

MORAL PANIC IN THE NEWS: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

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The previously unknown category of the migrant has become the centre of Hungarian political rhetoric since August 2015, when the topic of migration stormed into the Hungarian media. Several competing representations aimed to fill the empty category of the migrant with meaning and content. This competition for the framing of the migrant reflects a political struggle. The paper aims to compare two different media representations of the migrant by focusing on the 6 pm news presentations of the two main polarities of the Hungarian media landscape (MTV1 and RTLK) in 2015 and 2016. The main focus is on the representation of the first peak of the migration crisis at Keleti Railway station, Budapest. The research, however, also covers a one-year period on the framing of relating events on migration. The method of the analysis is based on the five criteria of moral panic, namely audience involvement, hostility, disproportionality, volatility and consensus. The research concludes that the two main polarities create contrasting representations of the category of the migrant. While the news of MTV1 depicts migrants as homogeneous and threatening actors to the idealized order of society, the news of RTLK counter-frames this presentation by emphasizing the diversity of difficulties that a long journey of migration involves. These representations implicate existing power relations manifested in the two main polarities of the Hungarian media landscape.

The panic over migration might not end until at least 2018, when the next national election distributes power among existing political parties in Hungary. The political rhetoric on migration has recently been re-articulated by the spokesperson of the Hungarian government, according to which “the migration crisis is the direct consequence of the existing underlying power relations of global capital” (“Március végével megszűnik,” 2017). Not surprisingly, migration is in the center of a narrative that links existing constructions of threatening agents into a network of hostility. The representation of threat has an influential emotional effect on voters and these emotions can be mobilized for political purposes.

Migration has existed for some time, long before such mobilization started. The number of registered asylum-seekers in Hungary has steadily increased since 2012. In the first quarter of 2012 this number was 457, while one year later, in 2013, it increased to 2.322. In the last quarter of 2014 the number of applications was 28.631 and, in the third quarter of 2015 a significant increase resulted in 109.175 applications (Központi Statisztikai Hivatal, 2016). Regardless of the tendency of an increasing number of asylum-seekers, people in Hungary received no information about migration and the phenomenon remained unnoticed until communication campaigns started to construct and frame migration.

Migration was redefined as a threat and magnified in mass media news broadcasts. Mass media, as Bourdieu claims, has the capacity to construct social reality through representations (Bourdieu, 1991). Although migration, based on its circumstances and intensity, can be seen as critical, media broadcast shapes events in accordance with desired images. The severity of migration appears in a desired quality and quantity, defined by editors,

reporters or news directors who set the narrative and discourse of events (Schudson, 2000). The news, therefore, is the result of a more imbedded institutional framework that defines the system of media production and the desired communication of social reality (Couldry & Curran, 2003). The construction of the migrant in relation to its social reality, therefore, reflects the intention of the actor who has the power to identify and fill this empty category with meaning and content.

The category of the migrant in Hungary resembles Simmel's concept of the *stranger*. Simmel defines distant social groups or, as to use his term, the *stranger* as the "union of nearness and remoteness, which every relation between *men* comprehends."¹ Accordingly, while the stranger, such as the migrant, is part of the community for a period of time, it is still remote, distant and excluded as a result of its distinctness vis a vis the in-group. Beyond this, the stranger is also vulnerable because it is too they are too distant—in linguistic or cultural terms—to identify discourses and articulate them in a way that can be received by the majority society. Therefore, the stranger has no capacity to influence discourses projected on them. Due to the new appearance of the stranger, it is an empty category and no meaning or quality is attached to it. Therefore, the possibility of attaching values to this empty category is open. The way in which this empty category is defined, however, shows the intention of the definer.

Moral panic theory describes the way in which an empty category can be turned into a threatening other. Moral panic theory, according to Cohen, is based on the idea that a group of people can be identified as a threatening out-group that is framed as if it endangered the idealized order and fundamental values of a society. As a result, intense feelings of hostility and panic occur as a reaction from the members of the majority (Cohen, 2002; Kitzinger, 2000). Subsequently, action to discipline the threatening, deviant group is taken. According to Critcher, the action to discipline the deviant group by the majority is in fact a way of repairing them. This approach, however, seems to provide authorization to the majority to act for the betterment of a group without the consent of this group. Such an approach can easily become counterproductive. Hier highlights that the disciplining of a threatening, deviant group by the majority, generates a greater group cohesion. His argument is that the disciplining action in fact results in the articulation of ingroup values and the clearer definition of group boundaries. This idea leads to Hall's observation that the disciplining of the deviant is rather an instrument. As Hall argues, the action to discipline utilizes the deviant group for the mobilization of fears and for the regeneration of societal unity for political purposes. (Kitzinger, 2000; Hall et al., 1976).

This paper focuses on the representation of the recently occurring phenomenon of migration in Hungary. The main question of the research is the extent to which migration is represented in the frames of moral panic. To what extent do news broadcasts construct the migrant as the threatening other posing a significant threat to the idealized order and values of Hungarian society? Assuming that migration is framed as deviance in news presentations, the research focuses on the 6 pm news from a comparative perspective. Parallel broadcasted news from the two main poles of the Hungarian media landscape, the Hungarian public service television channel

¹ Italics as Simmel's *men* is interpreted as humans (Simmel, 2009).

called MTV1 and RTL Klub, which is part of the RTL Group, is analysed. The research focuses on a period from August 28, 2015, to October 3, 2016, when migration strongly dominated public discourse. The aim of the research is to identify dominant discourses of news presentations through the lenses of moral panic theory.

Based on the results of the study, MTV1 strongly contributed to the construction of moral panic through news representations of migration in the examined period. RTLK, on the other hand, was reactionary to the presentations of MTV1 news. While MTV1 presented hostility, threat and, through different stages of representation, linked migration to further agents of hostility, RTLK presented a more humane aspect of migration that involved showing images concerning the causes of migration, personal stories or emotions of victims. Therefore, RTLK counter-framed MTV1, which constructed an abstract category and a distant perspective on migrants. However, the success of RTLK is questionable. Based on the results of the quota referendum on October 3, 2016, a unification of political supporters of the right-wing might have been achieved.

