

**Inclusive immigration frames in the news media and their influence on  
citizens' attitudes**

**A multi-method analysis of the Hungarian and German cases**

*PhD Dissertation*

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## Declaration

I, Eszter Farkas, candidate for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at the Central European University Doctoral School of Political Science, declare herewith that the present thesis is my own work, based on my research. External information are properly credited in notes and bibliography. I declare that no parts of this thesis has been submitted in this form to any other institution of higher education for academic degree.

A handwritten signature in purple ink, appearing to read 'Eszter Farkas', is positioned on the right side of the page.

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## 1. Abstract

Political contests and campaigns in recent decades highlighted the permanent relevance of immigration in political communication and preference formation, and the politicized nature of the surrounding discourse. If we follow recent empirical findings and assume that negative discourses effectively evoke anti-immigration sentiments, what are the opposite trends, and how do the contents and intensity of more positive or inclusive frames influence public attitudes, especially in an overwhelmingly anti-immigrant context? What if media outlets and politicians in their communication tend to apply less negative frames? How would public attitudes respond to that? Do framing theories apply and the exposure to more inclusive frames lead to more acceptance of immigrants and refugees? My research aims to understand why certain inclusive frames about immigration appear in media discourses, and how these frames influence the way citizens think about immigration in Hungary and Germany between 2014 and 2022. I apply several methods to discover these questions, including sentiment analysis and topic modelling of Facebook data, survey analysis, an experiment and focus group discussions. The various results of the empirical analyses highlighted a very important difference between the German and the Hungarian media discourses and attitudes, namely, that while in Germany immigration is rather approached as a policy, the Hungarian media, politics and related attitudes stem as an identity issue mostly.

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*“On the day of the multiplication of the loaves, in the evening, Jesus' disciples went down to the lake. They got into the ark and set out across the lake towards Capernaum. It was getting dark but Jesus was still not with them. The wind was strong and the lake was roaring. They rowed twenty-five or thirty stages (about five kilometers), when they saw Jesus walking on the water towards the ark. They were very frightened. But Jesus encouraged them, "It is me, do not be afraid." They wanted to take him into the ark, but at that moment the ark came ashore just where they were going. (Jn 6,16-21)”*

## **2. Introduction**

Immigration can hardly be avoided or neglected by politicians and citizens. Climate change, wars, political, social and economic inequalities constantly create circumstances that force people to change their place of residence. Therefore, immigration is a rational activity of individuals globally. Even though the intensity of the 2015 migration crisis has decreased, the recent trends after the outbreak of the war in Ukraine showed that massive immigration has remained timely and relevant as a policy issue in Europe, and therefore, continuous scientific research about it is necessary. The topic of how to relate to minority groups with different religious and cultural backgrounds has been present in European social and political debates since decades. So far, the dominant political science discourse about immigration basically concluded as follows. As soon as immigrants appear in a country, and if there are political parties which can effectively frame this phenomenon as a threat or danger, this negative tone of communication will dominate the related discourse and result in a vote share according to the rate of xenophobic population (Della Posta, 2013; Kaufmann, 2017). This was the case, for example, in the Netherlands, Italy or France previously. In these countries, the presence of anti-

immigration parties caused significant changes in other parties' policy agenda and representation as well (van Spanje, 2010).

Citizens reasonably rely on the information and interpretations received through media and politicians to formulate attitudes. Since people have indirect experiences in most policy issues, the media's and politicians' interpretations are the only interface where they can inquire various facts, arguments about current topics (Robertson, 1976). However, people can devote only little time to gather relevant information on political issues. Most studies point out to the theory on selective exposure, namely that citizens mostly consume information from media sources that are along their political alignment and that these viewpoints strengthen their engagement as well (Stroud, 2017). Public opinion and attitudes towards immigrants became extremely politicized recently, and many studies identified the media and political communication as a key influence in this regard (Krzyżanowski et al., 2018; Sik & Simonovits, 2019; Vollmer & Karakayali, 2018). The majority of European citizens gained information about migration trends and related events through media channels exclusively. Thus, the way the media pictures immigrants, the sort of information individuals are exposed to and the diversity of media representation are crucial factors in public opinion and attitudes towards non-European immigrants.

Studies on issue position agree that left and right parties “possess” policy issues that construct their identities and policy agendas, and all of them try to put emphasis on their own issues in their political communication, hoping that those particular issues will dominate media discourses as well (Robertson, 1976). According to the *issue salience* theory of Robertson, political actors aim to structure discourses in a way that their own issues dominate. Pro-immigration or inclusive messages were less effective in countering electoral and policy challenges of immigration, in spite of the fact that parties in some countries proposed inclusive policy measures to address the migration crisis. Several examples show that the pro-

immigration framings saturate easily, reach their limits in terms of popularity and need continuous re-framing (Avdagic & Savage, 2021; Boros, 2019). Furthermore, it was also pointed out that the issue salience of immigration is more dominant in case of right-wing than left-wing voters (Kustov, 2022). This results in a biased discursive environment, where negative messages dominate, and thus hinder news consumers to consider diverse ideas and arguments and to formulate complex positions on immigration.

Political contests and campaigns in recent decades highlighted the permanent relevance of immigration in political communication and preference formation, and how politicized the surrounding discourse is (Grande et al., 2019; Hutter & Kriesi, 2022a). Several theoretical and empirical considerations are widely accepted in political sciences in regards of my dissertation interest. First, related studies concluded that media frames and political debates convey mainly negative interpretations about immigration (Eberl et al., 2018a) and that individuals are overly receptive to these negative frames, which results in drastic shift towards anti-immigration attitudes (Abrajano et al., 2017). Second, previous research points out that adopting anti-immigration political party position pays off because anti-immigration sentiments effectively mobilize voters (Della Posta, 2013). Moreover, as a ‘contagion effect’, parties with an emphasized anti-immigration agenda can move the political position of other parties in the political system in the same direction (van Spanje, 2010). Last, because of the politicization of immigration, issue salience theory supports the understanding of which political actors use immigration to mobilization purposes. The more politicized a public issue, the higher media attention it receives. As de Wilde defines it, politicization is most commonly understood as “an increase in polarization of opinions, interests or values and the extent to which they are publicly advanced towards the process of policy formulation” (2011, p. 559). Moreover, it can also be regarded as a process of making “all questions political questions, all issues political issues, all

values political values and all decisions political decisions” (Hartwell, 1979, cited by Krzyżanowski et al., 2018, p. 4).

Although frames that mediate a more positive, inclusive, or humanitarian interpretation about immigration are less dominant, they also appear, even in countries where anti-immigration frames and attitudes are much more prevalent. However, fewer studies are dedicated to analyze their substantive content; moreover, available results about the effects on attitude formation are puzzling. While several studies show the intuitive interrelation, namely that inclusive media frames alleviate anti-immigration attitudes (L. Jacobs & van der Linden, 2018), another group of works point out that they have a backlash effect and reinforce prior anti-immigration attitudes (Avdagic & Savage, 2021; Bail et al., 2018). On the individual-level analysis about attitudes, I suggest relying on theories of *cross-cutting exposure* and *deliberative group discussions* to investigate the effects of diverse immigration narratives and arguments including more inclusive frames. Scientific works on cross-cutting media exposure show that if individuals face new information (e.g. pro-immigration) that counter their prior beliefs (i.e. anti-immigration), instead of logically integrating them, they tend to interpret and use these as additional evidence to their initial viewpoints and as a support to prepare for counter-argumentation. This is mainly because any kind of cognitive shift of opposing political content generates cognitive biases that individuals generally try to avoid.

These contradicting results about the effects of inclusive frames on attitude formation, the sensible negative trends regarding media narratives about immigration and related attitudes and the policy relevance of constant, unavoidable immigration, legitimize further investigation on this topic. This dissertation considers the opinion shaping influence of immigration related frames represented by media outlets and politicians in media discourses. More precisely, it aims to unfold the content and influence of positive or inclusive frames about immigration in a highly anti-immigration political context, Hungary, and compare it with another country case, of which

discourses and attitudes are less anti-immigrant, Germany. As I will show later, Hungary is an especially interesting case to study because extant research identified a particularly high prevalence of anti-immigration communication (Bajomi-Lázár, 2019; Bíró-Nagy, 2021a; Messing & Bernáth, 2016) and anti-immigration attitudes (Barna & Koltai, 2019; Messing & Ságvári, 2019; Sík et al., 2016), fueled by the dismissive government communication about immigration. These anti-immigration communication and opinion trends were outstanding across Europe, although only a handful of cross-national research pointed out to the exceptional Hungarian circumstances. The fundamental motivation of this research is to see, whether different (more positive) trends in Hungarian media contents and immigration attitudes could have been possibly lead attitude formation. In order to contextualize the quite extreme Hungarian trends, the analysis includes a further country case, Germany as well, where the media and political discourse, as well as public attitudes include more inclusivity. The appearance of inclusive frames in the German media discourse will provide examples and support the interpretation of those in the Hungarian context.

Although related research categorized a dozen of immigration media frames, this research project focuses on two types of frames about immigration primarily. First, I refer to *exclusive frames* when articles or politicians communicate about immigration in a negative, exclusive manner. This frame represents immigration mostly as a phenomenon that generally might threaten the country's economic and cultural values, or social norms. Second, I apply the term *inclusive frames* to those, which highlight the humanitarian aspects of immigration, evaluate immigration as something that could counterbalance negative economic trends, or enrich the nation culturally. Obviously, the intensity of these contents and messages vary across media outlets and politicians. Applying this polarized categorization inevitably squeezes further important types of immigration frames into these two categories. However, this approach allows me to focus on my key research question of whether inclusive frames can persuade citizens at



all, or what is at stakes is merely the intensity with which popular discourse activates underlying aversions to immigrants at a given place and time.

If negative discourses effectively evoke anti-immigration sentiments, what are the opposite trends, and how do the contents and intensity of more positive or inclusive frames influence public attitudes, especially in an overwhelmingly anti-immigrant context? What if media outlets or politicians tend to apply less negative frames, how would public attitudes response to that? Do framing theories apply and the exposure to more inclusive frames can lead to more acceptance of immigrants and refugees? Furthermore, what could motivate media and political actors to highlight the inclusive aspects of immigration, especially when exclusive narratives are that popular among the readership and the electorate? Detailed analysis of the content and timely distribution of inclusive frames, as well as various individual level analysis will suggest the answers to these questions.

Overall, my research aims to understand why certain inclusive frames about immigration appear in media discourses, and how these frames influence the way citizens think about immigration in Hungary and Germany between 2014 and 2022. Proving causal inference between particular variables (frames and attitudes) has been always challenging in social sciences. Especially since social media sites are one of the main sources of information in my research, where the supply and demand side of politics, media outlets, politicians and citizens can interact (Hameleers et al., 2021). However, simultaneous trends in frames and attitudes can suggest the relevance of these information sources on attitude and opinion formation. My research design uses different data sources and applies several methods. While the analysis of social media (Facebook) data will establish trends in discourses, the analysis of users' reactions to Facebook posts, focus group discussions and a survey experiment will examine how typical articles or general frames resonate with individual attitudes.

In the following, I specify the research questions of my dissertation research and introduce, why the Hungarian and German cases are suitable for comparative empirical analysis in terms of immigration frames and attitudes. According to the content of the research questions, I separate the theoretical and methodological concepts into two parts: media discourses and related attitudinal influence. At the end of each theoretical part, related hypotheses are formulated, followed by the methodological strategy to unfold the adequate responses. I conclude this chapter by listing the most important contributions and limitations of my research in terms of theoretical, practical and methodological benefits and burdens.

## **2.1. The research questions of this study**

Throughout this study, media frames and attitudes about immigration will be discovered in Hungary and Germany. The general research interest refers to inclusive frames about immigration, and whether these could have influenced attitude formation in Hungary, where both media coverage and attitudes are highly anti-immigrant. For this purpose, my research project aims to unfold both the macro- and micro-level contextualization of immigration frames and attitudes. Consequently, one question regards the substance, emotional valance and timely distribution of immigration related media frames, the other one the effects of these frames on individual attitudes. The macro-level analysis will be more explorative, whereas analysis on the individual level will unfold a decisive question. Although research questions that refer to causal inferences are more widespread in comparative political science, several examples show the legitimacy of descriptive approaches.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> For instance, the credo of a recently launched journal, the *Journal of Quantitative Description: Digital Media*, emphasizes the significance of descriptive studies in the quickly changing technological and digital environment, especially in terms of social media, and refuses to publish any research that make causal claims. See the information about the journal: <https://journalqd.org/about>

Following the manner of several related analyses, I compare media outlets and attitudes from more countries in my research (Eberl et al., 2018a). There will be two different countries included: Hungary, where attitudes and the media discourses are overwhelmingly anti-immigrant, the media centralized and less social plurality characterizes the country. Whereas in Germany, anti-immigrant attitudes and sentiments are less extreme, and both the composition of the society and the media system are more diverse. Therefore, the first research question is formulated as follows:

*RQ1: What are the differences between inclusive immigration frames in Hungary and Germany?*

The exploration of inclusive immigration frames will contribute to the general research question of this study by providing nuanced insights about the content and timely distribution of these frames, and later serve as the subject of individual-level empirical works. Several aspects will be highlighted to discover this explorative research question: which inclusive frames are dominant across time in the two countries? Who communicates these dominant frames, and what are the strategical reasons for applying certain frames by politicians and media outlets through specific time periods? Furthermore, what can explain the decrease in anti-immigration frames in media or political communication?

Analyzing and comparing Facebook posts of most popular German and Hungarian media outlets will answer these questions. The analysis will include a wide time range between 2014 and 2022 and thus cover months before and after the migration crisis, the coronavirus pandemic and the Russian's war in Ukraine. This period of eight years will reveal new insights into the dynamics and content of inclusive immigration frames. The application of sentiment analysis will highlight the positivity (and negativity) of these Facebook posts, whereas topic modelling will suggest the content of frames. These methods allow me to sufficiently explore and compare German and Hungarian social media coverage of immigration.

The second main research question refers to how media frames influence citizens' attitudes.

*RQ2: Do inclusive frames about immigration move individuals' opinions towards more acceptance of immigrants and refugees in Hungary?*

The second research question focuses on the Hungarian case, since the widespread anti-immigration media discourse and attitudes in the country provide an exceptional context to investigate inclusive immigration frames. However, some methods will show results for the immigration attitudes of German people as well. The empirics include the analysis of Facebook user engagement, European Social Survey data, survey experiment and focus group discussions. While the main purpose of the first two is to provide timely dynamics of immigration attitudes in the two countries along with the explored trends of immigration frames, focus group discussions and survey experiments unfold the causal inference between inclusive immigration frames and attitudes.

## **2.2. The dominance of anti-immigration frames and sentiments vs. “Willkommenspolitik”**

What did previous research demonstrate on media and political communication about immigration and related attitudes in Hungary and Germany? The main purpose of this subsection is to provide an extensive overview about the results and conclusions of previous research, and to justify the country case selection of my research project. I will argue for the different media and social environments also in historical terms, which I consider plural in the German context and rather homogenous in the Hungarian one.

Although it would be exaggerating to claim that the rate of immigrant people in Hungary is totally insignificant, it is very low compared to other economically more developed European countries, or to those that lay at the Southern or Eastern borders of the continent, which

countries are especially exposed to immigration. The number of asylum seekers was the highest in Hungary in 2015, but in 2016 Germany became the leading country of Europe in this regard (Zgut-Przybylska et al., 2017). Previously, while Germany has been accepting immigrants from Turkey and other countries since the end of the Second World War, Hungary has not experienced similar exposure to big waves of immigrants, and the Hungarian residential population remained ethnically rather homogeneous compared to the German. Because of this experience with immigrants, campaigns about multiculturalism in Germany are not new, whereas in Hungary little to no such campaigns appeared in public debates. Related theories suggest that in countries where the rate of visible minority groups is low, people are more likely to rely on information from media sources by attitude and opinion formation about immigration (Nussio et al., 2019).

Since the low number of immigrants, immigration as a policy issue has not been salient until 2015 in Hungary, and there were no political parties, which would have owned the issue before. Consequently, the significant flow of immigrants in 2015 had serious political potentials, of which the government benefited mostly. Three main interpretations about the political motivations of the anti-immigration communication of Viktor Orbán and Fidesz can be provided. First, the popularity of Fidesz decreased drastically in 2014, consequently the party needed an issue that is sufficient to mobilize their voters. They had to own the issue of immigration before the – at that time – far-right opposition party Jobbik, which had reasonable chances to become the issue owner instead of Fidesz. Second, the anti-immigration policy and communication of Fidesz shows that the party has started to shift towards the extreme right political groups in the European Union. And third, the general political vision of the party highlights the moral superiority of a homogeneous, Christian society. At the beginning of the 2015 migration crisis, Germany and Hungary had complete opposite political approaches to deal with the issue. Germany under Angela Merkel's chancellorship announced an open-door

policy towards immigrants (*“Wir schaffen das!”*) and thus marked a divisive moment of the European migration crisis on 31 August 2015 (Mushaben, 2017), whereas the Hungarian prime minister Viktor Orbán represented a closed-door policy towards non-European immigrants.

According to Tali Mendelberg, the “race card” is most likely to bring political success in a campaign if it is applied implicitly. That is because of the double standards in societies including the simultaneously existing norms of racial equality and negative racial stereotypes (2001). However, politically successful anti-immigration messages in the 2015 migration crisis could not be more explicit - the anti-immigration campaign of Fidesz is a good example of that, but also the German AfD takes advantage of racial appeals and the predispositions to it by certain social groups. Krastev and Holmes emphasize related to Eastern European attitudes regarding the free movement in general: “In 1989, the open society meant a promise of freedom, above all a freedom to do what had been previously forbidden, namely to travel to the West. Today, openness to the world, for large swaths of the Central and East European electorate, connotes not freedom but danger: immigrant invasion, depopulation, and loss of national sovereignty” (2018, p. 125).

### **2.2.1. The hermeneutics of immigration**

How did the meaning and associations about immigration, immigrants and refugees changed in recent years in German and Hungarian languages? Although the hermeneutical understanding of the concept of immigration does not entirely overlap with the media framing of it, I still believe that briefly clarifying the interpretations about immigration in both language contexts could later on bring us closer to a more precise description of actual media dynamics, frames and narratives. This is relevant because the terms, expressions and concepts used in a discussion define the political nature of it largely (Koselleck, 2006). Several studies identified fields of incomplete scientific knowledge related to immigration, and the proper elaboration of the

hermeneutics of the term belongs to these (see e.g. Reinprecht & Latcheva, 2016). Although my empirical analysis strictly concentrates on the years between 2014 and 2022, below I provide some historical aspects of immigration representation and interpretation.

The translation of the original, Latin word “migration” (“*migrare*”) refers to wandering or moving; hereby referred as border crossing movement of individuals, more specifically as the inflow of non-European individuals into the area of the European Union. The two world wars represented turning points in terms of migration, related discourses and policies globally. Especially in the German media discourse, the primary associations about immigration were people fleeing after World War II and thus becoming guest workers in foreign countries. Since then, migration was considered as a form of social mobility, as a mechanism that can possibly balance the inequalities of European societies (if immigrants fill in jobs with the requirements of low level of education). This raised the issues of integration, multicultural communities, and overpopulation in public discourses. Consequently, discourses on immigration started to admit a global perspective, including the development of first migration policies. For many German social scientists, immigration has been considered as the “normal case” of civilization at least since the 1990s (Espahangizi, 2022). Even though the Hungarian society was ethnically relatively homogenous in the recent decades (Bocskor, 2018), from a historical point of view, more heterogeneity characterized the nations living in the Carpathian Basin. Whether in media discourses the expressions “refugee”, “asylum seeker”, “migrant” or something else is used also depends on the political context and what is described as politically “accurate” (Benczes & Ságvári, 2022; Mészáros, 2019). Spieß also enhances, that various political events can influence related discourses – topics, key terms or metaphors – intensively (Spieß, 2018). My empirical research attempts to reflect on all of these terms and include them in the media analysis below.

The years between 1945 and 1990 are the most accurately researched period about immigration from the point of view of German linguistics (Spieß, 2018). Migration and

immigration is embedded and discussed in several contexts, like modernization, wealth, labor market, social security system, national culture, social cohesion, integration or national identity (Espahangizi, 2022). These wider categories might explain a lot regarding the contemporary meaning of the expressions. Interestingly, despite the regular presence of the topic in German media outlets and academic discourses, related empirical studies followed qualitative methods to discover these contents for a long time (Drücke, 2012). Consequently, the quantitative approach of immigration related articles in the German media regard a new research direction from the last decade.

While immigration was constantly present in the German media discourse decades before the 2015 crisis, there is negligible distinct tradition of immigration debates in the Hungarian media context. Although the Yugoslav Wars in the 1990s provided some ground for that, the media attention towards immigrants was significantly less intense in Hungary. Nevertheless, individual immigration attitudes have been being measured since the beginning of the 1990s and were shown as consistently negative ever since (Sik et al., 2016). Therefore, these survey measurements did not rely on individual experiences, nor on the media representation of immigrants, but on more general and abstract perceptions about immigrants. However, due to the comparatively high level of xenophobia in the Hungarian society, a large rate of Hungarian survey respondents expressed negative attitudes towards immigrants. These different intensity debates can already cause significant differences in hermeneutic interpretations and in media frames in the two countries.

### **2.2.2. Different political and media systems**

As several related studies confirm, different media system characteristics imply significant differences in policy debates (Hallin, 2015). Media systems of European countries are different in terms of media pluralism. This especially holds for Hungary, where the authoritarian-



monopolistic media structure has been dominating in the last decade (see e.g. (Bajomi-Lázár, 2014)). In authoritarian-monopolistic media systems – as an opposite to the democratic-pluralistic media systems - public issues are presented in arbitrary and highly politicized ways and leave little room for balanced and diverse political orientation for newsreaders. This can seriously burden citizens' access to diverse political arguments and viewpoints, which results in more polarized and politicized debates. Contrary to Hungary, the media system of Germany is more balanced in terms of political resources, and provides discussions that are more diverse. This differentiation is especially true in terms of the media discussion about immigration: while the Hungarian media is overwhelmed by the government's anti-immigration rhetoric, the immigration discussion in German media sources provide more diverse approaches and information respectively. Media deliberation assumes that individuals are regularly exposed to media contents that are not in line with their political values, and ideally, consider and integrate these when formulating their opinion and attitude. The less plural a media system and more polarized a media discourse, the less likely that people access news and information outside their social bubbles, and even if they do, it supposedly triggers negative emotions in them.

Maniou and her colleagues discovered media pluralism empirically in relation to the migration crisis and found that the type of the media system does matter about how the crisis is covered (2023). The most relevant differences between the two categories include the level of polarization and clientelism; both were identified to be extremely high in the Hungarian case and relatively lower in case of Germany. Since 2011, changes in the media system of Hungary has been debated and criticized by scholars and experts. A decisive issue is the extent of media dominance of the Hungarian government, as many politicians and businessmen are owners of media outlets (Bátorfy & Urbán, 2020).

There is also available empirical evidence that the type of media (political) system define news consumption habits and thus might further imply individual immigration attitudes. While

greater level of authoritarianism is linked with more regular consumption of commercial television and popular newspapers, wider public service television and quality newspapers indicate lower level of authoritarianism (De Coninck et al., 2022). However, according to De Coninck's and his colleagues' results, Hungary seem to make an exception in this regard, where the reversed relationship was observed.

### **2.2.3. Media discourses and attitudes regarding immigrants**

Findings of empirical results about media discourses and attitudes about immigration in Hungary are consequent in one important aspect; several research confirmed the assumed effectiveness of the anti-immigrant campaign of the Hungarian government after 2014 (Barna & Koltai, 2019; Bíró-Nagy, 2021a; Bocskor, 2018). Because of the political motivation of the Hungarian government to oppose immigration, and the dominance of pro-governmental media sources in the media system, the outreach of the negative campaign against immigrants was enormous.

The immigration discourse was dominated by the government's narratives and frames even on the expert level – this is what I showed in a previous discourse analysis, where I investigated the contributions of Hungarian political scientists to the immigration debate (E. Farkas, 2022). I found that a minority of political scientists commented on the immigration issue in public opinion pieces in online media outlets, and those who did, primarily applied the frames and narratives of the Hungarian government. I provided two explanations for this phenomenon: the decreased academic freedom and the illiberal institutional turn in the Hungarian political system.

Regarding immigration attitudes, it is important to highlight that related empirical research pointed to the stability of these immigration attitudes over time (Jeannet & Dražanová, 2023). From this aspect, inclusive immigration frames could hardly work in a political and media

environment that is fully anti-immigrant. Researchers consequently found negative attitudes towards immigrants throughout the years in Hungary, which shows high level of xenophobia in the Hungarian society in general (TÁRKI). Reasons behind hostile attitudes vary. Most empirical works enhance that the level of education and the economic status seem to have the most significant influential potential. With two colleagues of mine, Attila Farkas and Dániel Kovarek, we applied conjoint experiment to explore background mechanisms behind immigration preferences relatedly (A. Farkas et al., 2022). Respondents had to choose between two fake immigrant profiles with varying attributes. These attributes included their gender, country of origin, level of education and possessed goods in the moment of crossing the southern border of Hungary. We found that less education of immigrants lead to lower chances of accepting them by respondents.

In another research project I investigated perceived issue salience of immigration before and after the 2018 Hungarian national elections (E. Farkas, 2021). Since longitudinal survey data allowed me to compare individual responses before and after the elections, the so called *campaign effect* could have been tested. I found that immigration was by far the most salient issue for Hungarian voters at the end of 2017, and this has even increased after the 2018 elections. As emphasized above, although the rate of immigrants was not negligible especially around 2015 and 2016, immigration was rather an issue of discussion than an actual phenomenon in 2018 in Hungary. Therefore, it is especially interesting that the Fidesz campaign could thematize immigration as a relevant threat on the Hungarian society at that time.

The German media discourse is different from the Hungarian one by its tone, topics, or the events that shape the public debate about immigration. While the Hungarian discourse about immigration is dominated by exclusive frames, the discourse in Germany went through significant changes (Schmidtke, 2017). Pragmatism dominated the debate for a long period of time (Abadi et al., 2016), and this pragmatic rhetoric was challenged by the explicit rejection

of integration of immigrants, which debate was started and sustained by the far-right party AfD. The media representation of asylum seekers (compared with other immigration groups) in German media was the most salient even before the beginning of the 2015 crisis (Eberl et al., 2018).

#### **2.2.4. Inclusive immigration frames in Hungarian and German discourses**

Although inclusive frames might appear in Hungarian media and political discussions as well (mostly driven by non-governmental organizations' and not party communication), the Hungarian media discourse about immigration is rather one-sided compared to the German media discourse, where diverse interpretations about immigration are more widespread. There are several reasons for this disproportionality. On one hand, opposition parties communicate about immigration cautiously because of the general anti-immigration attitudes among Hungarian citizens. On the other hand, the "media empire" created by the Orbán government since 2010 (Bátorfy & Urbán, 2020) leaves limited opportunities for voices that are critical with the government's policies. Thus, the "subordination of the public media to the governments for propaganda purposes" is part of the system's functions (Bozóki & Hegedűs, 2018, p. 1176). Furthermore, the moral panic related to non-European immigrants embedded in the Hungarian society also grounded the success of government propaganda (Barlai et al., 2017; Barna & Koltai, 2019). However, as the research of Janky, Kmetty and Szabó point it out, a significant rate of government and opposition voters regularly consume media outlets that are not necessarily in line with their political orientation. They claim that especially online news consumer tend to often check cross-cutting media contents (2019).

Consequently, while in Germany the inclusive narrative of immigration gained some popularity and political representation decades ago, in Hungary, exclusive frames dominated the public discourse. Although in Germany inclusive frames are more often present, exclusive

frames and anti-immigrant attitudes distributed rapidly after some remarkable events (Vollmer & Karakayali, 2018). Though several attempts of public actors like NGO organizations, the inclusive frame could not gain significant attention and popularity in the Hungarian context. Opposition parties in Hungary were also less active in this regard – this can be explained by the high level of anti-immigration attitudes even among opposition voters. Opposition political parties rejected to risk their – anyway weak – political position, and tried to avoid getting involved in the discourse on immigration. In this sense, they chose the strategy of *issue avoidance*, instead of *issue engagement* (Castelli Gattinara, 2019) what the government parties followed.

While immigration related media frames in the German media were wavy and often unbalanced (Vollmer & Karakayali, 2018), the majority of the Hungarian media interpretations framed immigration as a negative threat persistently (Kiss, 2016). Positive media frames about immigration were infrequent in the Hungarian media outlets. A further difference between the two media debates manifests in their intensity: even though the hostility of the Hungarian discourse might create the perception of its high intensity, in total, German media outlets published far more articles than Hungarian news pages during the 2015 peak of the migration crisis (Heidenreich et al., 2019).

While the Hungarian media is accused of being manipulative and overwhelmingly negative about immigration, recent public criticism about the German media interpretation was that it is too integrative and permissive with the harmful attitude of immigrants (Vollmer & Karakayali, 2018). Despite the dozen differences between the two countries, they are similar in how much media discourses have politicized immigration. However, the centralized anti-immigration government campaign is a unique characteristic for Hungary (Bocskor, 2018), even though the right-wing forces politicize immigration everywhere globally, including Germany as well (Hutter & Kriesi, 2022a). As Gellwitzki and Houde point out, the politicization of the

immigration issue is so intense, that it might affect the emotional language of other related debates as well, like the discussion around the European Union integration (2023). From research on US media we also know that the location and ideology of newspapers matter in terms of immigration frames they apply (Fryberg et al., 2012). In sum, the two country cases are appropriate for comparison along the media discourse on immigration and related attitudes.

### **3. Theoretical background and literature review: frames and framing effects**

Whether people have positive or negative attitudes towards a subject is mostly influenced by media and elite communication, and by the specific frames within which certain topics are discussed. Although the scholarly literature used to be quite vague about the concept of frames and framing effects, in the last two decades the scientific field is more unified in this regard (Scheufele, 1999). The concept of frames and the investigation of framing effects became an expanding research area for social and political scientists in recent decades, along with the concept of “mediatization” in politics (Mazzoleni & Schulz, 1999), agenda-setting (McCombs & Shaw, 1972)<sup>2</sup>, and the priming effect of media contents (Iyengar, 1990). These concepts all refer to the increased role of media’s influence on individuals’ preferences.

Framing means a specific presentation of an issue or an event in the public discourse. Frames serve as “coding schemes” that orient individuals’ opinions and thus are important factors by explaining the nature and orientation of public opinion. A framing effect takes place when a frame in communication influences the attitude and/or the behavior of the audience

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<sup>2</sup> Some scholars used to refer to framing as the „second-level agenda-setting” (Scheufele, 1999, p. 103), which enhances that besides the actual topic of articles, more abstract interpretation of media contents should be explored as well.

reached by that framing of a subject matter (Chong & Druckman, 2007a; Meltzer et al., 2017; Scheufele, 1999), or the salience of an issue in citizens' perceptions (Matthes, 2012). As Druckman argued: "people's preferences do not change because a single piece of information is described positively or negatively (or in otherwise equivalent terms), but rather because a substantively different consideration is brought to bear on the issue at hand" (Druckman, 2001a, p. 235). Thus, framing theory not only suggests that typical frames constitute media discourses, but that these frames influence public opinion in a way that they determine individuals' attitudes and behavior related to particular issues. Frames in thoughts are the schemata that individuals apply when they think about or formulate opinions regarding a certain issue, a structure of storing information cognitively.

Frames can be classified into two categories: equivalency frames and emphasis frames (Druckman, 2001a; Tversky & Kahneman, 1981). Equivalency frames are logically equivalent frames but formulated differently, often worded with opposite terms. The widely cited example for equivalency frames is when the efficiency of a medicine or a treatment is reported in terms of potential gains or losses. Even though the objective expected outcome is the same, people tend to practice more risk-avoiding attitudes, when potential losses are emphasized. Contrarily, in case of emphasis frames, a specific issue is framed from different aspects with "substantively distinct considerations" (Druckman, 2010). For example, referring to "illegal immigrants" or "undocumented immigrants" can create huge differences in the readership's attitude (Merolla et al., 2013). Relying on previous research results that outlined the various approaches to immigration by the press, my research focuses on the latter type, on emphasis frames.

Media frames are important policy orientation tools to ground support for certain policies, therefore, political actors tend to communicate by applying popular frames to convince and mobilize individuals. However, framing does not equal persuasion in politics (Nelson et al., 1997). Instead, frames encourage voters to think about certain policies along particular lines

(Chong & Druckman, 2007a). For instance, if dominant media frames emphasize the aspects that are related to the security issues that immigration raise, most voters will probably evaluate media contents along that aspect and will pay attention to how political actors communicate about security related aspects of the migration crisis.

However, it is important to note two further ideas regarding issue frames. First, since people have multiple simultaneous considerations about a certain issue, particular situations or sometimes even sheer randomness (e.g. higher exposure to certain frames) can determine which consideration comes to the fore in judging the question when it emerges (Zaller & Feldman, 1992). Another aspect to consider further is that the dimensionality of the political issue space is endogenous to the issue competition and actors may act strategically about their choice of frames with a view on gaining political advantage. For instance, sometimes political actors tend to highlight considerations which do not necessarily fit into conventional political divides but split up their opponent's camp (Riker, 1986, 1988).

As soon as some frames are present in public discourses, counter-frames are likely to appear, especially when original frames manage to politicize the discourse and shape public opinion effectively. According to a simple definition, counter-frames are those that oppose an earlier effective frame. By identification (also called "counter-frame strategy") Chong and Druckman recommend considering two aspects: (1) the amount of time that passes after the exposure of the original frame and (2) over-time repetition of a counter-frame (2007a). The most important criteria is that a counter-frame appears after a certain frame becomes dominant in the public discourse, also considered as a reaction to it. Although this approach by Chong and Druckman does not necessarily refer to the positivity and negativity of (counter)frames, the elaborated aspects can be applied to evaluate inclusive immigration frames later in the empirical analysis, since anti-immigration frames were the dominant frames initially in the Hungarian discourse.



### **3.1. Media frames about immigration and the macro-level aspects of this study**

The influential role of media contents regarding policy positions of individuals is one of the key subjects of current media communication research. Even though several previous studies on immigration attitudes pointed out that opinions about immigration are relatively stable and persistent throughout the adult years (Kustov et al., 2021), scientific works from the last decade highlighted the possible influence of media contents (Boomgaarden & Vliegenthart, 2009; Eberl et al., 2018a), which became especially relevant after the 2015 migration crisis. As some theoretical works emphasize, this does not necessarily mean changes in opinions. But the higher salience of the immigration issue in media discourses can trigger and radicalize views, highlight some yet undiscussed aspects of immigration. Several analyses pointed to the increase in anti-immigration voices, the politicization of the policy issue of immigration in Europe (Hutter & Kriesi, 2022b), and the emergent role of alternative and social media sources in this regard (Theorin & Strömbäck, 2020). While many further factors play important role in how citizens think about immigration – for instance the education level of individuals, the number of immigrants in the individuals' closest and wider surroundings, or religious beliefs, attitudes and habits -, the media's impact (and responsibility) in this regard should not be underrated. Even though analyzing the influence of media contents on individual attitudes (where media contents are the assumed cause and individual attitudes the effect) exposes researchers to serious methodological challenges, these investigations can provide important contributions in media knowledge and possible policy implications on the issue of immigration.

Numerous studies scrutinized media frames and counter-frames about immigration especially around the peak of the 2015 crisis (Eberl et al., 2018a; Greussing & Boomgaarden, 2017). Triandafyllidou identified two competing frames: the moralizing and the threat frames in media discussion (2018), while Greussing and Boomgarden (2017) enhance victimization, a

threat to security/culture/wealth and dehumanized out-group frames. Lindström's (2017) distinguish the conflict frame, threat frame, human impact frame, morality frame, economic frame, and responsibility frame related to immigration on the basis of previous studies. Several studies emphasize the securitization aspect of the immigration debate especially in the Hungarian context (Meltzer et al., 2017; Szalai & Göbl, 2015), where anti-immigration narratives are often embedded into the communication against Western European countries and EU institutions (Enyedi, 2020). Further research shows that instead of issue-specific frames (like a new law or referendum on migration), the generic framing of immigration is more widespread (Helbling, 2014).

I argue that the categorization of media frames can follow the logic of differentiating merely between inclusive and exclusive frames, especially in highly politicized and polarized environments. Inclusive frames enhance a positive, welcoming, humanistic view on immigration, while exclusive frames hit a negative, hostile tone towards immigrants, underlying the various sorts of threats, dangers, and harm that immigration can cause to a country. Inclusive and exclusive frames are also sometimes referred to as humanitarian and securitization media frames (Messing & Ságvári, 2019). Similarly, the former is expected to have positive, and the latter negative effect on pro-immigration attitudes.

Negative media frames about immigrants were found to be more effective in public mobilization, i.e. they facilitate any sorts of political participation easier than neutral media frames, or media frames with positive connotation and messages (Boomgaarden & Vliegenthart, 2009; Haynes et al., 2016). Positive views of immigrants rarely appear, except in left-leaning media outlets (Eberl et al., 2018a). Several categories that can increase the popularity of immigrants among the national population or that can lead to the positive interpretation of immigration are those, which include the images of refugee children, or those, which enhance the morality aspects of the policy issue. Some studies show that as soon as

readers are faced with moral responsibilities, they tend to reduce their hostile thoughts and attitudes (Elsamni, 2016).

### **3.1.1. The media and politicians about immigration**

While traditional news channels, like television are still important sources of information, online news consumption has been becoming one of the most dominant in individuals' political orientation (N. Newman et al., 2021). This leads us to the debate on whether the assumed easier access to different viewpoints online will result in the quality raise of democratic debates and deliberation, and all in all, in well-established public opinion on certain policy issues. Along with the theories about people's homophily, social media connections consist mostly of people that share similar worldviews, values and ideologies (Bail et al., 2018). Therefore, regular use of social media news feeds as a source of political information can reinforce selective exposure theories. Social media users are mainly exposed to the opinion and interpretation of like-minded opinion bubbles, almost creating alternative realities and further dividing social groups, at the same time keeping the possibility of any deliberate actions on a low level. A further option would be that sponsored posts from ideologically different sources reach social media users, but the chances of this are extremely low, since sponsored advertisements - basically for the sake of financial return - are targeted to reach and convince like-minded users in particular (Papakyriakopoulos et al., 2018).

Because of the significance of social network sites in news consumption, my empirical project focuses on the immigration related Facebook posts of the most popular media outlets in Hungary and Germany. Heidenreich and his colleagues showed the interrelation between media and political communication on Facebook and focused on how political actors share specific news items on Facebook (Heidenreich et al., 2022). They found that news on salient issues are more likely to be shared by politicians and parties across countries with different media and

political systems. Several studies investigated the content of Facebook posts about immigration and related user engagement trends. These works not only considered the traditional engagement buttons ('Like', 'Comment' or 'Share') but also included and differentiated between the recent emotive reactions ('Love', 'Haha', 'Wow', 'Angry', 'Sad'). While some studies found that not only negativity increased the number of 'Angry' reactions, but the more positive the tone of a post, the higher number of 'Love' reactions it received (Eberl et al., 2020a), another works highlight that only negativity increased user engagement (Heiss et al., 2019).

### **3.1.2. Motivations to apply inclusive frames**

Although the primary aim of my research is to identify how media outlets report about immigration on Facebook, to explore more inclusive narratives and their influence on attitudes, it is important to consider that politicians have specific interpretations on this policy issue and that is an integrative part of related media debates. The Hungarian governing elite tends to refer to positive or inclusive frames of immigration as an “intellectual amuck of the European Left”, or as part of the “Soros plan”, who wishes to invade Hungary by domiciling as many immigrants as possible (Sík et al., 2016). However, the political position of left-wing parties about immigration is much less elaborated. Left-wing politicians tend to hinder the issue of immigration in their communication, by offering other policy issues for consideration and discussion, like education, health care or simply the negative critics on the current governments (E. Farkas, 2022). While the government's position dominated public discourse about immigration in Hungary, German media landscape on this issue is showing a more diverse picture – this is, indeed, one of the main arguments for why these two countries are worth to compare. More precisely, the distinctive media contexts provide an interesting ground to test counter intuitive hypotheses about media narratives' effects on public opinion, namely the

influence of inclusive immigration frames, which regard as cross-cutting media exposure for the majority of the Hungarian society.

Since the intuitive assumption that politicians and the media would primarily appeal on negative sentiments towards immigrants overly simplifies the issue at stake, a question of strategies arises. As outlined in previously, several empirical studies found correlation between the intensity of negative messages about immigration and anti-immigration attitudes. What can be the motivations and strategical considerations of various public actors to choose inclusive or exclusive frames when communicating and reporting about immigration? Why do they increase or decrease the intensity of anti-immigration frames? Are these choices always driven by the desire to increase the readership and the electorate? As a subquestion of RQ1, my analysis will put a special emphasis on two main actors: media outlets and politicians, and how politicians' claims about immigration are represented in most popular media outlets, which leading politicians are the most active in this regard. It will further shed light on whether various media outlets and politicians are motivated for a diverse communication about immigration based on the somewhat heterogeneous opinions and attitudes of the readership. Furthermore, I am especially interested in how politicians of opposition parties in Hungary and Germany apply certain inclusive and exclusive immigration frames. Relying on previous analyses, I will assume that while German opposition politicians are actively involved in the media debate about immigration, Hungarian opposition politicians rarely proclaim their related views. This is partly because of the different political opportunities structure in the two countries. While Jobbik in Hungary had significant chances to own the issue of immigration before Fidesz in 2015, the invisible threshold for the German AfD is definitely lower, because of the dissonant historical memories of the Nazi Party during World War II.

We can assume 'clickbait' as one important motivation behind editorial decisions, and thus that exclusive media frames respond to audience demands, which expects frames to echo prior

anti-immigrant attitudes. Similarly, politicians should also be constrained by the dominant negativity of popular attitudes. But then, why do inclusive immigration frames appear in media discourses at all? Several studies show that the humanitarian aspects of immigration evoke empathy (Langdon, 2018), and that many people in host countries are willing to help immigrants and especially refugees, who flee from wars. Humanitarian actions can be regarded as a tool for counter political mobilization to raise awareness towards the dangers of widespread anti-immigration sentiments. Traditionally, these humanitarian values should be a core element of left-wing and liberal parties' identities. But we could see the "Willkommenspolitik" of Angela Merkel in 2015 or the warm hospitality of Viktor Orbán at the beginning of the Russian invasion in Ukraine, when more immigrants arrived than 7 years before and still, the prime minister proclaimed that Hungary is absolutely willing to help them. Both conservative politicians stimulated an inclusive discourse in the current media debate. This suggests that right-wing or conservative people can be similarly receptive to more inclusive immigration frames, moreover, that inclusive policy position can result in political benefits.

