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May 2012

Master thesis

Broadcast news production in the light of changing regulations

in Hungary:

A case study of the leading commercial and public service channels

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Abstract

In 2010 the center-right Fidesz-Christian Democrat coalition (Fidesz-KDNP) had an unprecedented electoral victory in Hungary. The party won two-thirds of the mandates, allowing the government not only to follow through with their reforms but change laws which require two-third of the votes. After the inauguration they started a fast legislation process, in the frame of this process the constitution and the media law were among the first laws that have been modified. Both of the laws as well as the party`s legislative decisions in general received negative international critiques, from politicians, the IMF and the EU as well as from the media. Furthermore, the governmental acts and the content of the regulations were also accused of being non-democratic. This being the case, the popularity of Fidesz did not decrease nationally. The new media law was among the most critiqued and controversial laws that have been passed. Furthermore, media, being a mediator between politics and the public has an important impact on public opinion. The difference between international and national opinion suggest that there might also be differences in news coverage. Therefore, this thesis aims to provide an understanding of the ongoing political situation in Hungary through the lenses of the media law and television news broadcast. Using genre analysis, the research provides an analysis of the media law and the content production of commercial and state television channels. A case study of the three most popular television channels facilitates the understanding of the topic. Furthermore, this analysis is placed in a wider political, historical and media industry context, which enables the reader to look beyond news production and provides knowledge about the context in which the media law and news production are embedded. Besides genre analyses, interviews with journalists and a media

economist provide linkage between the different sections of the research and first hand experiences on the current situation of the Hungarian media market.

Keywords: media law, television broadcast, news values, genre, Hungary, self-censorship

Introduction

On April the 25th, in 2010 the center-right Fidesz-Christian Democrat coalition (Fidesz-KDNP) had the biggest democratic electoral victory since the fall of communism. After eight years of the center-left Socialist Party (MSzP) administration, Fidesz won 68 per cent of the mandates, which means that they gained two-thirds of the seats in the Hungarian Parliament. MSzP, the Hungarian Socialist Party received only 59 mandates. Another surprise of the elections was that two relatively newly formed parties, Jobbik and “Politics Can be Different”, reached the Parliamentary threshold and cut out MDF (Hungarian Democratic Forum) from the Parliament. The radical right party, Jobbik received 47 mandates. LMP also reached the Parliamentary threshold, receiving 16 mandates. (HVG 1)

The election reshaped the Hungarian political landscape and brought about significant national political changes. After its inauguration Fidesz started a hasty legislation process. The Parliament during its first year passed over 200 bills among which 70 were newly formed. Almost all of them were promoted by the government and in addition bills promoted by the opposition were not approved, except for a sports law modification bill. (HVG 2) The two-third majority of Fidesz did not only enabled the party to follow through with the planned reforms but to alter laws which require a qualified, two-thirds majority to modify, such as the media law and the constitution. These were among the first laws to be changed and which received negative critiques. Besides the modification of the above mentioned two laws there were several amendments made which raised both national and international concerns of incompatibility with democratic norms, such as the Central Bank law, the early retirement of judges and national data protection. These issues and the government's unwillingness to modify the regulations in accordance with EU suggestions, brought the country's negotiation with the IMF and EU about the Hungarian standby loan to a halt.

Although the country has been receiving sharp international critiques the popularity of Fidesz remained very high. The so called Békement movement (Peace March) was an organized protest on January 21st in 2012 in order to send a message abroad: Fidesz still has supporters in Hungary. The protest had around one hundred thousand participants which was much more than the anti-governmental protest approximately a month before. (Index 1)

These facts raise the question whether there is any difference between Hungarian and international media coverage that might have an impact on different news coverage in national and international spheres regarding the Hungarian government.

Therefore in this research I attempt to answer the following questions:

- How does the Hungarian mainstream news media, specifically television news, report on national politics?
- What impact do changing media laws and regulations in Hungary have on television news coverage, specifically in the RTL Klub – TV2 – M1 case study?
- What differences and similarities are there between international and national news reports, also in the wider context of changing media law, regulation and politics in Hungary?
- What tensions exist between television news values and practices in Hungary and its wider role in democratic engagement?

Besides personal interest in television broadcast, the fact that people are more likely to use television as their primary news source (Szonda Ipsos, 2006) is the underlying reason for the television news focus of this research. In order to analyze news coverage, it is inevitable to touch upon the fundamental practices and values of democratic media, which provide a basis of comparison of the media coverage after the changed regulations and the ideals of news. Furthermore, this thesis also aims to provide an understanding of the current political situation through the lenses of

broadcast news and the new media law, which facilitates the understanding of the situation of the media.

Since this thesis researches a currently ongoing and continuously changing situation, it also intends to fill the gap in the knowledge on this subject. Although, there are already studies of the current situation there are not much academic literature available on this topic, mostly because the new regulations have been passed very recently. As for the political context, the current administration`s acts continuously form the legislative landscape.

News Genre

In the academic literature there are several definitions of news genre. For instance, according to Lewis “news is a form of representation and the images and words that it uses are the results of creative and interpretive processes.” (Creeber, 2001, p.108) Therefore, “making television news is a matter of ‘putting reality together’”. (Schlesinger, in *ibid*, p.108) Hill defines news as a “category that encompassed regional, national and rolling news programs. News programs are often [...], providing the main source of public information.” (Hill, 2007, p44) Furthermore, according to Corner news is “regularly updated information about, and depictions of, significant recent events within a particular geographic area or sphere of activity.” (Corner in Hill, 2007, p44) This list of definitions could be long continued.

Hill argues that it is difficult to define news because it is a continuously changing category. (Hill, 2007) Besides changing over time it is also changing over space. As its purpose “is to provide people with the information they need to understand the world, [...] to live their lives” (Kovach and Rosenstiel, 2001, p149) and journalists have to make the information “meaningful, relevant and engaging” for them. (*ibid*, p149) Consequently, news has to have local relevance.

Furthermore, news varies in accordance with channel identity¹ or business model, in this case the means of financing the operation, such as public service and commercial models. Public Service Broadcasters (PSBs) are financed from state subsidies, therefore “from the beginning have made a commitment to a consistently high level of factual output. [...] As they [sic] changed to respond to more commercial television markets, they have looked to balance their information and educational programming with more entertainment-led output.” (Hill, 2007, p31) On the other hand, commercial channels get the necessary funding from advertisement, therefore

¹ This is the way how channels situate themselves on the market to project an identity towards the audience and other television channels. (Mittell, 2004)

they “must optimize their audience to receive the most amount of revenue.” (Hill, 2007, p31) “Entertainment is, therefore a dominant genre in the commercial portfolio.” (ibid, p31-32) The sharply different ways of financing greatly impact the news genre that these television stations broadcast. In addition to the above mentioned factors, the time of the day when news is transmitted also influences the genre. (ibid, 2007) In news programs “for the most part a distinction is made [...] between news about the world or national events, and sports/entertainment news” (ibid, p44) and there are also certain characteristics which alter by the reported issue, the person who is being interviewed. (ibid) As there are many factors which influence news production and therefore the genre itself, “it is worthwhile coming up with examples and prototypes that can be used as guides for typical qualities within factual genres.” (ibid, p56)

According to Hansen there are some aspects of narrative analysis that can be implemented in genre analysis. He claims that “the relationship between narrative conventions and audience expectation is what allows for the construction of genre classification.” (Hansen et.al., 1998, p175) Therefore, going along with Hansen`s list I apply his generic conventions to Hungarian news genre. Below only those conventions can be read and are shortly elaborated upon which are relevant to news.

Conventional period – One of the duties of news is transmitting relevant information. (Kovach and Rosenstiel, 2001) Therefore, the reported news event is close to present times.

Conventional representations, stereotypes – In news programs the viewpoints of politicians and political parties are always represented. Furthermore, advocates and other credible sources are also given a voice. Depending on the story, in some cases ‘man on street’ (MOS) interviews are included in the story and the reporter also might show up in a stand up. According to Coleman and Ross “the hierarchy of news values identified more than 25 years ago which gave value to some voices and not

others, shows no sign of disappearing in the 21st century.” (ibid, p51) In accordance with this practice citizens are not equally represented with politicians. (ibid)

Conventional locations – news studio

Conventional settings – The setting of a news studio is neutral, usually there is only a counter. Generally news studios are “dressed” electronically with the technique of CGI (computer-generated image). “This creates an environment which is frequently referred to as ‘virtual space’, although we actually identify with it as a particular place.” (Lury, 2005, p153)

Conventional objects – In news, the channel’s microphone, which sometimes can be seen at the bottom of the screen with the logo of the channel, could be seen as conventional object of news.

Conventional music – news signal

News values and practices

In democracies media is a mediating channel between society and politicians. (Colman and Ross, 2010) Journalists function as “independent monitor of power” (Kovach, 2001, p112) and give voice to the voiceless. (ibid) Kovach stresses that journalism has interlocked so much with democracy, “it is so fundamental to that purpose that [...] societies want to suppress freedom must first suppress the press.” (ibid, p18) Consequently, journalists not only create a platform of communication but serve as safeguards and representatives of the freedom of democracy. In fulfilling this responsibility they have to follow certain values.

The previous chapter introduced essential professional values of news but there is another, equally important aspect of news values, which is ethics. It is “a cornerstone of good journalism. All journalists must be concerned about ethics”. (White, 2002, p356)

A prime characteristic of news is its faithfulness to truth. (Hill, 2007; Kovach, 2001) News as a factual genre is committed to the notion that the issues and topics that it represents are real, experienced events. (Hill, 2007) Objectivity also has a pivotal importance in journalism. However, Kovach claims that a misunderstanding of the notion of objectivity has evoked. According to general belief, objectivity means that journalists are “free of bias”. On the contrary, objectivity means the necessity of creating a system of verification, stresses Kovach. “The discipline of verification is what separates journalism from entertainment, propaganda, fiction, or art.” (Kovach, 2001, p71) As a corollary of the development of “a transparent approach to evidence, [...] personal and cultural biases do not [sic] undermine the accuracy of [...] work.” (ibid, p72) Verification has several means. For instance, Tuchman identified four different techniques: 1) “Presentation of conflicting possibilities” (Tuchman in Tumber, 2000, p.299), 2) “Presentation of supporting evidence” (ibid, 300), 3) “The judicious use of quotation marks” (ibid, p301) and 4) “Structuring information in an

appropriate sequence” (ibid, p301). Consequently, in striving for objectivity, the works of journalists have to be in line with verification criteria.

There should also be proportionality and comprehensiveness in journalistic work. Consequently, there should be “diversity in news”. (Kovach, 2001, p165) Although, the measures of proportionality and comprehensiveness are subjective, certain questions, such as “does the top of the newscast include a fair mix of what people would consider either interesting or sufficient?” (ibid, p165) serving as guidelines. Nonetheless, the intention of being diverse increases the credibility of the journalist, emphasizes Kovach. (ibid) Besides the above introduced values “all journalists must have a personal sense of ethics and responsibility – a moral compass”. (Kovach, 2001, p181)

Nowadays it is an unequivocal fact that news is not a bearer of the only truth. News production is influenced by market flaws, politics, channel identity, perspectives, etc. (Hill, 2007; Ross and Coleman, 2010) Therefore, it is impossible to demolish all biases and perspectives and reach ultimate objectivity. (Petty Calhoun in Kovach, 2001) However, this does not mean that news production does not have to be in line with certain professional and ethical expectations, and to strive for objectivity. Inasmuch as ultimate objectivity is unfeasible, it is undoubtedly possible to aspire to accuracy, fairness, truth, impartiality. (Kovach, 2001; Hill, 2007)

The above introduced fundamental values of journalism serve as focal points for the analysis, which aims to discover whether news coverage in Hungary fulfills the requirement of democratic media. On the basis of the points of this chapter it can be stated that most of the values of journalism are subjective; however the aspiration to fulfill these requirements is a sign of democratic media engagement, which indicates media democracy.

Methodology

As texts “do not actively link together without [...] cultural activity”, (Mittell, 2004, p5) in order to analyze genre successfully we need to go beyond text, says Mittell. We need to “locate genres within the complex interrelations among texts, industries, audiences, and historical contexts.” (ibid, p7) The aim of this thesis besides discovering the means of broadcast coverage in the light of the new media law is to provide an overall understanding of the current situation in Hungary. Therefore, I have used genre analysis as my research methodology as it enabled me to introduce both the news genre and to place it in the Hungarian context. Throughout my study I have relied on Mittell’s book as a guideline in order to touch upon all the necessary aspects of the topic. In the frame of the genre analysis I conduct a case study on the most viewed Hungarian television channels` news programs on a selected day. Carrying out this analysis I have worked with Lury’s four components of television, such as image, sound, space and time. (Lury, 2005)

The subject of this research is an extremely current issue. The recent national political and consequently legislative changes are still being processed by citizens as well as scholars. Therefore, academic literature is not or hardly accessible on the topic. Thus, as a secondary method I have conducted interviews with journalists and other academic personnel to be able to draw connections between the sections of the thesis as well as to contextualize the case study with the experiences of those who are either directly affected by the regulations or are close enough to the field to form relevant opinion.

Genre Analysis

Scheduling and channel identity indicate how and what audience television channels aim to reach. “Scheduling uses genres to reach specific audiences, working to constitute the genre by linking it with particular assumptions. Channel identity can

operate as genre explicit (Comedy Central) or implicit (NBC`s urban white sitcom reputation)”. (ibid, p58) “Both scheduling and channel identity can articulate genres to particular target audiences and cultural hierarchies.” (ibid, p58) (e.g. daytime soap operas). Minding the importance of scheduling, as part of my genre analysis I introduce the Hungarian media market with a special focus on viewing data. Doing so I also provide information on the most viewed times of the day as well as where the analyzed news programs are placed in the channel`s program agenda.

Channel identity claims can usually be found in the company profile. Since I have not found this information on the television channel`s website I have not devoted a whole chapter to identity claims of the analyzed channels in this research. However, throughout the thesis I touch upon the composition of their audiences.

In his book Mittell explains how the changing regulation has had an effect on the increasing popularity of Saturday morning cartoons. ”Claiming that cartoons ‘drowned out’ quality children`s programming, challenged broadcasters to improve children`s broadcasting by eliminating ‘time waster’ shows and move toward more educational and ‘uplifting’ programming.”(ibid, p76) In case of my research changing regulations have particular relevance. Therefore, in this paper I elaborate on the technical changes that the new regulation brought about as well as on the critiques that have been formulated against it. Furthermore, I investigate whether the change in regulations at the state level has had any impact at the industry level.

Another aspect that is relevant for the research context is ownership. Although ownership structures and conglomerations have an impact on media content, ownership interest is not the single determining factor. Therefore the analysis should not be stopped “at the level of the industry itself - media industries always interrelate within the multiple spheres of texts, audiences, and historical contexts.” (ibid, p92) Analyzing the structure of the news and finding answers to the following questions can help in going beyond industry interests during the research: How is the new program built up? Where is the advert section? Where different kinds of news are positioned? (ibid) Although Mittell mentioned audience participation as an important

aspect of genre analysis, I did not include it in my research, as it does not connect directly to the main focus of this study.

In depicting the political background in which the new media law and consequently news production are embedded, I mainly relied on hvg.hu and index.hu news websites. The former is the online content of HVG magazine. Albeit it is officially a neutral magazine, it is more associated with the political left. The reason for this choice is a personal preference and familiarity with the website. However in order, to carry out objective research I counterbalanced the articles of this website with publications from a more independent news website, namely index.hu. In the citation HVG articles are predominate but the information has been checked on the other website as well.

This research aims to introduce the Hungarian political situation in details, providing a deep understanding of the current government's acts, the changing economic situation as well as the opinion of international media, mostly on new laws and regulations. As Index and HVG have been publishing international press reviews from various sources from across the world, I used these sites as guidelines in studying international feedback. Following the press reviews of the magazines I feel that I managed to collect a wider range of data than if I simply tried to get this information from primary sources. Being fluent in Hungarian and English I would not have been able to review any international opinion besides these languages. In the case of the English language materials I made sure that the publications were posted and I also made sure that the publications were published with the same content that the Hungarian web sites claimed. Several times Index as well as HVG provided link access to the original sources, mostly in the case of English language articles but sometimes to German, Spanish and other sources as well. In the case of German articles I checked the content only if a link access to the original source was provided. Since studying German media content I have faced language related challenges. In the case of English references without a link to the original source I tried to find the

articles where HVG and Index claimed they should be. I was mostly successful. These international opinions are referenced in my thesis from the original source. In case of other languages I had to rely maximally on HVG and Index. Studying international media I had access exclusively to international content, which was published online. This restricted the scope of the research.

Checking the international media content I figured that the aforementioned Hungarian media outlets often cited the opinion section of international magazines. Therefore, in some cases I looked into the content of other sections as well. It would have been interesting to make a comparison in order to discover similarities and difference in the general international opinion on Hungarian national politics and the international opinion which was projected by Hungarian media. Unfortunately, the length of this paper and the timeframe of this research did not allow me to elaborate on this aspect; however it might be the topic of a future study.

Case Study

Time

Time, or more precisely scheduling has an economic importance, especially for commercial televisions. “The value of airtime is calculated through a process of negotiation between the channel, advertising agencies, marketing managers and organizations which measure the viewing habits of the audience. [...] The time of the audience becomes a ‘commodity’ that is bought and sold.” (Lury, 2005, p125) As Mittell has also suggested, time as a positioning tactic, has a particular importance in television programs. Since news is “organized so that the most important or relevant information is put in the most prominent position” (Van Dijk, 1988, p43) throughout my case study I paid special attention to the news sequences. Furthermore, I studied how long the channels reported certain news events.

Sound

According to Lury, “the human voice is probably the most important sound on television.” (Lury, 2005, p59) There are several techniques in television for giving voices to people. Sometimes there is nobody attached to the voice, for instance in a voice-over. In other cases we see only a part of the speaker or even just the face. Lury claims that it is important who`s voice is represented. Although Lury stressed the significance of gender, class, etc, in case of my work I focused more on, which politicians are given a voice in the news reports and in what order. As it was suggested above, in the news sequence the most important information has priority. (Van Dijk, 1988) Scrutinizing which politicians are present in the new stories and in what order provides an idea about who are considered to be important personnel by the analyzed channels.

Reporters usually have a microphone attached to them to make sure that their voices are heard. Furthermore their voices are:

usually transmitted in a way that makes what they say ‘drier’, clearer and more audible than anyone else who speaks. They are therefore at the top of the hierarchy audibly, even if they seem, in terms of their picture, to be lost in the crowd. [...] This provides situations where an apparent visual ‘democracy’ is seen on screen, but actually, very few ‘ordinary’ people are able to speak and those that do re controlled audibly. [...] Television therefore often provides the appearance, but not necessarily the sound of democracy.” (ibid, p65)

Carrying out the case study I paid attention to the “sound of democracy”. I have analyzed whether citizens were given voices and it what ways, since one of the fundamental roles of democratic media is the mediation of public, in order to facilitate their political engagement. (Dahlgren, 2009)

Space and Image

In her book, Lury differentiates space and place. According to her, space is “described in terms of quantities that are, in effect, always relationships, and these special relations are imbued with effects of economics, politics and power.” (ibid, p148) Since television “transmits sound and image across the globe” (ibid, p148) it

compresses the distance between the viewer and the event. Consequently, it plays a facilitating role in time-space compression. On the contrary, place is “the way in which objects, buildings, people and landscapes are related to one another in space and time.” (ibid, p149) Lury stresses that image has a particular importance in constructing space. Therefore in this research I did not divide space and image sharply, but rather used them together. Television, says Lury, uses image as evidence which is mediated through different effects, such as split-screen, medium shot, close-up, etc. During the case study I paid close attention to camera techniques.

Qualitative Interviews

Eventually in order to be able to provide more extensive information on the research topic I conducted semi-structured qualitative interviews. As interviewing was only my secondary method I did not put the main focus on the quantity of the interviews but to arrange meetings with people who can provide me with the most relevant information. As the interviews were semi structured I listed a couple of questions to have as a guideline through the conversations, such as: Was there a need for changing the media law?, Are the critiques against it legitimate?, What impact does it have on content production and journalists?, etc. I paid special attention to constructing neutral questions which were not led by my previous knowledge on the issues. The list of questions remained mainly the same each time, however as I gained more knowledge on the subject the questions slightly changed. I interviewed four journalists, from both broadcast and publishing media sectors and a media economist. I recorded all the interviews except one, as a television reporter asked for anonymity. Furthermore, I lost one of the interviews due to technical problems. Fortunately, I managed to rebuild the data on the basis of my notes I took during the conversation and consultation with my interviewee.

The interviews provided useful information for a deeper understanding on the RTL Klub-TV2-M1 case study, media law and for placing these issues in the wider political, historical context.

Media market in Hungary

In this chapter I am going to introduce the Hungarian media market, more precisely the print and broadcast sector, with a special focus on viewing and reading statistics. This section aims to provide a general overview of the existing media outlets and an insight into the choice of the analyzed television channels.

Television

The Magyar Televízió (Hungarian Television - MTV), is the Hungarian national public service television company which was established in 1954 as the first television station in the country. M1 is an analogue channel; therefore it is freely accessible for every citizen. Besides MTV there is another public service channel in Hungary, Duna Television (Danube Television), which in accordance with the new media law has been merged with M1.

