“Hungary is Moving Forwards not Backwards”

A narrative analysis of news articles by *Origo* about two corruption cases concerning the Hungarian ruling elite

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Abstract

This thesis aims to investigate the effect of media corruption on the reporting of corruption. The thesis takes an analytical look at the online news site *Origo*, which used to be Hungary’s most popular independent news outlet until the middle of 2017 when it was bought by individuals close to Viktor Orbán, Prime Minister of Hungary. Two corruption cases are considered in this thesis, the Paks II case and the Elios-Tiborcz case. News articles discussing these corruption cases were then collected and sampled randomly to yield sixty articles in total, divided into four pools based on the corruption case and the status of independence of *Origo* based on the publishing dates of the articles.

As corruption has been on the rise in Hungary in the past decade, democratic standards and values have continued to be worn down by the Orbán-led Fidesz government, and the media has become ever-more concentrated in the hands of said government, this thesis examines the effects of these factors on the media representation of corruption cases involving the ruling elite. To achieve this goal, this thesis takes a qualitative approach, using qualitative content analysis as the method of data collection and narrative analysis as the method of data analysis. Narrative analysis provides the tools to examine the features and objectives of various stories, such as news articles. Furthermore, this thesis builds upon theories of media power, propaganda, media systems, and clientelism in the media.

The findings indicate a stark difference in the representation of the ruling elite (those connected to the two corruption cases) between the articles of the independent- and of the pro-government-*Origo*. The independent articles took a more neutral, but critical tone, whereas the pro-government articles were more biased and less objective in their reporting. The findings of this thesis are relevant to the field of media studies, as the case study shows a clear difference in the reporting on the same corruption cases by the same news organisation that lost its editorial independence. The results show how the corruption of the media affects the representation of corruption, and how the ruling elite uses the media’s power to change and dictate the narrative.

Keywords: corruption, propaganda, online news, narratives

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1. Introduction

> If you asked ten or twenty people what the sentence 'Hungary is moving forwards, not backwards' means to them, every answer would be different from one another. I am one of those who like this sentence because it encapsulates the struggle that Hungary has experienced over the last 12 years. So, Hungary was a country in a very difficult situation, suffering from bankruptcy. This country has been ruined, bled dry and ruined. … And with very hard work, in 12 years Hungary has corrected the mistakes and sins of the former left-wing government.
>
> —Viktor Orbán, *Interview on Kossuth Radio's "Good morning, Hungary!"*

1.1. Background

Viktor Orbán, Prime Minister of Hungary since 2010, a once liberal-democratic politician, has become the very thing he swore to destroy. Campaigning against the corruption of the previous Gyurcsány and Bajnai governments, his Fidesz party (Alliance of Young Democrats) won the 2010 election with a two-thirds- or supermajority, allowing them to make constitutional changes as they pleased. Already in 2010, the Fidesz government passed two new media laws, which laid the foundations for the prime minister's corruption of public service media and which helped build the media empire of his allies. As of 2022, the Hungarian media system is characterised by a partisan press (Bátorfy & Urbán, 2019), the consolidation of media outlets (Brogi et al., 2019), the use of state advertising as a tool for media capture (Bátorfy & Urbán, 2019), corruption (Transparency International, n.d.), clientelism (Vasvári, 2020), and patronage (Szanyi, 2019).

In stark contrast to its electoral campaign in 2010, the Orbán government has become even more corrupt than the government it replaced. As seen by Hungary's score on the Corruption Perceptions Index, the country has been on a downwards trend since 2012, down from 55 points to 44 points in 2020 (Transparency International, n.d.) – lower score, higher corruption. Clientelism has become widespread in Hungary, those close to Orbán rising or falling seemingly at his will – such was the case of Lajos Simicska, a high school friend of Orbán, who became one of the most powerful men in Hungary after Fidesz's 2010 election win, only to become disgraced in 2014, after not seeing eye to eye with Orbán anymore (Rényi, 2019). Orbán's other friends and family have also enjoyed unparalleled success: Lőrinc Mészáros, a gas- and water-fitter by trade, has become Hungary's richest man through his quick rise in the business world, mostly thanks to the vast amount of public

tenders he has won (Erdélyi, 2019). István Tiborcz, Orbán's son-in-law, has had a similar trajectory, quickly earning millions of euros after his becoming close to the Prime Minister's family (Vitéz, 2019).

1.2. Scientific relevance

This thesis investigates the intersection of media corruption and clientelism in Hungary – the relationship between media power, media systems, and corruption. Academics have previously focused on the effect of news outlets' political orientation on the reporting of corruption cases and have found that political affiliation affects what type of corruption cases the outlets report – most often those that involve figures from the opposing party (Czibik et al., 2016; Le Moglie & Turati, 2019; Palau & Davesa, 2013). Others have focused on the effect of government advertising on the reporting of corruption cases and have found that an increase in government advertising results in a decrease in the coverage of corruption cases involving the government (Di Tella & Franceschelli, 2011).

Additionally, research by Hajdu et al. (2016) firstly focused on the effect of journalistic attitudes on the coverage of corruption cases, and secondly on the state of investigative journalism in Hungary, and have found that political advertising has a negative effect on unbiased and free journalism. Katona et al. (2021), meanwhile, carried out a thematic examination of the prominence of corruption cases in the media and have found that affiliation with the government results in less coverage of corruption cases involving government figures. They have examined the case of *Origo* and have observed a negative change in the frequency of the reporting on corruption cases. Research by Martin (2019), meanwhile, focused on the connection between media freedom and corruption and found that the increase in corruption, in general, could be explained by the lack of media freedom (distortions in media ownership for example) among other variables.

These studies, however, have not examined the effect of ownership and political affiliation on the representation of corruption cases and corrupt government actors (Di Tella & Franceschelli, 2011; Hajdu et al., 2016), and did not provide an insight into how the difference of corruption coverage manifests itself in the representation of government figures and other individuals involved in corruption cases, and the representation of such corruption cases themselves (Katona et al., 2021; Le Moglie & Turati, 2019; Palau & Davesa, 2013). They did not provide insight into the possible connection between corruption and clientelism within the media and the representation of corruption and clientelism (Czibik et al., 2016), or have not focused on actual differences in coverage as a result of a difference in ownership

(Martin, 2019). This thesis, thus, attempts to fill the gap left unexplored by scholars, namely, how does the difference in political affiliation (ownership) of a news outlet affect the representation of not just corruption cases and clientelism, but those involved in such cases: the political figures, the business owners – the ruling elite. More specifically, this thesis examines what influence clientelism in the media has on the reporting of corruption cases involving Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, or those connected to him.

The two corruption cases sampled are the Elios-Tiborcz and the Paks II cases. The Elios-Tiborcz case refers to István Tiborcz, the son-in-law of Orbán, and his company's (Elios) unprecedented success at public procurements (Civitas Intézet, 2018). The European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) investigated Elios because of irregularities in public procurements involving Elios and subsequently fined the Hungarian government, who had to repay all the EU funds awarded to Elios in the public procurements investigated. The Paks II case, meanwhile, refers to the expansion of Hungary's Paks nuclear plant. The government contracted the Russian state firm Roszatom for the project without a public tender and subsequently designated the details of the arrangement a state secret (Civitas Intézet, 2018). Independent sources claim that the expansion would never be profitable (Ondrich & Bebiak, 2016). Furthermore, the biggest winner of construction contracts for Paks II has become Lőrinc Mészáros, Orbán's childhood friend (Katus, 2021). The news outlet whose coverage is sampled is *Origo*, one of the most popular online news outlets in Hungary, which was independent of government influence until the middle of 2017, when ownership changes have converted *Origo* into a "pro-government" outlet.

This thesis, therefore, proposes the research question, *how were Viktor Orbán and the ruling elite represented in the Hungarian news outlet* Origo *in articles related to the Elios-Tiborcz and Paks II scandals?* The thesis has the following research objectives: (1), to analyse the narratives presented in online news outlets related to the two corruption scandals; and (2), to compare the narratives published by the independent *Origo* (pre-2017) and the "pro-government" *Origo* (post-2017).

The thesis is grounded in the theoretical areas of media power and propaganda, media systems, and clientelism in the media. While media power examines the power relations inherent in the media (Freedman, 2015a), the study of propaganda reveals the methods employed by the powerful to influence the individuals (Ellul, 1965). Media systems scholars, then, look at the political side of the media, examining the various influences that shape media systems (Hallin & Mancini, 2004), while clientelism in the media examines the effect of corrupt practices on media output, and on the media itself (Hallin & Mancini, 2004).

1.3. Structure of the thesis

The thesis is structured in the following way: first, Chapter 2, the theoretical framework, discusses the theoretical areas relevant to this thesis – media power, propaganda, media systems, and media and clientelism. This is followed by Chapter 3, on the research design of the thesis – it employs a qualitative research approach, using qualitative content analysis, narrative analysis, and a deductive qualitative analysis (QDA) approach. Chapter 4, then, presents the results of the analysis, while Chapter 5 offers a discussion of the results and a conclusion to the thesis, discussing the theoretical implications and limitations of the thesis, and proposes future avenues for research.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1. Media power

Media power, as argued by Couldry (2000, p. 4) and Freedman (2014, p. 30), refers to the symbolic resources that construct or shape the reproduction of reality. What Freedman (2014) highlights, is that these resources and relationships are present in an environment where access to the media is unequal, reflecting the systematic inequalities of power within society. Couldry (2000) argues in a similar vein, writing that media power should be understood as the concentration of the symbolic power to construct reality within media institutions, which results from the practices of wider societal interactions. Both Couldry and Freedman are concerned with media power as held by large institutions, be it private, public, or a mix of both. Specifically, Freedman (2014) argues that media moguls – the individuals who control large media institutions – are at their most powerful when media control is combined with political power. This could mean an explicit mixing of interests, such as in the case of former New York mayor and founder of Bloomberg News, Michael Bloomberg, or where the conflict of interest is not as visible, such as Rupert Murdoch's close ties to Margaret Thatcher and Tony Blair (Freedman, 2014).

In line with Couldry (2000) and Freedman (2014, 2015), Street (2011) also sees media power as an issue of control. He identifies three separate powers inherent in media power: discursive power, access power, and resource power (Street, 2011). Discursive power refers to the media's power to construct reality and prioritise or suppress certain discourses (Street, 2011). This type of media power is the ultimate goal of the propaganda model proposed by Herman and Chomsky (2008), discussed later. Access power, then, relates to the power of the media to decide who gets to control the discourse (Street, 2011). This power operates on two levels: (1), it refers to the concentration of the media market which results in a narrower variety of sources; and (2), it refers to the interests and identities that are represented in a specific media outlet (Street, 2011, p. 287). Access power is strongly connected to discursive power, as who gets access to the media directly impacts what discourses will be presented. Finally, resource power refers to the power of media conglomerates in affecting the government and their power to distribute resources amongst themselves (Street, 2011). Additionally, access power and resource power are strongly connected to the filters proposed by Herman and Chomsky (2008), as discussed later.

Lastly, Couldry and Curran (2003) look at media power differently. They identify two "faces" of media power or two ways to conceptualise media power. From one way it is

seen as a way for powerful actors to use the media to fight their political battles – this way, the media is only one tool of the many that elites have when fighting amongst themselves, and media power becomes invisible (Couldry & Curran, 2003, p. 3) – similarly, Örnebring (2012) discusses this version of media power through the concept of elite-to-elite communication (discussed later). From the other way, media power can be seen not only as mediating societal events, but as being a primary force within society. As societies around the world rely on the "fast circulation of information and images" (the role of the media), those who control what gets circulated (and how) have immense societal power (Couldry & Curran, 2003, p. 4). Again, Couldry and Curran (2003), in line with the other scholars discussed above (Freedman, 2014; Street, 2011), argue that ownership and control over media production are where the power of the media lies.

The shared issue of media power identified by the scholars above is media ownership. Street (2011) argues that, historically, media ownership has become highly concentrated in the hands of media moguls. He continues by arguing that such concentration of ownership is not inevitable, it is not a logic of markets, that the media can be regulated (Street, 2011). Regulation, however, can become a problem when media moguls and politicians are connected, as discussed above. The higher concentration of media ownership that results from this mixing of political and media power is a serious threat to democracy (Street, 2011). In countries where democracy is backsliding, the media can become one of the most important targets of illiberal governments (Bermeo, 2016). Furthermore, although media conglomerates compete in the media market, they must generate revenue. However, this might not be the ultimate goal of media owners. Freedman highlights an observation by Gitlin (2013) regarding Jeff Bezos' takeover of *The Washington Post*, where Gitlin argues that commerce might not be the ultimate motivation for publishing (Freedman, 2014, p. 47).

2.2. Propaganda

The concept of propaganda is discussed from two angles. First, on a more conceptual level based on the writings of Ellul (1965), and second, on a more practical level based on the ideas of Herman and Chomsky (2008). Although the word propaganda carries negative connotations in the contemporary world, the word itself means things to be spread or propagated (Marlin, 2014). The negative connotation of the word and concept only began to appear after the First World War (Marlin, 2014) but has been present ever since. What follows is a discussion of the features of propaganda as outlined by Ellul, followed by an examination of Herman and Chomsky's propaganda model. Although not an exhaustive

review, this brief discussion is relevant in understanding what media power can be used for (the theory of propaganda), and what the actual process is (the model of propaganda).

2.2.a. Propaganda on a conceptual level

For Ellul (1965) propaganda is a scientific technique that is built upon psychology and sociology. He provides a (partial) definition of propaganda, which refers to a set of methods by an organisation or group whose goal is to influence a mass of individuals to take action and it does so through psychological manipulations (Ellul, 1965, p. 55). Although not universally accepted or completely exhaustive, for this thesis Ellul's definition of propaganda is used. Ellul identified eight characteristics of propaganda, defined as binary oppositions: political versus social, agitation versus integration, vertical versus horizontal, and irrational versus rational (Ellul, 1965; Tal & Gordon, 2016). According to Ellul, all of these types of propaganda are valid and exist in the world (Ellul, 1965). However, scholarly debate and research have mostly focused on political, agitative, vertical, and horizontal propaganda (Tal & Gordon, 2016). This thesis focuses on political, integrative, vertical, irrational, *and* rational propaganda. Increasingly, there is less distinction between rational and irrational propaganda, as (rational) facts are used to elicit an (irrational) emotional response (Tal & Gordon, 2016, p. 184). The analysis of the samples, however, might reveal that a different type propaganda is at play than those outlined here.

Ellul argues that propaganda needs both individuals and the masses to be effective. Modern propaganda targets the individual only based on what they have in common with other individuals, and the mass only as a group comprised of individuals (Ellul, 1965). Propaganda has to give the impression of being personal and at the same time not too specific so as to lose its wide appeal (Ellul, 1965, p. 6). Modern propaganda could not exist without mass media, and thus "total propaganda" must make use of all forms of media, television, radio, newspapers, and the internet – this is especially true for integration propaganda, which could not exist without modern media (Marlin, 2014). The orchestrator of propaganda has to balance all of the tools they have at their disposal, such as the mass media, censorship, legal texts, legislation, or conferences (Ellul, 1965) – as seen in many countries with specific media systems, as discussed later.

Propaganda must be continuous, if there is a gap in propaganda, the individual can be lost. Propaganda also has to be lasting, that is, a month-long election campaign is not propaganda – it has to occupy the lives of citizens continuously (Ellul, 1965). Furthermore, propaganda has to "short-circuit" an individual's thoughts, it must operate in the individual's

subconscious so that they don't perceive it (Ellul, 1965, p. 24). Additionally, the propagandist has to create myths that inform the lives of individuals, "activating images" which force the individual to act, because such images contain everything the individual thinks is good, true, and just (Ellul, 1965, p. 28; Marlin, 2014). Importantly, contrary to popular belief, propaganda is not a series of lies; truth does have a place in propaganda (Quaranto & Stanley, 2021).

Ellul (1965) discusses three notions regarding truth and propaganda: (1), propaganda can proclaim a fact as untrue if it is true but difficult to prove; (2), if a fact is true, it is either presented in a way that is difficult to comprehend, or if a fact is not true, it is rather not talked about; and (3), a true fact can be presented as it is, but in a way that suggests some other idea for the individual (pp. 49-51). However, falsehoods do play an important role in propaganda: the propagandist can never tell who they work for, as that would expose the source of propaganda; and propaganda is false when it interprets and colours facts (Ellul, 1965). Notably, Ellul highlights a phase of propaganda that precedes the "active propaganda" discussed here; this he calls "pre-propaganda" (Ellul, 1965, p. 26). Pre-propaganda prepares the individual for active propaganda, by spreading background myths, stereotypes, and shared attitudes (Ellul, 1965; Marlin, 2014). There are no new myths created by pre-propaganda (Ellul, 1965). What it does, however, is build on pre-existing myths and notions prevalent in society, which it can then further and exploit when the time comes (Marlin, 2014).

2.2.b Propaganda as a working model of mass media

The propaganda model proposed by Herman and Chomsky (2008) is an effort to explain the workings of the United States' (U.S.') media system as it was in the 1980s. The model, however, is not bound by its age and is still relevant to this day as a tool for media analysis all over the world (Pedro-Carañana et al., 2018). Although subjected to criticism, as collected by Pedro-Carañana (2011), the propaganda model is a simple but useful tool that allows for the criticism of media systems and the media power that is highly concentrated in the hands of the elite. This section briefly discusses the propaganda model and its five filters as proposed by Herman and Chomsky (2008), and provides an updated view of the model for the 21st century (Fuchs, 2018; Pedro-Carañana et al., 2018).

The propaganda model (PM) as outlined by Herman and Chomsky (2008) is an explanation of a system of the media where unequal power relations favouring the elite result in filters that cleanse the news, leaving only news that aligns with the elite's agenda. This model consists of five filters: (1), ownership; (2), advertising; (3), dependence on sources;

(4), “flak” or outside pressures from the powerful and interested; and (5), anti-communism, or the constraint by the prevailing ideology (Herman, 2018; Herman & Chomsky, 2008). The filter of ownership has been the subject of the previous section on media power, where authors seem to agree that the power of the media lies in the hands of those who own the means of producing and disseminating the news. This filter, then, outlines how media companies are becoming highly concentrated as the cost of running a media organisation is increasing. It also highlights media companies’ dependence on contracts, frequencies, licences, favourable policy and legislation from the government (Herman & Chomsky, 2008).

The filter of advertising is related to the basic rules of media: profitability. Media companies need to make money to survive, and this money mostly comes from advertisers. As advertisers play such a vital role in the survival and profitability of news organisations they have to power to influence the content that media companies produce (Herman & Chomsky, 2008). The third filter relates to the source of the news in the media. As it is immensely capital-dependent to source the news, media companies rely on government agencies for information. Additionally, such powerful sources can manage the media by prioritising or hiding news stories. Again, this can result in information or news that is more favourable for the powerful (Herman & Chomsky, 2008).