Which are the most relevant criteria that frames should fulfill to maintain in media discourses and to influence people? Sometimes the motivations of political actors and media outlets interrelate, since politicians are more likely to share certain news items if a salient issue is presented (Heidenreich et al., 2022). The following study investigated, why certain frames are more effective or convincing than others, and which characteristics suggest insights to politicians' and media outlets' communication strategies. Matthes summarizes three factors that determine effective frames (2012, p. 250). First, effective frames should be continuously on the media agenda. Second, the presence of competing frames weaken the influence of the original frames. Third, strong frames need either compelling and convincing facts, or they appeal to emotions. This infers that politicians should keep in mind the regularity, facts and emotive elements of their communication when they intend to maintain certain frames in media

discourses. Nonetheless, following these criteria might result in successful application of certain immigration frames and therefore, the time of presence and dominance, the number of competing frames, facts and emotive elements will be the main viewpoints to assess the relevant parts of RQ1 referring to main actors and their framing strategies.

### **3.1.3. Hypotheses about immigration frames**

To recall, the first research question referred to the differences between inclusive immigration frames in Hungary and Germany. Relying on previous case specific research results, and the scope of the research question that considered the timely distribution, the content of immigration frames and the strategies of media and political stakeholders in the two countries, the following hypotheses will be tested:

*H1: Frames about immigration will be generally more inclusive in the German than in the Hungarian Facebook posts.*

*H2: More types of inclusive frames will be discovered in the German than in the Hungarian Facebook posts.*

*H3: Inclusive frames will be longer and more regularly present in the German than in the Hungarian Facebook posts.*

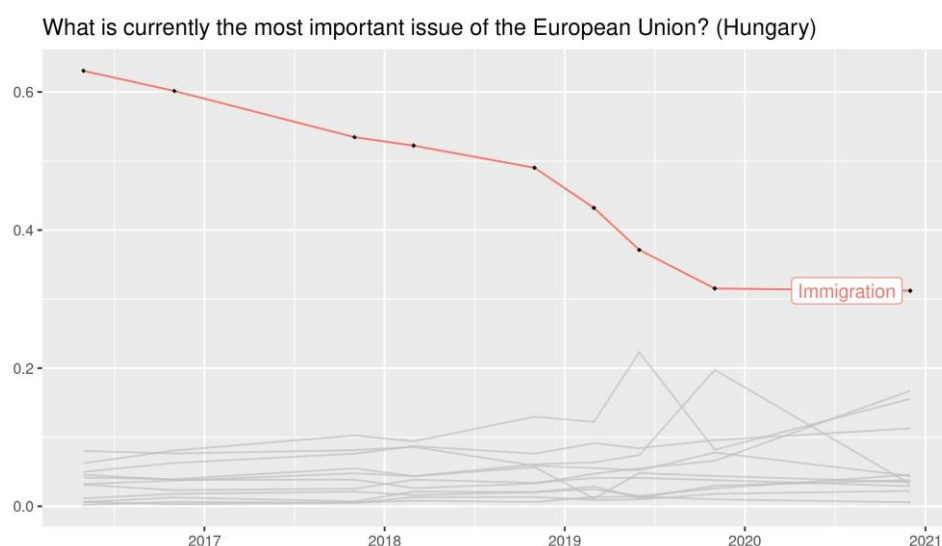
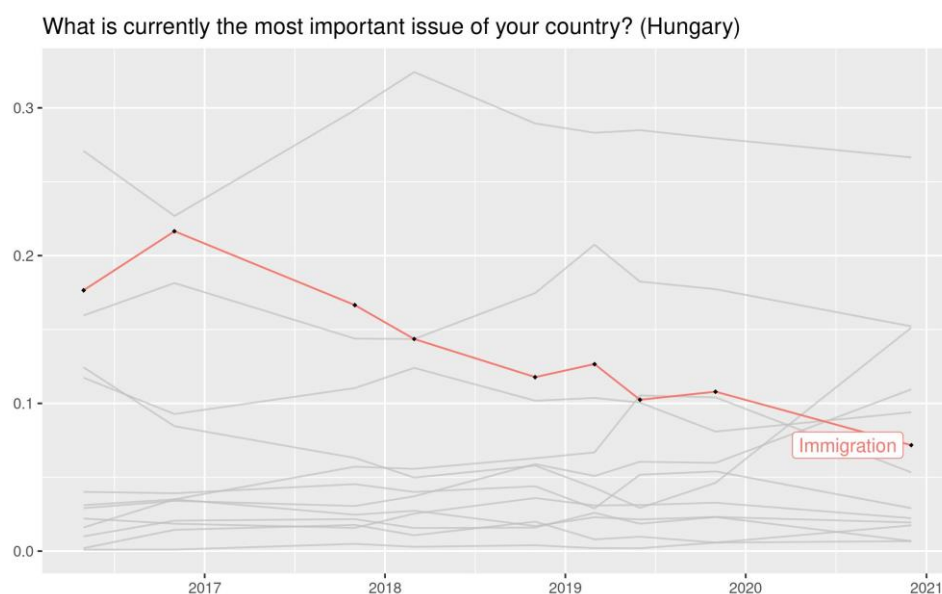
### **3.2. Immigration attitudes in Europe and the micro-level aspects of this study**

European survey questionnaires have been measuring attitudes towards immigrants since decades. Previous scientific works, which analyzed these survey data, focused on the impact of the increasing number of immigrants and on how society members perceive the cultural and economic impact that these immigrants can cause. Many of them highlight the stability of immigration attitudes despite external shocks that influence the salience of the immigration debate (Kustov et al., 2021). Two group conflict theories were developed to explain anti-

immigration attitudes in this regard: the clash of interests focus on the competition for economic goods, and social identity theory, that suggests that the need to belong to certain social groups motivate individuals to demote and negatively identify other groups' members (Sniderman et al., 2004).

Citizens tend to oppose the integration of foreigners and restrict immigration policies in European countries. Many of those who report about a generally integrative, pro-immigration attitude, may hold “not-in-my-backyard” (NIMBY) attitudes as well, opposing any immigration resettlement within their close environment (Clayton et al., 2022). Hungary became one of the most ‘anti-immigrant’ countries in Europe after the 2015 migration crisis (Messing & Ságvári, 2019; Sik & Simonovits, 2019). But anti-immigration attitudes are present in German public opinion as well (Boomgaarden & Vliegenthart, 2009). However, as the recent findings of Ipsos’s Global Survey show, attitudes toward refugees are becoming more positive since 2021. They identify a “halo effect” of the war in Ukraine, suggesting that Ukrainian refugees are considered differently than those who arrived during the migration crisis in 2015 (IPSOS, 2022). Nevertheless, their survey questions explicitly referred to refugees and there was no reference to immigrants. In general, refugees, especially those who escape war or persecution, are more welcome by local citizens.





Anti-immigration attitudes are often correlated with right-wing extremism, but besides the effects of media content (Boomgaarden & Vliegenthart, 2009), the level of trust, foreign investment (Rustenbach, 2010a), external shocks, or citizens' political engagement and perceptions about crime might also influence it (Fitzgerald et al., 2012). Scholars similarly assert that cultural and identity factors (including also the sense of national identity) are more relevant predictors of immigration attitude than real economic circumstances (Hainmueller & Hopkins, 2014; Sides & Citrin, 2007). A literature on the relationship between public opinion on migration and policy positions of parties and policy outcomes also exist. A study shows

mixed evidence of an impact of public attitudes, claiming that “even though attitudes are recognized as being important drivers of public policy, the literature does not provide systematic evidence on the link between individual attitudes and actual policies implemented” (Facchini & Mayda, 2008, p. 655). Furthermore, Kustov pointed to the asymmetry of immigration attitudes in issue salience: according to his cross-country results, people with anti-immigration attitudes perceive immigration as a more important issue than those with pro-immigration views (Kustov, 2022). Thus, issue voting is unbalanced on the two political sides, namely, the policy position of right-wing parties is more straightforward and known than that of left-wing parties (Tóka, 1995). Although my research does not focus on policies but on media discourses, some implications will be enhanced as a conclusion of the empirics.

Negative, exclusive frames prove to be more powerful in general to shift public opinion, and this especially holds for immigration-related attitudes and opinions (Farris & Mohamed, 2018; Meltzer et al., 2017). A recent study found that humanizing messages most likely fail to trigger more empathy in those people who are generally against foreigners (Gubler et al., 2022). In their comprehensive literature review, Eberl and his colleagues also outlined the increase of articles related to immigration and the prevalent negative and conflict-centered picturing of immigrants in European media discourse, which leads to negative attitudes and influence vote choices as well (2018a). Further research results show that people perceive the cultural threat as more relevant than the economic threat about the inflow of non-European immigrants (Lucassen & Lubbers, 2012; L. M. McLaren, 2003; B. J. Newman et al., 2012). Thus, relatively few individuals are afraid of immigrants taking their jobs and exploiting the welfare system built up and sustained by the national population, compared to how many of them believe that immigrants with different religious and cultural backgrounds destroy the Christian European culture, gender roles, family structures, national traditions and symbols (Glied, 2020). Immigration threatening non-material, cultural values are categorized as “higher-order values”

(Lahav & Courtemanche, 2012, p. 484) and frames that emphasize the cultural dangers of immigration can have a more intensive effect on people's behavior. This is because frames that include symbolic messages and thus trigger the political identity tend to be more effective than frames including factual information fundamentally (Körösenyi et al., 2022). Similarly, events linking immigration to identity issues, like the "Sarrazin debate", or the sexual assaults at 2015 New Year's Eve in Cologne (Abadi et al., 2016) influence media discourse and public opinion on immigration more intensively than stories about the economic or fiscal consequences of immigration. Terrorist attacks receive particularly high public attention, and they also always reshape and further polarize the discourse about immigrants (Nussio et al., 2019).

Although my research project relies on framing theories, it remains an ongoing debate whether elite and media communication exclusively shape individuals' preferences and political reality. Many scholars argue that framing effects represent the evidence for "citizens' incompetence". Some studies present citizens as passive recipients of political elite communication and opinion formation exclusively (Achen & Bartels, 2016; Zaller & Feldman, 1992). Others claim that adjusting one's opinion according to dominant media frames does not necessarily show citizens' incompetence, but it is kind of a natural process where cognitive evaluation accommodates to the huge amount of information received from various sources and they "consciously and deliberately think about the relative importance of different considerations suggested by a frame" (Druckman, 2001a, p. 241). Some studies highlight that framing effects are most effective in case of policy issues when there is less political knowledge and information available (Körösenyi et al., 2022). Moreover, since social network sites provide platforms for individuals to actively comment and discuss current political issues, the role of non-elite actors in opinion formation and persuasion became relevant (Umansky, 2022). The related discussion became even more intense because of the widespread appearance of fake news phenomena in politics. Moralized and politicized issues like immigration are especially

salient to fake news articles, and thus research conduction on the contents of immigration frames and their perceptions are even more relevant.

### **3.2.1. Inclusive immigration frames as cross-cutting media exposure**

The careful consideration of diverse and at the same time opposing arguments would be especially important in case of highly polarized and politicized issues like immigration, to potentially reduce partisan differences and create a deliberative political environment (Goldman & Mutz, 2011a; Mutz, 2002). Related theoretical works enhance that diverse information collection, the “interruption of regular reasoning habits” (Lev-On & Manin, 2009, p. 5) require disproportionately high amount of time, effort and cognitive resources from individuals. Therefore, only a handful of social groups - typically those who are better educated, well-off, and more interested in politics - are expected to meet these criteria. Moreover, related scientific works about homophily and selective exposure point out that even when diverse sources of information are similarly available, individuals tend to choose those that align to their value orientation. Assuming that, despite the dominance of anti-immigration frames, politicians and media sources are motivated to report about immigration by applying inclusive frames as well, the influence of these inclusive immigration frames on attitudes need to be theorized. I consider the Hungarian media context as mainly negative about immigration, and therefore, the appearance of any inclusive immigration frames regard counter-frames or cross-cutting media content.

What do individuals contemplate when exposed to media interpretation that oppose their political values and alignment? The consumption of opposing or conflicting information sources is often meant to approximate opinion differences as one form of deliberation, to enhance public discourses and to mitigate the effects of selective media exposure (Lev-On & Manin, 2009). This optimistic approach assumes that the awareness about ideologically

different news content as an important source of deliberation lead to more discussion, engagement and effort to understand different political approaches (Masip et al., 2020, p. 60). However, it might also result in further reinforcement of the initial preferences of individuals because opposing views trigger anger and skepticism, which hinder people to rethink or shape their preferences, and further reinforce of one's convictions (Knobloch-Westerwick & Meng, 2009). As the selective exposure theory reveals, people are in general more likely to engage with media sources that are in line with their political value orientation, which also contributes to the dominance of most popular frames in individuals' opinion formation (Stroud, 2017). Moreover, even with the theoretical availability of opposing sources in the online realm, individuals will not familiarize themselves with the content of these sources in detail.

Two ways of exposure to cross-cutting media can emerge: (1) incidental exposure to ideologically different news mostly through social media, (2) balanced exposure, as a regular and conscious consumption of cross-cutting news sources. Through incidental exposure, individuals are confronted with news and information outside their political spectrum. Balanced exposure refers to a more conscious type of information consumption, intentionally seeking for information that confronts that of individuals. Considering expected costs of information seeking, balanced exposure undoubtedly requires the most efforts and resources from individuals and therefore it is especially rare. Confronting news and information from different ideological sources needs a significant level of political interest and proactive engagement towards being well-informed about politics related news (Lu & Lee, 2021; Min & Wohn, 2018). In case of social media, this would mean the following of media and information sources (groups or certain pages) that are different from the political alignment of the individual. This latter approach is especially typical among politically engaged citizens.

The type of news sources and the extent of difference in political alignment from the individuals' position influences the potential of incidental exposure. Related empirical evidence show that high level of partisan polarization of media sources drastically reduces even the incidental exposure to non-like-minded media sources, most probably because the political orientation of mediums is the easiest to detect in such polarized environments. In addition, as the relative hostile media phenomenon suggests, people with opposing political alignments perceive the same media content differently, mostly as if they were hostile to their own political positions (Goldman & Mutz, 2011a).

Although the scientific and public interest towards reducing polarized opinion differences is increasing, research that investigates the effect of certain deliberative tools and plausible mechanisms behind are still in an early stage. Furthermore, the few studies that tested the effects of cross-cutting exposure arrived at contradicting conclusions. A recent study has just shown that empathy messages only work for those who originally represent pro-immigration attitudes, and fail when people are more hostile towards them (Gubler et al., 2022). One of the most complex related experiments was conducted by Bail and his colleagues (2018), during which respondents in the treatment group followed Twitter newsfeeds with opposing political ideologies for a month. According to the post-treatment survey, Republicans in the treatment group became substantially more conservative, and there was a slight increase in Democrats' liberal attitudes as well.

### **3.2.2. Group discussion and attitude formation**

As previously shown, counter-frames and cross-cutting media exposure might change individual attitudes. Additionally, theories on deliberation highlight the importance of interpersonal interactions, face-to-face communication and the exchange of ideas, arguments on opinion formation. Indeed, dialogue and discourse is supposed to be one of the most effective

tools on reducing polarization and conveying democratic decision-making processes, where different viewpoints are similarly represented and taken into account (Cooke, 2000). It is reasonable to assume that certain forms of deliberation could alleviate polarized standpoints and reduce anti-immigration sentiments in societies. Several related research that test various deliberative tools chose immigration as the subject of the debate (Grönlund et al., 2015; Lindström, 2017).

Many scholars argue that because of the homogenous social networks, the exposure to opposing views in modern societies most likely happens in media environments, social network sites, and not through personal conversations, though the latter proves to be a much more efficient way of deliberation and persuasion (Gil de Zúñiga et al., 2018). Divergent information environment is hardly ever available, moreover, information sources in most cases are self-filtered according to the political alignment and value orientation of individuals. Namely, people are more likely to follow and pay attention to news that strengthen their initial ideas even in the online realm, where diverse and ideologically different sources are theoretically easily accessible.

The majority of related research emphasize that the most effective form of deliberation proved to be interpersonal persuasion. Several studies presented the effective persuasive capabilities even of chat bots that presented ideologically opposing content to that of the receiver, moreover, they proved to be more efficient in persuasion and deliberation compared to media sources (Bail et al., 2018; Zarouali et al., 2021). Plausible explanation to this could be the passive nature of media news consumption as activity, which does not motivate individuals to seriously consider their opinion. The interpersonal exchange of ideas enforces an active argumentation and consideration of logic, during which the shaping of these ideas is more likely to happen.

However, similarly to cross-cutting media exposure, the outcomes of deliberation also vary. Namely, while opinion moderation is often expected as a natural outcome, opinion polarization is frequently observed instead as the outcome of deliberation (Lindström, 2017). Kimmo Grönlund and his colleagues purposefully constructed like-minded (either for or against the inclusion of immigrants) and mixed groups to discuss immigration (Grönlund et al., 2015). They found that the discussion of like-minded participants resulted in even further polarization of opinions about immigration, meaning that these discussions and interactions contributed to strengthen the original standpoint of participants. By taking part and actively engaging at these discussions, people who express the same views and attitudes on immigration further convince each other about the correctness of their arguments. However, groups with participants of anti-immigration attitudes moderated their opinions. Hence, the authors conclude that “deliberative norms can alleviate the negative consequences of discussion in like-minded groups” (2015, p. 995).

Obviously, various factors modify how interactions might affect people’s opinion and attitudes, not to mention the cases when deliberation is ‘hijacked’ and applied for partisan purposes in autocracies (Oross & Tap, 2021). Consequently, the influential potential of group discussions about immigration in the Hungarian context regards as especially important and relevant to study: the polarized attitudes with a high rate of anti-immigrant approaches, the dominance of the anti-immigration frames in media discourses, and the peculiar application of deliberation in an illiberal autocratic system.

### **3.2.3. Hypotheses about immigration attitudes**

If the majority of the Hungarian society indeed confess anti-immigration attitudes and exclusive immigration frames dominate media and political discussions, inclusive frames can be regarded as cross-cutting exposures or counter-frames for most Hungarians. Consequently, besides a



general hypotheses on the historical trends about negative immigration frames and attitudes (H5), the other empirical parts of the individual-level analysis will focus on the Hungarian context. While H6 relies on theories related to the backlash effect of non-likeminded media frames, H7 considers the deliberative potential of group discussions and expects positive influence of inclusive immigration frames. Thus, the following hypotheses are formulated:

*H5: If exclusive frames dominate the immigration discourse, attitudes will turn to more anti-immigrant.*

*H6: Inclusive frames reinforce the original attitude of those Hungarians with anti-immigration sentiments.*

*H7: Group discussions on inclusive and exclusive frames contribute to reducing anti-immigration sentiments among Hungarian respondents.*

To conclude, I expect personal interactions to be more persuasive in terms of reducing anti-immigration attitudes, while I assume that the passive reception of inclusive immigration frames results in a boomerang effect on attitudes.

#### **4. The methodology of the analysis**

Testing the effect of frames exposes researchers to several methodological challenges. Like generally in social sciences, the operationalization, measurement and interpretation of causal impact have to be conducted carefully, as the consideration of all relevant confounding variables is hardly possible, and available panel data about immigration attitudes is very limited. To tackle these challenges, my empirical research follows a mixed methodological design, aiming to benefit from the various advantages of these methods, and counterbalance the disadvantages of them by supplementing each other.

The following subsections summarize the designs of the various empirical parts of my research, and provide details about implementation. The description unfolds both the macro

(media outlets) and micro (individual) levels of the analysis. Later, the empirical chapters of the dissertation will follow the order of these methodological analyses. Since details and the theoretical considerations of applying certain methods are provided below, the empirical chapters later can focus on the interpretation of results primarily. To summarize the mixed methodological research design, Table 1. displays an overview on which methods are aimed to answer the particular hypotheses.

1. Table. The hypotheses and methods of the research project.

Hypotheses		DATASETS AND METHODS					
		Sentiment analysis of FB posts	Topic modelling of FB posts	Trends in FB user engagement	European Social Survey data	Focus group discussions	Survey experiment
MEDIA	H1	x	x				
	H2	x	x				
	H3	x	x				
	H4	x	x				
ATTITUDES	H5	x	x	x	x		
	H6						x
	H7					x	

#### 4.1. Immigration related posts on social media

The supply-side analysis focuses on the Facebook communication of most popular media outlets about immigration. According to the first research question, the aim of the social media analysis is to explore the intensity and trends of inclusive frames about immigration, to discover how they display immigration in detail, and to identify politicians who have key roles in communicating about immigration. The analysis includes every related Facebook post of the five most popular online media outlets in Hungary and Germany. One important reason behind

this data choice was that chances of being exposed to inclusive immigration frames are significantly higher on online news portals and social media, than on radio or television in Hungary, which mostly disseminated the government's anti-immigration narrative. Facebook posts will be collected by using the CrowdTangle software (2022). The exact time of post creation, the number of user reactions, any textual messages of the post and the links are also provided.

Related studies highlight, that the effect of media frames depends on the content and the credibility of the source as well (Druckman, 2001b; Hayes, 2008). Bleich and his colleagues emphasize several important aspects of this selection process. They touch upon the importance of political orientation of selected media sources, whether they are broadsheet or tabloid, national or local portals (2015, p. 864). In my research project, the selection of media outlets aimed to follow these criteria of Bleich and his colleagues. Especially because the number of followers varied a lot throughout the investigated years, and therefore defining most popular media outlets would have been problematic. Table 1. lists the included media outlets in both countries. (There are no intended direct pairing between Hungarian and German media outlets in the same line.)

2. Table. The list of media outlets in the analysis.

Media outlets	
Hungary	Germany
Origo.hu	Bild.de
Index.hu	Tagesschau
24.hu	Spiegel.de
444.hu	ZEIT Online
hvg.hu	FAZ – Frankfurter Allgemeiner Zeitung

As Helbling notes, research about why political actors use certain frames are still in an early stage yet and need further investigation (2014, p. 23). Moreover, because of the politicized nature of the immigration discourse, various motivations of politicians and media outlets are especially important, as highlighted above. The media's influence on individual thinking can also be interpreted as the indirect influence of the political elite, since media sources are primary interfaces to deliver political messages to voters. Many related studies distinguish between media and political frames. However, since the politicized nature of the immigration issue (Krzyżanowski et al., 2018; Sik & Simonovits, 2019), I will assume that the media content represents the political aspects of the debate, as well as that the issue position of political actors from media sources can be identified.

By the collection of Facebook posts, Hungarian search terms were *bevándor\**, *migrá\**, *menekült\**, *menedékkér\**, the German equivalents were *Einwander\**, *Migra\**, *Asyl\** and *Flucht\**. Days between 1 January 2014 and 1 December 2022 will be covered to compare discourses before and after the migration crisis in 2015, how they changed during the coronavirus pandemic when immigration was obviously less prevalent, and how the discourse became more intensive after Russian forces started to attack Ukrainian territories. The analysis of Facebook posts includes two stages: (1) sentiment analysis and (2) topic modelling.

#### **4.1.1. Observing engagement with news on Facebook**

Why could the analysis of Facebook posts consider as a representative media sample? Media consumption habits of individuals changed a lot with the spread of social network sites, as they became the primary news sources for a significant rate of the society (Vollmer & Karakayali, 2018). News consumption habits on social media sites are rapidly spreading, meaning that a growing number of people rely exclusively on politics related information that they gather from various sorts of social media sources (Pentina & Tarafdar, 2014). Since users are selective in

which Facebook pages they follow (Bene et al., 2022), in general they follow politicians and/or media outlets that they intentionally want to appear in their news feed.

Although decades ago the spread of internet access and online activities were supposed to facilitate democratic debates with diverse information sources and the opportunity of active involvement for those social groups who were excluded previously, most of the relevant empirical studies show disappointing tendencies. Online news consumption mostly deepened the inequality gap between social classes and political groups of different ideological standpoints in terms of awareness. However, some previous research confirmed that the selective exposure of offline news consumption is indeed mitigated in the online realm to some extent, where diverse media sources are easily accessible, especially through social media (Masip et al., 2020).

Many people consider news consumption as part of the time that they spend scrolling their news feed and follow the pages on media outlets. Thus, because of the minimal attention span on social media sites, they experience information “crumbs” between funny memes, friends’ holiday pictures, advertisements, and many more. The amount of time and how detailed they consume these posts (whether they read the entire text of the posts, whether they click on the provided links, whether they comment or share, etc.) depends on several frequently investigated factors and the sharing strategies of news portals (dos Santos et al., 2019). For example, how interested they are in politics, how extremist/radical they consider their political beliefs, or how often they take part in political actions - variables that measure these aspects are often included in political communication analyses. The curated flow theory suggests that users on social media can influence the visibility of the posts with their reaction, whereas paid contents also change the algorithm of news feeds (Thorson & Wells, 2016).

Social media posts represent a special niche between media content and public opinion since individuals might react to these posts by liking, commenting or sharing them. This does not

mean however, that the reactions to Facebook posts would be representative to public opinion from any scientific aspects. Due to the sporadic use of Facebook by the various media outlets in the analysis, the number of posts are inevitably lower than the number of articles – assuming that these sites do not post every immigration related article on their Facebook page. Related user strategies are described as sporadic because there is obviously no available handbook on Facebook policies of the media outlets, moreover, related social media policies, strategies and activities change frequently, too. Hypothetically, during periods when the immigration issue is more salient, news pages are more likely to post their articles about it, while immigration related articles are less noticeable in social media when the related discourse is less intense. Moreover, user activities on Facebook changed a lot in recent years, and it is unclear yet, when do users interact with posts.

There are obvious limitations, if a media analysis relies on Facebook data. First, since the logic of Facebook algorithms is not provided, the number of interactions - likes, comments, shares - does not exactly reflect how many people saw the posts altogether, but at least it can suggest more popular posts, since interactions generate more visibility on Facebook. Furthermore, although the use of emoticons on Facebook indicates higher engagement with posts and pages and can reflect the actual emotions of followers to some extent, several questions remain unexplained about what kind of emotions these Facebook posts could trigger. For example, our knowledge about the subject of the emotions is limited – on who is the user angry, why are they said, what are they laughing at? On immigrants, on politicians dealing with the issue potentially, or on how the media outlet reports about the issue? These questions require more attention and mixed methods to be explored effectively.

#### **4.1.2. Sentiment analysis of Facebook posts**

Sentiment analysis is a widely used approach to discover tones of social media actors (Drus & Khalid, 2019; Settle, 2020). In my research, sentiment analysis will outline trends in the positivity / negativity of the Facebook posts of media outlets about immigration to identify more inclusive (and exclusive) immigration frames. Hungarian texts will be translated to German by using Google Translate, in order to use available German dictionaries throughout the analysis. The suitability of the software for these purposes was demonstrated by de Vries et al. in detail (2018, cited by Traber et al., 2019). Based on predefined dictionaries, the analysis will assign every Facebook post a respective score, indicating how negative or positive is the tone of that post. Several studies identify relevant R packages for sentiment analysis, of which I will use *SentiWS*, *RSentiment*, and *SentimentAnalysis* (Fehle et al., 2021; Misuraca et al., 2020; Rauh, 2018). The comprehensive review article of Fehle, Schmidt and Wolff highlight the differences between various dictionaries for German sentiment analysis (2021). There are numerous aspects to consider, and relying on their evaluations, my research will use the dictionary of Chrisitan Rauh (2018), which is easily accessible, up-to-date, the lexicon performance was rated as one of the highest among the 19 investigated sources, and it contains a sufficient amount of tokens for the sake of complex text analysis.

As a result, changes in positivity (inclusiveness) and negativity (exclusiveness) can be detected across time and media outlets, comparing the two countries. Thus, important differences between immigration frames in Hungary and Germany will be explored. The analysis will reveal, (1) whether the anti-immigration dominance in Hungarian media and political communication is that obvious compared to social media trends in Germany, (2) whether negative or positive posts dominate in the two countries across time and how long these dominance prevail, and (3) which media outlets or leading politicians hit a more positive tone in immigration related Facebook posts.



#### 4.1.3. Topic modelling: frames behind posts with negative and positive sentiments

In which frames do Facebook posts with various sentiments report and communicate about immigration? Which are the most dominant and relevant inclusive and exclusive frames about immigration, and how do these frames differ between Hungarian and German media outlets and politicians? The aim of the topic modelling analysis will be to understand how Facebook posts about immigration with various negative and positive sentiment scores frame the issue and how prevalent are these frames across time in the two countries. Topic modelling is a suitable method to classify articles in certain clusters based on their vocabulary by recognizing specific groups of words which appear in the same articles (Mohr & Bogdanov, 2013).

Throughout the analysis, topic modelling with covariates will be applied, which method was demonstrated by numerous studies on text analysis previously. This research will primarily follow the considerations of Traber, Schoonvelde and Schumacher (2020). Relying on their work, the topic modelling analysis will be conducted through the following steps. Latent dirichlet allocation (LDA) topic models will be run on the texts of Facebook posts. A critical question in this stage will be the number of topic models applied for the analysis. Traber and his colleagues chose the ‘harmonic means’ measure of the model fit, at the first inflection point, i.e. “the point where the model fit decreases” (2020, p. 9). After defining the number of frames, they can be matched with Facebook posts, reflecting their content about immigration. For data preparation, the R packages of *readtext*, *stringi*, *textmining* and *tyditext* are the most appropriate. For the analysis part of the study, including advanced topics as well, *quanteda* and *topicmodels* will be applied (Welbers et al., 2017, p. 247).

While the sentiment analysis point out to the tone of Facebook posts, topic modelling categorizes the content of these posts into the ideal number of frames. Thus, both the tone and the frames of Facebook posts will be known, as well as the timely distribution of these across

the two countries, different media outlets and leading political figures. Consequently, the two supply side analysis will be sufficient to answer the first four hypotheses of my research project (H1, H2, H3, H4) concerning the rate, diversity and prevalence of inclusive immigration frames in Germany and Hungary, and the influence of main political actors in the media debate on immigration.

## **4.2. How citizen attitudes respond to public discourse?**

The macro-level or supply side analysis of the contents of social media posts will be followed by the analysis of users' reactions and the test of frames on individuals' opinions and attitudes. As a reminder, this section focuses on the second research question and aims to answer whether inclusive frames about immigration alleviate anti-immigration attitudes in Hungary, where anti-immigration sentiments dominate, but where the rate of immigrant people can be considered relatively low. To capture this challenging question as comprehensively as possible, quantitative and qualitative approaches will be similarly applied. As an introduction, regressions on available European Social Survey data will describe how media consumption habits and party preference might influence immigration attitudes in the two countries. Furthermore, trends in users' engagement and reactions to the analyzed Facebook posts, online focus group discussions in Hungary and Germany, and a face-to-face survey experiment carried out among Hungarian respondents will be analyzed in detail.

### **4.2.1. Facebook users' reactions and engagement**

As the last stage of the Facebook post analysis, trends in users' reactions will be outlined to see, whether exclusive or inclusive immigration frames are more advantaged by Facebook users and thus algorithms, namely, which are the frames that reach the highest number of users. The analysis can also suggest, to what extent do various inclusive and exclusive immigration frames

evoke certain emotions in followers. Moreover, correlation between sentiment scores and the number of various emojis can verify the results of the sentiment analysis. The analysis will systematically explore the distribution of likes, comments, shares and the various emojis across the Facebook posts of media outlets, considering the formerly established sentiment scores and dominant frames of the posts, as well. Besides these numbers and categorizations, I will investigate the content of those posts that received an outstanding amount of reactions. The purpose of this latter discourse analysis will be to identify typical posts of inclusive and exclusive immigration frames. These typical posts will be the subject of focus group discussions later. Although several studies carried out similar analysis (Eberl et al., 2020a), the limitations of this approach are important to consider. It is mostly because of the confidential logic in Facebook algorithms that hinder to draw universal conclusions from the investigated empirical data.

#### **4.2.2. Regression analysis of immigration attitudes with ESS data**

The analysis of Facebook users' reactions and engagement will be followed by the systematic investigation and comparison of ten consecutive rounds of the publicly available European Social Survey data from Hungary and Germany between 2000 and 2020. In order to explore H5 about the influence of exclusive immigration frames on attitudes, the purpose of the longitudinal data analysis will be to investigate the relationships between trends in exclusive immigration frames (based on the results of the previous Facebook analyses) and immigration attitudes, including the news consumption habits and party preferences of individuals.

Variables about media consumption habits (the primary source of political information, whether it is television, radio, offline or online newspapers, and the time they spend on gaining public news) foster to reflect on the relevance of news sources and the intensity of news consumption. This is especially important in Hungary, where relying primarily on television

and radio news means exposure to the exclusive immigration frames of the Fidesz government fundamentally, whereas online news readers are more likely to receive governmental and non-governmental media frames as well.

Ordinary least squares regression models will test the interrelations of interest, where dependent variables will be those three that measure immigration attitudes<sup>3</sup>, and independent variables will measure the primary source of information, the time spent with news consumption, party preference and how close respondents feel to that particular party, and the level of education.

#### **4.2.3. The deliberative potential of group discussions**

Focus group discussions represent the qualitative part of the mixed methodological research design and aim to explore whether inclusive immigration frames can alleviate anti-immigration attitudes of individuals. The method is suitable to explore attitudes in more detail, to shade and further interpret the standardized results of survey analysis (Síklaki, 2006). There are several reasons for using focus group discussions in my research. First, I want to understand immigration attitudes deeper than what standardized survey results can suggest. Second, I consider this method as most suitable to test whether deliberative group discussions are an effective tool for attitude formation. Third, a qualitative method might be more capable of exploring the complex immigration attitudes of individuals and the assumed causal inference between media frames and public attitudes, than survey experiments.

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<sup>3</sup> (1) Would you say it is generally bad or good for your country's economy that people come to live here from other countries? (2) Would you say that your country's cultural life is generally undermined or enriched by people coming to live here from other countries? (3) Is your country made a worse or a better place to live by people coming to live here from other countries?

The ideal number of participants is 6-8 in a focus group discussion. Reactions and discussion will surely arise with this amount of people, but not too many, in order to ensure an equal amount of time and opportunities to contribute. The discussions will take place online and will be moderated by me and a colleague of mine. Although in offline settings the non-verbal expressions might also have significant messages, the costs of online meetings are much lower, several people can participate, who otherwise could not (because of sickness, place of residence, etc.). Transcripts of focus group discussions will be analyzed qualitatively, and by applying the MAXQDA software as well.

The semi-structured interview outline is necessary to provide the comparative analysis between the two countries.

1. Greetings, introduction (5 minutes)

- Age, profession, motivation to take part at the discussion
- For how long do you live in your current settlement?
- What would you estimate for the rate of immigrant people in the settlement?

2. From which media sources do you get information about public issues and how much time do you spend a day with reading news? (10 minutes)

3. What is your general opinion about immigration? (10-15 minutes/questions) – Participants place themselves on a 1 to 10 scale and give reasons for their choices in a few sentences.

- Is immigration good or bad for the country's economy?
- Is the country's cultural life undermined or enriched by immigrants?
- Do immigrants mean a security threat to the country?

4. Presenting selected Facebook posts (5 minutes of reading)

5. Which information do you remember from the Facebook posts? Which emotions did you feel while reading them? (30 minutes)

6. What do you think, all in all, how many immigrants should the country accept?

Please choose an answer and justify your choice in a couple of sentences! (10-15 minutes)

- Any immigrants or refugees
- The amount of a possible EU quota
- Only people from war areas
- None of the immigrants or refugees

In the introductory round, I encourage participants to estimate the rate of immigrants in their town and in their neighborhood. This is the subjective perception of the participants, but will provide important information about how serious they consider the immigration issue in their surroundings. The second block is dedicated to media consumption habits of the participants. This block is especially important to know whether the Facebook posts presented later on could have reached them previously. The aim of the third block is to explore the general immigration attitudes of the participants, and thus to identify their initial positions on the issue before presenting the selected Facebook posts to them and to ground the debate that will follow the reading. To facilitate this, I apply a sort of mixed methodology: questions are identical with related standard survey questions of ESS about the economic, cultural and security aspects of immigration, but they have to give reasons for their choices, so that preferences and underlying motivations become clear for everyone in the group.

This will be followed by the presentation of the selected Facebook posts.<sup>4</sup> I aim to simulate a situation of scrolling on a personal Facebook page. After 5 minutes of “scrolling”, the Facebook posts will no longer be seen and the discussion can begin about the information they remember and the emotions that these articles triggered in them. The moderator will encourage

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<sup>4</sup> The selection process was previously described in the subchapter on Facebook post analysis.

participants to reflect on each other's statements and emotions. Responses in this block are crucial to answer the hypotheses of my research.

A standard question will close the discussion about how many immigrants in general participants would allow to enter their country. Standardized answers will be given, but participants are required to give reasons for their choices again. This block could clarify to some extent whether the discussion caused any changes in their immigration attitudes, and aims to ensure that no negative feelings remain in participants after the debate.

#### **4.2.4. Testing the effects of frames in a context rich in anti-immigrant messages: a survey experiment in Hungary**

The actual test of framing effects means indeed a methodological challenge for scientists since it requires them to draw causal conclusions as a result. Making causal inferences between independent and dependent variables is barely possible without conducting experimental research since regression models only refer to interrelations between independent and dependent variables. Experiments expose subjects to various frames in randomly selected groups and compare their preferences after reading or experiencing a particular frame. The most suitable type of experiment for testing framing effects is a survey embedded vignette experiment (Sniderman et al., 2004).

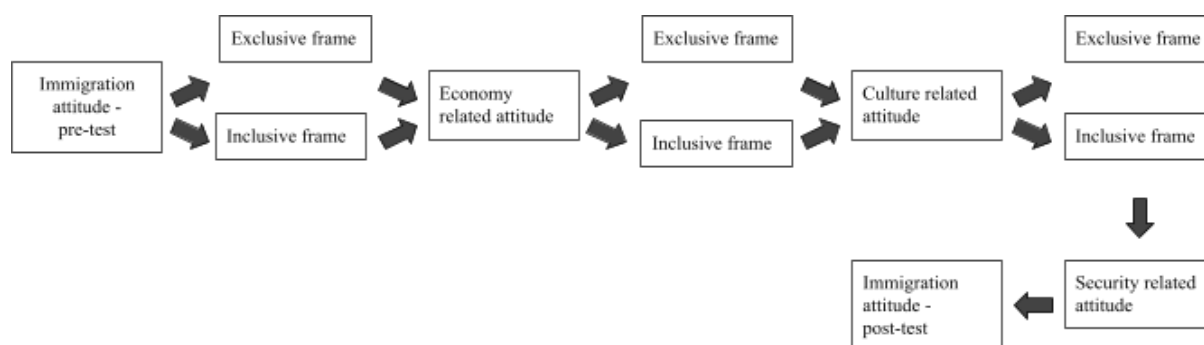
The primary aim of the survey-embedded experiments is to expose respondents in the two different contexts to (1) exclusively negative, (2) exclusively positive, and (3) mixed media frames about immigration, and to compare their immigration-related attitude afterward. Subjects of the experiments will be Hungarian citizens above age 18, preferably without a migration background, because that would cause undesirable bias in attitudes and opinions related to immigration. The stimuli of experiments will be the reading of short inclusive and exclusive frames about immigration. Besides the framing effect, various other characteristics

of subjects should be measured (like socio-economic variables, political values, party preference or personal values, see (Davidov & Meuleman, 2012)). The measurement of outcome variables of experiments (immigration related attitude and opinion) will follow the formulation of European Social Survey researches, so questions about how many immigrants should the country allow to enter, whether immigrants are good or bad for the country's economy, and whether immigrants enrich the cultural life of the country or not will be included in the analysis.

The design of the experiment fulfills the requirements of incidental exposure to opposing media frames, namely, respondents are randomly exposed to either the inclusive or the exclusive interpretation of several aspects of immigration, which are indeed formulated as opposing and not just diverse approaches. Therefore, the choice between opposing media interpretations is not provided to respondents, but they are arbitrarily and randomly exposed to the negative or positive interpretations about the economic, cultural and security aspects of immigration. This is meant to test the influence of incidental cross-cutting exposure and whether it can result in a reverse effect on opinion formation about immigration.

Figure 1. demonstrates the design of the experiment in detail. Three general frames about immigration are previously determined: the economy, culture and security frame, and both categories were split into an exclusive and inclusive interpretation, among which respondents randomly received one as treatment. Consequently, every respondent receives five attitude questions (pre- and post-test, economy, culture and security related attitudes), and three treatments before the relevant attitude questions.





1. Figure. The design of the survey experiment. Author's compilation.

#### 4.3. The expected contributions and limitations of this study

This research project on immigration related media frames and public attitudes focuses on an angle that was less explored previously, inclusive frames about immigration, and covers a wide range of empirical data both on social media and on individual levels. The general research question asks, whether more inclusive media and political discourses could have led to more receptive attitudes towards immigrants. The project was motivated by the extremely negative political discourse and sharp anti-immigration sentiments and attitudes in Hungary at the time of the 2015 migration crisis. Moreover, I included another country case for comparison, Germany, where the political inception towards immigrants was much more positive in 2015, and where immigration and integration have a longer history. Two specific research questions are aimed to be answered: (1) what are the differences between inclusive immigration frames in Hungary and Germany and (2) whether inclusive immigration frames can push public attitudes towards more acceptance in Hungary. I apply an empirical research design with mixed methodologies to answer these questions, including the in-depth analysis of selected Facebook posts of media outlets, regression analysis of cross-sectional surveys, a survey experiment and focus group discussions as well.

Despite all efforts in the realm of a PhD project, the limitations of empirical research are widely known and debated. Even though applying mixed methodologies, comparative and big data approaches, research resources are limited and there will be always question marks remaining. Although this research can provide several contributions to the field of political communication or the dynamics of immigration frames and attitudes, there are also certain limitations that should be taken into consideration. To conclude the chapter on the theoretical and methodological concept, these contributions and limitations are listed below.

Several main contributions of this research project can be outlined. First, it aims to contribute to the understanding of dynamics and influences of inclusive frames about immigration in an anti-immigrant political and media environment, Hungary. The detailed examination of the German case, which is significantly different in several relevant aspects, could also deepen related knowledge. The comparative assessment of inclusive and exclusive frames about immigration between two countries that differ in their social and media plurality can reveal important details to add to current knowledge. Moreover, this research project might develop further understandings about how various general frames and typical Facebook posts influence attitudes on the individual level. Especially because of the emphasized focus on inclusive media frames about immigration, which got less scientific attention in recent years.

Nevertheless, the limitations of this research design should be considered, too. As mentioned several times previously, the most considerable theoretical and empirical challenge of this research project is to detect and explain causal inference between frames and attitudes. Although survey experiments and focus group discussions are good alternatives to tackle these methodological challenges, further tests are necessary to highlight more nuances in framing effects. I will interpret results very carefully regarding this aspect. Furthermore, even though social media sites became important sources of information, the examined Facebook posts are only one channel of communication about immigration. The influence of media channels vary

across different social groups, and thus the examination of social media can only discover one segment of it. Last, the categorization of immigration related frames into inclusive and exclusive also means certain limitations, although the diversity of frames within these categories will be enhanced.

In sum, immigration is clearly a very complex policy issue to deal with. While the economic, social and cultural benefits of immigration are important, the integration of immigrant people obviously lead to social tensions, which easily results in the spread of xenophobic sentiments in societies. However, because of the inevitable circumstances, nation states cannot avoid facing with the constant movement of people globally, even if individual perceptions about the current importance of the issue vary (Hatton, 2021). Therefore, the media and politicians have significant responsibilities in how they communicate about immigration in order to encourage comfortable solutions and peaceful coexistence between native people and immigrants.

