

**“SORRY ABOUT OUR PRIME MINISTER” –
SOCIAL MOVEMENT RESPONSES TO
GOVERNMENTAL ANTI-REFUGEE
DISCOURSE IN HUNGARY**

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**“ELNÉZÉST A MINISZTERELNÖKÜNKÉRT” –
TÁRSADALMI MOZGALMI VÁLASZOK A
KORMÁNYZATI MENEKÜLTÉLLENES
DISKURZUSRA MAGYARORSZÁGON**

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Statement

I hereby state that the thesis contains no materials accepted for any other degrees in any other institutions. The thesis contains no materials previously written and/or published by another person, except where appropriate acknowledgement is made in the form of bibliographic reference.

Zsófia Nagy

Budapest, 2019

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CHAPTER 1. Introduction

At the end of 2014 the Ministry of Interior of the Hungarian Government issued a call for applications (Belügyminisztérium, 2014) for local governments around the country to host new asylum institutions that would open in and after 2015 as a response to increasing numbers of forced migrants arriving in the direction of Hungary – a trend that has been visible from at least 2013 already¹ (BÁH, 2015). The call for applications caught my attention for a number of reasons. It clearly signaled a response to social change that would potentially generate contestation and negotiation of what constitutes an appropriate political and social solution in a country where anti-migrant sentiments have traditionally been strong in a European comparison (European Commission, 2012) and where the ratio of foreign citizens is insignificant (Gyulai, 2014, p. 2). It also pointed to potential ambiguities in the logistical-political response to such changes. Parallel to the call for applications, already in the beginning of 2015, following the terrorist attacks on *Charlie Hebdo* in Paris, the Hungarian prime minister voiced a strong anti-migrant message connecting the issue of threat to the issue of migration (“Hungary PM Orbán Says,” 2015), therefore it appeared that such logistical responses would be at odds with discursive constructions of the migrant-threat. And it provided a natural field of inquiry: local understandings and contestations of the issue of forced migration. While expert organizations (Gyulai, 2014, p. 3) often remind us that anti-refugee sentiments appear in an environment where citizens do not have actual, personal contact with forced migrants, therefore their opinions are strongly shaped by the media and political discourses, such asylum institutions would provide the researcher insight into how local communities are affected by the arrival of refugees.

I wrote and handed in my PhD research proposal in April 2015. It was based on a number of preliminary assumptions. First, contrary to rational choice approaches, I argued that objective considerations – such as the costs and benefits of asylum institutions, their advantages and disadvantages, their distance from the settlement – do not sufficiently explain local community responses – deliberation, contestation and adaptations strategies – to the establishment to such institutions. Second, I argued that local communities are not homogenous: inner conflicts, break

¹ The number of asylum seekers has grown nine fold in 2013 alone reaching 19 thousand, while in 2014 more than 42 thousand asylum requests were handed in. The large majority of asylum seekers crossed Hungary towards Western Europe. Protection was granted to only a small portion of asylum seekers. According to data carried out by Eurostat while the EU average for positive decisions on asylum claims is 35 per cent, the Hungarian average is 8 per cent (BÁH, 2015; Eurostat 2015)

lines, stratifications are relevant to the understanding of their responses and also their attempts to appear unified to successfully advocate their cause. Finally, I also proposed that the establishment of asylum institutions has complex effects on the attitudes of locals towards forced migrants: neither an increase or a decrease of anti-migrant sentiments would follow naturally from it. I drew up four broader research questions in my proposal regarding (1) the effects of local asylum-institutions on migrant-related attitudes; (2) the emergence of local knowledge, narratives and identities (autochthony, unity, self-defense, victimization); (3) the formation of local social movements; (4) and the temporal aspects of the formation of the above attitudes, narratives and practices.²

By the time my research proposal got accepted and I started my PhD studies however, the landscape regarding my research focus has been radically altered. During the summer of 2015 – the ‘long summer of migration’ (Kasperek & Speer, 2015) – hundreds of thousands of refugees crossed Hungary, mostly towards other Central and Western European countries on the Balkan route, not without hindrance and conflicts. In the meantime, the government, rather than providing effective help to those crossing, engaged in a forceful anti-refugee campaign (that I will discuss in Chapter 4) coupled with legislative changes that would make Hungary far less hospitable to refugees than ever before and than any other country in the European Union, and with the building of a fence on the Southern border of Hungary. Nevertheless, Hungarian social movements did not stay unresponsive neither to the arrival of refugees nor to the governmental propaganda. An unprecedented number of people organized to provide aid and information to those crossing, initiatives to counter the government’s campaign appeared on Hungarian streets as well, while local conflicts also arose.

The aims, research questions and design of my thesis had to be completely reconsidered. What was clear already in the fall of 2015 is that I would not have the time and luxury to spend months with drafting and writing up a literature review that traditionally precedes empirical work in social sciences. Instead what was necessary was to ‘dive into’ the field and collect evidence regarding the contemporary and multifaceted events that took place then and there. Together with my colleague, Tibor Dessewffy we first studied Migration Aid, a grassroots movement born on Facebook that became the hub of humanitarian responses provided to refugees in the summer of 2015. The result of this research (Chapter 5) was an article that appeared in the *International Journal of Communication* that detailed the repertoires of the group and their

² I want to thank Annastiina Kallius for inspiring me to move towards this research direction, even though I never pursued it.

rhizomatic structure (Dessewffy & Nagy, 2016). Not ready to leave my focus on the local behind, I was also intrigued by the case of Martonfa, a small village in Southern Hungary, that, during the summer of 2015 learned from the news that the Hungarian government would establish a refugee camp on their territory and that built an anti-refugee camp movement as a response to that. Having set up the fence at the border, the government abandoned their proposal of the Martonfa refugee camp, which the locals interpreted as a success of their movement. My research (Chapter 7), published in *Kötő-jelek*, examined the collective action frames utilized by this movement and how they relate to the structural deficiencies of the movement (Nagy, 2017b). Finally, by the fall of 2015 it became clear that the discursive efforts of the Hungarian government were of significant importance parallel with their policy responses to the arrival of the refugees, their aim to construct and redefine the crisis became a mobilizing force among Hungarians either sharing or opposing their narrative. Significantly, the first billboard campaign of the government – which was followed by numerous such campaigns and have become a staple of government communication – was countered by a crowdfunded and crowdorganized anti-billboard campaign initiated by the Hungarian mock-party, Two-Tailed Dog Party (Kétfarkú Kutypárt). This response was not only significant in its volume (the counter-billboards almost outnumbering the official ones) but in its innovative repertoires as well. My research (Chapter 6) focused on these innovations and the structure and effects of the campaign, which I published in *Intersections* in 2016 (Nagy, 2016b). By this time, it became clear that the structure of my doctoral thesis will take the shape of an article-based PhD, connecting these case studies in a broader framework. Based on a number of theoretical considerations my attempt to create a model to interpret these findings resulted in a paper published in the edited volume, *Current Perspectives on Communication and Media Research* in 2018 (Chapter 8) that discusses how these movements relate to the mediation opportunity structures that surround them in present-day Hungary (Nagy, 2018). In order to provide a stricter coherence between these loosely tied chapters, the above papers were supplemented with others that have not yet been published elsewhere: the present introduction (Chapter 1), the theoretical (Chapter 2) and methodological chapter (Chapter 3) of the thesis, and a chapter on mediatized populist strategies (Chapter 4).

Such a long narration of the process of thesis-writing is somewhat unconventional and might seem unnecessary at first sight. Nevertheless, I believe that it is essential to understand the approaches, strengths and weaknesses of the research for a number of reasons. It clearly shows the difficulties of doing social sciences during times of abrupt change: while during the times

of data collection one is often blind about the consequences of the events that unfold, it should not mean nevertheless that such data collection would be ill-advised – on the contrary. A lack of *a priori* theoretical notions, I believe, have benefited the work being carried out. It allowed for the use of abduction: a creative struggle to find patterns in observations. While proponents of abduction often claim that researchers should consciously seek out situations that depart from their expectations and should benefit from not knowing what their case is (Mills, Durepos & Wiebe, 2009) – I admittedly never sought this departure; still, the recursive interplay between deduction and induction, theory and empirical data have allowed more space for creativity and the sociological imagination. Finally, while data collection has clearly been explorative during my research, that does not mean that it lacked a theoretical or academic purpose. In what follows I will point to these purposes that have been constant during the research process and that have driven both the collection and interpretation of data, as central to my approach.

First, I approach forced migration as fitting within a broader context of social transformations. In agreement with Agamben's famous statement that the figure of the refugee is paradigmatic, inasmuch as it is the representation of contemporary socio-political realities (Agamben, 1998), the scientific relevance of my research has been an attempt to investigate such realities. As Castles argues, social sciences need to focus on forced migration as it is now an integral aspect of globalization, it allows us to understand systems of inclusion and exclusion, furthermore to investigate connections between human action and existing and changing social structures (Castles, 2003). It seems a truism to state that migration and change are interconnected, but I want to go further than that and claim that as opposed to continual, ever-present changes in society (Polanyi, 1944) the past couple of years have seen abrupt and massive changes – and abrupt and massive responses to these changes both in Western societies, many developing countries and in the relationships between them. How we narrate these changes is crucial to their understanding. In Chapter 4 I will argue that the term 'crisis' has been mistakenly and uncritically used to describe some of these processes as crisis is never a first-order observation but is always socially constructed.

Second, it has been constant throughout my research that I approached the research field – that is: Hungary – not as a given (i.e. that I am myself Hungarian carrying out research in my home country) but as a choice that represents an analytically worthy investigation. The implicit question – what the relevance of Hungary is in studying forced migration in the contemporary world – has elicited a number of responses. Some argue that Hungary can be considered an *anomaly* within Europe. Such claims, often found in media representations of Hungary in the

international press consider Viktor Orbán, Hungary's prime minister to be Europe's 'bad guy', where inclusive, humanitarian, solution-focused responses to the arrival of refugees represent the other extreme of the spectrum, often labeled 'Willkommenskultur'. Such depictions are not without foundations, given the harsh treatment of refugees in Hungary by the government, the constant efforts to elicit fears among Hungarians towards refugees and the often uncivil tone of the same government. However, I do not consider such contrasts to be analytically useful as they hide more than they explain. Many practices of the Orbán-government fit within the broader framework of the securitization of migration – that interpret migration as a security issue – that has neither been invented or practiced only by them in Europe. Furthermore, the securitization of migration is not so much the consequence of the events of 2015 as a partial cause of them. The tightening of migration policies in Europe can be traced back to a number of reasons: the significant limitation of the guestworker system following the economic crisis of the early 1970s, the diminishing political returns of providing refugee status after the end of the Cold War, the collapse of the former Yugoslavia, the global war on terror, the strengthening of European integration. Nevertheless, critical approaches to securitization call our attention to the fact that these policies were not 'natural' responses to different causes (Huysmans, 2006). Interpreting Hungary as an anomaly hides the similarities between European responses to forced migration on the one hand (see also: Kallius, 2017a). On the other, it also does not allow us to consider significant changes regarding the Hungarian government's and society's responses to the events either. While prior to 2015 the securitization regime of Orbán's government could be best described as indifferent to the hardships of refugees, the situation has changed significantly since then. Both in their legislation, discourses and policies Orbán's populist government has interpreted the issue of migration as a potential resource that they can effectively utilize in their agenda-setting efforts, consistently elevating the stakes of 'crisis'. Similarly, calling Hungary 'Europe's dying past' would offer a simplistic narrative of Hungarian society, claiming that its citizens have always been hostile towards and fearful of foreigners, therefore the anti-refugee climate is understandable. Such readings do not explain trends which show that anti-migrant sentiments have significantly increased in the past four years in Hungary (Messing & Ságvári, 2018). Therefore, I do not believe that the relevance of Hungary lies in its anomaly or extremity. What Hungary provides us with is an apparent *paradox* where anti-migrant sentiments increase in a country with virtually nonexistent migration. My response to this apparent paradox, as detailed in Chapter 4 is that what we see here is the mediatized construction of crisis by a right-wing populist government – but that is only part of the story, as contestations of such discursive constructions also exist.

Therefore, my third research purpose: the study of social movements needs to be emphasized here. This choice has been driven both by theoretical and methodological considerations. First, Hungary has often been described as a country with relatively low levels of civic activity in a European comparison, where participation in social movements, volunteering, demonstrations, petition-signing have not become popular forms of contestation (Howard, 2003). The proliferation of social movement activities in 2015 allowed me to ask the question: what was it in the opportunity structure that allowed, and what was it that limited their activities. It also allowed me to tell the ‘other side’ of the story. While research on the construction of Orbán’s anti-refugee narrative has been blossoming (Bernáth & Messing, 2015; Haraszti, 2015; Mong & Messing, 2015; Szalai & Göbl, 2015; Barta & Tóth, 2016; Gyóri, 2016; Kiss, 2016; Csigó & Merkovity, 2017; Janky, 2017), few have actually looked at the contestation of this narrative (Bernát, Kertész & Tóth, 2016; Kallius, Monterescu & Rajaram, 2016; Kende, 2016, Feischmidt, 2018).

Fourth, the issue of mediatization as a central feature of the above discussed dimensions has been an organizing principle in my approach to the data and the theoretical framework. I claim that the securitization of forced migration, the right-wing populist construction of the ‘refugee crisis’ and its contestation by social movements have all been *mediatized* processes, that is: the media have become central in the construction, perception and responses to these issues. The implications of this focus on media are manifold: it means the acknowledgement that the results of the thesis are limited as they do not detail legal, economical or other aspects of the issues in question. It also means the acknowledgement that these mediatized processes are heavily context-dependent: they take place in a particular space, in a particular time, in response to particular events. And it also means that the social world is not only constructed through media but is also constitutive in the formation of media, as the case of Hungary will clearly show.

Finally, and conceptually, the analysis of social movements in the framework of a multi-case study design has been my intention in order to focus on the mezo-level, that I believe has been missing in the research field. While on the one hand big-number analysis is available regarding the attitudes and sentiments towards migrants in the Hungarian public (Sik, 2016), and on the other, individual and biographical interviews provide us insights regarding the micro-level – what is missing from these approaches is ‘scaling down’ from the macro-level and looking at group-level responses, and ‘scaling up’ from the micro-level and investigating how actors interact with each other, and with other actors (such as refugees or the state). These considerations have driven my choice to design a multi-site study of social movements.

Based on the above considerations, the research questions of the present thesis are the following:

RQ1: What are the threats that arise in the Hungarian mediation opportunity structure during the construction of the ‘refugee crisis’?

RQ2: How do social movements arising in response to the construction of the ‘refugee crisis’ perceive and make use of the mediation opportunity structure, with a special focus on their media practices?

RQ3: What do we know about the opportunities and the related outcomes in the mediation opportunity structure regarding the contestation of the refugee issue in Hungary?

RQ4: Why did the construction of the ‘refugee crisis’ contribute to the strengthening and consolidation of the Orbán-government?

This fourth and final research question moves beyond the direct analysis of the empirical work carried out and attempts to provide an interpretation of the broader political and social context within which it is situated. While the first three research questions are addressed through narrative analysis, the last one is an attempt to provide a causal explanation.

The thesis is structured as follows. Following the present introductory chapter (Chapter 1) I move on to discuss in more detail the theoretical considerations based on the above identified foci – securitization of forced migration, populist discourses, social movements and mediatization – of my dissertation (Chapter 2).

I move on to explain my approach and the research design of the thesis in the methodological section of the paper (Chapter 3). It is true both regarding the theoretical and the methodological chapter that an article-based thesis is less coherent in terms of overarching models than a monographic essay. Therefore, theoretical and methodological considerations will also appear in the later chapters – where they are relevant in terms of the case studies presented.

In order to understand the different social movement responses to the government’s anti-refugee propaganda, I dedicate a chapter to the populist mediatized construction of ‘crisis’ in Hungary (Chapter 4). A common thread in the recent scholarship on populism investigates the cause-and-effect relationship between crisis and the increasing popularity of populist parties in Europe. There appears a common understanding that the so-called economic crisis and the migration waves that have been reaching Europe and the political turmoil these have caused led

to the rise of populism. It is only natural that the focus of social science scholarship has also turned towards the above described relationship between political, social, economic 'troubles' and their effects on the social and political values of European citizens. Nevertheless, the proposed relationship, namely that structural problems lead to a radicalization of the electorate and the demand for populism seems oversimplified at best. First, there is often a lack of reflection in the scholarly literature on what exactly the nature of the series of 'crises' is: do they actually constitute one 'crisis', what are the different epistemological questions that the concept of crisis brings with itself, what are the different understandings of crisis among different actors who shape discourse.

Second, the proposed correlation between crises and changing political attitudes, namely that crises lead to the emergence of populism have been researched. What we currently lack are investigations that view the formation of populist arguments and their effects on public discourse as a dynamic social process, where the role of the media is central. While empirical results do tell us about *what* is taking place, a consistent gap in most analyses is the examination of *how* these processes take place. Taking into account that in order to tackle these changes a dynamic approach is necessary, Chapter 4 provides a narrative description of (1) the construction and contestation of *crisis* dominated by the populist Hungarian party, Fidesz that has been in power for 8 years in 2018, (2) the interconnections between the factors that influence this mediatized formation of crisis-discourses and the dynamic nature of these relationships.

This chapter is followed by the three case studies. First I detail lessons learned from the analysis of Migration Aid (Chapter 5). This chapter explores the impact of social networking sites on social movements and collective action. Literature on the subject ranges from celebratory claims to critical stances. However, the more sophisticated approach conceptualizing 'connective action' broadens the theoretical scope. The case of Migration Aid, a Hungarian Facebook-based grassroots relief group for refugees, is such an example. In this case study, I contextualize the group's activities, exploring how they relate to the broader political environment, arguing for a need to reexamine the concept of contentious politics. I explore the characteristics that make connective action possible, with an emphasis on the group's rhizomatic structure. The findings detail the characteristics of the rhizomatic organization and how these characteristics shape the group's action repertoire.

Afterwards I move on to discuss the counter-billboard campaign of the Hungarian mock-party, the Two-Tailed Dog Party (Chapter 6). The so-called refugee crisis has had a profound effect on the discourses all over Europe. While the issue of migration is a contested one everywhere,

discourses are quite different in Central Eastern Europe than in the 'old' EU countries. A sharp increase in the number of refugees crossing Hungary during 2015, coupled with the Hungarian government's agenda-setting strategy led to a powerful anti-migrant campaign in the public, framing asylum-seekers as external threats to the country. While this campaign was by and large unchallenged by the Hungarian parliamentary opposition, Two-Tailed Dog Party, a Hungarian mock-party launched a counter-billboard campaign attacking the governmental discourse. Taking the latter as a case of digitally supported civic action, Chapter 6 first discusses two theoretical problems related to digitally enabled social movements: the problem of voice and the problem of participation. In both areas technopessimist authors have made strong claims, namely that the Internet creates 'echo chambers' that function as discursive enclaves; and that it leads to 'slacktivism', feel-good activism without significant impact. The chapter presents the case of the Hungarian counter-billboard campaign and through the examination of its action repertoire reevaluates the above claims. It argues that the campaign's action repertoire innovatively connected acts of feel-good activism in order to address wider audiences. With the help of the counter-billboard campaign people holding a minority opinion were given a platform and visibility in the public. It also challenged official statements about the governmental campaign through uncovering inconsistencies in governmental communication. Through memetic engineering, the original messages were altered and mocked in a satirical manner and the outcomes were brought back to the streets of Hungary. The campaign used an innovative combination of several low-cost activities, which proved to be a successful strategy. On a deeper level the counter-campaign challenged the hegemonic views about public discourse. It effectively contrasted the government's one-to-many, top-bottom approach to political communication with a campaign that relied on many-to-many communication and a bottom-up approach.

The last case study introduces the Martonfa-movement to the readers (Chapter 7). This case study examines how a local social movement in Martonfa – opposing the building of a refugee camp and the arrival of refugees – developed during the summer of 2015. The aim of the chapter is to unpack the effects of a perceived threat to this local community. The movement ceased its activities after 50 days when the government withdrew its plans to build a refugee camp in the small village of Martonfa. Nevertheless, it can be argued that the effects of the social movement on the local community reach beyond this period. The chapter first provides a possible theoretical framework for the analysis of such a movement. Then, the methodology of the research is explained. The findings of the research explain how the previously defined

theoretical model can be applied to empirical data. Finally, a number of conclusions are drawn. When constructing the movement's diagnostic frame, it is not the problem of the refugee but that of democratic decision-making that is heavily emphasized. In line with this, the prognostic action frame contains very few details regarding possible solutions or strategies to tackle the issue. The motivational frame centers on 'calling to arms' possible allies and partners.

Following these empirical chapters, I move on to explain the model in which I believe the findings can be interpreted: mediation opportunity structures in hybrid regimes (Chapter 8). Recent rise of hybrid regimes shapes a distinct environment in which social movements emerge and operate. This has challenged social science to offer a more nuanced analysis of the potential of social movements in such contexts. This chapter contributes to this ongoing discussion using the framework of *mediation opportunity structures*. It argues that understanding the dynamics of protest and social movements in contemporary autocratic contexts demands that we pay attention to three issues: 1) the structural power of the state to dominate the mainstream media discourse; 2) the logic of right-wing populism that set limits to public discourse; and 3) a new re-feudalization of the public sphere where top-bottom, unidirectional propaganda tools aim to replace forms that promote dialogue. The chapter draws on the results of the case studies discussed in Chapters 5-7. Highlighting findings of these case studies points to key potentials of the new media environment and to tactical innovations (in mobilization, organization and direct action) that were facilitated by social media. However, they also show how the effects of these innovations were limited, mostly as a consequence of their ambivalent relationship towards the populist logic of public discourse and structural constraints in mainstream media representation. The findings show that the application of mediation theory to contentious action in hybrid regimes allows for a nuanced and multi-layered understanding of opportunities and constraints of such action.

The paper claims that it was the populist construction of the 'refugee crisis' that allowed the Orbán-government to solidify its power. A transformational shift took place in the Hungarian mediatized opportunity structure beginning in 2015, the results of which are still affecting present day processes and that will have a lasting influence on Hungarian society. Social movement responses to these processes were not able to counter these effects, partly due to the organizational ecology, attacks on civil society, and partly due to their limited role-definition. The use of their narrative and disruptive capacities nevertheless crucially contributed to sustaining a subaltern counterpublic in Hungary – but did not lead to the emergence of an oppositional movement.

Recently we have witnessed a growing academic interest in Hungary and in Orbán's regime in particular. However, the manifold approaches to the country and the events that have unfolded there often stay within their rigorous disciplinary and paradigmatic boundaries, parallel lines rarely meet in the distance, so to speak. The aim of the present thesis is to contribute to this literature with empirical knowledge that the case studies serve to provide, but my ambition goes beyond that. I believe that what is urgently needed is to bridge theoretical gaps in the literature for a more productive understanding of the issues in question. First, a gap between social movement theory and media studies is necessary, in order to bring together approaches and models from the two paradigms. I believe that the construct of mediation opportunity structures is such a productive tool. Second, both social movement theory and media studies need to look beyond the democracy-autocracy binary and investigate the constantly growing gray zone in between, where hybrid regimes operate. My work identifies threats in the mediation opportunity structure in hybrid regimes, and among them focuses predominantly on the populist nature of the discourse in Hungary. While similar work analyzing the Hungarian government's anti-refugee discourse has been carried out in recent years, I also investigate what opportunities are still present in the mediation opportunity structure in hybrid regimes and how social movements perceive, make use of these opportunities and to what outcomes they carry out their activities. I believe that the framework and approaches provided in the thesis below contribute to the better understanding of not only processes that have unfolded in the recent years, but also tools to analyze the shape of things to come.

Before I continue, a few words on the researcher's position in the field are necessary. While I have no personal gains or damages at stake, the issues discussed here – the plight of refugees, the socio-political responses within and outside Europe to this movement, the fate of my country – do trouble me enormously, and this is not something to be hidden from the reader's sight. This dissertation is admittedly an attempt to turn these anxieties into a productive force to contribute to a better understanding of the structures that surround us and of the agency we have in interpreting, shaping and transforming these structures.

CHAPTER 2. Theoretical framework

In the previous chapter I have identified – and hopefully justified – the four theoretical foci underlying my approach to the research subject, namely: the securitization of forced migration; right-wing populism in hybrid regimes; social movement theory and mediatization. The aim of the present chapter is to provide a theoretical overview of these focus points in order to embed my research in the existing literature.

The nature of such theoretical chapters does not allow me to provide an overall narration of the evolution of each field, nor an all-encompassing in-depth discussion of existing debates within them. However, I do attempt, in each case to provide an account that familiarizes the reader with each, somewhat distinct field. It is not my intention here to point to potential links between these focus points – I will approach these linkages following the discussion of the case studies carried out, in Chapter 8.

I start with a discussion on the securitization of forced migration – a trend that did not begin and was not caused by recent events but that is clearly apparent in the policies of the Hungarian government. I will move on to discuss right-wing populism in hybrid regimes. Given the contestation and academic debate regarding the nature and definition of Orbán's government in Hungary, this deliberate choice of situating it within the academic field of populism and hybrid regimes requires justification, therefore I will return to the issue in Chapter 4 on mediatized populist strategies to connect the theoretical framework with empirical evidence from the field.

The present chapter then moves on to discuss social movement theory. The field consists of numerous middle-range theories that sometimes compete with and sometimes complement each other. I introduce these theories and situate my work within the paradigm of political process theory, an approach that gives special attention to the interaction between movements and power. I also propose however, that social movement theories cannot be uncritically applied to hybrid regimes and therefore discuss the Hungarian 'organizational ecology' in detail.

Finally, I will move on to introduce the concept of mediatization. This is necessary since all the above described issues – the securitization of forced migration, right-wing populism in hybrid regimes and social movements – appear in a mediatized environment. The mediatized nature of social processes and social practices is often assumed but rarely problematized. Therefore, this part of the chapter I believe is necessary in order to recount what mediatization is – and what it is not.

By the end of this chapter these overall theoretical considerations underlying my work should be clear to the reader. Nevertheless, there are further theoretical issues, relevant to the individual case studies that will be introduced in their respective chapters. And it is only following the presentation of the case studies that I attempt to bring these considerations together into an explanatory model in Chapter 8, drawing up the framework of mediation opportunity structures in hybrid regimes. While this requires some patience and effort from the reader's perspective, I believe that eventually it provides the logical coherence necessary to integrate the different paradigms and case studies driving my work.

2.1. The securitization of forced migration

At the time of writing this thesis the number of international migrants is estimated to be around 258 million according to data gathered by the United Nations where "international migrants are equated either with the foreign-born or with foreign citizens" (United Nations, 2017, p. 2). While the absolute numbers are growing, the percentage of those living abroad their native countries is consistently around 3 per cent relative to the global population. Important changes regarding migration in the 20th century include Europe becoming a target region for immigrants, beginning in the 1950s, as a consequence of the end of the colonial system and post-World War II rebuilding efforts in the region. Still, only around 30 per cent of all global migration can be considered a movement towards so-called developed countries in the Global North, including Western Europe and Northern America.

The study of migration is not novel to sociology. As early as the Chicago School in the 1920s and 1930s, urban sociology already focused on the role and position of newcomers, especially in the framework of urban sociology (Park, 1928a; Park, 1928b; Stonequist, 1937). A common criticism of traditional approaches to migration can be captured by the concept of 'methodological nationalism', that is, that until the 1980s approaches shared a view that naturalized nation-states as fields of research, have turned a blind eye to questioning nationalisms or to issues such as transnational relationships. In Giddens' conceptualization, this is captured by a 'container model' of society, where analytically everything outside national boundaries was cut off from investigation (1995). This has naturally affected the study of migration, where migrants have appeared as problems, contradictions, ambiguities from the perspective of the 'normal functioning' of societies within nation states. Globalization as a phenomenon and as a growing field of research has naturally affected these approaches and reshaped the study of migration, with novel approaches going beyond the above described

limitations. In terms of theoretical models however, what remains are middle-range theories competing but often complementing each other.

In their classic overview article on the subject, Massey and colleagues (Massey, Arango, Hugo, Kouaouci, Pellegrino, & Taylor, 1993) identify the most influential middle-range theories gaining ground in migration research in the 20th century. The theory of *neoclassical economics* focuses on the utility-maximizing individual as an explanation of why migration occurs. Contrary to this individualistic approach, the *new economics of migration* takes the family as its unit of analysis and also adds risk-calculation as an explanatory factor. *Dual* – or segmented – *labour market theory* proposes that within labour markets the presence of migrants is structured, usually in the lower-prestige sectors, because wages do not only reflect supply and demand, but prestige as well. *World systems theory* takes a macro-level approach and starts from the unequal distribution of power and capital globally as a cause of migration, claiming that the assumption of individual free choice as an explanatory variable is unrealistic. *Network theory* investigates the role of networks in sustaining migration. *Institutional theory* on the other hand looks at the imbalances that give rise to new institutions where migration occurs. The theory of *cumulative causation* focuses on the elements of the social context that is altered by such cumulative causes. Finally, *migration systems theory* studies linkages between countries. In his review article on the subject, Alejandro Portes critically examines the existing legacy of migration theory (1997) and proposes new themes for research, namely the issues of transnational communities, the new second generation, and household and gender. Indeed, in recent years, research on migration has moved to incorporate these subjects. Nevertheless, a migration trend in recent years – the increasing political salience of forced migration – has also influenced the research agenda.

Forced migration as an autonomous field of research did not appear until the 1980s in social sciences. It does not mean however that refugee movements had not been studied before that, by historians, international organizations or intergovernmental agencies. In terms of establishing disciplinary autonomy, the 1981 thematic volume of *International Migration Review* and the 1988 establishment of the *Journal of Refugee Studies* denote important milestones. Crucial to the formation of the field was Barbara Harrell-Bond's *Imposing Aid* (1989), and Michael Marrus's still relevant *Europe's Unwanted* (1985).

Similarly to other fields of research, the terminology adopted in forced migration studies is never innocent. Already in his editorial of the *Journal of Refugee Studies*, Zetter notes (1988) that the term 'refugee' is popular in public usage to describe experiences of uprootedness.

Nevertheless, in studies in the field, many warn against the uncritical use of the term. First, this use often does not go deeper than the acceptance of the refugee definition of the 1951 Geneva Convention (Black, 2001, p. 63), where a refugee is someone outside their country due to a „well formulated fear of being prosecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion.” Refugee studies, many claim, need to go deeper than the nonreflective acceptance of a legal definition devoid of further meaning (Black, 2001). Second, the adoption of the legal definition also naturalizes institutional processes without critically reflecting on them, where for instance, the decrease in the number of refugees in a host country caused by a more restrictive asylum policy might be mistaken for an actual decrease. Third, as Zetter also argues (2007), refugee-ness is always a process of labeling, whereby ‘convenient images’ of refugees that used to characterize humanitarian discourse have gradually given way to the fractioning of the label, with the aim of managing the ‘new’ migration. One possible solution for these complexities is the adoption of the term ‘forced migrants’, and indeed, refugee studies in recent years have indeed become more and more inclusive to cover issues of other types of forced migrants. Castles also argues that the legal definition of refugees is too narrow and limited to those recognized by law, while the „term forced migration includes not only refugees and asylum seekers, but anyone forced to leave their homes by violence, persecution, development projects, natural disasters or man-made catastrophes.” (Castles, 2006, p. 7). It needs to be recognized, on the basis of this definition however, that ‘forced migrant’ is not a better term for ‘refugee’ but an umbrella concept that also includes refugees among others. Therefore, in this thesis I will refer to those arriving in Europe fleeing prosecution in the recent years as refugees, understanding that it is a complex category that goes beyond legal definitions, and refers to all those who „undergo forcible uprooting, who lack protection, are stateless” (Voutira & Doná, 2007, p. 163). I am also motivated to choose this definition because of the public terminological contestation going on outside academia, where „the very category ‘refugee’ is sidelined in favor of other publicized terms such as asylum seeker, irregular migrant or undocumented migrant.” (Voutira & Doná, 2007: 163). By adopting the term ‘refugee’ I wish to recognize the legitimacy of the claims of people who are fleeing persecution.

Similarly, the discussion of what took place in parts of Europe in 2015 should be problematized. While many articulations in the public press and even in social sciences uncritically adopt the term ‘refugee crisis’, I would warn against such interpretations of the events. I suggest that we take one step back and ask what constitutes a ‘crisis’ rather than accepting the term as

descriptive. I will talk about the ‘long summer of migration’ (Kasperek & Speer, 2015) when discussing the events in question on the one hand or will use ‘refugee crisis’ where I imply that the frame has been a built-in heuristic tool for host societies to understand the events.

The rights of those who flee their countries are established fundamentally in the 1951 Refugee Convention (1951) and the 1967 Protocol (1967). These are supplemented by further human rights regulations: the International Covenant of Civil and Political Rights (1966), the United Nations Convention against Torture (1984), within Europe the European Convention on Human Rights (1950). A cornerstone of refugee protection is the prohibition of expulsion, and sending back (*non-refoulement*), which forbids the expulsion or sending back of the refugee to the territory where (s)he is in danger. This is the legal framework that defines the handling of the refugee issue from the perspective of the modern state.

At the same time however, following especially the end of the cold war, free movement has been framed as a security risk in numerous policies, discursive constructions by affected states. This is the new paradigm that is coined by many as the *securitization of forced migration* (Huysmans, 2006). The process goes hand in hand with a stricter and more restrictive interpretation of the 1951 Refugee Convention (Castles & Miller, 1998, p. 89).

Among the interrelated reasons leading to more restrictive refugee policies we find the significant limitation of the guestworker system following the economic crisis of the early 1970s, the diminishing political returns of providing refugee status after the end of the Cold War, the collapse of the former Yugoslavia, the global war on terror, the strengthening of European integration. However, a critical approach to securitization always reminds us that these restrictions are not ‘natural’ responses to certain factors.

Therefore, a critical approach to securitization aims to examine what socio-political processes are legitimized by framing forced migration as a security issue in receiving states (Bigo, 2000; Huysmans, 2006). According to this approach the question „what is security” cannot be comprehensively answered, therefore it is analytically more fruitful to rephrase the question so that it asks „through which processes security threats are constructed?” (Hammerstadt, 2014, p. 267).

Different paradigms exist within the securitization approach to forced migration. The speech-act approach, a sociological approach influenced largely by Foucault, and an ‘inclusive security’ approach establishing the notion of ‘human security’ stand out as the most prominent among these approaches.

One of the most influential approaches within the securitization paradigm has been the speech-act theory of the Copenhagen School (Waever, Buzan, Kelstrup & Lemaitra, 1993). The school takes a constructivist approach, it does not consider security to be an objective feature, but a result of an intersubjective process, where the speaker through a performative speech act constructs towards its audience what security is. Two further important claims can be derived from speech act theory. First, the core of securitization can be found in the opposition between an existential threat on the one hand and the object of this threat on the other. Second, securitization constitutes a 'case of emergency' where previously established rules of the game no longer apply (Buzan, Waever & Wilde, 1998, p. 22-3).

Critics of the speech act paradigm claim that the Copenhagen School relies too heavily on speech acts. The school relying on Foucault's notion of biopolitics provides a more sociological approach to securitization that includes the analysis of power relationships, the role of bureaucracy, institutional interests (Hammerstadt, 2014). In this perspective, security is formed less by speech acts and more by bureaucratic processes, surveillance, the practices of risk-management (Huysmans, 2006, p. 38). Related to these, the approach inspired by Foucault stresses that the aim of securitization processes is to increase the role of the state in the controlling of populations, the consolidation and strengthening of status quo elite positions (Hammerstadt, 2014). Regarding the content of securitization processes, according to the description of Huysmans, in order to establish the politics of 'anxiety', framing refugees as direct threats and enemies is not effective and sufficient – therefore it is necessary to connect them to other social groups or trends, such as international crime, trafficking, terrorism, that are traditionally considered threatening (2006).

Finally, the human security approach originated in the policymaking world. It aims to question traditional approaches to security, claiming that „security is emancipation” (Booth, 1991). Nevertheless, this latter approach is seen more as a normative agenda rather than an empirical research program.

Securitization theory altogether allows us to view exclusionary responses to forced migration as socio-historical constructs that can be subjected to criticism and change (Howarth, 2000). For a critical analysis, Huysmans' addition (1995, p. 54-7) is a crucial point: according to him securitization is more than the contrast created between threats and their targets, it plays an essential role in shaping of the 'threatened' subject's identity.

Works that explicitly position the Hungarian issue within the securitization framework are relatively scarce in the literature (Szalai & Göbl, 2015; Nagy, 2016a). In his study about the

legal aspects of the 'refugee crisis', Boldizsar Nagy introduces six characteristics that describe the government's securitization approach: denial, deterrence, obstruction, punishment, free-riding (lack of solidarity), and breaching superior law (Nagy, 2016a).

Securitization of forced migration is crucial for the present thesis as it provides the context necessary for understanding the actions of the Hungarian government. First, it points to the international context within which the shaping of the refugee-issue takes place: positioning refugees as threats in public discourse is not only characteristic of the present era or of Hungary. Second, it provides the necessary link to understand why right-wing populists have been so eager to position migrants as threats to their respective societies.

2.2. Right-wing populism in hybrid regimes

I identify the immediate political context as a right-wing populist discourse practiced by the Hungarian government in a hybrid political regime. All these terms require further clarification. Studying Orbán's power, especially within the country, has nevertheless often been made difficult by definitional debates and controversies regarding the nature of his rule. While impossible to summarize here, these debates have important consequences regarding how we understand and approach the past decade. Famously, Orbán's self-definition of his regime labels it an 'illiberal state' („Orbán wants to build 'illiberal state'", 2014). This term is Orbán's version of 'illiberal democracy', a definition that gained ground in the 1990s to describe regimes that regularly hold elections but otherwise breach the rule of law and violate checks and balances, going against the principles of 'constitutional liberalism' (Zakaria, 1997). The problem, however, with this definition, as many have pointed out, is that these regimes do not only damage liberalism, but also democracy by attacking minorities, media freedoms and political rights as such (Müller, 2016, p. 41).

Recently, many scholars have attempted to frame Orbán's rule as a 'hybrid regime' that operates in the gray zone between a functioning liberal democracy and autocracy (Bozóki, 2017).³ In his work on hybrid regimes Diamond proposes that we apply the term to regimes that practice a form of electoral democracy „but fail to meet the substantive test, or do so only ambiguously" (2002, p. 3). A synonym he suggests is 'pseudodemocracy', stressing that these regimes only mimic the democratic form. In their work on the subject, Levitsky and Way (2002)

³ For a summary regarding the state of democratic institutions in Hungary, see our response to the Information Sheet of the Hungarian Government on the issues raised by the draft report of Judith Sargentini (Labanino & Nagy, 2018)

adopt the term 'competitive authoritarianism' to describe one particular type of hybrid regime, and define it in the following way: „formal democratic institutions are widely viewed as principal means of obtaining and exercising political authority. Incumbents violate those rules so often and to such an extent, however, that the regime fails to meet conventional minimum standards of democracy.” (2002, p. 52). They point to the importance of four arenas of democratic contestation, namely (1) the electoral arena; (2) the legislature; (3) the judiciary; and (4) the media (2002, p. 54).

While it is impossible to provide even a short overview of these issues here, a few words are necessary. While it is well known that in 2018 Fidesz won the national elections for the third time in a row with a supermajority in the Parliament, it is less well known, that behind this stands a revised election system since 2012 that strongly favors incumbent parties. Additionally, from 2014 to 2015, there was a strong decline in the rating of electoral processes in Hungary (Freedom House, 2015) – the advantages of Orbán's party in terms of legislative, media and financial dimensions all provide an unfair advantage to the incumbents (Varga, 2018).