“Flak,” then, refers to the backlash that a piece of media can receive. It can be on the level of individuals, or organisations that have the power to pressure media companies to alter or remove what they think is not appropriate or aligned with their views (Herman & Chomsky, 2008). Finally, the fifth filter concerns the dominant ideology present in the country. In 1988, in the U.S., this filter materialised as anti-communism. However, this filter adjusts to the prevailing ideology and filters out content that is antithetical to that ideology (Herman & Chomsky, 2008). The result of these five filters is that media content becomes sanitized, in line with the needs, viewpoints, and interests of the elite.

Does this model hold up in the 21st century, in the age of the internet and the decline of the printing press? Fuchs (2018) examines the five filters in the context of new media and argues that the PM is still relevant in the online world, but needs to be adapted and extended because of the new features of digital media. The first filter, ownership, is still ever-present: media giants like Facebook and Alphabet control a large portion of social media, and they are, in turn, controlled by a few individuals who own a large percentage of stocks in these companies (Fuchs, 2018). It is not just international giants like Facebook where power is concentrated; in countries all over the world online media outlets are becoming highly

concentrated, such as in China (Hang, 2016), Russia (Vartanova, 2016), or in Eastern-European countries like Hungary (Bleyer-Simon et al., 2021).

Regarding the filter of advertising, Fuchs (2018) argues that the share of online advertising has surpassed newspaper advertising and is only second to television. In backsliding or illiberal democracies, government advertising can become a highly lucrative investment for governments attempting to control the narrative (Dragomir, 2017). Next, Fuchs (2018) argues that the filter of source has to be reconsidered for the digital age, as the internet is more decentralised. He highlights four aspects of the source filter online: (1), traditional media have become dominant online; (2), capital is used to gain a following and visibility; (3), on social media a small group of elites are most visible; and (4), political bots can skew visibility and importance (Fuchs, 2018). Instead of the term "flak" by Herman and Chomsky (2008), Fuchs argues for the use of the phrase "countermeasures to discipline the media" coined by Pedro-Carañana (2011). With new media, lobbying has also moved online, where all types of political groups can further their agenda and contribute to public discourse. Lastly, the filter of ideology is also present online, and it has become more diversified (Fuchs, 2018). As the prevailing ideology in a country has less influence on the decentralised nature of the internet, a myriad of different ideologies can exert their influence on the content produced online.

2.3. Media systems

Media and politics are intrinsically linked, as the power of the media can influence politics and vice versa. Hallin and Mancini (2004) argue that "media systems are shaped by the wider context of political history, structure, and culture" (p. 46). They list several factors relating to political systems that influence media systems, including economics, the role of the state, the effect of democracies, and clientelism (see next section) (Hallin & Mancini, 2004). The result of the interaction between these variables and the media is the wide variety of media systems that can be observed all over the world. For instance, although Hallin and Mancini (2004) originally offered only three models of media systems (Polarized Pluralist, Democratic Corporatist, and Liberal Models), there has been extensive academic research to expand on these models to account for the media systems in different parts of the world, such as Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) (Bajomi-Lázár, 2017; Dobek-Ostrowska, 2019; Jakubowicz & Sükösd, 2008; Mihelj & Downey, 2012). This section briefly explores the history of media systems research, which is followed by a discussion on recent contributions

to the field of media systems research, with an emphasis on theories most relevant to this thesis.

Although not the first to take up the challenge of comparing media systems (see Siebert et al. (1956) as a precursor), Hallin and Mancini (2004) offer a new way of describing and comparing media systems in different countries. Hallin and Mancini's work is heavily influenced by Siebert et. al.'s, and they argue, in a similar vein to Siebert et. al., that to understand the media, one has to understand external forces, such as the state, political parties, economic and political interests, and elements of the social structure (Hallin & Mancini, 2004). Furthermore, they stress that their three models only relate to North America and Western Europe, as an effort to avoid the mistake of scope that Siebert et. al.'s (1956) work is criticized for (Hallin & Mancini, 2004; Mihelj & Downey, 2012). In turn, they recognize that their models would require significant adaptation to apply to other countries in the world, and that, even within their limited geographical scope, there is significant variation among the media systems of different countries (Hallin & Mancini, 2004). They argue, however, that the "primary purpose [of the models] is not [the] classification of individual systems, but the identification of characteristic patterns of relationship between system characteristics" (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, p. 10).

The three models identified by Hallin and Mancini, then, are the Liberal Model, the Democratic Corporatist Model, and the Polarized Pluralist Model (Hallin & Mancini, 2004). Mihelj and Downey (2012) argue that Hallin and Mancini's three models are distinguished by the media's relations to economy and politics. Specifically, Hallin and Mancini (2004) identify four dimensions of media systems for comparison: (1) the development of media markets; (2) political parallelism; (3) the development of journalistic professionalism; and (4) the level of state intervention in the media system (p. 21). The liberal media model, then, is characterized by medium-sized press markets, a low level of politicization, a high level of journalistic professionalism, and the dominance of market principles. Meanwhile, the polarized pluralist model is characterized by small-sized press markets, a high level of politicization, a low level of journalistic professionalism, and strong state intervention (Hallin & Mancini, 2004; Mihelj & Downey, 2012). The final model, the democratic corporatist, falls between the two previous models (Mihelj & Downey, 2012). The liberal media model can be found in the media systems of the United States and Canada, the polarized pluralist model in the countries of Southern Europe, and the democratic corporatist in Central and Northern Europe (Mihelj & Downey, 2012).

2.3.a. Conflicting approaches to media systems in Central-Eastern Europe

This section provides an overview of different approaches to the classification of media systems, specifically in a Central-Eastern European context, as that is most relevant to this thesis and including other regions in this discussion would exceed the scope and aim of this theoretical discussion. Some of the authors discussed here refer to Hallin and Mancini's original three models, while others do not. Another point of note is that media systems – and, in turn, media system theories – are fluid (Hallin & Mancini, 2004). As political and economic forces change, the media system changes too. Therefore, the most recent theoretical work can only ever reflect a past state of the media.

Dobek-Ostrowska (2015) identifies four models of media systems in CEE: Hybrid Liberal, Politicized Media, Media in transition, and Authoritarian. In line with the work of Hallin and Mancini (2004), Dobek-Ostrowska identifies these four models based on economic and political variables. The combination of indicators such as the Democracy Index, Freedom of the Press, or Gross Domestic Product (GDP) shows clear separations between the 21 countries of CEE. These separations are then reproduced in these countries' respective media systems. Compared to the Western European countries that were focused on by Hallin and Mancini, Central-Eastern European states are poorer (Dobek-Ostrowska, 2015). Such poor economic conditions lead to a tabloidization of the news, foreign (Western) media ownership, and low-quality content (Dobek-Ostrowska, 2015, pp. 21-22). Furthermore, most countries in this region were either part of the Soviet Union (USSR), or were under the influence of the USSR, and thus have been transitioning away from communism. These forces, then, are reflective of the four models of Dobek-Ostrowska.

Countries in the Hybrid Liberal model are characterised by the highest democratic standards of the region, as well as being the richest in CEE (Dobek-Ostrowska, 2015). These countries rank high in indicators measuring the freedom of the press and democratic standards. Furthermore, this model is characterised by strong commercialisation and low levels of politicisation, resulting in media systems that are the healthiest in the region. Additionally, the economic and political stability of these states produces a rather stable media system as well. Countries in this model include The Czech Republic, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania (Dobek-Ostrowska, 2015). Countries in the Politicized Media model, meanwhile, are characterised by "low democratic standards and political culture of societies, a high politicization of public broadcasting service and control over public radio and television by political actors" (Dobek-Ostrowska, 2015, p. 28). Compared to the countries of the Hybrid Liberal model, these states are poorer and have a

lower democratic standard. A high level of political parallelism can be observed – where politicians are also owners of media outlets. Countries in this model include Bulgaria, Croatia, Hungary, Romania, and Serbia (Dobek-Ostrowska, 2015).

The Media in Transition Model is observed in countries that are the poorest in the region, and, although still democracies, are characterized either as flawed democracies or hybrid regimes (Dobek-Ostrowska, 2015). The media systems in these countries, then, are characterized by a high level of political control, a lack of journalistic autonomy and objectivity, and a lack of critical or neutral public service broadcasting. Countries in this model include Moldova, Macedonia, Montenegro, Albania, and Bosnia and Herzegovina (Dobek-Ostrowska, 2015). Lastly, the Authoritarian model has strong connections to the Authoritarian model of Siebert et al. (1956). Countries included in this model are recognized as authoritarian regimes, where the media are highly politicized, the opposition media are persecuted and restricted, and the ruling elite use the media to control society and garner support for the regime. The two countries included in this model are Belarus and Russia (Dobek-Ostrowska, 2015).

Dobek-Ostrowska (2015) argues that the differences observed between countries in CEE are more profound than those found in Western Europe. Although these classifications are based on empirical indicators (democratic standards and economic levels), built upon previous literature in the field of media systems research (Brüggemann et al., 2014; Hallin & Mancini, 2004; Peruško et al., 2013; Siebert et al., 1956), and were informed by empirical studies (as collected by Dobek-Ostrowska (2015, p. 21)), it is still important to note that, as of the writing of this thesis, seven years have passed since the formulation of these four models. Since then, for example, Hungary has been on a downwards path regarding its economy and democratic standard (Martin, 2017). Likewise, Poland, originally classified as Hybrid Liberal, has seen the integrity of its public service broadcasting decline, resulting in reclassification, putting Poland alongside Hungary in the Politicized Media model (Dobek-Ostrowska, 2019). Additionally, in 2012, Dobek-Ostrowska argued that Poland fit into Hallin and Mancini's Polarized-Pluralist model (Dobek-Ostrowska, 2012), then three years later she identified four new models within CEE and fit Poland into one of them (Dobek-Ostrowska, 2015). This, again, shows the fluidity and ever-changing nature of media systems research.

Crucially, however, Dobek-Ostrowska is not the only one who is active in the field of media systems research in CEE. Scholars like Jakubowicz and Sükösd (2008), Herrero et al. (2017), Połońska and Beckett (2019), and Bajomi-Lázár (2019) have made crucial contributions to this field of research. The contributions by Mihelj and Downey (2012) and

Mattoni and Ceccobelli (2018) are most pertinent for the current discussion, thus the following section discusses the approach of these authors.

2.3.b. New inquiries into the study of media systems

Mihelj and Downey (2012) argue for a new approach, an abandoning of the original ideas of Hallin and Mancini (2004). The authors do not offer a new theoretical framework, rather they indicate new ways of achieving comparative media frameworks, going beyond geographical differentiation and expansion. They argue that the media need to be acknowledged, not only as political but also as economic and cultural institutions (Mihelj & Downey, 2012). Furthermore, more emphasis should be placed on forms of ethno-cultural diversity, gender roles, or class structures, and on relationships between media systems and communication technologies (Mihelj & Downey, 2012, p. 6). Furthermore, they argue that the media-politics relationship as a causal factor is not enough to explain variations in media systems, and thus economic and socio-cultural factors should also be considered. Additionally, they contend that new contributions to media systems studies should not seek to be universally applicable, and should not be expected to be so. Lastly, they emphasise the relevance of both national and transnational factors, be it political, economic, or socio-cultural. As national media systems, just as nations themselves, are increasingly interconnected, there should be more focus placed on international influences on the national media systems (Mihelj & Downey, 2012).

Mattoni and Ceccobelli (2018) provide a different dimension to the study of media systems: the effect of new media and information and communication technologies (ICTs). They base their approach on Hallin and Mancini's original four dimensions, updating all four for the hybrid age, and then adding a new dimension, grassroots participation, as a fifth dimension. Regarding the development of the media market, Mattoni and Ceccobelli (2018) suggest moving away from the focus on traditional news media, such as newspapers and television included in Hallin and Mancini's original dimension and consider the "*degree of heterogeneity* regarding the consumption of information" (Mattoni & Ceccobelli, 2018, p. 546, emphasis in original). Then, regarding the political parallelism dimension, the authors argue that the indicators to measure this dimension already in place are sufficient for the hybrid digital age. With regards to state intervention, the authors provide two new indicators, namely investments in digital infrastructures and policies on digital media actors and content. Concerning journalistic professionalism, the authors propose two new indicators, namely the prevalence of an atypical news workforce and the levels of training in digital literacy. As the

new fifth dimension, Mattoni and Ceccobelli (2018) propose grassroots participation, providing four indicators: "(1) grassroots collective initiatives related to media systems, … (2) bottom-up mechanisms for citizens' participation in media systems, … (3) the development of citizen journalism and alternative media, and (4) the presence of user-generated content in the mainstream media. participation in media systems" (p. 549). Using this updated theoretical framework, Mattoni and Ceccobelli (2018) argue that researchers can better examine the role of ICTs and new media in the research of media systems.

2.4. Clientelism and the media

Clientelism is often described as a subset, or version of corruption. However, the concept of corruption itself lacks a unified definition (Rothstein & Varraich, 2014). As this concept seems to be present in all societies, both present and past, Rothstein and Varraich (2014) explore the search for a "basic core meaning of corruption" (p. 33) and conclude, referring to the work of Génaux (2004), that corruption, in its most basic form, is injustice. From this core meaning, then, different understandings of corruption can be derived depending on the theoretical area one approaches corruption, be it from the social sciences, legal academia, or political science. However, to have a working definition of corruption for this thesis, the definition proposed by Jain (2001) is used, wherein corruption is an activity in which "public officials, bureaucrats, legislators, and politicians use powers delegated to them by the public to further their economic interests at the expense of the common good" (p. 73). Rothstein and Varraich (2014), then, use corruption as an umbrella term when discussing the different forms of corruption: clientelism, patronage, state capture, particularism, and patrimonialism. Of these five forms, the concept of clientelism is most relevant for this thesis, as it has been the most prominent corruption tool of the Orbán government (see Bajomi-Lázár, 2019 as an example). As shown by several studies (Bajomi-Lázár, 2019; Hallin & Mancini, 2004; Hallin & Papathanassopoulos, 2002; Örnebring, 2012; Roudakova, 2008), clientelism exists in a wide variety of media systems and is often an indicator for the type of media system in a country. However, studies relating to clientelism in the media are few; Hallin and Papathanassopoulos (2002) note that this field has been underdeveloped – twenty years on, not much has changed.

For Hallin and Mancini (2004) clientelism refers to a form of social organisation where resource access is controlled by patrons, which can be exchanged for support from clients. More specifically, Rothstein and Varraich (2014) highlight several key characteristics of clientelism: (1) the patron-client relationship; (2) the quid pro quo aspect of the

relationship, as both patron and client are dependent on the other to deliver what was promised; and (3) iteration, which refers to the ongoing nature of the relationship. A client-patron relationship differs from a single payment to a police officer to look the other way, as, here, the relationship is ongoing, and there is personal trust that builds up over time that makes the relationship more fruitful to both parties in the long run – this is the aspect of iteration (Rothstein & Varraich, 2014).

Within the media, then, clientelism appears both in public and private media (Hallin & Mancini, 2004). In public media, clientelism manifests as appointments based on political loyalty rather than qualification, whereas in private media, owners rely on political connections for government contracts, licences, or advertisements. Private media owners, then, can use their media organisations as tools to negotiate with similar elites or to intervene in politics which can be the main goal of media ownership (Hallin & Mancini, 2004). Hallin and Mancini (2004) argue that because of the reasons mentioned above, the phenomenon of political parallelism tends to be higher in countries where the tradition of clientelism is stronger. One would find high levels of clientelism, then, in countries that are in the Politicized Media model of Dobek-Ostrowska (2015), like Bulgaria, Croatia, Hungary, Romania, and Serbia. Furthermore, clientelism is associated with lower levels of journalistic professionalism, as journalists also become a part of the clientelistic system, and through their links to political parties and media owners, they degrade journalistic solidarity (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, p. 59). In Hallin and Mancini's media systems categories, clientelism is most prevalent in the countries of the polarized pluralist model, as in these countries political parallelism is high, thus the level of clientelism in the media is high as well.

Although clientelism in the media has not been the subject of much academic discussion, Hallin and Papathanassopoulos (2002) note that clientelism can be a useful analytical tool, as "political and economic institutions do not develop separately" (p. 184), and thus clientelism can consider both forces. Furthermore, the authors note that media systems in which clientelism exists are not purely clientelist, as client-patron relationships coexist with a multitude of other complex political relations (Hallin & Papathanassopoulos, 2002). A potential indicator of clientelism is the late development of democracy, like in the Southern European countries mentioned by Hallin and Papathanassopoulos (2002), or in much of Central-Eastern Europe, where only the slow collapse of the Soviet Union at the end of the 1980s and start of 1990s brought with it rapid democratisation. Furthermore, clientelism, although dyadic at heart, can also take on a pyramidal form (Hallin &

Papathanassopoulos, 2002), where patrons at the top have clients below, who then in turn are patrons to clients below them.

Clientelism can have several effects on the news media. In a clientelist political system, the legal authority is less developed, and thus it can be influenced to apply laws differently to different news organisations. This is evident when the organisations that oversee and regulate the media, such as national media authorities, are under heavy political influence and can develop regulations that favour those in the clientelist network (Hallin & Papathanassopoulos, 2002). Additionally, in clientelist societies information tends to be conceived of as a private resource that can only be exchanged in a patron-client relationship. This can blur the lines between what is considered private or public, and politicians can perceive genuine new reporting as "intrusions into private affairs" (Hallin & Papathanassopoulos, 2002, p. 189). Lastly, clientelism can erode the ethics of journalism. When journalists are a part of a clientelist system, journalistic professionalism can be discarded in favour of the patron-client relationship (Hallin & Papathanassopoulos, 2002). This notion is strongly illustrated by Bajomi-Lázár (2019) who explores the *Maslow-pyramid* of journalistic needs in Hungary and argues that ethical journalism cannot be achieved in a clientelist media system: when the basic journalistic needs are not met (such as job security or a competitive wage) journalists have a tendency towards partisan reporting and fulfilling the needs of patron-client relationships.