## **5. The media-level analysis: immigration frames in the most popular media outlets' Facebook posts**

As the start of the empirical analysis of my research, this chapter elaborates and compares the media-level trends and contents of immigration frames in the two investigated countries' most popular online media outlets. As described previously in the introductory chapter, in order to identify the salience and content of inclusive immigration frames, the media-level analysis will consist of two main stages: a sentiment analysis followed by a topic model analysis of immigration related Facebook posts of the five most popular online media outlets in Hungary and Germany between 2014 and 2022. As the “preface” of discovering exclusive and inclusive immigration frames, the frequencies of immigration related Facebook posts will be analyzed to see the timely distribution and thus the salience of the immigration discourse during the time frame of my research. Moreover, as an introduction to the next chapter, the individual-level analysis of immigration attitudes, interrelations with the aggregated users' reactions will provide the first insights on how (inclusive) immigration frames can influence individuals' attitudes – or at least the reactions to the content of these Facebook posts about immigration related news. The calculated sentiment scores will suggest the distribution of positive and negative tones in immigration communication. The topics will complement these with trends in substantive immigration frames. Lastly, the users' reactions will suggest certain emotional influence that these Facebook posts induced in the followers of the pages, which will be the first (though methodologically yet not appropriate and comprehensive) empirical evidence on the interactions between immigration frames in media and immigration attitudes of individuals in the two countries. As a conclusion, this chapter will provide answers to the first main research question and the first three hypotheses of the dissertation.

In answering my first research question, which asked, what the differences between inclusive immigration frames in Hungary and Germany are, I will use an exploratory approach

when conducting the media analysis. According to my hypotheses related to the media discourse about immigration, (H1) more inclusivity in the immigration discourse in general, (H2) more diverse inclusive immigration frames and (H3) longer prevalence of inclusive immigration frames are expected in the German media discourse about immigration compared to the Hungarian. The most important purpose of the sentiment analysis is to investigate the first hypothesis in detail, while the second and third hypotheses will be answered in the next section relying on the topic model analysis. I pointed to several related sub questions in my introductory chapter that will accompany the media-level analysis. These questions will cover, (1) which inclusive immigration frames are dominant across time in the two countries; (2) which media outlets communicate these dominant immigration frames, and which can be the strategic reasons for applying certain frames through specific time periods; (3) what can be the more general explanations for increases in the salience of inclusive immigration frames. While the first question belongs to the subject of the topic model analysis, the second and third aspects, the considerations of media outlets and more general explanations for increase in inclusive immigration frames will be discovered through sentiment analysis.

As specified previously, three time periods will be compared and trends in immigration discourses reflected: the 2015-2016 migration crisis<sup>5</sup>, the coronavirus pandemic starting in March, 2020, and the Russian war in Ukraine starting on the 24<sup>th</sup> of February, 2022. Obviously, more intensive media communication about immigration is expected during the migration crisis and the Ukrainian war, when immigration and refugees is in the foreground of events anyway, and less during the coronavirus pandemic. Moreover, I also assume the intensification of more inclusive immigration frames after 2022, especially in Hungary, since the communication

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<sup>5</sup> To synchronize with most of the related research in this field, I apply the term 'crisis' when referring to the 2015-2016 events and period of large immigration and refugee inflows mostly from the Middle East.

strategies of political actors and the attitude of citizens in Europe were more hospitable towards Ukrainian refugees than towards Muslim refugees for example from Syria, Iraq or Afghanistan. On the other hand, the German media discourse is expected to include more inclusive immigration frames around the 2015 and 2016 immigration inflow, after the “Wir schaffen das!” statement of Angela Merkel on 31<sup>st</sup> of August 2015. The German media discourse was often accused to be too much biased towards inclusive voices, forcing opinions that are critical with immigration, refugees and related policies to the radical forums. This analysis can be a contribution to this debate, too, either by confirming this claim or by showing alternative trends on the Facebook pages of media outlets.

### **5.1. Inclusive or exclusive? The sentiment analysis of Facebook posts**

Contemporary research on political communication prove that sentiments are key in media contents, especially on social media sites (Bene, 2017). Sentiments can lead the focus of media readership, therefore, journalists and editors in many cases pursue to include emotions in textual, visual and audio elements of news.<sup>6</sup> Facebook is a particular platform for affective media contents, where followers of certain media sites can use the six emojis to express their feelings about different posts besides liking, sharing them or commenting on them. Several previous analysis showed that the emotional loading of immigration related media contents is especially high in comparison with other topics. Researchers who focus on politicians’ and parties’ Facebook activity found that Facebook posts that contain news or information on immigration are more likely to be more negative and to induce an outstandingly high percentage

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<sup>6</sup> For the sake of feasibility, my dissertation focuses on the textual representation of immigration frames. Here I would like to emphasize the importance of the (audio)visual media representation of immigration, as well. As a further research step in the future, I recommend the analysis of related visual frames and sentiments to be discovered in detail, too.

of ‘Angry’ reactions (Eberl et al., 2020b). Relying on Tobias Heidenreich’s and his colleagues study, it is also reasonable to assume that immigration related media contents are more likely to be spread by right-wing parties and political actors, since they own the issue in this regard (Heidenreich et al., 2019). A further important finding in this regard is that negative sentiments seem to increase user engagement and commitment to certain parties or politicians more likely than posts that contain positive sentiments (Heiss et al., 2019). This would imply significantly different users’ reactions in case of exclusive immigration frames compared to inclusive immigration frames.

To study emotions in political and media communications in more detail, I rely on the theoretical approach of Szabó and Kiss, who offer a classification of politicians and public figures as emotional managers, who constantly make various emotional offers to their followers for political strategical reasons (Szabó & Kiss, 2022). They also define emotion regulation processes, where emotional managers attempt to influence the mental state of news consumers. Emotion-rich content is meant to serve as communication tools to achieve this purpose. Emotional managers decide which emotions support their interest in various political situations and promote them accordingly. However, instead of ‘emotional offers’, in my research I apply the term ‘emotional trigger’ for these emotion-rich contents, since the identification of emotional offers would require a stricter analysis. Namely, emotional offers presuppose the explicit intention to induce emotional effects, of which identification my research does not go into. Of course, by the appearance of emotional triggers, the chances of inducing any kinds of emotions in readers/followers is also relatively high. In case of my research, Facebook posts with higher sentiment scores will represent these emotional triggers.

Szabó and Kiss highlight three important aspects that emotional managers have to consider: the emotional intelligence of the audience, the authenticity of the emotional trigger, and the normative rules of emotional expression in certain social and political contexts (Szabó & Kiss,

2022, p. 9). Furthermore, Farkas and Szabó argue that since policy considerations have become less relevant recently, whereas the communication style and personal characteristics of politicians play a more important role (especially on social media sites), this motivates public figures to perform emotionally, and thus gains the attention and support of citizens (E. Farkas & Szabó, forthcomingb). Moreover, emoji reactions can boost the visibility of Facebook posts and prioritize them in the algorithm (Tønnesen et al., 2023). Consequently, media (and thus often political) messages with clear emotional triggers can mobilize more effectively, and therefore, immigration frames with higher emotional load might be applied by politicians who primarily focus on the issue in their policy agenda and media communication strategies. This should be reflected in related media contents about immigration as well, namely, the higher a sentiment score of a certain media content, the more likely that it can be regarded as an emotional trigger by the respective person or author.

Although the primary aim of the media analysis in my research is to detect the salience and content of inclusive immigration frames in the two countries, building on the work of Szabó and Kiss about the mobilization potentials of emotional triggers in the media, I assume that the emotional reactions to the Facebook posts can be suggestive in several aspects in terms of immigration attitudes; most importantly, because the theoretical assumptions on inclusive immigration frames are contradictory. While framing theory would suggest that inclusive immigration frames result in more acceptance of immigrants, the previously discussed cross-cutting exposure and disconfirmation bias could lead to an increase in anti-immigrant attitudes, when inclusive immigration frames become more dominant. The analysis of users' reactions in terms of sentiment scores is aimed to provide preliminary insights in this regard.

## **5.2. Description of the corpus and data processing**



As described in the previous chapter on the methodological design of my research, my corpus includes every immigration related Facebook post of the five most popular online media outlets in Germany (Bild.de, Tagesschau.de, Spiegel.de, Zeit.de, and FAZ.de) and Hungary (Orgio.hu, Index.hu, 24.hu, 444.hu, Hvg.hu) between 2014 and 2022. The wide time range of the analysis allows me to include the most relevant related events to immigration, whereas, since the basis year is 2014, it can suggest important changes in trends following the 2015-2016 migration flow. The media outlets in the analysis are considered as the most popular and most decisive media sources in the two countries that effectively specify the information environment for voters. Erhard and his colleagues emphasize that high-quality media are the most influential in the German context (2022).

Applied search terms were ‘*menekül\**’, ‘*migrá\**’, ‘*bevándor\**’, ‘*menedékkér\**’ in the Hungarian, and ‘*Flucht\**’, ‘*Migrant\**’, ‘*Einwanderer\**’ and ‘*Asyl\**’ in the German case. As a result, I created a comprehensive dataset of these immigration related Facebook posts, containing 8944 posts altogether (CrowdTangle, 2022). The dataset can be considered as a comprehensive Big Data source, since all immigration related Facebook posts are subjects of the analysis, no consistent sampling procedure was effectuated. Although Facebook posts do not include every single article about immigration published by the online media outlets, the regularity of their daily posting allow me to assume that the articles that the editorials consider most important about immigration are posted on Facebook. Moreover, the pre-eminent role of social media sites in terms of media consumption habits (namely, people rather follow the Facebook pages of media outlets and not the media outlet directly) further justifies the investigation of media outlets’ Facebook posts. However, because of the pre-selection of certain articles by the editorials to be posted on Facebook or not, the individual decisions about whether users follow the Facebook page of a media outlet or not, and whether they react to these Facebook posts or not, definitely increase the chances for selection bias. Moreover, the usage

of the various emoji buttons pretty much depends on various cultural and contextual factors which are hard to be measured or defined precisely. Consequently, despite of the advantages, these limitations should be remembered throughout the interpretation of the research outcomes. Thus, the various results of my media-level analysis might be considered as kind of proxy measurements of the immigration media discourse, and I try to formulate every according reflection critically.

Sentiment scores were calculated as follows. I applied two sentiment dictionaries, a Hungarian dictionary on the Hungarian corpus, and a German dictionary on the German corpus. The Hungarian sentiment dictionary was developed by Miklós Sebők and his colleagues at POLText Lab (Sebők et al., 2021), whereas the German sentiment dictionary relies on the work of Christian Rauh (2018). Since sentiment dictionaries were available in both German and Hungarian, it was not necessary to translate any of the corpora to the other language or to English, and thus, I expect more reliable results of the sentiment analysis. The German sentiment dictionary included 10754, the Hungarian sentiment dictionary included 7134 positive and negative elements. Sentiment scores are the differences between the number of positive and the number of negative words in a Facebook post. If the sentiment score of a Facebook post is above 0, namely, it has more positive than negative words in it, it could be regarded as more inclusive than those with negative sentiment scores. Higher sentiment scores indicate more inclusive Facebook posts on immigration. Similar statements are true for the exclusive Facebook posts: the sentiment score below 0 indicates posts that has more negative than positive words in it, and the more negative a sentiment score, the more exclusive a Facebook post about immigration can be regarded. The distribution of these sentiment scores across time and media outlets will provide the main output of the sentiment analysis.

To compare the media discourses in the two countries, the German and the Hungarian dictionaries needed to be validated for the analysis. Even though the immigration media

discourse is highly politicized in both country cases, the dictionaries were created for parliamentary discourses, which does not necessary suit the corpora of investigation. There are basically two established methodological approaches in this regard: when the corpus and the dictionary are available on the same language, or when they both need to be translated to the other or to a third language. Although the analysis on an identical language can be argued in a comparative research project, too, the availability of dictionaries in both languages was a significant pro argument for keeping the original language of the corpus and the dictionaries.

Still, a cross-validation process for both languages was important to ensure the comparability of the two text analyzes; this cross-validation was done by following the steps below. First, I randomly selected 300 Facebook posts from each corpus, of which sentiment scores was in the highest or lowest quartile, in order to validate the most emotional parts of the corpora. By applying the *googletranslate()* function in a google sheet, I created the automatic translation of these selected Facebook posts to the other language, so the Hungarian Facebook posts to German, the German Facebook posts to Hungarian. Then, the sentiment scores of the translated texts were calculated. The Hungarian dictionary was applied on the sentences that were German originally, and vica versa. Last, the average and standard deviation of the sentiment scores of the original and translated corpora were compared, by calculating t-test in case of the averages and variance analysis in case of the standard deviations. The t-test did not result significant differences between the average sentiment scores ( $t = -0.96377$ ,  $p\text{-value} = 0.3356$ ), but the variance test was significant when comparing the two cases ( $F = 2.717$ ,  $p\text{-value} < 2.2e-16$ ). Consequently, the two corpus and the Hungarian and German dictionaries can be used for comparative purposes.

### **5.3. The salience of immigration in the Facebook posts**

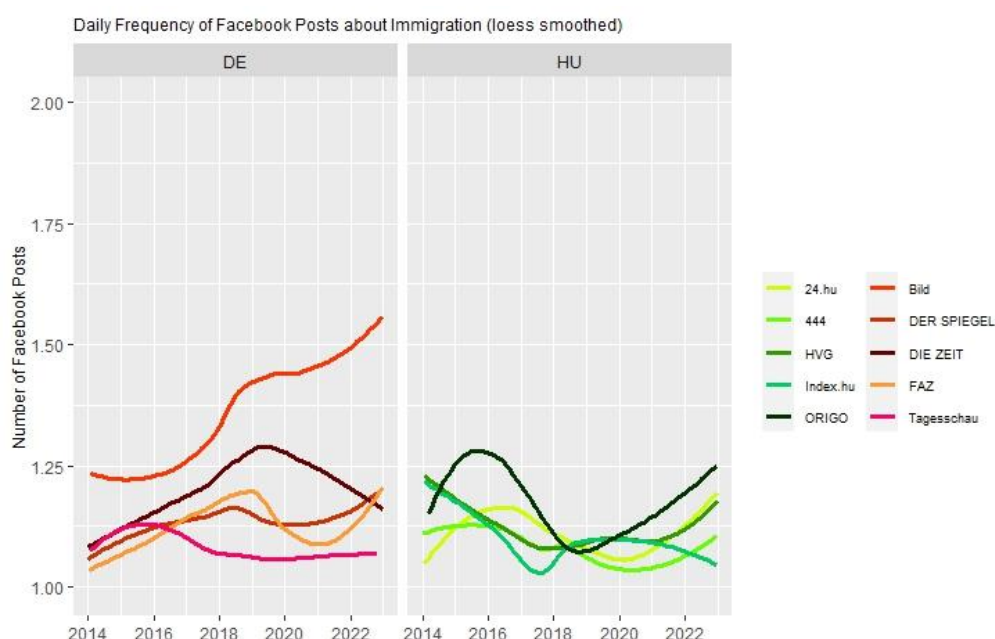
Before going into the details of the sentiment analysis, the frequency and over-time distribution of the number of immigration related Facebook posts are worth investigating, because they can pinpoint changes in the intensity of the immigration discourse in the various media outlets throughout the three investigated periods, and suggest important implications regarding the salience of the immigration issue in both countries. I assume that the more intensive the immigration discourse, the higher the chances that emotional triggers appear in related articles and Facebook posts, which are more likely to influence immigration attitudes.

Figure 1 presents the frequency of Facebook posts about immigration in the various media outlets in the two countries. Because of the wide time span of the analysis and the relatively big ‘noise’ in the data, frequency lines are smoothed by applying the *loess (locally weighted scatterplot smoothing)* method, which is a non-parametric regression method, fitting multiple regression models to previously specified subsets of the data (Gijbels & Prosdocimi, 2010). Not surprisingly, although trends across the two countries and media outlets vary, the plots suggest basically two main peaks of the immigration discourse between 2014 and 2022: the 2015-2016 migration crisis and Russia’s attack on Ukraine in the beginning of 2022. Around these events, the number of immigration related Facebook posts increased in most of the investigated German and Hungarian media outlets. On the other hand, Figure 1 also clearly presents the dominant role of the German Bild.de and the Hungarian Origo.hu in the national media discourses about immigration. However, while Bild.de posted frequently about immigration between the two “peaks” in the long run too, the intensive immigration discourse of Origo.hu is mostly concentrated around the 2015 migration crisis, although it was the leading media outlet in this regard after the outbreak of the war in Ukraine, too. The frequency of immigration related Facebook posts in other German online media outlets similarly reveal the significantly higher salience of immigration in the German context besides the acute crisis situations (e.g. the flow of immigrants and refugees during the two peaks in 2015 and 2022). The intensive

parliamentary debates in the German Bundestag about immigration around 2017 and 2018, social tensions about how the immigration issue in the country should be managed, how immigrants should be integrated and the rise of the far-right AfD can provide some explanations for this phenomenon (Hertner, 2022; Laubenthal, 2019). Especially because the number of immigrants clearly decreased during that period, although Germany accepted the highest number of immigrants beforehand among European Union countries, and even more immigrants arrived to Germany after the outbreak of the war in Ukraine.<sup>7</sup> In contrast, the issue of immigration remained almost invisible in the Hungarian media context after 2018 until the beginning of Russia's invasion in Ukraine. Immigration was a mobilizing issue of the Fidesz government even during the time of the 2018 national election campaign, and it has been being part of the party's communication blocks until recently, too, but the intensity of the political (and thus the media) discourse definitely decreased since 2018. Meanwhile, Origo.hu remained one of the most important pro-governmental media outlets where immigration related news often appeared.

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<sup>7</sup> These decreasing trends after 2016 and the number of immigrants to Germany can be found here: <https://de.statista.com/statistik/daten/studie/28347/umfrage/zuwanderung-nach-deutschland/> Downloaded 4.10.2023



2. Figure. Daily frequency of Facebook posts about immigration across German and Hungarian media outlets in the analysis (loess smoothed). Source: CrowdTangle 2022. Author's compilation.

Origo.hu represents a special case among the media outlets, since the tight relations between the media outlet and the Fidesz-government, and thus the media content in this outlet often reflects the political communication blocks (and strategical patterns) of the Hungarian government (Bátorfy & Urbán, 2020; Szeidl & Szucs, 2021). Accordingly, we can reasonably expect that articles about immigration in Origo.hu resonate with the political messages of the Fidesz-government in this regard. As shown in related theoretical and empirical works (see e.g. Bíró-Nagy, 2021), the anti-immigration messages were crucial in the Hungarian government's communication around the migration and refugee crisis from 2015, which sustained their popularity for further electoral cycles. Although the migration issue is currently not the main topic of Fidesz's communication, representing a clear anti-immigrant position still remained an important building block of the government's political identity, messages and communication until today. The salience of the immigration issue increased in Origo.hu after the outbreak of

Russia's war on Ukraine, but did not reach the intensity of the immigration discourse of 2015, nor did it exceed the frequency of immigration related articles of the German Bild.de.

Among the media outlets in the analysis, these two, Bild.de in the German media context and Origo.hu in the Hungarian media context represent the tabloid sources. The fact that these tabloid media outlets are those agents which sustain the immigration issue in the media discourses of both countries in the long run can pinpoint to a quite special but constant prevalence of the topic in the media discourses. This phenomenon suggests several implications, for example that more informal immigration frames could be more successful in media discourses, or that the readership (or the ownership and stakeholders) of these media outlets are especially interested in keeping up the salience of the immigration discourse. Similarly, as several scholars pointed it out (Els, 2013; Lane, 2019), tabloid media outlets are more likely to broadcast xenophobic messages, which are easier to adopt by newsreaders than pro-immigration frames and arguments, or to induce (latent or more explicit) anti-immigration sentiments (Ekman, 2019).

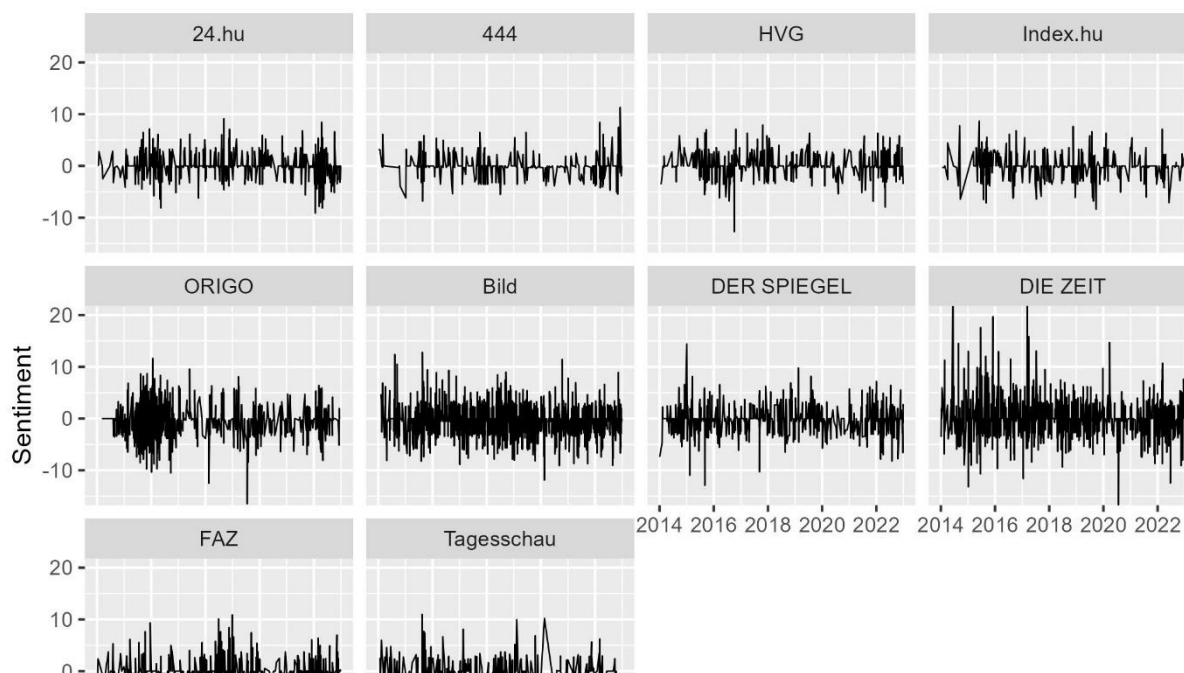
Overall, it can be claimed that the migration discourse was more salient in the German media context between 2014 and 2022. Not only the online version of the tabloid Bild.de, but the liberal-left-oriented Zeit.de posted more regularly about immigration than Hungarian media outlets. This includes the period of the coronavirus pandemic as well, during which the migration discourse did not cease to exist in the German media context, whereas the most popular media outlets in Hungary had a negligible amount of immigration related Facebook posts. Meanwhile, German media outlets discussed the immigration aspects of the pandemic, too: for instance, how the spread of the coronavirus affected refugee camps in the Southern countries of Europe, or how immigrants in various (but especially in vulnerable) social and economic statuses are affected by the coronavirus and the pandemic. Additionally, the high number of immigrants and refugees in Germany evokes continuous policy debates about the

issue in both media and parliamentary discourses. Although there was a visible increase in the intensity of the migration discourse at the beginning of the war in Ukraine, this uptick only lasted for a short period of time in both countries' media. This might show that the immigrants arriving from Ukraine induced lesser social tension, resistance, and therefore, the immigration issue did not remain salient in media discourses. The rest of the media outlets posted about immigration less frequently.

#### 5.4. Was the German media discourse about immigration really more inclusive?

##### The results of the sentiment analysis

Figure 2 presents the key output of the sentiment analysis, which summarizes and compares the sentiment scores for each media outlet's Facebook posts on immigration during the investigated time frame, between 2014 and 2022. As I pointed out above, posts that receive a sentiment score that is higher than 0 are considered as more inclusive, whereas those below 0 are



3. Figure. Sentiment scores across media outlets. Source: CrowdTangle, 2022. Author's compilation.



considered more exclusive. The higher the absolute value of a sentiment score, the more exclusive or inclusive it is regarded. These sentiment scores are displayed on the y axes of the plots below on Figure 2. As we saw in the frequency of the immigration related Facebook posts, the zero line rather represents the lack of immigration discourse in the particular media outlets than the dominance of neutral framing. There are several obvious and less obvious trends in the inclusivity and exclusivity of the immigration discourses of the two countries. I attempt to approach the description of the results from the previously outlined aspects, namely, which media outlets communicate more inclusive immigration frames, and what can be the strategic reasons for applying certain emotional tones through specific time periods.

Besides the outstanding frequency of immigration posts in case of the Hungarian pro-governmental Origo.hu, one of the most negative articles appear in this media outlet, too. The negativity and the density of the Facebook posts are most dominant during the 2015 migration crisis, and the inclusive tone did not appear later on, although I expected a significant increase in inclusivity after the outbreak of the war in Ukraine. Most probably the reason for this is that articles about illegal immigration at the Southern border of Hungary (which remained one of the key messages of the Orbán-government after 2015) were continuously published on Origo.hu, simultaneously with the more humanitarian articles on immigrants escaping from the war in Ukraine, of which the frequency decreased a lot after some months of the outbreak of the war. More precise results and conclusions will follow after the topic model analysis, which will suggest the substance of dominant immigration frames as well.

Because of the sporadic appearance of immigration related articles and Facebook posts, and the low variance in their sentiment scores, we can claim that non-governmental media outlets in Hungary (24.hu, 444.hu, Index.hu and Hvg.hu) approach the topic of immigration in a rather neutral manner or refuse to take any decisive part in the debate. The scarcity of the immigration discourse in these media outlets was visible on both figures, too; both the low

frequency, as well as the sentiment scores close to 0 refer to the low intensity of publishing related Facebook posts. A slight increase of the sentiment scores can be observed in case of 444.hu after the outbreak of the war in Ukraine, when political communication was mostly about how refugees arriving from Ukraine could be supported on the individual and state level as well. Whereas, the immigration discourse on Hvg.hu and Index.hu show decreasing sentiment scores after 2015. Although the change of owner- and leadership at Index.hu in 2020 could have explain changing trends in the immigration discourse, with Facebook posts being more anti-immigrant after 2020 since the pro-government shift, my results do not confirm these expectations. Similarly to previous research results that I conducted in this regard (E. Farkas, 2022), these results in non-governmental Hungarian media outlets allow me to conclude that the Hungarian media discourse on immigration is overwhelmingly negative. An explanation for this can be that the majority of the Hungarian population identify with anti-immigration attitudes, opinions and policies, and therefore, opposition politicians and media outlets try to avoid the discussion of the topic.

This goes against the trends in the German media discourse on immigration, where negative voices are to some extent counterbalanced by the rather inclusive style of Zeit.de, for instance. Immigration posts of Zeit.de were especially inclusive during the 2015 migration crisis. However, we can see that sentiment scores show high variance in this media outlet. Several media and opinion research point out that the representation of immigration was unbalanced in the German media discourse, too, but differently from the Hungarian posts and articles about immigration. While public opinion perceived the immigration media discourse as overly positive, several media content analyses pointed out to the general negative tone of the German media about immigration (Eberl et al., 2018b; Maurer et al., 2022). As the opposite of the Hungarian case, critiques on the German immigration articles relate to the perceived overwhelming rate of inclusive frames, namely, that opinions and policy positions that do not

support that much inclusivity are more difficult to publish and therefore, the media representation of immigration, immigrants and refugees in Germany is biased and supports more inclusiveness than citizens' attitudes (Arlt & Wolling, 2018). Erhard and his colleagues describe this phenomenon as a perceived 'code of conduct', which suggests that journalists and media outlets should not increase prejudice in the audience, and therefore they expect low level of emotional language about immigration in general (Erhard et al., 2022). In my view, the results of my sentiment analysis nuances these critiques, too, since I point to the negative trends in the immigration discourse in each popular media outlet, as well as show the relatively high valance of sentiments, which also contradicts the neutral expectations in this regard.

Other German media outlets show less inclusivity. Although, compared to the Hungarian media outlets, the rather conservative, center-right Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung (FAZ.de) and the more liberal, center-left Spiegel.de can be considered slightly more inclusive, all in all they rather follow a neutral reporting style on immigration with some outlier (not necessarily inclusive) sentiment scores during the 2015 migration crisis and after the outbreak of the war in Ukraine. The sentiment scores of Tagesschau.de show the most negative trends in the German context; the media outlet uses mostly exclusive language when communicating about immigration, which was especially typical during the time of the 2015 migration crisis. This is important because Tagesschau.de represents a traditional media outlet, which was the primary source of information for most German citizens before the German reunification in 1989, and the Facebook page has currently 2.2 million followers. Although according to several previous surveys, not only older but also younger generations follow the news of Tagesschau.de daily (Loosen et al., 2013)<sup>8</sup>, the traditional profile of the media outlet implies a higher rate of elderly

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<sup>8</sup> See also: [https://www.ndr.de/der\\_ndr/unternehmen/Tagesschau-um-20-Uhr-bleibt-erfolgreichste-TV-Nachrichtensendung.tagesschau7962.html#:~:text=Die%20Tagesschau%20ist%20in%20allen,%22%20mit%20199.000%20Zuschauer\\*innen](https://www.ndr.de/der_ndr/unternehmen/Tagesschau-um-20-Uhr-bleibt-erfolgreichste-TV-Nachrichtensendung.tagesschau7962.html#:~:text=Die%20Tagesschau%20ist%20in%20allen,%22%20mit%20199.000%20Zuschauer*innen.). Downloaded 8. February 2024

people among the spectators and followers, who in average are more engaged in anti-immigrant attitudes according to empirical studies in this field (see e.g. Schotte & Winkler, 2018). Obviously, as emphasized in several points previously, the direction of the causal link between the dominance of exclusive immigration frames and audience characteristics cannot be satisfactorily determined.

In order to provide a hard statistical test for the first hypothesis, namely, whether the German media discourse about immigration can be regarded more inclusive in general, I ran a linear regression model, with the sentiment scores as the dependent variables and the variable that indicated the country of the media outlets, besides further control variables that could explain the variance of the sentiment scores. These control variables measure the specific day when Facebook posts were published, the weekday and season of posting, and the length of the post. Because of the non-linear relationship with the dependent variable, the third-degree polynomials of the day of posting, the weekday and the length of posts are included in the regression model. While numerous expectations can be formulated about the impact of the control variables – e.g. media discussions may be more intensive on some specific days of the week or months of the year - , and these variables let me control for these effects in a flexible way, the focus of interpretation will be on the main variables of interest.

As Table 1 shows, the related variable does not significantly correlate with the variance of the sentiment scores of Facebook posts in the analysis, meaning that H1 should be rejected, the German media discourse on immigration is not necessarily more inclusive than the Hungarian media discourse in the long run during the investigated years. Let me emphasize again, that the analysis includes a wide time frame and investigates Facebook posts between 2014 and 2022, thus incorporating and considering the changes in the German and Hungarian discourses about immigration, too.

	Estimate	Std. Error	t-value	Pr(> t )
(Intercept)	-0.257254	0.087338	-2.946	0.00323 **
<b>country - Hungary</b>	<b>0.081941</b>	<b>0.062463</b>	<b>1.312</b>	<b>0.18961</b>
poly(which_day, degree = 3)1	-4.377566	2.783381	-1.573	0.11581
poly(which_day, degree = 3)2	-6.706437	2.760822	-2.429	0.01515 *
poly(which_day, degree = 3)3	3.083599	2.713495	1.136	0.25582
day_of_week – Monday	0.054387	0.103805	0.524	0.60033
day_of_week – Tuesday	0.186491	0.100980	1.847	0.06481 .
day_of_week – Friday	0.156617	0.100490	1.559	0.11914
day_of_week – Wednesday	-0.008341	0.099051	-0.084	0.93289
day_of_week – Saturday	0.056229	0.112541	0.500	0.61734
day_of_week – Sunday	-0.057327	0.107239	-0.535	0.59296
season_of_year - Spring	-0.137181	0.079180	-1.733	0.08322 .
season_of_year - Summer	-0.190601	0.076257	-2.499	0.01246 *
season_of_year - Winter	-0.059923	0.080266	-0.747	0.45535
poly(hour, degree = 3)1	-1.115990	2.675099	-0.417	0.67656
poly(hour, degree = 3)2	-5.207604	2.688117	-1.937	0.05274 .
poly(hour, degree = 3)3	-0.121760	2.666634	-0.046	0.96358
poly(post_length, degree = 3)1	23.302390	2.741434	8.500	< 2e-16 ***
poly(post_length, degree = 3)2	4.169359	2.721715	1.532	0.12559
poly(post_length, degree = 3)3	-27.024247	2.692614	-10.036	< 2e-16 ***
Adjusted R-squared	0.02138			

3. Table. Linear regression model to test H1. Dependent variable: sentiment scores of Facebook posts.

\*\*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*  $p < .05$ , \*  $p < .1$ . Source: CrowdTangle, 2022. Author's compilation.

Moreover, while investigating the temporal distribution of sentiment scores of each media outlet in the analysis, I also did not identify any obvious trends towards more inclusive immigration communication between 2014 and 2022 in the German media discourse. Zeit.de can be regarded as an exception around the years of the migration and refugee crisis. The

sentiment scores of German media outlets rather showed high volatility. Moreover, no further events related to migration – such as the Taliban offensive in Afghanistan in 2021 – can be identified as turning points in the related media discourses.

### **5.5. Individual-level evidence about the affective responses of Facebook users to immigration frames**

As the first, introductory stage of the individual-level analysis of migration attitudes, relying on the aggregated users' data provided by CrowdTangle, I investigated the codependence between sentiment scores and users' reactions. The aim here was to get a first impression about the broader interest of my dissertation, whether Facebook posts with more inclusive (or more exclusive) content come together with a higher rate of certain emotive reactions. Note that at this stage of the research, we cannot talk about precise immigration frames, we only know about the inclusivity (and exclusivity) of the Facebook posts about immigration over time. The most important advantage of the information on users' reactions is that they are directly related to the Facebook posts of the media outlets about immigration, and suggest some sort of emotional reflection on these media contents. This can to some extent counterbalance one of the most important disadvantages of the other methods for the individual-level analysis, namely, it is generally difficult to identify, which media outlets individuals are exposed to, when examining the influence of various media contents on immigration attitudes.

However, several important limitations should be highlighted here, exceptionally in advance of the analysis. First, data on users' reactions is aggregated, which hinders any direct conclusions on the level of individuals. Second, the emoji reactions on immigration related Facebook posts do not represent and should not be considered as complex attitudinal measurement tools of immigration attitudes. More proper variables to capture individual

immigration attitudes will be introduced in the next chapter of my dissertation. Third, Facebook users have complex and varying understanding of the meaning of different emojis. And last, we do not have any related information about the reacting Facebook users: we are not aware of their socio-demographic characteristics, media consumption habits, political preferences, or any previous attitudes about the issue of immigration. Consequently, the results below represent some introductory insights to individual attitudes, focusing especially on the emotional aspects of the potential influence of immigration related media contents. The survey data analysis, the survey experiment and the focus group discussions will focus on overcoming these limitations, and to complement aggregated trends with analyses on the individual level.

Altogether, besides commenting and sharing Facebook posts, users are provided with six (seven) options to react on a Facebook post: the Love, Haha, Wow, Care, Sad, Angry (and Like) buttons are meant to express related emotions to Facebook contents. I differentiate the Like button from the other emoji options because it was introduced by Facebook from its launch, meaning that users might be more comfortable with applying it, and the emotional content of the Like reaction is also ambiguous.

Although the general content of these emoji reactions are plausible, several further questions arise when we think about the function and meaning of these emotional expressions on Facebook. First and foremost, the meaning of emoji reactions in different contexts can significantly vary. We do not know for instance the subject of these emotional reactions in the different cases, especially in case of negative emotions. When users hit on the Angry button in case of a Facebook post that reports about a newly arrived boat at Lampedusa, what are they angry at? Smugglers that made it possible for immigrants to reach the Southern coast of Europe, or ineffective government measures, or do they think that with the increase of the number of immigrants, crime rates will also escalate?

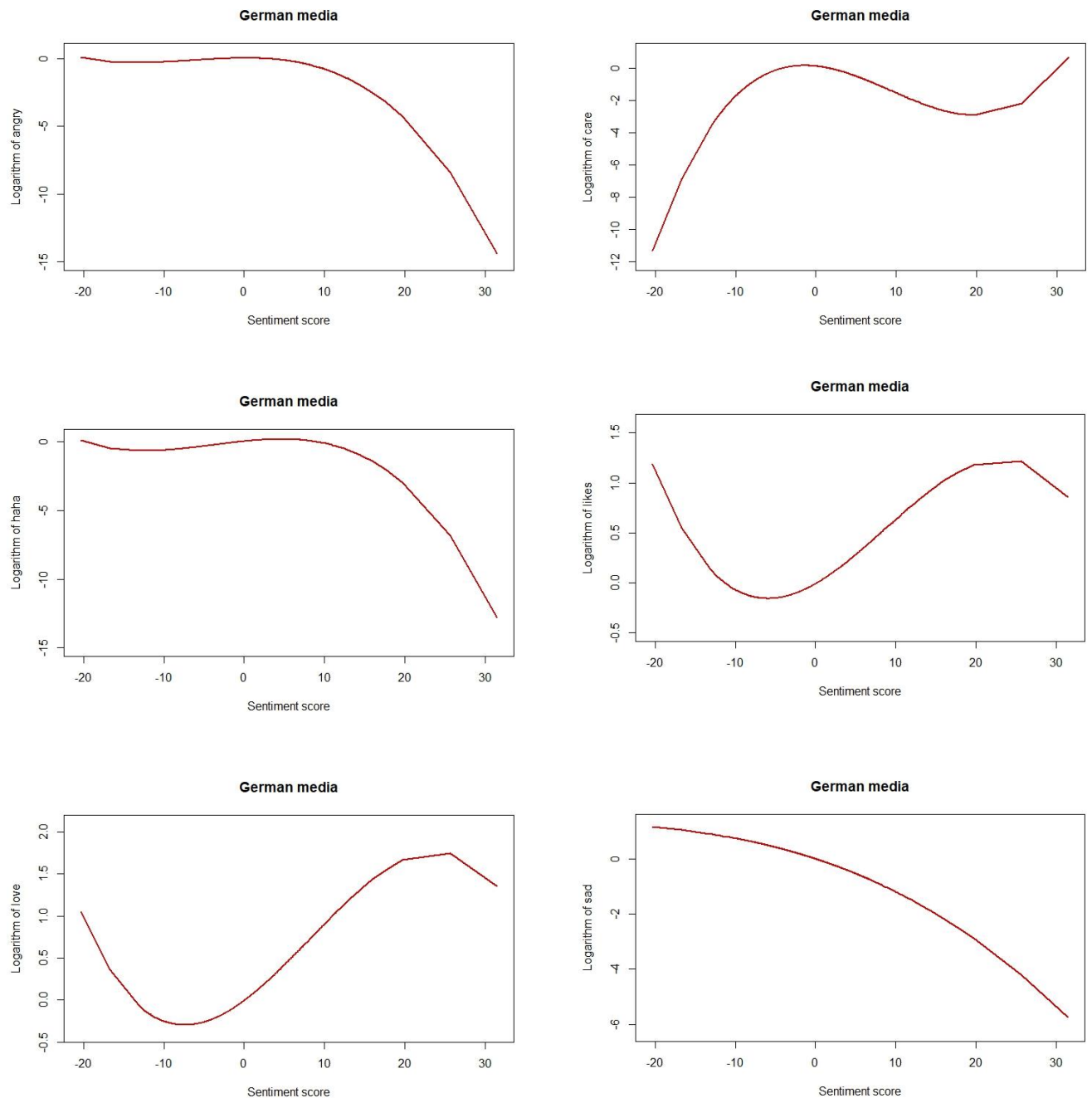
The dependent variable of these calculations will be the number of emojis on immigration related Facebook posts of the media outlets. Because of the right- or positively skewed distribution of these dependent variables, where the majority of posts received a sentiment score close to zero, I applied fixed-effect models and Poisson regression (Greene, 2002). Furthermore, similarly to the previous linear regression model, because of the non-linear relationship of sentiment scores, the third-degree polynomials of these variables are included in the various regression models. Also similarly to the previous procedure, besides the main variables of interest, three further fixed-effect variables are included: the one which indicates the day of the week, the season of the year, and a factor variable that records the media outlet that posted the content. Likewise, the differences between the various media outlets need to be checked: enduring differences in the use of emojis by the audience may for instance relate partly to the general style of an outlet, and thus generate a spurious correlation at the level of individual posts if the identity of the outlet is not controlled for in the statistical analyses.

The figures below illustrate the interrelations between the two main variables of interest, namely, the sentiment scores and number of users' reactions to Facebook posts. Note that the y-axis displays the logarithm of the number of reactions, because of the above mentioned right-skewed distribution, but lines are the predicted values of the fixed-effect Poisson regression models. For the sake of easier and more consumable visualization, the scaling of the y-axis is different on every plot, highlighting the area where each line concentrates. In the main text I included those figures that resulted in significant relationship between the sentiment scores and the respective emoji reaction. The first six figures present the results in the German, the next three figures in the Hungarian media context.

Before the substantive analysis of the interrelations, from a methodological point of view these interrelations can also be regarded as a validation of the applied corpora and sentiment dictionaries; even though the relationship between the sentiment scores and emoji reactions to

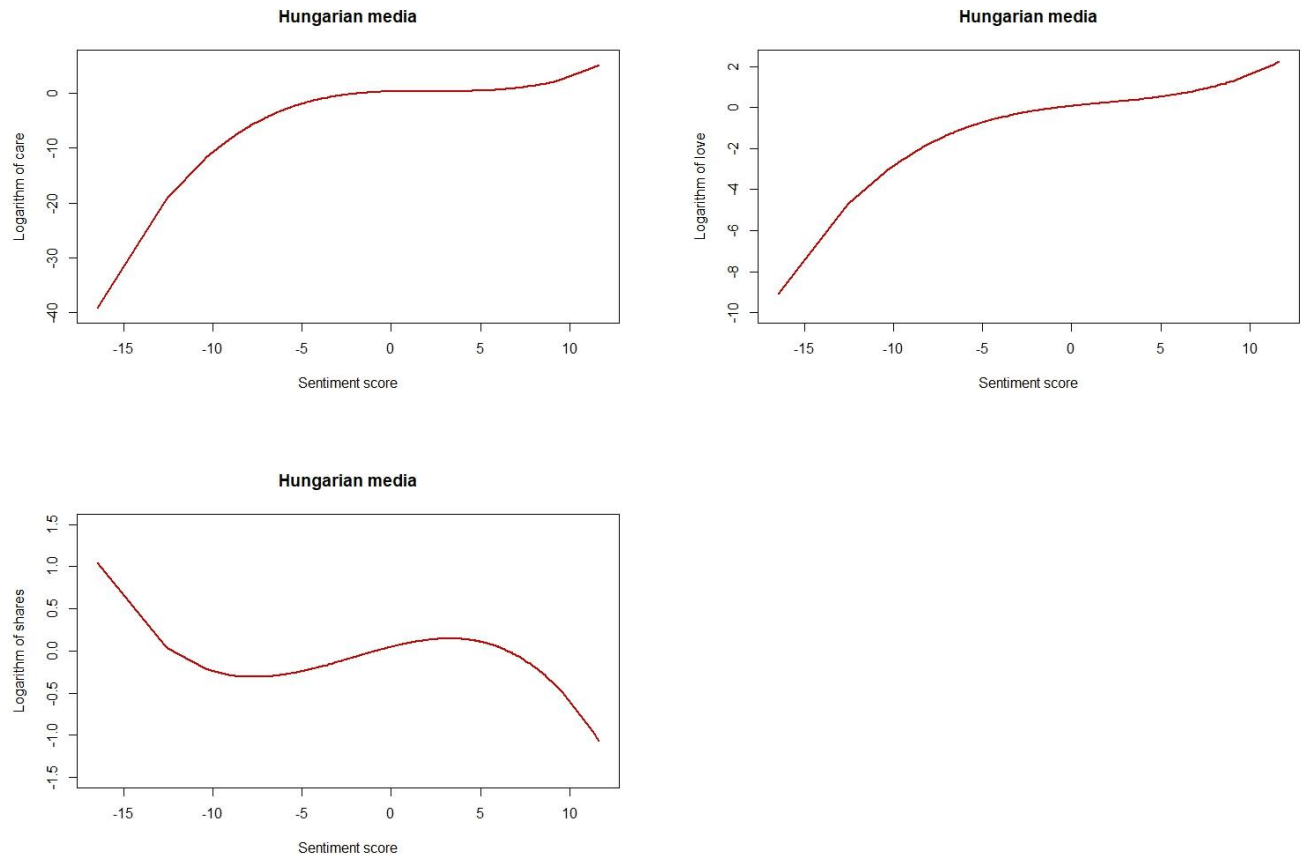


the Facebook posts is never linear, the trends mainly suggest that more negative sentiment scores imply more negative emotional reactions (angry and sad), whereas more positive sentiment scores interrelate with higher number of positive emotional reactions (care and love).



