

Chapter 3

Anti-Immigrant Propaganda

Anti-Immigrant Propaganda and the Factors That Led to its Success in Hungary

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Introduction

By the end of 2014, support for the governing party, Fidesz,¹ fell sharply as various scandals eroded its popularity. While a few months before Fidesz had won 45 percent of the votes in the parliamentary elections, resulting in 67 percent of the seats in the Hungarian National Assembly, by the end of 2014 only 25 percent would have voted for them if the election had been held again.

¹ Officially, the party alliance of Fidesz-KDNP (Christian Democratic People's Party) governs Hungary. However, KDNP is subordinate to Fidesz and functions as a satellite party.

Fidesz found a quick “solution” to its problems by launching an anti-immigrant² campaign. It started on January 11, 2015, when Hungarian Prime Minister, Viktor Orbán, right after the solidarity march in Paris, told a reporter of the Hungarian nationwide public television M1: “We [Hungarians] do not want to see minorities of significant size with different cultural characteristics and backgrounds among us. We want to keep “Hungary as Hungary” (M1 Evening News, 5:51). From that moment, migration became, and has remained the number one political issue in Hungary. The governing party used the tools of propaganda to run its anti-immigrant campaign and connected it to a harsh campaign against human rights NGOs, George Soros, and the European Union.

This chapter focuses on the period between the beginning of the campaign and the April 2018 parliamentary elections. The aim of the chapter is two-fold. On the one hand, it aims at providing an overview of the events of the anti-migrant campaign; on the other hand, it intends to prove that the campaign falls under the realm of classical propaganda.

Pictures in our Head and the Pseudo-Environment

In 1922, Walter Lippmann, the well-known and influential writer, journalist, and political commentator, published his book entitled *Public Opinion*. It is considered one of Lippmann’s most influential books, and some of its concepts can be employed to understand the modus operandi of the anti-immigration politics of Fidesz.

Although the opportunity for direct experiences is very limited, especially compared to the amount of information available, people have opinions and feelings even about things they have not experienced. “Inevitably our opinions cover a bigger space, a longer reach of time, a greater number of things, than we can directly observe. They have, therefore, to be pieced together out of what others have reported and what we can imagine” (Lippmann 1998, 79). Lippmann argues that people gradually make for themselves “a trustworthy picture inside

2 The campaign is often referred to as an anti-immigration campaign. I would like to emphasize that, by using anti-immigrant or anti-migrant as an adjective, the campaign – as shown in this chapter – was directed not only against immigration but more importantly against migrants, portraying these people as enemies.

[their] head of the world beyond [their] reach” (1998, 29), and they act not according to facts but based on the “pictures in their head.”

According to Lippmann, these pictures make up a quasi-environment inserted between the person and the reality. This is their mental image, “the interior representation” of the world people do not have the time or opportunity to experience directly. However, this pseudo-environment is not only an image; it can also be the source of acts, and the consequences of these acts “operate not in the pseudo-environment where the behavior is stimulated, but in the real environment where action eventuates” (Lippmann 1998, 15).

Propaganda

There have been several attempts to define propaganda over the decades (see, for example, Jowett and O’Donnell 2012, 2–6). For a long time, persuasion and propaganda have been regarded as synonyms; however, it has become clear that propaganda should be distinguished from other methods of persuasion. According to Philip Taylor (2003, 7), propaganda is “the deliberate attempt to persuade people to think and behave in a desired way.” He argues that the intent, namely that propaganda is “designed primarily to serve the self-interests of a person or people doing the communicating” (7), differentiates propaganda from any other form of persuasion.

Jowett and O’Donnell (2012) also emphasize the importance of differentiating between persuasion and propaganda. They state that “[p]ropaganda is the deliberate, systematic attempt to shape perceptions, manipulate cognitions, and direct behavior to achieve a response that furthers the desired intent of the propagandist” (7). In many ways, this coincides with Taylor’s definition. However, there are some important differences. The most important one, for now, is the use of the word “systematic,” meaning that propaganda is carried out in an organized, planned, and precise manner.

