

4 The Moral Panic Button¹

Construction and consequences

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Introduction

In January 2015, when the infamous terrorist attack on the editorial office of Charlie Hebdo happened, the Hungarian Prime Minister, Viktor Orbán was inclined to express his solidarity with the victims. A couple days later, just as he was about to fly to Paris to participate in the solidarity march, he drew a frightening picture of rising terrorism in Europe. He not only blamed European politics for the increasing threat of terrorism, but also political correctness and, most importantly, the so-called ‘economic immigration and immigrants’ (Index 2015). The following weeks experienced the birth of a campaign blaming migration for many of the problems of Hungary and Europe, portraying migrants as posing a threat of losing employment, increasing crime, and dissolving national culture, and continuously stating that the Hungarian government will commit everything to stop migration. The only problem was that, although the number of asylum seekers was increasing in the spring of 2015, they were hardly ‘flooding’ Hungary. The sudden increase in the number of arriving asylum seekers lasted only for a couple weeks and almost all of them only passed through Hungary (Bernát et al. 2015). Although since then, the number of arriving asylum seekers has returned to its normal level, the topic of immigration is still the central topic of the government’s and Fidesz’s political communication.

In September 2018, a new media corporation was founded, the Central European Press and Media Foundation. Throughout the next few months, the Foundation became the largest actor in the media market, owning 29 media companies, two television channels, a major national daily newspaper, the second largest online news portal, all county-level newspapers, one of the largest tabloids, and the largest freely distributed advertising newspaper. The most surprising thing about the Foundation is not the speed of its growth, but the fact that the former owners of these media outlets handed over their ownership for free. Thus, the Foundation acquired companies worth hundreds of millions of Euro without paying a single eurocent.

What is the connection between the two events? In our opinion, they are important steps of the 1) establishment, and 2) tailoring of the government’s

media organization toward a more fitting form (i.e., centralized, more controllable, and efficient, etc.) of the Moral Panic Button (MPB).

The Moral Panic Button

The concept of the MPB draws heavily on the theory of the moral panic developed by Stanley Cohen (1972). The moral panic involves the exaggeration of existing phenomena, picturing them as existential threats to the national community and explaining their causes by scapegoating and pointing to images of an enemy.

The ideal type of moral panic should focus on a 1) important, seemingly life-or-death, threat which 2) may have serious and lasting negative effects on 3) a large – or at least loud and visible – social group. It has to have 4) an identifiable person/group of the wrongdoer(s) who 5) can be blamed for the threat. 6) The ‘problem’ becomes a major topic for more and more actors, and in the course of the panic, 7) the level of hostility against the scapegoats increases. 8) Finally, the moral panic runs its course and disappears, often as quickly as it erupted.

The moral panic often involves specific language; the discourses of moral panics often use ‘relatively fixed lexical and syntactical forms’ (Cohen 2011: xxiv). For example, asylum seekers are often described using metaphors of water (flood, wave) or depicted as an invading army. Finally, moral panics need theories explaining why the dramatic event happened and emphasizing that the underlying mechanism is universal, thus it could happen again and in other places (Cohen 2011).

As to the origin of the moral panic, it can be a bottom-up one, when rumor or gossip initiates and widens the concerns of a local problem. It can also be the result of an idea which trickles down from the elite through the media. Opinion leaders of all sorts (editors, politicians, ‘moral entrepreneurs,’ the so called ‘right-thinking people’) use these channels to diagnose the problem and offer a remedy (Cohen 1972; Goode & Ben-Yehuda 1994).

The Moral Panic Button concept (Sik 2016; Barlai & Sik 2017) can be seen as a special version of Cohen’s top-to-bottom, elite-engineered moral panic, but in this case, it is the government that induces the moral panic and uses it as a major tool of its governance.

The MPB, however, is much more than just a simple government-initiated moral panic. It is far from being simply a hardcore version of a top-to-bottom type of moral panic. All of the characteristics of a moral panic are present in the operation of an MPB, however, they constitute only the necessary but insufficient conditions of an MPB. The MPB 1) assumes strong governmental control of the media, 2) the use of various propaganda instruments beyond the mass media, 3) continuously selects new scapegoats (while keeping the previous ones as well), and uses these combinations to hate-monger, 4) applies strong framing techniques (e.g. the monotonous repeating of simplified messages, using fake information and misinformation to

humiliate and ridicule the enemy, etc.), 5) has uncontrolled financing from the state budget, and 6) flexibly incorporates (often unofficially) pro-government actors, such as think-tanks, NGOs (church, sport, civil organizations), municipalities, and for-profit firms (owned by ‘friendly oligarchs’), etc. which are intertwined and organized by a few core state institutions.

The construction of the MPB in Hungary

In early 2015, after the sharp and fast drop of their popularity, the Hungarian government tried desperately to come up with ideas to regain the sympathy of their potential voters. For example, they experimented with opening a discussion in which they suggested the re-introduction of the death penalty and/or fueled suspicion towards the treacherous civil society. These ideas, however, failed.

In January 2015, just as the worst public opinion results came out, they discovered the merit of the terrorist attack mentioned at the beginning of this chapter as the basis of a ‘threat from migration-type’ moral panic construction. While the Hungarian Prime Minister expressed his solidarity with the victims, his statement issued on the occasion on January 11 was about the increasing threat that terrorism posed to Europeans’ everyday life:

Our reality today, in Europe, is the increasing presence of terrorism. Its presence is growing day by day. It is the ‘European man’ who is under attack: the freedom and lifestyle of the ‘European man.’ All of this is threatening the safety of our everyday life, therefore we cannot afford not to face it.