4. Figure. Interrelations relying on fixed-effect Poisson regressions between sentiment scores and Facebook users' reactions in the German media context. Source: CrowdTangle 2022. Author's compilation.





5. Figure. Interrelations relying on fixed-effect Poisson regressions between sentiment scores and Facebook users' reactions in the Hungarian media context. Source: CrowdTangle, 2022. Author's compilation.

At first glance, we can see that besides Likes and Shares, the Love, Haha, Sad, Angry and Care emojis correlate significantly with the sentiment scores of immigration related Facebook posts in the two countries' media discourses. Interestingly, the number of comments does not interrelate with sentiment scores in either the German or the Hungarian media environment, meaning that the inclusivity or exclusivity of immigration related Facebook posts does not influence how many Facebook users decide to comment on these particular posts. I found more significant interrelations in the German than in the Hungarian media context, which suggests that German Facebook users tend to apply the emotional reaction buttons with a higher likelihood than Hungarian Facebook users when sentiment scores intensify in immigration related Facebook posts. In the German context, sentiment scores and the number of Love, Care, Haha, Sad, Angry and Like reactions interrelate, whereas in case of the Facebook posts of the Hungarian media outlets, the number of Shares, Care and Love emojis resulted in significant interrelations with sentiment scores. The latter two might counter-intuitively imply that Hungarian Facebook users tend to react to inclusive immigration related Facebook posts with positive emoji reactions more likely than German Facebook users. Similarly, in the Hungarian context sentiment scores are not interrelated with other more negative emoji reactions. This partly contradicts research findings on the general negative and reinforcing influence of anti-immigration media contents in Hungary on the anti-immigration attitudes of Hungarian citizens. Moreover, this sort of trend is rather to be detected in the German media context: Facebook posts with highly negative sentiment scores tend to receive more love reactions from followers. Notwithstanding, these conclusions are yet too premature for the complexity of the operationalization of my research subjects of immigration attitudes.

Trends of several predicted lines display that Facebook posts with extremely low sentiment scores and a bit more inclusivity can induce more reactions in comparison, therefore the reversed "S" curve on most figures. This also contradicts the expectations regarding emotional

triggers and how political and media messages with higher emotional load can more effectively mobilize followers. Although more exclusive posts about immigration increase the number of reactions, the interdependence between more positive sentiment scores (i.e. more inclusive Facebook posts on immigration) and the number of reactions is rather decreasing. This could imply that publishing articles and Facebook posts about immigration with highly positive emotional load can reach lesser users than highly negative posts or that slight inclusivity is more likely to pay off in terms of users' reactions (and therefore, the outreach of these Facebook posts). The interrelation is most linear in the case of sad reactions; the more inclusive a Facebook post about immigration, the less sad emoji reactions it received in case of the German media outlets. German Facebook posts with higher negative sentiment scores also receive more haha reactions that can possibly suggest sort of a gloating feeling in Facebook users.

Interestingly and partly contrary to the hypothesized expectations, the higher the sentiment scores, the more love and care reactions these immigration related Facebook posts received in the Hungarian Facebook posts. This finding at this stage of the research contradicts and suggests the rejection of H6, because more inclusive immigration related Facebook posts resulted in a higher number of positive emoji reactions in the Hungarian media context, and not the opposite. Most probably, pro-immigration followers appreciate any inclusive media contents on immigration in the anti-immigration media environment of Hungary. Whereas the fact that immigration related Facebook posts with more negative sentiment scores are rather shared by Hungarian Facebook users suggest this type of appreciation of anti-immigration or exclusive contents. As outlined in the limitations of this analysis above, more proper tests of this claim will follow at a later stage of my dissertation research by analyzing representative individual-level rather than aggregated data.

## **5.6. Conclusions, limitations, and implications of the subsequent analysis**

Although the sentiment analysis is only the first part of the media-level analysis of my research, and the results are not entirely unambiguous, I make some concluding remarks at this point. All in all, relying on the results of the sentiment analysis and the related regression model, the first hypothesis (H1) needs to be rejected: the analysis did not support the assumption that the German media discourse about immigration would be more inclusive than the Hungarian during the time of investigation. However, some German media outlets (and Zeit.de in particular) posted indeed more inclusive contents about immigration than the Hungarian media outlets in average, and there were shorter time periods, when more inclusivity characterized the German than the Hungarian media discourse on immigration. The investigated data also revealed that the most popular non-governmental Hungarian media outlets post significantly less about immigration on Facebook (which most probably implies less immigration related articles in general) than pro-government outlets, and that these posts were more neutral than in any other media outlets in the analysis. In contrast, Origo.hu, which regularly represents the communication blocks of the Hungarian government, published about immigration in the most negative way. Surprisingly exclusive trends in immigration discourse were detected in the Facebook posts of the German Tagesschau.de as well, which, as a more conservative media outlet, was almost as exclusive as the Hungarian pro-government media outlet, Origo.hu. Regarding the theoretical focus on the identification of emotional triggers, it can be claimed that the sentiment analysis highlighted that media outlets created most of the emotional triggers during the 2015 migration crisis, when the emotional intensity of the posts showed to be the highest.

All in all, the sentiment analysis of the most popular media outlets' Facebook posts was meaningful for several reasons. Most importantly, it provided the categorization of immigration

related Facebook posts along one of the main theoretical interest of my dissertation research, namely, whether they can be considered as inclusive or exclusive during the investigated time period. To the best of my knowledge, although there are several comparative scholarly works in this field, my approach and comparative case selection can be considered unique and thus contributes to related debates.

Expectations regarding the three investigated periods could partly be confirmed. Although the 2015 migration crisis induced a significant increase in anti-immigration communication compared to the basis year of 2014, trends during the coronavirus pandemic and the Ukrainian war showed only slight changes in the regularity and emotional intensity of immigration related Facebook posts. This shows the outstanding relevance of the 2015 migration crisis in terms of the immigration discourse that most probably laid down the building blocks of the current immigration frames or the media discourse about refugees arriving from Ukraine, too. What I argue here is that most media contents about immigration after the migration crisis relate and refer to the migration crisis to some extent and cannot be treated independently.

Since CrowdTangle makes not only the content of Facebook posts, but the number of users' reactions to each post accessible, I examined the statistical interrelations between calculated sentiment scores and users' reactions. The non-linear interrelations mostly showed decreasing number of reactions at extreme values of sentiment scores, and moderate increases of sentiment scores at times attracted more users' reactions. Except for Love and Care emoji reactions in the Hungarian media environment, higher sentiment scores resulted in higher numbers of these users' reactions. Consequently, the hypothesis test on the individual level will require even more attention, because these results contradict my expectations on the influence of inclusive immigration frames as cross-cutting media exposures in the Hungarian media discourse.

Outlining questions is always easier than providing answers: obviously, there are several limitations of this analysis that need to be kept in mind when interpreting the results. First, we cannot be sure about the exact reach of the posts because there is no publicly available knowledge of how Facebook algorithms function exactly. Related debates on how social media sites as primary information sources affect journalists' work are growing, and are inconclusive yet (Brake, 2017). The expression of 'algorithmic imaginary' (how users *perceive* the logic of Facebook algorithms) is very suggestive here. Consequently, we objectively do not know how certain immigration posts appeared on the followers' Facebook news feed, which posts had the greatest outreach, whether the emotional intensity (be it inclusive or exclusive) and the number of users' reactions affected the readership of the posts. Moreover, my analysis does not consider whether posts are sponsored or not, which can also influence the reach of them. Last, I do not have certain information on the difference between published articles about immigration in the media outlets and how many of these articles are posted on the media outlets' Facebook page. However, I assumed that the increase of the frequency of Facebook posts about immigration suggest an increase in the number of articles in the media outlets, too.



## 6. Identifying immigration frames: The topic model analysis of Facebook posts

As the next step of the media-level analysis, topic modelling will reveal the content of these inclusive (and exclusive) immigration related Facebook posts. What can we expect from this analysis? Do inclusive immigration posts cover different topics in the Hungarian and the German media discourses? How many inclusive immigration frames can be identified in the two media contexts at all and how long do they prevail? Do they differ in the three investigated periods, meaning, do they differentiate framing immigrants during the 2015 migration crisis, the coronavirus pandemic and the migration crisis that followed after the outbreak of the war in Ukraine? These questions and the remaining hypotheses related to the media-level analysis will be addressed in the following section. Later on, the identified inclusive immigration frames will be the subject of the survey experiment and the focus group discussions in the Hungarian context.

So the sentiment analysis did not confirm the related expectation about the higher inclusivity of the German media discourse on immigration. However, we saw that some German media outlets (especially the left-liberal Zeit.de) discuss immigration in a more inclusive manner, while some Hungarian media outlets (especially the pro-governmental Origo.hu) are rather exclusive, or neutral about immigration in case of non-governmental media outlets. In contrast to the general anti-immigration stereotype of the Hungarian media, German media outlets are often criticized about their “inclusivity bias”, meaning that articles with a more inclusive tone are more suitable for popular media outlets and more likely to be published, whereas exclusive discourses are pushed back in mainstream media outlets and forced to take place in alternative media outlets (Erhard et al., 2022). We could see in the case of Tagesschau.de for example, that traditional media sources indeed provide room for more exclusive immigration discourses in the German media context, too. Furthermore, the analysis

of the Facebook users' reactions shed light on some trends about the most typical reactive dynamics, and how these partly contradicted some initial assumptions of my research regarding the backlash effect of the inclusive immigration frames in the Hungarian media context. However, as I highlighted several times previously, the methodological constraints of analyzing non-representative aggregated data of individuals makes it necessary to apply further methodologies for the individual-level analysis.

In the following section as the second part of the media-level analysis, the sentiment analysis will be extended by the topic model analysis of immigration related Facebook posts. As a result, I expect to discover the main inclusive and exclusive immigration *frames* in the most popular German and Hungarian media outlets (more precisely their Facebook representation). Let me emphasize here again that the media outlets in the analysis can be considered the most popular and decisive ones in the two countries throughout the investigated time frame, which implies high number of Facebook followers, too. Therefore, although it is hard to define precisely, which social, elite or political groups these media outlets represent, we can assume that immigration frames captured in these media outlets are well-known for a broad audience of the electorate. Consequently, we can reasonably assume that citizens are aware of the immigration frames established in these media outlets, which implies possible effects on immigration attitudes as well, that media framing theories most importantly imply. This is combined with examining their Facebook representation, where users and page followers are more likely to be exposed to contents that are different from their personal viewpoints, or to which sources they insist for habitual reasons. Namely, not only the selective exposure, but the accidental exposure theory prevails in the context of social networking sites, which increases the likelihood of cross-cutting media exposure on this interface, too. Not to mention the fact that most anti-immigration and racist discourses take place on social media sites in general

(Ekman, 2019), which highlights the importance of examining trends of inclusive immigration frames on this platform.

Similarly to the sentiment analysis, the topic model analysis of immigration related Facebook posts follows an explorative approach, too. Therefore, sentiment scores reveal, whether various posts can be regarded as inclusive or exclusive about immigration, and topic models suggest the frames as broader categories of immigration discourses in the two countries' media contexts. According to my related hypotheses, I assume more diversity in inclusive immigration frames in the German media context (H2) and longer and more regular prevalence of inclusive immigration frames in the German media context (H3). More diversity refers to more types of inclusive immigration frames, which will be longer prevalent (and sometimes even dominant) in the German immigration discourse. All in all, the results of the media analysis will have important implications on the individual level too, namely, to which (inclusive) immigration frames are German and Hungarian Facebook users most exposed to, and what are the influential effects of these on individual immigration attitudes in the Hungarian context. Since my dissertation research assumes significant differences in immigration discourses not only between the German and Hungarian contexts, but around the 2015 migration crisis and after the outbreak of the war in Ukraine, too, the topic model analysis sheds light on this aspect as well. Namely, how much are inclusive (and exclusive) immigration frames different, when mostly Syrian Muslim refugees and immigrants, or when rather Ukrainian Orthodox people arrive? Especially because related studies show mixed results (Ponce, 2023), I do not aim to imply that the religion of immigrants is the most decisive factor of the media representation of immigrants and the immigration attitudes of individuals. I only claim that different immigrants and refugees induce different sentiments and attitudes from individuals, and that these differences should be discovered in every possible details.

In the following, some further important aspects in terms of the operationalization of media frames in immigration discourses will be highlighted, followed by a more detailed methodological description of the topic model analysis and the conduction of the analysis itself. After the presentation of the results of the topic model analysis, I draw the conclusions about the topic model analysis first, and then about the entire media-level analysis, answer the related research questions and hypotheses in all details, and highlight the further implications of my research results in terms of immigration discourses, the role of politicians and some policy implications, and how inclusive immigration frames are part of these discourses, comparing the German and Hungarian research cases.

### **6.1. Advantages and disadvantages of the topic model analysis**

Going beyond the content of immigration frames that were discovered by previous empirical research and that I described in the theoretical chapter of my dissertation, below I would like to provide some further aspects on the operationalization of immigration frames in light of topic modelling. The focus in the following will be on one hand, whether and how topic models as a quantitative text analysis method are suitable to define various immigration frames in media discourses (highlighting also the disadvantages of topic model analysis in frame identification), on the other hand, how the prevalence and intensity of immigration frames are captured by topic model analyses. In my dissertation I do not have ambition to provide a further developed concept or definition of media frames in the current literature, my aim is only to find a concept that can support effective identification and capture of immigration frames in the media outlets of my investigation in the German and Hungarian media contexts.

Obviously, for the operationalization of immigration frames I need to decide, “what are the textual components carrying the frame?” (Lecheler & De Vreese, 2019, p. 4). By referring to

Cappela's and Jamieson's work from 1997, Lecheler and De Vreese lay down four important criteria for frame identification: (1) identifiable conceptual and linguistic characteristics, (2) frames should be commonly observed in journalistic practice, (3) they must be distinguishable from other frames, and (4) they must have representational validity, meaning that others also recognize them and they are not only "a figment of a researcher's imagination" (ibid, p. 5). I believe that the topic model analysis is a suitable method to fit these four criteria. First, by highlighting the most typical words for topics, the immigration frames become identifiable. As Entman notes, frames "[...] are manifested by the presence or absence of certain keywords, stock phrases, [...]" (1993, p. 52), meaning that the identification of these certain keywords can lead to the identification of the particular frames as well. Second, since the analysis relies on the most popular media outlets' immigration related contents, they are commonly observed in journalistic practices. Thirdly, the optimal number of topics ensure that they are distinguishable. And last, the representational validity is partly ensured by the fact that other empirical studies identified similar topics in their analyses.

Lecheler and De Vreese similarly highlight that selective exposure might even operate on the level of frames, namely, news readers intentionally or unintentionally select not only the media outlets, but also immigration frames that are most congenial to their personal views and opinions. However, as I elaborated previously, the analysis of social media context allows me to assume that Facebook users are more likely to experience the accidental exposure to immigration frames that do not correspond with their political values. This means that, even though my research does not focus on how individual users frame immigration in social media discourses, the likelihood of experiencing cross-cutting media exposure is higher on social network sites compared to other sorts of media sources (Min & Wohn, 2020).

Although a massive number of communication studies apply topic model analysis to identify latent structures in huge corpora, the number of critiques on this text analysis method

have similarly increased in recent years. In a recent comprehensive review of topic model analyses in media research, Chen and his colleagues systematically outline their critiques on how topic model analyses miss to make meaningful theoretical contributions in several cases (Chen et al., 2023). However, they also highlight the advantages of topic model analysis. On the one hand, as every dimension-reduction technique, topic model analysis provides a quick overview and the core content of large texts. On the other hand, especially because of the inductive nature of it, topic models help to discover and explore yet unknown arguments and aspects in these corpora. Although there are situations when the engagement of political actors and speakers proves to be more effective than framing (Jerit, 2008), meaning that rhetorical strategies are also important aspects of attitude formation.

Moreover, from an empirical point of view, there is a significant debate amongst communication scholars on whether the results of topic model analyses can be regarded as media frames or not. While several scholars, for example Dror Walter and Yotam Ophir clearly engage by applying topic model analysis for media frame identification (2019), Tom Nicholls and Pepper D. Culpepper argue that although topic models are effective analytical tools to capture the content of large media data, they rather discover topics in various discourses than frames (2021). The latter scholars claim that these “overly-mechanistic approaches” can be criticized, and that frames should not be compressed to some words, because these expressions cannot capture the overall meaning of them (2021, p. 3). On the other hand, simply because of the amount of textual (and visual) data that online journalism and social media has introduced, a mechanical identification of frames is not avoidable (Jacobi et al., 2016). For this reason, the co-occurrence of specific terms can be a representative measurement tool.

There are numerous other methodologies to identify media frames. Several scholars decide on implementing qualitative discursive approaches when they aim to establish media frames, especially to improve the reliability and validity of media frames (Carvalho, 2008), which is

unfortunately not possible when the time frame of the analysis is so extensive than in my case. Qualitative approaches are more suitable to discover the nuanced details of media frames, an in-depth analysis (Eberl et al., 2018a), rather than to capture the temporal distribution of them within eight years. Limited resources also did not allow to employ human coders in my research, which is frequently a valid procedure in related research (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000). Nevertheless, topic modelling might be considered as a more systematic art of discourse analysis in larger amount of corpora (T. Jacobs & Tschötschel, 2019) and therefore, this is also an important argument for the application of it.

All in all, topic models are suitable and “a most promising method for communication research” (Maier et al., 2018, p. 118), “the most used methods in the social sciences” (Bernhard et al., 2023, p. 6), but there are important methodological decisions that researchers need to consider. The aim of the train of thought above was to outline these methodological considerations, the possible explanations for them. All in all, taking into account the above described advantages and disadvantages of it, I considered LDA topic model analysis as a suitable method to identify immigration frames in social media discourses. The next section describes the methodological implementation and results interpretation of the topic model analysis in detail.

## **6.2. Step by step: the methodology of the topic model analysis**

I describe below the conduction of the topic model analysis on the German and Hungarian corpus. I intended to run identical analyses in both cases as much as possible. The interpretation of the topic model analysis follows a comparative approach, focusing on the possible similarities and more importantly the differences between the German and Hungarian media contexts’ immigration frames. Similarly to the sentiment analysis, the text of the Facebook

posts were assigned as the corpus of the topic model analysis as well. Besides the various algorithmic factors that influence the readership of the posts, it is also fairly random, which Facebook users open the links that are attached to the posts, depending on the content, relevance, perceived credibility of the media outlets, or just on personal factors like how much time they have. What we can be sure of is that most users skim through the posted contents, and therefore, the messages represented in the posts are most likely to reach the cognition of Facebook users and thus exert the definition of framing effects.

As per definition, Latent Dirichlet Allocation (LDA) topic models “identify latent patterns of word occurrence using the distribution of words in a collection of documents” (Jacobi et al., 2016, p. 2). Namely, in case of my research, LDA topic models point out, which are the words and terms that best describe the Facebook posts about immigration, how they are distributed across them, and what schemata of discourse these trends suggest. Similarly important is that topic models cluster the words in documents in an *unsupervised* way. The unsupervised nature of LDA topic models implies one of the most important disadvantages of it, that the method is less suitable for hypotheses testing than supervised text analysis methods. However, my research does not aim to test hypotheses about specific immigration frames, it intends to discover and explore the media frames about how more inclusive and more exclusive articles report about immigration. The essence and methodological approach of Denise Traber, Martijn Schoonvelde and Gijs Schumacher’s work was a baseline for my empirical analysis as well (2020). The authors also consider LDA topic modelling as a “state of the art” text analysis method. Especially because of the long time frame of their analysis, where they examined the proportion of the economic topic within political speeches of eight years.

Topic model analysis includes the following steps (see e.g. Jacobi et al., 2016; Maier et al., 2018): (1) pre-processing the corpus, (2) selection of parameter set (including the decision on the optimal numbers of topic models that most effectively capture immigration frames in the



corpus), and the (3) evaluation of topic models. Furthermore, I resemble the results of the sentiment analysis and topic models to arrive at a comprehensive media analysis.

As part of the pre-processing of the corpus, I stemmed and transformed all words into lowercase to standardize them, and removed the “stopwords” in both language contexts; those words that occur frequently, though do not carry substantive meanings in terms of the immigration discourse. Similarly, I removed hashtags that appeared regularly but were meaningless for the immigration discourse, like those that indicated the name of the media outlet at the end of almost every immigration related Facebook post (for example *#origo*, *#origoitthon*, *#origohír*, *#origonagyvilág*, *#24hu*). Finally, I deleted those Facebook posts from the corpus that did not include any textual element.

Related methodological papers suggest the tokenization and lemmatization of the corpus before conducting a topic model analysis. However, as Sebők and his colleagues note (2021), in cases of some Hungarian corpora, tokenization does not prove to be a suitable method, since the core meaning of the words can be lost (or mixed up) through the tokenization. Therefore, to avoid this loss of meaning, before conducting topic model analysis, I only lemmatized the corpus by applying the *spacy\_parse()* function in R (Sebők et al., 2021), and did the same for the German corpora to arrive at identical and comparable results. As the results later on will show, expressions remained meaningful in the corpus to arrive at interpretable topic models.

This was followed by defining the optimal number of topic models for both language contexts in the analysis, along which immigration frames could be interpreted in the corpus. Because of the explorative art of the topic model analysis, there are several methodological approaches in this regard and none of them are regarded decisive or valid for every analysis. Moreover, related works emphasize that in most cases the number of topics depend on the subjective choice of the researchers (Bernhard et al., 2023; Gan & Qi, 2021). Even though any model selection methods are proposed, the applicability and/or the validity of them are most of

the time questioned and criticized (Zhao et al., 2015). In LDA topic models, the most commonly applied standardized method for model selection is to calculate the perplexity score of models with various numbers of topics. In theory, a sharp decrease in the perplexity score (like an “elbow” on its visualized graph) would indicate the number of topic models that should be chosen for the analysis (Traber et al., 2020). However, in the case of my corpus, no “elbow point” emerge, i.e., the perplexity score did not decrease at all along with the increasing number of topics in the analysis. I even tried to separate 100 topics – an unusually large number in these kinds of analyses - in both languages to ascertain the validity of the calculations, but did not find an optimal number of topics according to this calculation.

Consequently, I decided to follow the subjective approach (which is also the inductive way to discover frames) and arbitrarily chose the number of topics relying on the content of them. I ran topic models with various numbers of topics and checked the ten most typical terms for every topic to find apparently meaningful topics in my corpus. I systematically raised the number of topics from 10 to 30 and carefully judged the coherence, diversity and content of meaning of each topic. Note that the higher number of topics create room to discover immigration frames that were yet unknown, but in this case not every topic of the resulted topic model can necessarily be interpreted meaningfully. I am aware that some topic model analysis approach even beyond with the number of topics applied, but since the perplexity score calculations did not bring any significant and translatable results in case of my research, by the manual selection I preferred those final models, where the interpretability and comparability of models had priority. Finally, I decided to investigate the distribution and content of 24 topics in the Hungarian and the German media contexts. I carefully checked the most typical keywords of these topics and their temporal distribution across media outlets, and intended to arrive at a result that covers the widest array of topics, where the topics are interpretable in both language contexts, but they are not repetitive in terms of keywords, suggested content and meaning of

them. Moreover, the similar number of topics in the two language contexts allowed me to compare the diversity of them, namely, in which media discourse do these topics cover more diverse range of topics.

The topic model approach indicates the probability of each identified topic in every Facebook post under investigation, which results in a probability score for each topic that occurs in the documents. However, for the sake of getting interpretable results, I considered the most probable topic for each Facebook post in the analysis and ignored any further topics in the classification of the document's dominant frame. Considering that the texts of the Facebook posts are relatively short, we can claim that the framing repertoire of them about immigration is generally limited, which justifies this analytical approach of choosing the most probable topic for each text and not to assign multiple topics to them (Eberl et al., 2018a, p. 212). Nonetheless, the two language contexts and altogether ten media outlets in the analysis ensure adequate representation and the identification of most relevant immigration frames in the German and Hungarian media discourses, which is the priority aim of my media analysis.

As the next step, the temporal distribution of dominant topics across media outlets was compared with the distribution of sentiment scores of the German and Hungarian Facebook posts in the analysis, as well as the sentiment scores of the topics, and the posts by topics and media outlets. Thus, all in all, the entire media analysis shows, which topics are dominant (i.e. which immigration frames are most typical) across time and media outlets in the two countries, and which immigration frames co-occur with more inclusive and more exclusive Facebook posts. Consequently, we will be aware of which inclusive (and exclusive) immigration frames dominate the German and the Hungarian media discourse, how are these different (or similar) to each other, and what these might ensue in terms of immigration attitudes of individuals.

### **6.3. More diverse inclusivity and longer prevalence of inclusive immigration frames in the German media context? Results of the topic model analysis**

Table 1 below lists the 24 identified immigration frames in the German and Hungarian media contexts (the order of the immigration frames in the table has no intentional meaning regarding the content of them). Besides the immigration frames, Appendix 2 and 3 include those ten German and Hungarian keywords and expressions that best describe each topic in the analysis, namely, those with the highest *Beta values* (topic-word density) in the topic models. Since topic modelling is an explorative research tool, immigration frames (the labels of these topics) were formulated relying mostly on subjective considerations in the following two steps. First, I considered these typical expressions with the highest beta values for each topic. Second, in case of every topic I read some of the most popular Facebook posts that received high number of likes, to get a deeper understanding about the content of them. The outcome of this process was the 24 identified immigration frames that Table 1 includes.

In general, the identified topics suggest that daily reports about immigration dominated the related media discourses in both countries, and rather few analytical articles about immigration were published. The terms that describe immigration frames are also suggestive regarding how “situational” or “analytical” related Facebook posts are (Jerit, 2008). Especially because of the dominant role of tabloid media outlets in the media discourses about immigration, it is hardly surprising that situational articles and reports dominate in both language contexts, namely, articles that describe and provide daily reports about what happened in certain situations: police reports, conflicts between immigrants, refugees and citizens, etc. These topics included several verbs as most descriptive terms, as well as the terms “photo”, “picture” or “video”.

German media outlets		Hungarian media outlets	
Why people seek refuge?	The police's role in Europe	Refugee crisis at Keleti Railway Station	EU & Hungary
Refugees & crime in Berlin	Asylum seekers and the German state	Refugee & Hungarian families	Everyday struggles of migrants
Statistics about asylum seekers	Russia and the war	Merkel & the German response	Keleti & Budapest
Immigrants from Syria	Turkey & Merkel	Austrian situation	Transportation
The history of refugees	Turkey & the German state	Helping refugees	Heading to Europe
Immigrants in Germany	Statistics about asylum seekers II.	War in Ukraine	Circumstances at the border
Merkel & Seehofer about migration	Reports about leaving	Everyday struggles of migrants	Smuggling by car
Refugees from Ukraine & the police	Berlin & migration	Police at the border	Germany & the police
War in Ukraine & families	Refugees & their home	Orbán & the EU	Accusing Merkel of smugglers
Germany & Europe in the refugee crisis	Refugees & criminal cases	Stories about migration to Germany	On-site report in Keleti
The war and refugees	Merkel & migration families	Turkey & Syrian refugees	Number of refugees in the EU
Women refugees in the EU	The number of migration families to Germany	EU & the border fence	The way from Turkey

4. Table. Identified immigration frames in the German and Hungarian media outlets. Source: CrowdTangle, 2022. Author's compilation.

Moreover, either the country of origin (e.g. Syria), transit countries (e.g. Turkey), or the desired destination country (e.g. Austria) of immigrants were identifiable in most immigration frames.

While the Hungarian media discourse on immigration often positions the approaches and events to the dynamics in the European Union and thus, several topics refer to the EU in their names, the focus of the German debate is more on national political actors and institutions. The names of the leading politicians are similarly often displayed, referring to the politicized nature of the immigration debate on one hand, and the significant policy implications that the issue of immigration can effectuate on the other hand. As for the politicians appearing in the debate, mostly the Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán and the German Chancellor Angela Merkel in the Hungarian context, and Angela Merkel and Horst Seehofer - one of the most important critics of Merkel's pro-immigrant policies in the German context - were identified in the immigration frames.

I similarly considered it meaningful if the topic included the words children, mothers, or any other family members – I suspected that these topics will correlate with more positive affect and inclusivity in the Facebook posts. In the Hungarian media context, the usage of words “*migráns (migrant)*”, “*bevándorló (immigrant)*” or “*menekült (refugee)*” can be also indicative, because of the negative connotation of the word “*migráns (migrant)*”, which is the consequence of the Orbán government's anti-immigrant communication, where the similarly negatively connoting “Brussels” intends to immigrate thousands of “*migráns (migrant)*” people to Hungary, who are one of the worst enemies of the country – according to the official government communication (Benczes & Ságvári, 2022). Therefore, these expressions rarely occurred in the same topic (and most probably in the same article) in the Hungarian topic model analysis; describing any related situations or reports by using the word “*migráns (migrant)*” definitely lowers the chances for “*bevándorló (immigrant)*” or “*menekült (refugee)*” to appear in the same text, similarly to other combinations of these three expressions.

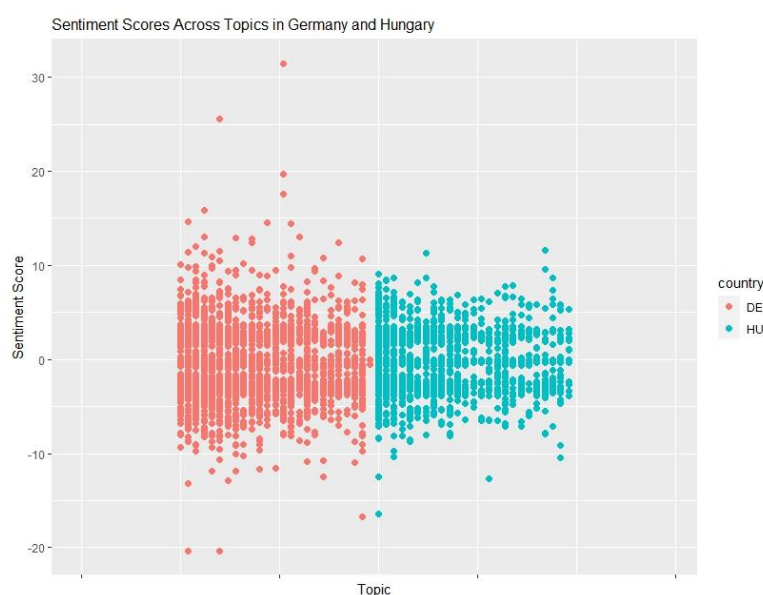
Further differences between the two countries' media discourses about immigration can be highlighted based on the results of these topic model analysis. Obviously, the events at Keleti

Railway Station during the summer of 2015, when thousands of people who arrived mostly from Middle East countries spent several nights or even weeks there waiting for trains to leave Budapest and to reach Western European countries (most typically Germany), became an immigration frame in the Hungarian media discourse, but did not emerge in the German media discourse. Nonetheless, the German media discourse about immigration similarly put a special emphasis on the role of the capital city; Berlin's and the political institutions' specific role in managing the immigration issue, or how immigration and crime appears in Berlin.

On the other hand, similarities of the German and Hungarian immigration frames emerged from the analysis, too. Several immigration frames refer to the security aspects of immigration in both the German and the Hungarian media discourses: how immigrants interact with police officers, or the situation at the borders, that mostly refer to the Southern Hungarian border barrier, set up by the Hungarian government especially in order to keep away illegal immigrants from Hungary and to symbolize the 'fight' of the Hungarian government in this regard. With the increasing significance of Recep Tayyip Erdogan's role in the negotiations with the German state about how Turkey could serve in accommodating immigrants and refugees from the Middle East before entering Europe, the immigration frames about Turkey appeared in both media discourses. It is not surprising that while the role of Germany and Angela Merkel appears in the Hungarian media as immigration frames several times, the opposite is not true for the German media contexts; Viktor Orbán does not appear in individual immigration frames as a reference in the German media discourse. Last, when the data collection ended in December 2022, various aspects of the war in Ukraine became an immigration frame in both countries, too. While the German media discourse seem to discuss more aspects of the war in Ukraine, too (in relation with how Ukrainian refugees interact with local police officers, how Ukrainian families keep together or separate during their struggles, or what are Russia's responsibilities

in the huge inflows of Ukrainian refugees), there appeared only one general immigration frame in the Hungarian media context.

To investigate H2 on the diversity of inclusive immigration frames, Figure 5 visualizes the sentiment scores across topics in the two countries, where the x-axis displays the 24 topics in both media contexts by starting from 0 in the origo of the x-axis, and the y-axis pictures the average sentiment scores for each topic. It suggests that sentiment scores have higher variance in the topics of the German than in the Hungarian media discourse, namely, more extreme values can be detected both in the inclusive (positive) and exclusive (negative) direction. This, similarly to the results of the general sentiment analysis, suggests the rejection of H2 on the diversity of inclusive immigration frames in the German media context.



6. Figure. Sentiment scores across topics in the German and Hungarian media discourse. Author's compilation. Source: CrowdTangle, 2022.

Just like in case of the general inclusivity of the two countries' media discourse on immigration, the hypothesis test on the diversity of inclusive immigration frames needs to be conducted through a statistical test. The linear regression model below is similar to the previous one in almost every aspect, but it includes an interaction term between the various topics and the one



that indicates the country. We can see that it does not show significant correlation with the sentiment scores of the posts again. Namely, H2 on the diversity of inclusive immigration frames in the German context should be rejected, too.

	Estimate	Std. Error	t- value	Pr(> t )
(Intercept)	-0.235967	0.099668	-2.368	0.01793 *
topic	-0.001280	0.005497	-0.233	0.81590
Hungary	0.102811	0.087220	1.179	0.23853
<b>topic * country - Hungary</b>	<b>-0.003923</b>	<b>0.008588</b>	<b>-0.457</b>	<b>0.64782</b>
poly(which_day, degree = 3)1	-4.514987	2.810302	-1.607	0.10818
poly(which_day, degree = 3)2	-6.253386	2.848634	-2.195	0.02817 *
poly(which_day, degree = 3)3	3.267264	2.752819	1.187	0.23531
day_of_week – Monday	0.047745	0.103995	0.459	0.64617
day_of_week – Tuesday	0.185336	0.101282	1.830	0.06730 .
day_of_week – Friday	0.154624	0.100719	1.535	0.12477
day_of_week – Wednesday	-0.010225	0.099188	-0.103	0.91790
day_of_week – Saturday	0.063590	0.112705	0.564	0.57262
day_of_week – Sunday <sup>9</sup>	-0.057303	0.107414	-0.533	0.59372
season_of_year - Spring	-0.144441	0.079541	-1.816	0.06942 .
season_of_year - Summer	-0.203507	0.076749	-2.652	0.00803 **
season_of_year - Winter <sup>10</sup>	-0.070813	0.080598	-0.879	0.37965
poly(hour, degree = 3)1	-1.100896	2.676378	-0.411	0.68083
poly(hour, degree = 3)2	-5.170205	2.689760	-1.922	0.05461 .
poly(hour, degree = 3)3	-0.054392	2.668701	-0.020	0.98374
poly(post_length, degree = 3)1	23.513262	2.742807	8.573	< 2e-16 ***
poly(post_length, degree = 3)2	3.917758	2.723443	1.439	0.15032

<sup>9</sup> Reference category: Thursday

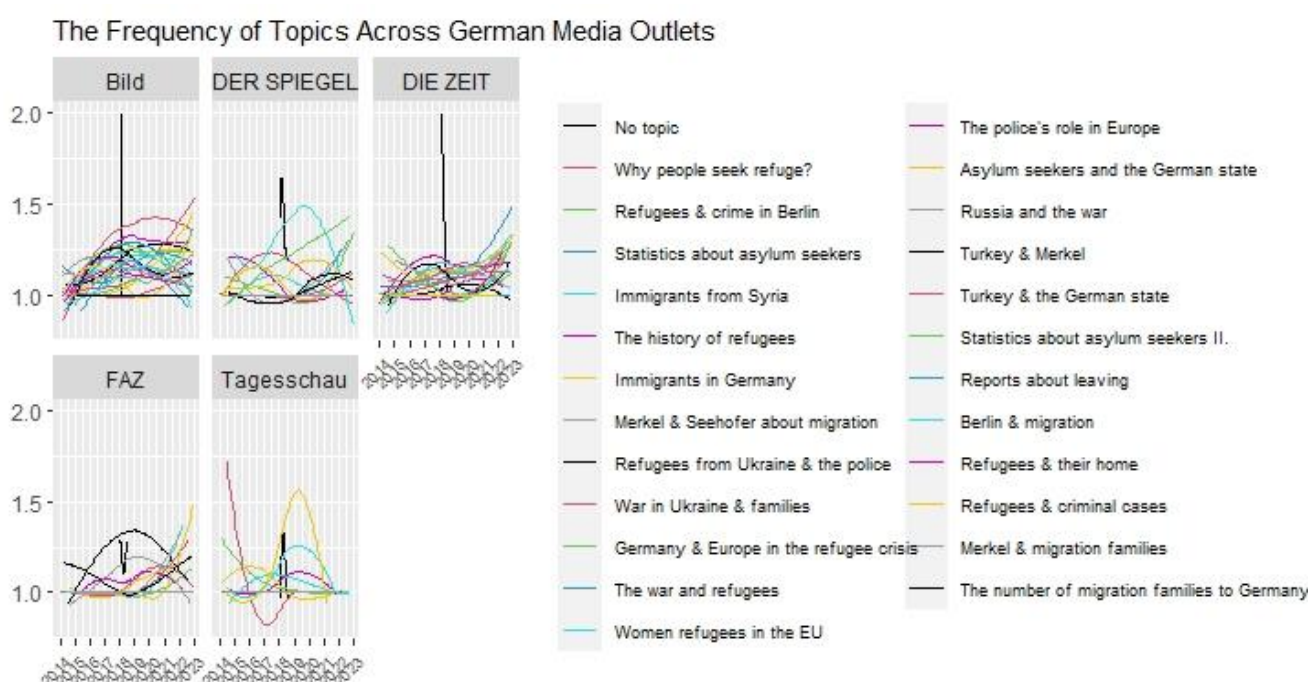
<sup>10</sup> Reference category: Autumn

poly(post_length, degree = 3)	-26.849646	2.695233	-9.962	< 2e-16 ***
Adjusted R-squared	0.02127			

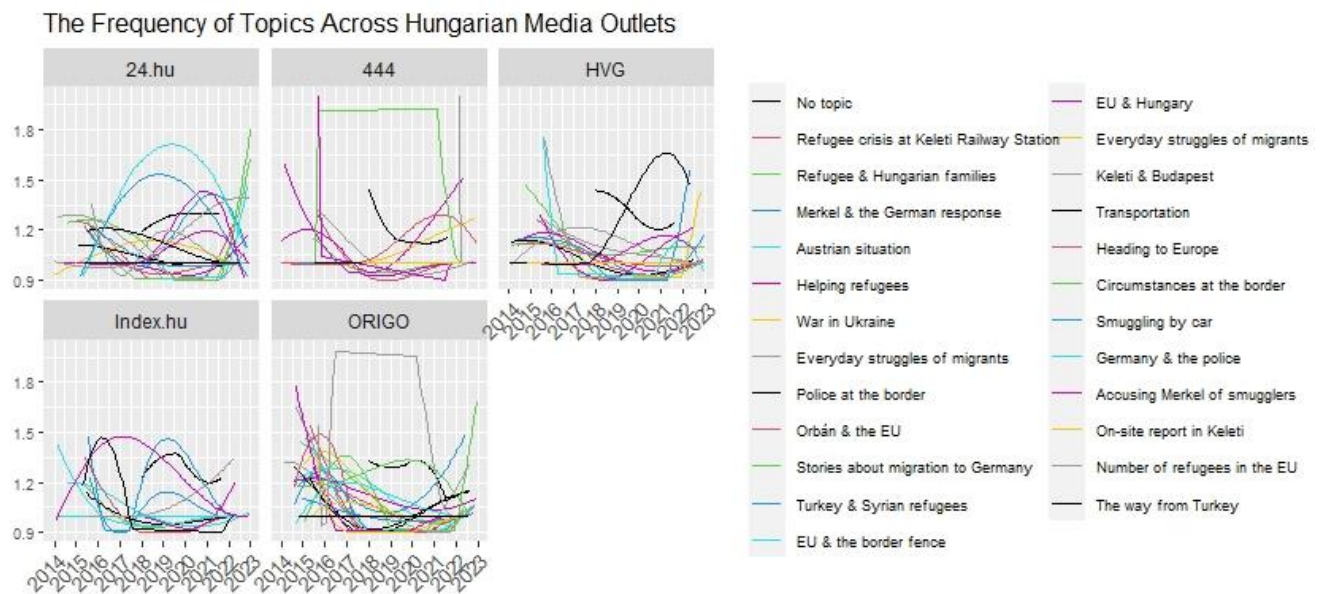
5. Table. Linear regression model to test H2. Dependent variable: sentiment scores of Facebook posts.

\*\*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*  $p < .05$ , \*  $p < .1$ . Source: CrowdTangle, 2022. Author's compilation.

However, the temporal distribution of various topics needs to be investigated in detail, too. Figure 7 and 8 picture the results of the topic model analysis across time and media outlets in the German and Hungarian media contexts. Similarly to the frequency of Facebook posts, the distribution of topics are smoothed by applying the 'loess' method, and posts are summarized and visualized on a weekly basis (see also Heidenreich et al., 2019). The y-axis of these posts represent the frequency of weekly topic appearance in media outlets.



