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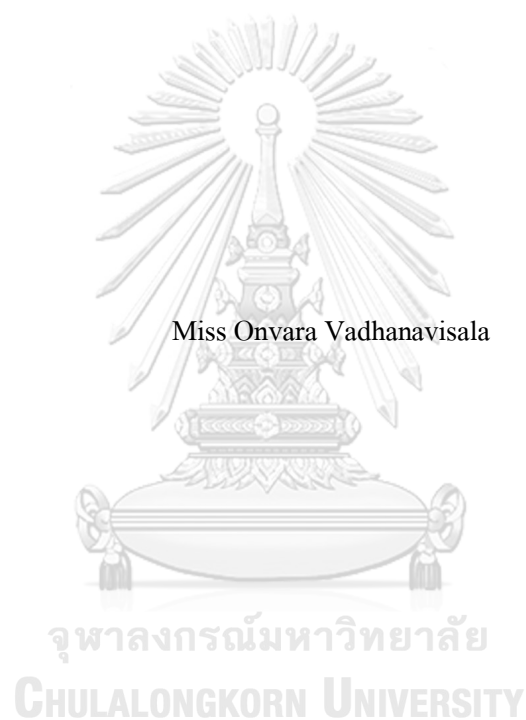
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THE VISEGRÁD GROUP AND THE EUROPEAN MIGRANT CRISIS: CAUSE FACTORS  
AND THE CASE OF HUNGARY



A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in European Studies  
Inter-Department of European Studies  
GRADUATE SCHOOL  
Chulalongkorn University  
Academic Year 2019  
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กลุ่มประเทศวิเชกราคกับวิกฤตผู้่อพพในยุโรป: ปัจัยและกรณีสึกษาฮังการี



วิทยานิพนธ์นี้เป็นส่วนหนึ่งของการศึกษาตามหลักสูตรปริญญาศิลปศาสตรดุษฎีบัณฑิต  
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|                |                                                                                                 |
|----------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Thesis Title   | THE VISEGRÁD GROUP AND THE EUROPEAN<br>MIGRANT CRISIS: CAUSE FACTORS AND THE CASE OF<br>HUNGARY |
| By             | Miss Onvara Vadhanavisala                                                                       |
| Field of Study | European Studies                                                                                |
| Thesis Advisor | Associate Professor Verita Sriratana, Ph.D.                                                     |

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 ปริญญาหลัก : รศ. ดร.วริตดา ศรีรัตน

วิกฤตผู้อพยพในยุโรปได้ผลักดันให้สหภาพยุโรป (EU) ต้องเผชิญกับความท้าทาย  
 หลายประการด้วยกัน โดยเฉพาะอย่างยิ่งความคิดเห็นที่แตกต่างกันในประเทศสมาชิกเกี่ยวกับการ  
 กำหนดนโยบายในการจัดการกับผู้อพยพจำนวนมาก วิกฤตดังกล่าวเป็นจุดเปลี่ยนสำคัญสำหรับ  
 ประชาชนฝ่ายขวาในยุโรปในการสร้างความแข็งแกร่งของฝ่ายการเมืองของตนในระบบ  
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 ของสหภาพยุโรปเนื่องจากการขาดทิศทางและยุทธศาสตร์ที่ชัดเจนในการแก้ไขปัญหาวิกฤตผู้  
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 สโลวัก กลุ่มประเทศวิเชกราคได้ดำเนินนโยบายเชิงลบต่อผู้ลี้ภัยและผู้อพยพอย่างเห็นได้ชัด  
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 และพรรคการเมืองฝ่ายขวาฟิเดซ (Fidesz Party) มีบทบาทสำคัญในการดำเนินนโยบายและการ  
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สาขาวิชา ยุโรปศึกษา

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ลายมือชื่อนิสิตร .....

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KEYWORD: POPULISM / ILLIBERAL DEMOCRACY / EUROPEAN STUDIES /  
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GROUP

Onvara Vadhanavisala : THE VISEGRÁD GROUP AND THE EUROPEAN  
MIGRANT CRISIS: CAUSE FACTORS AND THE CASE OF HUNGARY. Advisor:  
Assoc. Prof. Verita Sriratana, Ph.D.

The European migrant crisis has propelled the European Union (EU) to face many challenges, starting from the division of different ideas on how to manage a high number of refugees and migrants. The crisis is marked as a turning point for right-wing populism to gain its strength in modern European politics. The European Member States (EMS) have started to lose their trust in European institutions because of their unclear strategic direction on solving the refugee and migrant crisis. Correspondingly, Euroscepticism is spreading all over Europe. The situation has been worsened as more refugees are continuously entering Europe. Therefore, populists and right-wing leaders have taken this severe crisis as an opportunity to strengthen their political discourses and rhetoric. This kind of action can be seen in the case of the Visegrád group; of which members are the Czech Republic, Hungary, the Republic of Poland and the Slovak Republic. The Visegrád group has implemented negative policies towards the refugees and migrants. This can be seen especially in the case of Hungary, where Prime Minister Viktor Orbán and the Fidesz party have played an important role in keeping the refugees and migrants out of the country. The Hungarian government has conducted anti-refugee and migrant campaign series and instigated its political discourses, which have been used to establish the narrative of “protecting European identity” from “the Muslims”. This antipathy towards refugees and migrants among the Visegrád group contradicts the core values of the European Union of “unity within diversity” and “respect for human rights”.

Field of Study: European Studies

Student's Signature .....

Academic Year: 2019

Advisor's Signature .....

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As Abdul Kalam once said ‘If four things are followed – having a great aim, acquiring knowledge, hard work, and perseverance – then anything can be achieved’.

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จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย  
CHULALONGKORN UNIVERSITY

Onvara Vadhanavisala

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# **CHAPTER I**

## **GENERALITIES OF THE STUDY**

### **1.1 Background and Significance of the Research**

The European migrant crisis has been, and still is, a dominant issue in modern European politics and international relations. The crisis is a tremendous challenge because it has brought Europe into experiencing the largest number of refugees and migrants in its history since the end of the Second World War. The European migrant crisis, or the Syrian refugee crisis, is a term given to a period beginning in the year 2015. This year was marked as significant because there was a large number of refugees who travelled into the European Union (EU) by crossing the Mediterranean Sea or via land routes to enter the EU border. Most of the migrants are from Muslim-majority countries, including the Greater Middle East and Africa. The majority of them are Sunni Muslims. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the top three nationalities of entrants of the over one million Mediterranean Sea arrivals between January 2015 and March 2016 were Syrians (46.7%), Afghans (20.9%) and Iraqis (9.4%) (UNHCR). The number of refugees has consistently risen since 2015, so much so, that United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHCR) has stated: “we are living through a time of refugee crisis in human history”.

The number of refugees, especially those who have entered the border illegally, has increased sharply in year 2015 as shown in figure 1.





*Figure 1 The Number of Illegal Border Crossings by Third-Country Citizens  
via Land and Sea Routes from Year 2009-2015*

Source: [europarl.europa.eu](http://europarl.europa.eu)<sup>1</sup>

The influx of migrants and refugees happened suddenly and unexpectedly. The European Union (EU) and its Member States were not prepared for this crisis as the scale of it had a powerful impact across Europe. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) estimated that more than a million migrants and refugees arrived by sea and land in 2015, equal to the total number of arrivals for the whole year of 2014 (IMO, 2015). This figure does not include those who entered EU territories undetected. A body of evidence shows that more than a million migrants and refugees from Syria and other war affected areas fled to Europe in 2015, resulting in a crisis. The majority of the refugees arrived by sea while some have made their way across land via Turkey and Albania

<sup>1</sup> Migration and Asylum. *Chernobyl 30 Years on: Environmental and Health Effects* - Think Tank.

(the traveling route is shown in figure 2). Consequently, this traveling route has created a huge problem for some EU countries, such as Greece and Italy, because of their connected borders with Turkey and Albania. Frontex, the EU's external border force, has monitored the different routes that refugees use. It has collected data on the number of refugees arriving at Europe's borders during 2015 and 2016. The number has risen to more than 2,500,000 million people. Most were heading to Greece, taking a short route from Turkey to the islands of Kos, Chios, Lesvos and Samos.

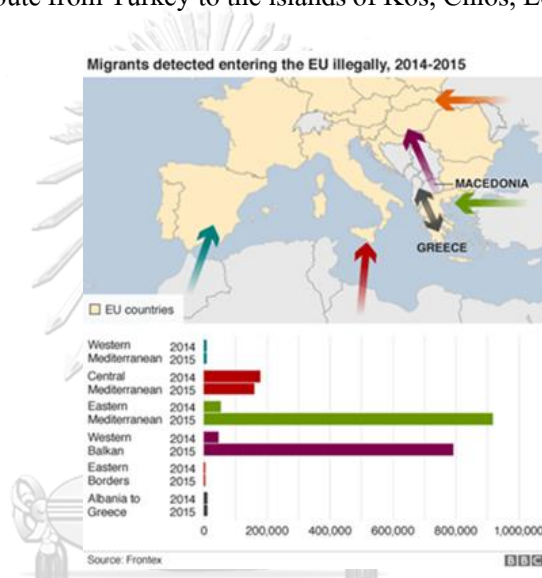


Figure 2 Routes Refugees Use for Entering the EU Illegally, 2014 – 2015

Source: Frontex

The continuation of the Syrian civil war, which was the result of the Arab Spring in 2011, has resulted in millions of refugees entering Europe. The war was considered a key driver for people to abandon their homes and head to the nearest safe place, such as Europe. This severe crisis has made migrants and refugees from Syria, Afghanistan, and Iraq attempt to enter Europe and search for shelter (Eurostat, 2016).