Regarding the state of affairs in legislature, between 2014 and 2017, the index for rule of law decreased with a number of 0.06 (World Justice Project, 2014; 2015; 2016; 2017). More importantly, the European Parliament, during 2018 has accepted a motion to begin the so-called Article 7 Procedure against Hungary that could eventually lead to the suspension of the country's voting rights in the EU. While this is extremely unlikely to happen, the process is indeed a cornerstone unprecedented in EU-history.

Regarding the judiciary, Hungary's score on Judicial Framework and Independence has fallen from 2010 to 2017 from 2.75 to 4.25 points (Freedom House, 2017). Issues such as the forced retirement of judges, the setting up of the National Judiciary Office (OBH), the appointment of Constitutional Court judges are all pointing to the declining independence of the judiciary system. Finally, regarding media freedom in Hungary, the score on 'Independent Media' fell from 2.75 to 4.25 between 2010 and 2017 (Freedom House, 2017). The damage to media freedom will be discussed in detail later, suffice to say here that both in terms of legislation and regulation, in terms of media ownership and in terms of attacking independent media, trends point to the same direction: the elimination of a pluralist media landscape that would effectively provide control and criticism over the government.

These debates about illiberal democracy, hybrid regimes and competitive authoritarian systems, however usually apply a strong formal and institutional focus – for the sake of the present analysis where political and communication strategies are emphasized, I prefer to underlie the

populist nature of Orbán's politics, while also adding that this populist discourse is practiced by a hybrid regime to pinpoint the formal-institutional aspects of their rule. This is not a straightforward decision as the ever-growing literature on populism is itself riddled with complexities and controversies. What I will attempt to do below is situate this thesis within the many co-existing approaches to and definitions of populism, shortly, in order to provide a better understanding of my aims.

Scholarly disputes regarding the definition of populism are not in themselves arbitrary or self-serving controversies but are consequences of different approaches towards populism as a phenomenon. In their recent work Mudde and Kaltwasser provide a short list of such different approaches for a clearer view on the subject (2017, p. 2-4). They make a distinction between an *ideational approach* that conceives populism as a worldview; a *popular agency* approach that emphasizes that such ways of life are „built through popular engagement in politics” (2017, p. 3). Significantly, an important contribution to the field is the *Laclauan approach* where populism is considered an emancipatory force: populism, by introducing conflict into politics is a radical response to the problem of liberal democracy (2017, p. 3). The *socioeconomic approach* emphasizes „irresponsible economic policy” at the center of populism (2017, p. 3). Furthermore, the *political strategy* approach, as implied by its name, focuses on strategies of populist leaders, while a final approach underlines the communication styles of populists (2017, p. 4). In the spirit of the latter approaches, Moffitt and Tormey for instance stress that styles are a more suitable ground for analysis than ideologies, since populists' ideologies cover a wide range of worldviews (2014, p. 381). They also argue that a focus on styles brings forward the issue of performativity that is central to the enactment of populism, and the mediatized nature of populism (2014, p. 387). Importantly, they do differentiate between styles and discourses, claiming that the *discursive approach* holds that nothing is outside discourse, while those accepting the style-frame decide to limit their focus to the discursive elements of populist politics.

While this research has been strongly influenced by the arguments put forward by Moffitt and Tormey, *I approach populism here as a discursive strategy* understanding that in the case of countries where populists are in power analysis should leave room to other aspects of their policies and politics. Discourse, I believe is not the only facet of populists in power, but is the focus of the present paper. In the context of the present paper this means for instance, that while the securitization of forced migration – constructing refugees as a threat – takes places in many

arenas (legislature, border control, communication), I take and analyze the discursive construction of the 'refugee crisis' as only one aspect of this overall process.

These debates surrounding the nature of populism are not inconsequential to different definitions of populism. It is also often claimed that the extreme difficulty in defining populism is not made easier by the fact that it is stigmatizing and rejected by those being studied (Albertazzi & McDonnell, 2008, p. 3). At least in the case of Hungary this difficulty does not arise as Orbán himself readily accepts the label. As he explained in an interview in 2015: "The problem is nobody knows what [that] means. It does not sound bad in Hungarian ears. Being a populist means that you try to serve the people. It's positive." („All the terrorists are migrants", 2015). A further issue with definitions concerns the role of ideology: Mudde speaks of populism as a 'thin-centered' ideology, implying that it is context-sensitive and flexible in comparison with other, 'thick-centered' ideologies. This issue has often been problematized in Hungarian debates as well. A well-known definition of Orbán's rule regards it as a 'mafia state' (Magyar, 2016) where ideology is merely a veil that serves to cover, other, hidden motivations (namely the state-capture of independent institutions); while those opposing this definition claim that the role of ideology is central to understanding Orbán's power. It is not accidental that this ideology is a post-communist form of neo-conservatism (Szelényi & Csillag, 2015). This paper shares the latter view and believes that there is a strong elective affinity between discursive practices and other – economic, structural – aspects of populist governments. However, rather than giving a detailed enumeration of definitions present in the literature (Taggart, 2000; Müller, 2016; Mudde and Kaltwasser, 2017; Rucht, 2018) I will point to three key features that most of these definitional attempts share and are relevant for the present paper: (1) the positive imagination of the 'people' (Rucht, 2018, p. 68); (2) an antagonism between the in-group and the outgroup; (3) and a reference to the *volonté general*, the general will of the people, agreeing with Müller that it is important to emphasize that these features are all embedded in a moralistic imagination of politics (2016, p. 19). These are the three key features that I will return to in Chapter 4 to discuss their relevance in the Hungarian case.

Any discussion on populism would be incomplete without an overview of potential explanations of the rise of populism. I here follow authors who make a distinction between demand- and supply-side factors. Mudde (2007), for instance claims that on the macro-level potential demand-side explanations include modernization, crises, ethnic backlash and authoritarian legacy. The *modernization approach* claims that populist parties respond to anxieties that arise in the electorate regarding processes of modernization. As we will see,

especially among new populist parties an important narrative feeds on these anxieties caused by the perceived 'breakdown' of established metanarratives. The *crisis-explanation* claims that times of crisis open up demands for populist solutions. As crisis is a concept central to my argument, I will return to this claim in detail later in Chapter 4, but what should be mentioned here is that crisis should not be understood as exogenous to politics, but as always constructed by and through political discourse, therefore such explanations should always be read with caution. The *ethnic backlash-explanation* refers to fears related to „perceived ethnic threats” (Mudde, 2007, p. 211). Again, in the case of Hungary, the role of populist parties in the construction of such perceptions of threats should be problematized, given the lack of actual refugees. Finally, regarding *authoritarian legacies*, Mudde specifically refers to „Europe’s new democracies” that would be particularly vulnerable to populism (2007, p. 216). In the decade that passed since the proposal of this explanation what we have witnessed is the global spread of populism, regardless of the existence of such legacies, thus this explanation seems insufficient at least.

Mudde points to the existence of further, mezo- and micro-level demand-side explanations (schools, organizations, attitudes, insecurities), the description of which go beyond the focus of the present article. Since here I focus on the communication strategies of populists, an examination of supply-side factors is however necessary. On the supply-side we can distinguish between internal and external factors. A number of well-known *internal features* – ideology, organization, leadership and communication strategies – will be discussed in later sections. Regarding *external factors*, Mudde points to the institutional, political and cultural context (2007, p. 233). An important explanation gaining ground here explains the rise of populist parties as a response to the failure of moderate parties (Lochocki, 2018). This, however, cannot be considered as a 'root' cause in itself but leads to further questions regarding the causes of the crisis of mainstream parties. Here Kriesi points to two potential causes: the emergence of the European/global level of politics and the mediatization of politics (Kriesi, 2014, p. 364). It is the latter that will be discussed in detail later.

In sum, I believe that explanatory models are often difficult to apply as they tend to confuse two different questions, namely: what are the root causes of populists' emergence, and what keeps populists in power, just like in the case of Hungary. I think what is needed rather than singling out potential explanatory variables is understanding the process as a *populist spiral*. In the case of Hungary, the first step in this spiral has indeed been the failure of mainstream parties. A second stepping stone has been, as we will see, a shift in the opportunity structure, namely

that the issue of migration has created an opportunity to polarize the electorate. Thirdly, the construction of crisis has indeed strengthened the populist governing party by creating further demand from the electorate. Fourth, this allowed for Fidesz to crackdown on its challengers coupled with an unprecedented volume of state propaganda. Eventually, this led to the solidifying of a specific type of hybrid regime, competitive authoritarianism in Hungary. Within this process, populism is the discursive strategy utilized, and not the definition of the regime.

Definitional debates often abound because of empirical differences between existing populist movements and parties, therefore a word on populism-typologies is necessary. The most straight-forward distinction is made between *left-wing* and *right-wing populism*, where the former would conceptualize the 'people' as a class, the latter, as nation (Kriesi, 2014, p. 362). A further, but far from equivalent distinction is made between *exclusionary* and *inclusionary populisms*. In their article on the subject, Mudde and Kaltwasser find exclusionary populist parties mostly characteristic of Europe, while inclusionary populist parties mostly in Latin America (2017, p. 148). Important for the present analysis is their distinction (based on the work of Filc, 2010) between dimensions of exclusion, namely material, political and symbolic. While in the case of Hungary symbolic exclusion of refugees has been an internationally well-known and discussed feature of populist politics, other – mostly material – forms of exclusion mostly go unnoticed, such as the gradual dismantling of a social welfare system, or the significant restrictions on workers' rights. As discussed before: ideology matters: Fidesz is a right-wing exclusionary populist party.

One further type worth mentioning is based on temporal specificities, namely 'new populism' (Taggart, 2017), that represents a new ideological, organizational and electoral base for such parties. Ideologically, new populists feed on and politicize the 'breakdown' of previously consensual structures and narratives, and position themselves as antisystem in nature (Taggart, 2017, p. 230). Organizationally, new populist parties are centralized on the one hand and can be characterized by charismatic leadership on the other (2017, p. 230). The new populist leader is not only the messenger, but the message of the party as well. In terms of the electorate, new populists are distinct inasmuch as they draw from a broader constituency than lower-status, disillusioned voters (Taggart, 2017, p. 232). These characteristics clearly situate Fidesz among the new populist group. Orbán has a strong penchant for giving speeches that provide interpretations of historical currents that fit the ideological framework described and has been his party's undisputed and undisputable leader for the past 30 years. Fidesz's electoral base is

an amalgam of both politically powerless losers of the system and middle- and upper-middle class voters strongly assisted by numerous government policies.

While not necessarily adopting the term, 'populist', several empirical works have already examined how the so-called 'refugee crisis' appeared in the Hungarian public and how the government shaped the discourse since 2015. One of the first studies with such a focus was the analysis of Bernáth and Messing that applied the framework of *moral panics* onto the problem and argue that the aggressive and dominant governmental campaign had no opponents in the Hungarian public, thus the passivity of the opposition and the media partially explains the government's success (Bernáth & Messing, 2015). Sik and his colleagues primarily focus on the consequences of the securitization discourse and the Hungarian government's anti-refugee campaign, positioning it in a wider historical context. Their paper argues that while *xenophobic sentiments* are at a record high in Hungarian society they still show relative stability over time and that anti-migrant attitudes strongly correlate with xenophobia in general (Sik, Simonovits & Szeitl, 2016). In their content analysis of the media representation of the 'refugee crisis' between 2015 and 2018 Sik and Simonovits find that the government successfully dominated the discourse on the issue in Hungary (Sik & Simonovits, 2019).

My aim here is not to replicate these findings. I believe that the case of Hungary is worthy of academic examination because it allows us to investigate not only what populists say, but also what they do once they get in power (Orbán's party has been governing Hungary since 2010), and the relationships between the two. Populists in hybrid regimes, once in power, create distinct mediation opportunity structures and dominate the discourse in these opportunity structures. In order to understand the concept of opportunity structures, I now move on to the field of social movement theory.

2.3. Social movements

Any introduction to the field of social movement theory is selective by nature. Here I attempt to give a short narration of the most important developments in the field since its birth and the description of relevant middle-range theories within. My research fits in the *political process theory* approach. Two of its conceptual tools: 'repertoires of collective action' and 'mediation opportunity structure' will be introduced here. While the birth of the digital have not yet led to the emergence of a distinct social movement paradigm, the theory of 'connective action' as put forward by Bennett and Segerberg (2012), and the 'capacities approach' of Tufekci (2017) are also highly relevant for the present study and will be introduced here.

Academic consensus usually dates the beginning of systematic research on social movements to the end of World War II (Goodwin & Jasper, 2014). This does not mean however that social sciences ignored social movements before the 20th century. The most characteristic and widespread theoretical framework used to study movements were the so-called *mass society theories* (Le Bon, 1960). This model interpreted social movement activity – which mostly referred to labor movement or electoral movement actions – as fundamentally irrational, and emphasized the dangers of individuals participating in mass movements (Hamilton, 2001). A typical feature of these interpretations is that they did not only consider collective action understood as mass action to be irrational but also to be a symptom of the transition from traditional to modern societies. Authors such as Tocqueville (1945), Durkheim (1964), Tönnies (1963) or Mannheim (1940) belong to this tradition – they emphasize that the dismantling of traditional primary groups, such as the family or the local community in industrial society lead to novel problems.

A way to interpret the motivation behind these approaches is the social gap existing between researchers and their research subjects, the latter coming from lower classes: according to this, social sciences coming from the higher strata of society have been suspicious towards such forms of collective action and this suspicion appears in their analysis (Goodwin & Jasper, 2014). The irrationality of collective action as an explanation also appears after World War II when social scientists were trying to understand Hitler's popularity in Europe, relying on the concepts of mass psychosis and irrationality as analytical tools (Goodwin & Jasper, 2014).

Social movement theory as an autonomous research field took shape in the 1960s driven by factors within and outside academia. An important social factor was that the increasing prosperity of Western societies did not lead to the disappearance of social movements – as it would follow from the statements made by mass society theories -, on the contrary: social movements in the 1960s have gained unprecedented momentum on both sides of the European continent and overseas. What was novel about these movements was that their participants were often highly educated, middle-class people – as opposed to the social composition of earlier movements. Many authors believe that the key to the success of the American civil rights movement has been precisely this aspect: that it established the coalition of oppressed African-American masses and their liberal middle-class supporters (McCarthy & Zald, 1977). It was partly due to these transformations that social movement theory as an independent field of study has emerged.

Following World War II, as I have said, the emergence of social movement theory was also influenced by scholarly trends. One such trend was the so-called 'economic turn' in social

sciences. In 1965 the economist Mancur Olson published his book, *The logic of collective action* that posed the question why individuals would participate in collective action, given that they rationally calculate costs and benefits of such participation (Olson, 1965). An important contribution of Olson's proposition is the so-called *free-rider problem*. The notion of the free rider as articulated by Mancur Olson is the following: „Unless the number of individuals in a group is quite small (...) rational self-interested individuals will not act to achieve their common or group interests” (Olson, 1965, p. 2). Or, as Lichbach – who himself proposed some solutions to the free-rider problem – puts it: If individuals receive the benefits regardless of whether they actively participate in a dissident group's activities, then why participate and pay any costs? (Lichbach, 1995). According to Olson a possible solution to the dilemma is the existence of *selective incentives*: members of an exclusive group gain particular advantages (or inversely non-members gain particular sanctions) that make collective action a rational choice. While Olson had an individualistic approach, he could imagine a situation where collective action would be a rational choice, and not caused by mass psychosis. This marks the establishment of rational choice theory within social movement research (Olson, 1965).

A benefit of rational choice theory is that it views social action as purposive, which, after classical works that emphasized the deviant nature of social movements, was a novelty which moved theories of social movements forward. Nevertheless, it falls behind in explaining the internal culture, group decisions, and cultural outcomes of social movements – aspects which are stressed by the culturalist models of social movements.

Rational choice theory hasn't been unresponsive towards some of these criticisms. It is a misconception first, to think that it only covers opportunistic or utilitarian behavior: a number of studies concentrate on non-opportunistic, altruistic behavior within the paradigm. Second: in response to criticisms about the approach covering only individualistic choices and motivation, it has moved towards studying group mobilization as well (Snow & Oliver, 1995, p. 585). Finally, a number of attempts have been made to redefine the scope of 'rational choice', which wouldn't assume full information, nor explicit calculation, where people satisfice rather than maximize. As Jasper notes however, such a definition opens the door to plenty other influences for rational choice theory (Jasper, 2010).

Resource mobilization theory is a correction and continuation of rational choice theory (Buechler, 2000). The theory includes both economic and political approaches. The economy-focused model considers movements to be analogous with business corporations and examines their interior and exterior resources, and resources they need to establish themselves and sustain

their efforts. John D. McCarthy and Mayer Zald belong to this strand of research. Their 1977 work, *Resource mobilization and social movements: A partial theory* is a foundational text of this approach (McCarthy & Zald, 1977). Partly stepping away from the business company metaphor, Doug McAdam, whose work on the American Freedom Summer brought important empirical findings to the field (McAdam, 1988), stays within the framework of resource mobilization theories. During the Freedom Summer in 1964, African-American civil right activists recruited mainly white, middle-class American students from Ivy League universities in the United States to involve them in numerous political projects in the Southern states of the US. Participation in the movement from the students' perspective was remarkably risky: three students lost their lives when racists attacked them, many activists experienced harassment, either from American citizens or from the police. By analyzing the questionnaires filled out by participants during the recruitment phase, McAdam had the opportunity to investigate the route of participants towards activism. Here he identified the significance of three factors. The first, namely 'biographical availability' refers to the fact that in certain life stages individuals have more free capacities to participate in social movements than in others (e.g. the years spent in education). A second such feature is 'ideological compatibility'. This is particularly relevant in the case of high-risk movements such as the Freedom Summer. Participation in high-risk activities might be explained by the personal history – previous participation in low-risk activities – of the activist. The most important factor however, as explained by McAdam, is the existence of 'social connections': the best predictor of one's participation in a movement is whether they know someone who is already participating. This, according to the author, is caused by the fact that the costs of participation become lower than the risks of potential social rejection in case of non-participation.

According to the *theory of relative deprivation* the experience of deprivation or dissatisfaction – when compared to an idealized or optimal situation – leads to strains in society and that explains the birth of movements (Merton, 1938). The theory of relative deprivation is usually attributed to American sociologist Robert Merton (1938). Additionally, it is the work of Walter Runciman that makes it especially suitable for the study of social movements, who distinguishes between egoistic and fraternal forms of relative deprivation. While the former refers to individual dissatisfaction in the light of comparison with the situation of one's own group, the latter means that a member of a certain group experiences deprivation precisely because his/her group membership, in comparison with other groups. In this interpretation for instance the Civil Rights Movement in the United States was a consequence of feelings of fraternalist relative

deprivation among African Americans who experienced that they suffered disadvantages because of their group membership, and this experience led to the emergence of the social movement (Runciman, 1966).

According to *structural strain theory* social structures exert such pressures on individuals that it leads them towards deviant acts (Agnew, 1992). They claim that we can speak of two such strains: individual and structural strains. The former is a pressure that does not appear on a societal level, such as personal workplace failure. The latter refers to socially malorganized situations that have negative effects on the individual's life. A classic example of strain-theory is Durkheim's theory of anomie in *Suicide* (1952). According to this, problems in society such as crime or deviance have social roots. According to Merton's strain theory the American cultural system motivates individuals to seek financial success (Merton, 1957). Merton claims that the motivational power of this norm might even push individuals towards deviance. In the matrix identified by him those accepting both culturally defined goals and institutional means are called 'conformists', those accepting goals but rejecting means are coined 'innovators', those rejecting goals but accepting means are 'ritualists'. Those who reject both goals and means have two options: 'retreatism', or 'rebellion' – this latter momentum brings social movements within the framework of strain theory (Merton, 1957).

Parallel to these developments, in the European continent, which has also been affected by strong waves of contention in 1968, scholars have taken a much less structuralist approach. The theory of *collective identity*, associated with the works of Melucci primarily focuses on the emergence and effects of the collective consciousness of a social movement (Melucci, 1995).

Framing theory, in the context of social movement studies, investigates how movement participants frame events and actors. Here it is not the existence of objective resources that matters but whether participants perceive these resources as available (Benford & Snow, 2000). I have applied a framing approach to the study of the Martonfa-movement as we will see in Chapter 7. Nevertheless, the conclusions of the study clearly show that framing needs to be contextualized within a structuralist understanding of movements.

The most influential European contribution to the field however has so far been *new social movement theory*. According to this people participate in contentious action less because of material reasons or class conflict and more because of identity and postmaterial issues. Student protesters of 1968, environmental or feminist movements all belong in this group according to the theory (Touraine, 1985).

Political process theory is interested in the interaction between the movement and the state (McAdam, Tarrow, & Tilly, 2001). According to this approach the birth of a movement can be a reaction to growing political pressures, but also to temporary relief from these burdens – the analysis of these particular constellations is the ambition of the theory. An approach outlined by Charles Tilly, Sydney Tarrow and Douglas McAdam provides a particular interpretation within this paradigm. Its first element focuses on identity, whether an 'insurgent consciousness' arises is reminiscent of the theory of relative deprivation. Its second element, the focus on organizational strengths borrows from resource mobilization theories. Finally, the third element of the theory, the concept of 'opportunity structures', that is, the existence of political threats and opportunities is most closely related to the approach of structural strain theory (McAdam, Tarrow, & Tilly, 2001). In short, political process theory puts the emphasis on political opportunities and threats, mobilizing structures, framing processes, protest cycles, and action repertoires. The focus is on the *interaction* between the context and movement characteristics. Four concepts, that of 'repertoires of collective action', 'mediation opportunity structures', 'connective action' and 'movement capacities' are important analytical tools in the case studies put forward in the following chapters, therefore they merit introduction here.

Charles Tilly (1984) describes 'repertoires of collective action' as "distinctive constellations of tactics and strategies developed over time and used by protest groups to act collectively in order to make claims on individuals or groups" (Taylor & Van Dyke, 2004, p. 265). There is a general understanding that the Internet has broadened these repertoires of collective action in the case of social movements (McAdam, Tarrow, & Tilly, 2001; Tilly, 1984).

Political process theory is significant for us inasmuch as this is the approach within which a bridging attempt bringing together media and communication scholars on the one hand and social movement researchers on the other has been conceptualized by Cammaerts (2012), that of 'mediation opportunity structure'. As explained by Cammaerts, the concept of 'mediation' is useful as

„It enables us to link up various ways in which media and communication are relevant to protest and activism: the framing processes in mainstream media and political elites, the self-representations by activists, the use, appropriation and adaptation of ICTs by activists and citizens to mobilize for and organize direct actions, as well as media and communication practices that constitute mediated resistance in its own right.” (Cammaerts, 2012, p. 118)

Cammaerts (2012) suggests that we think of the ‘mediation opportunity’ structure through a model that comprises of three kinds of constraints and opportunities: in the media, in the discourse, and in the networked environment. This conceptualization is crucial for my approach as the model provides a framework within which the contestation of the refugee issue can be analyzed. Therefore, I will return to the mediation opportunity structure and connect it with my empirical findings in Chapter 8.

The emergence of digitally born movements means novel challenges for scholars working on the field. A promising framework, the theory of ‘connective action’ (Bennett & Segerberg, 2012) attempts to respond to this challenge. The concept of connective action stresses that individual frames allow the personalized understanding of issues for participants, and these frames are easily distributed through a network in which digital technologies become “important organizational agents” (Bennett & Segerberg, 2012, p. 755); therefore, organizational structures are no longer needed to create new forms of mobilization. The theory of connective action is highly relevant for the understanding of the case study of Migration Aid discussed in Chapter 5, and will be discussed in detail later.

‘Movement capacities’ refer to the issue of movement outcomes, a question which needs to be addressed here. How to define, conceptualize such outcomes? Gamson’s (1975) approach is a fourfold typology: complete success, co-optation, preemption, and failure. In their debate on the subject with Goldstone (1980), the operationalization of success has become a central issue. Similarly to Gamson, based on whether discursive and/or institutional opportunities are grasped, Koopmans and Statham (1999) also arrive at a fourfold model, where movements can gain access to both, only to discursive opportunities, only to institutional ones, or neither. A more important question however that arises is the matter of explanatory variables behind success: is it structural forces, tactical repertoires or leadership that predict potential outcomes? Here I take Tufekci’s approach (2017) who claims that the strength of social movements can be found in their capacities, namely their collective ability to achieve social change. Here she suggests three such capacities: narrative (that is, their capability to frame an issue on their own terms); disruptive (whether they can interrupt the regular operations of a power system) and electoral (their ability to keep politicians from being elected). Important for the present research is the claim made by Tufekci regarding the nature of the relationship between digital technologies and capacities. While in general these technologies strengthen narrative capacities, lowering the incentive to organization-building, they tend to weaken their electoral capacities. During the analysis of the case studies I will return to the question of capacities and how they

played out in the examined cases. At the conclusion of the paper I will show that rather than the existence of digital technologies, it is the overall shift in the mediation opportunity structure that affects the existence of capacities. I will also ask what this means in a broader context: whether movements without electoral capacities in hybrid regimes can be seen as parts of an oppositional movement landscape, or rather, as I will argue, as parts of a subaltern counterpublic.

To conclude this discussion of social movements, a few words on the state of the art are necessary. Tarrow analyses the Eastern European regime changes, and the collapse of the Soviet Union in particular within the framework of political process theory (Tarrow, 2011). The next significant wave of contention that grabbed the attention of scholars have been the antiglobalization movement setting off with the 1999 Seattle WTO protests. Academic attention has turned increasingly towards the transnational nature of movements and the role of networks (Pianta, 2001). The wave also revitalized interest in new social movement theory (Langman, 2013). Following the economic crisis of 2008 scholars were confronted with a related dilemma: whether movements brought to life by economic strains could be interpreted in a postmaterialist framework (Gagyi, 2015).

Parallel to this, numerous attempts have been made to bridge the American-European, or the structuralist-culturalist gap. Snow, for instance who is an author known for his work within the framing approach argues together with his colleagues that it should incorporate structural strain theory (Snow, Cress, Downey, & Jones, 1998). As we have seen, political process theory also attempts to synthesize organizational, contextual and identity factors. The question whether such a synthesis is possible or even analytically desirable, however remains.

The present landscape of social movement theory consists of a number of middle-range theories that each give a partial explanation of the phenomenon. These middle-range theories appeared in the second half of the 20th century, in response to criticisms of earlier literature which either described social movements as deviant behavior, or connected them to ‘relative deprivation’, which no longer seemed to be the model explaining appearing new social movements. These middle-range theories from the structuralist end of the scale: rational choice theory, resource mobilization theory, political process theory, and towards the culturalist end of the scale: new social movement theory, framing theory and the culturalist perspectives. (It has to be noted though that one can perceive of these theories as all parts of and connected to different general theories.) Even though the interaction between these theories is often fruitless, pitting one variable (‘structure’, ‘identity’) against one another, I would argue that middle-range theories

better fit the field of social movements. In his book, *Theories of political protest*, Karl-Dieter Opp argues for a general theory in the field of social movements (Opp, 2009). He also mentions that there are a number of ways to formulate the use of theories: one can argue that they serve further generalizations (2009, p. 9). In the field of social movements, I agree with the contrary view: the use of theories as models that explain specific occurrences, rather than general propositions.

First, as Merton explains, middle-range theories have a better chance of connecting theoretic and empirical levels of analysis (Merton, 1968), thus narrowing the gap between the two, which, in the field of social movements has been a successful tool and led to a number of middle-range theories that reflect changes in the social movement field and politics.

Second, as Charles Tilly describes the roots of social movement theory, he notes that generalization took its form in the idea of a single Movement, which later led to the mistaken ambition of further generalizations in the field: „The effort to generalize across social movements perpetuated the erroneous idea of social movements as groups having continuous life histories.” (Tilly, 2003, p. 12).

Indeed: so far I have introduced theories that were born out of empirical experiences in an explicitly Western (European or American) context, mostly arising in pluralistic democratic societies. But I have also shown previously how hybrid regimes are distinct both from liberal democracies on the one hand and authoritarian states on the other. Can we uncritically apply social movement theories to the examination of such regimes? In his work on the subject, Robertson claims (2011) that we should talk about ‘hybrid protests’ in hybrid regimes. Protest and competition in such regimes are managed, that is, controlled by the state. Not only will hybrid regimes attempt to defeat-proof the elections, but they will also try to defeat-proof the streets (2011, p. 11). Importantly, among other factors, the level of contention in a hybrid regime will depend on the existence of “dense, durable social networks” (p. 9). Here I point to three specific factors that shape movements in hybrid regimes. The first is the ‘organizational ecology’ (Robertson, 2011) present in the given society. The second is the volume of attacks on civil society, and the third is the role-definition of social movement actors: whether it is limited or broadly framed. The latter two (attacks on civil society and the role-definition of the examined social movements) will be discussed in detail later, but in order to understand the context a short overview of said ‘organizational ecology’ is necessary.

The Hungarian transition of 1989-1990 together with historical social and political changes was also marked by significant optimism both in the academic sphere and among activists that the

new era of democracy would result in a strong and active civil sphere in the country (Gerő & Kopper, 2013). Three decades later there appears to be a scholarly consensus that such hopes were exaggerated and failed to materialize. Civic activities as categorized by Cisač (2013), can take the form of participatory activism (institutional forms of collective action, such as trade unions), transactional activism (NGOs), radical activism (disruptive forms of action) and civic self-organization (e.g. social enterprises). I will only discuss disruptive activities as they correspond to social movements, in Hungary to provide an overview of the organizational ecology.

Radical groups in this categorization are those that use disruptive forms of activities, direct action, and whose action repertoire often relies on protests and demonstrations. In this regard both empirical numbers and academic considerations conclude that both Hungary and the region can be characterized by a lack of radical groups. According to European Social Survey (ESS) data, among the 16 ESS countries that participated in every round of ESS, an average of 7-8 per cent of the population took part in a lawful demonstration in the last 12 months before the survey was conducted – the Hungarian number is 3-4 per cent between 2002 and 2012 (Szabó & Mikecz, 2015). The same numbers hold true in 2014.

Before a look at the decades following 1989, it needs to be noted that the transition itself and especially the era of 1987-1990 was marked by an intense increase in contentious movements and civic activities. The most significant issues that mobilized participants were: solidarity with minority Hungarians in Transylvania, freedom of press and democracy, the Duna-circle dealing with environmental issues, and the 1956 revolution.

A number of characteristics stand out when one looks at the Hungarian social movement sphere. First, the relatively active social movement sphere of the transition was soon replaced by general passivity in the early '90s, with the exception of two significant protests. The so-called 'taxi-blockade' of 1990 when taxi drivers successfully paralyzed traffic in most Hungarian cities to protest rising oil prices. The Democratic Charta on the other hand, founded in 1991 aimed to oppose the right-wing government of Hungary and protect its democracy. One possible explanation for the relative passivity of the Hungarian society following the transition, as given by Bozóki is that it was the newly formed democratic parties that absorbed most initiatives and dominated public discourse at the time (Bozóki, 1995). Second, neither feminists (Neményi, 1994), nor green social movements and environmentalists in general have become significant actors in the field (Musza, 1999). While, as stated above, the Duna-circle protesting against the Bős-Nagymaros hydroelectric power plant was an important mass movement preceding and

during the transition, environmentalists in the '90s took the form of transactional activism in the form of NGOs rather than social movements. This landscape began to change around the millennium, when influenced by the global justice movement and its protests in Seattle, Genova and Prague, a Hungarian environmentalist-leftist movement began to emerge (Harper, 2006, p. 13-14; Kerényi & Szabó, 2006).

In 2010 the right-wing Fidesz won the Hungarian elections, gaining a two-third majority in the Parliament. This turn generated significant social movement activity in the previous years. Among the first laws introduced was the new media law in 2011 which prompted the emergence of the movement 'One million for the freedom of press' (Milla) with significant social media presence and street demonstrations (Bozóki, 2015). Milla itself institutionalized itself politically when it merged with other actors in the field and formed the – now extinct – political party, Together (Együtt). Another legal change, that of higher education provoked the formation of a student movement, called the Student Network (HaHa) during 2012-2013. In spite of the relative reenergetization of the social movement sphere, in 2014, Fidesz was re-elected. The idea of internet taxation coupled with internal scandals prompted a third wave of protests at the end of 2014 with massive street demonstrations. As summarized by Bozóki, an important characteristic of these protests were the demographic profile of the demonstrators, with the emergence of a new generation of protesters (Bozóki, 2015).

While social movement organizations are often associated with leftist groups, it is often forgotten that right-wing and especially far-right radical groups have gained significant ground in Hungary, especially following the political crisis of 2006 and the economic crisis of 2008. While the far-right is institutionally present in the form of Jobbik, a political party established in 2006, a number of movements preceded and accompanied its presence, most important of them being the 64-County Youth Movement founded in 2001, and the paramilitary Hungarian Guard (Magyar Gárda) set up in 2006. While the Hungarian Guard was banned in 2009, it split into two successor organizations, namely the New Hungarian Guard (Új Magyar Gárda) and the Hungarian National Guard (Magyar Nemzeti Gárda). In his overview on the subject, Mikecz distinguishes between three threads of far-right movement types which also follow each other in chronological order: the skinhead subculture of the late-80s and early-90s which quickly exhausted itself; the folkish radical movement led by István Csurka, who contributed to present day radical right wing movements by setting up their ideological framework and symbolic repertoire; and finally new radicalism brought about by a generational and organizational

change and strengthened by the impetus of the political crisis and accompanying street riots during 2006 (Mikecz, 2015).

A characteristic of the Hungarian social movement sphere is the blurred line between what Gerő and Kopper coin honest and ‘fake’ movements, that is, truly civil agents and political actors disguised as social movements. One such example of ‘fake’ movements is that of ‘civic circles’ (polgári körök) called to life by Fidesz-leader Viktor Orbán after his defeat in the 2002 national elections. A special case of such ‘fake’ movements is the Peace for March (Békemenet) established in 2012 as a pro-governmental initiative which aims to organize marches that support Viktor Orbán’s right-wing government. As Gerő and Kopper note, the establishment of such movements contributes to a growing skepticism towards the civil sphere in general among the Hungarian public (Gerő & Kopper, 2013).

A number of explanations have arisen to explain the lack of social movement participation and activity in Hungary. It is generally noted that Hungary is a society marked by atomization and disintegration lacking incentives that would promote participation in forms of collective action (Szabó, 2008, p. 242.)

In his overview on the challenges that civic activities face in the region, Piotrowski enumerates a number of difficulties, namely: the low levels of mobilization in Central Eastern Europe; the difficulty of universalizing claims; the fact that their presence is mostly limited to big cities; their heavy reliance on grants due to professionalization and the dominance of the NGO-model; a groundedness in subcultures that limits the movements’ mobilization potential; and finally that leftist labels have become problematic in the scene (Piotrowski, 2015).

Ágh proposes a temporal framework to give an analysis of the formation of the civic sphere in Hungary (Ágh, 2016). He distinguishes between two generations of civil society in Hungary following the transition. The first can be described by the formation and stabilization of ‘Western’-type of institutions and NGOs; while the second with the presence of clientelism and state-capture.

Analysing the present situation and the effects of the hybrid regime on the civil sphere in Hungary, Szabó proposes the application of Ekiert and Kubik’s framework, where the Hungarian civil society can be described by a corporatist, top-bottom structure, with low levels of organizational pluralism and participation (Szabó, 2015). On an organizational level elements of the Hungarian civil sphere according to Szabó and Márkus are etatism, a dependence on international grants and low levels of grassroots activity (Szabó & Márkus,

2015). Analysing the dynamics of protest activities, Ekiert and Kubik differentiate between contentious and accommodating types (Ekiert & Kubik, 2014). Szabó adds that the Hungarian situation can be described by the ebbs and flows of these two types where ‘contentious’ periods (1989-91, 2006-2008) alternate with ‘accommodating’ ones (Szabó, 2015).

While quite superficial, this short overview allows us to see that the ‘organizational ecology’ within which the social movements to be introduced later have arisen, can be described with a lack of dense, active social networks.

2.4. Mediatization

By claiming that both the securitization of forced migration, the right-wing construction of the ‘refugee crisis’ and its contestation by social movements have been mediatized process, I refer to the process that the media have become central in the construction, perception and responses to these issues. Here I understand media as the “institutions and infrastructures that make and distribute particular contents” on the one hand, but “also those contents themselves” on the other (Couldry, 2012, p. 16). In my adopted definition of mediatization I rely on the two dimensions identified by Couldry and Hepp (Couldry & Hepp, 2016, 52): “In its quantitative dimensions, mediatization refers to the increasing temporal, spatial and social spread of mediated communications. (...) But mediatization also refers to qualitative dimensions, that is, to the social and cultural differences that mediated communications make at higher levels of organizational complexity.” (Couldry & Hepp, 2016, p. 52).

For the sake of clarity, it is worth investigating what the notion of mediatization does not imply. Firstly, mediatization is a complex process, meaning it is not one thing, or one “‘logic’ of doing things” (Couldry & Hepp, 2016, p. 15), rather, numerous processes in which the social world is transformed by the media. Second, mediatization does not mean the ‘colonization’ of the social world by the media (Couldry & Hepp, 2016, p. 28). Neither does it mean that mediatization is a unified process that takes place in the same manner everywhere – its degree and consequences vary significantly throughout the world (Couldry & Hepp, 2016, p. 28). Third, the binary distinction between ‘mediated’ forms of communication and face-to-face communication does not bring us analytically useful categories: “mediated communication (...) is interwoven with (...) face-to-face communication” (Couldry & Hepp, 2016, p. 29-30) and vice versa. Fourth, the changes that take place should not be attributed to technology alone (Couldry, 2012, p. 28) but are a result of the intersections “between technological, economic, social and political forces” (Couldry, 2012, p. 28). Finally, these changes are never the results

of a single form of media transforming communications. As Couldry and Hepp explain: “Communications’ role in history does not move (...) from one ‘influencing’ medium to another. It is rather a continuous and cumulative enfolding of communications within the social world.” (Couldry & Hepp, 2016, p. 51).

Nevertheless, clearly mediatization is a process of transformation, often labelled as a ‘media and information revolution’, therefore a discussion of these changes is in order. Already the arrival of television and film brought about scholarly discussions of the effects of media on social life (Couldry & Hepp, 2016, p. 13) but it has been the rise of the Internet and smart devices that put the issue on the center of the agenda (Couldry & Hepp, 2016, p. 13).

Rather than seeing mediatization as a novel phenomenon arising with the birth of the digital, Couldry and Hepp suggest that we understand the history of mediatization as a series of successive waves, starting with the wave of mechanization (the printing press), the wave of electrification (starting with telephone lines and the radio), and the wave of digitalization. They claim that presently we live in the age of the fourth wave, that of datafication, adding that the last two waves “correspond to phases of deep mediatization, because they are associated with a much more intense embedding of media in social processes than ever before.” (Couldry & Hepp, 2016, p. 51).

Relevant for the present discussion is the relationship between the political and mediatization, the social movement-media nexus in particular. This chapter ends with an – incomplete – discussion of these issues, and will return to them in the concluding chapter, situating them in the comprehensive framework of mediation opportunity structures.

Mediatization’s effects on collectivities is manifold: media contents define collectivities, media are means to construct them, and trigger dynamics in them (Couldry & Hepp, 2016, p. 213). This in itself is not a novel phenomenon. Recall Benedict Anderson’s analysis how the media – “the novel and the newspaper” – was crucial to the construction of the nation-state (Anderson, 1983, p. 25).

Deep mediatization, however, brings new potentialities that transform collectivities in a number of ways. There are apparent threats. As Couldry argues, it might mean the dislodging of “politics from its core” (Couldry, 2012, p. 39), where entertainment would be a force shaping political life. I will return to this argument in Chapter 4, and will ask whether the charge of ‘media complicity’ in the rise of populism is a legitimate claim. Deep mediatization might also bring about opportunities for elites to diversify the tools they use to sustain their power

(Chadwick, 2006, p. 202). I will also revisit this point and examine what it is in the network-dimension of the mediation opportunity structure that could justify this argument. Nevertheless, for both claims, I believe that the effects are not straightforward.