The projection of threat in our social reality – a theoretical framework

Moral panic can be seen as an intention to fill up an empty category with content and qualities. Moral panic, according to Cohen's theory, emerges as a result of a phenomenon linked to a group of people that is perceived as a threat to the idealized order of society (Cohen, 2002). The moral, therefore, refers to fundamental values and order in society, while panic shows the intensity of reaction and fear of the threatening phenomena (Cohen, 2002). Elements of intensity, temporality and periodicity are also part of moral panics, according to Rohloff and Wright. They point out that moral panics are always present (Rohloff & Wright, 2010), while Hier (2016) claims that moral panic is a "volatile short-term manifestation of long-term moral regulation processes." Moral panics are, therefore, intense, rapidly occurring and reoccurring campaigns targeting social groups by labelling them as threatening and deviant.

Moral panic theory has been widely used. The first application of the concept was carried out mainly by critical sociologists, such as Cohen and Young, who applied it to youth subcultures, such as punks, skinheads, goths, hippies and so on (Rothe & Muzatti, 2004). Critical sociology in the 1960s and 1970s challenged the way in which moral entrepreneurs aimed to label individuals and groups as deviant in the US and Britain (Klocke & Muschert, 2010). In the 1980s and 1990s this deconstructionist approach was followed by studies that went beyond and focused on adult manifestations of deviance and criminal behaviour, such as drug scares or AIDS (for a full list of studies see Klocke & Muschert, 2010). Terrorism has also been in the focus of moral panic since the 9/11 attacks (Rothe & Muzatti, 2004), as well as human rights violations targeting, for instance, homosexuals in Ghana (Tettey, 2016). Due to the increasing usage and application of moral panic theory, its theoretical coherence has undergone advancement and revision in the 21st century (Klocke & Muschert, 2010).

One of the reasons for the emergence of moral panics in some circumstances can be the implementation of regulations for the stability of values within society. Hier highlights that moral panics occur as a historical/structural phenomenon, due to a process of deteriorating values and loosening group cohesion. He argues that elites or

interest groups, as a result, aim to generate legitimization for launching new regulations. Therefore, as he claims, common identity, incorporating values and behaviors, emerges as a marker of group boundaries. Moral panic, according to him, turns into a project of integration when these boundaries become looser. It generates the pressure of conformity and moral standards by the regulation of the deviant in times when group cohesion loosens (Hier, 2016). In this framework, moral panic is a tool for stability and balance in a risk society that serves the process of regulation.

Critcher's approach of strengthening group cohesion or Hier's idea of generating attention for policy change can both be suitable concepts for moral panics under particular circumstances. His synthesis of risk society, governmentality and regulation in his case study on drunk people, however, differs from Hier's framework. Critcher implies that moral panics are instruments of power to *repair* the deviant (Critcher, 2008). Policies, therefore, aim to include the excluded groups by encouraging action to lift the deviant up from their state. Even when this paternalistic approach is technically functional, the idea of repairing the deviant group can become counterproductive when applied to culturally distinct groups.

The regulation for strengthened group cohesion or the attempt to generate attention for the necessity of *policy for the solution of* certain groups to fit into the majority might be suitable concepts for moral panics under particular circumstances. However, the primary function of moral panics can also be political. Kitzinger (2000) points out that moral panics rather entail the disciplining of deviant groups and the regeneration of societal unity. While Hier and Critcher imply that the achievement of societal unity is based on the inclusion of the deviant through the pressure of conformity and repair, in the case of instrumentalization the deviant group is, instead, excluded and rejected. In this case, unity is achieved only within the majority. This corresponds with Hall's observation that in times of crisis, when social tension is present, the use of an easily targeted group can generate social cohesion through the mobilization of existing fears and insecurities (Hall et al, 1976). In times of moral panics, the "silent majority" is won over to the support of increasingly coercive measures on the part of the state, and lends its legitimacy to a "higher than usual" exercise of control" (Hall et al, 1978). Significant institutional changes, such as to the constitution of a state, are authorized by this silent majority. Repairing or civilizing the deviant group in this case is not a priority. Even more, it would reduce the chance of their instrumentalization for political purposes.

Media plays a significant role in the instrumentalization of groups. Media has the "capacity to intervene in the course of events, to influence the actions of others...by means of the production and transmission of symbolic forms" (Thompson, 1995). Therefore, as Curran argues, media is the "concentration of symbolic power in specific institutional spheres" (Couldry & Curran, 2003) that can be utilized for political projects, such as the purpose of moral panic. Even in the case of autonomous media organizations Hall observes that "the media tend to reproduce the definitions of the powerful" (Hall et al, 1978) by representing the social reality constructed by *primary definers*, such as police or government officials (Klocke & Muschert, 2010). As a result, media turns into a *secondary definer* that amplifies the distorted image of a threatening group (Klocke & Muschert, 2010).

The production of news can be seen as a representation of the embedded power relations of mass media. News by definition aims to deliver distant events to the audience and, thereby, provide experience on reality. The delivered events are, however, not raw material. As Herman and Chomsky point out, events pass through a process of selection and edition. Broadcasting, as they claim, is preceded by the editing of presented discourse of these events (Herman & Chomsky, 2002). Schudson (2000) also highlights that the discourse of news is based on the preferences and perception of publishers, editors or reporters, whose voices mirror the desired narratives of their appointers, such as government officials or owners of media companies. Therefore, news production is certainly embedded into the existing power relations of the symbolic production of social realities. Consequently, events of moral panics are shaped in accordance with the power structure that defines the desired framing.

Media landscapes, however, can turn into a platform of struggle over the construction of social reality. Access to symbolic power is limited, but not in all cases monopolized. Actors, if they have the capacity, can generate parallel or even competing constructions of realities. Klocke and Muschert (2010) claim that the targeted group can resist if the media landscape is more fragmented and articulates their narrative. Therefore, a counter-campaign is possible by counter-framing the moral panic narrative.

For the analysis of narrative, the literature on moral panics makes a distinction between process- and element-oriented analytical frameworks. Cohen's original approach to moral panic was the process-oriented framework. This analytical framework has five stages; 1. behaviors are defined as a threat to societal values; 2. media recognizes and depicts the threat; 3. concerns arise; 4. authorities and politicians call for a strong solution; 5. social institutions and regulations change (Cohen, 2002). This approach might be suitable for the test of the existence of moral panic. However, a study on the media representation and communication of moral panic would certainly stretch beyond the original limits of Cohen's framework.