A similar trend is observed by Roudakova (2008) in the Russia of the 1990s and 2000s, where, as a result of the collapse of the USSR, news outlets could not achieve commercial viability unless they resort to journalism for sale. Organisations would be hired by politicians or businesspeople to cover them in a positive light, and they would use outlets to reach their financial or political goals (Roudakova, 2008). In this system, where money was tight, journalists would often not get paid on time, or at all, and thus would take their services elsewhere (Roudakova, 2008). It can be seen here, again, that on the *Maslow-pyramid* of journalistic needs ethical journalism is (almost) unattainable, because of the lack of job security and fair wages. Roudakova (2008) also highlights an aspect of clientelism that remained unexplored by Hallin and Papathanassopoulos (2002) and Hallin and Mancini (2004): the involuntary nature of clientelism. Whereas in the media systems discussed by the other authors the patron-client relationship would be built out voluntarily, out of greed perhaps, in post-Soviet Russia clientelist relationships could be coerced (Roudakova, 2008). This can be seen in the way *kompromat* would be forced onto journalists by political actors (Roudakova, 2008, p. 45).

Lastly, Örnebring (2012) argues that clientelist media systems, like the one described by Roudakova (2008), are unstable, transitory, and contingent. A media system like this can then provide space for elite-to-elite and elite-to-mass communication (Örnebring, 2012). Elite-to-elite communication is embodied by the need for oligarchs or moguls to collect and own as many media outlets as they can (often for the sake of the other not having it), and then use them to further their agendas and smear their opponents, be it political or business (Örnebring, 2012). They can use their media outlets to influence political outcomes, or to receive business opportunities, all by building out a clientelist system where journalists are used as mere conduits for the dissemination of the owners' agendas. More specifically, outlets might be forced to argue for a certain infrastructure project that would be built by a business owned by the oligarch that controls the media outlet itself, or they could advocate for a project that is the goal of a party, who then is the patron in the relationship with the media owner. As argued by Hallin and Papathanassopoulos (2002), Roudakova (2008), and Bajomi-Lázár (2019) however, even in clientelist media systems there still exist journalists who manage to put ethics above all else, and engage in investigative journalism, exposing the patron-client relationships that are widespread within politics, business, and the media itself.

3. Research design

3.1. Research approach

The research in this thesis uses a qualitative research approach. Qualitative research at its core is about making connections (Roller & Lavrakas, 2015). It refers to "the classification and interpretation of linguistic (or visual) material to make statements about implicit and explicit dimensions and structures of meaning-making in the material" (Flick, 2014, p. 5). Qualitative research has certain unique attributes that make it well suited to be used as the research approach in this thesis. Qualitative research relies heavily on context – as the finding of absolute truth is impossible, context helps legitimise the findings and the researcher's interpretations (Roller & Lavrakas, 2015).

Another way qualitative research stands out is in the importance of meaning associated with this type of research – as qualitative research focuses on interpreting the meaning-making process (Patton, 2014). Meaning can be derived from the context, the language, or social linguistics (especially in narrative research), and the researcher has to evaluate their own bias, and the breadth and depth of their research (Roller & Lavrakas, 2015). Researcher bias is another important aspect of qualitative research, as the researcher is the data-gathering instrument. This also means that qualitative research is personal, as the researcher's pre-existing knowledge of the subject, skills and personal beliefs and experiences shape how they approach the research (Patton, 2014). As a result of bias and the personal nature of the research, the researcher can get a more in-depth understanding of the data that they are collecting, even before the formal part of data analysis begins (Roller & Lavrakas, 2015). Qualitative research is also flexible, as the researcher can modify the research design as they get more familiar with the data gathered (Roller & Lavrakas, 2015).

3.2. Data collection

The method used for data collection is qualitative content analysis (QCA). QCA is a method used for the systematic description of the meaning of qualitative data, using a coding frame to do so (Schreier, 2013). It is a method that is systematic, and flexible, and it reduces data (Schreier, 2013). Using QCA for data collection means aiming for more detail and depth by collecting less data, which then can be analysed in more detail (Forman & Damschroder, 2007). QCA is a widely used method both for the collection and the analysis of textual data, especially news texts and media messages (Hodgetts & Chamberlain, 2014). The use of QCA

is appropriate for this thesis, as it will produce a deep understanding of the content while accounting for the socio-political context of the text (Hodgetts & Chamberlain, 2014).

3.3. Sampling

The sampling unit is the online news outlet *Origo*. This outlet is classified as a "pro-government" media outlet (Bátorfy, 2020). Such a classification is based on the concept of media capture (Mungiu-Pippidi, 2008), where outlets are influenced through financial means to be supportive of the government (Schiffrin, 2017) – this includes changes of ownership. *Origo* was independent of government influence since its foundation in 1998 and was one of the first Hungarian online news outlets. In 2016, however, the owner of *Origo*, Magyar Telekom sold the site to New Wave Media, which is connected to Orbán through György Matolcsy, an ally of Orbán and head of the Hungarian National Bank (MNB) (Előd, 2017). Matolcsy's cousin, Tamás Szemerey has a financial interest in both New Wave Media, and the bank that provided a loan of 1.26 million euros to New Wave Media to purchase *Origo* (Rényi, 2015). Then in 2017, New Wave Media was bought by the son of György Matolcsy, Ádám Matolcsy (Földi, 2017), allegedly using taxpayer money (Farkas, 2017). With both changes of ownership came mass resignations and firings at *Origo*, with most journalists citing the outlet becoming a government mouthpiece as the reason for their resignation or firing (Haász, 2017; Matalin, 2017). Furthermore, *Origo* is one of the most-read online news outlets in Hungary, with around 3.6 million real users per month in March of 2022 (Gemius Audience, 2022). *Origo* is one of many news outlets that started out as independent from government influence but then was captured by the government and turned into a "propaganda outlet" (Oroszi, 2018). Of all these news outlets *Origo* is the most popular among online news consumers in Hungary (Gemius Audience, 2022). The selection of *Origo* should therefore result in contrasting narratives presented from the same source on the same topics, as the change in ownership is expected to influence the way these corruption cases are portrayed.

As one of the objectives of this thesis is to examine the effects of media clientelism on the narratives presented in articles about corruption, the units of analysis are news articles collected from an online news outlet that has been affected by clientelism – *Origo*. The focus is on news articles rather than editorials or features, as the main objective of these types of news texts is to provide a factual account of events, an objective report (Figdor, 2010). News articles consist of objectively verifiable statements, whereas editorials or opinion pieces reflect the subjective opinion of the author. This distinction, however, only exists in an ideal

world. In our world, even news articles that are supposed to be objective and are supposed to recount events as they happened, are not always objective (Figdor, 2010). As news reporting is deeply rooted in storytelling (Lule, 2002), the storyteller both consciously and unconsciously influences how the story is told. When reporting factual events in news articles, the assumption is that journalists attempt to avoid their personal biases influencing their article (Manoff & Schudson, 1986). In reality, this is not possible, however, readers still rely on news articles as accurate reports of events.

The news articles collected, then, originate from the Hungarian online news outlet *Origo*. The reason for this is twofold: (1) accessing archives of physical newspapers in Hungary is difficult, as there is no centralised archive and individual news outlets rarely make public their archive of physical newspapers; and (2) all regional newspapers and three-quarters of daily newspapers in Hungary are owned by those with close ties to Orbán (Bátorfy, 2020), whereas there is still active competition in the online news media market, although the influence of Orbán is becoming stronger here as well.

This thesis employs purposive sampling (Jupp, 2006b) and random sampling (Jupp, 2006a). Purposive sampling was used to select two corruption cases as the topics of the news articles. This is because the researcher has pre-existing knowledge of major corruption cases in Hungary, and the prevalence of these cases within the media. Although there are more than a hundred such cases (Civitas Intézet, 2018), this analysis focuses on two major cases: the Elios-Tiborcz case and Paks II case. The Elios-Tiborcz case refers to corruption involving Elios Innovatív Zrt., a company that has been awarded millions of euros through public procurement tenders (Civitas Intézet, 2018). Elios was founded by the son-in-law of Orbán, István Tiborcz, who also owned a majority stake in the company for years. Although he sold his share of the company in 2015, its new owners are also connected to Orbán (Varga, 2016). Elios has been winning public tenders since 2010, which were mostly backed by EU funds (Civitas Intézet, 2018), in total receiving 43.7 million euros from the EU (Transparency International, 2019). The European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) investigated Elios because of its success in winning public procurements for public lighting projects all over Hungary. In total, OLAF investigated 35 public lighting projects where the main contractor was Elios. OLAF found irregularities in all projects investigated and estimated the total financial impact for the EU as 43 million euros (OLAF, 2022). Furthermore, investigative journalists visited 23 cities and towns where Elios installed new LED lights and found that in most of them the lights were not bright enough, which is corroborated by residents who have complained about the lack of brightness at night after the replacements of the lights (Becker, 2018).

The Paks II case refers to the planned expansion of Hungary's only nuclear reactor located in the city of Paks. The government contracted the Russian State Firm Roszatom for the construction of the project, 80% of which is covered by a 10-billion-euro loan provided to Hungary by Russia (Civitas Intézet, 2018; Herszenhorn et al., 2016). The details of the contracts have been designated a state secret and will not be available to the public for 30 years, and there was no public tender for the project (Civitas Intézet, 2018). According to a study commissioned by Greenpeace, the expansion could never be profitable for the government, which contradicts the government's projections (Ondrich & Bebiak, 2016) – this finding was corroborated by other independent sources as well. Furthermore, even before the construction of the project ever began, firms with ties to the government taking part in the project were paying their employees ~14.5 million euros in total per year, with seemingly nothing to show for it (Civitas Intézet, 2018). Furthermore, the construction company Közgép, owned by Orbán's former close friend Lajos Simicska, was expected to be a big winner of construction contracts (Nyilas, 2014b), however, after their public fallout, Orbán's childhood friend Lőrinc Mészáros has become the biggest winner of construction tenders for Paks II (Katus, 2021). Since the beginning of the project in 2014 multiple irregularities (EUrologus, 2017), lack of public support (Greenpeace, 2018), missing documents (Index, 2014b), and multiple lawsuits (Biró, 2019; Csurgó, 2018) have characterised the expansion.

The beginning of the timeframe for the samples was defined by the earliest article that appeared regarding each corruption case on multiple news outlets. The start date for the samples was the 9th of April 2013 for the Elios-Tiborcz case and the 14th of January 2014 for the Paks II case, respectively. The end of the timeframe was selected to be five years after the start dates, which would mean the 9th of April 2018 and the 14th of January 2019 for the two cases, respectively. The reason for the five-year timespan is that *Origo* was captured in 2016, which should provide two roughly equal periods where the outlet was independent and then pro-government, thus the articles collected would similarly be roughly equal in number. The end date, however, had to be adjusted for both cases: in the case of the articles relating to Elios only 16 articles were collected in the second half of the original timeframe, thus this was extended to end on the 9th of April 2020 and included articles without Elios, but about Tiborcz, as this produced 27 articles in total; in the case of the Paks II articles, the original timeframe produced 20 articles in the second half, whereas an extension until the 14th of January 2020 produced an additional 27 articles, 47 in total.

The articles were collected by searching through the archives of *Origo,* using keywords related to the corruption cases, such as "Paks II", "Paks 2", "paksi atomerőmű"

(Paks Nuclear Reactor), “Elios” (Elios), “Elios-ügy” (Elios case), or “Tiborcz István.” In total, 287 articles were collected, 216 and 71 relating to Paks II and Tiborcz respectively. The collected articles were then split into pools, those before the ownership change, and those after. Simple random sampling (Jupp, 2006a) was then used to select the news articles from the predefined sample based on the two corruption cases, by generating 15 random numbers corresponding to the articles within one pool (where one pool corresponds to news articles covering one corruption case, in one time period). The total sample consists of sixty news articles, thirty per corruption case, or fifteen per pool (see Table 1 for an overview, and Appendix A for the Document output report).

Table 1.

Sample overview

Pool	*Case*	*Status of ownership*	*Timeframe*	*No. of articles collected*	*No. of articles sampled*	*Frequency of articles (days between articles)*
Pool 1	Paks II	Independent	2014.01.14 – 2017.06.28	190	15	6.63 days
Pool 2	Paks II	Pro-government	2017.06.28 – 2020.01.14	47	15	19.8 days
Pool 3	Elios-Tiborcz	Independent	2013.04.09 – 2017.06.28	55	15	16.7 days
Pool 4	Elios-Tiborcz	Pro-government	2017.06.28 – 2020.04.09	27	15	47.1 days
Total				319	60	

3.4. Data analysis

The method of data analysis employed in this thesis is narrative analysis. Narrative analysis, or narrative criticism, is a tool for the analysis of narrative text, that is, text that portrays a setting or world, with intelligent agents or characters, who take actions and participate in events, which then cause changes in the said world (Foss, 2017, p. 320). This method of analysis provides a way for the researcher to identify, dissect, and analyse any type of narrative. Although narratives are often associated with fiction, there are narratives everywhere in the real world, such as in conversations, court proceedings, policy documents, or news articles (Foss, 2017) – in fact, humans organise their experiences and memories in the form of narratives (Bruner, 1991) and are storytellers by nature (Lieblich et al., 1998). As

the narratives found in any type of discourse contain essentially the same narrative elements, they can all be subjected to narrative analysis. This method of data analysis is a good fit for analysing text such as the news articles in this thesis, as "news is deeply rooted in the tradition of storytelling" (Lule, 2002, p. 277). Narrative analysis provides the tools for the researcher to break down and systematically examine the building blocks or elements of stories, thus it allows for a deep and detailed understanding of the articles sampled. Furthermore, Carey (2008) argues that news stories are dramatic representations of the real world. News stories are *stories* – they are narratives that represent real-world events, characters, causes, and effects.

The narrative analysis of the news articles in this thesis follows Foss's (2017) blueprint. The analysis involves two steps: (1), identifying the objective of the narrative; and (2), identifying the features of the narrative (Foss, 2017, p. 325). First, the objectives of the narratives are limited here, as the artefacts analysed are news articles, and the general objective of this medium is to inform or educate readers about real-world, current events. However, the articles may also have other, implicit objectives, such as downplaying the importance of events or the amount of corruption, or heightening emotions in the readers. Evaluating the objective of the narrative requires the identification of the author, audience, and the context of the story (Foss, 2017). This mode of narrative analysis can be filed under the categorical-content type identified by Lieblich et al. (1998). Here, the relevant sections of the text are selected, categories are defined based on their differing themes, the data are then assigned to one of these categories, and then conclusions are drawn from the results (Lieblich et al., 1998).

Furthermore, although there are numerous features of the narrative that can be identified, only those most relevant to narratives on corruption are used in this analysis. Such features include characters, events, types of narratives, and themes (Foss, 2017). These features are relevant to narratives on corruption, as they show how news outlets make sense of instances of corruption and present them to the audience. Through narrative analysis, this thesis identifies the relevant characters in stories on corruption, how these characters are framed and presented, what events are described and how they are described, what the relations between events and characters, and what the dominant or overarching theme of the narrative is. This should reveal if news outlets with different political orientations present the same story as a different narrative with different emphases on characters or events. Additionally, Prime Minister Orbán is directly connected to these corruption cases – István Tiborcz is his son-in-law, while Lajos Simicska was his childhood friend, and the public

procurements were/are run by the government (Előd, 2018), and Orbán personally visited Vladimir Putin in Moscow to sign the Paks II expansion agreement in 2014 (Index, 2014a), later deciding to designate the details of said agreement a state secret (Szentkirályi, 2015). As a final step, the researcher can see if an overarching story or *metastory* emerges from the narrative analysis. This is done by examining and comparing the identified narratives and seeing if there is a larger story that emerges (Berdayes & Berdayes, 1998). Identifying a metastory can also provide the researcher with insight into "the culture that produces the narrative" (Bishop, 2003, p. 120).

For the analysis, a deductive approach is used, per Gilgun's (2019) Deductive Qualitative Analysis (DQA) approach. Using such a deductive approach, concepts (such as sensitizing concepts per Blumer (1954)) and/or hypotheses are used at the beginning of the research. As this thesis is grounded in a review of relevant literature and theories, it is here where the research can begin. Gilgun (2019) also emphasises the practice of positive case analysis, referring to the process of finding data whose meanings could change or modify the theoretical assumptions and concepts used at the beginning of the research. Here, then, two main categories emerge from Foss's (2017) blueprint for narrative analysis, the objective of the narrative, and the features of the narrative. Subcategories are to inform, legitimise, shift blame, and critique, among others below the objectives category, while below the features are characters, events, temporal relations, causal relations, and themes. Already, then, some codes are deduced: antagonists or protagonists, themes of corruption, nepotism, of a bad government or a good one (see Appendix B for the complete codebook). Using a DQA approach, these categories can be revised if the positive case analysis yields results that contradict the original assumptions, thus the analysis does not suffer from being too rigid or predetermined.

3.5. Reflexivity

The following paragraph discusses the biases of the author. It is a section to inform the reader about the author and his biases that could negatively influence the objectivity of this thesis. As this thesis is qualitative in nature, it does not use a set of standardized methods, thus objectivity is difficult, if not impossible, to prove. Regardless, reflexivity

> means turning of the researcher lens back onto oneself to recognize and take responsibility for one's own situatedness within the research and the effect that it may have on the setting and people being studied, questions being asked, data being collected and its interpretation (Berger, 2013, p. 220)

The following section, then, provides a space for the author to reflect on his personal biases that are relevant to this thesis. This section was informed by articles on academic reflexivity by Agee et al. (2011), Berger (2013), Dodgson (2019), and Macbeth (2001).

The case study of the effect of corruption within the media on the reporting of corruption in Hungary has been chosen as a result of the author being Hungarian. The author has pre-existing knowledge of the culture, history, and socio-political situation in Hungary. As a Hungarian national, the author holds his own country to a higher standard. He thus takes a more critical stance concerning situations in Hungary which originates from his fondness for his country. The author wants what is best for his country and this is the main reason for the choice of topic – if one wants their country to improve, one must take a critical and analytical stance to understand what is wrong with it and what can be made better. One crucial aspect that the author finds wrong within Hungary is the level of corruption, both in general and within the media. The level of corruption in Hungary has been on an upwards trend ever since 2011 (Transparency International, n.d.) while the media has become ever more centralised in the hands of the ruling government – media pluralism is at high risk (Bátorfy & Szabó, 2021).

Another important point to address is the author's political and professional beliefs. Firstly, as an academic in the field of media studies, the author is predisposed to be critical of media products, media producers, and the system the media operate in. Secondly, as an individual who is an active participant in democracy and democratic processes, the reversal of democratic values in Hungary as a result of the Fidesz government's policies goes against the core beliefs of the author. This research, then, comes from a place of academic and personal interest in media processes, both on a macro and a micro scale, and from a genuine passion for the upholding of democratic values, both regarding the political landscape as a whole, and regarding the media, the press, and the people.

