

Ways of Seeing the Other

Migration in Contemporary Hungarian Cinema

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ABSTRACT

Around 2015, the migration wave had a huge impact in Hungary. The crisis had resulted in the intensification of the migration discourse that was never seen before in the country. A part of this intensification was a strong state campaign that has been built on the crisis: a nationalist and hegemonic rhetoric which was rejective and hostile towards migrants, asylum seekers and refugees. This propaganda framed migratory processes as a threat to the European-Christian culture that could be deflected via securitization. This narrative was not only rhetorically but visually outstanding. State financed posters and advertisements represented “the migrant” as a voiceless, faceless, male, violent, dark-skinned person who is not even an individual but exists in a horde-like group of people. Besides of this xenophobic and hostile context, counter-hegemonic narratives emerged not just in the form of social movements but, as I argue, in the artistic-visual field too.

In my thesis, I focus on this contemporary counter-discourse of the Hungarian cinema through the lens of three movies that have a privileged position in the “migration movie” corpus in Hungary, not only because all of them were funded by the state but because they earned nationwide recognition. These movies are *The Citizen* (2016), *Jupiter’s Moon* (2017) and *Easy Lessons* (2018).

In the first part of my research, I seek to contextualize these movies within their socio-political and cultural context. For this, I rely on existing literature. After, I make the analysis of the movies themselves to explore the place of them in the discourse on visual representation and migration after 2015. The main questions of the analysis are how these movies are the part of the counter-discourse, what are those circumstances by the dominant state discourse that could challenge free artistic expression, and in which ways aesthetic and political elements are intertwined in the visual language of these movies. The research would like to answer these questions through the politics of (in)visibility and those artistic instruments that aim to transform the unseen “Other” into visible. Therefore, the thesis displays two competing visual attitudes towards the representation of migration: one by the neo-authoritarian state propaganda and another by the contemporary Hungarian cinema.

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Table of contents

Introduction	7
Chapter 1: The Hungarian framing of “crisis”	15
1.1 Media Coverage.....	17
1.2 Visual narration of the state media	20
1.3 Emerging counter voices	21
Chapter 2: Field of culture in Hungary	23
2.1 Placing the Film Industry	24
Chapter 3: Intertwined discourses: a thematic film analysis within a sociological framework	28
3.1 Storytelling: who speaks?	31
3.2 Characters: from which position?	34
Conclusion.....	40
Bibliography.....	44

Introduction

After 2015, the discourse around migration in Hungary has intensified to a level which has not been seen before. A strong state propaganda has been built on migration in which the framing of migratory processes as a “crisis” made a crucial role. According to De Genova crisis is used as a strategic tool which has a strong connection with the question of governmentality (De Genova 2017). In the case of Hungary, grasping the state formation and giving a name to it has been dealt by several authors, showing that the country made a strong shift from its democratic state apparatus. Being an “illiberal democracy”, a “mafia” or a “neu-authoritarian” state means that the rule of law almost entirely lost its meaning. A strong centralization of political, cultural and academic institutions, the monopolization of mainstream media, the creation of a nationalist elite under the umbrella of populism in the last eight years in Hungary led to a hybrid and controversial governmental formation. Understanding this position is important when we discuss migration discourses both in the international and European, and the domestic level. The terming “crisis” also functions as political capital for certain actors for which the Hungarian governmental party’s, Fidesz’s strategy of gaining support and votes through the “crisis” discourse is a great example. The state reliance on the narration of migration as a “migrant” or “refugee crisis” opened up new ways of strengthening and consolidating their position.

In the critical understanding of the “crisis” framing it is important to raise at least two questions: whose crisis we are talking about and *of* what? De Genova offers as an answer that we can observe a crisis of (b)orders of Europe. “...anyone concerned with the question of Europe today cannot avoid eventually confronting the urgent and anxious problem of the borders of Europe, and therefore must inevitably come to recognize that the question of Europe itself has become inextricable from the question of migration.” (De Genova 2017, 22). This framework happened to be useful for Hungary in positioning itself in the European context as a state which is fighting for keeping its nation state feature and its sovereignty from the European Union, and in general, from the “Other”.

The hegemonic discourse about migration became a rejective and hostile one towards migrants, illegal migrants, asylum seekers and refugees in a systematic way.¹ The state mainly used a securitization framework in which migratory processes considered as a threat to the European-Christian culture. This was not only rhetorically but visually outstanding as well. A billboard

¹ The usage of the categories of refugee, migrant, asylum-seeker is not systematic in this thesis as this is the case most often in public discussion which give the departing point of this analysis.

campaign on the summer of 2015 had a highly controversial but successful function in guiding the public and everyday discourse about migration, moreover mainstream governmental media outlets had a huge effect on attitudes towards migration. The common representation of “the migrant” appeared as a voiceless male, violent, dark skinned person in a horde-like group of people.

However, in this xenophobic and hostile context towards migrants and other groups of minorities and marginalized people counter hegemonic narratives emerged. Probably the most distinctive example to that were the self-organized activities at Keleti railway station where civilians and volunteers engaged and provided help to migrants who stuck at one of Budapest’s train station during their mobility in the second half of summer (Kallius et al. 2016) Beyond this practical, active engagement which went against the dominant discourse, I argue that the symbolic visual discourses also provided alternative voices which gives the main focus of this research.

I will analyze three Hungarian movies dealing with the topic of migration in comparison with the hegemonic state-led discourse. The movies are the following: *The Citizen* (“Az állampolgár”; directed by Roland Vranik 2016), *Jupiter’s Moon* (“Jupiter Holdja” directed by Kornél Mundruczó, 2017) and *Easy Lessons* (“Könnyű leckék”; directed by Dorottya Zurbó, 2018). In the selection of the movies their privileged position in the Hungarian “migration movie” corpus played a pivotal role because this corpus is relatively small, and predominantly short movies creates it.² Furthermore, each of these films can be classified differently regarding their genres, and this way, they show a more diverse picture. They offer an opportunity for an analysis of a wide range of approaches, each with a different attitude toward “fiction” and “reality”: from a feature film, through a quasi-science-fiction to a documentary. These movies got national and international attention (e. g. *Jupiter’s Moon* in Cannes) and their chosen topic is not that popular in Hungary in feature-length movies which means that they are unique of their kind.

The main characters of both movies are refugees in Hungary and the films follow their lives and struggles there. Both are somehow portrait movies as they focus on the individual. However, despite many common features, the movies are fundamentally different in their form/genre: *Jupiter’s Moon* is a “drama/fantasy” and its protagonist is a seventeen-year-old

² There is no official definition to this cluster and there are some alternative corpus such as the project „Strangers in my Garden”. <http://idegenekakertemben.hu/idegenek-a-kertemben-bemutakozas/>

Syrian refugee boy, Aryan, *The Citizen* is a feature film which follows the life of an African man, Wilson, who tries to get a Hungarian citizenship, and *Easy Lessons*, in turn, is a documentary movie about a Somalian girl who stayed in Hungary after having left her home because of a forced marriage.

I consider these films to be part of a counter hegemonic discourse and I argue that they challenge and oppose the state narratives in their visuality and ways of storytelling. They bring closer the micro happenings of migration in order to make the audience understand the motivations and reasons behind such a movement, and to avoid looking at the whole phenomenon in a biased, homogenizing way opposite to the state narrative.

However, I will argue that the hegemonic and counter hegemonic voices about migration are highly interconnected and it is extremely challenging to distance them from each other. The division between these streams – just as the division between the securitization and humanitarian framework of migration – seems to be artificial and too analytical. While we can watch these movies as critical reactions to the state propaganda (subversion) they coopt and reinforce at the same time similar features at certain points (appropriation) (Butler 1990).

I take my thesis as a case of competing politics of representation in neo-authoritarian regimes: politics of (in)visibility and the production of instruments and lenses through which “the Other” can be seen. Central to my analysis, I endeavor to answer the following question: How and where can we place these movies in the visual discourse of migration in Hungary? Can these movies be parts of a counter-discourse of the visual representation of migration put forth by the Hungarian state and government? If yes, how, if not, why? How does the aesthetic and political intertwine in these movies? What is the relationship of speaking for and speaking about in the movies? I will do this in the hope to show a possible way, namely how a certain segment of art and the field of culture can deconstruct the discourse of crisis and the hegemonic discourse of the state, and what are the limitations of these subversive processes.

I will analyze these films in their sociocultural and political context, furthermore, I will examine their visual language and their relations to their context. Unquestionably, visibility and visuality played and still plays a crucial role in the case of the 2015 “migration crisis” as “political meaning production infiltrated all media to some extent” (Messing and Bernáth 2016, 5). It was unavoidable to be confronted with this topic because it was present in all forms of media; social media, television, newspapers and even on street campaigns (e.g. billboards). The visual medium’s peculiar language has made it possible to communicate propagandistic messages in

a direct way to the audience without creating a need for reflexivity (see Berger 1972). My argument is that with the help of these movie representations, although with certain limitations, we can, in Cantat's wording, "step out of the meta-narrative set by the Hungarian government to imagine alternative accounts of mobility, of the 'national community' and of the relationship between the Hungarian public and the 'migrants'" (Cantat 2017, 6).

