The Scope and Ability of Civil Society to Challenge Anti-Migrant Feelings with Particular Reference to the Netherlands and Hungary

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Abstract

The topic of this thesis is connected to the so-called refugee crisis of 2015, when an enormous number of refugees fled Syria due to war and came to Europe. This influx of refugees seems to divide the European nations: they either would like to help or close their borders completely.

The aim of this thesis is to find out whether civil society is able to counterbalance the rising anti-migrant feelings in contemporary European societies. Furthermore, the purpose of this thesis is to give a balanced view of the issue of migration with the help of those people who work for NGOs which are set up for providing help for asylum-seekers, refugees and migrants.

To achieve this goal I carried out four qualitative interviews of the above mentioned NGOs: two in Hungary and two in the Netherlands. The two countries are very different in the sense that while the Netherlands is considered to be on the liberal side of the political spectrum, the current prime minister of Hungary declared this country to be an illiberal one.
Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Dr Andrew Ryder, my thesis seminar teacher for his suggestions and help concerning the content of my thesis.

I also thank Menedék and Groningen Verwelkomt Vluchtelingen for allowing me to base my research on their organisations and to carry out interviews with them.

Furthermore I would like to thank Anja van der Meulen and Frits Broekema for helping me with searching for organisations that I could make the interviews with in the Netherlands.
Contents

1. Introduction ............................................................................................................................................... 1

2. Literature review ..................................................................................................................................... 2
   2.1. Migration – an evolutionary perspective ....................................................................................... 2
   2.2. Civil society – a definition with different points of views ............................................................... 3
   2.3. The shift from large government based organisations to small NGOs .......................................... 4
   2.4. From grassroots activism to governmentality .................................................................................... 6
   2.5. From migration to an issue of securitisation ..................................................................................... 6
   2.6. The role of civil society in issues of migration .................................................................................. 9
   2.7. Hungary ............................................................................................................................................ 10
   2.8. The Netherlands ............................................................................................................................... 11

3. Methodology ............................................................................................................................................ 13
   3.1 Research methods ............................................................................................................................... 13
   3.2. Details of the interviews .................................................................................................................. 14
      3.2.1. The interviewees ......................................................................................................................... 14
   3.3. Ethical Issues .................................................................................................................................. 14

4. Research Findings ................................................................................................................................. 15
   4.1. The organisations ............................................................................................................................. 15
   4.2. Characteristics of the organisations .................................................................................................. 16
   4.3. Funding .......................................................................................................................................... 16
   4.4. Aims ............................................................................................................................................... 17
      4.4.1. GVV ............................................................................................................................................ 17
      4.4.2. Integration or assimilation? ....................................................................................................... 17
      4.4.3. Menedék ................................................................................................................................... 18
      4.4.4. Lobbying, securitisation and liberalism ..................................................................................... 18
   4.5. Organisation .................................................................................................................................. 19
      4.5.1 Inclusivity .................................................................................................................................. 19
      4.5.2. Content analysis of interviews and the websites of the NGOs ................................................ 21
1. Introduction

My thesis aims to explore how civil society can counterbalance the rising of anti-migrant feelings in Europe, with special attention to Hungary and the Netherlands. The study will have a case study approach: targeting one NGO in each country by carrying out qualitative interviews. I chose to focus on these two countries because Hungary is my home country, and the recent refugee crisis/migration in Syria have been one of the most important topics in my country because of the number of asylum-seekers was huge – 177,135 in total in 2015 of whom 508 received a refugee status (KSH, 2017) - and hundreds of people were stuck in Budapest in one of the main train stations, which attracted the attention of not only people living in Budapest, but naturally the international media as well.

I also discuss how members of Dutch NGO-s perceive these events. I chose the Netherlands because I had the chance to spend a semester at the University of Groningen as an exchange student, and because the Dutch society is viewed as quite liberal, while Hungary is considered to be one of the more conservative countries in Europe. The comparison of such countries that are on different sides of the political spectrum should lead to quite diverse findings in the end. Since Hungary is more on the conservative side, in general, people are not in favour of migrants or refugees, what is more, the current Hungarian government openly declares that according to them the refugees coming from Syria are a source of insecurity.

In the Netherlands, as I discuss further in my thesis, the national government is more welcoming towards the refugees and asylum-seekers, even though a radical right wing party, Party for Freedom, being the second biggest party in the Netherlands gained more and more momentum during the last approximately 10 years. Since it is a radical right party, they are not at all in favour of refugees. In my opinion, it would be quite interesting to see the size of the difference between the perceptions of the representatives of the NGO-s in these two countries based on their experiences, and in contrary to see how the problem of recent migration is presented in the media, and how the national governments are approaching the issue of refugees in the countries I write my thesis about. My thesis will also discuss the importance and role of civil societies in dealing with the issue of refugees, and seeks to answer the question whether it can be helpful in counterbalancing the rising of anti-migrant feelings in European societies, such as Hungary and the Netherlands. My thesis will discover the reasons why migration, a phenomenon that has
been present since the beginning of human history (Donato & Massey, 2016), became an issue of securitization by the end of the 20th century (Huysmans, 2000).

In this thesis I primarily write about the issues that concern refugees: those people who obtained a residence permit in their destination countries.

2. Literature review

The topic of my thesis is related to migration and civil society, more precisely how they deal with the refugee crisis that is currently going on in Europe. In the literature review segment of my thesis I searched for journals and articles that explain why migration happens, how civil society, NGOs work, and whether they are helpful in counterbalancing the anti-migrant feeling that is present in the European Union.

2.1. Migration – an evolutionary perspective

Donato and Massey (2016) argues that humans are the only organisms that could move from one place to another furthest in space and quickest in time. In their work (2016) they give an evolutionary overview on how humans populated the earth. 150,000 years ago, the first humans emerged in East Africa, from where they migrated to East Asia and Australia about 50,000 years ago. Humans appeared on Northern Europe 40,000 years ago, and America 12,000 years ago. (Donato & Massey, 2016). Since people migrated from the start of the history of humans, they claim that “humans are migratory species” (Donato & Massey, 2016), and that people will continue to migrate when their living conditions are not satisfactory at the place that they originated from (Donato & Massey, 2016).

The paper of Donato and Massey (2016) discusses two periods of mass migration. The first one started in the 16th century and lasted until the 19th century. This phase was characterized by the colonial expansion of Europe by creating colonies in Africa, America and Asia. At that time, the number of people fleeing Europe to start a new life on one of the colonised continents was not at all big, in contrary, the number of slaves that were deported from colonised territories were around 10 million (Donato & Massey, 2016). The second phase took place between 1800 and 1929, due to industrialization. This phase is also the first phase of globalisation, this was the time when global capitalism emerged. Around 50 million people left Europe and moved to America and Oceania (Donato & Massey, 2016).
Although migration has been around since the appearance of humans on Earth, there is a new form of migration that was not present until recently. This form of migration, according to Donato and Massey (2016), is illegal migration, which is a consequence of the contradictions of the second phase of globalisation. The second phase of capitalist globalisation started after the Second World War, after Japan and Europe could rebuild their economies, and made them knowledge-based. Several international organisations were created at that time in order to maintain peace and boost global trade (such as the United Nations and the World Bank) (Donato & Massey, 2016). The contradiction of this era lies in the fact that while nations desire to take part in the global market, due to the restrictions of the globalisation of the labour market and the market of human capital in both qualitative and quantitative terms, most parts of the production is immobile; thus, they can’t participate in it (Donato & Massey, 2016).

