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### Right-Wing Populism in Central Europe: Hungarian Case (Fidesz, Jobbik)

*Populismo de derecha en Europa central: caso húngaro (Fidesz, Jobbik)*

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#### ABSTRACT

The migration crisis of 2015 in Europe had a huge impact on the political field of the European Union. The migration crisis has caused an increase in xenophobia in countries receiving migrants, while at the same time giving a powerful impetus to the revival of nationalism. The Visegrád group countries – the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Poland and Hungary – took a particularly harsh position on migration flows and the EU migration regulations. Among these countries, Hungary stands out for its consistent political position, which is resistant to criticism from outside, including from the structures of official Brussels.

**Keywords:** European Union, Fides, Hungary, migration, nationalism.

#### RESUMEN

La crisis migratoria de 2015 en Europa tuvo un gran impacto en el ámbito político de la Unión Europea. La crisis migratoria ha provocado un aumento de la xenofobia en los países receptores de migrantes, al mismo tiempo que ha dado un poderoso impulso al resurgimiento del nacionalismo. Los países del grupo Visegrád (República Checa, Eslovaquia, Polonia y Hungría) adoptaron una posición particularmente dura sobre los flujos migratorios y las regulaciones migratorias de la UE. Entre estos países, Hungría se destaca por su posición política consistente, que es resistente a las críticas del exterior, incluso de las estructuras oficiales de Bruselas.

**Palabras clave:** Fides, Hungría, migraciones, nacionalismo, Unión Europea.

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## INTRODUCTION

Hungary was one of the countries on the path of large migration flows of refugees seeking to find a safe place to live in Europe.

The number of refugees entering Hungary doubled between 2011-2012 and 2015 (Cantat: 2020, pp.183-199) and here we can only say about registered migrants.

Number of immigrants who arrived in Hungary (per year) thousand people.											
2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
24,29 8	27,82 0	25,7 32	24,3 61	37,6 52	27,8 94	25,5 19	28,0 18	33,7 02	38,9 68	54,5 81	58,3 44

**Table 1.** The number of refugees entering Hungary

It is noteworthy that there are figures of official statistics in the public domain, and they are not so large, but there are figures quoted in the media with reference to Hungarian officials, and there are also observations of journalists. These figures vary considerably. Thus, Euronews portal first mentions the figure of 140,000 people who "passed" through Hungary in the first half of 2015. Figures of 400,000 people for the period from mid - 2016 to the end of 2016 are also given. These figures may well be real, given the fact that during the greatest influx of refugees, Hungary tried to pass them through its territory as quickly as possible. In fact, during a certain period of time, people entering the country were not taken into account with due care, and therefore no statistical migration records were kept (Greven: 2016, pp.1-8; Stojárová: 2018, pp.32-45; Böcskei&Molnár: 2019, pp.1-20).

While the old-EU members, such as Germany, France, the Scandinavian countries, and Italy demonstrated their readiness to accept and integrate an increasing number of refugees, Hungary took a sharply different position.

Almost immediately after the migration problem arose, the Hungarian government announced the construction of a 175-km barrier along the southern border with Serbia (June 17, 2015) (Stanley: 2017, pp.140-158). In the fall 2016, Hungary started building a new, more powerful wall on its border with Serbia (Batory: 2016, pp.283-303). It was planned to equip the wall with heat sensors and video surveillance. Despite the dissatisfaction of the official authorities of the European Union, the decision to build such a wall was not changed (Kim: 2016, pp.345-357).

In December 2015, Hungary challenged the decision of the European Commission on mandatory quotas for the reception of migrants and refugees in the European Court of Justice in Luxembourg and does not recognize the mandatory quotas to this day.

