

The Image of Refugee in the Migration Crisis Context in Media

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Abstract

European union for the last years faces many kinds of Crisis and Challenges, which strongly reflected political and social conditions in each member state. Otherwise it is not even a long-term mediated topic of the migration crisis. One of the goals of this paper is to point out and emulate the image of the migration crisis in the media in the conditions of the Czech Republic.

Migration has long been a neutral concept for countries with economic reasons, so the issue of migration also appears to be a political issue where the migrants are perceived as a problem and society refuse to accept them because of individual prejudices against migrants. However, the issue of migration is a very broad topic that is viewed through a number of dimensions such as economic, security, cultural or religious. In the long run, the biggest problem was the economic dimension, which was a concern about the loss of domestic work or the risk of wage cuts. Migration trends and their changes can be easily seen through discourse and their gradual change based on political and social conditions, where discourse is understood to be the constitution of social practice as such.

The timeliness of the migration issue for 2015 and 2016 has grown considerably, not only in political discourse, but has also become one of the company's priorities. According to the Eurobarometer results of 2015, the V4 countries are turning to the tentative statistics on the perception of migration issues. They considered it the second most important issue in the EU right after unemployment. A very negative impact on the perception of the current migration issue has been attributed to quota redistribution, terrorist attacks and serious crime. These factors hurt the negative light towards migration as such, and the media only contribute.

Keywords: Discourse, Media, Migration Crisis, Refugee

Introduction

A lot of vulnerable people asking for asylum are coming into the European Union. These people are trying to escape from their home countries and they cannot come back because of the fear of persecution. European Union has got the legal and moral obligation to protect people in need. Member states are responsible for examining the asylum application and deciding who receives the protection. However, the current situation is not about the people who need to be protected. Many people coming into the Union do not need the protection; instead of that, they want to improve their own living standard. These people are so called economic migrants, and they are asking for asylum even though their economic situation is solvable. Such persons are not granted the asylum, and national governments are obliged to move them to their home country or other safe country through which they have passed.

For Europe, the whole refugee crisis was a huge shock. On the other hand, it should be noted that Europe is aging. The demographic development has shown for several years not only increasing the female fertility age, but the total number of children per woman has decreased,

and the number of pensioners is still rising. So, migration is one of the basic components of demography.

Solutions for the migration crisis are primarily sought at whole- European level. However, on these issues societies differ in their opinions which lead to misunderstanding and significant negativism of migration. Nowadays, this is not a classic migration that has accompanied us since we can remember, but societies are full of concerns about their own security and possible terrorist attacks. More radical attitudes towards migration have been taken up most often in homogenous countries, from which their own inhabitants come as economic migrants in the western European states. This significant lack of experiences with immigration and immigration is radicalizing, and the European Union is also trying to eliminate it. Under EU humanitarian aid, the capacities of the 2015 and 2016 criminal investigation have been strengthened to save more than 400,000 lives (the EU and the migration crisis, 2017). EU tries to solve the main causes of migration with the help of the African countries which are the main source of immigrants. Usually, it is a financial support from the Union serving to encourage economic activities mainly in transit countries. The main objective of EU still remains the stopping of uncontrolled migration from the main transit countries. In the Eurobarometer survey no. 86 from 2016 negative feelings about the immigration of people from other States were reported in a much higher degree than the fear of immigration of people from the Member States of the European Union.

Such prejudices are presented usually in relations among different cultures. Stereotypes and prejudices are not only negative, but they serve also as an instrument with the help of which we can recognize and categorize the world around us. Iveta Jeleňová says that: "... it is a set of convincing personality attributes assigned to a member of a social group"¹. Therefore, stereotypes alone create a certain illusion which is shared by society members, and this illusion is based on a modern identity generalization of a certain group without the society trying to perceive the difference of the given group. Stereotypes which are strongly believed in the given society can serve different purposes, usually they appear in clear contexts, mirror the processes, and help with the easier perception of information the way that the receptor processes only the knowledge he or she has already experience with. Stereotypes are usually associated with prejudices which are negative towards the migration. Their shape usually arises of negative attitudes towards the certain group of people, and consequently their negative evaluation. This can be seen in accusations from lack of working positions, criminality, or spread of inflectional diseases, or the current negative situation in society.