Some of the reasons why people choose to leave their home country might be seeking for better living and working conditions, or the lack of security of their home country, due to war or other conflicts. According to Donato and Massey (2016) people who wish to move to another country will be accepted or denied based on the following categories: people with financial and physical capital are widely accepted to move to other countries. Furthermore, countries that value human, social or cultural capital welcome moderately people who have the above-mentioned qualities, while people who lack the capital that is demanded by the destination country are strictly controlled and limited.

2.2. Civil society – a definition with different points of views

Civil societies and NGOs are often associated with providers of support and help for those in need - in the case of my thesis, I will focus on helping migrants and refugees. Civil society, per the International Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences (2008), “is the realm of independent activity and voluntary association that is not organized by the state”. Many scholars, including Montesquieu and Tocqueville attempted to define it, and these definitions consist of several concepts, of which many valued civil societies as something that is beneficial for the society by stressing that it is an entity which is independent of the state, and they can be a mediator between the individuals and the state (Darity, 2008). Civil society “exists within the framework of the rule of law, accepting a certain commitment to the political community and the rules of the game established by the state” (Darity, 2008). Others, such as Rousseau and Marx approached civil society from a more
critical point of view: “they saw (civil society) as an economic and social order, developing in accordance with its own rules and independently of the state” (Darity, 2008), and even though civil society was viewed as something beneficial for the society by most people, Rousseau argued that it is not perfect, it can be unjust and influenced by elitism and it can also be contradictory in the sense that it can lead to economic inequalities while originally, it was there to represent the “general will” of the society (Darity, 2008). Marx viewed civil society as something that increased economic inequalities and exploitation of the workers, and that it was characterised by alienation and individualism, from which only the bourgeoisie could benefit (Darity, 2008). The International Encyclopedia of Social Sciences (2008) holds that today, civil society “focuses on the causal link between democratization and the non-political aspects of the contemporary social order” (Darity, 2008), and it does not debate whether civil society is in conflict with the state (Darity, 2008).

2.3. The shift from large government based organisations to small NGOs

Let us now turn to the main concern of my thesis: the work of civil societies and NGOs. From the 1980’s onward, the cooperation increased between actors of development and security on the governmental level in most countries, and at the same time, a need for post-conflict reconciliations and peace building was also present, hence the work of non-governmental organisations, civil societies were demanded (Howell & Lind, 2009). After the declaration of the war on terror more and more attention was paid to Muslim people, furthermore the media was easily manipulated by Muslim terrorists, and civil societies seemed to be the solution to get rid of anti-radical perspectives and the prevention of terrorist attacks (Howell & Lind, 2009). Furthermore, civil societies played a role in conflict prevention and state building, that is why, according to Howell and Lind (2009), civil societies were “absorbed into the security domain”. In the mid 1980’s numerous case studies were carried out about the role and work of civil societies worldwide, praising these state-independent organisations about their flexibility, and how responsive they are to local needs (Howell & Lind, 2009). Sarah Blue (2005) in her work, Including women in development gives a brief overview of and explains how the shift from large government based organisation to small NGOs happened with regards to the taking care of refugees and migrants. She argues that the reason this shift happened is that governments in developing countries failed to consider “local realities” when it came to
carrying out projects which aimed at developing those areas, or countries (Blue, 2005). Local NGOs, who are independent of the state and politics, seemed to be the solution to tackle the problems that the government failed to solve, and to provide humanitarian aid for those in need of it (Blue, 2005). Civil societies were seen as “arenas of harmony” (Howell & Lind, 2009), and the general assumption about civil society was that it is an “agency of peace and good”, a tool for “bridge-building” between societies and a way of reconciling nations (Howell & Lind, 2009). Moreover, civil society was viewed as a power, that lacks all kinds of violence and evil, which means that criminal gangs and other violent groups were not a part of the domain of civil society (Howell & Lind, 2009).

On the contrary, a study carried out by Christopher A. Bail (2012), shows that those groups of people who represent radical far-right politics, and are not afraid to use violence against minority groups who they consider to be subordinate, are indeed can be called civil societies as well. In his work, he refers to them as fringe organisations, who are able to successfully convey their messages through the media or other platforms, by displaying the emotion of fear or anger (Bail, 2012). He finds that even though there are more pro-Muslim organisations worldwide, the anti-Muslim organisations are louder in the media, due to the fact that they manage to bring across their peripheral messages and point of views with the displaying of fear and anger more successfully than those pro-Muslim organisations who are trying to vanish the stereotypes and prejudices that Muslim people nowadays have to face (Bail, 2012).

After the turn of the millennium, the assumption that civil societies including NGOs are the best solution (that human kind came up with up to this point) for fighting against inequalities and helping those in need was not so popular. Donor agencies realised the -previously unknown- limitations of what civil societies can achieve, or rather what they cannot achieve. Furthermore, donor agencies, after years of working of NGOs realised how diverse these organisations can be in size, scope and capacity, and that they expressed disapproval of the high transaction costs that they suffer from due to the above-mentioned characteristics of NGOs (Howell & Lind, 2009). Another problem of civil society, including NGOs, according to Howell and Lind (2009) is that without the donor agency that provides them with monetary funds, they would collapse, because civil societies in some countries could not rely on financial help from the local community.

The growing academic literature of civil society contains contradicting results from the
2000s on about the role of civil society in development, which is another serious issue (Howell & Lind, 2009).

2.4. From grassroots activism to governmentality

Small community based NGOs also chime with conceptions of grassroots community activism which is according to the Civil Rights Movement, www.civilrightsmovement.cu.uk (2016) is a way of campaigning for something that the participants feel strongly about. Grassroots activists are independent of any political parties. The website also states that despite the fact that usually grassroots activists campaign for a goal that is on the opposite side of the political spectrum from what the ruling party represents, these grassroots activist initiatives can be quite successful in achieving their goals.

A key theorist in civil society being premised on such principles is Paolo Freire who argued that critical pedagogy can “transform oppressed people and to save them from being objects of education to subjects of their own autonomy and emancipation” (Aliakbari & Faraji, 2011). Freire used critical consciousness and grassroots activism as means to achieve “integrity and trust” (Goswami, 2009 as cited in Ryder, et al., 2014) in the society through critical pedagogy.

Of relevance to this views is Alinsky who believed grassroots activism was needed to mobilise communities. He argued that the voices and experiences of oppressed people should be heard through grassroots activist movements, which will eventually lead to social justice (Ryder, et al., 2014).

In contrast Foucault was alert to the opposite of grassroots activism happening in civil society with his notion of “governmentality” which claims that “the state will always be there, residing in a system of eternal inter-state competition” (Villadsen, 2016). According to Foucault there was a shift from viewing the governed as natural right-holders or “juridical categories of sovereign rule” to viewing the members of a society as rational actors (Villadsen, 2016). Based on this shift, Foucault argued that the centre of liberal governmentality is the governed (Villadsen, 2016).