Other scholars point to the problem that, since all forms of mass communication aim at changing or at least influencing people’s opinion, attitudes, and behaviours, it is hard to tell where the actual boundaries of propaganda lie. For example, Péter Bajomi-Lázár and Dorka Horváth (2013) suggest the importance of differentiating between political marketing and political propaganda. They argue that “political propa-

ganda is intended to establish ideological hegemony, while political marketing is based on the acknowledgment of ideological pluralism” (222). Furthermore, they suggest that “[t]he propagandist aims at re-socializing and indoctrinating the people in order to have them accept his views without reservation and with the long-term transformation of social order as the ultimate objective in mind” (222).

The Elements of Effective Propaganda

According to Brown (1963),³ propaganda includes: (1) the use of stereotypes (2) the substitution of names (3) selection, since “[t]he propagandist, out of a mass of complex facts, selects only those that are suitable for his purpose,” and censorship is one possible form of this selection (4) downright lying (5) repetition because “[t]he propagandist is confident that if he repeats a statement often enough, it will in time come to be accepted by his audience. (A variation of this technique is the use of slogans and keywords)” (6) assertion, meaning that “[t]he propagandist rarely argues but makes bold assertions in favor of his theses” since “the essence of propaganda is the presentation of one side of the picture only” (7) the pinpointing of the enemy since “[i]t is helpful if the propagandist can put forth a message which is not only for something but also against some real or imagined enemy who is frustrating the will of his audience” and (8) the appeal to authority (cited by Black 1977, 98).

In Lippmann’s view, propaganda is the effort to alter the “pictures in people’s head.” According to him, the pseudo-environment is essential for effective propaganda: “Without some form of censorship, propaganda in a strict sense of the word is impossible. In order to conduct propaganda, there must be some barrier between the public and the event. Access to the real environment must be limited before anyone can create a pseudo-environment that he thinks wise or desirable” (Lippmann 1998, 43).

Jowett and O’Donnell (2012) offer some additional techniques to maximize the effect of propaganda. One of them is “creating resonance” since messages have a greater impact on the audience if they are in

³ Brown established this list in his 1963 book titled *Techniques of Persuasion: From Propaganda to Brainwashing* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books).

accordance with existing values, opinions, and attitudes. This resonance can be best achieved through messages playing on emotions rather than rational thought.

The Hungarian Case: The Anti-Immigrant Campaign

The political and social context of the anti-immigrant campaign

As already mentioned, the statement of the Prime Minister in Paris signaled the beginning of the anti-immigration campaign. The political context, namely the sharp decline in the popularity of Fidesz, was the motivation the ruling party felt it needed to take action. However, it is the macro- and micro-social contexts that explain the choice of the campaign's topic.

Before the migration crises, Hungary had never been a destination of mass immigration: between 2004 (the year of Hungary's accession to the European Union) and 2012, the number of asylum seekers in Hungary was between 1,600 and 4,700 per year. In 2013, however, this number went up to 18,900 and in 2014 to almost 43,000. Paying attention to world tendencies, which Fidesz surely did, it anticipated that the number of immigrants would increase further, thus serving as the macro-social context for a planned campaign.

The micro-social context was provided by the generally xenophobic attitudes of Hungarian society. The European Social Survey (ESS)⁴ uses three questions to measure attitudes toward different sorts of migrants.⁵ Respondents are asked about the extent they think their country should allow (1) people of the same race or ethnic group; (2) people of a different race or ethnic group than most of the country's people; and (3) people from the poorer countries outside Europe, to come and live in the country. Respondents could choose from four options: (1) allow many, (2) allow some, (3) allow a few, and (4) allow none. In 2012, when

4 The European Social Survey was established in 2001. Starting in 2002, the survey has been held every two years in many European countries. The surveys are conducted using nationally representative samples following very strict methodologies. The last round was carried out in 2016–2017 in 23 European countries. Hungary took part in all eight of the surveys.

5 ESS uses these three questions in its core module, which is used in every round of the survey. There are also rotating modules in every round dedicated to specific topics; for example, in Round 7, in 2014–2015 additional questions were included about immigration as part of the rotating section.

immigration was not at all on the agenda in Hungary, already 38 % of the Hungarian population responded that they would allow no one from poorer countries outside of Europe, and 28 % answered the same in the case of any ethnic group other than Hungarians. Moreover, 42 and 46 %, respectively, said that they would allow only a few. The results displayed the xenophobic tendencies of many of the survey respondents. The high level of prejudices can be seen even more so when considering the high rate of rejection of ethnic Hungarians⁶: 37% would have allowed a few ethnic Hungarians into the country and 15% no ethnic Hungarians at all.