Literature review

As one of my main theoretical frameworks I will use the concept of hegemony most well-known from the works of Antonio Gramsci (1992). According to Gramsci, the form of cultural hegemony put forth by the ruling class, in this case the Hungarian government, is a form of cultural domination that it is an integral part of political domination. This shape and manipulate values of society through its symbolic and ideological work and helps maintaining political hegemony. This creates the common sense about and consent to its power from the ruled ones in a subtle way. It is important, that hegemony works in a mutual way which means that the consent of the ruled ones maintains and reinforces it, the justification of the world view of the rulers is confirmed by the ruled ones. I apply this notion to the state campaign about migration and put it in dialogue with counter hegemony. Counter hegemony is a reaction to hegemony to deconstruct and challenge it. It creates critical reflection to hegemony in order to dismantle it and question the common sense. In my case, I consider social movements which were helping refugees and most importantly the movies as counter hegemonic voices to the state propaganda.

As I look at cultural products in my thesis, it is necessary to contextualize them. In this approach, I follow Pierre Bourdieu's notion of the field of culture. (Bourdieu 1993) It gives a theoretical and, in some extent, a methodological departing point in my thesis. Sociology of art provides a way in which art pieces are understood in a relational way. Bourdieu emphasizes that art is not something which is outside of social relations, but it is a product of them hence the importance of seeing and understanding their embeddedness. There are several social realities and processes which construct the place and the meaning of art and these processes should be considered when we talk about art pieces. There is no cultural product that can be understood outside of its ideological surrounding. The cultural field is "a space of positions and position-takings" (Bourdieu 1993, 30) where different forces come together which have to be taken into account when we look at to the product itself. "The meaning of a work (artistic, literary, philosophical, etc.) changes automatically with each change in the field within which

it is situated for the spectator or reader” (Bourdieu 1993, 30) so art products need sociological, historical and political analysis.

Still as part of placing the films in their context I chose to place together the notion of culture industry and migration industry. The term culture industry was coined by Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer to describe the industrialization of culture (Adorno & Horkheimer 2006). According to their theory in the culture industry spontaneity disappeared and instead every segments of the cultural life is based on fixed formulas, sameness, standards and repetition. The economic production and interest, and the profit-oriented attitude have a unifying effect on the sphere of culture as well. Any kind of film industry is part of this broader cultural context and consequently, the filmic representation of migration is not an exception from that. The representation and picturing of it in different films might be unique which goes against Adorno’ and Horkheimer’s claim, however, because it is a trend to talk about that, processing it in artistic forms, it has already a unified, commercialized feature which definitely fits the argumentation. While these forms of representation are in dialogue with the official, hegemonic ones they still coopt and reinforce certain patterns around the discourse of migration. Subversion and appropriation happen at the same time (Butler 1990) which might sound paradoxical but in the realms of culture industry it is the logical way. These two processes, subversion and appropriation of migration are in constant dialogue: different discourses go against each other whilst there is a movement and shift in the power relation between them.

I see useful to examine the role of the culture industry in connection with migration industry and consider it as one of its “branches”. Culture industry often uses migration as a topic, theme or tool to gain cultural capital which can be converted into other forms of capital (e.g. film festivals), while migration industry uses these cultural products for its own purposes (e.g. regulations, facilitation, financial gains). I see this relation as a highly dynamic and dialectic one which means that this relation is not one directional, but the two industries constantly reinforce each other.

According to Sørensen and Gammeltoft-Hansen talking about migration without taking into consideration the migration industry is leaving out an integral part of the picture: “the migration industry today has become fundamentally embedded in the current migration regimes. Social networks and transnational linkages mean that the contemporary migration industry inevitably emerges as part of any established migratory movement.” (2013, 8) Migration industry describes in a broad sense migration as business. In this regard migration is embedded in and “linked both to the facilitation and to the control of migration” (2013, 4.). This control happens

through the commercialization and marketization of migratory processes. Transportation facilities, human smuggling, immigration detention centers, technological developments in migration are all part of this industry. Migration framed as a “crisis” plays a crucial role in the success of migration industry. According to De Genova crisis is used as a strategic tool which has a strong connection with the question of the above-mentioned governmentality (De Genova 2017). Migration industry, in my view, can be seen as a “creative” answer and exploitation of this so-called crisis.

To see how these theoretical frameworks played out “in action” in the Hungarian case, I rely on empirical sociological works about migration. The first part of this literature includes the description of the events, with the actors who were involved and some introduction to the governmental politics of Hungary (Nagy 2016, Gerő et al. 2017, Magyar 2001, Körösenyi and Patkós 2015, Bozóki and Hegedűs 2017, Pap 2017). The second one is about the attitude changes and impact of the anti-migration campaign (Barna and Koltai 2019) and as a third aspect, literature about the media coverage of migration around 2015 is cited (Messing and Bernáth 2016). These three aspects are brought together to give a descriptive socio-political contextual background.

For the Hungarian cultural background following Bourdieu’s approach I rely on Bozóki (2016) and Nagy and Szarvas (2019) analyses about the recent changes in the cultural policy of Hungary which is in strong relation with politics and political context. Within the field of culture, I introduce the contemporary film industry of Hungary through the work of Balázs Varga (2016) and official documents and journalistic articles.

I consider the films as my main empirical source and they give the most to my analysis about them, however, I rely on the official website of the Hungarian National Film Fund, public articles about and in connection with the movies.

The movies also reflect on the issues of “migration as spectacle” and the “border spectacle” (De Geneva 2015, Cantat 2017). The idea of the “Border Spectacle” means that areas and zones of the borders of the country in the context of migration are staged scenes, scenes of exclusion. These staged borders play important roles in creating the Other. I will argue, that the three movies “counteract the narrative of the “border spectacle”, however, the “spectacularisation of migration” remains. Cinema, just like the “border spectacle”, offers hyper-visibility of certain things, while neglects others. In the case of these movies, migration stays central and, although it is still a spectacle, it differs from the spectacle of the border. In my thesis, I will try to answer

the question of how these types of spectacles differ, at least to some extent, and in what sense are they similar.

As an outlook at the very end of my research I bring in the question of deconstructing the spectacle and crisis narrative through spectatorship following Jacques Rancière (2009) who argues that becoming active perceivers can make changes in our attitudes towards the distribution of the sensible and transform it.

Methodology

According to Andrea Brighenti, visibility can be understood as a sociological category: “[v]isibility lies at the intersection of the two domains of aesthetics (relations of perception) and politics (relations of power).” The visual information stands together with the politics of ways of seeing. In the dialogue of the visible and the invisible, there is a coexistence of visual aesthetics and politics. I will rely on visibility as a field during my research from where I believe I can understand complex social processes regarding migration.

I will read the movies in this field in relation with the state-financed and mainstream media representation of migration. I will analyze the specific time and social and political context from which they emerged through existing literature and media analyses, their differences and their common features, furthermore, the dialogue between the different discourses. Besides the close-reading of the movies (e.g. film and edit analysis), in order to explore the political embeddedness of the movies, I will look at the production side of them, which includes mostly the funding of the movies, with the help of existing literature and discourse analysis of public interviews and publications.

I will rely on comparison at least on two levels: I will compare the three movies with the mainstream visual discourse in Hungary by the state, and I will use comparison between the three movies. Unfortunately, comparing the Hungarian case with other European or international examples exceed the limits of this research, however, placing the Hungarian phenomenon in the international context might be crucial in understanding the mechanisms behind visual representation. Furthermore, my focus is narrowed down to the 2015 period of migration which was framed in many media as a “crisis”, hence the historical development of the events will be out of the focus.

These art pieces are products of social relations, so it is crucial to discuss how they are constructed, where they are embedded and what role they fulfill. To do so, I look at the field of

culture through existing literature. The core of this research is the analysis of the movies which happens with the help of analyzing their visual language, character choices, time and space division

This research includes several methodological challenges because of its interdisciplinary approach. It draws from several disciplines such as sociology, anthropology, art theory, cultural and film theory that makes it harder to balance in between the adequate methods however, I consider this research as an experimental approach to bring these methods and disciplines together in a fruitful way.

The structure of the paper

The main contribution of this thesis to the discourses around migration is the film analysis which is built up in a comparative way. In order to fully understand these relations, the paper structured in a way which gives the socio-political and cultural context in which these movies are embedded. The first part of the thesis starts with the description and summary of the events of the summer of 2015 in Hungary with a focus on those processes which were the most influential in forming the hegemonic discourse. As part of the contextualization, I summarize the media coverage of the events focusing on the main trends especially in the visual representation. After looking at the genealogy of the governmental narrative both in their narration and visual language, I give an insight to the main counter voices who challenged the mainstream attitude making place for the visual counter voices. Prior to the actual film analysis, in the second part, I will outline the field of culture in Hungary to see the political-cultural context and the production side of the movies to understand their full embeddedness and their relation to the structure of film industry. In the third part, I will give the analysis of the movies in two thematic clusters which are grouped as they connect back the movies to the visual narration of the state which provides the opportunity for a comparative reading of the mainstream and artistic stream of representation.. As a final, more theoretical-philosophical outlook, I will introduce a possible way to bridge the obstacle of passivity and activity of spectatorship with the help Rancière's theory.