2.5. From migration to an issue of securitisation

According to Dace Schlentz (2010), the concept of securitisation was first used by the Copenhagen School. It does not only mean securitisation in the traditional way – where
threats are mainly threats to the state and which need to be defended by the military. The Copenhagen School extended the meaning of securitization to political, economic, and human rights issues as well. The securitisation paradigm “is based on the premise that security issues are constructed through securitizing moves whereby an actor represents – through a speech act - an object as constituting an existential threat to the survival of a given referent object” (Schlentz, 2010). Since the actor is seen as a threat, special measures can be introduced, regardless of “the regular standards of political rules, respect for human rights and international treaty obligations” (Schlentz, 2010) to handle the situation.

The paper of Jeff Huysmans (2000) discovers the reasons why migration became an issue of securitization in Western Europe over the last few decades. Furthermore, Huysmans (2000) attempts to find out why the influx of migrants is perceived as something frightening in the Western societies. Huysmans (2000) gives an evolutionary perspective on how the incoming migrants, called as guest workers in the beginning, developed into something not-so-desirable, and something that raise concern about security in Western European countries.

Between 1950 and 1960, migrants coming from non-Western countries were viewed as extra work force in Western European societies, of whom these nations made a lot of advantages due to the fact that the guest workers worked for less money (Huysmans, 2000). This period was characterised by permissive policies with regards to migrants; they did not mean a problem in political, cultural or security terms, furthermore, the legal status of migrants did not matter, only the cheap labour did (Huysmans, 2000).

Between 1960 and 1970, there was a shift from permissive to restrictive policy (Huysmans, 2000). This was the phase in which the political rhetoric about migration increasingly supported the point of view which claims that there is a link between migration and the destabilisation of public order (Huysmans, 2000).

From the 1980’s onwards, an increase in the politicization of immigration can be observed in Western countries, because of the lack of distinction between migrants and asylum-seekers, stating that asylum is “an alternative route for economic migration” (Huysmans, 2000). The politicization of migration was followed by the Europeanization of migration: which meant that even stricter policies of migration were introduced to maintain the domestic stability and the public order in Europe (Huysmans, 2000).
These strict policies were designed to make it less appealing for people who wished to move to Western European countries by setting out requirements for the migrants that they cannot meet; which “ideally” leads to less applications for asylum in Western European societies (Huysmans, 2000). The previous events, policies and perceptions lead to the problematisation of migration, and from the 1980s on the “protection of public order and preservation of domestic stability” (Huysmans, 2000), meaning that migration is a threat for the domestic society, was a topic that was highly debated. These debates lead to the declaration of the connection between immigration, asylum and terrorism, moreover transnational crime in 1985 during the 1990 Convention Applying the Schengen Agreement (Huysmans, 2000).

Statements claiming that migration weakens the societal homogeneity and national traditions of Western countries played a role in the reinforcement of the political myth that holds that there was “homogenous western civilisation” in the past, and that it can be only protected by the exclusion of migrants from Western societies (Huysmans, 2000). Huysmans (2000) also adds, that the securitization of migration was not only promoted by far right based political parties, but for example national governments and the media as well.

Cynthia Hardy (2003) in her work focuses on the power dynamics of refugee determination system, and she does so from a Foucauldian point of view. She argues that the main concern of Western European governments is to defend their sovereignty by finding a way to reducing the number of asylum seekers and to introduce harsher control over who is allowed to cross the borders of the country (Hardy, 2003). Like Huysmans, Hardy (2003) also represents a critical point of view on Western governments’ attitude towards asylum seekers. The analysis she carries out shows that there is no point in trying keep the refugees outside the Western part of Europe, because that is not the solution to the issue of migration, although this seems to be the main concern of governments (Hardy, 2003). Governments do not seem to realise that these policies do not affect the underlying driving forces of migration, hence they can’t terminate the feared consequences that are

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1 The definition of power according to Foucault: „Power is not a thing but a relation. Power is not simply repressive but it is productive. Power is not simply a property of the State. Power is not something that is exclusively localized in government and the State (which is not a universal essence). Rather, power is exercised throughout the social body. Power operates at the most micro levels of social relations. Power is omnipresent at every level of the social body. The exercise of power is strategic and war-like” (O'Farrell, 2010)
linked to international migration (such as the loss of the sovereignty of the nation and the lack of jobs on the labour market due to increased competition) (Ambrosini & Van der Leun, 2015).

2.6. The role of civil society in issues of migration

A paper by Maurizio Ambrosini and Joanne van der Leun (2015) also claims that there is no country on Earth that does not have policies on migration, and these policies aim at maintaining their national sovereignty. While governments seem to be busy with the legal part of the question, civil societies attempt to take care of migrants. Most civil societies tend to focus on the asylum-seekers (Ambrosini & Van der Leun, 2015). Trade unions and especially religious institutions provide migrants with some sort of aid: practical, moral support, and the possibility to meet their co-ethnics (Ambrosini & Van der Leun, 2015).

Ambrosini and Van der Leun (2015) argues that while civil society is well known for their role in integration of immigrants and bringing about social change (Bail, 2012), until recently they were not involved in service provision, at least there is not much data on it. Civil societies should be “seen as a descriptive concept that can function as a starting point to understand the complex interrelationship between NGOs in the field of migration and the state” (Hsu, 2012 as cited in Ambrosini & Van der Leun, 2015). So far we have seen that civil societies (who support the rights of migrants and refugees) seem to be in contradiction with the governments of Western Europe. While the former is seeking ways to provide legal and other sort of help for migrants, the latter would like to maintain their national sovereignty by introducing policies that make it quite burdensome to move from a non-Western country to one of the European countries.

However, Ambrosini and Van der Leun (2015) contend that even though there is this contradiction between civil societies and governments, there is a phenomenon called “liminal service provision”. It means that humans (even those who are against illegal migration) can be touched by some of the stories that -in this case- the migrants and asylum seekers bring with themselves, and it can influence their mind-set in such a way that they become involved in supporting the rights and well-being of refugees (Ellerman, 2006 as cited in Ambrosini & Van der Leun, 2015). This way, the toleration of services that provide migrants with the sorts of help they need can lead to indirectly funding these services and which would mean that “states do not give up the principle of national
sovereignty, but people living on the territory can receive at the local level some basic services they need” (Ambrosini & Van der Leun, 2015).

There is another, more explicit way of civil societies in achieving their goals with regards to the issue of migration. They do so by protesting policies that are aiming at keeping illegal migrants and asylum seekers outside of the border, and this way they attempt to change public opinion about the issue of refugees (Ambrosini & Van der Leun, 2015). It seems to be in line with Bail’s (2012) reasoning, who claims that civil societies can bring on social change by setting up mainstream messages that “resonate with prevailing discursive themes” (Bail, 2012). It also needs to be taken into consideration that Ambrosini and Van der Leun (2015) focused only on the positive outcomes of changing people’s mind-set through stories that affect their emotions. Bail (2012) on the other hand claims that for example anti-migrant, fringe organisations (which also belong to the domain of civil society) can be very effective in manipulating people’s perceptions of and emotions towards migrants and refugees in a negative way, by presenting information about migrants via displaying fear or anger in their messages.