(Népszava 2015.)²

Then, he expressed his commitment to fighting this threat and stated that political correctness and the sclerotic EU are hindering the proper defense of Europe.

Soon, the government discovered that the result of this experiment was promising and decided to use it as the basis for further moral panics, and so on and so forth. They started beta-testing the MPB.³

As we have stated above, the main aim of the ruling elite was to regain the popularity they needed to remain in power. To achieve this goal, Fidesz needed to rule the discursive space. This required three things: 1) a hegemonic position in the media, 2) a proper topic for fearmongering, and 3) proper targets for scapegoating.

In the Introduction, we showed the last step (the creation of the huge state-controlled media entity) of the state’s achieving of a hegemonic position in the media. However, Fidesz started this process immediately after winning the Parliamentary election in 2010. The standard technique was a slow acquisition of various media outlets and either re-directing their political orientation or closing them down. To achieve these aims, the state used three techniques:

- 1 Undermining of the independence of the organizations responsible for overseeing private and public media;
- 2 The manipulation of access to the market resources necessary for media market activities; and
- 3 The manipulation of the information environment by controlling the access to public information and the political agenda (Polyák 2019: 283)

According to Bajomi-Lázár (2013: 76), the new institutional structure of the media ‘may be defined as a strategy aimed at extracting from the media resources such various services.’ The redistribution of media power started with the Media Act of 2010, which led to two major transformations. First, it established the Media Council and the National Media and Info Communications Authority with a high level of authority over media institutions. Second, it merged the dispersed public media institutions into one central public service foundation (Bayer 2011). The concentration of a high level of authority and massive funds into a single institution which is led by an appointee of the Prime Minister was followed by the suspension of media subsidies previously given to privately run TV stations (Rovó & Dull 2016).

The second phase was to occupy the privately-owned media space by taking over or exterminating media assets that were critical to the government. Between 2010 and 2014, the main figure in securing the hegemony over the media was one of the founding members of Fidesz and a long-standing friend of Viktor Orbán, Lajos Simicska, who owned the most important pro-government media outlets. However, due to personal differences, this oligarch turned against Fidesz, and the formerly pro-government media became anti-governmental as quick as lightning. Thus, after 2014, Fidesz needed a new media strategy. First, Fidesz-related entrepreneurs acquired well-established and formerly critical news outlets (such as the second largest online news portal, the second most popular commercial television channel, and local newspapers). Second, parallel to occupying the existing media, they established new and loyal media outlets and radio channels. Third, they centralized the existing pro-government media under the ownership of loyal entrepreneurs, and started to rule out several prestigious, independent, and critical newspapers (Polyák 2019).

The third phase, which took place in 2018, started with the re-allocation of the media outlets previously owned by Simicska, who, after Fidesz won the Parliamentary election in 2018, sold all his media assets to a friend loyal to the government. The new owner appointed a new editor the day after the acquisition happened. But the most important element of the third phase was the establishment of the already-mentioned state-controlled foundation. With this organization, the pro-government media can be instructed directly by the Party.

The second thing that Fidesz needed to do in order to dominate the discursive space was to find a proper topic. The optimal qualities of such a topic were as follows: 1) simple (easily understood by the average citizen), 2)

already popular among the public, 3) having a relevant moral component (i. e. connected to some basic element of the dominant value system), and 4) sensitive enough to be used as a potential threat to create a panic reaction.

In early 2015, the Hungarian government raised the issue of reintroducing the death penalty to the Hungarian legal system (Bugaric 2016). However, soon it turned out that the reintroduction of death penalty would contradict basic international contracts signed by Hungary, so the topic was dropped. Instead, the government turned to the topic of immigration, and at the same time, they repeatedly tried to attack civil society organizations.

Since the danger of civil society is a regularly returning topic of the government, we need a more detailed explanation why it did not serve well as a triggering issue of the Moral Panic Button. Fidesz tried to initiate an NGO threat-based moral panic already in 2013: the target was a representative organization of the Norwegian Civil Fund in Hungary,⁴ which distributes funds through selected civil society organizations. The government claimed that the representative organization (in fact a consortium of civil foundations) financed the political activity of the opposition. It launched a campaign against them as well as the recipients of the grants and pictured them as organizations representing foreign interests (Torma 2016).⁵ The Prime Minister even mentioned this case in his annual speech at Tusnádfürdő:⁶ 'I looked at civil society in Hungary apropos of debates over the Norwegian funds ... and what I saw were paid, political activists. Paid political activists sponsored by foreigners!'⁷

Despite the government's various efforts to criminalize the targeted NGOs, this topic failed to become a good topic to generate moral panic. This is caused partly by the fact that the level of trust of the Hungarian society in civil society is higher than in politicians or in the Parliament (Hajdu 2014; Péterfi 2016) Furthermore, the topic is irrelevant to the majority of Hungarians.

With immigration, it is the opposite. Most people have an opinion on this topic, and Hungary has been one of the most xenophobic countries in the European Union since 2002.⁸ Figure 4.1 shows that the level of xenophobia was always much higher than in other European countries.