The Hungarian framing of “crisis”

After 2015, the discourse around migration in Hungary has intensified to a level which has not been seen before, and I take this period as a departing point in my analysis. I find it crucial to look through the discourses around and the representation of these migratory processes in order to understand in what social context the movies in my analysis are embedded.

In June 2015 an increased number of people arrived to Hungary in the hope to get asylum in the European Union. In these movements towards Europe and to the “West” the so-called Balkan route provided the main path in which Hungary geographically has an important entering and transit point. Events and their reception around this time received diverse and contradictionary attention on the international level and to understand Hungary’s position in it needs further elaboration.

The state formation of Hungary has been theorized and discussed in different forms and received different terminologies to its present state (Magyar 2001, Körösenyi and Patkós 2015, Bozóki and Hegedűs 2017, Pap 2017), but what is certain that a strong shift towards illiberalism and neo-authoritarianism has happened in the last eight years. The theorization of these processes and mechanism often reflect on the geopolitical and historical background of the country to see the processes as a whole. To look through these processes would exceed the focus of this thesis however, looking at how, with what kind of tools and political features this formation was and still is maintained and developed is crucial in understanding the state discourse about migration.

Populism is most often connected to the strengthening of extreme right and emergence of illiberalism as it is an effective tool for building up nationalist right-wing politics. (Mudde 2009). “Most authors define the extreme right movement as nationalist, xenophobic and supportive of antidemocratic authoritarianism” (Gerő et al. 2017, 20) of which populism is part of. This notion is important from the perspective of my analysis, because for the extreme right Othering is an essential part of their politics because they create the enemy from the Other.

Enemy making has been always part of politics, but its positioning changed: “While the traditional enemy is an external actor *before* it becomes an enemy, the modern enemy is externalized *because* it is an enemy.” (Gerő et al. 2017, 17) The strategic importance of creating enemies is “...the contribution this makes to the sustainability of the imagined political community” (Gerő et al. 2017, 18). Pointing out and drawing the boundaries between “us”, the

in-group and “them”, the out-group because “specifying the Other is crucial for the identity-building of the extreme right, since the movement largely defines itself through constructing itself as a mirror image of the out-group.” (Gerő et al. 2017, 20) This relational notion of communities gives “the very identity of every group depends on the existence of its opposite”. (Gerő et al. 2017, 19) This notion suggests that enemy making is unavoidably, and it is an essential part of human nature, a basic need in creating societies, hence it is unavoidable to think in this framework.

In the mechanisms of enemy making the other is “pictured as someone who poses an existential threat to the community” (Gerő et al. 2017, 15). Most of the time the members of the out-group dehumanized, deindividualized, marginalized and demonized in order to valorize the in-group.

This strong Othering and enemy-making gave the core of the hegemonic discourse about migration in this populist right-wing political atmosphere. The “crisis” as political and symbolic capital was successfully mobilized to lay down who the members are of the Hungarian society and who are not, on the basis of the notion of a sovereign nation-state and on an ethnocultural idea of citizenship.

This happened through a strong nationalistic politics and propaganda against migration for national sovereignty. This agenda was built on certain events of 2015 and the usage of them in the construction of the political discourse was central from the state’s and the governing party’s, Fidesz’s perspective. The analyses and reports of the events which I am relying on here as my main source, usually distinct several main turning points which had a transformative effect on the discourses around migration both on the international and the domestic level.

In Hungary, before the actual arrival of migrants in bigger numbers, the propaganda has been started to gain political power. After the Charlie Hebdo attacks in Paris, prime minister Viktor Orbán systematically started to integrate migration into the state narrative about “ourselves” and the “others”. The following step was the launch of a “National Consultation on Immigration and Terrorism” in early May which established the conditions for a massive anti-immigration campaign. This was a xenophobic and rejective campaign against migration that included a massive media campaign in which the placement of billboards on public places played a crucial role in June and July. On the billboards the message of Fidesz was formulated in sentences like “If you come to Hungary you have to respect our laws!” or “If you come to Hungary you have to respect our culture!”.

The government soon expanded its symbolic fight into a radical one when they started to build a fence at the border of Serbia and Hungary in 13 July in order to close down migratory processes. By 15 September the border fence was finished. Meanwhile, from August a massive flow of people arrived to Hungary and this is the time when Keleti train station became a transit area where migrants stuck inbetween Hungarian authorities and the “West”. Migrants were not allowed to travel even when they had their valid tickets. Keleti and a park in its neighborhood turned into a refugee camp for weeks. This was the situation until the very beginning of September when refugees started to march towards the Austrian border.

This symbolic and concrete fight against migration created a communication that had a harsh and strong hegemonic political voice strengthened through a strong media strategy. The campaign had a controversial but successful function in guiding the public and everyday discourse about migration. It has not only supported the governing party in terms of their voting basis but had a major effect on the attitudes towards migrants from the perspective of the Hungarian society. (Barna and Koltai 2019) It was even more successful because it had a strong basis to built on: xenophobia was already high in Hungary before the “crisis”.

“...supporters of different political parties reacted differently to the migration crisis and the campaign” (Barna and Koltai 2019, 53) and it was proven, that right-wing voters (including Fidesz and Jobbik) were influenced most successfully by the propaganda. Furthermore “the level of xenophobia measured by TÁRKI kept increasing after 2015” (Barna and Koltai 2019, 51) regardless the lack of migrants in the country. This increase also shows the extreme impact of the campaign.

This hegemonic voice created and intensified the moral panic around migration because migrants and refugees were portrayed as a threat to the Hungarian society and the European-Christian culture. “... immigration had become one of the major concerns of Hungarians: while in November 2014 only four per cent of the Hungarian population listed immigration as one of the most important issues Hungary was facing, in May 2015 the number was 13 per cent, while in November 2015 it peaked at 34 per cent, and was thus the number one concern of Hungarians.” (Barna and Koltai 2019, 50)

Media Coverage

The role of mainstream media played a crucial role in the production and distribution of information during the events from the summer of 2015 on. “In creating and maintaining this

disproportionality, mass media, especially pro-government media, played a pivotal role. Cohen has identified mass media as one of the most important actors in situations of moral panic, seeing the role of mass media as having three components: (1) exaggeration and distortion, (2) prediction, and, (3) symbolization” (Barna and Koltai 2019, 52). The government realized this potential of symbolic power.

One of the reports of the Council of Europe deals with the “general” media coverage of migration across Europe (including the Czech Republic, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Serbia, United Kingdom) and despite regional, temporal differences, unevenness and diversity, some general tendencies were observed by the authors in the representation of the phenomena (Georgiou and Zaborowski 2017).³ As a common point, those who arrived to Europe were positioned in the narratives as outsiders. In the first part of the summer this outsider position was rather framed in a sympathetic and welcoming way, while from September the dominant voice about it became a hostile, rejective one (especially in the case of Hungary). The main points in the report were the attitudes towards refugees and migrants, simply put welcoming or rejective (humanitarianism vs. securitization narrative) and who speaks and from which perspective.

In the case of who gets voice to speak the results showed that predominantly officials, politicians and the authorities were given voice and migrants and refugees were dismissed. They were not described and represented from their own perspective which led to a creation of a passive and a victim position for them, moreover their agency and personal stories were denied and silenced. Furthermore, there was a gender difference between male and female refugees and migrants because female voices were almost entirely neglected.

In this general media coverage Hungary has a unique place because of its extreme ways of dealing and representing migration and because how media was strongly used as a tool in political agenda setting for the governmental party Fidesz. The Hungarian government’s media strategy around migration was based on an intense anti-immigrant campaign and was highly built on the framework of crisis and securitization.

This is nicely shown in an in-depth analysis of the media coverage of Austria and Hungary which was conducted by Messing and Bernáth (2016). It gives a more nuanced understanding

³ Discussing the events in a generalized way can be misleading, however, from the perspective of this paper highlighting the common features helps us to draw attention to the two-fold perspectives which became dominant in the Hungarian context.

based on a quantitative and qualitative content analysis of news and television programs of how the representational work was done by these two countries' mainstream media in the Cross-European and international context. The research mainly relies on the framework of humanitarianism and securitization and follows how in the Hungarian and Austrian discourses shifts were made between these two overarching frameworks. Given the focus of my research, I only bring in the Hungarian case in a state – non-state division with a focus on the first one because of its hegemonic feature.

In sum, the general state supported representation of the mainstream media emphasized the outside position of new arrivals with the help of introducing them as a threat. This framework became dominant by mid-September because of certain events which shaped the public discourse. However, it was not the case from the very beginning when there was a more diverse picture, but there was a change between humanitarianism and securitization discourse in Hungary which was most strikingly appeared after the Serbian border close. After this point, the anti-refugee attitude of the government became solid and went against to the welcoming, helping one, even put effort to destroy it.