2.7. Hungary

While reading the existing literature on the topic of my thesis, I found papers that are examining how a Hungarian NGO handled the issue of migration around the turn of the millennium in one of the refugee camps in Hungary. A study by Elvira Jaiswal (2005) depicts the realities of a refugee camp in Hungary, and it pays special attention the work and duties of members of NGOs who were interacting the refugees and migrants who came to Hungary.

First, I will briefly summarise the duties the volunteers of NGOs had to fulfil, then I will give an overview of how successful their work was.

Community workers had to build trust by the involvement of asylum-seekers management responsibilities, ensuring the anonymity of refugees, monitoring the asylum seekers, so that workers can immediately react to their needs. Furthermore, they tried to focus the asylum seekers attention on the similarities rather than the differences, and providing them with equal treatment. These initiatives lead to an environment in which the asylum seekers experienced respect and could work with the volunteers and community workers of the camp. They felt that they had authority, and that they self-organised football tournaments and language classes for themselves. Jaiswal (2005)
argues that one component behind the success was that the asylum seekers were not placed in depressing surroundings, but newly furnished and painted rooms that had a positive impact on the mood of the refugees. The second, more important component was that refugees could experience that they belonged to this newly-formed community, and by sharing their life experiences with each other, helped them build a “common ground”, even if they were coming from countries that conflicted with each other. Moreover, giving them different roles of the community (librarian, teacher, and sports coach) helped them to “re-establish their lives and identities” (Jaiswal, 2005).

During and after the summer of 2015, the European media paid special attention to Hungary, because of its way of dealing with the influx of refugees from the Middle East. The policies that were introduced to handle the situation divided not only the Hungarian society, but most European countries as well. The point of view of the Hungarian government was not in favour of migrants or refugees. From the beginning of the “crisis” the government made it clear that Hungary does not want to welcome refugees, and introduced policies – some argue that these were introduced for making the life of migrants even more difficult, while others are convinced that these interventions, such as building a wall on the Eastern border of Hungary, or immobilizing migrants, were submitted to make it easier to monitor who is passing through the country.

Kallius, Monterescu and Rajaram (2016) - based on the tone of their paper - belong to the former category. They are rather critical about Hungarian government’s interventions of the refugee crisis, and in their paper, Border ethnography, illiberal democracy and the politics (2016), they give a detailed overview of what happened to migrants coming to Hungary from June until October 2015. They conclude that the solution of the refugee crisis in – for example - Hungary lies in “refusing an event-based temporality of “crisis” that dehistoricizes both context and agency, turning instead to articulating the connections between the management of migrants and deep-seated economic, political, and cultural processes that maintain the illusion of a coherent state (and the public that it depends on)” (Kallius, Monterescu, & Rajaram, 2016).

2.8. The Netherlands

As I mentioned in the introduction of my thesis, for me, the Netherlands belongs to the more liberal countries of Europe, hence I had the presupposition that the Dutch society is more welcoming towards migrants and refugees. One in five people currently living in
the Netherlands were born outside of the country or are children of immigrants (Scholten, et al., 2015), which is quite a large share of the Dutch population, which would also lead to the presupposition that the Netherlands is an accepting country. However, the first paper that I read about the issue did not confirm my expectation. Joanne Van der Leun and Harmen Bouter argues that in the Netherlands, “the national government follows a strong exclusionary policy” (Ambrosini & Van der Leun, 2015). An example of these policies can be the Linking Act, which was introduced in the Netherlands in 1998, and its aim was to “exclude illegal or undocumented immigrants from public services” (Van der Leun, 2006). These attempts to exclude migrants went as far as urging NGOs not to support refugees and migrants anymore (Ambrosini & Van der Leun, 2015). Even though they were discouraged from helping migrants in need, civil societies in the Netherlands are still providing help and support for them – but they do it in a way that does not “endanger their working relations with the national government” (Ambrosini & Van der Leun, 2015). Based on this, the findings of Joanne Van der Leun (2006) does not take the reader by surprise: it concludes that what the national government stated about migration is not in line with the local authorities in every case: while the government tries to get rid of the immigrants, street-level workers treat the presence of migrants and refugees as “a fact of life” (Van der Leun, 2006). The study of Joanne Van der Leun (2006) was carried out more than ten years ago, I am fascinated to find out in my thesis how this situation changed, if changed at all.

While looking for sources for my literature review, I found many papers that deal with the history, impacts, policies and issues of migration and the work of civil societies. However, I could not find much information about (or up to date information) whether civil societies can or cannot counterbalance the anti-migrant feeling that is growing in Europe, with special attention to Hungary and the Netherlands. This is the reason why, in my opinion, the topic of my thesis is relevant, and can contribute something new to the already existing literature.

The journals that I reviewed for this section of the thesis are relevant to this research in the sense that they explain the connections between high migration rates and the expansion of securitization, furthermore it presents theories and narratives of the advantages and disadvantages of civil society and its work: these are the issues that I wish to investigate further with the qualitative interviews that were carried out.
3. Methodology

I collected the data for my thesis through four qualitative, individual interviews: I carried out two-two interviews with Hungarian and Dutch NGOs, who are providing help for refugees and migrants in both countries, be it legal, fiscal or moral support. Because of the size of my sample, my findings cannot be representative, but this is not the primary goal of my research.

The strength of this approach is that with the qualitative interviews I managed to obtain first-hand data. It was of particular importance for me to gather information of the refugees in Europe from those people who actually have a day-to-day interaction with them, and are not connected to the media or any political parties of the given society, hence they are able to convey their impressions of and experiences with the refugees from their own perspective, without being biased by the above mentioned organisations.

3.1 Research methods

I begin my thesis by researching the already existing literature of my topic. The papers that I used for my research give a historical overview of migration, and how it developed to be a phenomenon that is viewed as something threatening, and in fact an issue of securitisation in most countries on Earth. I also aimed to find out how civil societies work and whether they are capable of transforming the public opinion of migration in European countries, as well as influence governments in policy making regarding the refugees.

In order to obtain the required information about the above-mentioned issues, I carried out four individual qualitative interviews, two in Hungary and two in the Netherlands. The interviewees of this research were all people who worked for NGOs either in Hungary or the Netherlands.

Interpretivism was another method that I used while doing the analysis for this thesis. Interpretivism allows the researcher to include his or her “human interest” into the study, and it mainly focuses on meaning by interpreting elements of the study (Dudovsky, 2016).

For interpreting the interviews I chose the method of discourse analysis. Discourse analysis allows the researcher to study the linguistic repertoires of the given document: with this method the choice of words of my interviewees can be analysed.

Furthermore I used content analysis for studying the websites of the NGOs to find out what kind of patterns can be observed in the data presented on the websites, what is their
philosophy and what they are focusing on primarily with regards to supporting the refugees. I contrasted the organisations based on the available information about their work in English and about their structures.