The element-oriented analytical framework created by Goode and Nachman seems to be more applicable for the current study. Goode and Nachman identify five criteria of moral panic that serve unification through the instrumentalization of the deviant group. The first criterion is involvement of the public that can be measured through, for example, media thematising and coverage of the topic. The second criterion is the establishment of hostility towards the threatening group and the perception of an 'us' and 'them' distinction. The third criterion is consensus among the majority population that the identified group poses a threat to public morals and order. The fourth criterion is disproportionality, which involves the exaggeration of the threat. The final criterion is volatility, which means the sudden appearance and disappearance of threatening groups from the people's sight (Goode & Nachman, 2009). Media can play a significant role in the establishment of all these criteria.

A glimpse into the Hungarian media landscape in times of migration

The Hungarian media landscape underwent a significant transformation prior to the migration crises. According to Bajomi-Lázár (2013), the new institutional structure of the media “may be defined as *a strategy aimed at extracting from the media resources such as airtime, frequencies, positions and money, and channeling them to party loyalists in order to reward them for various services.*” The redistribution of media power started with the Media Act of 2010, which led to two major transformations. First, it established the Media Council and NMHH² with a high level of authority over media institutions. Second, it merged the dispersed public media institutions into one central public service foundation (Bayer, 2011). The concentration of a high level of authority and massive funds into a single institution, which is chaired and led by an appointee of the Prime Minister, was followed by the suspension of media subsidies previously given to privately run TV channels (Dull, 2016). Subsequently, by March 2015 the new media landscape had evolved. This landscape was dominated by public service TV channels with directors appointed by the Media Council. The public service TV channels, although apparently operating as autonomous institutions, seem to have the potential to articulate the political rhetoric of the actual government.

One TV channel that to some extent challenged the reality constructed by the new mass communication channels of the Media Council was RTL Klub (RTLK). The channel is part of the German RTL Group media corporation. After the introduction of advertisement tax regulations, RTLK started to launch anti-governmental news presentations from 2014 (Bednárík & Csuha, 2014). Although, the regulation on advertisement taxation changed and an agreement was reached, RTLK news remained moderately critical of the government. In the emerging migration crisis, therefore, RTLK counter-framed the reality constructed by MTV1 and represented the opposition position in the question of migration.

After the establishment of new public service mass media channels on March 15, 2015, migration began to exist in the social reality of the Hungarian people. The number of migrants steadily increased from May, 2015, while billboard campaigns framed migrants as hostile and alien (“Elfogott migránsok száma,” n.d.; “Kiderült milyen feliratok,” 2015). The Prime Minister of Hungary announced the construction of a fence on the Serbian border on June 17, 2015, with a goal of completing it by the end of summer 2015 (“Orbán: a fizikai határzár,” 2015). Meanwhile, the number of migrants in a highly visible spot at Keleti Railway Station started to increase. The location turned into a camp with services provided for people who provided for people who found themselves stuck in this location. Train services were suspended and live broadcast presented the conditions evolving in the surroundings of the station. The mismanagement of the situation resulted in a chaotic environment, lack of communication between the police, migrants and local members of NGOs. After an unprecedented attempt to transport migrants—without their consent—to the Bicske camp by train, migrant groups started to march on roads and highways toward Austria. The first peak of the migration crisis ended on September 4, 2015, when buses were ordered to transport migrants to the western border of Hungary and allow them to freely walk to Austria.

² National Media and News Authority [Nemzeti Média- és Hírközlési Hatóság]

The second crisis started to peak after a razor wire fence sealed the Serbian border on September 14, 2015. The role of the police in the increased tension is unclear. A crowd of people in front of the border crossing gate at Horgos that included children and families was dispersed by the police using tear gas and water cannons. After the fence was built on the Serbian border, migrants were diverted to Croatia from Serbia and several thousand people passed the Hungarian border until border control was also enforced on the Croatian border by Hungarian authorities. Given the lack of live broadcasts from the Croatian border, public awareness of migrants crossing from Croatia was minimal.

After winter, on March 9, 2016, 1500 soldiers were ordered to the southern border and Hungary declared a state of emergency (“Breaking News: Hungary Declares State of,” 2016). However, due to the EU agreement with Turkey and with Balkan states, the number of migrants arriving in Hungary significantly dropped. The route of migrants altered and people were already being pushed from the Greek borders back to Turkey. On October 2, a referendum was held on EU quotas. The referendum was announced much earlier, in spring 2015. Therefore, media coverage had previously framed the referendum in a variety of ways. The competition over the interpretation of the meaning of the referendum overrode its long and strongly criticized question.³

Research methods

The research is structured by the five criteria of moral panic and focuses on the analysis of news presentations of the two main poles of the Hungarian media landscape. The aim is to compare and contrast the presented level of involvement, hostility, disproportionality, volatility and consensus on the theme of migrants in the 6 pm news broadcasts of MTV1 and RTLK. MTV1 is the news channel of the recently state-established public service foundation media network, supervised by the Media Council. RTLK is the Hungarian branch of a German media corporation and often articulated narratives opposing government policies and legislation.

The research relies on the textual data of news blocks that were analysed in light of visual representations. The main source of audio-visual primary data was the online database provided by Nemzeti Audiovizuális Archivum [National Audio-Visual Archive]⁴ (NAVA). The website provides access to all the content that MTV1 and RTLK has broadcast. Furthermore, TV channels also provided information on viewership of the 6 pm news for the seven-day period before September 5, 2015.

Time periods analysed for the research vary for different criteria. Due to their distinct characteristics, criteria of moral panic are not always analysed in the same periods. For involvement and hostility criteria, the research

³ The question of the EU quota referendum was: Do you want the European Union to be able to mandate the obligatory resettlement of non-Hungarian citizens into Hungary even without the approval of the National Assembly?