4. Results

This chapter presents the findings of the narrative analysis carried out on the sixty articles in the sample. The chapter is organised into two main sections as determined by the two topics, first are pools 1 and 2 relating to the Paks II case and second are pools 3 and 4 relating to Tiborcz and the Elios-Tiborcz case. The most dominant codes that emerged are presented, which are then followed by discussions of the meta-narratives identified within each pool. The quotes taken from the articles are all translated from Hungarian to English by the author.

4.1. *Nuclear energy is (sadly) here to stay* vs. *Nuclear is the future*

There was a stark contrast between the objectives of the narratives between the two pools regarding the Paks II case. In pool 1 (independent), the objective of the articles was mainly to inform (60%). In comparison, the main objective of the articles in pool 2 (pro-government) was to legitimise (30%) (see Table 2).

Table 2.

Objectives of the narratives (Paks II)

Pool	To critique	To encourage action	To inform	To legitimise	To praise
Independent (Pool 1)	4	1	12	0	3
% Total	*20.00%*	*5.00%*	*60.00%*	*0.00%*	*15.00%*
Pro-government (Pool 2)	4	4	11	12	9
% Total	*10.00%*	*10.00%*	*27.50%*	*30.00%*	*22.50%*

The articles in the first pool were mostly neutral, as the objectives of the narrative were mostly to inform the reader, with some articles' objectives being to critique. The articles mostly reported objectively on the current events regarding the Paks II project:

> According to the loan agreement, the Russian side will provide a state loan of up to EUR 10 billion to Hungary for the planning of Units 5 and 6 of the Paks Nuclear Power Plant. The amount of the credit line covers 80 per cent of the construction and commissioning costs, the remaining part will be provided by the Hungarian state from its own resources. (Origo, 2014b, para. 2)

Some articles critiqued the government and its plan for the expansion project:

> According to Energiaklub, the Hungarian state did not prove the return on the Paks II project, did not carry out detailed studies before the decision, did not take into account the risks properly, and did not analyse the market effects of the project and did not consider possible alternatives. (Origo, 2016, para. 1)

Comparatively, the articles in the second pool were more biased, with their main objective being to legitimise the Paks II project. This was done so through multiple different topics, such as the achieving of climate protection goals with the help of Paks II (Hárfás, 2019a), that nuclear energy is more reliable than renewables (Hárfás, 2019c), or that Paks II will provide long-term, cheap (Hárfás, 2019d), and reliable electricity:

> János Süli also talked about the fact that the current units will run at 90 per cent occupancy and the new units will be able to operate at 93 per cent occupancy. All this shows that in the future, the power plant will be able to operate economically and secure a significant part of the country's electricity supply. (Kovács, 2017, para. 3)

The mostly neutral nature of the articles in pool 1 is also reinforced by the type of characters that were most dominant, neutral characters, while antagonists and protagonists appeared less. This lines up with the objective of informing readers, as these articles were mostly reporting events in a factual manner. In comparison, the articles in pool 2 were more even in their distribution of types of characters, most were neutral, while protagonists and supporting protagonists appeared less, with antagonists appearing the least. There was a much larger difference in the numbers, however, in pool 1 compared to pool 2. The distribution of characters can be seen in Figure 1 below.

The most dominant neutral characters in pool 1 were Hungary, the European Union, and the Hungarian government. In comparison, the most dominant neutral characters in pool 2 were (Hungarian) Government ministers, and Russia (see Figure 2).

The slight difference in characters can be explained by the different current events the two pools focused on. Whereas the articles in pool 1 discussed the progress of the Paks II project, or the progress regarding legal procedures by the EU towards Hungary, articles in pool 2 mainly discussed press releases or conferences by government ministers (see Table 3). The difference could also be influenced by editorial choices – what events to discuss or not discuss.

Figure 1.

Types of characters by pool (Paks II)

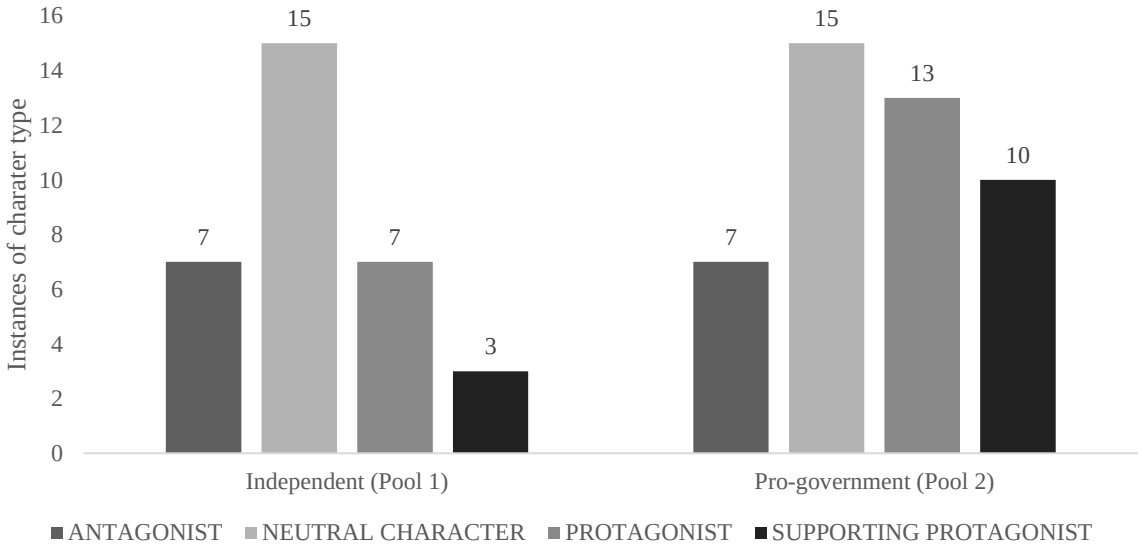
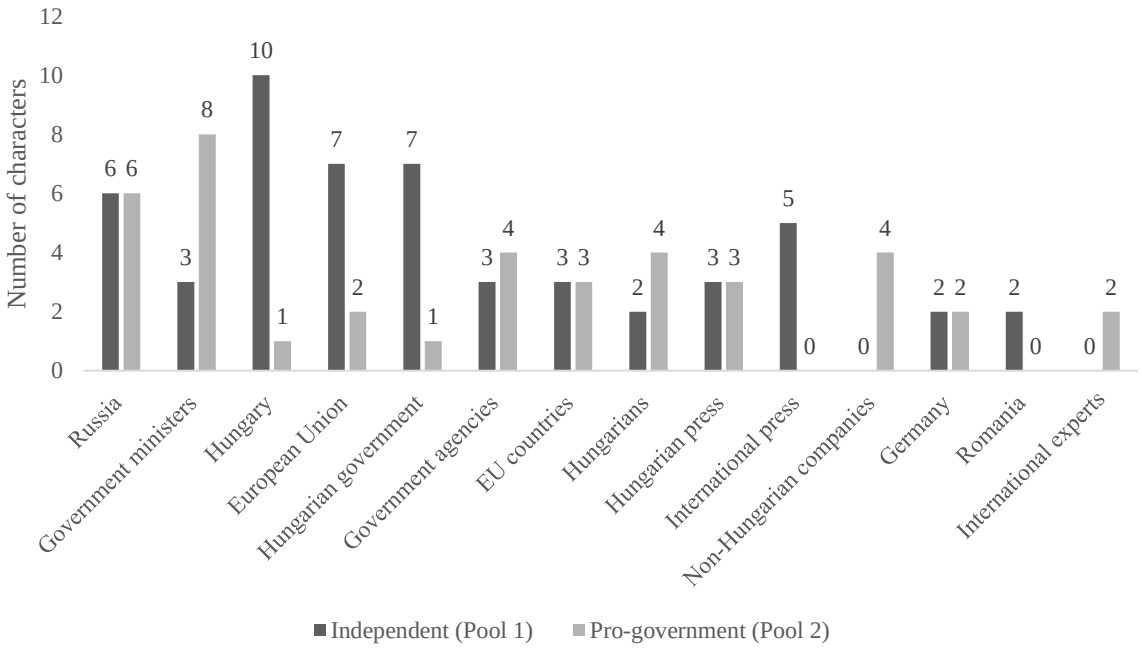


Figure 2.

Neutral characters by pool (> 2 mentions) (Paks II)



Furthermore, in pool 2 neutral characters also appeared in articles where the main objective was to legitimise. This is the case with Antal Kovács, for example, a government minister who gave an interview to the M1 television channel which *Origo* then reported on. Although his character is a neutral one, his words are used to legitimise the idea of nuclear energy:

> Antal Kovács emphasized that the nuclear power plant plays a key role in the country's security of [energy] supply, as it provides 33% of total Hungarian [energy] consumption, which means that it can supply the entire Hungarian population, hospitals and public utilities with electricity. Furthermore, through its reserves, the nuclear power plant will be able to supply the entire Hungarian population with electricity for two years in the event of an international conflict causing transport difficulties. (Origo, 2019a, para. 3)

Table 3.

Events discussed (> 2 mentions) (Paks II)

Event	Independent (Pool 1)	Pro-government (Pool 2)
Press conference / release	2	13
German energy details	0	2
Legal procedure progress	3	2
Paks II Progress	2	2
Minister discusses Paks II	0	2

A similar phenomenon could not be found in the articles of pool 1, when looking at neutral characters in articles with non-neutral objectives, such as to critique or to praise.

The antagonists of the narratives differed strongly (see Figure 3). Whereas in the articles in pool 1 the antagonists were the Hungarian government, government ministers, and the European Union – in pool 2 these were Paks critics, the European Union, and Germany. The protagonists meanwhile were *Energiaklub* (a Hungarian climate policy institute), the Hungarian opposition (such as Ákos Hadházy) and Hungary in pool 1, and Hungary, the Hungarian government, and Russia in pool 2 (see Figure 4). The supporting protagonists were international companies (such as DLR or Ecofys), and Russia in pool 1 (although the occurrence of supporting protagonists in pool 1 was negligible), and Hungarian companies (such as *KÉSZ Csoport*), Russia, European countries (such as France or Poland), and Hungarians in pool 2 (see Figure 5).

The most dominant theme identified in the articles in pool 1 was that of a negative view of the government. This theme appeared in 8 out of 15 articles in the pool. Comparatively, the most dominant theme in the articles in pool 2 was Paks II as a positive, which appeared in 10 out of 15 articles. The second most dominant themes were “us positive” (those affiliated or on the side of the government) in pool 1 (3 out of 15), and Paks II as

neutral and “us positive” in pool 2 (7 out of 15 for both themes) – see Figure 6 for all identified themes.

Figure 3.

Antagonists by pool (> 2 mentions) (Paks II)

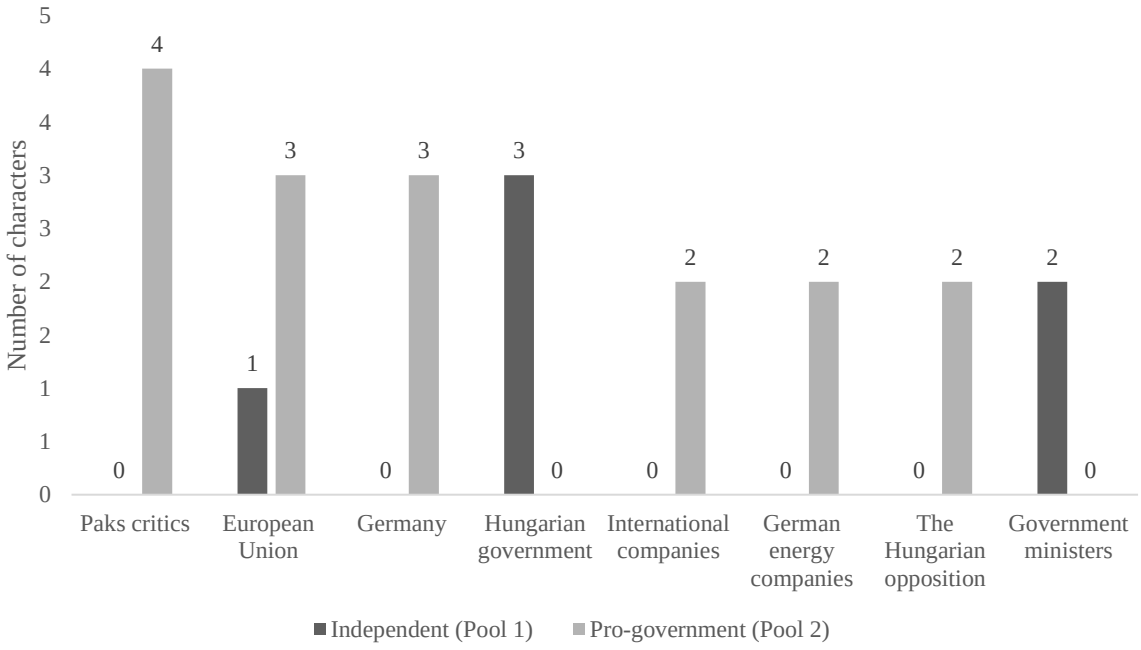


Figure 4.

Protagonists by pool (> 2 mentions) (Paks II)

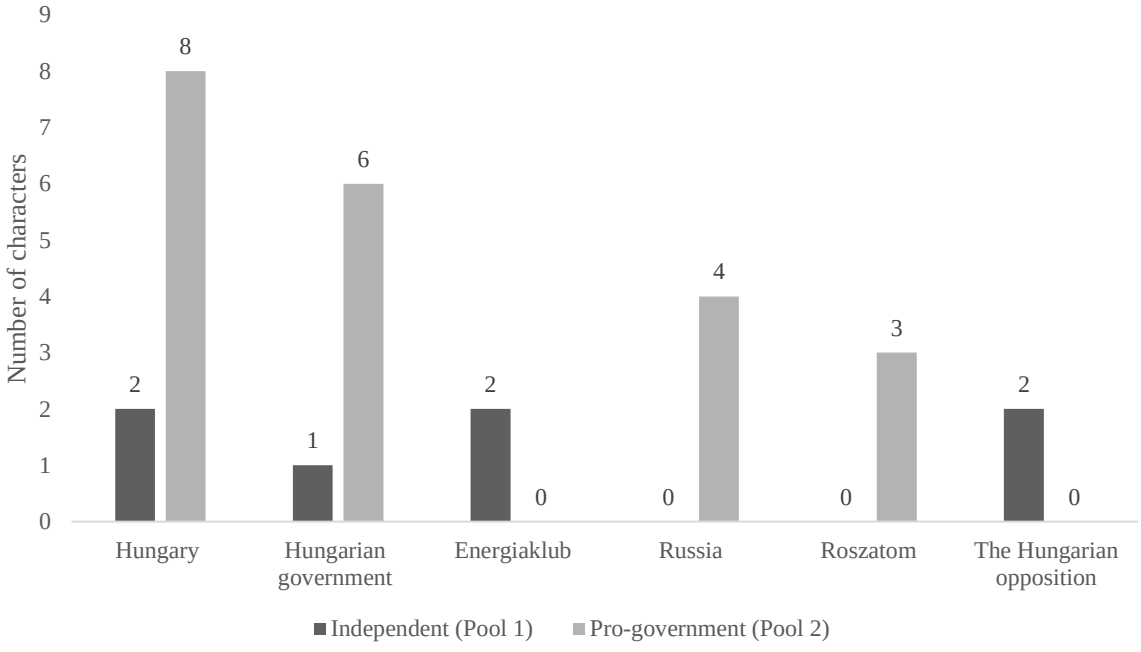


Figure 5.

Supporting protagonists by pool (> 2 mentions) (Paks II)

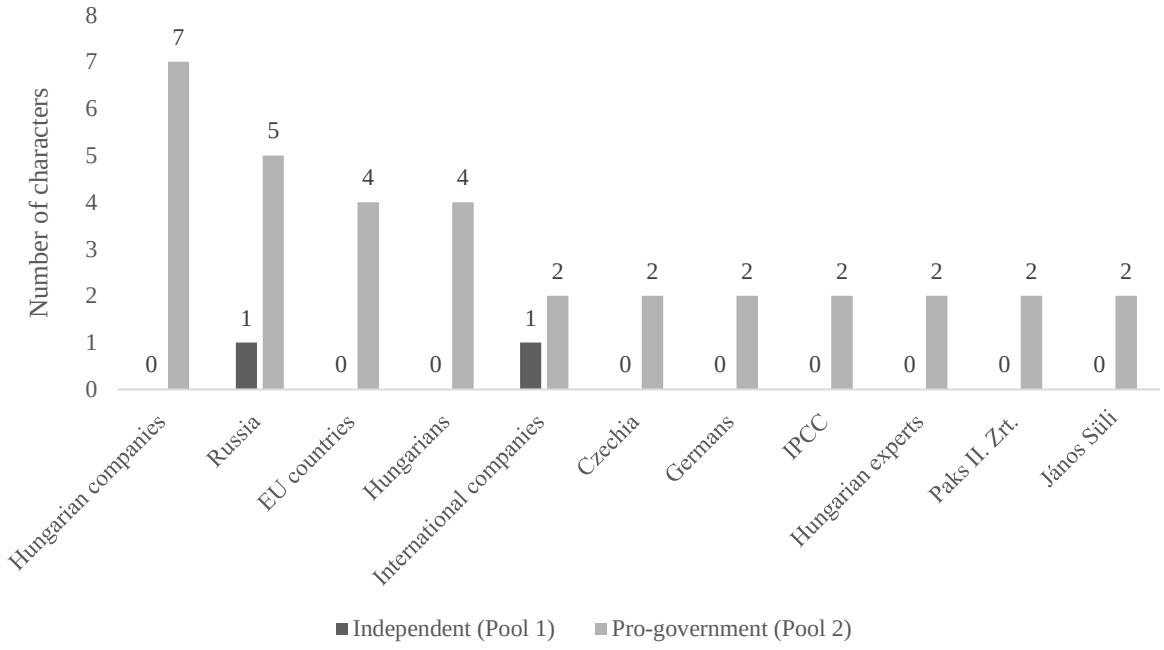
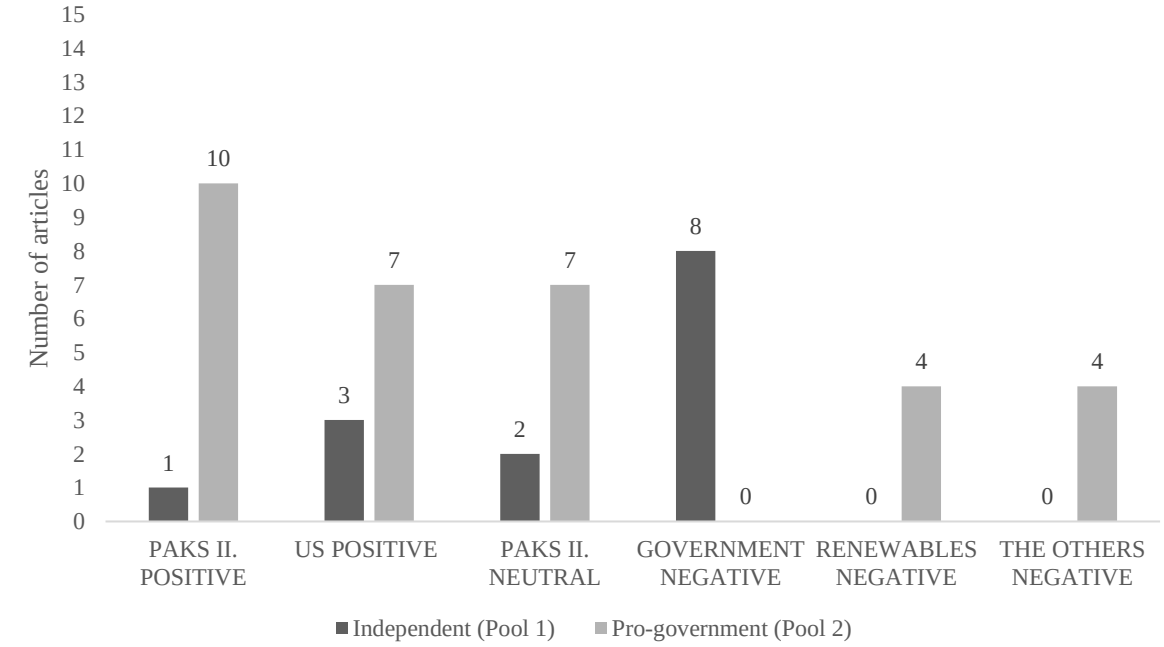


Figure 6.