3.2. Details of the interviews

I interviewed four people all together. They were all people who work for NGOs that provide help in any way for asylum-seekers, refugees or migrants. Two of them are Dutch, and two of them are Hungarian. The interviews were structured. Below I give a brief summary of who I interviewed. All the interviews were recorded, with the consent of the interviewees. In order to maintain their anonymity the names below are not the real names of my interviewees, they were given by me. The interview questions can be found in the Appendices section of this thesis.

I have to admit, that the task of managing to find organisations whom I can interview was a lot more difficult, than I thought it was going to be.

3.2.1. The interviewees

Martijn was my first interviewee, he is a Dutch young man living in Groningen. He became connected to refugees while he was doing his internship for university in an NGO. After that he was passionate about the well-being of refugees and that is how he became a member of GVV.

Daan is also a Dutch man, the interview with him was shorter, and we only talked about the questions that were part of the interviews. He is a member of the board of GVV.

János is a legal advisor of Menedék. He is Hungarian and have been working for Menedék since 2015. His work includes giving legal advice for refugees and to help their integration into the Hungarian society.

Dénes is a social worker of Menedék. He is also Hungarian. Dénes started working for Menedék in 2016. He mainly focuses on organising sports events for the refugees and he also helps them integrating into the labour market.

3.3. Ethical Issues

During my research for this thesis I adhered to the International Sociological Association’s Code of Ethics (ISA).
Before starting the interviews in every case I assured my interviewees that the data that I collect from them will remain confidential. I preserve their anonymity by giving them new names, hence the names appearing in the thesis are fictional, not the real names of the interviewees. Furthermore I provided them information about myself, where I am studying, what the reason is behind the interviews, what my aim is with this research. They signed a document which proves that they gave me their consent of recording the interviews and that they have been informed about the nature of the research sufficiently (see Appendices).

4. Research Findings

The following segment of the thesis discusses what the findings of the individual interviews that I carried out with members of organisations that work with refugees are. Furthermore I will compare my results of the interviews to the results of the literature review section of my thesis, to see what the major differences and similarities are.

4.1. The organisations

Firstly, I tried to interview Dutch NGO-s, who are providing any sort of help for the refugees, asylum seekers and migrants in the Netherlands. The city that I was an exchange student in had at least five organisations that would have been perfect for me to make interviews with, but after I tried to reach them via e-mail and going to their headquarters personally, only one of them replied, but they could not help me either because of the workload they had during the period I stayed in the Netherlands. Finally, two young men from the organisation, called “Groningen Verwelkomt Vluchtelingen” (in English: Groningen Welcomes Refugees, from now on, I will refer to it as GVV). GVV is a Dutch non-governmental organisation, which was founded in Groningen, the Netherlands in 2015. It aims at making refugees from all over the world feeling like at home in Groningen - “We do this by organising and coordinating social and cultural activities. We also function as an intermediate between the society and the refugees” - as indicated on their website, http://www.groningenverwelkomt.nl.

After coming home from the Netherlands, based on previous experience, I was quite nervous about whether I can find an organisation that can help me carry out my research in Hungary, so that I can do the comparative study that I planned to do. I contacted Menedék – Migránsokat Segítő Egyesület (in english: Shelter – Hungarian Association
for Migrants), which is a Budapest-based organisation. They replied and I could carry out the interview with its members. The association has been present in Hungary for the last two decades, and the work of Menedék is very complex: they not only target migrants that are coming to Hungary to help them with their integration, but they also deal with educating people who work with migrants, refugees, asylum-seekers on a daily basis, including social workers, police officers, people working in healthcare. Furthermore, they aim at educating the majority of the Hungarian population, that is the Hungarian citizens about the importance of integrating and helping the refugees who are coming to the country, making them more open towards the refugees, because, as they argue “it is [making the majority of the population more welcoming towards the refugees] one of the most indispensable condition of the successful integration of migrants” (Menedék, 2012).

4.2. Characteristics of the organisations

I think it is important to highlight, that the NGOs that I based my research on are different in almost every aspect as it will be visible through the next few section of this segment of the thesis. One of the most important difference is the size of the organisations: Menedék, although is a small organisation with 52 workers, is considered to be a rather big one among non-governmental organisations in Hungary. GVV is a smaller organisation, I do not have the exact number of the volunteers working there. GVV operates solely with the help of volunteers, they do not have any full or part-time workers, which raises some problems, on which I will elaborate in more detail later in the thesis. Menedék has full and part-time workers, as well as volunteers. Despite of their relatively small staff members, all of my interviewees told me that they have enough workers and volunteers working for the organisation.

4.3. Funding

By definition, NGO-s, humanitarian aids and civil society in general is independent of the state, hence they are not funded by the national governments of the given country they operate in. GVV is ran by donations and crowd-funding. This sort of funding does not provide the possibility of hiring people to work full time for the organisation, all the workers of GVV are volunteers. Menedék is in a better position compared to GVV in the sense that they rely on funds from the European Union and the United Nations, not solely on donations. Dénes says that the workers of Menedék are not exclusively volunteers, but
a bigger share of them work as full-time workers for the NGO. Furthermore, Menedék states explicitly on their website, menedek.hu, that they do not accept any sort of support from the government or other political parties, hence emphasizing their autonomy. The reason behind non-governmental organisations, like GVV and Menedék being independent of the state might be that they would not want to be associated with the state, or that they would not like to sacrifice their autonomy, which might happen if they accept funds from the government – they might feel obliged to act in a way that is desired by the state, not the principles of the given NGO.

4.4. Aims

4.4.1. GVV

GVV focuses on creating connections between refugees and Dutch people. Both of my interviewees emphasized the importance of creating connections during the conversations. Furthermore, Daan, one of my interviewees also highlights the need for Dutch citizens to acquire first-hand information and experiences of the refugees - so that through the stories of refugees the Dutch society can become more and more welcoming and understanding - for which GVV creates the opportunity: “[Dutch people] can get to know them better besides the news, and so that refugees can get in touch with Dutch people”.

According to Daan, the activities that they organised for and with the refugees living in Groningen helped them to integrate to the society more easily.

4.4.2. Integration or assimilation?

The Dutch was known for creating beneficial policies for refugees and migrants for the past decades, but the dynamics of migrant policies started to change from the 2000s on. The responsibility of integration from the beginning of the 2000s rests on those who wish to live in the Netherlands, not the Dutch citizens or the national government and its policies (Scholten, et al., 2015). Furthermore, Scholten et al. (2015) argues, that there has been an “assimilationist turn”, hence less emphasis was put on multiculturalism. Moreover, the introduced measures do not focus on the “public recognition of migrants’ cultural identity” (Scholten, et al., 2015). In light of this information, the presence of such
organisations as GVV is of exceptional importance in order to successfully integrate the refugees and migrants into the Dutch society.

A quite intriguing expression was used by Daan during our conversation of GVV. He referred to refugees with whom they interact as “new Dutch people”. The question is: do these refugees want to become new Dutch people, or would they rather maintain their cultural identity of their home countries? Further research is be needed to find out whether this expression really is pointing at an assimilationist direction, or if it is a sign of full acceptance.