Publics are also transformed, possibly even multiplied by deep mediatization (Couldry & Hepp, 2016, p. 217-8). Although, whether this multiplication leads to a fragmentation of public discourse (Habermas, 2006, p. 423) or the appearance of ‘echo chambers’ (Gromping, 2014), namely, that people tend to search out views that reinforce their original opinion, and form communities on this basis, is also debated. In order to make sense of these discussions, a potential framework, the Habermasian model of the public sphere might seem useful. However, one of the central tenets of the Habermasian concept that received considerable criticism is the claim that there exists a singular public sphere. Instead, as Nancy Fraser and others have argued we should conceptualize discourse as consisting of a plurality of publics where counterpublics resisting hegemonic discourses emerge and exist as well. (Fraser, 1990). I will argue in Chapter 6 that in Hungary subaltern counterpublics have emerged, and they “have a dual character. On the one hand, they function as spaces of withdrawal and regroupment; on the other hand, they also function as bases and training grounds for agitational activities directed toward wider publics.” (Fraser, 1990, p. 124). Therefore, they have the potential to challenge hegemonic views about public discourse, as I will demonstrate in Chapter 6. Again, this potential is limited in nature and has to be understood in its context.

The relationship between mediatization and the securitization of forced migration has not escaped the attention of scholars. A number of recent articles (Karstens, Kuznik, & McNeil, 2018; Bajomi-Lázár, 2018; McNeil & Karstens, 2018) focus specifically on the media-forced migration nexus, claiming that in Hungary two discourses – a nationalistic and a humanitarian one – in the media could clearly be distinguished. In his paper on the subject Pries talks about the ‘spectacularization’ of the ‘refugee crisis’ of 2015 (Pries, 2019, p. 4), pointing to the volume of images, videos, media pieces produced during the events.

When it comes to social movements, the democratic potentials of deep mediatization – interactivity, co-presence, disintermediation, reduced costs, speed, lack of boundaries (Couldry, 2012, p. 149) – appear overwhelming. Castells claims that such affordances create “networks of hope” (Castells, 2012) with enormous transformative potential. Some of these claims are unquestionable: deep mediatization has made mobilization easier and led to qualitative changes as well. The latter is captured in the already introduced concept of ‘connective action’ (Bennett & Segerberg, 2012) that claims that novel technologies support communicative practices that

enable more personalized forms of action” (Couldry & Hepp, 2016, p. 218). Throughout the thesis I will refer to voices that emphasize the transformative potential of media for social movements, as techno-optimists. Other voices, however, are more cautious, even pessimistic and claim that “the aspects of politics that would appear to have been transformed by digital communications are principally ‘the negative ones’” (Couldry & Hepp, 2016, p. 252). I will discuss the techno-optimist-pessimist debate in detail in Chapter 5. In the present, Hungarian case, advantages outnumbered disadvantages, however, their effects were quite limited in the broader mediation opportunity structure. To provide examples for both arguments: Benkler claims that the Internet facilitates, even triggers new types and volumes of cultural production (2006). This will be particularly relevant for my discussion on memetic engineering in the case study on Two-Tailed Dog Party in Chapter 6. Others argue that what the Internet makes possible could actually be called ‘slacktivism’: feel-good activism without significant impact (Morozov, 2009). I will also return to the issue of whether there is potential in individual acts of slacktivism in Chapters 5 and 6.

Literature on social movements is rich with analyses regarding the relationship between movements and the media. One thread of these analyses focuses on the media-representation of movements while a different approach puts emphasis on the media strategies employed by them.

With regards to the first approach the classic work of Todd Gitlin, *The Whole World Is Watching* (1980) stands out, in which Gitlin convincingly explores how the media frames social movements, focusing on their radical elements. It is often articulated in the academic literature that the media representation of social movements is driven by an asymmetrical relationship between the two actors: movements need to rely on media in order to meet their goals, the same is seldom true for the media (“most movements need the media, but the media seldom need movements” (Rucht, 2004, p. 35). Accordingly, numerous empirical studies investigate how the mainstream media trivializes the messages of social movements, giving a negative interpretation of their activities.

When it comes to the media strategies of social movements, social movement scholars traditionally emphasize that the importance of the media lies in its power to mobilize, legitimize and broaden their base (Gamson & Wolsfeld, 1993). It seems therefore self-explanatory that the significance of a social movement grows once it has been taken seriously by the media. According to Rucht’s classification social movements choose from the following four strategies when dealing with media: abstention, adaptation, attack and alternatives (2004).

The role of mass media in providing a platform for mobilization for social movements changes with the emergence of social media which appears to be an efficient tool of recruitment for social movements, especially those originating online. Mobilization, however, is only one among the many uses of media for social movements – as we will see. Therefore, literature is ambiguous on the issue, some authors claiming that access to traditional media is still relevant and affects how the goals of social movements are articulated and are being made visible (Della Porta, 2014). For instance, Bennett, Lawrence and Livingstone (2007) argue that despite the appearance of social media it is still difficult for critical voices to appear in mainstream media. Disputing these statements, a number of authors argue that social media and in the broader sense the digital sphere brings with it new opportunities that make it easier for social movements to create and reach alternative audiences (Borge-Holthoefer, Rivero, Garceu, Cauhé, & Ferrer, 2011), even positing that new affordances allow for virtual cosmopolitanism to arise (Sobré-Denton, 2016). In any case, the appearance of these new possibilities reshapes old mechanisms, the question is the extent and direction of these changes. Approaches that break with focusing only on a specific type of media (termed ‘one media bias’ by Treré, 2012) and instead put an emphasis on a hybrid environment (Chadwick, 2013) investigating the media ecosystem are analytically useful to answer these questions. As discussed before, the concepts of ‘connective action’ (Bennett & Segerberg, 2012), ‘mediation opportunity structures’ (Cammaerts, 2012) and Tufekci’s ‘signals and capacities’ approach (2017) are all refreshingly complex models that allow for a layered understanding of these processes.

In this chapter I have attempted to provide a comprehensive overview of the relevant theories that provide a broader framework for the present research. Given that my work lies at the intersection of different fields, this framework may not appear unified yet. In the next, methodological chapter I demonstrate how the research design has been structured in order to capture the connection not only between the cases but between the different theoretical approaches.

CHAPTER 3. Methods and approach

3.1. Case study research

As discussed in the introduction of the thesis, methodologically the research relies on the integration of independent case studies. Such an approach allows the researcher to expand the understanding of a particular issue and integrate it into a broader analytical framework (Mills, Durepos, & Wiebe, 2009, p. 475). While I have and will argue that such an approach brings benefits to the research, it also leads to further complexities. While each independent case study has its own methodology, driven by the context and the nature of the data, an integration of these independent methodologies into a single research design is still necessary. Therefore, in what follows, I will give an overview of this overarching research design here. However, the methodology of the cases is always independently discussed in the empirical chapters as well (Chapters 5-7). Before I continue with the discussion on case study research, a further note of warrant is necessary: the integration of independent case studies might seem similar to, but is not equivalent with comparative case study research (Mills, Durepos, & Wiebe, 2009, p. 475). In the case of the latter the comparative angle is already part of a predesigned research strategy. In my case, however, “comparison emerges from an ex post facto realization” (Mills, Durepos, & Wiebe, 2009, p. 475) that comparison adds to the explanatory power of independent analytical insights.

The roots of case study research in social sciences can be traced back both to the medical model (Becker, 1968, cited by Hammersley & Gomm, 2000, p. 1), and to the ‘case work’ of social workers influencing early American sociology (Platt, 1981, cited by Hammersley & Gomm, 2000, p. 1). As explained by Gillham (2000), in case study research, a case has four core characteristics: (1) it is a unit of human activity embedded in the real world; (2) it can be understood only in context; (3) it exists in the here and now; and (4) it merges in the context so that precise boundaries are difficult to draw (Gillham, 2000, p. 1).

The rationale behind case study research is given by the consideration that in certain research contexts in-depth knowledge about particular examples is analytically more useful than surface knowledge gathered from a large number of cases (Gerring, 2006, p. 1). Given all this, the character of case study research is not so much defined by its methodological choices – as it can be either quantitative or qualitative, rely on ethnography, observation, surveys or interviews – but on its research design serving the above described gathering of in-depth knowledge. In what follows I will describe the steps of case study research design. It should be noted however,

that there is no consensus in the literature whether single-case studies have a distinct methodology in comparison to multiple-case studies (Yin, 2002, p. 46). The research design described below belongs to the latter group where several particular cases are combined in the hope that they bring a better understanding of issues than single cases (Mills, Durepos, & Wiebe, 2009, p. 582), clearly, the research design steps of single-case studies differ significantly from the ones described below. Furthermore, the present thesis relies on *exploratory case studies* (Mills, Durepos, & Wiebe, 2009, p. 372) that also have an obvious influence on research design, both in terms of limitations (lack of preformulated hypotheses) and in terms of advantages (the use of abduction).

A *research design* is “a plan that guides the investigator in the process of collecting, analyzing, and interpreting observation. It is a logical model of proof that allows the researcher to draw inferences considering causal relations, among the ‘variables’ under investigation” (Nachmias & Nachmias, 1992, p. 77-8). As discussed by Yin, in the case of case studies the five steps of research design are (1) a study’s questions; (2) the study propositions; (3) unit(s) of analysis; (4) the logic of linking the data to propositions; and (5) the criteria for interpreting the findings (Yin, 2002).

In terms of the study’s questions, as it has been discussed, the four overarching research questions of the thesis are as follows:

RQ1: What are the threats that arise in the Hungarian mediation opportunity structure during the construction of the ‘refugee crisis’?

RQ2: How do social movements arising in response to the construction of the ‘refugee crisis’ perceive and make use of the mediation opportunity structure, with a special focus on their media practices?

RQ3: What do we know about the opportunities and the related outcomes in the mediation opportunity structure regarding the contestation of the refugee issue in Hungary?

RQ4: Why did the construction of the ‘refugee crisis’ contribute to the strengthening and consolidation of the Orbán-government?

As I will discuss later, the analysis put forward here responding to the first three questions aims at a narrative, rather than a causal explanation of these research questions. This is something that is characteristic of case study research designs that are often more appropriate for ‘how’

than ‘why’ questions (Yin, 2002, p. 21-2). Nevertheless, I will attempt to provide a causal response to the last research question.

Regarding the study’s propositions, in case of exploratory case studies, the nature of the research justifies the lack of such predefined propositions. Nevertheless, such studies still need to define a purpose by which judgements regarding the success of the research can be made (Yin, 2002).

The purpose of the present study has been to provide a rich description of the research questions as they unfold, identifying the emergent themes and case features in real-time. Utilizing the inherent advantages of real-time research (Mills, Durepos, & Wiebe, 2009, p. 783-4) the purpose has been to investigate phenomena as they occur, allowing flexibility, and an openness of outcomes.

The selection of the units of analysis is never a straightforward issue. Instead of general rules, the selection of cases is always heavily dependent on research goals and contexts. However, it is commonly accepted that in multiple case studies the number of cases is quite limited, usually falling between 2 to 10 cases (Mills, Durepos, & Wiebe, 2009, p. 61). Sampling in case study research is generally purposeful – as opposed to random sampling – and is clearly oriented towards information-rich cases for in-depth study (Mills, Durepos, & Wiebe, 2009, p. 837). The case selection for the present research relies on Mill’s method of difference (Mills, Durepos, & Wiebe, 2009, p. 62) which is particularly suitable to exploratory research questions. Here cases are selected “that have the same or comparable circumstances, but that differ in the presence or absence of the phenomenon they want to study” (Mills, Durepos, & Wiebe, 2009, p. 62). My aim with case selection has been therefore to compare cases that are maximally different except for the context in which they fit.

There is a consensus in the literature that in case study research cases should be added until theoretical saturation, or information redundancy has been reached (Mills, Durepos, & Wiebe, 2009, p. 838). It should be noted that in the previous years I have carried out research related to the aims of the present thesis (Nagy, 2017a; Nagy, 2017c; Dessewffy, Nagy, & Váry, 2018; Nagy, 2018), that I do not detail here, as they either do not fit into the present research framework or do not add relevant knowledge to what is to be discussed here. I believe that the case studies described here allow for a holistic but focused discussion of the issues at stake.

Linking data to propositions has been a two-step process. Firstly, within-case analysis has been carried out. Within-case analysis provides a stand-alone description of cases and allows one to

explore what is unique about the cases (Mills, Durepos, Wiebe, 2009, p. 971). Already this process has been abductive, that is, rather than relying on expectations, data has been considered as a resource for “possible puzzles and speculation” (Mills, Durepos, & Wiebe, 2009, p. 2). The independent conclusions drawn from these within-case analyses are discussed in their respective chapters. However, a second step – namely the exploration of what connects the cases, their integration – has also been part of the process. The tool of pattern matching, “whereby several pieces of information from the same case” were connected to a theoretical proposition (Yin, 2002, p. 26), has been utilized to fit the cases in a broader theoretical framework of mediation opportunity structures.

Finally, one needs to identify the relevant criteria for interpreting the findings. I will point to four such criteria, all of which would merit deeper examination than I can allow here. These are the issues of: (1) generalizability; (2) causal or narrative analysis; (3) the nature of theory; and (4) authenticity (Hammersley & Gomm, 2000, p. 5).

Generalizability, when discussing case studies, is claimed to be quite different in nature than in the case of statistical analysis. Here, generalizability – drawing conclusions about a general type of phenomenon – is rather ‘logical’ or ‘analytical’ than statistical (Yin, 2002). The model provided as a framework within which cases are interpreted has to be logically coherent and convincing. While I hope that the model I provide in the research fits this criteria, it should always be pointed out that the generalizability of the findings is limited in scope, given the specificity of the researched period and the chosen movements. The issue of logical coherence is also related to the second issue, namely causal or narrative analysis. While some claim that the in-depth nature of case-study research allows investigators to identify causal processes behind phenomena (Connolly, 1998), others claim that “outcomes can always be reached by multiple pathways” (Hammersley & Gomm, 2000, p. 5-6), therefore a narrative analysis is more adequate as a goal for case study research. The present research is idiographic in nature, that is, it focuses on a holistic understanding of cases, emergent processes, rather than the identification of independent variables that would explain the given phenomenon (a goal of nomothetic analyses). The generalizability of such narrative analyses is limited in nature. This brings us to the third issue, the role of theory in case-study research. The present research did not start out with a priori theoretical formulations that could have been tested through the research process. Instead, the analysis of cases led to the formulation of an overall theoretical framework. Finally, regarding authenticity, the “aim is to represent the case authentically: ‘in its own terms’” (Hammersley & Gomm, 2000, p. 6). This requires that the self-definitions and aims of the

researched social movements are not misrepresented or distorted. These aspects are always respected in the respective case studies – however it does not mean that these self-definitions and articulated aims remain unproblematized.

CHAPTER 4. Mediatized populist strategies – the construction of 'crisis' in Hungary⁴

The focus of my research is social movement responses to the Orbán-government's anti-refugee discourse in Hungary during 2015. This analysis however would be incomplete and impossible without a narration of the governmental discourse itself, and without an in-depth analysis of the dynamics of this discourse. Therefore, this chapter first describes the events that unfolded in 2015, and afterwards examines how it is situated in the framework of mediatized populist strategies, and the construction of 'crisis'. The chapter claims that the populist construction of the 'refugee crisis' allowed the Orbán-government to solidify its power after a considerable setback in 2014. From 2015 onwards, a transformational shift took place in the Hungarian mediatized opportunity structure, the results of which are still affecting present day processes and that will have a lasting influence on Hungarian society.

4.1. The emergence of the Orbán-government's anti-refugee discourse

During the summer of 2015 the issue of refugees arriving to the European Union, and especially Hungary has become central on the political agenda. For a number of interrelated reasons, the number of refugees heading towards Europe and choosing the so-called Balkan route in this direction has been growing steadily in the previous years, and increased rather sharply in 2015. While the details and explanations of this increase reach beyond the scope of this chapter, a characteristic of this drastic change is that Hungary became an important transit-point for most refugees, the majority of whom passed through the country towards Western Europe.

Immigration towards Hungary does not in itself explain the harsh stance of Orbán since the country – until around 2013 – has neither been a target nor a significant transit-country with regards to migration. Therefore, in order to interpret Orbán's words a preliminary point needs to be addressed. The end of 2014 saw the worst period for Fidesz since they came to power in 2010 and got reelected in 2014. First, the party was heavily hit by a corruption scandal. The United States banned the entry of several Hungarian citizens, including the head of the Hungarian tax authority, Ildikó Vida, to the country. The scandal deepened as leading politicians all denied having knowledge of the names of people banned, while Vida confirmed that she had reported the ban to the government. Parallel to this a very open conflict between

⁴ The original version of this chapter was presented at the 1st Lisbon Winter School for the Study of Communication – Media and Populism, in January, 2019

André Goodfriend, America's senior diplomat in Hungary at the time, and the Hungarian government also ensued. In midst of the weeks-long scandal already fueling protests, the government announced the introduction of a so-called internet tax, drawing tens of thousands of demonstrators to the streets for a consecutive wave of protests ("Thousands attend Hungary," 2015). Eventually, and very uncharacteristically for Orbán, Fidesz had to concede on both grounds: Vida resigned and the idea of the internet tax was abandoned. However, according to opinion polls, the popularity of the party began to weaken dramatically. What was needed from Fidesz's perspective was a radical shift in the political agenda. And the construction of a 'crisis' allowed just for that.

Following the terrorist attacks against Charlie Hebdo, 2 million people took to the streets of Paris on January 11, 2015. Among them was Viktor Orbán, prime minister of Hungary, who gave his interpretation of the events in an interview ("Hungary PM Orbán Says," 2015, para. 4-6):

We should not look at economic migration as if it had any use, because it only brings trouble and threats to European people... Therefore, immigration must be stopped... We will not allow it, at least as long as I am prime minister and as long as this government is in power. (Orbán, 11 Jan, 2015)

Orbán's words were echoed by a number of state officials later. The applied frame was clear from the beginning: There are no refugees escaping the horrors of war, only economic migrants who jeopardize Hungarian jobs, culture, and 'way of life'. A number of political and communication tools were applied to reinforce this message. The government set up a working group to handle the immigrant question ("A Kormány Felkészül," 2015). This was followed by a so-called "national consultation" in April, including questions that asked, "Do you agree that mistaken immigration policies contribute to the spread of terrorism?" ("Viktor Orbán Will Take Care," 2015). A month after this, the government announced a major billboard campaign with three basic messages: "If you come to Hungary, you have to respect our culture!"; "If you come to Hungary, you have to respect our laws!"; and "If you come to Hungary, you can't take away our jobs!" Given that the language of the billboards was Hungarian, it is presumable that the target audience of the campaign was the Hungarian electorate and not the migrants themselves. A couple of days after this announcement, the government also declared that it planned to build

a fence on the Hungarian–Serbian border (“Hungary to Fence Off Border,” 2015; see also Kallius, 2017b).

The governing Fidesz implemented a political agenda-setting strategy that framed asylum-seekers as undeserving, threatening, culturally incompatible with Europeans. Refusing to use the word ‘refugee’, the Hungarian government’s claim is that migrants have become the central problem of Europe and Hungary in particular. This framing of the issue also allowed for the construction of internal and external enemies – opposition parties and EU-institutions - who cooperate with or accepting the arrival of refugees.

Based on research conducted in 2018, 51 per cent of the Hungarian population believes that George Soros, Hungarian-born philanthropist and billionaire is organizing mass migration towards and across Hungary in order to replace the European population with migrants (Political Capital, 2018). The widely-accepted agreement with such statements clearly shows the effectiveness of the discursive efforts of the right-wing populist Hungarian government led by Viktor Orbán that has been in power in Hungary since 2010 and has recently been reelected in the 2018 elections with a two-thirds majority in the Parliament. It has never been clearer than that the toolbox utilized by the Hungarian populist government works effectively – nevertheless I believe that what is needed is greater insight into *how* exactly it operates. Understanding the dynamics of populist political and communication strategies is more urgent than ever. We also find an apparent paradox behind the success of such strategies: namely that anti-migrant discourses have been enormously successful in a country where migration is virtually nonexistent. This calls attention to the *mediatized* nature of populist discourses: while personal contact or experiences, affectedness by migration would not be able to explain the changing sentiments of the Hungarian public, the ongoing media- and public campaigns against migration and refugees in particular have dominated public discourse in Hungary for the past four years. Therefore, what this chapter attempts to do is look at the mediatized construction of crisis in Hungary by the populist government. I believe that the policies and discourses of the Hungarian government are at odds with the values of the European Union and liberal democracy, and the chapter approaches the issues from this normative stance.

Rather than separating the chapter in a traditional manner into theoretical and empirical sections, it is structured as follows. First, it defines right-wing populism as a discursive strategy and discusses three of its primary features and details their relevance for the Hungarian case. Then it moves on to discuss the relationship between media and populism, including favorable factors in the opportunity structure that provide ample ground for populist strategies, always

relating these factors to the Hungarian case. Third, it identifies particular media strategies of populists and how they play out in the case of Orbán’s right-wing government. Finally, focusing on the construction of crisis, the chapter looks at the steps of the mediatized construction of crisis with a focus on the past 3 years in Hungarian discourse. This logic of the chapter and dynamic is visualized in Figure 1. for a better understanding of the its structure.

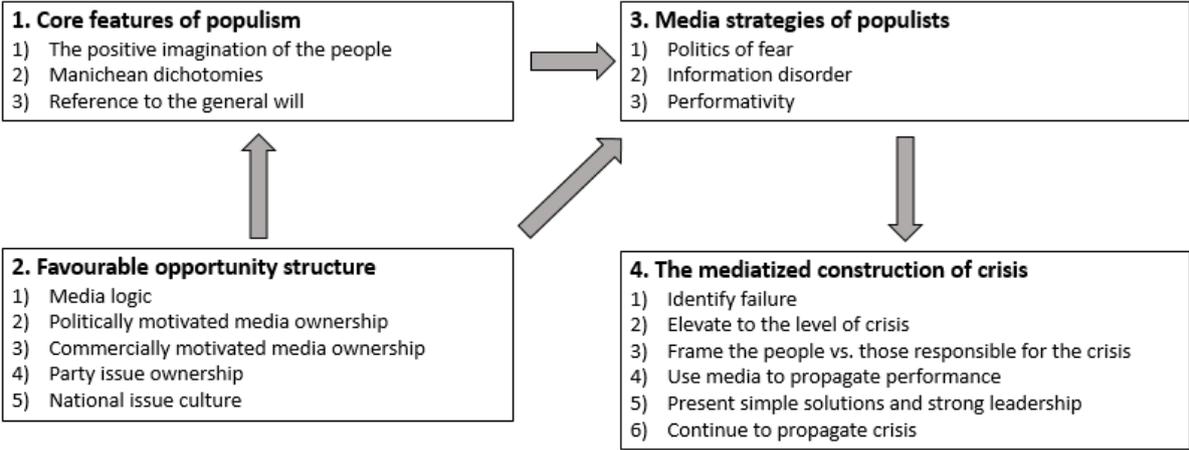


Figure 1. The structure of Chapter 4.

While in the public press Orbán’s party (Fidesz) and government have often been labelled as Europe’s ‘bad guys’, it needs to be recognized – and especially since the election of Trump as President of the United States as it has often been pointed out – that such political ideologies and practices are no longer the exception but are part of a broader phenomenon, namely the rise of right-wing populism in the Western World. While it was Gellner and Ionescu who famously pointed out 50 years ago that the spectre of populism is hunting the world (Gellner & Ionescu, 1969, p. 1), this spectre has grown into an international movement that affects party structure in many Western democracies (Lochocki, 2018), moreover, in some countries has led to the election of populist leaders and governments who effectively enact populist policies in power. While world-famous populists like Donald Trump or Jair Bolsonaro have made headlines in recent years, the case of Hungary is a deserving research subject inasmuch as Orbán’s election in 2010 preceded their success in time. I have previously situated my research in Chapter 2. taking a discursive approach to populism. I adopted the definition of populism as a co-appearance of three key features, namely: (1) the positive imagination of the ‘people’ (Rucht, 2018, p. 68), (2) an antagonism between the in-group and the outgroup, (3) and a reference to the *volonté general*, the general will of the people. These three key features

identified here should not be read as a taxonomy of populist focal points, I share the view of Taggart (2000, p. 4) and others who point out that we should envision these as 'primary' features of populism, where secondary features may also appear in the repertoires of populists. This is especially relevant in the case of Hungary where discourse has proven to be rather flexible in order to accommodate newer and newer antagonisms, 'enemies' of the people. In what follows I provide a short description of these three features, but will also point out the secondary features that have naturally followed from these core concepts in the case of Hungary.

4.2. Core features of populism

First, the positive imagination of the 'people' as a central tenet of populist discourses has been established in the literature, even though this concept in itself is extremely vague and hard-to-grasp (De la Torre, 2007, p. 389). Müller argues that what defines populists is their claim that it is them and only them who represent the people (2016, p. 20). I would also add that what is relevant here is the identification between Orbán, the leader, and his people; the equation made between his persona and 'Hungarians' that stands out remarkably.⁵

We Hungarians have a natural capacity for freedom. We have always known how to use it. We know that freedom is not a state that one achieves, but a way of life, like swimming: those who stop doing it drown. Freedom is always, everywhere, a simple question: Do we decide about our own lives, or does somebody else decide for us? (Orbán, 23 Oct, 2016).

The reference to the people strikes two further important chords: namely that of the heartland and that of nativism. The reference to the heartland (Taggart, 2000, p. 3) is not only spatial but temporal: it implies golden days that populists can refer to as standards to return to, especially in times of crisis. Such references are especially important in Hungary where the trauma of the 1920 treaty of Trianon, where the country has lost two-thirds of its territory and inhabitants still plays an active role in politics. In this manner references to the 'country' are replaced by

⁵ Orbán's personal story and rise to leadership has been carefully crafted in order to tell a bigger story that Hungarians can identify with: the simple son of working parents from a village who rose up against communism and transformed from a liberal to a conservative politician as part of his anti-elite fight for Hungary corresponds with the disappointments of many Hungarians who experienced the regime change of 1990 as a personal shock in their lives.

references to the 'nation' (manifested in the renaming of state institutions accordingly) where the latter include Hungarians living on the other side of the border and where dual citizenship is argued to remedy these traumas (and also provide pools of loyal voters for Fidesz during the national elections). Thus, the heartland, once whole but now irreparably damaged and the people of this heartland who need to be united is a constant rhetorical reference in Hungarian populist discourse.

However, nativism is a different matter. The idea of an ethnically homogenous nation at the core of Fidesz's rhetorics has become very visible since 2015, nevertheless there are deeper issues at stake here. Important immigration trends of the 20th century, such as the end of colonialism or the guest worker system and mass immigration towards Western Europe in the second half of the century did not in any way affect the composition of society and Hungary (that is also home to a Romani minority consisting approximately 7 per cent of the population) can be considered more homogenous ethnically than most European countries. Nativist voices, unlike references to the heartland embedded in historical traumas of the *past*, refer to demographic anxieties focused on the *future* of the country. This is also in line with the claim made by Kaufmann that demographic change is transforming politics in a way where white middle-class groups revolt against such change (2018). These demographic anxieties underlie other populist discourses as well, such as a strong anti-feminist and anti-homosexual stance of the government, their relationship towards religion and the EU as well (Turner, 2018).

Declining fertility rates, together with mass emigration from the country have not only caused symbolic worries about the survival or disappearance of the nation but have grave economic consequences as well, where the active aged population – and those responsible for the reproduction of this population as well – has been shrinking for the past couple of decades. Such anxieties are fertile feeding ground for populist rhetorics where the disappearing populations would somehow be replaced by migrants with Muslim backgrounds, as this has often been emphasized by Orbán and fellow politicians. But they also explain the government's strong normative stance on the role of women as mothers and their opposition towards a rethinking of female roles in society (Mudde, 2007). What seems at first glance as an ambiguity, 2018 has been called the „Year of the Family” in Hungary, while at the same time the government banned gender studies at Hungarian universities, is the manifestation of this very stance: a benevolent, protective sexism on the one hand and a fear of feminism and women intellectuals on the other (Turner, 2018, p. 6). Similarly, the definition of the family also serves exclusive but constructive purposes as well. On the one hand, legal attempts have been made

to reduce families to heterosexual relationships in order to exclude same-sex couples from the definition as non-reproductive members of the population. On the other hand, discursively, the 'family-comes-first' approach of the government can be seen as an attempt to disentangle the society as consisting of individuals as political subjects, replacing them with families as units dependent on the benevolence of the political leader (Yilmaz, 2018, p. 163), as clearly shown in the welfare policies of the state.

Religion appears to fit naturally within this nativist, anti-feminist, family-centered, traditional rhetoric. Presently, and on the surface it appears as a clear demarcation line between Christian Europe and Muslim migrants, therefore serves anti-migrant rhetorics in political discourse as well, with a strong emphasis on the visual dystopia of minarets and mosques that would appear in Europe. But the issue goes deeper than that, as many in the literature have called attention to the rising importance of Christianity in populist discourses in the past decade (Forlenza, 2018). What is important for us here is the distinction drawn by Forlenza between substantive Christianity and Christianity-as-culture (Forlenza, 2018, p. 138), the latter being a civilizational and identitarian form of religion that serves to redraw the boundaries between 'us' and 'them'. Importantly, this demarcation line based on so-called Christian values is drawn not only between, but within nations as well. After their re-election in 2018, the Hungarian government enacted yet another amendment to the Constitution that emphasizes that the protection of Christian culture is the responsibility of all governmental bodies. Such amendments are important inasmuch as actual legal changes flow from them: what followed was the constitutional ban of homelessness, where living on the streets has become a punishable criminal offense. Christianity has indeed been mobilized and hijacked in order to constitute Islam as a threat, but it serves the repressive othering of non-normative behaviors within the nation as well.

...what is going on in Europe now, is an absolutely open red and green attack against traditional values: against the church, against family, against the nation. (...) Especially because in our understanding, democracy in Europe is democracy based on Christianity. The anthropological root of our political institutions is *imago Dei*, which requires an absolute respect to the human being (Orbán, 9 Oct, 2013).

Finally, Orbán's relationship towards the European Union deserves some attention here. While on the one hand it is clear that rooted in their nativist nature, populists often build on an antagonistic relationship towards the EU and the positioning of supranational institutions as outside enemies of the nation, the picture is more complicated than that. While on the one hand, Orbán often plays this anti-EU card – one of the many campaigns led by the „Stop Brussels!” slogan has strongly created this distinction between Hungary and the foreign elites forcing their will on the country – it has to be noticed that the EU is also part of the West that Orbán claims to protect at Hungary's borders from outside flows of migration. Based on Vasilopoulou's conceptualization (2017), we can speak of four aspects and accordingly, three approaches to Euroscepticism, where the four aspects include Europe as a culture, Europe as a principle, the policy and the polity aspects of European integration. This delineates three distinct approaches: rejecting (that only accepts the cultural aspects of the above four), conditional (that only accepts the first two) and compromising (that accepts the first three) stances towards European integration. Orbán's in-and-out discourse towards the European Union can be identified as a constant nivelling between rejecting and conditional attitudes and framing it as a reformist stance towards the EU. Presently, as an Article 7 procedure is underway against his government based on the so-called Sargentini-report accepted by the European Parliament in 2018 with votes supporting it coming also from Orbán's party-family, the European People's Party, it remains to be seen how this stance will change in the future.



Image 1. Billboard-campaign against Judith Sargentini. 2018. „Let's not be blackmailed. Let's protect Hungary.”⁶

⁶ Source: <https://atlatszo.hu/2018/10/05/59-milliard-forintot-kolthet-a-kormany-a-most-kezdodott-sargentini-ellenes-reklamhadjaratra/>

It should be noted however on the one hand, that the EU is not only incapable of applying measures to governments that apparently contradict its principles but is actively complicit in sustaining them, as incoming EU-funds are a strong economic resource utilized by the government to fund its supporters. These circumstances allow Orbán's right-wing populist government to utilize these ambiguities: constructing the EU as a source of threatening foreign elites, while at the same time accepting funds from the EU and positioning Orbán as a reformist.

Europe is not free, because freedom begins with speaking the truth. In Europe, today it is forbidden to speak the truth. A muzzle is a muzzle – even if it is made of silk. It is forbidden to say that today we are not witnessing the arrival of refugees, but a Europe being threatened by mass migration. It is forbidden to say that tens of millions are ready to set out in our direction. It is forbidden to say that immigration brings crime and terrorism to our countries. It is forbidden to say that the masses of people coming from different civilizations pose a threat to our way of life, our culture, our customs, and our Christian traditions. It is forbidden to say that, instead of integrating, those who arrived here earlier have built a world of their own, with their own laws and ideals, which is forcing apart the thousand-year-old structure of Europe. It is forbidden to say that this is not accidental and not a chain of unintentional consequences, but a planned, orchestrated campaign, a mass of people directed towards us. It is forbidden to say that in Brussels they are constructing schemes to transport foreigners here as quickly as possible and to settle them here among us. It is forbidden to say that the purpose of settling these people here is to redraw the religious and cultural map of Europe and to reconfigure its ethnic foundations, thereby eliminating nation states, which are the last obstacle to the international movement. (Orbán, 15 March, 2016)



Image 2. The cover of the referendum information booklet (Marton, 2017)

A second core feature of right-wing populist rhetorics is the drawing up of Manichean dichotomies within and across societies that divide the world into 'good' and 'bad', 'us' and 'others'. Clearly, this Schmittian conceptualization of the political is most visible in the moralistic antagonism constructed between pure Europeans and threatening Muslims invading the continent. Nevertheless, again, these distinctions go deeper than that. One way to conceptualize this is to see these antagonisms as drawing not one, but two dividing lines: one vertical and one horizontal (Brubaker, 2018, p. 30). The horizontal opposition is indeed between those inside and those outside the nation, and it clearly differentiates right-wing populists from their left-wing counterparts. The second dividing line, the vertical opposition is drawn between the 'people' and the 'elites', and is often also shared by left-wing populists. More than that, one could also argue, as Brubaker does as well (2018) that the vertical drawing line defines the 'people' not only in opposition to the elites but to those, undeserving poor at the bottom, who are also excluded from the populist concept of the nation. Given this triadic (Judis, 2016) nature of right-wing populism, the conspiracy theories applied by populists often connect these enemies to the mass movement of threatening migrants towards the country or to working class demonstrators on the streets labelled as 'agents' of foreign powers.



Image 3. „Setting fires, breaking things. Oppositional vandals, paid by Soros. If you recognize them, call the police.” Front page of Ripost, government-friendly tabloid, December 2018.⁷

The list of enemies, as Snow and Bernatzky (2018) point it out, is never finite: as the 'people' is always discursively constructed so are its enemies which provides room for new waves of attacks against a growing number of groups considered threatening towards the state. Therefore, it would be impossible to provide a full list of enemies constructed by Orbán's government in the past decade, but for the sake of illustration a number of such groups should be mentioned. Importantly, civil society has been a targeted enemy before 2015 already, following in Putin's footsteps in both legislation and rhetorics. This has been amplified by the events of 2015 where pro-refugee grassroots movements and NGOs have taken a pro-refugee stance in the public. The legal changes that necessitate the registration of foreign-funded NGOs as foreign 'agents', the so-called Lex-Soros (named by the government) that effectively illegalizes providing aid and information to refugees all serve to criminalize and stigmatize NGOs in Hungary. As apparent, the picture is further strengthened by the reference to the figure of George Soros, who personifies many values that stand in antagonism with the state.

⁷ Source: <https://ripost.hu/cikk-tortek-zuztak-az-ellenzeki-vandalok-budapesten>



Image 4. „Let’s not let Soros have the last laugh.” Billboard campaign, 2017.⁸

Soros, whose presence in the Hungarian civil sphere has been undeniable since the beginning and even before the regime change in 1990, a proponent of Karl Popper’s concept of open society has been singled out as the ‘puppet master’ behind any opposition towards the government, regardless of whether it comes from NGOs, opposition parties, the media, protesters or scholarly circles.



Image 5. „Soros intervenes into politics.” News on the television channel TV2. (8 April, 2018)⁹

⁸ Source: <https://fuhu.hu/minek-nekunk-az-oreg-zsido-akkor/>

⁹ Source: <https://twitter.com/andraslederer/status/983434872525074433>

The attacks on Soros-funded institutions have not been without consequence. Already in 2018, the Open Society Institute had to relocate to Berlin after the introduction of the above mentioned anti-NGO legislations. A second group of enemies identified by the state – and not unrelated to Soros again in their discourse – is Hungarian academia. The independence of Hungarian higher education has already been dismantled in the early years of Orbán's rule by the introduction of a chancellor-system overseeing academic functioning. But what propelled the Hungarian issue onto international headlines was yet another attack on a Soros-owned institution, the Central European University based in Budapest. By fabricating new legislation in 2017 that CEU could no longer comply with (as that was the explicit aim of the government), a year-long public antagonism between CEU and the Hungarian government ensued at the end of which CEU had to admit defeat and announce that it was forced out of Budapest and to relocate in Vienna. But attacks against academic freedom went further than that, including the already mentioned banning of gender studies in Hungarian higher education, the announced privatization of Hungary's prestigious Corvinus university, as well as a frontal attack on the Hungarian Academy of Sciences (presently, important funds are withheld from the Academy as a punishment for their noncompliance with the government's announced restructuring plans for the institute).

While the many facets of such attacks cannot be detailed here, it should be noted that they are always coupled with a strong media-campaign where government-friendly news outlets participate. Memorably, right after the 2018 election victory of Fidesz, one such friendly weekly produced an elaborate – though often erroneous – list of the enemies of Fidesz, academics, intellectuals, members of civil society (Image 6). In the fall of 2018 another government friendly online newspaper called on university students to report oppositional activities in universities. It can be said that while attacks on NGOs have been inspired by Putin, attacks on academia by Erdogan, the attacks on a third group, namely the media, follow in the lines of Trump where independent media are often labelled 'fake news' by the government and attacked accordingly. I have discussed elsewhere and will detail here later the many tools of shaping the media field in an attempt to completely dominate Hungarian public discourse (Nagy, 2018), it should be mentioned here that these attacks go way beyond verbal attempts and discourses to discredit members of the press and include the buying up, closing down of independent media outlets.

While the choice of enemies might seem arbitrary to the untrained eye, what connects them is an overall attack against the mezo-level that should exist between the government and the

individual, or as Arendt says: “the neutral zone in which the daily life of human beings is ordinarily lived” (Arendt, 1991, p. 276). This includes autonomous civil society, science, journalism among other actors.



Image 6. „Personnel of the speculator”. The so-called Soros-list published in the weekly newspaper, Figyelő. April, 2018.¹⁰

Still, the most important and discursively most successful dividing line drawn by Orbán’s populist government has been between the native Hungarian population and Muslim migrants. This narrative has been constant in public discourse since 2015 and serves as a main frame of constructing threats and opportunities not only in Hungary but in populist discourses worldwide.¹¹ It should be pointed out that the strong anti-migrant rhetoric of the government is a relative novelty, as late as 2014, the Migration Strategy of the Government used a very different, pragmatic stance and language on migration. This aspect also points to the flexibility of populist discourse where (Zúquete, 2017, p. 153) new elements are incorporated with the changing of the environment. Orbán’s anti-migrant stance shares many features with other populists, it drives the governing party towards a strongly – at least discursively – philosemitic

¹⁰ Source: <https://figyelő.hu/a-spekulans-emberei>

¹¹ Discourses and policy actions however are very different matters. While discursively the government shows zero-tolerance towards migration, it also operates a settlement bond program that has allowed 20,000 foreigners from outside the EU to settle in Hungary through the purchasing of bonds, the profits of which also enrich government-friendly off-shore companies (“Settlement bond program gives”, 2017).

stance (Zúquete, 2017, p. 160) and towards the shaping and common referencing of a European – threatened – entity. It is also commonly argued in the literature that this anti-Muslim sentiment and rhetoric could be described as a form of 'new racism' (Barker, 1982) where the emphasis is on culture rather than on ethnicity. Nevertheless, in Fidesz's rhetoric, color and physical characteristics still play an important role when contrasting two populations. One could also argue that what Orbán's government represents is a form of biopopulism. Later I will show how this anti-migrant discourse is embedded in the construction of crisis in populist rhetoric.