7. Figure. The distribution of immigration frames across time and media outlets in Germany (loess smoothed). Source: CrowdTangle, 2022. Author's compilation.



8. Figure. The distribution of immigration frames across time and media outlets in Hungary (loess smoothed). Source: CrowdTangle, 2022. Author's compilation.

As we can see from the complexity of the graphs, it is difficult to suggest any dominant or longer prevalent immigration frames throughout the investigated time frame. What is perhaps more visible, is how these various immigration frames distribute across time. Regarding the density of these topics, we can observe that the more prevalent and intensive the immigration issue in a media outlet (so those media outlets that more often post and share immigration related articles), the more type of immigration frames emerge, the more diverse the immigration discourse becomes. Therefore, Origo.hu in the Hungarian media context and Zeit.de and Bild.de in the German media context present the highest number of immigration frames. Obviously, the distribution of the appearance of immigration frames corresponds with the general frequency of the Facebook posts. So in broad terms we can see that while immigration frame plots form a U-shape in the Hungarian context, meaning that the immigration discourse intensified at the time of the 2015 migration crisis and the war in Ukraine, the plots of the German media outlet peak more likely in the middle, showing that the media discourse about immigration remained

intensive between the two events as well. The models show that immigration frames also intensified in non-governmental Hungarian media outlets for the time of the Ukrainian war. These immigration frames mostly refer to the everyday stories and struggles of immigrants and refugees, and their families.

Although none of the immigration frames seem to dominate for longer period of time, the meaning of most of the discovered frames overlap with each other. Both in the German and the Hungarian media contexts topics about borders, crime and police, the role of the EU appear most regularly. Let me note here that, regardless of the number of topics I applied as kind of a robustness check of the various models, be it 10 or 30, the temporal trends of frame distributions were similar to those presented here in both countries. This means that these were the periods across media outlets that generated distinctive topics between 2014 and 2022. This strengthens previous claims about immigration frames in the Hungarian media in the last decade, namely, that the migration crisis and the Ukrainian war intensified the related debate and made the issue of immigration salient in the media discourse. Whereas in the German media discourse and particularly in Bild.de and Zeit.de, immigration remained salient and various frames appeared between these two decisive events, too.

To test the last hypothesis related to the media-level analysis, namely, whether inclusive immigration frames are longer prevalent in the German media discourse, I interacted the variables that indicated the topic, the country and the total number of days when the immigration frames were present in the media discourses. Again, the interaction term does not show significant correlation with the sentiment scores of the Facebook posts, which means that H3 should be rejected, too. This can have important theoretical implications regarding the differences between the two countries' immigration discourses, namely, that the media discourses are not that different as expected.

	Estimate	Std. Error	t-value	Pr(> t )
(Intercept)	-1.379e-01	2.097e-01	-0.657	0.51099
topic	5.987e-03	1.470e-02	0.407	0.68383
country – Hungary	2.628e-01	3.123e-01	0.842	0.40007
total_days	-1.432e-04	6.234e-04	-0.230	0.81837
topic * country – Hungary	4.309e-03	1.954e-02	0.221	0.82545
topic * total_days	-8.953e-05	1.025e-04	-0.874	0.38226
Hungary * total_days	-2.819e-04	8.168e-04	-0.345	0.73004
<b>topic * Hungary * total_days</b>	<b>-3.579e-04</b>	<b>3.019e-04</b>	<b>-1.186</b>	<b>0.23584</b>
poly(which_day, degree = 3)1	-4.357e+00	2.919e+00	-1.493	0.13551
poly(which_day, degree = 3)2	-5.359e+00	3.091e+00	-1.734	0.08300 .
poly(which_day, degree = 3)3	3.183e+00	2.887e+00	1.103	0.27027
day_of_week – Monday	4.437e-02	1.040e-01	0.426	0.66978
day_of_week – Tuesday	1.833e-01	1.013e-01	1.809	0.07048 .
day_of_week – Friday	1.494e-01	1.008e-01	1.483	0.13822
day_of_week – Wednesday	-1.016e-02	9.927e-02	-0.102	0.91845
day_of_week – Saturday	6.565e-02	1.128e-01	0.582	0.56044
day_of_week – Sunday	-5.941e-02	1.074e-01	-0.553	0.58033
season_of_year - Spring	-1.459e-01	8.014e-02	-1.820	0.06875 .
season_of_year - Summer	-2.065e-01	7.793e-02	-2.650	0.00806 **
season_of_year - Winter	-6.733e-02	8.097e-02	-0.831	0.40571
poly(hour, degree = 3)1	-1.164e+00	2.679e+00	-0.435	0.66387
poly(hour, degree = 3)2	-5.203e+00	2.690e+00	-1.934	0.05314 .
poly(hour, degree = 3)3	-6.877e-02	2.670e+00	-0.026	0.97945
poly(post_length, degree = 3)1	2.361e+01	2.744e+00	8.604	< 2e-16 ***
poly(post_length, degree = 3)2	3.876e+00	2.724e+00	1.423	0.15488
poly(post_length, degree = 3)3	-2.679e+01	2.699e+00	-9.926	< 2e-16 ***
Adjusted R-squared	0.02123			

6. Table. Linear regression model to test H3. Dependent variable: sentiment scores of Facebook posts.

\*\*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*  $p < .05$ , \*  $p < .1$ . Source: CrowdTangle, 2022. Author's compilation.

#### **6.4. Conclusions: Are the German and the Hungarian media discourses on immigration different?**

The media-level analysis provided several valuable insights about the immigration frames in the Facebook communication of the most popular online media outlets in Germany and Hungary. All in all, despite the differences between the German and Hungarian discourse on immigration, the topic model analysis basically revealed that the majority of immigration frames are quite similar in the media discourses in both countries. The security aspects, such as the role of the police or the situation at the border, the role of the European Union or specific politicians were the most important frames through which immigration was discussed in the analyzed media outlets. Consequently, and also because of the non-significant results of the related regression model, the second hypothesis (H2) that assumed more types of inclusive frames in the German media outlets should be rejected. Similarly, regarding the salience, we could see that the longer prevalence of inclusive immigration frames in the German media discourse (H3) could also not be confirmed. Being aware of the sentiment scores of these Facebook posts as well, the distribution of these topics across time and media outlets suggests important implications on inclusive and exclusive immigration frames. We saw that most immigration frames appear in the media outlets where the debate was more frequent between 2014 and 2022: during the migration crisis and the war in Ukraine, especially in the Hungarian media context. To remind, around these times, the Hungarian Origo.hu reported mainly in a negative tone about immigration, while the German Zeit.de posted Facebook posts with more

positive sentiments. The sentiment scores of the German Bild.de varied during the whole time of investigation.

Although my media research primarily focused on the differentiation between inclusive and exclusive immigration frames in the German and Hungarian media contexts, the topic model analysis of immigration related Facebook posts was necessary to differentiate between immigration frames within these two categories, and to gain a deeper understanding of the content of them. As I described previously, although this two-dimensional differentiation along inclusive and exclusive immigration frames supports the discovery of the research questions and hypotheses, beyond the sentiment analysis of immigration related Facebook posts, with this further categorization of topic model analysis, my aim was to avoid the extreme reduction of perspectives and narratives on immigration. Thus, I aimed to avoid the replication of unnecessary polarization in the research context – or to replicate more polarization in the research context than there is actually in the media discourses of Germany and Hungary. I already pointed out that the immigration discourse is polarized in both countries' media contexts, but the intensity of this polarization, and what it implies should not have been the initial subject of the media-level analysis. Furthermore, even if the discourse on immigration is considered to be polarized, especially in the Hungarian media, the detailed and systematic study of its content, focusing on highlighting the most relevant immigration frames could help to understand the nature of the discourse in a more comprehensive way.

As I highlighted several times previously, the survey experiment and the focus group discussion partly rely on the results of the media-level analysis. Vignettes in the survey experiment are formulated to include the discovered immigration frames, and example Facebook posts are selected based on their sentiment scores and immigration frames. More information on this will follow in the relevant chapters.

## **7. The long-term effects of the information environment and party preferences on immigration attitudes –Survey data analysis**

After analyzing trends in immigration frames in media discourses, I turn now to the discovery of the individual level in my research design, and begin with detangling immigration attitudes. To remind, the research question on individual attitudes considers the influence of inclusive immigration frames, and asks, whether these inclusive immigration frames move individuals' opinions towards more acceptance of immigrants and refugees in Hungary. However, beforehand, a general hypothesis on the historical trends about exclusive immigration frames and attitudes will be investigated. The fifth hypothesis, H5 of this research claims that if exclusive immigration frames dominate the media discourse, immigration attitudes turn negative. Therefore, the focus of this current section is the temporal distribution of immigration attitudes, while later on further cross-sectional analyses (a survey experiment and focus group discussions) discover how immigration frames could impact individuals' immigration attitudes. Generally, immigration attitudes are influenced by numerous factors beyond media frames and political preferences, and thus constitute a complex structure of interrelated links. Individual characteristics, potential experiences with immigrants and refugees, and stimulus from the surrounding environment simultaneously contribute to how people perceive immigrants, whether they consider immigration as an advantageous phenomenon for a country's economic and cultural life, or whether they see immigrants as those who potentially threaten the security of their country.

As the next step of the empirical analysis of my dissertation, to untangle the complexity of these factors on the individual level, and most importantly, to discover the role of media consumption habits and party preferences within these factors, I analyze immigration attitudes measured by the European Social Survey (hereafter referred to as ESS), including every survey round between 2002 and 2020 from Hungary and Germany. While this time frame extends



beyond the main focus of my dissertation research, longer trends relying on available empirical data help to contextualize immigration attitudes in the two countries more precisely. Furthermore, since the previous media analysis provided trends about the inclusivity (and exclusivity) and content of immigration frames in media discourses between 2014 and 2022, these trends in the most popular media outlets can be compared with the timely trends of immigration attitudes and these immigration frames also support interpreting the results of the cross-sectional analysis of individual attitudes.

Similarly to the other empirical chapters, this one follows a quite traditional structure, too. First, I briefly review related research about immigration attitudes, focusing on theories and variables that are especially important for discovering the research questions, and that are operationalized and included in the regression models later. Therefore, media consumption habits and political preferences are given a special emphasis. Then I introduce the ESS dataset, the operationalization of variables and the methods that I use for the regression analysis. Regarding the presentation of the research results, I introduce and interpret the frequency of immigration attitude variables over time in the two countries before turning to the results of the more complex multidimensional regression analysis. Last, I draw the conclusions, highlighting the interrelations between the previous media analysis and the regression results on the longitudinal ESS data and list the limitations of my analysis.

### **7.1. Theories about the determinants of immigration attitudes**

(Mis)perceptions and identities are often more relevant in terms of immigration attitude formation than rational considerations or economic interests (Sides & Citrin, 2007). With the growing number of immigrants and refugees in European countries, immigration attitudes in a society have broad implications on the acceptance of these related societal changes,

implemented policy measurements, as well as they impose remarkable theoretical consequences for the social and political science disciplines. Social conflicts, especially when the core of the tensions stem from ethnic differences, can seriously burden the optimal functions of democratic political systems and societies. In line with this, the normative viewpoint would suggest to find the roots of these hostile attitudes for a more effective integration of immigrants and thus for a better social cooperation. Similarly to the related literature from the United States, the majority of scientific articles that concentrate on immigration attitudes in Europe approach the topic from this angle to understand negative immigration attitudes (Berg, 2015; Rustenbach, 2010b).

Since the 2015 migration crisis, the mainstream notion on migration and immigrants arriving from outside of European countries assumed enormous increase in anti-immigration attitudes, translated into the consolidation of (primarily right-wing) anti-immigration parties in the political arena. However, contrary to the conclusions of several related articles, the previously assumed negative trends in immigration attitudes since the 2015 migration crisis cannot be verified across Europe. The rate of those Europeans who are willing to integrate immigrant people in their country's economic and social environment have not changed significantly (Bartels, 2023; Dennison & Geddes, 2019; Stockemer et al., 2020). However, in his book Larry M. Bartels also highlights those countries where anti-immigrant sentiments are more prominent; he claims that these countries are more conservative and more religious, and he includes Hungary besides other Eastern European countries, Italy and Greece (2023, p. 112). Consequently, although the rise of anti-immigrant parties strengthened anti-immigration attitudes, these sentiments were wide-spread in European societies at that time already. The most probable explanation on this phenomenon is that with the growing number of immigrants in European countries, the issue became salient and important for political mobilization purposes. Therefore, the political relevance of immigration should not be neglected for several reasons, as well. Since the issue became highly politicized especially after the 2015 migration

crisis, political alignment and party preferences of individuals significantly interrelate with public opinion and attitudes about immigration. The same phenomenon is expected in the German and especially in the Hungarian case. Namely, party preference is supposed to be a predictive factor of immigration attitudes across the two countries.

The study of immigration attitudes has been shaped by various theories within the field of sociology discipline as well. These theories seek to understand the complexities of individual and societal perspectives on immigration. One of the main and most frequently cited theory is Gordon Allport's contact theory (1954), which proposes that experiencing positive and meaningful interactions between individuals from different social and cultural backgrounds can contribute to the reduction of prejudice and discrimination in a society. In the following regression analysis, I account for two aspects that stem from Allport's theoretical approach. First, I investigate, how trust in people in general can influence immigration attitudes. Those individuals who report about stronger trust in other citizens with whom they are not in touch with, usually perceive immigrants as less threatening, and are less against the social integration of immigrants from the policy perspective. Second, to incorporate the various aspects of social threats, which are similarly indicated as important explanatory factors of immigration attitudes, I discover how safe respondents feel in their neighborhood when walking home alone in the dark. Elisa Rustenbach especially refers to this as the 'Neighborhood safety explanation' to immigration attitudes (2010b). Accordingly, native citizens might attribute higher level of violence or crime to immigrants, which can be manifested in the respective variable. It is reasonable to assume that people who anonymously suspect danger in public situation (i.e. not feeling safe when walking alone on the dark streets), are more likely to suppose harmful behavior of unknown people from other cultures, and thus, to reject immigrant people.

Beyond the influential role of media, political preferences or interpersonal factors, there are several other socio-demographic variables that similarly contribute to the variation of

immigration attitudes. First, let me consider the level of education of individuals, which is the main interest of most related studies and shows the most consistent interrelation with immigration attitudes (Hainmueller & Hopkins, 2014; Jeannet & Dražanová, 2023; Rustenbach, 2010b). Berg highlights that the educational status of individuals is “one of the most consistent predictors of a positive immigration attitude” (2015, p. 25). Accordingly, people with lower level of education seem to reject immigrants with a higher likelihood and to have a more negative opinion and attitude compared to higher educated citizens. Several explanations on this phenomenon are provided; they either rely on the rational economic aspects of immigration attitude formation, the fact that citizens might compete with immigrants on the job market, or the role of education in people’s empathy and tolerance. As Rustenbach claims, because of the generally low education level of immigrants, highly educated individuals do not consider their applications on the job market as existential threats, who would be preferred in job seeking situations or who would be judged by the (mostly) native leaders of various companies and institutions. On the other hand, institutions in the education system provide an atmosphere where more tolerance and acceptance of others are articulated and promoted, which also enhances pro-immigration attitudes of higher educated citizens (2010b, p. 57). As it is known, the education level is tightly connected with the job market positions; the income of more educated people is higher on average than those who spent less time in the education system and possess lower level of degrees. Therefore, the level of education regards as a quasi-indicator of the job market position of individuals, too. Similarly, because of the lower level of economic threat they perceive from the job market, individuals with income stability and predictability report about lower hostility in immigration attitudes.

Religiosity has a significant, though not straightforward and often puzzling role in affecting immigration attitudes. Contrary to an intuitive expectation about the more conforming personality of religious people, feeling religious and practicing religion is often considered as

a catalyzer of anti-immigration attitudes. Explanation basically rely on group threat theory, which suggests that any newcomers who threaten the homogeneity of a society (in this case the religious beliefs, norms and practices) and thus threaten social cohesion are more likely to be disregarded or excluded by native people (Bohman & Hjerm, 2014). Muslim immigrants in European countries with Catholic majorities are often depicted as these newcomers. However, although there is a significant variance, what most of the related empirical research show is that more religious people tend to be more tolerant towards immigrants, although the degree of religiosity causes variation in immigration attitudes; the more religious citizens consider themselves, the more likely that they will be welcoming with immigrants and refugees (Bohman & Hjerm, 2014). Religious denomination also has an influential role, though empirical results on this vary as well (Leon McDaniel et al., 2011). Furthermore, political ideology and economic insecurity were found to complicate this interrelation. The least stable the economic situation of a religious person, the more likely that they will oppose the settling of immigrant people (Storm, 2018).

Last, several empirical research point out to the age differences and the varying influence of the age of individuals behind immigration attitudes. Related studies are consistent on showing that older people are more likely to refuse immigrants than younger citizens who seem to be more flexible and integrative with foreign people in general, and with asylum seekers, or Muslim immigrants as well (L. McLaren & Paterson, 2020). One of the main explanations for this variation in immigration attitudes is that, because of the changing patterns in societies' diversity, separate generations experience immigration differently (Jeannet & Dražanová, 2023; L. McLaren & Paterson, 2020). As Kustov and his colleagues highlight, similarly to political socialization, younger people easily change their minds about immigration, meaning that individuals in their early adult ages are flexible in terms of opinion and attitudes (Kustov et al., 2021). Moreover, as McLaren and Paterson further argues, generational patterns

could change the anyway stable immigration attitudes in societies. Explanations for differences between generations and thus the immigration attitudes of people with different ages are provided by the authors from various angles, emphasizing the changing political and social environments, or the changing economic circumstances.

While the cross-sectional research methods on the individual level will especially focus on the immigration attitudes of Hungarian citizens, since available ESS data allows me to do so, similarly to the analysis on Facebook users' engagements, German respondents are also included in the following regression analysis. Thus, although causal links on the individual level between immigration frames and attitudes will be established in the Hungarian context primarily, the temporal dynamics of immigration frames and attitudes will be highlighted in case of the German media and citizens, too, and the comparative approach of the research can be maintained. Therefore, to complete the content of the related theoretical chapter on my country selection, I would like to emphasize here as well the important differences between the Hungarian and German social environment and especially the different media contexts that create a fertile ground for this comparative analysis on immigration frames and attitudes. On one hand, while immigration and social diversity have a longer tradition in the German society, Hungarian citizens have less experience about how to share their life space and integrate non-European immigrants in the last 50-60 years. Consequently, Hungarian people most probably rely on media discourses to a greater extent to formulate their opinion about immigration. However, media discourses about immigration are significantly different in the two countries, and, in fact, there are remarkable differences in immigration frames of various media outlets, and these differences especially manifest in the Hungarian media context.

What can be expected about the various media sources from where respondents get their news and public information? Héricourt and Spielvogel conducted a research with similar design on ESS data, investigating immigration attitudes and how media consumption might

influence it (2014). Their investigation included more countries but shorter time frame though. They assumed the overall negative impact of regular news consumption on immigration attitudes, regardless of which media sources are accounted. They explained this assumption with the sensationalist approach of media sources to basically any kind of policy issues, which inevitably results in negative biases in the media interpretation, which is similar to George Gerbner's concept on the "cultivation differential" in conceptions of reality between light and heavy television viewers (Gerbner, 1998, p. 180). Their research did not confirm this type of pessimist view: according to the results, those individuals who spend more time with consuming politics related public news are more open and accepting towards immigrants. Furthermore, they differentiated along media types: while regularly watching news in television results in more negative attitudes towards immigrants, regular reading of newspapers lead to more positive attitudes towards them. Moreover, Gattino and Tartaglia also found positive interrelation between regular watching of news and public affairs in television and immigration attitudes – although on a convenience sample conducted amongst Italian respondents (2015).

As I have been repeatedly highlighting it several times before, the anti-immigration campaign of the Hungarian government since 2015 and the strong government dominance in media ownership resulted in a predominantly negative media discourse (Bajomi-Lázár, 2019; Schnyder et al., 2023). Although exclusive voices are widespread in German media contents, too, more room for inclusive frames about immigration is provided there. My media analysis also pointed out the higher variance in terms of sentiment scores in the German than in the Hungarian media context. The dominance of the Hungarian government in media ownerships results in biased interpretation of the issue of immigration in various media outlets. While after 2015 the Fidesz government's anti-immigration messages were unavoidable on public television and public radio channels, newspapers and online news portals were more diverse in this regard (McNeil & Karstens, 2018).

## 7.2. Data and methodology

The publicly available European Social Survey datasets are primary empirical sources for social scientists. Scholars who specialize in immigration studies regularly apply the related standardized immigration attitude questions that are included in the ESS questionnaire (see e.g. Jeannet & Dražanová, 2023). Which are the most important benefits of including the ESS analysis into my dissertation research? Although every measurement tool is cross-sectional, so respondents' are included only once, the standardized questions of the ESS are repeated throughout the years. The cross-sectional survey data represents a sufficient temporal supplementary to the other individual-level analysis: the trends in Facebook users' engagement, the survey experiment and the focus group discussions. First, it diversifies our empirical knowledge on the various media sources from where immigration frames can potentially reach individuals, and which are indirectly measured by the other research tools. Second, the extended time frame of the available ESS data complements the time frame of my analysis, and allow me to draw conclusions on individual attitudes about immigration before the 2015 migration crisis as well.

Before describing the results of the regression analysis in detail, let me introduce the ESS data at hand<sup>11</sup>, the variables in the analysis and the applied regression methodology. Including every country case throughout the ten consecutive survey rounds between 2002 and 2020, the final dataset contains 34425 German and 16642 Hungarian survey respondents. Regarding the

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<sup>11</sup> Although there are several further publicly available datasets that include questions on immigration attitudes (for example the European Values Study or the World Values Survey), in my analysis I analyzed the ESS data exclusively for two reasons: because of its consistent measurement of immigration attitudes in my two country cases, and because of the applicability of its related survey questions in the other empirical parts of my dissertation research. Thus, results will be comparable between the two countries and compatible with the two further parts of the individual level analysis.



statistical procedure, ordinary least squares (OLS) regression models are estimated for the two countries separately, including interaction terms for the variables of main interest: the one that indicates (1) the year of the data collection, (2) the time spent on politics related news consumption on an average day in three categories (no time at all, less than 1 hour, more than 1 hour), (3) the party preference of respondents, i.e. whether they voted for Fidesz (or not) in the Hungarian, and for CDU (or not) in the German case.

What do scientists conceptualize when attitudes on various social phenomena are under investigation? As Berg summarizes, “(...) the term attitude refers to an emotional and intellectual evaluation, ranging from favorable to unfavorable, of an object, process, or person, including groups of people” (2015, p. 23). Accordingly, I aim to discover emotional and intellectual evaluation of immigrant people in national communities. I would like to emphasize, that, as dependent variables, my current research focuses primarily on attitudes about immigration and immigrants, how native citizens in a country perceive immigrants as persons with whom they have to share their living spaces, and does not consider individual preferences about immigration policies (e.g. what kind of political measurements are preferred that reflect on the integration of immigrant people). Dependent variables are constructed of three variables that measure immigration attitudes. They refer to the economic, cultural and general aspects of immigration and immigrants living in the country of the respondents. These variables are measured by the following survey questions: (1) Would you say it is generally bad or good for Germany’s/Hungary’s *economy* that people come to live here from other countries? (2) And, (...) would you say that Germany’s/Hungary’s *cultural life* is generally undermined or enriched by people coming to live here from other countries? (3) Is Germany/Hungary made a *worse or*

*a better place* to live by people coming to live here from other countries?<sup>12</sup> Response options vary in a range of 0 to 10, where 0 is the most exclusive, 10 the most inclusive opinion. As a great advantage regarding the importance of measurement equivalence and the comparative aspects of the analysis, these immigration attitude variables are included in every ESS round in both Hungary and Germany (Davidov et al., 2015). In the final models I constructed a composite variable out of these three that summed up the values of each by individuals in the datasets, so that the higher the value between 0 and 30, the more inclusive immigration attitude the respondent reported about in the three various aspects of the issue.

Although the available ESS data is not directly connected with any immigration frames that respondents were any time exposed to, it registers the type of media outlets that respondents habitually follow, and the regularity of politics related news consumption on these.<sup>13</sup> Therefore, it becomes measurable whether these specific media outlets cause any systematic variance in immigration attitudes. However, the related survey questions on media consumption habits in the various ESS rounds are not fully consistent. Table 1 demonstrates, which media sources are measured in each ESS round. The variables measure the frequency when individuals get politics related news and information from the various media sources. As we can see, while the first five rounds measured the amount of time that respondents spend on consuming news about politics and current affairs on radio, television and newspaper on an average day, the sixth and seventh round only included television in this regard, which was fully replaced by online media sources in the last three survey rounds. Therefore, none of the media sources' impacts on

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<sup>12</sup> Furthermore, especially because of the importance of measurement equivalence and to arrive at comparable results of the different methods of the individual level analysis, these same question formulations were applied in the survey experiment and in the focus group discussions as well.

<sup>13</sup> The exact formulation of the related survey question: „On an average weekday, how much of your time listening to radio/watching television/reading newspaper/reading news online is spent listening/watching/reading news or programmes about politics and current affairs?

immigration attitudes can be consistently outlined for the whole period of investigation, but information on the various media sources can complement each other. Unfortunately, especially the time frame of my research is a bit poorly covered, when only the effect of television watching in 2014, and online news consumption between 2016 and 2020 are measured. Nonetheless, trends from previous years are worth to discover, too. For the sake of simplicity, I excluded radio and newspaper from the analysis, and used the ones that measure either watching politics related news on television or reading them on the internet. As highlighted previously, the variable has three categories; (1) spending no time at all with politics related news, (2) spending less than 1 hour on an average weekday with politics related news, (3) spending more than 1 hour.

	ESS 1	ESS 2	ESS 3	ESS 4	ESS 5	ESS 6	ESS 7	ESS 8	ESS 9	ESS 10
Year	2002	2004	2006	2008	2010	2012	2014	2016	2018	2020
TV	x	x	x	x	x	x	x			
Internet								x	x	x
Radio	x	x	x	x	x					
Newspaper	x	x	x	x	x					

7. Table. Media sources that are included in European Social Survey rounds, from where politics related news consumption is measured on an average day. Source: ESS 2002-2020. Own compilation.

For the operationalization of party preference it should be considered that the governing Fidesz-KDNP is the political party that represents anti-immigration in Hungary, while the AfD is clearly the most anti-immigration party of the German political system. However, because of the consistent analytical approach in both countries by investigating government parties, the highlighted role of Angela Merkel in the immigration debate in Germany and the need for a party that is consistently included in the survey questions throughout the years of investigation, in the regression analysis I included respondents who voted (or not) for the governing CDU. Therefore, as a further independent variable, the party preference of the respondents is included: whether they voted for the party list of Fidesz or not in Hungary, and for CDU or not in Germany on the last national election in the respective survey rounds.

Following the theoretical and methodological considerations of related research that were described above, and to sufficiently account for significant confounding effects to immigration attitudes, five further explanatory variables are included in the regression models. Namely, (1) whether respondents feel safe of walking alone in local area after dark<sup>14</sup>, (2) whether they think that most people can be trusted<sup>15</sup>, (3) their religiosity<sup>16</sup>, (4) the number of years that they spent in the education system, and (5) their age.

### **7.3. Descriptive analysis: immigration attitude change over time in Germany and Hungary**

While several theoretical considerations and empirical research suggest the relative stability of immigration attitudes throughout individuals' life, if media framing is hypothesized, it assumes the relative flexibility of these immigration attitudes and that certain immigration frames can effectively influence them (Kustov et al., 2021). Before going into the details of the multidimensional regression analysis, to get a general overview on how immigration attitudes changed over time on the social level, descriptive graphs are displayed below (see Figures 1-3.) that show the distribution of the average value of the relevant immigration attitude variables – those that will be the dependent variables of the regression analyses – in Germany and Hungary across the ten consecutive ESS rounds. The figures show two important trends that should be remarked here. First, we see an expected increase in anti-immigration attitudes in Hungary after the beginning of the migration crisis, especially in the cultural aspect of the issue. However, the dominance of these anti-immigration attitudes started to ease after the 2015-2016

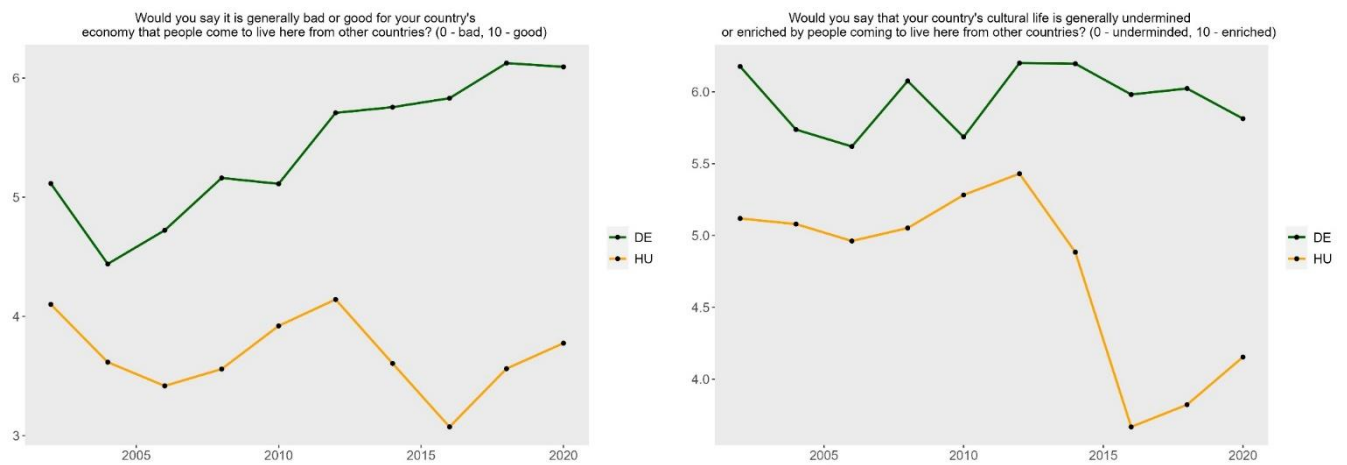
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<sup>14</sup> 1 – very safe, 2 – safe, 3 – unsafe, 4 – very unsafe

<sup>15</sup> 0 – you can't be too careful 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 – 7 – 8 – 9 10 – most people can be trusted

<sup>16</sup> 0 – not at all religious 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 – 7 – 8 – 9 10 – very religious

rock bottom. No similar phenomenon in the German attitude trends can be observed; on the contrary, general immigration attitudes seem to become more positive than the initial

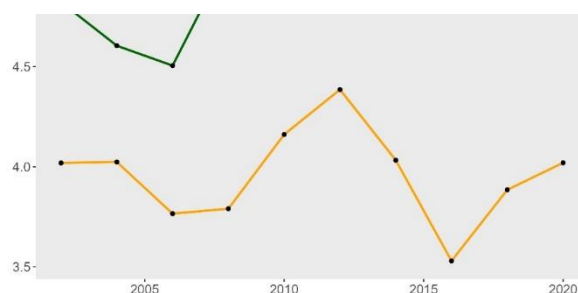


observations in 2002 along the economic and the general aspects throughout the investigated years.

Is your country made a worse or a better place to live by people coming to live here from other countries? (0 - worse, 10 - better)

9. Figure. The economic, cultural and general immigration attitudes in Germany and Hungary. Source: ESS 2002-2020. Own compilation.

How do these  
correlate with the  
appearance of  
(and exclusive)



distributions  
temporal  
various inclusive  
immigration

frames in the German and Hungarian media discourses? Although the time frames are not the

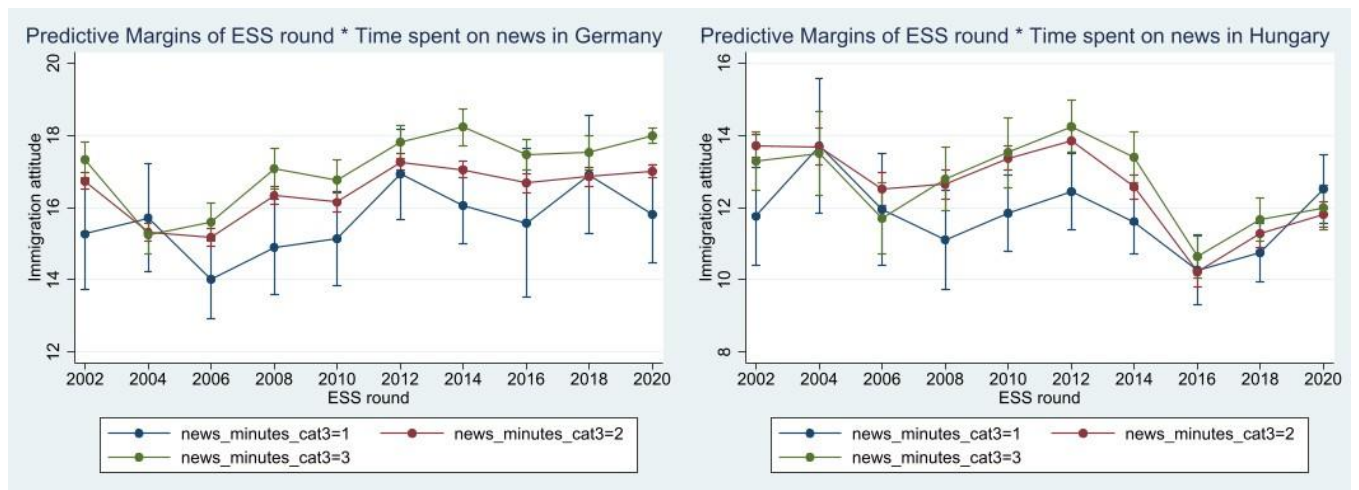
same, some interrelations should be highlighted here. The overwhelming rate of negative immigration frames around 2015-2016 and the negative trends in immigration attitudes that were just demonstrated offer an easy and handy link to connect, especially in the Hungarian context, in terms of H5 as well. However, these aspects should be considered carefully, since we do not know yet anything about the interrelations of the relevant variables and immigration attitudes, nor we have any information to draw direct causal links between these factors – the following sections' aim is to dig deeper in this regard.

#### **7.4. Results of the regression analyses: media consumption habits, party preferences and immigration attitudes over time in Hungary and Germany**

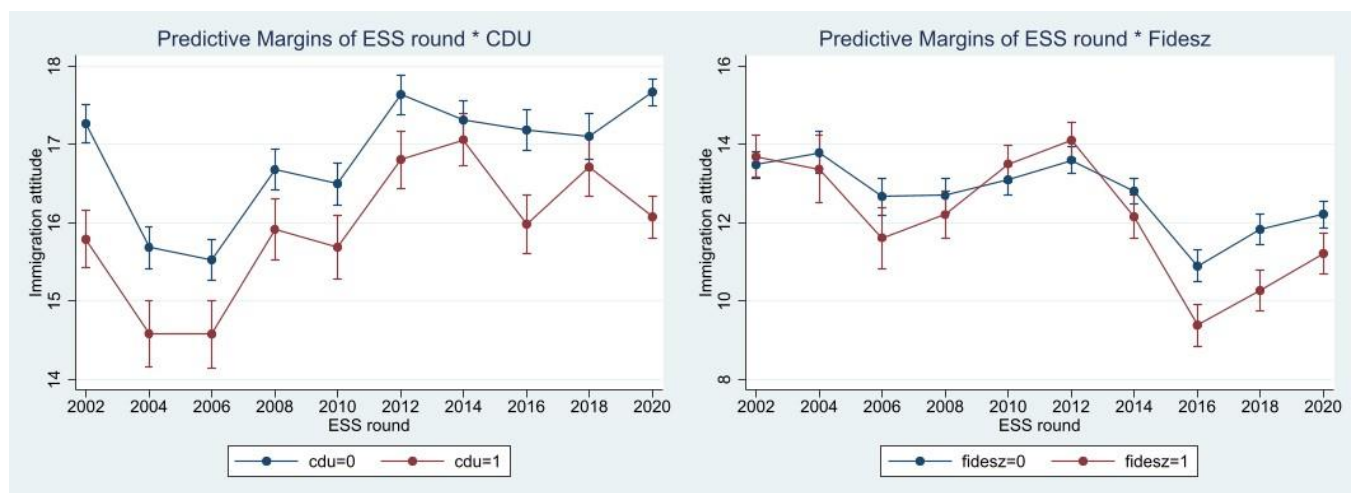
After scrutinizing the frequency of these immigration attitude variables in the German and Hungarian contexts, in the current section I present the results of the multidimensional regression analyses. As I described previously, special attention is placed on media consumption habits and variables that refer to the political preferences of individuals, but the rest of the independent variables are interpreted in more detail, too. According to the values of the variance inflation factor (VIF), there is no multicollinearity between the independent variables of the various regression models.

Figures 4-6. present the predictive margins of the intensity of news consumption and party preference throughout the ten consecutive ESS rounds, as well as the joint effects of the intensity of news consumption and party preference in the two countries. Figure 4 shows that people who do not follow news on television or in online news portals at all represent the most anti-immigration attitude in both countries. This is somehow counter-intuitive in the Hungarian context, where the negative communication of the Hungarian government could have suggested a higher rate of anti-immigration attitudinal patterns after the 2015 migration crisis. Nonetheless, the significant difference in immigration attitudes for the 2016 survey round

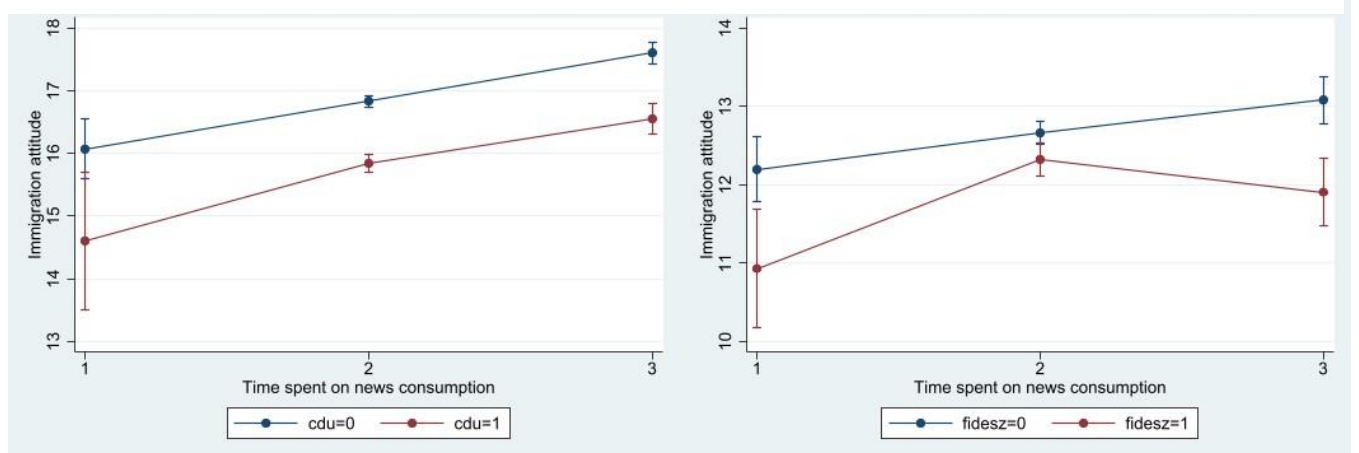
disappeared between those who do not spend time with news consumption on a weekday, spend 1 hour or more. These differences remained more balanced during the respective survey rounds in the German context. As Figure 5 presents, both CDU and Fidesz voters reported about lower acceptance of immigrants, but while this difference sustained during the years of every survey conduction in Germany, it only became significantly different after 2015 in Hungary. Interestingly, despite of the “Willkommenspolitik” and communication of Angela Merkel, the difference between CDU voters and others extended after 2015. Last, respondents with various party preferences and news consumption intensity seem to differ to a very small extent to most. As it can be observed on Figure 6, the difference between CDU and non-CDU voters does not change with varying intensity of news consumption. Whereas, Fidesz voters represent a more anti-immigrant stance than non-Fidesz voters if they spend more than 1 hour on news consumption on an average weekday. This partly verifies the assumption about the influence of the intensive anti-immigration communication of the Fidesz government after 2015.



4. Figure. Predictive margins of ESS rounds and the time spent on news consumption on an average day in Germany and Hungary. Source: ESS 2002-2020. Own compilation.



5. Figure. Predictive margins of ESS rounds and party preference in Germany and Hungary. Source: ESS 2002-2020. Own compilation.



6. Figure. Predictive margins of time spent on news on an average day and party preference in Germany and Hungary. Source: ESS 2002-2020. Own compilation.



Table 2 below presents the coefficients of the other independent variables in the six regression models. The first three models present the Hungarian, the second three models the German results. They differ in the interaction terms included: Model 1 and 4 measure the interaction between the respective ESS round and party preference (Fidesz or CDU), Model 2 and 5 measure the interaction between the ESS round and the intensity of news consumption on an average weekday and last, Model 3 and 6 measure the interaction between the intensity of news consumption and party preference. Besides the interaction terms, regression estimations and coefficients mostly show consistent results across the two countries and the various models. First and foremost, we can see that in general, more frequent news consumption than zero results in more accepting attitudes towards immigrants in both Hungary and Germany. Regarding the party preferences of individuals, both CDU and Fidesz voters are more likely to perform anti-immigrant attitudes compared to non-CDU or non-Fidesz voters, except for Model 1 in Hungary, where the difference is non-significant. We can also observe that the other independent variables consistently perform as theorized in the regression models across the two countries and model versions. Namely, the less individuals feel safe walking alone after dark in their local area, the more anti-immigrant they turn to be. Higher trust towards other people in general can increase the acceptance with immigrants as well. More educated people are more pro-immigrant, which is similarly true for people who report about being more religious. As discussed in the related theoretical description, older people show more hostility towards immigrants than younger citizens.

