Integration or isolation?

Mapping out the position of populist radical right media in the public sphere

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**Abstract.** The study investigates the differences and similarities pertaining to the locations of populist radical right media outlets in the Hungarian and Romanian public spheres. It explores the validity of the media visibility thesis in a cross-country comparative framework. The visibility of the populist radical right media outlets in the public sphere is considered as the key component of the discursive opportunities for populist radical right mobilization. The presence of discursive elements of populist radical right communication in the mainstream media is understood as empirical evidence for the visibility of the populist radical right politics. We analyse first the characteristics of media discourses (such as the interaction patterns between media outlets, combination of phrases, frames, etc.). Second, we identify the positions of the populist radical right media products within the network structure of the mainstream media. Using network analysis as a methodological approach, we study both the general structure of the media network and the ego network of the populist radical right media outlets.

**Keywords:** radical right, media sphere, integration, Hungary, Romania.
Despite an already voluminous literature explaining the media attention to radical right and its effect on the electoral success (Birenbaum and Villa 2004; Norris 2005; Mudde 2007; Koopmans and Muis 2009; Vliegenthart et al. 2012), there are very few studies to date that investigate the location of populist radical right mass communication channels in the wider media sphere. The aim of the present paper is to fill this gap in the existing literature by identifying the positions of the radical right media within the network structure of the general media sphere. With this in mind, we investigate the differences and similarities pertaining the media visibility of populist radical right in Hungary and Romania, thereby exploring the validity of the contagion thesis in a cross-country comparative framework.

Hungary and Romania, two neighbouring post-communist countries, are excellent cases for comparison with different electoral patterns concerning the populist radical right. In Hungary, 2009 was the year of the electoral breakthrough of the Hungarian Movement for a Better Hungary (Jobbik Magyarországért Mozgalom, Jobbik), when it gained 14.7% of total votes (14.7%) and delegated three MEPs to the European Parliament. The Jobbik achieved further support in the Hungarian parliamentary elections of 2010 gaining 16.6% of votes. The Jobbik has cemented its status as by far the largest radical right party in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) by winning 20.54 percent of the votes in the 2014 parliamentary election. In Romania, the radical right political parties gained significant electoral success soon after the collapse of the communist regime and by 2000 the Greater Romania Party (Partidul România Mare, PRM) became the largest opposition force. Contrary to the wider European trend, popular support for the PRM has declined so far and no other radical right-wing group has managed to replicate its electoral performance. Indeed, if the PRM polled 8.6% in the elections for the European Parliament in 2009 and sent three MEPs to Brussels, in the 2012 Romanian parliamentary elections the PRM received a meagre 1.3%, score confirmed by the 2014 European elections when the PRM polled only 2.7%. These developments notwithstanding,
the Romanian political landscape is not depleted of such electoral forces, for instance the short-lived People’s Party-Dan Diaconescu (*Partidul Poporului-Dan Diaconescu*, PP-DD) or the more recently founded United Romania Party (*Partidul România Unită*, PRU). However, at the moment there seems to be a low presence of populist radical right parties in the parliamentary political competition. The trajectory of the radical right’s political performance is surely differing in the two countries, but what can one discern when looking at the media landscape in Hungary and Romania? There is no clear consensus whether the media systems in the CEE countries gravitate towards the western, northern or southern European models or rather form a distinctively separate block, it is however safe to say that the trends of tabloidization, fragmentation, political parallelization, the dominance of opinion based-journalism, gradual decline in broadsheet newspaper sales and the high level of political pressure on media are common in Hungary and Romania (Bajomi-Lázár 2014; Dobek-Ostrowska 2015).

In our understanding, the media are actively participating in setting different agendas, interpretations and narratives to the consciousness of the general public rather than tools for public deliberation (see Horsti and Nikunen 2013). The study therefore embraces the notion of ‘discursive opportunities’ and argues that populist radical right parties are able to capitalise on the conditions of the public sphere for electoral success (Koopmans and Olzak 2005). The meaning of favourable conditions, in this context, varies in form and level of manifestation in the public sphere. There seems however to be a wide consensus that the media is partially responsible for the radicalisation of the public discourse by covering the preferred topics, political personalities, and actions of the populist radical right intensively (Walgrave and de Swert 2004; Art 2007; Bos et al. 2010).

Some researchers suggest that the relationship between the media products and radical right populism does make a real difference (Ellinas 2010; 2013). They claim that editorial boards
and the journalists play an important role in determining the level of visibility and prominence the populist radical right parties or their representatives are given by a certain media outlet. First and foremost, the visibility matters regardless of the tones and the frames of the coverage. If the media deal with the representatives of the populist radical right, these parties are able to exploit even negative publicity to connect with the voters and offer them a political alternative, which is becoming increasingly popular in many European countries. Then, if the mainstream media are willing to deal with populist radical parties and present their viewpoints on certain political issues, this has a positive influence on the electoral performance of the radical right parties in question. To sum up, the more media attention is paid to the populist radical right political actors, the more votes they are likely to gain in national and sub-national elections.

