The Role of Social Institutions in Attitude Formation
Knowledge Construction Regarding the Migration Crisis in Hungary

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Abstract

The aim of this thesis is to explore attitudes and opinions concerning immigrants triggered by the refugee crisis in 2015, Hungary. The paper is dealing with questions regarding the possible drives behind the acts of the government, discussing key concepts such as biopolitics, securitization and moral panics. After a short discourse on the interconnectedness of the media and the state in Eastern European countries, some gaps still seem to exist in terms of the causal factors behind knowledge production, this thesis seeks to find some clarification. This research attempts to reveal the role of the state and the media as key social institutions in shaping the attitude of inhabitants. To be able to answer the above mentioned questions, a pilot study has been conducted in a small village at the North-East of Hungary. Concerning the nature of the research question, individual deep-interviews seemed to be the best to explore people’s ideas in detail. The main findings reveal, that even though social institutions are definitely able to shape people’s attitudes, the same social factor result in different outcomes. A matrix of other social factors, especially personal biography of an individual seems to have significance.
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Introduction

“Hungarian People Have Decided: The Country Must Be Protected”

So says the sign on hundreds of billboards funded by the Hungarian government as a part of a major campaign on the migrant issue. The official name of institution dealing with this question is “National Consultation about Immigration and Terrorism”, but many people who are opposing it just refers to it as the “Hate Campaign”. According to one of the online newspapers, by mid-September the government had already spent 1396 million HUF (approximately a bit more than 5 million USD) on the campaign and was planning to spend even more (Horváth, 2015).

Since I know some, who do, but personally I do not really agree with it, this statement made me wonder. Is it really what Hungarians, as a whole want? On what does the government base its assertion? What might be their aim with this message?

Even though we cannot talk about big numbers coming to Hungary in comparison to Germany, it looks like that this migration wave is a huge shock for the Hungarian society. So far the country has not experienced terrorist attacks, or fights between the native population and migrants, still, there is a tension, and a kind of anxiety in the society, which roots might be an interesting topic for investigation. A kind of radicalization, or orientation
to the political right can be seen as a pattern throughout almost the whole of Europe, and Hungary is not an exception (Wilson & Hainsworth, 2012). Exclusive behaviors, fear, and hatred are emerging which might lead to serious problems in the future, therefore I see the exploration of attitudes and concerns in society as a first step to prevent some possibly disastrous outcomes. Which social factors and forces shape people to stand up for or against refugees?

In order to be able to explore this phenomenon, the knowledge construction of people qualitative methods seem to be the best possible tools. My aim was to conduct a case study in one of the small villages in Hungary, and get to know the opinions of those, whose voices are not just rarely heard in the discussion, but exclusively influenced by social agents, and have no first-hand experience with refugees at all. Most of the people are not directly influenced by the migration wave, but they are receiving information on a daily basis from the media, thus many appear to have clear cut opinions based on these second-hand experiences. I would like to draw attention to a general mistake that we tend to make in questions like this: seeing the circumstances of the capital being applicable to the whole country, this is far from reality. Even though Budapest seems to be a bit more of an open platform for discussion in regards to the debate on migration it is not necessarily true for the rest of the country.

The objective of this paper is on the one hand, to explore the attitude of Hungarian people towards the wave of migrants and refugees who travelled to, and travelled through the country during the summer of 2015, and the drivers behind popular views on this issue on the other hand. The information that people receive from the media is highly dependent on the purpose of the given media agent, therefore the reports about the same events sometimes have extremely different messages and conclusions. I would like to examine if these differences in media channels result in the polarization of people’s attitude to peculiar poles. I am also interested in the possible motivations or drives by specific social actors that are highly involved in the question, in this case about the role of the media and the government.

Given the complexity of the issue, the research question is twofold: How do Hungarian people see migrants? Do the government and the media shapes the attitudes of people? This research touches upon questions concerning xenophobia, the relationship between politics and the media, and a matrix created by other social psychological factors as well.
I. LITERATURE REVIEW

1. The Broader Picture – Contextualization of the Question

First of all, I would like to contextualize the question, and make a brief overview on which political acts and events shaped the current situation in this direction. I would like to start with the actual political background of the problem, and later on introduce some demographic theories that still have an effect on the discourse.

1.1. Political Background

1.1.1. Is there a common ground?

In a collection of studies, published in 2010 scientists ran a series of research investigations aiming to clarify the attitude of Hungarian people towards a variety of issues. It included topics concerning politics, religion, volunteering and even more. Interestingly enough, only six years after the country joined the European Union, the introduction of the book deals with questions that may be more relevant today, then ever before. What serves as the basis, the foundation of the EU? If all the member states have different cultures, opinions, solutions towards certain questions then what makes us a Union? Which value is going to make us stick together in troubled times? (Rosta and Tomka 2010).

1.1.2. Problems with the CEAS

Even if the question of the Common European Asylum System (CEAS) is not in the main focus of this study, I still would like to say a few words about it, since it is one of the cores in the debate about refugees. Due to this system, in 2015 up till October, Hungary had to deal with 199,165 asylum applications in a short period of time. Even if the country was part of the system since the very beginning, it never really had to deal with its burdens, and indeed, the massive influx of migrants is a new phenomenon to handle. The new migration wave gave room to new routes, which has had an effect on Hungary at this time. As long as the European Union is trying to reform its asylum policy, the debate in certain Central Eastern European countries moved to a different level. The discussion is not about the redistribution of refugees, and possible solutions to the problem, but simply about how to keep them out of Europe’s territory. Without having any precedence for these issues, the
governance is raising awareness to the problems of terrorism, organized crime, and irregular migration, in other words, some Eastern European countries applied securitization exactly like western countries, without facing the same problems. The agenda can be divided into two core arguments: emphasis on the illegality of “economic migrants” and ignoring the reasons why refugees or immigrants actually leave their country, while picturing these people as a threat to the native population’s culture and religion (Stepper, 2016).

1.1.3. An overview on FIDESZ

Hungary, a little country in the heart of East-Central Europe received great attention by international news agencies in the recent past. Mainly, these sources criticize the illiberal democracy practiced by Viktor Orbán, the Prime Minister of Hungary (Simon, 2014). This situation may need a bit of a further explanation. The Federation of Young Democrats, otherwise the FIDESZ played a crucial role in the political life of the country in the past 25 years. They were present during the transition period, and with more or less success or weight, they always been one of the key actors in the political sphere. Still, it looks like that the most notable changes occurred in April, 2010 when FIDESZ, with Orbán as a leader did not simply win the elections, but won over the two-third of chairs in the parliament. Having the overwhelming majority, a party can easily implement all kinds of regulations, without any reconciliation with the other parties. Even though these issues made people doubt about the situation of citizens, the existence of democracy, even a possible threat to the EU, respecting the sovereignty of the nation state these acts remained without any external intervention (Kilgman 2015).

FIDESZ, as a Christian Democrat party is not concerned to be radical at the first place, but looking at their agenda might show a different picture, and it raises the following questions: What is more dangerous? An openly radical party, or one which is radical in its strategies, but claim to be central? From this respect FIDESZ might be a bigger threat then the openly radical right-wing party of Hungary, due to three main reasons. First of all, radical policies are not limited to radical parties, mainstream parties have more influence on other aspects of political life as well, and finally, historical evidence shows that young, openly radical parties are not sustainable for a longer period. The strategy behind these actions may be one simple idea: more radical statements might attract people from a different political preference too (Mudde, 2015).
I would like to make a connection between the introductory statement about the decision of Hungarian people, and the legitimacy of FIDESZ, or to be more precise the inactivity of the citizens when it comes to elections. The last elections mobilized less than half of the population, and the above mentioned survey was answered by just over than a million people, meaning no more than 10% of the Hungarian society. Can we generalize the results with low participatory rates like this? Most of the critics of democracy itself claim that the dysfunction of the system is inevitable, there will always be some people who are not participating in elections, and in general do not give voice to their opinion. According to this argument, the results are justified regardless of the rate of participation. On the other hand, some argue, that we still have to seek for the opinion of as many as possible (Perrin, 2011).

