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 <https://doi.org/10.1075/dapsac.81.10sar>

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Migration and Media: Discourses about identities in crisis

Edited by Lorella Viola and Andreas Musolff

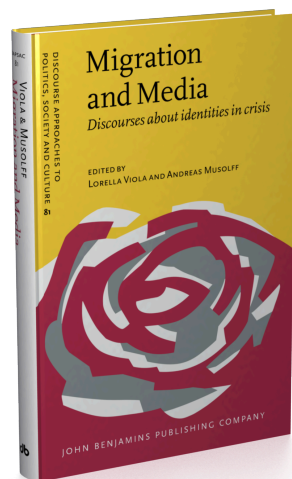
[Discourse Approaches to Politics, Society and Culture, 81]

2019. xi, 360 pp.

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Representations of the 2015/2016 “migrant crisis” on the online portals of Croatian and Serbian public broadcasters

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This chapter investigates the verbal and visual representation of migration and migrants in Croatian and Serbian public broadcasters’ online portals during the “migrant crisis” in 2015/2016. The study shows that migrants are generally positively represented, which is congruent with the official policies of Croatia and Serbia. This positive representation was frequently used for positive self-evaluation of these countries’ influential social actors, and negative evaluation of neighboring countries. The chapter employs macro- and micro-linguistic analysis within the theoretical framework of critical discourse analysis and multimodal analysis.

Keywords: migrant “crisis”, the Balkan route, Croatian public broadcaster, Serbian public broadcaster

1. Introduction and background

Migrations¹ within and through the Balkans are not unique in modern times. However, their intensity, type, and direction vary depending on global and regional politics. In the recent past, during and after the wars of Yugoslav succession in the 1990s, there were large migrations, mostly from Croatia and Bosnia to Serbia; from Bosnia to Croatia; and from Bosnia, Serbia, and Croatia to Western countries (Penev 2011: 16).

1. We use the term “migrants” to refer to all people traveling through Serbia and Croatia in 2015/2016 with the aim of reaching Germany and other Western countries, regardless of their legal status. We have adopted the term “the Balkan route” to refer to the geographical area that stretches from Greece via Macedonia, Serbia, and Croatia to Slovenia.

The Balkan route has been used by migrants from the Middle East and Africa for some time now, and it became more accessible in 2012 after Schengen visa restrictions were relaxed (Frontex 2016). The number of migrants peaked in 2015 and turned into what is referred to as the “migrant crisis.” Despite the common EU migration policy (European Commission 2016), solving this migrant “crisis” turned out to be challenging. Some analysts differentiate among the three types of political approaches that the EU and its member states applied to the migrants: exclusion, fear, and humanitarianism (Župarić-Iljić 2014: 91). The politics of exclusion involves finding ways to exclude migrants from the territory of the EU; the politics of fear involves criminalization and stigmatization of migrants; and the politics of humanitarianism involves the development of measures that are less restrictive, more accepting, and aimed at regulating the status of irregular migrants.²

The increase in migration through the Balkans in 2015 caused internal political crises in the region, resulting in closing and opening of borders, erection of walls, and mutual accusations. This article focuses on a particular geographic segment of the Balkan route: Croatia and Serbia. We investigate the discursive constructions of migrants on the online portals of Serbian and Croatian public broadcasters, RTS and HRT, from August 2015 to March 2016. Croatia and Serbia are important countries on the Balkan route because they serve as the border between EU and non-EU countries and between NATO and non-NATO countries.

The policies of Croatia and Serbia regarding migrants have been influenced partially by Croatia’s status as an EU member state and Serbia’s efforts to become one and partially by the fact that Serbia and Croatia were merely transit countries on the migration path to other EU countries and an insignificant number of migrants decided to stay in these countries.³ Even though both countries have asylum laws, very few asylum seekers have been granted asylum, a fact that has been criticized by some human rights organizations (Human Rights Watch 2016a, b).

This political situation can be described as a “qualified humanitarian approach” (see Šelo Šabić 2017: 53) to the migrant “crisis.” The main focus of the analyzed

2. EU documents use the term “irregular immigration” to refer to people traveling without the necessary documentation and/or using unauthorized border-crossing points (see, e.g., [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2015/554202/EPRS_BRI\(2015\)554202_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2015/554202/EPRS_BRI(2015)554202_EN.pdf)).

3. Concentrating on the Balkan corridor and specifically on Croatia, Župarić-Iljić and Valenta (forthcoming) claim that “the state’s ‘public-face’ strategy of advocating human(itarian) approaches was, in practice, restricted to enabling a more humane ‘transit’ process rather than one of aiding ‘longer-term solutions.’” The authors (forthcoming: 7) also claim that “Croatia’s positive, welcoming, humanitarian stance must be viewed in terms of an overtly proclaimed aim, namely, to ensure that arriving migrants were being welcomed into the country on a temporary basis only.”

material is the plight of migrants (see also Greussing and Boomgaarden 2017: 1751)⁴ and not their illegality or crime. However, there are a few examples in our material that relate to the politics of fear, or a security-driven narrative (Šelo Šabić 2017: 53).⁵ Political relations between Croatia and Serbia have oscillated since the end of the war in 1995; because there are still some open questions related to the war, political relations are easily disturbed. The migrant “crisis” exacerbated old disputes between Croatia and Serbia as well as among other countries in the region. Political relations worsened when the migrants started entering Croatia via Serbia, changing their route after Hungary closed its borders in September 2015. Croatia accused Serbia of redirecting the migrants to Croatia on purpose, and Serbia blamed this on Hungary’s decision to close its borders and migrants’ desire to continue to Western Europe. Croatia responded to Serbia’s actions (transporting migrants near the Croatian border) by blocking freight traffic from Serbia. Croatian and Serbian politicians also engaged in a war of words, which was commented on by media outlets around the world (e.g., Bilefskysept 2015). The Balkan route was officially closed in March 2016.

Croatian and Serbian public broadcasters followed the “crisis” closely. Both had journalists reporting live from the field and claimed to be independent, neutral, and free of any political influence.

This chapter is organized as follows. Section 2 provides remarks on the theory and methodology used, including macro- and micro-linguistic analysis within the theoretical framework of critical discourse analysis (Wodak et al. 2009) and multimodal analysis (van Leeuwen 2008; Kress and van Leeuwen 1996/2006). We mainly focus on representations of migrants, supplemented with an analysis of the representation of politicians that were influential in this particular context. The main part of the chapter is devoted to analyses of social actors and actions and the photographs accompanying news items. These aspects are interwoven and are separated for analytical purposes only (see Section 3). We complete our interpretation of representations of social actors and actions with some concluding remarks.

4. See also Župarić-Iljić and Valenta (forthcoming: 8), who claim that the attitude of media reporting in Croatia at the beginning of the “crisis” was mainly positive.

5. Župarić-Iljić and Valenta (forthcoming: 8) claim that the new Croatian government elected in November 2015 continued a discourse of responsibility and humanity, however, “gradually over time, and especially after Paris terrorist attacks and Köln harassments shifted more and more towards convergence with Slovenian, Hungarian and the Visegrad group’s securitisation discourse on preventing irregular migration.... and defending borders and presumed national interests.” We could not identify any clear discursive shift in our corpus.

2. Theoretical and methodological framework

We employ thematic, temporal, and comparative criteria to limit our object of analysis. Our material is multimodal “texts” discussing migrants and the “migrant crisis” phenomenon in Croatia and Serbia from August 2015 to March 2016. We understand “text” in a broad sense and include all available semiotic resources, such as layouts and photographs. The texts we analyze are unified in terms of genre (i.e., news items) and in terms of what they represent.

Our multimodal texts are online journalistic texts that incorporate, refer to, and recontextualize discourse by politicians, humanitarian organizations, the police, and other social actors. They also represent journalists’ and editors’ voices and are thus polyvocal.

We analyze two comparable sources: the online portals of the Serbian and Croatian public broadcasters RTS (*Radio-televizija Srbije*) and HRT (*Hrvatska radiotelevizija*).⁶ Table 1 shows the size and structure of the material. Our analysis is qualitative, and we use quantitative information only to show some tendencies.

Table 1. Corpora structure and frequencies of key terms

Formal features of the corpora			Frequencies of key terms		
	HRT	RTS		HRT	RTS
No. of words	56,031	100,860	<i>migrants</i>	593	502
No. of images	887	284	<i>refugees</i>	776	341
No. of texts	150	245	<i>asylum seekers</i>	25	38
			<i>people</i>	298	197
			<i>children, babies, little ones</i>	88	47

Although there are obvious differences (e.g., HRT uses significantly more images and somewhat fewer words in relation to the total number of texts), the sources are comparable because they are both Internet portals of public broadcasters, they reach comparable audiences, and they are similar in function, if not in presentation.