⁴ Data was collected from the Nemzeti Audiovizuális Archivum [National Audio-visual archives]. This online source can be accessed on the following link: < <http://nava.hu/musorujzag/?date=2015-09-03&fixed=true&chns=101%2C104> > accessed 3 January 2017.

focuses on the seven-day period before the first migration crisis peaking on September 5, 2015. The constructed attributes of the migrants are carried over for a one-year period until the quota referendum on October 2. Therefore, the criteria of disproportionality and volatility are analysed in the period between September 14, 2015 and October 3, 2016. In this period, the 6 pm news sessions of each Monday presented in MTV1 and RTLK were selected because Monday news might involve more content due to the weekend. This weekly examination of news presentations involved 56 news sessions for each channel. The fifth category of moral panic theory, consensus, is analysed through the news session broadcasted on the day after the quota referendum. Therefore, it focuses only on the 6 pm news presentations of MTV1 and RTLK on October 3.

News presentations are broadcast concurrently, however, program length is different for the two channels. MTV1 news is mostly 26 minutes long, while the RTLK news is between 47 and 53 minutes. The news of RTLK has two parts divided by an advertisement session. Political content on RTLK, however, is almost entirely presented in the second part of RTLK news. Thus, the program was essentially the same length, but 30 minutes later than MTV1 news. The content of the first part of RTLK news is mostly apolitical.

The involvement criterion focuses on the media thematization of migrant-related topics and audience involvement in the news sessions. Through this criterion, the length of migration coverage within the political content of news sessions is measured. First, the political content is selected and, second, migrant-related themes within the political content are identified. Content is considered political if any relevance to recent political events or topics is identified. Audience involvement, furthermore, is measured by the viewership of the examined 6 pm news. Data for the viewership was provided by TV channels based on the data collected by Nielsen Media Research.

The hostility criterion focuses on the qualities attached to the category of the migrant in the seven day period before the first peak of the migration crisis. This criterion is analysed in three subcategories. First I examine group homogeneity of migrants and the establishment of an *us* and *them* polarity. Second, I consider the presented goals or aims of migrants that are used as an indicator of their value, intention or quality. Third, the level of presented threat posed by migrants, based on the presented level of organization and attitude towards the host culture is analysed.

The disproportionality criterion examines whether the representation of migration is proportionated to the potential threat they might generate. This criterion is examined by the analysis of the length of migration-related topics in news presentations, in comparison to the length of other topics. The priority news presentations grant migration-related topics over other topics in news sessions is compared to the number of people who were identified as migrants by the Immigration Office of Hungary at the time of the news presentation. The length of media coverage in comparison to the number of migrants aiming to enter the country shows whether the real and the presented threats are proportionate.

The volatility criterion aims to identify a change tendency of migration-related topics in a longer time frame. The examination of this criterion aimed to analyse patterns along which migration-related topics change. This involved the identification of dominant narratives and the presence of migration-related topics in different periods in relation to other political topics.

The focus of the criterion of consensus in this research is somewhat different than in moral panic theory. The consensus criterion of moral panic focuses on the extent to which the threatening group generates a feeling of hostility among the majority society. Due to the limited scope of this research, this criterion could not be measured. An indication, however, on the consensus about the migrants as a category can be derived from the quota referendum held on October 2, 2016. The result of the quota referendum provides an indication of the extent to which MTV1 and RTLK shaped social reality through news presentations. Therefore, beyond the result, the interpretations of the results in the 6 pm news on the day after the referendum was held are also analysed.

Beyond the consensus criterion, the research has some further limitations. Due to the limited resources and scope of the research, the viewership could only be measured for the one week period before the first peak of the migration crises. From September 14, 2015 to October 3, 2016, viewership was not analysed. The main reason for this is the lack of free access to data on viewership from 2014. Furthermore, two Monday news evenings were not accessible due to technical difficulties with the NAVA website. In these cases, the Tuesday presentations were used as close proxies to the Monday sessions. On one occasion, the whole week was unavailable due to unavailability of the digital library as a result of maintenance work. The week, as a result, is missing from the study. Moreover, the scope of the study did not involve other TV channels from the media landscape, even though other actors could widen the spectrum of representations.

The attributes of migration in the news

Findings on the involvement criterion show that the political content significantly increased from August 29 to October 4, 2015. Figure 1 shows that political content on August 29 (Sat) was 15 minutes on MTV1 and 19:43 minutes on RTLK. This increased gradually towards the peak of the migration crisis at Keleti Railway Station. On September 5 (Friday) political content increased to 23 minutes on MTV1 and 41:40 minutes on RTLK. A sharp increase can be observed on September 3 (Thursday), due to the live broadcast of the Prime Minister's speech from Brussels on MTV1 and the Bicske transportation, broadcast by RTLK (Boda et al, 2015). As a result, news sessions spilled over their usual period. Consequently, political content increased toward the peak of the migration crisis in news presentations.

The percentage of topics on migration in the political content of news presentations shows the increasing importance of the crisis at Keleti station and the increased involvement of the audience. Figure 2 shows that after a Sunday decline on August 30 (Sunday), MTV1 coverage on topics of migration show a steady increase. Coverage increases from 50% to the full length of the news session. Figures show that the percentage of migration-related

topics in the news on RTLK sharply declines on Sept 1 (Monday), when figures for MTV1 increase. Figures for RTLK stay below the figures of MTV1 until both increased to 100%. Although some level of fluctuation occurs, both news broadcasts prioritized the involvement of the audience in the case of migration in the one week period before the first migration crisis peaked.

Figure 1: Political content in news presentations (min)