With ethnic Hungarians viewed as one of the enemies, the topic of migrants was instrumentalized in the propaganda campaign. Since Hungarians, despite living in an almost completely ethnically homogeneous society, already had strong xenophobic sentiments, a new set of stereotypes did not need to be invented; the existing one was reinforced and intensified.

The National Consultation

In the beginning of 2015, the topic of migration was not at all in the limelight when considering public opinion. In November 2014, according to the Standard Eurobarometer (European Commission 2014), only 4% of the Hungarian population listed immigration as one of the most important issues facing Hungary. However, there was a much bigger problem: the opposition had also not perceived the changes in the world's political environment and was completely unprepared when reacting to the government's messages, even though the campaign was already in full swing starting in January.⁷

Government and party officials were conveying an overwhelming number of systematic and consistent messages about the threat of migration. The rhetoric of the government linked migration to crime, unemployment, and terrorism, and instead of calling immigrants asylum seekers or refugees, they used expressions such as “economic migrants,” “illegal migrants,” or “subsistence migrants.” Subsistence was a term already used with a negative connotation and usually referred to the Roma. Refugees constituted the enemy that posed a threat to the

6 In 1920, as a consequence of the Treaty of Trianon, when Hungary lost 72 percent of its territory and 64 percent of its total population, a considerable portion of ethnic Hungarians became citizens of neighbouring countries.

7 For the analysis of the discourses in January 2015, see Bernáth and Messing 2015.

nation, and against whom the “national interest” had to be defended (Barna and Hunyadi 2016, 16–21).

The pro-government media had been continually spreading the messages of the campaign. In 2010, soon after Fidesz won the parliamentary elections that resulted in a supermajority in the National Assembly, the government passed a new media regulation, and also established the National Media and Telecommunication Authority to supervise all means of communication, including private radio, television, print media, and the Internet. The Media Council heading the authority consisted of (and has consisted of ever since) members nominated by and elected by Fidesz. The Authority has constantly been distributing frequency allocations to pro-government stations, wealthy businessmen supporting the government, and the Prime Minister, while taking them away from stations where alternative voices could be heard. The Authority is responsible for content monitoring and may impose fines based on vague regulations (Bajomi-Lázár 2013, 81–82).

Public broadcasting has been completely restructured and filled with pro-Fidesz journalists who are used as the mouthpiece of government propaganda — while financed generously from taxpayer’s money. The Hungarian Press Agency also started to release news free of charge, resulting in an increased number of media outlets relying on them for the news. Bajomi-Lázár wrote in 2013 about the “party colonization of the media,” and defined it as “a strategy aimed at extracting from the media resources, such as airtime, frequencies, positions and money, and channelling them to party loyalists in order to reward them for various services” (Bajomi-Lázár 2013, 76); and he stated that “[t]his construction enables the governing party to control nearly all media” (Bajomi-Lázár 2013, 84).

In April 2015, the government launched a “National Consultation⁸ on Immigration and Terrorism.” Not only did the title of the consultation convey the message of the government campaign, the letter from the Prime Minister was full of biased, one-sided statements, and

8 The national consultation is an institutionalized political survey aimed at “discuss[ing] every important issue before decisions are taken” (Letter of the Prime Minister in the National Consultation on Immigration and Terrorism). Since 2010, there have been eight national consultations in which a “questionnaire” accompanied by the Prime Minister’s letter is sent out to every eligible voter. The questionnaires are constructed disregarding all rules of quantitative social research methodology. The data processing of the questionnaires lacks any transparency, and the public has to rely completely on the results published by the government. All national consultations are financed through taxes.

the questions were crafted to ensure that the majority would give the answers that matched the intent of the government. The Prime Minister's letter drew the attention of the reader to the "unprecedented act of terror" that shook Europe when "[i]n Paris the lives of innocent people were extinguished, in cold blood and with terrifying brutality" (Orbán 2015). He also pointed out that these events were clear evidence that "Brussels and the European Union are unable to deal with the issue of immigration adequately," and therefore Hungary must "defend itself against illegal immigrants" (Orbán 2015). He used the same rhetoric that had already been propagated over the past several months before the consultation, describing "economic migrants" who "present themselves as asylum seekers" and who come only "to enjoy our welfare system and the employment opportunities our country has to offer." As with other national consultations, this was a tool of political mobilization concealed as public-opinion research.