1.1.4. Relevance of Hungary in the Question

Hungary, being a really small part of the whole picture has its own significance in the current refugee crisis. Being the vanguard among European countries that places state sovereignty above the European Union, neglecting certain obligations, building the fence, having a rhetoric that is openly against refugees, is affecting other countries as well. Even though the significance of the country or the whole crisis may not be relevant from a global perspective, there are still important questions to deal with. How come that people accept and do not stand up against this harsh rhetoric and practice?

1.2. Migration from a Demographic Perspective

Starting off with the enormously big topic of the European Union narrowing it down to the problems with the CEAS, and to the actual political status of Hungary is an inevitable point to contextualize the current problem. In the following section I am going to briefly introduce some demographic theories that are important from the perspective of understandings on migration. This section reveals that the current discourse still gathers round the same concepts as it did a hundred years ago, and it provides some explanation to the acts of the government. I would like to state with the concept with biopolitics (Foucault 1999), in order to reveal how politicized our lives are, and the link between politics and demographic question.
1.2.1. Terminology

Before going into details, I would like to make a short comment at the beginning in terms of terminology. Even though I am aware, that refugees and immigrants are highly different not just in their legal status, but their background, I am still going to use the word migrants, and immigrants as well. This decision has two main reasons behind. If we look at different media platforms, we see that there is an embeddedness in terminology. The words immigrant, migrant, and economic migrant have a negative connotation in public discourse, used mainly by people and agents who try to express the negative effects of migration, on the other hand the term refugee is often used by those, who try to highlight the human aspect of the question. This embeddedness makes the research itself more difficult as well, since the researcher has to make a decision at the beginning, and deal with the problems of pre-assumptions arising by this. (Hunter, 2015). Refugees are a subcategory of migrants, to be more precise this term is used to refer a group of people who suffer from the so called “forced migration” (Messina & Lahav 2006), therefore I would like to allow myself in the following sections to use both words, but I would like to avoid a misunderstanding that may rise from this links existing in the public discourse.

1.2.2. Population Discourses and Migration

As I already proposed it, in the following part I am going to introduce the relevant demographic theories on migration, keeping in mind the concept of biopolitics, and the way how people address the problem.

In demographic theory there are two main poles formulating the core ideologies, and since these two are still present in the current discourse on migration it is worth mentioning. The first main category builds around Malthusian ideas, meaning that the resources of the Earth are not infinity, and there is a certain number of people that the planet can supply. Humanity has to set a limit for itself, otherwise population growth might be the obstacle for further development. The combination of global competition, and the higher fertility among lower class people are the two factors that are the founding pillars of this theory. Seeing lower class people as a possible threat to upper- or middle-class people has its roots in the 18th century. (Malthus, 1798).
Reflecting the idea above to migration, higher fertility rate among the poor and immigrants lead to fear and anxiety in society, but the solution is not to control fertility, but immigration (Melegh, 2006).

In order to understand the other core, we have to make a quick overview of the demographic transition theories. It pictures a unilinear path of development, meaning that each and every country on the planet is going to evolve in the same way. It makes a differentiation between certain regions, making a comparison and labelling it as more or less developed with regard to each other. The main statement of the theory is because of industrialization, globalization, urbanization and the low fertility, high mortality rate the population is going to significantly decline, and stabilize only at a low level. Obviously, Western countries labelled to be more developed, and countries with different features considered to be underdeveloped. From a geopolitical perspective developing countries with high fertility might be seen as a threat, since big population can be seen as a strength from this perspective. (Notestein, 1945).

The change in thinking arrived with the second demographic transition theory. As long as the first demographic transition theory aimed at finding a solution to theimbalance between population growth and resources, the second demographic transition theory had a largely different focus. It was more of a defensive ideology, which saw low fertility in the western world more disastrous than high fertility at other regions. This understanding on the world is even more important from the point of refugees and immigrants. Instead of seeing the flow of immigrants as a problem, it might be the solution for the declining population problem of the western world (Messina & Lahav 2006).

The above introduction to these ideologies shows really briefly the core attitudes of people towards migration even today. People either see migration, and the different fertility rates as a threat to their own country and culture or see the potential of working-age migrants to fill up the gap in certain jobs, and the solution to the problem of the aging population and the existing pension system in crisis.
1.2.3. Specificity of Hungary

Even though there are always certain patterns to specific regions and cultures, it is important to look at Hungary, as the country in focus specifically and to make a brief overview on the changing trends over time.

The starting point could be the movement of populist writers started in the 1920-30s as a reaction to the crisis of the agrarian sector which resulted in low fertility rate among the Hungarian peasants. These writers describe low fertility as a “suicide against aristocracy”, a self-destructive behavior blaming the German and Jewish origin, exploiting middle-class for the problem. Hungary rejected Malthusian ideas about population growth, and adopted a pro-natalist approach. It was encouraged by the communist state as well, giving birth is an obligation towards the state. Those who are not able, or are not willing to accomplish this obligation are stigmatized and penalized not just by the state, but by people as well. When anti-natalist approaches became more popular in the 1960s, the stigma vested on those, who had more than 3 children. The most important aspect in family-planning is the “quality” of the kids, which had a negative effect on mainly Roma families. This complicated web of history and different policies, the western values about the freedom of fertility and the exclusion of minorities from welfare could be accused as the main roots of racism in Hungary (Melegh, 2006).

Nativism being embedded in society do not simply provide explanations to racism and xenophobia, but it might be an indicator to find the starting point of the problem.

2. The Role of Different Agents Shaping People’s View

After making an overview on the demographic theories explaining the attitudes towards migration and narrowing it down to Hungary, I would like to take a step back again. The aim of the following section is to search for evidence in the literature about the effect of a variety of social institutions that may play a role in the attitude formation of the population. First of all, I am going to briefly highlight which social psychological factors and how may have an influence on attitudes. These theories demonstrate how important role the media has, and finally I would like to draw attention to some theories that may serve as a possible explanation to some acts by the Hungarian state.
2.1. A Social Psychological Approach

The following short section serves the purpose of providing evidence for the shaping role of the media, and to prove that we cannot leave out this agent from the equation. In the following I am going to make a brief overview on the basic social psychological concepts that may have an influence on people in regard to this topic.

2.1.1. Conformity

The attribute of morality was seen as an inborn personal feature for a long time, but as the experiment of Solomon Asch has shown, peer pressure is often a lot more decisive than logic or independent thought for example. The core of his experiment is to figure out if the decision making behavior of the participants is changing if they are in a group situation, and the answer is definitely yes.

“The results showed a pronounced effect of conformity: Compared to the control condition, permissible actions were deemed less permissible when confederates found them objectionable, and impermissible actions were judged more permissible if confederates judged them so.”

(Kundu & Delllarosa 2012)

2.1.2. Social Learning Theory

In 1961 Albert Bandura made an experiment with children in order to learn more about social behavior, in his experiment especially about aggression. The observation of models results in the imitation of their behavior, combined with a cognitive process of studying the reaction of the environment (positive or negative reinforcement) is the learning process itself. Even though these factors are more than important, the most relevant information from this is the fact that social learning is absolutely feasible. Of course, it does not mean that it represses the effect or the role of other socializing agents, the point is only that media as such has a huge effect on our way of thinking, attitude towards other people (McLeod, 2011).
2.2. Media Freedom

Despite the laws and regulations concerning media, and media freedom governments in each country of Central Eastern Europe challenge the independency of these agents. The existence of this phenomenon is really fragile, it is influenced by numerous external factors, just like the economy or certain entrepreneurial conditions. In addition, there are preconditions for democracy that effect the level of media freedom too. The existence of democratic institutions with social interactions, an increased level of consciousness among politicians admitting the need for an independent mediator, and the attitude of citizens, their need for democratic values all bear a great relevance.

During the 20th century Hungary the political life of Hungary did not simply went through major changes, but it always moved from on extreme to the other. After the transition, which ended a long communist period the more right-wing parties had to define themselves. Their understanding on right-wing politics and parties are the still existing definitions of these poles, which characterized by an increase in state control, and the nationalization of certain parts of the economy. Concerning that the transition happened in 1989, only a bit more than two decades ago, political preference went through major changes. In 2010 FIDESZ two-third of the chairs, while the worker’s party did not even make it to the parliament (Bajomi-Lázár, 2014).