6. The Internet portal of the Croatian public broadcaster was established in 1994 and was the most important Croatian web portal until 1998. It was somewhat neglected and less widely visited between 2001 and 2012. After a few redesigns, it started to gain popularity in 2012. In March 2013, it was 19th in terms of its reach. See http://obljetnica.hrt.hr/static/doc/hrt_leksikon.pdf; http://www.hrt.hr/uploads/media/Program_restrukturiranja_HRT-a_8.7.2013.pdf.

The Internet portal of the Serbian public broadcaster was established in 1999. After the redesign in 2008, it started gaining popularity and it is now considered one of the leading online media sources in Serbia. See <http://www.rts.rs/page/rts/ci/internet+portal.html>.

The ideological framework of our material is defined by official state policies represented in the sources and specific features of the genre of the material: a condensed online version of TV news in which verbal information is accompanied by images and video clips. HRT items start with three to five still images and one or more video clips from the main news program, *Dnevnik*, whereas RTS includes fewer still images and one video clip per news item, which starts with a still image. We included this image in the study but did not analyze the videos. The chosen semiotic resources used by news portals reflect their own norms and expectations of how the reader should relate to migrants.

We focus on representations of discourse participants or social actors that are the main topic of the texts, and actions that these actors perform or do not perform. We pay attention to backgrounded and foregrounded social actors and actions as well as those that are excluded. Another category of social actors is those that directly or indirectly influence and/or produce representations, that is, framing of an event. These actors may be medium-external (e.g., politicians, policymakers, any city mayors) or medium-internal (e.g., journalists and editors), and some are both internal and external as they not only influence and produce representations but also are represented (e.g., politicians). We do not analyze the site, conditions (technical or otherwise) of discourse production, or discourse reception. Our primary concern is the migrants (the social actors that are the main topic of the material), although we also focus on the representation of some medium-internal and medium-external social actors and their actions if their voice is “visible” in the texts (e.g., politicians). These actors are considered in relation to the role they play in the representation of the migrants.

Our understanding of discourse follows that of van Leeuwen (2008) and Wodak et al. (2009): discourse is conceived of as a recontextualized social practice in which different semiotic means, including language, are used in order to represent certain aspects of the social world. According to van Leeuwen (2008: 7), “social practices enter into texts.” However, texts themselves are also social practices. We assume that discourse is influenced and constrained by various social factors, but it also influences them by supporting, questioning, or deconstructing (some aspects of) these factors. Discourse is a battlefield of a number of ideological options, although it may be dominated by a single one.

In this analysis, we employ the concept of “representation,” which implies the use of different semiotic means for what van Leeuwen terms “recontextualization.” In doing so, we follow Wodak et al. (2009); in their framework, recontextualization implies a transfer of, for instance, lines of argumentation from one context to another.

Multimodal texts in our material draw upon and transform certain social practices. Social practices of, for instance, taking care of migrants are represented by various semiotic means (e.g., verbal metaphor or visual metonymy). The choice

of certain semiotic means implies that others are consciously or unconsciously avoided. These means produce certain effects, such as particularization and individuation of certain social actors or generalization and aggregation (i.e., referring to some actors with numbers) (see van Leeuwen 2008). Over-aggregation (extensive use of numbers) is a striking feature of our material.

Using different means of personal reference (e.g., nouns, pronouns, or quantifiers to refer to individuals and groups) and attributions (e.g., positively connoted or pejorative) contribute to certain discursive strategies (e.g., positive or negative self- or other-presentation; see Wodak et al. 2009: 35–42).

We also focus on the role of metaphors in representing social actors and actions (see Musolff 2011; Zinken et al. 2008). Metaphors in discourse can be used consciously or subconsciously. In either case, they produce certain effects and their users can achieve certain communicative purposes (Musolff 2011; Šarić 2014).

A prominent feature of our material is over-spatialization (we use “spatialization” to refer to the use of various types of spatial expressions, such as spatial adverbials). In other words, great emphasis is placed on spatial locations, sources, and goals that are an intrinsic part of social actors’ and actions’ representation. Spatialization is reflected in numerous motion verbs.

The migration “crisis” as a social practice is linked to specific times and locations, about which the analyzed texts are very specific. In many cases, the texts’ overall topics are migrants’ arrival at or departure from certain locations or specific events taking place at certain locations (e.g., breaking of border fences). Spatial and temporal “landmarks” are thus represented with very specific terms. Compared to their degree of specificity, the representation of social actors differs greatly (see Section 3).

Representation can add evaluations to elements of social practice(s). As a rule, evaluation in texts is connected to legitimation (e.g., explanation or critique of certain actions). Van Leeuwen (2008: 21) emphasizes that evaluation in journalistic reporting is rare but can be direct or indirect. It is indirect, for instance, in the use of metaphors (see Section 3.2).

In the following section, we employ the main categories used by van Leeuwen (2008) to examine the representation of social actors and social actions.

3. Results and discussion: Representation of social actors and social actions

Van Leeuwen (2008) draws upon a socio-semantic inventory of ways of representing social actors and their actions that range from naming strategies to metaphors and include analysis of both verbal and visual representation.

3.1 Naming strategies, determination, and functionalization

Our data contain news items that provide “normative” suggestions for naming strategies and definitions of labels to be used in reference to people that are traveling through the western Balkans (e.g., *Damir Matković: Migranti, izbjeglice ili ljudi u nevolji?* ‘Damir Matković: Migrants, refugees or people in danger?’ HRT, September 7, 2015). Similar recommendations are also found in international media.⁷ In recommendations found in our material, C/S *migrant* (E ‘migrant’)⁸ is described as a general term used to refer to a person moving to a new area or country in order to find work or better living conditions, whereas C/S *izb(j)eglice* ‘refugees’ is a specific term referring to persons in danger that leave certain areas because of armed conflict. This term is further related to the official status some persons can acquire in countries in which they seek asylum. The official recommendations rely on the UNHCR’s definitions and international law.⁹ The root of the C/S word *izb(j)eglice* is *b(ij)eg* ‘escape’. Its nominal stem refers to the necessity of leaving, unlike the C/S word *migrant*. The C/S terms *imigrant(i)* ‘immigrants’ and *emigrant(i)* ‘emigrants’ are also occasionally used. The former refers to one who reaches a destination country, and the latter refers to one who leaves their country of origin. The route and “crisis” are qualified in C/S as *migrantska* ‘migrant’, *migracijska* ‘migration’, *izb(j)eglička* ‘refugee’, and, occasionally, *imigrantska* ‘immigrant’ (see Excerpts 1 and 2):

(1) ...*migrantska kriza nije samo problem Hrvatske...* (RTS, October 22 (a), 2015)
‘...migrant crisis is not just Croatia’s problem...’

(2) *Tzv. balkanska izbjeglička ruta od ponoći je i službeno zatvorena.*
(HRT, March 9 (a), 2016)

‘The so-called Balkan refugee route has been officially closed since midnight.’

7. For example, BBC (<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-24583286>).

8. The letters C and S refer to Croatian and Serbian, and E refers to English. E is regularly used after C/S. Due to the similarity of standard Croatian and Serbian, the terms used in the material are very similar or identical in most cases and are labeled C/S.

9. See, for example, the UNHCR recommendations (<http://www.unhcr.org/refugees.html>, <http://www.unhcr.org/pages/49c3646c137.html>), and the recommendations published by HRT (September 7, 2015 and September 18 (a), 2015), and RTS (August 26, 2015 and September 2, 2015).

Reporting on a large number of people moving through Serbia and Croatia required rethinking of terminology related to migration. In some situations, journalists chose particular terms to provide information about the backgrounds and aims of the migrants. For example, in some texts discussing people from European countries that joined Syrians, the term *migrant* was used (e.g., HRT, March 20, 2016). However, we have not noticed any careful differentiation between the terms *migranti* and *izbjeglice*. These terms were largely used interchangeably in both Croatian and Serbian material (see Table 1). These terms were often alternated in article leads, and both were used as parts of noun phrases with numerals to report how many people entered Serbia or Croatia (Excerpt 3):

- (3) *Tijekom prošle noći u prihvatni centar u Opatovac pristiglo je oko 5.000 migranata i izbjeglica...* (HRT, September 25, 2015)
 ‘During last night, about 5,000 migrants and refugees arrived at the reception center in Opatovac...’