According to this framing, migration is a danger which against we have to defend ourselves. Migration was portrayed as a never-ending human flow which has to be stopped in order to avoid a catastrophe from the Christian-European perspective and its (b)orders. “Refugees were presented as a threat in the government’s discourse on different levels: as abstract threat (embodiment of different cultures), as potential threat (they bring ‘diseases ... which haven’t been present for decades’) and as actual, tangible threat (aggressive crowd attacking the country’s border).” (Messing and Bernáth 2016, 48)

As it was observed in the general European context, in Hungary as well, refugees and migrants were nameless without personal stories and their own voices, particularly in the case of female refugees. Direct voices in the press only got platform from authorities, politicians and official actors. This created a homogenized picture about diverse actors and events.

Regarding the terming used by the mainstream media and discourse, the most common one was “migráns” (migrants) and illegal migrant which had a pejorative connotation and “the Hungarian government systematically replaced terms that trigger positive feelings or sympathy – such as ‘refugee’ – in its communications with legally neutral or even negative terms that were more likely to alienate the audience from refugees and increase their association with ‘otherness’” (Messing and Bernáth 2016, 16). This way of communication supported the

dehumanization and deindividualization of people which reduced the ability to feel empathy towards them and realized the potential symbolic power of words.

The hegemonic discourse about migration was not just rhetorically but visually outstanding which is crucial from the point of this research and firstly in the second semi-chapter I will summarize the government's visual language and then compare that way of looking to the visual narration of the movies.

Visual narration of the state media

All of what was described above was supported not just with narration but with a strong visual toolkit from the state side. Visual illustrations and images played a crucial role in mediating the securitization discourse which was most visibly in the pro-governmental outlets and of course in the public billboard campaign.

In Bernáth and Messing's analysis this argument mostly supported by the analysis of M1 television station which is a state financed media outlet. "...M1 adopted the anti-refugee campaign of the Hungarian government in its framing of the news through editing, choice of titles, carefully selected images and selectively giving voice to certain actors while denying it to others." (Messing and Bernáth 2016, 46)

The common state-driven representation of "the migrant" (illegal migrant, trespasser) appeared as a male, violent person in a horde-like group of people. Mostly crowds were shown in violent situations without showing their faces and showing them from behind, distancing them from the viewer. Furthermore, they were often showed in violent scenes, protesting, shouting and portraying them as fearful criminals. The gender perspective was also highlighted, because women and children were almost absent visually, making the picture even more homogenous. When they appeared occasionally, they were put in a highly victimized, passive position. In pair with the who got the opportunity to speak, these agents received the visual focus in the sense that policeman, politicians and other officials – but not volunteers or helpers – were shown as individuals with close-ups, as they serve the common interest in protecting "us" from "them".

I argue that the movies of my analysis provide an alternative, counter narrative in their storytelling and visual language. Before giving a detailed analysis of how they manage to do that, it is important to see in what context they emerged besides the social-political one, and what other counter movements appeared at the same time.

Emerging counter voices

Chantal Mouffe gives the critique of the naturalistic notion of enemy making because this understanding of society and community gives floor and justification to populist politics as they can rely on the human drive to create enemies. According to her, instead of antagonism we should think about agonism in politics (Mouffe 2005, 20) which would not mean the community building can only rely on excluding others. This notion of society is close to the behavior of counter voices in the migration discourse.

In this xenophobic and hostile state-led context towards migrants and other groups of minorities, however, other, counter hegemonic narratives emerged. In the field of media, non-state platforms did this job to a certain level (such as RTL). The contestation of hegemonic practices and representations happened in several platforms such as in humanitarian work where new NGOs were established (Migration Aid, Migszol, Menedék). Probably the most distinctive example to that were the self-organized activities at Keleti station where civilians and volunteers engaged and provided help to migrants who stuck at one of Budapest's train station during their mobility (Kallius et al. 2016). From the perspective of my analysis, visual forms of counternarratives and counter discourses are in the center.

The most outstanding and far reaching example to that was the anti-anti-immigrant campaign of the Hungarian Two-Tailed Dog Party (Magyar Kérfarkú Kutyapárt). MKKP was in this period a joke party and since then became a "real" party, launched their own campaign. The party started to crowdfund money from civils to create their own billboards. As a counterhegemonic movement, they created an alternative perspective through humor and satire to reflect on the positioning of the government and Hungary in the field. They put out billboards on the street which were critically reflexive to the original one in a humorous way. The posters had the same visual form as the original campaign and the texts on it used satire like "Sorry fot out prime minister!" and "If you are Hungary's prime minister you have to respect our laws!" This was mostly analyzed from a social movement and activism perspective but "the visual nature of the party's style of communication" (Nagy 2016, 122) give the opportunity to make a bigger step towards the visual counter discourses.

In the field of art, the topic of migration in connection to the "crisis" has been processed in different ways. Usually because art as a place of resistance provides alternative space to get and give voice for those who do not have it elsewhere. There has been a trend to represent and include migration in art such as in theatre, museum exhibitions or in action research of art,

participatory projects and in the film as well. In film it is mainly prevalent as a topic, theme or “story”. The analysis of this cultural products most often happened through case studies (Köhn 2016, Demos 2013). I follow the same approach as I rely on the chosen movies as cases of cultural counter hegemony in the field of culture.

Field of culture in Hungary

Relating to the media coverage and representation of migration it is unavoidable to look at the cultural context in which it is embedded because the relations in the cultural field opened up the opportunity for the state to have and develop their extremely successful xenophobic campaign and propaganda. I depart from ideas of Bourdieu to understand cultural products in their social context.

Regarding the Hungarian cultural politics, 2010 is most often stated as a substantial turning point. The cultural policy of the post-2010 era is considered to be a new, radically different way of cultural politics because this is when the governmental party, Fidesz has gained its strong political basis after the elections. From this point the state started to cement its power in several ways in which culture plays an important role, furthermore, to which the anti-immigrant campaign and the whole discourse of migration is highly connected.

From the perspective of this thesis, it is crucial to see the mechanisms of the cultural field and production. From 2010 the process of strong centralization of political power started in which culture can be considered as a legitimating pillar: “Orbán’s cultural policy is based on a reluctance to view culture as an autonomous, multi-colored, free organism.” (Bozóki 2016, 106). Culture serves in this regime as a tool in establishing and strengthening a (Christian) national, sovereign Hungary. From this period the government has started to build up its political basis through a re-nationalization discourse in which “national unification” paired with social exclusion, the restriction of free press, new leaders in cultural institutions, monopolization of the media were key elements. The distinction between “them” and “us” and the creation of a national elite happened with the help of the transformation of cultural institutions and values. Bozóki argues that the post-2010 cultural policy of the Hungarian state “cannot be viewed as one of the governmental sectors separable from prime minister Viktor Orbán’s concept of power and symbolic politicking”. (Bozóki 2016, 87) This way the national culture became the “handmaiden of politics”. One of the core reasons for the need of the re-definition of the cultural field from the perspective of Fidesz was to strengthen their hegemony. They use art and culture in a symbolic and functional way in order to do so.

However, beyond building a strong national elite, Nagy and Szarvas emphasize that we should think about the cultural field of Hungary in a dualistic way (Nagy and Szarvas, 2017). One part of this dualistic system includes what was described above, the creation of a national profile and domestic bourgeoisie through cultural production in order to strengthen the notion of

sovereignty, but they add to this the market-oriented perspective. This means that after 2010 a new, managerial perspective entered the field to improve the profitable sectors of culture and to catch up to the production side. This perspective is important in my analysis because such as design and the film industry is more on this side of the culture industry. Hungarian culture policy viewed as a dualistic system, as on the one hand building up a domestic bourgeoisie, on the other, catching up to the market-oriented sphere of cultural production, gives us the opportunity to better understand and place the film production and industry.

Placing the Film Industry

In the field of film industry we can see an interesting conjuncture of the different cultural policy trends in Hungary. On the one hand, it is strongly market oriented because of the nature of the medium, easily distributable, and on the other hand, it has strong connection to the state mainly because of its financing system. It balances on the border of autonomy and dependency that makes it hard to grasp its position.

In Hungary it is a common narrative about contemporary film industry that in professional terms is autonomous and the evaluation of applications, tenders, the distribution of funds happens on the basis of a professional competence. However, it is a state institution because film without state support is stable and sustainable on its own rights (Varga 2016, 15) which creates direct links to the governmental politics. This political connection creates a controversial position that received critical opinions about its functioning. (Oroszi 2015) This is extreme in the case of contemporary cinema which emerged at the beginning of 2010s.

In his book “Filmrendszerváltások” (Film Transitions) Balázs Varga follows the institutional and financing shifts in the Hungarian film industry from the 1960s until the early 2010s. There are two main processes distinguished by Varga: the crisis and falling, furthermore the reorganization of the old system, and the formation of a new system. (Varga 2016, 24) The old system was based on studio financing which means that film studios received money from the state and they dealt with their resources on their own.