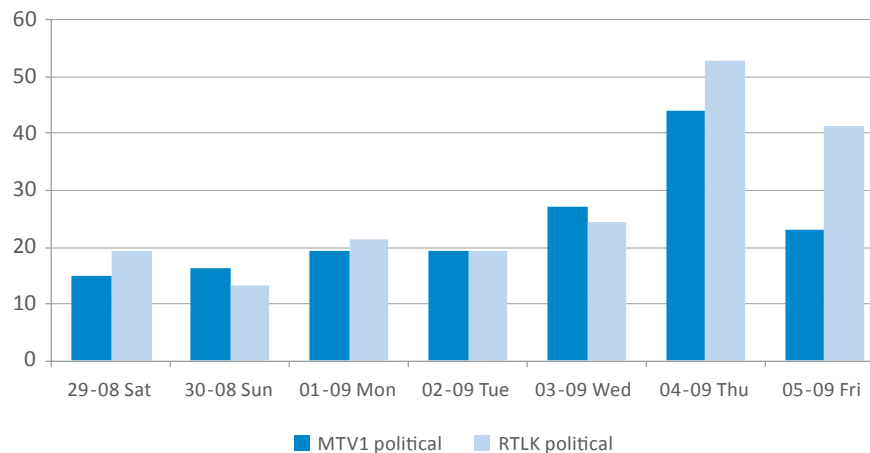
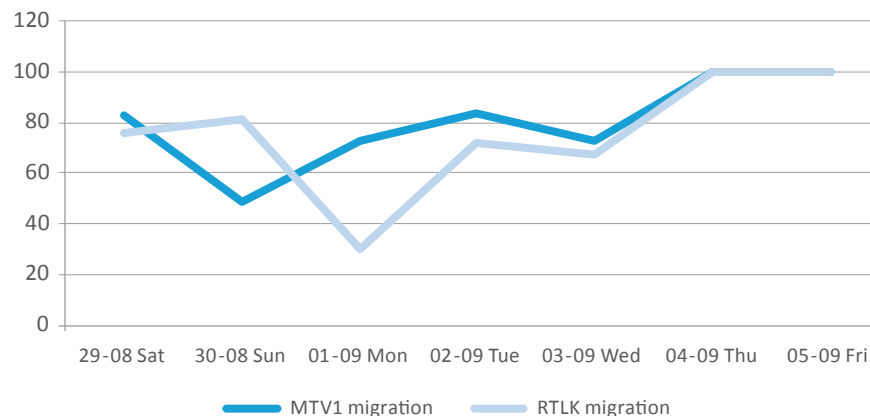


Figure 2: The percentage of migration-related topics (%)



The figures on viewership also show the involvement of the audience. According to viewership measurement by Nielsen Media Research, viewership significantly increased from August 29 to September 5, 2015. For instance, figures showing the number of viewers who watched at least one minute of the broadcast tripled in the examined period. The average one-minute viewer, for instance, of the 6 pm MTV1 news was 44.836 on August 29, 2015. A steady increase reached 135.445 by September 5, 2015.⁵ The RTLK news shows similar trends in the increase

⁵ Data was provided by MTV1 and RTLK channels based on Nielsen Viewership measurement.

of viewership. Consequently, audience involvement significantly increased in the examined period—the seven days before the first peak of the migration crisis.

The findings of the research reveal the establishment of the hostility criterion in the seven-day period before the first peak by framing the category of the migrant as a group of a homogenous others in MTV1 news presentations. MTV1 news presents the category of the migrant in a singular way. First, migrants are depicted as homogenous units that are led by a person or a group of people. Second, live reports from different locations, such as Keleti Railway Station, frame migrant groups as a discrete social and cultural unit. The presenter of a live report observes the praying group as an outsider and predicts the intentions of the group. She says:

[migrants] would like to break through the police line and get into the main entrance [of the station] because more and more of them gather here.⁶

The presentation shows images from an outsider perspective defining viewers' perspective accordingly. Furthermore, the presenter assumes and articulates negative intentions without well-founded reasons.

RTLK news shows a variation of migrants, discrediting the singular migrant category presented by MTV1. RTLK provides a familiar concept of a guest worker migrant by presenting a road accident. The block shows a family that regularly migrates from Kosovo to Berlin for work.⁷ The block highlights that the locations, activity and identity as a migrant are part of a usual, legal and accepted phenomenon. This depiction possibly overlaps with many Hungarian guest workers who live and work, for instance, in Germany or in the UK. Furthermore, RTLK regularly presents interviews with migrants, providing insight into the individual feelings, desires and aims of migrating people. Therefore, RTLK promotes a nuanced image and a variety of migrants that generates empathy toward and distinction between migrants.

Beyond being framed as homogenous others in MTV1 news, migrants are also presented as hostile by linking the category to the value of dishonesty based on migrants' assumed goal. Migrants are claimed to achieve the extraction of economic benefits by moving from their countries to Europe. News presentations appear to undermine the idea that people are seeking refuge from warfare. Instead, MTV1 promotes the concept of economically driven migration. Even the identity of Syrian refugees from war torn areas is questioned in the comment of the news presenter:

It is important to question what will happen with Syrian refugees because, in Turkey, fake Syrian passports are produced on a large scale. In this way, economic immigrants try to disguise themselves as refugees and get into the EU.⁸

⁶ See 2nd September, 2015 (Wednesday) from 05:39 to 6:20 minutes in MTV1 News.

⁷ See 29th August, 2015 (Saturday) from 09:20 to 11:35 minutes in RTLK News.

⁸ See 1st September, 2015 (Tuesday) from 10:08 to 10:34 minutes in MTV1 News.

On the other hand, RTLK emphasizes a different perspective on migrants, demonstrating their suffering and their reasons for escaping war-torn areas. This representation depicts them as victims of warfare. Presentations show that on the escape route to Europe they encounter suffering. A news presentation shows the personal story of the dead child who was photographed on the coast of Turkey. The story shows pictures of warfare and emotionally stimulating images of people migrating through roads and sea. This depiction, therefore, shows that the goal of migrants is not the exploitation of economic benefits but rather the search for safety and security.

The treatment of migrants as criminals, according to the hostility frame created by MTV1, is justified by their presentation. Migrants are framed by MTV1 as organized groups that deliberately disregard the rules of the host culture and therefore have to be treated by the police as criminals. A reporter, during a live presentation, highlights:

The majority of immigrants perceive the Hungarian procedures as coercive... We have just been by the passage where a group of a dozen African immigrants were waiting for the disappearance of the patrolling police.⁹

This statement frames migrants as non-cooperative and not trustworthy, implicating the justification of their treatment as criminals. During the presentation, visual elements frame migrants in the Röszke camp as jailed. According to the news presentation,¹⁰ a group of immigrants broke out from this camp in an organized fashion at the same time as other rebellions in distant locations in Hungary. This implies their cooperation and communication with each other.

Migrants are pictured as violent and aggressive groups by MTV1. Migrants are depicted as a mass of inflowing people involving significant security risks, such as murders who target members of the host society. MTV1 News warns that the Hungarian border is under attack by migrants who arrive in increasing numbers.¹¹ The presenter highlights a killing of a couple in Sicily, Italy, by an immigrant from the Ivory Coast:

The young man lived in a welcoming centre where the police arrested him. The elderly couple was killed for mobile phones and cash in their home... Their daughter declared that the leadership of the country is responsible for the tragedy as they take migrants in indiscriminately while they are incapable of providing protection.¹²

The presentation of the crime appears to highlight the threat and the moral obligation of the government to provide for the protection of the locals and at the same time equates migrants, asylum-seekers and criminals.