The adjectival qualifiers “economic” or “illegal”¹⁰ were occasionally used with the term “migrant.” As a rule, the term “refugees” was not accompanied by adjectival qualifiers, but the term appeared infrequently with the appositions *S deca* (E ‘children’) and *C/S beba* (E ‘baby’) (e.g., *deca izbjeglice* ‘refugee children’, *beba izbjeglica* ‘baby refugee’; see also Table 1):

- (4) *... prva beba izbjeglica rođena je početkom listopada u zagrebačkoj Klinici za ženske bolesti i porode.* (HRT, November 5, 2015)
 ‘... the first baby refugee was born at the beginning of October at the Zagreb Gynecology and Maternity Clinic.’

RTS used the term corresponding to ‘migrants’ most frequently, followed by ‘refugees’, whereas HRT used the term for ‘refugees’ most frequently. The terms *azilanti* or *tražioni/trožitelji azila* ‘asylum seekers’ were rarely used, which is understandable because very few people applied for asylum in Serbia and Croatia (see Table 1).

All of these terms indicate different types of movement and different scenarios that cause it. These scenarios are either “neutral,” such as the one related to the C/S term *migrant* ‘migrant’, which implies a change of location for pragmatic reasons, or life-threatening, as in the case of *izb(j)eglice* ‘refugees’. In addition to these terms, the generic C/S term *ljudi* ‘people/humans’ was also used (see Table 1). Although it

10. In the Croatian material, the term *ilegalni migrant(i)* ‘illegal migrant(s)’ is used seventeen times. In addition, there are three occurrences of *nezakoniti* ‘illegal’ and *neregularni (i) migrant(i)* ‘irregular migrant(s)’. There was a regular pattern of labeling certain actions or locations as illegal (e.g., crossing the border). One text (HRT, September 18 (a), 2015) explicitly dealt with the terms and suggested that only actions can be illegal, not people. RTS used *ilegalni (i) migrant(i)* 35 times. A single occurrence of *ilegalne izbjeglice* ‘illegal refugees’ was found in RTS.

implies a highly general categorization (van Leeuwen 2008: 42), this term allowed a different approach: humanization and individuation of the migrants. Consider (5)–(6), in which *ljudi* is followed by an attributive relative sentence:

- (5) ...*ljudi koji beže od rata na Bliskom istoku i siromaštva...*
(RTS, November 11, 2015)
‘...people that are running away from the war in the Middle East and poverty...’
- (6) ...*ljudi koji su se odvažili krenuti na put tražeći bolji život za sebe i svoju obitelj.*
(HRT, September 7, 2015)
‘...people who dared to set out on a journey, seeking a better life for themselves and their families.’

Using van Leeuwen’s (2008) classes of nomination (i.e., naming) and categorization, the social actors that are the main topic of the material are often simply categorized by the terms *migranti* and *izb(j)eglice*, which mark the identities they share with many others. In the great majority of texts, they are not named. The texts typically report on large groups of people crossing borders and transportation of these groups from one spatial point to another. Migrants are named in only a few cases, such as a newborn baby in (7):

- (7) *Dječak Abdul Rahman Al Oubeid...šesta je beba izbjeglica rođena u Slavonskom Brodu...*
(HRT, February 24, 2016)
‘The boy Abdul Rahman Al Oubeid...is the sixth baby refugee born in Slavonski Brod...’

In contrast, the actors that “manage” the migrants – for instance, high-ranking state officials – are “nominated” and “titulated” (to use van Leeuwen’s terminology). As a rule, formal titles are used at first mention:

- (8) *Ministar odbrane Bratislav Gašić posetio je Prihvatni centar za migrante u Preševu ...*
(RTS, August 23, 2015)
‘Defense Minister Bratislav Gašić visited the reception center in Preševo...’

If they are mentioned more than once, their name is abbreviated (e.g., *ministar Gašić* ‘Minister Gašić’ or *ministar* ‘minister’). Lower-ranking persons are occasionally named when individuated and quoted. However, as a rule, they are only categorized (*policija*, *policijski službenici* ‘police, police officers’):

- (9) *Policija je napravila dobar posao, i ja bi napravio isto, rekao je.*
(HRT, September 23 (a), 2015)
‘The police did a good job; I would do the same, he said.’

The same is true for volunteers and humanitarian organization members, who are most frequently categorized as such (e.g., *volonteri* ‘volunteers’), and only occasionally named:

- (10) “... sada delimo i mleko, voće”, priča volonterka Rafaela.

(RTS, October 9, 2015)

“...at the moment, we are also distributing milk and fruit,” says the volunteer Rafaela.’

In terms of functionalization and identification (classification and relational and physical identification), various state actors are referred to in terms of their occupation or role (e.g., *službenici Odseka za strance, predstavnici ministarstva* ‘officers of the Department for Foreigners, the representatives of the ministry’); that is, they are functionalized.

Relational identification of migrants is occasionally found (e.g., *majka iz Iraka* ‘a mother from Iraq’, RTS, August 27 (a), 2015; *majkama sa tek rođenom decom* ‘mothers with newborn children’, RTS, August 23, 2015). Physical identification—that is, reference to permanent physical characteristics—is rare. However, adjectives such as *iscrpljeni, umorni, povređeni*, or *bolesni* ‘exhausted’, ‘tired’, ‘hurt’, ‘sick’ were occasionally used to refer to the temporary state of the migrants. According to van Leeuwen (2008), social actors referred to by such terms are “appraised” out of pity and compassion.

Regarding (in)determination, as a rule, migrants are represented as unspecified and anonymous. Indetermination overlaps with categorization because simply categorizing people as migrants maintains their anonymity. Other signals of indetermination are pronouns such as *neki*:

- (11) *Neki migranti kažu da je situacija toliko loša da žele da se vrate nazad u Srbiju ...*

(RTS, September 8, 2015)

‘Some migrants say that the situation is so bad that they want to return to Serbia...’

Social actors are named in some situations and/or determined by their country of origin:

- (12) “...jako sam srećan kada sretmem nekog ko govori arapski i može da mi pomogne”, kaže Lijak Salah iz Iraka.

(RTS, August 27 (a), 2015)

“...I am very happy when I bump into someone who speaks Arabic and could help me,” says Lijak Salah from Iraq.’

Countries of origin are also mentioned in the few texts discussing the situation of refugee centers in which individuals are given a voice or in texts reporting incidents:

- (13) *Hrvatska, albanski migrant kamenom gađao novinare*

(headline, RTS, September 17, 2015)

‘Croatia, an Albanian migrant threw rocks at reporters’

In the representation of the migrants, naming, determination, and functionalization occur together only in isolated cases:

- (14) *Student tehničkih nauka Muhamed iz Sirije rekao je da ide u Nemačku, jer je u njegovoj zemlji sada veoma opasno.* (RTS, September 5, 2015)
 ‘Mohamed, a technical sciences student from Syria, said that he was heading towards Germany because it was very dangerous in his country.’

Functionalization of migrants is rare. If the migrants are identified by classification, this is done in terms of a group membership, and the most frequent parameters are gender, provenance, and age (e.g., *slučaj dve avganistanske devojčice koje su bile seksualno iskorišćene* ‘the case of two Afghan girls who were sexually abused’, RTS, October 15, 2015). Classification by religion is rarely used:

- (15) *U raspravi u kojoj se pojavio predlog da se u državu puste samo migranti hrišćanske vere...* (RTS, September 3, 2015)
 ‘During the discussion in which it was suggested that only Christian migrants should be allowed to enter the country...’