The third factor needed to dominate the discursive space by the government was a proper scapegoat. The choice of 'immigrants' is partly explained by the comparatively high and increasing xenophobic attitudes of the Hungarian population (Figure 4.1). Thus, it was easy to apply already existing frames to the scapegoats.¹⁰ Later, when additional scapegoats were added (such as George Soros, the liberals, civil society, UN, and Brussel's bureaucrats), Fidesz adapted a new frame to the old/new mix of scapegoats, all belonging to a worldwide conspiracy against Hungarians (this frame also equals the Hungarian nation with the Orbán government). The feeling of having been mistreated, cheated, undervalued as well as oppressed and exploited has a long tradition in Hungarian culture. These elements of ethnocentric values are used in the current framing of 'Them,' in which 'liberal'

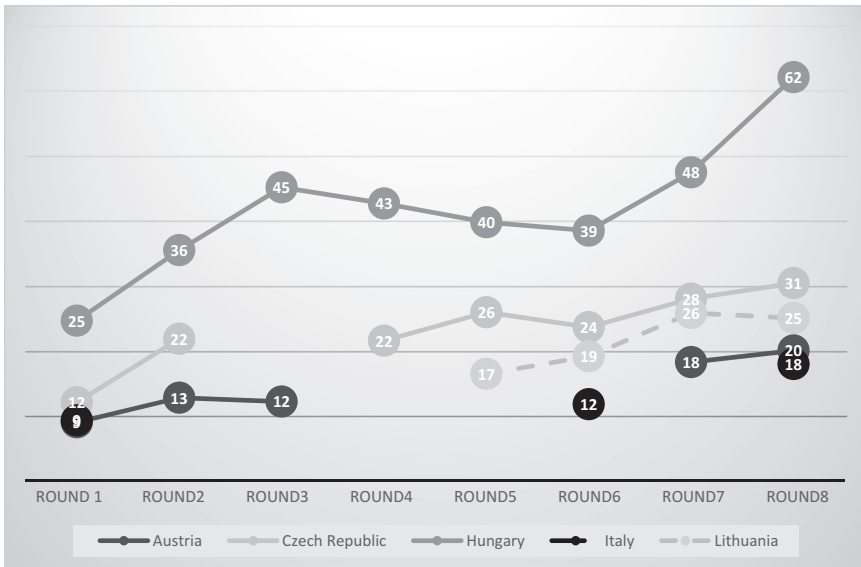


Figure 4.1 Countries with increasing levels of Rejection Index between 2002 and 2016, European Social Survey, percentage of 15+ population⁹
 Source: The figure is based on Messing & Sagvari 2019: 25

discourse is an empty signifier, a foreign wealthy banker is an usurper, international organizations are colonialists, etc. Moreover, this discourse smoothly uses the disguised but well-known elements of the anti-Semitic discourses of the twentieth century (Kende 1996; Kalmar 2018).

The Hungarian version of MPB

The main characteristics of MPB in Hungary are as follows:

There are three types of actions: information campaigns, national consultations, and voting-based actions. While the first type of pressing of the Moral Panic Button is the most prevalent and is conducted via the media (TV, radio, on- and off-line newspapers and billboards), the latter two actions (the four national consultations and the three actions involving voting – the quota-referendum, the Parliamentary and EU elections) reached all Hungarian households.

The information campaigns usually both precede and follow a national consultation and/or the referendum/election. Those preceding them serve to frame the topic, while those following them serve to reinforce the original message and claim victory (which is always greater than earlier ones).

The frames and the language are repetitive and simple, and while always adding new elements to the original frame (Europe and its value system, i.e. Judeo-Christianity and/or European culture is threatened by migration,

Hungary is fighting a war and is unjustly treated by those whom we defend), the contexts of all pressings of the MPB are carefully tailored to a concrete situation. The scapegoats (EU, Brussels, Soros, UN, civil society, Merkel, etc.) are always the same, but they appear in different configurations.

Figure 4.2 shows the structure of the MPB. The figure contains all seventeen pressings we identified as separate, though overlapping, acts of the MPB. The footnote contains the essence of these pressings. In the following paragraphs, we briefly demonstrate some of them, just to illustrate the details of the operation of MPB.