Dependent variable: immigration attitude	Hungary			Germany		
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
Feeling safe after dark	-.433*** (.083)	-.44*** (.084)	-.429*** (.083)	-1.229*** (.047)	-1.231*** (.047)	-1.231*** (.047)
Trust in other people	.571*** (.025)	.566*** (.025)	.568*** (.025)	.652*** (.017)	.652*** (.017)	.653*** (.017)
Years in education	.252*** (.016)	.255*** (.016)	.254*** (.016)	.289*** (.013)	.289*** (.013)	.29*** (.013)
Religiosity	.091*** (.02)	.092*** (.02)	.091*** (.02)	.133*** (.012)	.132*** (.012)	.133*** (.012)
Age	-.012*** (.003)	-.012*** (.003)	-.012*** (.003)	-.023*** (.002)	-.023*** (.002)	-.023*** (.002)
Time spent on news consumption a day						
less than an hour	.713*** (.195)	1.961*** (.71)	.461** (.223)	.801*** (.225)	1.471* (.782)	.762*** (.244)
more than an hour	.862*** (.225)	1.532* (.805)	.88*** (.26)	1.557*** (.236)	2.07** (.813)	1.529*** (.258)
ESS round						
2004	.316 (.32)	1.949* (1.172)	.133 (.272)	-1.581*** (.186)	.452 (1.089)	-1.467*** (.156)
2006	-.81*** (.296)	.191 (1.054)	-1.183*** (.253)	-1.736*** (.184)	-1.25 (.954)	-1.585*** (.155)
2008	-.782*** (.276)	-.647 (.98)	-.983*** (.228)	-.588*** (.186)	-.361 (1.027)	-.38** (.154)
2010	-.382 (.263)	.087 (.873)	-.26 (.213)	-.769*** (.187)	-.129 (1.019)	-.574*** (.155)
2012	.125 (.242)	.684 (.877)	.252 (.202)	.367** (.179)	1.661* (1.003)	.558*** (.148)
2014	-.664*** (.243)	-.143 (.831)	-.924*** (.207)	.042 (.181)	.795 (.938)	.431*** (.148)
2016	-2.574*** (.27)	-1.484* (.848)	-3.161*** (.222)	-.08 (.185)	.313 (1.301)	-.004 (.153)
2018	-1.65*** (.261)	-1.01 (.805)	-2.205*** (.217)	-.162 (.195)	1.651 (1.132)	.162 (.159)
2020	-1.257*** (.246)	.763 (.847)	-1.628*** (.208)	.399*** (.153)	.548 (1.036)	.403*** (.129)
Fidesz	.217 (.32)	-.558*** (.114)	-1.267*** (.437)			
ESS round * Fidesz						
2004	-.637 (.609)					
2006	-1.264** (.564)					
2008	-.704 (.49)					
2010	.194					

	(.448)		
2012	.286		
	(.432)		
2014	-.876*		
	(.458)		
2016	-1.737***		
	(.464)		
2018	-1.774***		
	(.458)		
2020	-1.221***		
	(.449)		
ESS round * time spent on news			
2004			
less than an hour	-1.978		-1.871*
	(1.212)		(1.102)
more than an hour	-1.734		-2.54**
	(1.375)		(1.151)
2006			
less than an hour	-1.392		-.306
	(1.092)		(.97)
more than an hour	-1.781		-.485
	(1.234)		(1.024)
2008			
less than an hour	-.435		-.044
	(1.013)		(1.04)
more than an hour	.142		.107
	(1.152)		(1.093)
2010			
less than an hour	-.435		-.461
	(.903)		(1.034)
more than an hour	.145		-.434
	(1.083)		(1.087)
2012			
less than an hour	-.556		-1.13
	(.904)		(1.016)
more than an hour	.276		-1.186
	(1.031)		(1.06)
2014			
less than an hour	-1.008		-.48
	(.862)		(.952)
more than an hour	.251		.102
	(.99)		(1.005)
2016			
less than an hour	-2.023**		-.371
	(.888)		(1.313)
more than an hour	-1.163		-.173
	(.985)		(1.342)
2018			
less than an hour	-1.428*		-1.535
	(.844)		(1.146)
more than an hour	-.616		-1.465
	(.951)		(1.182)
2020			
less than an hour	-2.67***		-.282
	(.876)		(1.047)
more than an hour	-2.052**		.1
	(.989)		(1.071)
Time spent on news * Fidesz			

less than an hour			.933** (.456)			
more than an hour			.095 (.508)			
CDU				-1.473*** (.227)	-1.016*** (.073)	-1.465** (.608)
ESS round * CDU						
2004				.374 (.341)		
2006				.521 (.341)		
2008				.711** (.329)		
2010				.665** (.335)		
2012				.645** (.317)		
2014				1.226*** (.31)		
2016				.273 (.324)		
2018				1.079*** (.33)		
2020				-.12 (.277)		
Time spent on news * CDU						
less than an hour						.474 (.614)
more than an hour less than an hour						.417 (.625)
Constant	8.282*** (.399)	7.423*** (.751)	8.662*** (.402)	12.191*** (.336)	11.436*** (.804)	12.087*** (.34)
Observations	13372	13372	13372	30814	30814	30814
R-squared	.126	.125	.123	.19	.189	.189

8. Table. Results of the linear regression models. Displayed regression coefficients, standard errors are in parentheses. \*\*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*  $p < .05$ , \*  $p < .1$ . Source: European Social Survey 2002-2020. Own compilation.

## 7.5. Conclusions: what do cross-sectional data suggest on immigration attitudes?

This section was dedicated to the systematic analysis of available European Social Survey data on immigration attitudes in Germany and Hungary between 2002 and 2020, and how various confounding factors can influence these attitudes, with a special focus on media consumption habits and party preferences. Although immigration frames could not have been directly included in this analysis because we cannot know whether respondents were exposed to the respective immigration frames and how often, the intensity of consuming politics related news and information on current affairs suggest important trends. In terms of news consumption habits, those who do not spend time on getting information about public affairs, so who are practically not exposed to media frames but most probably to opinion leaders in their surroundings, are the most anti-immigrant in comparison. While CDU voters represent more anti-immigration attitudes than non-CDU voters, this difference between Fidesz and non-Fidesz voters became significant after the migration crisis only. Various intensity of news consumption of Fidesz and CDU voters did not show significant differences in their immigration attitudes.

We can interpret the results as if there is a real world event (the huge immigrant and refugee influx in 2015-2016), credible political actors who represent clear messages (“Wir schaffen das!” or building a border fence and claiming that no immigrants are needed), and media interfaces that transmit these political messages, it can significantly influence immigration attitudes of citizens. Even though the anti-immigration political communication of the Hungarian government continued after the 2015-2016 migration crisis, the cease of this real world event stopped the spread of anti-immigration attitudes. Consequently, there can be media influence, but only if it is accompanied by relevant real world events.

Moreover, the temporal distribution of immigration frames as a result of the previous subchapters on media contents could be compared with the immigration attitudes discovered throughout the analysis of the ESS data. We could see that the intensive media discourse on immigration and the harsh anti-immigration political communication of the government around

2015-2016 affected Hungarians' opinions negatively. Whereas, the ongoing intensive debate about immigration in the German media (which was not necessarily inclusive) interrelates with more positive immigration attitudes of German individuals in the meantime.

As every element of the mixed methodological research design, there are important theoretical and methodological contributions of this ESS analysis of immigration attitudes that support the exploration of the research question and the further empirical chapters that focus on individual immigration attitudes. Most importantly, a wide overview about immigration attitudes in Germany and Hungary could have been drawn, accounting for the most relevant factors that influence immigration attitudes according to the theoretical and empirical works in this research field. In terms of independent variables that are not tightly related to my research question, my analysis confirmed the interrelations that previous research about immigration attitudes highlighted.

Because of the relatively wide, almost twenty years long timeframe that this analysis covers, it can be regarded as a complementation of the analysis on Facebook users' reactions. Moreover, the two analysis complement each other also because, while the ESS data does not measure habits on social media usage, users' reactions on the related Facebook posts can suggest information in this regard. The regression analysis of ESS data also considers as the preceding individual-level empirical analysis before introducing the results of the survey experiment and focus group discussions in Hungary. Here, although the following two analyses will focus especially on the Hungarian case, data availability made it possible to include German respondents as well.

Besides the contributions, the ESS analysis have several limitations that should be noted here, too. Since the research design of the surveys is not panel or longitudinal, the temporality of the results should be considered carefully. Every change that is presented between two data collection years refer to changes on the societal and not on the individual level, since the

samples are different for each survey. Moreover, although the operationalization of related variables is prompt and widely applied among social scientists, there is no room for change in this regard. And last, as I mentioned before, the links between dominant (inclusive or exclusive) immigration frames and immigration attitudes measured by the ESS should be interpreted carefully, since we have no information on which immigration frames ESS respondents were exactly exposed to.

Moreover, two further aspects were not considered in this analysis. First, my research does not consider individual preferences about related immigration policies. However, attitudes towards immigrant people and towards immigration policies can be much different in case of individuals with different social situation, personality, resulting many times in parallel pro- and anti-immigration attitudes (Berg, 2015, p. 24). Second, although previous research highlighted the relevance of these aspects, because of the lack of data, in this analysis I do not diversify or consider the country of origin, religion, education or any other characteristics of immigrant people either (De Coninck, 2020; A. Farkas et al., 2022; Hainmueller & Hopkins, 2015). Consequently, I aim to include both aspects in future research, namely immigration policy preferences of individuals and diverse attitudes on various immigrant groups that will hopefully extend and complement the results of this current research.

However, all in all, I hope that the advantages of the various methodologies can effectively complement each other, counterbalance the disadvantages, and provide generalizable inputs to get a deeper understanding on how immigration frames and attitudes interrelate, especially inclusive immigration frames in the Hungarian social and media context.

## **8. The short-term effects of immigration frames: The results of a survey experiment in Hungary**

The previous section on the ESS measurement of immigration attitudes and the one about the reactions of Facebook users investigated and compared both Hungarian and German citizens. From now on, by applying and evaluating a quantitative and a qualitative method within the individual-level analysis, I will focus on the case of Hungary to explore whether inclusive immigration frames as cross-cutting media exposure have any influence on immigration attitudes in a country context where anti-immigration, exclusive narratives and sentiments dominate the media and the political discourses. With this I do not claim that the exclusive, anti-immigration frame is the only one that appears in the Hungarian media discourses about immigration. I only say that the government's anti-immigration campaign was so intensive, that it became the dominant immigration frame to which Hungarian citizens orientate their opinions about immigration. Moreover, as we saw previously in the media analysis, non-governmental media outlets are rather neutral or do not discuss about immigration. Therefore, even though some inclusive interpretations also appeared mostly in non-governmental media outlets, the government's exclusive anti-immigration messages dominated the debate by far, and remained the primary immigration frame in citizens' thinking.

Two empirical research will contribute to this examination. First, in this section I introduce the results and implications of an original survey experiment, which was conducted during the summer of 2020 in the framework of my dissertation project.<sup>17</sup> This will be followed by the analysis of focus group discussions among Hungarian participants, which were conducted

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<sup>17</sup> I am grateful for receiving the funding of the Research Support Scheme at Central European University, which made it possible to conduct this survey experiment. Also, I am very glad that I could cooperate with Bence Hamrák, Lukács Hayes and Dániel Kovarek on the application and the questionnaire. Special credits to Robert Sata, who helped us a lot with the application process, as well as to the colleagues at TÁRKI Research Institute, Judit Rác and István György Tóth for organizing the data collection.



approximately two years later, two weeks before and after the 2022 national elections in Hungary.<sup>18</sup> Both of these original data collections utilized from the previous media-level analysis; the design of the survey experiment includes immigration frame formulation that relies on the results of the topic model analysis, and, as I will show later, typical and popular immigration related Facebook posts and articles were presented during the focus group discussions.

The purpose of this subchapter is to present the initial results of an experimental study about cross-cutting, inclusive and exclusive immigration frames and public opinion on immigration in Hungary. From the point of view of the research question, Hungary regards as an extreme or rather outlier case since, as the media-level analysis also pointed out, the dominant and most visible political communication and public opinion about non-European immigrants is exceptionally hostile in this country. Therefore, related public debate is almost completely deficient in pro-immigration or inclusive argumentation and media frames. Throughout the experiment, respondents were exposed to three different types of media frames about immigration, covering topics of the economic, cultural and security aspects of the issue. However, half of the respondents were randomly assigned to frames that followed an inclusive formulation about immigration, the other half of respondents received exclusive frames about immigration along the respective topics, the economic, cultural and security aspects of immigration. Immigration attitude questions measured public opinion before and after the treatments as well. Results show a slightly reverse effect of economy related inclusive frames on immigration attitudes, and they fail to prove the influence of any combinations of immigration frames. Moreover, and perhaps even more importantly, they also point out the

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<sup>18</sup> Receiving the Field Research Grant from the Central European University made it financially possible to conduct the focus group discussions properly, for which I am very grateful, too.

dominant role of party preference in terms of immigration attitudes; independent of other factors, Fidesz voters are more likely to oppose immigration along the various aspects or to see the negative consequences of immigration on economy, culture and security of Hungary.

### **8.1. The exposure to opposing views - deliberation or reinforcement of initial opinion?**

In the universe of rational politics, citizens consume diverse media sources and carefully consider various ideas and arguments before developing their policy positions on certain issues. However, most evidence do not support the concept of this kind of well-informed and cool-headed political opinion formation, whereas further aspects and influences - for example the opinions appearing in conversations in individuals' social network, identity issues and affective affiliation - should also be considered in terms of opinion formation beyond arguments (see e.g. Achen & Bartels, 2016). What most related theories reveal is that the majority of citizens can devote little time to gather relevant information on political issues, and the type of information they choose - or what they are exposed to in the era of social network sites and their algorithms - reinforce the issue positions on various policies that ensue from their original value orientation (Barnidge et al., 2020).

Although the issue is not as salient today as it was during the 2015 migration crisis, the framing of immigration has received significant scientific attention in recent years, in terms of analysing various media contents, capturing dominant narratives in certain types of mediums, and the attempt to measure the influence of these on individuals' attitude and opinion (see e.g. Farris & Mohamed, 2018; Fryberg et al., 2012; Krzyżanowski et al., 2018). Most of the analysis stressed that the negative or exclusive framing of immigration is dominant in popular media sources and most research focused on how this phenomenon can strengthen anti-immigration attitudes of individuals.

The identification of media frames about various policy issues and the demonstration of their effects on public opinion has been receiving significant scholarly attention in previous decades. The general assumption of the concept is that the consequent specific interpretation of certain topics can significantly influence the cognitive associations of individuals on these issues, and thus they fundamentally determine public opinion (Chong & Druckman, 2007b; Druckman, 2001a). Furthermore, as the selective exposure theory reveals, people are more likely to engage with media sources that are in line with their political value orientation, which also contributes to the dominance of most popular frames in individuals' opinion formation (Stroud, 2017). Meanwhile, the consumption of diverse, opposing and conflicting information sources is often meant to approximate opinion differences as one form of deliberation, to enhance public discourses and to mitigate the effects of selective media exposure (Lev-On & Manin, 2009). However, it might also result in further reinforcement of the initial preferences of individuals because the awareness of opposing views could trigger anger and skepticism and thus strengthen the original opinion and arguments, which hinder people to rethink or shape their preferences (Knobloch-Westerwick & Meng, 2009).

While cross-cutting exposure is often referred as an optimal element of democratic discussions, the careful consideration of diverse and at the same time opposing arguments would be especially important in case of highly polarized and politicized issues to potentially reduce partisan differences and create a deliberative political environment (Goldman & Mutz, 2011b; Mutz, 2002). However, related theoretical works enhance that diverse information collection, the "interruption of regular reasoning habits" (Lev-On & Manin, 2009, p. 5) requires disproportionately high amount of time, effort and cognitive resources from individuals, and therefore, only a handful of social groups - typically those who are better educated, well-off, and more interested in politics - are expected to meet these criteria. Moreover, related scientific works about homophily and selective exposure point out that even when diverse sources of

information are similarly available, individuals tend to choose those that are ideologically close to their value orientation (Goldman & Mutz, 2011b; Lev-On & Manin, 2009). Moreover, diversity does not equal opposing views, which would be key for deliberation, and even if individuals face new information that counter their prior beliefs, instead of logically integrating them they tend to interpret and use these as additional evidences to their initial viewpoints and as a support to prepare for counter-argumentation. This is mostly because any kind of cognitive shift that cross-cutting exposure or opposing political content causes generates anxiety that individuals try to avoid generally (Lev-On & Manin, 2009, p. 4). Many scholars argue that because of the homogenous social networks, the exposure to opposing views in modern societies most likely happens in media environments, and not through personal conversations, though the latter proves to be a much more efficient way of deliberation and persuasion. Divergent information environment is hardly ever available, moreover, information sources in most cases are self-filtered according to the political alignment and value orientation of individuals. Namely, people are more likely to follow and pay attention to news that strengthen their initial ideas even in the online realm, where diverse and ideologically different sources are theoretically easily accessible.

Although decades ago the spread of internet access and online activities were supposed to facilitate democratic tendencies with easily accessible diverse information sources and the opportunity of active involvement in debates for those social groups who were completely excluded previously, most of the relevant empirical studies show disappointing tendencies: online news consumption, political communication and campaigns only deepened the gap between political groups of different ideological standpoints. However, some previous research confirms that the selective exposure of offline news consumption is indeed mitigated in the online realm to some extent, where diverse media sources are easily accessible, especially through social media (Masip et al., 2020). Since online news consumption has been becoming

one of the most dominant source of individuals' political orientation<sup>19</sup>, this efficiently sustains the debate about whether easier access to different viewpoints will result in a higher quality level of democratic debates and deliberation, and all in all, in well-established public opinion on certain policy issues. Along with the theories referring to people's homophily, social networks and social media connections consist mostly of people that share similar worldviews, values and ideologies (Bail et al., 2018). Therefore, regular use of social media news feed as source of political information reinforces selective exposure theories. Social media users are mainly exposed to the opinion, interpretation of like-minded opinion bubbles, almost creating alternative realities and further dividing social groups, at the same time keeping the possibility of any deliberate actions on a low level. A further option would be that sponsored posts from ideologically different sources reach social media users, but the chances of this are extremely low, since sponsored advertisements - basically for the sake of financial return, are especially targeted to reach and convince like-minded users.

However, whether the optional availability or incidental exposure to opposing interpretations does not necessarily change the news consumption habits of individuals and their perception of various policy issues, namely, whether and how they perceive and integrate the narratives of ideologically different news sources, still remains unclear. What do individuals contemplate when exposed to media interpretation that oppose their political values and alignment? Obviously the optimistic approach assumes that the awareness about ideologically different news content as an important source of deliberation lead to more discussion, engagement and effort to understand different political approaches (Masip et al., 2020, p. 60), but in reality, non-like-minded media content can trigger intensive negative emotions like anger

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<sup>19</sup> There is also evidence that television provides higher cross-cutting exposure to opposing viewpoints than newspapers (Goldman & Mutz, 2011). Among social media platforms, Twitter seems to facilitate most likely the access to ideologically challenging news content (Masip et al., 2020, p. 54).

and anxiety, resulting in a more intensive rejection of opposing views, and further reinforcement of one's own convictions. Moreover, even though the theoretical availability of opposing sources in the online realm, individuals will not familiarize with the content of these sources if they are not aware or not reminded to their existence.

Obviously, several forms of information exchange between citizens regard as deliberation, but as the majority of the related research emphasize, the most effective (or at least the most supported) form of deliberation proved to be through interpersonal persuasion like local gatherings, political events (Boulianne, 2018; Bowler et al., 2007). Several studies presented the effective persuasive capabilities even of chat bots that presented ideologically opposing content to that of the receiver, moreover, they were more efficient in persuasion and deliberation compared to media sources (Bail et al., 2018; Zarouali et al., 2021). With Gabriella Szabó we found that people who are frequently involved in interpersonal conversations about politics are more likely to report about lower level of subjective well-being (E. Farkas & Szabó, forthcoming). Plausible explanation to this could be the passive nature of media news consumption as an activity, which does not motivate individuals to seriously consider their opinions. Whereas, the interpersonal exchange of ideas enforces an active argumentation and consideration of logic, during which the shaping of one's ideas who are involved is more likely to happen.

Two ways of exposure to non-like-minded media contents or cross-cutting exposure can emerge: (1) incidental exposure to ideologically different news mostly through social media, (2) balanced exposure, as a regular and conscious consumption of cross-cutting news sources. Through incidental exposure, individuals are confronted with news and information outside their political spectrum. Balanced exposure refers to a more conscious type of information consumption, intentionally seeking for information that confronts that of individuals. Considering expected costs of information seeking, balanced exposure undoubtedly requires

the most efforts and resources from individuals and therefore appears especially rarely. Nevertheless, most related researches show that confronting with news and information from different ideological sources needs a significant level of political interest and proactive engagement towards being well-informed about news related to politics. In case of social media, this would mean the following of media and information sources (groups or certain pages) that are different from the political alignment of the individual. This latter approach is especially typical among politically engaged citizens.

The type of news sources and the extent of difference in political alignment from the individuals' position influences the potential of incidental exposure. Related empirical evidence shows that high level of (perceived) partisan polarization of media sources drastically reduces even the incidental exposure to non-like-minded media sources, most probably because the political orientation of mediums is the easiest to detect in such polarized environments. In addition, as the relative hostile media phenomenon suggests, people with opposing political alignments perceive the same media content differently, mostly as it were hostile to their own political positions (Goldman & Mutz, 2011b).

However, several theoretical approaches challenge the ideas of echo chambers or selective exposure theory and point out that people do not necessarily avoid or reject media content that contradicts their worldviews. As the *biased-assimilation theory* suggests, individuals tend to spend even more time on analysing contradicting news content than reading news that fits their political and ideological value orientation. This, however, does not mean that these opposing arguments will be considered and integrated to their final policy position, but, through motivated reasoning, detailed awareness about opposing views most likely will reinforce initial policy positions and prepare people for any counter arguments in debates (Dandekar et al., 2013).

Although the scientific and public interest towards reducing polarized opinion differences is intensive, researches that investigate the effect of certain deliberative tools and plausible mechanisms behind are still in an early stage. Furthermore, the few studies that tested the effects of cross-cutting exposure arrived at contradicting conclusions. While some of the analysis revealed the deliberative effects of opposing news content, some pointed out the “backlash”, “backfire” or reverse influence on public opinion, namely that exposure to opposing views can result in further reinforcement of individuals’ initial opinions on an issue. One of the most complex related experiments was conducted by Bail and his colleagues (2018), during which respondents in the treatment group followed Twitter newsfeeds with opposing political ideologies for a month. According to the post-treatment survey, Republicans in the treatment group became substantially more conservative, and there was a slight increase in Democrats’ liberal attitudes as well.

## **8.2. Hungary as an extreme case of partisan media environment and hostile political information environment<sup>20</sup>**

“There is only one medicine against migration: not letting them to Hungary” claimed the Prime Minister Viktor Orbán even on 16 November 2023 in the state funded Kossuth Radio, which platform can be regarded as the main communication forum for him, where he regularly gives public interviews.<sup>21</sup> The political message seem to be clear since 2015: the Hungarian government refuses to host any refugees or immigrants (Boda & Rakovics, 2022). The 2015 migration crisis generated in Hungary an extensive public debate as well, especially because

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<sup>20</sup> This chapter partly relies on a previously published article (E. Farkas, 2022).

<sup>21</sup> Source: <https://kormany.hu/hirek/egyetlen-orvossag-a-migracióra-a-be-nem-engedes>. Downloaded: 21 February 2024.



Prime Minister Viktor Orbán and the governing party Fidesz has taken a clear anti-immigration position, using the counter-narrative to non-European immigrants as the main campaign message to mobilize their voters (Barna & Koltai, 2019; Bíró-Nagy, 2021). Immigration was successfully expropriated in the government's political communication, gaining media attention and agenda-setting priorities from the previously far-right party Jobbik. According to the Hungarian government's widespread position, Muslim immigrants mean a serious threat to the security, economy and Christian culture of Hungary, and "the government will counteract to protect Hungarian people from these threats". These views dominated media reports about immigration in pro-government media outlets.

The Fidesz government has spent an enormous amount of public money to disseminate their anti-immigration messages on posters, in various offline and online media outlets (Bernáth & Messing, 2015). Furthermore, several related events enhanced the intensity of the immigration discourse, like building the southern border barrier in 2015 or holding a referendum about refusing the EU's migration quota in October 2016. Though the mobilisation potential of the government remained below the expected level and the referendum was invalid due to the low electoral turnout, the government's anti-immigration campaign was very effective in terms of spreading the anti-immigration political message (Boda & Szabó, 2017).

Despite the significant decrease in the number of asylum seekers after September 2015, the issue still occupied a significant part of the Hungarian public discourse, and it became extremely politicised (Simonovits, 2020). The escalation of the political debate about the migration crisis in Hungary resulted in the increase of government's support. The majority of Hungarian citizens display anti-immigrant attitudes (Bíró-Nagy, 2021b; Messing & Ságvári, 2019), and several studies showed a tight correlation between being a Fidesz supporter and opposing immigrants from non-European countries to enter the continent and Hungary (Barna & Koltai, 2019). The migration crisis became a key topic of Fidesz to such an extent that the

intensive anti-immigration communication helped Fidesz to regain its popularity after a sharp decline in 2014. The anti-immigration message successfully became the leading political issue (or rather concern) especially among government supporters, and dominated the public discourse still during the 2018 national election and 2019 European Parliamentary election campaigns (Bíró-Nagy, 2021). It even appeared during the 2019 municipal election campaign, when the government still frequently enhanced the migration danger in their everyday communication.<sup>22</sup> Although government-supportive media sources still maintain the discussion about immigration on a minimum level, the immigration topic was not regarded salient in public discourses during the conduction of the survey experiment of this study.

At the beginning of the migration crisis in 2015 some opposition political actors intervened and publicly expressed their solidarity for example with people waiting at Keleti Railway Station or with those marching through Hungary to reach Austria. The most controversial opposition politician, former prime minister Ferenc Gyurcsány even hosted immigrants and refugees for a couple of days in his own house.<sup>23</sup> Although there are some opposition politicians who explicitly support inclusive attitude towards immigrants, generally neither the issue of immigration as such, nor any inclusive stances about immigration are frequently emphasized in Hungarian opposition parties' political communication, simply because their voters also do not necessarily support the idea of an inclusive society (Boros, 2019). In general and in the long run opposition politicians were extremely careful about expressing any pro-immigration opinions because it is complicated to address any inclusive political messages in an

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<sup>22</sup> As a typical example, the mayor of the Northern Hungarian village Salgótarján was accused of installing new public wells especially for immigrants, where their presence is hardly imaginable. Source: Index (2019). Fidesz candidate: are wells built for migrants? Available at <https://index.hu/belfold/2019/10/01/salgotarjan-ivokut-migransok-fekete-sandor-fenyvesi-gabor>. Downloaded 13 March 2020.

<sup>23</sup> Atv.hu (2015). Ferenc Gyurcsány hosted refugees in his house [Menekülteket fogadott be a házába Gyurcsány Ferenc] Available: <https://www.atv.hu/belfold/20150902/menekulteket-fogadott-a-hazaba-gyurcsany-ferenc>. Downloaded: 19 February 2024

environment characterised by anti-immigration attitudes mainly. Moreover, some clear anti-immigration messages also appeared, for example when the Green Party (LMP) suggested ankle monitors to track immigrants residing in Hungary (Kovarek & Littvay, 2019), or when the prime minister candidate Péter Márki-Zay established a “immigrant counter” at the southern border.<sup>24</sup> Consequently, critical voices with the government are generally underrepresented in the Hungarian public discourse compared to the intensity of the government’s anti-immigration messages.

Besides the dominant anti-immigration frames and voices, testing the effects of cross-cutting media frames is especially important in countries where the level of media-party parallelism is as high as in Hungary. The term “media-party parallelism” describes cases when “patterns of exposure to specific media sources parallel the party structure” or more precisely, “the extent to which the use of specific media sources predicted specific types of partisanship” (Goldman & Mutz, 2011b, pp. 45–46). Hungary provides a perfect example for partisan polarization, which seriously affects its media structure as well. The prediction holds especially relevant in Hungary’s case: higher levels of media-party parallelism correlate with lower levels of exposure to cross-cutting opinions. Therefore, inclusive immigration frames regard as cross-cutting media frames for the majority of Hungarian citizens, because they are unusual to see in media discourses. Even for people who do not rely entirely on government-friendly media outlets, because, as the previous media analysis pointed out, the immigration discourse was rather not visible or discussed neutrally in non-governmental media outlets. Moreover, I suppose it is not the same to be confronted with opposing views but in a way that the article’s interpretation challenges them, as reading reports that incorporate that opposing view. Namely,

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<sup>24</sup> Hvg.hu (2021). Márki-Zay established a „migrant counter” at the border crossing of Röszke [Márki-Zay felállított egy migránsszámlálót a röszkei határátkelőhöz]. Available: [https://hvg.hu/itthon/20211118\\_marki\\_zay\\_migrans\\_soros\\_kerites](https://hvg.hu/itthon/20211118_marki_zay_migrans_soros_kerites) Downloaded: 19 February 2024

even though people who read about how government-friendly media outlets challenge and question pro-immigration arguments (and thus getting aware of these pro-immigration arguments), articles and arguments that interpret by clearly applying inclusive immigration frames will be new for them, too.

Based on the theoretical considerations outlined above and regarding the disproportionately dominant anti-immigration or exclusive immigration frames in the Hungarian media context, this chapter investigates the following hypothesis about cross-cutting immigration frames and public opinion about immigration:

*H6: Inclusive immigration frames strengthen and reinforce the original attitude of those Hungarians with anti-immigration views.*

### **8.3. Data and the design of the experiment**

Experiments can provide a sufficient research tool for testing the main question of this analysis, the influence of various inclusive (and exclusive) immigration frames on different aspects of immigration attitudes. Despite their disadvantages (which will be listed and discussed in detail below), experiments are one of the most widely applied methodologies in this research field. Namely, experiments are the most common and manifest way to discover causal inferences between the independent (immigration frames) and the dependent (immigration attitudes) variables of this study.

Throughout the experiment, respondents were randomly exposed to either inclusive or exclusive immigration frames. Therefore, contrary to real-life media consumption choices, respondents are arbitrarily exposed to one of these immigration related arguments. To test their influence in this survey experiment, I determined three different aspects of immigration frames previously: the economy, culture and security frames, and both categories were split into an

exclusive and inclusive interpretation<sup>25</sup>, among which respondents randomly received one frame as treatment in every round for three times. Relying on the general cognitive influence of media frames on one hand, which claims that cognitive associations of media frames are established in public thinking so that minor pieces of information are enough to recall them (Druckman, 2001a), and to avoid partisan biases as much as possible on the other hand, no media sources are indicated with the presented immigration frames throughout the experiment, but they are rather highlighted as various arguments in favor of or against the inclusion of non-European immigrants and refugees. This kind of applied method of testing media framing effects is typical to similar research in this field (see e.g. Hainmueller & Hiscox, 2010; Wenzel & Żerkowska-Balas, 2019). Namely, studies that examine media framing effects do not necessarily present specific media contents to the survey respondents, but rather highlight the most important arguments that appear in these various frames. However, the fact that the arguments can be found in several media sources will be indicated at the beginning of the displayed immigration frames.

Consequently, every respondent received five attitude questions (pre- and post-test, economy, culture and security related immigration attitudes), and three treatments (inclusive or exclusive immigration frames) before the relevant attitude questions and except for the pre and post-test of immigration attitudes. Similarly to the interview outline of the focus group discussions later and for the sake of comparison and generalizability, the formulation of immigration attitude questions in my survey experiment follow the questionnaires of the

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<sup>25</sup> I am aware that my approach inevitably excludes some immigration frames that were discovered by previous studies. I aspired to build in most of these frames to the six tested categories, for example the humanitarian frame appears in the inclusive cultural and security interpretation about immigration.

European Social Survey.<sup>26</sup> Figure 1 demonstrates the design of the experiment, the logic and the procedure of the survey questionnaire in detail.

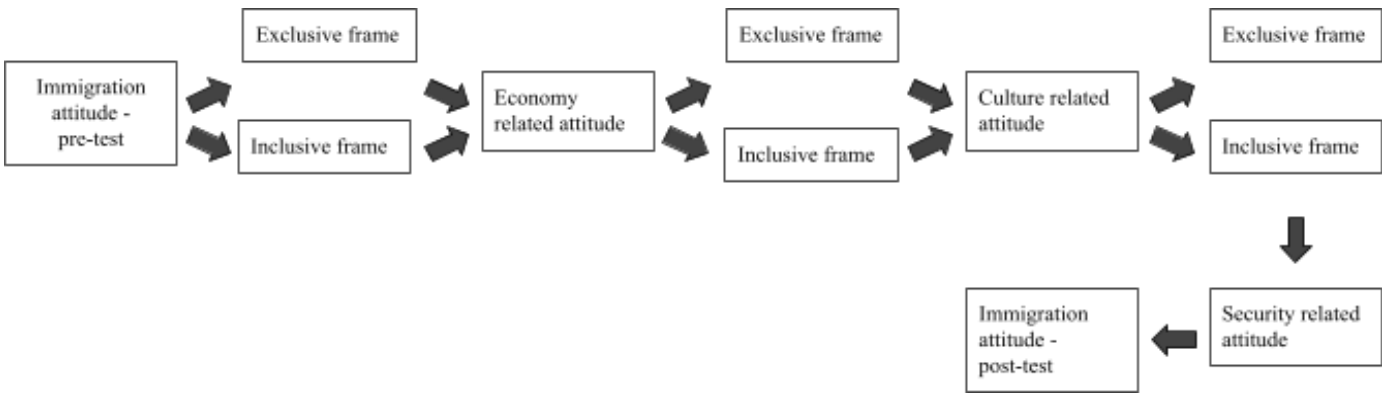


Figure 10. The design of the survey experiment. Own compilation.

Table 1 shows the combination of frames applied as triggers in the experiment and the number of respondents who received the different combinations of these frames. Although the likelihood of receiving certain frames was equal in every case out of the three, due to differences caused by this random likelihood, they did not appear in exactly the same rate to the respondents, and this is what causes the differences in numbers between the categories below. The Hungarian and English formulation of these presented immigration frames are listed in Appendix 2.

	Culture frame
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<sup>26</sup> The following questions were asked after presenting the related inclusive or exclusive immigration frames: Would you say it is generally bad or good for Hungary’s *economy* that people come to live here from other countries? Would you say that Hungary’s *cultural life* is generally undermined or enriched by people coming to live here from other countries? Would you say that Hungary’s *security* is not at all threatened or very much threatened by the presence of people coming to live here from other countries? Answer options ranged between 1 and 10, where 1 represented the most exclusive immigration attitude and 10 the most inclusive immigration attitude in case of every question.

				<i>Exclusive</i>	<i>Inclusive</i>
<b>Security frame</b>	<i>Exclusive</i>	<b>Economy frame</b>	<i>Exclusive</i>	116	108
			<i>Inclusive</i>	113	147
	<i>Inclusive</i>	<b>Economy frame</b>	<i>Exclusive</i>	152	98
			<i>Inclusive</i>	143	121

Table 9. The combination of frames in the experiment and the number of respondents in each treatment group.

The survey experiment was conducted by Computer Assisted Personal Interviews (CAPI), during July 2020 (N=998). The fieldwork was carried out by TÁRKI Research Institute. Note that the fieldwork was postponed several times because of the emergency provisions related to the coronavirus pandemic, and the summer of 2020 was an exceptional time frame when face to face surveys were allowed to be conducted. Although there were several immigration related aspects of the coronavirus pandemic<sup>27</sup>, and experts feared that it will enhance negative and exclusive public attitudes towards immigrants (Dennison et al., 2022), as my media analysis also pointed out, the issue of immigration was not salient at that time in the Hungarian media and political discourses; contrary to other European media contexts, the immigration related aspects of the pandemic were not discussed.

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<sup>27</sup> For example, in the very beginning of the pandemic, when Iranian students were accused of starting to spread the COVID-19 virus, the government attempted to fit the story in their usual anti-migrant frame, but this attempt failed pretty soon. Source: <https://www.direkt36.hu/igy-jettek-baratokbol-a-koronavirus-bunosei-az-iraniak/> Downloaded: 20 February 2024. Although for example the German discourse extensively reported and argued about the immigration related aspects of the coronavirus in refugee camps or the economic consequences, these approaches did not appear in the Hungarian discourse at all.

Besides the treatment and immigration attitude questions, the survey included important measurements of relevant independent variables, i.e. (1) whether they voted for the governing Fidesz party, (2) their media consumption habits: the amount of time they spend with consuming politics related news, and the most typical news sources from where respondents gather these information, and (3) relevant socio-demographic variables: their age, level of education and whether they live in villages or not. As for the party preference of the respondents, I especially aimed to include the dummy variable that measures voting for Fidesz in the models to see, whether the intensive anti-immigration propaganda of the government manifested in the actual immigration attitudes as well. Furthermore, since the fragmented political ideologies of opposition parties, their low rate of popular support (thus the low number of cases in the survey) and their obscure position about immigration, it would have been difficult to include a variable in the regression models that indicates voting for opposition parties. Regarding media consumption habits, a dummy variable in the models indicate whether the radio is the primary source of public news source for the respondent or not, since that was the only information source where the government's anti-immigration messages clearly dominated. Even there are television channels which can hit a critical tone with the Fidesz government, and thus the related variable would not unquestionably mean the dominance of the government's exclusive immigration frames.

Last, as a manipulation check, respondents were asked in an open question, which country they think the most immigrants arrive from to Hungary. As a result of the Fidesz government's anti-immigration campaign, respondents are assumed to associate immigration with non-European nationalities, mostly from war zone countries like Syria, Afghanistan or Iraq, which were the countries that the majority of the respondents indicated as supposed country of origin of most immigrants arriving to Hungary. Only a minority suggested that most immigrants arriving to Hungary originate from Eastern-European countries, like Ukraine, Romania, Serbia,



or Croatia. This reveals that most respondents have similar associations on immigration, which is in line with the government's political communication, which shows the successful spread of related anti-immigration messages, too.<sup>28</sup>

#### **8.4. Do cross-cutting immigration frames and arguments reverse opinions? Results of the survey experiment**

Could the exposure to inclusive immigration frames influence the immigration attitude of Hungarian respondents? This section aims to present the main results of the survey experiment by three approaches. First, ordinary least squares (OLS) regression models will demonstrate the relationship between inclusive immigration frames and related immigration attitudes by interacting the inclusive immigration frame treatment with each of the independent variables in the model. Second, logistic regression models will estimate the interrelation between inclusive immigration frames and the post-test immigration attitude variable, when the inclusive immigration frame treatment will be similarly interacted with the explanatory variables in the regression models. Third, a logistic regression model will test whether those respondents who only received inclusive immigration frames throughout the experiment will be less likely to refuse the acceptance of all immigrants and refugees in Hungary, measured by the post-test immigration attitude variable, including the same interaction terms as before.

Results are summarized in Table 4-10. Although the number of regression models presented here feels overwhelming, I can interpret the most important lessons of all of the model estimations in the following paragraph because the inclusive immigration frames and their

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<sup>28</sup> The Central Statistical Office registered 103 asylum seekers in Hungary in 2020 altogether, whose country of origin is not published yet, though the data from 2019 shows that most asylum seekers arrived from Afghanistan and Iraq. Sources: [https://www.ksh.hu/docs/hun/xstadat/xstadat\\_eves/i\\_wnvn002b.html](https://www.ksh.hu/docs/hun/xstadat/xstadat_eves/i_wnvn002b.html) and [https://www.ksh.hu/docs/hun/xstadat/xstadat\\_evkozi/e\\_wnvn001.html](https://www.ksh.hu/docs/hun/xstadat/xstadat_evkozi/e_wnvn001.html), accessed 3 March, 2021.

interaction terms show identical results across the regression models, regardless of which dependent variables (the related immigration attitude or the post-test attitude) or independent variables (the inclusive immigration frame on economy, culture or security or all of them) are at stake. Most importantly, according to the model estimations, almost none of the variables of main interest show significant interrelation with the dependent variables. Namely, inclusive immigration frames have no influence on the immigration attitudes of respondents throughout the survey experiment, regardless of their socio-demographic characteristics, media consumption habits or party preference. However, a very important finding can be highlighted on the other hand. Most of the regression models consistently show significant negative interrelation between Fidesz as a preferred party and the various measurement forms of immigration attitudes. A similarly robust variable in the models was the amount of time individuals spent on reading, watching and listening to politics related news – the more time spent on gaining information about current politics, the more anti-immigrant attitude these respondents reported about. This means that spending more time on news consumption does not necessarily result in familiarity with more diverse interpretations, but these people spend longer time on media sources with similar political alignments. Also, listening to radio as the primary information source can negatively influence the immigration attitudes. Not that consistently, but the level of education was also several times positively interrelated with the immigration attitude variables, meaning that the more educated the respondents are, the more accepting their attitudes towards immigrants. People who live in villages seem to represent more anti-immigration viewpoints.

<b>DV: immigration attitude on economy</b>	<b>Model 1</b>	<b>Model 2</b>	<b>Model 3</b>	<b>Model 4</b>	<b>Model 5</b>
Education	0.252.	0.107*	0.107*	0.106*	0.107*
Village	-0.265	0.094	-0.271	-0.275	-0.271
Fidesz	-1.152***	-1.171***	-1.152*	-1.161***	-1.149***
Media time	-0.012***	-0.012***	-0.012***	-0.006	-0.012***

Radio	-0.333	-0.328	-0.332	-0.342	0.825
Inclusive frame	0.202	-0.100	-0.172	-0.038	-0.050
Education*Treatment	-0.091				
Village*Treatment		-0.236			
Fidesz*Treatment			-0.005		
Media time *Treatment				-0.004	
Radio*Treatment					-0.732
Intercept	4.615***	5.104***	5.210***	5.009***	5.028***
Adjusted R2	0.123	0.122	0.121	0.122	0.125

10. Table. OLS regression models – Treatment: inclusive economy frame & DV: economy related attitude variable.  $p=0$  \*\*\*,  $p=0.001$  \*\*,  $p=0.01$  \*,  $p=0.05$ . Source: TÁRKI data, 2020. Own compilation.

DV: immigration attitude on culture	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
Education	0.259*	0.034	0.033	0.033	0.033
Village	-0.639***	-0.971.	-0.637***	-0.637***	-0.637***
Fidesz	-0.832***	-0.837***	-1.153*	-0.834***	-0.834***
Media time	-0.011***	-0.011***	-0.011***	-0.017*	-0.017*
Radio	-0.429*	-0.467*	-0.458*	-0.455*	-0.455*
Inclusive frame	0.624.	-0.068	-0.110	-0.149	-0.149
Education*Treatment	-0.150.				
Village*Treatment		0.229			
Fidesz*Treatment			0.212		
Media time *Treatment				0.004	
Radio*Treatment					0.005
Intercept	3.856***	4.903***	4.966***	5.018***	5.018***
Adjusted R2	0.112	0.107	0.107	0.108	0.108

11. Table. OLS regression models – Treatment: inclusive culture frame & DV: culture related attitude variable.  $p=0$  \*\*\*,  $p=0.001$  \*\*,  $p=0.01$  \*,  $p=0.05$ . Source: TÁRKI data, 2020. Own compilation.

CEU eTD Decision	DV: immigration attitude on security	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
	Education	0.180	0.081.	0.080.	0.081.	0.081.
	Village	0.021	0.082	0.022	0.018	0.018
	Fidesz	-1.330***	-1.332***	-1.649**	-1.322***	-1.322***
	Media time	-0.007*	-0.007*	-0.007*	0.001	0.001
	Radio	-0.311	-0.314	-0.319	-0.341	-0.341
	Inclusive frame	-0.009	-0.265	-0.390	-0.105	-0.105
	Education*Treatment	-0.065				
	Village*Treatment		-0.040			
	Fidesz*Treatment			0.211		

Media time				-0.005	
*Treatment					
Radio*Treatment					-0.005
Intercept	4.587***	4.981***	5.176***	4.723***	4.723***
Adjusted R2	0.109	0.108	0.108	0.109	0.108

12. Table. OLS regression models – Treatment: inclusive security frame & DV: security related attitude variable. .  $p=0$  \*\*\*,  $p=0.001$  \*\*,  $p=0.01$  \*,  $p=0.05$ . Source: TÁRKI data, 2020. Own compilation.