4.4.3. Menedék

The aim of Menedék is to initiate a dialogue between the Hungarian society and the refugees. Similarly to GVV, Menedék also emphasized the importance of creating a platform for the Hungarian citizens where they could learn about the stories and pasts of the refugees who received the permit to stay in the country, hence creating more accepting surroundings for the refugees to start their lives in Hungary. As János summarises it: “We do not necessarily want the anti-migrant feelings to vanish immediately, but to create insights and procedures in which people meet for example refugees, so that they can talk to them, hear what they have to go through, what is the situation that they are in, show them what they bring with themselves. We try to show more and more of this in order to make social change possible, but what we emphasise is the dialogue. We need to talk about these issues, and we need to achieve an accepting attitude in the minds of people.”

4.4.4. Lobbying, securitisation and liberalism

Both GVV and Menedék aim to raise awareness of the issue of refugees within the given country and these organisations do not solely organise activities or provide help for the refugees, but for the mainstream society as well. Menedék has more extensive activities for the citizens of Hungary to have a better understanding of this issue: they are present in various festivals, but also organise film-clubs for the Hungarian citizens, after which there is an opportunity to stay and talk about the refugee-themed films. Furthermore, they organise a so called “Menedék Műhely” (Shelter Workshop), which is a sequence of events, during which an expert of the field of migration is invited to discuss with the participants the issues related to refugees and migration.
GVV also organised events in the city of Groningen during which local people and refugees could meet each other and tell their stories.

Menedék also focuses on policy-making with regards to refugees living in Hungary and by doing so they are lobbying for the rights of those people who already received a refugee status in Hungary. “Moreover, what I think is an important activity, but it is not necessarily focusing on our target-group, is policy shaping. We can’t directly influence it, but we try to make comments on them, we review laws and policies, and if we think something is not right with it, we indicate it” – says János. This way, they are attempting to make the government re-think their policies and introduced measures on refugees.

As I noted in the literature review segment of this thesis, migration has developed into an issue of securitization during the last couple of decades. Christina Boswell (2007) critically reviewed the assumption that claims that states want to expand their control through portraying migration as an issue of securitization. She argues that although governments might find securitisation a tempting solution in times of crisis, it might be a risky option to associate migration with security issues because of the following reasons: if states label migration as an issue of securitisation, they can’t enjoy the benefits of labour migration, furthermore harsh migration control might lead to human-rights related problems. The second reason is termed “delivery”. Boswell (2007) argues that European governments often failed in delivering what they promised. In many cases the promises are unfeasible, hence the governments can’t deliver them, which might weaken their credibility – an example might be the idea of deporting migrants from Europe – this is not plausible. The third reason is losing credibility. If there is a too wide gap between what the governments argue the situation is and the actual situation, it can also lead to the loss of credibility of governments (Boswell, 2007).

4.5. Organisation

4.5.1 Inclusivity

Both of the NGOs that I interviewed employ refugees in their organisations. GVV’s chairwoman is for example a former refugee, and they occasionally involve refugees in the planning of the work of GVV, but mostly they do not: „it is partly because we started at the time of the big influx, so we needed to find people quickly, and refugees needed to focus more on their daily challenges” -argues Daan.
Menedék employs a few refugees as their “intercultural mediators”. Based on the website of Menedék, they are currently working with five intercultural mediators, whose work makes cooperation smoother and easier between asylum-seekers or refugees and the workers of Menedék. “Most of the time we work with social workers, but we also have intercultural mediators, colleagues from Afghanistan, Somalia and Iran. They help my colleagues in making them be able to communicate with people in a way that is more than simply translation: the conveying of the real content of what they have to say” -says János. It is of exceptional importance, because both of my interviewees named the lack of language skills the greatest obstacle in their work with asylum-seekers and refugees. As noted in the literature review Freire and Alinsky have been important theorists in understanding the critical and potential grassroots dimension of civil society in bringing about transformative change. The NGOs featured are in line with the above mentioned theory in the sense that they both aim at – apart from providing other sort of support for the refugees – making the majority of the society more understanding towards refugees. Another theorist of importance was Foucault and his theory of governmentality, which claims that NGOs have become agents of the state. Based on my research –including the interviews and content analysis of the websites – neither of the NGOs are closely related to the state. Menedék clearly states on their website that “we are not involved in direct political activities and do not receive funds or give financial support to political parties” (Menedék, 2012). Furthermore, in the case of Hungary, my findings based on the interviews also reveal that Menedék is not an agent of the state. Since the current Hungarian government has strict policies about the recent migrants and refugees, hence it is not surprising that this organisation is not closely connected to the state. The Dutch GVV is likewise distinct from the state, although the Dutch government did not introduce harsh policies of migration and they are also open for taking in around 7000 refugees as a sign of cooperation with the European Union (Government of the Netherlands, 2007). Thus, GVV could be agents of the state, because the aims of the Dutch government and GVV are not contradictory, but based on the interviews, GVV is not working for the state. Moreover, just like Menedék, GVV does not receive any funding from the Dutch government.
4.5.2. Content analysis of interviews and the websites of the NGOs

To get a richer picture of the work of NGOs that this thesis focuses on, apart from analysing the text of the interviews, I looked at the websites of these NGOs as well. The first conspicuous difference between the websites of Menedék and GVV is the amount of information available about the organisations in English.

The website of GVV operates with only one module in English, which contains information about what they do, and provides ways in which people can help the organisation as a citizen of Groningen (become a volunteer, share ideas and become a sponsor), and as an ordinary person (through donations). The website of GVV does not provide any information about policy recommendations for the national government, or other policy reports, which indicates that they are narrower in scope than Menedék, and GVV primarily focus on interacting with the refugees and not on shaping policies regarding the refugees.

The website of Menedék contains almost the same number of modules in Hungarian as in English. On the website they give an overview of what they are doing, and a detailed list of the people who work for the organisation (Diagram 1.) In their newsfeed they always try to react to new policies and law recommendations that affect the refugees. In March and April of 2017 they focused on how the Hungarian government modified the laws which now violate the rights of the refugees, such as asylum-seekers that stay in
transit-zones could not leave these zones unless they exit through Croatia or Serbia. This bill – according to Menedék would deprive asylum-seekers from international help or support. Furthermore Menedék is concerned that the same bill would apply to children, elderly people and families as well (Menedék, 2017). When the national government passes a law that abuses in any form the rights of the refugees, Menedék would write open letters (often in cooperation with several other NGOs that support refugees) to them in order to pressure the government to rethink their policies and they give the reason why the given law is deteriorative for refugees.

Views on government policies regarding the refugees differ in the two organisations. During the interviews none of the interviewees (neither the Hungarians, nor the Dutch) criticised harshly the work of the governments in the given country. Daan mentioned that in his opinion the government should provide more help for organisations like GVV in terms of investing more in organising activities for the refugees, hence the government would not leave the task of integrating the refugees up to NGOs like GVV only.