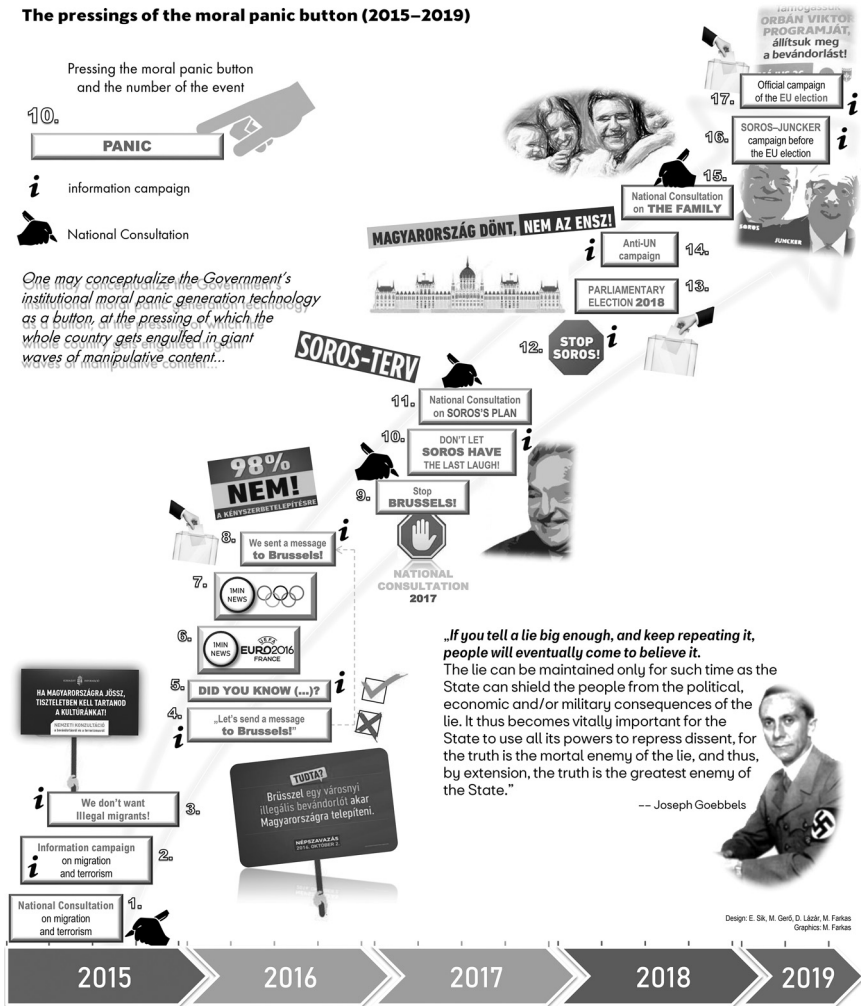


Figure 4.2 The pressings of the Moral Panic Button (2015–2019)^{11, 12}

The first example is the content of the national consultation on immigration and terrorism (Pressing 1, Figure 4.2). This example shows how all national consultations were used as fake public opinion surveys to frame the topic of migration. In Box 4.1, we selected some of the questions of the consultation questionnaire (Prime Minister's Office 2015).¹³

Box 4.1 Three questions from Hungary's 'National Consultation on Immigration and Terrorism'

- 1) We hear different views on increasing levels of terrorism. How relevant do you think the spread of terrorism (the bloodshed in France, the shocking acts of ISIS) is to your own life?

Very relevant

Relevant

Not relevant

- 3) There are some who think that mismanagement of the immigration question by Brussels may have something to do with increased terrorism. Do you agree with this view?

I fully agree

I tend to agree

I do not agree

- 4) Did you know that economic migrants cross the Hungarian border illegally, and that recently the number of immigrants in Hungary has increased twentyfold?

Yes

I have heard about it

I did not know

It is obvious, even for a first-year undergraduate sociology student, that in the case of Questions 1 and 3, the wording of the questions is suggestive and the answer items are unbalanced, and that the function of Question 4 is only to give (incorrect) information on migration.¹⁴

We can conclude that the so-called national consultations in Hungary are more akin to direct marketing than to a public opinion survey: these are short questionnaires sent to every Hungarian citizen which contain biased questions to sell the messages of the government. They are also far from the consultative tools of a democracy, since the topic is always the choice of the government, the questions are biased, and due to a lack of public meetings and publicly available rules of the procedures and control mechanisms, they can hardly be considered as consultations at all.¹⁵ They serve only two purposes: 1) to manipulate the population and 2) to reinforce the truth of the message by boasting about the strong support of the government's policies.

The second example is from an information campaign (Pressing 3, Figure 4.2). In this case, the MPB operated by using three simple messages,¹⁶ suggesting that refugees are a threat to job security and to the cultural values of Hungarians, and that they are likely to be criminals.

The third example shows how MPB incorporated fake news into its technology. The pre-referendum information campaign (Pressing 5, Figure 4.2) used the slogan: 'Did you know?,' supposedly providing information about the settlement quota and immigration. The examples¹⁷ clearly highlight the fakeness of this 'information campaign.'

As to the quota referendum (Pressing 8, Figure 4.2), the question asked¹⁸ was intentionally biased, since 1) it referred to a non-existing conflict between Hungary and the European Union and 2) the question reflected the discussion about the settlement quota as if it were already decided, although this was not the case (EKINT 2016; Bognár, Sik & Surányi 2018). The communication of the result of the referendum is a clear example of the manipulative communication of MPB – in the post-referendum campaign, the government communicated the fact that 98% of those who voted were against the quota, but failed to communicate that the referendum was invalid, since fewer than 50% of the citizens eligible to vote participated.

The pressings of MPB from number 10 and above 10 (Figure 4.2), contain new combinations of 'old' and 'new' topics, as well as 'old' and 'new' scapegoats. Although the issue of immigration was always present, the main 'enemy' changed and involves European Union's bureaucrats, George Soros, and the United Nations, all of whom are forcing Hungary to give up its position as defender of European culture. This shows a shift of the discourse, i.e. while at the beginning the information campaigns suggested that Hungarian or European culture was in danger because of the migrants, at the end of the campaign emphasis was on our national sovereignty endangered by a worldwide conspiracy of foreign oppressive forces using migrants as their puppets.