After 1989, new, independent film production companies emerged but until 1991 the Hungarian film industry was centralized and controlled in distribution of resources. The loosening of the system between 1991 and 2010 was introduced through a new financing structure in which the Magyar Mozgóképek Alapítvány (Hungarian Motion Picture Foundation) dealt with feature and documentary film production. In the 1990s governmental politics stayed out from telling what

kind of films are allowed to make. Until the 2010s the system the financial distribution was centralized as it all came from the state budget. The distribution of funds happened and still happens in a tender system. The Mozkép's four-person membered curatorium judged and evaluated the tenders, however, a strong financial deficiency was created which was one of the reasons that led to the transformation of the filmic system.

A milestone in the restructuring was the so called “film law” in 2004 which transformed the film industry into the direction of a market-oriented one with a more sustainable funding system. The new and substantial chapter of the contemporary film sphere started in 1 June 2011 when the Hungarian National Film Fund (Magyar Nemzeti Filmalap; MNF) was established. This is a nonprofit state organization which main task is to distribute the state sources for predominantly feature length animation, documentary and feature films and further for experimental and exam films. All other film financing happens under the coordination of the Nemzeti Média- és Hírközlési Hatóság Média tanácsa (National Media and Media Authority Media Council) and other not production related support is by the Nemzeti Erőforrás Minisztérium (Ministry of National Resources) or the Nemzeti Kulturális Alap (National Cultural Fund). Unlike before, the major source of MNF is not coming directly from the state budget but from the tax income of the lottery that takes off a huge burden from the state and provides a permanent source.

After the establishment of the Film Fund a slow development started in film because of its more calculatable and reliable feature, but critical voices towards the controversial position of MNF emerged. Filmmakers and professionals in the field argued that the many personal links between politicians and officials at the Fund have negative impact on the professional aspect of the field and also the judgements of application might be based on informal relationships rather than the professional quality of the work. This way of giving position to close, reliable people of the government is not a unique approach in the institutions of Hungary.

It is still an open question whether there will be a very new chapter because of the recent death of Government Commissioner Andrew G. Vajna. Vajna's position embodied the controversy between the culture policies and in the film industry as he was a business man with strong and intimate connections to the state politics. A new commissioner has not been nominated only the already existing board took the tasks over.

The movies discussed in this paper are embedded in this film industry and emerged from this cultural field. The chosen three movies have a privileged position in the “migration movie”

corpus in Hungary, not only because all of them was funded by the state but because they earned nationwide recognition. Also, the film corpus which deals with the events of 2015 is relatively small. The most common approach to this topic in film happened in the form of short movies, and we can find feature, documentary and even animation movie in the field. These movies take most of the part of the corpus and feature-length films are rare, so these three movies are unique of their kind.

All movies received their main financial support from the Hungarian National Film Fund. According to their release *The Citizen* is the first one in this mini corpus (national premiere 26/01/2017, world premiere 11/2016). The director of the movie is Roland Vranik who is also one of the screenwriters with Iván Szabó. The film deals with the topic of migration, but it is not directly about the “crisis”. However, it was premiered in the middle of the “crisis” so the connections and connotations with it are unavoidable.

Jupiter’s Moon received around 700 million HUF from the fund and it is a co-production with Germany with regional funds and Eurimages so the budget of it exceeds the two others’. The shooting of the movie started in May 2016 (national premiere 08/06/2017, world premiere 19/05/2017), however, the screen-play born before the “crisis” and its working title was “The Unnecessary Person” (A felesleges ember). This title is more didactic than the final version and explicitly refers to the outsider position of the protagonist of the film with a value judgement. Kornél Mundruczó, the director and one of the screenwriters with Kata Wéber, is someone who works at theatre and film locally and internationally, has already worked with the topic of migration in his theatre play *Winterreise* at Trafó.

Easy Lessons as the newest out of the three (national premiere 11/10/2018, world premiere 08/2018) is also more directly linked with the 2015 “crisis” but it is not about it. The film was part of the “Inkubátor” (Incubator) program of MNF which provides opportunity for young filmmakers to enter the film scene and develop their scripts and then their films with professional support provided by the Fund. Dorottya Zurbó is young filmmaker, relatively at the beginning of her filmic career.

MNF is an umbrella and mother institution of the movies but there were several independent production companies included in the making and in the promotion of the films. Together the work of these levels, the state and independent sphere, the films have reached a wide audience in the professional area. Their success is their nationwide reception is nicely articulated in the

festival screenings and in the prizes which they won which add to the validation of their stressed position in this research.

Intertwined discourses: a thematic film analysis within a sociological framework

First and foremost, it is crucial to see why specifically these movies were chosen for this analysis. I already highlighted the unique position of these movies in the Hungarian migration film corpus as well as their nationwide recognition — factors that played central role in my selection of these films. Beyond their local successes, their international reception and unique place in the corpus, their synthesis and comparison provide a rich unit of analysis in a comparative study. On the one hand, with the mainstream discourse and on the other, with each other. Furthermore, these movies provide a gradation in several aspects. By this I mean that we can observe a continuous leveling in their ways of looking at the topic of migration and in terms of their genre as well.

I will analyze the films through three thematic clusters. Firstly, how they place themselves in the discourse for and discourse about division, whether they sustain this division, and for whom and how they give voice. Secondly, I look at how the films position the protagonists, in which frameworks they look at them (humanitarian – securitization), what the Other or outsider means in these movies and how they reflect on this position. Finally, I study the role of different genre choices for the movies, particularly their relation to reality as well as their narrative and storytelling style. I focus on these clusters because these elements had an important role in the hegemonic discourse as well.

In the following section I will explore the movies focusing on these perspectives and connecting them back to the hegemonic discourse at several points. I chose not to talk about them separately but in a conceptually connected way to grasp commonalities and differences at the same time,. I compare the movies to each other as well as the mainstream state discourse. Despite the many differences in storytelling, filmic languages, and first and foremost their different genres, in my view, they together provide a fruitful basis of analysis.

Before the analysis, I give the synopsis and summary of the movies — relying on the one hand on the movies themselves and on the other hand, on their description provided by the official website of the Hungarian National Film Fund. I engage critically with these descriptions because they provide a source of knowledge about how the movies' storylines are “officially” framed to the wide audience.

The Citizen is a movie about “the difficulties of integration through a love- and refugee story”. From this, it is clear that Wilson’s relation to society is the intention of getting integrated — not assimilated. Further, the mixture of a romantic story line with a “refugee story” gives and “unorthodox love story”. This relationship, supposedly, considered to be an “unorthodox” one because of the different positions of the involved ones (legal and symbolic status, skin color etc.) which also gives the “drama” and tension of the movie. Wilson is 56 years old “honest, good-hearted African man” who is a “political refugee”, works as a security guard in Hungary, and his love Mari, a 56 years old Hungarian teacher. Their ages do not come up specifically in the movie but only in the synopsis. The adjectives used to describe Wilson gives a clear positioning: he is a nice, open-minded person who wants to become “a model Hungarian citizen” since he has been living in the country for a while. He wants to stay in Hungary, because “It’s good for me here” (from the movie). He takes the “constitutional studies exam” several times in the hope of getting the citizenship. Because of the continuous failures, he starts to go to Mari for private lessons on Hungarian culture and history and from this point their unfolding “mutual attraction” leads to an “unexpected turn” in their lives. The “unexpected turn” for them is their love which breaks the life of Mari, because she leaves her family for Wilson. At the same time, a third main character, a “mysterious stranger” enters the movie and Wilson’s life. One night, Shirin, a 26 years old pregnant “Persian girl” knocks on Wilson’s door to ask for refuge from him because she has no other place to go. She must hide because she “fled the refugee camp” in Bicske because “she was facing expulsion”. She stays at Wilson’s and at the same night when she arrived, her water breaks but she “refuses to go to the hospital” because of the danger of expulsion. She “refuses” because she has no other choice. She gives birth at home to Hidi, her daughter whose father is in Iran, and throughout the movie it turns out, that the pregnancy was one of the reasons she had to leave: they were not married. As a solution to the expulsion, Wilson offers that when he will get the citizenship, he will marry Shirin and this way she can legally stay in the country. Their relation becomes a “strong, trusting” one which will be later a source of conflict between Wilson and Mari. Shirin wanted to hide her situation from Mari because of lack of trust, but Mari started to get “increasingly frustrated” by their close relationship with Wilson. When Hidi gets sick, Shirin’s illegality turns out to Mari because Shirin refuses to get a doctor, however Mari without her permission calls a pediatrician. The relation between the two women gets worse and Wilson stands between the two of them. Mari’s frustration grows even more, when she gets to know the plan of the marriage. The jealousy and frustration lead her to “betray Shirin”. She calls a refugee camp with a good intention to help Shirin and Hidi but the camp reports Shirin’s place of residence and the process

ends with the deportation of Shirin and Hidi. Wilson is unable to forgive Mari and he “breaks up with her for good” which means that Wilson’s decision was justified regardless Mari’s point of view. Because of his “deep disappointment”, he leaves Hungary at the very end of the movie, “gives up on his dreams” about becoming a “model citizenship” and “moves to Austria, in the hope for a better life” which nicely shows that Austria as a “Western” country might provide the opportunity for a new beginning.