⁹ See 29th August, 2015 (Saturday) from 3:00 to 5:50 minutes in MTV1 News.

¹⁰ See 4th September, 2015 (Friday) from 13:38 to 14:06 minutes in MTV1 News.

¹¹ See 1st September, 2015 (Tuesday) from 13:23 to 17:20 minutes in MTV1 News.

¹² See 31th August, 2015 (Sunday) from 09:55 to 10:22 minutes in MTV1 News.

RTLK, on the other hand, highlights that pointing to migrants as sources of danger is an invalid claim. RTLK stresses that migrants are heterogeneous groups, including families, children and vulnerable people. A news presentation aims to highlight the existence of many children and their families among migrating people. This view on the migrant category discredits the homogenous image of organized, aggressive and violent groups from which the host society should keep a distance. These pictures increase the likelihood of a more empathetic view on migrants. Moreover, RTLK points out that the underlying reasons for the behaviour of migrants that led to the rejection of cooperation is, in fact, the result of the inadequacy of the police forces to communicate properly and organize sufficient services. For example, according to RTLK news, no adequate communication was offered about the reasons for stopping train service to Germany; information was provided only in Hungarian.¹³ Accordingly, RTLK highlights that rebellions, marches and the rejection of cooperation by groups of migrants are subsequent results of the mismanagement of the situation and the inconsistency that characterized decisions during the first peak of the migration crisis.

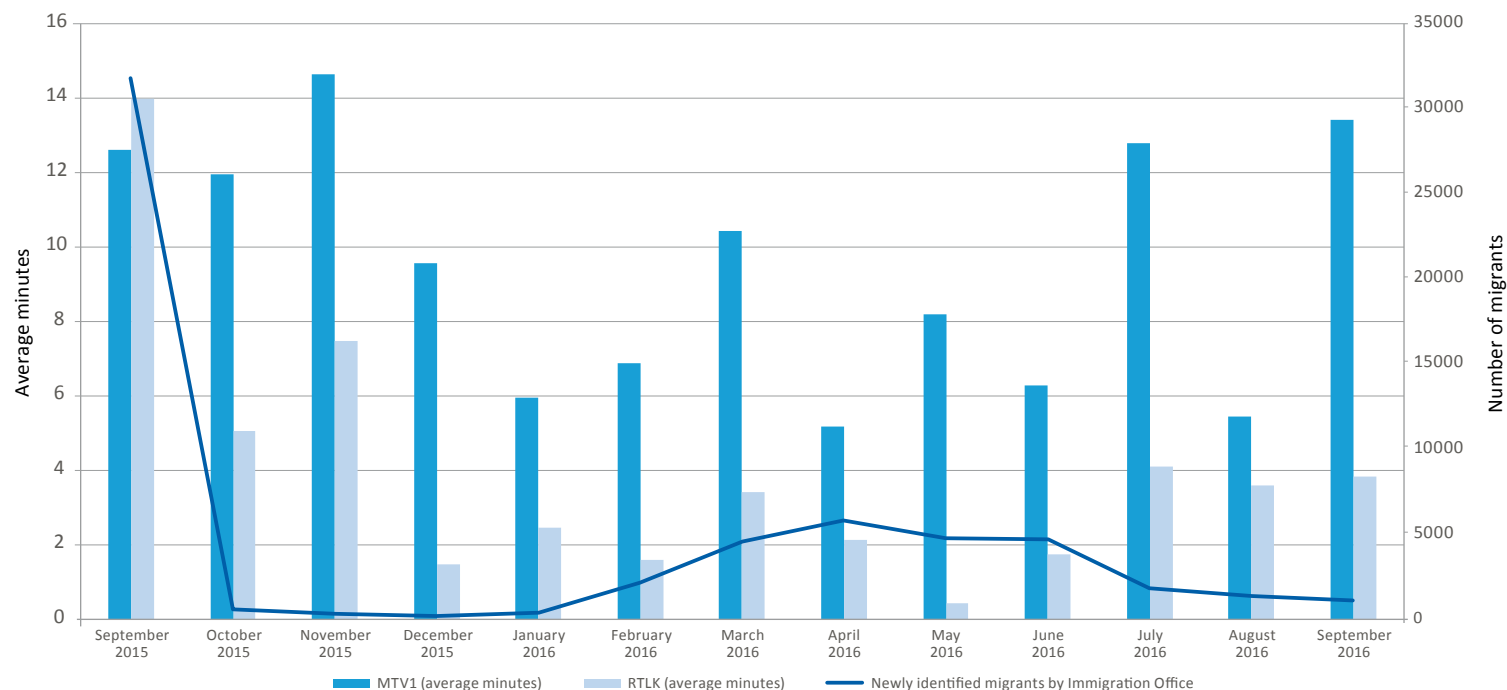
The findings of the research show contrasting patterns in the disproportionality criterion between MTV1 and RTLK. The topic of migration was presented for significantly longer in the MTV1 news compared to the RTLK news in the examined period from September 14, 2015 to October 3, 2016. The topic of migration was significantly more dominant in MTV1 news than in RTLK news. The average length of migration-related topics in MTV1 news was 10:03 minutes, while, it was 3:52 minutes in RTLK news. Therefore, MTV1 presented migration-related topics over 36,6% of the total news sessions in the examined period with RTLK at 14,5%. Furthermore, these MTV1 News presentations often linked migration to terrorism, while migration and terrorism were clearly distinguishable themes in RTLK News.

News presentations on MTV1 kept the topic of migration on the agenda throughout the whole period. As Figure 3 shows, after the last quarter of 2015 the length of the topic of migration dropped slightly but firmly kept the same length until August 2016, when campaigns for the quota referendum started to increase the length of migration-related topics in MTV1 news. Only some special events, such as the Euro Football Cup or the Oscar Gala, interrupted the lengthy coverage of migration. These events grabbed public awareness and dominated the news agenda in early February, June and mid-August.¹⁴ The length of migration-related news is significantly higher on November 17, 2015, July 25 and October 3, 2016.