Both of Hungary`s national commercial television channels, RTL Klub and TV2 were established in 1997. On the Hungarian media market ownership transparency has its challenges, which will also be elaborated on in another chapter. However, on the basis of the information that is available on the official websites of the channels, I will introduce their ownership structures. Since 2011, RTL Group² is the sole owner of RTL Klub. (origo.hu) 81.5 per-cent of TV2 shares belong to the ProSiebenSat.1 Media AG³ owned by SBS Broadcasting Europe B.V. and only 16 percent of its shares are owned by the Hungarian MTM-TV2 Ltd. (tv2.hu) According to ABG Nielsen⁴ statistics, RTL Klub and TV2, the two commercial channels were the most popular in Hungary in the fourth year quarter in 2011. Behind them there are the

² The RTL Group, with 47 television channels and 29 radio stations in ten countries, is the leading European entertainment network. (rtlgroup.com, accessed: February 13, 2012)

³ The ProSiebenSat.1 AG is the biggest German and one of Europe`s leading television companies. It has 27 channels in 10 countries. With its services ProSiebenSat.1 reaches 67 million households every day. (prosiebensat1.com; accessed: February 13, 2012)

⁴The ABG Italia group was established in Hungary in 1992, as AGB Hungary, now known as Nielsen Audience Measurement. The Group is responsible for audience measurement in the country. (agbnielsen.net, accessed: February 13, 2012)

general entertainment channels in the rank, such as movies, news, music and sports channels. These were followed by public service channels in the television ranking. (mmonline.hu)

On a daily basis, viewing rates start growing around 15:00 and the number of people who tune in is continuously growing until 21:00, which is the peak of the day. After 21:00 there is a plunge in viewing. (Arcsai and Varga, 2009; Nielsen, 2012; adattar.nmhh.hu) In 2011 RTL Klub was the most watched television channel on a whole day scale in every age group. RTL Klub was followed by TV2 and M1 in third place in the three-channel-comparison. The viewings of the latter two are gradually decreasing. The underlying reasons for this will be introduced in a subsequent chapter. This ranking was generally true for the first four weeks of 2012 as well as according to the latest viewer statistics made by R-time. (R-time.hu)

Besides audience data, accessibility factors had important roles in selecting the cases of this research. In Hungary there is television access in nearly every household and TV is the most common source of information. Despite the general access of television, 25 percent of the population does not have cable television but an indoor antenna, which provides access only to three analogues, the freely accessible channels, RTL Klub, TV2 and M1. (Szonda Ipsos, 2006) Until RTL Klub and TV2 are in the analogue system, they have to be freely accessible by law. However, after digitalization people will be charged for watching these channels. (HVG 3)

On the basis of the information in this section I have decided to analyze the news coverage of the public television M1 as well as the two commercial channels, RTL Klub and TV2.

From Hungary`s cable channel repertoire ATV should be highlighted. According to the channel`s own audience measures as well as Szonda Ipsos, its news program`s popularity is growing. (atv.hu/cikk; piackutatasok.hu) Therefore, I was considering including the channels news program in the case study. Since, ATV is left leaning, Hír TV, which is a right leaning cable news channel would have been a

counterbalance to the channels. Analyzing the channels according to the aspect, which were described in the genre analysis, I intended to discover similarities and difference between the new coverage of PSBs, commercial channels and cable channel as well as left and right leaning channels. However, due to data protection, I was not able to discover if, on the basis of their viewing statistics they should be incorporated in this research. Second of all, I was not able to access the channels actual news program either in order to carry out this research. Therefore, eventually I had to exclude these channels from my research.

Newspapers

In this paragraph I am going to briefly introduce the Hungarian national newspapers according to their profile and frequency of publication, focusing on political newspapers.

National political daily newspapers are Népszava (People`s Voice), Népszabadság (National Freedom), Magyar Hírlap (Hungarian Newspaper), Magyar Nemzet (Hungarian Nation), Magyar Nemzet (Hungarian Nation), Napi Gazdaság (Daily Economy) and Metropole. National weekly newspapers with a political focus are: 168 Óra (168 hour), Heti Válasz (Weekly Answers), Magyar Demokrata (Hungarian Democrat), Magyar Narancs (Hungarian Orange), and Élet és Irodalom (Life and Literature). Figyelő (Observer) and the HVG (Weekly World Economics) are regarded as political and economic weekly newspapers, covering national and international issues as well. (mediapic.hu 1, 2) Besides these newspapers, there are 19 regional political dailies in Hungary, which are, in many cases, more popular than national political newspapers.

While nationally distributed dailies and weeklies are mostly read in the capital, in its suburbs as well as in regional centers, tabloids are mostly sold in the countryside (m.magyarnarancs.hu) Magyar Nemzet is the second most widely read newspaper among the most popular national dailies. In 2011 on average 50 285 copies were sold weekly. It is followed by Magyar Hírlap and Népszava. Népszabadság is the most

popular one. Magyar Nemzet is mostly read by 18-59 year-olds who are part of the highly qualified population, living mainly in Budapest (53%). (mno.hu) However, according to MATEsz tabloids, other entertainment papers and regional papers have much higher sale records than any of the national newspapers. While many of the tabloids have close to 200,000 sales records, none of the national papers even reach having the 100,000 copies sold. As the range of newspapers from which people get their information is very wide, if I wanted to study printed press, I should work with several newspapers. Due to the time extent I have been given for this research and the restricted length of this paper I decided not to include newspapers in my research. (matesz.hu)

Hungarian media in the post-communist era

In 1989, along with the political transition, there was also a reform in the media market. Since the transition, media has undergone significant changes; it has to be mentioned that:

Contemporary media policy, and hence the current status of television broadcasting, are to a great extent determined by Hungary being a young democracy where the media have only recently stepped on the way leading from what has been termed a ‘totalitarian’ or ‘authoritarian’ model, toward the ‘libertarian’ or ‘socially responsible’ model. The transformation of the media has been a slow and unfinished process. (Bajomi-Lázár, 2005, p796)

Bajomi-Lázár expressed these thoughts about the status of the Hungarian media in 2005 and since then, they had become even more accurate. On account of the new media law the Hungarian media was accused of heading back to totalitarianism, to a model which it was supposed to leave behind. Regardless of the truthfulness of the accusation, it indicates that the Hungarian media regulation system still needs to be formed in order to create a better functioning media sector.

In this chapter I intend to introduce developments to the media market after 1989, focusing mainly on television and shortly touching upon radio broadcasts as well as on print media.

Radio and Television Broadcast

When communism fell there were two state television stations in Hungary. Due to challenges in regulation, there were no changes made to the two television channel dominance for almost a decade, albeit some smaller broadcasters made efforts to break into the market. Local broadcasters were already operating as early as 1986. Cable television, “the loudspeakers of the then communist-controlled local municipalities” (ibid, p801) and the first FM radio station which was owned by the state were established. Since their main focus was local news and entertainment, they did not “challenge the monopoly of the public service television and radio in news

and current affair reporting”. (ibid, p801-802) The late 1990s brought a shift in legal conditions and therefore the proliferation of new private channels. (Gálik, 2004; Bajomi-Lázár, 2005)

The communist party, instead of passing a broadcast law, “imposed a moratorium on frequency allocation” (Gálik, 2004, p192) shortly before 1989. According to Gálik it was a political decision against “emerging opposition forces”. (ibid, p192) Their decision on the moratorium had a long-lasting effect on Hungarian media. The democratic parties did not come to an agreement about a new media regulation, especially because in Hungary a two-third majority is required for approving broadcast regulations. (Bajomi-Lázár, 2005) As democratic regulation is a prerequisite of privatization, the scarcity of a broadcast law combined with the frequency moratorium hamstrung the broadcast media market, making privatization impossible for a long time. Scholars argue that privatization is advantageous because along with the increase in the number of private broadcasters facilitating information diversity, it also takes the responsibility from the PSBs and distributes it among the market actors. (ibid, 2005)

The long awaited consensus between the democratic parties eventually was reached and the Radio and Television Broadcast Act officially came into effect in 1996, much later than in other post-communist countries in Eastern and Central Europe. For instance, in Czechoslovakia regulation had already come into force in 1991 and in 1992 in Poland. (ibid)

One year after the conditions for privatization were created, in 1997, two commercial television stations, TV2 and RTL Klub were launched. In 1998 Danubius Radio and Sláger Radio, two commercial radio stations were established. (Gálik, 2004)

An important purpose of the media law was to demolish the political debate over media ownership, media`s – mainly state broadcasters` - societal role, and state influence over media. In academic literature this period is often referred to as the

“media war”. (Bajomi-Lázár, 2005, p793) The main characteristic of these times is the uncertainty of journalists regarding their role and the media’s role in democracy. Hence, journalists and politicians were divided into two different groups: those who thought that the state should have control over broadcasters and those who reckoned the opposite. (ibid)

According to Bajomi-Lázár the legislation managed to remove the political influence from broadcast media. Even though two independent presidents were assigned to manage the two public broadcast channels the government did not stay long away from the “day-to-day operation” (Gálik, 2004, p209) of the televisions. The responsibility to decide on the above mentioned “dispute on state influence on media” (Bajomi-Lázár, 2005, p793) was put on television stations. They were to decide if they should let the state be involved or not. This put an unbearable pressure on the television stations, some rather submitted themselves to the political power. As a result, the “political intervention in the public media has been institutionalized.” (ibid, p793) The influence had several forms, says Bajomi-Lázár, such as “the appointment of loyal media personnel, the removal of critically minded journalists, the withdrawal of state subsidies, and the licensing of certain broadcasters or the denial of licensing for others”. (ibid, 798)

The law created the National Radio and Television Board (ORTT) and its branches, such as the Monitoring and Analyzing Service, the Complaints Committee, and the Broadcasting Fund. ORTT was established to serve as a safeguard of freedom and became responsible for supervision, funding and licensing for broadcasters. It operated under the supervision of the Parliament which approved [sic] its budget and received [sic] its annual report”. (ibid, p793) In practice the independence role of ORTT was not entirely fulfilled as the responsibilities of the Board left room for political pressure. (ibid) In order to be able to fulfill its role as a safeguard of the freedom of democracy, it has to present conflicting opinion and all political sides equally. The financial dependence on the state put this role of PSB at stake.

Print Publishing

Print media regulation was dissolved in 1989 and it became possible for other players to enter the market. Therefore, vis-à-vis broadcast media, print media market was privatized early. In the print media sector, new players entered the market in 1988, already before the transition. The term privatization is misleading in the case of print content providers in Hungary, says Gálik. “The four big state-, or party-owned, publishing houses were not privatized – they simply collapsed and disappeared from the market.” (Gálik, 2004, p201) After that a so called “spontaneous privatization process” (ibid, p201) started. Hence, journalists contacted private investors to invest in already existing media outlets. Besides the already existing papers new ones appeared on the market, however mostly in the tabloid sector since there was a demand for this genre. Some of the political magazines which already existed during the transition are still on the market with different size, content, circulation, etc. but with the same titles. These are the centre-left Népszabadág, the centre-right Magyar Nemzet, the leftist Népszava and the centre-left Magyar Hírlap. According to Gálik, the Hungarian print media market was very hard to break into for a long time. (ibid)

Ownership concentration and transparency after the media law in 1996

According to media theorists, ownership concentration hinders the presentation of different viewpoints and violates basic democratic journalistic values. Therefore, more regulations on media concentration have been approved, even though this phenomenon is difficult to regulate both nationally and internationally. In Hungary television and radio cross-ownership is limited by law and it is even more strictly regulated between publishing and television broadcast institutions. Concerning ownership rules “state officials at both national and local levels, members of the judiciary (judges, state attorneys, etc.) party officials, members of regulatory bodies on broadcasting and telecommunications, etc. are excluded by law from being broadcasters.” (ibid, p195) Furthermore, “companies in which [the] state has a controlling interest (25 percent or more) and companies founded by parties cannot

obtain broadcasting license[s].” (ibid, p195) In spite of the regulations Hungarian media is concentrated, but not fully transparent. Although transparency is to some extent assured by law, in many cases it is very difficult to obtain information on ownership structures. “All business associations have to be registered at one of the Court of Registers, and all of them have to report to the Court their ownership structures and changes in ownership structure”. (ibid, p198) However, ORTT’s opinion on it and its recommendations are hardly accessible. Moreover, broadcasters sometimes do not report changes. (ibid)

Reflecting on all the information above it is obvious; say Gálik and Bajomi-Lázár, that the system needs reform. All the governments since the transition have made efforts to influence the political content of televisions. Frequent changes in television leadership in favor of governing parties serve as examples. Analysts argue that that “public service broadcaster’s news and current affairs programs [sic] have frequently been biased during the past 15 years” (Bajomi-Lázár, 2005, p794) As it was mentioned above as well, one fundamental role of ideal journalism is being unbiased. Besides being a watchdog of the freedom of democracy, PSB should function as an informative source for the audience of all age groups. One-fifth of the Hungarian population has access only to RTL Klub, TV2 and M1, the public service television is the primary source for many people. (Szonda Ipsos, 2006) This puts an even bigger responsibility on M1 to present proportional and unbiased information, in order to fulfill its democratic role, since the profile of the two commercial channels is infotainment.

Politics in Hungary

Overview of the Fidesz administration

In 2010 the electoral triumph of Fidesz and its two-third majority in the Parliament had positive national and international acceptance. The Hungarian national currency, the forint, strengthened and the European Union showed a positive attitude towards Hungary's new government as well. The majority of Fidesz allows the government to follow through with its structural reforms and to achieve the consolidation of the financial deficit, said Jose Manuel Barroso. (HVG 4, HVG 5) However, as a result of the governing party's extensive changes and abrupt law making process doubts have evoked.

Media Law

The media law was among the first significant laws which were suggested to be changed by Fidesz and the amendment required two-thirds of the votes. After a couple of months of national political debate the Parliament approved the new media law, which came into effect on January 1st in 2011. In the new law the suggestions of the opposition are barely represented. (HVG 6)

In accordance with the media law the state media institutions, such as Duna Television, Hungarian Radio, MTV (Hungarian Television) and MTI (Hungarian National News Agency) have been merged and now operate under the supervision of the Public Service Foundation. The MTVA (Media Service Support and Asset Management Fund) is responsible for the financial allocations. The news program of MTV is produced by the above mentioned three Public Service Broadcasters, more precisely Duna Television, MTI and MTV. The television channels as well as the radio orders media content from the Fund who produces it themselves or orders it from an external partner. The president of the MNHH (National Media and Communications Authority) is appointed for 9 years. The Media Council of MNHH

determines the rights and responsibilities of media institutions, and potentially imposable fines. Besides television and radio the new law also regulates printed press, and online magazines. Furthermore, the members of the Public Service Foundation are nominated by the parties in the Parliament proportional to the number of seats. As a corollary of the two-third majority of Fidesz in the Parliament they are also a majority in the media authority. (Index 2, HVG 7, HVG 8)

After the law came into effect hundreds of people were fired, especially from PSBs including high profile editors, reporters and activists. Although, the Media Service Support and Asset Management Fund received more financial support for 2012 than in the previous years, it alluded to low budget. The amount of financial support was 65 billion/77 billion⁵ forints for 2012 and 58 billion forints for 2011. Recent radio frequency tenders were won by radical Lánchíd, Catholic Maria and Lutheran Europe Radio, while Klub Radio, which is critical about the government`s acts is in the risk of being shut down. The tender created for Klub Radio`s frequency was one that a talk and news radio had no chance of winning. (HVG 9)

When the idea of changing the media law first accrued, experts, politicians as well as media personnel agreed that the old media law was out of date and there was a need for change. (HVG 10) During my interviews with journalists as well as an economist/associate professor, everybody agreed on that as well. However, the controversy is about the means and the final outcome. (interviews) Besides my interviewees many people were of the same opinion both in Hungary and abroad. For instance, Attila Mesterházy, president of MSzP claimed that with the new law “the government is preparing a power concentration” (HVG 11), the European Parliament clamored for its suspension (HVG 12) and international media published extremely severe critiques as well.

⁵ Two different sources published different data.

It is important to emphasize that in December when the new media law was passed Hungary was just about to assume the EU presidency. Therefore, the country was already the focus of international attention. One could assume that in an atmosphere like this, the European Union as well as the member countries might be more sensitive about the national political situation in the country of the prospective presidency.

Amnesty International sent a briefing to the governing party, with the title: “Freedom of Expression on Fire”, to express their concerns about the new media law and to suggest changes. In the document the institute “urges [sic] the Hungarian government and parliament to address concerns of Amnesty International [sic] and to take steps to ensure that the legislation is in compliance with international human rights law.” (Amnesty International Publications, 2011, p10-11) The Washington Post was writing about Hungary’s “Putinization”, referring to the declining media freedom, an aspect that; according to the magazine, will put Hungary “in a league together with Russia and Belarus regarding press freedom.” (washingtonpost.com) The Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung calls Hungary as “Führerstaat”. (Index 3) The ‘Der Spiegel’ wrote that the approval of the “media muzzle” was “a last step towards authoritarianism which draws serious consequences.” (ibid) The author claimed that “the political left is also responsible” (ibid) for the current situation, as they “have committed political suicide”. (Index 4) The ‘Der Standard’ states that the new media law is a draconian law, which controls the media and violates human rights. The writer also argues that “Hungary is at the stage of becoming a banana republic”. (Der Standard 1) In another article the magazine claimed that “Hungary is on the way to the former political East” (Der Standard 2)

The ‘Die Welt’ German newspaper wrote about Viktor Orbán and Hungary’s upcoming presidency as “‘Puszta-Putin’ for Europe”. (welt.de, Index 5) The French Le Monde gave the title; ‘Hungary is taking European power in the middle of the

authoritarianism drift' to the article describing the new Hungarian media law and other national issues. (HVG 13) The Washington Journal stated that the restriction of media freedom is only one of the signs for concern from Hungary. (WSJ online)

Although, the government made changes to the law in order to meet the requirements of the European Union, these modifications did not touch upon the most disturbing parts. (Polyák, 2012) According to Fidesz, international critiques are illogical in general as the law was based on European examples. (HVG 14)

The start of Hungary's European Union presidency was affected by the new media law. (HVG 15) After the closure of the presidency, among others, the Economist evaluated it as a moderate success. The magazine stated that critiques about the media law, the constitution and the power centralization overshadowed the government's activities in the European Parliament. (HVG 16)

Constitution

In spite of the objection of the opposition, on April 25th, in 2011 Pál Schmitt, then president of Hungary signed the new constitution. (HVG 17) From its content HVG highlighted the following: It restricts the legal power of the Constitutional Court. It also creates the so called Kúria, which fulfills the role of the former Supreme Court. Furthermore, in accordance with the new constitution, lawyers of the Supreme Court retire when they reach the general age limit of retirement. Additionally, local governmental elections will be organized every five years and from the Hungarian Republic the country's name was changed to Hungary. (ibid)

The opposition made an attempt to send the constitution out for a public vote but they failed. Ferenc Gyurcsány, former prime minister claimed that "the government is [a] coward if it is too afraid to send the constitution for [a] public vote". (HVG 18) Instead of consulting with the opposition or organizing a public vote about the issue Fidesz sent out questionnaires to the public, more precisely to 8 million voters in

order to “create a legitimacy for the Constitution” (HVG 17). In the questionnaire the party assured people that they will “take note of their answers.” (Economist.com) According to political analysts, “approximately 1 million questionnaires were sent back which is not enough” for creating legitimacy, wrote the HVG. (HVG 17, *ibid*)

“From 13 countries over 80 attorneys and other experts signed an appeal which summarizes in four points the most concerned parts of the new constitution.” (HVG 17)

1. “It dissolves a significant part of the system of constitutional supervision; the law expectedly will paralyze the Constitutional Court and allows the Parliament to approve laws which are not in line with the constitution. Consequently, it undermines the legal state system.” (*ibid*)
2. It is concerned that it regards the constitutional law and justice of the past twenty years illegitimate; therefore it hinders the interpretation of its real meaning. Consequently, it further damages the legal state.
3. “It significantly restricts the latitude of future governments unless they reach two-third majority in Parliament.” (*ibid*)
4. “It is solely written by the government, was ratified without debate of proper length and extent. Furthermore, it was approved without the participation of the opposition or the public.” Therefore, its legitimacy can be questioned. (*ibid*)

Additionally, according to the Hungarian Helsinki Commission, the Eötvös Károly Institute and the Association for Freedom Rights, the constitution of Fidesz makes the political competition more difficult, weakens the system of political breaks and counterweights and with the extension of the suffrage reshapes the frames of the political community. (HVG 19)

Besides the critiques summarized above, numerous sources of negative feedback arrived from international media, such as Süddeutsche Zeitung, Le Soir, Deutsche Welle, Slovenian News Agency, Die Welt, Le Monde and others. According to the Human Rights Watch “with the changes Hungary has made to its system for protecting rights and democracy, it would not meet the requirements to join the EU today.” (Ward in Human Rights Watch, 2012)

The liberal Süddeutsche Zeitung German daily wrote that attorneys and social scientists do not understand the reason for the rush. However, says the writer, “without strong, international objection Hungary would get an even stricter constitution.” (HVG 20) On the Guardian’s website Mueller asks the following question in his opinion piece: “So is Hungary the first EU member ever to turn into an authoritarian state?” The author claims in his critical analysis of the new constitution that “this package is deeply illiberal and departs from shared European understandings of democracy, which should involve a legitimate opposition – in contrast to a ‘democracy’ where one party, whether in or out of power, claims permanently to speak for the nation as a whole.” (Mueller in Guardian 1)

Economics and Further governmental actions

In order to analyze and provide an understanding of media coverage and the news genre in Hungary context, besides placing them in cultural and historical context, it is essential to also locate them within the interrelations among economy, politics and media industry. Depicting an overall picture of the aforementioned three components is a significant part of the genre analysis.