The description of the two other movies is significantly shorter than that of *The Citizen*, which might be the case because of the groundbreaking nature of *The Citizen* that firstly dealt with this topic in the Hungarian film scene. Aryan, the protagonist of *Jupiter’s Moon* is characterized in the synopsis as a “young immigrant” who “illegally crosses the border” of Hungary. He had to flee Syria with his father. The main conflict of the movie starts to unfold at the very beginning, when during “illegally crossing the border” Aryan gets shot by a police man, László. Aryan not just survives it but he “mysteriously levitate at will” after the shot. After this, he is “thrown into” a refugee camp, from where he is “smuggled out”, by the doctor of the camp, Stern. Illegality appears in the description several times, as he enters the country, as he exits the camp and in general in his position as an “illegal migrant” despite that except the authorities (police) he considered to be a refugee by his close surrounding. Dr. Stern decides to help the boy because he sees his “extraordinary secret” and his intention is to “exploit” this power in order to get money out of it for his own purpose which is to pay for a former medical mistake he made. The notion of exploitation is in line with the exploitation of illegal migrant work in many receiving countries. However, the “enraged” police man who shot Aryan, and whose motivation besides his seemingly pure evil attitude is not very developed and explained, also knows his secret and he is after both “fugitives”, Aryan and Stern. Being a fugitive also resonates with the illegal, outsider position and now Stern is part of it as well. During the escape from the anger of the police man who in one person embodies “the” official bureaucracy and authorities, Stern “takes a leap of faith in a world where miracles are trafficked for small change”. In a disenchanted world a migrant brings back hope in a person’s life with his ethereal power which is a strong metaphor for the power lying in individuals who are displaced from society.

Easy Lessons is about a 17 years old girl, Kafia, who has “fled to Europe” two years ago “on her own” from Somalia from a forced marriage. In the movie it turns out that she did not come on her own, she came with others who are not mentioned more specifically, but also her mother helped her a lot in arranging her flee. She lives in a “state children’s home” in Budapest and

we follow her personal development while she prepares for the Hungarian graduation and starts to fulfill her dream to become a model. “On the surface”, Kafia is a strong young woman “at the brink of adulthood”, but “behind that beautiful and confident appearance lies a heavy heart”. The appearance of Kafia pops up several times as her dream job, modeling is also connected to that and that her beauty and calm behavior hide her feelings and traumas. She has “constant dilemmas” about breaking with her old life and Muslim culture. These dilemmas give the core to her one-sided dialogue with her mother. The movie with these elements becomes “an intimate confession” which mainly directed towards Kafia’s mother. The movie explores what it is like to “fully give yourself up”, “break with your past” and “find a new self” which are not at all easy but from the outside they might seem like to be.

Storytelling: who speaks?

The face of an African man and the voice of someone asking some exam question in Hungarian. A dark, closed, moving space showing in it some poultry in a cage. Cut. The face of a heavily sweating young man.

Hearing a voice speaking in broken Hungarian. Cut. An extreme close-up of the face of a Somalian girl.

The establishing shots and opening scenes of the movies give a clear guidance for the viewer that whose stories we will see and hear with what kind of approach. Contrary to the state portrayal of the events, both movies focus on individual stories. Each movies’ narration is from the perspective of one main character who is a refugee. This is important because these movies are platforms for giving a voice for those who are most often silenced. Bringing closer the personal stories creates intimacy and the feeling of empathy in the viewer what is absent from the state narrative. Visually the main tool for creating this sense is the use of close-ups. The establishing picture of the movies starts with close-ups of the main characters. *Easy Lessons* and *The Citizen* strongly keep this approach throughout the whole films and builds on extreme close-ups of the protagonists most often from the front, while in *Jupiter’s Moon* such close-ups are less frequent but still prevalent.

It is common in the movies that they have a central refugee character, but they have differences in terms of their degree of focus on only that one character and their interaction with their surroundings. *Jupiter’s Moon*’s Aryan portrayed in relation with his environment and with two other important characters: Dr. Stern, who is also in some way the protagonist of the movie and

the antagonist, László, the police man. He is shaped mainly by these two people and vice versa, they — especially Stern — are shaped by him.

We see that through the refugee characters, others get back their voices. For example, Aryan prompts Dr. Stern, who is disillusioned by society, to dive into deep introspection. Mari and Shirin through Wilson get an opportunity to break away from their former lives, even if only temporarily. Mari, when falling in love with Wilson, starts to live again, she goes out dancing, soon leaves her husband and moves to Wilson's place. Shirin finds a safe point in Wilson and receives a promise for a new life with her baby.

In the case of Kafia, the opening up of others is a bit different because the narration is more focused on her. The narration goes in two lines: the first one is as the camera follows Kafia in her everydayness and the second one is kind of a soliloquy or a one-sided conversation with her mother. In the second line, Kafia speaks in Somalian about her deepest thoughts and feelings. Even though Kafia is at the center, the film shows a glimpse into the lives of small communities which she is part of. She lives in a state's children home where we see how teenage girls live their everyday lives. They are pictured as the immediate surrounding of Kafia, and the audience get some impressions about a structural issue of the placement and displacement of (underprivileged) children in Hungary. However, because of the focus of the movie, this topic is not developed. Furthermore, Kafia became a member of a small Christian community and we see her relation to the members there. Thirdly, in school we see her with the company of her classmates and teachers who try their best to help her in completing her final exams. The different emphasis in Kafia's case can be explained by the fact that *Easy Lessons* follows a coming-of-age narrative very strongly. We see her growing up, finding herself in an unknown, new environment.

Beyond giving a voice to displaced persons, *Easy Lessons* very much emphasizes a gendered perspective. This perspective is also part of *The Citizen*, but it is rather dismissed in *Jupiter's Moon*. As we saw, the mainstream media did not provide place for women and children to express themselves and in the case of Kafia these two come together. As a Somalian female young adult, she represents a multiply oppressed position (child, female, refugee, black person) and she breaks the silence assigned to her with the help of the film. The preconditions for this were created during the shooting of the film in a supporting atmosphere where most members of the crew were women. This established a safe space for Kafia, who in the film mentions that back in Somalia she has hated men and she had issues with them.

The gender perspective in *The Citizen* also emphasized through the character of Shirin. She is in the most vulnerable position in the sense that as a pregnant refugee woman in a foreign country without any stable network she faces expulsion. She must rely on informal help otherwise any other source of help is too risky. She has to take responsibility not just for herself but her child as well.

As we saw in the media coverage, migrants did not have a voice but authorities and officials had the floor. The movies challenge the dominance of their voices — as they give voice to the oppressed and to the Other, they reverse the position of authorities. This can be illustrated by how all the movies portray the police. While the mainstream discourse showed them usually from the front, using close-ups of individuals as protectors, the movies somehow reverse — but still sustain — the binary division between the portrayal of refugees and authorities. Although the movies bring closer the personal stories of the refugees, they seemingly do the same with the position of authorities what the hegemonic discourse does with the position of refugees.

Police appear in all the movies. In *Jupiter's Moon* the antagonist is the chief police and the main conflict starts from his and Aryan's interaction. At several points in the movie the police is portrayed as violent, careless and even abortive — for instance, in the case of the terrorist attack at the metro line of Budapest committed by two migrants, and at the end of the movie, Dr. Stern disarm with his belt a riot police. In *The Citizen* the police's scene is at the end, when they find out Shirin's "hiding" place, they enter Wilson's apartment by force. They communicate and behave in an aggressive way: they manacle Shirin and Wilson because they try to resist to protect the baby. In *Easy Lessons* they appear in a subtle way. They show up twice, both times in the state's children room. They are faceless and appear in the background. First, they bring back a girl to the institution (we do not know from where and why) and then the second time they leave the building supposedly from some meeting with the heads of the institution. Their appearance suggests that their constantly part of the lives of those who live in this state institution and that they are responsible for keeping the order — which is needed in this kind of institution.

Taking away the voice of officials and authorities and somehow giving it to the silenced ones happens in other cases as well. Through the bureaucratic procedures which Wilson is faced every day the film gives a critique of the disfuncionality of these bureaucratic institutions. It starts with the absurdity of the exam, where they ask things about Hungary which are not integral part of being a Hungarian citizen either. The Immigration Office appears several times, where we see other migrants waiting in the hall. Wilson goes back here twice in the movie: first

to inquire whether he will get the citizenship. In this discussion it turns out, that he is a familiar face in the office because the bureaucrat already knows him and tells him that he should not come back here all the time, he will get his answer. The second time, he goes there with Mari to speed up the procedures because he needs the papers for the marriage. At this point, another issue, namely racism came up because he gets offended by the bureaucrat when she says that for a black person it is even more challenging to get the papers. The last and most symbolic institutional critique is towards the end of the movie, when Shirin already has been deported. Wilson goes to the residency of the president in the Buda Castle and knock on the huge doors of the building with anger. This is a symbolic gesture towards power and authority because as he gets to know from the police there, the president does not live or stay there. In the case of Kafia, these critiques are not that explicit.

