and TVP in the 2018 period made it hard to impossible for the viewers to distinguish reporting from ruling party’s views.

The report started off with images of the Hungarian border fence, with no people in sight. A cut followed, showing many migrants walking (this footage was re-used from a report about the Balkans from July 5th 2018). The voiceover said: “Since 2015, there is order and security on Hungary’s southern border. But the situation continues to be critical on the western Balkans route. Yet the police are doing well; Hungary and the Hungarian people are safe. However, if Brussels does not change its pro-migration policy, millions of people may come to Europe in the coming years.” Only after this long monologue coupled with persuasive imagery did the voiceover reveal that “This is what Károly Kontrát [State Secretary at the Interior Ministry] said”. Only then, TV2 featured a visual indication that the views originated from a press conference.

¹⁰⁰ “Találkoztam és tárgyaltam az osztrák kancellárral, és a V4-eket is összehívtam, és fogadtuk a francia elnököt”; Orbán’s Facebook video from June 28th 2018: <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=10156300836191093>

¹⁰¹ “Három éve, a migrációs válság kezdetén, ez még lehetetlennek tűnt”, “Pedig három éve ez a vállalkozás még lehetetlennek tűnt”; “migráció megállításáról szóló magyar javaslatokat Brüsszelben csak patás ördöggént emlegetik”; Orbán’s Facebook video from June 29th 2018: <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=10156302305661093>

In contrast to the regulators in V4, the British regulator Ofcom, for instance, provides specific guidance on the interpretation of due impartiality in a case like this: “A personal view or authored programme or item must be clearly signalled to the audience *at the outset*” (Ofcom 2013).

Thus, both Hungarian broadcasters made it difficult for the viewer to recognize reporting from the ruling party’s opinions. The views of the ruling party politicians were repeatedly left unmarked, leading the viewer to believe she listens to the TV’s own reporting. Opinions and statements were reported as facts.

While TV2’s coverage of Lázár’s press conference may not meet the threshold of a regulatory offence for a private broadcaster, the MTV’s repeated *adoption* of Lázár’s and Orbán’s views from public speeches beg to question MTV’s compliance with the formal legal obligation on public-service broadcasters to provide “balanced, accurate, detailed, objective and responsible news” (Article 83 m of Act CLXXXV) and appliance of this clause in practice (Datalyrics 2020).

Accuracy

For the fulfilment of the standard of accuracy, we consider instrumental hat (1) provided information corresponds with reality and (2) sources are revealed transparently.

Unlike either of the Polish channels which did not give sources for the numbers of incoming people cited every day in the 2015 period, ARD and ČT transparently provided sources of the given statistics (e.g. IOM).

As described earlier, on September 12th 2015, MTV cited a single Hungarian, openly progovernment high-school teacher, Elmar Forster, to engineer a claim that “*Austrian historians* are protesting” Chancellor Faymann’s comparison of a bluff on refugees by the Hungarian authorities to the logistics of the holocaust.

Our sampling captured seven channels to have addressed the summer 2018 spat in the German coalition government. ČT, ARD and RTL provided a relatively even-handed description of the conflict and the public channels added an adequate substantive description of the competing perspectives of CDU’s Angela Merkel and CSU’s Horst Seehofer as well as commentaries by representatives of the competing parties.

In contrast, TV2 and Prima favoured one of the conflict participants. Both channels presented Horst Seehofer as the one actor who was both active and dominant in the spat.¹⁰² TV2’s anchor introduced a report on the issue from July 2nd 2018 by saying: “Horst Seehofer *is satisfied* with the negotiation *with* Angela Merkel on Monday, so *he will* not resign.” Later, TV2 reported that “Seehofer finally *reached* an agreement *with* Merkel.”¹⁰³

At Prima, the conflict in the German government was a background story in a three-part series about a document that Merkel distributed and which outlined repatriation accords with 16 countries.¹⁰⁴ Three of

¹⁰² Note CDU had over four times more seats than CSU in the Bundestag and Angela Merkel had continuously higher approval ratings.