(Index 6) In the same month without any prior agreement a crisis tax was levied on the energy sector, retail chains and telecommunication companies. (Index 7) The ‘extra tax’ was imposed for three years on those sectors through which significant amounts of money “leaks out” of the country. (Index 8) Parragh, the president of the Hungarian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (HCCI) indorsed the governmental action. According to him it was necessary for sustaining a financial balance.

However, he added that further action will have to be taken. The government has to “restructure the retirement, education, health and tax systems as well as research and development strategies.” Furthermore, Hungary has to be put on the course of gradual economic growth. (ibid) Most of the reforms suggested by Parragh were made step by step.

The transformation of the private retirement system

At the end of 2010 the government started to restructure the retirement system. (Index 9) The main idea of Fidesz was the following: “In the case of 90 per-cent of the private retirement fund members going back to the state funded system by the end of 2011, from their 2400-2500 billion forints the government can spend 540 billion forints to cover current state retirement needs and 2000 billion forints of it can be put in a fund which serves to balance the financial deficit.” (Index 10) As a result, “the government completely depleted 2000 billion forints of private retirement funds and the rate of the state loan that the government was supposed to reduce with this amount of money even increased.” (HVG 21)

New electoral law

The new electoral law was passed in December, 2011. To combat the crisis, stable governance is inevitable, said Viktor Orbán. Several changes in the law meet the interests of the winning party, such as the winner`s surplus vote⁶ and the single-round election system. According to Király, if the same electoral law would have been in effect in 2010, Fidesz would have won four-thirds of the mandates instead of two-thirds. (Király in Index 11)

The law decreases the number of MPs and sets the maximum size of the Parliament at 200 members. Therefore, the individual constituencies had to be restructured, which

⁶ Surplus votes are votes which were given to individual nominees or parties but were not enough receive mandates. (elsoszavazo.hu, accessed: May 17, 2012) According to the new system these are given to the winner. (Index 11)

“enabled Fidesz to draw a map that serves its interests”. (Index 12) The new electoral law gives suffrage to Hungarian citizens living beyond the borders. Whilst Hungarians who live in the country have two votes, people who live beyond the borders get only one. It also makes the nomination of candidates easier. In the future the law can only be altered with a vote of two-thirds majority. (ibid)

Flat tax system

From 2011 the government launched the flat tax system. Consequently, there are no different income groups but the same, 16 percent tax rate applies to all incomes. (Index 13) According to László Békési financial minister the tax rate system is built on the following illusion of the government. With the new system upper classes will have higher net income which will encourage them to increase their consumption and therefore stimulate economy. However, “it is obvious that it does not work like this”, says the financial minister. (HVG 22)

National public opinion

Despite the government’s rush in codifying new laws and regulations as well as the negative international reverberation of its acts, the popularity of Fidesz remained undiminished for a very long time. (HVG 23) Even though people thought that “things are not the best for the moment”, especially economically, they were generally positive about the future. (HVG 24)

The unprecedentedly fast decision making process that has characterized Fidesz since its inauguration makes sense, says a political analyst. The most important changes should be made as fast as possible while the general opinion is positive. People are negative mostly about the situation of the Constitutional Court but this attitude can easily transfer to the economy, he said. (HVG 25) Fidesz is mostly supported by the 25-49-year-old, middle class citizens who are the most affected by the reform of the

retirement funds. Véleményvezér blog therefore predicted Fidesz`s loss of its most faithful Fidesz voters. (HVG 26)

Through 2011 there were more opinion polls conducted. Some of the results indicated that according to the majority, “things are going in the wrong direction”. However, there were positive outcomes as well. (HVG 27, HVG 28) Regardless of the ambiguous opinion poll results, one thing is certain: there is no change in the fact that Fidesz is the most popular party in Hungary. Inasmuch as the position of Fidesz seems stable there are changes in the rankings of the opposition. Throughout the months, the radical-right Jobbik was continuously gaining support and by March, 2012 became the second most popular party, pushing MSzP to third place. (Index 14) Another change of the past two years is that the number of people who would vote if there were elections in the near future is decreasing. Now it is less than 50 percent of the population who would participate in the elections. (HVG 29; Index 15)

In the beginning of 2012 there were two significant events when people respectively expressed their support or dislike towards the government and its acts. On January 2nd, while the government was celebrating the inauguration of the new constitution, more than a thousand people and envoys of the opposing parties were protesting against the administration. (Index 16)

Approximately three weeks later, on January 21st civic organizations arranged a rally for the government. The aim of the so called Peace March was to show the international public that there are still supporters of the government in Hungary. According the Hungarian National News Agency more than one hundred thousand people were marching in support of the government. As the protest had an international message besides Hungarian banners demonstrators carried several signs with English texts such as: „Orbán=secured pension" or „Read the lies", with the logo of The New York Times, Der Spiegel, Le Monde and The Guardian. At the front of the march people were carrying a big banner, saying: “We will not be a colony”. (Index 17)

Media coverage of the anti-governmental protest is a good example that depicts the situation of the Hungarian media. The state television and the commercial channels reported the protest as well. Whilst, the state television showed images of almost empty streets behind the reporter, on the coverage of the commercial channels the street in front of the Opera House was packed with people. (Appx. 4)

IMF negotiations

In 2010 Orbán started a process to gain more independence from the IMF. The repayment of the loan that Hungary received in 2008 was due in October 2010 and after the refund the government no longer wished to cooperate with the IMF. According to the prime minister “the independence from the IMF is the first step toward self-governance.” He added that we have to be thankful to the International Monetary Fund for saving Hungary from going through the same crisis as Greece did. In accordance with the IMF conditions Hungary has to pay back the loan and keep the state deficit under 3.8 percent. Orbán stressed that according to EU regulations this level is 3 percent. Hence, he promised that Hungary will keep the deficit under 3 percent. (HVG 30, HVG 31) The government’s economic actions since April 2010 have served this goal.

In 2011, János Lázár, Fidesz’s fraction leader, hailed that the “peaceful and correct” separation from the IMF as the biggest success of the first year of the administration besides the new form of allocating the state expenses. (HVG 32)

Even in the beginning of November the government suggested that there is no need for the IMF loan. (HVG 33) At the end of the month they promulgated a “new form of cooperation” with the International Monetary Fund. However, Lázár emphasized that Fidesz still wants to finance Hungary from the market but the country needs a “security net”. (HVG 34) In the meantime Hungary was downgraded more times and by January 2012 all of the three largest credit rating agencies cut the country down to a BB+ rating. (Index 18)

The negotiations started again with the IMF and the EU but the process has not been going smoothly at all. In December 2011, the delegation of the European Commission arrived in Budapest with an ultimatum consisting of three points. The EU required the withdrawal of the bill of the central bank law and the decision according to which there has to be two-third majority in order to change the flat tax system. Furthermore, the EU specified that it is willing to negotiate about a type of loan that would mean a strict IMF supervision over Hungary. According to Orbán, Hungary is capable of financing itself from the market and would need a flexible loan in case the crisis gets tougher. According to Fidesz, the EU asked something “impossible” from the government in the ultimatum because international institutions want to enforce Orbán’s resignation, this way. (HVG 34)

On December 16th, only a couple of days after the delegation’s arrival the negotiations came to an unexpected halt. Most likely the approval of the central bank law significantly affected the IMF’s decision to stop negotiations. The law increases the number of monetary council members from 7 to 9 and instead of the president of the central bank, the prime minister would assign its deputy directors. (HVG 35, HVG 36) MSzP, LMP and the Democratic Coalition also stressed that with these acts, Fidesz risks bankruptcy. (HVG 37, HVG 38) Lázár, president of Fidesz fraction said in an interview that the negotiations stopped because of the holiday and they will be resumed in January. (HVG 39) In the same month the Parliament also approved the financial stability law. (Index 19, HVG 40)

On January 5th the government announced that it is ready to accept the condition of the IMF in the case that they are in accordance with Hungary’s interests. Lázár stressed that it is not possible to delay the central bank law but comments of the IMF can be included. (HVG 41; Balázs Péter, 2012) As a corollary of Orbán’s announcement the negotiation were resumed in mid-January. On the contrary, the European Union decided to launch three infringement procedures against Hungary about the central bank law, the early retirement of judges and national data

protection. Hungary had to react to the EU`s critiques by February 17th. (HVG 42, HVG 43)

Meanwhile, negative international reverberations have not come to a halt. Mark Palmer, former U.S. Ambassador, speech writer of Kissinger and Reagan, said in an interview that Hungary is on the right track if it wants to become dependent on Russian again. Although he thinks Europe is the natural environment for Hungary, he claimed that they might get thrown out of the EU. (HVG 44) Moreover, the EUI (Economist Intelligence Unit) lists Hungary among the flawed democracies in its report in December 2011. (Democracy Index 2011, EUI)

Additionally, French, Spanish, Polish and Slovakian papers were not positive about Hungary either. They published the following thoughts: the French Libération: “An anarchic regime was already born in Hungary”, Slovakian Pravda: “Hungary is heading towards dictatorship” (HVG 45)

Although an effort should be made for peaceful agreements, there is a need to continue fighting, said Viktor Orbán in his 14th annual evaluation. He admitted that the party has made some “non-sophisticated” actions but it was only because of time pressure. However “the direction that was chosen in 2010 should be followed”. (HVG 46) He announced that as a result of fighting the debts, Hungary`s state deficit has dropped to under 3 percent, for the first time since the country`s entrance into the European Union. (ibid) In the same month, the EU suggested the freezing of 495 million Euros of subsidies for Hungarian because it failed to lower its public deficit. The EU`s decision was a shock for the country because as it was mentioned above Hungary`s deficit was under 3 percent and is expect to stay at this level in 2012 as well. (HVG 47) Although, international actors are against many of Fidesz`s action they agreed with the Hungarian government that the decision of the European Union was not fair. (HVG 48)

“Angelic patience with Spain but much less with Hungary. It is because of double standards.” – said Fekter, Austrian Finance Minister as well in a Kurier interview. (kurier.at)

The Spiegel online also published similar thoughts: while Spain got a “grace period” from the European Union, it “was hard” on Hungary. (Strafe in Spiegel.de) According to Rzecznik Rządu Hungary’s anti-EU communication is the reason for its unmerciful procedures against Hungary. (HVG 49)

Although Hungary made modification to some of the laws critiqued by the European Union, the EU still decided to continue with an accelerated infringement procedure against Hungary. The EU is expecting further information regarding the independence of the central bank and they take their procedure for breach of agreement to a second level. (HVG 50) Furthermore, the European Venice Commission claimed that Hungary needs to change its constitution as it is in contradiction both with European standards of justice and independence and with the right to fair procedures in Human Rights Conventions. Moreover, the Commission is reviewing eight further laws, including the electoral law, freedom of information, the Constitutional Court, the media law and the constitution. (HVG 51, HVG 52)

The above introduced cat and mouse game was the usual characteristic of the negotiations between the IMF/EU and Hungary. In the atmosphere of the EU procedure against the country and the suggestion of the suspension of subsidies the celebration of the 1848-49 revolution and independence war has come. The haggle over the above mentioned laws has been continuing since.

Protests and police trespasses in 2006

In 2006 MSzP, led by Ferenc Gyurcsány and its coalition partner, the liberal Alliance of Free Democrats (SzDSz) was reelected in the parliamentary elections, narrowly defeating Fidesz and the conservative Hungarian Democratic Forum (MDF) which also ran for presidency. MSzP became the first party since the transition that remained in power for two consecutive terms. A few months after the election the prime minister Gyurcsány held a speech to his fellow party members in Öszöd, where he was complaining that they had managed to win the elections only because they had lied throughout the past two years. His speech was leaked on the 17th of September and shocked the Hungarian public. As a result demonstrations started nationwide, demanding the resignation of the prime minister. (Bodoky, 2009)

Assumedly, the disappointment of the citizens in MSzP as well as the violent nature of the demonstrations facilitated the far-right party, Jobbik, to strengthen and also paid a pivotal role in the two-third majority electoral victory of Fidesz in 2010. Furthermore, the demonstrations drew international attention to Hungary, just like the extensive changes and abrupt law making process of the current government. These are two situations where democracy has been questioned in Hungary. Therefore, the short introduction to the events of 2006 and their comparison with the current national political issues makes it possible to provide a more nuanced picture of the political background to the genre analysis.

There are two significant dates that have to be highlighted in connection with the protests of 2006, September 17th and October 23rd. On September 17th, the headquarters of the Hungarian Television (MTV) “were seized and set ablaze” by protesters (ibid, p6-7). A small group of poorly equipped police officers tried to defend the building but they were not able to do it effectively. Two days after the siege, riot police appeared on the streets without identification badges, wearing ski

masks, and assaulted both violent and peaceful protesters without any distinction. (ibid, p110) This tension prevailed on the streets until October 23rd, which was the 50th anniversary of the 1956 Revolution. During the night, the clash between protesters and police “became volatile, officers used draconian methods to restore order, committing many trespasses of human rights that bloodied both Hungary’s populace and international reputation as a free democracy.” (ibid, p6-7) The police even assaulted people, “who did not resist, were lying on the ground, or were already handcuffed” (ibid, 110), even occasionally using telescopic metal batons. It is undoubted that “purposeless vandalism” also prevailed in the city throughout the course of the night. Innocent people were beaten up by the police and through these acts the police violated their democratic rights. (ibid) In the clashes between the police and the demonstrators about 150 civilians were injured. “60% of the injuries were inflicted on the heads, necks, and eyes of the victims.” (ibid, p133) According to MP Máriusz Révész, who was also seriously beaten even though the police knew who he was, “the police would not have dared to trespass if they were not backed by political support.” (ibid, p58) Furthermore, the riots came at a time when it gave the governing MSzP the chance to distract voters from the prime minister’s leaked speech. The media focus shifted from the speech to the violent nature of the riots. According to Révész if that speech had been in the center of discussions in Hungary until 1st October, when the local governmental elections were held, then the governing parties would have lost the (...) elections everywhere.” (ibid, p58) Even among such circumstances they had a serious defeat.

“The scandal had no consequences for (a) the composition of the government; the governing parties did not even try to reduce the shock of the public in [sic] this way.” (ibid, p128) “At the moment, there are two interpretations of the events of October 23rd [sic].” (ibid, 109) MSzP supporter’s interpretation is this: “the democratic police took brave and firm action to control the rampage of violent rioters.” (ibid, 109) People with center-right political views favor the other interpretation, that “peaceful demonstrators, people commemorating the events of October 23rd, [sic] 1956, and

innocent bystanders fell victim to unjustified police violations and brutality on this national holiday” (ibid, p109)

According to Index, “besides the first days of the violent riots in Budapest, the American press barely reported on Hungarian national issues.” (Index 20) Although the news channel CNN reported the Hungarian demonstrations in its ‘Breaking News’ section on October 23rd, it discussed the protests very briefly. BBC, similarly to CNN, made a short note on the demonstrations of the past few weeks but rather had a historical overview of the revolution 50 years ago. The Russian national television was also there at the demonstration broadcasting live coverage in which bleeding people, riot police and water cannons were seen on the screen. (ibid)

At the end of September, in spite of the scandal around Ferenc Gyurcsány, the demonstrations and the fact that Hungary’s “2006 budget deficit was [sic] expected to hit 10.1% of GDP, the highest in Europe” – by which Hungary exceeds the 3% EU ceiling for all member states - the European Union decided to give the country one more year “to get back in line” and postponed the initial deadline set for 2008 to 2009. (news.bbc.co.uk) Furthermore, international investors, who had billions of dollars in Hungarian bonds considered Gyurcsány the only person who could decrease the budget deficit, in order to bring the economic insecurity to an end and lead the country to the euro zone, published the Reuters in October. (Index 20)

The Guardian published articles with the headlines akin to the followings: “Hungarian PM blames ‘aggressive minority’ for riots” (McLaughlin in Guardian 2) and “Far-right ‘hijacking’ Hungary protests” (McLaughlin in Guardian 3) appeared on the magazine’s website.

The above cited international publications give insight into the reverberating opinions about the demonstrations. Although democratic rights were violated during the protests, international media did not criticize these events as sharply as they do it now in connection with the national political acts of Fidesz. According to Bodoky, “in

2006 the government successfully implemented the rhetoric that the protests were caused by far right wing members in Budapest which had to be taken care of and people abroad believed it.” (interview) However, other journalists say that Hungarian media made “too big deal” out of the protests, (interview: Koncz) since in other countries such as Greece, France, etc. this kind of aggression is more usual, therefore international media was not as shocked seeing the bloody pictures of the protests as Hungarian people were. Probably, during protests in these countries police brutality is witnessed as well. (interview: Koncz; Participant 1, 2) Since “these kinds of protests are not in practice in Hungary, neither the police nor the protesters knew how to handle the situation; what should and should not be done.” (Koncz) Undoubtedly the police overstepped their boundaries in 2006, but it is also true that lots of hooligans acted illegally and took advantage of the situation as well and thus, neither of them acted appropriately. (Koncz; Participant 1, 2)

Moreover, concerning international coverage, “there was nothing to report on in the international news. The international opinion will not judge the democracy of the government on the basis of police trespasses. Now the limelight is on us because democratic rights are violated.” (Participant 1) In the period between 2010 and 2012 the political right accused the left of feeding negative international opinion, and accused them of being responsible for the verbal “turmoil”. However, stressed a journalist during the interviews, such a big echo cannot be connected to only one party. Although, they probably do everything to keep the topic hot, Fidesz cuts its international connections by itself. (Participant 2) According to Urbán, another participant of the interviews, “MSzP would be happy if it were able to create such a big reverberation” of Fidesz`s acts. (Urbán)

“In case the legitimacy of a government is questionable the respective country gets isolated from international politics.” (ibid) Urbán claimed that not because of the brutal riots in Budapest but because of the leaked speech Gyurcsány has been isolated as well. Although in his case it was not as obvious as Orbán`s seclusion now. Here it has to be stress that there is a big difference between the foreign policy of the two

administrations. While “the socialist governments have always tried to maintain good foreign relations”, (Participant 2) Fidesz has a more conservative stance not only in communication but in economics as well. “International investors prefer predictable markets and do not like, for instance, sudden changes in the legislation or the tax system” (Urbán), as it happens now under the Fidesz administration. The government makes legislative and economic decisions which are advantageous for Hungarian companies and disadvantageous for international companies. Thus, besides political seclusion the country experiences the distrust of international investors. The Hungarian market was more predictable during the MSzP administration. Even though Gyurcsány has been on the course of political isolation, “the economy was relatively stable until the crisis affected the country”. (ibid)

The new media law

Due to the restricted extent of this paper instead of describing the content of the media law, which is accessible in English online⁷, this section will focus on the objections to it.

In the past two years several critiques of the new media law have been published. Many of them were research based statements and many were partly or fully non-substantiated opinions, even libels. In this plethora of national and international vantage points it is not an easy task to fully understand of the situation that the new media law sets up. Looking for an accurate source in order to capture the essence of the negative echoes of the amendment, the publication of Standards Media Monitor provided a reliable summary of the “problems of the media laws”. (mertek.eu) Therefore, the following chapter is based on the aforementioned study of Standards Media Monitor.

General critiques

The media law defines “vaguely (...) the scope of jurisdiction of the authority” (ibid) such as public morality, constitutional order, etc. Therefore, it fails to provide the media sector with a clear guideline for content production and journalistic work. Furthermore, the media law determines the amount of penalty to be paid by media providers in the case of infringement of the law and it gives space to levy prohibitive fines. Due to these acts, the new media law “severely [sic] and unreasonably [sic] restricts the freedom of press.” (ibid) According to Standards, possible fines put journalists and editors at a high risk as it “potentially allows the authority to make the operation of certain media impossible.” (ibid)

⁷ Link to the English translation: http://www.kormany.hu/download/c/b0/10000/act_civ_media_content.pdf, accessed: February 3, 2012

With the regulation of printed and online content the law draws an “unreasonably” (ibid) wide range of media providers “under the Media Council's supervision” (ibid). Whilst, in accordance with the old regulations violations were brought to court in order to be resolved, now “official and administrative measures may also be applied”. (ibid)

In the case where online content violates the media law, the Media Council can enforce the Internet access and the storage place providers “to cease transmission of content”. (ibid) This rule puts heavy responsibility on these content providers. Moreover, it does not fit with the “operation of the Internet” (ibid) and is technically not easily feasible.

The law gives an “unreasonably wide scope of ‘investigative’ jurisdiction” (ibid) to the Media Council. Consequently, it allows the Council to access and copy “all of the documents of editorial offices and journalists” (ibid) without any prior legal permission. “The so-called media commissioner may also [...] review data even in those infringement cases that are outside of the media authority's jurisdiction, and even in the event of interest violations that do not constitute infringement.” (ibid)

In accordance with the modifications, the Media Council consists of members appointed by the “larger governing party”. (ibid) This is an essential alteration as the authority has complete influence over media content “through the distribution of broadcasting rights and monitoring program requirements”. Therefore, it has considerable control over the “entire media selection and the programs of each broadcaster”. (ibid) By closing off the opposition from the council this does not mean a complete close-off from decision making but it disables the opposing parties to oversee the “media authority's operations” (ibid) as well as the “preparation and justification of decisions.” (ibid)

The chairperson of the media authority is nominated by the prime minister and “elected by the Parliament by two-thirds majority.” (ibid) The president has enough authority “to enable him/her to effectively shape the most important decisions

relevant to the media system. The chairperson's political independence is not provided under the current regulatory environment.” (ibid)

Broadcast frequency tender regulations enable the Media Council “to prolong the closing of bids for a given media service right (frequency) as long as there is a bidder who is to the authority's liking”. (ibid) The Council can terminate the tender process at any time if according to their own consideration the “media policy aspects” (ibid) cannot be assured by completing the tender. Additionally, there are other parts in the regulations, such as the scarcity of “evaluation criteria” (ibid) which “allows [sic] the authority to arbitrarily apply the laws, such as by failure to regulate the evaluation criteria, and lead to complete legal uncertainty, as well as ambiguous and unpredictable procedure with regards to the bidders.” (ibid)

The lack of an independent media authority is a problem that more of the above introduced critiques suggest. According to academic literature, journalism, in ideal cases, is the independent watchdog of the freedom of democracy. Acting according to this role it has to be in line with other values and practices (Kovach, 2007) but media independence has to come first. The impact of the lack of an independent media authority on media production and the other critiques will be further analyzed in subsequent chapters.