Themes by pool (Paks II)



The articles in pool 1 presented the government in a negative light when they discussed the points of the critics of Paks II: “No preliminary studies have been carried out for the decision on the new Paks nuclear power plant” (Origo, 2014a, para. 1); or when they presented the issues of Paks II as identified by the EU: “Brussels has objected to the Paks expansion project. Infringement proceedings were launched against Hungary on Thursday for breaching EU rules on public procurement” (Kovács, 2015, para. 11). The government was also presented in a positive light, most often in articles that discussed a third party praising the government: “‘The Hungarian government is extremely committed to fulfilling the contracts,’ Sergey Kiriyenko said at the same meeting” (Origo, 2015, para. 2).

The articles in pool 2, meanwhile, presented the Paks II project in a positive light when discussing the need to reduce carbon emissions (Origo, 2018c), and the need for energy independence: “If the Paks II Nuclear Power Plant and other necessary power plants were not built, we could only rely on imports” (Hárfás, 2019d, para. 18); or the increase in energy consumption in Hungary:

> The main lesson of the new peak in consumption and [energy] system load, as well as in the ever-increasing demand for imported electricity, is that the construction of new domestic [nuclear] power plants is absolutely necessary to meet domestic electricity demands, increasingly frequent electricity consumption records, and to significantly reduce current electricity imports. (Hárfás, 2019b, para. 9)

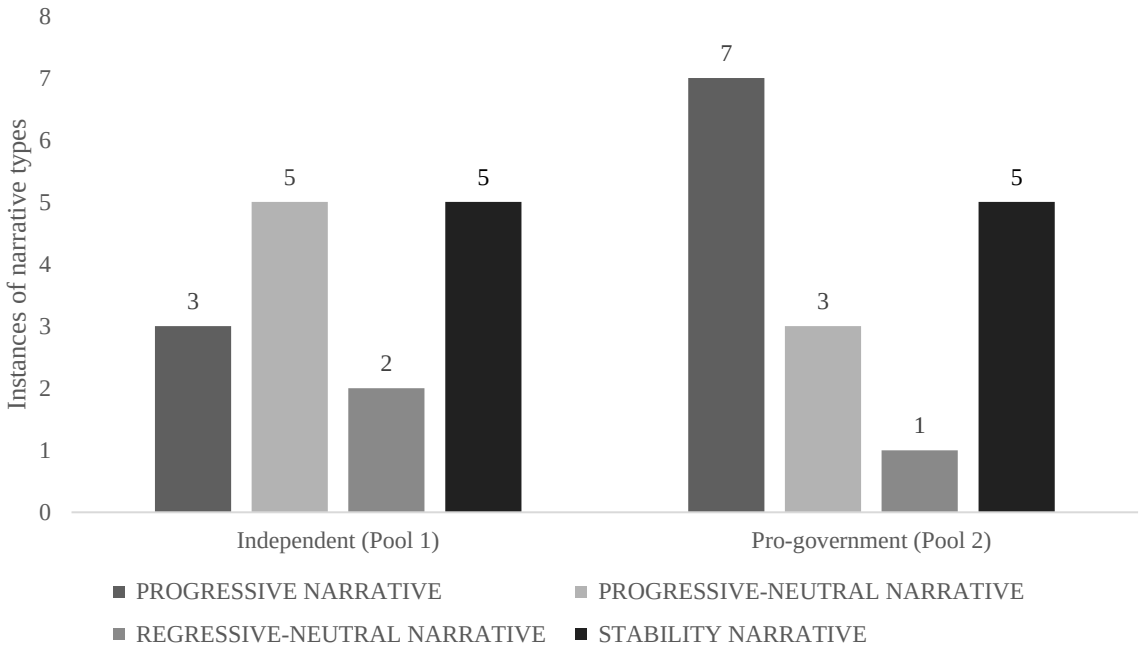
The Paks II project was also presented neutrally, mostly when discussing the progress of the project: “The minister spoke about the start of construction in Paks” (Origo, 2019b, para. 4); and “us” were also presented positively, for example when Hungary paid off the first instalment of its loan early: “Mihály Varga reminded that based on the 2014 Hungarian-Russian interstate loan agreement, the interest rate in the period of implementation of the Paks investment is 3.95 per cent, so significant interest savings can be achieved with prepayment” (Origo, 2018b, para. 3).

The most dominant types of narrative in pool 1 were the progressive-neutral and stability narratives (see Figure 7). This finding is in line with the other features and objectives of the articles in pool 1 outlined above – as the characters and objectives were mostly neutral, and the articles reported on current events, which were often concerning the progress of the expansion project. Stability narratives occurred when neutral characters were the focus of the narrative, and no noticeable positive or negative change occurred in the lives of these characters:

> ‘We offer good conditions and advanced technology. So, if they refused to cooperate, it would be detrimental to Hungary's national interests,’ Russian President Vladimir Putin said in a meeting with Sergei Kirienko, head of Rosatom, about the Paks expansion, the Russian TASS news agency reported. (Origo, 2015a, para. 1)

Figure 7.

Types of narrative by pool (Paks II)



Progressive-neutral narratives meanwhile occurred when the lives of neutral characters moved in a positive direction:

> MVM Paks II Atomenergoproekt and the Russian Joint-Stock Company Nizhny Novgorod Engineering Company on Tuesday signed three implementation agreements for two new 1,200-megawatt nuclear power plant units to be built in Paks. … According to the announcement, the Hungarian state concluded a favourable contract within the financial framework available for the project. (Origo, 2014a, para. 1, 3)

In comparison, the types of narratives in the articles in pool 2 were overwhelmingly progressive narratives (see Figure 6). Again, this is in line with the previous findings outlined above, such as the main objective identified in this pool of legitimising the Paks II project. Progressive narratives, then, most often appear when discussing the progress of the project:

> Rosatom's first deputy CEO is pleased with the progress of the Paks II project. As he said, there is active work in many areas, like the preparation of the technical documentation, or work related to the suppliers and the preparation and planning of the application for the installation permit. (Origo, 2017, para. 5)

The meta-narratives of the two pools were identified by taking into account the features and objectives of the individual narratives as outlined above. For pool 1, the articles were mostly focused on informing the readers of current events related to the Paks II project, while some aimed at criticising the government for the various issues around the project. The types of characters in these narratives are also along this line, most being neutral, while most of the antagonists identified were the Hungarian government itself or government ministers. The most dominant theme identified also lines up with the other aspects of the narratives, that being the portraying of the government in a negative light. Finally, the types of narratives also conform to this trend, the most dominant being progressive-neutral and stability narratives. The meta-narrative identified, then, was that of the unfavourable nature of the Paks II project for Hungary, a project that is bound to happen nonetheless. This meta-narrative is named *nuclear energy is (sadly) here to stay.*

For pool 2, the articles were mostly focused on legitimising the Paks II project. The types of characters identified were mostly neutral as articles focused on reporting press releases or conferences held by government ministers involved in the project, however, these narratives then focused on the main theme identified, which was the positive aspects of the project. Protagonists and supporting protagonists identified were Hungary itself, or Hungarian companies who would be involved in the project. The type of narrative most dominant in this pool aligns with the other findings, as the articles presented progressive narratives regarding the Paks II project. The meta-narrative identified, then, centred around how good nuclear energy is and how much it is needed for Hungary, and how, thanks to the responsible decisions of the Hungarian government, Hungary will become more energy independent and will head towards a green future. This meta-narrative is named *nuclear energy is the future.*

4.2. *The blinding lights of nepotism* vs. *Simicska, the oligarch, and Tiborcz, the benevolent*

There was a stark contrast between the objectives of the narratives between the two pools, similar to the difference regarding the previous topic. Discussing the Elios-Tiborcz case, the objectives of the articles in pool 3 (independent) were to inform (50%) and to critique (50%). In comparison, the main objective of the articles in pool 4 (pro-government)

was to critique (39.29%), while the objectives of informing and shifting blame followed closely behind (see Table 4).

Table 4.

Objectives of the narratives (Elios-Tiborcz)

Pool	To critique	To inform	To praise	To shift blame
Independent (Pool 3)	14	14	0	0
% Total	*50.00%*	*50.00%*	*0.00%*	*0.00%*
Pro-government (Pool 4)	11	8	3	6
% Total	*39.29%*	*28.57%*	*10.71%*	*21.43%*

The articles in pool 3 were neutral when the objectives of the narratives were to inform the reader. The articles mostly reported objectively on the current events regarding Tiborcz and Elios:

> The company owned by István Tiborcz, Elios Innovatív Zrt., won a total of 2.9 billion forints [7.31 million euros] worth of public procurement in 2014, of which 1.9 billion forints [4.79 million euros] worth of contracts were signed after István Tiborcz returned as owner in April. (Origo, 2014c, para. 2)

However, some articles critiqued the success of Tiborcz and his company, Elios, when the objectives of the narratives were to critique:

> In recent months, István Tiborcz's company has been able to win several public procurements where tenders have been issued for the modernization of public lighting: from Alsópáhok to Vác, Elios Zrt. is taking LED light sources almost everywhere. The company has been doing pretty well lately. (Origo, 2015b, para. 4)

Comparatively, the articles in pool 4 were less neutral, with their main objective being to critique, most often the Hungarian opposition: “The opposition only began to attack these programs after one of the construction companies became the one owned by the prime minister’s son-in-law. Interestingly, before that, these programs went smoothly and no one was interested” (Origo, 2018e, para. 6). Articles in this pool also informed, mostly about The European Anti-Fraud Office’s (OLAF’s) ongoing investigation into Elios (Origo, 2018e), and shifted the blame for the Elios scandal, away from Tiborcz and onto Simicska (Origo, 2018a).

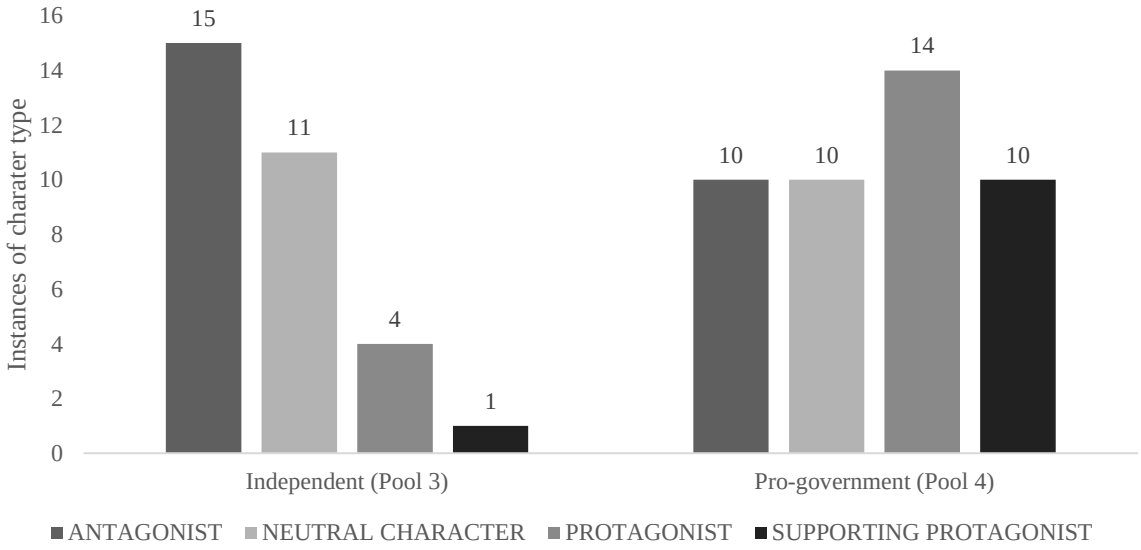
Contrary to the most informative nature of the narratives in pool 3, the types of characters most dominant were antagonists (see Figure 8). This seems contradictory at first sight, however, there is a reason for this result. The primary objective of most articles in this

pool is to inform the reader about the success of Tiborcz and Elios, however, this neutral, objective reporting on facts then presents Tiborcz as an antagonist (most often using the theme of nepotism, discussed below):

> Viktor Orbán's son-in-law's company is also getting business, and not an insignificant amount: Elios Zrt. has recently won 246 million forints [620 thousand euros] in EU money to modernize public lighting. István Tiborcz's company is installing thousands of modern luminaires in the country's Fidesz cities - often for billions. (Koncz, 2015, para. 3)

Figure 8.

Types of characters by pool (Elios-Tiborcz)



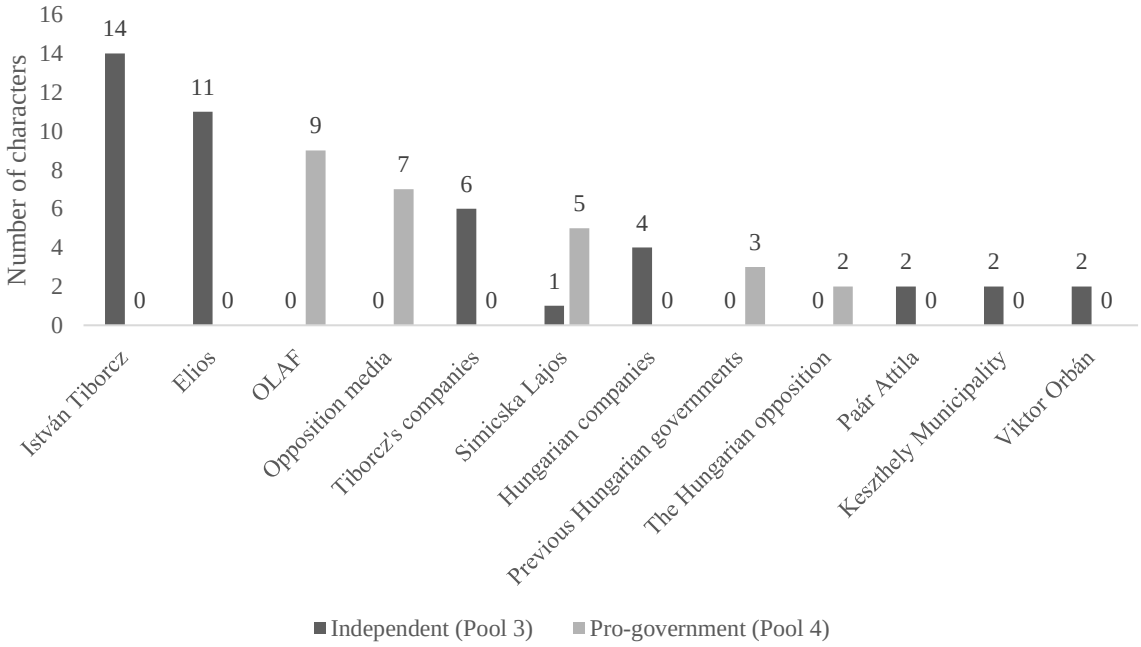
The paragraph above highlights the contradictory nature of the articles in pool 1: although they primarily inform the reader about events concerning Tiborcz and Elios, through the discussion of these events in the first place, and the way he is referred to, Tiborcz is perceived as an antagonist. In fact, of the antagonists identified in this pool, Elios and Tiborcz were the most dominant (see Figure 9).

In comparison, the articles in pool 3 were more evenly distributed between the different character types, although protagonists were the most popular type of characters (as seen in Figure 8 above). The main protagonist in this pool was István Tiborcz (see Figure 10) who was portrayed as such when articles shifted the blame of the Elios scandal away from him (Origo, 2018g), or when they described his financial success (Origo, 2020a) or his benevolence:

> The real estate development company BDPST Group [owned by Tiborcz] provided a donation of nearly 10 million forints [25 thousand euros] to the obstetrics department of St. Imre Hospital for the purchase of a ventilator and other medical instruments, and equipment for the care of newborns. The ventilator to be donated can provide essential help to ward staff in the event of a coronavirus infection, while other devices, including infusion pumps, a patient monitor, and a special crib, can help ensure the safe care of newborns. (Origo, 2020b, para. 1)

Figure 9.

Antagonists by pool (> 2 mentions) (Elios-Tiborcz)



The articles in pool 4 equally featured antagonists, neutral characters, and supporting characters (as seen in Figure 8 above). The main antagonists were OLAF, the opposition media, and Lajos Simicska; the neutral characters were OLAF, Hungarian authorities, the Hungarian press, and Hungarians (see Figure 11); while the supporting protagonists were István Tiborcz, Bálint Erdei, Hungarian healthcare workers and hospitals, Hungarian municipalities, and the Hungarian press (see Figure 12).

Figure 10.