The use of, for instance, proper names, functions, and relational identification all include the feature “human” and as such illustrates van Leeuwen’s (2008) personalization. The opposite category, impersonalization, implies either abstraction—that is, using abstract nouns in reference to humans (e.g., referring to humans as problems)—or objectification (e.g., different types of metonymic reference). Impersonalization does not play a significant role in our material. Occasional impersonalization of the migrants is related to some uses of the words *problemi* ‘problems’ and *izazovi* ‘challenges’. However, in most cases, these relate to the crisis situation and not to persons, although the two categories are hardly separable (e.g., *problem migrantske krize*; *problem migranata* ‘problem with migrant crisis, problem with migrants’):

- (16) a. *Migrantska kriza dugoročni je problem koji zahtijeva rješavanje korijenskih uzroka migracija, odnosno stanja u mediteranskom bazenu i na Bliskom istoku, a to treba učiniti iskorjenjivanjem siromaštva, nejednakosti, borbom protiv terorizma i ekstremizma IS-a i svih drugih skupina, rekla je novinarka predsjednica Grabar-Kitarović.* (HRT, October 7, 2015)
 ‘The migrant crisis is a long-term problem that requires resolving the root causes of migration—that is, the situation in the Mediterranean and the Middle East—and this should be done by eradicating poverty and inequality, and combating the terrorism and extremism of IS and all the other groups, President Grabar-Kitarović told reporters.’
- b. *Migranti su humanitarni, a ne bezbednosni problem* (RTS, December 17, 2015)
 ‘Migrants pose a humanitarian problem, not a security one’

Metonymic reference is widely used for Croatia and Serbia (see 15):

- (17) a. ...*Srbija jedina ozbiljno vodi evidenciju o migrantima.*
 (RTS, November 15, 2015)
 ‘...Serbia is the only one that keeps records of the migrants.’
 b. ...*Hrvatska dopušta prolazak migrantima ...* (HRT, September 18 (b), 2015)
 ‘...Croatia allows migrants to pass...’

Metonymic reference is vague in similar cases because the social actors responsible for certain actions cannot be easily identified. This kind of reference emphasizes collective responsibility and positions entire countries as more human or less human, as in (18):

- (18) a. *Mađarska suzavcem na migrante* (RTS, August 26, 2015)
 ‘Hungary uses tear gas against migrants’
 b. *Hrvatska je u migrantskoj krizi već pokazala svoje humano lice...*
 (HRT, November 2, 2015)
 ‘Croatia has already shown its humane face in the migrant crisis...’
 c. ...*Srbija treba da pokaže da je pristojna, dostojanstvena, humana ...*
 (RTS, August 27 (b), 2015)
 ‘...Serbia ought to show that it is decent, dignified, and humane...’

Representations of the “migration crisis” in our corpus are related to immigration policies in Croatia and Serbia as well as the broader context: social practices in Europe, especially practices by neighboring countries. The “crisis” involved a set of social actors in each country: the migrants and politicians from various offices directly responsible for immigration and security issues (e.g., ministers of internal affairs and the police). The internal social actors are most frequently included, whereas external (international) social actors (e.g., foreign prime ministers) are less frequently included. Some texts featured backgrounding (van Leeuwen 2008: 29), in which the social actors responsible for an action were mentioned in the text but not in each instance describing that action. Additionally, migrants are mainly conceptualized as groups, which are often implicitly or explicitly evaluated as much larger than expected; see Section 3.2.

- (19) ...*rekordnih 156.000 migranata ušlo je u Europsku uniju u kolovozu.*
 (HRT, September 15, 2015)
 ‘...a record 156,000 migrants entered the European Union in August.’

This “disproportion” initiated a prominent metaphor of moving water:

- (20) *Skoplje je tjednima toleriralo masovan priljev migranata iz Grčke ...*

(HRT, August 22, 2015)

‘For weeks, Skopje has tolerated a massive influx of migrants from Greece...’

The assimilation subtype “aggregation” (van Leeuwen 2008: 37) occurs very frequently in our material. In the majority of texts, readers were confronted with numbers; the migrants were quantified and the readers learned how many people crossed a border on a particular day or a territory in a certain period:

- (21) a. *Do juče je oko 260.000 ljudi prešlo preko srpske teritorije...*

(RTS, October 22 (b), 2015)

‘As of yesterday, approximately 260,000 people have passed through Serbian territory...’

- b. *Mađarsko-austrijsku granicu jučer je prešlo više od 3.400 migranata.*

(HRT, August 28, 2015)

‘More than 3,400 migrants crossed the Hungarian-Austrian border yesterday.’

High-ranking national actors or elites (ministers, prime ministers, etc.) are individualized, as are some lower-ranking officials:

- (22) *Ovih dana očekujemo dolazak oko 4000 izbjeglica, rekao je potpredsjednik Vlade i ministar unutarnjih poslova Ranko Ostojić.* (HRT, September 16 (a), 2015)

‘Around 4,000 refugees are expected to arrive these days, said Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister Ranko Ostojić.’

Individualization of the migrants (i.e., focus on individuals) is much less frequent, although it is more frequent in RTS than HRT due to the size of the corpora. In addition, there are many fewer words but more images in the HRT material. The voices of various named individuals are occasionally heard, especially at the beginning of the “crisis”. For example, one text quotes Aja, who is celebrating her birthday (a culturally important event for which the parents hold a party for their child) and learning Serbian. Both elements in the story appeal to readers’ empathy:

- (23) *Aja će svoj 14. rođendan možda proslaviti u Srbiji. Pre mesec dana je stigla iz Sirije i njen dom je trenutno u jednom Centru za izbeglice. “Ovde mi pomažu da učim srpski. Ako naučim, možda ću ići ovde u školu”, kaže Aja.*

(RTS, August 18, 2015)

‘Aja may celebrate her fourteenth birthday in Serbia. She arrived a month ago from Syria and her home at the moment is in a center for refugees. “Here they are helping me learn Serbian. If I learn it, maybe I’ll go to school here,” says Aja.’

Both HRT and RTS present the migrants primarily positively, as victims (of wars), explicitly expressing empathy:

- (24) *Mukama ovih ljudi nije bilo kraja, po mrklom mraku i hladnoći morali su preko rijeke Sutle kako bi došli do Rigonce.* (HRT, October 21, 2015)
 ‘There was no end in sight to these people’s miseries, they had to get across the Sutla River in pitch darkness and in the cold in order to reach [the village of] Rigonce.’

In both corpora, previous personal experiences of Serbs and Croats as refugees in the wars of Yugoslav succession are referenced:

- (25) *Ako smo uspjeli prebroditi 500.000 izbjeglica tijekom Domovinskog rata, ne vidim zašto bi to sada bio problem.* (HRT, August 21, 2015)¹¹
 ‘If we managed to deal with 500,000 refugees during the War of Independence, I do not see why there should be a problem now.’

Migrants are often presented as people in need of protection, and they are sometimes individualized: their occupations and ethnic backgrounds are specified and personal stories are told. In a typical example, a named person, Mohamed (indexing a Muslim faith) is given a voice. He is a journalist that had to escape Syria because it was forbidden to publish true stories. He is traveling with part of his family because some members are missing.

- (26) *Muhamed je u Siriji radio na televiziji i u novinskoj agenciji. Nije uspevao da prenese, kaže, prave informacije. “Zato što svako ko kaže istinu ubiju ga, svi oni, ili režim ili oni drugi”, kaže Muhamed. Muhamed putuje sa porodicom, neke članove familije traže. Razdvojili su se.* (RTS, October 6, 2015)
 ‘Mohamed worked on TV and for a news agency in Syria. He was not able to convey, he says, the right information. “Because everybody who tells the truth is killed, by all of them, either regime or the others,” says Mohamed. Mohamed is traveling with his family; they are looking for some of their family members. They have been separated.’

Similar passages resemble mini “human interest stories” that are embedded in a larger text. In both corpora, special emphasis is placed on children and their well-being (see Table 1).

11. Sociological research emphasizes experience of recent armed conflict and refugee movements of their own populations as a relevant historical and socio-economic factor that has framed specific responses to migration in Croatia and Serbia. The second factor is position in the EU and not being part of the Schengen zone. The third is experiences with catastrophic floods in Croatia, Serbia, and Bosnia in May 2014 (Župarić-Iljić and Valenta forthcoming).

As the discussion above shows, both sources analyzed present migrants primarily positively as victims. In most cases, migrants were categorized using the general terms corresponding to ‘migrants’ and ‘refugees’, which imply identities shared by many. Although as a rule migrants were represented as unspecified and anonymous (in contrast to influential state actors), identification, naming, categorization, determination, and functionalization also occasionally occurred. The migrants were regularly conceptualized as much larger groups than expected. This is related to the moving water metaphors that are examined in the following section.

3.2 (Moving) water metaphors

The “migrant crisis” in our corpora is conceptualized as a flood. The movements of people are relatively often conceptualized as rivers and waves. All of these conceptualizations can be seen as instances of a broader WATER metaphor.

- (27) a. ...*slijevale su se rijeke izbjeglica u vojarnu* ... (HRT, September 17, 2015)
 ‘...rivers of refugees flowed into the military barracks...’
 b. *Veliki talas migranata u posljednja dva dana prolazi kroz Srbiju.*
 (RTS, August 24, 2015)
 ‘A big wave of migrants has been sweeping through Serbia for the last two days.’