Public service broadcast related critiques

One key problem is the “unjustified and non-transparent” (ibid) acquisition of the public service broadcasters. According to Standards, PSBs “lose ability to manage their assets and workforce” (ibid) which hinders them to act according their main responsibility is “providing information” (ibid)

Besides making the structural merging non-transparent, the new law also creates non-transparency in financing. First of all, the law did not provide a clear definition of the public service “obligations and the compliance”. (ibid) Second of all, there is no legally determined contention between financing and the particular task that should be performed and the available funds are not at all in connection with the expenses of

certain service providers. In order to be in harmony with the norms of the European Community, the law should allocate financial resources on the basis of professional criteria and according to the media provider`s expenses rather than in a closed, top-down system. (ibid)

The law fails to restrict media concentration, such as cross-ownership; therefore it “violates the requirement of diversified information in the long run.” (ibid) This is problematic because ownership concentration may have a negative impact on the views transmitted by content providers. (Gálik, 2004)

These critiques suggest that the public service media is not given space by the new media law to fulfill one important fundamental role of journalism, such as providing divers information. Furthermore, it leaves the PSBs without profession guideline for content production. The impact of this as well as of the general critiques on new production will be further analyzed in upcoming chapters.

Case Study on RTL Klub – TV2 – M1 news broadcast

In the frame of genre analysis the evening news programs of three Hungarian channels were analyzed, more precisely one state broadcast channel, M1 as well as RTL Klub and TV2; Hungary`s two commercial channels.

In the news agenda newsworthiness has an influence on the sequence of stories and their length. “The newsworthiness of social and political events is partly determined by the seriousness of their consequences”, says Van Dijk. (Van Dijk, 1998, p54) He also states that news is “organized so that the most important or relevant information is put in the most prominent position.” (ibid, p43) Besides Van Dijk`s mentioned aspects, analyzing the news sequence and looking into the structure of the news program are also important in order to be able to go beyond the interests of the industry. Media industry “interrelates within the multiple spheres of texts, audiences, and historical contexts,”-say Mittell. (Mittell, 2004, p92) Scrutinizing the structure of the news program can help to place the genre in a wider context. On the basis of Van Dijk`s and Mittell`s points, the chapter provides answer the following questions: What did the above listed channels determine to be newsworthy? Where did they place these stories in the news sequence? What was the length of time certain news events were reported among the channels?

Besides the above mentioned focal points the case study analyzes the representation of public and political actors. “The fundamental role of journalism in democracy is to link citizens to political life.” (Dahlgren, 2009, p48) Connecting citizens to politics facilitates their democratic engagement. What is more, mediation of public is a “prerequisite” of civic engagement, says Dahlgren. (ibid, p48) Consequently, people have to “see themselves as engaged citizens” (ibid, p48) in order to participate in politics. (ibid) These thoughts strongly connect to Lury`s points on the voice of democracy. As it was described earlier, the voice of reporters is on the top of the news hierarchy, reporters` voices are more audible even in those cases when they are

on the street among people. This suggests that television “often provides the appearance, but not necessarily the sound of democracy.” (Lury, 2005, p65) Hence, “a very few ‘ordinary’ people are able to speak and those that do are controlled audibly.” (ibid, p65) This chapter aims to discover if the “sound of democracy” is represented in the analyzed news programs and in what ways. Colman and Ross state that “government spokespeople” (Coleman and Ross, 2010, p51) are overrepresented in news vis-à-vis citizens. This observation indicates the necessity, first of all, to analyze how much and in what ways politicians are represented in the news programs of the three analyzed channels; second of all, suggests the importance of comparing the representation of politicians and citizens. Therefore, in this chapter these aspects will be in focus as well.

Two efficient ways of giving a voice to ordinary people, such as participants, witnesses, etc. are the ‘man on street’ (MOS)⁸ and the natural sound (NAT)⁹ bites. The latter can be heard either in the foreground or in the background. Therefore, these two types of techniques helped determine whose voice and in what ways these were represented on certain channels. Aiming to provide a detailed picture of the means of broadcasting in Hungary, I prepared a transcript of the entire news programs complete both with images and sound. Although, the length of this study did not make it possible to incorporate the transcripts into the core of the research, looking at them in the appendix might facilitate the understanding of the following case study.

The news programs of RTL Klub, TV2 and M1 were analyzed on March 15th, which is the anniversary of the 1848-49 revolution and independence war in Hungary, when the so called “Youth of March” stood up against the Habsburg oppression. The underlying reason for my decision is the fact that due to the national holiday all the political actors were represented on the streets. Therefore, the news programs of the

⁸ People appear on the screen as interviewees. (quizlet.com; accessed: March 25)

⁹ NAT sound is the ambient sound from the background/foreground of a video. (ibid)

day provide a good basis for analysis and a good opportunity to monitor all the above described aspects.

The program structure of the evening news on RTL Klub and MTV is slightly different but mainly they follow the same pattern. Firstly one or more main news events of the day are highlighted. This introductory section is followed by national news and the program is closed with international news. Due to a reform in the structure, TV2 Tények deviates from the structure used by the other channels. Instead of starting with the most important news of the day, they present the most interesting one in the first place, which is usually crime. Therefore, the national political reports are in the second half of the program. This change is the result of a recent structural change of the news program that the channels announced in 2010. (Thüringer, 2011) However, on March 15th they made an exception and the news started with national politics.

RTL Klub Híradó

In the analyzed news program, RTL Klub informed its audience about the state celebration of March 15th and the anti-governmental protest together in the first place in the headlines, while images of them were shown simultaneously on a shared screen.

After the signal there was an anchor voice-over¹⁰ about the main event of the day. The anchorwoman reported on the state event, mentioning the participating state dignitaries by name. The exact number of participants was not mentioned in the report or throughout the entire program.

The anchor voice-over was followed by a package¹¹ on the Peace March. In the report several high angle shots of the crowd were visible, which introduced the number of participants. During the voice-over the cheering and applause of people is frequently well audible in the background as well as in the foreground. As for politicians, József Szájer's (Fidesz MEP) as well as Viktor Orbán's speech were included in the package via sound on tape bites (SOT)¹². Due to the fact that Szájer started the sequence of speeches at the state commemoration, is most probably the reason why he had been given a voice in the report first. His sound bite was followed by Viktor Orbán's. During the entire report there were three SOTs presented from the prime minister.

A package about the Polish sympathizers was broadcasted in the next place. In the report three MOS interviews were presented. Besides MOS interviews there was an István Tarlós SOT bite in the report, who is the mayor of Budapest and another with Viktor Orbán at the end of the report. During the voice-over, NAT sound is well audible. We hear drumbeat and chanting Poles: "Vik-tor Orbán! Vik-tor Orbán!" (appx.1)

¹⁰ The anchor reads the news while the visual is broadcast simultaneously. (quizlet.com; accessed: March 25)

¹¹ A package consists of three parts: lead (introduction) read by the anchor, voice-over and sound bite/sound on tape. (ibid)

¹² When an interviewee is on camera, giving a statement. (ibid)

This story was followed by a report on the anti-governmental protest, which was organized by the ‘One Million for the Freedom of Press in Hungary’ movement, which is often referred to as ‘Milla’. In this story there were SOT bites of the speakers for the demonstration, including Dopeman (rapper and an alternative president), Eszter Csákányi (actress, host of the event) and Lajos Parti Nagy (poet and writer), in this order. The applause of the crowd was audible but for a very short time in the foreground and then for a short time in the background. Although the voice-over stated that the avenue was full of participants, besides a couple of high angle shots of the crowd they were mostly shown with lower angle shots. The images of the report were mostly focused on the stage, participants were seen in medium shots and NAT sounds were also less frequent than, for instance during the first report.

The radical protest, so called ‘System-cut’ was incorporated in the same report, most likely because the participants aimed to disturb the ‘Milla’ protest. The shouts of the crowd in the background and later in the foreground were well audible. Close ups of the participants and medium shots of the police, whose faces were airbrushed were shown on the screen. According to the reporter protesters were arrested.

The editors of the RTL Klub News presented the political events of the opposition parties in this order: MSZP, LMP, Jobbik and eventually the Democratic Coalition. Each event was introduced in a separate anchor voice-over with SOT¹³ and in every case the presidents of the parties were represented in SOT bite. In these anchor voice-overs images were shown about the politicians while there were talking and about the participants. NAT sound of protesters was audible in the background only in the Jobbik report.

After national politics there were two lighter national news packages. In the international news section of the RTL Klub Híradó there were four anchor voice-overs about international issues. The closing story was a tabloid package.

¹³ An anchor voice over with SOT is when the anchor reads the voice-over, we see images while he/she is speaking and there is a SOT at the end.

On RTL Klub, concerning SOT bites, the governing party was slightly overrepresented. Besides politicians, the participants of the events were strongly represented through NAT sound. However, in the news packages on the governmental events they were audible longer, and more frequently in the foreground than in the case of the anti-governmental event. Another noticeable difference between the state event and the 'Milla' protest was that besides NAT sound the participants were also more visible in the case of the former report, due to frequent high-angle shots. The channel, besides NAT sound, also gave a voice to democracy, as Lury phrased it, through MOS bites, in the report on the Peace March. RTL Klub devoted a two-minute long package to the state commemoration and reported on the Polish participants even longer, for two and a half minutes. The 'Milla' demonstration together with the radical protest was one and a half minutes long. The channel introduced all the opposition parties through the same technique and in reports with similar lengths (approximately one minute).

TV2 Tények

Viewers who chose to watch the news on TV2 on March 15th, heard about the state event at first, then about the arrival of Polish and Lithuanian Fidesz supporters. After that, the anchors highlighted two points from the prime minister's commemoration speech and eventually mentioned the anti-governmental protest of 'Milla'. This information was listed in the headlines.

The first news package on TV2 was about the state commemoration, which included three SOTs from Viktor Orbán. Additional information in Tények compared to RTL Klub News was that approximately 250 000 people participated in the state event. On TV2 there was information about the number of participants in the political events in every news story. Moreover, TV2 informed its audience that besides the Polish sympathizers, Lithuanian protesters also joined the Peace March. Locals were represented through images, while they were greeting the Peace March with applause. The participants of the Peace March were both visible and audible in the report; their voices moved to the foreground a couple of times as they applauded or chanted Viktor Orbán's name. Images of Poles were also shown as they were holding flags; banners, chanting and applauding appear on the screen multiple times. Besides Viktor Orbán, Tomasz Sakiewicz, editor-in-chief of the Gazeta Polska and István Tarlós, mayor of Budapest were given voices via SOT bites. The former organized the journey of the Polish participants. This background information about the trip was not mentioned on TV2 channel, only on RTL Klub. In this story the images of the governmental event at the Parliament were mostly wide shots, showing less of the participants and more of the buildings surrounding Kossuth Square, the sky and the flag on a mast. At the other location of the celebration, images showed folk dance performances, the speakers and there were close ups of flags and banners. NAT sound was audible mostly during the sections which reported on the event on Kossuth square and the Peace March. Mostly it was in the foreground then moved to the background.

A news package about the 'Milla' protest was broadcasted in the next place, also including the far-right protest. There was no exact information in the lead¹⁴ about the number of participants, although by estimations the demonstration had more than a thousand attendees. Additional information on TV2 was that some of the supporters of the Democratic Coalition visited the 'Milla' demonstration and that LMP activists were present as well to collect signatures for their public vote initiative. In contrast with the information on RTL Klub, according to TV2, only one person was detained at the far-right protest. Among the speakers of the 'Milla' protest Dopeman's, László Majtényi's speech (former national data protection commissioner) and Eszter Csákányi's voices were given in SOT bites. In the report there were some close ups on people, banners and the crowd. Besides being represented on the screen, both the participants of 'Milla' and the radical right protest were given voices in the form of NAT bites.

After the 'Milla' report, there was a breaking news lead on the far-right protesters who broke into the building of the Bank Center, where the office of the IMF representative is located. Dozens of protesters went to hand in a petition to the representative, and in the meantime they set off firecrackers.

After the breaking news, the last political report of the day was broadcasted. In an anchor voice-over the audience was informed about Ferenc Gyurcsány's speech on the event of the Democratic Coalition, the speech of Gábor Vágó, the president of LMP at the party's commemoration and eventually about the MSZP celebration. The anchor voice-over was closed with a Mesterházy (president of MSZP) SOT. Except for the event of the Democratic Coalition, images of the commemorations were visible and besides the MSZP SOT there was no NAT sound in the report. TV2 did not mention the event of Jobbik.

The rest of the reports, precisely eight news packages had cultural and criminal relevance. The news program on March 15th did not contain any

¹⁴ Lead/lead-in is the introduction of a story/package usually ready by anchor. (quizlet.com; accessed: March 25, 2012)

international news. After the aforementioned criminal and cultural stories the anchors closed the program.

On TV2 the national political section was very short, there were only four news stories broadcasted, including the breaking news lead. In the report on the state events the channel put a special focus on the Polish participants. Since there were eight culture and crime related stories, these outnumbered the national political reports. Although, through SOT bites nearly the same amount of Fidesz representatives were presented; there were more Fidesz politicians given voices than the members of the opposing parties. While four SOT bites were presented from the former, only one was presented from the latter. The rest of the SOT bites represented the members of the civic movement, who are actors, writes, etc. As for the length of the representation, on TV2 the state event was introduced together with the Peace March and the Polish and Lithuanian participants in three minutes. The 'Milla' report was two minutes long. The participants of the 'Milla' demonstration as well as the radical right protest were represented but the attendees of the opposition event were not given a voice. Regarding the images, TV2 did not put the main focus on participants; it tried to project neutral images, such as buildings, flag on a mast, etc.

M1 Híradó

The news program was the longest on this channel on March 15th and was filled with political messages from all over the county as well as from Hungarian cities of the pre-Trianon era.¹⁵ The program started with two anchor voice-overs. The first informed about the governmental commemoration. The second one presented the locations of all the political events, mentioning the state event first, then the ‘Milla’ demonstration, Jobbik, LMP and lastly the event of the Democratic Coalition.

After the introduction a news package was broadcasted about the state celebration, in which 250,000 people participated by estimations. József Szájer, MEP of the European People`s Party was represented in a SOT bite, then three SOT bites were audible from Viktor Orbán`s commemoration speech. As RTL Klub, M1 also used many high angle shots from the balconies of the windows of buildings to show the number of celebrators on Kossuth square. The appearance of people was more the focal point, than their voices.

This story was followed by a news package about the Peace March. There was almost no NAT sound audible in the report but there was a MOT interview and a SOT bite from an interview with László Csizmadia, the president of the Civil Cooperation Council.

Although Polish and Lithuanian visitors were incorporated in the package about the Peace March, there was another package specifically about them. The television viewers saw images of them filling up the platform at the train station, convening at the celebration as well as marching, applauding and holding banners. Due to NAT sound bites their applause, cheering as well as the chanting of Orbán`s name was audible in the report. There was one SOT bite present in the package from Orbán. Besides the prime minister the speech of the editor-in-chief of the Gazeta Polska was also heard, even before Orbán, due to the chronological order of the events. Additional information on this channel was that after the commemorations

¹⁵ Approximately 2.38 million Hungarian people live in these territories. (kitekinto.hu/karpat-medence; accessed: May 13, 2012)

“the Polish Gazeta Club and the Civil Cooperation Council signed a cooperation. They agreed that they will promote the Patriot Europe Movement in their home countries.” (appx.3)

After a short lead about the Canadian remonstrations against accusations of Hungary and the Swedish Hungarian’s petition to the Swedish National Television and Radio Station for accurate and factual representation of Hungary, the demonstration of the ‘Milla’ movement was only the seventh news piece in the program. In the lead of this package there was a significant difference compared to the information on the commercial channels. According to M1, the speakers of the event were saying that they want control over the commanding power. Furthermore, M1 was the only channel which mentioned that French intellectuals and students arrived in Budapest for the event. In the report the spokesperson of the demonstration, Dopeman and János Kulka, actor and the other host of the protests were represented through SOT bites.

On M1, viewers were informed about the radical-right protest in a separate anchor voice-over, both about the protest near the ‘Milla’ demonstration and their IMF “mission”.

M1 reported about the event of Jobbik in a news package. In the report, firstly the vice-president of the party, then Gábor Vona, president, eventually, Csanád Szegedi, Jobbik MEP’s were given voices via SOT bites. The politicians as well as the participants were visible and NAT sound bites were also present in the report. Mostly the national anthem and speakers were represented through this technique.

After that, the LMP event was also introduced through a news package. SOT and NAT sounds from Gábor Vágó were present in the package. Images showed that there were not that many listeners, approximately a hundred people visited the commemoration.

The celebration of the Democratic Coalition was also reported in a package. M1 informed its viewers that about a thousand sympathizers visited the event. As for the images, participants were represented through several kinds of camera techniques.

During the report their voice was audible in NAT sound, mostly cheering and chanting slogans for Gyurcsány.

MSzP's event was introduced only in twelfth place. Two SOT sound bites were in the report, one from Mesterházy and the other from Kornél Árok, the former co-president of the Hungarian Solidarity Movement. As for the NAT sound mostly Kossuth folk songs, and speakers voices were heard, the images were mainly medium shots.

The MSzP commemoration was followed by the event of KDNP (Christian Democrats, coalition partner of Fidesz), in which Zsolt Semjén, president of the KDNP fraction was represented in a SOT bit. As for images, singing ladies on the stage as well as participants were visible in wide and medium shots.

The last national political news on M1 was a package, which summarized the political events mostly outside of Budapest. Voice-over and SOT sound bites introduced the events and commemoration speeches, firstly István Tarlós's speech at the National Museum, and then the mayor of Hódmezővásárhely, Győr, Szeged, and Székesfehérvár. Besides Szeged, all the represented cities are governed by Fidesz.

On M1 there were three other packages about non-politically related celebrations of March 15th and two international news stories. The international stories consisted of the election turnout in Slovakia, which Hungarians living beyond the borders were affected by, and about the bus accident in Switzerland.

On M1 the governing party was noticeably overrepresented, regarding SOT bites, NAT sound and news sequence. Except for the Democratic Coalition event and the 'Milla' demonstration participants of opposition events were not given voices. Although they were represented in the two aforementioned reports, their representation was not as frequent as in the case of the state events. The voice of democracy rather received a visual representation on this channel. As for the length of the reports, the governmental celebration was three minutes long, the Peace March was one and a half and the report on the Polish and Lithuanian participants was two

minutes long. Among the anti-governmental events the 'Milla' demonstration and the MSzP event were introduced in two minutes long packages each. The rest of the opposition parties were given approximately one and a half minutes.

Summary

In the case of this research whether media fulfills the requirement of democratic journalism are key questions. In answering these questions this case study plays a pivotal role.

As it was stated in earlier chapters there is a big difference in the news production of PSBs and commercial channels. Commercial channels financing their operation from advertising, strive for high viewing rates. Therefore, entertainment is their main characteristic. The fact that tabloids are more favored by the audience might also be the reason behind tabloid news story as a closing story on RTL Klub, and the high number of non-political news on TV2. This question will be discussed in a different chapter. PSBs, being dependent on state subsidies, “have made a commitment to a consistently high level of factual output.” (Hill, 2007, p31) Consequently, M1 should aspire for objectivity, proportionality, faithfulness of truth, accuracy, impartiality and independence from all political sides in an ideal case. (Kovach, 2001; Hill, 2007) Since news is a factual genre, even though infotainment is the primary aim of commercial channels, TV2 and RTL Klub should aim for the aforementioned values in their news programs.

The news program of M1 on March 15th was biased towards the government in its news sequence, representing politicians as well as giving voices to the participants of the events. Therefore, it failed to fulfill the requirement of proportionality as well as impartiality. Although in the case of the representation of the participants of the state commemoration there was a little overrepresentation on RTL Klub, but this channel provided the most balanced coverage as a whole. In the case of TV2, striving for neutrality both in case of news stories and projected images suggests an attempt to avoid political issues.