During the interviews with Menedék the interviewees remained neutral towards the Hungarian government, they did not express any negative feelings about the government. Dénes only stated that they only disagree with the decisions of the government if they really are violating the rights of the refugees, which emphasises even more their independence of any political parties. When Menedék experiences that some of the initiatives of the government might risk the well-being of refugees they try to pressure the government in the above mentioned ways.

GVV –based on the interviews and the content of their website – is not critical about the work of the Dutch government for asylum-seekers and refugees.

4.6. Type of work

The type of work that the two organisations are doing are quite different in size and scope. This should not be surprising, since GVV is a small NGO that focuses on the refugees who are living in Groningen, while Menedék, although it is Budapest-based, is also present on different locations in Hungary where refugees and asylum-seekers are.

4.6.1. Main differences

GVV Primarily focuses on creating events that connect the locals with the refugees. Daan told me that during the first year after the birth of GVV they mainly focused on organizing
“eat-and-meet, game nights, sports, we also helped them with language, so start with Dutch classes. But the main focus was to make connections. For example we discovered that some people, a group of the refugees started a choir, we helped them, we brought the choir into this group to make more connections, with sharing life and life-stories”. He argued that these initiatives were indeed successful to integrate the refugees into the Dutch society.

After the first year, in the summer of 2016, asylum-seekers that have been previously living in camps received their refugee status, hence the camps had to be closed. Since then, Daan says, it is more difficult to organise events for the refugees, because they do not live in the same location anymore.

In order to overcome this obstacle in their work, GVV created a buddy-system. This means that those refugees who would like to participate in this programme is assigned to a group with Dutch citizens, with whom they do different kinds of activities within Groningen.

I have already mentioned a few of the activities that Menedék does for the refugees. When I asked about their work, Dénes summarized it as follows: “It is [the work of Menedék] is very broad: starting from satisfying basic physiologic needs of the refugees to reuniting them with their families. Furthermore from providing them with legal advice to spending free time usefully, or to treating traumas, a lot of things like this. Honestly, I think that we try to solve any kind of problem that a refugee or migrant have to face”.

Apart from operating their office, where they focus on the integration of those people who already obtained a refugee status and creating events for the Hungarian society to better understand the backgrounds and life-stories of refugees, they are present on different locations in Hungary.

Menedék also aim to create events in schools where there are children who are either migrants or have migrant-backgrounds. Additionally, they train those people who are in daily interaction with refugees – social workers, police officers, pedagogues, people working in healthcare.

Another major project of Menedék takes place in those locations, where asylum-seekers who did not receive the refugee status wait before they return to their home countries. In this project, Menedék cooperates with the police. They provide help for these people in terms of making their departure smoother, and making their time of waiting for departure more pleasant with the help of social workers and psychologists in Nyírbátor,
Kiskunhalas, Győr and Budapest. Menedék is also present in the Reception Centre of Kiskunhalas (there are three of these centres in Hungary: Bicske, Vámoszabadi, Kiskunhalas). Here, they meet asylum-seekers and help them to prepare them for integration: “They talk about how life is in Budapest, how they can rent a flat, who they need to look for if they would like to get a job” -explains János. On these locations, the help of intercultural mediators is inevitable.

Dénes works for Menedék as a social worker. He is more involved with creating sports events for the refugees and providing them with help on how to get involved in the labour-market. Furthermore, he organises film-clubs, which targets Hungarian citizens.

As I mentioned earlier in my thesis, Menedék also tries to form the social policies that are focusing on the refugees. The organisation goes through them, and if they find policies that are making the lives of the refugees more difficult, they try to convince those who initiated the policy to re-wise it and make them better-fitted to the needs and circumstances of the refugees.

4.7. Challenges

4.7.1. Money related challenges

According to Daan, the most substantial challenge GVV has to face is to obtain adequate funding for the organisation. This is extremely important, because all of the workers of GVV work for the organisation as volunteers, they all have other jobs, hence there is less time for them to focus on the organisation, which is very busy. Daan thinks that if they would be able to employ full or part-time workers for the organisation, it would smoothen up their work. For this, though, more monetary funds are needed.

Menedék, on the other hand does not seem to face any financial issues. Both of my interviewees stated that they do not have money-related problems. This, for me was quite surprising. Given the attitude of Hungarian people towards refugees, I imagined that organisations which are trying to help them must have a hard time, because donations might not be enough to cover the expenses of running Menedék. Although, as I understood, donations – with contrast to GVV- are not the main source of money for Menedék. They receive fiscal support from the European Union and the UNHCR.

4.7.2. Attitudes towards migration
Based on the findings of Eurobarometer (2016), on a European level, people are most concerned with migration and terrorism, although these concerns have declined since 2015 in the case of concerns with immigration and 2016 in connection with terrorism, they are still the top priority of concerns. The graph below (Diagram 2.) shows the results of a Eurobarometer survey, which aimed to discover the main concerns of European citizens. Broken down into national levels of concerns, Estonia has the highest concerns in relation with migration, followed by Hungary (65% of the respondents think it is top priority). The Dutch respondents, although lagging behind Hungarian scores with 10 percentage points, are also treating migration as the number one problem at the moment: 56% (Standard Eurobarometer 86, 2016), although this study does not specify why citizens of the European Union view migration as today’s most severe problem.

Diagram 2., Q5: What do you think are the two most important issues facing the EU at the moment?
Source: Eurobarometer, 2016: pg. 5.

Another Eurobarometer Survey, Migrant Integration (2011) concludes based on their research that “there is a genuine fear or resentment among some participants that migrants are taking employment opportunities from local people. Consequently, the general public in these countries feel frightened and threatened by migrants and there is a tendency for them to be more resistant to interaction and integration generally” (Qualitative Eurobarometer, 2011). Although the latter study was carried out in 2011, before the “refugee-crisis” of 2015, given the findings of the Standard Eurobarometer 86 survey - which found out that the main concerns of the European Union member states is migration
and terrorism - Europeans do not only associate migration with the possibility of the loss of their jobs, but with terrorism as well.

A previous study carried out by Ambrosini and Van der Leun, as noted in the literature review, argue that the mind-set and attitudes of people towards migration can be changed by influencing their emotions, hence they might become involved in supporting the rights and well-being of refugees. My data diverges from these views in the sense that during the interview with Dénes he emphasized that one of their main responsibilities as workers of Menedék is to provide the government, political parties and Hungarian citizens with factual information and not through manipulating emotions: „Listen, here is the number of the refugees, this is what we have done, this is what we have seen, this is what we are working with and we are not just conveying a bunch of emotions, like I feel like this and that... this is very interesting, but it is not an argument”.

4.7.3. Narratives of governments

In the case of Hungary, the government and its leader, Viktor Orbán made it very clear and explicit that they do not support migrants and asylum seekers who are coming to Hungary. Ever since the start of the refugee-crisis of 2015 he and his government had a very harsh negative opinion about the huge influx of asylum-seekers and migrants. The Hungarian government placed huge posters on the streets of Budapest and throughout the country, before a referendum in October 2016, which translated to English were the following: “Did you know? The terrorist attacks in Paris were committed by migrants”, “Did you know? Ever since the start of the migration-crisis, the number of abuse of women has dramatically increased”, “Did you know? Brussels wants to immigrate a city-sized number of migrants.”