Coupled to this, the visibility in the public sphere of the media outlets sympathetic or affiliated to the populist radical right, which in the present paper label as radical right to indicate its position in relation to the mainstream, is another key component of the discursive opportunities for populist radical right mobilization. In addition, the populist radical right seems keen to establish its own media universe with a powerful mix of social media, traditional formats of written press, and radio stations as a counterbalance to the sometimes hostile mainstream media environment (Udris 2012). With this in mind, then, this study addresses the issue of media visibility of populist radical right in Hungary and Romania.

Visibility has been mostly conceptualised by focusing on the textual dimension; quantitative and qualitative content analysis of the media coverage of radical parties, politicians or hot issues is a fruitful way of analysing radicalisation (see Vliegenthart et al 2012). Visibility however may also be understood as chains of interactions between the key actors of the mainstream and radical media, which is rather a neglected aspect in researching the populist radical right (Szabó and Bene 2015). This paper attempts to combine the merits of these
content-oriented and interaction-oriented approaches, aiming to examine empirically the following research question: *what are the differences and similarities concerning the media visibility of radical right media products in Romania and Hungary?*

**Methodological notes**

To assess the visibility of the radical right mass communication channel, we analyse first the characteristics of media discourses (such as the interaction patterns between media outlets, combination of phrases, frames, etc.). Second, we identify the positions of the populist radical right media products within the network structure of the mainstream media.

The presence of discursive elements of populist radical right communication in the mainstream media is understood as empirical evidence for the visibility of the populist radical right politics. The more numerous these discursive elements in the mainstream media, the higher level of visibility for these politics may be observed. In other words, the more integrated into the mainstream flow of mass communication the populist radical right media is, the higher their chances of influencing the public discussion, creating the favourable discursive conditions for populist radical right politics.

*Network analysis: nodes, connection, ties, metrics and structures*

Using network analysis as a methodological approach, we study both the general structure of the media network and the ego network of the populist radical right media outlets. In our study, multiple media networks have been compiled. Both are n*n directed, weighted networks. The media outlets are considered as the nodes of these networks. Edges are the connections between nodes which are defined here as discursive ties. This means that we examine the connection between media products via their discursive patterns. Discursive patterns are operationalized in two different ways. First, we focus on the references in the
content of the news media articles (citations, quotations and hyperlinks of other news items). Second, the framing activities of the media products have been monitored and issue specific interpretations have been coded in each collection of empirical items.

To compare the findings, five ideal typical network structures are defined to measure the general structure of the whole network. The ideal types model the distribution of ties between nodes of the network, evidencing how the ties have been distributed among the nodes, and whether the distribution follows any specific patterns or not. The ideal typical structures were predefined by the metrics as follows: the maximum modularity score of the edge-betweenness community detection algorithm, fitness score, global clustering coefficient and the average shortest path.

In this context, then, we suggest distinguishing between cohesive and non-cohesive structures. The structure in cluster-free networks and in small-world networks (Watts and Strogatz, 1998) is cohesive because we can easily reach all nodes of the network by taking very few hops. Certain nodes of a small-world network tend to cluster together. The groups are nonetheless strongly connected with each other. In the case of the cluster-free type, as the name suggests, the nodes do not form tightly knit groups. Clusters are also lacking in the diffuse network. The diffuse network however differs from the cohesive networks (cluster-free networks and small-world networks) by requiring many hops to reach all the nodes. The core-periphery type has a non-cohesive structure by having some densely connected nodes in the core position and the other one in the periphery. It assumes that the core nodes are maximally connected to each other, there are no connections among periphery nodes, and the connections from periphery to core are more frequent than the reverse. We can also observe non-cohesive structure in the polarised networks, in which there are clusters with dense in-group connections and sparse out-group ties.
Once we have identified the ideal typical structure of the networks, we have to specify the main variations of the hypothesised location of the radical right media products within the networks. If our data show that the networks of the media products are cohesive, we may expect very little or no difference between the location of radical right media nodes and the place of mainstream media nodes. This finding would indicate that the radical right media outlets are highly integrated into the mainstream media sphere and function as important actors of the public spaces.

If evidence suggests the presence of non-cohesive networks, we expect the radical right media nodes to be placed at the periphery of the entire network. This result would mean that the populist radical right remain on the fringe of the public sphere in the respective country. Alternatively, the radical right media nodes may form their own cluster that is characterised by dense in-group connections and few or zero out-group ties. In this constellation, we might conclude that the radical right media are the representatives of an alternate communication universe which has little impact on the mainstream flow of media discussion.
Figure 1. Ideal types of networks in media sphere and the measurements. EV = expected values (average of 1000 random networks); SD = standard deviation (average of 1000 random networks). *= strong condition; **= weak condition. Blue = nodes represent mainstream/non-radical right media outlets; Red = nodes represent radical right media outlets.