Protagonists in pool 4 (> 2 mentions)

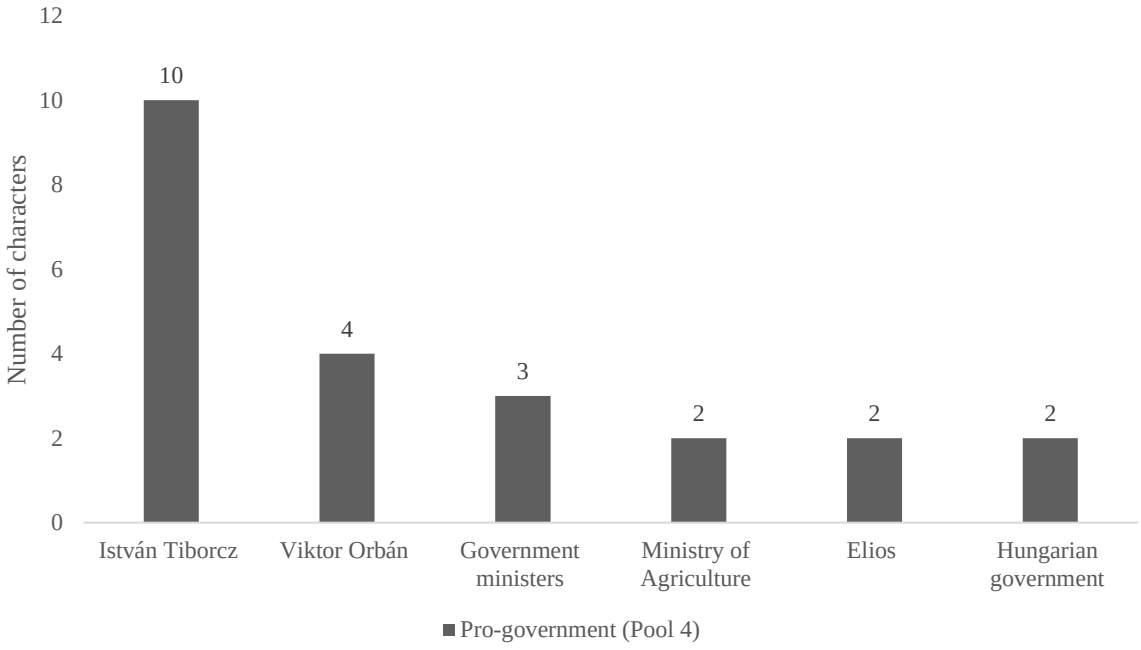


Figure 11.

Neutral characters in pool 4 (> 2 mentions)

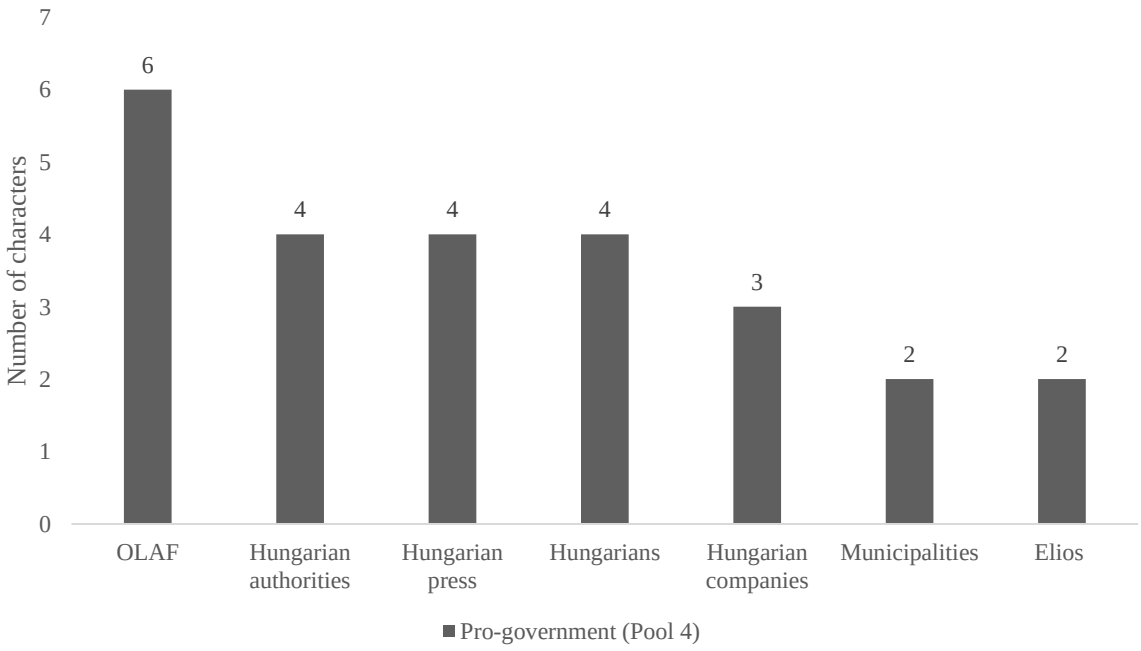
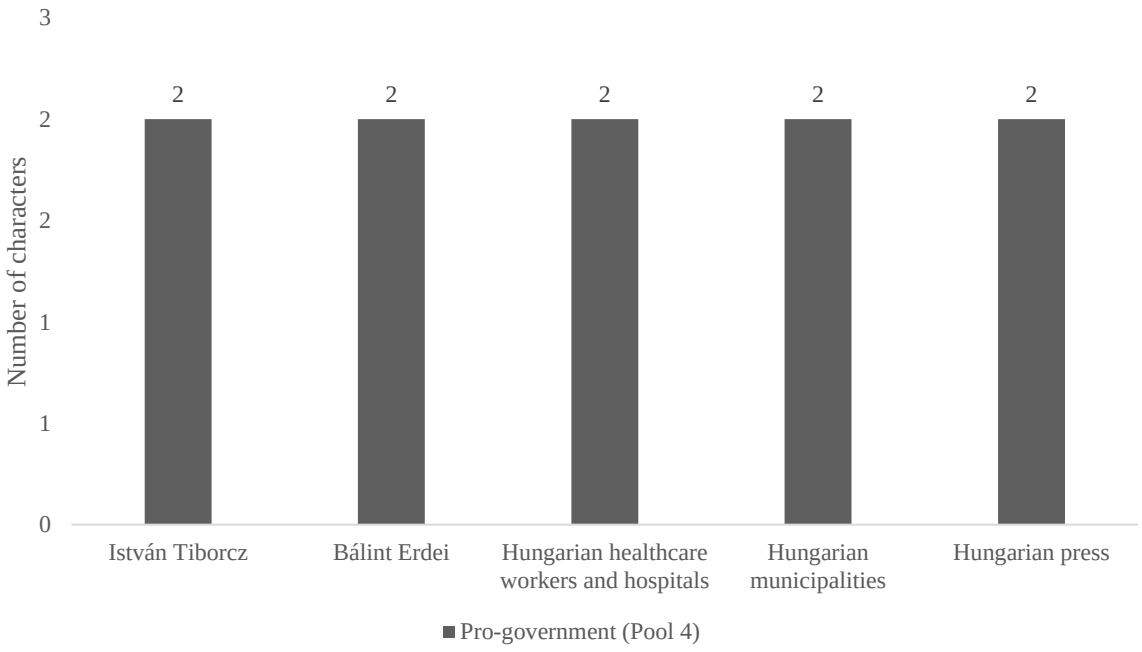


Figure 12.

Supporting protagonists in pool 4 (> 2 mentions)



The events discussed differed drastically, mostly because of the different current events occurring during the two different timeframes. The most dominant event discussed in pool 3 was someone winning a public procurement, whereas the most dominant event discussed in pool 4 was a person or group giving a press conference or publishing a press release. Furthermore, articles in pool 3 focused on Tiborcz selling his share in Elios, whereas articles in pool 4 discussed OLAF's investigation into Elios and the public procurement programmes as a whole, and opposition news outlets attacking Tiborcz and his family (see Table 5).

The most dominant theme identified in the articles of pool 3 was nepotism. The main antagonist, Tiborcz, was often also referred to as the son-in-law of Orbán, or the husband of Orbán's daughter – in all 15 of the articles analysed Tiborcz was referred to in connection to Orbán: "Viktor Orbán's son-in-law's company is also getting business, and not an insignificant amount" (Koncz, 2015, para. 3) or "Elios feels the loss of Orbán's son-in-law" (Károly, 2015). Other than nepotism, the second most dominant theme was Elios being successful (see Figure 13). Both themes were strongly connected to the events the articles reported on, as most were news of Elios winning public procurements (as seen in Table 5 above), which were always connected with the theme of nepotism or Tiborcz's success.

Table 5.

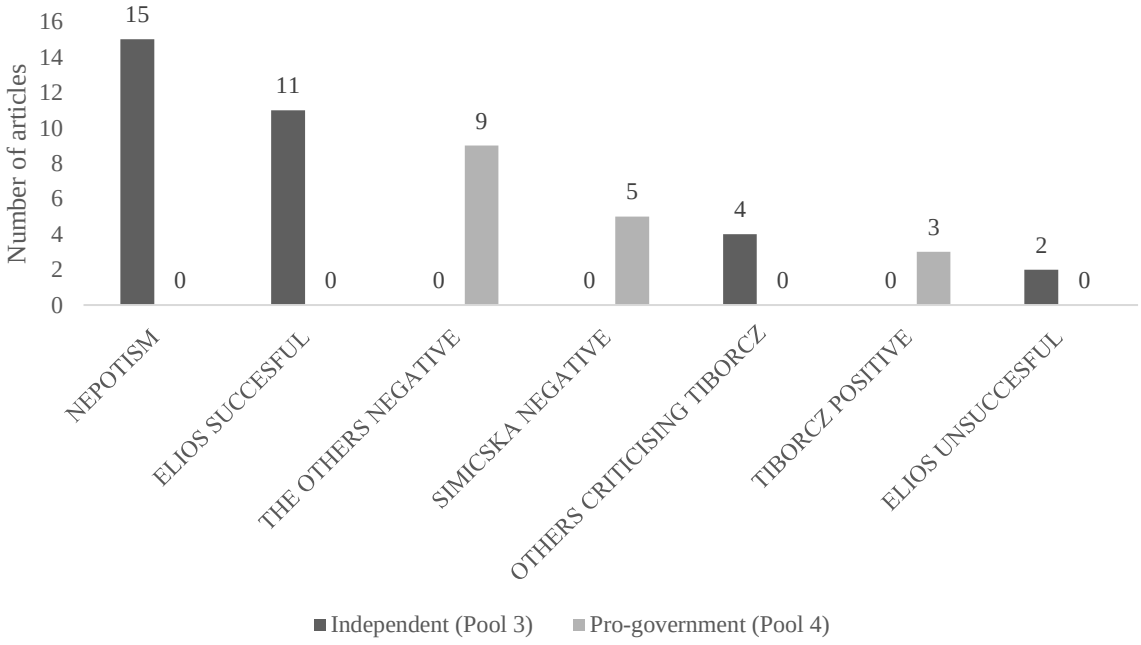
Events discussed by pool (> 2 mentions) (Elios-Tiborcz)

Event	Independent (Pool 3)	Pro-government (Pool 4)
Person wins public procurement	13	0
Press conference / release	1	7
Elios sold	5	1
OLAF investigating Elios	0	3
Opposition news attack	0	3
Corruption found	3	0
Legal procedure progress	3	0
Tiborcz donating	0	2

In comparison, the main theme in pool 4 was "others" negative, most often negatively referring to antagonists like the opposition media or OLAF (see Figure 13): "We hope that the 'independent', 'objective', 'professional' journalists, after dedicating dozens of writings to the subject of harming the reputation of the Prime Minister…" (Origo, 2018a, para. 7). Another dominant theme was Simicska being presented in a negative light: "Later, 'unfortunately,' it turned out that the scandal could be linked much more to their oligarch owner, Simicska, and his business associates" (Origo, 2018a, para. 1).

Figure 13.

Themes by pool (Elios-Tiborcz)



The most dominant type of narratives in pool 3 were regressive narratives (see Figure 14). This finding is in line with the other features and objectives of the articles in pool 3 outlined above – as the characters were overwhelmingly negative (antagonists) and objectives were mostly neutral or critical, and the articles reported on current events, which were often concerning the increasing wealth-accumulation of Tiborcz through public procurement wins:

> If we are already discussing the tender system, we would like to mention that already in April the company of István Tiborcz won three public procurements: Elios Zrt. can modernize the public lighting in Gyál and Alsópáhok, but it also won the works related to the track lighting of the Ferenc Szusza Stadium. Viktor Orbán's son-in-law won a total of 340 million forints [856 thousand euros] in the three tenders. (Kovács, 2015, para. 6)

Progressive narratives mostly occurred when articles discussed opposition parties' or politicians' legal procedures against Elios, Tiborcz, or Orbán: "LMP is filing a lawsuit against an unknown perpetrator in four public procurement tenders, in which a company owned by István Tiborcz, the son of Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, won" (Origo, 2014c, para. 5).

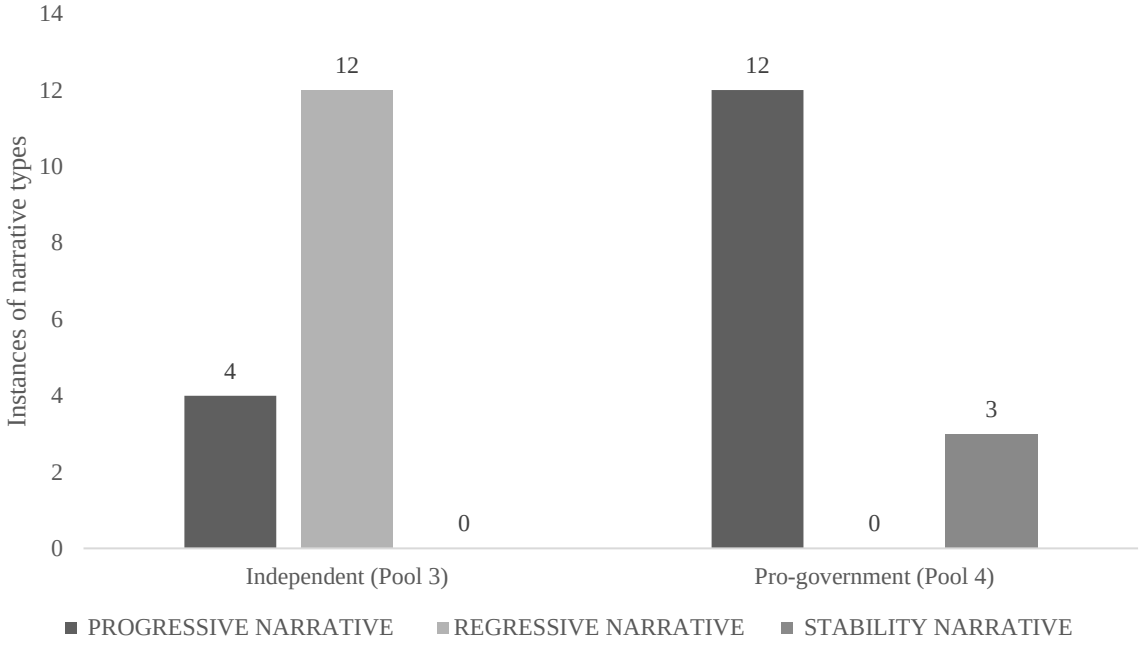
In comparison, the most dominant type of narratives in pool 2 were progressive narratives (see Figure 14). Again, this is in line with the other findings regarding these articles discussed above: the most dominant characters were Simicska, the antagonist, and Tiborcz, the protagonist, and the narratives regarding Simicska were negative, while those regarding Tiborcz were positive. Articles were always quick to point to the fact that Simicska owned Elios in the period that OLAF was investigating: "Lajos Simicska's flagship, Közgép Zrt., had a majority stake in Elios Innovatív Zrt. through another company during the period investigated by the European Anti-Fraud Office, OLAF" (Origo, 2018d, para. 1).

The meta-narratives of these two pools were also identified by considering the features and objectives of the individual narratives as outlined above. For pool 3, the articles were mostly focused on informing the readers of current events related to the Elios-Tiborcz case, while some aimed at criticising Tiborcz for his continuous wining of public procurement contracts. The types of characters in these narratives were mostly antagonists, most of them being Elios and Tiborcz. The most dominant theme identified lines up with the other aspects of the narratives, that being the portraying of Tiborcz through his connection to his father-in-law, Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, nepotism, and the excessive success of Elios. Finally, the types of narratives also conform to this trend, the most dominant being regressive

narratives. The meta-narrative identified, then, was that of the continuous financial success of Tiborcz which results from his familiar connection to the Prime Minister. This narrative is named *the blinding lights of nepotism*.

Figure 14.

Types of narrative by pool (Elios-Tiborcz)



For pool 2, the articles were mostly focused on criticising Simicska for his involvement in Elios and the opposition media for their negligence in the reporting on Simicska and Elios. The articles also focused on informing about the OLAF investigation, and on shifting the blame from Tiborcz onto Simicska. The types of characters identified were mostly antagonists, Simicska and the opposition media, and protagonists, Tiborcz. These articles focused on discussing press releases and conferences, updates regarding the OLAF investigation, and Tiborcz donating to medical institutions. The most dominant themes align with the findings above, representing the "others" and Simicska as negative. The most dominant type of narratives were progressive narratives, as Tiborcz was being vindicated. The meta-narrative identified in this pool of articles was about how Tiborcz was not involved in Elios during the period investigated by OLAF, instead, he is benevolent as seen by his donating to hospitals. The main culprit was Simicska, but the opposition media does not want people to know this. This narrative is named *Simicska, the oligarch, and Tiborcz, the benevolent*.

5. Conclusion and Discussion

The research question proposed in this thesis was the following: *how were Viktor Orbán and the ruling elite represented in the Hungarian news outlet* Origo *in articles related to the Elios-Tiborcz and Paks II scandals?* The thesis attempted to achieve two research objectives: 1, to analyse the narratives presented in online news outlets related to the two corruption scandals; and 2, to compare the narratives published by the independent *Origo* (pre-2017) and the "pro-government" *Origo* (post-2017). The following chapter serves as a conclusion to the thesis, it interprets and discusses the results presented in the previous chapter, provides an answer to the research question, discusses the theoretical implications of the research findings, identifies the limitations of the research, and it provides directions for future research. The discussion of the results follows the structure of the results section, first discussing the results relating to the Paks II case, then those relating to the Elios-Tiborcz case.