The visual appearance of the democracy was accomplished by all three channels. As for the “voice of democracy”, as it was mentioned above that there were inequalities in representing participants through NAT sound. Furthermore, none of the channels` reporters conducted MOS interviews on the anti-governmental event. All the MOS

interviews which were present in the programs were voices given to Fidesz supporters. (Lury, 2005) Consequently, people with different political views do not see themselves equally represented as engaged citizens, which might have an impact on their civic engagement. (Dahlgren, 2009)

Alternative media

“[Journalism’s] role in democracy is [...] being altered, reduced.” (Dahlgren, 2009, p44) One underlying reason is the shift in the composition of audience. “Audiences are becoming more fragmented, and they are expecting more choices in media consumption.” (ibid, p44) This phenomenon is strongly connected to the Internet which provides a plethora of information. The new technology, which many people have access to, besides giving more space for the decision when, how and what kind of information citizens receive, it also gives the chance for participation (ibid):

The evolution of journalism in the wake of the Internet has several dimensions, and certainly opens up new spaces for civic participation in the journalistic activity. The increasing “joint production,” where citizens cooperate in various ways with mainstream journalists, is one area; the growing field of citizen journalism is another, represented by both activist organizations and individual bloggers.” (ibid, p179)

The online platform enables civic actors to “maintain a critical dialogue with mainstream journalists” (ibid, p177) by providing complementary information or giving them the space to “offer a competing frame in which to understand the political world.” (ibid, p177) Furthermore, alternative media has different measures of what is newsworthy than mainstream media and therefore it gives more space to stories that would be “otherwise hidden”. (Coleman and Ross, 2010, p78) Thus, analyzing mainstream media in the given country is important to touch upon the alternative media market as well as on the information that can be found there. This chapter is giving insight on the information available on March 15th.

Before doing so, it is important to note that people do not choose alternative media, like blogs as their primary source of information in Hungary. On the basis of the conducted interviews, it can be assumed that official news websites are more popular news sources than blogs in Hungary.

According to WebAudit, which is an online indicator of the number of visitors to websites, the CEMP, the Central European Media and Publishing Group and Origo are the most visited online sites in Hungary. The latter has approximately 3 million and the former also nearly 3 million visitors each day. (webaudit.hu) The CEMP Group registers websites such as index.hu, which is the most popular independent news portal since 1999 and blog.hu, where more than 17 000 blogger post content every day. (cemp.hu) Although, Origo and Index are independent content providers, they are not mainstream media; they do not belong to the alternative media category either. Therefore, these websites are not included in this chapter.

In this chapter I focus on the content of blogs, more precisely, on two blogs which are registered on blog.hu and are referred to by other news content providers, namely mandiner.blog and Véleményvezér. Furthermore, besides the above mentioned blogs I introduce Kettős Mércé (Double Standard) blog as well, which is also registered on blog.hu and assuming, from the number of its Facebook likes (13 672, on May 9th, 2012) (facebook.com/magyarinfo) it is a quite popular blog. Besides these, Attila Mong`'s blog, Napi Fix (Daily Fix) was taken into consideration. He is a well-known and respected journalist; however he did not post anything about the commemorations of March 15th.

On Kettős Mércé blog there were two articles published on March 15th. One was about the 'Milla' protests in which the blogger introduces a few topics concerning the event such as Klub Radio, which won on the court a day before¹⁶ and the hunger strike of some journalists for the cause of the Hungarian media. Besides these issues the article introduced the 7 points of the 'National minimum' program of the 'Milla' movement. (Thx Jucc, magyarinfo.blog.hu) The second article was a minute by minute account of the event. The editors of the blog called the readers to send e-mails about what they saw on the streets on the 15th. The posts mostly focused on the

¹⁶ The radio took its lost frequency tender case to court. The tender, created for Klub Radio`s frequency was one that a talk and news radio had no chance of winning. (HVG 9)

‘Milla’ and the radical right protests. According to the article, a couple of hundred radical right protesters gathered to provoke the participants of the ‘Milla’ demonstration. The speakers on the stage tried to calm the ‘Milla’ participants down, asking them not to pay attention to the provocations. (magyarinfo.blog.hu)

On Mandiner blog there were also two articles published. One of them is a poem about different nationalities arriving for the commemoration and about Europe’s attention being focused on Hungary. (rajcsányi, Mandiner.blog.hu) The other publication was history related. (Szálinger, Mandiner.blog.hu)

Besides the articles that were published on March 15th further articles were published before as well as after this date by Mandiner blog and Kettős Mércse.

Although Véleményvezér blog did not publish anything about the commemoration of March 15th, this blog is often referred to by other news content providers. Therefore, I decided to mention the long opinion piece that was published on Véleményvezér on March 13th. The authors elaborated on their opinions about the fact that the Polish protesters and the French anti-protesters came to Hungary. According to the article, the foreign protesters were “meddling in affairs” which first of all they are not completely aware of in every detail, and secondly they do not have to cope with the consequence. As a third point they mentioned that in the corollary of the import of foreign protesters “we export our national political division to an international platform.” (Véleményvezérblog.hu)

Regarding the variety of information these blogs did not provide overall information as for example the official independent news sites, such as Index and origo.hu. They offered to the reader some supplementary data but the information published on these online blogs was not enough to gain a broad picture of the event of March 15th. However together with other official online news sources the Internet provided a wide range of information and facilitated a deep understanding of the political events, including different viewpoints, all political actors, participant voices, etc.

Although, the Internet is often accused of providing non-filtered, hence irrelevant and false information (interview: Participant 2; Gahlgen, 2009), it also provides a bigger variety of information than mainstream media.

Discussion

In this chapter I make an attempt to discover what impact the new media law has on journalists in general and on the media content relying on the interviews. Furthermore, the research of Attila Mong completed the interview materials with useful information.

On the basis of the conducted interviews it can be stated that the international tabloidization process manifests itself in Hungary. (Participant 1 and 2) However, tabloidization has other reasons as well. Prior to the introduction of these reasons, it is essential to emphasize that there was a need to change the previous media law which had been in effect since 1996. As it was noted earlier, journalists, advocates, etc. welcomed the government's modification initiative. The old law had several flaws, such as its "public service supervisory system". (Urbán) Furthermore, it was written in a technically different environment, hence it did not regulate things that media would have had a need for. (ibid) The problem is that the new regulation "was passed very fast without the involvement of the opposition" (Participant 1), creating an even stricter law than the previous one. (Bodoky)

Critiques of the media law

The new media law, like the old one, failed to prevent the public service from political influence. On top of that it made the supervisory system of the public service media completely non-transparent. (Urbán) For example,

if the former president of the Supreme Court gets airbrushed away from the screen¹⁷, nobody knows who should investigate the case, if the Public Service Foundation or any other authority can do anything about it. (...) There are many offices around the public service

¹⁷ Zoltán Lomnici, the former president of the Supreme Court was technically blurred from the background in an interview showed on Duna TV and M1 News, because, according to the channels, he is an undesirable person in their news programs. In both cases the NMHH (The National Media and Communications Authority) was asked to investigate the issues. NMHH rejected the request, saying the cases are not under the scope of its authority, as the Media and Press Law does not regulate the process of content making. (atv.hu, accessed: February 3, 2012; mediatanacs.hu/hirek, accessed: February 2, 2012)

media but nobody knows what their responsibilities are. Therefore, in case there is a problem nobody solves it”. (Urbán)

Furthermore, the regulation drew the printed and online content under the supervision of the Media Council (Participant 1, Urbán), which can also impose high fines on content producers in the case of infringement, without any prior court approval. (Participant 1)

“The media law created [a media authority] which has unlimited power.” (ibid) Because of the two-third majority of Fidesz, their nominees are in majority in the media council. Furthermore, the president of NMHH, Annamária Szalai was nominated to her position for 9 years. (Participant 1, Urbán) According to Annamária Szalai, the two-thirds majority of Fidesz manifests itself in the consistency of the members but the polycyclic nomination serves long term aims. Furthermore, “the new system requires more democratic freedom than the old one as the nominees of the parties have to receive two-thirds of the votes in order to be assigned”-she said. (Index 21)

On the other hand, interviewed professionals had different opinions:

It is worth it to start off from facts. In this nomination system nobody can get in from the opposition, and it is like this in every state institution. [...] What we have to look at is: who is assigned for a position, how, for how long and if the person is removable from the position. (Participant 2)

The intention is not even there to create a multi-party, democratic media council whose members are nominated for a much shorter period. (Urbán)

Consequently, as a result of the nomination system, due to the one-thirds majority of the governing party, the law failed to create an independent supervisory board of media content producers, which would be a fundamental role of media in democracy. On the basis of an earlier chapter it is also important to note that independency of the supervisory board (ORTT) was not fully achieved under the previous media law either.

Consequences of the regulations

Commercial channels “were very removed from politics even before the media law.” (Bodoky) On the one hand because “their profile has always been infotainment; [...] hence, their news programs are not politically centered.” (Participant 1) On the other hand, they have been dependent on the state to a certain extent, for example regarding frequency permission. Thus “they do not want to interfere in politics [...] [and] consequently they will not do investigative reports.” (Bodoky)

The commercial channels` behavior moved from a self-defense mechanism to tabloid news production. Thus, it can happen that certain news programs contain only a couple of minutes of national politics and the rest is crime, cute things, celebrities (Urbán)

The more we deal with tabloids the less we have to do with politics. This way we can stay on the surface of the issues. We [...] tell what happened, present the government`s standpoint, the opposition`s opinion, maybe an advocate. But we do not analyze consequences. (Participant 1)

The tabloidization process is strongly connected to self-censorship. According to Mong, self-censorship is “the phenomenon when the journalist recognizes his/her limits and draws a line to him/herself accordingly, and keeps him/herself to it even if it is contrary to his/her professional convictions.” (Mong, 2012, p5) It works as a defend mechanism, for example, against the aforementioned high fines. “Editorials with difficult financial situations cannot afford paying such prohibitive fines. (Participant 2) “The possibility of being fined creates self-censorship among the editorial staff. This restricts freedom of press.” (Participant 1)

Whilst you know exactly what mistakes the public service media makes, in the case of commercial channels you only notice that they do not report on something, they rather shift to tabloid news, in order to avoid sensitive issues or, for example, they put the demonstration of the opposition to eighth place in the news sequence. However, this is not because of the media law. They feel the pressure because they are dependent of their jobs existentially.” (Participant 2)

Researchers consider self-censorship as a byproduct of “formal censorship”. (Mong, 2012, p6) The ultimate target of institutionalized censorship is to “feed, keep alive and enforce self-censorship”. (ibid, p6) However, according to Mong, the Hungarian case is proof that self-censorship as “cultural practice of a past can endure and

become a practice or even strive in democracy”. (ibid, p6) Thus, people act according to a cultural practice, when they impose self-censorship on themselves. The changed regulations even accelerate the existential fear. Mong`s thought suggests that self-censorship is not new phenomenon.

There are several techniques of self-censorship, among which the most common form is “withholding information”. (Mong, 2012, p6) Withholding information is not unique for commercial channels. The so called economic censorship affects all types of content providers. (Mong, 2012, p6) According to Urbán economic self-censorship is even more usual. “Journalists are not afraid of politicians in the first place. However, if the advertiser of a certain editorial is involved in an issue journalists rather not deal with those sensitive topics.” (Urbán) Consequently, with withholding information journalists avoid the risk of losing advertisers.

Another form of self-censorship is packaging, in other words presenting the news in a way that it is acceptable. This technique is strongly connected to the method of “packaging strong facts in opinion articles [...] since everybody thinks that they have bigger freedom” to give information. (Mong, 2012, p6)

Journalists, instead of making sensitive claims, make other people say it and they cite them. These other people are usually “politicians, mostly opposition, experts, columnists, etc”. (ibid, p6) Eventually a common technique is displacing sensitive or provocative information on certain blogs and they are referred to or cited in the newspaper. (ibid)

As the above listed tactics indicate, even though there is a decline in the political engagement of television channels, there are also efforts on their part to provide citizens with the necessary information, in order to fulfill the expectations of democratic journalism.

According the conducted interviews as well as the researches of the Republikon Institute and Index, Fidesz is overrepresented both in news and politics related

program on M1. (Index 22) The submission of M1 under political power was also noticeable in the case study.

What happens here is the prototype of political manipulation. Well known examples of this are the airbrushed Lomnici or the demonstration by the Opera House without participants. (Urbán)

At the public service television, people loyal to the party are in position, just as in the previous administration. Therefore, the PSB is doing public relations for the government. It is not as critical as to the extent that it would be expected. (Bodoky)

PSB`s role as a safeguard of the freedom of democracy, has to be emphasized here, for which an equal representation of political sides is inevitable. Additionally, the interviews suggest that the submission (such as self-censorship) of public service television is not a new phenomenon either.

While, commercial channels avoid politics, M1 serves the interests of the governing party. Both methods of dealing with the current media regulation system have an impact on the variety of information, even though it might not seem to be the case at first glance. It can be claimed that the new media law has an indirect effect on the variety of information provided. For example, Bodoky stresses that it is not true that there is no variety in media content. However, this claim is not true for all news sources:

There is everything on the Internet. If somebody wants to be informed there are good news websites. [...] What we can say is that the mainstream media, television and radio, depending on political orientation, significantly distorts information. (Bodoky)

According to Koncz, although diverse information can be still found, their number is decreasing:

If we look at the media as a whole, it is still a democratic system. [...] It is still possible to find an atmosphere which is in line with ethical requirements. [...] The problem is that the number of these options is decreasing, since the government is demolishing all courses of escape. [...] The danger of this tendency is that we get the same variety from every source. [...] Some of the rules have an obliging nature. In this case self-censorship comes into play. [...] The result of self-censorship is that there is no politics in the media. Therefore, a big part of the news program consists of tabloids, because that does not generate any problems. But citizens do not access information. The Internet is still free but with the registration obligations there were trying to go against it. But they didn`t succeed, because it is impossible to implement. (Koncz)

Consequently, the Internet serves as a source where citizens find a high variety of information. However, there is a segment of the society who does not access this type of information. There is a “certain generation who does not engage in Internet activities” (Participant 2) and there is another part of the society who does not have access to the Internet at all. (Urbán)

The above listed main indirect consequences of the new media regulation, such as tabloidization, self-censorship, in the case of commercial channels; the one-sided political broadcast in the case of state television and decreasing variety of information in the case of both types of content producers have impact on achieving ideal news values. Since PSB`s are financed by state subsidies they are committed to producing content high factuality; consequently striving for fairness, accuracy, proportionality. However, in this case it seems that the public television`s state dependence is the factor that hinders the state television in fulfilling its role as an “independent monitor of power” (Kovach, 2001, p112) Although commercial channels` are entertainment led, in their news programs, in order to be in line with genre criteria they are supposed to be involved in the democratic practices of journalism. Avoiding national political issues, turning toward tabloids instead, withholding information and staying on the surface of issues represent an entirely different direction. People do not hear about issues in these news programs or hear about them superficially. Consequently, they are impeded in getting the information “they need to understand the world, [...] the information that people need to live their lives” (Kovach, 2001, p149)

Conclusion

On the basis of the RTL Klub-TV2-M1 case study and the conducted interviews the following conclusion can be drawn: self-censorship, tabloidization, biased news coverage and lack of variety of information are the respective characteristics of television news broadcast on the three analogue channels, as indirect impacts of the new regulation. As it was suggested throughout the thesis there is a sharp difference between commercial and public service media, regarding their operation, democratic roles, commitment towards society, etc. These differences also influence the means in which they transmit information as well as the ways in which they deal with the new media regulation. On the basis of the case study and the discussion after, it can be stated that commercial channels avoid political issues, for which presenting tabloids, crime, cultural news stories and withholding information are a sufficient techniques. These techniques are outcomes of self-censorship. In the case of state television, assimilating to the new media environment means the submission to political power. The high imposable fines, being financially dependent on the state as well as advertisers, the constitution of the MNHH members are all factors, which impact the news production of both state and commercial channels. According to Mong “the two-thirds majority of the executive power, the unprecedented power of authorities and Fidesz’s push forward” (Mong, 2012, p6) were bigger influential factors, than the new regulation itself. (ibid) Consequently, the political context in which the new media laws had been created, and had been analyzed earlier, significantly influences media actors. According to the interviewed professionals, the above mentioned phenomena, such as self-censorship and submission to political power are not new to the new media law. The former is a cultural inheritance from the communist past, surviving through democracy. The latter has also been a practice during previous administrations.

In conducting an analysis on the current political situation in Hungary two online magazines, HVG and Index served as sources of information. This analysis shows that a wide range of information is accessible online in Hungary which provides critiques, opinion, different viewpoints and frequent updates about the ongoing issues. Therefore, the Internet serves as an accurate and varied of information. On the contrary, in the international media some of the governmental act were highlighted, such as the media law and were the focus of sharp critiques. Furthermore, the analysis of the content of alternative media on March 15th revealed that blogs are not sufficient to serve as primary sources of information, but are useful in gaining supplementary information. As it was also described above, the means of presenting information is significantly different in the case of the analyzed television channels.

It has been emphasized earlier that the ideal values of journalism are subjective. Nonetheless, aiming to meet the requirements of ideal journalism in democracies is a sign of democratic media engagement. The self-censorship, along with the tabloidization process as its byproduct, on commercial channels and the leaning towards the governing party in the case of state television hinders these broadcasters even from striving for these values and accomplishing them. As the analysis of the Hungarian media market shows RTL Klub, TV2 and M1 are the most popular channels in Hungary as far as the news programs and the evening hours concerned, and these are the channels which are freely accessible for everybody. Therefore they have a big responsibility of projecting information. However, the ways commercial and state channels act in the new media environment hinders them in providing a variety of information. The state channel predominantly presents the governing party. The commercial channels do not go into in depth, and broadcast more tabloid and crime stories than important information. According to a television reporter, this self-censorship “restricts media freedom” (Participant 1), since if [journalists] feel themselves less free, they are going to be less free.” (Mong, 2012, p6)

Both techniques disturb the mediation of the information that people need to understand the political issues and make decisions accordingly. The above described characteristics of content production disable these news programs in fulfilling their role as the watchdogs of the freedom of democracy. They either discard this role or pick a political side. Consequently, the proportionality of broadcasting is harmed as well.

The historical overview of Hungarian media revealed that in Hungary media regulation was created much later than in other post-communist countries. Media regulation has been in practice for only 16 years. Most likely, the lack of experience in media regulation had an impact on the media law. As it was described in an earlier chapter both the first and second media laws have its flaws and in many cases struggle with the same problems. The old media law did not manage to diminish state intervention in the day to day operation of television stations, did not create a transparent supervisory system, and according to the interviewees the new law failed to solve these issues as well. Furthermore, according to interviewees, self-censorship also prevailed under both legislations:

Self-censorship is not a new phenomenon; it existed even before the new media law. The difference is that it has not been in the limelight until now. [...] It has probably been present in society for decades. Although, it would have been logical that the political transformation changes the situation but it did not happen. Seemingly it is embedded very deeply in the editors and other media staff. This submission to the commanding political power has prevailed in the past [...] twenty-two years in a political and an economic sense¹⁸ as well. [...] The law was not able to make this situation better or worse. (Urbán)

It is only the zenith point of a twenty years long process. For the current situation both the political left and right are responsible for the erosion of the freedom of press because it was in both of their interests. (Mong, 2012, p6)

The only change that the new media law brought is that the government legitimized by law something that had already existed. (Bodoky)

¹⁸ Political self-censorship is the fear of political power; economic self-censorship manifests itself as a fear of losing advertisers.

Although there are different opinions about the degree of self-censorship after the media law one thing is sure, self-censorship is not a new phenomenon. The only difference is that these issues were not discussed earlier. “It pointed out a bunch of problems. Now we have already started to talk about [...] problems which are unquestionably present in Hungarian media. If we look at it from this perspective, it even had a positive impact.” (Urbán) The first step towards healing is admitting the problem, the saying goes. With the new media law, politicians, journalists, media experts, etc. got the opportunity to discover all the problems of media regulations and find solutions.

It is important to emphasize that this thesis provides an analysis of the media and the wider political and industrial context between the period of April 25th, 2010 and March 15th, 2012; therefore it does not include the changes that happened after. Even so it has to be noted that the Parliament passed a modification bill of the media law, on May 18th, 2012, which was prepared in reaction to the critiques of the Constitutional Court, launched in December, 2011. The modification increased the protection of the sources of information but it kept the rights of the media commissioner, in spite the fact that, according to the Constitutional Court it should have been eliminated from the law. (Király in index.hu; Polyák, 2012)

Appendix

Appendix 1: RTL Klub Híradó

Marc 15. 18.30

Total length should be around 30 minutes this time it was 24.

Analysis of the news program on the 15th of March

Main news story – anchor voice-over

Voice-over: The news program starts with the main news story of the day: The Kossuth square (the square front of the Parliament) was full of demonstrators and about the same amount of people participated in the anti-governmental protest which was organized by civil associations.

Image: On a shared screen both the crowd on Kossuth square and the anti-governmental protest was shown next to each other.

Signal

Teaser: The signal can be heard while the anchors list the headlines. In the studio there is always one woman and one man anchor. They say the headlines in rotation. This time the woman started.

- Polish people arrived in Hungary. The foreign participants of the Peace March supported Viktor Orbán.
- Cavalrymen: They are car mechanics or attorneys by profession but for a day they become national heroes in order to keep the Hungarian tradition alive.
- Cockade: The Italian chef and the French radioman know what to use it for but not how to use it right.

Signal – the title: “Híradó” shows up

The anchors welcome the viewers.

Story 1

Lead-in: “Demonstration, counterdemonstration, Peace March, foreign participants, political speeches, family events. The holiday was eventful this year as well.”

Story 2 - voice over (00:58-01:31)

Voice-over: On the 164th anniversary of the 1848-49 war of independence and revolution the state celebration started in the morning on Kossuth square. The national flag was hoisted up. The most important participants were mentioned by name, like Pál Schmitt president of Hungary, Viktor Orbán prime minister and László Kövér speaker. The anchorwoman stated that there were two big demonstrations in Budapest. And the amount of participants of the anti-governmental demonstration was about the same as of the pro-government event.

Image: Images were shown about the state event, such as the process of hoisting the national flag and the politicians in front of the Parliament. After that the shared screen image was visible again, showing the crowd of both the anti and pro-governmental demonstrations.