The source domain of a flood imposes its structure on the target domain, migrants’ movement in space. Metaphors that people use are potentially linked to the way they think and can influence the way readers approach the target domain (the migrants’ movement). MOVING WATER and FLOOD metaphors in the corpus are reflected in expressions such as *talas migranata/migrantski talas* ‘migrant wave’ (five occurrences in RTS), *val migranata* ‘migrant wave’ and similar expressions with *val* ‘wave’ (66 in HRT), *bujica migranata/ljudi* ‘a flow/influx of migrants/people’ (two in RTS), *rijeka migranata* ‘river of migrants’ (five in HRT), and *priliv migranata/priljev migranata* ‘migrant flow’ (68 in RTS, 65 in HRT). These are often modified by the C/S adjectives *velik*, *najveći*, *ogroman*, *nekontrolisan*, *pojačan* ‘big, the biggest, enormous, uncontrolled, increased’ and are related to representation of certain actions (see Section 4). The MOVING WATER metaphor implies a series of mappings, including the following: receiving countries are containers, movement of people is dangerous water, and liquids are not easily stopped, nor are movements of people.

A flood is a natural disaster that implies danger and damage, usually depriving people of their homes and property. One would expect that the FLOOD metaphor is used to negatively represent the situation and warn readers of imminent danger. However, it seems that the metaphor was primarily used for other purposes (see

KhosraviNik, 2009: 486). In our case, it indicated logistical problems that both Serbia and Croatia faced and, accordingly, led to demands for more help from the EU. The contextual framing of migrants in transit made the effect of the flood metaphor less negative than it could have been.

The use of “flood,” “waves,” “influx,” and other similar terms in current discussions of migration and migrants worldwide (see, e.g., Neagu and Colipcă-Ciobanu 2014) reveal views that are so “normalized” that they do not seem dangerous at all. However, this is precisely why such language and metaphors, and the views they relate to, can be dangerous.¹² Researchers and activists emphasize the need to deconstruct and bring awareness to “the wealth of water metaphors in media discourses on migration” (Kainz 2016). As research emphasizes (e.g., Santa Ana 1997: 221; Schrover and Schinkel 2015), the WATER metaphor is not a necessity, and other representation options also exist.¹³

Both HRT and RTS have employed moving water metaphors in this context to discuss logistical challenges faced by both Serbia and Croatia. These challenges are related to a few social actions represented in our material. The following section focuses on mediated representations of actions and reactions by migrants and political elites in Croatia and Serbia.

3.3 Representing social actions: Non-agency and conditional agency

Mediation of social actions in our material occurs on several levels: journalists represent themselves as active social actors interviewing other social actors (migrants, politicians, and “ordinary people”). Furthermore, journalists mediate actions by politicians and migrants for their readers and viewers. Politicians, in their own right, represent themselves and their own actions.

Migrants’ actions and reactions are represented differently depending on the context of the news items. For example, when migrants are represented as numbers or objects of actions they do not have agency, and when they are active in a limited way, such as when traveling, they have conditional agency (see Chouliaraki 2006: 119). When migrants are represented as objects, they are often the goal of transporting and placing processes (e.g., *C/S prevesti, sm(j)estiti* ‘transport, place’). Transport and placement verbs are often used in the passive:

12. See also <http://www.newstatesman.com/politics/2013/08/we-need-change-very-language-we-use-talk-about-immigrants>.

13. Metaphors found in other European discourses, such as MIGRANTS ARE INSECTS (see, e.g., <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2015/aug/10/migration-debate-metaphors-swarm-s-floods-marauders-migrants>), were not found due to the specific nature of our corpus and genre.

- (28) a. *Izbjeglice će biti smještene u centrima u Jezevu, Dugavama, Kutini, Sisku i Tovarniku.* (HRT, September 16 (a), 2015)
 ‘The refugees will be housed in the reception centers in Jezevo, Dugave, Kutina, Sisak, and Tovarnik.’
- b. *Mnogi su spavali na otvorenom, u polju, na hladnim noćnim temperaturama i nadali su se da će biti prevezeni u centar za registraciju ...* (RTS, September 8, 2015)
 ‘Many had slept outdoors, in a field, in cold nighttime temperatures, and had hoped to be transported to a registration center...’

Frequent use of these verbs has a dehumanizing effect because the typical objects of transport are goods, not humans.

Migrants are at the receiving end of social actions performed by politicians, the police, humanitarian agencies, and ordinary people. The Croatian and Serbian governments engaged in activities related to helping migrants continue their journey, such as registering them and offering food and medical help, but they also divided the migrants into groups and stopped some of them from continuing. When such actions are represented, the main social actors are very often active and named as representatives of some institutions or referred to as the Croatian or Serbian government:

- (29) *Vlada je odobrila isplatu 27,7 milijuna kuna iz ovogodišnje proračunske zalihe za troškove nastale uslijed prihvata i smještaja migranata...* (HRT, October 29, 2015).
 ‘The government has approved the payment of 27.7 million kuna drawn from this year’s budget reserves in order to cover the costs incurred during the process of receiving and accommodating migrants...’

In such representations, the migrants are passive recipients of help treated in a humane way. For example, they are lodged in tents and given medical assistance, food and water:

- (30) *...svi migranti koji su prošli kroz Šid dobili su hranu ...* (RTS, January 3, 2016)
 ‘...food was given to all of the migrants who passed through Šid...’

In situations in which the police or customs officers were exercising control (e.g., detaining people, sending them back across borders, letting them come in, and preventing them from entering the country), their actions were often represented euphemistically. Thus, illegal migrants are C/S *privedeni* ‘detained’, not arrested, and the migrants are C/S *pod policijskom pažnjom* ‘under police care’ and not in police custody:

- (31) a. *...ilegalni migranti koji su privedeni pošto su isekli ogradu na granici sa Srbijom, treba da budu "kažnjeni za primer" ...* (RTS, August 7, 2015)
 '...illegal migrants who were detained because they cut through the fence on the border with Serbia should be arrested in order to "set an example"...'.
- b. *Od momenta kada uđu u Miratovac do momenta kada izađu u Šidu oni su pod policijskom pažnjom.* (RTS, November 22, 2015)
 'From the moment they arrive in Miratovac to the moment they leave Šid, they are under police care.'

Such descriptions may reflect journalists' or other social actors' belief that these people should not be treated badly.

Humanitarian organizations, volunteers, and drivers perform practical tasks and are engaged in verbal and material processes. National elites are primarily engaged in verbal processes (announcing, commenting, and emphasizing; see 31a), whereas police and volunteers are mostly engaged in material processes (e.g., stopping, driving, preventing entry, following, helping, and bringing food; see 31b).

- (32) a. *Premijer je istakao da je izbegličke kampove obišao mnogo puta i da nije video nikakav problem.* (RTS, November 17, 2015)
 'The prime minister emphasized that he had visited refugee camps many times and that he had not noticed any problem.'
- b. *Crveni križ i UNHCR podijelili su u jutarnjim satima deke, hranu, piće, odjeću...* (HRT, October 19, 2015)
 'In the morning, the Red Cross and the UNHCR distributed blankets, food, drinks, clothing...'

When active, migrants perform a social action of purposefully moving from their own countries via the Balkan route toward their explicit goal: Germany or other Western countries. However, agency is not a clear-cut category, and it often implies action within certain restrictions (Chouliaraki 2006: 125). Thus, migrants act as free individuals while moving, but only in the space and time defined by others.

Migrants' movements are represented by a set of verbs and verb phrases related to motion: *C/S hodati, prelaziti, prolaziti, dolaziti, ulaziti, nastavljati put, putovati, stizati, pristizati, skretati, okrenuti se ka* 'walk, pass over, pass through, arrive, enter, continue journey, keep on arriving, travel, turn (towards)'. Which verbs of motion are used depends on the deictic position of the reporter (i.e., whether the reporter is on the arriving or departing side of a border or whether the reporter is traveling with the migrants). Almost all verbs are accompanied by adverbials representing the geographical points where the migrants are headed. These points can be general, such as "Western Europe," or more specific, such as "the Hungarian/Croatian/Serbian border" or names of locations such as Đevđelija:

- (33) *Gotovo 10.000 izbeglica prešlo je granicu Grčke i Makedonije na prelazu Đevdelija u periodu između 1. i 6. septembra...* (RTS, September 8, 2015).
 ‘Between September 1 and 6, nearly 10,000 refugees crossed the border between Greece and Macedonia at the Gevgelija crossing...’