The significant change began in 2015, the year when the number of refugees seeking for asylum in Europe indicated a steep growth. According to Eurostat (2016), a total of 1.25 million people applied to the European Union member countries for asylum. Over 441,800 went to Germany, 174,400 to Hungary and 156,100 to Sweden. The rise was almost 200% compared to the year 2014 which recorded over 625,000 applications registered in the EU. The record of refugees and asylum seekers that Europe is currently experiencing is considered the largest number in its history since the end of the Second World War. As a result, this has created a crisis known as “the European Migrant Crisis”, which has become a critical issue among the European Member States until the present day.

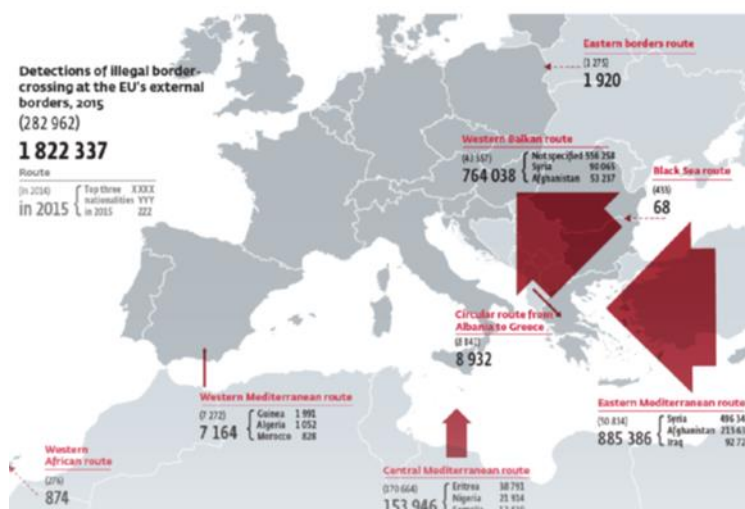


Figure 3 Detections of Illegal Border-Crossing at the EU's External Borders, 2015

Source: Frontex

The European migrant crisis has become a big challenge to human rights issues in Europe, the crisis has created an argument of whether or not each of the member states of the European Union should accept the refugees and integrate them to its own society. Later, when the crisis took

a more critical turn, it divided Europe into two opposition parties; between countries which refused to provide assistance to the refugees for the reason that receiving them might cause terrorist attacks and threaten their national security, and the countries which, giving importance to human rights above all, were eager to help those people who were clearly in need. However, the crisis continued for a certain period of time until there was a call for governments among the European countries and international institutions to take immediate action. Consequently, asylum process and border management systems around Europe were enthusiastically activated and were put under pressure. However, there was no common or grand strategy that can be applied to all European countries. There was only a solution based on the “solidarity principle”, which was the refugee redistribution scheme and quota. This crisis poses more challenges because this time, it is not a “shared interest” but rather a “shared responsibility” or even a “shared burden” for all the Member States. Therefore, this should be the time to prove whether or not all the Member States can follow the EU’s solidarity concept under the framework of communities. For those who believe in the European Union and intense integration, solidarity will not be just an abstract or intangible concept, but a reality. While, on one hand, some EU member states, such as Germany, tend to be far more open and willing to accept a larger number of migrants and refugees compared to other European Union member states, Eurosceptic countries, on the other hand, view this crisis as a burden. They view EU intervention as a threat to their sovereignty (Danaj, Lazányi, & Bilan, 2018), which has resulted in a pragmatic approach of rejecting the EU relocation and resettlement scheme. As a consequence, the number of migrants and refugees has not been distributed equally within the European Union Member States,

and the burden has fallen to particular member countries (Havlová & Tamchynová, 2016), such as Greece and Italy.

The ongoing European migrant crisis has raised a number of questions regarding regional integration, particularly relating to its cooperation and solidarity. This unsolved crisis has strengthened the wave of nationalism and right-wing parties in Europe who aim to be “less European” (Postelnicescu, 2016) by returning the power of decision making and sovereignty back to each nation state instead of empowering the European Union. In Postelnicescu’s perspective, it is Europe’s multicultural policies of integration that produce adversary effects among European citizens. Some people do not feel they really belong to Europe, nor they do not wish to assimilate and embrace tolerance. Therefore, they prefer to define themselves as the people of their own nation state rather than being the people of Europe.

The most obvious case is the former Eastern bloc countries named the Visegrád Four (V4). The group comprises the four member states: the Czech Republic, Hungary, the Republic of Poland, and the Slovak Republic. These countries had rejected refugees and migrants’ relocation schemes and were ready to implement their close-border policy in order to prevent any illegal entry. It is clear that the Visegrád group strongly opposes the EU relocation and resettlement schemes, their negative responses have turned the Visegrád group into a symbol for non-solidarity countries in Europe.

The analysis of political rhetoric, discourses and channels of communications can be seen as the focus of this thesis. In the case of Hungary, the political communication conducted by right-

wing populists is done through different platforms, such as anti-refugee and anti-migrant campaigns, or speeches by Prime Minister Viktor Orbán. These platforms of communication allow right-wing populists to be able to distribute their propagandas in public spheres. The originality of this thesis lies in its attempt to examine how a political actor like Prime Minister Viktor Orbán conducts his political communication with the Hungarian citizens regarding the refugee and migrant crisis. This qualitative study aims to bring into focus the critical analysis of right-wing populists' anti-refugee and anti-migrant discourses. The primary data used in this analysis comprises statements made by Prime Minister Viktor Orbán. The Hungarian government's campaigns during the propaganda process of the Hungarian election and referendum are also included as part of the analysis. This thesis suggests that textual and discourse analysis of the rhetoric and messages conveyed through the media can help readers understand the right-wing populist agenda of the Hungarian government. Readers will see that Orbán's control of the media is the key to maintain his political power, especially during a national election or a referendum campaign. The Hungarian government uses various types of media as a platform through which direct communication with voters is established. The government conveys its political message through advertisements, billboards, television, radio, online and prints, or speeches given by Prime Minister Orbán himself. In regard to this, the relationships between language, politics, and policies implementation are examined in this thesis. For example, the Hungarian government launched a billboard campaign against the European Union known as "Did you know?" campaign. The message of the campaign portrays the European Union as a bureaucracy dominated by pro-

migration elites who want to open the door to refugees to destroy Europe. In fact, the campaign was to manipulate voters' opinion on the subject of the European Union's relocation and resettlement scheme. Since the Fidesz party has risen to power in 2010 and received a supermajority in the parliament, Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, supported by the Fidesz's majority, has adopted new media legislation to erode media independence and pluralism in Hungary. The media law adaptation included a requirement that all media must be registered with the state and the communication outputs should be of "relevance to the citizens of Hungary" (Dunai, 2014). The law amendment also undermines the protection of journalists' sources. If any media unit breaks the law, they will have to face penalties, such as fines, suspension, or being shut down (Dunai, 2014). Apart from the media law, many privately-owned Hungarian news outlets are in a form of state-financed media influenced by the Central European Press and Media Foundation (Közép-Európai Sajtó és Média Alapítvány – KESMA). The foundation is operated by Gábor Liszkay, who is considered close to the Hungarian government and Prime Minister Viktor Orbán. Consequently, the Hungarian government is able to determine and select the issues it wants to raise to the public as well as the issues it wants to undermine.

Apart from textual and discourse analysis, which can be seen as the strength and originality of this thesis, I propound that this thesis can fill in the gaps in interdisciplinary study which can explain the causal factors of the Visegrád group's implementation of negative policy on refugees and migrants, based on in-depth political rhetoric and discourse analysis. For the cause factors, most research papers only mention, in general, that social and political factors are reasons behind

the Visegrád's negative policies towards refugees and migrants. In my opinion, there is another important factor that should be included in the examination, and that factor is populism. The analysis of political rhetoric and discourse related to refugees and migrants among the Visegrád group has clearly confirmed that populism is a crucial factor for right-wing political parties in the Visegrád group to seize power. What they have in their hands as a tool is the European migrant crisis, which the Visegrád group has used to bend the society's will towards right-wing nationalism. In order to legitimise their political actions and policies implementation, populist actors present themselves as a representative of "the people" in the fight against a "corrupted elite", with the European migrant crisis portrayed as a threat to the nation. The political leaders of the Visegrád group convey the repeated message of refugees and migrants as perpetrators of terrorist attacks. In the case of Hungary, a historical event is chosen by Prime Minister Viktor Orbán to stimulate negative sentiment towards refugees and migrants. Not only the security concern that has been raised by the Visegrád leaders to create fear among its population but also the economic issue. Right-wing populist leaders of the Visegrád group convince people to believe that receiving refugees and migrants into their countries would lead to a higher rate of unemployment and raise concerns on the potential of the refugees and migrants to displace locals from jobs and drive down wages. They amplify this notion by claiming that refugees and migrants will also become an economic burden for the country.