Data collection and coding

The framework of our empirical examination concentrates on a couple of heavily debated political issues in 2014 in each country. The Issue type 1 tests the visibility in a controversial domestic issue which is rather neutral for the populist radical right, whilst the Issue type 2 examines the changes in a communicative situation whereby populist radical right actors perform as promoters, initiating and introducing new political ideas, branches of their political organisation, or political manoeuvres. The first type of issues enables us to assess the position of the populist radical right in a ‘politics as usual’ situation. The second type enables us to uncover the reconfigurations of media networks, when populist radical right actors intensify their communication efforts with the hope of attracting as much public attention as possible.

In other worlds, we aim to observe if the promotion of the populist radical right’s own agenda

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1 Criteria of issue selection: 1. the issue should be a controversial one in which pro and anti-government forces pro and anti-government forces have been exposed politically; 2. the issue has not been associated by any agents of radical right; 3. the agents of radical right have not introduced new arguments, new communicative tools and techniques in the debate; 4. the agents of the radical right are not excluded from the debate by any means (if they wanted, they would have contributed to the discussion).
modifies the structure of the media networks and the position of the radical right nodes or not. If yes, our objective is to describe and evaluate the changes. For this purpose then, the Năstase-issue and the Paks-issue\(^2\) were selected as neutral communicative situations (Issue 1), whilst the Diaconu-issue and the Janiczak-issue\(^3\) were deemed as communication situations in which the populist radical right acts as promoter (Issue 2).

The data collection of the study required a complex procedure with several steps and careful perusal of the empirical material. First, we made an ex-ante calculation of the products of mainstream media: these are the most read daily newspapers (including tabloids) and online news portals. In addition, we pre-defined the list of radical right media outlets (mostly online news portals) to include them in our analysis. Second, we scrutinised all of them by searching the keywords for the examined issues. Third, every quotation, reference, citation or hyperlink of other media products was coded as an outgoing tie (excluding self-references), if they signified published news items of the chosen time period for data collection. To attain saturation, then, we continuously expanded the data collection with the media outlets that had been referred by the ones already collected. Once saturation achieved, four topical types of corpora were created to collect and manage all the selected articles of each issue in a ready-to-analyse format. All the corpora are available in electronic forms.

Every news item was then systematically examined with the help of a set of guidelines collected in specific codebooks. The codebook1 contains the instructions for data collection for the reference networks. In the reference networks (Network A), the architecture of the

\(^{2}\) The Paks-issue is organised around an agreement that was signed by Russian President Vladimir Putin and Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán on January 13 2014. According to the deal, the Russian state-owned nuclear firm Rosatom is to build additional units to extend Hungary's nuclear power plant. Russia would provide loans for financing the two units. The issue has been quickly politicised; thousands protested in the streets of Budapest against the agreement and left leaning anti-government organisation made huge efforts to mobilise electoral supports around the issue.

\(^{3}\) Dávid Janiczak is a politician of Jobbik party and mayoral candidate for the local election of Ózd (middle size industrial city in the North of Hungary with around 35000 inhabitants) on November 3 2014. Prior to the local election, the Jobbik party heavily focused its campaign activity on promoting Dávid Janiczak for the local and non-local citizens as labelling the success as breakthrough for the party in the preparation for governing the country.
media sphere was calculated on incoming and outgoing ties. To explain what incoming and outgoing ties mean in this project, let us take a hypothetical situation by way of example. If the journalist in an article of Media outlet1 cites the content of Media outlet2, then we coded it as outgoing tie of Media outlet1 and incoming tie of Media outlet2. Therefore, the two nodes are tied in our analysis. The more citations were found, the stronger the connection between the nodes was evaluated.

For the framing network (Network B), then, we conducted a qualitative pre-analysis to identify dominant interpretations that were employed by the analysed media products. Having labelled the issue-specific interpretative frames in the codebook, the total sample was re-coded in order to detect the presence of these frames in the media product. In the framing networks, we connect the media products to each other by the interpretative frames they make visible when covering the examined political issues. To illustrate, let us say that both Media outlet1 and Media outlet2 apply frame1 and frame2, which nonetheless are present in the articles of Media outlet1 and Media outlet3. In this situation, we coded it as connection between Media outlet1 and Media outlet2. Also Media outlet1 and Media outlet3 have been linked together, though there is no tie between Media outlet2 and Media outlet3. The more similar framing activities were identified during the coding process, the stronger the connection between the examined nodes was established. The coding was done by the authors of the paper and two other competent assistants, and then the results were compared. When discrepancy was detected the research team discussed the issue and took a stance on it. As a software support for calculation, we applied the igraph (Csárdi and Nepusz 2006) and the tnet (Opsahl 2009) packages for R as well as the Ucinet 6 software (Borgatti et al. 2002). To visualise the findings, NetDraw employed.