The immediate consequences of the success of the MPB: obedient public opinion, polarization, and xenophobia

The MPB has proven to be successful in its main aim: to overcome the loss of popularity of Fidesz at the end of 2014 (Figure 4.3).¹⁹ However, when the

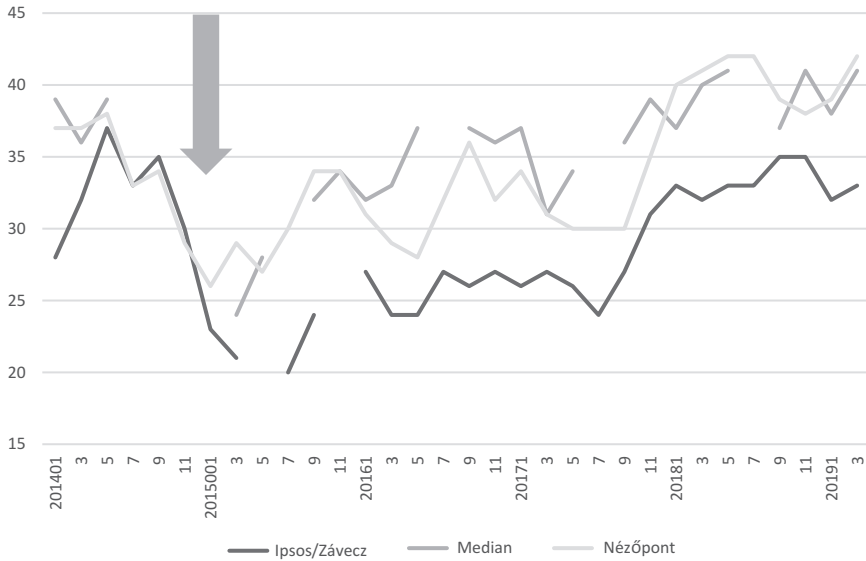


Figure 4.3 The level of popularity of FIDESZ (proportion of potential voters among those entitled to vote) 2014–2019²⁰

Source: Own design. The arrow shows the significant drop of popularity. Calculations are based on the data of the three public opinion research firms who conducted surveys during the entire period. The data is available at: Sik 2019.

use of MPB proved to be successful in gaining back the lost popularity of the government within just a few months, it became the main tool of maintaining popularity. Moreover, after several pressings, the MPB became a smoothly running machine used to mobilize the voting camp of Fidesz.

The success of the MPB is clearly demonstrated by the changing directions of the public opinion as well, i.e. the population follows the messages that the MPB emits towards them. Figure 4.4 demonstrates that the shift between the prevalence of threats of immigration, terrorism, and national sovereignty from 2017 to 2018 corresponds to the change in the framing of the ‘refugee crisis’ in the MPB.²¹ Figure 4.5 shows that the choice of the main enemies changed as well, in accordance with the influence of the MPB: the actors of the international conspiracy became much more important. Furthermore, not only was the prevalence of mentioning international actors higher, but the relationship between threats and ‘enemies’ became stronger: among those, who perceived external threats to be the most important, the mentioning of external enemies, with the exception of immigrants, doubled in a year.

Through the MPB, the government defines the core topics of the public discourse to make sure that their sympathizers learn the language of full agreement. However, this leads to increasing polarization within society:²³ while Fidesz sympathizers perceive that external threats (losing national

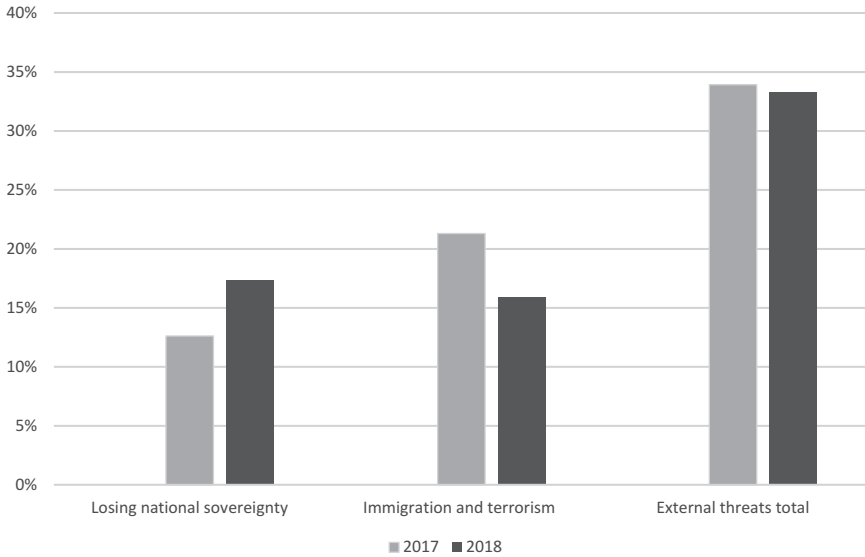


Figure 4.4 The prevalence of the perception of immigration, terrorism, and the loss of national sovereignty as the main threats for Hungary, 2017–2018, percentage of the total of selected items²²

Source: MTA Cooperation of Excellences, Mobility Research Center project, own calculations.