¹³ See 1st September, 2015 (Tuesday) from 29:20 to 32:09 minutes in RTLK News.

¹⁴ Football European Cup in June 2016; Son of Saul Oscar Award Ceremony in early February; Olympic Games in mid-August 2016; The legislation changes on Sunday closure in early April.

Figure 3: Monthly average minutes spent on migration in the news and the number of identified migrants arrived to Hungary



In each case an exceptional event, such as terrorist attacks or the referendum on migration, increased news coverage.

RTLK news, on the other hand, seems to show the inverse of the tendency in the presentation of migration-related topics. Presentations on migration are rather short, unless news on legislative changes, international events, and war or terrorist attacks increase the length of presentations. Even in the last quarter of 2015, migration-related topics were presented for shorter timespans than in MTV1 news. In 2016 the length of these topics significantly dropped or, in many instances, completely disappeared. By the end of the examined period in August 2016, migration-related topics also increased in RTLK news due to the upcoming quota referendum. However, the length of these news blocks is still significantly lower than in MTV1 news.

While migration was presented in a variety of lengths in news broadcasts, the number of migrants significantly dropped. As Figure 3 shows, a massive fall in the number of migrants identified by the Immigration Office of Hungary can be seen in October 2015, when border control was firmly enforced. According to the Hungarian Immigration Office, from January to September 2015, more than 175.000 people were identified as a migrant seeking refuge. The number of people trying to enter in the last quarter of 2015 dropped to 1.172. In the first quarter of 2016, 7.182 were registered, with 15.309 in the second quarter and 4.386 in the third quarter (Hungarian Immigration Office, n.d.). Therefore, based on the data on the number of migrants, Hungary became significantly less affected by the impact of migration.

The length of migration-related topics in the news, however, did not change in relation to the decreasing security risk. As the number of migrants decreased and Hungary was less affected by migration, the security risk caused by the uncontrolled inflow of people also decreased. The decreasing security risk, however, did not have any effect on MTV1 news presentations. MTV1 news, with some interruptions, kept on presenting migration as threatening and hostile to the idealised order of Hungary. Migration was presented in a fashion similar to that of 2015, when significantly more migrants were travelling through the territory of Hungary. Consequently, while the real risk decreased, news broadcasts by MTV1 kept on presenting an increased level of threat caused by migrants and, thereby, communicated hostility and significant security threats posed by migrants.

Although migrants were more distant from the life of Hungarian people, the presentation of migrants in MTV1 news still showed hostility and threat. Migrants and migration are dominantly shown in relation to threatening attributes. The most common associations of a threatening attribute of migrants are terrorism, jihadism, cultural difference in relation to fundamentalism and the suppression of women. Terrorism, for example, is often linked to migration in news blocks, even though most commonly convicts are second- or third-generation citizens.

RTLK, on the other hand, clearly distinguishes migration and terrorism. RTLK news highlights that migrants and terrorists have distinct qualities and attributes. A presentation communicates that the tension among migrating people is often increased due to their uncertainty about terrorists hiding among them. This phrase implies a distinction between the two categories and counter-frames the equating of migration and terrorism. Themes related to each category are present as distinct blocks in presentations. Terrorist attacks are linked to ISIS while migrants are depicted as victims of war-stricken areas.

The findings of the research for the volatility criterion show different tendencies. Contrary to previous moral panic cases, MTV1 did not echo the topic of migration after its disappearance but, rather, constantly kept the theme on the agenda of the news. On the other hand, migration in the news of RTLK was nearly non-existent from early 2016 to mid-July, when the quota referendum campaigns started. Therefore, the topic of migration varies in different times of the year for the two poles of the media landscape. However, the tendency of keeping it on the news agenda or removing it almost completely characterizes the type of volatility that can be observed. Nevertheless, how the topic changes in relation to the actual context of the changing situation of migration becomes visible.

Based on the dominant framing in MTV1 news presentations, moral panic on migration has three stages. In the first stage, the threatening category is constructed. As shown above, during the discussion of the hostility criterion, news presentations depict migration as a threat to public order, morals and legal mechanisms in Hungary and frame migrants as a unified, homogeneous group with a clear aim. In the second stage, presentations grant authorities the potential to act, which articulates the views of these primary definers. MTV1 articulates arguments for solutions and, at the same time, shows images of hard working police and military officers. Presentations dominantly focus on the construction of the razor wire fence and on the heroic work of the police and military. In the third stage protection is implemented. Presentations imply that migrants are pushed back to the

Balkans. Dominantly, presentations show captured and ejected migrant stories and the Serbian and Macedonian situation of chaos, due to the closed Hungarian border.

In the succeeding stages, moral panic on migration is reiterated and constantly kept on the agenda. In the fourth stage, a new threatening agent appears in presentations. The Hungarian government is being judged for its solution and presentations focus mainly on conflicts with EU and neighboring states. Presentations show, for instance, Angela Merkel's argument, her declining support and German problems caused by migrants. In contrast to this, the argument of the Hungarian Prime Minister is presented. This stage implies a conflict for the protection of the Hungarian solution to the inflow of threatening groups. In this framing, the EU turns into an agent aiming to eliminate the protective measures of the Hungarian government. In this framing, the EU is against the Hungarian values being threatened by hostile groups. In the fifth stage presentations communicate that the threat is pushed even further away from the Hungarian borders, implying that the protective measures of the Hungarian government were successful. News blocks, showing that the EU has struck an agreement with Turkey and the Balkan countries, imply that the Hungarian solution is adopted by the EU. Furthermore, it shows that the problem of migration is pushed to Italy, the Mediterranean Sea and Turkish camps. News blocks imply that Hungary is an example to other countries that might adopt the Hungarian solution. In the final stage, news presentations frame, new conflicts that Hungary takes on for the protection of its integrity and sovereignty. In this conflict, the EU is framed as a hostile agent of power aiming to take over the authority of Hungary over its domestic politics.

The six stages of moral panic in the Hungarian political environment differ from moral panics in earlier cases. The constructed threat of migrants did not appear and disappear as the volatility category of moral panic would prescribe. Instead, MTV1 constantly kept different aspects of migration on the agenda. In these related themes, the previously constructed threatening group was periodically used as a reference in news presentations, perhaps as a reminder to the audience of the pre-constructed danger. In light of the presented threat caused by migrants, policy solutions were discussed and advocated. These solutions have been shown as exemplary and ideal, while other countries were depicted as struggling to solve the problem of migration. The EU was also shown as a new threatening actor that endangers the security of Hungary by taking over sovereignty over the question of migration.