The change in public opinion could already be seen at this early stage of the campaign. According to the Eurobarometer, in May 2015, 13% of the Hungarian population listed immigration as one of the most severe problems Hungary was facing. However, what is more important, according to ESS, is that the proportion of those claiming that no one belonging to a different ethnic group should be allowed to come to live in Hungary had increased by 5%, while those saying the same about people from poorer countries outside Europe increased by ten percentage points (European Commission 2015).

In June 2015, the government launched a billboard campaign "promoting" the results of the national consultation at the expense of taxpayers. Three types of giant billboards were placed in every corner of the country with the following messages: "If you come to Hungary, you mustn't take away the jobs of Hungarians"; "If you come to Hungary, you must respect our culture"; and "If you come to Hungary, you must obey our laws." Although the wording suggested that the messages were directed at migrants, they were all written in Hungarian. In September, a new type of billboard appeared that read: "The people have decided: The country needs to be protected."

A parallel campaign against the NGOs and George Soros

Even at the beginning of the anti-immigrant campaign, conspiracy theories were incorporated into the rhetoric of the government and Fidesz. Government and party officials often referred to migration as a phenomenon that was not only encouraged but actively financed and

organized by those aiming to destroy nation states and European culture. The main targets of these allegations were George Soros, the US billionaire businessman of Jewish-Hungarian origin, and non-governmental organizations providing assistance to migrants or dealing with human rights issues and criticizing the government's policies. In 2015, a Fidesz press release read: "The pseudo-civic Helsinki Commission, which fulfills the political orders of the international financial speculators, brazenly tries to falsify black-and-white facts.... We call on the Helsinki Commission to stop lying, and at least in such an important and serious question not to be preoccupied with stuffing their pockets with the money of György Soros" (A Fidesz Közleménye 2015). In October 2015, the Prime Minister himself stated that "[h]is name [Soros] is perhaps the strongest example of those who support anything that weakens nation states" and he claimed that "Europe has been betrayed, and if we don't stand up for it, the continent will no longer be for those citizens living here, but for some well-organized, unelected activist leadership presiding over huge flows of capital, thinking in terms over and beyond the framework of nation-states; and if the Soros Foundation comes into your mind now, that is not entirely unjustified" (Orbán, October 30, 2015). Using Lippmann's term (1998, 10), Soros was used as the "omnipotent evil," and NGOs were constantly portrayed as Soros' henchmen.

The use of *enemies* also paid off for populist political leaders in the past. "By constantly identifying new enemies, and by maintaining an atmosphere of vigilance and suspicion, the regime creates a Manichean domestic political divide that hinders critical actors from efficiently mobilizing citizens" (Kopper et al. 2017, 110). "Referring to enemy images evokes strong emotions by suggesting that the internal core of members is threatened by an existential threat from outsiders" or from within. "The two types of enemy — internal and external — have different roles in politics: the former serves as a threat, a form of oppression; while the external enemy calls upon the 'community' to act" (112). In analyzing Orbán's speeches between 2010 and 2015, Kopper and his colleagues found that the Prime Minister constantly linked internal and external enemies and "domestic enemies were mostly identified as enemies that primarily serve foreign interests" (Kopper et al. 2017, 118). Orbán and his government followed the same path after 2015 — pointing to human rights NGOs as the internal enemy, financed and directed by the external enemy, George Soros.

The crisis in the summer of 2015 and its consequences

The flow of immigrants to Hungary continued throughout the first half of 2015, with a total number of almost 67,000 asylum seekers entering the country by the end of June (Hungarian Central Statistical Office 2016). The reception and detention centres became extremely overcrowded with two or three times more people than their capacity; the quantity and quality of food was unsatisfactory; conditions were horrible; and the treatment of asylum seekers was rough and included unlawful detention practices.