There was a short period of time between the 1980s and 1990s, when the political elite of the actual regime was not strong enough to control the media, and the new elite was not strong enough yet to do that. During those years, journalists had a great level of freedom and independency, and even had the power to mobilize people. One of the most topical debates was about media freedom in the parliament, the Christian Democrat party of the time wanted to establish an independent media service, shaping it to the face of BBC.

“Today in the world, only those who control television can say they are in power.”

Sükösd, 1992:62
Said one of the MP’s as a response for a politician who argued for the maintenance of a state founded media service. If they have the majority of the votes, then it should not be a problem that the media is owned by the current government.

The biggest concern is, that without a strong, independent media service democracy as such is undermined and endangered. FIDESZ introduced a number of serious changes in the legal system, many of them have a strong effect on the media in Hungary without any conversation with the citizens, or with the oppositional parties.

When they founded the National Media and Telecommunications Authority (NMHH) in 2010 and established the regulations about its functioning they basically determined media freedom for a long time. The NMHH has 4 members in its council, all four of them are the members of the dominant party. These people work with a 9-year mandate, their role is to monitor all media sources, and they are able to give fines up to 200 million forints, based on rules that are not really exact or clear. The news produced by this agency are biased, in 83% of the debates their own party representative is shown.

In 2009 the Freedom House gave 23 points to Hungary, evaluating the country as one with free press, but in 2011-’12 they downgraded it to 36 points, which means that the media is just partly free (Bajomi-Lázár, 2014).

2.2.1. The Effects of the Media

Indeed, party colonization of the media has an effect on public opinion, and voting habits, but we have to take into consideration, that most people listen to the news selectively. In addition, it is also proven by the above mentioned study, that if people have a sense of receiving too much propaganda or intervention it can also be counterproductive. Nonetheless, it is not evident, what does “too much propaganda” cover, and after which point it has the opposite effect. Based on the already existing literature, due to the points raised above, the separation of the effects of the media and the state does not seem to be separable. At least, it would not necessary make sense to make an attempt, due to the interconnectedness of these two social institutions.
2.3. Theories about the Role of the State

The following section is probably going to occupy the biggest part of this thesis. The aim is to see the acts by the government through the lenses of different theories about role of the state in general, and especially in crisis situations like the summer of 2015. Mapping out the possible motives behind certain decisions is inevitable to understand the overall situation in Hungary at the current situation.

2.3.1. Biopolitics of the State

The concept of biopolitics is one of the most difficult, yet the most popular theories among population discourses. In order to understand the idea of biopolitics, it is crucial to take a quick historical overview to the ancient times, when the emperors (and the father) had the right to kill people, or order them to sacrifice themselves for a greater purpose. The right of death is an asymmetrical, and a bit paradoxical right. Asymmetrical, because the only way to practice the right of death is through killing, and paradoxical, because from one point, killing is about survival. The protection of one’s life may lead to the end of another.

The bloodiest wars over history happened during the 20th century, even though they are obviously not about sovereignty, but more about an evolutionary idea, the biological survival of the nation. The technological development slowly but steadily made death as an inevitable part of existence disappear from politics, and as a consequence from everyday thinking as well. In today’s western world it is outside of the power of the state. The practice of send to death, and let to live is now replaced with the new right: help to live and let die.

The power over life started to develop about three hundred years ago, and it has two major components. From one point, the “anatomy-politics of the human body” which looks at the human body as machinery, and its aim is to achieve development: growing utility and obedience at the same time. On the other hand, there is the “biopolitics of the population” which is obviously dealing with demographic questions. The combination of these two factors, disciplining the body and regulating the population results in a concept that we call biopower (Foucault, 1999).
As the separate historical and political processes merged with human life over time, and the power over life replaced the right to death human, body became an economic investment, and we, humans became the subject of our own politics. As Foucault himself articulates it:

“If one can apply the term bio-history to the pressures through which the movements of life and the processes of history interfere with one another, one would have to speak of bio-power to designate what brought life and its mechanisms into the realm of explicit calculations and made knowledge-power an agent of transformation of human life.”

(Foucault, 1999:143)

But why is the concept of biopolitics, an idea that seems to be so far from the research question is so essential to understand?

I would like to make a link between these paragraphs on biopolitics, and the one on demographic theories on migration. Demography and education are not just tools in the hands of the ruling elites to acquire knowledge about the population, but by its nature this knowledge includes the possibilities for intervention too. They maintain control on the individual and on the group level as well, in order to achieve security and balance in society. Racism can be seen as a function, a natural response of society after the right to death faded away. There is a contiguous war between the races, for the survival of the fittest. The constant struggle between different social groups is not exclusively about the resources, but to be able to enjoy the privileges, or help provided by the state too. Therefore, under these circumstances we can talk about racism as an institution, being embedded in society. (Melegh, 2006).

The theory of Michel Foucault (1999) do not simply demonstrates the interest and the motives the state may have with certain acts, but it is also able to provide an explanation on why people tend to accept inequalities in society. This theory can be applied not just to racism within countries, but it explains attitude towards migrants as well. While some claim that the concept itself is a critique of neoliberalism, and society (Aradau, 2012) Foucault himself received great criticism due to the complexity of his notion (Lemm & Vatter 2014),
2.3.2. Securitization

Securitization is the act of picturing migration as a question of security from the perspective of the target country. It has various forms as well as various motives. If people feel insecure, oppressed, anxious the phenomenon of reactive identity may occur, which is actually a strong nationalistic feeling, that otherwise would not necessarily appear. It may also lead to the acceptance of a strong, autarchy that would not be tolerated by people under other circumstances (Vetik, et al. 2006).

On the other hand, securitization also has numerous drawbacks, and a clever balance between the three underlying factors is needed. First of all, the conflicting interests among, and within the nation states, including individual rights, the purpose of economic growth and socioeconomic fairness. The delivery of the problem, counting with the possible failures and the difficulty of keeping the promises. Finally, the fear of losing credibility. It is mainly about the power elites depicting themselves as being capable to protect the country. Yet, we always have to keep in mind, that securitization issues are more about the internal factor, and not the external, which is actual migration. As Christina Boswell made it clear in her paper about securitization, there are several different ways to do this, but she made a real distinction between three subtypes. The gap between the strategies is the result of how different governments articulate their policies, and what they actually do (Boswell, 2007).

Applying this theory to the actions of FIDESZ shows that in this issue, Hungary belongs to the third category, in which the state applies a harsh public announcement, and use strict policies at the same time. Looking at the overall picture of refugees and immigrants as the government depicts them, and the way they transmit this message is quite unitary. It goes without saying, that the head of the party has a really important role, especially in standardizing the opinion of the party in certain questions. From this aspect, we might say that the statements by Orbán Viktor can be more or less applied to the members of his party as well. As it turns out from the article of Matthew Kaminski (2015) the prime minister said the following on migrants:

“Of course, it is not accepted, but the factual point is that all the terrorists are basically migrants, the question is when they migrated to the European Union.”

(Kaminski, 2015)
Pronouncements like this are not unique at all, neither on an institutional or on a personal level when it comes to politics and the refugee crisis, therefore the “though rhetoric” part of the equation is confirmed to a certain degree. In 2015, August the all-time government decided to take action, and protect the Hungarian border with a 175 kilometers long wired fence, with the help of almost a thousand soldiers and a few hundred public workers. The migration wave was at its peak at that point, meaning that there were about 2000 border-crossers per day at that time. In fact, the fence served its purpose and its slowed down the migration wave, but the act itself is highly questionable especially from a human rights perspective.

The work was done in an incredible manner, they finished the fence by the 15th of September. This action served as a basis for criminalizing refugees and immigrants, meaning that those, who illegally cross the border could face imprisonment up to 3 years, and those, who damage the fence could face imprisonment up till 5 years. This act is quite controversial and problematic. Controversial, because seemingly the main goal of the government is to help the voluntary or forced return of migrants to a “safe third country”, and problematic because the penalization of refugees goes against the Article 31 in the Geneva Convention (Stepper, 2016).