Continuity of movement is usually emphasized by the present tense, signaling that actions are taking place at the moment of speaking and giving the situation a sense of urgency. This sense of urgency is also conveyed by the use of verbs such as *C/S žuriti* (hurry). For example, migrants are represented as hurrying to reach their destination and avoid possible difficulties:

- (34) *Migranti su nestrpljivi, žure da što pre stignu do Mađarske ...*
 (RTS, September 14 (a), 2015)
 ‘Migrants are impatient, they are hurrying to reach Hungary...’

Material actions are actions that can have a material purpose or effect, whereas semiotic actions are actions that do not have such an effect. All actions related to moving could be categorized as material actions because they have a material purpose or effect (van Leeuwen 2008: 59). On the other hand, examples such as *poručuju da se nikada neće vratiti nazad* ‘they [migrants] say they will never go back’ (RTS, November 24, 2015) illustrate semiotic actions that do not necessarily have a material purpose. Semiotic actions are usually indicated by indirect quotes. In our corpus, journalists quoted migrants both directly and indirectly. The migrants explained their feelings and intentions, provided evaluations of countries they traveled through, and expressed their wishes and demands:

- (35) *“Hoću da nastavim studiranje i normalan život”, naglasio je Rudi.*
 (RTS, August 14, 2015)
 “I want to continue with my studies and normal life,” emphasized Rudi.’

When the migrants perform the semiotic social action of talking to journalists, verbs are used in the present tense: *C/S poručuju, navode, kažu, tvrde* ‘saying, claiming, giving a message, citing’.

- (36) *Ondje će, kažu, radije umrijeti nego odustati...* (HRT, March 9 (b), 2016)
 ‘They would rather die there than give up, they [migrants] say...’

This may signal to the audience that their opinions matter.

Migrants are represented as subjects waiting for borders to open:

- (37) *...šestotinjak migranata iz Sirije, Afganistana i Iraka je na grčkoj strani granice, gdje čekaju ulazak u Makedoniju...* (HRT, January 20, 2016)
 ‘...around six hundred migrants from Syria, Afghanistan, and Iraq are on the Greek side of the border, waiting to enter Macedonia...’

The action of waiting could be understood as a type of conditioned agency. It is usually caused by somebody other than the people that are waiting and because there is an absence of immediate action in the nature of the verb “wait.” However, waiting is described as a strenuous activity because it lasts for an unreasonably long time and involves vulnerable actors such as (pregnant) women and children:

- (38) ...*povremeno se dešavaju manji incidenti jer izbeglice, među kojima su žene i deca, primorani su na višesatno čekanje.* (RTS, September 9, 2015)
 ‘...small incidents occur from time to time because refugees, among them women and children, have to wait long hours.’

Constant waiting at various borders and changes in policies regarding migrants often serve as a background for representations of the migrants’ aggressive actions and reactions. In this way, aggressive reactions are justified and are more understandable and acceptable.

- (39) *U Rigoncu se tijekom noći dogodio jedan incident – manja skupina ljudi se potukla, a jedan je čovjek uboden nožem. Ljudi su nervozni, izbijaju sukobi...*
 (HRT, October 22 (a), 2015)
 ‘There was an incident in Rigonce during the night—a small group of people got into a fight and one man was stabbed with a knife. People are nervous, conflicts are erupting...’

Actions and reactions by migrants that are stopped during their journey are represented dynamically or in an activated manner (van Leuween, 2008: 63), and the verbs are frequently in the present tense. There are several patterns of reactions, from less aggressive ones such as *S protestuje* (see (38a)), *C/S viču, legli su na put* ‘protest, yell, lie down on the road’ in to more aggressive ones such as *S seku ogradu, kamenuju voz, gađaju policiju kamenjem i bocama* ‘cut fences, throw rocks at trains, throw rocks and bottles at the police’ (see 40b).

- (40) a. *Oko 500 migranata, uglavnom Sirijci, protestuje ceo dan ispred stanice skandirajući “Nemačka, Nemačka” ...* (RTS, September 1, 2015)
 ‘Around five hundred migrants, mostly Syrians, have been *protesting* in front of the station all day, shouting “Germany, Germany”...’
 b. *Zahtijevaju da Mađari otvore granični prijelaz te gađaju policiju kamenjem i bocama.* (HRT, September 16 (b), 2015)
 ‘They [migrants] are demanding that Hungarians open the border crossing and are throwing rocks and bottles at police.’
 c. *Representing countries’ actions and views: protecting one’s own interests versus competing to be the most humane country*

Both Croatian and Serbian leading politicians presented themselves as treating the migrants best, describing their positive actions to deal with the migrant “crisis”. The public broadcasters contributed to that presentation by publishing many news items about these politicians and their views. There is a sense of competition about which country is the most humane (see 39). Most of the countries compared to Serbia and Croatia are neighboring countries, and some are Balkan and East European countries.

- (41) a. *“Mi smo najorganizovanija država na putu tih migranata”, istakao je Vulin ...* (RTS, August 25, 2015)
 “‘We are the most organized country on those migrants’ way,” emphasized Vulin ...’
- b. *Hrvatska je ocijenjena kao humana i civilizirana zemlja, za razliku od ostalih zemalja iz kojih izbjeglice dolaze. To je kompliment Hrvatskoj, rekao je Ostojić.* (HRT, October 6, 2015)
 ‘Croatia is rated as a humane and civilized country, unlike other countries that refugees are coming from. That’s a compliment to Croatia, said Ostojić.’

Croatia and Serbia distanced themselves from countries such as Hungary, Slovenia, and Macedonia, which were portrayed as less humane and more violent:

- (42) *Ministar unutarnjih poslova Ranko Ostojić poručio im je [Slovincima] da pokažu humanost na dogovorenim prijelazima [...] Tranzitirajte ih humano, bez bornih kola, pasa, žice na dogovorenim prijelazima, a ne na kapaljku pa da onda sami traže svoje putove. Toliko o humanosti, izjavio je Ostojić.*
 (HRT, October 22 (b), 2015)
 ‘Interior Minister Ranko Ostojić urged [Slovenes] to show humanity at the agreed crossings. ... Transport them humanely, no army vehicles, no dogs, no wires at the agreed-upon crossings, by transporting only a negligible number of them, you are forcing them to look for alternative routes. So much for humanity, said Ostojić.’

They also distanced themselves from each other when the other was represented as inefficient:

- (43) a. *Izbjeglice dolaze organizirano, autobusom, 100 metara od GP-a na kojem nema nijednog srpskog policajca, nitko ih ne kontrolira, samo ih se usmjerava na ovu stranu.* (HRT, September 23 (b), 2015)
 ‘Refugees come in organized groups, by bus, [at a distance of] one hundred meters from the border crossing where there is not even one Serbian police officer, nobody is supervising them, they are just pointing them to the other side.’

- b. *Hrvatsku je upitao i zašto je ćutala pet meseci tokom kojih su migranti išli ka Mađarskoj i gde im je evropska solidarnost, navodeći da je kroz Srbiju, bez ijednog incidenta prošlo 180.000 ljudi od početka godine, a da je Hrvatska zbog dolaska 8.000 njih doživela kolaps.* (RTS, September 24, 2015)

‘He asked why Croatia had remained quiet for five months, a period during which migrants had been heading towards Hungary. He also raised the question of their European solidarity, stating that 180,000 people have passed through Serbia without any incident since the beginning of the year, while Croatia has faced a collapse due to the arrival of eight thousand [migrants].’

Violent actions by the country’s police are justified as necessary security measures, and overall reporting seems to downplay police measures by presenting them in very general terms or euphemistically, as in (42), which presents the police as calming the situation down and even saving lives by using pepper spray.

- (44) *Ministar unutarnjih poslova Ranko Ostojić ističe da je policija ispravno postupila kada je naguravanje izbjeglica riješila koristeći “papreni sprej”. Štoviše, spasili su život toj djeci u naguravanju.* (HRT, September 23 (a), 2015)

‘Minister of Internal Affairs Ranko Ostojić stresses that the police acted correctly when they dispersed the pushing crowds by using “pepper spray.” Moreover, they saved the lives of those children from the pushing crowds.’