A previous study – as noted in the literature review – argues that fringe organisations can influence the public very successfully with displaying the emotions of fear and anger (Bail, 2012). In my opinion, these posters as part of the propaganda of the government against migration work just as well, or even better for the Hungarian government than fringe organisations. These posters also strive to create fear of the migrants in the Hungarian citizens, and connects migrants with the idea of abuse and terrorism. It does so without providing the sources of information they convey through these posters and depicting all migrants as terrorists.
Before June 2016, the Hungarian government provided benefits in monetary terms for people with a refugee status (Integration Support). It is now eliminated. János argued that it was a huge help for the refugees, moreover he liked the structure of this benefit: The refugees based on a contractual agreement could obtain the money for two years. The amount of money decreased every half a year, and according to János it allowed the refugees to focus on learning the Hungarian language and finding a job or flat first, but after a few months –as the integration support started to decline- they needed to work in order to be able to pay their bills.

In contrast with the Hungarian government, the Dutch government is not fighting against taking in the asylum-seekers to their country. On the website of the Government of the Netherlands it is stated that the Dutch government cooperates with the European Union, and will receive around 7,000 refugees. The Dutch government provides the refugees with a distribution quota based on the number of inhabitants, national income, the number of asylum-applications and unemployment figures.

Of course, there is a number of people in the Netherlands as well who are not in favour of migrants and refugees. Far right politician, Geert Wilders, argued that male-refugees should be kept in refugee camps in order to stop and prevent “sexual jihad” (Sims, 2016). Furthermore, he promotes the idea that the Dutch borders should be closed from asylum-seekers coming from Islamic countries in order to protect Dutch women from the “Islamic testosterone bombs” (by this he means male asylum-seekers of Islamic religion).

### 4.8. Reflection

After the global financial crisis of 2008 (radical) right wing politics gained momentum, because they seemed to offer better and more secure solutions to ordinary people to achieve economic stability after the economic melt-downs. Migration was not among the most desirable things on the minds of people after the crisis, because a huge number of people lost their jobs as a consequence of the financial crisis worldwide, and migrants became associated with greater risks of losing even more jobs.

After 9/11 people of Islamic religion have been increasingly associated with terrorism. It explains why the influx of migrants and asylum-seekers coming from the Middle East became an issue of securitisation; as a consequence of drawing a positive correlation between Islamic migrants and asylum-seekers and terrorism radical right wing parties could prosper more than left wing parties (the latter being more in favour of migrants),
and see them, among other things, as means to eliminate population ageing in European societies.

5. Conclusions

The primary aim of my thesis was to find out how actors of the Dutch and Hungarian civil society manage to deal with the issue of migration that has developed into the number one concern of the European Union since 2015, taking over unemployment (Eurobarometer, 2016).

Based on my findings it is visible that NGOs who engage in work that aims at supporting refugees are not only preoccupied with providing the needed help for these people, but making the majority of the society that they operate in more open and understanding towards the refugees as well. In achieving this goal the greatest obstacle is that the perception of migration in the second decade of the 2000s is rather negative, in general people are afraid of the influx of the unknown migrants who leave behind their home countries and wish to stay in Europe.

In Hungary, the national government being openly against migrants does not provide the needed platform for open discussion about the issue of refugees and migrants, hence Hungarian people are not provided with balanced information about the above mentioned issues. Furthermore NGOs in Hungary that support refugees cannot convey their first-hand experiences and impressions about the refugees as efficiently without the government being more willing to present both sides of the issue.

Moreover, the propaganda of the Hungarian government wants to make Hungarian citizens believe that refugees can be directly associated with terrorism. To get rid of this misconception, not only in Hungary, citizens of each country of the European Union should be provided with balanced information, by which I mean that on the one hand refugees should not automatically be depicted as terrorists and they should not be scapegoats of any governments, and on the other hand if the newcomer refugees are indeed caught during any kind of wrong-doing (harassing women for example) it should not be hidden for at least two reasons: people should be informed if such things happen, because they have the right to know it and then draw their conclusions, the other reason is that once the secret information has leaked, it would only lead to bigger scandals.
If the above mentioned conditions about information flow about the refugees were met, Menedék would be in a better position to convey their message and experiences of the refugees with whom they work to the majority of the Hungarian population.

In the Netherlands refugees receive fiscal support from the national government, which makes their integration into the Dutch labour market and society easier, while in Hungary such support - from June 1, 2016 - is abolished. János argued that if this support from the Hungarian government could come back it would make the situation of refugees a lot easier, because with the help of this fiscal support the refugees in the first period could concentrate more on finding a job, a place to live and they would also have more time to learn the Hungarian language.

National governments might protect their borders and only accept those asylum-seekers who can prove that they have fled their country because they had no other choice for survival, but for those people who indeed receive the refugee status the government should provide more help for integrating into the given society, which then would make the work of those NGOs smoother who work with refugees. By doing so these NGOs could maintain their autonomy and can keep on working without being directly attached to the state of the given country.
Appendices

Interview questions

- When did you start working for …………….? What is your position/what is it that you do within the NGO?
- How does …………… try to provide help for refugees?
  - in what ways?
- Where do the most refugees come from? What is reason behind their migration?
- Have you visited the refugee camps in Groningen/Hungary?
  - If yes: what is your impression?
  - If no: why not?
- What are your experiences with refugees?
  - what are the difficulties of interacting? (language, traditions)
  - what is the attitude of refugees towards the members of your NGO?
- Are the refugees satisfied with their living conditions in Groningen (or in the Netherlands, if you have information about it)/ Budapest, Hungary?
  - where do most of them live?
  - are there alternatives to refugee camps?
- What extra help or resources could help the NGO you work for? What would you do?
- Do you involve refugees in the planning and delivery of the NGO work?
- In general, what is the attitude of Dutch/Hungarian people towards refugees?
  - Negative, positive? Which is stronger, which is more present in the media?
  - If negative: (why?)
- Is it one of the aims of your NGO to counterbalance these negative attitudes?
  - If yes: what do you do to achieve this goal? Are these initiatives working?
  - If positive:
- In your opinion, how did the Dutch/Hungarian society manage to overcome anti-migrant feelings that are present in the majority of the member countries of the European Union?
- What reforms would you like to see the Dutch/Hungarian Government make?
Informed consent

In this section I present the consent form that all of the interviewees had filled out and signed.

Letter of Participation/ Consent

I am carrying out research as part of a BA thesis at the Corvinus University Budapest. The research pertains to the theme of The Scope and Ability of Civil Society to Challenge Anti Migrant Feeling with Particular Reference to the Netherlands and Hungary.

As part of this research I would like to interview you. I would ideally like to record the interview. I WILL anonymize your name and not record the interview, if you wish.

If you need further clarification or wish to withdraw your participation, please contact me at ruffgnes@gmail.com.

Best regards,

Ágnes Ruff

Signed consent

The objectives and conditions of the research have been explained to me.

I, .......................................................... agree to be interviewed.

I do / do not give my consent to be recorded.

Signature:  ..........................................................

Date:  ..............................................................
References


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