Sound: Besides the anchorwomen's voice-over there was almost no additional sound. Very silently the drumbeat of the state event was audible and two speakers visible the shared screen. Both of the speakers, Dopeman, who was assigned to be the alternative president of Hungary from the anti-governmental demonstration, and Viktor Orbán at the state event were visible and audible at the same time. However as they were talking at the same time, none of the speeches were understandable.

Story 3 – Package (01:31-04:32)

Lead in: István Pálffy

Voice-over: Barnabás Kéri

Lead-in: “We are not going to be a colony.” According to the prime minister this is the intellectual program of 1848 and this is the demand of the holiday today. Viktor Orbán, in his speech, which he held before a huge crowd, warned everybody that Hungarians will not be second rate European citizens and they will hold onto their sovereignty.

Image: The participants of the Peace March are walking, holding a banner: “With united power” with the Polish and Hungarian flags next to the text.

NAT Sound: applause, cheering of the crowd

(We hear and see this scene for a couple of seconds before the voice-over starts)

Voice-over: The Peace March on March 15th was the second march which was organized to take a stand for the politics of the government and to remonstrate against the international attacks against it.

Image: participants while marching

Voice-over: “The Peace March crossed the chain bridge, where hundreds of people were waiting for them. The crowd was waving Hungarian and Polish flags, as participants arrived from Poland as well for the demonstration.”

Image: The march walks through the city and arrives in Kossuth square. The camera shows the big size of the crowd several times from a high angle.

NAT in the background: In the background we continuously hear cheering, applause as well as the national anthem.

Voice-over: “József Szájer held the first speech, stating why he is happy for the Polish support. According to him an unprecedented attack has turned on Hungary.”

SOT: (József Szájer Member of the European Parliament, Fidesz) “They even critique my dear friends, how we name our own country.”

Image: The camera shows him talking (long shot)

(After his sentence there is a break)

Image and Sound in the break: Waving flags, hissing and booing of the crowd in response to Szájer’s speech.

VO: “And this is how the crowd greeted Viktor Orbán. Hungarians, Poles and Lithuanian chanted the name of the prime minister together.”

Image and Sound: The camera shows the celebrating crowd. The cheering is well audible in the background and there is a second, when the voice-over stops and the NAT sound moves from the background to the foreground.

Voice-over: There were people who even brought chairs with them in order to see the prime minister from the back rows.

Image: An elderly woman standing on her chair, leaning up front to see Orbán.

Sound: folk music in the background

SOT: Viktor Orbán “The political and intellectual program of 1848 was the following: We are not going to be a colony!”

Image: medium shot about Orbán

(short break in his speech)

Image and Sound: Cheering from the crowd, the camera shows them, then turns back to Orbán as he continues his speech

SOT: (Orbán) “The demand and desire of Hungarian people in 2012, sounds like this: We are not going to be a colony!”

(Short break)

Image and Sound: The crowd starts cheering again, so the camera turns to the participants.

During the entire report three SOTs were presented from Orbán. Showing him as well as the crowd, and the crowd was always well audible either in the background or in the foreground while there was a break in the voice-over.

At the end of the report the camera shows the stage front of the Parliament, a band is playing Hungarian folk music, people walking home.

The narrator concludes: The demonstration ended peacefully.

Story 4 – package (04:33-07:11)

Lead-in: Antónia Erős

Voice-over: Péter Zódi

Lead-in: By estimation more than 2000 Poles arrived early morning in Hungary to participate in the celebration of March 15th. The trip was organized by a conservative Polish daily. During the events the Poles were supporting Viktor Orbán and the Hungarian prime minister greeted them in Polish.

Image and Sound: A group of Polish youth is chanting (the voice over starts with a delay)

Voice-over: Hungarians and Poles are two good friends, chants a group of Polish youth at the Nyugati train station. At 7:00 in the morning the station was already covered with flags and banners although the train from Poland had not arrived yet. There were many people who arrived with busses and cars.

Image: We still hear and see the chanting youth, later a banner saying: Poles-Hungarians are two good friends, Occupancy, Lets fight together

Voice-over: “Then the train arrives. There were people who waited for the celebrators with flowers.”

Image: We see people waiting at the station for the arriving train. An elderly lady gives flower to another lady who is just getting off the train. The former also shows up on the screen for a Man-on-street (MOS) interview: “Polish-Hungarian friendship”-she says and shrugs her shoulders. “I know and like them and I am happy that they feel for us and that they take this effort to come and celebrate with us.”

Image during the MOS: Behind that lady we see people walking, taking off the train. It is visible that a decent crowd arrived in Budapest. The camera also shows a man, still on the train waving and smiling.

Voice-over: "They came to celebrate. This is what the Poles say as well."

Image: Nice atmosphere, a person hugs a man who just arrived (probably two Poles who know each other) and others are tying a ribbon with the Hungarian national colors on a Polish flag.

Voice-over: "They do not know what happened exactly in 1848, but they know why they are here for the celebration."

Image: We see people on the station again wearing broaches with the picture of Orbán.

MOS interview: (Young boy, around his late twenties, speaks Hungarian) "According to us, according to Polish people, this day is very important in Hungary because we need to fight for a proud, free and independent Hungary."

MOS: (older man, the reporter talks to him while he is walking) "Because I like Viktor Orbán"

Image and Sound: We hear him saying it in English and then the narrator translates it. We also see him talking to the reporter and smiling. Then the camera shows the participants of the Peace March walking after a police car, beat of drums and cavalrymen on horses.

Image: The scene changes. We see another location of the celebration, the regimental band playing drums, behind them cavalrymen are coming on horses, followed by the Polish crowd. We also see a participant, probably Hungarian who applauds to the Polish people when he hears them chanting Orbán's name. Somebody holds an English sign: "We'd like to have Viktor Orbán for Poland's prime minister".

NAT in the background: beat of drums and chanting: "Vik-tor Orbán! Vik-tor Orbán!"

Voice-over: "The reporter translates the sign. He informs us that the editor-in-chief of the Polish daily that organized the participation of the Poles as well as mayor of Budapest talked about the similarities in Polish and Hungarian history, and that the participants were happy to listen to these speeches."

Sound: We hear the chief editor speaking in the background.

SOT (István Tarlós, mayor of Budapest): “These are two lot-suffered nations, who were attempted to be trampled down many times and in many ways but they always managed to recover.”

VO: Then the Polish sympathizers went to the castle and later to Kossuth square to listen to Viktor Orbán`s speech.

Image: We see the sympathizers in the castle area and on Kossuth square with waving flags.

SOT: (Viktor Orbán as he greets the Poles in Polish and then he translates it to Hungarian) “For our freedom and for yours!”

VO: “The prime minister greeted them in Polish; they received it with a huge ovation. Expectedly they are leaving Hungary tomorrow.”

NAT in the background: Cheering comes from the crowd

Image: The prime minister smiles seeing the reaction of Pole`s reaction and then the camera shows the cheering crowd, waving many flags.

Story 5 – package (07:12-09:50)

Lead-in: István Pálffy

Voice-over: István Borsody, László Velti

Lead-in: We wash off the shame/ignominy. The demonstration of the ‘One Million for the Freedom of Press in Hungary’ movement started with this sentence in the afternoon. The participants demonstrated against the government on the Pest side of the Erzsébet Bridge. The speakers, including Lajos Parti Nagy, Kossuth Prize winner writer, were talking about how the government is ruining the constitution and freedom of press. They also announced their own political program, with the title: ‘National minimum plus’.

The report started with NAT Sound in the foreground:

Image and Sound: “Dr. Dopeman, Dr. Pityinger László” – the moderator of the demonstration announced the next speaker. The stage is shown in a long shot. Therefore, one part of the crowd, which is standing right front of the stage, is visible. Dopeman walks on stage. We hear the crowd applauding for a very short time. The voice-over starts immediately after the narrator announces Dopeman, although we still hear the crowd in the background.

VO: “In the first place they elected an alternative president of Hungary, who is the rapper Domeman. This time he did not sing but wrote a poem.”

Image: Dopeman is speaking on stage

SOT: (Dopeman)

“The reason of the problem, very deep inside
That my damned folks have become dumb
And that is almost equal to wickedness
That is why they can oppress us with division”

Voice-over: From the bridge till the Astoria square the streets were covered with participants.

Image: showing the crowd

Voice-over: “In the meantime at the Jégbüfé the participants of the system cut were shaking the cordon. They were trying to interrupt the demonstration of the ‘One Million for the Freedom of Press in Hungary’ movement with chants.”

Image and sound: The camera zooms out from the cordon to the crowd. NAT in the background: chanting crowd. Then close up to the participants, shaking their fists and the NAT sound moves to the foreground: “We are at home! We are at home!”

Voice-over: The police arrested more participants.

Image: Marching police, we cannot see their faces, it is blurred.

Voice-over: The award gala was welcomed happily by the people at the bridge. As the group phrased it, they gave awards to coward politicians who ruined the legal state. The main prize was named after Rák Bene, the hero of Janos Arany’s poem, The lost constitution. It was given to József Szájer. One year ago he was the one who suggested the renewal of the text of the constitution.

Image and Sound: The camera shows the stage again with a long shot and we hear applause and cheering in the background. Then the camera zoomed out so the television viewers saw more of the crowd. On the stage the moderators are showing the main prize. Then there is another shot on the crowd but this time from another angle.

SOT: (Eszter Csákányi actress) “The Úri lócsi sub-prize of the Rák Bene Prize goes to István Balasi.”

Sound: Laughs and cheer from the crowd for a moment but the volume is turned down as the voice-over starts again.

Image: We see Eszter Csákányi on stage while she announces the winner.

Voice-over: The hosts of the event, Eszter Csákányi and János Kulka were talking about their dislike toward the system, this time as well. There were ten speakers at the demonstration, including Lajos Parti Nagy Kossuth Prize winner writer and poet, who forbade the broadcast of his work on the Hungarian Radio.

Image: One little part of the crowd is visible, then Lajos Parti Nagy as he walks on the stage.

SOT: (Lajos Parti Nagy) “We will have to say no for a long time. No for the totalitarianism ...”

Voice-over: At the demonstration Szelem Simandi, a university student in Budapest introduced the political program of the civil association, which they name as the ‘The national minimum plus’.

Image: The camera turns onto the crowd from a low angle, so we do not see the whole square and turns back to the university student.

SOT: (Szelem Simandi) “We, one million active and independent constituent, can change this. We, powerless, civil people, citizens, we have to agree on the national minimum.”

Voice-over: The ‘national minimum’, according to them, would result in the reconciliation of the values of the republic. Furthermore, they demand the clarification of the party finances and the creation of guarantees for press freedom.

Image: Crowd from different angles.

The ‘One Million for the Freedom of Press in Hungary’ Facebook group’s local activists organized demonstration in Szeged and Gyula with similar programs to the Budapest demonstration but with less participants are shown.

Image: A woman speaking on the stage in one of the cities, we do not know for sure which one and participants.

Story 6 – anchor voice over with SOT (09:51-10:55)

Voice-over: The president of MSzP, called the government a coward. At the socialist party’s celebration in Esztergom, Attila Mesterházy said that the administration was not brave enough to take the responsibility of its failures. Besides this, alluding to the nation and national interests they represent their own power interests. The opposing politician in his entire speech was judging the Orbán administration. The reason for choosing another city and not Budapest as the location of the celebration, the

president of MSzP said that Budapest had become the symbol of the failed governance of Fidesz.

SOT: (Attila Mesterházy) “Day by day, more and more people pay higher and higher prices because of Viktor Orbán. Orbán and Matolcsy are running amok and everybody pays the price. Everybody pays for it in doubled foreign currency debts, prohibitive gas prices, increasing taxes, decreasing social support, worsening health care, depreciating pension, high tuition fee, and unemployment.”

Image: Participants, marching crowd with flags and banners with the following signs: “Újpest”, “Ferencváros”, “437 forint for gas? Thanks Orbán”. A mother with her baby on her arm and waving a flag, people are walking, non-participants are crossing the square, the square is not so crowded. The camera shows Attila Mesterházy while he is speaking. (medium shot)

Story 7 – anchor voice-over and SOT (10:57-11:46)

LMP was celebrating on the Pilvax square. They also took the opportunity to get signatures for their public vote initiative. At the event, Gábor Vágó, LMP MP, held a speech. He said that March 15th was not the holiday of nice words but the holiday of action. According to him Hungary is at a cross road. One of the ways is being at the mercy of Viktor Orbán and the other one is the way of LMP, for which the labor law is not a tool but a value.

SOT: (Gábor Vágó) “We have to make a stand! We have to lift our heads and say: It was enough of being defenseless to the government. We have to go out on the streets, squares, in friends groups and we have to hint that there is another option than this. We had to make the nation believe that, yes, there is another option, other than leading the nation as sheep into servitude.”

Image: public vote booth where the people of the party are gathering signatures, people who sign the petition, we see shots more times about the lining of the booths with cockades on them, conversation between participants and Gábor Vágó speaking. During the SOT we only see Gábor Vago`s face on the left side of the screen in a close shot.

Story 8 – anchor voice-over with SOT (11:47-12:26)

Voice over: Jobbik held its meeting in Budapest. Gábor Vona, president of the party, said that his party wanted freedom, honesty and order because all of these are missing

in Hungary. He added that if the Union endangers this, they will fight against it because, according to him, currently Hungary is a colony of the European Union.

Image: Crowd with Hungarian and Jobbik flags, then the camera scans the stage, showing the band playing, triumph is audible in the background, speaker on the stage, Gábor Vona on the stage while speaking.

NAT in the background: A band is playing folk music; sometimes cheering of the crowd can be heard as well.

SOT: (Gábor Vona) “We already woke up and we are going to wake up all the Hungarians of the Great Hungarian Plain. We demand freedom, order and honesty because this nation has no freedom, no order and no honesty.”

Story 9 – anchor voice over and SOT (12:28-13:14)

The Democratic Coalition would put the building of the Constitutional Court under blockade, said the president of the party. The reason, said Ferencáros, was that the institution has failed to study a document in depth about the legitimacy of the government. According to the former prime minister everybody is celebration today but they should rather mourn because Viktor Orbán has buried the results of 1848.

Image: The square front of the Constitutional Court, we see the participants, then the camera shows Gyurcsány as he arrives and walks on the stage. We also see a women giving out Democratic Coalition flags.

SOT: (Ferenc Gyurcsány) “We accuse Viktor Orbán, here in the heart of Budapest, of stealing, denying `48 and lying about it. He is the last one who has the right to celebrate, and he is the last one who can refer to Batthyányi, Széchenyi, Táncsics, Eötvös or any of them. Batthyányi is ashamed that he has been followed in power by such a person.”

Image: We see Gyurcsány while he is talking. (close shot)

Sound: After the SOT we can hear the participants cheering but we do not see them.

Teaser – cavalymen story

Lighter topics section: still national news. These stories have no political connection:

Story 10 - package about how people celebrated 1848 who did not attend the political events

Story 11 - package about tradition keeper cavalymen

Teaser – They live in Hungary but they do not know what the National Song is. The Italian chef and the French radioman have been living with us for several years. We were testing if they know what the Hungarians celebrate.

International news section

That day there were four anchor voice-overs about international issues.

Closing story

The closing story was a package about the Italian chef and the French radiomen.

Appendix 2:TV2 Tények (Facts)

March 15. 18.30

The total length should be around 30minutes, this time it was 24.

Analysis of the news program on March 15th

There is a woman and a man anchor in the studio, they list the headlines in turns, the viewer sees them sitting behind a counter and there are no pictures on the screen yet. This time the man started reading.

Headlines

“Hungary is not going to be a colony, said Orbán Viktor on Kossuth square.”

“Polish and Lithuanian sympathizers also protested for the Hungarian government.”

Signal – on the screen there is count down 5-4-3-2-1

Teases

Sound: We hear the signal in the background while the anchors introduce the main stories of the day taking turns after each sentence.

“Equal treatment should be used towards us, the prime minister was talking about this issue as well.”

“According to him if things are going bad in Europe, things go bad for Hungary as well.”

“The constitutionality and democracy of Hungary is in danger according to the ‘Milla’. They were protesting on the Szabadsajtó Road.”

Signal and an image pops up on the screen in order to divide the previous section from the upcoming one. After that non-political headlines come.

A woman drove into a mall with her car in Budapest. It was close but she did not hit anyone.

Signal

A third voice introduces the anchors:

This is the Tények, in the studio it is Éva Andor and Péter Pachman.

One of the anchors greets the viewers. This time the woman starts with the first story right after that.

Good evening!

Story 1 – package (00.50-03.41)

Lead-in: Éva Andor

Voice-over: Csaba Faix

Lead-in: “Viktor Orbán asked for fair judgment of Hungary on Kossuth square. According to MTT’s information (National News Agency) 250 000 people participated in the celebration. The prime minister said that Hungary does not want to be a colony, as it did not want it in 1848 either. Viktor Orbán said when Europe was sinking during history, Hungary was sinking as well.”

NAT in the foreground: cheer of the audience on Kossuth square in the foreground

Image: We see Orbán Viktor on stage

Sound on tape (SOT): Orbán: (medium shot) “The demand and desire of Hungarian people in 2012, sounds like this: We are not going to be a colony!”

Voice-over: “Viktor Orbán held his speech on Kossuth square or as he called it, the independence warrior’s square. He said, he chose this location because he doesn’t want to bring the ‘Youth of March 1848’ into a museum. However, he wants to remind the country of them and their goals.”

Image: We see Orbán for a little more, and then the camera shows a smaller part of the crowd from the back, holding flags. Afterwards, the camera pans slowly above the crowd so we can see that many people are participating, holding flags everywhere.

SOT: (Orbán together with the crowd, medium shot of Orbán): “We hereby swear that we the yoke of slavery, no more shall wear.”¹⁹

¹⁹ A section of the Nemzeti dal (National Song)

VO: "According to him the questions is if all those people who don't find a job, or are unable to pay off their debts are free or not? As an example he took a frog, which is put into warm water, starting to boil and doesn't notice it, so it is being cooked."

Image: We see Orbán again when the voice-over starts, then the camera shows the crowd, this time from another high angle and slowly pans over the square. Thereafter, we see a small part of the crowd, again from the back, then a close-up on some flags, banners with names of cities and soldiers in uniforms in the background.

SOT: Orbán Viktor (medium shot): "This is what we got after 2002. People did not even notice that with comfortable loans they slowly cook us. We jumped out of the pan in the last minute."

VO: "He said about the disputes with the European Union that there is no need for everybody to love Hungarians, but the country expects equal treatment. According to him Europe and Hungary can only be successful together."

Image: Long shot of the crowd, the viewer see the crowd but mostly the building of the Parliament. Then the camera pans the crowd from another angle, but only their heads can be seen just as during the previous shot, the rest of the screen is taken by another building among those which surround the square as well as the sky and a Hungarian flag dragged up on a mast. After that there is a close up of a banner saying in English: "Hands off Orbán Viktor".

SOT: Orbán (middle-shot): "The rise of Europe and Hungary is undividable. Each time Europe was in trouble Hungary's heyday was over as well."

VO: "Polish and Hungarian participants of the Peace March 2012, which is an organized procession joined the celebration on Kossuth square."

NAT in the foreground in a short break: cheering, applauding crowd

VO: "Viktor Orbán thanked the help of those countries who stood up for Hungary."

Image: long shot of the crowd then close up of people holding flags, after that a long shot again from a different angle, from one side of the square. Close up of the Polish participants of the Peace March as they arrive and hold Polish flags. People who are already on the square welcome them with applause. Thereafter, the camera zooms out and we can see more of the arriving Peace March.

SOT: Orbán (middle-shot): "Glory to Lithuania and God bless Poland!"

NAT: cheering crowd as Orbán greets the Polish and Lithuanian participants.

NAT: The Hungarian national anthem is audible in the foreground.

VO starts with a delay: “The Polish and Lithuanian sympathizing protesters participated in the march already in the morning, after the ceremony of hoisting of the national flag. From the building of the Parliament Hungarian traditional chivalry men led the march to the Museum garden.”

NAT in the foreground: We hear horse shoes of the chivalry men clapping on the asphalt.

Image: the flag is being hoisted on a mast, Peace March, waving people

NAT in the foreground: Vik-to Orbán! - Chanting

Image: One segment of the crowd, the people are holding mostly Polish flags.

VO starts with a delay: “Here Poles chanted the name of Viktor Orbán and many Polish flags were seen.”

Image: the camera pans the people, then only flags and banners are visible; we see lots of Polish flag and banners.

SOT: Tomasz Sakiewicz (long shot): Jó napot kívánok! (in Hungarian)

VO: “The chief editor of Gazeta Polska, Tomasz Sakiewicz, said that thousands of Polish people arrived to stand up for the Hungarian government.”

Image: close up of flags and banners, saying: “Hungarian-Polish friendship.” Then the participants can be seen from another angle and Polish flags are in majority on the images.

NAT in the foreground: Hungarian folk music

Image: Dance performance

VO: “István Tarlós, mayor of Budapest said that Europe does not need to be worried about Hungary, especially not for Budapest, which, as he claimed, is again the city of brave changes.”

NAT in the background: folk music

Image: Dance performance

SOT: (Tarlós István, long shot of him, then the camera zoom out into a medium shot): “We don’t reject when we have to face the heritage that almost disable the city’s operation.”²⁰

NAT in the foreground: “By all the gods of Hungary, we hereby swear that we the yoke of slavery, no more shall wear.”