In February 2016, Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, who is also the leader of a right-wing conservative and essentially nationalist party, announced a referendum on accepting migrants, as the quota system "would change the Hungarian and European national, cultural and religious identity..." (Bozóki&Ádám: 2016). Almost all of 2016 was marked by the so-called Hungarian "referendum on migrants" – on October 2, 2016, at the initiative of the Hungarian authorities, a referendum was held on the feasibility of allocating quotas for migrants in the European Union. The decision to distribute quotas for the reception of refugees in accordance with the decision of official Brussels was made in the fall of 2015 and met with persistent rejection in Hungary – primarily at the government level. Official Budapest took an unambiguous position on the proposed issue, this was reflected in the official discourse of the authorities and in agitation: "Don't take any chances! Vote no!" (Ilikova: 2019, pp.197-212).

According to the quota, Hungary would have to accept in 2016 not too many migrants and refugees – 1,294 people. Compared to host countries such as Italy and France, this number looks quite insignificant. It is

important to take into account not only the number of migrants as such, but also the dynamics of migration flows through Hungary and the ratio of the number of migrants to the population of Hungary. Hungary is traditionally a country with almost a mono-national population – over 83% of the country's inhabitants are ethnic Hungarians. At the same time, the remaining 17% are mostly representatives of culturally and religiously close ethnic groups. Probably, the tense attitude and expressed rejection of foreign-cultural migrants and refugees in Hungary is also a consequence of the predominant mono-ethnicity of society (Enyedi: 2016, pp.9-25; Havlík: 2016, pp.46-65).

As for statistics, in quantitative terms, Germany received the most migrants in 2015 (this number subsequently increased, especially after the famous phrase of Chancellor Angela Merkel «Wirschaffendas!), but the country with the highest number of asylum applications per capita was Hungary. In 2015, petitions were submitted by about 1,800 people for every 100,000 citizens of the country. In the future, these figures have changed, primarily because the rhetoric and policies of the Hungarian government did not seem friendly to foreign migrants and refugees (Murer:2015, pp.79-102; Lugosi: 2018, pp.210-233).

The government that initiated the referendum did not hide its negative position towards accepting migrants, as Prime Minister Viktor Orbán has repeatedly stated: "The descendants of those who let in migrants now will live in a different world" (Pirro&Róna: 2019, pp.603-626). This is in many ways similar to representatives of other right-wing parties in Europe, in particular with the leader of the Italian "League" Matteo Salvini, who used similar rhetoric during his election campaign. In calling for refugees and migrants from Africa and the East not to be allowed into the country, Salvini even used the example of American Indians: "They allowed the migration. Now they live on reservations."

In the Hungarian referendum, the question itself was: Do you want the European Union to be able to provide for the mandatory relocation of non-Hungarian citizens to Hungary without the consent of the National Assembly?» The results of the Referendum were met with condemnation in the European Union and emphasized the fact that there was no quorum for the Referendum - the turnout was less than 50%. The results at the same time, was clear and even categorical. On average, 97% of those who voted were against supporting and accepting European quotas for migrant distributions. This allowed the Hungarian government to continue to consistently pursue an anti-immigration policy, now legitimately, with reference to the will of the Hungarian people.

In March 2017, the Hungarian Parliament passed a law allowing the detention and removal of migrants. At the same time, Hungary passed a law on detaining asylum seekers, despite the UN's condemnation. A new document adopted in Hungary prescribes to prohibit migrants ' free movement around the country, regulating their movement. Migrants are supposed to be held in closed temporary camps or transit zones on the southern border with Serbia until the migration services decide to accept or expel them from Hungary. This document received a sharply negative reaction in the European Union, Viktor Orbán was even called "enfant terrible" in the media. However, this did not affect his political agenda in any way.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The research methods include discourse analysis, content analysis and conceptual analysis of sources on the problem of research with the rise of the populism and social movements to nationalism in European Union. Instrumentalism as paradigm of methodological analysis has been applied to reconcile the position of the researchers with the current scientific basis of the research.