Representations of humane and efficient actions by Croatia and Serbia regarding migrants was constantly followed by addressing personal interests:

- (45) *Vlada Srbije će, rekao je Vulin, kao i do sada nastaviti da štiti interese Srbije i da svaku odluku koju donosi, donosi na prvom mestu u skladu sa interesima građana i potrebe da migranti bezbedno prođu kroz našu teritoriju, budu nahranjeni, medicinski zbrinuti ...* (RTS, January 20, 2016)

‘Vulin said that the Serbian government will continue to defend Serbia’s interests and every decision reached by the government shall be made primarily in accordance with the interests of citizens and the necessity to allow migrants secure passage through our territory, provide them with food, medical care...’

Both countries’ politicians stressed that they would not allow either of their countries to become hotspots or the migrants to stay. They stressed other countries’ responsibility, legitimizing migration control:

- (46) *To više nije naša odgovornost, oni su na teritoriji Mađarske i očekujemo od mađarske države da se prema njima ponaša kako dolikuje”, rekao je Vulin.*

(RTS, September 14 (b), 2015)

“‘That’s not our responsibility anymore; they are on Hungary’s territory and we expect that Hungary will behave towards them appropriately,” said Vulin.’

The material includes examples of politics of exclusion discourse, explicitly referring to Hungarian policies:

- (47) *Orban je poručio da Mađari uprkos pritiscima neće pristati na promenu sopstvenih kulturnih obrazaca, jer ne žele neintegrisana, paralelna društva kakva postoje u nekim evropskim državama s velikim brojem migranata iz muslimanskih zemalja.* (RTS, October 26, 2015)

‘Orban has pointed out that, despite pressure, Hungarians will not consent to changing their internal cultural patterns because they do not want non-integrated, parallel societies that exist in some European countries with a large number of migrants from Muslim countries.’

3.4 Visual presentation of social actors and social actions

The photographs (see Table 2) that accompany various news stories mostly use perceptual realism as a mode of presentation. The photographs are still shots of the migrants performing various activities (e.g., resting or being given food) while the “crisis” was unfolding.

Table 2. Photographs: thematic categorization and percentages

Photographs	HRT	RTS
No. of photographs	887 (of these, 388, or 43%, show migrants)	284
Photographs showing migrants in groups	50% (of 388)	33%
Photographs emphasizing individuals (adult migrants)	18* (of 388)	7%
Photographs showing children	21% (of 388)	17%**
Mixed groups (e.g., migrants and police)	10% (of 388)	
Photographs showing politicians	11%	21%
Photographs showing other social actors	32%	16%***
Photographs with no visible social actors	11%	6%

* Some photographs within this category also show groups, but emphasis is clearly placed on individuals.

** Some photographs within this category show groups of migrants, but children are clearly the focus.

*** These photographs show different social actors together (for example, journalists and politicians) or groups of migrants with other social actors (for example, police officers or humanitarian workers and migrants).

The visual and verbal correspondence in most of the analyzed photographs is tight; the photographs and texts complement one another. This indexical meaning gives readers the impression that they are present with the migrants, following the unfolding tragedy, and it contributes to a sense of objectivity of the news.

We identified several types of photographs with regard to the social actors represented, including the following: (1) photographs of migrants in groups (of different size), (2) photographs of children (and their mothers or families) and photographs focusing on migrants as individuals, (3) photographs of politicians, (4) photographs of other social actors (police officers, journalists, and humanitarian workers), and (5) photographs with no apparent/visible social actors (see Figure 1).¹⁴

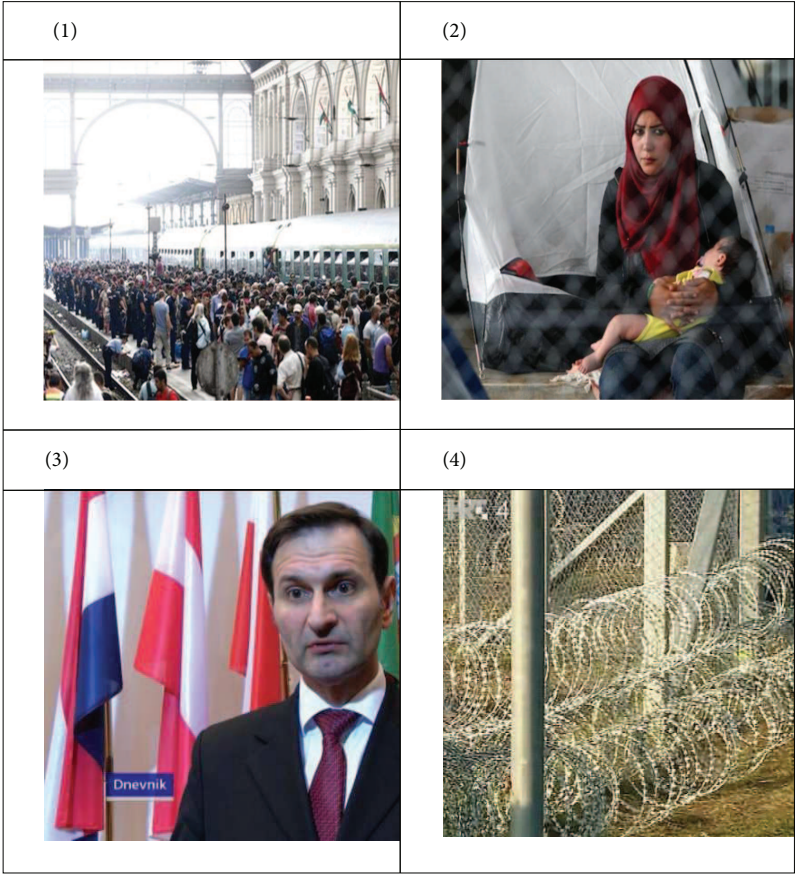


Figure 1. Examples of photographs

14. Sources: (1) RTS, 2015. “Budimpešta, scene očaja.” September 3. <http://www.rts.rs/page/stories/sr/story/11/region/2026081/budimpesta-scene-ocaja.html>. (2) RTS, 2015. “Unicef: Neophodna adekvatna zaštita dece izbeglica.” September 18. <http://www.rts.rs/page/stories/sr/story/10/svet/2042105/unicef-neophodna-adekvatna-zastita-dece-izbeglica.html>. HRT. (3) 2016. “Kovač: EU treba pronaći zajedničko rješenje za migracijsku krizu.” February 16. <http://vijesti.hrt.hr/322430/kovac-eu-treba-pronaci-zajednicko-rjesenje-za-migrantsku-krizu>. (4) HRT, 2015. “Makedonija se priprema za moguće postavljanje ograde.” November 15. <http://www.hrt.hr/308675/vijesti/makedonija-se-priprema-za-eventualno-postavljanje-ograde>

3.4.1 *Photographs of migrants in groups*

The largest group of photographs depicts migrants in groups and not looking at the camera. They are represented as active (walking through fields or alongside roads or waiting in lines to board buses and trains) and passive (sleeping or sitting in tents covered from the rain). In many of these photographs, long shots are used. In some, the viewers see the migrants from a bird’s eye view; they are “below” the viewer. Photographs of groups convey the idea of assimilation, which is often expressed through verbal means as well. In one subgroup of photographs, a medium shot is used, but the viewer cannot see the migrants’ faces clearly as they are not angled toward the viewer. In addition, many photographs show groups of people with their backs to the viewer, either standing or walking away. The social actors are clearly separated from the viewers; they do not face them, and there is no possibility of interaction with the viewers. The large distance in space communicates a lack of interpersonal relationships and social distance (van Leeuwen 2008: 138). If people are depicted from a considerable distance, one cannot perceive their individual characteristics, and in the photographs in which migrants do not look at the viewers, no social interaction is realized and the people are simply “offered” to the readers’ gaze (van Leeuwen 2008: 140).

Photographs of large groups of people convey the same information as texts that regularly mention large numbers. If headlines and/or leads use phrases such as “rivers of migrants,” a photograph using a long shot and showing large groups of individuals can be expected. The representation strategies of similar images are distancing and objectification. The migrants are not close and are objects for scrutiny. At the same time, large groups of people emphasize the scale of the aid needed.