Methodology

A content analysis is a quantitative method and objective analysis of any kind of given information. Together with word analysis, content analysis focuses on non-verbal text signs or other signs, usually pictures, schemas or figures below the text. The content analysis has a potential to provide information of quantitative, descriptive, interpretative and explanative character. A quantification for the content analysis in our case means set of articles from print media for the given period of time during 2015 when migration crisis started to be very discussed in media. Migration crisis in the V4 countries has been significantly negativised which leads to the negative perception of migration in the society. Pieces of information needed for our research will be gathered by the access to print agency Anopress IT, whose database enables us to reflect the whole year in the medial space in the Czech Republic. We think, that media in society present an authority and serve as a "night guardian" of political institutions.

¹ Standard Eurobarometer (2015). (online) Available in <<https://tinyurl.com/yd2epra8>>

Therefore, we consider the picture of migration crisis offered by print media as legitimate, moreover, print media *Lidové Noviny (LN) a Mladá fronta-Dnes (MF-D)* are according to public opinion surveys considered to be opinion-forming. The content analysis is then a simple and a very productive methodological mean in comparison with other data collection techniques, and in document analysis it is adequately structured because the procedure and the rules of how texts should be approached are strictly stated, and the results are quiet simply verifiable [1]. When collecting data, we clearly and with the help of filters choose those options we need for the analysis. This is time period (the given month of the year), key word for looking up of the relevant articles (migration crisis) and the daily papers we chose. The method of content analysis is popular among experts because on the base of correlation of the variables it offers a clear picture about the given problematic. The category specification will create the content represented in quantitative measure [2]. The content analysis also has some kinds of restrictions we are aware of before the data collection. This is certain degree of subjectivity while the author of the content analysis creates a new text which is a specific mean of interpretation; in the same time, it cannot be claimed to what content the perceiver will understand the result. However, it has to be taken into account that medial picture perceived by the public is not direct. The same we take into account that differences in reading and understanding of media texts is considered to be the rule of mass communication and the specification will be its decoding based on the stated quantitative approaches. With its possibilities it offers great premises and applications which widen reading and automatic perspective of text analysis based on so called “ground theory” on the one hand, and on the corpus approaches, on the other hand [3]. The content analysis is then an objective research technique which leads to the objective, systematic and quantitative description of the given communication content [3, pp. 291-322]. Human communication is a process, in which by the means of communication media (a voice, a picture, and writing) a certain communication content which can be further studied is shared.

Results

Migration crisis in the Czech Republic has started to be presented in media since May.

Analysis then dealt with 8 months May 2015 till December 2015. The media were chosen by means of median, where the opinion of the society stated these two daily papers as trustful.

Both papers are released six times a week apart of Sunday. In 2015 it was 302 working days minus holidays (11) plus Saturdays when the papers were released. After the data collection, coding based on the given quantification processes which showed us the clear picture and the proportion of discussing the migration crisis in whole media sector was designed. When coding we focused on the newspaper section in which the text appeared (Home, World, economy, Opinions...) what kind of a text was it (an article, one paragraph, only a small note in the text...), recognition of Push-Pull factors, relation to European Union and relation to homeland policy. In Tab. 1 we can see the start of publishing articles about migration crisis. Despite the fact that the migration crisis started in 2014, media in Czech Republic started to inform it in May 2015.

Tab. 1. An overview of the number of messages in which the connection occurred migration crisis for 2015.

MONTH	MLADÁ FRONTA – DNES	LIDOVÉ NOVINY
Year	2015	2015
JANUARY	-	-
FEBRUARY	-	-
MARCH	-	-
APRIL	-	-

MAY	-	3
JUNE	1	3
JULE	1	-
AUGUST	1	3
SEPTEMBER	20	22
OKTOBER	10	14
NOVEMBER	12	18
DECEMBER	16	18
TEXTS OVERALL	85 150	21 377
TEXTS WITH KEY WORD	61	81

Source: *The Author.*

We used the data provided by ANOPRESS IT to look for any relations with migration crisis with the given criteria, and we tried to find the situations in which the migration crisis was mentioned in the media. Our research was based on the following criteria: 1. *What kind of text it is*, 2. *In what section is the text about migration crisis published*, 3. *what terms media use to refer to a refugee*, 4. *how many articles focuses on the push-pull factors*, 5. *relations to European Union*. Tab. 2 presents the quantification procedures as defined by us during data analysis.

Tab. 2. The total share of criteria in print media.