Image: Singers perform the National Song on stage

VO: “The newly scored version of the National Song was performed for the first time during the commemoration on Kossuth square.”

Image: singers on the stage, people in front of the stage

Story 2 – package (03.42-05.46)

Lead-in: Péter Pachman

Voice-over: Gergely Losonczy

Lead-in: “Hungarian democracy is in danger. The speakers were also talking about this at the demonstration of the ‘One Million for the Freedom of Press in Hungary’ movement. According to MTI there were thousands of people there. In the beginning of the demonstration they inaugurated the rapper, Dopeman as alternative president of Hungary. Far-right protesters made an attempt to interrupt the demonstration. One person was detained.

Image: There is a picture about the demonstration next to the anchor.

Image: long shot of the crowd so the viewer can see how big the crowd is.

NAT in the foreground: Somebody is speaking on the stage

VO starts with a short delay: “From the Erzsébet Bridge the line of people was more hundred meters long at the demonstration of the ‘One Million for the Freedom of Press in Hungary’ movement. Many arrived on bikes and others came with children. Only a few brought banners but those who did, demanded the resignation of the government.”

Image: The camera pans across the square swiftly. It shows that people are everywhere. Then an image of a woman can be seen with a bike and a child, later banners, eventually the stage.

²⁰ He is talking about the heritage of the previous administration.

NAT in the foreground: cheering crowd before the stage

VO starts with a delay: “In the beginning of the demonstration they inaugurated the rapper Dopeman as the alternative president of Hungary.”

NAT: Cheer of the crowd, applause, blare of trumpets

SOT: Dopeman (he is on stage, long shot): “In Hungary the republic is also just an option, isn't it?”

MOT: (crowd together) “Yessss”

SOT: Dopeman: “But it is worth it to fight for, isn't it?”

VO: “The speakers were discussing that democracy, constitutionality and press freedom are in danger in Hungary.”

Image: close-ups of the participants from different angles

NAT in the background: The speakers on the stage can be heard.

SOT: László Majtényi (former national data protection commissioner, long shot): “There is no problem until the oppression doesn't reach the constitution, but it did. Therefore, we have to fight for our rights that have remained.”

Image: A long shot of him standing on the stage, the people are in front of the stage.

VO: “They gave out, so called Rák Bene prize to several Fidesz politicians for ruining the constitution.”

Image: A long shot of the avenue where the demonstration took place, then the camera shows one part of the crowd in a closer shot. After, János Kulka (actor) and Eszter Csákányi (actress) are shown on the stage.

SOT: Eszter Csákányi: “The Úri lócsi sub-prize of the Rák Bene Prize goes to István Balasi.”

NAT: Laughter comes from the crowd, then applause

VO starts after with a delay: “At the demonstration LMP activists were gathering signatures, but the supporters of the Ferenc Gyurcsány led Democratic Coalition were there as well. At Ferenciek square some far-right protesters tried to interrupt the

'Milla' demonstration, they were closed off from the event with cordons. More of them got into arguments.

Image: An LMP public vote booth with a cockade on it and people around it. They are signing the LMP's public vote initiative. Later we see participants, and a close up of a Democratic Coalition flag and a banner.

Thereafter the scene changes; images of cordons and police are on the screen and the camera pans to the participants.

NAT in the background: The protester chanting slogans such as the followings: "We are at home! We are at home! Ria ria Hungária!"

NAT in the foreground: "Get out of here!"

Image: Demonstrators surround a group of police and chant the above mentioned sentence. The faces of the police are airbrushed.

VO: "The police pulled one person out from the crowd because he wanted to cover his face with a ski mask."

Image: Close up of the participants from two different angles.

VO: "The demonstration of the 'One Million for the Freedom of Press in Hungary' movement ended around 16:30 in the afternoon"

Image: long shot of the stage, then of the crowd, eventually a close up of the crowd.

NAT in the background: A man is talking on the stage, the crowd is cheering.

Story 3: breaking news (05.46-06.07)

Lead-in (Éva Andor): "Not long ago far-right protesters showed up at the Szabadság square. Dozens of them broke into the building of the Bank Center. According HVG.hu they wanted to give a petition to the IMF representative in Hungary. In the meantime they detonated smoke bombs and firecrackers. They were walked out by the police.

Story 4: anchor voice-over (06.12-07.12)

Lead-in (Péter Pachman): "In his speech Ferenc Gyurcsány threatened to blockade the building of the Constitutional Court for not negotiating one of the Coalition's bills. Gábor Vágó, during the LMP event said that Hungary is at a cross road. It has to choose between the road of being defenseless and knowledge. Attila Mesterházy at the commemoration of the socialists in Esztergom, called the government a coward,

also adding that the government cannot tackle with the problems of the country alone.”

Image: When the lead-in arrives to the LMP part we see Gábor Vágó holding up a banner in front of the public voting booths, saying: “On your feet now”, than reporters and journalist surrounding them taking pictures. After that the camera turns back to him for a couple of second then pans the booths and people who are standing by them.

Thereafter, the scene is changed to the MSzP event. The camera shows participant from different angles, waving flags, Mesterházy among the people and participants applauding while looking at the stage.

SOT: Attila Mesterházy: (medium close-up) “Hungary is a brave nation. It was proved in 1848 and in 1956 as well. But the government is a coward. It is a coward, because it was too afraid to take responsibility for its failures. Because alluding to the nation and national interests, they represent their own power interests.”

Story 5

Package about how families spent the holiday. Cultural programs in Szentendre and Budapest.

Story 6

Package: A revolutionary menu was cooked at Lake Balaton for 1848 forints (6 euros), ancient revolution reconstructions, hiking, spending the long weekend in spas. Report from Kecskemet, Balatonfüred, Rám szakadék, Pécs

Story 7

Package: about the women who drove into a mall in Budapest

Story 8

Package: illegal dogfighting.

Story 9

Package: one man died while fishing in the Danube.

Story 10

Package: More than 50 years old fighter is reconstructed in Szolnok for a museum.

Story 11

Penguin show in a wild reservation.

Story12

Package: cranes were let free from an animal hospital with national color ribbons.

“This was the Tények!” There is a short television program review about the upcoming programs then saying good-bye.

Image: The two anchors sitting behind the counter, in the studio.

Signal

Appendix 3: M1 Híradó

March 15, 2012 19.30

The total length of the program should be around 30 minutes. On March 15th, 2012 it was 30.55.

Analysis of the news program on March 15th

Signal

Image: The camera moves in from the side and stops on the anchors.

Anchorwoman: Good Evening!

Anchorman: This is the News with Edit Varga

Anchorwoman: And with István Gulyás

Anchorman: We start now!

Signal

Image: Híradó sign

Headlines

Image: In the headline section pictures of the stories are visible on the screen and a Híradó image divides each headline from the next one.

NAT in the background: Signal

- We are not going to be a colony! This is the most important message of 1848 to the present times, according to the prime minister.
- Dopeman was inaugurated as alternative president, the MSzP went to the countryside and the opposition was also celebrating with meetings.
- More than a thousand people celebrated outdoors because of the sunny weather.
- Hungarians of the Great Hungarian Plain were wearing cockades. There were commemorations of the revolution beyond the borders.

Signal and Híradó sign

Story 1 – Anchor voice over (00.43-01.15)

Lead-in

István Gulyás: “Thousands of people were celebrating the anniversary of the 1848-49 revolution and independence war throughout the country with dignity.”

Edit Varga: It has not been the case now for several years that so many people participated in different political events in the center of Budapest.

Istvánnal Gulyás: More Hungarian dignitaries participated in the traditional ceremony of hoisting the national flag on a mast, in the morning in front of the Parliament. After that in the museum garden István Tarlós commemorated the 164th anniversary of the revolution

Image (We start seeing images when the anchors arrive to the event in front of the Parliament in the lead-in): On the screen soldiers carry the national flag. There is a long shot of the stage with Hungarian dignitaries, low angle shot off the national flag on a mast. The voice-over ends with a long shot of the state event in front of the National Museum.

Story 2 - Anchor voice over (01.17-01.18)

Lead-in (Edit Varga): In the afternoon, there were five different political events at about the same time in Budapest. Kossuth square and its neighborhood were packed with the audience of the official governmental celebration and the Hungarian and Polish participants of the Peace March. By the Erzsébet Bridge the demonstration of the ‘One Million for the Freedom of Press in Hungary’ movement took place. On Deák square Jobbik organized a meeting. LMP and the Democratic Coalition also commemorated in the center of Budapest. Buda, castle district welcomed the celebrators with different family programs all day long.

Image: Budapest map from above. As the anchor lists the locations arrows show up on the map indicating the locations of the events. As she speaks the camera gradually zooms in.

Story 3 - Package (01.49-04.54)

Lead-in: István Gulyás

Voice-over: László Mészáros

Lead-in: “We have the political and intellectual heritage of 1848, claimed Viktor Orbán during the state celebration of March 15th. According to estimations, 250,000 people participated in the event. In his speech the prime minister emphasized that the political and intellectual program of 1848 was the avoidance of becoming a colony.

As he said, the program of Hungary is the same today, because now we have all the constitutional, economic and political tools the break the state of its defenselessness.

Image: There is a picture next to the anchor with the participants of the government celebration by the Parliament.

NAT in the foreground: “By all the gods of Hungary, we hereby swear”- song

Image: High angle shot of the participants. The camera pans over them so we can see that participants fill the whole square.

VO: The whole neighborhood of the Parliament was full of celebrators. Kossuth square looked like this from the balcony on the first floor of the Parliament building. (In the meantime the camera shows the crowd. This is the image that the word ‘this’ refers to) The side streets were packed as well. This image was recorded from one building on Alkotmány Street. At the state event József Szájer, MEP of the European People`s Party, held the first speech. The fact that the country receives several international attacks should not disappoint anybody in vision of a common Europe, he thinks.

Image: The camera continues to pan over the crowd and then it stops. After that there is another high angle shot of a smaller segment of the crowd. The camera pans over a side street of Kossuth square from a high angle. Thereafter, the camera shows the crowd in a closer view and we see that a huge number of people are on the square holding dozens of flags. This image is followed by a medium shot of József Szájer from the back. From this angle the crowd is visible front of the stage. Close up on flags, then crane shot of the participants.

SOT: (József Szájer, medium shot): “It is not Europe that is attacking us. We shouldn’t give up on our faith in the vision of a common, equal, national collaboration that makes the EU, that we inherited from our descendants. We should not give it up, only because some journalists and politicians use double standards towards Hungary.”

Image: After showing Szájer for a while the camera turns to the participants and pans over the crowd.

VO: Viktor Orbán, who was talking after the MEP, said that Hungarians inherited the political and intellectual program of 1848.

Image: High angle shot of the square, a long shot of Orbán on the stage, participants, then of the Parliament building together with the stage and participants.

SOT: Orbán (medium shot): “The political and intellectual program of 1848 was the following: We are not going to be a colony!”

VO: “According to Viktor Orbán, the program of Hungarian people is the same today. As he put it, the country is now very close to complete freedom.”

NAT in the background: cheering people, Orbán speaking

Image: There is a shot of the crowd waving flags and then another medium shot of the prime minister. Later the camera starts panning over the crowd again.

SOT: Orbán (medium shot): “The thing is that we have never had so many political, constitutional and economic tools in our hands to break off of the defenseless nature of the state. The thing is that we are enough in numbers and enough in determination to attain a free Hungarian life.”

VO: “According to the prime minister the country has not been as strong as it is now for decades. Therefore, we do not need their uninvited help either.”

Image: There is a close up of a cockade while flags in the background are blurred. After a couple of seconds the camera zooms out so the viewer can see the flags around the cockade, and later a bigger segment of the crowd.

SOT: (Orbán, medium shot): “We decide for ourselves what is important and what is not, following Hungarian perspectives, state of mind, and feelings. Therefore, we write our own constitution. We do not need an accounting office and do not want the uninvited help of strangers who want to drive us in another direction.”

Image: in the very beginning of his speech we see the previous image of the flags and the crowd.

NAT: We hear applause from the crowd showing that they like what they are hearing, somebody yells yes.

VO: “According to the prime minister, Europe can be led out of the crisis only by strong, independent states. Hungary is now on this way as well. He added that equal treatment to Hungarians is a fair demand.”

NAT in the background: The applause after Orbán’s statements remains audible.

Image: High angle shot about the crowd, the angle is decreasing. This is followed by a high shot of the crowd from another angle, then medium shot of Orbán shaking

hands with a participant on the stage, smiling, applauding. Eventually, there is a long shot of the stage and the people in front of it.

Story 4 - Package (04.56-06.32)

Lead-in: Edit Varga

Voice-over: Tamás Silachter

Lead-in: The participants of the second Peace March urged for a joint stand up against the discrimination of the European Union. The crowd walked from the MTA (Hungarian Academy of Sciences) to the celebration on Kossuth square, they were also accompanied by more than one thousand Poles and Lithuanians.

Image: a picture of the front of the peach march holding a banner: "With united power"

NAT in the foreground: we hear only the sound of the wind

Image: wide shot of people in front of MTA

VO starts with a delay: "The participants of the peach march were convening on Széchenyi István square, in front of MTA as of 14:00 in the afternoon. Then across the Chain Bridge the Polish sympathizers arrived led by a Hungarian national band. Thereafter, the Peace March left to Kossuth square. Right before 15:00 Bajcsy-Zsilinszky Street looked like this from the bridge over the Nyugati square and this is the street leading to Kossuth square. In the crowd there were Hungarian and Polish flags as well as "Hungarian friends, we are with you!" signs. The Hungarian participants of the Peace March said, it is very touching that many people came to Hungary to express their sympathy.

Image: close up on the participants walking over the Chain bridge, camera pans over Széchenyi square quickly. Medium shot of the Chain Bridge, chivalry men go over the bridge together with the Polish participants, with banners and flags, medium shot of people greeting them with applause, the camera pans them. Medium shot of the peach march's arrival, holding a banner saying: "With united power", long shot of Bajcsy-Zsilinszky Street, where people march with flags, high shot of Alkotmány street, (side street of Kossuth square where the government celebration took place.) close up from above of the peach march, the Pace March from the front.

MOT: "They are really nice. We even got a sticker from them so we are very happy. Thanks so much, Poles."

Image: Medium shot of two participating girls around their mid-twenties, smiling, and showing thumbs up for the Poles.

VO: “According to the organizers of the Peace March the aim of the current collaboration besides the historical friendship of Hungary and Poland is to stand up together against discrimination within the European Union. If it is necessary there will be a continuation of the event.

Image: Close up on the banners of the Peace March, then about the participants from different angles, after that, a close up of people coming and playing on drums.

NAT: We hear them singing something and the beat of drums

SOT (László Csizmadia, president of the Civil Cooperation Council, medium shot, the camera walks with him): “The ambers are still there under the ash. We keep the gunpowder dry and if something happens that requires us to light the wick, we will do it. We will stand up for whole Europe.”

VO: “The sympathizers of the government have already organized a Peace March in the capital, in January. Back then they wanted to dissolve the false image that the Orbán administration has no supporters in Hungary.

Image: Close-up on marching people, the camera swiftly pans over them. At the end there are some additional shots of them from different angles.

Story 5 – (06.33-08.26)

Lead-in: István Gulyás

Voice-over: Mészáros László, Tamás Silachter

Lead-in: “As you have already seen this year Polish and Lithuanian sympathizers joined the state celebration as well. The Poles came to express their sympathy toward Hungary and the policy of the Hungarian government.”

Image: a picture of marching people holding a huge banner with the Hungarian and Polish flags, in the middle two shaking hands.

NAT in the foreground: Train station, middle shot of a man, who just got off the train, saying something in Polish.

VO with a delay: “The train of the Polish guests arrived in Budapest in the morning. After getting off they filled the whole platform. The co called ‘Big journey to

Hungary' program was organized by the Gazeta Polska Polish daily. First, the group watched the hoisting of the national flag then they walked to the National museum together with Hungarian celebrators. At the state celebration their representative was talking about the common roots of the two countries.”

Image: During the voice-over the report starts with a medium shot of Poles with flags at the train station, people getting off the train. Close up on the crowd waiting on the platform with flags, and then a wide shot of soldiers on Kossuth square carrying the national flag. After that wide shot of the building of the parliament, people marching on the street with Polish flags, then gathering at the other location of the celebration.

NAT in the foreground: Tomasz Skaiewicz, chief editor of the Gazeta Polska is speaking

Image: medium shot of Skaiewicz

VO: “If there is anything unique in Hungarian and Polish history is the patriotism. Many generations died for Hungary`s freedom as well as for Poland`s. The Hungarian heroes remind us to the Polish ones, said the chief editor of the paper. After all, the Polish Gazeta Club and the Civil Cooperation Council signed a cooperation. They agreed that they will promote the Patriot Europe Movement in their home countries.

NAT in the background: the chief editor of Gazeta Polska is speaking

Image: medium shot of Skaiewicz, than medium close up of signing papers, the camera zooms out so we see all the people who participated in the meeting. After that there are more shots of them sitting at the table, standing and showing the signed agreement as well as of people who participated in the ceremony.

NAT in the foreground: chanting

VO starts with delay (NAT continues in the background): Hundreds of Poles also walked up to Buda castle and participated in the programs there. In the afternoon Hungarians and Poles walked together in the Peace March holding signs with Hungarian and Polish texts on them. By that time the Lithuanian participants had joined them as well. The Polish and Lithuanian groups were greeted with applause by Hungarians.

NAT in the background: chanting

Image: medium wide shot of the Poles chanting and holding a banner with a Polish sign. Then the camera pans people from behind, their backs up at the Buda castle. The next image is the marching crowd with the following banner: “Stop Occupancy”.

Then there is a close up and zoom out on people greeting the Lithuanian participants of the Peace March with applause. After that we see people marching, most probably the Poles and Lithuanian participants, people who are leading the march are holding a banner. After, a close up shot of the people applauding for the arriving Peace March.

NAT in the foreground: People cheering and clapping “Vik-tor Orbán!”

Image: People clapping and a medium shot of a Polish man who chants Orbán`s name. The camera zooms out and we see that he is at the front of the march leading the crowd.

VO: On Kossuth square Viktor Orbán greeted them directly in his speech.

Image: the camera pans over the aforementioned people.

SOT: Orbán: “Glory to Lithuania and God bless Poland!”

NAT in the background: cheering participants.

Image: medium shot of Orbán, then a high angle shot of the crowd

NAT in the foreground: the crowd breaks out in cheer, folk music which goes into the voice over

VO: “The train of the Poles leaves back to Warsaw on Friday evening.”

Image: high angle shot of the crowd, a medium close up of the polish flag carried by a man, then a medium shot of Polish banners and signs.

Story 6 – lead (08.26-08.54)

Lead in: (Edit Varga) “Canadian Hungarians joined the Peace March with an announcement. They published their message in a bilingual cultural magazine in Toronto. They remonstrated against accusations against Hungary. The Swedish Hungarians handed in a petition to the Swedish Radio and Television station in Stockholm. According to them the company broadcasted more programs in the recent past which presented Hungary in a non-objective and insulting manner.

No image

Story 7 – package (08.55-11.08)

Lead in: István Gulyás

Voice-over: Lóránt Hevér

Lead in: “The ‘One Million for the Freedom of Press in Hungary’ movement demonstrated on the Pest side of Erzsébet Bridge. According to estimations 30 000 people came together. The speakers of the ‘Milla’ event were saying that they want control over the government.”

Image: picture of the demonstration

NAT: cheer

VO: People filled the Free Press Road, the area by Erzsébet Bridge on the Pest side as well as Városház Street for the ‘One Million for the Freedom of Press in Hungary’. At the event they inaugurated Dopeman, their assigned alternative president of Hungary.

Image: High angle shot of the street, the camera pans over the people from the top of a building. Medium shot of the participant`s backs. Medium close up of some participants. Zoom in on the crowd from the stage.

NAT in the background: Somebody is talking on the stage.

SOT Dopeman (medium shot) “I am a Hungarian, I am a Jew, I am a gipsy and a mixed blood aria, I am a Hungarian.

NAT in the background: Cheer, blare of trumpets.

NAT in the foreground: cheering

VO: The sympathizers of the movement who also call themselves ‘Milla’ were giving out so called Rák Bene Prizes to those who, according to them, contributed the most in ruining constitutionalism in Hungary. They gave a prize to Lázár János, the president of the Fidesz fraction of the Fidesz KDNP coalition, to József Szájer EMP of the European People`s Party, to István Balsa, Constitutional Court Judge, and to Péter Szijjártó, spokesperson for the prime minister.

NAT in the background: Speakers on the stage, cheering, blare of trumpets and applauding

Image: medium shot of participants from the stage, medium shot of the stage where a girl is lifting up the award. Camera pans the crowd from one side of the street, then the cameramen walks among people on the square and the we see them clapping,

SOT: Kulka János (medium shot): “They said that the system which they are going to launch will be a system of national cooperation. But what we received is nothing but

a system of national laziness. Our dislike has turned into indignation because this system holds us in contempt, suppresses and dictates, instead of cooperates.

SOT (I did not recognize this speaker and there was no subtitle, medium shot): What does the Hungarian nation wish for? For the freedom of press, for the abolition of censorship...²¹

VO: “According to the organizers, no one has been invited officially from abroad to the event of ‘Milla’. Therefore, they did not know that French intellectuals and students were also coming for the event.

Image: A shot shows participants from a lower angle, we see that they hold many signs. The camera pans on them, long shot of the street, the camera is facing the stage but it is too far to see.

SOT (Tóth Balázs, spokesperson of the event, bust shot): “There has been no official invitation. We also found out about the declaration which was published by French intellectuals from the media. We did not organize anything, therefore we also do not have any official contact with them.”