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4 The intercoder reliability was estimated by using Krippendorff’s α (Krippendorff, 2004) in each type of coding process which resulted in 0.8 for the reference network and 0.79 for the framing network in the Hungarian case. In the Romanian case such scores are 0.75 for the reference network and 0.64 for the framing network.
### Table 1. Comprehensive summary of the data collection issue by issue.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue type 1.</th>
<th>Number of media outlets involved in the analysis (sample)</th>
<th>Number of nodes in the media networks (unit of network analysis)</th>
<th>Keywords for the advances searches in the sampled media products</th>
<th>Timeframes of the data collection</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Năstase-issue (RO)</td>
<td>reference network 39</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>Adrian Năstase, condamnat, Zambaccian (Adrian Năstase, convicted, Zambaccian)</td>
<td>January 5-26, 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>framing network 39</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>Năstase, convicted, Zambaccian</td>
<td>January 5-26, 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>framing network 50</td>
<td>29</td>
<td></td>
<td>January 14 - 28, 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issue type 2.</td>
<td>reference network 17</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Bogdan Diaconu, Partidul Romania Unita, demisie (Bogdan Diaconu, United Romania Party, resignation)</td>
<td>August 20 – Sept 10, 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>framing network 17</td>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
<td>August 20 – Sept 10, 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>reference network 44</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Janiczak Dávid, Ózd, választások (Janiczak Dávid, Ózd, mayoral election)</td>
<td>October 22 – November 13, 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>framing network 44</td>
<td>23</td>
<td></td>
<td>October 22 – November 13, 2014</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Analysis of the findings**

In this section of the paper, we discuss our findings concerning the four topics that we analysed. First, the reference networks (Network A), then the framing networks (Network B) are presented and compared. The main empirical claim of our analysis is that the positions of the radical right media products in the media networks in the two examined countries reflect the popular support and the electoral fortunes of the populist radical right in each country. The Romanian case shows that the radical right platforms are isolated and relegated to the fringes of the media networks, which we evaluate as a low level of media visibility that goes together with the lack of electoral success for the Romanian populist radical right parties. The Hungarian case, however, suggests the opposite constellation, with a more integrated position.
of the radical right in the media networks (thus, higher media visibility) and somewhat tightly knitted cluster of radical right platforms.

*Networks A: reference networks*

Let us commence with the general characters of the reference networks. Concerning the Năstase-issue (RO) and the Paks-issue (HUN), we assume, reveals the architecture of the media sphere in the situations of a ‘normal’ political debate in Romania and Hungary, the two networks differ from each other in the sense of the structure. As for the Paks-issue, more media products referred to each other, and there are also more connections between them. However, the total number of references is less than those of the Năstase-issue. The second type of issues, the Janiczak and the Diaconu-issue tell somewhat the same pattern: more nodes and more connections in the Hungarian sample, less dense network structure with significantly fewer nodes and ties (see Table 2).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue type 1.</th>
<th>Năstase-issue (RO)</th>
<th>No. of nodes/No of nodes after the removal of isolated ones</th>
<th>Paks-issue (HUN)</th>
<th>No. of connections</th>
<th>No. of references</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>39/33</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>50/38</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue type 2.</th>
<th>Bogdán Diaconu-issue (RO)</th>
<th>No. of connections</th>
<th>Janiczak Dávid-issue (HUN)</th>
<th>No. of references</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>44/22</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. Summary of characteristics of the reference networks in both Romanian case and Hungarian case.

*The comparative analysis of the Paks-issue (HUN) and Năstase-issue (RO)*

The ties signal a network in which web-based, nonweb-based and mixed media products connect strongly to each other in the two examined countries. It means that both online and
offline media channels are important components of the contemporary media sphere in Hungary. Interestingly, there are no tabloid dailies in the Paks-network. Apart from only one example (Szegedma.hu), the local media outlets are also missing. The lack of in-coming and out-going ties suggests that the tabloid daily papers and local journals might have covered the issue, but their coverage remained unreported by other media outlets. And vice versa, they also did not initiate any interactions with other media products. For a visual illustration of the Paks reference network, please see figure 2.

Figure 2. The reference network of the Paks-issue (light gray = 1. community; dark gray = 2. community; white = out of the community; square = mainstream medium; triangle = radical right medium).

The detailed analysis of the metrics reports that the network of the Paks-issue shows the signs of slight polarization (modularity score = 0.14). Additionally, there are two clusters that are separated from each other more sharply (modularity score = 0.27) as listed below:
Cluster 1: nol.hu, hvg.hu, Mandiner, Jobbegyenes, nepszava.hu, magyarhirlap.hu, Örülünk Vincent, Ténytár.hu, Kardblog.hu, bekialtas.blog.hu, tutiblog.com, nyugat.hu, Mos Maiorum, Kettős Mérce, Figyelő Online, HunHír (radical right node).