¹⁰³ “Elégedett a hétfői, Angela Merckellel folytatott tárgyalással Horst Seehofer, ezért nem mond le tisztségéről”, “A hétfői megbeszélésen végül sikerült Seehofernek megegyeznie Merckellel”

¹⁰⁴ <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-europe-migrants-germany/merkel-secures-asylum-seeker-return-deals-with-14-eu-countries-idUSKBN1JQ0DQ>

the sixteen states subsequently denied their alleged commitments. Prima provided largely repetitive reporting on this issue on June 30th, July 1st and July 2nd 2018:

In the news item from the first day, Andrej Babiš and Viktor Orbán were reported to deny consent to the agreement. Babiš was quoted at length, concluding: “I thought we had only Russian fake news, but it looks like we also have *German fake news*.” The anchor accepted and repeated Babiš’s labelling. To illustrate a measure aiming at returning asylum seekers to the country of first registration (that is, potentially speaking of *bona fide* refugees), Prima showed a decontextualized footage of people in orange shirts resembling prisoners (see Figure 32). Through visuals, Prima thereby muddled the distinction between a crime and a voidable violation (secondary migration). This first news item in the series was, however, quite dispassionate in relation to Angela Merkel.



Figure 32 Prima, 30. 6. 2018

A follow-up report from the next day informed about an additional denial by the spokesman of the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Viktor Orbán was newly reported to have called the information “*political canard*”. The reporter’s narrative was more expressive than on the first day: Merkel was said to “*go for broke*” because “the EU Summit represented a deadline until which her coalition partners *were willing* to wait with *toughening* of the migration policy”.¹⁰⁵ She needed an “unequivocal outcome”. “But when she presented her successes *such as* the agreement with fourteen countries about returning refugees, it turned out that she interprets the meetings in Brussels completely differently from *those* with whom she negotiated.”¹⁰⁶

In other words, the reporter suggested that (1) Merkel misled other parties about *a number of issues* albeit a dispute about only one issue has been a matter of public record and was reported on by Prima, (2) albeit more parties [13] did not dispute Merkel’s phrasing than those that did [3], Prima claimed that Merkel is the one who has misled (all the) others. The second proposition contrasted clearly with the RTL reporter’s rendering of the same issue: “(...) This was perhaps a misunderstanding, thus only fourteen states made this commitment.” ČT’s reporter reframed the issue altogether, noting perceptively: “(...) But what is important is that on the list of countries [said to made commitment], there isn’t Italy which is where by far the most migrants coming to Europe are registered these days.”¹⁰⁷

At the end of this news item, Prima claimed that “more and more often”, member states “want to take migration policy in their own hands” and illustrated this claim with a short segment about Matteo Salvini’s measures preventing ships from disembarking rescued refugees and migrants in Italy. This contrasted with ČT which dedicated a compact news item to this subject on July 2nd 2018 at the beginning of a newscast.

¹⁰⁵ “Merkelová hraje o všechno”

¹⁰⁶ „Ovšem když své úspěchy jako třeba dohodu se čtrnácti zeměmi o vracení uprchlíků představila, ukázalo se, že si bruselská jednání a jejich výsledky vykládá úplně jinak než ti, s kterými jednala.”

¹⁰⁷ “Co je ale důležité, že v seznamu těchto zemí chybí Itálie, kde se v současnosti registruje zdaleka nejvíc migrantů, kteří přijíždějí do Evropy”

While Prima spoke about Salvini's supporters as of "Italians", ČT spoke of "voters". Prima's portrayal of Italians' response to the measures as "gratitude" and "appreciation" functioned as a clue of how to interpret Salvini's measures, that is, positively.

In the news item from the third day, July 2nd 2018, Prima's zeal to portray Merkel in a negative light culminated. The narrative from the second day was repeated in yet more suggestive terms: "Merkel was given an ultimatum [by Seehofer]. "Either she will bring a deal solving the problem with migrants from Brussels or the minister of interior will enforce his program."¹⁰⁸ ... [B]ecause of this, the chancellor, who wants to save her skin, ... claimed that she reached an agreement with several countries... Now, she admits it is not true." Merkel was quoted as referring to the issue as a "misunderstanding". But the TV repeatedly referred to Merkel's clarification as an "admission" – corresponding to the terminology used in a quoted tweet from Andrej Babiš. Then, a statement of Jan Hamáček, the Czech Minister of Interior, is quoted: "There is no agreement obliging the Czech Republic to accept returned people ... and the [summit] meeting minutes ... certainly, do not have any legal weight."

Hamáček's legal perspective, Merkel's "misunderstanding" and Babiš's "admission" were internally incongruous. This was not reflected in the TV's framing which culminated in (3) the implication that Merkel willingly lied. By pursuing this narrative, Prima kept the original (4) rendering of the incident as "fake news".