In July, the government issued a “Decree on the National Designation of Safe Countries of Origin and Safe Third Countries,” to be enforced at the beginning of August. The decree established a list of safe third countries, namely all the states along the Western Balkan route including Serbia. According to the new regulation — severely criticized by human rights NGOs and international organizations, including the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) — the authorities could reject all asylum applications filed by individuals who had come through “a third safe country” as they could have applied for protection in that country. Since 99 percent of asylum seekers were entering Hungary at the Serbian-Hungarian border, the new legislation meant that the vast majority of applications could be rejected. The concept of the third safe country provided the opportunity for the government to reinforce the concept of migrants *illegally* entering Hungary.

By the end of July, more and more asylum seekers approached Budapest, while continuous attempts were made by refugees to break out of refugee camps and registration centres. By the end of August, thousands of asylum seekers waited in limbo at the railway stations in Budapest to leave Hungary for Germany. The situation was especially chaotic at the Keleti Railway Station. While human rights NGOs, volunteers, and many ordinary citizens were struggling to provide food, clothing, and even medical assistance, the Hungarian authorities refused to assist the refugees. Then in early September, the police closed the railway station, thus preventing the migrants from boarding trains bound for Austria. People were left completely uninformed as they experienced the hectic reactions of the authorities, and on September 5 hundreds of refugees gave up waiting and headed for Austria on foot. On the same day, Austria and Germany opened their borders to the migrants in response to the “humanitarian crisis.”

The images of the dirty, desperate mass of people were utilized in the propaganda demonstrating how Hungary would look if migrants were

allowed into the country. Gábor Bernáth and Vera Messing identified “five different frames of interpreting events and the sources of problems: the humanitarian crisis frame; the security threat frame; criticism of the European Union’s (EU’s) and other countries’ refugee policies frame; framing events in terms of the consequence of war; and the integration challenge frame” (2016, 58). In the Hungarian media, by mid-September, the frame of “the threat to national security” became dominant. The broadcasts of M1, the public 24-hour news channel, “explained all developments in terms of a threat to national security, whether it be a health threat (epidemic), criminal threat (violent, aggressive crowd) or security threat (invasion of Hungary and the EU)” (Bernáth and Messing 2016, 58). In their analysis, the authors shed light on a very important aspect of the working mechanism of the government’s propaganda. They argued, based on their in-depth analysis, that “even just by reporting about the speeches and actions of governmental actors, the media [also non-governmental] may have contributed to the dissemination of an anti-refugee agenda. We could see how the government’s dehumanizing terminology about illegal migrants, welfare migrants, and illegal trespassers, used only in Hungary, was reproduced in media reporting. Some of the media outlets . . . used this terminology consistently, but it penetrated other media as well” (59).

The autumn of 2015 brought several legislative changes. In September, the Hungarian government issued a Decree announcing a crisis situation caused by mass immigration, and a crisis situation was declared in five counties out of nineteen.⁹ Also in September, the *Act on Amendment of Certain Acts relating to the Management of Mass Immigration* came into force. The timing was not accidental, as the fence along the Hungarian-Serbian border had just been erected.¹⁰ The Act introduced new border procedures — special “transit zones” — as the only places where applications could be submitted, and it limited the number of applications to only 100 asylum seekers per day.¹¹ The Act also included an amendment to the Criminal Code declaring crossing and damaging the border closure a criminal act (Barna and Hunyadi 2016, 8–9).

9 In March 2016, the government declared a state of emergency for the entire country and has prolonged it several times since then.

10 Later in 2015, the Croatian-Hungarian border was also closed by a fence.

11 The number was gradually reduced to 10 by November 2016.

Talking about immigration without migrants: the quota referendum

After the physical and legal closure of Hungary, the number of registered asylum-seekers fell from 177,135 in 2015 to 29,432 in 2016. However, they remained practically unseen by the public. In the absence of actual refugees, Fidesz needed to shift its communication in order to keep immigration on the top of the political agenda. The EU's *relocation quota plan* provided the basis for a new communication framework. In November 2015, Fidesz launched a signature drive spreading misinformation against the "mandatory migrant quota" entitled "Let's protect the country!" In one month, approximately one million Hungarians signed the petition against the quota.