Cluster 2: Népszabadság, Bruxinfo, napi.hu, cink.hu, Átlátszó.hu, Hír24, portfolio.hu, Metropol, Alfahír.hu (radical right node).

In case of the Paks-network we registered three radical right media product. There are not too many references connected to any of these three mediums: both Alfahír and kuruc.info refer to one, while HunHír refers to two other media. The radical right mediums are not referred by any other media. The four registered references that come from the radical right media are not identical; all of them refer to different actors. As a result, the patterns of references of the three radical mediums are different from each other. Basically, they refer to mediums that are often referred to by other actors, too (such as cink.hu, origo.hu, nol.hu). However, it is only HunHír that refers to a medium among the three most referred mediums (nol.hu, index.hu, Népszabadság) – more clearly, it refers to nol.hu. Apart from this, HunHír also refers to Magyar Hírlap that is only referred to by only one other medium – nol.hu.

In sum, one may see that the radical right mediums are on the periphery of a slightly polarized network: while they are not referred to by other mediums, in some cases, they refer to some more important mainstream mediums (even if they ignore the most important ones). Their peripheral position is also strengthened by the fact that radical right mediums do not refer to each other, either.

In the Romanian case of the Năstase-issue (Figure 5.2), the value of the maximum modularity is nearly zero (0,017). Therefore, in this case we cannot speak about polarization in the network. Metrics also demonstrate that the core-periphery structure also is not valid for the
description of the reference network. While the average shortest distance is significantly smaller than the expectable value, the clustering coefficient is about the same as the expectable value. Thus, although there are few references, the network is pretty cohesive (see figure 3).

Figure 3. Reference network of the Năstase-issue (square = mainstream medium; triangle = radical right medium).

As for the more cohesive Năstase-issue, there is only one radical right medium that is registered in the reference network – i.e. buciumul.ro. There are no references to this medium by any other mediums, and buciumul.ro did not refer to any other mediums referred by other 8 actors, either. However, it referred to a medium that was not referred to by any other – to cotidianul.ro. Therefore, the only radical right medium in this issue has an isolated position within the otherwise quite cohesive network; at the same time it found an alternative reference point.
In both issues one may notice that the online and print media refer heavily to broadcast media. In the Paks-issue (see figure 4), there are 71 references to a total of 7 TV and radio channels. This makes up 42% of all references in case of these media outlets.

Figure 4. References to broadcast media in the Paks-issue (triangle = radical right; square = mainstream medium; 2 by 2 square = broadcast medium).

The two most referred broadcast media is Hír TV and Hungarian Public Broadcaster Radio 1 (Kossuth Radio). These two have been referred to almost twice as much as the most referred media outlet, nol.hu. This shows that for print and online media, broadcast media is of key importance in terms of information and opinion sources. Media publicity is not divided by references to broadcast media; the key actors of broadcast media seem to integrate the public realm. It is important to note that kuruc.info and HunHír did not refer to the most important actors, but they did refer to the rather often referred TV channel: the Hungarian Public Broadcaster Television Channel 1 (M1). This is the only common reference among radical right media. Alfahír.hu links to the second most connected media outlet: Hír TV. All in all,
references to broadcast media confirm the peripheral role of the radical right media outlets: if they do refer to someone, then these actors are among the highly referred ones by other media as well.

In the Năstase-issue (Figure 5), broadcast media is an important reference point as well, but to a somewhat lesser degree than in the Paks-issue. The 33% of all references (54 references) point towards 6 broadcast media outlets.

![Figure 5. Broadcast media references in the Năstase-issue (triangle = radical right; square = mainstream medium; 2 by 2 square = broadcast medium).](image)

Two broadcast media occupy a key position: Romania TV (18 references) and Digi24 (18 references). It was only Năstase’s blog that had more references (31 references). Broadcast media did not polarize the network. The ziartricolorul.ro radical right medium did not refer to any other print or online media outlet, but it did refer to Digi24. Buciumul.ro did not refer to
any broadcast media. This shows that the inclusion of broadcast media did not change the isolated (or possibly alternative) media space. We could also spot the signs of a fringe position in the case of ziartricolorul.ro.