Even though it does not seem to be too difficult to bring examples either to “though rhetoric” or “though practice” there are some issues that are hard to categorize like this. Is the billboard campaign or the National Consultation still part of the rhetoric or is it already a well-definable act?

2.3.3. Moral Panics

Moral panics could be defined as an episodic, exaggerated increase in anxiety and fear within a society, often concerning a certain group of people, or their activity as the source of their problem, or as a threat. This social anxiety is often reinforced by media and public policies. The root of a current moral panic could be basically anything, but there are certain things that seem to come up over and over again throughout history. The fear of “outsiders” as such is not a new phenomenon at all, and as it will turn out from the following paragraph the way
how the ruling elite transmits this problem to the people is pretty much the same in most of the cases (Krisnky et al. 2011).

The distinction between immigrants, asylum-seekers and refugees is blurred, even though the difference between these groups from a legal point of view and their entitlement to certain services is highly different. The political agenda is basically made out of three main steps, that are sometimes controversial, since these categories often cover each other. First of all, the authorities make an attempt to keep out foreigners, and they also introduce strict rules about eligibility. Finally, there is a clear message about the refugees or immigrants that they lie, and do everything in order to gain benefits. These people are often called “economic migrants” to point out that they did not left their country because of the fear of persecution, as it is justified by international law. Obviously, the media plays a crucial role when it comes to moral panics, especially in industrial countries, where people are more likely to have second hand information exclusively. It is worth to pay attention to the wording of different media sources and the metaphors they use when they refer to refugees as an “invading army” or as “criminals” (Cohen, 2002).

The aforementioned concept of securitization might serve as basis for moral panics, especially that the messages and the pictures used are quite similar. The difference is, that while the idea of securitization highlights the acts and motives of the government, the theory about moral panics does not forget about the crucial role of the media. What is more, we should not forget that when it comes to moral panics the fear is usually exaggerated, so the subjects of fear and anxiety might be far less dangerous then as it is perceived. In brief, one reason behind the rejecting attitude of the government may be the intention to create fear and anxiety within society, in a way that enables them to not just maintain, but to spread out their power.

2.3.4. Risk Society

The concept of risk society is more often acknowledged by media and communication experts. It is not surprising, since this theory mainly concerns the effect of media and public discussion, but it is contextualized in an evolutionary theory, and the whole idea is more than significant from a social scientific point of view as well (Cottle, 1998).
Ulrich Beck conceptualized risk society as a specific feature, or side-effect of modernity itself. He defines risk as a potential for catastrophes, not making any significant differentiation between natural catastrophes, or ones caused by humans just like terrorism, or other threats. It is modernity itself producing the potentials for risk, it is created by the societies own development. Mainly it is resulting from the self-reflexivity of society, and concerns are raised about how certain threats might be possibly avoided. The notion of safety generates the idea of risk. Sometimes people tend to forget that certain phenomena always existed in society in a natural way, just like in the case of migration. The most important part of theory the exaltation of the following idea: risks exist exclusively through either formal, or informal knowledge, which leads to at least two ideas. The discourse created by people themselves, and the way how the question is pictured in political discourse are the most important factors shaping public opinion. Since the notion of risk is created by discourse, it means that it could be easily shaped, and changed (Beck, 1992).

Even though the theories mentioned above about securitization, moral panics, and the risk society may seem similar, there are some points that they do not cover on their own, but their mixture provides an overlapping picture. The triangle of politics, media, and public opinion are in interaction with each other, and while these theories grasp different aspects of the question, it is important to focus on the overall impact of these three actors.

2.3.5. Populism

Last, but not least it is worth to give a few words about populism. Being an important concept in recent years, not just in Europe but all around the world. Even though the idea is especially important, scientists still have problems with exactly defining what it actually is. The broadest definition that everyone might accept is a political entity, which aims to reflect on, and forward the aims and needs of everyday people. It mobilizes people, and it depends highly on the cultural and historical context of the given country or region. (Gidron & Bonikowski, 2011).

Even if theoretically it is an independent concept, it is often clearly mixed with other ideologies. Mostly, this other ideology is centered around making a boundary between “us” and “them”, and this polarization is often made between the native population and minorities or migrants, therefore it perfectly fits the concept nativism as well as moral panics. (Gidron & Bonikowski, 2013).
3. Previous Research on the Question

As it was already pointed out in the sections above, the migration crisis of 2015 was a huge shock for the Hungarian society, and indeed, it did not really happen before with these numbers, and under these circumstances. Nonetheless it does not mean that Hungary did not have immigrants before, but the constitution of immigrant groups was highly different in the previous years. A book published in the 2012 contains a comprehensive study on a similar question. One chapter is especially dealing with the perception of people, carefully studying what do Hungarian, and migrant participants see as being the boundaries of integration.

Looking at the results of that research it turns out that even before the campaign of the government was launched, three quarters of the Hungarian participants already had fears that migrants were taking away the jobs of the native population. It supports the idea that the negative attitude was not created by the government, but they are just manipulating the already existing attitudes. As it turned out, people mostly had negative stereotypes about immigrants, but it is mainly due to the lack of knowledge about these groups. The estimates about immigrants are a lot different from the actual, official numbers, overestimating the amount and impact of certain groups, creating a notion of risk, just like Beck (1992) articulated it in his theory. Naturally, the composition of the migrant groups was highly different from today, having an overwhelming number of Hungarians from neighboring countries, and some Chinese, African immigrants. Today refugees arrive mostly from Syria, therefore the difference does not only emerge from the different country of origin, but the different kind of, in this case forced migration as well (Lengyel et al., 2012).

On the other hand, it is also clear that after the participants had to take part in a number of lectures on immigrants, their knowledge was extended, their attitude changed a bit, and it looks like that they became more open-minded, and tolerant towards these groups. Even if this finding was not that strong, and did not get too much attention in the book, from the perspective of my research question it is crucially important. The education of the native population about migrants seems to be a good tool to make the society more accepting (Lengyel et al., 2012).
It is not just another evidence for the shaping force of certain agents, but it is also an indicator for the events happening today. TÁRKI, one of the biggest social science research institutions of Hungary have a longitudinal study on xenophobia within the country. It shows, that in the past few years the amount of people, who are openly opposing the presence of migrants rose to 53%, obviously meaning more than half of the population. The number of the mitigating group dropped, while the group who have positive attitudes towards foreigners basically disappeared, representing only 1% of the population. On the other hand, looking in more detail it also turns out that there is no clear-cut connection between the governmental propaganda and the negative change in attitudes, there is a stronger connection when we look at the more specific times when the number of migrant groups were bigger in Hungary (Sik, 2016).

Concerning all the theories, and especially the researches mentioned in the previous section, the overwhelmingly negative attitude of Hungarians has a number of specific roots. While some studies suggest that the current government is populist, and using the xenophobia of and the already existing fear of people to gain more popularity, other studies show, that the attitude of people towards migrants still changed in a negative way. Even though the study of TÁRKI, edited by Simonovits and Bernát (2016) shows, that the connection between governmental propaganda and the negative change is clear, at some points the graph is contradicting to this. Nonetheless the graphs reveal, that the governmental propaganda has a negative effect on people’s attitude, at the peak of the crisis this picture somewhat changed. When one of the biggest railway stations of Budapest was crowded with refugees, the figures indicate the following: when people really had things to think about, they did rather more carefully compare to the times before the actual, massive influx started.
II. METHODOLOGY

1. Research Ethics

Before going into details about the research methodology itself, I would like to note that in my study I adjusted my approach to the Sociological Association’s Code of Ethics (ISA). All the participants were informed about my role as a sociology student, who is collecting data for her BA thesis as well as the topic of the study. I let all the interviewees know that I am going to anonymize the interviews, and treat every piece information confidentially. Based on previous consultations I had the feeling that some people have problems taking side in the debate and expressing their opinions in a straightforward way, due to not just the novelty, but the sensitivity of the issue, I found it important to do these steps. Before starting the conversation with them I provided a letter of consent that all of them signed, agreeing that I informed them (see appendix 1 for consent letter). I shared my contact with the participants, therefore providing an opportunity for them to reach me if they have any further questions, which might be another step toward establishing trust. The participation in the study happened on a voluntary basis (Marczyk & DeMatteo, 2005).