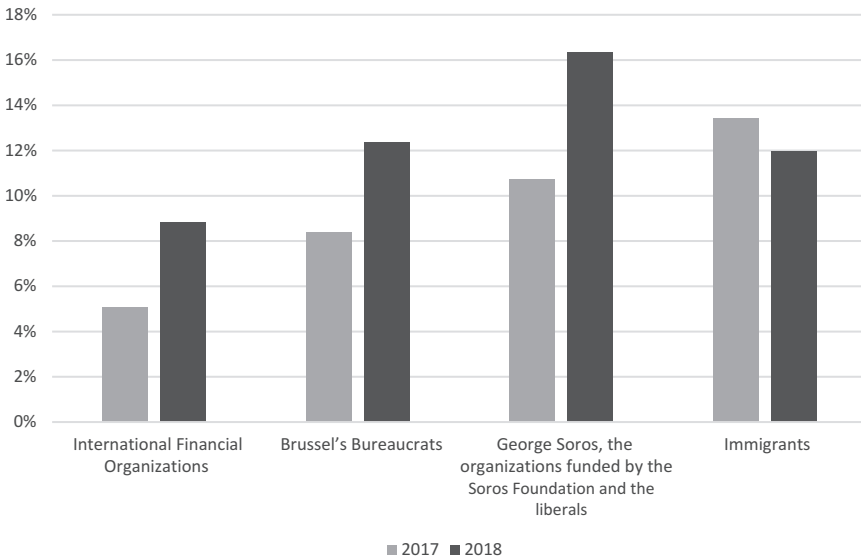


Figure 4.5 The extent to which respondents hold international actors responsible for the main threats for Hungary, 2017-2018, percentage of the total of selected items

Source: MTA Cooperation of Excellences, Mobility Research Center project, own calculations.

sovereignty and immigration) are the most important threats and they hold international agents responsible for them, the opposition feels that the threats caused by the ruling elite – the demolition of democratic institutions and state level corruption, are the most important threats. Naturally, the main cause of these threats is the Orbán government (Gerő & Szabó, 2017; Szabó & Gerő, 2019). The opinion of respondents positioning themselves in the ‘center’ are usually in between those of the two groups with stronger political affiliation (Figure 4.6).

As Figure 4.1 already showed, since 2002, Hungarian society has been more xenophobe than other European countries. However, if we focus on the more recent changes represented in Figure 4.1, we find that the Hungarian results deviate from all countries – even from those where the level of rejection has increased – i.e. the prevalence of the Rejection Index was significantly faster.²⁴

Moreover, unlike in other European countries, in Hungary there is no difference in the level of xenophobic attitudes between the various social groups (Figure 4.4).

While in Portugal, Austria, and the UK certain social groups exhibit significantly higher or lower levels of rejection of migrants, in Hungary, there is no deviation from the high level of the national average of rejection. We

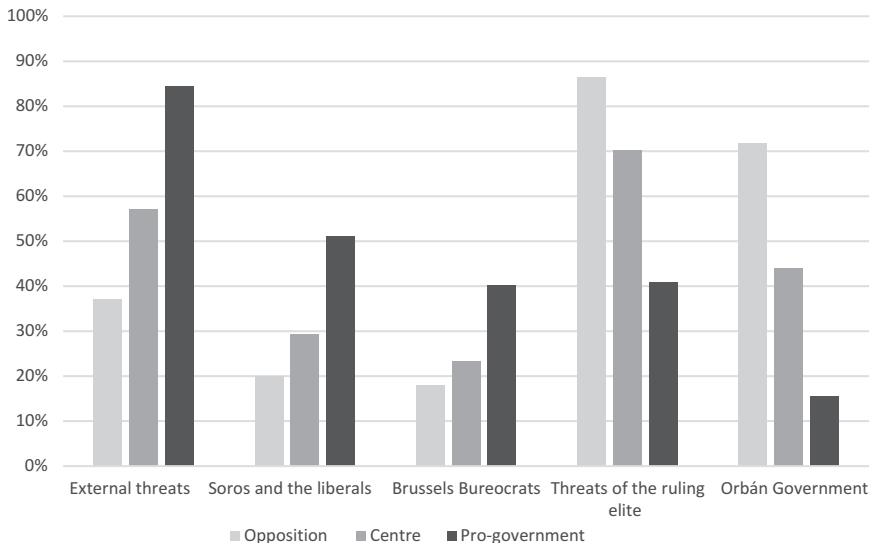


Figure 4.6 Perceived threats and the actors/groups held as responsible by political affiliation. Percentage of those who mentioned external threats (immigration and terrorism and losing national sovereignty) or threats of the ruling elite (state level corruption, demolition of democratic institutions), 2018

Source: MTA Cooperation of Excellences, Mobility Research Center project own calculation.



Figure 4.7 Rejection Index by demographic groups in four countries in 2016/2017
 Source: Our design, based on Messing-Ságvári 2019.

consider such uniformity (i.e. the lack of social group specific deviations) to be a result of MPB, since only intense brain-washing can create a situation where the same proportion of all parts of a complex society answers the questionnaire similarly.

We conclude, therefore, that even in the short run, the MPB 1) made the Hungarian society extremely xenophobic, and 2) successfully streamlined intolerant thinking of the entire society into an equally non-thinking formless mass. However, it is important to point out that we have been experiencing a twofold process: the unification of opinions regarding immigration on the one hand, and the simultaneous polarization of opinions about the importance of issues and enemies on the other.

The long-term consequences of the success of the MPB

In principle, the aim of consultations, information campaigns, and other tools applied in the political process is to help politicization, which, according to de Wilde (2011), includes a growing salience of issues, polarization of opinions and the pool of actors involved in the decision-making processes (social movements, experts, etc.). However, as Bognár et al. (2019) argue, though the Hungarian case might be seen as a successful case for politicization at first sight, this is hardly the occurrence – although immigration, as the core issue, became extremely salient, the polarization of opinions was reduced to duality. This type of polarization leads to the creation of mental borders between social groups, making public discussion impossible. Also, although the audience involved in the decision-making processes seems to be larger than before, the consequence of the national consultations and information campaigns is the exclusion of mediating actors and experts, and consequently, of alternative opinions from the debates (Bernáth & Messing 2015).