Un-institutionalized negative voices such as racism, anti-gypsism or exoticization also appear. Racism most harshly illustrated in *The Citizen* where Wilson gets direct comments to his skin color on a workplace event (“Enjoy until you can, nigger.”) or the already mentioned Immigration Office situation, but Mari’s family is also hostile in some ways. One of her son and her sister, Wilson’s colleague make stereotypical and inappropriate comments about him to Mari (e.g. the size of his penis and that he only wants Mari to marry her for the papers). Aryan at the visit of one of Stern’s clients gets the comment from the patient that he should leave because he is a gypsy. Aryan does not get it but Stern gets angry and Aryan with his superpower as a reaction to the conflict literally twist the flat of the patient. (The patient could not comprehend this supernatural experience and soon he jump out of the window.) Towards Kafia there are no racist comments but there is some kind of exoticization and objectification of her body, which is prominent. She tells the story in Somalian that first one of the girls asked why she is so dark skinned, is it because she goes often solarium? We also see this curiosity on the screen when her housemates check the color of her hands.

In this section, I argued that the movies with their individualistic focus both content-wise and visually break the mainstream discourse regarding who has voice to speak. However, in some cases, this happens in a way that giving voice to someone means taking away it from someone. In these situations, the films seem to miss reflecting on whether there might be a way to give voice to all actors.

Characters: from which position?

Having a hearable voice in a different culture poses several challenges, in particular due to a possible language barrier. As foreigners in a different country, each protagonist deals with this issue but on different levels. In understanding this, the different time and space division of the movies give us some clue.

Jupiter's Moon is the most dense out of the three because the time and space perspective is packed and the plot of the film spans a maximum of a couple of days. In space we only move between a border area and Budapest which gives the space for almost the entire movie. The filmic tempo is fast, events come after each other in a quick way and the chasing scenes semblance of an action movie (e.g. car chasing, shootings in the hotel) make the speed even quicker. We do not know what happened and will happen to Aryan; for him Hungary is a new field and since he does not know the language, he communicates in English.

While *Jupiter's Moon* provides a dense time and space conjuncture, the other two movies' time line is a slower and longer one. In *The Citizen Wilson* appears in the movie with a clear background: he speaks Hungarian fluently with a strong accent, we get to know that he has a job as a security guard in a super market, an apartment and that he has been trying to get the citizenship for a while. Wilson is embedded but not entirely part of the Hungarian society, hence the constant application for the citizenship — he wants to become a “model” Hungarian. Kafia's situation is similar in the sense, that she must have been in Hungary for a while because she also knows the language even if she still studies and struggles with it. She arrived as a minor to the country, that is why she lives in a state's children house and we see her growing out of this institution.

Regardless of their relatively embedded position and their journey towards integration and acceptance into the Hungarian society, Kafia and Wilson, just as Aryan are portrayed strongly as outsiders and as the Other. They are pushed out from more communities but they want to get in, be part of one. This resonates with the hegemonic discourse because migrants are distanced from the receiving society in general — they are outlaws. However, the approach towards this outsider role differs in the movies from the mainstream narrative because they reflect on it in a critical way.

The protagonists of the movies are introduced at the very beginning from this outsider position, but we see them in their journey trying to destroy and overcome this category. The movies follow the topos of a Bildungsroman form where we see the development and change of a person throughout the story. As I already mentioned, this is most emphasized in *Easy Lessons*

where the narrative is entirely built on this. The visual metaphor for this journey is that we see Kafia often on her way: walking on the street, but mostly traveling by public transportation, looking out of the window and being on the road, always going somewhere.

We see individuals (some cases more than the protagonists) develop their personalities in relation to their surroundings. Most of the main characters want to overcome this outsidership and Otherness through official procedures (e.g. exams, official papers, citizenship). However, the most important element in becoming an insider seems to be their personal relationships with insiders who are in fact often in a transitional position between outsiders and insiders themselves. Dr. Stern made a medical error before he met Aryan and with this mistake he lost ground. He became an outsider, a cold, reluctant person. However, meeting Aryan brought changes in him. (This approach in the movies similar to the counter movements in the humanitarian framework where the helping procedures happen mostly through relations of individuals.)

In the hope of exceeding the outsider position, the movies predominantly focus on integration as a mode of becoming part of the Hungarian society. This focus is explicit in the synopsis of *The Citizen*; however, in the movies the relation between integration and assimilation is blurred. There is a scene in *Easy Lessons* which reflects on this in a subtle way. Kafia sits on a history class where the teacher talks about the assimilation processes in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and explains how Hungarians wanted to convince others how extremely great to be Hungarian. During this speech we see Kafia's face for whom following the language and this topic is quite challenging but the scene gives the feeling as if the teacher was talking about the position of Kafia.

The position of protagonists as newcomers is most often framed as being refugees. However, this framing varies, as Aryan is first pictured as an illegal migrant who was smuggled into Hungary before we get to know that he had his papers that were taken away and used against him in a terrorist attack in the metro of Budapest.

The protagonists' portrayals go against the hegemonic one in the sense that they are highly active. The protagonists get help from other people, but they are not passive spectators of the events around them. This activity is a constructive one opposite to the state portrayal where migrants as active participants are portrayed as deconstructive, aggressive actors. Instead of passivity in the movies, in some cases they are pictured as victims which suggests that they are vulnerable but not because of their own fault but because others place them that way. Besides

victimization, which is not that empathetic, naivety also appears as the outsider do not know the rules and norms yet. This is the case for instance with Aryan, when he enters a restaurant only asks for French fries and the waiters look at him as he does not ask that because he wishes for that but because he does not know anything else.

This not knowing enough yet theme is crucial in their journey because it stands for the gap that has to be filled in with new knowledge and experiences. The culture of the receiving country as a central topic in this “becoming someone” processes is crucial and it appears in both movies in the key metaphor of national anthems. Anthems express the belonging to somewhere in a national level.

As part of culture in a broad sense, the movies are full of Biblical and Christian, and with eutherian references in a critical, subversive way. In *The Citizen*, the highest point of this critique is when Wilson and Mari visit a museum where they sit in front of the portrait of St. Stephen, the founder of the Hungarian state and which he built on becoming a Christian country. Wilson comments on that and says that he was cruel because he cut his opponent into four pieces. Mari replies that it is more complex than that and he needed to do it.

In the movies we can see many successes of the protagonists in transgressing the outsider position. On the event where Wilson faces racist comments, the purpose of the event is the celebration of 25th anniversary of the super market where he works in Hungary. On this night, Wilson receives the title of worker of the year and in his speech he thanks to his colleagues that they accepted him. Nicely and a bit didactically we see him standing in front a poster that says “In Hungary for 25 years”. Kafia’s journey is full of with successes as she starts her model career and passes her exams with excellent result with several distinctions.

However, the hope of becoming an insider is not fulfilled entirely in any of the cases. In Aryan’s case this is shown through the metaphor of levitation from the very beginning. Aryan as an “angel” or “alien” has at the same time a bonding and alienating effect. As an eatherian power Dr. Stern sees in it the business potential to get money with it from sick people who he has to visit. As a miracle the levitation brings something unusual and magical into the lives of terminally ill people, bringing back hope in their lives. On the other hand, with this supernatural skill he gets outside of the common sense about what human is. This has a strong connotation with being a refugee of migrant, as they often get deprived from their humanity. However, levitation creates a strong connection between Aryan and something beyond our world hence the reference to him as an angel. Aryan is not only a transitional position in his journey as a

refugee, but as a human being between the rational and irrational world which in some cases brings hope but in other cases fear. At the last scene of the movie we see this duality when he escapes László, the police man with the help of his power and he levitates in the air with Keleti station in the background. We see the faces of people on the streets who stare at Aryan in the air and after this the movie shows a refugee kid at Keleti station who plays hide-and-seek and he counts with closed eyes. Around him everyone stares Aryan but not him. He, as a small kid gets stuck in the disenchanted world with closed eyes while magic happens around him.

Wilson's journey ends up in Austria because of his disappointments, mostly in his private life. However, immediately after Shirin's leaving he receives an official letter. He opens it up at his balcony but we do not know what it is about, we can just guess whether it is his acceptance or denial as a Hungarian citizenship. Dramaturgically, the first case is more likely to make the disappointment even bigger and more dramatic. After his experiences shown in the movie, Wilson decides to leave Hungary and start a new life which probably also means that he has to restart the whole journey what he has already took in Hungary: learning a new language, finding a job and place to live.

Kafia successfully finishes her exams with excellent grades at the end. She has learned how to climb a rope as part of her PE exam which at the beginning of her preparation seemed to be impossible. She did it and climbed up on her road. Besides the graduation, she also has some modeling jobs and she had to move to another place because she is not a child anymore: she legally turned into an adult. She took a huge journey but at the very last scene we see that it is not finished or most probably it will never be finished. She prepares for a video call and we see her putting back on her headscarf for the very first time in front of the camera. She rings someone and eventually her mother picks up the phone. This is the happiest moment of Kafia in the movie and somehow disturbing for the viewer at the same time. What Kafia came through seemingly brought back to point zero with the gesture of transforming herself into her old personality.