TVP and MTV did not focus on the issue of the misleading document as such but spun it to advance its persistently favoured narratives like blaming the previous government and cheering for the current one: "Europe pays the price of an open-door policy that Jarosław Kaczyński, president of PiS, warned against in the debate on refugees". Like Prima, TVP began by referring to the incident as "Angela Merkel's fake news".

Prima exhibited zeal to disparage Angela Merkel, painting an illusionary portrayal of a multi-party negotiation and degrading the term "fake news" in the process. For MTV and TVP, blaming Merkel was only an episode in its persistent messaging.

On MTV, Merkel was explicitly blamed for the spat in the coalition government through repetition of an old cliché: "After 2015, one million illegal immigrants flooded Germany in a year, thanks to Chancellor Angela Merkel's open doors policy."¹⁰⁹ The criticism of Merkel, however, functioned only as a temporary 'scaffolding' to MTV's persistent narrative warning against the danger of migration:

MTV contrasted cheerful footage of an archetypical German village of Piding, featuring a quintessentially German imagery of an orderly brass band in *Lederhosen*, with chaotic footage of crowds of migrants illustrating the "40-60 migrants coming [to the village] every single day" (see Figures 33 – 40).

¹⁰⁸ "Bud' z Bruselu přiveze dohodu o řešení problému s migranty nebo prosadí svůj program."

¹⁰⁹ "2015 után egy év alatt egymillió illegális bevándorló árasztotta el Németországot, köszönhetően Angela Merkel kancellár nyitott kapuk politikájának."



Figure 33 MTV, 2. 7. 2018



Figure 34 MTV, 2. 7. 2018



Figure 35 MTV, 2. 7. 2018



Figure 36 MTV, 2. 7. 2018



Figure 37 MTV, 2. 7. 2018



Figure 38 MTV, 2. 7. 2018



Figure 39 MTV, 2. 7. 2018



Figure 40 MTV, 2. 7. 2018

Unlike MTV which put emphasis on key anti-migration messages in its disparaging of Merkel, in Prima's iteration, Merkel herself is central. On September 5th 2015, Prima reported that Merkel "offered that her country will accept Syrian refugees". Faymann's announcement was not mentioned at all. Prima's framing raised doubts regarding the legality of the German "offer" and suggested it encourages "the influx" of refugees into Europe. In a news item from September 13th 2015, Prima thematised "Merkel's Germany" against Germany's municipalities Munich and Hessen: "Munich and Hessen reached the very limit of their possibilities. However, Germany says it is ready to receive more migrants."

In 2018, TVP frequently featured strong unsubstantiated evaluative statements: "Austria wants safety most the of EU states" (30. 6. 2018), "V4 countries are just right" (6. 7. 2018). TVP used expressive language in its portrayal of V4 and EU interaction: "dictatorship of the EU diplomats" (TVP, 29. 6. 2018), "V4 countries against the EU dictatorship" (TVP, 6. 7. 2018).

Incitement to hatred

Prima featured views disparaging an out-group when it relayed a citizen on September 14th 2015: "We do not want any *Arabáci* [a derogatory term for Arabs] here". The statement contained little meaning but it could be understood as a reflection of emotions present in a segment of society.

On September 12th 2015, however, Prima effectively favoured views that, in our view, qualify as incitement to hatred.

Facts: An anti-refugee and a pro-refugee demonstration were held on opposite sides of a single square in Prague. According to police estimates, the demonstrations were attended by 700 – 800 and 300 – 500 people, respectively.

Reporting: ČT's main framing motive was the *opposition* of the two groups, it noted the second group was smaller and allocated the space for expression accordingly. In contrast, Prima mentioned the group in support of refugees only in passing and aired exclusively the views of the first group (7 quotes of refugee opponents and 0 quotes of refugee advocates).

Prima's reporter shadowed a group of bikers ("according to [*whose?*] estimates, at least 600 bikers") that later joined the demonstration (attended by "other hundreds of people"). The report mentioned the pro-refugee demonstration only in passing. Unlike in all the references to the anti-refugee demonstrations, it did so in *passive voice*: „A few meters away, *it was being protested* (sic) in support of refugees.“¹¹⁰

Among the quotes from refugee opponents, 3 belonged to anti-Muslim opinion-leaders (an anti-Muslim politician, an anti-Islam activist and the anti-refugee demonstration organizer) and 4 belonged to anti-refugee attendees. Some of the attendees' statements expressed concerns about Islam for which the reporter expressed his empathy. Note this aspect alone would likely fell well within the commercial channel's freedom to illustrate the mood in society, inclusive of its emotionality.