2. Research approach

I would like to refer to this paper being an interpretive work, focusing on the knowledge production of the society in this specific case, looking at the different practices resulting in different attitudes, outcomes. Instead of ready-made concepts, an interpretative researcher relies on the experiences gathered during the fieldwork. The approach of historical ontology also fits my research project, emphasizing the constantly changing nature of knowledge, shaped by a variety of social, cultural, and political forces. (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006). The main goal of interpretive research is, that instead of numbers take a look at people, having their own consciousness and knowledge about the world. The knowledge production of people takes time, therefore they do not immediately react through changing their attitudes, but over time it may reconstructs their social reality. Using all the benefits of qualitative research, my aim is to interpret social action (Haralambos & Holborne, 1990). Later on, I would like to position myself within the context of the question, being self-reflexive and introducing the reader to this aspect as well.
3. Research Design

3.1. Pre-Assumptions and the Context

My research question was formulated after the observations I made in my everyday life about the contradictions between what the government and the media claims about the attitude of Hungarians concerning immigrants and refugees, and what is the actual discussion around me. Regardless of how much people are actually influenced by a phenomenon, how much the person is interested in the question, still, everyone has a more or less detailed opinion on such things. Living in a globalized era we all know about the events, even from the other side of the world, therefore we tend to build up our universe on exclusively second-hand information sometimes.

Given the research question on people’s attitude, and on social forces changing it, I decided to conduct my research in a village, that I have personal connections with. Knowing the place itself, and the multiple segregation that it suffers from (spatial, and exclusion from services like internet connection, and a big variety of TV channels) it seemed to be a perfect place to explore the phenomenon in detail. Due to its geographical position, taking place at the northeast of Hungary the community physically was not influenced by the migration wave. Based on this feature of the village, inhabitants must rely exclusively on second-hand sources. These circumstances seemed to be the perfect setting to explore how the above mentioned social forces look like during progress.

3.2. Tools for Data Collection

Considering the nature of the research question itself, the collection of qualitative data seemed to be the best serving this purpose. The data was gathered through deep, semi-structured interviews, providing the opportunity to understand the phenomenon in detail. On the other hand, the validity of the results is questionable. The phenomenon of the so called “interviewer bias” have always been problematic, and questionable how the researcher themselves have an influence on the result. (Haralambos & Holborne, 1990). I would like to refer to this research as a pilot study, exploring the surface of a new phenomenon, and the possibilities how it could be developed further in the future. Accordingly, the interviews are rich in detail, but due to the specific circumstances, the generalizability of the results is questionable. (Thomas, 2009).
4. Self-Reflexivity

Reflecting on ourselves is not just crucially important to be able to help ourselves in everyday life, being aware of our own-self, what limitations we have rooting in our personal life may help the research process as well. It is often applied by ethnographers, therefore it is not just the observed community that matters, but the researcher as well in similar studies. The making of a choice while deciding on the topic is already something personal. It might help to understand a complicated web of thoughts, nevertheless it may influence the results as well. This is what researchers decide as self-reflexivity. Ethnographers (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006). I would like to provide an opportunity to the reader to have an insight to my mind, and indeed viewpoints through my experiences in the past, and their effect on my life in the present, including this research.

I am coming from a working-class family, in which the values of love, sharing, and hard work are the priorities. My parents encouraged me since the beginning to not be afraid to show sensitivity, and to stand up for others. Probably the first biggest shock for us happened when I attended primary school, around the age of 9, when I had a close friendship with a boy from a Roma community. The teachers of a girl, who always been well behaving, and had good marks suddenly felt the urgent need to call in the parents every other day to tell them, that I am playing with a gipsy boy, and they are worried about me because of that. The children whom I was playing with was not a problem for my parents, on the contrary teachers with this attitude are another question. After that incident, I attended the same school for another year or two, but the emotional and physical bullying that I received from both teachers and students was over the top after a point, therefore I had to change school. Since that incident, I always felt like an outsider, and my life have always been shaped in this direction.

After this incident, at the age of 10-11 I was already sure, that inherently bad people do not exist, it is all what society makes us become.

I attended a high school in which all they teachers had a motto about “educating kids for life” and simply making students socially more sensible, and aware of the events happening around them, as well as teaching responsibility on a societal level. Having a platform for discussion and sharing ideas, I think I always tried to grab the opportunity to do something
for the common good. At the same time, I became the part of the punk subculture, which also encouraged critical thinking outside the box. Finally, during the last year I decided to go to university, and study sociology, and later to join and organize a volunteer summer camp.

I think I am aware of my bias, and this example from primary school is just one of the many events that shaped my life this way. Despite my attitude towards marginalized people, I also think that everyone’s ideas are worth listening to. During my interviews I had the chance to talk to a lot of people, who were completely on the opposite opinion from me, but I tried my very best to not make them feel it, and encourage them to express whatever they had in mind. Understanding both sides of the debate and the driving forces behind them could be even be part of the solution to reduce tension in society. As it was mentioned above, personal life experience shapes already the decision on the topic itself, and the methodology: if I would not have family in the village, probably I would never have the idea to go there.

For the time being in the position of the interviewer I saw my position being somewhat twofold. Whereas I enjoyed the hospitality and the trust of people, not being a complete stranger, since I spent all my summers there of my childhood, they know my family, and they know that I somewhat belong there due to my roots. I had the feeling that it made them feel a lot more comfortable to talk, they might have some previous knowledge, or pre-assumptions about me, or my family that may have an effect on the results.

5. SWOT

Being closely related to the section on self-reflexivity, I would like to grasp the opportunity to demonstrate the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats with regard to this research. would refer to this position as both strength, and weakness of the research at the same time.

I would like to reflect to my specific position in the village as being both the strength, and the weakness of the project. Another positivity could be, that even though there is an enormous amount of literature on migration, and political perspective as well, but as far as I am concerned so far no one really had this approach and methods to study this question. I rely heavily on qualitative data, which would serve the best to explore attitudes, on the other
hand there are some question that remain unanswered because of this. I conducted a survey in the village to be able to draw a picture on the extendedness of the phenomenon, and to be able to see how generalizable the results are to the society, but the limitations in terms of length did not allow me to include that as well. I am hoping for an opportunity in the future, where I can extend this paper with the quantitative data gathered.

I see the opportunities in the future with these results. It may encourage the reader to be opened to the voices of all the specific groups in society, and to make an attempt to find the roots of certain problems. I am hoping, that those, who have access to it will see the importance of a variety of media sources which are not biased, and try to provide the broadest picture that is possible. Through this, I am hoping to have further research and suggestions on how is it possible to provide easier access for people to the sources, and a more integrational approach that helps both parties in understanding and to be more tolerant.

As a threat, I would mention the sensitivity of the issue, and its negative effects on certain layers of the society. Again, my position as a researcher could be a threat as well, but I hope I was able to clarify those points at the self-reflection part.
III. INTERVIEW ANALYSIS

1. Environment and Methods

Due to the tininess of the village, and my personal ties, I had the possibility to conduct the interviews in the homes of the participants, hoping that they are the most relaxed in their own environment. I used semi-structured interviews, because I mainly wanted to explore what and how people think about the topic, therefore I wanted to give room for even those ideas, that did not occur to me before. Since the topic might be quite sensitive, and some might find it difficult to talk openly about their opinions, I assumed that the best option is if I try to appear as being one of them and reduce the pressure through this as well. As I promised interviewees anonymity, I changed some information about the participants in order to provide protection.

2. Typology

Given the complexity of the issue, and human beings themselves it is not easy to create a typology based on the interviews. After careful consideration of a variety of opportunities, I think the best possible categorization is something similar to the one in the study of TÁRKI. There are people, who are convinced about the harmful effects of migration, and openly talk against refugees, some people are exactly the opposite. Nonetheless most of the people far from representing the extremes, and find it extremely difficult to take side in the debate and aiming to find the way in-between the two poles of the discourse. Naturally, there are bits and pieces overlapping the categories, but these are the patterns that evolve from the data. In the following section I am going to describe in detail the ideas and emotions expressed by the interviewees concerning the topic, again draw attention to the complexity of the issue.