The comparative analysis of the Janiczak-issue (HUN) and Diaconu-issue (RO)
Continuing with the second type of issue, we discuss the differences of the network structure and the changing position of the radical right media outlets in a communicative situation of promoting radical right’s own agenda in the media spheres in Romania and Hungary. Data suggest that there are fewer nodes in both media networks than the previously analysed Paks- and Năstase-networks. Also we observe lower density of connections. It means that the less media outlets have produced decreased number of references in the Janiczak- and Diaconu-issue compared to the Paks- and Năstase-issues. It is safe to say that the topics promoted by the radical right have received considerably less media attention than the issues of general ‘government versus opposition’ type of political controversies (see table 2).
The Janiczak-issue has provided a cohesive structure (see figure 6) which rather similar to the ideal description of small world network as the clustering coefficient (0.48) and the average shortest distance metric (relatively low 1.09) indicate. It is confirmed by the maximum modularity score of the edge-betweenness community detection algorithm (the score is 0). Also there is no evidence of the presence of core-periphery architecture in the network.
Regarding the position of the radical right media products, the Janiczak-issue demonstrates strong capacity of clustering of such platform. On the one hand, they registered as active members of the network in the sense of referring to other media outlets: 55% of all references have been initiated by the radical right platforms. On the other hand, radical right media products have received considerable amount of citations: 57% of the references pointed towards radical right outlets. Moreover, they have formed a tightly knitted cluster as 46% of all references have been coded in the circle of radical right nodes. It is however should be mentioned that the said densely connected group is not separated from the non-radical right nodes. Both kuruc.info and Alfahír.hu, both radical right media outlets, initiated outgoing ties to the representatives of the mainstream media. Interestingly enough, the Alfahír.hu has received incoming ties from outside the radical right media universe (Index.hu, TV2.hu, Mandiner.hu). Therefore, the findings indicate the integral position of the radical right outlets in the media sphere in Hungary. It is a valid observation, even though the fact that the Janiczak-issue cannot be considered as the most covered issue of the year 2014 in Hungary.
The Diaconu-issue is extremely difficult to analyse by the metrics of the study because it has critically little number of nodes and ties. Surely, the network structure is not cohesive as the average shortest distance metric (2.16) suggest. In addition, the value of the clustering coefficient (0.54) tells that there are no tightly knitted groups in the network. Since 54% of the references point towards a Facebook page of Bodgan Diaconu, we can say that there is a node in the network which possesses a kind of key position. In our understanding, the Diaconu-network provides a version of diffuse media network in terms of references which has a node of central importance in maintaining the structure. Apart from the Facebook entry of Bodgan Diaconu, the radical right outlets remain outside of the network as fully isolated nodes (see figure 7).

![Figure 7: Reference network of the Diaconu-issue (square = mainstream medium; triangle = radical right medium).](image)

The moderate level of attention and citation activity in the Romania media sphere resonate with our previous observation of the position of radical right in the Romanian public discourse: radical right actors stay totally under the radar of general public in these days. In
addition, there is no sign of the creation of radical right media universe in Romania as it is happening in Hungary nowadays with Alfahír.hu, kuruc.info, NITV, Barikád, Hazai Pálya and the social media platforms of radical right politicians.

**Networks B: framing networks**

As a last section of the analysis, we present our findings concerning the networks which have been composed by the similarities of the framing activities of the media outlets. The table 3 summarises the data we collected in all the 4 issues.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue type 1</th>
<th>Frame ID no.</th>
<th>In how many media outlets does the frame appear?</th>
<th>How many times we registered the frame?</th>
<th>The rate (%) the frame appears in relation to the total visible interpretations</th>
<th>Number of nodes</th>
<th>Number of connections</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Năstase-issue (RO)</td>
<td>F1</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>33</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F2</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F3</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F4</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F5</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pask-issue (HUN)</td>
<td>F1</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>29</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F2</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F3</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F4</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F5</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F6</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issue type 2</td>
<td>F1</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diaconu-issue (RO)</td>
<td>F2</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Janiczak-issue (HUN)</td>
<td>F1</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F2</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F3</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F4</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F5</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3. Summary of data collection on the framing networks.
The comparative analysis of the Paks-issue (HUN) and Năstase-issue (RO)

In the Paks-issue a total of 29 media outlets were interconnected through interpretation frames, while in the Năstase-issue 33 media outlets. In the Paks-issue there was only one radical right product (kuruc.info), whilst in the Năstase-issue there were four radical right outlets (buciumul.ro, ziartricolorul.ro, magazincritic.ro, Romania Mare print). However, these media outlets were not very active: kuruc.info, buciumul.ro and magazincritic.ro presented only one frame, while ziartricolorul.ro presented three frames and Romania Mare print presented two different frames (but 3 times).

The all metrics of our analysis shows that both framing networks demonstrate rather cohesive structure. The Paks-issue however has a slightly more integrated architecture than the one of the Năstase-issue. In both networks modularity is close to 0. As for the Năstase-issue, polarization is also not detected (see figure 8 and 9).

![Framing network of the Pask-issue](image)

*Figure 8. Framing network of the Pask-issue (square = mainstream medium; triangle = radical right medium).*
Figure 9. The framing network of the Năstase-issue (square = mainstream medium; triangle = radical right medium, light grey = subgroup1; dark grey = subgroup2). Normalized network, only connections with a higher weight than the average.