In February 2016, the government announced a referendum to be held in October. Between February and October, the government initiated waves of campaigns that constantly thematized public discourse. It included three waves of billboard campaigns directly connected to the referendum. In May, the billboards read "Let's send a message to Brussels so they can understand it too!" In July, five types of billboards were put up with messages that all started with "Did you know ..." followed by untrue or half-true statements such as "Brussels wants to settle a city's worth of illegal immigrants in Hungary" or "The Paris terror attacks were carried out by immigrants."

In September, just before the referendum, billboards called to participants to say "No" to the "mandatory quota": "Don't put Hungary's future at risk! Let's vote 'NO' on October 2!" Also, there were television and radio spots, as well as ads in newspapers and on online platforms, all incorporating misleading information and distorted facts. In September, a booklet with this "information" was also sent out to every household (Barna and Hunyadi 2017).

In parallel with the propaganda tools mentioned above, the campaign against NGOs and the alleged mastermind behind them—George Soros — continued. NGOs providing support and assistance to migrants or those critical of the government were condemned as "organizations of the Soros-network," and Soros was portrayed as a conspirator and machinator, part of the "background power" that was accused of supporting and even organizing mass migration to the EU.

On October 2, 2016, the quota referendum was held, asking people the following question: "Do you want to allow the European Union to mandate the resettlement of non-Hungarian citizens to Hungary without the approval of the National Assembly?" Only 44 percent of the electorate

went to the polls, which meant that the referendum was invalid, since the turnout did not reach the threshold of 50 percent plus one. One would think that this failure would have held back the government — but that was not the case at all. Mere hours after the referendum, the government broadcasted a message with a newly invented term: “politically valid.” In the following days, all government and party officials, as well as all pro-government media outlets, were repeating the term, highlighting the fact that 98 percent of those casting a valid vote were against the quota. Since the referendum was invalid, the parliament had no obligation to change any law to reflect the result of the vote.

And the propaganda machine rolled on

The rhetoric of the government did not change after the referendum. Disregarding the fact that the referendum was not valid, PM Orbán presented the results as a victory. While George Soros and the human rights NGOs remained the main targets of the anti-immigrant propaganda, they also alleged “the European Union is dancing to George Soros’ tune” by implementing the “Soros plan.”

In April 2017, a national consultation titled “Let’s stop Brussels!” was launched by the government, including two highly biased questions about NGOs. The government’s television advertisement regarding the consultation directly targeted the Hungarian Helsinki Committee (HHC). In June 2017, the vice president of Fidesz compared the HHC and Amnesty International to the Cosa Nostra in Italy, stating that Soros used these “mafia networks” to import 1 to 1.5 million migrants into Europe. By the beginning of July, Hungary was plastered with a new type of poster depicting the smiling face of Soros accompanied by the text “Don’t let Soros have the last laugh!”

The campaign led to a national consultation on the alleged Soros-plan in September. In October 2017, one of the MPs of the Christian-Democratic ally of Fidesz, KDNP, went so far as to compare Soros to Satan, while in December a mayor of one of the districts of Budapest compared him to Hitler and Stalin. The rhetoric and the images used in the campaign against George Soros clearly resembled the narrative of antisemitic conspiracy theories that accuse Jews of attempting to rule the world, controlling global financial institutions, subjugating economic and political leaders, and acting secretly (Barna et al. 2018).

The social consequence of the anti-immigrant campaign

As mentioned above, according to the representative survey of ESS, xenophobia had already increased in the first few months of the anti-immigrant campaign. However, the results of the *eighth* wave of ESS, conducted in Hungary in early 2017, were beyond imagination. Both in the case of immigrants of different ethnic groups and immigrants from poorer countries outside Europe, the proportion of respondents stating that they would allow some of them into the country *decreased*; while those stating that they would allow *none* of them to come to Hungary *increased*.

By way of comparison, in 2015, right after the anti-migrant campaign started, *48 percent* of the Hungarian population would allow a *few* non-Hungarian migrants in to the country; and *33 percent* would allow *none* of them into the country. Whereas in 2017, only *39 percent* would allow a *few* into the country; and *48 percent* would allow *none*.