Given these reasons, I would like to propose my analysis of cause factors to explain the Visegrád group's negative policies implemented towards refugees and migrants through the case



study of Hungary. I have chosen to focus on Hungary because of its interesting characteristics. Hungary is one of the leading democratic countries in Central Europe after post-Soviet communism era. However, Prime Minister Viktor Orbán and the Fidesz party have transformed Hungary into one of the least democratic states in the European Union. Hungary, slowly after its legislative amendment by Prime Minister Orbán, has become a soft autocratic state with a combination of right-wing rhetoric and a single political party atmosphere.

Additionally, it is important to understand the Visegrád group's political action because the role of this sub-regional group is steadily increasing on the European's political stage. The Visegrád group is one of the most important sub-regional cooperation under the European Union apart from the Benelux and the Nordics. The cooperation of the four member states can be seen through important meetings, for example, the regular meetings of representatives of the Visegrád countries on the European level, including the Prime Ministers and Foreign Ministers (Strážay, 2012). The Visegrád group has now firmly established its role in the European political economy and operates as a separate sub-regional group with a specific partnership and cooperation on European affairs. The Visegrád group is no longer just a regional bloc within the European Union (Dangerfield, 2014). As the Visegrád group is gaining more attention and playing an increasingly important role on the EU stage, the European migrant crisis could be considered as an opportunity for the four countries to participate in shaping the future direction of Europe (Groszkowski, 2013). Public attention is drawn to the Visegrád countries on how they are going to solve the crisis since their borders are connected to a main route that the refugees are using to enter Europe.

In short, the rise of right-wing populism is one of the most important political developments in modern Europe. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century when we started to witness the collapse of centre-left ideology which has dominated European politics since the end of the World War II, populism slowly started to gain its existence in modern European politics. This has not happened only in Europe but the rest of the world. In this thesis, I will explore populism in terms of three approaches: ideology, strategy, and style. The definition of populism is constituted based on the idea of the antagonistic relationship of two groups defined as, first, “the people”, who tend to be portrayed as virtuous and “the elite”, who tend to symbolize the villains. Populism is appealing to the people because of its popular sovereignty. It fulfils the will of the people, who are the ultimate source of government’s legitimacy. This concentration on the “people” is an important element which distinguishes populism from other political ideologies. Canovan (1999, 4) explains that “Populism is not just a reaction against power structures but an appeal to a recognized authority”. This characteristic of focusing on the antagonism between the people and the elites in populism, in my opinion, helps the politicians, political parties, or elites to convince the people that they are the only solution to a certain political situation, that they have the capability to solve whichever crisis the country is facing. Therefore, people pin their hopes on politicians and/or political parties which can give them confidence, for example, Prime Minister Viktor Orbán announced his plan to build a wall at Hungary’s border in order to prevent incoming refugees. Such an action could be attractive to those who believe in the political tactic of fear. For this reason, populism has laid its foundation

on the democratic promise of a better world through the actions of the sovereign people (Spruyt, 2016). This notion will be discussed throughout this thesis, especially in the case of Hungary.

From Marine Le Pen of France to Viktor Orbán's declaration of his third consecutive term winning as a Prime Minister of Hungary, together with a nationalist leader, such as Beatrix von Storch, the top members of Germany's anti-immigrant AfD party, or a Dutch populist leader Geert Wilders, all have been gaining power in the government and acquiring more popularity among voters. In Hungary, the Fidesz-KDNP alliance won 133 seats out of 199 in national election in April 2018. Those kinds of populists' victory show that we cannot overlook the role of populism in modern European politics. Whether it is an anti-refugee and migrant campaign in Hungary or any other negative policies implemented by the Visegrád group on the refugees and migrants, they all reveal the dynamics and political style of populism in these group of countries. According to Prime Minister Viktor Orbán's speech at Băile Tuşnad (Tusnádfürdő) on 26 July 2014, he stated the following:

“The new state that we are building is an *illiberal state, a non-liberal state*. It does not deny foundational values of liberalism, as freedom, etc. But it does not make this ideology a central element of state organization, *but applies a specific, national, particular approach in its stead.*”<sup>2</sup>

Prime Minister Viktor Orbán's speech at Băile Tuşnad (Tusnádfürdő)

26 July 2014

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<sup>2</sup> Tóth, C. (2014). Full Text of Viktor Orbán's Speech at Băile Tuşnad (Tusnádfürdő) of 26 July 2014. *The Budapest Beacon*. Retrieved from [budapestbeacon.com/full-text-of-viktor-orbans-speech-at-baile-tusnad-tusnadfurdo-of-26-july-2014/](http://budapestbeacon.com/full-text-of-viktor-orbans-speech-at-baile-tusnad-tusnadfurdo-of-26-july-2014/).

What I have highlighted in italics from the above speech shows Prime Minister Viktor Orbán's clear intention to establish an illiberal democracy state in European politics. He intends to transform Hungary from a liberal democracy state to an illiberal state. Liberal democracy, as defined by Zakaria (1997), is a political system that not only allows for free and fair elections, but also gives importance to the rule of law, constitutional rights, a separate balance of power and independence judiciary, and the protection of basic freedom of speech, including religion and free media. Liberal democracy is described both as an ideology and an institutional system. On the contrary, an illiberal democracy is a partial democracy or a hybrid regime (Calleros-Alarcón, 2009). It is a governing system, whereby, although elections take place, citizens are cut off from knowledge about the activities of those who exercise real power because of the lack of civil liberties. As Orbán stated, this new state does not deny foundational values of liberalism, as freedom, etc. In short, illiberal democracy is a democratic system which allows elections, referendum, etc. but limits the freedom of speech, press, and judiciary system.



*Figure 4 Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán at an Electoral Rally*

*South-West of Budapest, April 2018.*

Source: [https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2018/sep/11/populism-eu-hungary-](https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2018/sep/11/populism-eu-hungary-orchestras-conductor)

*orchestras-conductor*

As I have mentioned earlier, the European migrant crisis has created a clash of fundamental values of the European Union. All Member States are at a crossroad to confirm its belief in the core values of respect for human rights, freedom, democracy, equality and the rule of law, the set of values which united them together at the beginning<sup>3</sup>. However, the European Union must strive for a balance to maintain its core democratic values of freedoms and justice, while right-wing populists in the Visegrád group are fuelling nationalism throughout Europe.

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<sup>3</sup> European Parliament. (n.d.). Values. Retrieved from <http://europarlamentti.info/en/values-and-objectives/values/>

## 1.2 Problem Statement

It is widely recognized that the Visegrád countries has implemented negative policies toward refugees and migrants. Therefore, the argument of this thesis revolves around the question: why has the Visegrád group executed these negative policies? Their anti-policies on refugees and migrants are implemented violently and explicitly, such as building fences at Hungary's border, a billboard campaign, or the group's refusal in following the European Union's directive on refugees' relocation and redistribution scheme.

To answer the thesis question, I propose four hypotheses of causal factors explaining why the Visegrád group has implemented negative policies on refugees and migrants. The proposed causal factors are presented as follows:

### 1. The History Factor

In the case of Hungary, right-wing populist politicians use history to create a national collective trauma in order to legitimate their political actions. History is used as a mechanism to create the feeling of belonging to a certain society (in this case is the Hungarian society). Prime Minister Viktor Orbán has carefully chosen a particular historical event that happened almost five hundred years ago, such as the Battle of Mohács fought in 1526, to create a psychological sense of belonging and an imagined community of nation building. Orbán utilises past events and memories in order to stimulate the Hungarian national identity, which lead to nationalism. First, it is crucial to understand the concept of nation building. According to Hiers, Soehl, and Wimmer (2017), history is one of the most significant causal forces that shapes the processes of nation-building and

formation of modern state. Anderson (1991) who developed a concept of imagined community, proposed that history is one of the political tools in creating a sense of nationality, enabling people who do not know each other to imagine and feel that they belong to the same community at a certain boundary (Anderson, 1991). Therefore, it is not surprising that both “history” and the “feeling of belonging to a certain society” have been chosen as instruments by populist politicians to be propagated throughout. Even though in the contemporary world, people are no longer related and have not really witnessed those historical events, however, the process of nation-building has made them feel that they are sharing the same history, with the same ancestors and heroes, an imaginary community. As a result, nationalism has successfully built a foundation in Hungarian society. Prime Minister Orbán chose to use a part of history of Hungary when the country was invaded by foreigners; the Mongols, the Turks, the Austrian Empire, Nazi German and the Soviet army during the World War II, to stimulate nationalism, xenophobia, and Islamophobia among the Hungarians. Orbán presented, to the public sphere, that the Ottoman occupation of Hungary (1541–1699) was a foreign invasion rather than a Christian-Muslim conflict. He has presented a narrative of national crisis through the misuse of history. The encounters with foreigners in Hungary, for example, started when the Ottomans, followed by the Austrian Empire, conquered Hungary and formed the Austro-Hungarian Empire or the Dual Monarchy between 1867–1918, and was dissolved following the First World War. Then, the country was controlled by the Soviets until 1989. A part of the Hungarian history that the country was invaded has become a mechanism for Orbán to set a belief that Hungary had lost its sovereignty and territory to foreigners, resulting in a reduction to a small

remnant nation after World War II (Romsics, 2002). These events from the past are used by Prime Minister Orbán to create a narrative that Hungary has been suffering from foreign powers and portrays the Hungarians as a distressed people who have already suffered throughout the history. Using this, Orbán has created another narrative that being defeated in the past cannot be repeated, therefore, the Hungarians must defend themselves and Europe from a similar fate. Instead of being wounded by criticism, Prime Minister Orbán has continuously used the history of invasion to embody a belief among conservative Hungarians that their country is currently struggling to protect its identity and values from foreign oppression, which in this regard, are the refugees and migrants. He convinces his people that they can win this war and there is no other suitable leader in this circumstance as Viktor Orbán himself.

Moreover, I observe that since the formation of the Visegrád group, the four countries have been in agreements, disagreements, and even sometimes in conflict with each other. There were both stages of more tightened integrating and disintegrating tendencies on various shared issues and interests within this sub-regional group. The integration of the four countries seems to be rooted in their shared history. However, there is a blurred line of unity reflected in many situations, for instance, the Energy Union. Despite the Visegrád group's general support for EU integration in energy, the members of the group have had different opinions and positions on the Energy Union from the very beginning (Mišík, 2016). However, the European migrant crisis shows that the Visegrád countries have all agreed on their position on anti-refugees and migrants. The question is why? Is it because of the implications of economic and security reasons that the



Hungarian government is trying to convince people to believe? or is it more likely to be a political hidden agenda and the inheritance of power by a populist political party?

## 2. The Economic Factor

Economic impacts of refugees on host countries are still a matter of debate among academic scholars. Some scholars have concluded that refugees can be beneficial to the host country's economy, while others argue that a certain number of refugees could, on the contrary, harm the economy. It is possible that the Visegrád group does not want to accept refugees because they consider them as an economic burden (Aiyar, 2016), especially when there is no financial compensation from the European Union to support the costs occurred in providing asylum for the refugees. Thus, the host country needs to subsidize the refugees' costs of arrival, such as land, water, housing, food and medical services. In some instances, they may cause price inflation, and labour market competition may drive down wages and reduce native employment. Therefore, no government in the Visegrád group is prepared or willing to reallocate its national funds to support these refugees. However, I find that the economic impact of refugees on host countries is not necessarily negative. On the contrary, the presence of refugees and migrants could be an economic stimulus which leads to the economic development of the host country (Cortes, 2004; Damoc, 2016). Furthermore, other countries in the European Union, such as Germany and Sweden, view refugees and migrants as one of the factors which drives the economy in terms of supplementing the country's labour shortage (Brljavac, 2017).

### 3. The Security and Defense Factor

The European migrant crisis is considered as one of the world's largest refugee crises since World War II. Millions of Syrian refugees have escaped from war into Europe, because of an uncertain future or death. The Visegrád group, however, has been implementing the “closed door” policy in response to these people. The Visegrád group claims that they have concerns over national security, that Syrian refugees and migrants could be linked with terrorism. Prime Minister Viktor Orbán stated in an annual speech in Romania in 2015 that: “There is a clear link between illegal migrants coming to Europe and the spread of terrorism” (Reuters, 2015). On the contrary, Europol indicates that there is no official data that could testify to any specific or credible case indicating that the refugees and migrants are truly a terrorism threat (Europol, 2019). Therefore, we have to critically think and examine if this is a real threat or a propaganda from the governments. In fact, statistics shows that the refugees and migrants enter the Visegrád countries only for the purpose of passing through to a third country, such as Germany, France, or Sweden. The statistical number of refugee requests for asylum in the Visegrád group member states is very low compared to other countries in the European Union. I consider this factor to be a rhetoric and discourse that have been used by right-wing populists and nationalists to frame the refugee and migrant crisis as being a threat to Europe's security. In addition, the accusation aimed at Muslim refugees and migrants as terrorists allows the Visegrád group leaders to justify their decisions to tighten their borders in order to reinforce and protect its European Christian values.

#### 4. Populism

The European migrant crisis has direct and indirect impacts on the strength of right-wing populism in European politics. In many European countries, including Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Finland, Norway, and Switzerland, right-wing populist parties have either taken the power of government or gained more popularity in recent elections (BBC, 2019). They have gained benefits from this unsolved crisis. Politicians and government leaders in Europe, especially the Visegrád group, have succeeded in building a sense of ultra-nationalism, creating “fear” and “us-other” dichotomy, a rhetoric for people to believe that national identity is under threat from foreign culture, specifically the Muslims. In the case of Hungary, the use of socio-psychological factors of islamophobia and xenophobia was spread throughout the country by the government anti-refugee campaign, which is conducted offline (such as newspapers, billboards, national consultation letters) and online media. The Hungarian government has firmly controlled its influence over national mainstream media. A pro-government media empire is established by the Fidesz party, known as the Central European Press and Media Foundation (Közép-Európai Sajtó és Média Alapítvány — KESMA). This huge media network has more than 500 media outlets under its umbrella (Zoltán, 2019). This allows Orbán’s government to lead the Hungarian to focus their attention on repeated messages of how refugees and migrants will affect their lives and destroy their “Christian values”. These anti-refugee and migrant campaigns are used as a tool to justify political actions of populist leaders such as Prime Minister Viktor Orbán. He is able to install policies that restrict the rights of Muslim refugees and migrants by posing as the defender of Christians. It is no surprise that this

kind of notion which focuses only on foreign invaders could distract people from their own “corrupted native elites”. While the Hungarians were focusing their attention on the crisis of refugees and migrants, Prime Minister Viktor Orbán and the ruling Fidesz party have passed many laws to undermine the opposition and to gain advantages in national election. For example, the Hungarian government passed a bill to criminalize those who help undocumented migrants. Other bills and laws to establish an autocracy, are means to portray Orbán as the protector of the people and violate the country’s rule of law, freedom of speech, and cultural expressions (Cseresnyés, 2019; Day, 2018; Gosling, 2019). This method is used in order to distract people from unsuccessful core policy issues implemented by the incumbent government including public services, education, poverty, healthcare, etc. The people are driven by the right-wing populist party to believe that to keep the country safe from refugees and migrants, is the only issue that matters. Since 2010, Orbán and his Fidesz party have been controlling over legislation with a strong democratic legitimacy through a holding of two-third majority. Therefore, Orbán and the Fidesz’s control of the parliament allows the Hungarian government to portray a narrative of national crisis that claims to defend the Hungarians from, whether it be, the refugees and migrants, Brussels, or George Soros.

I have chosen the case of Hungary to verify that, of all the four factors, populism is the most significant factor in the Visegrád group’s negative policies implemented towards refugees and migrants. Populism has been used by Prime Minister Viktor Orbán of Hungary to legitimise and justify his action of claiming that he is the protector of the Hungarians and the nation. The Hungarian government has violated the fundamental values of the European Union in terms of

human rights and freedom of speech through the absolute control of the media. This is explained in the case study of Hungary in Chapter Five.

### **1.3 Research Objectives**

The objectives of this research are as follows: First, to conduct an analysis of the four causal factors explaining why the Visegrád Group has implemented negative policies towards the European migrant crisis. Throughout this thesis, readers shall observe how each factor is instrumental in creating anti-refugee and migrant sentiment in the Visegrád group, especially in the case of Hungary. Second, to strengthen critical thinking and raise questions on political discourses created and proposed by the right-wing government. By using the case study of Hungary, I have gathered several facts, such as the historical development of the Visegrád group and the history of political party's coalition in Hungary to analyse its political agenda. To clarify how the Hungarian government, led by Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, the leader of the Fidesz party, which is known as a national-conservative and right-wing populist political party in Hungary, has been accusing refugees and migrants of being an economic burden to Hungary and a threat to its national security. This propagation of political discourses and the use of populism for political purposes have somehow succeeded in Hungary. In short, I see the European migrant crisis as an instrument for the right-wing populist party to consolidate its ruling power.

#### **1.4 Research Scope**

The scope of this thesis is the Visegrád group and the European migrant crisis, with Hungary as a case study. The timeline of the study starts in 2014 and 2015 when the crisis begins with a huge number of people arriving in the European Union (EU) from across the Mediterranean Sea or overland through Southeast Europe. This research concludes in 2019 when an election to the European Parliament is held in May.