The data suggests the media outlets regardless they political colours have provided visibility for all the dominant interpretations of the covered topics. Notwithstanding that heavy political parallelization and biased political coverage characterise the media spheres in both countries, the media can still be considered as window for the different political argumentations. The remaining question is whether the radical right media outlets are open for alternate explanations, or other way around the mainstream media platforms pay any attention to the discursive patterns of the radical right.

To answer the question, let us observe the position of the radical right nodes in the Paks-issue. As we can see, only one radical right node (kuruc.info) becomes the part of the framing network. It applies the frame (F1) which is considered as rather marginal in the media coverage of the issue (13% out of the total frames). It, however, should be noticed that the visibility of F1 connects the kuruc.info to the pro-government centre-right media outlets (Heti
Válasz, Demokrata, Magyar Hírlap, Világgazdaság, Figyelő, Hírtv.hu, Mno.hu, Magyar Nemzet). It suggests that the framing activity of the representatives of the radical right outlet somewhat differs from the mainstream products, certain similarity has been identified with the centre right media outlets.

Radical right media outlets do not play an active role in the Năstase-issue, either. However, the four radical right media outlets that were present in the discourse used eight times four different frames altogether. Similarly to kuruc.info, buciumul.ro and magazincritic.ro made visible only one frame, while ziartricolorul.ro used three frames and Romania Mare print applied two frames (3 times). The radical right media products, according to our community-division, belong to either communities. This was the case because in the Năstase-issue the difference in terms of the rate of attention paid to the issue was more significant than the difference between the applied frames. Like other media outlets, buciumul.ro and magazincritic.ro barely dealt with the issue, and so only represented the interpretation that dominated the whole discourse – frame “F1”. This interpretation was also applied by ziartricolorul.ro, which nonetheless also made visible two other frames – the second most popular F2 and the second less popular F3. The Romania Mare print is assigned to Community 1 by the algorithm, but Figure 5.9 shows that it serves the role of a bridge between the two communities. It is because Romania Mare print is dominated by F1 (appearing two times), but it also used the F3 (once in our sample) as well. The F3 was not applied by any other radical right media products, although it was the third most popular frame in the whole discourse. In the raw network, ziartricolorul.ro has the strongest connection with bzi.ro and gandul.info. These mediums, although applied F1 more often and F3 was also important to both of them, used F2 and F4 frames only once. In turn, the normalized network, may tell more about the real similarity. It shows that ziartricolorul.ro is the most similar to ziare.com and hotnews.ro. Although these pages made visible much more
frames, the rates of their applied frames were similar to that of the radical right medium. The radical right Romanian Mare print has the strongest connection with the pressalert.ro and Evenimentul Zilei print.

*The comparative analysis of the Janiczak-issue (HUN) and Diaconu-issue (RO)*

As discovered in the reference networks, the issue type 2 reveals two networks with fewer nodes and less dense connections than the previously analysed Paks- and Năstase-networks show. The framing network data confirm that the topics promoted by the radical right gain less media attention than the issues of general ‘government versus opposition’ type of political controversies (see table 3) in Hungary and likewise in Romania.

Contrary to the Paks- and Năstase-issues, metrics tell that both issues create polarised framing network structures. It means that the media spheres have been divided by the framing activities of the media outlets. Surprisingly, the political colours of the examined media products do not provide adequate explanation for the separation.

In the Janiczak-issue, the modularity score for the whole network is 0,21 and one for the most tightly knitted group is 0,31. There is variety of size in the subgroups of the Janiczak-networks. The subgroup no1 has 15 members: "mno.hu", "index.hu", "vs.hu", "hvg.hu", "mandiner.hu","Népszava", "HVG", "Nepszava.hu", "atv.hu", "nol.hu", "Heti Válasz", "hunhir.info", “hir24.hu" with 2 radical right outlets as of “*kuruc.info*” and “*Alfahír.hu*”. The subgroup no2 and no3 contain 4 elements each: "444.hu", "Magyarhirlap.hu”, "napi.hu”, "Magyar Nemzet” and “Magyar Hírlap”, "blick.hu", "cink.hu", “Blick” (see figure 10).
Figure 10. The framing network of the Janiczák-issue (normalized network, only the strongest connections. Light gray = community 1; dark gray = community 2, black = community 3; square = mainstream medium; triangle = radical right medium).

Radical right media products, in this issue, were really active (both in as for the references and as for the applied interpretational frames: the three radical right medium applied almost the one third of all the visible frames of 24 mediums. Out of the three radical right mediums, alfahir.hu was the most active one that made frames twice as many times visible (27) than the second placed index.hu (15). Hunhír was the third and kuruc.info is the shared fourth medium that used frames the most times. After all it is not surprising that there were not huge differences, compared to the average. All of the radical right mediums used F5 frame the most times but F4 as represented more times than the average. Hunhír did not represent F1 frame at all, the two other radical right medium, at the same time, used F1 frame similarly to the average.