Image 7. If you come to Hungary. Billboard campaign (Marton, 2017)



Image 8. Did you know? Billboard campaign (Marton, 2017)

Finally, a primary feature of populists is the reference of the *volonté general* as a driving force behind its policies. This is a manifestly anti-pluralist stance where the will of the people can only be homogenous and also a form of majoritarian rule where once this general will has been established, minority opinions are repressed in the public discourse. A clear case of how this *volonté general* is adapted and utilized by populists is the Orbán-government's heavy reliance on so-called national consultations. What would follow from the strong emphasis on the *volonté general* would be a preference and use of referenda in the policies of the government. Nevertheless, except for a single case, the government has refrained from using referenda, even when it would have been symbolically important (to provide public authorization for the new Constitution in 2011), and had successfully blocked numerous referendum-attempts originating in the opposition (such as the referendum on Sunday shopping, or on hosting the Olympic games). Instead it initiates waves of national consultations where letters are sent to Hungarian voters with one-sided, distorted questions (in 2015 on migration, in 2016 on European refugee-quotas, in 2017 on the so-called Lex-Soros, in 2018 about family policies). Such national consultations however do not aim to aggregate existing views among voters (Müller, 2016), rather to reinforce already established policies of the government. (Nagy, 2018). In this manner the reference to the people, criticisms of outside enemies to be dismissed and the general will come together, as put forward by Orbán himself:

the people ... gave good advice, good command to the Hungarian Parliament [for adopting the basic law], which it carried out. In this sense, when the Hungarian constitution is criticized, ... it is not meant for the government but for the Hungarian people. ... It is not the government the European Union has a problem with, much as they want us to believe ..., the truth is they attack Hungary (quoted by Batory, 2016)



Figure 5 The second page of the national consultation letter. Issued by the Hungarian government. Reconstructed with English translation by the author (Hungarian Government, 2015b)

Image 9. National consultation letter (Marton, 2017)

Having identified these core features, now we can reiterate how they appear in the Hungarian case, where populists have been in power and have shifted towards a hybrid regime in the past years. First, the reference to the people in the Hungarian case is always a *nativist*, ethno-nationalist reference, which signals a clear refusal of the political concept of the nation. Second, the drawing up of dichotomies always serves the *polarization* of the electorate. Drawing from previous experiences, Fidesz has concluded that in order to keep together and energize their voter block, the stakes of political conflicts need to be constantly elevated. Third, the *volonté* general in the Hungarian case is always a *volonté majoritaire*, where minority perspectives are openly ridiculed and ignored.

4.3. Favorable opportunity structure

As explained at the beginning of the chapter, my aim here is not to untangle all aspects of populist politics but to focus on the mediatized crisis construction of the Hungarian right-wing populist government. In order to get to my point, a few points regarding the relationship between media and populism need to be established. This section consists of two larger parts: the first focuses on the charge of media complicity, namely that the mediatization of politics plays a role in the rise of populism. The second part details populist media strategies in particular. One of these strategies, as it will become apparent is the mediatized construction of crisis in public discourse.

First, regarding the charge of media complicity (Albertazzi & McDonnell, 2008, p. 50) it is often argued that media logic and populist logic share common traits that reinforce each other. Mudde points to personalization, emotionalization, and antiestablishment attitudes as such characteristics (Mudde, 2007, p. 251). Others argue that these trends go together with the overall commercialization of media (Brubaker, 2018, p. 35). The problem with such generalizations however is that they hide more than they reveal: differences between different types and formats of media, new media trends, and different populist regimes. Therefore, I believe it is more useful to talk about the elective affinity between trends in the media and populism and what favorable discursive opportunity structures mean for populists.

Central to this process is the mediatization of politics, that is that the media have become central to getting political messages through (Albertazzi & McDonnell, 2008, p. 52). This mediatization is crucial to understanding the Hungarian construction of the so-called 'refugee crisis' by populists as most Hungarians have never encountered the phenomenon of migration personally. Here the fact that "mediated reality matters more than any kind of actual or objective reality" (Stromback, 2008, quoted by Krzyzanowski, Triandafyllidou, & Wodak, 2018, p. 6) dominates the logic of public discourse.

This mediatization has wide-reaching consequences, where sensationalism and spectacle have become central tenets of political reporting. I believe, agreeing with Entman however that this convergence, stemming from 'production bias' is often unintentional (Entman, 1989).

The mediatization of politics would imply that the media play the role of intermediaries between politicians and voters. Nevertheless, recently an apparently inverse trend has also been discussed in the literature, namely the claim of net populism, that is, that the breaking down of such intermediaries with the rise of social media would serve the goals of populists. The

implication that social media would be the platform of unmediated communication between leaders and voters, however, is at least questionable (Moffitt, 2018, p. 36). In the case of Hungary, populist leaders mostly rely on social media as a marketing tool for top-down communication, disinformation campaigns and rarely explore other facets of such platforms.

Nevertheless, there are favorable factors in the discursive opportunity structure that indeed reinforce populist discursive strategies, as discussed by Esser, Stepinska and Hopmann (2016) who enumerate five of such factors. The first one concerns what I have described above as *media logic* and includes conflict framing, strategic framing and personalization. The second such factor is *politically motivated ownership*. This factor is relevant to a varying degree in different countries, as the authors point out its particular importance in Eastern Europe. While even before 2018 the Hungarian media landscape had been characterized by an extreme concentration of ownership by government-friendly oligarchs and the explicit use of public media for government propaganda purposes, 2018 saw further developments in the field. Following the elections, former Orbán-ally-turned-enemy Simicska's media business, including a daily newspaper, a television and a radio channel have surrendered to the power while the end of the year saw the emergence of an even greater pro-government media conglomerate consisting over 500 media titles, which Fidesz also exempted from competition law, setting up an unprecedented dominance in virtually all forms of media in Hungary („Orbán exempts new propaganda conglomerate from competition law”, 2018).

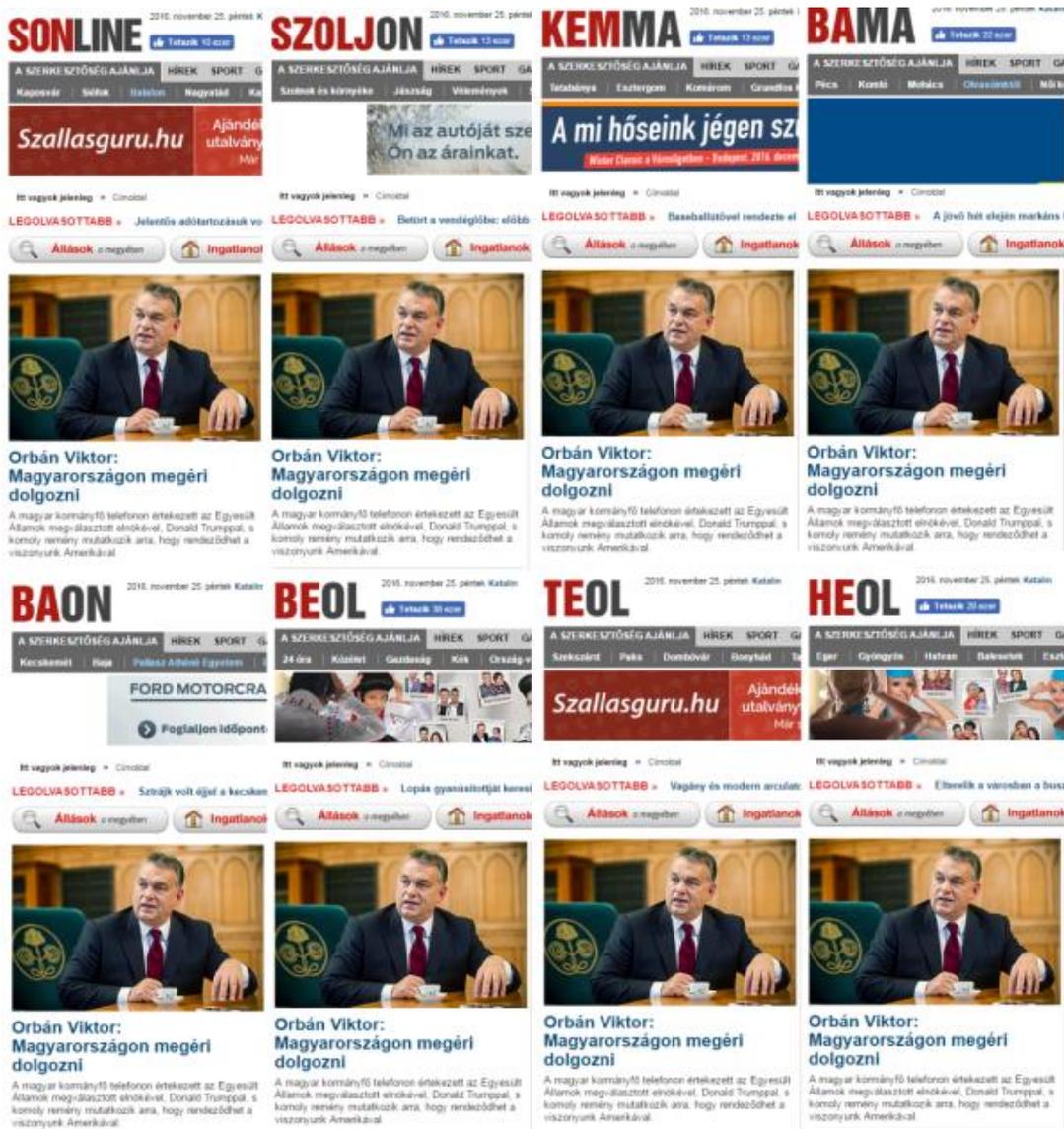


Image 10. „Viktor Orbán: It is worth working in Hungary.” Identical front pages of local newspaper websites. 2018.¹²

The third factor is identified by the authors as *commercially motivated media ownership*. A point particularly relevant here is the role of advertising in the media. Even in the case of media outlets formally independent, Fidesz utilizes a generous state advertising technique where public advertisements directly fund friendly media outlets and sanction those trying to establish independence. The fourth factor, namely *party issue ownership* means that certain topics on the agenda are connected to certain political actors, therefore the media, even when critically approaching these issues might support the party’s intentions by maintaining them on the

¹² Source: <https://444.hu/2016/11/25/remelem-nem-rugjak-ki-a-beol-nak-azt-a-munkatarsat-aki-fel-merte-cserelni-a-kormanypropaganda-szorendjet>

agenda. The consecutive campaign waves of the past four years from the government's side served especially this purpose, by proactively dictating the dominant discourse – coupled with political and commercial media ownership – it ensured the omnipresence of governmental narratives in the media.

The final, fifth factor is what the authors call event environment and *national issue culture* (Esser, Stepinska, & Hopmann, 2016). As I discussed elsewhere (Dessewffy & Nagy, 2019), Fidesz's narratives tap into culturally established mental 'checkboxes' already deeply rooted in Hungarian discourse. One of these is the 'last battalion' narrative where Hungary historically confronts enemies greater than themselves, standing up for others. A further element is the 'betrayal-narrative', strengthened by the Trianon-trauma discussed above or the 1956 passivity of Western powers during the Hungarian revolution, according to which international support cannot be expected as the nation stands alone in the face of danger, as explained by the third, 'we are alone' narrative. Finally, the 'youngest prince' narrative claims that being a small country, rather than relying on brute force, Hungarians have to turn to wit and trickery to fight their fights. The quotes from Orbán's different speeches below illustrate these elements of the issue culture.

When there is an issue [regarding migration], then we cannot count on the help of either the Serbs or the Croats from the south. The worse news is that we cannot count on it from the West either, though it was already this way with János Hunyadi¹³ as well.' (Orbán 18 Sep, 2015)

We arrive with great joy to Kazakhstan. In the EU we are treated as equal partners in political terms. However, based on our origin, we are nevertheless foreigners there if we travel to Brussels. There we have no relatives. However, if we come here, in Kazakhstan we have relatives. It is a really strange feeling, but one has to travel east if one wants to feel at home. This is why Hungarian delegations always travel here to you with great joy. (Orbán, 1 Apr, 2015)

¹³ in reference to 15th-century Hungarian general and regent János Hunyadi, who organized the successful defense of the southern borders of the Kingdom of Hungary from the Ottoman Turks.

We feel that we have not only preserved our special culture, but have also enriched it, because throughout all this time we have tried to combine the wisdom we brought from the East with Western rationality. This has resulted in a very specific Hungarian way of thinking; this has enabled Hungarians to give the whole of humanity a disproportionately large number of scientists and artists, compared to their population of ten million or so. (Orbán, 2 Dec, 2015)

4.4. Media strategies of populists

In order to make sense of the many-faceted populist communication strategies, I organize this section by looking at affective, cognitive and behavioral dimensions of such strategies. While in real life these distinctions are obviously less clean-cut, they allow for a systematic overview here.

In terms of the *affective* dimensions, politics of fear (Wodak, 2015) stands out as an important communication strategy. This also implies the centrality of the topos of threat and danger (Wodak, 2018, p. 15), where the stakes of the political are constantly elevated. Writing about the paranoid style in politics, Hofstadter (1964) sums up present-day populist strategies too: „The paranoid spokesman sees the fate of conspiracy in apocalyptic terms – he traffics in the birth and death of whole worlds, whole political orders, whole systems of human values. He is always manning the barricades of civilization. He constantly lives at a turning point. Like religious millennialists he expresses the anxiety of those who are living through the last days and he is sometimes disposed to set a date for the apocalypse.”

The concept of moral panics needs to be mentioned when discussing the role that the media plays in this politics of fear (Cohen, 1972). During the process marginalized groups are constructed as enemies, coupled with a heightened emotional state of lay groups. The role of private security is emphasized; attention is drawn to deviance in public spaces. Important for the present research is Endre Sik’s modification of the model (2018). He speaks of ‘moral panic buttons’ discussing the Hungarian anti-refugee propaganda. The media in itself, he says, did not generate moral panics, governmental campaigns however did, and the effects of this have indeed been strengthened by the media.

In terms of *cognitive* dimensions, a heavy reliance on information disorder (Wardle & Derakhshan, 2017), including the use of propaganda, disinformation and conspiracies is an important element of the populist strategy. Propaganda is defined by Benkler, Roberts and Faris

as „the manipulation of public beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors for political ends, framed in terms that reinforce partisan narratives” (Benkler, Roberts, & Faris, 2018, p. 80). Partisan networks have a tendency to amplify narratives of propaganda, creating a feedback loop among like-minded actors (media outlets, elites, publics), lowering „the costs of telling lies” (Benkler et al., 2018, p. 33). Given what I already discussed about media ownership in Hungary, such feedback loops are considerably larger in size in Hungary, where populists no longer occupy fringe positions but are dominating discourse. Propaganda is not a stand-alone tool, but is coupled with other aspects of what Kakutani calls „truth decay” (2018, p. 8). Its use is best explained by Arendt: „The ideal subject of totalitarian rule is not the convinced Nazi or the convinced Communist, but people for whom the distinction between fact and fiction (i.e., the reality of experience) and the distinction between true and false (i.e., the standards of thought) no longer exist” (Arendt, 1951, quoted by Kakutani, 2018, p. 7). Therefore, disinformation and a heavy reliance on conspiracy theories is central to this information disorder.

Finally, regarding the behavioral aspects, *performativity* is an important media strategy utilized by Orbán’s government. Staging events and rallying are parts of this strategy where political communication moves from the spheres of traditional representative democracy to the border by setting up fences, and to the streets, by rallying Orbán’s supporters. These become building blocks in political communication later. In their advertisement attacking the European Parliament in 2018 the visual dichotomy is clear: while the EP is shown to be situated in a distant, futuristic, alienating building in Brussels, the Hungarians are referenced to by three signifiers: the Hungarian fence and border patrol, a Hungarian pro-Fidesz rally, and a historical church in Budapest.



Image 11. Captions from the government's video advertisement against Judith Sargentini: Brussels vs. the Hungarian people. September, 2018.¹⁴

4.5. The mediatized construction of crisis

In the blossoming literature on populism, it is often argued that crisis – as an exogenous factor – would explain the recent rise of populism. As Kenneth Roberts claims (1995, p. 113), populism „surges most strongly in contexts of crisis or profound transformation.” In his recent work on the subject, Brubaker talks of a 'perfect storm' of crises, including the economic crisis of 2008-9, the refugee and security crisis of 2015, the crisis of European institutions, and a crisis of 'public knowledge' that come together to create an opportunity for populists (Brubaker, 2018). The problem with such explanations is that they fail to problematize the notion of crisis and that the crisis-populism nexus remains under-theorized (Moffitt, 2015, p. 189).

As a point of departure – and in agreement with Moffitt's approach – I take Roitman's contribution to the subject where she claims that while crisis is commonly posited as an *a priori*, it is in fact a blind spot for the production of knowledge that needs to be made visible (2013, p. 13). In Luhmann's terms, crisis would be a second-order observation, as opposed to a first-order experience. What needs to be asked is what the concept does. According to Roitman, firstly, the concept and narrations of crisis delineate historical time. Secondly, it provides potentialities of moral judgment, thirdly, it provides means to contrast the abnormal with the normal (Roitman, 2013). Crisis is often seen as a catalyst, which by some is regarded as a „pervasive cultural narrative” (Authers & Charlesworth, 2014). As Colin Hay points out, the story told about the crisis is inherent to its understanding (1995). Overall, crisis serves as an overarching trope for mobilization, blame-attribution, and fear-mongering (Knight, 2013), all central to populist discourses. Agreeing with Moffitt (2015, p. 194) I think that rather than seeing crisis as an external variable, „performance of crisis should be seen as internal to populism”.

The mediatized construction of crisis relies on the core features of right-wing populism identified above, utilizes favorable opportunity structures and ties together the media strategies of populists: it is performative, it builds on the politics of fear and operates in a media environment where propaganda and information disorder is prevalent. In his work on the

¹⁴ Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cWakEpcTLRI>

subject, Moffitt (2015, p. 198) identifies six steps in the performance of crisis by populists. In what follows I narrate how these steps play out in the Hungarian case.

1. *Identify failure.* During the summer of 2015 an unprecedented number of refugees reached the border of the European Union, causing a massive wave of upheaval in the countries affected by the events. While opinions regarding the national and EU-level capacities and preparedness to handle the situation, refugees met no coordinated state-level support from the side of Hungarian authorities, and lacked provision of basic needs such as food, shelter or medical aid during the time they crossed the country. It can also be hypothesized that the inactivity of Hungarian authorities was a conscious effort to generate a sense of chaos and crisis: directing refugees to large cities, forcing them to public transportation, effectively crowding them outside in public places definitely led to such an impression. On the other hand, this passivity was coupled with a massive and sustained anti-refugee campaign from the Hungarian government's side. As part of this campaign a working group to handle the immigrant question was set up, followed by a so-called 'national consultation' in April, including questions that asked: „Do you agree that mistaken immigration policies contribute to the spread of terrorism?“. A major billboard campaign in May introduced three basic messages seemingly addressing migrants but in fact targeting Hungarian voters: „If you come to Hungary, you have to respect our culture!“, „If you come to Hungary, you have to respect our laws!“ and „If you come to Hungary, you can't take away our jobs!“. The government also declared its plans to build a fence on the Hungarian-Serbian border which was finalized in mid-September.

2. *Elevate to the level of crisis by linking into a wider framework and adding a temporal dimension.* As we have seen, delineating abnormal times from normal ones is central to the story of crisis. While populists rely on a feeling of historical juncture (Müller, 2016) and a spirit of decadence (Zúquete, 2017), Orbán has also been attempting to stretch out this temporal frame to historical, apocalyptic dimensions:

The phenomenon which we call mass population movement began much earlier than the refugee crisis, and is a much longer process than that crisis. If we look at the ethnic composition of large Western European cities we can see that radical changes have taken place. We see shocking figures for the proportions of native and nonnative populations in Paris, Rome and other large cities. The people who have already arrived in Hungary come from about 80 different countries, and the most difficult stage of the process will be when Africa sets out for Europe. We are part

of a long process in world history. (...) So, what we must solve is not a refugee crisis, but a historic task related to how we Europeans, Hungarians and Christians relate to mass population movement. Of course, the question of taking assistance to those countries instead of bringing the problems here is still valid – and this is not just true of the crisis in the Middle East. Many disagree, but of course hypocrisy has been a part of world politics for a long time. (Orbán, 30 Sep 2016, quoted by Marton, 2017).

3. *Frame 'the people' vs. those responsible for the crisis.* As we have seen at the discussion on Manichean dichotomies, Orbán's government has been creatively connecting migration to a couple of constructed enemies of Hungary, George Soros and the EU most importantly. The quote below nicely shows how the people is always referenced as a 'we' in the prime minister's speeches, while the EU is referred to with the use of a metonymy, 'Brussels':

At first, they are only talking about a few hundred, a thousand or two thousand relocated people. But not a single responsible European leader would dare to swear under oath that this couple of thousand will not eventually increase to tens or hundreds of thousands. If we want to stop this mass migration, we must first of all curb Brussels. The main danger to Europe's future does not come from those who want to come here, but from Brussels' fanatics of internationalism. We cannot allow Brussels to place itself above the law. We shall not allow it to force upon us the bitter fruit of its cosmopolitan immigration policy. We shall not import to Hungary crime, terrorism, homophobia and synagogue-burning anti-Semitism. (...) We know how these things go. First, we allow them to tell us whom we must take in, then they force us to serve foreigners in our country. In the end, we find ourselves being told to pack up and leave our own land. Therefore, we reject the forced resettlement scheme, and we shall tolerate neither blackmail, nor threats. (Orbán, 15 March, 2016)

4. *Use media to propagate performance.* Given the structural characteristics of the Hungarian media-sphere, it is difficult to conceptualize the media as an independent actor in the redefinition of the crisis. While on the one hand, government-friendly media outlets and

public media consider it their role to amplify governmental messages, they're also the primary platforms of governmental advertisements, blurring the line between paid marketing and journalism. In their analysis of media framing of the refugee 'crisis' of 2015, Bernáth and Messing found that in comparison with Austria, Hungarian media outlets have given considerably larger attention to authorities (police, armed forces, governments), more than 50 % of all quotes coming from them, when discussing issues on the one hand, and have gradually abandoned a humanitarian frame, replacing it with a securitization frame by September 2015 (Bernáth & Messing, 2015). The media has also been instrumental in spreading the terminology 'illegal migrant' that would replace 'refugee' in Hungarian discourse. Visually this was coupled with showing migrants in groups, emphasizing links to criminality, where Hungarian public media was explicitly forbidden to show pictures of children that would elevate empathy (Bernáth & Messing, 2015). Counternarratives, with a significantly smaller reach, do exist in Hungary, and independent media took efforts to emphasize a humanitarian frame in their coverage.

5. *Present simple solutions and strong leadership.* Facing such matters of life and death, the redefined crisis calls for urgent solutions. An important manifestation and a visual symbol of Orbán's policies was the setting up of a fence at the Hungarian-Serbian border, which provides a symbolic response to the slow-moving bureaucratic EU as a simple yet forceful answer. The referendum on national quotas is a second such simple measure where the 'will' of the people counters 'outside' political interference. Finally, during the national elections of 2018, the central message was also structured around migration: if voters want to protect their country, they should vote for Fidesz to do the job. These acts, while participatory, require very little effort from the electorate with significant rewards promised. By positioning himself as the 'other' voice of Europe – in comparison with Macron and Merkel – and aided by international media coverage that depicts him as Europe's 'bad guy', Orbán also elevates his leadership skills into an international arena.

6. *Continue to propagate crisis.* Stretching the temporal frames of the crisis, a curious thing about the refugee issue that has been central to the government for the past four years is the government's ability to keep it at the top of the agenda for more than four consecutive years. A short list of related activities illustrates this point:

April 2015. National consultation on migration

May 2015. First billboard campaign (If you come to Hungary)

July 2015. Second billboard campaign (Hungarian reforms work. We don't want illegal migrants")

May 2016. Third billboard campaign. (Let's send a message to Brussels so that they understand)

July 2016 Fourth billboard campaign (Did you know?)

September 2016. Fifth billboard campaign (Let's not risk)

October 2016. Referendum on refugee quotas

November 2016. Sixth billboard campaign (We sent a message to Brussels)

April 2017. National consultation: „Let's stop Brussels”

June 2017. Seventh billboard campaign (Hungary is a strong and proud European country)

August 2017. Eighth billboard campaign (Let's not let Soros have the last laugh)

October 2017. National consultation on the „Soros-plan”

September 2018. Ninth billboard campaign (They want to blackmail us)

October 2018. National consultation on families

Demographic anxieties reinforce and justify to permanent campaign against migration:

Yes, this is a matter of life and death: we are talking about fundamental issues related to our very existence. If we look at the shifting ethnic balances and the difference in fertility rates between the indigenous population and those who have newly arrived, simple mathematics tell us how many years it will take before there are as many of them as of us, and when they will be in the majority. This is not the first time that this has happened in the course of human history. (Orbán, 30 Sep 2016, quoted by Marton, 2017).

As we have seen, the redefinition and construction of the crisis has been an ongoing process in the Hungarian public discourse dominated by the government for the past years. Its effects are unquestionable, as findings consistently show unprecedented levels of xenophobia in the Hungarian public (Sik, 2016). Nevertheless, it remains to be seen when and if these messages can reach a saturation point, whether their relevance would erode with time.

While this short narration cannot do justice to the complexities of the events, five preliminary points on the governmental propaganda should be underlined:

First, the construction of the ‘refugee crisis’ effectively shifted and opened up the political agenda from the national to the international levels. From 2015 onwards, the Orbán-government is constantly combatting outside ‘enemies’ (the EU, Soros, the refugees) whose local agents (Hungarian civil society, the media) should also be fought as well.

Second, while the orchestrated construction of a sense of ‘crisis’ is undeniable, these governmental efforts were not without mistakes or missteps themselves. Rather, the process evolved in a trial-and-error manner, where Fidesz continuously tested its agenda-setting initiatives. In this manner, the idea of a compulsory drug-test for journalists was introduced and then later dropped, in early 2015 the party’s politicians publicly discussed the reintroduction of the death penalty only to abandon it a couple of weeks later. The construction of the refugee-figure was not without mistakes either. Early 2015, the politicians of Fidesz warned against ‘economic refugees’ from Kosovo – as their numbers saw an increase of arrivals from that group. This had to be adjusted to Middle-Eastern images, and the term ‘refugee’ to be dropped as it generated too much sympathy in the audience.

Third, the construction of the ‘crisis’ was coupled with not only discursive but very real attacks against autonomous actors at the mezo-level between the individual and the state: universities, civil society and the media most prominently.

Fourth: crisis has not only been constructed, but narrated and performed as well. This dynamic narration allowed for the issue to stay at the top of the political agenda for the past years – even in the lack of actual refugees.

Fifth, the role and volume of propaganda activities should be underlined here. The total spendings on state advertisements have reached 270 billion HUF (860 million EUR) between 2015-2018 (“Állami reklámköltség 2006-2018,” 2019). By 2019 the government spent a daily 100 million HUF (310 thousand EU) only on governmental billboard campaigns (G7, 2019).

This volume of propaganda is unprecedented and unparalleled in the modern history of democracies and has only been characteristic of totalitarian states before.

These five points, I believe, provide an overview of the transformation of the opportunity structure that has been taking place since 2015.

The government's offensive was not without its effects. According to polls, a majority of Hungarians agreed with the billboard campaign's statements ("Századvég," 2015). The findings of another opinion poll ("Csúcson az Idegenellenesség," 2015) showed that xenophobic sentiments had reached a record high already in 2015.

The 2018 wave of the European Social Survey also shows that anti-migrant sentiments are the highest in Hungary within Europe. While most European societies' results were not deeply affected by the events of 2015, the Hungarian numbers have sky-rocketed to an unprecedented 61 points in Hungary (Messing & Ságvári, 2019). The results of the populist construction of the 'refugee crisis' apparently still have a profound effect. But I want to go further than that and claim that given the mediatized construction of 'crisis' the anti-refugee propaganda can be expected to have a lasting influence on Hungarian society. Put forward in his cultivation theory, according to Gerbner (1970), mass media doesn't only have immediate effects in terms of the acceptance of certain messages, but do much more than that: they create new symbolic environments, "a common culture through which communities cultivate shared and public notions about facts, values and contingencies of human existence." (Gerbner, 1969, p. 123). Given the level of exposure of Hungarian society to the anti-refugee propaganda, it can be expected that it will have fundamental, long-term effects on Hungarian attitudes. The aim of the following chapters is to examine, whether counter-narratives put forward by social movements had a role to play in the process as well.

4.6. Conclusion: the dynamic performance of crisis

A common thread in the recent scholarship on populism investigates the cause-and-effect relationship between crisis and the increasing popularity of populist parties in Europe. There appears a common understanding that the so-called economic crisis and the migration waves that have been reaching Europe and the political turmoil these have caused led to the rise of populism.

It is only natural that the focus of social science scholarship has also turned towards the above described relationship between political, social, economic 'troubles' and their effects on the

social and political values of European citizens. Nevertheless, the proposed relationship, namely that structural problems lead to a radicalization of the electorate and the demand for populism seems oversimplified at best. What this chapter attempted to do by focusing on right-wing populism in Hungary was to situate narrations of crisis within the broader issues of core ideological features of populism, media opportunity structures that favor populism, and media strategies utilized by populists. It also aimed to reflect on the epistemological complexities of the notion of crisis and argued that it is not an objective 'status' of crisis but the performance of crisis by populists that need to be investigated. In order to do the latter, borrowing Moffitt's model on the dynamic performance of crisis, the chapter narrated the Hungarian populist government's construction of the refugee crisis within the above described framework. Media is central to such communication strategies, where media ownership plays a central role in amplifying messages sent by political actors and in creating feedback loops that resonate in the electorate. What this chapter has been able to show are dominant, anti-migrant discourses and constructions of crisis, nevertheless, this does not in any way mean that counterpublics or contestations of such discourses do not appear in the Hungarian public, which, due shortness of space cannot be discussed in detail here but which still play a role in opinion formation and in providing alternatives.

CHAPTER 5. Born in Facebook: The refugee crisis and grassroots connective action in Hungary¹⁵

In this chapter, I look at the case of the Hungarian Facebook-based relief aid group Migration Aid, arguing that it is an emerging form of organization. Migration Aid is a grassroots relief group that was formed on social media without the use of traditional mobilizational agents; it has taken over roles traditionally occupied by formal NGOs or the state. The aim of the study is to explore how a coherent and effective organization was created using Facebook as a platform for cooperation.

In what follows, I first outline the most important concepts relevant to the object of the case study and form its research questions, I revisit the issue of techno-optimism and techno-pessimism in detail. Then, I provide a context of the events, followed by an overview of Migration Aid's activities. Then, I describe the approach and methodology of the research. My findings address my research questions focusing on the group's organization and action repertoire. Finally, I revisit the conceptual framework and discuss its relation to the findings.

As already discussed in Chapter 2, the rise and growing importance of social networking sites have garnered considerable and growing research attention related to different aspects of social media use, and have given a new impetus for the wider discussion of the relationship between communication technologies and social organization (Castells, 1996, 2009, 2012; Rainie & Wellman, 2012). Most observers agree that the effects of social media influence collective action, but there is little consensus regarding the exact nature of this influence.

The theoretical debates have focused on whether the contribution of social media can facilitate traditional action (the so-called *reinforcement hypothesis*; Bekkers, Beunders, Edwards, & Moody, 2011; Van Laer, 2010) or generate new types of collective action (the *innovation hypothesis*; Benkler, 2006; Mossberger & Tolbert, 2010), whereas empirical case studies mostly have focused on already existing forms of collective action. So far, relatively little empirical attention has been given to organizations outside the realm of political campaigns and activism, social movements with explicit political aims, or self-interest and identity groups – formations that existed prior to the rise of social media. Although a large body of work argues that social media can be a potentially innovative tool in terms of creating new modalities of

¹⁵ The original version of this chapter appeared as an article co-authored with Tibor Dessewffy in the *International Journal of Communications* in 2016 (Dessewffy & Nagy, 2016)

organization (Bennett & Toft, 2009; Chadwick, 2013), there is a lacuna in research investigating such newly enabled forms.

5.1. Theoretical framework: techno-optimistic and techno-pessimistic interpretations of the digital turn

The role of social media in the organization of social movements and collective action in general has been at the center of debates since its inception. In fact, as soon as the Internet emerged, the first views that posited that digital technologies carry in them the possibilities of nongovernmental self-organization appeared (Bimber, 1998). Regarding the offline positive effects of the Internet, it has been argued that it makes possible the extension of one's social network (DiMaggio, Hargittai, Neuman, & Robinson, 2001).

Techno-optimism, as discussed in Chapter 2, related to civic activity and self-organization gained a new momentum with the appearance of social media bringing to the fore many-to-many communication. Writing as early as 2008, Clay Shirky found that social media has a role in spreading information and coordinating collective action (Shirky, 2008). With the appearance of large social media platforms, literature emphasizing their role in communication, identity formation, and networked organization potentials emerged.

Miller (2015) identifies three dimensions in the optimistic discourse regarding the effects of social media on social movements. They emphasize, first, an increase of information originating in the ease of media production and distribution. Second, an increased ability to connect, organize, and mobilize is underlined. Finally, social media, according to these views, naturally increases participants' ability to self-express.

The first decade of the 21st century presented numerous political events that strengthened this optimistic view: Moldavia's Twitter revolution, Iran's Facebook revolution, Chile's student movements, Iceland's kitchenware revolution, and the international Occupy and Indignados movements have been conceptualized as being made possible by social media (Castells, 2012; Gerbaudo, 2012). These political events serve as examples underlining the mobilization potential of social media. Such stances have been reinforced further by the events of the Arab Spring, in which participants themselves often stressed the significance of social networking sites. Hence, it is no surprise that literature reflecting on the events of the Arab Spring often focuses on organization methods using social media (Castells, 2012; Tufekci & Wilson, 2012).

There are four strands of criticism that stand against these optimistic views. First, Malcolm Gladwell (2010) argues that the contagious spreading of revolutionary movements predates

social media. Works dealing with the history of information give detailed accounts about how novel ideas were able to spread well before the emergence of social networking sites (Gladwell, 2010; Standage, 2013).

Second, Gladwell (2010) also questions Granovetter's renowned thesis on the strength of weak ties (1973). He maintains that the thesis is context-dependent, as weak ties show their strength in certain situations (e.g., getting a job), but this may not be the case in other contexts. According to Gladwell, collective action carrying physical risks is such a context, where strong ties are more important. Morozov (2009) uses the term *slacktivism* to describe nonrisky, nonmeaningful activism based on such weak ties on Facebook.

Third, a further criticism questions the mobilization potential of social media. As Fuchs (2012) stresses, looking at Internet access rates in the countries of the Arab Spring, the number of Facebook and Twitter users was far behind the number of protesters; therefore, the view that social media was a catalyst of these revolutions cannot be upheld.

Fourth, Morozov (2011) and others note that social media-based social movements leave behind digital footprints that authoritarian powers can exploit for the surveillance and oppression of such movements and their members.

The debate surrounding the effects of social media on collective action has itself been criticized (Lim, 2012) for pitting against each other human and technological actors as primary drivers of social organization, arguing that these actors are not detached from each other; rather, they coexist and coevolve in an increasingly hybrid world (Treré, 2012).

Therefore, I believe that a more sophisticated and comprehensible approach and conceptual framework is needed to address the relationship between social media and collective action. An important advance in this direction is the concept of *connective action* developed by Bennett and Segerberg (2012) as opposed to traditional forms of collective action.

The concept of connective action stresses that individual frames allow the personalized understanding of issues for participants, and these frames are easily distributed through a network in which digital technologies become "important organizational agents" (Bennett & Segerberg, 2012, p. 755); therefore, organizational structures are no longer needed to create new forms of mobilization.

Discussing motivation for participation in connective action, Bennett and Segerberg (2012) emphasize the role of community appreciation, peer production recognition, and respect. Indeed, examples of Wikipedia and open software movements all point to the importance of

such recognition structures in online communities. This is of particular significance for our case. As Bennett and Segerberg explain, such self-motivated forms do not lead to self-centered behavior: It is not only individual recognition but also working toward a commonly understood goal that form the basis of motivations. In the case of Migration Aid, this commonly understood goal was humanitarian action. As we will see later, this does not mean that self-centered and humanitarian action are exclusive as their relationship is more complex.

To apply the logic of connective action to Migration Aid, the metaphor of the *rhizome* originally developed by Deleuze and Guattari (1987) seems particularly useful. Theoretical literature on social movements recently turned its attention to their rhizomatic nature (Castells, 2012; Funke, 2012). Funke (2012) describes rhizomes as “unlike a tree structure, with its ‘root node’ or starting point and end-points, or ‘leaf nodes,’ rhizomatic structures can be entered and exited from any point” (p. 29).

As opposed to the formal, hierarchical, rigid structures built by clear-cut binary concepts, Deleuze and Guattari (1987) present the rhizome as a more informal, centerless, spontaneous, even hybrid system of relations. The organic, dynamic characteristics of the rhizome make it more adequate and suitable to my research than the network metaphor, which is more sterile, model-like, and structural. Although the network approach has great merits, the rhizome fits my research subject better. For Deleuze and Guattari, the rhizome describes both a connected mode of knowledge and communication and processes of reality. This notion became remarkably useful to describe new, grassroots social movements that were created in the digital sphere given the networked nature of social networking sites. To understand the interpretative power of the rhizome, it is worth contrasting rhizomatic movements with those successful social movements of the previous epochs. As put forward by Gladwell (2010), the civil rights movement in the United States had a charismatic leader, an ideology, a clearly defined hierarchy with functionally differentiated competencies, established top-down communication channels, and precise, almost military-like operation. The new rhizomatic social movements exhibit none of these elements; actually, they embody the exact opposite and therefore epitomize a new type of operation for social movements. Without having a firm structure, rhizomatic movements are highly flexible and are able to adapt, proliferate, and restart when necessary.

By putting an emphasis in the connective action framework on rhizomes, a central question that emerges is how the rhizomatic structure shapes the action repertoires of social movements. As discussed earlier, when applying the term *repertoires of collective action*, I refer to what Charles Tilly (1984) describes as “distinctive constellations of tactics and strategies developed over

time and used by protest groups to act collectively in order to make claims on individuals or groups” (Taylor & Van Dyke, 2004, p. 265). There is a general understanding that the Internet has broadened these repertoires of collective action in the case of social movements (McAdam, Tarrow, & Tilly, 2001; Tilly, 1984). Such a development is not surprising given that the combination of offline and online tactics naturally leads to an increase (Van Laer & Van Aelst, 2010). Although offline and online actions add up to a new ‘digitalized’ repertoire, the interdependency of these actions within the movement also points to blurring of the boundaries of offline and online actions.