5.1. Discussion of results

The result of the narrative analysis of the articles regarding the Paks II case reveals a significant difference in the narratives presented by the two different pools of articles. The articles from *Origo's* independent period looked at the Paks II expansion project with a critical eye, however, they most often reported neutrally on current events regarding the project. In comparison, the articles of the pro-government *Origo* were much more biased in favour of the government, often heavily criticising those who disagreed with the government. The differing objectives of the narratives highlight the discursive power of the media as discussed by Street (2011) – the media's power to construct reality or suppress certain discourses. This can be seen in the way the articles discussed the need, or lack thereof, for the Paks II expansion in the first place. While the independent articles turned to independent organisations, such as Greenpeace, to discuss alternatives to the expansion of Hungary's sole nuclear power plant, or reported objectively on current events, the pro-government articles mostly acted as a conduit for the dissemination of the government's views about the project, most often reprinting the words of János Süli, the minister responsible for the expansion project, legitimising the expansion, and criticising the critics of the project. Here access power (Street, 2011) can be seen, as the media market is becoming ever more concentrated in the hands of the few, the variety of sources shrinks, thus instead of sources ranging from

Greenpeace to János Áder, the President of Hungary in pool 1, pool 2 reduces these sources to only government ministers.

The type of characters that appear in the two different pools further reinforces the rift in narratives rift: the mostly neutral characters in pool 1 put Hungary into the spotlight, examining whether the expansion would be a positive or negative occurrence for the nation, whereas the neutral characters in pool 2 (most often government ministers) act as a way of furthering the government's agenda, as the words of these ministers are never questioned or critiqued. Comparatively to its neutral nature in pool 1, Hungary appeared as the dominant protagonist in pool 2, as Paks II is always seen as a positive, according to these articles, Hungary is indeed moving forwards, not backwards. The themes of the narratives highlight another type of media power at play, one identified by Couldry and Curran (2003) – the media as a battleground for politics. In pool 1 this power is not visible as much, as the owner of *Origo* was Magyar Telekom, a subsidiary of Deutsche Telekom, it did not have strong political affiliations either way, which allowed for an independent news outlet to operate, which often criticised the government for the Paks II project. The articles in pool 2, however, highlight the political affiliation of the outlet, as here direct attacks can be seen against opposition politicians who criticise the project – it is no surprise that the main antagonists in this pool are Paks II critics. Whereas the independent *Origo* plays the role of an independent press, keeping the government in check, the pro-government *Origo* does just the opposite: it legitimises a project that by most independent accounts is a bad investment for the country, not just fiscally (Ondrich & Bebiak, 2016; Romhányi, 2014), but what such a long-lasting commitment to Russian financing would mean (especially in light of Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2014) (Index, 2014c; Nyilas, 2014a), and what has led to ever-increasing financial gains for those close to the government (Bakró-Nagy, 2022; Katus, 2021).

The five filters of the propaganda model by Herman and Chomsky (2008) are mostly present here. Ownership guided the sampling process in the first place, and its effects are visible here: the narrative regarding Paks II took a significant turn after the change in ownership in mid-2017. Advertising, although not present in this analysis, has been discussed elsewhere and has been shown that the government uses it as a tool for silencing or supporting different outlets among *Origo* (Bátorfy & Urbán, 2019). The dependence on sources, as discussed above, is a way for the outlet to control the narrative, as who gets their voice heard, and their ideas disseminated, matters. Flak is not present here, as it was only the news articles that were analysed, any outer pressure was not taken into consideration. The fifth filter of the prevailing ideology is present, although it is somewhat hidden: Viktor Orbán

has claimed that he is building an illiberal democracy in Hungary (Plattner, 2020; Polyák, 2019) – meaning that liberty is not institutionalised and the rule of law is weak, the leader of the country may do as he pleases (O'Neil, 2017). This can be seen in the way the project was agreed upon, without a public tender, with no input from the Hungarian population. This was discussed in pool 1, among protests against the way the agreement was signed and what the project would mean for the country, however, any such concerns – although discussed by other outlets – are absent from the pro-government *Origo*'s reporting. The situation is the same concerning possible corruption and clientelism around the project: discussed in pool 1, absent in pool 2, even though both have occurred during both time periods. As for the powerful – for the ruling elite – the Paks II project means profit: the Paks II contract outlines a minimum of 40% of Hungarian participation in the project, and these tenders have overwhelmingly favoured those close to the government, such as Lőrinc Mészáros, Orbán's childhood friend (Katus, 2021), or Attila Paár (Katus, 2021) (familiar from the Elios-Tiborcz case, as he purchased Elios after Tiborcz left the company). Additionally, Rosatom opened a new account at the bank-giant owned by Mészáros, after the closure of Sberbank in March of 2022 (Bakró-Nagy, 2022).

The articles regarding the Elios-Tiborcz case reveal a similar rift in narratives to the Paks II articles. The independent articles were more critical than the independent articles in the Paks II case, which can perhaps be explained by corrupt practices being more evident in the former Elios-Tiborcz case. Although neutral and objective reporting remained, these articles accounted for half of the narratives, the other half's objectives being to critique. The pro-government articles on the other hand were also critical, although not of the same persons involved: whereas the independent articles critiqued Orbán and Tiborcz, the pro-government articles targeted the previous governments of Gyurcsány and Bajnai, the opposition media, and Simicska. Here, media power as described by Couldry and Curran (2003) – media as a battleground for politics – is highly visible, as the reason for the shifting of the blame of the scandal onto Simicska was his and Orbán's public fallout. Once, close friends, the two had a highly public falling-out in 2015 (Jámbor, 2016), after which Simicska became a political outcast, and his news outlets were forced to close down after the taps of government advertising had run dry (Mérték Médiaelemző Műhely, 2018). Although these articles are clear attempts at shifting the blame of the scandal away from Orbán's son-in-law and onto the disgraced Simicska, the truth perhaps lies somewhere in the middle. As *Index* has reported, Tiborcz and Simicska were both key figures in Elios during the period of financial prosperity in the company's life (Előd, 2018). It is perhaps a shortcoming of the independent *Origo* that

it did not consider Simicska along with Tiborcz as a key figure in this corruption case, on the other hand, the pro-government *Origo* did not consider Tiborcz to have played a role in the case and shifted the blame purely onto Simicska.

Along these lines, the pro-government *Origo* also vilified OLAF, claiming that the investigation into Elios is politically charged. This aligns with the Orbán government's anti-EU stance which has permeated the government's political communication and strategy (Tidey, 2022), as highlighted in the "Stop Brussels" campaign for example (Byrne, 2017; European Commission, 2017). Interestingly, the narrative concerning OLAF went through multiple changes: first, it was described as a politically motivated investigation, later OLAF was criticised for not investigating Simicska, and then OLAF's claims were rebutted by another company involved in the scandal, suggesting that the organisation did not care about the truth, and finally OLAF and its report – details of which appeared in the Hungarian media in 2018, (Kerner, 2018) – completely disappeared from *Origo*'s reporting. Again, this highlights the media's power to suppress certain discourses and promote others – as discussed by (Street, 2011). It can even be seen in the number of articles that were collected before the random sampling took place: compared to the 51 articles collected from the independent period of *Origo*, only 20 were collected from the pro-government period. Additionally, the distinct drop in reporting is not caused by a lack of events regarding this case: the then independent outlet *Index* consistently reported on events regarding Elios throughout 2018 and 2019, with reporting in that outlet drying up in 2020, potentially as a result of its loss of independence after being purchased by individuals with ties to the government (Borbás, 2020). Other, still independent outlets, however, have continued reporting on the scandal: both *444.hu* and *24.hu* have constant reporting throughout 2020, 2021, and 2022 (24.hu, n.d.; 444.hu, n.d.) on notable events, such as the publication of the OLAF report in 2022 (D. Kovács & Vitéz, 2022).

Another rift in the pool of articles concerns the theme of nepotism. Whereas Tiborcz's connection to the Prime Minister permeates all the independent articles, the pro-government articles rarely mention this connection, never in a negative way. This is another example of the media's agenda-setting power (Street, 2011). Whereas an independent outlet has the power to keep (or at least try to) the government in check, after its loss of independence, *Origo* did not continue with the nepotism narrative. The independent *Origo* exposes corruption through its articles, the pro-government *Origo* hides the corruption. For any independent outlet, nepotism involving the Prime Minister would be – and should be – major news. When an outlet keeps silent on such an issue, its independence can be called into

question. Instead of nepotism what we find is the type of political battle, discussed above, that attempts to shift blame and to bring down others, those who are not favourable to the government, and thus the outlet.

Overall, one main pattern emerges from the results of the narrative analysis of both corruption cases: there is a clear and significant difference in the narratives between independent and pro-government articles. Such a strong shift in narratives can be explained by the change in ownership of *Origo* – again, concerning media power. As Freedman (2014) argues, issues regarding media power arise when media control is combined with political power. This is exactly the case with *Origo* when the outlet was purchased in the middle of 2017 by Ádám Matolcsy – son of György Matolcsy, the Minister of National Economy and the head of the Hungarian Central Bank, called his "right-hand" by Orbán (Than & Dunai, 2013) – allegedly using taxpayer money for the transaction (Farkas, 2017). In 2018, another ownership change further solidified *Origo* as a pro-government outlet: the newly created Central European Press and Media Foundation (KESMA) – headed by Gábor Liszkay, a close ally of Orbán – consolidated almost 500 media outlets already friendly to the government (Brogi et al., 2019). After becoming captured by the government, the outlet, then, used its power to construct a reality more favourable for the ruling elite, suppress discourses and narratives that are unfavourable to the elite, and fight the political battles of its owners.

This case perfectly illustrates the state of the Hungarian media system. Hungary falls into the Politicized Media model of Dobek-Ostrowska (2015), characterised by low democratic standards (illiberal democracy as claimed by Orbán), a high politicisation of public service media (discussed by Polyák (2019) and Bajomi-Lázár (2013), among others), and a high level of political parallelism (in Hungary's case through the tools of government advertising, and media consolidation, as exemplified by KESMA). It is also important to consider international factors when examining national media systems (Mihelj & Downey, 2012). In Hungary, there has been a steep decline in foreign media ownership (as discussed by Polyák (2015), Simon and Rácz (2017), and Griffen (2020), among others), which has resulted in less foreign influence. Furthermore, as state advertising has rapidly increased overall (Mérték Média Monitor, n.d.), the share of state advertising in individual news outlets has also grown (Bátorfy & Urbán, 2019), often accounting for over 50% of an outlet's advertising income (Bátorfy, 2020; Mérték Médiaelemző Műhely & Kardos, 2021), in turn reducing the space for advertisers other than the state, thus reducing foreign advertising as well. Foreign media influence, then, is decreasing, while the influence of the state is

increasing, which then results in a distortion of narratives presented in news media influenced by the state.

State advertising is strongly connected to clientelism in the media: private media owners rely on political connections for government advertisements, contracts, and licences (Hallin & Mancini, 2004). Although Hallin and Mancini (2004) argue that appointments based on political loyalty occur within the realm of public media, recently, in Hungarian private media a different type of "appointment" has occurred: the ownership rights of over 470 pro-government news outlets were donated to KESMA, the pro-government foundation headed by a close political ally of Orbán, Gábor Liszkay (Brogi et al., 2019). The donating of the outlets occurred simultaneously, thus coordination between all parties is highly likely. Furthermore, after the Competition Authority was notified of the unprecedented size of the merger, the government issued a decree declaring the merger a matter of national strategic interest, thus circumventing the authority of the Competition Authority in this matter (Brogi et al., 2019). The media owner (client), then, provides their political support for the government (patron), which manifests in favourable coverage, the likes of which were evident in the representation of the two corruption cases analysed in this thesis.

Furthermore, Hallin and Papathanassopoulos (2002) argue that in clientelist societies genuine reporting can be considered by politicians as "intrusions into public affairs" (p. 189). This is exactly what *Origo* argued in one of its articles about Tiborcz's role in Elios: "The harassment campaign, therefore, has lost its purpose. Of course, they [opposition journalists] will never give up, as the real goal of the campaign is to attack Viktor Orbán, through his family" (Origo, 2018f, para. 5). For *Origo*, the reporting of independent outlets on Tiborcz's involvement in the Elios scandal amounts to harassment, not genuine reporting. This ties into another point discussed by Hallin and Papathanassopoulos (2002) and Bajomi-Lázár (2019): the erosion of ethical journalism in a clientelist media system. *Origo*'s reporting about the Elios scandal is characterized by personal attacks on Simicska and his associates and on independent news outlets, blatantly partisan reporting in support of the Fidesz government and opposing the previous governments, and a sense of disregard for objective facts that would show the ruling elite in a bad light. It appears as though the state is making a return on its investment in news media, as negative discourses about the government and the ruling elite are silenced, in turn, discourses attacking their political opponents and critics are plentiful.

Lastly, then, the output of the pro-government *Origo* can be looked at as a type of propaganda. Referring to Ellul's (1965) definition, one can identify a set of methods

(clientelism, corruption) by an organisation (the ruling elite, Fidesz) whose goal is t influence a mass of individuals (Hungarians, voters) to take action (vote, show support). The group does this through psychological manipulation, which in this case can be analogous to the suppressing or prioritising of certain discourses, relying on the vilifying of individuals or organisations, and absolving ones from any blame. The propaganda of the ruling elite as seen in this thesis is political (as most of the discussion is centred around politics), integrative (promoting unity through the Paks II project), agitative (inciting hatred against OLAF and Simicska in the Elios case), vertical (the propaganda originates from the top), rational (using facts to justify the Paks II project and to shift the blame away from Tiborcz), and irrational (Paks II positioned as of national importance for all Hungarians). The propaganda from *Origo* is continuous in the case of the Paks II project as is still ongoing to this day, however, discussion of the Elios-Tiborcz case has ceased, as it appears it is easier to silence the narrative than to shift it, in this case at least. Ellul's three notions regarding truth and propaganda all appear here as well: *Origo* has (1) argued that the criticism of Paks II not being profitable is not true, however, independent sources claim otherwise, although such calculations are highly difficult to carry out; (2), silenced any discussion about Tiborcz's involvement in Elios after a certain period, even though before it claimed Tiborcz had nothing to do with the scandal; and (3) presented Tiborcz's involvement in Elios as negligible, as he was never the managing director in the company, which implies that direct control over the company is the issue, and not his involvement in the first place, as the son-in-law of the Prime Minister.

This thesis set out to find an answer to how Viktor Orbán and the ruling elite were represented in *Origo*'s articles relating to the Paks II and Elios-Tiborcz corruption cases. The two research objectives were to analyse the narratives presented in the articles and to compare the narratives of the independent and the pro-government *Origo*. The results show that, overall, in the independent articles the ruling elite and Viktor Orbán were presented in a negative light: they were implicated in corruption scandals, criticised for acting in a non-democratic manner, and exposed as active participants in enabling nepotism, clientelism and corruption. The pro-government articles meanwhile presented Viktor Orbán and the ruling elite in a positive light: they were praised for being responsible, presented as protectors of Hungary's and Hungarians' best interest, and depicted as innocent and uninvolved in corrupt practices.

5.2. Implications of findings

This thesis set out to fill a gap in research relating to the effects of media corruption on the representation of corruption. The news outlet as the source of these articles, *Origo*, is a news outlet that has transitioned from being independent to being pro-government as a result of various corrupt and clientelistic practices. The ownership change resulted in a clear transition from objective reporting to heavily biased reporting on corruption cases involving the ruling elite and Viktor Orbán. The results of the narrative analysis show a clear difference in the narratives presented regarding the individuals and groups connected to the corruption cases, the same groups and individuals who are connected to the corruption of *Origo* in the first place. Whereas before clientelism and corruption affected the news organisation it provided objective reporting on clientelism and corruption, after it lost its independence, the outlet kept silent on such issues or shifted the conversation away from such issues. The results further indicate the various powers of the media identified by scholars like Couldry (2000), Couldry and Curran (2003), Freedman (2014, 2015), and Street (2011), the existence of the propaganda filters of Herman and Chomsky (2008), and the contemporary relevance of Ellul's (1965) notions regarding propaganda. Furthermore, this case illustrates the relevance of Hungary's classification in the Politicized Media model of Dobek-Ostrowska (2015) and the existence of clientelism within the media (Hallin & Mancini, 2004; Hallin & Papathanassopoulos, 2002).

5.3. Limitations and directions for future research

There are several limitations, however, of the research carried out in this thesis which can be resolved in future research. Firstly, *Origo* was used as a sole source of articles about corruption cases, which does not necessarily indicate a wider pattern of reporting. Further research could include more news outlets as sources: the online news outlet *Index* recently lost its independence in a similar fashion to *Origo*, thus it could be a potential candidate for similar research. Researchers could also compare not only the reporting of one outlet in two states of independence but multiple news outlets in differing states of independence. Furthermore, although the two corruption cases selected as topics of articles are of great relevance and importance to Hungarian society, the selection of different corruption cases could yield different results. Researchers could select other corruption cases, either using the extensive source of corruption cases involving the government by Civitas Intézet (2018) or by a completely different method. Another criterion for the sampling of corruption cases could be the involvement of EU funds; as seen in the Elios-Tiborcz case, the

EU does investigate and fine countries misappropriating EU funds, which has been an established trend in Hungary (Zalán, 2020). The research was also limited by the number of articles analysed in the periods defined, as 15 articles per pool amount to about one article per two months. This could be resolved by analysing more articles or by tightening the period in which the articles are collected. Additionally, *Origo* is an online news outlet, and although popular in Hungary, television consumption is still a central activity for Hungarians (Bajomi-Lázár, n.d.). Researchers could examine the representation of these corruption cases in television news reports, as TV channels have also been affected by the government's media capture strategy (Polyák, 2019). Furthermore, this research did fully not consider the role of journalists in the representation of these corruption cases. Some differences are apparent, such as the seeming lack of individual authors credited in the pro-government articles compared to the more open nature of the independent articles. However, other research could consider forces affecting journalists and objective journalism, such as censorship, soft-censorship, self-censorship, job security, financial security, or work environment, among others.