However, as a cliché it is well known, what matters is the journey itself which enriches the wanderer and not the destination. I believe, this is true to the protagonists as well who seemingly take the same circles but they get to know themselves and their surrounding in their personal, micro level. I find it important to emphasize this individualistic approach because as we look at it from a more structural perspective, being a refugee often means that you live closed into this circle. Facing the danger of expulsion, not achieving your goals can happen any time. From

this macro perspective these movies shift the focus only on individual and slightly and occasionally reflects on the big picture.

As a passage to the third cluster of analysis, relation to reality, it is worth to see the relation between the filmic and real position of the characters. There is a difference in the movies regarding the actors who play the protagonists. Aryan is played by a Hungarian, young, rather popular actor because the original person, who was a refugee cancelled the role. In a feature film this choice is understandable and justified. Dr. Stern is played by the Georgian actor Merab Ninidze which is interesting regarding the language barriers. The film's original language is Hungarian and except Ninidze everyone speaks it so he is synchronized. This has an alienating effect but it fits the film because this again reflects on the outsider position. The Citizen's protagonist "plays" himself in the sense that Dr. Cake-Baly Marcelo arrived to Hungary as a refugee and not in the same way, but went through similar experiences as Wilson. Shirin, played by Arghavan Shekari is an amateur actress, she is Iranian but her experiences are different from the filmic character. She has not fled Iran because she had to but because she fell in love. Kafia, literally and all the characters in Easy Lesson "play" themselves which is given based on the documentary genre of the movie.

In this section I showed how the starting point of the movies in terms of how they look at their protagonists is the same as the hegemonic discourse. Their starting point is the Other as an outsider but contrary to the state narrative, they look at it in a more critical way. They show this position from different perspectives in a more nuanced way: from the point of view of the protagonists, from their surrounding's and also the viewer adds a third perspective to it. They stress the individual engagement which often leaves the structural and social responsibility in the background.

Conclusion

“Jupiter has 67 known moons. Galileo Galilei in 1610 had discovered the four biggest ones. Presumably, under the frozen surface of one of them there is salted water that could prove the presence of life. The name of the moon is Europa.”

The motto at the beginning of *Jupiter's Moon* introduces the ambiguity that runs through the film but on a more abstract level: the issue of the portrayal of real events. This allegory immediately brings up the question what the relation of the film and its content to reality. It plays with blurring the boundaries in the viewer whether the following scenes take place on the continent Europe, or on the fictional space of the moon. This ambiguity gives space to the science-fiction world of the movie, alienating it from our everyday life, however, it creates connection with the crisis of Europe. The movie maintains this duality with its formic choice as well. I believe, this ambiguity is present in the other movies but also in the hegemonic discourse. Distortion and highlighting certain aspects of a phenomenon are part of our everyday experience and ways of seeing of the world. This movement between reality and fiction, distortion of “facts” raises important questions for which the answers are not part of this thesis.

The question of the representation of reality is central in cinema from its very beginning, and especially emphatic in documentary. Documentary filmmaking started as a reality driven form of representation. The classic distinction between fiction and nonfiction film is based on their relation to truth or reality and nonfiction films bring up the issue of the ontological status of the image and the epistemological stakes of representation (Renov 1993). Different genres play with different notion of reality, however, there are no clear borders in the genres because each of them implement formic and visual elements that are might be characteristic to other genres than theirs. In the case of this research, it is interesting to compare these streams to each other instead of searching for non-existing normative and an objective notion of reality however, to look at it needs ontological and epistemological analysis of reality that would exceed the limitations of this research.

In this writing, I rather focused not on the relation to reality within the movies, but on the relation to reality of these movies as cultural products. As I introduced, these films are embedded and produced in a certain socio-political context through a certain logic of cultural production. The product (the movie) itself is the product of the culture industry and at the same time connected to the migration industry not just because of its content and its references within

the movie, but as a cultural product it also influences the operation of the migration industry internationally and locally.

In my thesis, I stated my exploration of the visual discourses about migration from 2015. The 2015 “migration crisis” has been mobilized as a political tool in Hungary by the government. This mainly happened through an anti-immigrant campaign which was built on marked events of the crisis such as the Paris attacks, Keleti station and the refugee march, the closure of the Serbian border. As part of its extreme right-wing and populist politics through this Fidesz kept and strengthened its political power. They framed migratory processes as a threat to Hungarian society and culture and positioned migrants as the “Other” from which they created the enemy. The “Other” has been demonized, dehumanized and deindividualized in mainstream media outlets which had a crucial role. The visual coding of the xenophobic narrative made a huge effect on attitudes towards migration.

However, counter narratives emerged to the state propaganda. Helping chains appeared in the form of social movements and humanitarian work, especially at the time of the refugee march. I argued in this thesis that not only in the field of social work but in the field of culture appeared counter hegemonic voices which were critical towards the dominant discourse. Within the cultural field, I focused on the film industry and three movies that have a unique place in the Hungarian “migration movie” corpus. I explored how these movies go against the hegemonic narrative and whether they are able to break existing social patterns put forth by the state.

Contrary to the hegemonic one, the movies ways of seeing focused on individual stories of refugees hence giving voice to those who were oppressed by the state campaign. Their visual language go against the mainstream media outlets’. They used close-ups of the protagonists and emphasized personal stories to bring closer the micro-level happenings in migration.

However, their approach stayed most of the times in the binary division provided by the state: seeing migration on the macro or on the micro level, but not on both at the same time. The films do not provide a third way but stay in an opposition. They challenge the hegemonic discourse by showing the opposite of the state narrative but do not go beyond it in many cases. The synthesis of the two narratives, that there is a structural, global phenomenon of migration in which the actors are individuals, do not happen in a constructive way in neither of the discourses about migration. Hence, we can see the limitations of creating a counter hegemonic discourse in the visual narration of migration in the reflection on the macro and micro level.

In this thesis I looked at the socio-political and cultural embeddedness of the movies in order to understand their visual and narrative choices in comparison with their social context. The analysis of the effect of the movies on the public audience exceeds the limits of this text. However, I consider my research as a gate to possible researches on the audience and reception side of these movies or in general on art pieces connected to migration. Questions such as how we can position ourselves to these cultural products or transforming the passive perceiver position into an active one arises. As an outlook in my conclusion, I would like to focus on this perspective in the extent of how the viewer at this stadium of my research can start to develop this active position which can be linked to the notion of the spectacle.

In Jacques Rancière's work about the distribution of the sensible he explores how the aesthetics and politics are connected and think further how one can position itself to this sphere. (Rancière 2009) The main question is how the perceiver can challenge and deconstruct what he or she sees and how the viewer can make ruptures in the distribution of the sensible. He deals with overcoming the binaries such as activity and passivity, individuality and community, ignorance and knowledge. Rancière sees the possibility of resistance through perception. For this, the viewer has to see what the structure is of the distribution of the sensible which means the distribution of spaces, times, hearings and also includes who get part in it. The distribution happens through exclusion and inclusion, marking the boundaries of the sensible for the community. Rancière sees an aesthetics of politics in these processes because the distribution of senses is a political act. "Politics revolves around what is seen and what can be said about it, around who has the ability to see and the talent to speak, around the properties and the possibilities of time." (Rancière 2013, 13). Becoming an active participant of a system of politics like this means critical reflection to it. This can happen through the involvement of others and themselves into the discourses by talking about what they have seen and how they were affected by it. As a starting point, this is the minimum task of the spectator of any kind of art piece as well.

I believe, that the literature and analyses of the events of 2015 is widely covered from a sociological-political perspective. The topic of visual representation of migration in Hungary and the role of mass media is emphasized and well researched, however, other forms of representation from the artistic-cultural field in scientific analysis are underrepresented (e.g. films, theatre). With my research, I hope to connect these trends to the mass media representation and that it will encourage the readers to a more critical perception and consumption of the discourses about migration.

What I endeavored to do in my research is to connect different disciplinary fields such as sociology, visual anthropology, migration studies, aesthetics and politics in a fruitful way. I believe using and reading movies as social texts, as a reflection of the society from which they emerged could be the base of a legitimate social scientific undertaking. Comprehending art pieces as products of social relations is crucial and necessary to fully understand their place in our social reality. I consider my thesis as a starting point to a more structural analysis of the issue of representation of migration.

I believe that discussing and analyzing these issues is extremely important in the context of mass media and the information flood we live in. Representation of people can be manipulated and used as a means of reinforcing an ideology, as propaganda. I am interested in exploring and developing new methods that encourage a critical and reflective consumption, and creation, of the media. With my thesis, I hope to give an approach which opens up new ways of connecting these different spheres, and opportunities for further investigations in this area, keeping in mind the limitations of such research but also its formative power both in academia and in our everyday lives.

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Filmography

Könnyű leckék ('Easy Lessons'). Director: Dorottya Zurbó. 2018. Documentary. 78 minutes.

Az állampolgár ('The Citizen'). Director: Roland Vranik. 2016. Drama. (2016, feature, digital, color, 109 minutes, 1:1,85, DolbyDigital)

Jupiter Holdja ('Jupiter's Moon'). Director: Kornél Mundruczó. 2017. · Drama/Fantasy. 129 (2017, feature, color, 123 minutes) minutes.