¹¹⁰ „Jen o pár metrů dál se *naopak protestovalo* proti xenofobii a na podporu uprchlíků“

Tomio Okamura was quoted speaking of “illegal migration”, the main anti-refugee demonstration organizer was quoted labelling the arrival of refugees as „an invasion of young men in fighting-fit age“. Included in the quotes that Prima effectively treated favourably were also the following two statements:

“... Islam *is* unfreedom ...” (Martin Konvička)

“Islam *is* concentrated evil” (demonstrator).

Thus, the broadcaster effectively favoured views that did not question the content of the belief in Islam but necessarily denigrated all Muslim believers by implying that they approve of “unfreedom” and “evil”. In our view, the favourable treatment of such views encroaches the principle of religious freedom to a degree exceeding the protections of the freedom of speech and amount to incitement of hatred.

Prima’s amplification of anti-refugee demonstrations more broadly was not unique to the news item described above. On September 16th 2015, Prima briefly informed about a demonstration of *tens* of “people” (*lidi*) against refugees at a border crossing in Dolní Dvořiště. In contrast, ČT also informed in passing about a demonstration in support of refugees by “thousands” in London and many more across Western Europe on September 12th 2015.

The coverage of such demonstrations became one of the topics of internal disputes about impartiality in Prima’s newsroom. You can read more about this issue in forthcoming *Datalyrics* articles.

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THEME CODE	CZECH REPUBLIC			GERMANY			HUNGARY			POLAND				
	ČT1	Prima	ARD	RTL	M1	TV2	TVP1	TVN						
2018														
<i>Total items</i>														
RUN UP TO EU SUMMIT	28.6.	EU Summit on Migration <i>European treatment</i>	28.6.	Controversy over refugee policy dominates EU summit in Brussels <i>European treatment, national disunity</i>	28.6.	Government's statement on EU refugee summit <i>national disunity</i>	28.6.	Viktor Orbán: European democracy must be restored <i>EU in crisis</i>	28.6.	European solution is needed <i>EU in crisis, European treatment</i>	29.6.	Position of V4 countries <i>power struggle</i>	28.5.	Tusk proposes solution to EU in crisis <i>solidarity, European treatment</i>
	29.6.	Summit and agreement on migration <i>European treatment; power struggle</i>	29.6.	EU summit participant agree on compromise in refugee policy <i>national interest, inadequate response</i>	29.6.	EU state agree to tighten asylum policy <i>European treatment</i>	29.6.	Viktor Orbán: Hungary continues not to be a migrant country <i>European treatment, power struggle, disturbance</i>	29.6.	V4's success at the EU Summit <i>European treatment, power struggle</i>	30.6.	Success of Polish govt <i>power struggle</i>	29.5.	Politicians talking <i>solidarity, European treatment</i>
GERMAN CDU/CSU CONFLICT	2.7.	German government crisis <i>crisis</i>	1.7.	CDU and CSU discuss asylum dispute <i>irresponsible politics</i>	30.6.	Will the EU Summit end the crisis between the CDU and CSU? <i>uncertainty</i>	2.7.	The German Interior Minister may resign because of the migration crisis <i>crisis</i>	3.7.	Tranzit centers could be established <i>crisis, European treatment</i>	1.7.	Political crisis in Germany / Angela Merkel's fake news <i>irresponsible politics</i>	--	--
AUSTRIA'S EU PRESIDENCY	30.6.	EU presidency <i>threat to security, power struggle, European treatment</i>	30.6.	Babiš denies promise to accept returned migrants <i>distrust, European treatment</i>	30.6.	Mediterranean route: UN refugee agency criticises situation in Libyan camps <i>inadequate response</i>	7.7.	Toll of dead refugees in the Mediterranean likely to increase on Spanish shores <i>solidarity, crime</i>	30.6.	Safety of Europe as Austria's priority for the presidency <i>threat to security, European treatment</i>	30.6.	Safety of Europe as Austria's priority for the presidency <i>threat to security, European treatment</i>	9.7.	Italy to close its ports to migrants <i>threat to security</i>
MEDITERRANEAN SEA	2.7.	Legal and verbal battle takes place in Mediterranean sea <i>victim, solidarity</i>	4.7.	Conflict about transit centers <i>dilemma</i>	6.7.	Berlin: coalition agrees on asylum package <i>inadequate response</i>	2.7.	George Soros negotiated with the Spanish Prime Minister <i>'Soros runs the world'</i>	2.7.	Soros visited the Spanish prime minister <i>'Soros runs the world'</i>	5.7.	Migrants are taking new routes <i>crisis, crime, threat to security, disturbance, EU in crisis</i>	30.6.	Question of security in Europe <i>threat to security</i>
GERMAN COALITION GOVT														
SOROS														
ESCALATION IN WEST BALCANS														
SECURITY														