The Diaconu-issue shows a somewhat similar framing network structure to the Janiczák-issue: as for the average connections, the network as rather integrated (modularity = 0.15) but if we
focus on the strongest connections, we can differentiate between 3 subgroups (modularity = 0.26). In the subgroup no1 there is no radical right outlet: “adevarul.ro", "click.ro" "cotidianul.ro", "evz.ro", "gandul.info", "libertatea.ro", "realitatea.net", "rtv.net", "ziaruldeiasi.ro. The subgroup no2 is actually a clique of 2 nodes: “bzi.ro”, “hotnews.ro”. The subgroup no3 with a radical right node is composed by “**buciumul.ro**”, “cugetliber.ro”. “tien.hu”. The other examined radical right media outlets (e.g. Romania Mare, ziartricolorul.ro) remain isolated. See figure 11.

![Network Diagram](image-url)

**Figure 11.** The framing network of the Diaconu-issue (light gray = subgroup1; dark gray = subgroup2, black = subgroup3; square = mainstream medium; triangle = radical right medium) Normalized network, only the strongest connections.
Concluding remarks

Our aim was to provide empirical evidence for comprehending the radical right media products in the network structure of the media space when explaining the rise and the performance of right wing radicalism in Hungary and Romania. Our point of departure was that interaction is essential to assess the relationship between radical right media and other media products. In our concept, dense and strong interaction ties indicate that right wing radical press products have entered into the mainstream media sphere by being integrated, and are hence important, legitimate, and effective actors in public discussions. We also claim that the more integrated are the radical right media nodes into the media spheres, the more advantageous are the discursive opportunities for the populist radical right mobilization.

Briefly, the examination of the radical right media in Hungary and in Romania presents two different situations concerning the integration of radical right media platforms into the mainstream (see Table 4 for a comprehensive summary of findings). The Romanian case shows that the radical right media outlets are rather in isolated positions in the media space. These mainly disconnected positions have been identified in both types of media networks (see Table 4). The disintegration of the radical right media products illustrates the exclusion of populist radical right views and communicators in the mainstream media in Romania. In the Hungarian case, we noted that the radical right media outlets are an integral part of both media networks (see Table 4). The Hungarian case reveals that radical right media products are able to form a cluster in the media space which is assessed as the early sign of crafting a media universe of the radical right. Surprisingly, evidence also suggests that the political orientation of the media products does not correlate with the interactions between the radical right media nodes and the mainstream outlets. We failed to confirm that centre right media nodes play important role as bridgeheads in the integration of the radical right media into the mainstream media sphere. It is however clearly demonstrated that the some actors of the
radical right media scene aim to enter into the mainstream. The mainstream media, however, do not respond compliantly to that ambition. In that sense quarantine against right wing radicalism still seems to be effective in the Hungarian media.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue type 1</th>
<th>Issues</th>
<th>Type of networks</th>
<th>Structure of the network</th>
<th>Position of the radical right media outlets</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Năstase-issue (RO)</td>
<td>Reference network (Network A)</td>
<td>cohesive</td>
<td>isolated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Paks-issue (HUN)</td>
<td></td>
<td>polarised</td>
<td>integrated: fringe position</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Diaconu-issue (RO)</td>
<td></td>
<td>diffuse</td>
<td>1 outlet is integrated: key position; others are isolated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Janiczak-issue (HUN)</td>
<td></td>
<td>cohesive</td>
<td>integrated: strong cluster of radical right nodes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue type 2</th>
<th>Issues</th>
<th>Type of networks</th>
<th>Structure of the network</th>
<th>Position of the radical right media outlets</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Năstase-issue (RO)</td>
<td>Framing network (Network B)</td>
<td>cohesive</td>
<td>isolated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Paks-issue (HUN)</td>
<td></td>
<td>cohesive</td>
<td>integrated: fringe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Diaconu-issue (RO)</td>
<td></td>
<td>polarised</td>
<td>1 outlet is integrated: others are isolated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Janiczak-issue (HUN)</td>
<td></td>
<td>polarised</td>
<td>integrated: strong cluster of radical right nodes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 4. Comprehensive summary of the findings.*

We are nonetheless aware of some inherent limitations in our analysis. The probability of other potential constellations can never be excluded: most probably if the media network is organised around other issues the analysis may have different findings. In addition, our study does not contextualize the identified interactions. With this in mind, further qualitative analysis is needed to discover whether media outlets quote, refer or cite radical right media products in positive or negative ways. More empirical analyses should explore to what extent media interactions contribute to identity construction in right wing radicalism.

References