With regard to movement repertoires, the effect of the rhizome also can be conceptualized as allowing for the emergence of hybrid organizations in which the boundaries between online and offline activities are blurred, allowing for fast ‘repertoire switches’ between the two spheres (Chadwick, 2007). The question regarding why such hybrid organizations existing on numerous platforms do not disintegrate is posed by Bennett, Segerberg, and Walker (2014). Linkages and networks are crucial for the survival of such organizations; furthermore, a key platform gains a ‘stitching’ role, they argue, allowing for a coherent organization to be maintained.

The emergence of hybrid organizations with rhizomatic structures may affect action repertoires with regard to low- and high-threshold activities. Literature on Internet-based movements often associates them with the creation of weak ties (Harp, Bachmann, & Guo, 2012; Van Laer & Van Aelst, 2010), which in turn lead many authors to conclude that participation based on such weak ties excludes the possibility of high-threshold/cost activities (Gladwell, 2010). Slacktivism (Morozov, 2009) refers to the phenomenon of low-threshold/cost activities performed online with little to no effect. Whether such a distinction applies to hybrid organizations needs further empirical investigation.

One of the ways in which the rhizomatic structure affects a group’s action repertoire is the implication that organizations tend to respond more quickly to challenges than hierarchical organizations (Powell, 1990). This is the characteristic I call the *information thermostat* function of Facebook. The concept of the information thermostat refers to the operation of a self-regulative system that permanently receives inputs from given surroundings and changes its outputs accordingly. At the same time, information thermostats themselves are subjects of continuous change, and they drive transformation of the broader context as well.

The concept of the rhizome as applied to the structure of hybrid social movements and its relation to action repertoires drove the research questions of the present chapter:

RQ1: How do the characteristics of the rhizome appear in the organization of Migration Aid?

RQ2: How does the rhizome influence the repertoire of action of the group?

In what follows, I use an empirical case study to broaden this theoretical framework, as I am confident that such case studies are necessary not only to test and refine theoretical considerations but they can also contribute to the progressive development of theories. Epistemological modesty is not the only rationale for such an empirically focused starting point. As we will see, real-life events often follow unpredictable patterns incongruent with theoretical constructs.

5.2. Migration Aid – an overview

Migration Aid is a nonprofit organization based on the voluntary association of its members and dependent on the donations it receives, which would make the group either a voluntary association or an NGO by definition (Vedder, 2007). Della Porta and Diani (2006, p. 22) suggest the term *consensus movements* to overcome the problem of including charities and voluntary associations – groups that lack the conflictual element and the motivation to alter the social structure – within the movement framework of analysis. I argue here that the boundaries of the political point to more complex issues: The self-definition of Migration Aid states that the group is nonpolitical in nature. However, what constitutes political action in a given context is not necessarily shaped by the group alone and is subject to the intentions of those in power, namely the Hungarian government in our case.

As Castells (2007) writes, “one of the few natural laws of society, verified throughout history, asserts that wherever is domination, there is resistance to domination” (p. 248). At first sight, it seems that the striking fact about the Hungarian case is that this ‘natural law’ of Castells’ did not operate here. Orbán’s leftist opposition had been in the state of a permanent crisis at least since 2010, and the extreme-right Jobbik had lost its momentum specifically because of the refugee crisis. Attempts to establish new political parties or social movements in the past have been unsuccessful. Orbán’s power has yet to meet its counterpower. Nevertheless, Castells also maintains that counterpower can take a number of different shapes, “be it political, cultural, economic, psychological, or otherwise” (p. 248). The complexity of the issue of the political-humanitarian nexus is sensitively captured in Feischmidt and Zakariás work on civic help for refugees in Hungary (2019). They claim that the relationship is dialectical: both the politicization of charity, and the charitization of politics have taken place.

As we have seen in Chapter 2, the organizational ecology of social movements in Hungary points to the existence of narrowly focused, limited contentious actions, rather than broader oppositional movements. And this is important to understanding how movements operate in hybrid regimes. Nevertheless, 2015 saw an increase in such activities. Even though the formation of Migration Aid has been an unpredictable and unexpected event, in hindsight, one can see the growing potentials of resistance and alternative discourses clearly. When the government announced its billboard campaign, an outburst of memes followed. This time, however, the outrage did not stop there. The portal Vastagbor and the satirical Hungarian Two-Tailed Dog Party launched a crowd-funding campaign setting out to collect HUF 3 million to buy 50 billboards to mock the government's campaign ("Óriásplakátra Gyűjtünk!," 2015). The call became an overnight success: HUF 33 million were collected that allowed the organizers to produce and display more than 500 billboards. This campaign will be the subject of Chapter 6.¹⁶

Both the case of the Hungarian Two-Tailed Dog Party and, as we will see, of Migration Aid point to the more general analytical question about the 'boundaries' of the political and whether collective action can become political against the intentions of its actors. Castells' (2007) notion of counterpower has its origins in Foucault's (1990) oft-quoted thesis on resistance: "Where there is power, there is resistance..." For us, the second part of this statement is also relevant: "and yet, or rather consequently, this resistance is never in a position of exteriority in relation to power" (Foucault, 1990, p. 95). Migration Aid had a clearly expressed nonpolitical agenda at its conception, but its actions carried clear political meaning in the given context. One way to conceptualize this apparent contradiction is to turn to the study of humanitarian action and how it appears in the case of Migration Aid. Humanitarian action in the West historically relies on the principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality, and independence (Pictet, 1979). It is worth examining how these values were present here.

One possible approach to frame trends in the field of humanitarian action is offered by Chouliaraki (2013), who argues that we live in the age of posthumanitarianism given that in the past decades, a shift from the ethics of 'pity' toward the ethics of 'irony' has taken place. The ironic spectator is presented as "an impure or ambivalent figure that stands, at once, as skeptical towards any moral appeal to solidary action and, yet, open to doing something about those who

¹⁶ While not at the focus of the present research, it should be noted that a dichotomic view of the Hungarian public sphere as splitting into pro- and anti-refugee discourses would also be oversimplifying and misleading as well. Discourses outside these two 'bubbles' also existed, tabloid media focused on human interest stories without a clear stance on societal issues for example.

suffer” (Chouliaraki, p. 2). Three trends that led to this shift are identified by Chouliaraki as the marketization of humanitarian action, an individualist morality of activism in which the donor’s emotional benefits are central to action, and a new communicative structure. Although the first trend, consumerization of humanitarian action, was present in Hungary, such activities of mainstream NGOs stood in sharp contrast to those of Migration Aid. Although The Office of the *United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees* (UNHCR) launched a billboard campaign to promote solidarity as refugees and other NGOs reluctantly organized traditional charity activities, such practices were slow in reaction, distanced from the problem, and very rarely took place at the actual locations where refugees were to be found. If anything, the case of Migration Aid is a clear criticism of such humanitarian practices. Nevertheless, Chouliaraki’s work is central in pointing out that self-centered behavior and humanitarian action are not mutually exclusive, but have a more complex relationship.

In his theory on collective identities, Castells (1997) delineates three different kinds of identities: legitimizing, resistance and project identities. Whereas legitimizing identities serve to maintain the power structure, resistance identities aim to exclude the excluders by the excluded. Castells proposes that project identities – where participants do not define themselves against the system, but aim to realize immanent values outside of the power dichotomies – will be the dominant forms of collective identities in the network society. From this perspective, it is fascinating that the impact of social networks on collective action has mostly been demonstrated – from the Arab Spring to the Occupy movement – on resistance movements.

The Migration Aid case is an attempt to use the connective action framework in such a project identity movement. I also argue that regardless of the (nonpolitical) intention of the participants, in this highly politicized context, humanitarian action had a huge political relevance.

Established by a previously unknown one-person NGO on June 29, 2015, Migration Aid is a Facebook group that had 9,000 members at the end of September 2015. In the course of a few weeks, Migration Aid built a highly complex relief infrastructure, one that the government was hesitant to provide and traditional NGOs were incapable of establishing.

After three months of relief work, Migration Aid compiled statistical data about its operations and the efforts undertaken by its members and donators. According to these data, 500 activists in 70,000 work-hours provided for 111,600 refugees. Telephone bills related to relief work amounted to €11,000. Volunteers distributed 140,000 bottles of water, 49,400 sandwiches, 90,400 cereal bars, 73,200 cleansers, 7,830 pairs of shoes, and tens of thousands pieces of clothes, among other things. Migration Aid spent €22,200 on public transport tickets for

refugees. From 2,100 donators (90% of whom were members of the Migration Aid group), the group received €118,000 for medication for the refugees (“Migration Aid Számokban,” 2015).

First Phase (June 29–July 14). During the initial phase of its operation, the first members of the group concentrated on gathering information in the field about the whereabouts and primary needs of refugees. Based on these first experiences, a general operational network for Migration Aid was established. Because the state did not actively organize the transportation of refugees, they had to use the railway infrastructure designed for civilian purposes that was unfit for the needs of refugees. The documentation received by the refugees was in Hungarian, making the process incomprehensible for most of them. Once they arrived in Budapest, they did not receive information about how to reach their destination. Those arriving late at night were not provided for and often slept near the train stations.

In terms of what the tasks of Migration Aid were, the first related post summarized it in six points: (1) examine within Budapest what kind of help is needed, (2) establish a phone-based duty and dispatch service, (3) find locations outside of Budapest that require help, (4) locate a storehouse, (5) find transportation, and (6) recruit volunteers (June 30).

A number of house rules for the group were established. On its third day, the Facebook group ‘closed’ to protect itself from outside attacks. The group’s founder requested a restraint from ‘politics’, ‘incitement’, and ‘xenophobia’ (July 1).

Two types of communication existed and were reflected on by the group. ‘Phatic’ communication (Malinowski, 1923; Miller, 2015) – acts of speech that do not necessarily serve information exchange; rather, they create a feeling of community – had to be separated from ‘useful’ functions. There were numerous strategies to overcome this problem: Migration Aid established a Migration Aid Conversational group and local groups also moved in such a direction.

Second Phase (July 15–August 30). The developments in the next month show a number of interrelated trends. Both the number of the group’s members and the amount of donations grew in size. At the same time, the demands pressed on the group were also escalating. This led to a renegotiation of the group’s roles and a shift of the activities from the previously established framework.

In mid-July, posts on the Facebook page repeatedly warned about the original tasks of the group, implying a growing concern about whether its activities could remain within those boundaries:

July 13: We have a lot of returning ‘clients’, what we do now is counter-productive.
Passers-by . . . only see the growing crowd hanging out around the railway stations.

By the end of July, the online posts showed a markedly different approach: The cooking and distribution of meals and establishment of stable transit zones where refugees were taken care of became part of the group’s roles. This shift was made possible by a number of internal and external pressures on the group.

So far, Migration Aid’s activities were either ignored or hindered by authorities. In the first week of August, however, city officials and Migration Aid agreed to open three so-called transit zones provided by the city and managed by Migration Aid’s volunteers.

Third Phase (August 31–September 15). The week between August 31 and September 4 was described in the group’s discussions as the heaviest days of the crisis. An unprecedented number of refugees reached Budapest. As they refused to enter camps and were unable to board trains toward Western Europe, and human trafficking became a difficult solution, with Austria introducing strict border controls, most refugees were stranded in Hungarian train stations, mainly in Keleti. State officials locked down the train station, prohibiting refugees to enter.¹⁷ The situation with 3,000 refugees pushing the limits of the transit zone’s capacities plus miscommunication from authorities maintained tension during the week. On September 4, approximately 1,000 people decided to leave Keleti and walk toward Austria. This event marked a turning point in state response: Hungary and Austria reached an agreement whereby Hungarian state authorities provided buses for refugees that took them to the Austrian border where Austria accepted them. A newly built fence on the Serbian–Hungarian border and a number of legal changes on September 15 made entry for refugees close to impossible, and the decision of Austria and Germany to open their borders rendered the relief efforts of Migration Aid obsolete in Budapest. The group continued to ship donations to refugees in need by and through the border.

¹⁷ Note that this corresponds with the escalation of crisis discussed in the previous chapter on the populist construction of ‘crisis’.

5.3. Methodology of the case study on Migration Aid

The analysis is based on Migration Aid's posts as units of analysis. All posts between the foundation of the group (June 29) and the creation of the fence by the Hungarian–Serbian border (September 15) were analyzed. I retrieved 4,614 posts from Migration Aid's Facebook group during the researched period. The attribute of 'date' was added to each post, which allowed for the frequency and distribution of posts to be analyzed. Two types of posts were differentiated: posts that contained only text, and posts that contained outlinks with or without further comments.

To give an overview of Migration Aid's activities, I applied content analysis (Krippendorff, 1980), which consisted of the close reading of the posts, notetaking, and identifying emergent issues and patterns.

To answer RQ1, I used link analysis. According to Hogan (2008), a useful distinction in network research is one between the analysis of whole networks, personal networks, and partial networks. My approach fits into the partial network model as it situated Migration Aid in the context within which it operated, collecting the nodes linked to Migration Aid's Facebook page. This approach in general is usually referred to as link analysis. Two main types of outlinks were (1) links to media sources and (2) links to other groups and pages as actors. The link analysis was carried out using NodeXL and maps out Migration Aid's relations to other groups and pages.

Thematic analysis was undertaken to answer RQ2. As Braun and Clarke (2006) explain, the aim of the method is to identify, analyze, and report patterns in the data. During the data analysis phase, I followed the six processes put forward by Braun and Clarke: (1) familiarizing ourselves with the data, (2) generating initial codes, (3) searching for themes, (4) reviewing themes, (5) defining and naming themes, and (6) producing the report. In accordance with these steps, I started with a close reading of the data for emerging codes. Each post was treated as a single unit of analysis. The formation of themes took place in an iterative manner, that is, followed by reflection on the initial codes and links between them (Bryman, 2008). Initial codes were thus summed in nine larger themes, as shown in Table 1: question by member, help/donation offered by member, materials produced by member, idea by a member, materials produced by the group, group-focused communication, practical knowledge-sharing, calls for help/donations, and sharing of related news.

Table 1. Themes Identified in Migration Aid’s Facebook Group’s Posts.

Theme	
Field information offered	Individuals post information, news, description, field reports based on their offline experiences.
Field information requests	Questions related to what is happening somewhere offline.
Help/donation offered	Individuals offer their capacities – help or donations – to the group.
Help/donation requests	Individuals or administrators of the group – in the group’s ‘name’ – post requests for donations or volunteer help that specify what is needed and where.
External media content shared	Links to news sites, articles, broadcasts.
Self-produced media content shared	Members who made pictures or videos during their volunteering offline upload these contents to the group.
Knowledge production	Files uploaded to the group that volunteers can individually disseminate or use: vocabulary lists, timetables, laws and regulations, maps.
Ideas	Bottom-up ideas shared by members that serve innovation.
Group-related communication	Posts that discuss issues related to group meetings, group rules, and group activities.

During its existence, Migration Aid conducted two short online surveys to get a picture of its members’ opinions and aspirations, the second of which (September 18–21) yielded 230 respondents (see Table 2).

5.4. Results: The rhizomatic structure and its effects on Migration Aid's action repertoire

I consider Migration Aid an emerging form of organization as it took the form of highly complex, coherent, and effective connective action. I emphasize the role of rhizomatic structure as central to understanding how the logic of connective action operates. My findings point to a number of characteristics of the rhizome. How these characteristics influence the group's repertoire of action is also detailed.

The rhizomatic structure of Migration Aid. My first research question, how the characteristics of the rhizome appear in the organization of Migration Aid, was examined by link analysis. Figure 1 gives a schematic network topology of the group.

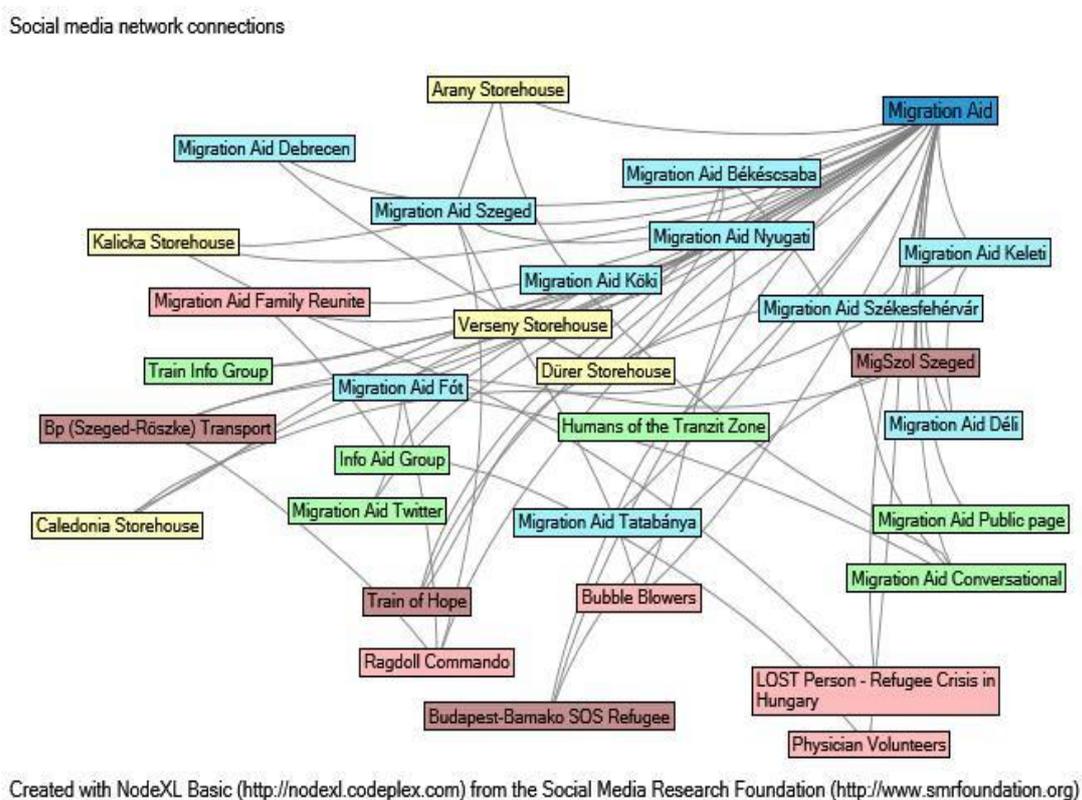


Figure 2. A network topology of Migration Aid's connections. (1) Local subgroups (Migration Aid Keleti, Migration Aid Déli, Migration Aid Nyugati, Migration Aid Fót, Migration Aid Szeged, Migration Aid Debrecen, Migration Aid Köki, Migration Aid Békéscsaba, Migration Aid Székesfehérvár, Migration Aid Tatabánya). (2) Storehouse facilities (Caledonia Storehouse, Kalicka Storehouse, Arany Storehouse, Verseny Storehouse, Dürer Storehouse). (3) Online groups (Info Aid Group, Train Info Group, Humans of the Transit Zone, Migration Aid public page, Migration Aid Twitter, Migration Aid Conversational). (4) Specialized groups

(Physician Volunteers, Migration Aid Family Reunite, LOST Person – Refugee Crisis in Hungary, Bubble Blowers, Ragdoll Commando). (5) Partnerships (MigSzol Szeged, Budapest-Bamako SOS Refugee, Bp [Szeged–Röszke] Transport, Train of Hope).

The central group operated closely with local subgroups that were positioned at train stations in the capital and in the country. A number of storehouse facilities were also connected to both the central and the subgroups. A number of online groups – with no offline activities – operated to distribute information for group members and the wider public. Furthermore, specialized groups with thematic aims also functioned. Finally, it has to be noted that Migration Aid formed partnerships with similar organizations.

The rhizomatic structure of Migration Aid shapes the organization of the group in a number of ways: It is nonhierarchical in nature; it is hybrid in terms of connecting the online and offline spheres; it is an organization for which Facebook has an important stitching function, but it is not the sole online platform used; and it allows for a long-term flexibility of the organization over time.

First, the rhizomatic structure allows the group to be nonhierarchical. Information within the group does not flow in a top-bottom manner; it lacks fixed starting or ending points. However, this does not mean that the organization is flat or lacks a certain structure. Although it is often assumed in the literature that new, Internet-enabled social movements are leaderless (Castells, 2012), even within the rhizomatic structure, supernodes emerge, and hyperactivists (Nunes, 2005), who are more available than others, are present. The uneven distribution of digital skills (Hargittai & Hsieh, 2013; Hargittai & Shafer, 2006) also creates in-group differences.

Second, the rhizomatic structure blurs the boundaries between Internet-based online and Internet-supported offline activities. The deep interdependency of these two spheres makes one question whether such a distinction is still analytically useful (Bimber, 2000). Applying Chadwick's (2007) terms, Migration Aid can be seen as a hybrid mobilization movement operating both in the online and offline realm, where social media make effective switches between the two spheres possible.

Third, although Facebook was central in the creation of and cooperation within Migration Aid, social media were not the only communication technology used by the group's volunteers. Verbal communication was significant at the locations and during the group's weekly meetings. Volunteers used their cell phones in a number of ways: A network of interpreters useful for

their work was available by phone for fieldwork volunteers, the dispatch service and volunteer operators who distributed up-to-date information about train arrivals and the number of refugees on a given train were both phone-based services. When communicating with the general public, Migration Aid used several channels: an open Facebook page, websites, Tumblr, and Twitter. In this complex, rhizomatic communication ecology, the closed Facebook group of Migration Aid remained the main platform of collaboration, stitching together different groups and communication media (Bennett et al., 2014).

Finally, a characteristic of a rhizome is its flexibility over time to challenges. The above-described divisions of labor – between online and offline, between different communication technologies, and between the original group and further subgroups – therefore were dynamic throughout the researched period. To illustrate these changes, I looked at the number of posts in the original Migration Aid group (see Figure 3). First, following the establishment of the group, the number of posts grew rapidly and started to slowly decline after July 3, stabilizing after mid-July. This balanced Facebook activity lasted during the six weeks between July 15 and August 31. In the first two weeks of September, however, a rapid growth and a second decline are visible when looking at the number of posts in the group. These three phases can be explained by a number of factors both internal and external to the group.

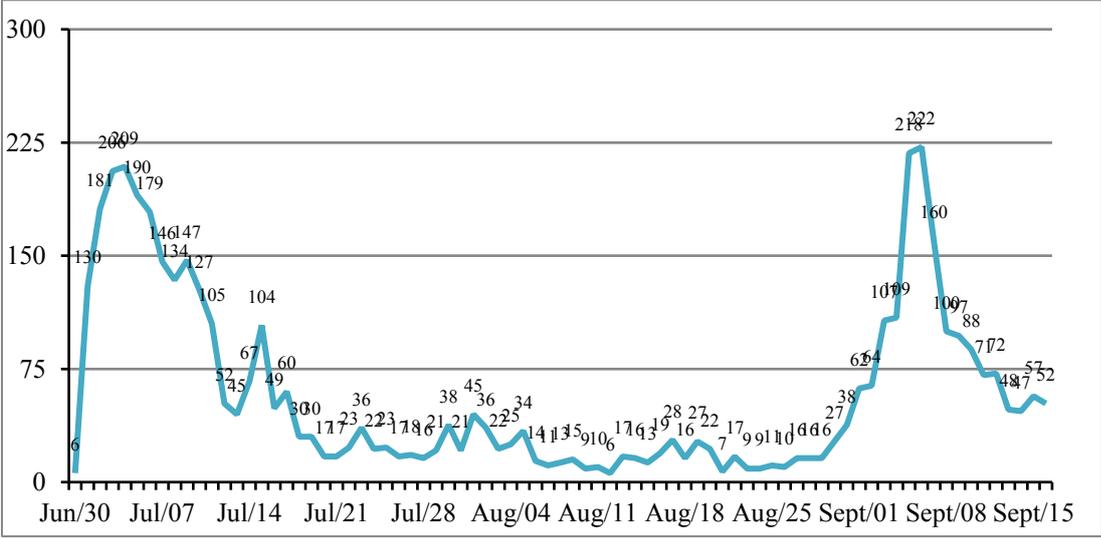


Figure 3. Number of posts/day (Migration Aid).

First, as posts reached a certain frequency within the group, coordination became difficult for the members. That is one of the reasons why subgroups were established on July 2 and a great proportion of discussions ‘moved’ to those subgroups. A second movement leading to the decrease of posts was from online action to offline action: Once relief points within the city were established, Facebook became one of the many platforms through which offline work was organized. The crisis that unfolded from the end of August put a strain and a need for reorganization on Migration Aid, leading to the growing number of posts. On September 15, the border fence accompanied by new legislation put an end to the influx of refugees. Although Migration Aid continues to ship aid to crisis points in Hungary and abroad, the relief efforts as once established in Budapest ended in mid-September. A rhizomatic structure is dynamic in the sense that it allows adaptability to these long-term changes by restructuring the organization of the group accordingly.

Effects of the rhizomatic structure on the action repertoire. My second research question addressed how the characteristics of the rhizome shaped Migration Aid’s action repertoire.

The first identified characteristic, namely the movement’s nonhierarchical organization and lack of clear starting and ending points, leads to the emergence of new modalities of participation and therefore a high degree of autonomy of members to shape the action repertoire of the group.

The existence of a wide range of modalities of participation is exemplified by the variety of roles undertaken by members. This is evidenced in the findings of Migration Aid’s own online survey, shown in Table 2. Furthermore, there were opportunities to join relief work temporarily (visiting a location once with donations) or permanently (joining activities as a Migration Aid volunteer or coordinator), online (coordination and administrative tasks) or offline (volunteering as drivers, at storage facilities, or at railway stations), in a hierarchical (coordinators and experienced volunteers were higher in the hierarchy than novices) or a horizontal (individual contribution) manner. Acts otherwise seen as slacktivism found their function: When a post was considered important, members added a simple dot in a comment to keep the post ‘afloat’.

Table 2. Migration Aid Online Survey (N = 230, September 18–21, 2015).

What type of volunteer work would you participate in within Migration Aid in the future?	
Collecting donations, sorting, transporting donations, working in the warehouse.	40%
Background work, coordinating different Migration Aid activities.	38%
Work in the field (setting up, coordinating Migration Aid teams in the field, participating in their work).	37%
Taking a role in shaping the public opinion about asylum seekers and migration, participating in think tanks to elaborate proposals for political decision makers.	22%
Working on 'getting the word out', gathering information and articles on this topic and also writing and creating different contents regarding the topic (infographics, micro studies, data and fact sheets).	21%
Helping the asylum seekers in camps, registration points with things that have to do with the legal process of being recognized as refugees.	13%
Health care and medical assistance (treating, or if not qualified, then working with doctors, nurses in caring for the asylum seekers and/or refugees).	12%

The second identified characteristic is that Migration Aid is a hybrid organization, blurring the boundaries between offline and online participation. A consequence of this characteristic with regard to the group's action repertoire is that an unreflexive distinction between low- and high-threshold activities as independent variables underlying individual and collective action within a group needed to be readdressed in a more reflexive manner. The questions of what constituted a 'risky' activity were continuously negotiated and formed in a discursive style within the group. These discussions navigated around the question of legality, possible counteractions from the state, and possible negative or unintended consequences. As an outcome of Migration Aid's activities, risk thresholds were lowered for relief efforts in general.

Furthermore, low- and high-threshold activities often organize in an interdependent manner, where low-threshold activities are a necessary precondition for high-threshold activities that build on them. These low-threshold activities often took the form of crowd-sourced action in which the effectiveness of the task relied on a large number of participants, whereas the high-threshold on-site activities had a limit on the number of participants. Donations or information were thus gathered by many members, requiring relatively little effort and risk, and later built on, distributed, and articulated by a few. My findings underline that the organizational logic builds on the coexistence of what Van Laer and Van Aelst (2010) identify in their model as Internet-supported and Internet-based, low-threshold, and high-threshold activities. This interconnectedness of ranges of activities is made possible at least partly by the new modalities of participation (Van Lear & Van Aelst, 2010) afforded by social networking sites and the Internet in general.

Third, I argue that within the rhizomatic structure of Migration Aid, the Facebook group had a stitching role. This affected the group’s action repertoire in its ability to permanently receive inputs and change its outputs accordingly in a highly flexible manner. The mechanism of connecting and circulating inputs and outputs is evidenced in the results of the thematic analysis. This analysis led to the identification of nine themes as described in the Method section. The breakdown of the themes within the group’s posts is shown in Figure 3.

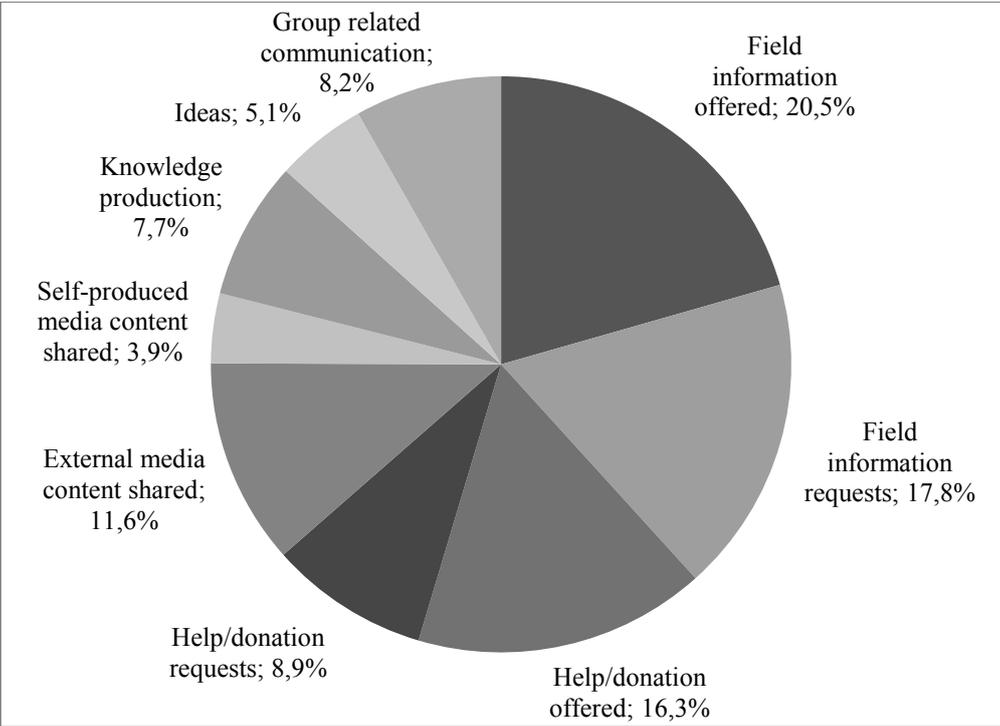


Figure 4. The distribution of themes in Migration Aid’s Facebook posts.

The most common theme to appear was field information offered combined with the second most common theme, field information requests. There were twice as many help/donation offer posts than posts requesting them. Twelve percent of posts shared external media content. Group-related communication and knowledge production appeared in 8% of the posts. Ideas and self-produced media content were the least common types of posts. We see that diagnostic inputs (information from the field or from media) and outputs were prominent in the functioning of the Facebook group, followed by prognostic inputs and outputs (help/donation requests and offers). A look at how the frequency of these themes changed over the course of the group’s existence (see Figure 5) further shows that such inputs and outputs were in close accordance with each other.

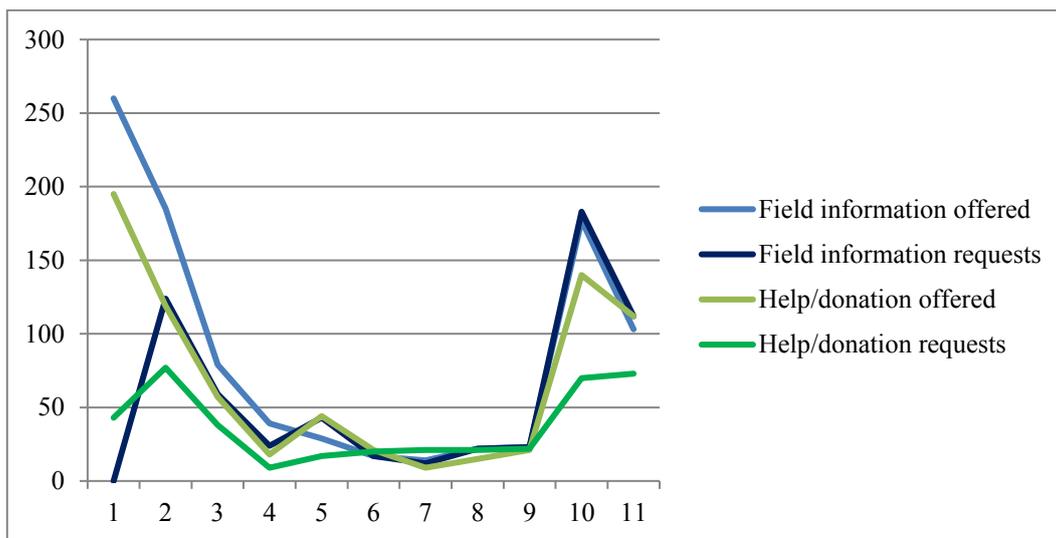


Figure 5. Frequency of four themes (breakdown by week). (Migration Aid)

We see that Migration Aid’s Facebook group was permanently receiving inputs and changed its outputs accordingly in a highly flexible manner. This flexibility was made possible by the rhizomatic structure of the group, allowing it to change its shape and reconfigure itself in an adaptive manner.

The thematic analysis also sheds light on how the fourth identified characteristic – the rhizome’s highly flexible nature and its ability to reconfigure itself – affected the action repertoire of the

group. During its operation, Migration Aid continuously adapted, changing its rules and tasks over time. Newly established activities broadened the range of tasks and tactics. Once the group was established, original functions were supplemented by new undertakings. They covered issues related to the well-being of refugees (children's activities, musical performances), specialized tasks undertaken by professionals (physician and pediatrician services), and tasks targeting the volunteers themselves (self-help groups, training). Social networking sites were also fostering bottom-up initiatives – individual ideas to flow and gain popularity. It was not only internal mechanisms but also a constantly changing external environment that shaped this adaptive repertoire of collective action.

The concept of the information thermostat refers to the operation of a self-regulative system that permanently receives inputs from given surroundings and changes its outputs accordingly. At the same time, information thermostats themselves are subjects of continuous change, and they drive transformation of the broader context as well. Such an information thermostat was a prerequisite for effective functioning because the needs of newly arriving refugees at a given location and the nature of incoming donations were largely unpredictable. The concept is crucial to theoretically grasp the highly complex operation of the 'digitally born' Migration Aid. Started as a Facebook group, Migration Aid as a self-organized relief network operated in an institutional vacuum. It did not get any support from official agencies. The tasks the newly formed movement faced were substantial. Members aimed to take care of the rapidly growing numbers of refugees who had very different psychological and physical needs. Therefore, members had to 'learn by doing', developing procedures on the go. Not only did they lack any former well-tested procedures to follow, the total number and the national, cultural, and demographic composition of the refugees who arrived in Hungary changed day by day. Hence, the refugees' grievances and needs also fluctuated on a daily basis. To be able to provide relief for these refugees, Migration Aid developed a hybrid communication system to monitor the actual needs of the arriving refugees. By relying on its network-based communication system, Migration Aid was able to reallocate resources and deliver goods to address these needs, be it food, water, blankets, tickets of public transportation, entertainment for the children, or legal or logistic information. It is remarkable that it all happened without clearly defined competencies and responsibilities or any kind of formal hierarchy within the group. Hence, using the information thermostat, I understand the operation of a connected action cycle consisting of permanent and decentralized monitoring, processing, reallocation, and delivery.

5.5. Conclusions: humanitarian activity in a posthumanitarian context

The Migration Aid case study is an attempt to use the connective action framework for a project identity movement. I also have argued that regardless of the seemingly nonpolitical intentions of the participants, in the highly politicized context, humanitarian action had a huge political relevance.

Inquiry into how Migration Aid operated sheds light on how the concept of connective action can be applied and further developed to understand the specific ways a coherent organization is achieved in digitally born movements. Proposing that an emphasis on the rhizomatic structure of the group provides a unique insight, I have suggested that new rhizomatic social movements epitomize emerging types of organizations. My inquiries led to the identification of four central characteristics of the rhizome as they appeared in the case of Migration Aid. The movement is nonhierarchical and lacks fixed starting and ending points. This organizational characteristic affected the group's action repertoires in allowing a wide range of modalities of participation in Migration Aid's activities. Furthermore, I also found that – although born digitally – the group was a hybrid organization. The blurring of lines between online and offline spheres within the structure also affected the group's activities; I conclude that a hard-and-fast distinction between low- and high-threshold activities associated with offline/online operations is not applicable to rhizomatic movements. The existence of a stitching platform in rhizomatic organizations was central for the group's survival; in the case of Migration Aid, its Facebook group played such a role. A unique characteristic of the rhizome is its ability to reconfigure itself in both the short and long run. This flexibility, together with the stitching role of Facebook, leads to what I coin the information thermostat, a self-regulative system that permanently receives inputs from given surroundings and changes its outputs accordingly. In a broader sense, Migration Aid might be considered a manifestation of humanitarian activity in a posthumanitarian context in which the traditional principles of humanitarian action are being called into question. These principles are substantially endangered now; therefore, the relevance of Migration Aid and similar relief groups goes much further than their actual aid.

5.6. Migration Aid: mediation opportunity structures and capacities

As refugee movements shifted from Budapest first to the Serbian and to the Western borders, so has Migration Aid refocused its activities in these regions, and then outside the Hungarian borders. As the fall of 2015 arrived, and parliament began its sessions, attacks against the group

from Fidesz MPs have become common in public discourse. The group continues to have more than 7 thousand members but is mostly used to share refugee-related pieces of media.

Looking at the use of opportunities in the mediation opportunity structure, we can envisage them taking place in three interrelated domains: the media opportunity structure, the discursive and the networked opportunity structure. With regards to the first, Migration Aid gained momentum by having strong field experience and often giving expert interviews or taking the role of spokesperson for the refugees during the crisis.

A potential opportunity in the discursive opportunity structure for Migration Aid was the salience of the chosen issue and self-mediation of this issue in opposition to the hegemonic discourse. It also utilized affordances in the networked opportunity structure in a manner that led to complex, intensive and hybrid frameworks of action.

Regarding the capacities of Migration Aid, it is important to point out again, that while the largest, it existing within a network of other humanitarian volunteer groups operating in Hungary during 2015. The narrative capacities of Migration Aid should not be underestimated. By being visible and active during the months discussed they provided a framing of the situation largely distinct from the governmental propaganda. This had effects even on the hegemonic discourses. Notable among these was the event when Anikó Lévai, the prime minister's wife visited refugee children in 2015. Tabloid media in 2015 also shifted its attention to images of suffering where help for the reports – translation and contact – often arrived from members of Migration Aid. Significantly, this also brought about counterresponses where state media was instructed not to show pictures of refugee children as they would raise sympathy in the viewership. In terms of disruptive capacities, the regular operations of the state were attempted to first push refugees towards the capital and to withdraw assistance, information or aid from them secondly. If the intervention into these 'regular operations', namely the provision of assistance and information can be considered disruptive, then the disruptive capacities of Migration Aid cannot be doubted, as the statistical figures show. However, as the group always refrained from challenging politicians, the movement lacked any electoral capacities. This should not be seen as a failure however: the movement's active phase had its own, self-limited trajectory within which their defined goals have been achieved.

CHAPTER 6. Repertoires of contention and new media – the case of a Hungarian anti-billboard campaign¹⁸

Someone arriving in Hungary during the summer of 2015 would have been surprised to find a significant number of billboards on the streets especially targeting the newcomer. Messages stating that “If you come to Hungary, you have to respect our culture!”, “If you come to Hungary, you can’t take away our jobs!”, “If you come to Hungary, you have to respect our laws!” could be seen on the streets nationwide. The newcomer would have been even more dumbfounded to find that – mocking the style and visuals of these billboards – very different messages in just as large numbers were also put up on the streets, one of them simply stating: “Sorry about our prime minister!”.