Total words: 18,554

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Appendix A

Document Output Report

Project: Master Thesis

Report created by Martin Hadobás on 31/05/2022

Document Report – Grouped by: Document Groups

All (60) documents

Pool 1 (Paks II - independent)

15 Documents:

1 2014-01-30 - Durva takarékoskodással megúszhatnánk az atomot

2 2014-01-31 - Az Együtt-PM megszállta a fejlesztési minisztérium portáját

3 2014-02-27 - Nyilvánosak az EU észrevételei Paksról

4 2014-06-23 - Energiaklub vizsgálat nélkül döntöttek Paks 2-ről

5 2014-06-23 - Jóváhagyta a parlament az orosz-magyar hitelmegállapodást

6 2014-11-18 - Megvizsgálják a Paks II. leendő helyét

7 2014-12-09 - Három szerződést írtak alá Paks II.-ről

8 2015-02-19 - A fideszes expolgármester jól járthat a paksi bővítéssel

9 2015-03-13 - Navracsics Tibor újból a paksi bővítésről beszélt

10 2015-03-31 - Moszkva nem akar politikai befolyást szerezni Magyarországon

11 2015-05-05 - Putyin - A magyar-orosz együttműködés nemzeti érdek

12 2015-11-22 - Az Alkotmánybíróság és Brüsszel is keresztbe tett a kormánynak

13 2016-02-15 - A románok támogatják a paksi bővítést

14 2016-02-16 - Paks II. az Európai Bizottsághoz fordult az Energiaklub

15 2017-03-08 - Paksi bővítés Victor Ponta gratulált Orbán Viktornak

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Pool 2 (Paks II - pro-gov)

15 Documents:

16 2017-10-05 - 2020-ban kezdődhet az új paksi blokkok építése

17 2017-11-07 - Paks II. beruházás - lehívják az orosz hitelt, kifizetik az első tíz fővállalkozói számlát

18 2017-11-20 - 2020 után állítják be a paksi atomerőmű új blokkjait

19 2017-11-20 - Több mint negyven százalék lehet a magyar beszállítói arány a Paks II.-ben

20 2018-02-06 - Előtörleszti Magyarország a paksi hitelt

21 2018-06-28 - Klímavédelem csak Paks bővítésével tudunk teljesíteni

22 2019-01-10 - Megint megdőlt a magyar villamosenergia-fogyasztási rekord

23 2019-02-21 - Egyre inkább felértékelődik a nukleáris energia a világon

24 2019-04-11 - Orosz rulett német módra

25 2019-05-23 - Európára és a világra csak az atommal vár zöld jövő

26 2019-06-20 - Megkezdődött a Paks II. Atomerőmű felvonulási épületeinek építése

27 2019-09-19 - Süli János A növekvő energiaigény miatt szükség van a Paks II.-re

28 2019-10-09 - Paks Magyarország energiaszíve

29 2019-11-06 - Süli János A legkorszerűbb blokkok épülnek meg a Paks II. projekt keretében

30 2019-11-19 - Áder János Magyarország 2050-re klímasemlegessé válhat

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Pool 3 (Tiborcz - independent)

15 Documents:

31 2014-12-21 - Milliárdos üzleteket szerzett Orbán Ráhel férje

32 2015-03-05 - A DK tovább üti a kikötőt, amit Orbán veje vásárolt

33 2015-03-05 - Orbán veje visszautasítja Juhász Péter vádjait

34 2015-03-07 - A héten véget ért a szocializmus

35 2015-03-07 - Vácon is Orbán vejének a cége nyert

36 2015-04-18 - Orbán, Gyurcsány vagy Bajnai miatt nem ad pénzt Brüsszel

37 2015-05-14 - Tiborczéknak nem volt ellenfele Siklóson

38 2015-05-19 - Tiborczék félmilliárdért kaptak munkát Cegléden

39 2015-05-29 - Orbán Viktor veje és a Várkert Bazár

40 2015-05-30 - Majdnem félmilliárd forintot kaszáltak Tiborczék

41 2015-06-25 - Tiborcz nélkül is tud nyerni az Elios

42 2015-07-07 - Balatonfüredet még bevette Orbán Viktor veje

43 2015-09-25 - Az Elios megérzi Orbán Viktor vejének elvesztését

44 2015-11-02 - A bazár és a stadion mellett jól húz a LED-biznisz is

45 2015-12-05 - Visszavont zsidózás és tömeges felmondás

Pool 4 (Tiborcz - pro-gov)

15 Documents:

46 2018-01-12 - OLAF-vizsgálat a közvilágítási programot a Gyurcsány-Bajnai kormányok találták ki

47 2018-01-15 - Szél Bernadett is Soros érdekeit szolgálja

48 2018-01-20 - A Közgépé volt az Elios az OLAF által vizsgált időszakban

49 2018-01-20 - Ahol Tóth Marianna, ott van mindig a háttérben főnöke, Simicska Lajos - az Eliosban is

50 2018-02-08 - Az Elios a vizsgált időszakban Simicska Lajos cége volt

51 2018-02-09 - Tiborcz István soha nem volt az Elios ügyvezetője

52 2018-02-17 - A Fidesz harcolni fog az ENSZ migrációs csomagja ellen

53 2018-02-20 - Aki bírálja a Stop Sorost, megkérdőjelezi a kormány döntési jogosultságát

54 2018-03-02 - A Tungsram cáfolja az OLAF-ot

55 2018-03-17 - Budai Gyula Czeglédy fizethette az MSZP 2014-es kampányát

56 2018-11-09 - Ismét lebukott a 24 nevezetű balliberális álhírgyár

57 2018-11-19 - Újabb csúnya lebukás a sorosista álhírgyárnál

58 2020-03-19 - Tiborcz István lélegeztetőgépeket vett az Uzsoki kórháznak

59 2020-04-07 - Lélegeztetőgépet és orvosi műszereket adományozott a Szent Imre Kórháznak a BDPST Group

60 2020-04-22 - Értékesítené Appeninn-részesedését a BDPST

Appendix B

Codebook

Code		Code description
Features of the narrative		
	Characters	
	ANTAGONISTS ANTAGONISTS: Attila Paár ANTAGONISTS: Bálint Erdei ANTAGONISTS: Csaba Czeglédy ANTAGONISTS: Elios ANTAGONISTS: European Union ANTAGONISTS: Foreign investors ANTAGONISTS: Gazprom ANTAGONISTS: German energy companies ANTAGONISTS: Germany ANTAGONISTS: Government ministers ANTAGONISTS: Government ministers' families ANTAGONISTS: Hungarian companies ANTAGONISTS: Hungarian government ANTAGONISTS: International companies ANTAGONISTS: István Tiborcz ANTAGONISTS: Keszthely Municipality ANTAGONISTS: Lajos Simicska ANTAGONISTS: OLAF ANTAGONISTS: Opposition media ANTAGONISTS: Paks critics ANTAGONISTS: Previous Hungarian governments ANTAGONISTS: Ráhel Orbán ANTAGONISTS: Romanian government ANTAGONISTS: The Hungarian opposition ANTAGONISTS: Tiborcz's companies ANTAGONISTS: Viktor Orbán	Character(s) that are described in a negative way, who are the "bad guys" of the narrative.
	NEUTRAL CHARACTERS NEUTRAL CHARACTERS: a laikusok NEUTRAL CHARACTERS: a műszaki ellenőr NEUTRAL CHARACTERS: a világítástervező NEUTRAL CHARACTERS: ajánlatkérők NEUTRAL CHARACTERS: az érintettek NEUTRAL CHARACTERS: China NEUTRAL CHARACTERS: Critics of Paks II. NEUTRAL CHARACTERS: Elios NEUTRAL CHARACTERS: EU countries NEUTRAL CHARACTERS: European Union NEUTRAL CHARACTERS: Europeans NEUTRAL CHARACTERS: Germany NEUTRAL CHARACTERS: Government agencies NEUTRAL CHARACTERS: Government ministers	Character(s) that play neither a positive nor a negative role in the narrative.

	NEUTRAL CHARACTERS: Hungarian authorities NEUTRAL CHARACTERS: Hungarian companies NEUTRAL CHARACTERS: Hungarian government NEUTRAL CHARACTERS: Hungarian opposition NEUTRAL CHARACTERS: Hungarian press NEUTRAL CHARACTERS: Hungarians NEUTRAL CHARACTERS: Hungary NEUTRAL CHARACTERS: International experts NEUTRAL CHARACTERS: International press NEUTRAL CHARACTERS: Municipalities NEUTRAL CHARACTERS: Non-Hungarian companies NEUTRAL CHARACTERS: OLAF NEUTRAL CHARACTERS: Paks II. workers NEUTRAL CHARACTERS: Romania NEUTRAL CHARACTERS: Russia NEUTRAL CHARACTERS: Switzerland NEUTRAL CHARACTERS: Viktor Orbán	
	PROTAGONISTS PROTAGONISTS: Der Spiegel PROTAGONISTS: Elios PROTAGONISTS: ELTE PROTAGONISTS: Energiaklub PROTAGONISTS: EU countries PROTAGONISTS: German energy companies PROTAGONISTS: Government ministers PROTAGONISTS: Greenpeace PROTAGONISTS: Hungarian authorities PROTAGONISTS: Hungarian experts PROTAGONISTS: Hungarian government PROTAGONISTS: Hungarians PROTAGONISTS: Hungary PROTAGONISTS: István Tiborcz PROTAGONISTS: János Süli PROTAGONISTS: Ministry of Agriculture PROTAGONISTS: Nuclear Energy Museum PROTAGONISTS: Paks PROTAGONISTS: Paks II. workers PROTAGONISTS: Roszatom PROTAGONISTS: Russia PROTAGONISTS: The Hungarian opposition PROTAGONISTS: Tungsram PROTAGONISTS: Viktor Orbán	Character(s) that are described in a positive way, who are the "good guys" of the narrative.
	SUPPORTING PROTAGONISTS SUPPORTING PROTAGONISTS: a jegybank SUPPORTING PROTAGONISTS: A neves közvilágítási lámpagyártók SUPPORTING PROTAGONISTS: a tanúk SUPPORTING PROTAGONISTS: a Társaság a Szabadságjogokért SUPPORTING PROTAGONISTS: Appeninn Nyrt.	Character(s) that are described in a positive way, who play a less important role than the protagonists, but still occupy the role of the "good guys" of the narrative.

	SUPPORTING PROTAGONISTS: az Enerin képviselői SUPPORTING PROTAGONISTS: Bálint Erdei SUPPORTING PROTAGONISTS: Czechia SUPPORTING PROTAGONISTS: Ede Teller SUPPORTING PROTAGONISTS: ELTE students SUPPORTING PROTAGONISTS: EU countries SUPPORTING PROTAGONISTS: Európai Megújuló Energia Tanács (EREC) SUPPORTING PROTAGONISTS: European Commission SUPPORTING PROTAGONISTS: Germans SUPPORTING PROTAGONISTS: Hungarian authorities SUPPORTING PROTAGONISTS: Hungarian companies SUPPORTING PROTAGONISTS: Hungarian experts SUPPORTING PROTAGONISTS: Hungarian government SUPPORTING PROTAGONISTS: Hungarian healthcare workers and hospitals SUPPORTING PROTAGONISTS: Hungarian municipalities SUPPORTING PROTAGONISTS: Hungarian press SUPPORTING PROTAGONISTS: Hungarians SUPPORTING PROTAGONISTS: International companies SUPPORTING PROTAGONISTS: International Energy Agency SUPPORTING PROTAGONISTS: IPCC SUPPORTING PROTAGONISTS: István TIborcz SUPPORTING PROTAGONISTS: János Süli SUPPORTING PROTAGONISTS: Kalocsa SUPPORTING PROTAGONISTS: OLAF SUPPORTING PROTAGONISTS: Paks II. Zrt. SUPPORTING PROTAGONISTS: piaci intézményi befektetők SUPPORTING PROTAGONISTS: Russia SUPPORTING PROTAGONISTS: United Nations	

	Events	
	Events: ALTERNATIVE ENERGY PLAN PROPOSAL	Two alternative energy plans are proposed.
	Events: CLIMATE REPORT PUBLISHED	A climate report is published by an organisation.
	Events: CORRUPTION FOUND	Instances of (possible) corruption found.
	Events: ELIOS SOLD	Elios being sold by Tiborcz.
	Events: EU PAKS II. OPINION REVEAL	The EU reveals its opinion on Paks II.
	Events: GERMAN ENERGY DETAILS	Events connected to German energy.
	Events: HUNGARY DOUBLES FORESTS	Hungary grows its forests to twice their size.
	Events: LEGAL PROCEDURE PROGRESS	Information about legal procedures.

	Events: MINISTER DISCUSSES PAKS II.	A minister discusses information about Paks II.
	Events: NEWS REPORT	News outlet reports something.
	Events: OLAF INVESTIGATING ELIOS	OLAF investigation progress into Elios.
	Events: OPEN LETTER TO GERMANY	An open letter is sent to Germany.
	Events: OPPOSITION NEWS ATTACK	The "opposition" news attacks something.
	Events: PAKS II. PROGRESS	Progress with Paks II.
	Events: PERSON WINS PUBLIC PROCUREMENT	Someone wins public procurement.
	Events: PRESS CONFERENCE / RELEASE	Person or group holding press conference or providing a press release.
	Events: PROTEST AGAINST GOV.	Group protests against the government.
	Events: PUBLIC PROCUREMENT LAW CHANGED	A change to the public procurement law is passed.
	Events: RÁHEL ORBÁN POSTS	Ráhel Orbán posts online.
	Events: RENEWABLES NOT WORKING	Renewable energy sources not working as intended.
	Events: ROMANIA SUPPORTS PAKS II.	The Romanian Atomic Forum provides its support for Paks II.
	Events: TIBORCZ DONATING	Tiborcz donates to hospitals.
	Events: TIBORCZ SELLS SHARES	Tiborcz sells his shares in Appeninn.
	Events: TUNGSRAM INFORMS OLAF	Tungsram provides information to OLAF.
	Events: VICTOR PONTA CONGRATULATES VIKTOR ORBÁN	Romanian ex-PM congratulates Orbán on Paks II.

	Theme	
	Theme: ELIOS SUCCESFUL	When Elios is portrayed in a way that displays its successes.
	Theme: ELIOS UNSUCCESFUL	When Elios is portrayed in a way that displays its lack of success.
	Theme: GOVERNMENT NEGATIVE	The government portrayed in a negative light.
	Theme: NEPOTISM	When the concept of nepotism is prominent in the narrative.
	Theme: PAKS II. NEUTRAL	Paks II. discussed in an objective way.
	Theme: PAKS II. POSITIVE	Paks II. portrayed in a positive light.
	Theme: RENEWABLES NEGATIVE	Renewable energy sources (solar, wind, hydro, etc.) portrayed in a negative light.
	Theme: SIMICSKA NEGATIVE	Simicska portrayed in a negative light, the "bad guy".
	Theme: THE OTHERS NEGATIVE	Countries, groups who oppose the government are portrayed in a negative light.
	Theme: TIBORCZ POSITIVE	Tiborcz portrayed in a positive light, he is the "good guy".
	Theme: US POSITIVE	Those on the side of the government portrayed in a positive light.

	Type of narrative	
	Type of narrative: PROGRESSIVE NARRATIVE	The protagonist moves towards a positive direction, or the antagonist moves in a negative direction.
	Type of narrative: PROGRESSIVE-NEUTRAL NARRATIVE	The neutral character moves in a positive direction.
	Type of narrative: REGRESSIVE NARRATIVE	The antagonist moves in a positive direction, or the protagonist moves in a negative direction.
	Type of narrative: REGRESSIVE-NEUTRAL NARRATIVE	The neutral character moves in a negative direction.
	Type of narrative: STABILITY NARRATIVE	No noticeable change occurs in the life of the protagonist or the antagonist.

Objectives of the narrative		
	To critique: CRITICISING OLAF	Criticising OLAF in its investigation of Elios.
	To critique: CRITICISING OPPOSITION NEWS	Criticising the "opposition" news outlets.
	To critique: CRITICISING PAKS II. OPPONENTS	Criticising the opponents of Paks II.
	To critique: CRITICISING THE CRITICS OF TIBORCZ	Criticising those who take an issue with Tiborcz.
	To critique: CRITICISING TIBORCZ AND PAÁR	Criticising Tiborcz or Paár.
	To critique: ELIOS TOO SUCCESFUL	When the narrative criticises the successes of Elios.
	To critique: NO GOV. PAKS II. PLANS	Criticising the lack of Paks II. plans by the government.
	To encourage action	
	To encourage action: REDUCE EMISSIONS!	Encouraging the populace to reduce emissions.
	To encourage action: REDUCE ENERGY USE!	Encouraging the populace to reduce energy usage.
	To inform	
	To inform: APPENINN INFO	Information about Appeninn.
	To inform: ELIOS INFO	Information about Elios.
	To inform: EU - PAKS II. INFO	Information about the EU's relation with Paks II.
	To inform: EU - PUBLIC PROCUREMENT INFO	Information about the EU and public procurements.
	To inform: EU INFO	Information about the EU.
	To inform: GERMAN ENERGY PLAN INFO	Information about Germany's energy plan.
	To inform: HOSPITAL INFO	Information about a hospital.
	To inform: LEGAL PROCEDURES	Information about various legal procedures.

	To inform: LOAN AGREEMENT INFO	Information about the Russian-Hungarian loan agreement for Paks II.
	To inform: MINISTER DISCUSS PAKS II.	Info about various ministers discussing Paks II.
	To inform: NUCLEAR ENERGY MUSEUM INFO	Information about the Nuclear Energy Museum.
	To inform: OLAF INVESTIGATION INFO	Information about OLAF's investigation into Elios.
	To inform: OPPOSITION PROTESTS	Information about the opposition's protests.
	To inform: PAÁR INFO	Information about Attila Paár.
	To inform: PAKS / PAKS II. INFO	Information about Paks II and Paks (the town).
	To inform: PIPELINE INFO	Information about the German pipeline.
	To inform: PUBLIC PROCUREMENT INFO	Information about the public procurement.
	To inform: RENEWABLES INFO	Information about renewables.
	To inform: RUSSIA - PAKS II. INFO	Information about Russian involvement with Paks II.
	To inform: TIBORCZ INFO	Information about István Tiborcz.
	To inform: TUNGSRAM - ELIOS INFO	Information about the Tungsram Elios relationship.
	To inform: TUNGSRAM INFO	Information about Tungsram.
	To legitimise	
	To legitimise: HUNGARIAN ENERGY NEEDS	Describing the energy needs and vulnerabilities of Hungary.
	To legitimise: NUCLEAR ENERGY POSITIVES	The positive aspects of nuclear energy used to legitimise Paks II.
	To legitimise: OTHER ENERGY NEGATIVES	Describing the negative aspects of other energy sources.
	To legitimise: PAKS II. POSITIVES	Positive attributes of the Paks II. projects that are used to legitimise the project.
	To praise	
	To praise: HUNGARIANS / GOV. ARE GOOD	Praising the Hungarian government or Hungarian entities.
	To praise: PAKS II. IS GOOD	Praising the Paks II. project.
	To praise: TIBORCZ DONATES	Praising Tiborcz for donating to medical institutions.
	To shift blame	
	To shift blame: ELIOS OWNED BY SIMICSKA	Shifting the blame of the Elios scandal to Simicska or those connected to him.
	To shift blame: PUBLIC PROCUREMENT OPPOSITION	Shifting the blame of the Elios scandal onto opposition politicians / previous governments through their connection to the public procurement system.
	To shift blame: TIBORCZ NOT CONNECTED	Shifting the blame of the Elios scandal away from Tiborcz.