In the case of migrants from *poorer* non-European countries, the percentage of Hungarians saying they would allow a *few* decreased from 39 to 32 percent; while those saying they would allow *none* increased from 48 to 62 percent. It is important to note, however, that the acceptance of ethnic Hungarians from outside of Hungary did not change, further reinforcing the concept that changes in the magnitude of xenophobia were the consequences of the government's anti-immigrant propaganda.

Conclusion

As has been demonstrated, the Fidesz government led by Viktor Orbán built a pseudo-environment full of lies, half-truths, and distorted facts, continually omitting any information that would contradict the message it wanted to convey. The propaganda campaign was not only a deliberate one (Taylor 2003) but also a “systematic” attempt “to shape perceptions, manipulate cognitions, and direct behavior” (Jowett and O'Donnell 2012). The campaign was designed to serve the self-interest of the Fidesz government, namely to remain in power. It was intended to establish ideological hegemony, and it did not tolerate any form of pluralism — making it political propaganda, and not political marketing (Bajomi-Lázár and Horváth 2013).

Bajomi-Lázár and Horváth (2013) argued that 2010, the year when Fidesz-KDNP came into power, was a paradigm shift in political communication, and that the campaigns initiated by the ruling party were a revival of old-school propaganda. The authors also used the above-mentioned list established by Brown to prove that the communication campaigns initiated by the Orbán government between 2010 and 2014 met all the criteria of propaganda.

Going through Brown's list makes it possible not only to classify the anti-immigration campaign as classical propaganda but also to identify the success factors of the campaign. In the campaign, the government used migrants, human rights NGOs, George Soros, and the European Union as enemies (*the pinpointing of the enemy*) against whom Christianity, Europe, and the Hungarian nation should be defended (*the appeal to authority*). Stereotypes were used extensively to describe the magnitude of the threats they posed (*use of stereotypes*).

According to Lippmann (1998), “[t]he subtlest and most pervasive of all influences are those that create and maintain the repertory of stereotypes,” (90) and that is exactly what the Orbán government did. However, it also used existing stereotypes and prejudices that helped boost its efficiency. The general tendency of people to pay attention to facts that support stereotypes, and dismiss those that contradict them, also helped the government. However, the government and the media serving their goals also carefully *selected* events and facts, either by utilizing only those suitable for their purpose, or by using the “colonized media” to exercise censorship and thereby create a barrier between reality and the public — thus creating a pseudo-environment. Moreover, government and party officials did not refrain from lying about the facts; and the messages of the campaign were always formulated as assertions, leaving no room for questions or doubt. The campaign also used many substitutions, such as calling asylum seekers economic, illegal or subsistence migrants, and all messages were constantly repeated.

In its campaign Fidesz instrumentalized xenophobia. For this political instrumentalization to be successful, the high level of prejudice in Hungarian society was a necessary but not sufficient condition. Therefore, the government had to spread xenophobia into every sphere of the society and it became all-pervasive. Migrants were, in fact, the symbolic enemy, as they were not actually present in the country; nevertheless, many people were constantly on alert to fight them. For example, some women were almost attacked on the street when they were wearing a headscarf after visiting the hairdresser; and panic broke

out in a small town when residents thought that people coming to the cemetery on All Saints' Day were migrants. The lack of immigrants in the country did not decrease the level of fear but rather heightened it. On the one hand, people felt even more that they had to watch out all the time; and on the other hand, people had no chance to experience anything contrary to the government's propaganda.

The strategy of Fidesz proved to be successful. It resulted in a landslide victory in the parliamentary elections of 2018, and Viktor Orbán was elected for his third consecutive term as Prime Minister. And because Fidesz had a supermajority in the National Assembly, it was able to approve the seventh amendment to Hungary's Fundamental Law (i.e., constitution) in June 2018.

Among other things, the amendment states that “[n]o alien population shall be settled in Hungary” and that “[t]he exercise of freedom of expression and the right of assembly shall not harm others' private and family life and their homes.” The general reasoning of the amendment refers to “the activity of the pro-immigration forces” that is “threatening the national sovereignty of Hungary.”¹² On June 20, the Hungarian parliament passed the bill known as the “Stop Soros law,” according to which it became a criminal offense to provide financial means or conduct “organizational activity” that assists immigrants not entitled to protection with asylum requests, and such a criminal offense was punishable by up to one year in prison.

Unfortunately, these events do not predict a bright future for Hungary.

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