3.4.2 *Photographs of migrant children (and their mothers or families) and photographs focusing on migrants as individuals*

These are very often photographs of children and mothers with small children and babies that are in news items they are part of described as vulnerable and dependent. Many photographs in which either a medium shot or close-up is used show children (see Table 2) and force individualization. In some photographs with medium shots or close-ups, the children do not look at the camera. These are “offer” photographs (in the terminology of van Leeuwen 2008: 140) because the children do not interact with the viewer. However, children (smiling or waving) establish eye contact with the reader in many others. Photographs with children convey the idea that migrants are in need of help. In the majority of photographs, mothers have headscarves and are passively sitting, whereas men, if portrayed together with women, are standing. There is an interesting exception: in some photographs, men are presented as the sole caregivers, carrying and holding children.

Both sources occasionally employ images showing individualized adults. These individuals are either alone or focused upon, “singled out” from the group of which they are part.

3.4.3 *Photographs of politicians*

A significant number of photographs (see Table 2) show national and international politicians talking either to the press or to each other and visiting migrants (e.g., at reception centers). A close-up is used in almost all of these photographs, focusing on politicians’ personalities and functions.¹⁵ The politicians are looking at the viewers and demanding “goods and services” (Kress and van Leeuwen 2006) from them. The most frequently photographed politicians in RTS are the Minister of Labor, Employment, and Veteran and Social Policy, Vulin; the Minister of Internal Affairs, Stefanović; and the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dačić. In HRT, the most photographed politicians are the Minister of Internal Affairs, Ostojić, and Prime Minister Milanović.

3.4.4 *Photographs of other social actors*

Other prominent social actors in RTS material are journalists, police officers, and humanitarian workers. All three professions are represented as doing their jobs: journalists are interviewing politicians in TV studios; police officers are keeping order, protecting borders, or physically engaging with migrants; and humanitarian workers are helping with logistics and health issues. The represented police officers are rarely Serbian and are often from neighboring countries. The same is true for the HRT corpus, in which a large share of photographs (285) shows other social actors (or foregrounds them). Of these, around 50% exclusively show or foreground journalists, around 25% exclusively show or foreground the police and army, and the remaining 25% show or foreground different experts, humanitarian workers, and citizens.

3.4.5 *Photographs with no apparent/visible social actors*

A prominent type of photograph in HRT (see Table 2) does not depict people, but vehicles, tents, border signs, meadows, plains, or railroads, sometimes with garbage. The contrast of photographs showing empty spaces through which the migrants have just passed with photographs of large groups of people has a powerful effect: the only trace left after so many people have gone through is the garbage on the ground. The problem of large amounts of garbage was discussed in several articles in both sources and was presented as a logistical challenge.

15. The same is true for photographs showing journalists and various specialists (e.g., political analysts).

There is a sense of artistic tension and melancholy in some of these photographs. In addition, photographs of nature (meadows, woods, and rivers near the borders) suggest the irregularity of the migrants’ movements. The artistic tension may emphasize the lack of state control over the borders and/or the desperation of people that are prepared to reach their destination at any price.

Fences are an important artifact in many photographs.¹⁶ Fences make control possible and are connected to notions of sorting those that can enter the country and those that cannot. Fences are stable when they are made of concrete and wire (e.g., at the border between Serbia and Hungary) or movable if made of metal or lighter materials and used to create lines for waiting. As clear symbols of power and control, fences often include barbed wire and razor wire. In some photographs, one can see people through the wires at a distance, and in others, the razor wire is the foregrounded element. Depending on the accompanying text, photographs with fences could be interpreted as either a plea for humanitarianism or support for the politics of exclusion. In the official discourse of both Croatia and Serbia, the plea for humanitarianism is foregrounded during the analyzed period.

As mentioned, many of the photographs in both sources show large groups of people, supporting the over-aggregation and over-spatialization expressed by other means. However, individualization (i.e., showing children and adults) is also present in both sources (see Table 2). Table 2 indicates that the percentage of photos showing politicians is higher for the Serbian material, whereas the percentage of photos showing no visible social actors is higher for the Croatian material. These differences necessitate further analyses of a broader sample.

4. Concluding remarks

The macrostructural context of transit migration through Serbia and Croatia influenced how migrants were constructed discursively in RTS and HRT online. There are no significant differences in the representation of the migrants in the online material from Croatian and Serbian public broadcasters. The migrants were

16. Some examples:

<http://www.rts.rs/page/stories/sr/story/11/region/1997627/ograda-se-gradi-broj-migranata-se-ne-smanjuje.html>

<http://www.rts.rs/page/stories/sr/story/125/drustvo/2109749/unhcr-srbija-i-makedonija-ogranicile-protok-migranata.html>

<http://vijesti.hrt.hr/323394/slovenski-parlament-odobrio-koristenje-vojnika-na-granici-s-hrvatskom>

<http://www.hrt.hr/305728/vijesti/video-na-sentilju-tisuce-migranata-koje-austrija-ne-moze-prihvatiti>

represented positively as people that need help, either because they fled war or want a better life. Both reasons were represented as equally legitimate.

This is in accordance with findings of social science studies emphasizing that, during the migrant “crisis”, the Croatian and Serbian public discourse was different from, for example, the Slovenian and Macedonian discourse, which was dominated by security concerns. The former was characterized by empathy, and humanitarian issues were most prominent,¹⁷ although these countries also shifted to a securitization approach after the “crisis” (see Šelo Šabić 2017; Župarić-Iljić and Valenta forthcoming).

The focus was often on children, mothers, and educated people, in line with what Chouliaraki (2006) terms “the mediation of suffering.” This victimization frame mirrors the humanitarian approach to the “migrant crisis” taken by both Croatia and Serbia. As in other European countries, there was a meta-discussion about the appropriate terms for referring to people passing through (e.g., refugees, migrants, or asylum seekers). However, as migration in this context was primarily focused on transit, the discussions were not connected to exclusion issues in Croatia and Serbia to the same degree as elsewhere (Šelo Šabić 2017).

Two prominent features of the analyzed material are over-aggregation (extensive use of numbers) and over-spatialization. The first feature relates to a dominant topic of the material – Croatia and Serbia having to host large numbers of people – and logistical challenges that political elites and humanitarian organizations faced in that context. Over-spatialization relates to another topic frequently represented in our material: physical movement of migrants. Both of these features feed into frequent use of the moving water metaphor, which in other contexts implies danger and damage. However, neither over-aggregation nor over-spatialization was used to represent migrants as an imminent threat. We claim that this is due to contextual framing of the migrants as merely being in transit and not at their final destination.

The migrants were often given the opportunity to speak for themselves in the media, and their suffering was mediated daily by journalists. Even though they were represented as active, the range of the migrants’ activity was restricted; they were actors first and foremost in scenarios involving physical movement. The most frequent actions and corresponding verbs were “enter,” “cross over,” “pass through,” and “walk.” Sometimes, the migrants were also active actors in actions such as protesting, breaking fences, pushing, and beating. However, in almost all of these cases, the migrants’ reactions were justified based on their right to move towards their desired destination.

17. “... on the grounds, of course, that refugees did not stay in their territories” (Šelo Šabić 2017: 68).

The analyzed photographs follow the verbal semiotic resources in that they usually present the migrants as groups. When the photographs showed individuals, they were not represented as specific people, but as general categories defined by age, gender, or family relations: “child refugees,” “adult migrants,” or “mothers with children.” Large groups of unnamed people, “the others” that one reads about or sees on TV moving, are ascribed less humanity (Chouliaraki 2006: 125) than an individual that one either reads about or sees in a close-up scene and who looks at the reader and explains his or her situation. In many cases, although the visuals suggested individualization, the accompanying verbal information did not.

We claim that the focus on positive representations of the migrants in both sources relates to political elites’ positive positioning; that is, strengthening one’s positive self-presentation (e.g., Serbia or Croatia as humane/serious/responsible because they help migrants) in contrast to negative positioning and evaluations of other countries (e.g., Hungary for erecting a wall, Serbia or Croatia for not cooperating in logistics, etc.). This positive representation aligned Serbia and Croatia with the EU (Croatia as a member and Serbia as an aspiring member). The portals mediated politicians’ non-aggressive language use when referring to the migrants. However, aggressive language use by the same politicians was present when referring to neighboring countries in connection with solving logistics problems. The intensive war of words between Croatia and Serbia in September 2015 revived the atmosphere of the conflicts of the 1990s and resulted in material actions such as closing of borders and causing many travelers to lose time and money.

Observed from another angle, the main focus of both public broadcasters shifted constantly between the plight of the migrants and political decisions about their fate. Both transit countries were afraid of becoming hotspots and having to host large numbers of people. Whenever this topic was in focus, the politicians were represented in the media as tending to their countries’ interests first, justifying the need for border controls and blaming higher powers for causing the “crisis”.

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