## RESULTS

In modern Europe, the political slogans of nationalist-oriented political movements are gaining strength. If a few years ago, in the context of proclamations of "multiculturalism" and tolerance, the presence of far-right forces in power structures seemed nonsense, and sometimes impossible, today we see how the European right is moving more confidently to the top of power. The growing popularity of the Italian "League" is based precisely on appealing to traditional values; in neighboring Austria, political prodigy Sebastian Kurz, who began his brilliant career as Minister for integration and is known for his tolerance and statements about the value of multiculturalism, has changed his position in the past 4-5 years to almost the opposite (Bozóki&Ádám: 2011; Varga: 2014, pp.791-807; Boda et al.: 2015, pp.871-891).

Hungary, being virtually a mononational country, at the same time actively uses the rhetoric of nationalism. It is Hungary that at the moment, in the context of the European migration crisis, has taken one of the most (if not the most) tough positions in relation to migrants and refugees. At first glance, it is not clear why the ideas of nationalism and Euroscepticism have been flourishing for years in a European country that is facing an influx of foreign-cultural migrants only now, and the socio-political situation is not experiencing critical moments and inter-ethnic conflicts. However, right-wing conservative nationalist movements in Hungary have been very popular in recent years. As mentioned by Hungarian scientists, such an anti-migration campaign of official Budapest could make a appreciable influence on public opinion in Hungary (Bajomi-Lázár: 2019, pp.619-6258). The most famous such movements are the ruling Fidesz party and the ultra-right Jobbik party. In this sense, Hungary is a unique phenomenon for Europe, since the country has been led by right-wing representatives for the past four years. First, it is the Fidesz party – the Hungarian civil Union, which is a moderate party of a center-right nature. Second, the party "For a Better Hungary" (abbreviated as Jobbik) – representatives of far-right political forces. Their victory in the 2010 elections came as a surprise to democratic Europe, and the events that followed continue to be a challenge to the European system being built by Brussels (Hegedüs: 2019, pp.406-430).

Fidesz party is one of the oldest political organizations in modern Hungary. The party was founded in 1988 by 37 students (the name of the party is short for Fiat DemokratákSzövetsége – Alliance of Young Democrats, Fidesz), and since then has played and continues to play an important role in the political life of the country.

The Central themes of the political platform of modern Fidesz are Christian values, support for traditional industrial industries and the priority of Hungarian interests over European ones, as well as the policy of protecting and supporting Hungarian minorities outside the country – especially in Romania. The attention to the Hungarian community in Romania has a historical explanation.

To understand these processes and the rhetoric of Fidesz regarding the protection of Hungarian minorities, it is necessary to turn to history, namely, to the Treaty of Trianon(1920). As a result of the signing of the Treaty of Trianon on June 4, 1920, Hungary was recognized as the losing party in the first world war and lost a significant part of its territories, as well as the population of these territories. In fact, under this Treaty, Hungary remained within the borders of 1/3 of its territory, losing Transylvania (ceded to Romania), Slovakia and Transcarpathian Ukraine (Carpathian Rus by another name) (ceded to Czechoslovakia), Burgenland (ceded to Austria). The population decreased by 2 times, and more than 3 million ethnic Hungarians, who lived in an enclave in Transylvania, found themselves outside the newfound borders. In addition, the country lost its Navy, since access to the sea was also lost, and the army had to exist in a limited size and be hired.

These events were perceived as a national tragedy and subsequently attempts were made to take revenge and return territories – according to the Vienna arbitration agreements of 1938 and 1940, when with the support of Nazi Germany, Hungary was returned some territories: Northern Transylvania, southern

Slovakia and Transcarpathian Ukraine (Carpathian Rus). Subsequently, these territories were again lost, but the historical memory was preserved.

## **DISCUSSION**

The ruling Fidesz party is considered a center-right party, that is, still moderate. Recently, the Jobbik movement, an ultra-right nationalist movement, has been gaining more and more popularity, and with it a greater number of seats in Parliament.

As already mentioned, the nationalist movement in Hungary is represented primarily by two parties. These are Fidesz and Jobbik. The political movement "Jobbik" ("Movement for a better Hungary") positions itself as a "principled, conservative and radically Patriotic Christian party" whose fundamental goal is to protect "Hungarian values and interests".