While MTV1 constructed the first three stages of its moral panic, RTLK broadcasted a reactionary response. RTLK news presentations frame government policy on migration as dysfunctional and inhuman. First, it shows that razor wire can hardly stop migrants from entering the country, while police capacity is reaching its maximum. After capturing and charging migrants for damaging the fence, they end up in Hungarian prisons in which, after one year, they are provided a residence permit. Therefore, the policy aiming to solve the inflow of migrants is presented as dysfunctional. Second, RTLK shows the negative impact of the fence on Balkan countries where the number of migrants increased, where migrants receive minimal services or stay in inhumane conditions. Therefore, RTLK news communicates that the razor wire and the Hungarian solution did not solve the problem but simply pushed it further away to the Balkans.

While MTV1 covered migration and related topics even though migrants almost completely disappeared, RTLK news removed these topics from its agenda. The topic is almost completely removed from news from early spring 2016. Only a few blocks appear that provide an explanation for political tension in the middle-East and migration. These presentations show terrorist attacks outside of Europe, ISIS-caused threats and potential war crimes in the middle-East, as well as inhumane treatment of migrants elsewhere.

Although RTLK news does not react to the last three stages of MTV1, RTLK increases coverage on migration as the date of the upcoming referendum approaches. Topics on migration generate sympathy toward migrants and discredit, for instance, the equating of migration with terrorism. RTLK news broadcasts, for instance, a discussion with the Pope, who talks about the necessity of making a distinction between fundamentalism and religiosity. Immediately after, in the same news session, warfare as a cause of escape and migration is emphasized.

The level of consensus on the threat generated by migrants on the idealized order of society is also framed in different ways by the two poles of the Hungarian media landscape. MTV1 presented the narrative articulated of the Prime Minister of Hungary concerning the victory on the referendum. The 6 pm news presented 6 minutes of speeches in parliament exclusively held by members of the FIDESZ-KDNP party coalition. According to the narrative articulated, the referendum informally legitimized the rejection of EU quotas due to the 98.34 percent of *no* votes. RTLK presents a more balanced perspective on the referendum. The presentation emphasized that:

the referendum was invalid because only slightly more than 40 per cent of voters submitted a valid vote. However, from these votes 98 per cent chose to vote *no*.

The presentation also highlighted that the referendum cost more than any previous referendum.

In the light of the referendum, the presentation of a moral panic might have had an impact on voters. If the referendum is considered a measurement of the success of framing migration as moral panic in MTV1 news, the result can be seen as an implemented project. The political power that aimed to reach, mobilize and unify voters against the exaggerated construction of an external threat seems to have achieved its aim. This political power unified a wide spectrum of politically active voters, including possibly the entire right-wing. The 3.362.224 votes against the EU mandate to resettle non-Hungarian citizens on the territory of Hungary without the permission of the Hungarian National Assembly are significant (Hungarian Elections Office, n.d.). In comparison to the national election in 2014, the two right-wing groups, FIDESZ-KDNP and JOBBIK, received fewer votes together, which were 3,285,256 (Hungarian Elections Office, n.d.). From this perspective, presentation of moral panic achieved its intended goal of unification among supporters.

However, moral panic did not reach everyone. The referendum resulted in invalid or blank votes and also absentees. 224.668 people actively protested against the unfair question by submitting invalid votes. 56.163 people voted *yes* to the question of the referendum (Hungarian Elections Office, n.d.). Moreover, 4.629.570 people simply did not turn up on the day of the referendum. These people can be passive boycotters of the validity of

the referendum, which has to be enforced only if it reaches 50 percent turnout rates. The other reason for being absent might be the loss of interest in migration, moral panic or in the resettlement of non-Hungarian citizens. Consequently, the majority of people were not affected by moral panic in any way. However, it is hard to evaluate politically active voters from this pool of absentees.

Conclusion

To summarize, moral panic was framed and counter-framed in the Hungarian news presentation of the two main poles of the Hungarian media landscape. In all criteria of moral panic, MTV1 news presented intense hostility. Furthermore, in MTV1 news, the time spent on migration significantly increased. Even when the number of migrants arriving in Hungary significantly fell, MTV1 kept the same level of intensity in the presentation of hostility and threat. The constructed category of the migrant was repeatedly used as a reference in relation to new constructions of threats to the security and the values of Hungary. In RTLK news, on the other hand, the frame of hostility and threat was counter-framed. In RTLK news, a more humane aspect of migration was presented. This focused on the causes of escape, the difficulties of travelling and the possibility of facing death on the routes. RTLK news presented the personal aspects of all these and the emotions of migrants. Beyond generating empathy toward migrants, RTLK news also made a distinction between terrorism and migration. The time spent on the topic of migration was equal in the first peak of migration crisis, however, when the number of migrants dropped, RTLK news significantly reduced the time spent on migration.

The presentation of moral panic shows novel patterns in the political milieu of Hungary. Contrary to moral panics that usually occur and reoccur for a short period of time in order to achieve legitimacy for regulation, moral panic in the Hungarian case is constant. Moral panic and the communication of hostility were present in the whole examined period from September 5, 2015 to October 3, 2016. First, the construction of threat, hard work by authorities and the implementation of solutions were articulated. Second, although the threat became more and more distant, new agents of hostility were constructed and framed as dangerous to the implementation of security policies in Hungary. In the Hungarian case, therefore, moral panic is presented on a multidimensional level, constantly bombarding voters with a network of constructed threatening agents.

The consensus criterion, although not adequately measured, indicates the receptivity of moral panic among politically active citizens. The representation of moral panic mirrors embedded power relations in the Hungarian media landscape. Moral panic on migration and the network of newly constructed threatening agents possibly achieved consensus among politically active citizens who were hesitant about the two major competing political parties on the right in Hungary. Therefore, moral panic on migration possibly fulfilled its purpose of unification of supporters. The high number of absentees and protest voters may indicate that the communication of moral panic did not reach or had no effect on the majority. However, it is difficult to measure the number of people in this pool who are politically active.

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