We assume, therefore, that the biased politization process based on the success of the MPB, in the long run, serves the de-democratization processes of Hungary, which have gained much attention in recent years (Bogaards 2018; Bozóki & Hegedűs 2018; Cianetti et al. 2018; Freedom House 2018). Although this literature focuses on the regulation and the state of democratic institutions, we argue that the de-democratization of the country is a result of the efforts to secure popular support and to disarm the challengers. As these efforts are manifested in techniques preventing the possibility of any critical attempts, and as the regime placed emphasis on these techniques, it became more and more radical in the sense of decomposing democratic institutions.

Thus, we argue, that ‘de-democratization’ is best understood when we focus on the way in which governments fight for popular support and legitimacy sanctioned by the masses. We argue that when the main tool of gaining this support is the Moral Panic Button, the result is not only increasing popular support, but the creation of different realities for the

supporters and non-supporters of the regime. This divided reality draws boundaries between social groups and gives birth to harsh in-group out-group conflicts. In such a situation, the government's only option is to maintain its support to further this process, which leads to the increasing control over the public sphere and the demolition of democratic institutions. In the constant fight to 'save the nation,' the destruction of democratic institutions appears as a necessary means.

This process fits the ongoing debate on hybrid regimes. According to Diamond (2002), until the second half of the twentieth century, the decision whether a regime was autocratic or democratic was easier, since, autocracies applied obvious forms of oppression to their opposition. In the last decades, however, the number of autocratic regimes that apply some democratic elements has been growing. They hold elections allowing limited competition, consequently allowing the existence of an opposition and non-state-controlled organizations and press. As they apply the scenery of a democracy, they claim the title as well, although it is quite clear that most of these regimes are far from being democratic – elections are hardly free and fair, the conditions of a real electoral competition are missing, most of the press is state-controlled through state ownership or by other means, and individual freedoms are limited.

Zakaria's (1997) concept of illiberal democracies also connects the rise of regimes with elections (democracies) and disrespecting constitutionalism (liberalism) with the second half of the twentieth century. Zakaria claims that only the West understands democracy as a system requiring more than competitive elections. Other parts of the world equal democracy with the existence of competitive elections, which are not necessarily accompanied by the respect of constitutionalism, the rule of law or respect for individual freedoms (Zakaria 1997).

Although there is much discussion about the existence of semi-democratic, hybrid regimes, illiberal or defective democracies, most of this scholarship is optimistic in the sense that they interpret the appearance of these regimes as a move from authoritarianism towards democracy. Even when the weaknesses of new democracies are discussed, they are attributed to the youth of these regimes, arguing that new democracies cannot be fully democratic in all examined aspects immediately, as they need to develop (Bogaards 2018).

Many of these scholars argue, however, that in the last years, the reversal of democratic transitions can be observed. In this reversal, it seems, Hungary plays a leading role (Csillag & Széleányi 2015; Kornai 2015; Bogaards 2018; Bozóki & Hegedűs 2018; Cianetti et al. 2018).

However, even in these attempts, scholars mostly try to describe how the regimes look, without explaining how governments are able to exploit the existing value system and the dissatisfaction with political institutions, and how they are able to transform social structures and institutions to support their attempts to maintain their power.

Therefore, to explain the process of de-democratization, we have to pay attention to the use of political communication and the media as well, and in particular, to the technology of the MPB. Through the centralization of the media, and by applying national consultations and billboard campaigns, the government initiated a series of moral panics through which their preferred reality is presented.

As to the long-term impact of the MPB on the value system of the Hungarian society, if we accept solidarity as a basic European value, and the ability to think politically as a premise of a democratic society, then we see the MPB as a threat to the European value system. Even more so, since there are signs that the Hungarian technology appears to be transferred to other countries, in some cases directly (Macedonia, Slovenia), and in other cases, less directly (Poland). Therefore, the MPB Hungarian specialist think tank recently established a subsidiary in London, as an inheritor of the infamous Finkelstein emporium (see Balogh 2019).

In the long run, MPB seems to have the same role as New Speak has in Orwell's anti-utopian Oceania (Lexico Dictionaries n.d.), and the resulting society might also be similar – a brainwashed and dumb mass society without any communication skills, unable to form political opinion, and only sensitive to centrally initiated values.

Notes

- 1 This chapter is supported by the CEASEVAL project. Grant no. 770037, <http://ceaseval.eu/>
- 2 All translations into English, except for those labelled otherwise, are ours.
- 3 The experiment was destined for success, partly because migration is a perfect theme for moral panic generation, and partly because previous research proved that the Hungarian population (compared to other EU countries) is very xenophobic (see Figure 4.1).
- 4 The Norwegian Civil Fund is a small part of the grants provided by Norway in compensation for accessing the Common Market without EU membership. Most of the grants are distributed through state organizations, except for the Civil Fund which is aimed at helping civil society and distributed by civil society organizations, independently from the state.
- 5 These attempts to label civil society organizations as foreign-funded organizations are very similar to those of other governments, e.g. Israel or Russia.
- 6 Every year during a mass celebration of the greatness and unity of the Hungarian nation, Orbán holds a visionary speech at a youth camp in a small city in Transylvania (Romania). In these speeches, he defines the core ideology and often the direction of his politics for the next year. The speech receives great attention each year.
- 7 Orbán Viktor's speech, 'The era of the work-based state is approaching,' translated by (Kopper et al. 2017: 117).
- 8 Other countries had lower level of xenophobia during the entire period, and/or a decreasing trend after 2015 (Messing & Ságvári 2019: 20–22; Figures 12, 13, 14).
- 9 Since the figure in Messing & Ságvári (2019: 25) is calculated from the freely available dataset of the European Social Survey, we re-calculated the data and designed our own figure (European Social Survey Cumulative file ESS 1–8 2018).