DV: Post-test immigration attitude	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
Education	0.521**	0.191***	0.192***	0.192***	0.193***
Village	-0.268	-0.821	-0.264	-0.289	-0.284
Fidesz	-0.810***	-0.800***	-1.272.	-0.814***	-0.815***
Media time	-0.021***	-0.021***	-0.021***	-0.009	-0.021***
Radio	-0.819*	-0.819	-0.825*	-0.821*	-0.453
Inclusive on economy	1.048*	0.021	-0.012	0.316	0.131
Education*Treatment	-0.206*				
Village*Treatment		0.339			
Fidesz*Treatment			0.290		
Media time *Treatment				-0.008	
Radio*Treatment					-0.223
Intercept	-2.540**	-0.914.	-0.859.	-1.361*	-1.082*
Adjusted R2	0.109	0.108	0.108	0.109	0.108

13. Table. Logistic regression models – Treatment: inclusive economy frame & DV: Post-test immigration attitude variable.  $p=0$  \*\*\*,  $p=0.001$  \*\*,  $p=0.01$  \*,  $p=0.05$ . Source: TÁRKI data, 2020. Own compilation.

DV: Post-test immigration attitude	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
Education	0.034	0.193***	0.193***	0.193***	0.193***
Village	-0.272	-0.361	-0.267	-0.267	-0.267
Fidesz	-0.827***	-0.815***	-0.836	-0.814***	-0.815***
Media time	-0.021***	-0.021***	-0.021***	-0.024	-0.024
Radio	-0.823*	-0.799*	-0.796*	-0.797*	-0.797*
Inclusive on culture	-0.278	0.174	0.186	0.143	0.143
Education*Treatment	0.104				
Village*Treatment		0.064			
Fidesz*Treatment			0.013		
Media time *Treatment				0.002	
Radio*Treatment					0.002
Intercept	-0.441	-1.141*	-1.160*	-1.096.	-1.096.

DV: Post-test immigration attitude	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
Education	0.205***	0.190***	0.197***	0.201***	0.195***
Village	-0.268	-0.444.	-0.278	-0.269	-0.281
Fidesz	-0.822***	-0.794***	-0.814***	-0.820***	-0.821***
Media time	-0.021***	-0.021***	-0.021***	-0.019***	-0.021***
Radio	-0.782*	-0.854*	-0.790*	-0.805*	-0.839*
Only inclusive frames	0.011	-0.675	-0.233	0.194	-0.300
Education*Treatment	-0.057				
Village*Treatment		1.230.			
Fidesz*Treatment			-0.077		
Media time *Treatment				-0.019	
Radio*Treatment					0.296
Intercept	-0.908**	-0.795**	-0.867**	-0.935**	-0.855**
Adjusted R2	0.109	0.108	0.108	0.109	0.108
Adjusted R2	0.109	0.108	0.108	0.109	0.109

14. Table. Logistic regression models – Treatment: inclusive culture frame & DV: Post-test immigration attitude variable.  $p=0$  \*\*\*,  $p=0.001$  \*\*,  $p=0.01$  \*,  $p=0.05$ . Source: TÁRKI data, 2020. Own compilation.

DV: Post-test immigration attitude	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
Education	0.083	0.195***	0.195***	0.196***	0.198***
Village	-0.273	-1.461.	-0.269	-0.272	-0.252
Fidesz	-0.829***	-0.831***	-0.255	-0.806***	-0.831***
Media time	-0.021***	-0.021***	-0.021***	-0.007	-0.022***
Radio	-0.809*	-0.854*	-0.808*	-0.824*	0.348
Inclusive on security	-0.495	-0.368	0.006	0.095	-0.089
Education*Treatment	0.074				
Village*Treatment		0.774			
Fidesz*Treatment			-0.383		
Media time *Treatment				-0.010	
Radio*Treatment					-0.775
Intercept	-0.133	-0.328	-0.909.	-1.043.	-0.754.
Adjusted R2	0.109	0.108	0.108	0.109	0.108

15. Table. Logistic regression models – Treatment: inclusive security frame & DV: Post-test immigration attitude variable.  $p=0$  \*\*\*,  $p=0.001$  \*\*,  $p=0.01$  \*,  $p=0.05$ . Source: TÁRKI data, 2020. Own compilation.

16. Table. Logistic regression model – Treatment: only inclusive frames & DV: post-test immigration attitude variable.  $p=0$  \*\*\*,  $p=0.001$  \*\*,  $p=0.01$  \*,  $p=0.05$ . Source: TÁRKI data, 2020. Own compilation.

### 8.5. Conclusions and limitations of the experiment

The main goal of this study was to test the influence of inclusive and exclusive immigration frames on related attitudes in the Hungarian context, where media-party parallelism is especially high, from which media sources mostly negative messages about immigration reach out, and where the majority of public opinion about immigration is hostile. In this political and media context inclusive immigration frames can be regarded as cross-cutting media exposure for many citizens, and create an opportunity to test this research concept. A backlash influence of inclusive immigration frames could challenge the original logic of how positive messages in media discourses on immigration could change prejudices in a society. A survey experiment was conducted to measure the influence of inclusive (and exclusive) media frames about the economy, culture and security dimensions of immigration on public opinion. Results showed that (1) none of the inclusive immigration frames (or their combinations) influenced immigration attitudes of the respondents, (2) the most important variable that consistently explained the variance of the dependent immigration attitude variables was the one that measured the support of the governing party Fidesz, (3) less consistently, but regression models also showed that the more time people spend with consuming public news and rely on radio as the main media source, the more likely they will report about anti-immigration attitudes. Consequently, even though survey experiments are a sufficient method to measure the instantaneous effect of immigration frames on attitudes, the hypothesis of this chapter on the backlash effect of inclusive immigration frames on Hungarian respondents' anti-immigration attitudes are rejected.

There are important limitations of this analysis that need to be addressed, and which warn to be careful about drawing serious long-term conclusions about how cross-cutting exposure to inclusive immigration frames might affect immigration attitudes. Similarly to most survey experiments, “laboratory”, artificial circumstances could hinder the simulation of real life circumstances, namely that although the content and formulation of presented frames rely on real media data, news reading context was not simulated, which reduces the external validity and thus the generalizability of the results of my analysis. Several replications of this survey experiment in the Hungarian context could solve this deficiency.

Second, related theories enhance reverse opinions after being exposed to cross-cutting media frames and media content, which was hypothesized in my study as well. Nevertheless, change in opinion is not an easy phenomenon to measure, since similar survey questions before and after the treatment would ruin the reliability of responses within the survey experiment. Therefore, the findings of this research are limited in this regard. Possibly a more complicated, longitudinal survey design with a follow up measurement could provide a solution for that. Furthermore, other formulation of inclusive and exclusive media frames should be tested in future survey experiments as well, in order to either prove the robustness of this study, or to potentially reject or challenge the findings above. Consequently, to enhance again, the future replication of this survey experiment could be an important follow-up and solution to the shortcomings of this research design.

## **9. Group deliberation, persuasion, immigration frames and related attitudes in focus group discussions**

Now I have come to the final empirical test of the effects of inclusive (and exclusive) immigration frames on individual attitudes to immigration, which is the single qualitative part of my research design. In the following I introduce the concept, implementation and the results of the online focus group discussions carried out among Hungarian participants two weeks before and two weeks after the national elections on 3<sup>rd</sup> of April in 2022. The main aim of these focus group discussions is to investigate in detail how the presentation of various inclusive and exclusive immigration frames in group debates - where various arguments on the issue collide through interpersonal exchange and persuasion - influence immigration attitudes. The individual-level research question is identical for this empirical part as well, namely, whether inclusive immigration frames move individuals' opinions towards more acceptance about immigrants and refugees in Hungary, where anti-immigrant communication and attitudes dominate. Previously, in the theoretical chapter I already formulated the related hypothesis (H7), which, claims that:

*H7: Group discussions on inclusive and exclusive frames contribute to reducing anti-immigration sentiments among Hungarian respondents.*

During the focus group discussions, participants were presented articles and Facebook posts that represented several typical inclusive and exclusive immigration frames relying on the previous Facebook content analysis, then continued to discuss their views about the articles and the various aspects of immigration. Although I am aware that qualitative research methods are less suitable to verify or reject positivist hypotheses, the formulation of it was rather to stay consistent with the previous approaches; related limitations will be explicitly highlighted below.



### **9.1. The role of group debates and deliberation in opinion formation**

While the deliberative function of the media has always been debated among academics and other experts, and Hungarian public opinion also seems to be very critical with the media as a deliberative tool (Oross, 2023), there is more consensus on the effectiveness of group deliberation in opinion formation (Westwood, 2015). More precisely, while various available information in media sources are less effective to shade opinions, group discussions could be more relevant in this regard. This is because in a group setting not only various arguments are presented, but also persuasion between participants contributes to these arguments, which can significantly influence whether people actually consider counterarguments or not.

Previously the media was considered as one of the main forums of democratic discussions, the arena of information exchange and orientation on various policy issues. Thus, theoretically, media sources could provide appropriate materials for careful information seeking, allowing individuals to formulate considerate opinions and attitudes. However, the trends in polarization of public debates and media contents create serious burdens to these assumptions. Most importantly, individuals are most likely obsessed with media channels that reflect their views and ideologies, and thus more frequent media consumption does not result in moderate and differentiated opinions, but on the contrary, they strengthen the original opinion on various policy issues.

Regarding information sources and political knowledge on various public issues, George E. Marcus describes two contrasting concepts of citizenship (2013). In his deliberative model, individuals highly rely on explicit learning and contemporary assessment of their political knowledge by constantly seeking for more new information in order to generate the most effective response to debated policy issues. Whereas, according to the partisan model of citizenship, individuals rely less on learning and more on the policy positions of their preferred political party, inhibiting engagement with new information. In the deliberative model,

participants are open to cooperate with any parties, while partisans express solidarity with their friends only. Most current research seem to confirm the dominance of the latter approach, the dominance of partisan information seeking. Furthermore, the group theory of democracy claims that different social group interactions and identities are the foundations of political identity and rational reasoning. As many studies and experiments showed, “group norms can override individual judgments” (Achen & Bartels, 2016, p. 220). In this sense the emotional commitment to one’s viewpoint must be also accounted for. Strong emotional commitment to political parties may lead to biased beliefs about the world, since people do not want to sacrifice their worldview, which means they look for biased information that confirms their beliefs. Achen and Bartels also point out that although media access and supply has increased dramatically in recent years, the quality of politics related news did not necessarily improve, moreover, media bubbles result in homogeneous media consumption. Even when people “do the best they can”, they rely mostly on partisan beliefs and folk wisdom to get informed about public issues (Achen & Bartels, 2016, p. 275). From this perspective, the issue position of voters is a consequence, not a cause of their party choice. Voters learn the position of their preferred party and candidates, and form their opinion accordingly, i.e. they apply partisan motivated reasoning during decision making.

Few studies examined yet, how group discussions could influence immigration attitudes of individuals. Several studies concentrated on validating immigration related survey questions with focus group discussions (Gorodzeisky, 2011). Although the research design of Kalogeropoulus and Hopmann did not build specifically on the analysis of focus groups but on panel surveys that aim to measure the change in individual immigration attitudes, they showed that individuals who are less favorable towards immigrants are more likely to engage in interpersonal exchange about the topic (2019). They explain this through the spiral of silence theory, which suggests that people who believe they are in a minority with their opinion are

more likely to exclude themselves from a related group discussion. As a result, focus group discussions may be dominated by anti-immigration voices.

As I highlighted several times in the previous theoretical and empirical chapters, the media discourse and attitudes on immigration belong to the most politicized and polarized policy topics in Hungary. Therefore, the country and the context provide a suitable research case to study the deliberative functions of the media within an opinion exchange. Furthermore, because of the mostly anti-immigration discourse and attitudinal patterns, the presentation of various immigration frames that include inclusive arguments in the immigration debate are likely to regard as cross-cutting media exposure. In the following I investigate, whether inclusive and diverse media contents and public discourses on immigration convey deliberation, namely, whether they can mitigate opinion differences and promote group consensus on the issue of immigration in this context.

## **9.2. The design of the focus group discussions**

The main point of applying focus group discussions in a research is “interaction between participants to produce data and insights that might not be accessible without this interaction” (Daniels et al., 2019). That was the main consideration in case of my research design as well. The exchange of thoughts on immigration and on related media contents, the intention to persuade other group participants about own views establish a situation that is otherwise rare in the average everyday of citizens, nor is it easy to simulate by any other research tools. Thus, the aim is to observe the possible influence of these interactions on the way how participants formulate their opinion about the various aspects of immigration.

Since the coronavirus pandemic, online research tools became widely applied in scientific methodologies. Although these online focus group discussions render some disadvantages

compared to the traditional in-person version of the method, several advantages should be mentioned, too. The most significant advantage is probably the convenience and efficiency of the technique to conduct qualitative research (Archibald et al., 2019). Namely, softwares for online group discussions are now easily and freely accessible, most of the people became familiar with using them during the pandemic, and conducting online (group) interviews are time- and cost-effective. Geographical barriers basically disappear, and thus the selection of participants becomes very flexible, providing higher external validity for the research (Daniels et al., 2019). Also, there is no (or at least less) need to worry about physical appearance, which can also hinder several people to participate in interview situations that include the presence of other people besides the researchers as well (Morgan & Lobe, 2011; O'Connor & Madge, 2003).

Among the disadvantages, the potential disruption of internet connection should be mentioned firstly, which can seriously harm the flow of the conversation and can even exclude certain participants from the debate – either because they are aware of the bad quality of their internet connection and don't sign up for the group discussion, or because of the bad internet connection they drop out from the discussion during the interview. Participants can also be interrupted during focus group discussions by other members of their household. Furthermore, the usage of non-verbal gestures is less significant in online focus group discussions compared to the offline setups, which limits the contextualization of the participants' contribution to the debate (Archibald et al., 2019).

The focus group discussions were conducted in cooperation with colleague of mine, Attila Farkas, PhD candidate at the Doctoral School of Political Science at ELTE University. As Carey highlights in terms of the role of the moderators, “the analysis should be done by someone who observed the session, although not necessarily the leader.” (1995, p. 493) We considered it important to be able to moderate the debates, so that we are familiar not only with the transcripts, but with the nuanced atmosphere, tensions, group dynamics during the discussions, too. The

first discussion was moderated by me and Attila observed it, whereas the second one the other way around, Attila moderated and I observed the discussion. The online focus group discussions were conducted and recorded by using the Microsoft Teams software (*Microsoft Teams*, 2023).

The summary of the interview outline was already introduced in the previous related section where the research design was comprehensively described. Below I elaborate the interview outline of the focus group discussions in more detail, explaining the functions of each question regarding the research question and the hypothesis that aims to be explored about the influence of inclusive and exclusive immigration frames in group discussions.

In the introductory round, after sharing their names and occupation, we encouraged participants to estimate the rate of immigrants in their neighborhood and town. This estimation is the subjective perception of them, but provide important information about how serious they consider the immigration issue in their surroundings, and helps to warm up for the discussion about the topic. The second block is dedicated to media consumption habits of the participants. This block is especially important to know whether the presented articles could have reached them previously. The aim of the third block is to explore the general immigration attitudes of the participants, and thus to identify their initial positions on the issue before presenting the selected Facebook posts to them and to ground the debate after the reading of these media contents. To facilitate the expression of opinions about immigration, we applied the following technique: we asked questions that are identical with related standard survey questions of ESS about the economic, cultural and security aspects of immigration, but participants had to give reasons for their choices, so that preferences and underlying motivations become explicit and clear for everyone in the group.<sup>29</sup> Remember, these ESS questions were applied for computing

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<sup>29</sup> Similarly to the survey experiment, the following questions were asked and discussed during the focus group discussions: Would you say it is generally bad or good for Hungary's *economy* that people come to live here from other countries? Would you say that Hungary's *cultural life* is generally undermined or enriched by people coming

the dependent variables in the regression analyses, and for the survey experiment after each immigration frame treatment, too.

The immigration attitude questions were followed by the presentation of the selected Facebook posts. After 5 minutes, the Facebook posts were removed from the screen and the discussion could begin about the information that participants remembered about the media contents they just saw and how they relate to it, what they think about it. We also asked, what kind of emotions these articles triggered in them. Furthermore, we constantly encouraged participants to reflect on each other's statements and emotions. Responses in this block were crucial to explore the main research question, because they could indicate if the presented media contents had any kind of influence on how participants think about immigrants and refugees, despite of the arguments in the previous discussion.

The articles that were used as vignettes during the focus group discussions were selected throughout the analysis of Facebook posts in the following steps. First, I checked the distribution of posts and the various forms of emoji reactions to detect typical trends and engagement rates across media outlets. Second, I focused on Facebook posts that received an outstanding number of user reactions, and analyzed the content of them in more detail. This already highlighted an important advantage of including Facebook contents compared to scraped data. Although precise manual scraping can completely cover the content of online media outlets during certain time periods and thus create a comprehensive dataset, it is more ad hoc whether data about the number of visitors, comments or any type of "readership feedback" are available, while the various emoji reactions on Facebook posts can be more suggestive in this regard. Selected

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to live here from other countries? Would you say that Hungary's *security* is not at all threatened or very much threatened by the presence of people coming to live here from other countries? Answer options ranged between 1 and 10, where 1 represented the most exclusive immigration attitude and 10 the most inclusive immigration attitude in case of every question.

Facebook posts that are the subject of focus group discussions received exceptionally high emoji reactions from followers, and had an extreme sentiment score. It was also important to present contents from each media outlet that are included in my research. The articles and Facebook posts that were presented can be found in the Appendix.

A standard question close the discussion about how many immigrants in general participants would allow to enter to their country. Standardized answers are provided, but participants are required to give reasons for their choices again.<sup>30</sup> This block could further clarify whether the discussion caused any changes in the participants' immigration attitudes, and by wrapping up the debate, it aimed to ensure that no participants remain upset or disappointed after leaving the discussion, and that everyone was provided the opportunity to express their remaining thoughts and feelings about the issues on the table.

As for the selection of focus group participants, it was important that the various categories of settlement type or seize, level of education and party preferences were represented equally among focus group participants.<sup>31</sup> Table 1 summarizes the characteristics of the participants of the two focus group discussions by presenting their average age, settlement, their highest degree in education, the party that they voted for at the 2018 national elections, and the political party they intended to vote for at the 2022 national elections in case of the first group, and the political party they voted for in case of the second group. The selection process was conducted by a market research company, who provided their list of contacts, advertised the event among those people, and organized the online discussions as well. We can see that the average age of participants was a bit higher in the second group, they came from more settlements that also

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<sup>30</sup> 1 – anyone who submits an asylum application, 2 – the number of people specified by a possible EU quote, 3 – only those people who seek refuge from wars, 4 – we should not accept anyone at all.

<sup>31</sup> We are grateful for Rozália Szamaránszky, who supported our project by implementing the selection of the participants to the focus group discussions.

included smaller towns not only cities, and more people leaned towards the governing party than in the first group. Although this might have caused some bias in the discussions, from a methodological point of view the two groups regard as comparable.

	<b>Group 1 – 24<sup>th</sup> of March 2022</b>	<b>Group 2 – 14<sup>th</sup> of April 2022</b>
Average age	43	53
Settlement	Budapest: 2 persons County centers: 5 persons	Budapest: 1 person County centers: 3 persons Villages: 4 persons
Education	Vocational: 1 person Graduated: 3 persons College: 1 person University: 2 persons	Vocational: 2 persons Graduated: 4 persons College: 1 person University: 1 person
Party preference 2018	Democratic Coalition: 1 person Fidesz-KDNP: 2 persons Jobbik: 2 persons MSZP-P: 1 person Did not vote: 1 person	Fidesz-KDNP: 4 persons Jobbik: 2 persons LMP: 1 person Other party: 1 person
Party preference 2022	Fidesz-KDNP: 3 persons United for Hungary: 2 persons Does not know: 2 persons	Fidesz-KDNP: 5 persons United for Hungary: 1 person Did not vote: 1 person Does not tell: 1 person

Regarding the media consumption habits of the participants, independent of their ages or level of education, most of them claimed that they get news and public information from online sources primarily. In most cases, commuting time is dedicated to news reading, when they scroll over their Facebook news feed and over the content of preferred online newspapers. Traditional media sources, like printed newspapers or the daily news in television channels seem to lose their role permanently. Those who mentioned these information sources as relevant were all



retired or close to retirement. In both groups, more participants emphasized that around certain public events they consume news more intensively, like the 2022 national elections or the war in Ukraine. Several participants, mostly those who seemed more interested and engaged in politics emphasized that in order to get balanced information and arguments, they read multiple media sources. As they interpreted, they read news from “both sides” of the political spectrum comprehensively, meaning that they try to assess both the government’s and opposition parties’ approaches to certain policy issues and/or public events.

### **9.3. The assessment of the focus group discussions**

Below I interpret the results of the focus group discussions, participants’ attitudes towards immigration and immigrants in light of being exposed to the various typical immigration frames during the discussions. To underline my points and argumentations, I highlight related quotes from the two focus group discussions’ transcripts to support each claim. But before that, as for an overview of the discussions, let me provide some details about the values that were given by the participants to the standardized questions related to their immigration attitude, preceding the presentation of the selected Facebook posts. Although the main point of applying these questions in the interview outline was to motivate participants to share their more complex ideas and thoughts, the quantitative numbers can provide some insights about the starting points and possible group dynamics, too. Table 1 presents the average values of these answers in both focus groups. In case of the first three questions, answer options ranged from 1 to 10, where 1 represented the most exclusive and 10 the most inclusive attitudes on immigration. Whereas in case of the last question, answer options ranged from 1 to 4, where higher values represented more exclusive immigration attitudes (1 - “we should accept everyone who seeks asylum” vs. 4 - “no asylum seekers or immigrants should be accepted”). We can see that the second group

was more anti-immigrant in general in every investigated aspect of immigration. At the end of the discussions, most participants chose either the option that “only people from war zones should be accepted” or “no one should be accepted”, so the conclusions were rather exclusive in both cases. Even though the presented media contents could have provided some insights related to the inclusive aspects of immigration, they were hardly as persuasive as arguments and personal attitudes.

	Economy		Culture		Security		Overall	
	Group 1	Group 2	Group 1	Group 2	Group 1	Group 2	Group 1	Group 2
Average	5,07	3,57	4,93	3	3,64	1,65	2,86	3,43

17. Table. Descriptive values of the answers of the focus group participants on immigration attitude questions. Source: focus group transcripts. Own compilation.

The discussions about the three aspects of immigration (economic, cultural and security) established basically “anti-immigration atmospheres” in both groups before the presentation of the media contents. Those group members who generally opposed the arrival of immigrants to Hungary were not only in majority in both focus group discussions but they also dominated the debates. There were one to two group members, who were more supportive about the integration of immigrants, or who were less dismissive. Most of the opposition voters reported about rather negative immigration attitudes, too.

*“I only would like to say that although I am a left-wing person, I have never thought on immigration as it was some kind of a good thing. (...) And I do not think that the fact that such a crowd of African people come to Europe would have brought more positive than negative consequences. And that the UN supports immigration – well, this is their job, they are such an organization. But we do not have to agree with them.” (Woman, 72, Győr-Moson-Sopron county, voted for United for Hungary)*

Participants often evaluated other participants' opposite opinions and the content of cross-cutting media contents as personal attacks. They claimed that opposite media sources are pure liars every time they interpret anything about immigration. In the first focus group discussion, a heated conflict escalated about the articles of the pro-government site, Origo.hu.

*"Well, this was a very funny article, the poor someone called journalist wrote a terrible piece in my opinion for a higher order." (...) "What was it about? The United Nations and György Soros enforces immigration – leave me alone, this must be a joke."*

*"Did you read the article actually?"*

*"Please stop this superior laughing, it's a poor picture of you that you laugh at everything. Shame on you."*

Similar emotions were triggered in terms of media sources, of which interpretation participants took as if these articles or the journalists would attack them personally, or mislead them intentionally.

*"It was so bad to see in case of left-wing media sources that sneaking and attacking from behind, it only induced bad emotions in me. It was only bad faith coming from those texts." (Man, 48, Debrecen, voted for Fidesz-KDNP)*

*"Outrageous. The fact that they have photographed a part of the border where there are no migrants... Again, I can't check how many migrants actually want to cross. I think that there are a lot of in Western countries, so they just came in from somewhere, they may have avoided Hungary because there is the southern fence. It doesn't bother me because it means that the fence is working, that's why they're not standing there." (Man, 46, Földes, voted for Fidesz-KDNP)*

*"Journalists clearly want to manipulate with these pictures." (Man, 53, Győr, voted for Fidesz)*

*“I am outraged by this wave of resettlement by the UN and Soros.” (Man, 64, Debrecen, voted for Fidesz)*

*“Well some sources write about facts, and others, well, it is useless to argue, everyone knows the political alignment of 24.hu and hvg.hu.” (Man, 33, Budapest, voted for Fidesz)*

*“For me, in case of the left-wing media sources, it felt so bad to see that sneaky, hidden agenda, it only triggered bad emotions in me.” (Man, 40, Debrecen, voted for Fidesz)*

When inclusive opinions were formulated, it resulted in sharp conflicts between group members, while the declarations of exclusive opinions were followed by supportive comments.

*“Hungarian people are so exclusive, that it is below any critical level. People have to be faced with the fact that there is life outside Europe and Hungary. And what it looks like, and what characterizes people. Unfortunately, if someone is not a cosmopolitan person, if someone has not travelled yet, s/he has no idea, what s/he will be faced with. (Man, 34, Budapest, voted for United for Hungary)*

*“I absolutely do not feel or see anything like that, this is a totally liberal attitude, with a strong preconception towards right-wing people that our “nice colleague” has just presented. I do not see that Hungarians weren’t inclusive, we have been totally inclusive for thousand years.” (Man, 40, Hajdú-Bihar county, voted for Fidesz)*

While the issue of immigrants and refugees from Ukraine was less likely a topic of the focus group discussion before the national elections, group members referred to them more frequently during the discussion after the elections, which motivated other group members to reflect on it, as well. This is especially interesting, because a significant number of refugees left Ukraine right after the outbreak of the war, and this phenomenon dominated the media and other political discourses. Generally, group members were reluctant to use the term ‘migrant’ in this relation, and they tended to save it for immigrants outside of Europe in special circumstances (E. Farkas & Farkas, 2024).

*“I would like to mention two settlements quickly. First, Földes, which is a small village, and I guess that both the rate of migrants from Ukraine and “migrant migrants” are zero there. (...) I would add to Debrecen’s situation that if we consider university students, there are more thousands of people from the Far-East and Africa, but I would not call them migrants, because their purpose is not migration when they arrive to Hungary. However, they arrived in a reasonable number. (...) I cannot talk about Ukrainian people, many times I hear people speaking Slavic languages, but I do not have information about them. I know it sounds mean, but you cannot tell of their appearance, that they are migrants. (Man, 46, Hajdú-Bihar county, voted for Fidesz)*

*“Only women, children and elderly people arrive from Ukraine, because they really escape from war. And one should see that the 90 percent of the other migrants are strong, muscular, sporty men. Therefore, why don’t they stay home and protect their country, as Ukrainian men do it? (Man, 46, Hajdú-Bihar county, voted for Fidesz)*

*“I have already met Ukrainian refugees. They are accommodated in the hospital on Zrínyi Street. And I also met migrants in Vámoszabadi, they had bigger accommodation.” (Woman, 28, Győr-Moson Sopron county, did not vote)*

There was a long debate about who can be considered as immigrants and who doesn’t in the first focus group before the elections. According to the arguments, they apply the term migrant for those people towards whom they feel significant prejudice.

*“As XY said, I would separate immigrants along their nationalities, namely, if someone comes here for economic reasons, because they want to work, to make a living, and accept jobs that other people wouldn’t (...) And there is that other nation, who comes here to bum – I don’t say because they want to explode bombs because that would be a bit demagogue – I say that they come here to parasitize, and they do not want to*

*assimilate to the host nation. I hate these kind of people.” (Man, 46, Hajdú-Bihar county, voted for Fidesz)*

*“What they always address, the double standards that Hungary applies by not accepting African immigrants and accepting Ukrainian immigrants; this we elaborated enough, these are two completely different things, pearl and apple, even hard to compare. In the latter case, they are really escaping from war, women are escaping, men fight, they are neighboring countries, Hungary is the first safe country and they do not cross 6-7 countries to arrive here, etc., etc.” (Man, 46, Hajdú-Bihar county, voted for Fidesz)*

Consistently with the findings of the related research, the job market activity of immigrants proved to be a decisive factor in how they are categorized, whether they are considered as “desirable” or not. Consequently, the argument that “immigrants cannot take away our jobs”, emphasized by the Hungarian government very often in various campaigns or communication blocks, is seemingly not taken as a general knowledge in terms of every foreigner and asylum seeker staying within the borders of the country.

*“Guest workers and immigrants should be treated separately. Guest workers are those who come here to work, they live in workers’ hostels, visit their families at home. This is different from immigrants, who come here with his family and exploits the welfare system, those are not desirable, and we do not need them. Those immigrants who come here and normally integrate to the system, well we need them, but there are not many of them. (Man, 64, Debrecen, voted for Fidesz)*

Without asking any related questions, several participants differentiated Arab, Muslim immigrants from immigrants and refugees with different origins. In every case, while immigrants with Asian and European origins were considered as hardworking people, immigrants from Arab countries were negatively judged from cultural point of view as well.

*“There are two things. First, Vietnamese, Mongol university students arrive to Hungary, often working in sectors where the lack of workforces is higher, or where the lack of work intentions would create bad conditions; such as in the light industry. Or the Lidl in Tiszaújváros, they would hire now anyone, even if a mangy dog would apply, it would be allowed to the company in the first place (...). The other layer, which I call “Arabs on foot”; those from Pakistan, Syria to the Sahel region in North Africa, who were fooled how wonderful it is in Europe, everyone is welcome, how high salary they can earn here, and so on. But even German people cannot do anything with this situation, but we neither, if they come here.” (Man, 52, Győr, voted for Fidesz)*

*“I also see that there are those East-Asian and South-Asian employees who are hard-working people and work in sectors where Hungarian people wouldn’t for the same amount of money, from this aspect they are useful. However, I also think that those immigrants coming from Syria, the Middle-East or North-Africa... They do not fit here at all.” (...) “Because those who we allow to enter and settle down for longer, those South-East Asians, etc., they can accommodate to our culture pretty well. Besides the fact that some Chinese people drive aggressively with their BMW or Mercedes, I do not see any problem with them.” (Man, 29, Budapest, undecided voter)*

*“A lot of foreign immigrant workers are employed at certain companies. Here in Győr there are a lot of Romanian, Ukrainian, Serbian and other immigrants in Audi and they are really good workforces.” (Woman, 28, Győr, did not vote)*

Moreover, many of them highlighted that respecting the Hungarian culture and accommodation has key importance in their evaluation.

*“(...) as XY said, there are those nations that fit in, Chinese, Thai, there are no problems with them, they bring a nice light into our culture, gastronomy, and we can learn a lot from them.” (“Woman, 28, Győr, did not vote)*

*“That culture which would like to enter from Africa, we do not need them, we need the educated people, because it makes our culture more colorful, as XY said, that our culture is the priority, here they have to integrate and accept the rules and norms; those who are more educated, are more likely to accept these, but the others are not capable of it.”*  
(Man, 64, Debrecen, voted for Fidesz)

Those who arrived from outside of Europe were clearly presented more negatively, and the ‘migrant’ word as such represented a negative connotation, too.

*“There is no problem with the European immigrants, only with those, who arrive from Africa, they arrive from a completely different culture. They do not want to work, but the others would, and I think we need guest workers.”* (Man, 61, Hajdúszoboszló, voted for Fidesz)

*“Basically those who arrive from Africa, because they are sent here, everyone is aware of the background information...”* (Man, 33, Budapest, voted for Fidesz)

*“I would complete what the others have just said that these people are those who arrive by climbing the fence, throwing their passports away, lying that they are 17 years old; they are very strong, although they lie that they escape from wars. So this category, those who would expect that if they arrive, we should take them as they are, to take their culture as well, namely, they would not assimilate, but everyone else should accommodate to them.”* (Man, 46, Hajdú-Bihar country, voted for Fidesz)

Despite all, many of them emphasized that Hungarian people are in general very inclusive, pro-immigrant attitudes.

*“The Hungarian is a very inclusive nation, despite of how the Ukrainian people behaved with Hungarians living in Transcarpathia, it is like nothing would have happened, I think there is no problem with us.”* (Man, 48, Debrecen, voted for Fidesz)



Many times participants were referring to their personal experiences to demonstrate, how dangerous immigrants can be. This was especially the case in the second focus group discussion.

*“We were afraid of going to the streets, they broke into private gardens, they destroyed everything, harvested all fruits, they did not consider anyone; this is what we want? No. This sort of immigration we definitely don’t need.” (Man, 64, Debrecen, voted for Fidesz-KDNP)*

*“There were security guards even on buses! They did not have to buy tickets, nothing. Realist people did not go to the supermarket at the time they were there.” (Man, 64, Debrecen, voted for Fidesz-KDNP)*

*“They even burned trash bins!” (Woman, 40, Hajdúsámson, undecided voter)*

*“When I moved to the city from my village, I had several negative experiences with immigrants.” (Woman, 27, Győr, Did not tell her party preference)*

*“We were in the amusement park of Vienna, and how they behaved was nonsense, they through garbage everywhere, quarreled, hit each other.” (Man, 48, Debrecen, voted for Fidesz-KDNP)*

Indeed, participants confirmed their claims and opinions with personal experiences, especially in case of negative opinions, or when someone brought up a personal experience, other participants reflected on the comment by telling their own experiences, too.

*“During the previous election the migration situation was very relevant to me, right before it I was visiting my mother for a couple of months in Austria, and I also visited a friend of mine in London. And the circumstances I saw there made it very clear that I don’t want to experience anything similar in Hungary.” (Man, 29, Budapest, undecided voter)*

*“Two experiences. Rome and Vienna. In Vienna we were in an amusement park; how migrants behaved was terrible, they threw garbage away, they were quarreling loudly and hitting each other, it was terrifying. After we left, there was a huge scandal. My cousins and other relatives live in Rome, therefore I was there many times in the last decades and I saw what I saw, the circumstances are horrible there.” (Man, 48, Debrecen, voted for Fidesz)*

*“Last summer we were many times terrified when we were having a meal in a restaurant with my partner and children and they were making loud noises the whole time.” (Man, 46, Földes, voted for Fidesz)*

*“I was in Bergamo last year, we got off the plane, and they squatted, drew, danced, made music there, they scared us. (...) We don't need anything like that.” (Man, 64, Debrecen, voted for Fidesz)*

*“I will never forget, I was in Budapest and took tram 2, and these ‘forsekin’ man in long dresses came, sat down and made a move that scarred three-four people away, we just did not know what they hide behind their dresses. They obviously did not hide anything, but they were so much unreliable, I say, the fear is in the people.” (Man, 64, Debrecen, voted for Fidesz)*

*“However, I experienced in Debrecen that they move in hordes and we were literally scared, and were looking, in which direction we could escape, if they come in a way that we should; they were shouting, yelling, really like a horde, I cannot find a better word for them.” (Man, 46, Földes, voted for Fidesz)*

*“I live in Győr and the migrants are walking around in hordes on the Baross street, too. Well, they can be very scary, you are happy if you meet a policeman. They go on patrol, and you feel a bit safer. I also heard that in Vámoszabadi there was stabbings; they are not able to behave well.” (Woman, 28, Győr, did not vote)*

*“We avoided the Penny on the Sámsoni way greatly. We did not dare to go shopping, because they were rampaging and going around in hordes. Cameras were set up at this time along the Sámsoni way. (Woman, 40, Hajdúsámson, undecided voter)*

*“The refugee shelter was at the Sámsoni way in the Szabó Pál street, not far away from us. Well, they appeared here every now and then, although this was not their way. When this happened, we were afraid of going out, they broke into private gardens and destroyed everything, harvested all the fruits, did not consider anything; do we need this, did we want this? No we don't. This kind of migration we don't need.” (Man, 64, Debrecen, voted for Fidesz)*

Participants thematized several times the changing discourse in pro-government media outlets about migration, namely that they perceived different styles and approaches about migration around the 2015 migration crisis and about immigrants escaping from the war in Ukraine. However, they considered this change reasonable and permissible.

*“I think that these articles that we saw represented a change in Origo.hu-s communication. Couple of years ago there was only this kind of, well how to say, this blame everywhere, or not even blame, but destination search, which characterized previous Fidesz governments, that they always looked for someone, who they can put on a target, and they could mobilize one certain part of the population this way. (...) And now I see that this is a bit, well not only a bit, specifically changed to more objective. Well it is still the government's style, but others read Telex.hu, which is the liberal interpretation. But all in all, there is a change, I recognized it.” (Man, 29, Budapest, undecided voter)*

Not only the different narratives, but the different government measures were identified by the focus group participants, and if they agreed with these, they expressed their agreement with Viktor Orbán's political approaches, too.

*“Regarding Ukrainian people, I think he should not make another move, I think Viktor Orbán is doing it perfectly. He even decided that we will help those who arrive, because they really escape from war and are refugees, really. Most of them would like to return, but some might stay as well.” (Man, 64, Debrecen, voted for Fidesz)*

*“Well we should agree that even if we have any problem, we also go to the neighbor for some help, I think this is absolutely the right way to handle the situation regarding the Ukrainian people.” (Woman, 40, Hajdúsámson, undecided voter)*

Participants articulated several significant problems that they have with the Islam religion.

*“Anyway I still think that the Islam teachings include that I can stick you on the back and smile at you in your eyes. Namely, where the Islam appears, it strives for monopoly, it will uproot Christianity and consider it as enemy. (...) It is a fundamental religion that strives for monopoly, those who refuse this don’t know Islam and religion. (...) It also depends how they socialized, and here we only have problem with the Islam, and with none of any other further religions that arrive here.” (Man, 40, Hajdú-Bihar county, voted for Fidesz)*

All in all, we can see that despite of the discursive setup and the diverse media sources provided throughout the debates, the mostly anti-immigration issue position of individuals did not change significantly but was rather strengthened during the focus group discussions.

#### **9.4. Conclusions regarding persuasion in focus group discussions**

As the only qualitative part of the mixed methodology research design, this chapter was dedicated to explore the results of two focus group discussions conducted with Hungarian participants about immigration attitudes in light of specific related media contents (including articles that represent typical inclusive and exclusive immigration frames), and by

systematically analyzing the transcripts of these discussions. The most important purpose was to see, whether dynamics and arguments (persuasion) in group discussions can effectively modify the opinion about immigration of other group members.

Regarding the related hypothesis about the deliberative potentials of group debates, several concluding remarks should be highlighted here on group deliberation and cross-cutting immigration frames. Most importantly we could observe that neither diverse immigration related media contents, nor various arguments during the group discussions changed the dominantly anti-immigration “atmosphere” in any focus group discussions. Moreover, these two focus group discussions provided evidence on the possible backlash effect of cross-cutting exposure: when participants were faced with views or media contents that did not align with their owns, they seemed to be more convinced of their original views on immigration and argued for it more intensively. We also saw that personal experiences regarded as important basis for opinion formation and argumentation.

While because of the limited number of participants, focus group discussions are not suitable for originating empirical data that can be generalized on the social level, the logical argumentations and interactions between participants can lead us to important conclusions regarding the individual-level research question and the related hypothesis. However, future research would be necessary to discover these aspects in different group compositions, and with different media contents on immigration, too.

Besides the limitations that the low number of participants or the qualitative approach mean, the focus group discussions complement the regression analysis of European Social Survey data and the survey experiment with several important aspects. This is especially important because of the negative results of the previous research methods; indeed, focus group discussions are also applied to seek for further or deeper explanations, where other methods do not necessarily provide positive research results (Rétiová et al., 2021). First, the possibility of

presenting any type of media contents about immigration to the participants and focus their attention on them means a clear advantage compared to the publicly available ESS data. Moreover, in case of focus group discussions, the reactions to these media contents were more explicit than in case of the survey experiments, when the attention span of respondents could not be controlled that much as in the situation of focus group discussions, where we as moderators could intervene. The presented media contents were different as well: while survey experiments tested the influence of more general inclusive and exclusive arguments about immigration, focus group participants reviewed typical Facebook posts and articles about immigration instead. Furthermore, focus group participants are provided the opportunity to formulate their opinions on immigration and media contents freely, whereas standardized questionnaires have more limitations in this regard.

## 10. Concluding discussion

The length of a PhD research project inevitably implies a socially and politically changing environment, which can shed light on new aspects, and also question those, which previously seemed more adequate. Despite its shortcomings, I believe that my research could diversify our knowledge about the influences of various immigration frames on public attitudes in different social, political and media environments, and contribute to contemporary research on how cross-cutting media exposure and deliberation could influence media framing effects.

Although the relative salience of immigration and refugees as a policy issue varies across countries, the constant relevance of the topic can hardly be questioned. Regardless if the countries are considered as target or transit regions, the European Union's member states – separately, but also as a joint political system - are exposed to immigration. Therefore, how leading media outlets frame the immigration issue and how general public opinion and attitudes about immigration evolve, can be decisive in terms of related policies, general public mood, trust, social cooperation, or the quality of social integration of immigrants and refugees.

Moreover, this raises attention to the importance of diverse political and media communication about certain policy issues, especially about those which are that much polarizing and politicized like immigration. Diverse political and media communication have significant impact on democratic functioning and on the dynamics of policy making in general. Because, all in all, immigration is a policy issue, even though in the Hungarian political context it is presented as an identity issue primarily. Immigrants need rights, rules, housing, education, health and other services, regardless how long they plan to stay in a particular country, and their interests can conflict with those of citizens. This obviously mean extra load for the welfare system on one hand. On the other hand, the cultural differences between immigrants and native people can induce conflicts and xenophobia, or like in several instances, the strengthening of

extreme right-wing political forces. However, while in Hungary the government provided political representation for extreme anti-immigration voices and sentiments, in Germany, even though its political relevance has been seriously increased in recent years, the AfD represented the anti-immigration position as an opposition party.

Relying on media framing theories, it is assumed that reporting and communicating about the positive aspects of immigration will inevitably turn attitudes towards more positive. However, several empirical works challenged this view (Bail et al., 2018; Bakshy et al., 2015), which provided motivation for my research puzzle, too. If we accept that immigration discourse and related attitudes are extremely negative in Hungary (also compared to a generally integrative country's discourse, as that of Germany), then it could be a suitable environment to test the framing effects of cross-cutting media exposure, which I consider as *inclusive immigration frames*.

All in all, the main purpose of my dissertation was twofold. On the one hand, as an exploratory research it complements and contributes to the rich literature about the anti-immigration communication of various political actors across Europe and beyond. In particular, I aimed to compare the content and dynamics of inclusive immigration frames in the German and Hungarian media contexts. On the other hand, I wanted to investigate how Hungarian respondents react to these inclusive immigration frames, which are exceptional in the Hungarian media context and political communication and therefore, I defined them as cross-cutting media exposure in this context.

After an extended empirical design and various contradictory research results, I would like to dedicate a longer concluding chapter to “connect the dots”, to provide explanations for the various results and answers for the research questions in its entirety. Therefore, the theoretical and methodological aspects of the empirical results will be discussed, as well as the



limitations of my research and possible further research steps, which could counterbalance the limitations and extend its validity.