Probably the best indicator for this complexity is at the same time the difficulty of the typology: even if there are certain patterns and similarities, all the interviews are highly individual and unique as well. To be able to bear in mind the human aspect, I am going to give a little insight to all the individual interviews within the categories, and later on, I would like to draw attention to certain similarities and differences, and some overall conclusions. For a precise description, the following categories can be created.
3. Interview Analysis Based on the Typology

3.1. The Xenophobe Group

Adam, at the age of 79 cannot really leave his house due to a number of health issues, but finds it really important to be aware of the events around the world. His main source of information is his television, and he is watching the news on both the governmental and the commercial channel every day. During the interview it is more important for him to express his opinion through personal stories, and when he did that, he connected the crisis as such to the holocaust: “Every miracle lasts for 3 days only”. As well as the Germans left, this situation is going to be over at one point too, just like the idea of religious wars is not a novelty either. He is taking the interview seriously, and being highly religious he was clearly thinking about the answer when I asked about his opinion on the difference in religion.

“The whole point about this Muslim religion – I just heard it in the news – there were bombings in Turkey because of this religion. These religious wars have existed before too, in the 14th century, but they did not let them (Muslims) spread that much.

Question: So is it the specificity of Muslims?
Well... No. Listen to me, they actually do not have a country, but they settled down in other countries, and they want control there. Even now, I just heard it in the news yesterday, that they were bombing in Turkey. I do not know how many people died... Soldiers. They just cannot do anything about them.”

He does not really express real interest in the topic, and especially at the beginning it looked like that he can relate to some problems emotionally, for example the tragedies of wars and the traumatizing effect of it on people, but as we keep talking, this connection seemed to fade away. In the following quote we can see an example for both hatred, and a bit of justification at the end. Immigrants are not able to fully participate in society; therefore, they will necessarily become parasites. At the end, even if he is visibly upset by the news, he expresses some understanding on what life-changing events may lead to some people end up being terrorists.

“The only thing I can tell you about this whole thing [he is raising his voice], that those, who come here are just parasites! To live off on poor Hungarians! That is true. Just imagine, he is coming here, he does not know the language, he does not know anything, then what can he do? Nothing! Am I right? The only thing he can do is to start bombing and to destroy people. [continues in a calmer manner] That is the only thing he can do... They were raised under war circumstances, where they immediately shoot each other. I understand this.”

The other person who belongs to this group is an old lady, Mary (69) who is also just occasionally able to leave the house, usually just to work on the fields, and especially to go to church. Otherwise, she had to quit her job at a young age, to be able to take care of her mentally and physically disabled child. Interestingly enough, even though the attitude and the core ideas are similar to the ones of Adam, seemingly Mary is a lot more connected to FIDESZ, there was not a single idea by them that she rejected during our conversation. She often expressed the belief that the fence built by the government actually saved us, opposing the EU, trying to force Hungary to do certain things against its will. Illegality, again being a huge issue gives some people the feeling that the only possible explanation is that immigrants are not straightforward, and intend to hide something in their past.

“They are lying about their age. This country does not have any spare money to investigate these cases, and it supposed to have. Instead of this, the country should support its own
people. There a lot of marginalized, poor, child, disabled, and there is no money for them. And for those who simply leave their own country without any serious reasons, have some people backing them up with money. If I have money on my bankcard that just covers my bills, then – God forgive me – how come, that they have thousands of euros? Not Hungarian Forints. And they can take a taxi from one corner of the country to another, and I can take the bus only or the train, because I cannot afford a taxi.”

It would not be true, if I would claim that there are no overlapping parts between the ideas of this group with the others. As it is clear from the quotes, even openly-xenophobic people can sometimes relate to refugees on an emotional or rational basis. The point is rather, that even if they are aware of certain factors (people are fleeing from war, not all of them are the same) they seem to concentrate on different aspects. The interview with Mary shows at the first place that “economic migrants” with bad intentions must be a lot less in regard to their number, than those, who actually need shelter. On the other hand, the quote shows that she has doubts about the seriousness of the problems and the war refugees have to face. We can either call it a different focus, or I may come from the biased media sources. At the end, an overestimation in numbers and in the extend of the problems immigrants cause are definite points for this group. Security and nativism, creating a gap between “us” and “them”, supporting our natives, the struggle for the protection of the state (Foucault, 1999). The application of a certain terminology, often used by the government, and what is referred to by Cohen (2002) as indicators of a moral panic are also observable. Calling migrants “parasites” or an “invading army”, emphasizing the illegality of these people, assuming that they are dishonest and have to hide something. In terms of media consumption, the most important characteristic seems to be that the members of this group not just highly rely on television, but they do not seem to question media at all.

3.2. The In-Between Group

The following group is considerably the most complicated, and diverse one. I decided to put those interviews in this group, in which the participants really paid attention to gather information from different sources, and often questioned, criticized media. My experience shows, that within this small sample it was the most difficult to make these people speak, make them comfortable about expressing themselves, and there a number of possible explanations for that phenomenon. Their silence may root in their doubts, not being
completely sure about what to think about certain events. Another explanation could be, that these are the people who actually did not really know me, and we had no close personal ties before. This group is not homogeneous in their attitudes at all, but I find this category to have an outstanding importance that reveals the process of thinking itself, making decisions, and taking side in the debate. The age component is also different, for this group. They are mostly between the age of 30-50. Being relatively younger, having access and interest, the most important source for them is the internet compared to the previous group. There could be a connection between having the initiative to look at different sources, questioning media as such, and being doubtful about events that make up the core of the refugee crisis.

3.2.1. Xeno-Considerate

Given the general characteristics of the group, now I would like to make a distinction based on attitudes. One could argue that some of the opinions expressed in this group are also quite radical, but as I said, I made the distinction based on the willingness, and taking the initiative to consider some aspects of the other side as well, even if just shortly. Interestingly enough, the leaders of the village belong to this category. I also aimed to scratch the surface of the importance of social ties. Concerning the position of these leaders, I was briefly interested how influential are they from the perspective of attitude shaping in a question, that is far from actual community life. In this regard, the two leaders, the mayor and the priest represent highly different attitudes, therefore I do not think that their opinion on the question could be that significantly influential.

Sam (49) being the mayor of the village often found it more important to talk about the circumstances there, and make a comparison based on that. Even before mentioning the refugees he expressed seeing his role as a leader being in a position to control who is moving to the village and who is not, which indicated a highly nativist perspective again. He is describing refugees and migrants as a threat to the Hungarian society, especially to the Christian religion, the desecration of places and objects. Personally it looks like he has a great respect for traditional values, having a number of maps of Hungary before Treaty of Trianon, flags, Hungarian motives and symbols adorning his office. On the other hand, he emphasizes the importance of firsthand experience, and mentions he is aware of the manipulating intentions of the media.
“Once a Muslim boy, a technician, who was highly educated, attended a program here, and he was an absolutely normal person. But he did not want me to become a Muslim, he did not want money from me, he did not want me to support his family. He came here, and had great respect for everything here, since he came from a similar community, where the circumstances are really difficult. He is working at one of the biggest companies around the world in a high position. We had a relatively good friendship when he left, and at the end that is what is important: what does the person want who is coming here, if he wants to assimilate or does not want to assimilate. For me, this is important, to filter and regulate who does a village community like lets in.”

Unfortunately, even if many of the interviewees mentioned some personal stories, with Muslim people, but they often treated them as isolated cases.

Right after the mayor, I had the chance to conduct an interview with the priest, John (38) being probably the most important or most influential person in a highly religious, closed community like this. Due to his position I assumed that there might be a chance that he has an opinion-shaping role in the community even in political questions like the refugee-crisis. As a possible agent in attitude formation I paid careful attention to what he said. I have to make a short circuit here to a really important factor. Thinking through the discussions with the interviewees the one with the priest was the least informative. He kindly expressed that he sees his role differently, and felt really uncomfortable about taking sides. At the end of the day, an opinion-shaping role does not apply to this case at all, all the interviewees with highly different attitudes encouraged me to talk to him, all of them had deep trust in him that he did not betray. He listened to everyone regardless of opinion and did his best to not influence people. As a conclusion, I would like to analyze this discussion not being any different from all the other participant. When he expressed some thoughts on immigrants and refugees he often used the terminology of the “invading army” and also expressed how it was suspicious that migrants are trying to avoid legal processes.