The apparent addressees of the former message were people who were indeed arriving in Hungary in the hundreds of thousands: refugees taking the Balkan-route and crossing the country towards Western Europe, whose arrival led to significant public response in Hungary. Nevertheless, both campaigns specifically targeted Hungarian audiences in a political debate that played out not between host populations and asylum seekers but among Hungarians against the backdrop of the refugee-problem. Given the strong anti-migrant sentiments in the Hungarian public (Sik, Simonovits, & Szeitl, 2016) and the overwhelming governmental campaign building on and fueling it, the fact that this campaign was openly challenged has been an unexpected development. Other than being a curious political event, the counter-billboard campaign initiated by the Hungarian mock-party, the Two-Tailed Dog Party, holds a number of implications for scholars of social movements as well.

The issue of organizational ecology need to be readdressed here. There appears to be a general consensus within the social movement scholarship that Eastern European social movements are considerably weaker in all aspects than their Western counterparts Europe (Howard, 2003). Even when social movements do emerge, they tend to orient towards less disruptive, lower-threshold activities (Jacobsson & Saxonberg, 2013). Emergent forms of civil activism in Eastern Europe are therefore an important field of study as they provide insights into how some initiatives can overcome these obstacles.

With regards to mediatization, we have seen that social movements often start off from a disadvantageous position in the public discourse, given that they lack the resources, discursive

¹⁸ The original version of this chapter appeared as an article in *Intersections* in 2016 (Nagy, 2016b)

opportunities that the power they aim to challenge has access to. Classic works on the coverage of the anti-Vietnam movement (Halloran, Elliott, & Murdock, 1970) and the anti-Iraq War movement (Murray, Parry, Robinson, & Goddard, 2008) provide empirical basis on this matter. The phenomena is also explored in the classic work of Todd Gitlin, *The Whole World Is Watching* (1980) in which Gitlin convincingly explores how the media frames social movements, focusing on their radical elements. It is often articulated in the academic literature that the media representation of social movements is driven by an asymmetrical relationship between the two actors: movements need to rely on media in order to meet their goals, the same is seldom true for the media (“most movements need the media, but the media seldom need movements” Rucht, 2004, p. 35). Accordingly, numerous empirical studies investigate how the mainstream media trivializes the messages of social movements, giving a negative interpretation of their activities.

This is even more so in the Hungarian case where the unbalanced nature of the public sphere has raised significant concerns in the previous years. Freedom of press metrics show that the growing concentration of power in the media, the near-nul chances of dissident voices to appear in the media all point to a move away from pluralistic and towards a hegemonic public sphere controlled by the government (Freedom House, 2017). It is not a coincidence therefore that notable protest movements in the past years have often been Internet-supported trying to make up for their disadvantages by utilizing affordances provided by social networking sites. The counter-billboard campaign itself was not an exception: it heavily relied on and innovatively used social media for its purposes from its inception to its execution. Therefore, the present chapter argues that this digital context is central to understanding the campaign.

As discussed previously, the quickly expanding academic literature that deals with the relationship between social media and social movement organizations is quite often conceptualized as a debate between technooptimists (Castells, 2012) who regard the emergence of social media as providing voice and organization affordances to social movements and therefore having a liberating effect on social movements, and technopessimists who contest the above statements (Morozov, 2011). These two opposing views can be further broken down to radical and moderate stances. Those who accept the innovation-hypothesis within the optimist camp believe that the positive aspects create novel, never-before-existing tools and opportunities for social movements (Benkler, 2006); while those taking the reinforcement-hypothesis only go as far as to claim that new affordances strengthen previously existing strategies and action repertoires (Van Laer, 2010). Within the technopessimist camp, a radical

viewpoint emphasizes the ways in which social media allows for oppression and surveillance, the creation of ‘echo chambers’, phenomena that in fact weaken the power of social movements (Morozov, 2011); while the skeptical viewpoint takes a more moderate view and calls attention to surviving barriers and obstacles to social movement organizations (Gladwell, 2010).

While the above described dichotomy has had a large and lasting effect on scholarly discourse on the issue, some authors call for a more nuanced view, claiming that binaries are themselves misleading as they may often result in overgeneralized and oversimplified approaches (Lim, 2012). For the sake of the present analysis I will point to three such approaches attempting to bypass the optimist-pessimist dichotomy, that focus on critical approaches, context and content respectively.

First, a *critical* approach put forward by Kellner argues that online spaces are neither benevolent or malevolent in themselves, but are places of contestation and conflict. In such spaces of contestation repressed and groups can find democratic potentials to enhance their visibility and organization opportunities, but these spaces of contestation are neither free nor fair because of the structural inequalities they carry (Kellner, 1999).

Second, those stressing the importance of *context* argue that one of the shortcomings of the aforementioned debates has been caused by an artificial distinction between online and offline spheres, or what Treré calls a ‘one media bias’, where a single platform of communication – social media in the present case – is singled out and studied disregarding other communication channels (Treré, 2012). Instead in this chapter I propose that an empirical investigation of hybrid movements that operate both on- and offline and their use and presence on different platforms gives us insights into the complex relation between technologies and collective action.

Finally, an analytically useful approach is a focus on *content* – the message of the social movement and how it is affected by social media. The theory of ‘connective action’ as elaborated by Bennett and Segerberg (2012) argues that movements originating on social media are examples of what they term ‘connective action’ where participants engage with issues on highly individual terms. The key to such a common sense of direction therefore in their view is the use of personalizable action frames shared on social media. This personalization of the content is central to understanding the transformations that social media allows.

The case study presents the Hungarian antibillboard campaign organized by Two-Tailed Dog Party with the above considerations in mind. Therefore, it aims to take a critical approach, that

is, situating the case in the Hungarian discursive field, where already existing power structures, and powerful players primarily shape the outcome of social movement activities. Second, the chapter situates the campaign of Two-Tailed Dog Party, that relied heavily on social media, within the media ecology that surrounded it. Finally, the personalized content at the center of the campaign took the form of memes that provided not only an understanding of the issue on individual terms but strategic advantages for the movement, as we will see.

Notwithstanding these general disagreements in the field, there appears to be a consensus in the literature that social media capacities affect social movements in more than one domain. This is summed up by Sandor Vegh's classification (2003) that distinguishes between awareness and advocacy effects (the potential to bypass traditional media gatekeepers) and mobilization and organization effects (the lowering of risk thresholds and organization costs).

Based on this distinction in what follows, the chapter first discusses two theoretical problems related to digitally enabled social movements: the problem of voice and the problem of participation. In both areas technopessimist authors have made strong claims, namely that the Internet creates discursive enclaves; and that it leads to 'slacktivism', feel-good activism without significant impact. Afterwards the chapter presents the case of the Hungarian counter-billboard campaign and through the examination of its action repertoire reevaluates the above claims. It argues that the campaign's action repertoire innovatively connected acts of feel-good activism in order to break out of the counterpublic's enclave and address wider audiences.

6.1. Theoretical framework: Echo chambers (the problem of voice) & Slacktivism (the problem of participation)

Echo chambers (the problem of voice). The problem of 'voice' in the present context asks the question whether the Internet and social media have a democratic potential in pluralizing the public sphere.

The concept of the public sphere, as elaborated by Habermas, describes a space where ideas are deliberated through communication. Central to the concept is that the exchange of thoughts in the public space takes place in a non-coercive manner. According to Habermas, twentieth century developments, the rise of mass media most notably, have led to the deterioration of the public sphere described above. The question is whether digital platforms bring us closer to the Habermasian normative idea of a public sphere (Habermas, 1989).

One of the central tenets of the Habermasian concept that received considerable criticism is the claim that there exists a singular public sphere. Instead, as Nancy Fraser and others have argued

we should conceptualize discourse as consisting of a plurality of publics where counterpublics resisting hegemonic discourses emerge and exist as well. According to Fraser, the assumption of a singular public sphere is both analytically mistaken and normatively undesirable (Fraser, 1990).

Habermas himself responded to this thread of criticisms regarding the concept of a singular public sphere, and has expanded the 'public sphere' to capture the possibility of a 'pluralistic, internally much differentiated mass public' (1992, p. 438).

In her discussion about counterpublics, Fraser differentiates between stratified and egalitarian multicultural societies (1990). Following this distinction, the Hungarian case is closer to the former where the government's hegemony in the public discourse and in the media and a strong anti-migrant sentiment in the public leads to subaltern counterpublics as opposed to a peacefully coexisting plurality of publics. As Fraser claims, "(...) in stratified societies, subaltern counterpublics have a dual character. On the one hand, they function as spaces of withdrawal and regroupment; on the other hand, they also function as bases and training grounds for agitational activities directed toward wider publics." (Fraser, 1990, p. 124). Clearly, the notion of subaltern counterpublics is analytically useful to describe movement responses in hybrid regimes. Dahlberg emphasizes the need for a space of withdrawal, claiming that counterpublics succeed if and when they can use 'critical-reflexive spaces of communicative interaction' to 'contest dominant discourses that frame hegemonic practice and meaning' (Dahlberg, 2011, p. 861).

Whether a counterpublic becomes an enclave or enclaved is also strongly interrelated to the question of the movement's media strategy. In Rucht's conceptualization (2004) the choices a movement faces in this regard are abstention (keeping away from mainstream media), adaptation (accepting the rules of the game and participating in the mainstream media), attack (explicitly challenging and criticizing mainstream media) or alternatives (creating the movement's own media-platforms). The factors that influence these choices are many, ranging from endogenous ones – like the identity and strategy of the movement – to exogenous factors – such as resources available, or the society's degree of openness. Rucht himself concludes that the emergence of digital platforms has made the option of creating an alternative media platform more probable and favorable for social movements (2004). Rucht's conceptualization, like any, is context-dependent and fits better into a pre-Internet era media ecology than that of the present but is analytically useful as it points to how movement strategies appear in a terrain of contestation.

Indeed, proponents of digitally enabled protest movements often emphasize its ability to broaden the repertoire of communicative action. Such optimistic viewpoints usually posit a direct positive relationship between digital communication affordances and deliberation (Benkler, 2006; Holt, 2004; Singh, 2013). Techno-pessimists on the other hand claim that the affordances of digital media lead to not more but less deliberation. Gromping states that social networking sites polarize users and lead to the emergence of 'echo chambers', where critical reflection is seriously hindered (Gromping, 2014).

The stance of Habermas himself is rather skeptical with regards to the effects of the Internet, stating that 'the rise of millions of fragmented chatrooms across the world instead lead to the fragmentation of large but politically focused mass audiences into a huge number of isolated public issues' (Habermas, 2006, p. 423).

Simply put: a technopessimist claim posits that if social movements choose alternatives from Rucht's options – which is made more likely by digital affordances - they run the risk of creating echo chambers, therefore reducing the likelihood of wider influence on society. In this chapter I propose that different media strategies coexist and build on each other: the use of an alternative media-platform can become a stepping stone towards mainstream media, even if the boundaries between the two are not necessarily clear-cut. Social movements are often hybrid, they function both on- and offline and through a wide variety of media channels. The question then becomes how can a movement effectively utilize social media in order to make the transition and reach wider audiences.

Slacktivism (the problem of participation). The relationship between activism by social movements and social media has been at the center of academic attention with the rise of such platforms and their use for collaborative action. Some celebrate the coming age of 'participatory culture' characterized by (a) low barriers to participation; (b) strong support for creating and sharing creations, (c) the presence of informal mentorship; (d) members believe that their contributions matter; (f) a feeling of social connection with others (Jenkins, 2009, p. 5-6).

Critiques of these two technooptimist approaches argue that the Internet only favors activism based on a low-threshold for participation, as it is only able to create weak links (Gladwell, 2010). Thus, the participation generated online cannot have significant political impact. This phenomenon has been referred to as 'slacktivism' (Christensen, 2011).

A simple example of slacktivism that costs no more than a few clicks of a mouse is the generation and sharing of memes online. As defined by Shifman (2013), an Internet meme is a

unit of popular culture circulated, imitated and transformed by Internet users, creating a shared cultural experience.

An Internet meme, according to Knobel and Lankshear has three main characteristics: it contains elements of humor, a rich kind of intertextuality and anomalous juxtaposition (2006). An important built-in feature of the Internet meme is humor that derives from the juxtaposition of the viewers' expectations based on the template and the actual altered outcome. As Internet memes are predominantly nonserious, quite rarely political and naturally stay within the boundaries of the online world, their political impact can at first glance be conceptualized as relatively insignificant. However, while relatively underresearched, memes can contain humorous elements and social critique at the same time, and more importantly, actors can consciously undertake memetic engineering, that is, identifying harmful memes and releasing a counter meme into the discourse (Godwin, 1994).

This chapter posits that the creation of internet memes is indeed what Morozov (2011) would coin slacktivism or feel-good activism in the sense that it requires relatively little of the participant's resources. Nevertheless, such memes – if and when they go viral – are able to help a social movement break out of its immediate environment and reach wider audiences, therefore they do have value. It is not only the spreadability of memes that is important from a social activist perspective but their capability of turning passive audiences into active participants. As Lankshear and Knobel sum it up: “If we don't like their contagious ideas, we need to produce some of our own.” (2003, p. 37). As we will see, one innovation of the Hungarian case was the identification of the government's anti-refugee campaign as a harmful meme, the creation of counter-memes and taking these memes offline back to the streets.

6.2. The counter-billboard campaign – an overview

The first governmental billboards were set up on June 6, 2015. When these hit the streets, an outburst of memes followed. But the reaction this time did not stop there. As a prelude to the coming counter-campaign, many of the billboards have been damaged or altered by self-appointed street artists. While these acts of outrage were spontaneous in the beginning, they gave rise to acts of cooperation soon. First, a crowd-sourced map was created anonymously that made it possible for those interested to track which governmental billboards got altered or damaged already, and which ones were yet untouched (Image 12). Participants could also upload pictures about the 'results' of their work (Image 13). Second, those altering the signs of

the billboards often uploaded their work to social media which became widely shared memes on their own right (Image 14).

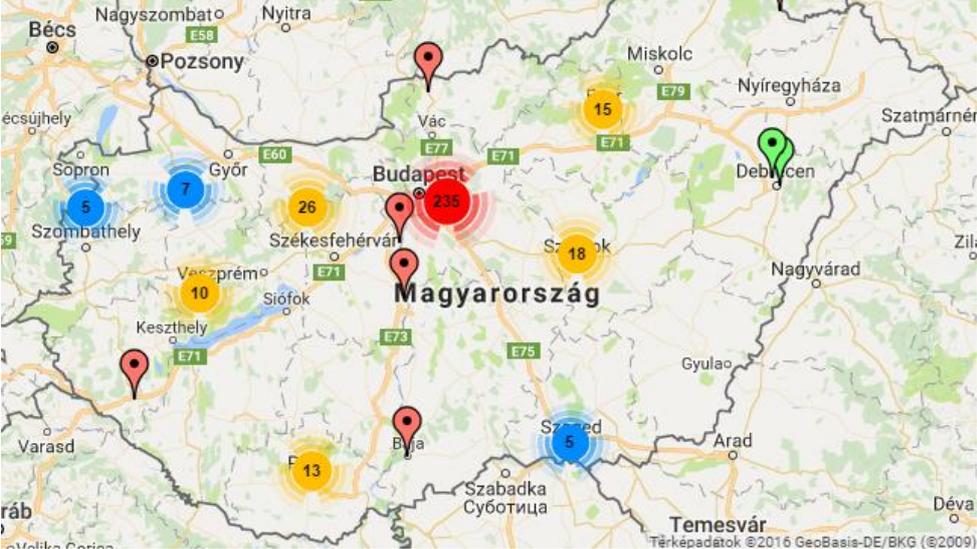


Image 12. Crowd-sourced map showing the location of intact/alterd/damaged governmental billboards.¹⁹

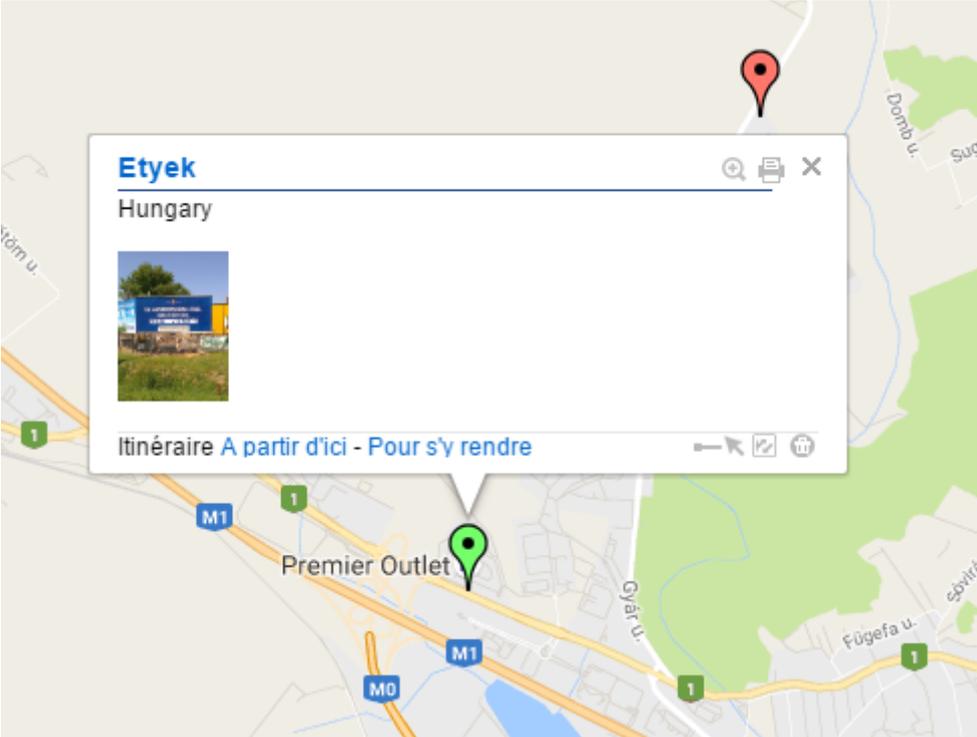


Image 13. Uploaded picture of an altered governmental billboard to the crowd-sourced map.²⁰

¹⁹ Source: <https://www.zeemaps.com/map?group=1485171>
²⁰ Source: <https://www.zeemaps.com/map?group=1485171>



Image 14. “If you come to Hungary, you can’t take away Viktor Orbán!” Uploaded picture of an altered governmental billboard to the crowd-sourced map.²¹

According to press reports, hundreds of the total 1,025 governmental billboards got vandalized in one way or another during what the Hungarian public soon nicknamed the billboard-wars („Száznál is több plakát megrongálása miatt folyhat eljárás”, 2015). While these acts led to intense discussions about whether billboard-vandalism constitutes an act of free speech or not, they were soon followed by much more sophisticated acts of contention.

On June 8, Two-Tailed Dog Party, a mock-party specializing in urban performances and street art with a strong emphasis on social satire announced that it would launch a so-called ‘anti-anti-immigrant campaign’ for which it awaits donations. The party is not a conventional political project but a spoof established by street artist Gergely Kovács, whose slogans include “More everything, less nothing!”, “Eternal life, free beer, tax-deduction!” and “We promise anything!”. Kovács maintains that he has no intention of joining or forming a ‘serious’ political movement. While at its inception, the original goal of the counter-billboard campaign was the setting up of no more than a few dozen billboards, the initiative soon escalated into a much wider protest. On the very first day, the party succeeded in collecting 6,5 million forints, an equivalent of 20,700 euros in its crowd-funding campaign and within ten days the donated amount reached 34 million forints – 108,000 euros which made it possible for the group to create and set up more than 900 billboards nationwide – and a few billboards abroad. The

²¹ Source: <https://www.zeemaps.com/map?group=1485171>

crowd-funding campaign was organized on Facebook but the digital aspects don't end there. The contents and visuals of the billboards were also co-created: anyone with an idea could upload their version online, and finally, decision about the billboards was also outsourced as people could vote about the best pieces on social media too. That does not mean nevertheless, that the mock-party did not have their say in their own campaign – during the establishment phase they often emphasized that they want the counter-billboard campaign to center around three core messages. First, solidarity with the refugees (Image 15); second, raising awareness about the 'rubber-bone' nature of the campaign and redirecting attention to issues of corruption and poverty (Image 16); and finally a number of messages especially targeting foreigners and apologizing for the xenophobic messages by the government (Image 17). The billboards hit the streets in two waves, on July 1 and July 16. Some of the already created online memes got in to print but brand new suggestions were also displayed. Famously, Two-Tailed Dog Party set up billboards in Viktor Orbán's native town, Felcsút with the message: "Space station to be built here soon!" This reference, for instance mocks the prime minister's obsession with football, who initiated the building of a 3,500-seater stadium in Felcsút, a place with a population of less than 1,700, immediately next to his country estate.

At the end of the campaign 1,025 governmental billboards were countered by 900 anti-billboards by Two-Tailed Dog Party. The often satirical messages allowed for wide coverage in the press – both Hungarian and international – and on social media and successfully altered the direction of the public discourse.



Image 15. “For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in” Matthew 25-35. A counter-billboard set up by Two-Tailed Dog Party²².

²² Source: <https://www.facebook.com/justanotherwordpresspage>



Image 16. “If you’re Hungary’s Prime Minister, you have to respect our laws!” A counter-billboard set up by Two-Tailed Dog Party.²³

²³ Source: <https://www.facebook.com/justanotherwordpresspage>



Image 17. “Sorry about our prime minister!” A counter-billboard set up by Two-Tailed Dog Party.²⁴

6.3. Methodology of the case study on Two-Tailed Dog Party: Data, approach, methods

As discussed above, the case study takes a threefold approach – a critical perspective, and an emphasis on context and on content - towards the issue of social media and social movement relationships. This approach provides the framework of its methodology as well. A critical approach towards the issue places an emphasis on the discursive opportunity structure heavily shaped by the government’s agenda-setting during the ‘refugee crisis’, therefore the case study relies on a preliminary press research to provide an overview of the government’s approach to the issue, and measures issue salience by comparing important keywords utilizing Google Trends. A focus on context drives the empirical research in its attempt to overcome one-media bias and instead proposing a multi-site ethnography. Crowd-mapping was analyzed using data available from Zoomaps, numbers regarding acts of crowd-funding during the campaign are from a Google Spreadsheet created by Two-Tailed Dog-Party. Finally, as Facebook has been central in the campaign, the Facebook Fan Page of Two-Tailed Dog Party was analyzed. Data from the Fan Page was scraped using Netvizz, a software that provides important metrics for

²⁴ Source: <https://www.facebook.com/justanotherwordpresspage>

the study. Through Netvizz both the text from posts and comments, and the number post likes and shares, and the so-called ‘pages like network’ discussed below was collected, while images were chosen manually.

To give an overview of Two-Tailed Dog Party’s activities, content analysis was applied (Krippendorff, 1980), which consisted of the close reading of the posts, notetaking, and identifying emergent issues and patterns. To look at the potential reach of Two-Tailed Dog Party on social media link analysis was used. As discussed in Chapter 5, according to Hogan (2008), a useful distinction in network research is one between the analysis of whole networks, personal networks, and partial networks. The present study’s approach fits into the partial network model as it situated Two-Tailed Dog Party in the context within which it operated. This approach in general is usually referred to as link analysis. While potential reach would be best measured by linking together individuals sharing the campaign’s messages, Facebook’s privacy settings do not allow data collection of this kind. Instead, the link analysis provides the organizational network within which Two-Tailed Dog Party is situated. A network visualization software, Gephi was used provide an overview of this link analysis.

6.4. Results: the many faces of innovation in the counter-campaign

A look at the overall performance of Two-Tailed Dog Party’s Facebook Fan Page in 2015 helps us situate its campaign among its broader activities. The present study’s focus is on *likes* and *shares* as these provide sufficient insight into user engagement. The data in Figure 6 shows that while the billboard campaign obviously draws audience for Two-Tailed Dog Party, it is far from unprecedented (Figure 6). Staying within the realms of social media the significance of the campaign is difficult to explain.

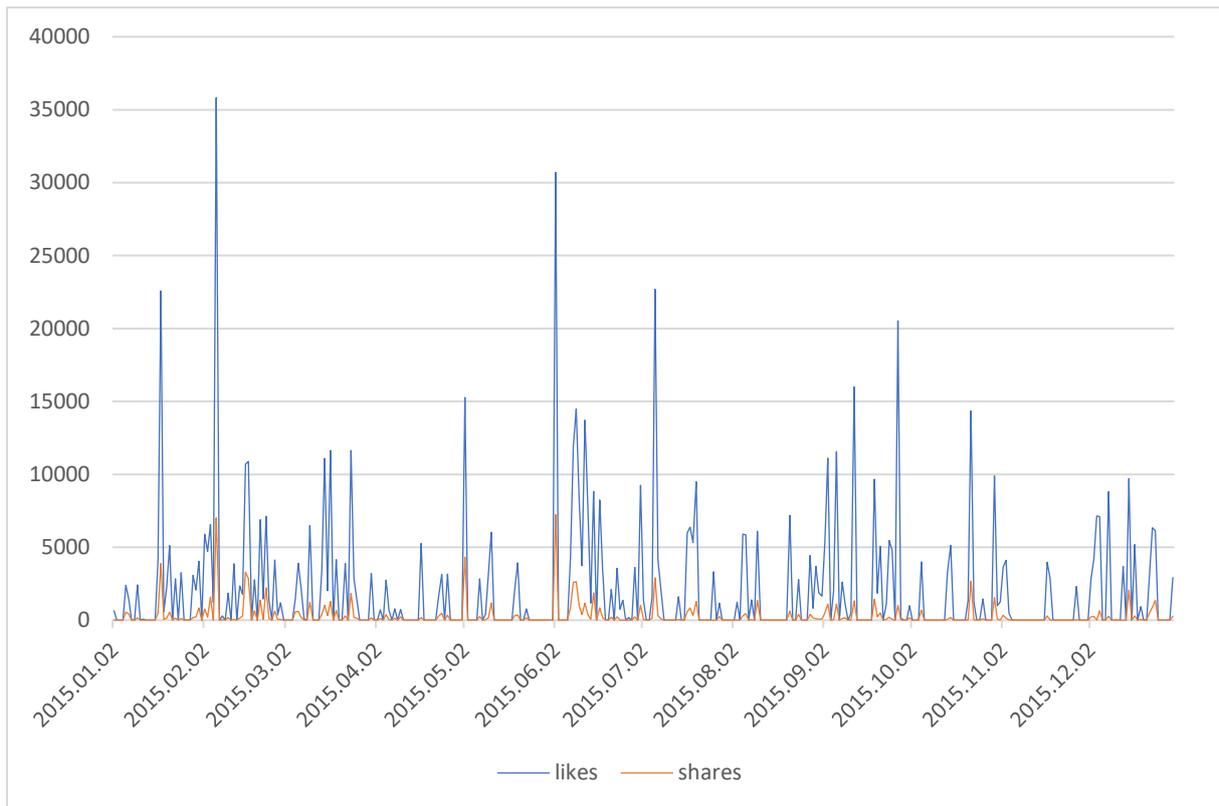


Figure 6. Number of post likes and shares on the Facebook Fan Page of Two-Tailed Dog Party during 2015.

Among the 20 most popular posts by the Facebook Fan Page of Two-Tailed Dog Party in 2015, 15 contain pictures, which is a clear illustration of the visual nature of their communication. 5 out of these 20 most popular posts were written within a week's time frame, the first week of June. The second most shared and liked post by Two-Tailed Dog Party in 2015 contains no textual message, it is a meme, a variation of the billboard campaign that states: „Come to Hungary, we already work in London!” (4572 shares, June 2, 2015). While the third most shared post of 2015 predates the billboard campaign, it is a mockery of the government's national consultation, aptly titled: „Who do you hate more?” (3730 shares, May 2, 2015). The post receiving the largest number of comments (854) in 2015 asks the question: „What billboard should we put up in Felcsút?” (June 12, 2015), referring to the prime minister's hometown, triggering hundreds of suggestions: „Hungary: Closed on Sundays!”, „For a mediocre Hungary!”, „If you're Viktor Orbán, give back the money you stole from us!”, „If you come to Hungary, it's not too late to turn back!”. The second most commented post of the year (723 comments, July 6, 2015) shares the photo of a poster from Two-Tailed Dog Party's campaign from Vienna that says „Thank you Austria for not closing your borders in 1956!” in German. Contrary to the previous example this post provokes considerable controversy where numerous people express their distaste for the parallel drawn by the billboard.

Breaking the spiral of silence. The spiral of silence in the Hungarian case refers to the fact that while on the one hand the government proactively targeted asylum-seekers as potential threats to the country, those who would disagree with such a stance had little to no representation in the public discourse, partly because of the inactivity of opposition parties and a lack of strong social movements working in the field. The spiral of silence was also made possible by the fact that the power asymmetry between anti-refugee and pro-refugee groups was coupled by another fundamental asymmetry: that the anti-refugee campaign had access to mass communication techniques to reach its wider audiences, while the latter group had rather limited resources to get its messages across. These asymmetries often lead to 'preference falsifications' (Kuran, 1995) where minority groups lack knowledge about others' political preferences and are in turn less likely to speak up. While social media may lead to the emergence of homophilous groupings strengthening the so-called 'echo chamber' effect, it can also be strategically used to generate resources in order to transcend the boundaries of such counterpublics, as the case of the counter-billboard campaign shows.

In a counterintuitive way, overcoming the barriers of such 'echo chambers' and reaching wider audiences was made possible and not halted by feel-good activism. Participants had to engage in low-cost and low-risk activities that required very little commitment, while the appeal of the campaign was based on its humorous, satirical nature. As Two-Tailed Dog Party launched its crowd-sourced anti-billboard campaign in the beginning of June, 2015, it also recorded each donation in a Google Form, the available data shows both aspects – low-effort contributions and the hit-nature of the campaign – rather clearly. In 16 days, the campaign generated an amount of 34 million forints from 6,688 donors, where the average contribution was 5,128 forints, about 16 euros. Data also shows that within the first four days, 89 per cent of all donors contributed and 86 per cent of the funds were raised (Figure 7).

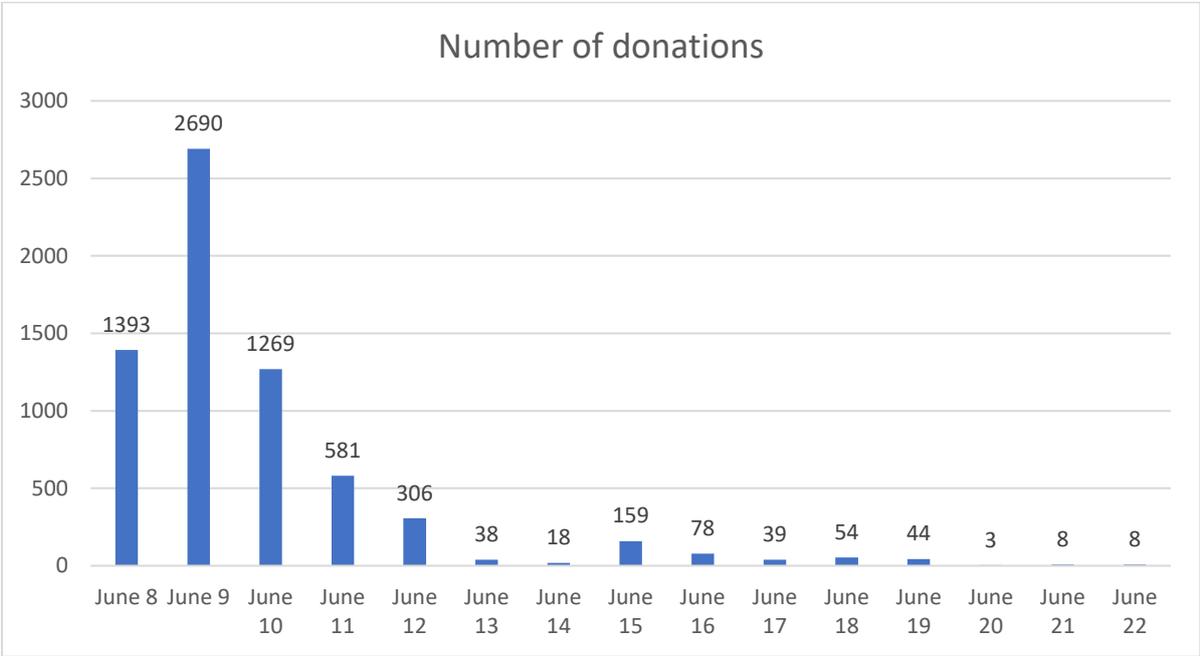


Figure 7. Number of donations to Two-Tailed Dog Party during the crowd-funding campaign.²⁵

²⁵ Source: <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1Faqcki4Woh85wOQdl0P9rDKWaCv1G5r4woth0dkCMew/edit#gid=0>

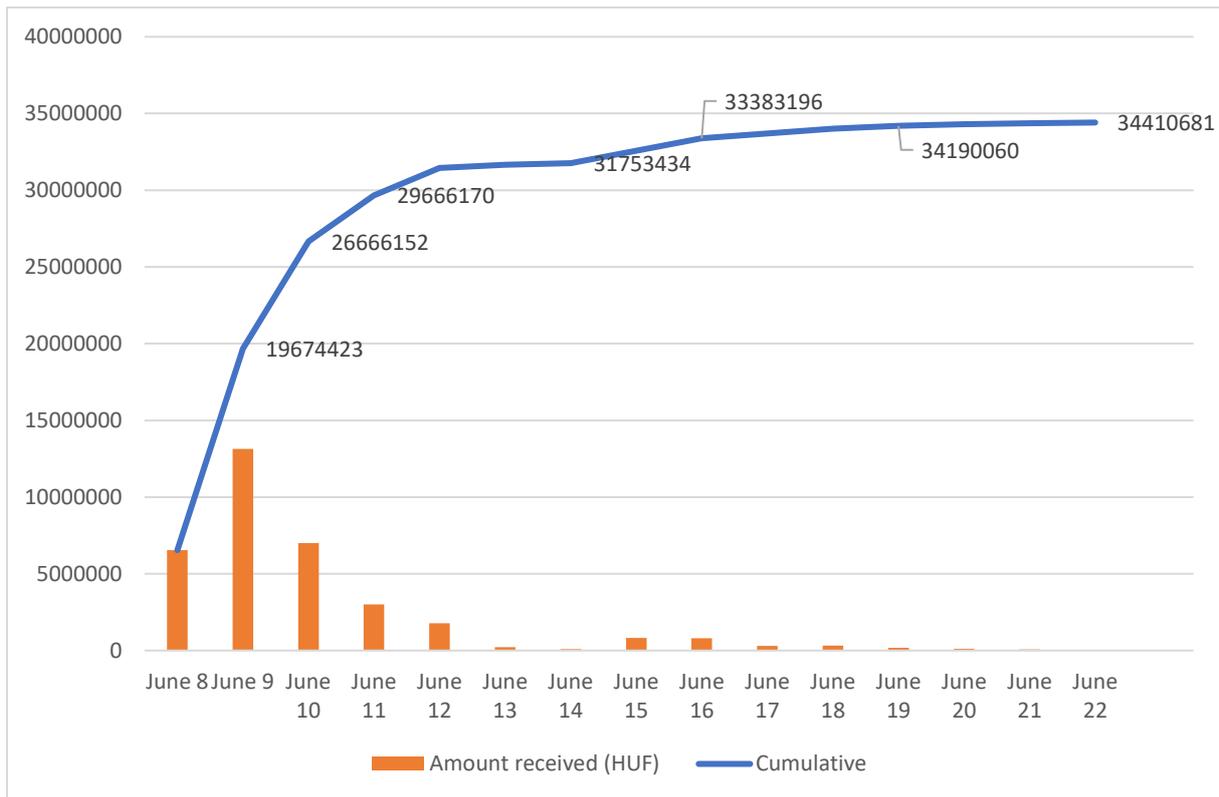


Figure 8. Amount of donations collected by Two-Tailed Dog Party during the crowd-funding campaign.²⁶

Uncovering the nature of the governmental billboard campaign. The counter-campaign had a number of cognitive effects, that is, in itself it challenged a number of assumptions about the governmental campaign that manifested itself in the form of a national consultation in May, 2015 and a billboard campaign in June-July, 2015. The official message, that the campaign is addressing asylum-seekers arriving in Hungary has already been discredited by the very fact that the language of the messages was in Hungarian. But the crowd-sourced map created during the so-called 'billboard wars' - during which individuals vandalized the governmental posters during May-June, 2015 - made it clear to wider audiences that the placement of the billboards did not correspond to the arrival of asylum-seekers: very few in fact were placed near the borders or different asylum institutions and the majority of them was put up in downtown Budapest. While the strongly manipulative nature of the campaign has always been suspected, the map provided a clear and factual demonstration of this.

²⁶ Source: <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1Faqcki4Woh85wOQdl0P9rDKWaCv1G5r4woth0dkCMew/edit#gid=0>

The counter-billboard campaign also contributed to the uncovering of serious inconsistencies about the government's spendings on its own campaign. While the official budget shows that the 1,025 billboards put up by the government cost 74 million forints, Two-Tailed Dog Party spent less than 50 per cent of this amount on around the same number of billboards (900). This finding further undermined the credibility of the government's campaign which was effectively framed as overpriced for questionable reasons, to say the least („380 millió forintból szítja a gyűlöletet a kormány a menekültek ellen”, 2015).

Memetic engineering. Framing political messages as potentially alterable memes is rather common in the online world. So it is only natural that when the first governmental billboards appeared, memes satirizing the original messages started appearing in social media.²⁷ The governmental billboards were rather suitable bases for memetic engineering in the sense that the recognizable visuals were coupled with a simple and easily replaceable sentence. In a way, it can also be argued that it was also in the government's best interests to create such alterable messages, as with each replication the original messages got closer to become units of popular culture. What the government did not and could not expect was that in terms of fecundity anyone would rival their position and presence on the streets. What the initiative launched by the Two-Tailed Dog Party did was providing two essential spaces that made success more likely: a critical-reflexive space for communicative interaction (Dahlberg, 2011), and a wider visibility afterwards where these reflections could be shared with the general public. The innovative element in the campaign was taking the campaign back to where it came from: having identified the government's billboard propaganda as harmful, having invited people to crowd-fund, co-create and co-select countermemes, the counter-campaign then moved offline and reached mass audiences.

Combined acts of slacktivism. Examples of crowd-enabled collaboration often include cases where the distribution of a larger task among many participants executing the same task from remote locations leads to a lowering of costs for them. The organizational logic of the counter-billboard campaign effectively utilized the advantages of such forms of collaboration, but also combined them in a way that allowed for a sophisticated chain of activities (Figure 9). During the 'billboard-wars' this chain of action was rather short: information about the location of the

²⁷ While it is close to impossible to count the number of memes reflecting on the campaign, a Google-search for the general term „Ha Magyarországra jössz...” („If you come to Hungary...”) yields hundreds of picture results.

billboards was crowd-mapped online and a number of offline actions followed from this knowledge (with a possible feedback about the ‘results’ online). However, the counter-billboard campaign went beyond this short chain: it built on (a) crowdfunding activities that generated resources and hype for the campaign; (b) co-creation of the billboards, that allowed for the memetic engineering described above; (c) an e-vote about the billboards that strengthened the sense of participation in the campaign; (d) the offline campaign that reached the wider audiences. This interconnectedness of activities was partly made possible by the new modalities of participation afforded by social networking sites.