#### **1.5 Limitation of the Study**

The main limitation of this research is language. To understand the Hungarian language or other languages in the Visegrád group would be beneficial in the analysis of the discourses of anti-refugee and migrant campaigns. Also, this would allow me to gain advantage in terms of wider access to media sources, such as television programs, social media, and academic studies which are conducted in Visegrád group languages. However, I have overcome this limitation by having a language expert translate unfamiliar text under supervision.

#### **1.6 Methodology**

This research is an in-depth case-based research. Case study methodology is widely used across multiple disciplines and fields especially in many social science studies to investigate a current phenomenon based on real world context and when in-depth explanations are needed

(Bartlett & Vavrus, 2017). Through case study methods, a researcher is able to go beyond the quantitative statistical results and understand the behavioural conditions through the actor's perspective (Zainal, 2007). Through literature review and reports of past studies, case study research allows the researcher to explore complex issues particularly when a holistic in-depth investigation is required. Case study method is a tool in many social science studies; the role of case study method in research becomes more prominent in issues with regard to sociology (Grassel & Schirmer, 2006). Furthermore, there are also other areas that have used case study methods extensively, particularly in government, management and in education. In addition, documents provided by EU institutions, statistical analysis and comparative methods are used in this thesis.

### 1.7 Definition of Terms

- Asylum seeker<sup>4</sup>

Asylum seekers are people who move across borders in search of protection and, having applied for protection as a refugee, await the determination of his or her status.

- The European Union

The European Union (EU) is a politic-economic union of 28-member states that are located in Europe, having an estimated population of over 510 million. The EU has developed an internal

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<sup>4</sup> "Asylum Seeker." *Literacy and Non-Formal Education in Iraq* | United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, Discovery Channel, Producer., [www.unesco.org/new/en/social-and-human-sciences/themes/international-migration/glossary/asylum-seeker/](http://www.unesco.org/new/en/social-and-human-sciences/themes/international-migration/glossary/asylum-seeker/).

single market through a standardized system of laws that apply to all member states. EU policies aim to ensure the free movement of people, goods, services, and capital within the internal market, endorse legislation in justice and home affairs, and maintain common policies on trade, agriculture, fisheries, and regional development. Within the Schengen Area, passport controls have been abolished. A monetary union was established in 1999 and came into full force in 2002, and is composed of 19 EU member states which use the euro currency. The EU operates through a hybrid system of supranational and intergovernmental decision-making. The seven principal decision-making bodies—known as the institutions of the European Union—are the European Council, the Council of the European Union, the European Parliament, and the European Commission, the Court of Justice of the European Union, the European Central Bank, and the European Court of Auditors.

- Ideology

A set of beliefs or principles, especially one on which a political system, party, or organization is based (“Ideology,” n.d.).<sup>5</sup>

- Illiberal Democracy

An illiberal democracy, also called a partial democracy, low intensity democracy, empty democracy, or hybrid regime (Calleros-Alarcón, 2009) is a governing system in which, although elections take place, citizens are cut off from knowledge about the activities of those who exercise real power because of the lack of civil liberties. It is not an “open society”. There are many countries

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<sup>5</sup> Ideology. (n.d.). In *Cambridge Dictionary*. Retrieved from <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/ideology?q=ideology>.



that are categorized as neither ‘free’ or ‘not free’, but as ‘probably free’, falling somewhere between democratic and nondemocratic regimes ( Levitsky & Way, 2002). This may be because a constitution limiting government power exists, but those in power ignore its liberties, or because an adequate legal constitutional framework of liberties does not exist.

- Islamophobia

Islamophobia is an intense fear or hatred of, or prejudice against, the Islamic religion or Muslims (Oxford Dictionary, 2016), especially when seen as a geopolitical force or the source of terrorism (Wike, Stokes & Simmons, 2016).

- Migrants

Migrants are people who choose to move to another country by will, with the objective of life improvement, for instance, finding jobs, education, or any other reasons that are not directly related to death threat or war.<sup>6</sup>

- Populism

Populism is a political philosophy supporting the rights and power of the people in their struggle against a privileged elite<sup>7</sup>. Critics of populism have described it as a political approach that seeks to disrupt the existing social order by solidifying and mobilizing the animosity of “the people” against “privileged elites” and the “establishment” (Orbach, 2017). Populists can fall anywhere on

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<sup>6</sup> UNHCR. (2016). UNHCR viewpoint: ‘Refugee’ or ‘migrant’ – Which is right? Retrieved from <https://www.unhcr.org/news/latest/2016/7/55df0e556/unhcr-viewpoint-refugee-migrant-right.html>.

<sup>7</sup> Populism. (n.d.). In *the American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*. Retrieved from [ahdictionary.com/word/search.html?q=populism](http://ahdictionary.com/word/search.html?q=populism).

the traditional left–right political spectrum of politics and often portray both bourgeois capitalists and socialist organizers as unfairly dominating the political sphere (Taguieff, 1995). Political parties and politicians (Norris, Garnett, & Grömping, 2020) often use the terms populist and populism as pejoratives against their opponents. Such a view sees populism as demagoguery, merely appearing to empathize with the public through rhetoric or unrealistic proposals in order to increase appeal across the political spectrum (O'Halloran, 2014).

#### ▪ Refugees<sup>8</sup>

Refugees are persons fleeing from death threats, war and conflict or persecution. They cross national borders to find refuge in nearby countries and are not able to return home due to war or danger to life. There are international laws on the basic rights which state that any States should welcome refugees and they should not be expelled or forced to return home for any situations because their life and freedom would be under threat.

#### ▪ The Visegrád Four

The group of four countries located in central Europe; the Czech Republic, Hungary, the Republic of Poland, and the Slovak Republic. It cooperates in the form of partnership on non-institutionalized issues, such as cultural, economic, environment, politics, security, and foreign policy. Based on the willingness of member states rather than legal binding.

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<sup>8</sup> UNHCR. (2016). UNHCR viewpoint: 'Refugee' or 'migrant' – Which is right? Retrieved from <https://www.unhcr.org/news/latest/2016/7/55df0e556/unhcr-viewpoint-refugee-migrant-right.html>.

- Xenophobia

Xenophobia is the irrational fear and distrust of that which is perceived to be foreign or strange.<sup>9</sup> Xenophobia can manifest itself in many ways involving the relations and perceptions of an in-group towards an out-group, including a fear of losing identity, suspicion of its activities, aggression, and desire to eliminate its presence to secure a presumed purity (Bolaffi, 2003).

Xenophobia is a political term and not recognized as medical phobia.



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<sup>9</sup> Xenophobia. (n.d.). In *Oxford English Dictionary*. Retrieved from <https://www.oed.com/>

## CHAPTER II

### THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

*As mentioned in the first chapter, populism plays an important role for the Visegrád group on the European stage, particularly in the European migrant crisis. In order to understand the definition and concept of populism, this chapter offers the readers an overview of the study of populism, the history and its concepts. I shall present how various scholars have explained the concept of populism by offering a discussion of the different definitions and approaches to the study of populism. In the next section, I will examine the relationship between populism and political discourse. In the final section, I will offer the reader a conceptual definition of populism theory, methodology, and previous studies.*

#### 2.1 Populism

To begin, populism is one of the most dynamic fields of comparative political research (Pappas, 2016). The Cambridge English dictionary defines “populism” as political ideas and activities that are intended to get the support of ordinary people by giving them what they want. This would give us a rough idea about what populism *is*. However, I have been through literature reviews and found that populism as a concept emerged a long time in history, from a wave of the farmers’ movements in Russia and the US in the late 19th century, to the recent winning of Prime Minister Viktor Orbán in Hungary, President Donald Trump in the United States, and Hugo Chavez of Venezuela in Latin America. (Taggart, 2000; Jagers & Walgrave, 2007; Roberts, 2010; Levitsky,

2013; Rosenthal & Trost 2012). However, some scholars, such as Pappas (2016), indicate that the study of populism only began in the late 1960s. Nevertheless, there are numerous forms of populism that have developed at various times and various places. For instance, Russia had developed its own type of populism during the 1870s and 1880s, followed by the United States in the 1890s, a less radical populism grew in this part of the world and reappeared several times thereafter (Cox, 2017).