- 10 Bernáth & Messing (2015) point out that Fidesz borrowed the criminalization and security frames of JOBBIK, a radical right-wing party, while Bocskor (2018) reminds us, that the first campaign revived the labor-threat (as immigrants will take away Hungarians jobs) applied by the socialist-liberal government in 2004, as an argument against providing citizenship to Hungarians living in the surrounding countries.
- 11 1. National consultation on migration and terrorism, 2. Migration and terrorism – information campaign. 3. ‘We don’t want illegal immigrants!’ – information campaign, 4. ‘Let’s send a message to Brussels!’ – information campaign, 5. ‘Did you know (...)?’ – information campaign, 6. ‘One Minute News’ – UEFA Euro 2016, 7. ‘One Minute News’ – Olympic Games 2016, 8. Quota referendum and information campaign, 9. National consultation ‘Stop Brussels,’ 10. ‘Don’t let Soros have the last laugh!’ – information campaign, 11. National consultation ‘The Soros Plan,’ 12. ‘Stop Soros’ – information campaign, 13. Parliamentary election 2018, 14. Anti-UN – i. c., 15. National consultation on family protection, 16. ‘Soros-Juncker’ EU election information campaign, 17. EU election
- 12 We usually do not treat migration-related news as a separate act of MPB but we treated the ‘One minute news’ television campaigns during the UEFA Cup and Olympic games as unique pressings of MPB, since the overwhelming part of these news focused on migration and terror, and their messages were always very negative.
- 13 The questionnaires of National Consultations are sent out to every household in Hungary. The translations of the questions are freely available on the homepage of the Hungarian government, (see Prime Minister’s Office 2015)
- 14 Not to mention that the combination of two elements in a single question is forbidden in survey research.
- 15 In 2018, the European Citizen’s Consultation took place in 26 countries of the EU. The form and scale of the consultations varied from country to country, however, they always involved citizens’ meetings and face to face communication (Butcher & Pronckut 2019). Hungary was among the last countries to join the Consultation and its form was a chain of forums held by government officials (Stratulat & Butcher 2018). The result of the forums was, according to the news reports, that Hungarians are committed to a Europe of nations, their priority is security and they do not want to live in an open society (see ‘A magyarok nem akarnak nyílt társadalmat’ 2018).
- 16 ‘If you come to Hungary you must not take Hungarians’ jobs away from them!’; ‘If you come to Hungary you must respect our culture!’; ‘If you come to Hungary you must respect our laws!’ Translation found in the Parliamentary question submitted by István Újhelyi, member of the European Parliament (Újhelyi 2015)
- 17 ‘The terror attack in Paris was carried out by immigrants,’ ‘1 million immigrants are headed toward Europe, only from Libya!’
- 18 ‘Do you want the European Union to prescribe the mandatory settlement of non-Hungarian citizens in Hungary, even without the consent of Parliament?’
- 19 The most likely cause of this loss of popularity was that after winning the election earlier in 2014, the government decided to increase the tax on Internet use (Szombati 2015).
- 20 The data is available at Sik 2019.
- 21 The surveys were conducted as part of the research project ‘Integration and disintegration processes in Hungary’ (2017, grant no. NKFIH 108836), and the MTA Cooperation of Excellences, Mobility Research Center project of the Centre for Social Sciences, Hungarian Academy of Sciences (2018).

The respondents could choose the three most important dangers threatening Hungary out of ten items. These items were grouped as 1) external threats (the dangers of immigration and terrorism, and the loss of Hungarian national

- sovereignty), 2) dangers posed by the ruling elite (de-democratization processes and corruption), and 3) threats posed by dissatisfactory public policies (social inequalities, education, and healthcare). Figures 4.4 and 4.5 represent only the external threats and international actors/groups. The surveys were conducted between March and April 2017, and between September and November 2018.
- 22 Since the question was a multiple-choice question, the number of possible choices is not equal to the number of respondents (2000 and 2700), but it is three times larger. The figures represent the choices compared to this total number, not to the number of respondents.
 - 23 See also Messing & Ságvári (2019), in which the authors show that perceptions about immigration are highly dependent on political affiliation.
 - 24 Other analyses described the same trends in Hungary. For example, Barna & Koltai (2019) compare the 6th and 8th waves of ESS's Hungarian data from 2012 and 2017, and find that the proportion of the population who would not allow anyone to enter the country grew significantly until 2017. The most significant growth was found among sympathizers of the governing party. Simonovits (2016) found similar results: the ratio of people rejecting asylum seekers was already high (around 40%) in 2014, but became even higher (53%) in 2016 and the proportion of the respondents that would accept all asylum seekers decreased from 10 to 1%.

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