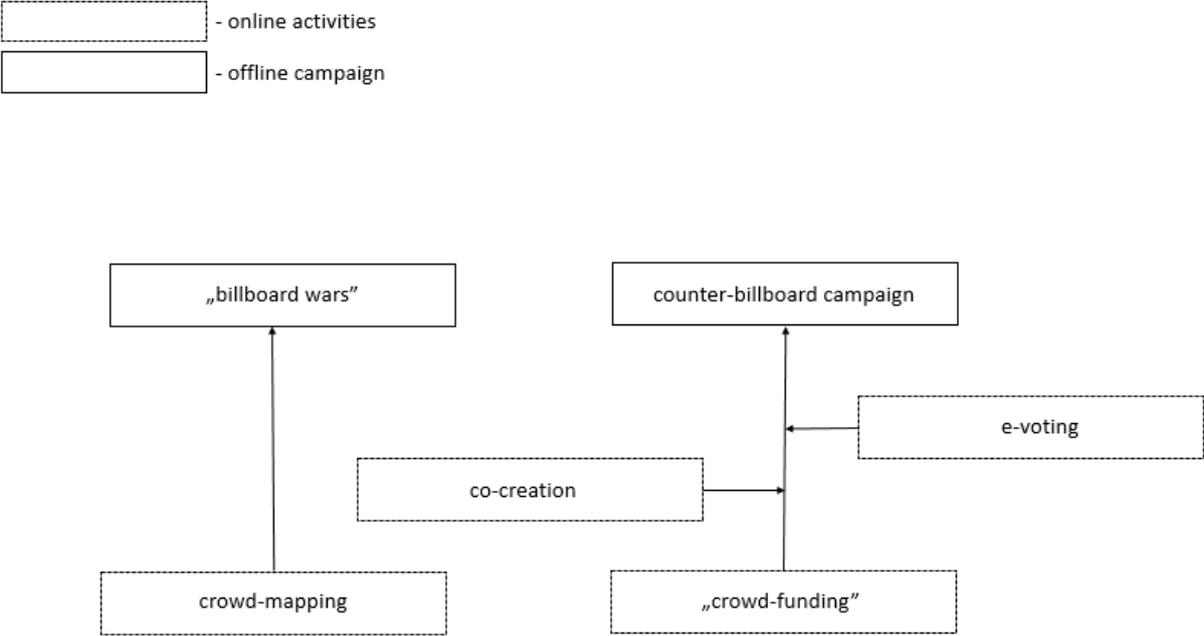


Figure 9. Combined acts of slacktivism (Two-Tailed Dog Party).

Challenging the structure of the discourse. Neither the average size of the contributions (5,128 forints) nor the number of participants (6,688 donors) are significant in themselves – nevertheless the combined effects allowed for a national campaign just as large as the one it was countering. While on a surface level the counter-campaign was a no serious, nonpolitical prank with an unplanned success, it also provided a contrast to the wider public about the nature of the political discourse.

One way to visualize the potential reach of Two-Tailed Dog Party’s messages is through link analysis (Figure 10).

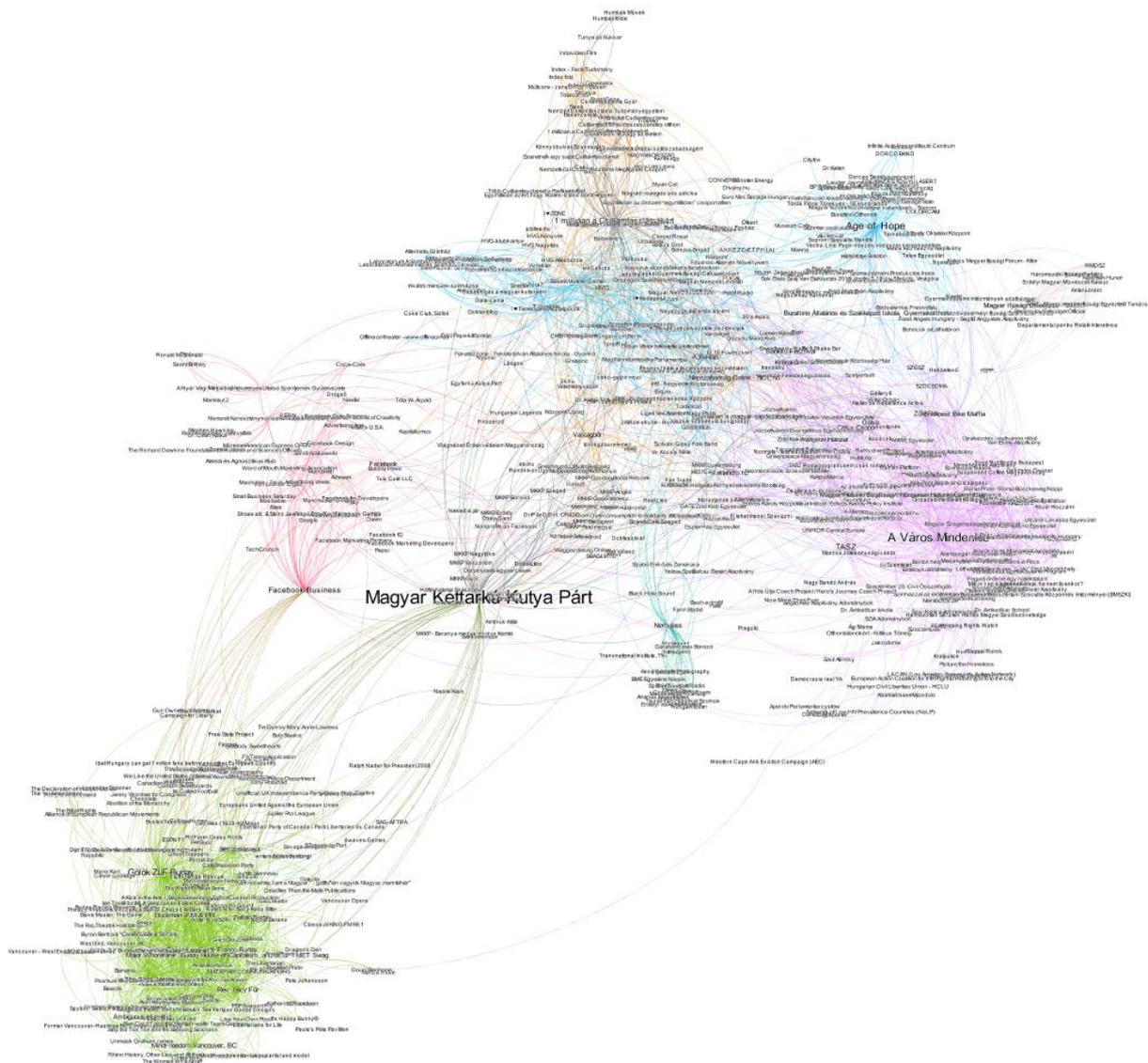


Figure 10. Network map of Two-Tailed Dog Party on Facebook.

The network consists of pages liked by Two-Tailed Dog Party and pages liked by these pages: it contains 673 nodes and 3063 edges. The average path length is 3,876. The different colors represent clusters of nodes that are more densely connected together than with the rest of the network. Node label size represents influence (the bigger the label the higher the node's betweenness centrality). The large, rather separate light green cluster connects mostly non-Hungarian (mainly American and Canadian) libertarian-liberal groups. The purple, densely connected cluster on the right-hand side of the network consists mostly of Hungarian NGOs and social movements critical towards the government. The light-blue cluster in the upper-right corner consists of charities whose focus is on poverty. The magenta cluster on the left hand-

side of the picture consists of pages with a technological focus, while the blue cluster in the upper-central side of the network contains of pages that belong to the Hungarian blogosphere and journalists. One clearly sees that the network of Two-Tailed Dog Party is far from densely connected and the party in fact stands at the intersection of numerous spheres remote from each other.

In the Hungarian discursive field of the ‘refugee crisis’ the effects of the antibillboard campaign are impossible to be analytically separated from the numerosity of other influences, including the original governmental campaign, the presence of refugees, the international climate and the coverage of the story by traditional media. One way to illustrate the claim that Two-Tailed Dog Party’s presence indeed influenced issue salience during the ‘crisis’ is a look at Google Trends that collect search terms used by Hungarians during 2015 (Figure 11).

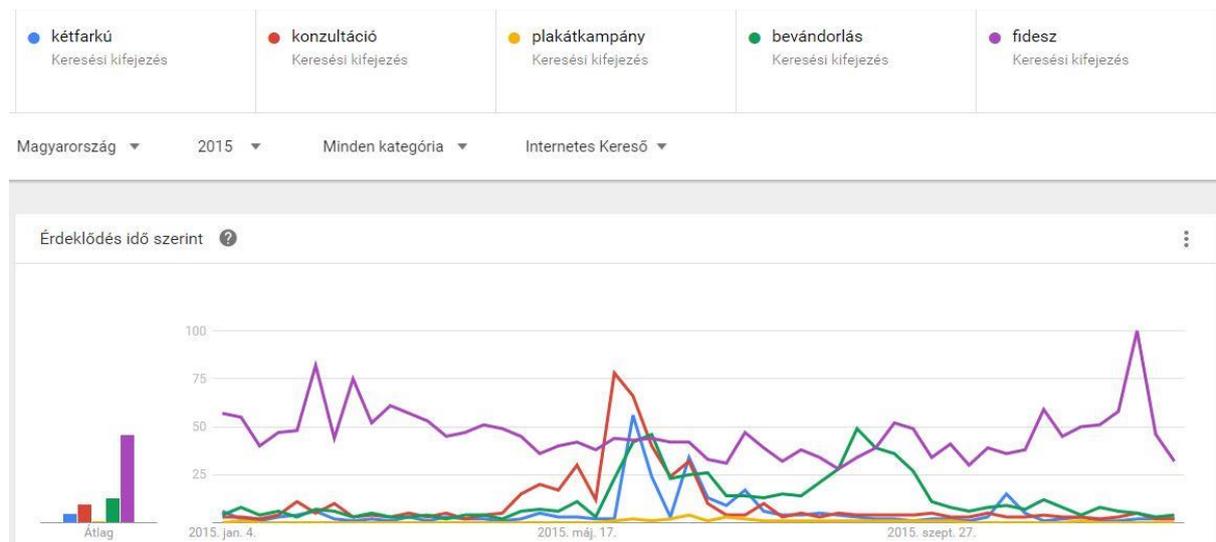


Figure 11. Issue salience measured by Google Trends during 2015 [two-tailed (‘kétfarkú’); consultation (‘konzultáció’), billboard-campaign (‘plakátkampány’), immigration (‘bevándorlás’), Fidesz (‘fidesz’)]

The Figure compares salience of five search terms, in order of appearance: two-tailed (‘kétfarkú’), consultation (‘konzultáció’), billboard campaign (‘plakátkampány’), immigration (‘bevándorlás’) and Fidesz (‘fidesz’). It is clear from the figure that during the launch of Two-Tailed Dog Party’s campaign search terms related to the party increase significantly until mid-August, at one point (first week of June) these numbers even exceed those of Fidesz. The term, billboard campaign is never extensively searched online, while consultation – referring to the

national consultation initiated by the government – reaches its peak at the beginning of the summer, and loses significance from that point. It is clear from the figure that searches for Two-Tailed Dog Party exceed searches for immigration during the summer of 2015 three times. These figures all point to the conclusion that the antibillboard campaign had a significant influence in the Hungarian discourse.

On a deeper level the counter-campaign challenged the hegemonic views about public discourse. It effectively contrasted the government's one-to-many, top-bottom approach to political communication with a campaign that relied on many-to-many communication and a bottom-up approach. Many-to-many communication is in a way inherent in social media discourses, while the bottom-up approach meant that successful authors could see their own billboard-designs appear on streets. The characteristics of participatory culture (Jenkins, 2009) thus create a sense of empowerment and a radically different interpretation of how collective action problems should be approached by political actors. The introduction of memetic engineering into its action repertoire, the campaign also showed in a deeper level the differences between passive audiences and active participants in a political discourse. The traditional assumption that the general public's role in shaping the relevant narrative is merely a reactive one has thus been effectively questioned by the counter-campaign. On an emotive level, the counter-campaign also offered an alternative emotive frame – as a built-in feature of memes, the campaign was humorous and satirical in tone, in contrast with the fear-mongering nature of the governmental messages.

6.5. Conclusions: redrawing the boundaries of the political?

The counter-billboard campaign successfully broke a 'spiral of silence' where people holding a minority opinion were given a platform and visibility in the public. It was also effective in uncovering the nature of the governmental billboard-campaign: that it had no intention of addressing asylum-seekers arriving in Hungary and that its spending's significantly exceeded the real costs of the billboards. On a deeper level it challenged the hegemonic views about public discourse contrasting one-to-many, top-bottom messages about fear with many-to-many participative messages based on humor. The traditional assumption that the general public's role in shaping the relevant narrative is merely a reactive one has been questioned by the counter-campaign. It also challenged perceptions on how to address collective action problems in society, offering a participatory alternative.

However, based on Gladwell's claim (2010) - who does not rule out the possibility of successful digital social movements, rather, states that such movements do not challenge the status quo – the limits of the campaign should not be overlooked either. While the campaign was part of a political discourse about migration, it was a rather self-restricted one. It never offered a substantial critique of the government's actions and views, deciding to focus on satire and mockery instead. It was also limited in the sense that it was not part of a sustainable long-term effort to counter governmental discourse, but a short campaign of mobilization and action. (However, during 2016, when the government initiated a national referendum against the EU quota scheme of accepting refugees, its renewed billboard campaign once again mobilized Two-Tailed Dog Party and its supporters – a repeated call for donations leading to the same enthusiastic support.) Finally, however visible, the counter-billboard campaign did not mobilize a broad spectrum of the Hungarian society, the majority of whom are staunch supporters of the governmental migration policy. Nevertheless, an innovative action repertoire made possible by digital affordances contributed to effectively resisting the hegemonic discourse about the refugee crisis, and more generally, about the 'boundaries' of the political. In a broader context the campaign was an example of prefigurative politics where instead of making claims addressing the government, contentious groups act out practices that are in accordance with how they picture the ideal functioning of politics: activities that are creative, participatory, critical and autonomous.

6.6. Two-Tailed Dog Party: mediation opportunity structures and capacities

The model of crowdfunded 'anticampaigns' have proven successful for the party. In 2016 they countered the government's referendum campaign on 'refugee quotas', their slogan being: "Stupid answer to a stupid question", urging the voters to cast invalid votes. In 2017, when the government put out billboards saying "Let's stop Brussels!", the countercampaign of MKKP came up with the slogan: "Let's stop stopping Brussels. They ran at the national elections in 2018 and the European Parliamentary elections in 2019, receiving around 90 thousand – 1-2 per cent of all – votes.

In terms of the mediation opportunity structure, the findings show that the billboard campaign of Two-Tailed Dog Party achieved considerable media visibility through the use of billboards, but the campaign also generated significant media attention. As we have seen, in the discursive opportunity structure, the movement could not change the hegemonic discourse, but it successfully utilized it to increase its potential for organization, mobilization and self-mediation. The campaign also utilized affordances in the networked opportunity structure.

Activities were clearly intensive enough to result in quantitatively significant mobilization of resources.

As described before, the first countercampaign had strong narrative capacities: providing an alternative voice against hegemonic discourses. Such campaigns however have not influenced the regular operations of the power; therefore, it would be difficult to talk about the disruptive capacities of the movement. While MKKP is the only formation to actually attempt to influence electoral politics, these attempts so far have been unsuccessful, therefore so far, the movement has no electoral capacities.

CHAPTER 7. Collective action frames – the case of a local anti-refugee camp movement in Hungary²⁸

The case study below examines how a local social movement, which opposed the building of a refugee camp and the arrival of refugees, developed during the course of the ‘refugee crisis’ that unfolded in Hungary in the summer of 2015. The aim of the research is to unpack the effects of a perceived threat to this local community. The local social movement that emerged in Southern Hungary called ‘*Tiltakozás a martonfai -pécsi menekülttábor ellen*’²⁹ lasted for approximately 50 days. It began on August 1, when locals from Martonfa, a village of 200 inhabitants, woke up one morning only to realize that the government had announced the placement of a refugee camp on the Martonfa shooting range, without consulting the mayor of the village about it. On the very same day a Facebook group was established and offline contentious activities began. Most importantly, a group of locals ‘occupied’ the shooting range for 50 days, putting up tents and spending days and nights on the location. Other events – demonstrations, petitions, forums – were also organized, often with the aim of creating alliances and partnerships with a range of actors, most notably Pécs, a city and regional center near Martonfa. The movement ceased its activities after 50 days when the government withdrew its plans to build the refugee camp in the small village of Martonfa. Nevertheless, it can be argued that the effects of the social movement on the local community reach beyond this period.

The present chapter first provides a possible theoretical framework for the analysis of such a movement. Then, the methodology of the research is explained. The findings of the research explain how the previously defined theoretical model can be applied to empirical data. Finally, a number of conclusions are drawn.

7.1. Theoretical framework: collective action frames

The approach the present case study applies the perspective of social movement theory to a local anti-refugee camp movement. As detailed in Chapter 2, within the scholarly literature on social movements, two distinct approaches have developed (Crossley, 2002): the first is often associated with American authors and applies a structural approach to social movements and includes theories such as rational choice theory (Olson, 1965), resource mobilization theory (Jenkins, 1983), relative deprivation theory (Morrison, 1971), structural strain theory (Agnew,

²⁸ The original version of this chapter appeared as an article in *Kötő-jelek* in 2017 (Nagy, 2017b)

²⁹ <https://www.facebook.com/Tiltakoz%C3%A1s-a-martonfai-p%C3%A9csi-menek%C3%BCltt%C3%A1bor-ellen-950949548311025>

1987), and political process theory (Tarrow, 2011). The second strand is more associated with European authors and puts an emphasis on cultural aspects of social movements: academic discussion here revolves around questions of identity within a movement (Melucci, 1995), questions of framing (Benford & Snow, 2000) and issues of values, such as new social movements theory (Touraine, 1985). The aim of the present study is to apply the latter – cultural rather than structural – approach to the case of Martonfa, as examining the discourse of a movement is more fitting to such a theoretical stance. Within this approach, I focus on questions of framing in order to analyze how the members' perspectives, understanding of the situation and messages developed over the course of time.

In the field of social movements, framing theories (Benford & Snow, 2000), influenced primarily by Goffman's famous concept, are used to understand the ways in which social movements and social movement actors create and use meaning, or how events and ideas are framed. In the study of social movements collective action frames are used to bring people together and incite them to action.

One way to conceptualize the above is to differentiate between three types of collective action frames, namely diagnostic, prognostic and motivational frames (Benford & Snow, 2000, p. 615). As Benford and Snow explain, *diagnostic framing* means that a problem needs to be identified by the movement. Such diagnostic frames often include a so-called injustice frame. *Prognostic framing* refers to the articulation of a proposed solution or at least strategic planning. Proposed solutions need to fall in line with the habits and ideologies of the movement. Finally, *motivational framing* provides a 'call to arms' to participants, potential participants, and allies (Benford & Snow, 2000).

A precondition for successful movement action concerns both creating meaning within these frames and on creating consistency between the three frames. The case study examines how these frames are filled with meaning and how inconsistencies within the frames are handled. While not central to the argument of the present chapter, I also tentatively ask what the limitations of such a framing approach to social movements are.

7.2. Context: investments of key importance

Chapter 2 discusses in detail the national level anti-refugee discourse that Hungary has been witnessing since 2015. It is against this backdrop of political discourse and the very presence of refugees that the events detailed below took place. On July 31, 2015, a government regulation was published and announced by the government spokesperson concerning the establishment

of two temporary reception centers in Martonfa (Baranya county) and Sormás (Zala county). As the government ranked the building of these centers “investments of key importance for the national economy” their construction was deemed exempt from local consultation or notification procedures. This provided the legal justification for the government not to consult with the political leaders or locals of Martonfa. This, however, created a paradoxical situation: while on the one hand the government was strongly invested in fear-mongering against refugees, the local objection against the reception center went against their goals.

7.3. Methodology of the case study on Martonfa

Posts within the Facebook group were analyzed utilizing thematic analysis. Thus, one Facebook post is one unit of analysis. A total of 287 Facebook-posts were analyzed – no posts were excluded from the process. The steps of thematic analysis follow those outlined by Braun and Clark (2006):

- immersing oneself in the data;
- generating initial codes;
- searching for themes;
- reviewing themes;
- defining and naming themes.

The methodology of the present research follows these steps – and also relies on the concept of collective action frames when searching, reviewing and defining its themes. The findings follow this logic, introducing the different collective action frames – diagnostic, prognostic and motivational – and the themes they contain.

Digital methods carry with them a number of difficulties that needed to be addressed during the analysis. While they cannot be recounted in full detail here, it should be mentioned that data reduction and coding necessarily leads to loss of data in terms of losing the original context of discussions and the natural flow of the discourse. A more significant problem arising during analysis is the question of generalizability: to both a population and a theory. Therefore, significant limitations to the present study exist: it should be borne in mind that analysis of digital contents are suitable for exploratory research but should optimally be supplemented with other methods, such as fieldwork or on-site interviews.

7.4. Results: competing frames and mobilizations

Chronology of events. Before a detailed analysis of the messages and discourses of the anti-refugee camp movement at Martonfa, it is useful to look at the events as they unfolded from the perspective of the movement. The table below (Table 3) gives a short summary of this chronology.

Table 3. Chronology of events (Martonfa)

July 31	The government appoints the Martonfa refugee camp sans consultation
August 1	The Facebook-page is set up An open letter to the Prime Minister from the mayor of Martonfa Demonstrations in Martonfa and Pécs
August 2	Forum – decision about camping in the shooting field
August 3	Online petition
August 4	Townhall meeting in Martonfa
August 5	Letter to the Minister of Interior from the mayor of Pécsvárad
August 6	Demonstration (traffic disturbance)
August 7	Demonstration in Pécs
August 8	Motorcycle demonstration Concert in the shooting field
August 9	Offline petition
August 10	Pro-Martonfa demonstration in Nagykanizsa

	Helsinki Committee & Menedék [NGOs] visit Martonfa
August 11	Cooperation with the movement against the NATO radar station in Pécs
August 13	Demonstration in Martonfa (traffic disturbance)
August 14	Demonstration in Pécs
August 23	Open-air religious service led by Lóránd Hegedűs
August 24	Residential forum in Hird
August 26	Car/motorcycle demonstration in Pécsvárad
August 27	Road-blockade in Pécsvárad
August 28	Demonstration in Pécs
August 29	Residential meeting in Martonfa
September 4	Demonstration in Pécs (traffic disturbance)
September 6	March in Pécs
September 9	Jobbik demonstration in Pécs
September 10	Residential forum in Hosszúhetény
September 11	Pécs town hall meeting on migration
September 12	Demonstration in Pécs (traffic disturbance)
September 15	Government announces the cancellation of refugee camp in Martonfa
September 19	Family day in the shooting field
September 20	The demonstrators leave the shooting field

Diagnostic frames. With regards to the diagnostic frame, an analytically useful distinction is to differentiate between various threads of the problem, namely the discourses on refugees, on the village, and finally on the political context.

Two aspects stand out when members of the group discuss refugees: that of cultural incompatibility and that of deservingness. Many posts and comments refer to refugees as people who are not compatible with European, ‘civilized’ ways of living:

August 2: The refugee shelter in Vámoszabadi is full of dirt. It would be naive to believe that our fate would be different, if the refugee camp would be built here...

September 14: Not a single cigarette was thrown away in the Martonfa shooting range in the past 1,5 months. Compare this with what [amount of litter] the migrants left behind in a couple of days...

When discussing the case of Petra László, the journalist who famously kicked a refugee (“Hungarian nationalist TV camera operator”, 2015), the members come up with different gender norms of Europeans and Muslims as an argument against the victim:

September 14: The poor soccer coach, that dirty migrant left behind his wife and daughters and only brought his son along, he can go f...k himself. He’s like the other Muslims, women and daughters mean nothing to them, they only use them as servants...

The second refugee-related aspect, that of deservingness, is summarized in great detail in the comment below:

August 3: 1. After months of walking and struggling, would anyone be in as good shape as these migrants? 2. Having walked and suffered thousands of kms would anyone be in the mood to run away from policemen? 3. Why are some migrants

hiding their faces? 4. If they are running away from war and hunger, how come that they have hundreds or thousands of dollars and euros to pay for trafficking? 5. They can also afford smartphones and GPS... 6. I've just seen it on TV, a guy in Szabadka was walking around in such a nice white T-shirt, it was straight from the laundry... 7. The other day I saw pictures of migrants, 'armed' with designer shoes, clothes, jewelry... How did they pay for these? They are running away from poverty...

Part of the diagnostic frame is positioning the village as unique and as typical at the same time. The first is necessary in order to argue why it is especially unsuitable to host a refugee camp in comparison with other locations. This is done by referring to both quantitative (i.e., size of the village) and qualitative arguments.

August 1: Baranya county [the administrative region Martonfa belongs to] is the second most densely populated region of the country. There is no military or border patrol securing the borders. If [the refugees] hide in the Mecsek forest, these intruders will never be found.

August 2: The facts: 2200 people live in Martonfa, we have 5 streets, a grocery and a pub. The village lacks a sewer system. We don't have any railroads, the motorway is 30 kms away. The region lacks the language and other skills needed to host refugees. The competitive advantage of Martonfa is based on local agriculture – the guarding of the lands however is not secured.

At the same time, however, the discursive construction of the diagnosis also has to resonate with wider audiences in order to win allies and partners for the case, which explains the need for more universal argumentation.

August 1: I hope that you are aware that this is not only about Martonfa. Do you realize that if they can force this on us without consultation, then this can happen to any place, at any time?

To bridge the gap between the two strands of argumentation, the Martonfa movement posits itself as the watchguard of the nation. This is best captured in the main motto of the movement: “Martonfa today – the whole country tomorrow!”.

Finally, the political contextualization of the question puts an emphasis on democratic decision-making – or rather the lack thereof. Throughout the discussions the fact that the government never negotiated with locals or the mayor of Martonfa but instead announced its decision without consulting them is heavily stressed. This focus on unilateral decision-making facilitates the connection between claims of specificity and universality and between the different constituencies: locals of Martonfa and those of the wider region. While the case of Martonfa is special, this could happen to anyone.

August 2: In Slovakia they hold a referendum on the reopening of the Bős refugee camp. In Hungary they decide without consultations, anti-democratically, and the village affected has to learn from the press that the decision has already been made without asking them.

August 3: Democracy is over in Hungary... The time of dictatorship has come.

We see that in their diagnosis of the problem members of the group stress that the ‘figure of the refugee’ is culturally incompatible, and at the same time question whether those arriving are refugees at all. Location is central to the diagnosis: Martonfa is special in certain aspects, which is why it is unsuitable to host a refugee camp. Nevertheless, it is also similar to other places in Hungary. The latter part of the diagnosis is essential in order to embed the objection in a wider national context and win supporters beyond the local base. That the decision was made without consulting the locals and is therefore undemocratic is crucial to the diagnosis. In its attempts to build a wider coalition including a range of locations and a range of political actors, this factor serves as a lowest common denominator to glue together these actors.

Prognostic frames. The prognostic frame serves to offer possible solutions to the problem in question, the arrival of refugees in our case. Interestingly, there is a significant lack of

discussion related to possible solutions. The question is often handled with the tools of irony. A popular meme shared and liked by many people reads:

August 4: Martonfa doesn't want migrants! The Pancho Arena is large enough to host 3.500 people, the average audience size in Felcsút is 1.089 – do you have any more questions?

The above quote refers to Felcsút, the home town of Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, where a huge soccer stadium was famously built to host games of Orbán's favorite sport.

Further ironic solutions offered are to move refugees to the Gypsy ghetto of Miskolc – a town in North-Eastern Hungary, or to “make life harder for Auntie Merkel” by “pushing” the refugees further West.

Notably, there are very few members who believe that the solution would be to send the refugees back home – pointing to the fact that members of the movement do not question the fact of war, rather their own role in sharing its burdens.

In terms of what the prognosis for the locals and the social movement is, members believe that a wide coalition and persistent action would be the solution: that through their efforts they can first convince the government to consult with them and second, that this consultation would lead to the cancellation of the plans. The movement in its discourse is keen to look for clues in national and international politics about how the situation unfolds and is therefore welcomes the plans of the government to build a fence on the Serbian-Hungarian border.

Motivational frames. The motivational frame can be summed up with the motto created by the movement: “Keep on Martonfa, wake up Pécs!” Therefore, the motivational calls, event descriptions and mobilization slogans most significantly aim at a target group larger than the inhabitants of Martonfa, i.e., locals of the region, most notably the residents of the large nearby city of Pécs. This is in line with the action repertoire of the group where numerous events are organized not in Martonfa but in Pécs instead.

August 1: Let's meet at 5 and go to Pécs's Széchenyi Square afterwards so that they too can see how democracy works today!

September 4: Wake up Pécs! This issue is much more significant than the internet tax was! Where are you? ...

September 7: We have a growing number of programs: we have programs organized by civilians and programs organized by political parties alike. Everyone can find something that fits their preference. Now we especially speak to those in Pécs: hiding from your problems and ignorance are the worst possible choices, so we ask everyone to get informed! ...

7.5. Epilogue and conclusions: the construction of identity through crisis

Three months after the cancellation of the government's plan to place a refugee camp in Martonfa and after weeks of inactivity within the group, the movement announced a year-closing event: a commemoration walk to the shooting range:

December 29: The Martonfa folk is small but strong. Dear All! The core members of the Martonfa campers plan to start a tradition by meeting on the last day of the year at 1 p.m. in front of the Martonfa church, from where we will walk together to our wonderful shooting range in order to 1. commemorate our struggle and praise the heavens for our success in defending our village 2. meet each other and talk for a little bit...

The cancellation of the plan is celebrated and remembered as the victory of the locals and also forms the basis of a strengthened and renewed local identity: Martonfa-ness means something different at the end of the year compared to before, as a result of the social movement.

The above summary cannot give a full account about the discourse of the movement – nor can its findings be easily generalized. Nevertheless, they do point to a number of conclusions. We see that the action repertoire of the movement contains a wide variety of activities and stays colorful and rather intensive throughout the whole period. The actions undertaken are non-violent and stay within legal limits. This might be understood in terms of the wider goals of the movement, where alliance-building is central to members. The action repertoire contains mostly offline activities, while the role of social media and Facebook in particular is the promotion and documentation of the events. There are a number of messages that are central to the collective

action frame constructed by the movement. While xenophobia is indeed present in this action frame, it is not central, and dehumanization of the refugees doesn't take place. The action frame stresses that Martonfa is unsuitable: the village is small and lacks proper infrastructure for the hosting of refugees. The village intends to resonate by appealing to the interests of surrounding villages as well. It is not only a coalition of villages but an alliance of different political backgrounds that becomes paramount: movements on the left, even pro-refugee NGOs, are addressed by the members. This wide coalition partly explains why the refugees are not central to the diagnosis: the 'democracy-frame' connects most actors in the field. The conclusion of the story brings about a sense of achievement – while the movement didn't solve the problem, the events strengthened members' inner solidarity and identity.

When constructing the movement's diagnostic frame, it is not the problem of the refugee but that of democratic decision-making that is heavily emphasized. In line with this, the prognostic action frame contains very few details regarding possible solutions or strategies to tackle the refugee issue. The motivational frame centers on 'calling to arms' possible allies and partners. This points to at least two broader conclusions. First, it seems that the movement – because of the small size of the village – intends to balance its lack of power by using online tools to address possible allies. This need to widen the constituency drives the aim to create frames that resonate with the wider public. Second, regarding to structural-cultural divide in social movement scholarship, the above findings reinforce that a cultural approach – framing theory – in itself is insufficient to explain strategies of the movement, as these are often driven by the resources available, or in this case the lack thereof. Therefore, connecting structural approaches – the investigation of resources for example – could enrich and add to knowledge of cultural approaches in social movement studies, even if they focus on discourse itself.

7.6. Martonfa: mediation opportunity structures and capacities

With regards to the mediation opportunity structure, the Martonfa movement have gained visibility, especially in the independent media, which is not a common phenomenon in case of a local contestation.

In terms of the discursive opportunity structure, the movement apparently couldn't compete with the agenda-setting abilities of the government and couldn't easily introduce alternative agendas in the discourse.

The Martonfa movement, just like the other two movements analyzed, utilized affordances in the networked opportunity structure. The movement's communication repertoires were all hybrid – successfully connecting forms of online and offline organization.

In 2016 the community organized a three-day camp at the shooting field commemorating the events of the previous year, called “those glorious 50 days”. The self-defined success of their movement continues to shape local identity. This is an important, even if locally limited narrative capacity. The above analysis and timeline of events attempted to show that the group had local disruptive capacities as their protest events often aimed at such – very locally bounded – disruptions. As the movement had the local support of the village's mayor, and never had more wide-reaching ambitions, it did not have electoral capacities.

CHAPTER 8. Conclusions: Mediation opportunity structures in hybrid regimes. Social movement responses to state anti-refugee propaganda in Hungary ³⁰

8.1. The dual challenge: bridging media studies and social movements research, and the challenge of hybrid regimes

The academic challenge. Bridging media studies and social movements research. There are two gaps that urgently need to be bridged between media research and the study of social movement organizations. First, recent evolution of the *media landscape* – notably digitalization, the rise of social media and emerging hybridization of the environment – has produced new concepts and theoretical frameworks in fields, but explicit connections across disciplines is rare. Second, media scholars and of social movements both need also to stock of the changing *political* environment: the rise of hybrid regimes – a context that does not fit the inherited democracy-dictatorship binary.

It is not the case that the changes – digitalization, mediatization, the rise of social media – and their potential effects on social movements and contentious action have gone unnoticed. One could argue that what is happening is the exact opposite: the proliferation of literature dedicated to the subject. Nevertheless, I claim that what lacks from many of the conceptualizations is a clear connection to the existing social movement paradigm and that this integration is imperative if our ambition is to provide new approaches that build on already existing knowledge in the scholarship. To illustrate my point, I give a brief overview of three discussions that evolved in the field.

First, a significant debate related to new media trends and their effects on social movements has taken place between the so-called technopessimist and technooptimist sides. Within the technopessimist camp, a radical viewpoint emphasizes the ways in which social media allows for oppression and surveillance, the creation of 'echo chambers', phenomena that in fact weaken the power of social movements (Morozov, 2011); while the skeptical viewpoint takes a more moderate view and calls attention to surviving barriers and obstacles to social movement organizations (Gladwell, 2010). Technooptimists on the other hand provide largely enthusiastic accounts about the democratic potentials of new media (Castells, 2012).

³⁰ The original version of this chapter appeared as a chapter in *Current Perspectives on Communication and Media Research* in 2018 (Nagy, 2018)

Second, among those who claim that a change is taking place enabled by digital affordances, suggestions range between voices that propose that the Internet reinforces organizational tools – the reinforcement hypothesis (Bekkers, Beunders, Edwards, & Moody, 2011) – to claims that beyond reinforcement Internet also makes innovation possible – the innovation hypothesis (Benkler, 2006). While the former suggests changes on a scale-level – the lowering of mobilization costs, widening of repertoires of action – the latter point to qualitative changes. Clusters of findings related to these dimensions emerge, where on the one hand Internet-supported offline action is examined with relation to the reinforcement hypothesis, such as political campaigns and protest organizations (Lim, 2012). On the other hand, authors who seek empirical support for the innovation hypothesis often turn their attention towards novel, emerging types of social movement organizations. More skeptical voices on the other end of the spectrum warn against such optimistic readings (Tarrow, 2011; Della Porta & Diani, 2006), claiming that technology is not central in the broadening or transformation of social movement action repertoires and practices.

This is not the space to provide a comprehensive criticism of these debates. Although what is noteworthy is a tendency in these debates to ask binary questions on the one hand – does the internet help or hinder social movements; does new media allow for innovation for social movements or not – and to have the weakness of one-medium-bias (Treré, 2012) overlooking the importance of a hybrid media environment.

A third important conceptual approach successfully overcomes these weaknesses: the concept of connective action developed by Bennett and Segerberg (2012) as opposed to traditional forms of collective action. The concept of connective action stresses that individual frames allow the personalized understanding of issues for participants, and these frames are easily distributed through a network in which digital technologies become “important organizational agents” (Bennett & Segerberg, 2012, p. 755); therefore, organizational structures are no longer needed to create new forms of mobilization.

I argue that while all the above approaches have their own merits, we need frameworks that successfully integrate media scholarship and social movement approaches and that one such conceptualization, that of mediation opportunity structures as put forward by Cammaerts (2012) can be this framework.

The concept of opportunity structures has been established by political process theory within social movement scholarship. In short, political process theory puts the emphasis on political opportunities and threats, mobilizing structures, framing processes, protest cycles, and action

repertoires. The focus is on the *interaction* between the context and movement characteristics. Cammaerts has proposed the notion of *mediation of opportunity structures* within this paradigm. The framework of *mediation opportunity structures* (Cammaerts, 2012) provides a potential missing link between media and movement scholars in studying such emergent phenomena. Applying this framework on hybrid regimes is an also analytically useful tool to uncover a previously under researched area: the mediation constraints and opportunities in hybrid regimes. The application of mediation theory to contentious action in hybrid regimes allows for a more nuanced and multi-layered understanding of opportunities and constraints of such action.

The core idea states that 'mediation' is useful as

It enables us to *link up* various ways in which media and communication are relevant to protest and activism: the framing processes in mainstream media and political elites, the self-representations by activists, the use, appropriation and adaptation of ICTs by activists and citizens to mobilize for and organize direct actions, as well as media and communication practices that constitute mediated resistance in its own right. (Cammaerts, 2012, p. 118, emphasis added)

Cammaerts (2012) suggests that we think of the mediation opportunity structure through a model that comprises of three kinds of constraints and opportunities: in the media, in the discourse, and in the networked environment (Figure 12).

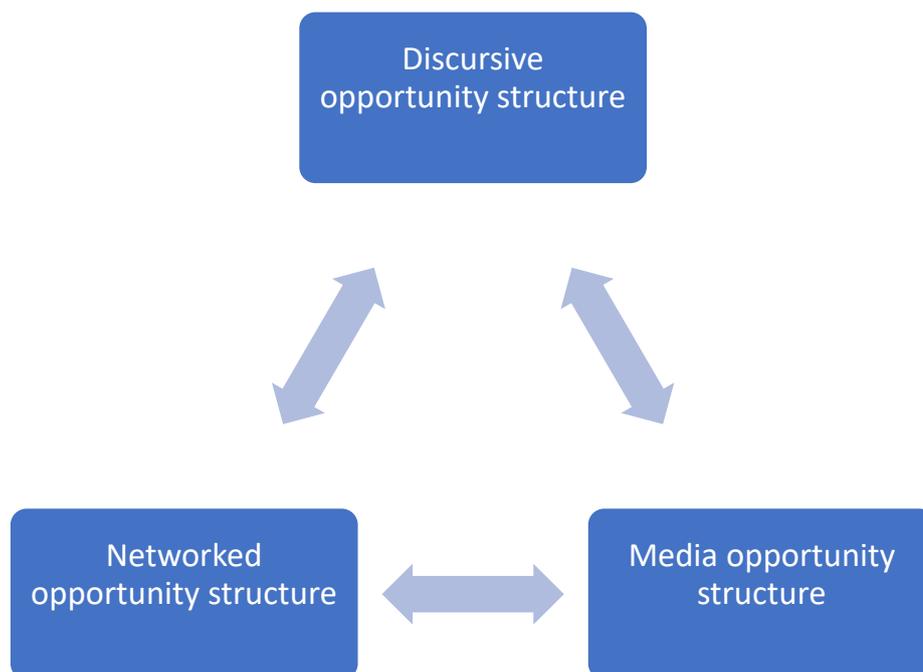


Figure 12. Mediation opportunity structure (Cammaerts, 2012).

The political challenge: hybrid regimes. The recent rise of hybrid regimes poses a similar challenge to both scholars of media studies and social movement researchers: existing paradigms and theories gravitate towards either clearly liberal democratic or authoritarian states. What is needed is theoretical and empirical work that addresses the case of states falling in the gray zones within these endpoles.