VO: The movement also organized a demonstration in Szeged. The speakers on Dugonics square were talking about their intention to summarize their demands in 12 points. Among others they demand press freedom, freedom of religions, independent jurisdiction and democratic legislation.

Image: Wide shot of the stage, wide shot of the participants, after a short while the camera pans the square, wide shot of the stage from one side, then the camera turns to the participants who are listening to the speeches

NAT in the background: speakers from the stage

Story 8 – anchor voice over (11.09-11.45)

Lead-in: (Edit Varga) “The participants of the ‘System-cut’ movement interrupted the demonstration of the ‘One Million for the Freedom of Press in Hungary’ with shouting. More people were detained by the police who tried to keep away the protestors with cordons. Shortly after the Jobbik demonstration a group led by György Gyula Zagyva, Jobbik MP, protestors broke into the building of the Bank Center in the city center. They wanted to hand a petition to the representative of the

²¹ A section from the 12 point-long program about the 1848 revolution.

International Monetary Fund. After being informed about her absence they set off firecrackers in the empty building and left.

Image: medium shot of the police, who is trying to keep protesters away, close up, and then the camera pans them. After that a wide shot of police in the Bank Center but the shot cuts their heads off, then we see shots of the inside of the building

Story 9 – package (11.45-13.11)

Lead-in: István Gulyás

Voice-over: Árpád Balázs

Lead-in: “Fighting for freedom is a lifestyle for Hungarians, this is dictated by the circumstances, said the president of Jobbik in his speech. Gábor Vona called on more thousands of sympathizers to defend their land and to stop the colonization of the European Union.

NAT in the foreground: We hear somebody speaking on the stage

VO with a delay: “The national radical party commemorated the heroes of the 1848-49 Revolution and Independence war on Károly Avenue. They fully pack the road near Deák square. Zoltán Balczó, vice president of the party said that in 1848 Hungary was a colony of the Habsburg Empire, now is a colony of the European Union. According to him the EU exploits our country.

Image: The camera slowly pans the crowd who are holding many flags. This is followed by a long shot of the event and a close up of the flags. Then the camera starts to pan the crowd again, medium wide shot of Zoltán Balczó.

NAT in the background: National anthems, Balczó’s speech, close ups on some of the participants, the camera tilts up to the flags they are holding.

SOT: Balczó Zoltán (medium shot from a low angle): “The center states pump out 100 billion euros each year.”

VO: “Gábor Vona, the president of Jobbik, reminded the celebrators that the moratorium on land purchase in Hungary will be over in 2014. Therefore, we have to hinder foreigners from seizing the Hungarian land.”

Image: Medium wide shot of Vona, from aside, wide shot of the participants in front of the stage, medium shot of Vona from a low angle

NAT in the background: At the end if this section of the voice over Vona’s speech is audible.

SOT Vona (medium shot of Vona from a low angle): “They forgot about something again. The land is not simply property. This is the mother land and all mankind protects its mother. Therefore we will also protect our land.”

VO: “According to Csanád Szegedi, Jobbik MEP, Hungary has to fight for its independence and the country has to leave the European Union.

Image: Wide shot of the stage from the back, a little from the side. We see Csanád Szegedi’s back and people facing the stage. Medium shot of participants.

NAT in the background: Szegedi’s talk is audible and at the end of the report, cheering and applause of people.

Story 10 - Package (13.11-14.34)

Lead-in: Edit Varga

Voice-over: Ivett Falucskai

Lead-in: Hungary has arrived at a cross road. This thought was promoted at the celebration of LMP where about 100 people participated. According to Gábor Vágó it can choose between the road of being defenseless and the road of knowledge. Regarding their public vote initiative he reminded the participants that the number of the Youth of March was only a couple of dozen but thousands joined them for the good cause.

Image of the demonstration

VO: “The LMP was celebrating on Pilvax Street. The area front of the café was half packed. Gábor Vágó emphasized in his speech that we should not look back in the past, but analyze the present and look into the future. According to him, the country had arrived at a cross road. It has to choose between the road of being defenseless and the road of knowledge.”

Image: The report starts with the image of the sign of the Pilvax Café, and then the camera zooms out, so the audience can see the square with LMP booths. Wide shot of Gábor Vágó as he is holding a speech in front of the booths, medium shots of some participants

NAT: Gábor Vágó speaking

SOT Vágó Gábor (between medium and wide shot): “The way of LMP is different and we think that the country should go our way, where the labor law is not a tool but

a value. The cross road is here, this is the question today and we have to make a decision about it now.”

VO: “He says the Hungarians have to stand up for themselves again, as the Youth of March did as well. After that he raised a sign saying: “Hungary, on your feet now”.

Image: Bust shot of Vágó, medium shot of people at the booth while they are listening to his speech, wide shot of Vágó holding up the “Hungary, on your feet now” sign.

NAT: Vágó speaking

NAT Vágó (medium wide shot): “So later millions can stand up for their rights.”

VO: “The opposing party was also collecting supporters for their public vote initiative at the commemoration.”

Image: The camera pans the applauding participants, medium shot of people signing LMP’s request a public vote.

NAT in the background: cheers and applause in the beginning of the voice over

Story 11 – package (14.36-16.12)

Lead-in: István Gulyás

Voice-over: Csaba Radnai

Lead-in: “The Democratic Coalition was celebrating on Egyetem square together with approximately a thousand sympathizers. If March 15th was a revolution than what Viktor Orbán is doing is an anti-revolution, said Ferenc Gyurcsány. According to the former prime minister the current administration broke with the basic norms of the protection of freedom. Therefore, the Democratic Coalition calls the Constitutional Court to declare the illegitimacy of the governing power.”

No image

NAT in the foreground: Cheering and applauding crowd

Image: wide shot of participants from the back.

VO starting with a little delay: “The Democratic Coalition was celebrating on Egyetem square. Three-quarters of the square was filled by sympathizers; some of them were holding signs saying: Austrian, Russian, and Italian Republic.”

Image: We continue to see the wide shot of participants from the back, Gyurcsány is walking towards the stage, medium shot of people in front of the stage, close up on one participants face, behind him a “Republic Österreich” sign. Wide shot of signs.

NAT in the foreground: chanting people

Image: Gyurcsány is on the stage and people are chanting in front of it.

VO: “According to Ferenc Gyurcsány, if March 15th was a revolution then what Viktor Orbán does is an anti-revolution. 1848 brought the freedom of press, Orbán brought the censorship of the press, said the president of the Democratic Coalition”

Image: Wide shot of the participant, close up of the banners and wide shot of Gyurcsány on the stage. Wide shot of the people from the stage, on the right side of the screen we see Gyurcsány on the stage from his back, and then the camera pans the crowd.

NAT in the background: people applauding and Gyurcsány is speaking

SOT: Gy.F (medium shot, from a lower angle): “We accuse Viktor Orbán, here in the heart of Budapest, of stealing, denying `48 and lying about it. He is the last one who has the right to celebrate, and he is the last one who can refer to Batthyányi, Széchenyi, Táncsics, Eötvös or any of them. Batthyányi is ashamed that he has been followed in power by such a person.”

NAT in the foreground: people cheering

Image: medium shot of people standing right front of the stage

VO (starts with a delay): “Ferenc Gyurcsány said that their friends and political alliances handed in a declaration to the Constitutional Court. In this they ask the Constitutional Court to declare that the government is illegitimate and illegal. The former prime minister also made a promise: If the Constitutional Court does not study the declaration in depth within 30 day they will put the building of the Constitutional Court under blockade.

Image: we continue to see the previous image, then wide shot of the participants from the back so the camera faces the stage, then it tilts down behind a woman and man (participants), we see their heads from the back. Therefore the picture looks like we are standing right behind them. After that there is a wide shot and close up shots of the participants

NAT in the background: Gyurcsány is speaking and people are cheering.

Story 12 – package (16.14-17.55)

Lead-in: Edit Varga

Voice-over: Bősze Bernadett

Lead-in: The socialists were celebrating in Esztergom in front of the city hall. Thousands of people participated in the event. Attila Mesterházy called the Hungarian nation brave but the government is a coward, he said. According to him they are unable to solve the problems of people and they do not know how to handle the crisis sufficiently.

NAT in the foreground: Kossuth songs

VO with a delay: Kossuth folk songs were played on the square front of the country hall while the MSzP sympathizers were convening in Esztergom. The square was completely filled with the participants who arrived from all parts of Hungary. Many of them were holding up signs which critiqued the high petrol prices, the 47000 forint (approximately 157 euros) communal work salary and Tamás Medgyes, former Fidesz mayor of the city. Attila Mesterházy called the Hungarian nation brave but the government is a coward, he said. According to him they are unable to solve the problems of people and they do not know how to handle the crisis sufficiently.

Image: wide shot of the crowd, medium shot of some participants, then another wide shot from a different angle, after that medium shot from a side angle, medium shot of people holding signs, medium shot of the organizers by the stage, on the right side of the screen we can see the participants. The camera pans them. Thereafter, medium shot of people holding a huge national flag above their hands in front of the stage, the camera zooms out of the flag so we can see more of the participants as well as the stage. The there is a wide shot of the participants from the front.

NAT in the background: Kossuth songs, the national anthem, speaker on the stage.

SOT Mesterházy (medium shot): The government “is coward, because it was too afraid to take responsibility for its failures. Because, alluding to the nation and national interests, they represent their own power interests. And it is coward because it is too afraid to tell people honestly what is needed to be done in order to come out of the crisis.”

VO: Kornél Árok the former co-president of the Hungarian Solidarity Movement called for the importance of collaboration of the opposition.

NAT in the background: We keep on hearing Mesterházy speaking

Image: medium shots of the participants

SOT (Kornél Árok, medium shot): “Maybe it is also our fault, my dear friends. It is our fault if we believed even for a second that Viktor Orbán is able to lead this country in a good direction.”

VO: “The MSzP organized its celebration in Esztergom, because, as they say, the difficult financial situation of the city symbolizes the situation of Hungary.”

Image: wide shot of the stage, we also see the participants, participants from another angle, and eventually the camera pans the street.

Story 13 – (17.56-19.17)

Lead-in: István Gulyás

Voice-over: Bea Nyers

Lead-in: “1848 gives faith and strength, said the president of KDNP fraction in Veszprém. If we give up on our national independence, sovereignty and the implementation of all the necessary reforms, we would endanger the nation`s survival, emphasized Zsolt Semjén.”

No image

NAT in the foreground: “On your feet now, Hungary calls you!” – the National Song

Image: A women sings the National Song on the stage, behind her a band is playing.

VO: “Home and progress! The Hungarian nation was facing the same challenges 164 years ago, during Szent István, in 1956 as it is facing today. Zsolt Semjén, president of KDNP said in Veszprém, during those times which have historical significance we had to fight for our independence and carry out reforms in the same time.”

Image: We continue to see the singing women, then there is a wide shot of the square where the ceremony is taking place, wide shot of lining policemen, close up of participants, medium shot of Zsolt Semjén. These images are followed by a wide shot of the square surrounded by people, then a medium shot of some participants listening to Semjén`s speech.

NAT in the background: Zsolt Semjén is speaking

SOT: Zsolt Semjén (medium shot): “Home means that we have a constitutions and laws which ensure the nation`s sovereignty on all level. Progress means that there are

no privileged groups and no intellectuals who feel that they are above laws. The vision of the EU has to have and understand the meaning that the Hungarian nation has the opportunity to reunite.

VO: “According to the deputy prime minister, the story of the Youth of March should fill everybody with pride because it can give us faith and strength.”

Image: medium wide shot of participants, wide shot of Semjén, medium shot of other participants, eventually a close up of a flag from a low angle

NAT in the background ground: Blare of trumpets

Story 13 – package (19.18-21.53)

Lead in: Edit Varga

Voice over: Anrdás Vigh, Lilla Malya, László Tálás, Péter Németh

Lead in: The European Union, Hungary`s independence, patriotism and rebellion were the most commonly mentioned topics at the ceremonies in big cities throughout the country.

NAT (István Tarlós) in the foreground: Tarlós is holding his speech.

VO: The mayor of Budapest, István Tarlós drew a parallel in his speech between the revolutionary past and the present situation of Hungary. According to him, the crisis and the pressure that is on Hungary now should not be the reason for giving up on our values and goals.

NAT: In the background Tarlós István is speaking. After his speech we hear people applauding.

Image: medium shot of Tarlós, medium shot of the National Museum, after that we see participants on the stairs. Later as the camera is moving away from the building we see more of the square and the number of participants.

SOT (Tarlós, medium shot): We know that Europe needs a strong and self-assertive Hungary, as Hungary also needs a strong Europe. We need a European Community which implements its own regulations consistently, and which does not prioritize among its member states.

VO: “1848 is the celebration of our all rebellious nature, said János Lázár mayor of Hódmezővásárhely. It is the celebration of our nature that says no to slavery, that is reckless, free and brave.”

Image: a girl and a boy carry a wreath to the memorial, medium shots of participants.

Low angle shot of a statue

NAT in the background: blare of trumpet

SOT (János Lázár, medium shot) “We have been living in a country for centuries now, which is trampled at the feet of invaders. These invader feet are sometimes the boots of the Russians and sometimes it is the leather shoes of bankers. There is no significant difference between the two.”

VO: “Zsolt Borkai, the mayor of Győr, said that in a sense Hungary is still fighting for its independence, for a stronger voice of those Hungarians who are working on the rise of the country than for those who are trying to cast a negative light on our home.”

Image: wide shot of soldiers carrying a wreath, medium shot of the politicians from a side angle, including Borkai, medium and medium wide shots of participants.

SOT (Zsolt Borkai, medium shot): “It seems that the commemoration is not enough. And it is not enough to simply hope for a better future. We need actions and hard work for our rights, values and money.

VO: László Botka the mayor of Szeged said that the European Union does not attack but protects Hungarian freedom.

Image: chivalry man place a wreath at a memorial, medium shot and close up on participants

NAT in the background: trumpet

SOT (László Botka, medium shot): Today, when Europe gives a warning, at the same time it also protects Hungarians. Europe might feel itself endangered because its fundamental values are questioned, violated and because it is facing a causeless, threatening and self-serving power.

VO: The Fidesz mayor of Székesfehérvár, András Cserpalkovics emphasized that looking back to history patriotism and the love of freedom have always been basic characteristics of Hungarians.

Image: wide shot of the participants on the square, the camera pans them, medium shot of Cserpalkovics

NAT in the background: people are yelling on the square, Cserpalkovics is speaking

Story 14 - package

Cultural programs for families in Budapest

Story 15 - package

Celebrations throughout the country: Mátra, Székesfehérvár

Story 16 - package

The students of the Madách Highschool in Budapest traveled to Kolozsvár to celebrate March 15th with students who live beyond Hungary's present borders.

Story 17 – anchor voice-over

The Social Democratic Party (SMER), Robert Fico's party won the elections in Slovakia during the weekend. The politician will govern with 83 mandates; he decided not to form a coalition. Among the government's plans is the amendment of the dual citizenship law. (This affects Hungarian-Slovakian dual citizens)

Story 18 – anchor voice-over

Bus accident in Switzerland

Anchorwoman: "After sport news and the weather forecast you can watch „Égi madár” film drama and “Híd ember”.

Anchorman: Thank you for your attention! Good-bye!

Anchorwoman: Good-bye!

***Appendix 4: The Opera House protest on the commercial channel
and on public service channel***

Accessed: April 26, 2012

(<http://thecontrarianhungarian.wordpress.com/2012/01/08/to-the-margins-of-an-early-january-protest-in-hungary/>)



Executive summary

Due to the electoral victory of the Fidesz-Christian Democrat coalition (Fidesz-KDNP) in 2010, the party has two-thirds majority in the Parliament. This provided Fidesz with the opportunity to follow through with its reform plans. As soon as the party was inaugurated they started a swift law making process, passing new laws and changing regulations which require two-thirds majority of votes. These laws were passed without an overall debate with the opposition in many of the cases, which resulted in negative feedback from the national opposition, international media as well as the IMF and the European Union. Besides the swift decision making, they critiqued the legitimacy and democratic nature of the new regulations, mostly in the cases of the central bank law, the early retirement of attorneys, national data protection, the constitution and the media law. The government's neglect to modify the critiqued laws resulted in the prolongation of EU/IMF negotiations about the Hungarian loan. There has been no consensus reached since.

Hungary has received intense international media critiques; it even has been accused of heading towards totalitarianism. Despite the sharp critiques of international media, the popularity of Fidesz has not decreased in Hungary. Although, the national public has not agreed with some of the acts of the government, people remained positive about the future in general. This initiated me to choose news coverage as the main focus of this research with the aim of discovering similarities and differences between international and Hungarian content production, and also in the wider context of changing media law, regulation and politics in Hungary.

In order to analyze the current situation of the Hungarian media and to study whether it functions according to international norms, it is inevitable to discuss the values and practices that media should ideally maintain. Therefore, this thesis provides an introduction to the fundamental values of news and its main role in democracy. This

serves as a vintage point for the analysis of news practices in Hungary and enables the discovery of whether Hungarian news production is in line with international standards. Therefore, through a case study of the news programs of RTL Klub, TV2 and M1, this research introduces television news content and the means of broadcasting, this way providing an understanding of the situation of media as a whole.

According to Mittell texts “do not actively link together without [...] cultural activity”; (ibid, p5) in order to analyze genre successfully we need to go beyond text. Therefore, the analysis should not be stopped “at the level of the industry itself – [as] media industries always interrelate within the multiple spheres of texts, audiences, and historical contexts.” (ibid, p92) Consequently, we need to “locate genres within the complex interrelations among texts, industries, audiences, and historical contexts.” (p7) In order to provide an overall understanding of the situation in Hungary, this paper places the analysis of news production and the new regulations in the wider context of the interrelations of politics, history and the media industry. Moreover, interviews with journalists and a media economist provide linkage between sections of this paper and firsthand experience of the media industry in the new regulatory environment.

Although, this research touches upon online media content, television broadcast is the focal point. The introduction of the media market reveals that television is the primary source of information in Hungary. From the repertoire of all the channels that can be accessed, the two commercial channels (RTL Klub and TV2) and the state television channel (M1) are the most popular ones. Furthermore, approximately 25 percent of the Hungarian population has access only to these three, freely accessible, analogue channels.

This thesis also includes a detailed analysis about the problems of the new media law and the objections to it, among which the followings can be highlighted on the basis of the interviews: It gives space to levy prohibitive fines on content producers in case of infringement of the law. It draws online and printed media under the scope of

regulations. The new media law creates a media authority which has unlimited power; and the majority of its members are nominated by the governing party due to its two-third majority in the Parliament. Furthermore, the president of the National Media and Communications Authority (MNHH) is assigned for their position for nine years. According to Standards Media Monitor, these modifications put an unnecessarily large pressure on content providers and do not ensure the independence of the media supervisory board. (mertek.eu)

Discussions about commercial channels and public service channels have been separated in the thesis, since the different ways of getting the necessary funding for their operation impacts how they produce and broadcast news. Public Service Broadcasters (PSBs) are financed from state subsidies, therefore “from the beginning have made a commitment to a consistently high level of factual output.” (Hill, 2007, p31) On the other hand, commercial channels get the necessary funding from advertisement, therefore they “must optimize their audience to receive the most amount of revenue.” (Hill, 2007, p31) “Entertainment is, therefore a dominant genre in the commercial portfolio.” (ibid, p31-32) Consequently, PSB has bigger responsibility in providing factual information. What is more is that this is what people expect from public service television in Hungary, to provide them with information. (Szonda Ipsos, 2006) Besides, choosing different means for news production, commercial and public service media also deal with the changed media environment differently. As the case study and the conducted interviews revealed, commercial televisions avoid national political issues and the tabloidization of their news programs can be noticed as well. The new media environment puts pressure on editorial staff and as a corollary they impose self-censorship on themselves. According to Mong, self-censorship is “the phenomenon when the journalist recognizes his/her limits and draws a line to him/herself accordingly, and keeps him/herself to it even if it is contrary to his/her professional convictions.” (Mong, 2012, p5) Consequently, self-censorship works as a self-defense mechanism. Besides tabloidization there are other techniques of self-censorship, such as withholding

information, wrapping facts in opinion articles, presenting them in a way that is more acceptable and making other people say sensitive claims, who are then cited by journalists. Self-censorship stems from the communist past, which survived in the course of political transition and also during democracy. (Mong, 2012) Consequently, this phenomenon is not new to the current situation. Indeed, the new law was not able to make it any better or worse, says Urbán. (interview: Urbán) The public service media instead of avoiding national politics, such as commercial channels, it submitted itself to the political power. In both of the cases the quality of the information is endangered. On commercial channels citizens are barely informed about national politics. On the state channel they witness biased news broadcasts. Media's pivotal role in democracies is its role as an independent mediator between politics and the public, while providing the public with the necessary information they need to understand the surrounding world. (Kovach, 2001) Both ways of producing news disturb this mediation channel, hindering people to receive impartial, proportional and varied information.

The introduction of the historical background and the conducted interviews revealed that both the first and second media laws have their flaws. Moreover, in many cases they are challenged by the same problems. For example they failed to solve the problem of state intervention in the day to day operation of television stations and did not create a transparent supervisory system. Furthermore, according to interviewees, self-censorship also prevailed under both legislations. Although, its degree increased after the new media law had been passed, but it is not a direct effect of the regulation, says Mong. According to him, the status of Hungarian politics and the ongoing processes have a big impact on the growth in self-censorship. (ibid)

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