The word "Jobb" in Hungarian means both "best" and "right". The views of Jobbik supporters are often described as neo-Nazi, anti-Semitic, anti-Roma, racist and homophobic. Also, the party figures speak with irredentist slogans of "greater Hungary", demanding "territorial autonomy" for the Székelyregion in Transylvania and the creation of an independent Hungarian district in Transcarpathian Ukraine (those territories that were separated from Hungary after the First world war).

At the same time, it should be taken into consideration that Jobbik is not a marginal party that does not have the support of the population: in the parliamentary elections in Hungary, Jobbik collected 20% of the vote, which secured the third place in the country's Parliament.

In the 2014 elections, Jobbik lost heavily to the ruling Fidesz party, when about 20% voted for it; but in April 2015, Jobbik won a by-election to the country's Parliament. We can assume that, if the trend continues, Jobbik could be more than a serious competitor to the ruling Fidesz party in the next parliamentary elections, if Fidesz did not intercept the current agenda from its competitors.

So, created in 2003 by right-wing radical students of the University of Budapest, the Jobbik Party is the second significant right-wing force in Hungary. At first, the party did not play a significant role in Hungarian politics, but since 2009 Jobbik has become a real political force, winning three seats in the European Parliament elections. The success was cemented in the 2010 parliamentary elections, when the party broke the five percent barrier for the first time. The party's program is national-conservative-the main emphasis is on anti-immigrant and anti-Roma rhetoric. The motto of the Jobbik party is "Hungary for Hungarians".

In 2007, the party's paramilitary wing, the Hungarian guard, was created and banned in 2009. The Hungarian guard uses uniform elements and symbols that resemble the Hungarian Nazis of the 40s of the XX century –The Arrow Cross Party. (Recall that it was in the 40s after the Vienna arbitrations that the territory of Hungary was partially returned to the state before the First World War).

In October 2009, the party initiated the creation of the Alliance of European National Movements, an Association of far-right parties, including the French National Front and the British National Party.

In mid-2015, the Jobbik party used in its rhetoric concern for the fate of Transcarpathian settlements bordering the troubled Ukrainian regions, thus demonstrating its concern for the fate of the Hungarian people and transferring the conflict in neighboring territories into its political capital.

Thus, in Hungary, there is a situation where the two real political forces are the center-right and the far-right parties. The moment that unites them is in the anti-immigrant rhetoric and nationalistic statements of their leaders. The far-right Jobbik is gradually demarginalizing and softening its rhetoric to win more and more votes. Thus, they gradually reject anti-Semitic statements, but mainly focus on preserving the "values and interests of the Hungarian people".

At the same time, the ruling Fidesz party actively and successfully uses the rhetoric of right-wing and conservative values, anti-migrant rhetoric. Anti-migrant rhetoric is one of the cornerstones of the policy of the Hungarian authorities, which always receives the support of the population of their country, even if it is followed

by the condemnation of the official structures of the European Commission. Thus, Hungary, like other countries of the Visegrád Group, ignored an Emergency EU summit on migration in the summer of 2018, convened after Italy announced the need to review the Dublin Regulation (Ilikova: 2019, pp.129-140). Thus, Hungary once again confirmed its disagreement with any schemes for the mandatory distribution of migrants and refugees among the host countries of the European Union.

## **CONCLUSION**

The popularity of nationalist movements in Hungary suggests that anti-immigrant sentiment is strong among the Hungarian electorate – despite the fact that Hungary is not a multi-ethnic country and is not a host country with a traditionally high influx of migrants (like France or Germany). What is the reason – not high enough in the opinion of the Hungarians themselves standards of living or other factors – that can only be assumed. The most likely hypothesis is that the lack of experience of living together with representatives of other faiths, on the one hand, and the Imperial past, on the other hand, have a negative impact.

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