The term “populism” is widely used (Roberts 2006, Barr 2009). Its definitions are based on political, economic and social features (Weyland, 2001). It is analysed through theoretical perspectives including structuralism, post-structuralism, modernization theory, social movement theory, party politics, political psychology, political economy, and democratic theory—and other methodological approaches, such as archival research, discourse analysis, and formal modelling (Acemoglu et al., 2011; Ionescu and Gellner, 1969; Canovan, 2002; Hawkins, 2009; Goodliffe, 2012; Postel, 2007). Moreover, the term “populism” has been studied across countries and regions, for example, cases from North America, Latin America, Africa, Eastern Europe and Russia were discussed by Gellner & Ionescu (1969). Meanwhile, Mudde & Kaltwasser (2012) have compared populism in relations with democratic and post-communist states in Eastern and Western Europe, Canada, and Latin America. Levitsky and Roberts (2011: 67) disassociate populism from specific policy initiatives. They define populism as a political mobilization by charismatic leaders who challenge the established political or economic elites on behalf of the people (Roberts, 2010). They also emphasize that populism appeals are ideologically flexible: “the programmatic content of

populist appeals has varied considerably across cases and over time [...] Unlike the Left, then, populism should not be defined in programmatic or ideological terms”. Even though there are some overlaps between left-wing political actors and populism, there are also non-populist leftists and non-leftist populists.

There are scholars, such as Taggart (1995), who define populism as a form of political organization with emphasis on the characteristics of the political leaders and their relation to political actors. From his stance, he argues that populist parties are characterized by a centralized organizational structure headed by a strong charismatic leader (Taggart, 1995; Pauwels, 2011). Therefore, in his opinion, populism is “particularly liable to the politics of personality” (Taggart, 2000: 101). Similarly, Pappas (2012: 2) claims that populist leadership “offers a key analytical variable in both understanding populism and assessing its successes or failures”. Looking at cases as diverse as the Netherlands and Peru, he argues that “populism obtains its characteristic when a certain political entrepreneur is able to polarize politics by creating a cleavage based on the interaction between ‘the people’ versus some establishment, thus forging a mass political movement”.

While the personality characteristics of political leaders are frequently cited in studies of populism, some warn against treating this criterion as sufficient or even necessary in operationalizing populism. Barr (2009), for instance, points to the fact that next to important charismatic populist leaders, “there have been notable non-charismatic populist leaders as well,” with Peru’s Alberto Fujimori being one example (2009: 40). Consequently, even if charismatic

leadership is often associated with populism, it is not a constitutive element of it. Rather, Barr stresses the linkage between populist movements and their supporters, and argues that once populists have taken power, they tend to use clientelism in addition to plebiscitarian linkages (2009: 42). Bringing together political style and strategy, Barr (2009: 38) defines populism as:

reflect[ing] the specific combination of appeals, location and linkages that suggests a correction based on enhanced accountability rather than increased participation. More specifically, it is a mass movement led by an outsider or maverick seeking to gain or maintain power by using anti-establishment appeals and plebiscitary linkages.

Cas Mudde, an expert on right-wing politics at the University of Georgia, defines the radical right as possessing three features: an authoritarian approach to law and order, a populist critique of elites as out of touch and corrupt, and a nativist ideology that casts refugees and migrants as a threat to the nation. As a researcher, I understand that in the field of social science, the summary of events in one context in a particular environment, such as populism in the case of Latin America, cannot be completely used to generalize populism in the case of the Visegrád group or Hungary. Anti-refugee and migrant sentiments in modern Hungary demonstrate another lesson for us to understand how the government has successfully created the “hatred of others” among its people. However, after I have been through review of literatures, I find that, according to Pappas (2016), the study of populism, throughout its history, can be roughly distinguished into four waves as

follows: the pioneers, the classical populism, the neoliberal populism, and the contemporary populism, each corresponding to a particular time period and research agenda.

### 2.1.1 The Pioneers

The earliest studies of populism originated in 1967 at the London School of Economics (Pappas, 2016) when several scholars set out to define *what is populism?* At the time, populism was evidenced in political systems, the term was categorized in a mode of political actions in many forms, such as in communist states (Ionescu & Gellner, 1969: 1). Those early-day scholars such as Canovan (1981) and Sartori (1970) studied populist movements in pre-democratic or nondemocratic political settings such as the Narodniki in imperial Russia; nondemocratic regimes in Latin America's post-war autocracies; interwar peasant movements in Eastern Europe and the Balkans; and anti-capitalist and anticolonial movements in Africa (Pappas, 2016). Later, in the early 1980s, Canovan (1981: 294) regarded populism as "a variety of phenomenon, from techniques of direct democracy to political movements and authoritarian regimes". In conclusion, the early studies on populism acknowledged that populism existed, and its importance has been recognized by academic scholars even though there is still a lack of common definitions and a clear concept. As mentioned by Ionescu & Gellner (1969) that:

There can, at present, be no doubt about the importance of populism. But no one is quite clear just what it is. As a doctrine or as a movement, it is elusive and



protean. It bobs up everywhere, but in many and contradictory shapes. Does it have any underlying unity? Or does one name cover a multitude of unconnected tendencies? (Ionescu & Gellner, 1969: 1)

Regarding the quotation, scholars in the pioneers group admit that populism does exist, although they could not give a consensus on the definition of populism. From my perspective, it is because populist political parties in each country or region do have different context settings. That explains why populism is present in different shapes and forms with no underlying unity. The only fundamental form that connects various approaches of populism together, in my opinion, is “the people”. Moreover, populists often follow a different path and technique when choosing rhetoric and discourses to mobilize their constituents. Some populist parties build legitimacy through a perceived threat emerging from unidentified enemies outside and within while other parties gain support by associating themselves with different political imaginaries and traditions.



### **2.1.2 Classical Populism**

The 1970s and 1980s were periods of a second wave of study on populism, mostly developed by Latin American researchers. In contrast to the European pioneer scholars who aimed to define the meaning of populism, classical populism scholars focused mainly on socio-economic conditions, with mass political movements developed in their countries as a setting. For example, in Germani's (1978) study, the objective is to explain the conditions under which the political

participation of the lower classes is channelled through a populist movement (Germani, 1978: 95). Nevertheless, two approaches of populism have been developed within this classical period, one is structural Marxism and dependency school, and the other is modernization theory. For the first approach of structural Marxism, academic scholars such as Cardoso & Faletto (1979) and O'Donnell (1978) explain populism as a multiclass political movement corresponding to the stage of industrialization and capitalism. With this, populist leaders are allowed to build cross-class alliances between urban labour, the middle sectors, and domestic industrialists according to Roberts (1995: 85). On the contrary, those scholars who adhere to the modernization theory approach, such as Collier (1979), Drake (1982), Germani, Di Tella & Ianni (1973), and Malloy (1977), view populism as a means for the urban working and middle classes to integrate themselves into politics which once belonged only to the elite class. The emergence of these two new classes is the result of a breakdown of oligarchic politics and a post-war transition to capitalism. In conclusion, the second wave study of populism has developed two important approaches; both saw populism as a part of historical and political development specifically in semi-periphery states rooted in "relations of production and market conditions" (Jansen, 2011: 79). In this period, I notice that populism has been put into social terms, and most of the case studies that were used to explain populism are from authoritarian states. Populist movements in the classical period were based on a specific socio-economic context of industrialization in Latin America and other periphery states which cannot be utilized in the study of populism in liberal democratic contexts. However, I consider this classical

period as a foundation of populism study which was developed into different types of populism in modern politics.

### **2.1.3 Neoliberal Populism**

In the third wave of neoliberal populism, the arguments about populism and neoliberalism are based on Latin American cases. Some scholars disagree with the generalization of cases on Latin America for its compatible and validity when discussing populism in general. To eliminate such issue, Weyland (2001) chose to study a different system by analysing and comparing populism through the politics of economic liberalism in Eastern Europe and Latin America. These two regions are different in their historical background, culture, political development, economic system, and most importantly, they differ in institutional framework of authoritarianism (Latin America) versus post-totalitarianism (Eastern Europe). He concludes that in institutional fragmentation countries, enforced with deep economic crises, political populism and economic liberalism can reinforce each other (Weyland, 2001). In Eastern Europe, the fall of Communism of the Soviet Union and its influence over the region has founded a nationalism tendency which can be later developed to ultra-nationalism. This has paved the way for populist politicians to gain popularity, win elections, and gain power in the government. Therefore, communism's legacy created by Soviet Union, is one of the root causes of the rise of populism in Eastern Europe. In contrast, populism in Latin America rises from its domestic weak politics. Neoliberal populist in the Latin region is much stronger and the market reformation depends on populist leaders and

political classes. The most outstanding feature of populism in Latin America is the emerging of “charismatic” leadership rather than oligarchy systems (Hawkins, 2010: 1138). For Weyland, populism is “a political strategy through which a personalistic leader seeks or exercises government power based on direct, unmediated, uninstitutionalized support from large numbers of mostly unorganized followers” (Weyland, 2001: 14). Moreover, there are political interests in the discourse patterns used by populist leaders and their usages in politics, incorporating the masses in this period. In my opinion, the third wave of neoliberal populism is an important connection to modern populism. The concept of populism in this period is the closest definition to what we understand today. The features of populism, such as discourse patterns and mass media will be discussed in the case of Hungary in Chapter Five.