### **10.1. Biased media, inconsistent immigration attitudes? An overview of the findings**

The various stages of my study provided several important empirical findings on both the media- as well as on the individual level. To briefly summarize, the sentiment analysis and topic model analysis showed that, contrary to the expectations, the Hungarian and the German media discourse was not significantly different throughout the investigated time period. The regression models on ESS data highlighted the negative immigration attitude of Fidesz voters compared to CDU voters. Similarly, the negative results of immigration frames in the Hungarian experiment highlighted the importance of partisanship in that context. The focus group discussions among Hungarian participants showed how inclusive immigration frames can have a “backlash” influence on anti-immigration attitudes, resulting in more intensive anti-immigration stances.

Why were the two cases suitable for comparative research and why is the individual level research question especially timely and relevant in the Hungarian context? The two countries of my research represented interesting comparable cases for a number of reasons. First, the political relation towards the migration crisis as a starting point could not have been more different. Second, the migration population in the two societies are almost the two ends of a scale. Consequently, all these differences verify the further investigation of media coverage of immigration and related attitudes after the migration crisis, until the current years.

The unbalanced Hungarian media system with a disproportionate influence of the government and its oligarchs in various media outlets, and thus the decisive amount of government-friendly anti-immigration frames in the public discourses create a special context

for investigation. However, I do not intend to claim that inclusive immigration frames do not appear in the Hungarian, or if exclusive immigration frames would not appear in the German media discourse. However, the overwhelming majority of the Orbán government's anti-immigration frames in the Hungarian media discourse was proved by several studies (Bajomi-Lázár, 2019; Benczes & Ságvári, 2022; Messing & Bernáth, 2016), which was an important condition for my case selection.

Why does the relation of Hungarian people towards immigrants and refugees clearly differ depending on the country of origin, cultural background and religious beliefs of the arrivals? A classic work, Samuel P. Huntington's book titled "The clash of civilizations" could be cited at this point. Although we see that the economic position (i.e. among others the educational level) of immigrants can be decisive as well (regardless of the social status of native individuals, higher educated immigrants are preferred (Hainmueller & Hiscox, 2010; Hainmueller & Hopkins, 2015; Helbling & Kriesi, 2014)), cultural differences seem to be most crucial for the successful social integration of immigrants. The 2015 migration crisis and the Orbán government's related exclusive immigration discourse deepened xenophobic sentiments towards young Muslim men mostly (A. Farkas et al., 2022).

However, the intensive refugee waves after the outbreak of the war in Ukraine brought interesting new dynamics in terms of the communication of the Orbán government. Even Viktor Orbán personally visited the Hungarian-Ukrainian border some days after 24<sup>th</sup> of February, to ensure local forces and the general public about his presence and support towards those who flee from the war.<sup>32</sup> There are already several empirical works that show that not only

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<sup>32</sup> MSZ. (March 17th 2022). Viktor Orbán welcomed a Ukrainian refuging family at the border. (In Hungarian: Orbán Viktor fogadott egy menekülő ukrán családot a határon). Index.hu. Source: <https://index.hu/belfold/2022/03/17/haboru-ukrajna-tartozkodasi-engedely-orban-viktor-miniszterelnok-menekultek/>. Downloaded: April 9th 2024.

Hungarians, but European people in general relate to immigrants and refugees from Ukraine differently (Moise et al., 2024; Pepinsky et al., 2022). Two explanations could be provided for that. First, the political situation is different than after the Arab Spring in the 2010s; the relative proximity of the current war zones in Ukraine induce greater fears and anxiety in European populations. Second, closer cultural proximity to Ukrainians compared to Muslim people could also contribute to more hospitality.

Furthermore, there seem to be a change in the Orbán government's relation towards guest workers from Far-Eastern countries, too. Recently, an ongoing discourse and regular coverage of this issue has been started by non-governmental media outlets.<sup>33</sup> These reports and articles point out that the number of guest workers in Hungary has been significantly and rapidly increased, mostly because the factories in Hungary are in shortage of blue collar workers. The Hungarian government tend to support with various measures the settlement of these people. Working conditions are reported to be poor; since these workers usually arrive without their families and are seasonally employed, long working days and bad (cheap) housing solutions are typical.

More specifically, other empirical works (Golubeva, 2021) previously confirmed what we found during the focus group discussions, too: Hungarian people tend to be especially inclusive and permissive with Chinese immigrants. Explanations for this can be manifold. On one hand, several studies show that people prefer those immigrants who can and are willing to contribute

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<sup>33</sup> Csurgó, D. (March 4th 2024). With ten percentage more expensive, but thirty percentage more effective – the background of the guest worker flows in Hungary. (In Hungarian: Tíz százalékkal drágább, de harminccal termelékenyebb – a magyarországi vendégmunkásdömping háttere). Telex.hu. Source: <https://telex.hu/gazdasag/2024/03/04/vendegmunkasok-munkaerotartalek-kolcsonzok-videk>. Downloaded: April 9th 2024.

Élő, A. (December 4th 2023). Operation Fox – dangerous Austrian migrant chasing in Hungarian territories. (In Hungarian: Operation Fox – veszélyes osztrák migránsüldözés magyar területen). Valaszonline.hu. Source: <https://www.valaszonline.hu/2023/12/04/ausztria-magyarország-operation-fox-rendorseg-migracio-janossomorja-riport/>. Downloaded: April 9th 2024.

to the social welfare system by being employed or working as entrepreneurs (Bansak et al., 2016). Interestingly and as a contradiction to this phenomenon, one of the most important messages of the Orbán government was that “Immigrants cannot take the jobs of Hungarian people away!”; despite of this type of exclusive framing, Hungarian citizens tend to prefer those immigrants, who are integrated to the job market and pay taxes. As a participant in the first focus group claimed:

*“I also see that on the one hand there are East Asian and South-East Asian workers who are hard-working and work in sectors where Hungarians don't go for so much money, this part is useful, but I also think that these immigrants from Syria, the Middle East and North Africa are... They simply do not fit to our country.” (man, 29, from Budapest, undecided voter)*

Facchini and Mayda found, that “the salience of migration issues is lower in countries with fewer immigrants” (2008). However, this is clearly not the case in Hungary. Even though the number of non-European guest workers has grown rapidly, their rate compared to the Hungarian native population is vanishing. Moreover, for most immigrants, Hungary remains a transit and not a destination country for most non-European immigrants (Kriesi et al., 2024). Consequently, immigration attitudes in Hungary are mostly influenced by the media’s interpretation, and not by personal experiences and contacts with immigrant and refugee people.

On the other hand, the comparative investigation of the German case and the inconsistent results in this regard can empirically contribute to the more nuanced understanding of previous perceptions about the German media discourse on immigration. First, the comparative media analysis pointed out that the Hungarian immigration discourse was not that much more exclusive than the German in the long run, but the higher variance of sentiment scores in the German context point out to the more diverse frames that get publicity there. Moreover, the German media interpretation about immigration is often categorized to be “inclusively biased”

towards immigrants. Namely, the common sense perception and intuition would suggest that more critical and less inclusive immigration frames and narratives are not provided enough room for publication in Germany.

The results of my media analysis also showed that the media discourse was more intensive when the parliamentary debate about immigration was maintained in the German case between 2016 and 2022. In comparison, the Hungarian parliament rarely discussed the policy topic in its depth, it was mostly approached through the general anti-immigrant addresses of Viktor Orbán (Pokorny & Sággy, 2021). Furthermore, the polarization of the German political environment is quite different from the Hungarian.<sup>34</sup> As Kováts claims in her article on the book titled “Triggerpunkte” written by Steffen Mau, Thomas Lux and Linus Westheuser: “Conflicts exist, not much polarization, but rather radicalized extreme forces (...) The main question of the book, whether the political and media discourse *present* these cleavages in the societies, or *create* them”.

In general, the differences between the political and media systems of the two countries are not questionable. While the media system in Hungary is clearly dominated by government oligarchs, which infers the dominance of the government’s anti-immigration frames, the variance of the German media discourse is higher. Namely, the appearance of inclusive immigration frames is more likely in the German social media discourse about immigration. However, in contrast with the previous assumptions and expectations, the generally more exclusive art of immigration discourse in Hungary was not entirely confirmed. Another important difference between the two cases to highlight is that agencies in the two contexts are

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<sup>34</sup> Kováts, E. (2023). The picture of polarized societies is just an illusion: the majority is indeed normal! (In Hungarian: A kettéosztott társadalmak képe csak látszat: a többség igenis normális!) Source: <https://www.valaszonline.hu/2023/10/27/nemetország-társadalom-polarizacio-szociologia-tanulmány-media-ertekrend/>. Downloaded 13th of April, 2024.

different: whereas in the German context the media is the agency because of the more stable independency of the institution, in the Hungarian case politicians dominate the immigration discourse.

All in all, immigration is mostly an identity issue in Hungary. Rational argumentations about immigration as a policy issue were soon dominated by identity-based communication, both in the related political and media discourse. Is there any room to change immigration attitudes in the Hungarian context and turn them to more inclusive? Beyond deliberative forums, there is room for change in media discourses, as well. In this regard, the Policy Brief of the E-Mindful Project could point to important knowhows.<sup>35</sup> They highlighted a list for media content creators about the Dos and Don'ts of effective communication on migration, including the adoption of values-based messaging, encouraging interactions between citizens and immigrants, or acknowledging intersectionality in the various communication and media materials.

## **10.2. What was at stake? The theoretical implications of my research**

What do the research results suggest on inclusive immigration frames in the two country contexts and how do they as cross-cutting media exposure influence immigration attitudes in Hungary? There are several theoretical aspects and implications that need to be considered. One important message of the empirical results can be that immigration in Hungary is more of an issue of political communication, than it would reflect on any policy aspects. Since immigration discourse is highly politicized in Hungary, media and political communication patterns and

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<sup>35</sup> E-Mindful Project. (2024). Policy Brief: Key takeaways and guidelines about strategic communication on migration. Access: <https://e-mindful.eu/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/PB2-1.pdf>. Downloaded: 13th of April, 2024.

frames overlap, and these frames establish individuals' narratives and attitudes on immigration, too.

Most importantly, relying on the survey experiment and the focus group discussions, I was able to show that immigration is not a policy, but rather an identity related issue in Hungary. And, whereas this is not such a novelty in terms of media and political discourses, not many related research was done on the individual level in this regard. Although since 2015 the Orbán government's communication about immigrants clearly lacked any essential policy arguments ("immigrants steal the Hungarian people's jobs", "immigrants destroy the Hungarian culture", etc., as the billboards with the government's main messages suggested), we did not have much empirical proves, whether these effectively framed people's thoughts about immigration as well, or which are the main arguments of the Hungarian citizens in this regard.

As I highlighted it in the introductory section of my dissertation, my research question reflected on a causal cue, and therefore, the directions of causal inferences (what was the cause and what is the causation?) should be clarified also here by the concluding remarks. Are immigration frames the consequences of widespread and dominant individual attitudes or the other way around? Which one is the independent variable, which wan is the dependent variable? Audience demands or framing effects? My empirical results clearly confirmed that the negative immigration frames of the Orbán government are reflected on the individual level, namely, Hungarian people rely on them, if they formulate their opinion and attitudes about immigration, regardless of whether they agree or disagree with them.

What did we learn about immigration discourse and attitudes in terms of deliberation, the deliberative forums as democratic innovations and as a possible solution on xenophobic sentiments? Although I believe that the focus group discussions can significantly contribute to the scientific discussion on how to eliminate strong anti-immigration sentiments and attitudes, it should be noted here, that focus group discussions cannot be considered as deliberative

forums as such. Let me highlight here one important difference: in the introduction of the focus group discussions, we encouraged participants to be honest and open with their opinions, but did not mention that deliberation would be an aim of the discussions. Therefore, participants were not motivated to convince each other about certain views, and even though they did at some points, we as moderators did not perform as we wanted to achieve any kind of agreement or cooperation.<sup>36</sup>

Finally, the concepts of populism and political polarization inevitably prompt some questions here. Political communication about immigration is closely related to populism; more populist politicians tend to be more anti-immigrant. This is interrelated with the antagonism dimension of populism, which divides the world into “us” and “them”. The inclusion in the “us” category is very selective; Viktor Orbán never forgets to identify in his speeches, who are the individuals who belong to the native concept of the governing party Fidesz (Hungarian, Christian people) and who are excluded from it (immigrants, Brussels, George Soros, etc.). Consequently, immigration communication defines the level of populism in the political arena. This implies the high level of partisan polarization as well. Most current relevant research pinpoints to the several negative consequences of partisan polarization on the economic performance, general subjective well-being of a country (Patkós, 2022; Patkós & Farkas, 2020).

### **10.3. Lessons about mixed methodology research design**

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<sup>36</sup> For these aims, a German television show, „13 Fragen” could be a good starting point, as the show is about lining up pro and con arguments related to a certain topic, than debate and try to convince the others of the own arguments. There were several episodes about immigration, which meant important inspirations in the discovery of the current German situation. See for example: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nt9jcGQ71Rw&ab\\_channel=ZDFheuteNachrichten](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nt9jcGQ71Rw&ab_channel=ZDFheuteNachrichten) or [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3e5LbBEtOfk&ab\\_channel=ZDFheuteNachrichten](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3e5LbBEtOfk&ab_channel=ZDFheuteNachrichten). Downloaded on 13th of April, 2024.



The practical experiences and the “real-life” conditions of research operationalization proved important lessons to me throughout my dissertation research project, especially in terms of the advantages and disadvantages of the mixed methodology research design. One of the most important lesson was, that mixed methodology is obviously not the Holy Grail of the empirical discovery of research questions and related hypotheses, but an important and sophisticated methodological approach worth to be followed and carried out.

In my view, one important contribution of my research is the rich empirical design and sources that approach the research questions and hypotheses from several aspects by investigating various empirical data within a wide time frame. Current scientific trends enhance the advantages of mixing quantitative and qualitative methodologies, especially when research questions referring to causal inferences are scrutinized. To align with this, I tried to provide a wide range of methodologies and datasets in my empirical analysis.

The analysis of Facebook data provided by CrowdTangle included a new aspect of empirical analysis, namely, that the interrelation between the content of Facebook posts and the individual reactions could be directly analyzed on the aggregate level. Although several important studies have been starting to use this source recently (see e.g. Eberl et al., 2020), the exploitation of its potentials are in an early stage yet. My methodological solution on selecting vignettes in focus group discussions relying on the most typical immigration frames and users’ reaction trends can also be a novelty in this field. However, the fact that CrowdTangle has already announced the limitations on data availability, which will come into force from August 2024, could create a more difficult research environment in terms of data access.

Experiments and focus group discussions capture and operationalize media framing effects differently. In case of my research, focus group discussions were especially important to be integrated into the research design because of the negative results of the immigration frames in the Hungarian survey experiment. Therefore, explanations and underlying

mechanisms were only possible through qualitative research. This combination of survey experiments and focus group discussions can be a suitable combination of methods for future research about media framing effects on public attitudes. Moreover, by conducting the survey experiment and the focus group discussions in Hungary, my research not only analyzed publicly available datasets, but I generated and included original datasets/transcripts, as well.

However, although the main point of applying mixed methodology research design is that the various advantages and disadvantages of each method can counterbalance each other, they are not suitable to fill all gaps and cover every aspects of immigration frames and attitudes at hand. Carrying out similar research projects in other country cases, presenting different types of vignettes in experiments and in focus group discussions, including further alternative media outlets to the media analysis would all be possible and reasonable directions for future research. Another research approach can be the combination of media analysis and longitudinal panel data to track changes in immigration attitudes (Schneider-Strawczynski & Valette, 2023).

#### **10.4. Limitations and further research steps**

In the previous empirical chapters, I tried to be as cautious with the interpretation of the research results as possible, highlighting the limitations of each research method in the relevant sections transparently. However, a general summary is due here.

My media analysis is limited in terms of the type of the corpora: the analysis of media contents should be extended to the actual articles of media outlets, not only the Facebook posts of these. Moreover, further comparative studies could discover the relative salience of immigration compared to other policy topics, like climate change or education, how the intensity and sentiments of these discourses relate to each other. Another idea would be to

include the comments sections to the analysis, how they reflect on posted articles and thus might influence related Facebook algorithms.

Obviously, besides investigating the influence of inclusive immigration frames on attitudes in Hungary, I do believe that testing the same research question worth to be investigated in more detail in the German context as well. However, the different social (the higher number of immigrants and refugees), political (a more established democracy) and media system (media outlets are less dependent on political influence) would require different assumptions and approaches there. I definitely needed more research resources and contextual knowledge for being able to conduct the same research design on the individual level in Germany (a survey experiment and focus group discussions). The above mentioned inclusively biased German media system (and/or the perceptions about the media system) might also negatively influence related attitudes there, if we rely on the cross-cutting exposure theory and motivated reasoning.

Since the interrelations and overlaps between media and political communication were extensively discussed, besides the analysis of media outlets, the communication of parties and politicians should be included in future research, too. And last, the country cases of the analysis should be extended. The four dimensions and aspects of comparison (the heterogeneity of the society, integration patterns and knowledges, the (inter)dependence of media outlets with political actors and groups, and previous trends in immigration attitudes) could be a good guideline for research proposals in the future.

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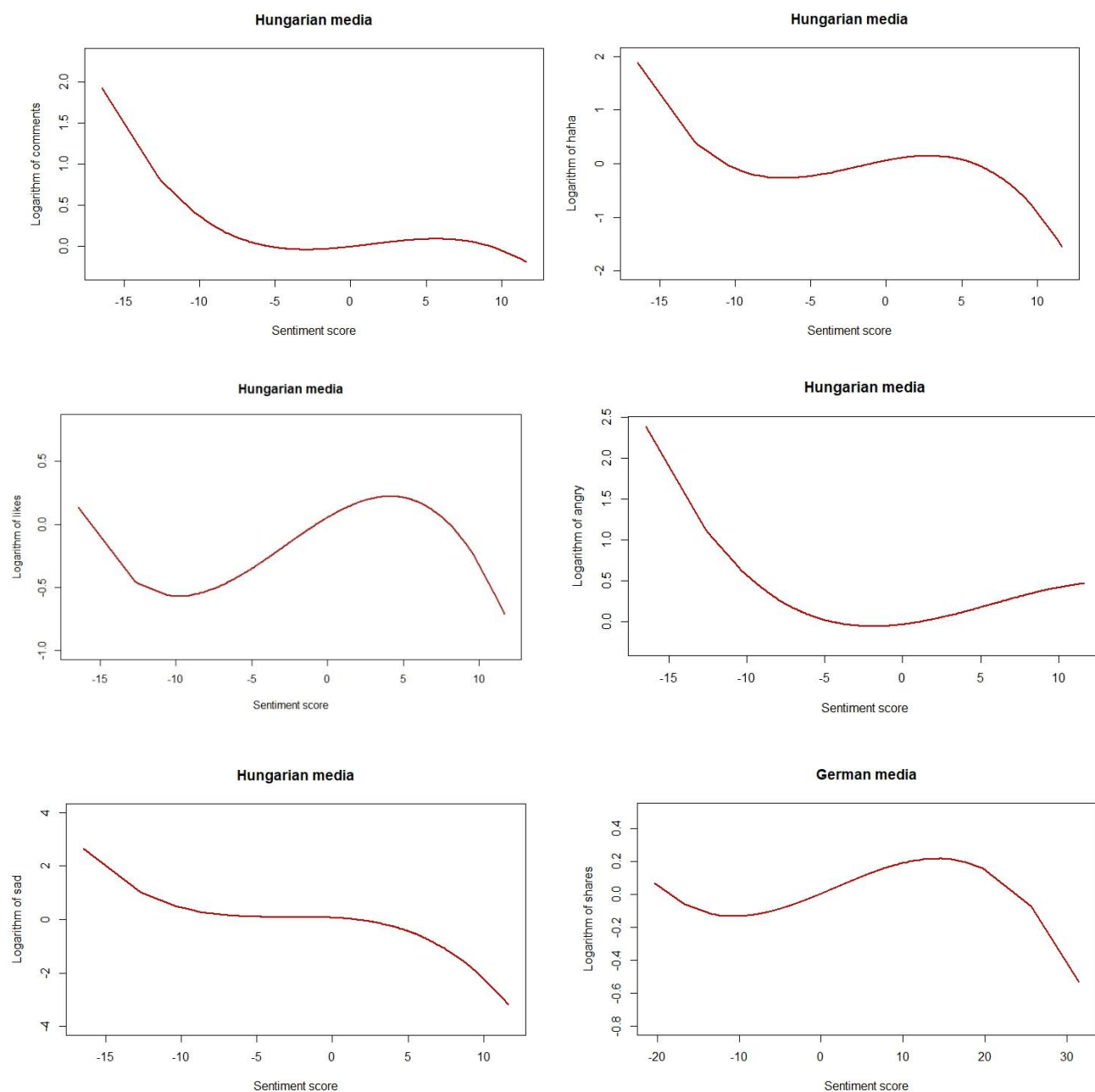
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## 12. Appendix



*1. Appendix. Non-significant interrelations between sentiment scores and users' reactions in the German and Hungarian media discourse. Author's compilation. Source: CrowdTangle, 2022.*

**Immigrati  
on frames**

**Top 10 keywords**

<i>Why people seek refuge?</i>	flucht	warum	abo	woll	wurd	hat	neue	geflücht et	ganz	täter
<i>Refugees &amp; crime in Berlin</i>	zwei	menschen	verletzt	flucht	fast	bereit	dabei	täter	berlin	wurd
<i>Statistics about asylum seekers</i>	mensch	laut	mehr	tausend	russland	jahr	asyl	monat	kommen	ganz
<i>Immigrant s from Syria</i>	foto	bild	syrien	gelang	zwei	europa	sollen	geht	deutsch	sagt
<i>The history of refugees</i>	menschen	werd	geschicht e	viel	flucht	geflücht et	geht	tausend	staat	berlin
<i>Immigrant s in Germany</i>	gegen	konnt	flucht	deutschen	deutsch	land	migrati on	männer	berlin	tausend
<i>Merkel &amp; Seehofer about migration</i>	migrat	end	seehofer	erst	hat	sollen	monat	merkel	migrant en	deutsch
<i>Refugees from Ukraine &amp; the police</i>	flucht	polizei	täter	russland	macht	berlin	männer	zwei	ukrain	asyl
<i>War in Ukraine &amp; families</i>	ukrain	kinder	krieg	welt	familie	abo	dort	europa	immer	berlin
<i>Germany &amp; Europe in the refugee crisis</i>	flucht	hat	deutschla nd	jahren	wollen	europa	vier	mann	erst	heute

<i>The war and refugees</i>	dass	sagt	ganz	neue	wenig	kommen	krieg	macht	offenbar	bereit
<i>Women refugees in the EU</i>	mehr	flucht	flüchtling	migration	sollen	immer	frau	fliehen	eu	geht
<i>The police's role in Europe</i>	flucht	jahr	seit	schon	polizei	sagt	vier	land	sollen	europa
<i>Asylum seekers and the German state</i>	asyl	deutschland	wer	grenz	flüchtling	zwei	ganz	jahr	staat	migrat
<i>Russia and the war</i>	deutschland	sagt	immer	erst	russland	grenz	viel	krieg	ab	verletzt
<i>Turkey &amp; Merkel</i>	hat	immer	gibt	türkei	abo	täter	merkel	eu	geschicht	krieg
<i>Turkey &amp; the German state</i>	flüchtling	migrat	bundesamt	migranten	staat	werd	türkei	ganz	kinder	grenz
<i>Statistics about asylum seekers II.</i>	menschen	mehr	million	viel	laut	tausend	hat	vier	geflüchtet	staat
<i>Reports about leaving</i>	flucht	land	müssen	hat	verlass	migrant en	schon	dabei	fliehen	bericht
<i>Berlin &amp; migration</i>	flucht	jahren	viel	heute	migrati on	wurd	gelang	dass	seit	berlin
<i>Refugees &amp; their home</i>	wurd	drei	lang	flucht	heimat	flüchtlin g	geht	dort	verlass	neue

<i>Refugees &amp; criminal cases</i>	flucht	worden	täter	offenbar	ab	mensch n	hat	polizei	zwei	foto
<i>Merkel &amp; migration families</i>	mann	jährige	jung	frau	worden	bereit	viel	merkel	welt	deutsch en
<i>The number of migration families to Germany</i>	asyl	kommen	mal	deutschla nd	laut	eu	jahr	familie	schon	monat

2. Appendix. Terms with the highest Beta values in the German topic models. Source: CrowdTangle, 2022. Author's compilation.

#### Immigrati on frames

#### Top 10 keywords

<i>Refugee crisis at Keleti Railway Station</i>	itthon	menekült	keleti	próbál	menekült válság	lát	miatt	ember	millió	nap
<i>Refugee &amp; Hungarian families</i>	menekül	videó	kormány	idő	év	magyar	férfi	otthon	család	rengeteg
<i>Merkel &amp; the German response</i>	menekült	merkel	is	mond	lép	tud	ausztria	rendőrsé g	óta	német
<i>Austrian situation</i>	is	ausztria	ma	áll	videó	le	történik	helyzet	bevándor ló	itthon
<i>Helping refugees</i>	akar	menekült	segít	tart	ország	nő	bevándor ló	állít	férfi	szám
<i>War in Ukraine</i>	háború	ukrajna	ukrán	ezer	magyaro rszág	orosz	ország	rengeteg	állít	ha

<i>Everyday struggles of migrants</i>	menekült	tud	jut	jön	migráns	nap	ha	próbál	elől	vár
<i>Police at the border</i>	határ	menekült	rendőr	ember	két	elől	kerül	segít	tud	él
<i>Orbán &amp; the EU</i>	orbán	viktor	menekült	németszág	európai	unió	mond	videó	meg	kér
<i>Germany &amp; the police</i>	menekül	is	fog	történet	élet	németszág	vesz	rendőrség	menekült	mond
<i>Turkey &amp; Syrian refugees</i>	törökország	is	nap	német	miatt	magyar	pénz	jön	szíriai	mond
<i>EU &amp; the border fence</i>	menekült	magyar	kerítés	ember	nap	indul	ezer	kormány	hét	eu
<i>EU &amp; Hungary</i>	menekül	európa	migrán	helyzet	fotó	menekült	kap	ember	magyarország	megint
<i>Everyday struggles of migrants</i>	menekül	is	kerül	év	élet	miatt	él	hét	család	ember
<i>Keleti &amp; Budapest</i>	férfi	nő	érkezik	menekült	ittthon	éves	út	budapest	kép	keleti
<i>Transportation</i>	menekül	hu	is	jön	tud	év	autó	él	megy	kap
<i>Heading to Europe</i>	menekült	magyarország	menekül	tud	hét	két	megy	európai	lép	indul
<i>Circumstances at the border</i>	gyerek	határ	menekült	szám	budapest	millió	ittthon	év	rendőrség	migrán
<i>Smuggling by car</i>	ittthon	ha	család	autó	teszt	óta	magyar	hu	miatt	történik
<i>Germany &amp; the police</i>	menekült	ittthon	is	németszág	rendőr	bevándorló	él	kap	idő	menekül

<i>Accusing Merkel of smugglers</i>	menekül	elől	férfi	embercs empész	állam	fél	is	millió	merkel	miatt
<i>On-site report in Keleti</i>	itthon	percrőlp ercre	érkezik	vonat	vár	pénz	helyzet	ezer	ember	él
<i>Number of refugees in the EU</i>	menekült	magyaror ország	éves	ezer	elől	eu	le	fél	kér	millió
<i>The way from Turkey</i>	itthon	migrán	ország	élet	rendőr	autó	is	törökors zág	út	próbál

3. Appendix. Terms with the highest Beta-values in the Hungarian topic models. Source: CrowdTangle, 2022. Author's compilation.

### 12.1. Descriptive statistics of immigration related variables in the analysis

Variable	Question	Mean	Median	Std. dev.	Minimum	Maximum
General (pre-test)	Is Hungary made a worse or a better place to live by immigrants coming to live here from non-European countries?	4	4	1,92	1	10
Economy	Would you say it is generally bad or good for Hungary's economy that people come to live here from other countries?	4,31	4	2,27	1	10
Culture	Would you say that Hungary's cultural life is generally undermined or enriched by people coming to live here from other countries?	3,79	4	1,94	1	10
Security	To what extent are you worried that the number of violent crimes will increase because of non-European immigrants arriving to Hungary?	3,99	4	2,26	1	10
General (post-test)	To what extent do you think Hungary should allow non-European immigrants to come and live here?	1,79	1	1,07	1	4

**12.2. Frames and immigration related questions in the experiment (EN – English, HU – Hungarian)**

<b>General introduction:</b>	
<p><b>EN: During the summer of 2015 immigrants and asylum seekers arrived to Europe in great numbers. Since then, there is a constant debate about how the situation of non-European immigrants arriving to Hungary should be treated.</b></p> <p><b>[HU: “2015 nyarán nagy számban érkeztek Európába menedékkérők és bevándorlók. Azóta folyamatos vita zajlik arról, hogyan kezeljük a Magyarországra érkező nem-Európai bevándorlók helyzetét.”]</b></p>	
<b>Pre-test immigration attitude question:</b>	
<p><b>EN: What do you think, will Hungary be a worse or a better place to live since people from non-European countries arrive to live here? 1 – much worse - 10 – much better</b></p> <p><b>[HU: Ön szerint általában véve rosszabb, vagy jobb hely lesz Magyarország azáltal, hogy Európán kívüli országokból érkeznek ide emberek élni?</b></p> <p>1 - sokkal rosszabb - 10 - sokkal jobb</p> <p>NT/NV]</p>	
<b>Exclusive immigration frame on economy:</b>	<b>Inclusive immigration frame on economy:</b>
<p>EN: Several media outlets reported, that immigrants and asylum seekers arriving to Hungary represent a significant burden for the social welfare system, which cannot be recouped in the future due to their lack of skills and therefore their inability to work.</p> <p>[HU: Számos hírforrásból úgy tájékozódhatunk, hogy a Magyarországra érkező bevándorlók és menedékkérők jelentős terhet jelentenek a szociális ellátórendszer számára, amelyet a képzetlenségük és így munkára való alkalmatlanságuk miatt a későbbiekben sem tudnak megtéríteni.]</p>	<p>EN: Several media outlets reported, that immigrants and asylum seekers arriving to Hungary may be able to fill the low-skilled labor shortage and thus contribute to the stability of the social welfare system.</p> <p>[HU: Számos hírforrásból úgy tájékozódhatunk, hogy a Magyarországra érkező bevándorlók és menedékkérők alkalmasak lehetnek az alacsony iskolai végzettséget igénylő munkaerőhiány betöltésére, így hozzájárulhatnak a szociális ellátórendszer stabilitásához.]</p>
<b>Economy related immigration attitude question:</b>	
<p><b>EN: How worried are you that immigrants from outside Europe are more of a burden on Hungary's economy than a benefit? 1 – very much worried – 10 not worried at all</b></p> <p><b>[HU: Ön mennyire aggódik amiatt, hogy az Európán kívülről érkező bevándorlók nagyobb terhet jelentenek Magyarország gazdasága számára, mint amekkora hasznot hoznak?</b></p> <p>1 - nagyon aggódik - 10 - egyáltalán nem aggódik</p> <p>NT/NV]</p>	



Exclusive immigration frame on culture:	Inclusive immigration frame on culture:
<p>EN: Several media outlets reported, that Muslim believers consider women to be inferior, and that they are unable to adapt to Christian cultural norms valid in Europe.</p> <p>[HU: Számos hírforrásból úgy tájékozódhatunk, hogy a muszlim vallású emberek alacsonyabb rendűnek tekintik a nőket, illetve hogy egyáltalán nem képesek az Európában érvényben lévő keresztény kulturális normákhoz alkalmazkodni.]</p>	<p>EN: Several media outlets reported, that people of Muslim faith with different customs enrich the cultural life of other European countries with predominantly Christian traditions, which also contributes to their social integration.</p> <p>[HU: Számos hírforrásból úgy tájékozódhatunk, hogy az eltérő szokásokkal bíró muszlim vallású emberek színesebbé teszik más, alapvetően keresztény hagyományokkal bíró európai országok kulturális életét, amely társadalmi integrációjukat is elősegíti.]</p>
<b>Culture related immigration attitude question:</b>	
<p><b>EN: In general, do you think that immigrants from outside Europe are more harmful or more enriching to Hungary's cultural life? 1 – very harmful – 10 – very enriching</b></p> <p><b>[HU: Mit gondol, az Európán kívülről érkező bevándorlók általában véve inkább ártanak vagy inkább gazdagítják Magyarország kulturális életét?</b></p> <p>1 - sokat ártanak - 10 - nagyban gazdagítják</p> <p>NT/NV]</p>	
Exclusive immigration frame on security:	Inclusive immigration frame on security:
<p>EN: Several media outlets reported that there is an ongoing conflict between local police officers and asylum seekers temporarily staying in the transit zones at the southern border, which poses a particularly high psychological and physical risk to the police officers serving in the transit zones.</p> <p>[HU: Számos hírforrásból úgy tájékozódhatunk, hogy a déli határnál lévő tranzitzónáknál folyamatos a konfliktus a helyi rendészek és az ideiglenesen a tranzitzónában tartózkodó menedékkérők között, mely különösen nagy lelki és fizikai kockázatot jelent a tranzitzónában szolgáló rendészek számára.]</p>	<p>EN: Several media outlets reported that asylum seekers waiting in transit zones at the southern border are subjected to constant harassment by local police. During conflicts, asylum seekers are at significant risk of physical and psychological harm.</p> <p>[HU: Számos hírforrásból úgy tájékozódhatunk, hogy a déli határnál lévő tranzitzónákban várakozó menedékkérők folyamatos inzultusoknak vannak kitéve a helyi rendészek által. A konfliktusok során a menedékkérők jelentős fizikai és lelki sérülés kockázatának vannak kitéve.]</p>
<b>Security related immigration attitude question:</b>	
<p><b>EN: How worried are you about that due to the increasing number of immigrants from outside Europe there will be an increase in the number of violent crimes, too? 1 – very much worried – 10 – not worried at all</b></p> <p><b>[HU: Ön mennyire aggódik amiatt, hogy az Európán kívülről érkező bevándorlók miatt megnő</b></p>	

**az erőszakos bűncselekmények száma Magyarországon?**

1 - nagyon aggódik - 10 - egyáltalán nem aggódik

NT/NV]

**EN: What do you think, what proportion of immigrants from outside Europe Hungary should accept?**

1 - no one should be allowed

2 - only asylum seekers should be admitted

3 - a pre-defined number of immigrants should be admitted on the basis of a quota (e.g. 1000 people)

4 - no upper limit should be set

**[HU: Mit gondol, Magyarországnak milyen arányban kellene befogadnia az Európán kívülről érkező bevándorlókat?**

1 - senkinek nem kellene engedni

2 – csak menedékkérőket kellene befogadni

3 - kvóta alapján előre meghatározott számú bevándorlót kellene befogadni (pl. 1000 fő)

4 - semmilyen felső határt nem kellene szabni

NT/NV]

**12.3. Articles and Facebook posts presented during the focus group discussions**

1. Origo.hu (3 April 2018). The UN still forces the colonization of migrants. Available: <https://www.origo.hu/nagyvilag/20180403-az-ensz-husveti-uzeneteben-is-a-migraciot-erolteti.html>. Downloaded: 29 January 2024.

NAGYVILÁG

**Az ENSZ továbbra is a migránsok betelepítését erőlteti**

ORIGO

2018.04.03. 16:52

EZ A CIKK 3 ÉVE FRISSÜLT UTOLJÁRA. A BENNE SZEREPLŐ INFORMÁCIÓK A MEGJELENÉS IDEJÉN PONTOSAK VOLTAK, DE MÁRA ELAVULTAK LEHETNEK.

AZ ENSZ Menekültügyi Főbiztossága húsvétkor is azt csinálta, amihez a legjobban ért: a bevándorláspárti spekuláns, Soros György kívánságának eleget téve a migrációt erőltetette, annak ellenére, hogy az európai emberek 78%-a szigorúbb határvédelmet követel.

A Pew Research Center adatai alapján **2010-TŐL NAPJAINKIG TÖBB MINT EGYMILLIÓ FEKETE-AFRIKAI MIGRÁNS KÖLTÖZÖTT EURÓPÁBA.** A kontinens őslakóinak a 68%-át félelemmel tölti el az afrikaiak beköltözése - írja a **Breitbart**.



Afrikai migránsok Lampedusa szigeténél. FORRÁS: AFP/NURPHOTO/CHRISTIAN MARQUARDT

A tanulmány szerint

**A LEGTÖBB ILLEGÁLIS BEVÁNDORLÓ A SZOCIÁLIS JUTTATÁSOK ÉS A JOBB GAZDASÁGI HELYZET MIATT JÖN AZ EURÓPAI UNIÓBA, TEHÁT NEM HÁBORÚ ELŐL MENEKÜL EL.** A Pew Research Center mérései értelmében **A KENYÁBAN ÉLŐK TÖBB MINT 50%-A ELKÖLTÖZNE AZ ORSZÁGBÓL.** Az európaiak 70%-a azon a véleményen van, hogy problémát fog jelenteni a muszlimok nagy népességnövekedése. Csupán 8% gondolja azt, hogy ez nem gond.

57% szerint a bevándorlás megváltoztatja az adott ország kultúráját.

**78% UGYANAKKOR SZIGORÚBB HATÁRVÉDELMET KÖVETEL.** Ennek tükrében teljesen érthető, hogy az ENSZ Menekültügyi Főbiztossága **MIÉRT ERŐLTETI MEG A KERESZTÉNYSEG LEGNAGYOBB ÜNNEPÉN IS AZ ILLEGÁLIS MIGRÁCIÓT.**

**A SZERVEZET SZERINT A BEVÁNDORLÁS ELKERÜLHETETLEN, SZÜKSÉGES, SŐT KÍVÁNATOS IS.**

Teljesen egyértelmű tehát mindenki számára, hogy a genfi székhelyű Menekültügyi Főbiztosság és a vele szövetséges EU-t irányító brüsszeli elit teljesen elszakadt a valóságtól, és **AZ EURÓPAI EMBEREK AKARATÁVAL SZEMBESZÁLLVA SOROS GYÖRGY MEGBÍZÁSAIT TELJESÍTI, AMINEK AZ A LÉNYEGE, HOGY EURÓPA BEVÁNDORLÓKONTINENS LEGYEN.**

2. Hirado.hu (4 March 2022). Viktor Orban negotiated with the vice president of the European Commission. Available: <https://www.origo.hu/itthon/20220304-orban-viktor-margaritisz-szkinasz-talalkozo.html>. Downloaded: 29 January 2024.

ITTHON

## Orbán Viktor az Európai Bizottság alelnökével tárgyalt

MTI

2022.03.04. 15:33

Orbán Viktor miniszterelnök a Karmelita kolostorban fogadta Margarítisz Szkínászt, az Európai Bizottság alelnökét péntek délután - tájékoztatta az MTI-t Havasi Bertalan, a Miniszterelnöki Sajtóiroda vezetője.

A megbeszélés témája az ukrajnai háború és az annak nyomán kialakult humanitárius válsághelyzet volt.

**ELSŐRENDŰ CÉLKÉNT NEVEZTÉK MEG A BÉKE MIELŐBBI MEGTEREMTÉSÉT UKRAJNÁBAN, VALAMINT AZT, HOGY AZ EZT CÉLZÓ ERŐFESZÍTÉSEK SORÁN AZ EURÓPAI UNIÓ MINDVÉGIG EGYSÉGESEN LÉPJEN FEL.**

Az uniós biztos elismerően szólt a magyar hatóságok, a civil szervezetek és a magyar állampolgárok segítőkészségéről, amit az ukrajnai menekültek irányába tanúsítanak, és amit a határon tett látogatásán személyesen is megtapasztalt.



Orbán Viktor kormányfő fogadja Margarítisz Szkínászt, az Európai Bizottság alelnökét a Karmelita kolostorban 2022. március 4-én. FORRÁS: MTI/MINISZTERELNÖKI SAJTÓIRODA/MINISZTERELNÖKI SAJTÓIRODA/BENKO VIVIEN CHER

Ígéretet tett arra, hogy az Európai Unió támogatni fogja ezeket az erőfeszítéseket.

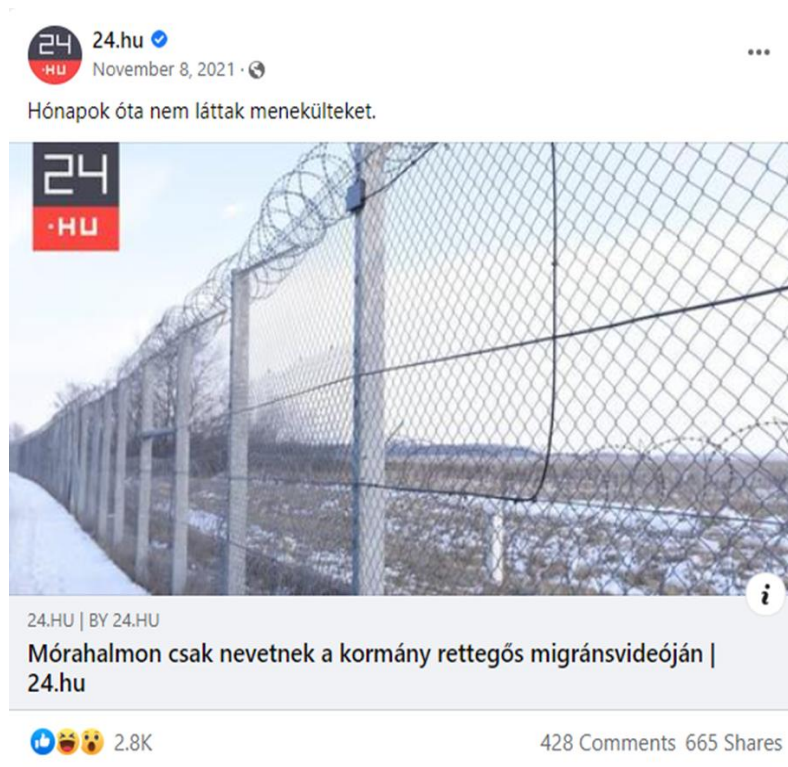
3. 24.hu (8 October 2021). They only laugh at the government's fearful migrant video in

Mórahalom.

Available:

<https://www.facebook.com/202099276507678/posts/4912120222172203>.

Downloaded: 29 January 2024.



4. 444.hu (6 August 2021). We outran the West in terms of everyday life – said Orban to the American television star. Available: <https://www.facebook.com/490030231058740/posts/4535462769848779>.

Downloaded: 29 January 2024.





5. HVG.hu (11 June 2021). Orbán: the pandemic leaves, the issue of immigration returns in Europe. Available: <https://www.facebook.com/131283758531/posts/10160452995423532>. Downloaded: 29 January 2024.



HVG

June 11, 2021 · 🌐



Orbán szerint migránshadak dörömbölnek Európa kapuján.



HVG.HU

**Orbán: Elmegy a járvány, visszakerül a migráció kérdése Európában**

Szokás szerint a Kossuth Rádióban kezdte a napot Orbán Viktor, és még azután i...



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