Criteria		Medium – the number	
		Mladá fronta dnes	Lidové noviny
Text	Whole article	21	33
	Paragraph	27	27
	Small note	13	21
Section	World	14	13
	Economy	1	6
	Home	6	12
	Comments	6	17
	Title page	11	8
	Refugee crisis	6	6
	Other	17	19
Push-pull factors		-	3
EU - Mentioned		26	39
Home country – Mentioned		19	22
The term	Migrant	4	7
	Refugee	19	13

Source: *The author.*

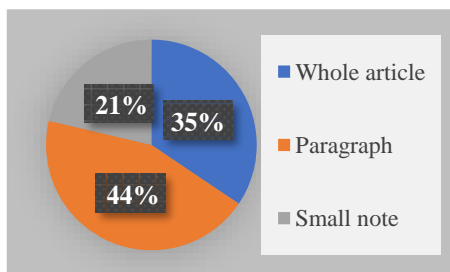


Fig. 1. Text: (MF-D).

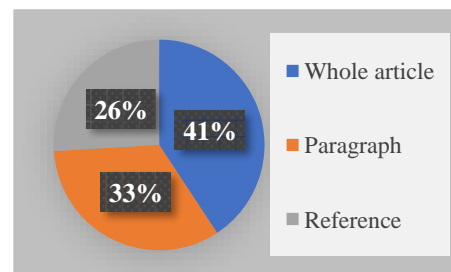


Fig. 2. Text: (LN).

Source: *The author.*

When coding we classified the collected texts according to the degree in which they were related to the migration crisis. As shown in Figs. 1 and 2 we stated 3 measurable quantification

procedures, first to what degree the text is related to the migration crisis- whether the whole articles are dedicated to the topic, or it was just one paragraph, or only a small note in the text.

In both cases of analyzed daily papers, the migration crisis was hot – topic in 44% of the texts, especially in September and October when higher proportion of the texts dealing with the topic was found. In the case of MF-D the migration crisis was the most commonly mentioned only in one sentence in an article even though the whole article was not dedicated to the given topic, it was usually the headline of the article. In the case of LN, the migration crisis was usually mentioned in the form of one paragraph from the whole article. In LN the migration crisis was mentioned more often, and many interviews about the crisis were added.

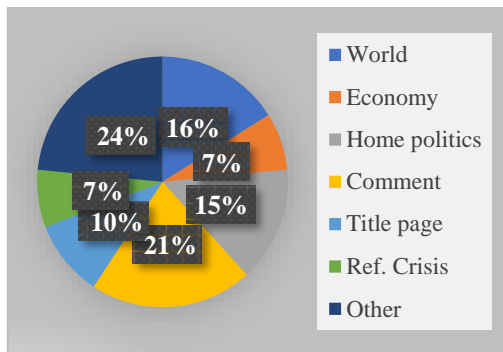


Fig. 3. Section: (LN).

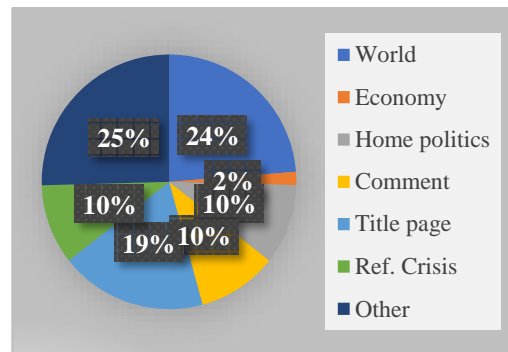


Fig. 4. Section: (MF-D).

Source: *The author.*

Another quantification approach was the section in which the text about the migration crisis was published. Figs. 3 and 4 show the highest perceptual proportion for the section “others”, it means that these were the sections of articles which did not include significant repetitions; these were regional sections, orientations, culture and others. Interesting fact is that the newspapers created a separated section dealing with the topic of the migration crisis. Quiet high perceptual proportion belonged to the front pages which use the topic as a sensation, and the crisis was mentioned only in one paragraph in whole article. Of course, in the section Opinions journalists ‘subjective attitudes towards the topic were presented; their picture reassured the previous depiction of the crisis shown in media and only encouraged the opinions in society. Only in one article we could spot push- pull factor of the crisis. In the economy section no form of manipulation appeared, only facts events and no speculations were presented. In the section Home, the migration crisis was presented in relation to the Czech Republic, and these were usually descriptions of the crisis by different political actors and their opinions on the topic.

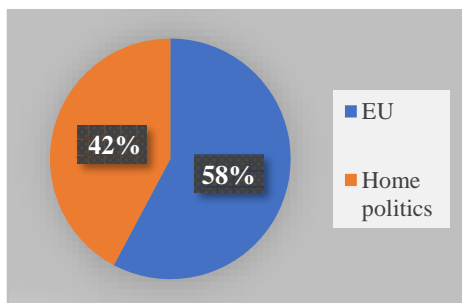


Fig. 5. Relation to EU vs. Home politics: (MF-D).