Finally, to say a few words about the last member of this category, I would like to introduce the discussion with a young lady, who tried her fortune in Budapest. She left the village with the hope for educational and job opportunities, but as she but it “not having enough luck” she finally moved back to the village. Lili (30) knows exactly the struggles of being a young adult in a segregated village, her two siblings are already working abroad. Nonetheless she
obviously had strong nationalistic feeling, the context in which she is talking makes me come to the inference that she strongly identifies with the EU as well. It was interesting to see how her way of talking changed throughout the interview, being passionately against refugees, but finding difficulties to provide explanations to support certain ideas. Nonetheless her core ideas still belong to the xenophobic group, she often made attempts to mention, that of course, there are exceptions for what she is saying.

“From one point I think it is people (immigrants) themselves are the problem, because... I think they are a group with no pretension, and let’s admit that the way how they live is not right. It is not at a European standard. How to say... They are dirty, and I do not know what, they carry those diseases, the toilet usage, everything is so different for them from Europe! I think that them and the Hungarian culture.... Well, maybe they could learn it or get used to it, but it takes a lot of time, and it is still not sure that at the end they can accept our culture. From this perspective, this is a problem, and on the other hand, their way of thinking is also different from European’s. For example, me, I would never think that I just go and in the name of God I blow myself up on the metro. So... No, no, no, I cannot even imagine how they get these “fantastic ideas”. Whatever... I think that they are completely different from us, and I think that they do not fit in here. [After finishing the sentence really quietly whispers:] Oh my God I sound totally racist.”

I tried to demonstrate the pauses, the times of thinking about the answers, and the reasoning, even short self-reflexivity at the end. Probably this fuzzy quote serves the best to demonstrate the features of this group. They are convinced about the negativities, but they also give room for some doubts.

3.2.2. The Sympathetic-Considerate Group

All the general features of the considerate group obviously fit this subcategory as well, the difference to the previous subgroup is the outcome in attitudes. After the careful consideration of contradictory information these people ended up still being more tolerant towards migrants. On the other hand, the ideas they share seem to be highly controversial due to that. In many cases they echo the most important ideas that are also part of the governmental propaganda, but they are consciously opposing the government, and refuse its rhetoric as a whole, even if they agree on some of the points. While being aware of the risk
often highlighted in the media and by the governmental propaganda, resulting in fear sometimes, they still more tolerant or sympathetic, being able to relate to some personal miseries. I would even dare to say, that mostly believing in the negativities highlighted in the media, it looks like they are still aiming to find and stick to the human aspects. It turns out from both the words and the attitudes of the participants, that they are the first ones in this sample, tend to focus on a more human, individual term when it comes to refugees.

George (47) have an outstanding situation in the village, especially after taking into consideration what the mayor said about filtering those, who would like to move there. George was born in Romania, and decided to move to Hungary, to this village 20 years ago, and he is more than accepted, he has the honor of being an important representative for the natives. When I asked him about his opinion on what was the biggest political event in the last year his answer was the following:

“If I have to say something about the politics of last year, there is just one thing that I could highlight, which is really unprepossessing. The fact, that we are so much against migrants. It is a horrible thing. Horrible. (...) If we start talking about that migrants want to invade us; I do not understand this. I understand people who have a fear for their family, and children, but not this.”

At this time, with the support of the quotes I would like to highlight the above mentioned aspect again. Certain aspects are represented from both poles of the debate, but the seeing refugees as human beings seem to somewhat balance the overall attitude to the more accepting, sympathetic pole.

“I would not be happy if a lot of migrants would come to Hungary, but I understand that they are fleeing from war.”

Kate (38) is a mother of a 14-year-old boy. She is really worried and concerned about her offspring’s future in the village. Even if she used to live shortly in the capital, and had a job there that she really enjoyed, she finally decided to move back to the village, seeing the countryside as a better environment for a baby. On the other hand, as the boy is in his teenage years now, she does not see the future there for him. As she said, she does not agree with FIDESZ, and “her opinion is really divided about the migrant question.” She talked about
how her opinion changed on the topic, being confused about why do people leave their home country. She used to have an overwhelmingly negative attitude towards migrants, but as she talked to her friends from Budapest, they recommended her to look at other media sources as well.

“Not from the Hungarian media, but from foreign media sources, if you look at that hospitals and whole cities were bombed and destroyed by the Russians, and children... children had no arms and legs... That was... That was something horrible to see. At that point, I reevaluated the whole question, that these unfortunate do not come here because they cannot find a job, but because they really have to escape from war.”

Demonstrating the contrasting ideas and the problems with taking side in the debate I would like to introduce the following quote from the same lady, who is just a few seconds later started to push some nativist ideas as well as a Moral Underclass Discourse (MUD) claiming that refugees are not willing to integrate and work. Seeing no examples that demonstrate different point, some aspects seem to be highly embedded in her thinking, and treated as taken for granted facts.

“The strange thing is, that they do not want to take a job anywhere, and they do not want to learn languages. They get job offers, but they are not used to this. I do not know how did they live in Syria, but it is strange for me that they are not willing to work, and just wait for the monetary support by the state. In this case, there are a lot of children living in poverty in Hungary, or in Europe, or even in Africa too. Why do not we support them instead?”

As the last point of this section I would like to highlight another novelty in the way of thinking of this group. It is not just the human aspect that appears to these people, but it is the first time in the interviews, that a sense of personal responsibility occurs too, and plays an important role in opinion shaping. It is interesting, how a collective idea of not just belonging somewhere can have an effect on these attitudes in a positive way, being responsible for the decisions made by the government in the name of Hungary and Hungarians, and being aware of the consequences of these decisions.

“The laws have to be respected, yes, but... for what price? In this case Hungary should have done the same for these people. Helping them rather, than setting back.”
3.3. Sympathetic Group

It is not completely accurate to call this category a group in this sample, since there is just one lady who expressed tolerance and a feeling of empathy towards refugees with really few, but basically no negative feelings. The fact that in this sample there is only one person in this category may not be surprising if we recall again the study by TÁRKI (Sík, 2016), which shows that the sympathetic group in Hungary in these years is basically non-existent. Numerically speaking, this group in society might not be the most significant, but the values they represent are more than worthy for investigation. What keeps these people sticking to their values when all social factors are working against them? Obviously, generalization must be avoided in this case, but I still investigating the drivers of the sympathetic attitude is not any less significant than all the other groups.

Anna (55), have been through difficult times in the past few years. She was suffering from depression for years, without knowing what is happening to her, but with medical care, the support of her family, and the tranquilizing feeling she has during gardening and when reading the Bible helped her to get a lot better. She is quite, but confident. Draws my attention that due to her medical condition she might have some problems with speaking if she feels anxious, or might forget about things, but still seems to be excited. Her main source of information is books, but she watches the television sometimes, but as she said just really rarely, she said the reason for that is that they are not showing the right things in a right way. In her view, the most important factor that shaped her view on the world was experience, especially living through difficult times, and being able to come out of it being a better person. About the whole question on migration she said the following:

“People set off. They have always been, there is nothing new about it. Our grandparents started off too, with the hope for a better life, and they were wandering forever.”

She is talking in a really calm manner throughout the whole interview, taking her time to think about all the answers she gave. From a political perspective she claimed not to be as active as she used to be when she was younger, but as she said she is aware how important it is to take part in elections, and express political opinion, but there has to be a healthy balance not letting politics influence one’s individual life too much.
“I am aware, that this is (the migration crisis) is a problem. But I am also aware, that those, who could help do not necessarily do that. It will not be politicians who solve this problem. At least I hope that it will not be them. People have to solve it, starting by making order in their own heads. We build fences for poultry, not human beings. Humans were born to love, to be nice, at least to smile at each other. That is what I believe in. We can achieve a lot more through being a role model, being good, and giving love. We have to stay human. I will not be able to solve this. I can feel it, and indeed I also just stop. I stop, because I am a simple person, and I know that there are subservient people there too, who use their heart and their mind, and it would be good I we could hold together. That is something that I also pray for. If we do not, then we are doomed to be destroyed. We are doomed to be destroyed by ourselves if we cannot find the right path.”