#### **2.1.4 Contemporary Populism**

When Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels released the Communist Manifesto in 1848, they began the piece by writing: “A spectre is haunting Europe—the spectre of communism. All the powers of old Europe have entered into a holy alliance to exorcise this spectre: Pope and Tsar, Metternich and Guizot, French Radicals and German police-spies” (Marx & Engels, 1848: 14). It would seem that in this modern era, there is another different spectre haunting Europe today, only that it is not Communism. In my perspective, right-wing populism and nationalism could be a replacement for Communism since those two notions have increasingly played an important role in contemporary European politics and the rest of the world. We have seen, in recent years, that the study of populism

has been growing exponentially. Several definitions are proposed by social and political scientists, and historians. Populism is being understood in various terms, such as populism as actors that refers to the people, some elite, or a leader (Pappas, 2016); populism as political actions that mobilize the mass with strategic leadership (Da Silva & Vieira, 2019); populism as a political style (De Vreese, Esser, Aalberg, Reinemann, & Stanyer, 2018).

In Europe, variants of populism emerged and have strengthened since 1980s—targeting mostly immigrants and minorities (Betz, 1994; Koopmans, 1996; Betz & Immerfall, 1998; Norris, 2005; Carter, 2005; Ivarsflaten, 2007; Mudde, 2007; Berezin 2013). In the United States, populism has been associated with a variety of economic ideologies and political parties, from the Populist Party of the late 19th century and the New Left of the 1960s, to present-day Republican (Kazin 1995, Lowndes 2008). In contrast, populism in Latin America in recent years, has been mostly related to a vision of society, bringing together diverse ethnic identities into shared political frameworks (Madrid 2008, Levitsky & Roberts 2011). What is interesting about contemporary populism is that the concept has spread to Europe, where it did not have much of a hold before in its history. This rising trend of extremist parties and populist leaders has made modern European politics not only unstable but also a challenge to democracy itself. Previous populisms were specifically national in character whereas contemporary populism has a more international form (Cox, 2018) and this is seen in the case of the European migrant crisis.

In an era of decline in formal political and democracy's moral foundations in Europe, authoritarians are on their rise and populism has an ability to stimulate new forms of political

engagement (Skocpol & Williamson, 2012, 197). Levitsky & Loxton (2012) viewed populism as an erosion of democratic institutions and competitive authoritarian regimes. Ionescu & Gellner (1969, 4) and most academic scholars agree that “populism worships the people” while Laclau (2005), Fella & Ruzza (2013) consider populism as a creation of boundaries between groups which leads to the emergence categories of “us” and “them”. In my opinion, I agree with Laclau (2005), Fella & Ruzza (2013) that populism, as one of its features, is to create the boundary between “us and them”. Populism is used by populist politicians in order to legitimate their policies implementation and negative actions towards migrants and refugees. Also, because modern populism is more of an international form rather than focusing on national aspect as Cox explains. Therefore, to define the absolute meaning of populism is still a challenge because the term has been used to describe various political aspects including political ideologies (populism of left-wing vs right-wing) or the individual charisma of any particular leader. Moreover, it is likely to depend on the scholars’ theoretical perspectives and methodological approaches whether they have examined the populism term based on which notions or ideas they use. As a result, further research on populism is needed, especially when studied in different contexts and circumstances.

After a synopsis of four waves in the study of populism, in the following section, I will provide a systematic understanding of populism and its key features with the aim of using this term for a more principled comparison across contexts. From the literature review related to the topic, scholars distinguish populism into three conceptual approaches: populism as an ideology (Mudde, 2017), populism as a style, and populism as a strategy (Gidron & Bonikowski, 2013).

## 2.2 Populism as an Ideology

Populist movements usually arise from socio-economic complications. The term populism is usually not regarded as a full political ideology as socialism, liberalism, or conservatism, etc. However, populism is thin-centred (Mudde, 2017) which addresses only a part of political agenda. To emphasize, populism has no specific or suggestive opinion on what the best political or economic system is. Accordingly, populism will be combined, by political actors, with a certain set of political ideology, such as liberalism, communism, nationalism, or socialism. However, the most outstanding features of populism is that it appeals to the people and claims to justify the democratic ideology of popular sovereignty and majority rule. The idea ultimately separates a society into two homogeneous groups: “the people” and “the elite”, with the main distinction is based on morals, i.e., “pure” versus “corrupt”. According to Mudde, populism is:

[a] ideology that considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogenous and antagonistic camps, ‘the pure people’ versus ‘the corrupt elite,’ and which argues that politics should be the expression of the *volonté générale* (general will) of the people.

(Mudde, 2004: 543; Mudde, 2007).

According to the quotation, I think Mudde offers very concrete defining attributes of populism since he explains that populism is a form based on an appeal to “the common people” who believe that politics should express the will of the people rather than serving the established elites. Mudde does

not attach populism with any full political ideology such as socialism, fascism, or liberalism, but rather explains it as a thin-centered ideology so that populism, in his definition, could be assimilated into other ideological elements, which are crucial for populists to appeal to the public with different political contexts. Thus, populism can appear in different forms and shapes depending on which host the ideologies of populism relates itself to. One form of populism might be more or less appealing to different societies (Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2017).

When discussing populism as an ideology, a series of studies by Cas Mudde should not be omitted. Mudde is a Dutch political scientist who focuses on political extremism and populism in Europe especially right-wing populist parties and populism in the United States. His research includes the areas of political parties, extremism, democracy, civil society, and European politics. Mudde (2004) concludes that populism is a set of ideas categorized by an antagonism between the people and the elite, with the dominance of popular sovereignty. Similar to Laclau (2005), Fella & Ruzza (2013), Mudde agrees that populism encourages a binary world-view in which society is divided into “friends and enemies”, with the latter being regarded not just as people who have “different priorities and values” but as being fundamentally “evil” (Mudde, 2004: 544). Mudde has put populism as a thin-centred ideology which does not provide an explanation to all the major socio-political spectrums, it can either be developed through political belief systems such as liberalism or socialism, and could therefore be compatible with both left and right ideologies. Populism can be found across ideologies, it has an ability to merge itself to either left or right-wing



depend on political context: “which ideological features attach to populism depend upon the socio-political context within which the populist actors mobilize” (Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2012: 2).

Mudde’s research has been influential to other political science researcher such as Rafał Pankowski (2010) who analyses populism in the context of Poland. Apart from adopting Mudde’s idea, Pankowski further elaborates on the importance of cultural resources. He uses popular culture to engage Polish youth and raise awareness of human rights in the face of racism, xenophobia, and antisemitism. Pankowski founded the Never Again Association with the aim to create an anti-racist network in Poland through cultural events, such as concerts and football games designed to attract the younger Polish generation. Pankowski explains the role of traditional conceptions of the nation as sources for populist mobilization: “the traditions that legitimize particular aspects of political actions” (Pankowski, 2010: 6). Most research literature in this approach are based on computational texts analysis, which focus on specific country cases or a comparison of transnational context.

### 2.3 Populism as a Strategy

In contrast to other broad approaches, some scholars explain populism as a mode of political strategy. This approach is popular among sociologists and political scientists working on populism in Latin America. This approach identifies populism by focusing on three different aspects of political strategy including forms of mobilization, policy choices, and political organization. For example, some scholars taking this approach, such as Weyland (2001) and Barr (2009) define populism as “A political strategy through which a personalistic leader seeks or

exercises government power based on direct, unmediated, uninstitutionalized support from large numbers of mostly unorganized followers” (Weyland, 2001: 14) or “A mass movement led by an outsider or maverick seeking to gain or maintain power by using anti-establishment appeals and plebiscitarian linkages” (Barr, 2009: 44).

Acemoglu et al. (2013: 2), on the other hand, focus their study on policy. They define populism as “the implementation of policies receiving support from a significant fraction of the population, but ultimately hurting the economic interests of this majority”. In the same vein, Madrid (2008) studies the rise of ethno-populism in Latin America and argues that populism takes the form of particular economic policies and repertoires of mass mobilization. Madrid (2008) defines populist policies as an instrument aiming at economic redistribution and the nationalization of natural resources. He views populist mobilization as one consisting of anti-establishment and anti-system appeals. Populism, in this approach, applies mostly to pro-redistribution positions as can be seen in the case of Latin America where populist leaders use populist language in order to convey voters that they are not obligated to capitalists’ economic interests (Madrid, 2008: 31). The difficulty of this approach is that it identifies modes of organization or strategy that appear across the political spectrum in many different articulations (Hawkins, 2010: 168). Normally scholars in this approach would not consider populism as a number of social movements or forms of community politics. Moreover, this approach leaves out the classic referent in discussions of populism “the people” which is a central feature that differentiates populism from other styles of politics. Such action seeks to abandon the etymological roots of the term. While tracing the

etymology of terms is obviously not a primary reason to discard concepts, when it comes to populism, Alan Knight notes that “the etymology is sufficiently clear, recent and compelling for us to take it seriously” (Knight, 1998: 226).