On the other hand, there is a blossoming of literature on hybrid regimes in political and social sciences that need to be introduced here. Recent backsliding among previously established liberal democracies have been widely documented, where most important case studies focus on countries such as Hungary, Poland and Russia. Discussions on the extent, causes and consequences of the trend produced an enormous amount of literature that cannot be fully detailed here. It is sufficient here to address three focal points central to the understanding of the present chapter.

First, there is a wide-ranging debate addressing the question of terminology. I have briefly touched upon these debates in the introductory chapters of the paper. While 'illiberal democracy' is a widely accepted term, scholars also debate whether the negative prefix 'il-' creates an oxymoron or a concept that is unable to address the extent of the backsliding. Thus, authors, when discussing the above listed states also use terms such as 'autocracies' (Kornai, 2015), 'electoral or competitive autocracies' (Levitsky & Way, 2010), 'hybrid regimes' (Cassani, 2014).³¹ There is variety in terminology also caused by different foci of the researchers. Thus, those focusing on the political economy of such regimes also describe them as 'neo-patrimonialisms' (Fukuyama, 2014) or 'mafia states' (Naím, 2012). Researchers focusing on ideology talk about 'post-communist traditionalism' and 'neo-conservatism'. I define the regime as a competitive autocracy, a specific type of hybrid regime. I conceptualize its discursive strategy – that is relevant for my research focus – as right-wing populism.

A second strand of the debates focuses on the root causes of hybrid regimes. In his paper covering the subject, Sheiring (2015) distinguishes between three competing interpretations: the transition paradigm focusing on the role of elites; a second approach emphasizing the role that inequality play in democratic backsliding, and a third, varieties of capitalism approach that adds class conflict to the picture. While this paper cannot contribute to the discussion on why hybrid regimes emerge, in terms of populist success, I believe that it is useful to speak of a

³¹ In his article on the subject András Bozóki argues that terminology also needs to reflect changes that took place within these regimes, where 'illiberal democracy' was an apt description of Hungary between 2010-2015 but given the increasingly authoritarian measures of the state the term 'hybrid regime' should replace it (Bozóki, 2017).

populist spiral, where first step in this spiral has been the failure of mainstream parties. A second stepping stone has been a shift in the opportunity structure, namely that the issue of migration has created an opportunity to polarize the electorate. The construction of crisis has strengthened the populist governing party by creating further demand from the electorate. This allowed for Fidesz to crackdown on its challengers coupled with an unprecedented volume of state propaganda. Eventually, this led to the solidifying of a specific type of hybrid regime, competitive authoritarianism in Hungary. Within this process, populism is the discursive strategy utilized, and not the definition of the regime.

Third, there is very important work carried out – often on the national level – in some of the countries affected to uncover the consequences of the autocratic trend. Hungarian Octopus, the book series edited by Bálint Magyar (2016) for instance covers the effects of the Orbán regime in fields such as corruption, economy, foreign affairs, education and legislation – among the many.

However, very few of the above described researches deal explicitly with questions that focus on media and discourses in hybrid regimes. At the same time there is very little reflection on the mediatized nature of the societies within which these developments take place. This leads to two characteristics of the existing literature: Many of the works tend to be descriptive rather than analytical at this point. More importantly, research on media policies on the one hand and discursive-ideological issues on the other tend to be disjointed. What is needed is a comprehensive analytical framework that addresses these gaps. The framework of mediation opportunity structures allows us to answer three research questions of the thesis: (1) What are the threats that arise in the Hungarian mediation opportunity structure during the construction of the ‘refugee crisis’ following 2015? There are other types of threats – non-specific to hybrid regimes – that are relevant to us as well and they will be pointed at throughout the text. My aim here however is a comprehensive framework where structural, discursive and tactical issues are not analyzed separately but are brought together. (2) How do social movements arising in response to the construction of the ‘refugee crisis’ perceive and make use of the mediation opportunity structure, with a special focus on their media practices? (3) What do we know about the opportunities and the related outcomes in the mediation opportunity structure regarding the contestation of the refugee issue in Hungary? The fourth and final research question (4) Why did the construction of the “refugee crisis” contribute to the strengthening and consolidation of the Orbán-government?, attempts to move beyond the empirical work carried out and provide

a broader, causal analysis of the events that unfolded. Let's begin the conclusion with addressing the first of these research questions:

RQ1: What are the threats that arise in the Hungarian mediation opportunity structure during the construction of the 'refugee crisis'?

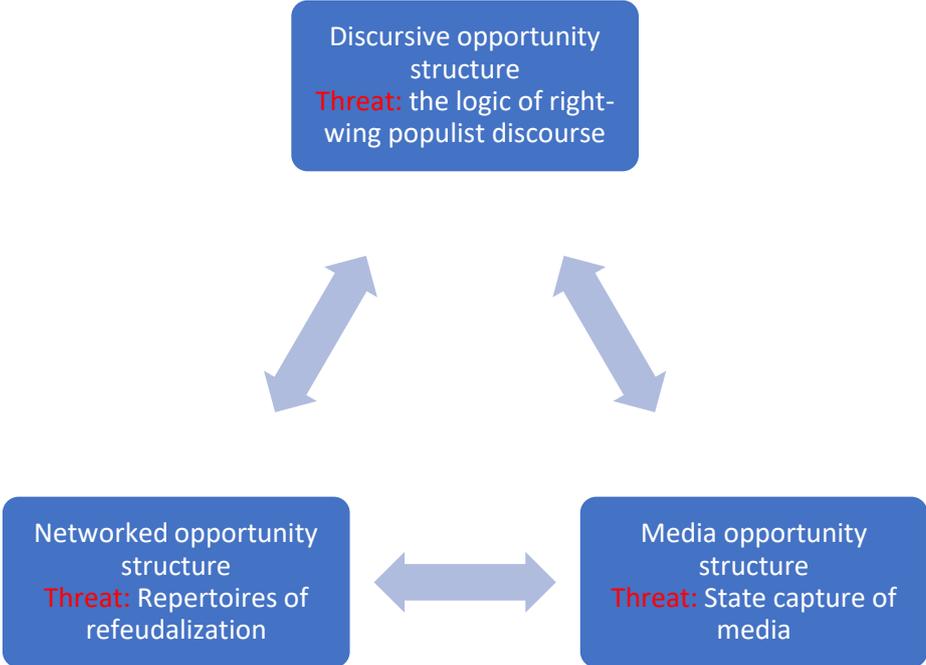


Figure 13. Autocratic threats in the mediation opportunity structure.

Before an explanation of the model put forward in Figure 13, a few words on the interpretation are necessary. Opportunity structures are naturally not static: if they were, they wouldn't be analytically useful for understanding how social movements emerge. I claim in this research that an important feature of the Hungarian case is the transformation – the closing down from the movements' perspective – of this structure, and will discuss this transformation in detail in response to my fourth and final research question. However, in what follows, I describe the context in which movements began their activities in 2015.

Regarding autocratic threats, Figure 13 identifies the key points in the three interrelated dimensions. The autocratic threat in the media opportunity structure can be conceptualized as the state capture of the media, which in fact consists of three interrelated process that have not taken place at the same time. First, the dynamic building of a right-wing media empire has

begun before Fidesz came to power in 2010 and is an ongoing process in the present day. Second, the creation of a legislative framework that fits the aims of state capture started in 2010 – this framework was largely finalized by 2012. Third, interference and attacks on newspapers and journalists became widespread mostly after 2014. The overall decline is visible in Freedom House’s independent media score rankings (Figure 14). Here it is sufficient to provide a brief overview of the three processes that unfolded – the autocratic threat posed by them, and also to point to a number of opportunities that opened up.

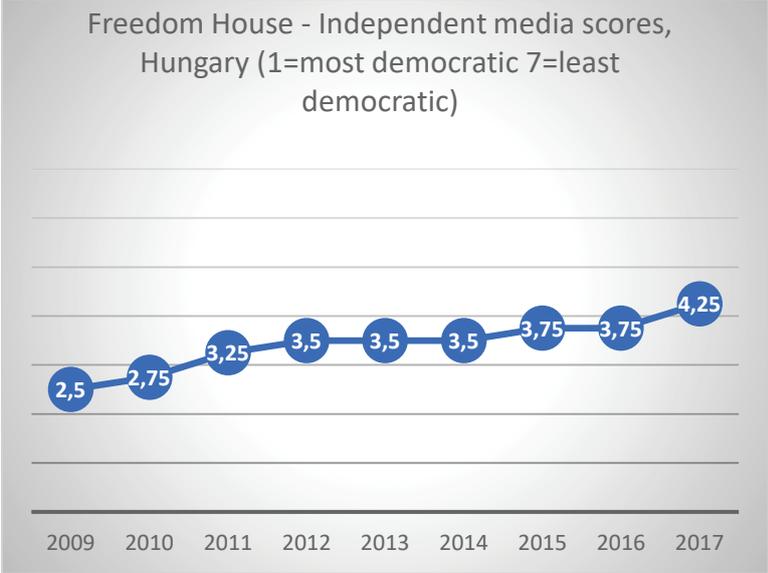


Figure 14. Independent media scores – Hungary, 2009-2017 (Freedom House, 2017)

In 2010, Fidesz began its term with already strong media positions controlled by businessmen closely linked to the party, daily broadsheets, radio stations and television channels among them. By 2012 the portfolio contained 15 companies, including the country’s biggest outdoor advertisement company (owned by then-best friend of Viktor Orbán, and state oligarch Lajos Simicska). The two major free tabloids with a previously apolitical tone also became parts of the empire. While advertising revenues in the overall media market dropped by 30 % as a consequences of the financial crisis, members of the empire enjoy the benefits of state-led advertising campaigns. One of the two commercial television stations was bought by Andrew Vajna, a government commissioner in 2015 further enhancing the dominance of progovernment voices.

Importantly, a significant rupture took place in 2015 with the falling out between prime minister Orbán and state oligarch Simicska that led to a reorganization of the empire. A Simicska-owned

daily newspaper, a television and a radio channel have all radically changed their tone and became opponents and critiques of the government.

State capture did not limit itself to commercial outlets: the public service media landscape was redrawn by legislative changes immediately after Fidesz took power. The Hungarian Television and Radio, together with Danube Television were merged into an umbrella organization that also includes the Hungarian News Agency. All news are centrally produced by the Agency, while the power to appoint executives to these outlets is solely in the hands of the Media Council's president. As the budget allocated to public service media is continually increasing, it holds a strong influence on audiences.

Moving on to legislation, the most important changes took place already in 2011. The 'new media constitution' established a central institution called National Media and Infocommunications Agency, responsible for granting licenses and broadcasting frequencies, monitoring content among others, the latter function carried by the Media Council. The opposition is not represented among the members of the Council. It was also given power to impose steep fines on outlets which can potentially lead to the withdrawal of an outlet's license. Having set the framework, in the coming years Fidesz has been using legislation in the media field as a punitive measure. In 2014 it introduced the advertising tax that aimed to disproportionately affect the other one of the two Hungarian commercial stations, RTL Klub. Further legislation that affected free speech (regarding the criticism of public figures, hate speech, the use of forged videos and audio) took place mostly in and around 2013. Suffering from a blowout between Simicska – who is a major player in the outdoor advertisement market – and the prime minister, the government in 2017 pushed through legislation that prohibits the use of outdoor advertisement for political purposes outside campaign season (this does not affect the government's billboards as they are considered social advertising). Having set the framework, in the coming years Fidesz has been using legislation as a punitive measure. Open attacks against independent outlets have become more prominent throughout the years that culminated in the infamous closing down of Hungary's largest daily newspaper, *Népszabadság* in October 2016.

The discursive opportunity structure in Hungary is dominated by the logic of right-wing populist discourse. The core features of populism appear in a specific light in the Hungarian case, where populists have been in power and have shifted towards a hybrid regime in the past years. First, the reference to the people in the Hungarian case is always a *nativist*, ethno-nationalist reference, which signals a clear refusal of the political concept of the nation. Second,

the drawing up of dichotomies always serves the *polarization* of the electorate. Drawing from previous experiences, Fidesz has concluded that in order to keep together and energize their voter block, the stakes of political conflicts need to be constantly elevated. Third, the *volonté* general in the Hungarian case is always a *volonté majoritaire*, where minority perspectives are openly ridiculed and ignored.

Regarding the refugees, the discursive formation of the 'undeserving and frightening migrant' frame was clear from the beginning: There are no refugees escaping the horrors of war, only economic migrants and/or potential terrorists who jeopardize Hungarian jobs, culture, and 'way of life'. A number of speech acts support this frame: a refusal to use the word 'refugee' and reference to asylum seekers only as 'migrants'; the attachment of the 'illegal' label to migrants regularly and the narrative formation of the 'state of exception' by a constant reference to no-go zones, rapes, terrorism and epidemics (Szilágyi, 2016).

Looking at the consecutive campaign-waves of the government two significant groups of hostile elites stand out and are attacked: the EU-leadership in general and George Soros personally. In 2016 the government initiated a referendum that would provide public support for its opposition of the EU-relocation scheme set up in 2015. The main message of the campaign said „Let's send a message to Brussels so that they'll understand!”, claiming that the EU-leadership is in fact the aggressor who wants to impose 'forced settlement' of refugees on Hungarians. The anti-EU messages were coupled with a strong campaign attacking Hungarian-born investor and philanthropist George Soros. This latter campaign went beyond the issue of migration, directed also at Hungarian Soros-financed NGOs and Central European University founded by Soros. Once again, billboards around the country were set up, this time with the message „Don't let Soros laugh in the end!”, claiming that Soros has a detailed plan of settling migrants in the EU in order to dechristianize the continent. Both the anti-EU and the anti-Soros campaigns were cases of the attacker-attacked reversal where the Hungarian government played the role of the victim against aggressors who want to force their migrant-agendas on Hungary (Szilágyi, 2016).

State capture of the media and the ruling position of Fidesz does not in itself explain the hegemony of the populist logic in Hungarian public discourse. It should also be noted that even prior to the government's migrant-agenda the Hungarian discourse on migration was rather biased according to studies on the one hand (Gyulai, 2014) and that even when given the opportunity, opposition parties have been reluctant to directly attack the anti-migrant messages.

Traditionally, threats in the networked opportunity structure have been understood in a limited sense, focusing mostly on classical censorship (such as blocking parts of or the whole Internet)

and surveillance. Such threats are unquestionably present in a number of hybrid regimes, such as Russia and Turkey, but are not widespread in Hungary. However, in agreement with Tufekci (2017) who claims that an important mechanism of control in the networked age is censorship by disinformation, I suggest that it is necessary to broaden the scope if we want to address such threats. Disinformation campaigns aim at paralysis and disempowerment of members, which usually serves the purposes of the status quo. Such manipulation, coupled with reliance on trolls – commentators who pose provocative or misleading content. Taken together what we see in the networked opportunity structure is the refeudalization of the public sphere, with its corresponding tactics where top-bottom unidirectional marketing tools replace forms that promote dialogue and debate. This refeudalization appears in the shape of disinformation, trolls and surveillance in the networked sphere – but reaches beyond that. Since the first half of 2015, Hungary has been in the state of 'permanent campaigns' where new waves of billboards hit the streets every few months followed by their corresponding television, radio and newspaper ads. This marketing logic follows a double purpose: on a symbolic level rather than promoting an ideal of 'rational-critical' citizenry it positions the voters as passive, unthinking mass audiences. On the material level, these state-led advertising campaigns provide substantial sources of income for the Fidesz media empire. Marketing is only one aspect of the refeudalization of public discourse. The second is the bracketing out of dialogue and debates from political discourse. Governmental politicians refuse to give interviews to independent journalists and newsroom debates also ceased to exist. Notably, prime minister Viktor Orbán and president of the republic János Áder haven't given interviews to independent journalists for years in Hungary. Orbán has a weekly radio show where he shares his agenda and governmental politicians hold press conferences to distribute his thoughts – talking points and sound bites have taken the place of interviews and debates. Such a practice follows from the populist logic of antipluralism where debates are seen as unnecessary hindrance standing in the way of the singular common good.

It should be noted that referenda and so-called national consultations are tools often used by the Hungarian government to gather public support behind its policies. The national consultation on migration in 2015 included questions that asked, „Do you agree that mistaken immigration policies contribute to the spread of terrorism?“ („Viktor Orbán will take care“, 2015), the one in 2017 asked, „By now it has become clear that, in addition to smugglers, certain international organizations encourage the illegal immigrants to commit illegal acts. What do you think Hungary should do?“. As Müller (2016) also argues, referenda and national consultations in the

hands of populists do not aim to engage citizens in public discussions or deliberation but to claim ownership over the – singular – public will. An extreme case of this is the 2016 Hungarian referendum on the EU-relocation scheme where the government failed to mobilize 50 % of the voters that was necessary for a valid result as only 44 % of the voters showed up at the voting booths. Disregarding this apparent failure, the government celebrated the results with another advertisement campaign falsely claiming that 98 % of Hungarians voted against the relocation scheme.

To sum up, I argue that the mediation opportunity structure in Hungary faces often interrelated autocratic threats in all dimensions: state capture in the media opportunity structure; the logic of right-wing populist discourse in the discursive opportunity structure and refeudalization in the networked opportunity structure. In the second part of the chapter I look at how a number of social movements make opportunities within this mediation opportunity structure.

8.2. Lessons from three movements

The second research question dealt with the issue of how social movements interpret and use the mediation opportunity structure:

RQ2: How do social movements arising in response to the construction of the ‘refugee crisis’ perceive and make use of the mediation opportunity structure, with a special focus on their media practices?

Migration Aid: a grassroots movement helping refugees. Established by a previously unknown one-person NGO in June 2015, in a couple of months Migration Aid built a complex relief infrastructure for refugees, something the government was hesitant to provide. After three months of relief work, Migration Aid compiled statistical data about its operations and the efforts undertaken by its members and donators: it had mobilized 500 activists in 70,000 work-hours, helping 111,600 refugees. (Migration Aid Számokban, 2015).

Inquiry into how Migration Aid operated sheds light on how the concept of connective action (Bennett & Segerberg, 2012) can be applied and developed to understand the specific ways a coherent organization is achieved in digitally born movements. My analysis suggests that new rhizomatic social movements epitomize emerging types of organizations, pointing to four central characteristics of the rhizome (as they appeared in the case of Migration Aid). The movement was *nonhierarchical* and lacked fixed starting and ending points. This characteristic affected the group’s *action repertoires* in allowing a wide range of modalities of participation.

The group was also an example of a *hybrid* organization where blurring of lines between online and offline spheres had an important impact. Finally, the existence of a *stitching platform* (its Facebook group) was central for the group's survival. A unique characteristic of the rhizome is its ability to reconfigure itself in both the short and long run. This flexibility, together with the stitching role of Facebook, suggests that the movement developed an 'information thermostat', a self-regulative system that permanently receives inputs from given surroundings and changes its outputs accordingly.

The Two-Tailed Dog Party. Following the January 2015 terrorist attacks against the French magazine Charlie Hebdo, prime minister Viktor Orbán concluded: "We should not look at economic migration as if it had any use, because it only brings trouble and threats to European people.... Therefore, immigration must be stopped.... We will not allow it, at least as long as I am prime minister and as long as this government is in power." ("Hungary PM Orbán Says," 2015). Following this, political and communication tools were applied to reinforce this message. The government set up a working group to handle the immigrant question (Index, 2015). This was followed by a national consultation and a government billboard campaign with three basic slogans:

"If you come to Hungary, you have to respect our culture!"

"If you come to Hungary, you have to respect our laws!"

"If you come to Hungary, you can't take away our jobs!"

When the first billboards hit the streets in June 6, 2015 an outburst of memes followed. On June 8, the Two-Tailed Dog Party, a satirical political party specializing in urban performances and street art launched an 'anti-anti-immigrant campaign' soliciting donations from the public. The original goal of the campaign was to set up no more than a few dozen billboards but the initiative soon escalated into a wider protest. Within ten days donations had reached above 100,000 euros enabling the creation of more than 900 billboards nationwide. Their content and visuals were also co-created: anyone with an idea could upload their version online, and decisions about which ones would be used were also outsourced to a social media vote. By the end of the campaign, 1,025 governmental billboards were being countered by 900 counter-billboards on the streets. The satirical messages attracted wide coverage in the press and on social media, and successfully altered the direction of public discourse.

The counter-billboard campaign successfully broke the 'spiral of silence' as people with minority opinions were given a platform and visibility in the public eye. On a deeper level the

counter-campaign challenged hegemonic views about public discourse by contrasting messages based on fear with counter-messages relying on humor. It also questioned perceptions about how to address collective action problems in society, replacing a top-down, one-to-many campaign with a participatory alternative. However, the limits of the counter campaign should not be overlooked. While it managed to become part of the political discourse about migration, it never offered a substantial critique of the government's activities and views.

Martonfa: an anti-refugee camp movement. The case study of Martonfa, a small Hungarian village, examined a local social movement opposing the building of a refugee camp. This study aimed at unpacking the effects of a perceived threat to this local community. This movement emerged in August 2015, when locals from Martonfa woke up one morning to the news the government had announced the opening of a refugee camp on the Martonfa shooting range – without consulting the mayor of the village. On the very same day a Facebook group was established and offline contentious activities began. A group of locals ‘occupied’ the shooting range for 50 days and other events were also organized, often with the aim of creating alliances with a range of actors. The movement ceased its activities after 50 days when the government withdrew its. Nevertheless, the effects of the social movement on the local community reach beyond this period.

The research examined how collective action frames (Benford & Snow, 2000) are being filled with meaning and how inconsistencies within the frames are handled. The movement's diagnostic frame (what is the problem?), focuses not on the refugee problem but the problem of democratic decision-making. In line with this, the prognostic action frame (what should be done?) contains very few details regarding possible solutions to tackle the refugee issue. The motivational frame (why should we act?) centered on ‘calling to arms’ possible allies and partners. This points to two broader conclusions. First, it seems that the movement – because of the small size of the village – balanced its lack of power by using online tools to address and mobilize possible allies. This need to widen the constituency encouraged the creation of frames – such as injustice frames – that resonate with the wider public. Second this suggests that a cultural approach – such as framing theory – is insufficient for explaining strategies of the movement, as these are often driven by the resources available – or in this case, the lack thereof. In order to enrich cultural approaches in social movement studies a more structural emphasis must be added, even if the analysis focuses on discourse itself.

8.3. Threats and opportunities – movement outcomes in hybrid regimes

Having looked at threats and media practices within the mediation opportunity structure, the final research question can be addressed:

RQ3: What do we know about the opportunities and the related outcomes in the mediation opportunity structure regarding the contestation of the refugee issue in Hungary?

The potential opportunities for the movements studied are summarized in the mediation opportunity structure (Figure 15). Given the autocratic constraints in the media opportunity structure, social movements in hybrid regimes start off with serious disadvantages. Nevertheless, all three movements were able to achieve considerable media visibility during their operations. In the case of the billboard campaign of Two-Tailed Dog Party, this visibility was through the use of billboards, but the campaign also generated significant media attention. Migration Aid also gained momentum by having strong field experience and often giving expert interviews or taking the role of spokesperson for the refugees during the crisis. These opportunities for visibility thus arose for the movements, although these moments of fame were limited both in time and reach. They were mostly covered by the ever-shrinking independent media and the effects of this visibility can well be questioned.

A potential opportunity in the discursive opportunity structure is the salience of the chosen issue and self-mediation of this issue in opposition to the hegemonic discourse. This means that while movements apparently cannot compete with the agenda-setting abilities of the government and cannot easily introduce alternative agendas in the discourse, attaching themselves to the prominent issues opens up opportunities of mobilization for them. While movements studied here could not change the hegemonic discourse they successfully utilized it to increase their own potential for organization, mobilization and self-mediation.

All three movements utilized affordances in the networked opportunity structure in a manner that led to complex, intensive and hybrid frameworks of action. Complexity can be seen in the structured use of different tools that build on each other in each case. Activities were clearly intensive enough to result in quantitatively significant mobilization of resources. The movements communication repertoires were all hybrid – successfully connecting forms of online and offline organization.

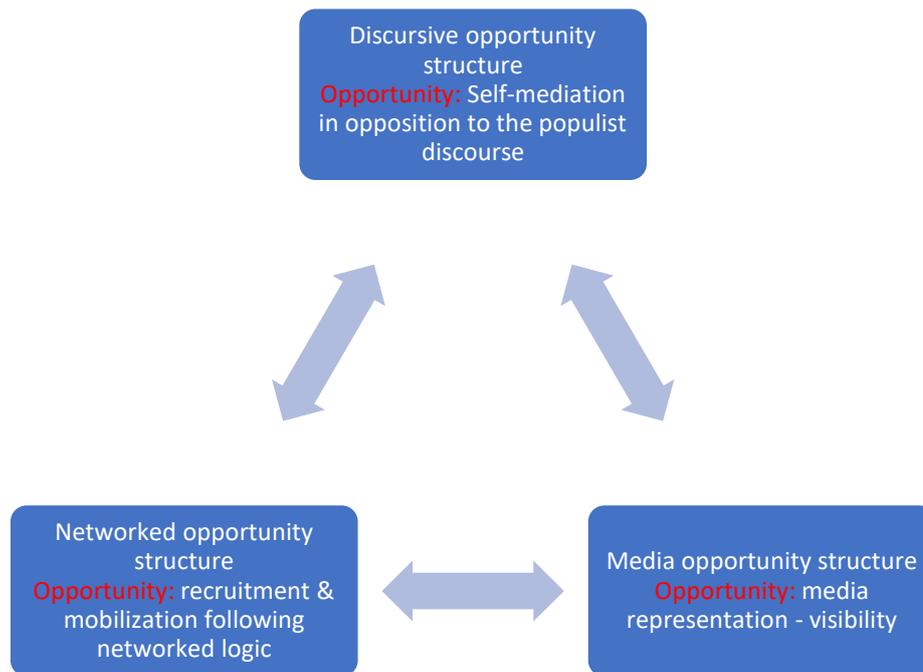


Figure 15. Opportunities in the mediation opportunity structure.

The mediation opportunity structure does not consist of three isolated spheres but interconnected dimensions. It is important therefore to look at the relationship between these elements. In this sense, the tactical innovation within the networked opportunity structure should not be underestimated. However, in the cases above, such tactical innovations facilitated by social media resulted in limited effects. This can be best explained by the role played by the *discursive* and the *media* opportunity structures. The structural constraints present in media representation – namely the state capture of media – often result in either no representation or a negative representation for social movements. Inside the discursive opportunity structure, the movements’ ambivalent relationship towards the hegemonic discourse is an important factor. As noted above, none of the movements provided a direct and radical opposition or alternative to the hegemonic discourse. The ambition of the Two-Tailed Dog Party was to satirize – not to offer a substantial critique. Even though the context was a politically polarized one, the self-definition of Migration Aid strongly stated its non-political nature. The Martonfa movement’s relationship to the dominant discourse represents a classic case of NIMBY (Not In My Backyard) where national and European level arguments replicate each other at the local level verifying the master narrative of securitization. Overall, then, the potential tactical innovation in the networked opportunity structure remained limited given the constraints and missed opportunities in the two other dimensions.

8.4. Looking back: what is constant and what has changed?

RQ4: Why did the construction of the ‘refugee crisis’ contribute to the strengthening and consolidation of the Orbán-government?

It was the populist construction of the ‘refugee crisis’ that allowed the Orbán-government to solidify and strengthen its power since 2015. Following a set-back in 2014, the government consciously generated an agenda that would pose refugees as threatening Hungarian security. While this was in line with broader securitization discourses, the volume and centrality of the issue is a Hungarian phenomenon.

As a result, transformational shift took place in the Hungarian mediatized opportunity structure beginning in 2015. The construction of the ‘refugee crisis’ effectively shifted and opened up the political agenda from the national to the international levels. The construction of the ‘crisis’ was coupled with not only discursive but very real attacks against autonomous actors at the mezo-level between the individual and the state. Crisis has not only been constructed, but narrated and performed as well, which allowed for the issue to stay at the top of the political agenda for the past years – even in the lack of actual refugees. The volume of the Hungarian state’s anti-refugee propaganda is unprecedented and unparalleled in the modern history of democracies and has only been characteristic of totalitarian states before. The results of the propaganda have broader societal consequences with unprecedented levels of xenophobia appearing in Hungarian society. We can expect the campaign to have a lasting influence on Hungarian society, given the mediatized nature of the propaganda, and the role that media plays in acculturation and socialization.

The construction of the ‘refugee crisis’ took place in a hybrid regime, where right-wing populism describes the discursive strategy of the government. The core features of populism in Hungary appear in the forms of nativism, polarization and majoritarianism. These regimes and strategies crucially shape threats and opportunities in the mediation opportunity structure. The rise and staying in power of such actors should be seen dynamically, for which I proposed a populist spiral-model, where first step in this spiral has been the failure of mainstream parties, followed by a shift in the opportunity structure, namely that the issue of migration has created an opportunity to polarize the electorate. The construction of crisis has strengthened the populist governing party by creating further demand from the electorate. This allowed for Fidesz to crackdown on its challengers coupled with an unprecedented volume of state propaganda. Eventually, this led to the solidifying of a specific type of hybrid regime, competitive

authoritarianism in Hungary. Within this process, populism is the discursive strategy utilized, and not the definition of the regime.

Social movements that have responded to the construction of the ‘refugee crisis’ emerged in this mediation opportunity structure, where threats (state capture of the media, right-wing populist discourse, refeudalization) and opportunities (visibility, self-mediation and recruitment) were both present. Nevertheless, social movement responses to the governmental propaganda were not able to counter its effects, partly due to the organizational ecology (a lack of dense, active social networks), attacks on civil society, and partly due to their limited role-definition and ambitions.

As we have seen, in the case of the three researched movements, narrative and disruptive capacities were present in their activities. The role of digital technologies in strengthening these capacities should not be underestimated. Social media allowed the movements to organize, multiply their voice, self-mediate, and regroup when necessary.

The use of their narrative and disruptive capacities nevertheless crucially contributed to sustaining a subaltern counterpublic in Hungary – but did not lead to the emergence of an overall oppositional movement.

The rise of hybrid regimes has made social scientists question and rethink long-held assumptions in their respective fields. An upside to the often-worrying trends that play out on a societal level is the blossoming of related and relevant theorizing and research in different disciplines and paradigms. What I believe is necessary is communication and cross-pollution of the different middle range theories existing across disciplines often not aware of each other. My aim here has been to provide an illustration of such an attempt, namely to create connections between the fields of social movement theory, media and communication studies and research on hybrid.

Author biography

Zsófia Nagy is an assistant lecturer at the Department of Social Psychology at Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, Hungary. She obtained a degree in sociology and social anthropology at Central European University. She is currently a doctoral student, focusing on social movements that appeared as a response to the ‘refugee crisis’ in Hungary during 2015–2017. Her further research interests include: sociology of death, political sociology, digital sociology, sociology of migration.

Summary (English)

The thesis discusses social movement responses to governmental anti-refugee propaganda in Hungary from 2015. Theoretically, its approach lies at the intersection of the study of securitization of forced migration, populist discourses, social movements and mediatization. It is based on an analysis of case studies carried out in 2015, among three relevant social movements, these case studies are contextualized by an analysis of the populist mediatized construction of ‘crisis’ in Hungary.

I provide a narrative description of the construction and contestation of *crisis* dominated by the Fidesz, and the interconnections between the factors that influence this mediatized formation of crisis-discourses and the dynamic nature of these relationships.

This chapter is followed by the three case studies. First I detail lessons learned from the analysis of Migration Aid. This chapter explores the impact of social networking sites on social movements and collective action. In this case study, I contextualize the group’s activities, exploring how they relate to the broader political environment, arguing for a need to reexamine the concept of contentious politics. I explore the characteristics that make connective action possible, with an emphasis on the group’s rhizomatic structure. The findings detail the characteristics of the rhizomatic organization and how these characteristics shape the group’s action repertoire. Afterwards I move on to discuss the counter-billboard campaign of the Hungarian mock-party, the Two-Tailed Dog Party. It argues that the campaign’s action repertoire innovatively connected acts of feel-good activism in order to address wider audiences. With the help of the counter-billboard campaign people holding a minority opinion were given a platform and visibility in the public. It also challenged official statements about the governmental campaign through uncovering inconsistencies in governmental communication. Through memetic engineering, the original messages were altered and mocked in a satirical manner and the outcomes were brought back to the streets of Hungary. The campaign used an innovative combination of several low-cost activities, which proved to be a successful strategy. On a deeper level the counter-campaign challenged the hegemonic views about public discourse. It effectively contrasted the government’s one-to-many, top-bottom approach to political communication with a campaign that relied on many-to-many communication and a bottom-up approach. The last case study introduces the Martonfa-movement. It examines how a local social movement in Martonfa – opposing the building of a refugee camp – developed during the summer of 2015. The aim of the chapter is to unpack the

effects of a perceived threat to this local community. When constructing the movement's diagnostic frame, it is not the problem of the refugee but that of democratic decision-making that is heavily emphasized. In line with this, the prognostic action frame contains very few details regarding possible solutions or strategies to tackle the issue. The motivational frame centers on 'calling to arms' possible allies and partners.

Following these empirical chapters, I move on to explain the model in which the findings can be interpreted: mediation opportunity structures in hybrid regimes. I argue that understanding the dynamics of protest and social movements in contemporary autocratic contexts demands that we pay attention to three issues: 1) the structural power of the state to dominate the mainstream media discourse; 2) the logic of right-wing populism that set limits to public discourse; and 3) a new re-feudalization of the public sphere where top-bottom, unidirectional propaganda tools aim to replace forms that promote dialogue. The findings show that the application of mediation theory to contentious action in hybrid regimes allows for a nuanced and multi-layered understanding of opportunities and constraints of such action. The paper claims that it was the populist construction of the 'refugee crisis' that allowed the Orbán-government to solidify its power. A transformational shift took place in the Hungarian mediatized opportunity structure beginning in 2015, the results of which are still affecting present day processes and that will have a lasting influence on Hungarian society. Social movement responses to these processes were not able to counter these effects, partly due to the organizational ecology, attacks on civil society, and partly due to their limited role-definition. The use of their narrative and disruptive capacities nevertheless crucially contributed to sustaining a subaltern counterpublic in Hungary – but did not lead to the emergence of an oppositional movement.

Összefoglaló (magyar)

A dolgozat tárgya a magyarországi menekültellenes propagandára adott társadalmi mozgalmi válaszok vizsgálata 2015-től. Elméleti keretűl a kényszermigráció biztonságiasítása, a populista diskurzusok, társadalmi mozgalom-elméletek és a mediatizáció szolgálnak. Empirikus alapjául három, 2015-ben megvalósított esettanulmány szolgál, amelyet három releváns társadalmi mozgalom körében végeztem, ezeket pedig a populista mediatizált válságkonstrukció analízise kontextualizálja. Ezért először a válság Fidesz általi konstrukciójának és vitatásának narratív leírását adom, illetve azon tényezők összefüggéseit vizsgálom, amelyek hatással vannak a válságdiskurzusok mediatizált formálódására, ezen összefüggések dinamikáira rámutatva.

A fejezetet három esettanulmány követi. Az első a Migration Aid elemzését mutatja be. Célja feltárni a közösségi média hatásait a társadalmi mozgalmakra és kollektív cselekvésre. Az esettanulmány során egyrészt kontextusba helyezem a csoport tevékenységét, feltárva, hogyan kapcsolódott az a tágabb politikai környezethez, amellyel érvelve, hogy a tiltakozó cselekvés újragondolására van szükség. Feltárom azokat a tényezőket, amelyek a konnektív cselekvést lehetővé tették, hangsúlyt fektetve a csoport rizomatikus struktúrájára. Az eredmények egyrészt a rizomatikus szervezet jellegzetességeit mutatják be, másrészt, hogy hogyan hatnak ezek a csoport cselekvési repertoárjára. Ezt követően a Magyar Kétfarkú Kutya Párt nevű viccpárt 2015-ös ellen-plakátkampányjának elemzése következik. Az elemzés amellyel érvel, hogy a kampány cselekvési repertoárja kreatívan kapcsolt össze hobbi-aktivista tevékenységeket annak érdekében, hogy tágabb közönségeket elérjen. Az ellen-plakát kampány segítségével a kisebbségi véleményen levők platformhoz és láthatóságához jutottak a nyilvánosságban. Emellett a kampány ahhoz is hozzájárult, hogy a kormányzati kampánnyal való kijelentéseket, illetve ezek inkonzisztenciáját is megkérdőjelezze. Memetikus tervezés segítségével a kormány eredeti üzeneteit átalakították, szatirikus hangnemben kigúnyolták, mindennek eredményei pedig megjelentek a magyar utcákon. A kampány számos alacsony költségű tevékenységet kombinált innovatívan, ami sikeres stratégiának bizonyult. Az ellenkampány egy mélyebb értelemben is kihívást jelentett a nyilvános diskurzussal kapcsolatos hegemon elképzelésekkel szemben. Hatékonyan állította szembe kormányzati felülről-lefele, egytől-sokaknak való megközelítést a politikai kommunikációt illetően saját kampányával, amely a fentről-lefele és a sokaktól-sokaknak elven alapult. Az utolsó esettanulmány a martonfai mozgalmat mutatja be. Azt vizsgálja, hogy alakult ki 2015 nyarán egy mozgalom – amely egy menekülttábor elleni tiltakozásképp született – a faluban. A fejezet célja egyrészt azoknak a hatásoknak a feltárása,

amelyet a vélt fenyegetés jelentett a helyi közösség számára. A mozgalom diagnosztikus keretének megalkotásakor nem a menekült alakja, hanem a demokratikus döntéshozatal igénye került középpontba. Ezzel összhangban a prognosztikus keret nagyon kevés lehetséges megoldást, vagy stratégiát tartalmaz az ügy kezelésére. A motivációs keret lehetséges szövetségesei és partnerek 'fegyverbe hívását' szolgálja.

Az empirikus fejezeteket követően a dolgozat ismerteti azt a modellt, amelynek keretei között az eredmények értelmezhetők: a hibrid rendszerekben megjelenő mediációs lehetőségstruktúrák modelljét. Amellett érvelek, hogy a tiltakozás és társadalmi mozgalmi cselekvés megértéséhez a kortárs autokrata kontextusban három tényezőre kell különösen figyelni: 1) a hatalom strukturális erejére, amely a mainstream média-diskurzusok dominálására irányul; 2) a jobboldali populizmus logikájára, amely korlátozza a nyilvános diskurzust; 3) a nyilvánosság új refeudalizálására, amely a dialógusok támogatása helyett fentről-lefele, egyirányú propaganda eszközöket használ. Az eredmények azt mutatják, hogy a mediatizáció elméleti kerete a tiltakozásra alkalmazva a hibrid rezsimekben az ilyen tevékenységekben rejlő fenyegetések és lehetőségek árnyalt és mély megértéséhez járul hozzá. A dolgozat következtetése, hogy a 'menekültválság' populista konstruálása az, ami lehetővé tette az Orbán-kormány számára, hogy megerősítse hatalmát. A magyar mediatizált lehetőségstruktúrában 2015-től kezdődően fundamentális átalakulás ment végbe, amelynek hatásai a jelenben is érezhetők, és amelyek hosszú távon fognak nyomot hagyni a magyar társadalmon. A folyamatokra adott társadalmi mozgalmi válaszok nem voltak képesek ellentartani ezeknek a hatásoknak, részben a tágabb szervezeti ökológia, részben a civil társadalom elleni támadások, részben a mozgalmak korlátozott szerepfelfogása miatt. Narratív és disruptív kapacitásaik használata ugyanakkor hozzájárult egy szubaltern nyilvánosság fenntartásához Magyarországon – bár nem vezetett egy ellenzéki mozgalom felemelkedéséhez.

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