4. Reflection on the interviews

The detailed description of the deep interviews in the previous section requires not just a summary, but an explanation on how certain social forces seem to work in society in this respect.

In the xenophobic and in the xeno-considerate group it is worth the time to pay attention to the wording of the participants, which shows a clear connection to the concept of moral panics (Cohen, 2002). The subjects can be divided in three subgroups, reflecting to what the interviewees saw as being the biggest problem about refugees or immigrants.

First, the illegality being one of the main issues, that makes these people wonder about the whole question. They use the following terms to describe immigrants: they are sneaking in, occupy the country, lie, are not clean and straightforward, and they are like an invading army. The second big group of problems and terms is dealing with Christianity. The members of the xenophobic and xeno-considerate group often refer to the desecration of places and objects, having no respect, and finally, a sense that immigrants want to force their own religion on the natives of the host country. Finally, the last biggest group concerning welfare issues is not only in reference to moral panics (Cohen, 2002), but to nativism as well (Wilson, & Hainsworth 2012). They often express that they have certain knowledge about the unwillingness to work, laziness, and especially being uneducated, the gap created between “us” and “them” is the most visible when it comes to this topic.
For these two groups the problem is not just about immigrants, but migration in general. Many of them emphasized the problems about the educated youth of Hungary is simply leaving the country, and even if it is not fully accepted, but knowing the economic hardships a lot more justified than from the side of refugees, or economic migrants, however the interviewee referred to the group of interest.

The sympathetic-considerate group still embraces some of the aspects that are clearly there at the previous two groups, but other, new elements are also arising. That is, a less distinct view not just on the question, but on refugees themselves, seeing the human aspect of the question. We are not simply talking about migrants or illegal aliens, but human beings, and it should not be forgotten. Even if the notion of risk is there, and creates fear the members of this group are still trying to focus on the human aspect instead of the others (Beck, 1992). In the sympathetic “group” as well as in the sympathetic-considerate group There is a novelty in the sense of responsibility compared to the other groups, meaning that belonging to a nation does not simply mean rights and privileges, but certain obligations as well in terms of taking responsibility for certain decisions that have been made and facing their outcomes as well. At least, it seems to be the case in terms of both wording and the content of the discussions.

Regardless of actual attitude towards migrants, all the participants agreed, that the best possible option is, if the problem could be solved in the war regions where people escape from. Thus people would not be forced, to leave their home, seeing the difficulty of people facing forced migration, and being the best for Europeans as well, being saved from the difficulties that the EU and all the member states are facing in terms of registration, and integration too. Due to a variety of reasons, but all the participants were against quota too. Either because they do not think it would be good for the country, or as a duty to accept a 1000 refugees seeing the sovereignty of the country being challenged, or because they feel that refugees actually do not want to settle down here, so we should not force them to do so, especially, that it means then that they have to face the hostility of the natives. I did not mention a couple of aspects in my interview questions, mainly to be able to keep the focus on Hungary, but the discussion with the participants illuminated that this aspect cannot be totally left out, namely the question of the European Union. For many respondents the refugee crisis gave more room for Euroscepticism, and the independence of the nation state.
Interestingly enough, all the groups are aware of the heterogeneity of the migrant groups who came here that summer. Still, difference is in what people are willing to focus on: Migrants are mostly innocent and unfortunately there are some dangerous elements based on the law of big numbers? Or do we have to keep out everyone due to the dangerous elements regardless to their number? Or mostly criminals coming to Europe to invade the continent? Again, the point is how knowledge is constructed in society and how does it converge in people’s mind.

From certain respect, I feel like the focus of the study missed the right target. Based on the interviews it looks like that personal history matters a lot more in shaping ideas about the world, being by nature, in general more accepting to all sorts of people, or not. From the self-introduction of those who have a more or less tolerant attitude towards immigrants it was clear that they all have been through a lot. An immigrant from Romania, a single mother who felt highly connected to refugee mothers and their children, and a lady who suffered from depression for a long time. Searching for media agents that actually support our already existing ideas about the world obviously narrows and enforces these attitudes, but maybe media on its own is not strong enough to change attitudes from the roots.
IV. CONCLUSION

This thesis work is built around a number of issues raised by the migration crisis in 2015, Hungary. The aim of this paper was to answer two main questions. First of all, in reaction to a campaign launched and financed by the government, claiming that Hungarian people feel the need for the protection of the country. Second, I tried to explore how the acts of social institutions like the state and the media actually effect people when they form their opinion on this issue.

I started with the contextualization of the problem, drawing attention to both the political background of the question, and the embeddedness of certain demographic theories in the public consciousness. A sense of Euroscepticism, the problems with the Common European Asylum System, narrowed down to the actual political situation in Hungary all are important elements to understand how the negative rhetoric of the government emerged. I tried to provide an explanation and evidence to the interconnectedness of the media and the state in the country, seeking to demonstrate how these negative images and perception could be extended.

Given the background of the problem in question, I made an attempt to provide possible explanations from the review of the literature on similar phenomena, that could justify the acts of the Hungarian state, emphasizing the notions of biopolitics, securitization and populism. Nonetheless the relevance of the media and public discourse are highlighted in the theories on moral panics, and risk society a gap still seemed to remain, concerning to what extent and how these social forces work.

I do not think that I was able to answer my question dealing with the share of xenophobic ideas in the Hungarian society, but I think I made interesting findings based on attitude formation of people, and to what extent social institutions can shape these attitudes. Based on the findings of this research, I would say that the biography of a person, his understanding on himself within the context of culture surrounding him is a crucial element. Human beings are in interaction with their environment, and they reflect on the world around them. Different experiences in life mean, that people may react differently to the same social force, which is, in this case the negative pictures transmitted through media.
Overall, we can see a drop concerning public interest about the “migrant question”, but why is it still important to deal with this question?
Some might say that since the fence was built on the borders, this topic is not relevant anymore, and indeed, there is a constant, significant drop in the interest of the public concerning refugees. Nonetheless it does not mean that we can simply abandon the topic, for at least two main reasons. Last summer was an intense and busy period of focus on migration, and the citizens had a lot to process, and think about. These experiences and shocks cannot be neglected from one day to the other, in addition, we cannot pretend that the migration crisis is over just because it does not affect the country that much anymore. On the other hand, some critical voices raise attention to ideas that mainly say that the negative campaign on immigrants just served the purpose of gaining more popularity among more radical right-wing people, and to distract attention from the inner problems of Hungary. Since immigrants are not significant in number, and people became more interested in the problems with education and healthcare, the popularity that FIDESZ gained before, now dropped again (Simon, 2016).

I would like to connect this idea with the future of this research, and highlight the significance of the questions that it is concerned about. The country with all its citizens should be self-reflexive, and we should be aware of the case of possible manipulation. Even if we assume, that the migration crisis is over, the country has important questions to ask from itself.

Who is going to be the next scapegoat if the authority has to justify itself?
Appendix

Tisztelt Résztvevő!

Koritár Réka vagyok, a Budapesti Corvinus Egyetem alapszakos hallgatója. A tanulmányaim befejezéséhez késztendő szakdolgozatom a Magyar társdalom menekültekhez való hozzáállását vizsgálja. Jelen okmány aláírásával tanúsítja, hogy az interjúban való részvétel oiktántes alapon történt, illetve hogy a beszélgetés előtt megfelelő tájékoztatást kapott a kutatásról, és a részvétel lehetséges kockázatairól. Beleegyezését adja az interjú rögzítésébe, és felhatalmaz a tartalmának bizalmas, tudományos célra való felhasználására.

Kérdés esetén az alább megadott fórumokon, címeken ér el.

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Dear Participant,

My name is Koritár Réka, the bachelor student of Corvinus University of Budapest. To be able to finish my studies, I have to write a thesis, which deals with the attitude of Hungarian people towards refugees. Through signing this document, you justify that your participation in the interview happened on a voluntary basis, and you received all the information about the study and the possible threats. You assign me to use the information provided through the interviews for scientific purposes, on a confidential basis.

If you have any questions, you can reach me through the following platforms.

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