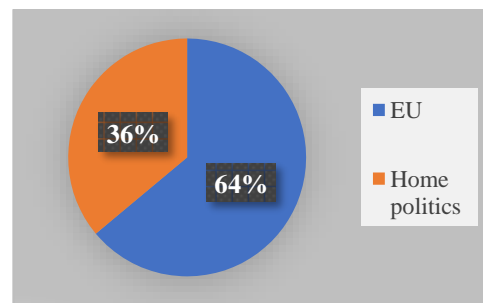


Fig. 6. Relation to EU vs. Home politics: (LN).

Source: *The author.*

The biggest attention in all collected texts was paid to the relation to the European Union institutions or to home politics (Figs. 5 and 6). In both cases (MF-D, LN) it was more than half of the texts that were directly referring to the responsibility for the current situation in EU. The

name of the German chancellor Angela Merkel and her politics appeared in the texts quite common. Information towards EU in the context of migration crisis was rather of a negative character, and the migration wave was described in media as a problem. The solution of this problem was on the shoulders of EU according to these texts. The section of home politics was discussed in the context of the politicians' attitudes towards the topic which influenced the forming of migration discourse which consequently influenced also the political discourse in the country.

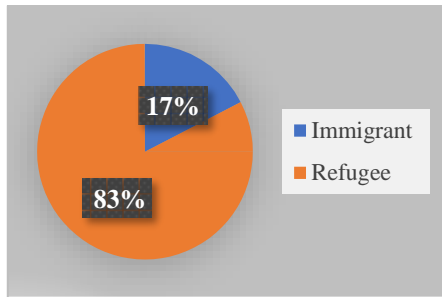


Fig. 7. Term using: (MF-D).

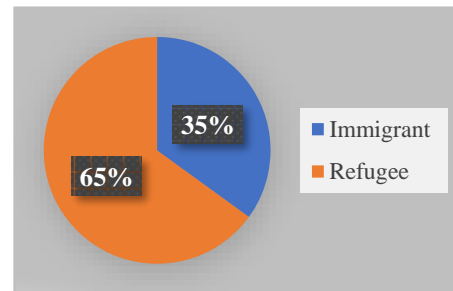


Fig. 8. Term using: (LN).

Source: *The author.*

For better orientation in the topic we included into quantification approaches also the coding of the terms migrant and refugee (Figs. 7 and 8). Their occurrence was not as common as we expected, but in cases where they appeared both terms were mentioned in the same contexts even though the documents differ between the terms migrant and a refugee. When talking about the term migrant it contributed to its negative connotations and perception.

Conclusions

The collected data from the Anopress press database enabled us to portray the media space devoted to the migration crisis. Under the definition of the migration crisis, the database filtered out 142 relevant articles from 2015. However, when we read the texts in detail, we noticed further repetitions in individual articles, but they were triggered by the moods that were in the company. The uncontrolled number of refugees seeking asylum and their entry into the buffer countries has forced the European Union to act in the sense of reallocation of refugees on the basis of a quota system, to which the V4 countries have been significantly affected. Quotas have used political leaders in their rhetoric and closest profiling. The migration crisis has thus become a company's priority, but the European Union has been responsible for it. The crisis has highlighted the stability of the European Union, which has manifested itself in the different views of its Member States. The rate of visibility of the migration crisis in September 2015 marked a significant increase in media, with quotas being the most common, with the further linking of the fence to the Hungarian-Serbian border and Viktor Orbán's radical approach to migration as such. In September 2015, the mood of the company was driven by the need for security, the fear of crime and the potential threat that "threatens us" with the arrival of a large number of refugees from other cultures and other faiths.

The coloring of the text message related to the migration crisis has been strongly dependent on the column in which the text is published. The most emphatic contributions were on the front page and in the rubrics of the refugee crisis, which was based on the quota system and its criticism and rejection. It directly referred to the "guilt" of the European Union and the dictate of Brussels. In the Economy section, the texts were rather informative in nature, trying to clarify the events, but the ratio of such reports was very low. The depiction of individual concepts as a migrant and a refugee occurred in the same contexts, and the migratory crisis was arbitrarily confused, which led to misunderstandings in the discussions on asylum and migration.

Refugees are people who escape from armed conflict or persecution, and their return home can be dangerous. A migrant is a person coming to a destination country for education, work or family.

Migration issues have thus become a very sensitive issue and, moreover, a political problem, but they have not (not) been able to solve the situation merely by highlighting it and rhetorically spreading moods in society, resulting in a side effect such as the growth of radical political parties in Europe.

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