The first column contains theme codes. Most prominent frames in the given news item are always noted below it.

Attachment 2: Catalogue of frames

#	Frame name	Central organizing idea or storyline (comment)
1	victim frame	refugees and/or migrants portrayed as victims of war/hardships/human smugglers
2	crime frame	refugees and/or migrants portrayed as criminals (e.g. “illegal immigrants”), engaged in criminal activities (visuals: migrants’ apprehension by police)
3	threat to security	refugees and/or migrants portrayed as a threat to the safety and security of the country (may be equated with terrorists, portrayed as attacking “us”)
4	threat to public health	refugees and/or migrants portrayed as carrying diseases not common in Europe
5	‘otherness’ frame	refugees and/or migrants portrayed as a threat to national culture, language, values, or Christianity
6	economy frame	costs or benefits of migration
7	frame of economic burden	how much do/will the refugees and/or migrants cost us
8	frame of power struggle	events, views or measures are interpreted through the lenses of interests of various governments/statespersons/the EU and how successful they were at manipulating/convincing/ strong-arming others to push their agenda (frequently associated with national sovereignty)
9	national interest	events, views or measures are interpreted through the lenses of interests of various governments/countries but dispassionately so
10	frame of national disunity	divergence of country’s leading political forces is emphasized
11	frame of irresponsible politics	favouring one’s own/party’s political interests at the expense of common interests is emphasized
12	frame of inadequate response	incongruity between the diagnosis of a problem and proposed/agreed solutions is emphasized
13	administrative challenge	administrative/logistical problems associated with implementation of a solution proposal is emphasized
14	disturbance frame	refugees and/or migrants portrayed as disrupting the lives of ‘ordinary people’ (e.g. traffic jams on the highway, trains not running, Schengen system suspended)
15	European treatment frame	necessity of cooperation and/or a common European solution is emphasized (this may be expressed pragmatically, or, in the form of appeal for “solidarity” with other EU members)
16	solidarity frame	need to help refugees and/or migrants
17	frame of distrust	distrust to a foreign entity/authority
18	EU in crisis	incapability of the EU to devise an effective solution of the migration policy crisis is emphasized
19	crisis frame	escalation of tensions, or, incapability to cope with increased scale of migration flows is emphasized

20	'Soros runs the word'	a tale of conspiracy by George Soros is narrated
21	frame of dignity	general reference to Human Rights principles (not explicit to specific Rights)
22	order frame	undesirability of disorderly reception of refugees / refugees are coming without any control or registration
23	victim frame	victimhood, vulnerability and suffering of refugees
24	frame of uncertainty	unclear outcomes
25	frame of dilemma	different views are compared, portrayed as legitimate and result in a conundrum

Attachment 3: Timeline

2015	
July	Hungary began to build a fence on the Hungarian-Serbian border.
August 27 th	71 dead migrants were found in an airtight lorry in Pandorf, Austria, on the route from the Hungarian border to Vienna
September 1 st	Keleti train station in Budapest is ordered closed.
September 2 nd	A toddler Alan Kurdi drowns in the Mediterranean and a distressing picture of his body washed on the beach is published in media worldwide. In V4 to a limited extent. "It triggered massive shock and empathy amongst governments and the European Union officials. Many governments promised to take in refugees, some of which were never fulfilled."
September 4th	V4 Extraordinary Visegrad Group Migration Summit held in Prague. At midnight, Austrian Chancellor Faymann announces the Austrian and the German borders are opened to asylum seekers.
September 11 th	German Chancellor Merkel states that the right to asylum cannot have a maximum quota. Austrian Chancellor Faymann (SPÖ) publicly aligns with Merkel's policy.
2018	
June 28th – 29th	European Council ('EU Migration Summit')