## 2.4 Populism as a Style

Deegan-Krause & Haughton (2009: 822) distinguish populism from ideology and define it as a style. In their examination, the two scholars found that populism is a characteristic of political talk rather than an identity of a political actor. Kazin (1995) argues that the political style of populism is built on the opposition between us and them. Yet, for Kazin (1995), populism is not an ideology that captures the core beliefs of particular political actors but rather a mode of political expression that is employed selectively and strategically by both right and left, liberals and conservatives. It means that, the degree of populism that a given political actor employs may vary across contexts and over time. The actor’s explicit ideological positions are likely to be more constrained by concerns over credibility. Similarly, Panizza (2005) contends that populism as a discursive concept refers to relatively fluid practices of identification, rather than to individuals or parties. It is a form of politics rather than a stable category of political actors. Taguieff (1995), Kazin (1995), Canovan (1999), de la Torre (2010) and Filc (2011) have defined populism as a style, but have generally focused on its rhetorical features. They address populism as a tendency which not only communicates in a simple and direct manner, but also offers solutions that are direct and simple. Knight (1998: 223) sees populism as a loose style of characteristics involving a proclaimed

rapport with “the people”, a “them-and-us” mentality, and often, though not necessarily, a period of crisis and mobilization. Knight (1998) defines populism as a political style [that] implies a close bond between political leaders and the people (Knight, 1998: 227). Indeed, Jagers and Walgrave (2007: 322) further specify populism as “a political communication style of political actors that refers to the people”. However, I see that none of these scholars have attempted to define the concept of political style. Therefore, it cannot yet be of use for comparative political analysis.

In conclusion, my understanding of populism is that it has many subtypes and can be combined anywhere on the political spectrum whether it is left-wing, right-wing, authoritarianism or even centric. Populism poses as anti-system to the corrupted elites but not necessarily to the democracy. It still embraces the features of democracy, popular sovereignty, and majority rule. Most scholars describe populism as a set of ideas focusing on an opposition between the (good) people and the (bad) elite although there still are disagreements on whether it is a fully-fledged ideology or more of a political discourse or style. The summary of populism characteristics in three approaches are shown in table 1.

*Table 1 Characteristics of the three approaches to populism research.*

|                    | Scholars                                                   | Definition of Populism                                                | Unit of Analysis                                                | Relevant Methods                                                       |
|--------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Political Ideology | 1. Mudde (2004)<br>2. Kaltwasser and Mudde (2012)          | A set of inter-related ideas about the nature of politics and society | Parties and Party Leaders                                       | Qualitative or automated texts analysis, mostly of partisan literature |
| Political Style    | 1. Kazin (1995)<br>2. Laclau (2005)<br>3. Panizza (2005)   | A way of making claims about politics; characteristics of discourse   | Texts, speeches, public discourse about politics                | Interpretive textual analysis                                          |
| Political Strategy | 1. Roberts (2006)<br>2. Wayland (2001)<br>3. Jansen (2011) | A form of mobilisation and organisation                               | Parties (with a focus on structures), social movements, leaders | Comparative historical analysis, case studies                          |

Source: <https://scholar.harvard.edu/><sup>10</sup>

When analysing the rise, power, and the role of populism in European modern politics, one of the key driving forces is the weakness of democratic institutions. In my opinion, the distrust of the European institutions among European citizens could be traced back and connected with the Euro crisis in 2010 which later developed into Euroscepticism. Even though the criticism of the

<sup>10</sup> Gidron, N & Bonikowski, B. (2013). Varieties of Populism: Literature Review and Research Agenda. *Weatherhead Working Paper Series*, 17.

European Union has become mainstream since the early 1990s (Bijmans, 2020). However, the 2010 Euro crisis has confirmed the doubts of its ineffectiveness prior to its ability to solve the economic crisis. The European migrant crisis is, again, repeating and reflecting the inefficiency of the European Union institution for it could not solve the crisis effectively. This leads to the collapse of the traditional or mainstream politics legitimacy, and induces voters to believe that existing liberal democratic, the check and balance system, and the current politicians might not be able to solve the problem as they wish. Therefore, populists emerge and gain more popularity by convincing others that their policies are based on the interests of the people. Hence, populism has succeeded in establishing a foundation in modern European politics. This idea is confirmed by Taggart (2000), who concludes that populism can be stimulated through a perception of crisis which is often related to the breakdown between citizens and their representatives. Because during the time of breakdown or threat, severe situations will lead people to demand for decisive and immediate action from the politicians, political system, or institutions. Crises can also be related to various issues including immigration, economic turmoil, injustice, military and security threat, or social change (Taggart, 2000). In other words, ideology and political style are not mutually reliant on each other nor are they the same. Thus, populism can be introduced through both left-wing and right-wing. It can be analysed in both liberalism and socialism because political style does not function as an ideology. As in the case of Communism, it has spurred different political styles from Stalin to Lenin.

In the case study of Hungary in this thesis, I propose the analysis of right-wing populism demonstrated by Prime Minister Viktor Orbán who is a populist leader in Hungary, and its influence on the Hungarians. Because the important question is not who “the people” are, but how “the representative represents the people” (Arditi, 2007: 64) — that is, whether the people are an active entity that shapes democratic politics, or whether the people are shaped by external forces such as a leader (Kalyvas, 2002). Therefore, it does not necessarily require the traditional distinction between style and content that other approaches inherently rely on. I aim to use a framework of populism to explain how a populist leader, such as Prime Minister Viktor Orbán of Hungary, applies his political strategies with his believers. Populism rhetoric and propagandas are presented through national mainstream media to legitimize the implementation of negative policy on refugees and migrants. Therefore, in my case study of Hungary, populism is seen as a political strategy and a style, which can be performed through any political spectrum. This will allow us to understand how populism can be used by diverse political actors instead of labelled populism with any exact ideology or strategy as many scholars of populism have envisaged. Saward (2010: 66) explains that populism is action by actors, and the performance contains or adds up to a claim that someone is or can be representative. For all these reasons mentioned, I see that a framework of populism as a political strategy will unlock an important new dimension to explain the phenomenon of the Visegrád group, in the case of Hungary, on its implementation of negative policies in this latest European migrant crisis.

## 2.5 Previous Studies

The aim of writing this section is to explore how previous scholars have conducted their studies related to the topic and to provide a broad background literature to introduce the readers to the research topic. The first paper is *Refugee Crisis in Europe: The Case Studies of Sweden and Slovakia* by Brljavac (2017) and the second paper is *the Uncertain Role of the EU Countries in the Syrian Refugee Crisis* by Havlová and Tamchynová (2016).

### 2.5.1 Refugee Crisis in Europe: The Case Studies of Sweden and Slovakia

Brljavac studies the comparative cases of Sweden and Slovakia in terms of immigration policies towards the refugees, to answer the question of whether or not this migrant crisis that is currently challenging the European Union is an end to a united and integrated Europe. The methodology used is discourse analysis. According to the study, the two countries have applied completely different policies to the migrants as follows. Over the past five decades, Sweden has endorsed integration procedures many years before officially announcing a shift from immigration to integration policies. It can be otherwise stated that Sweden is a country which has implemented an integration model, applied policies, and measures with the aim of making a smooth integration of migrants within the country for a long time. This social integration model has been founded on the principles of equal rights, obligations, and opportunities for all, regardless of their ethnic, religious or cultural background (Brljavac, 2017). One of the possible reasons of Sweden's openness to migrants is that the country has been facing a challenge of population decrease.



Therefore, the country regarded the coming migrants as a solution for the country's economy in the long term, views refugees as a valuable economic asset which, in the future, could subsidize its labour shortage in regard to economic development. On the contrary, the Slovak Republic has been one of the countries in Europe that is highly criticized from the beginning, for its strong opinion and rejection of refugee settlement and relocation quota regulated by the European Union. In December 2015, the Slovak government utilised the EU's mechanism, the European Court of Justice, to fight against the relocating of quotas proposed by the European Union (Brljavac, 2017). The European Union planned to reallocate 120,000 refugees across all 28 EU Member States. Consequently, it is undeniable that Slovakia's policy on migrants openly rejected the EU calls for its core value of solidarity. Brljavac concludes that this latest migrant crisis is not purely a new phenomenon since Europe has always been an attractive continent appealing to millions of migrants all over the world because of its offering of economic opportunity and multiculturalism. In conclusion, this phenomenon will only be recalled as, one of among several social, political, economic, and legal wave crises that the European Union has been facing throughout its history.

#### 2.5.2 The Uncertain Role of the EU Countries in the Syrian Refugee Crisis

Havlová and Tamchynová (2016) analyse the EU's policy towards the Syrian refugee crisis. This study by Havlová and Tamchynová focuses on the background of the common asylum policy of the EU and major challenges posed by the refugee crisis regarding the common EU refugee policy. This study represents a crisis for the European common asylum policy as Syrian

refugees are a burden which has not been distributed equally within the EU. Havlová and Tamchynová then summarize that the “old” EU member states tend to be far more open towards the refugees and received a larger number of them compared to the former Communist countries which are now the newer members of the European Union. While Germany sees refugees as an opportunity and source for further development, the cultural differences are stressed more in the other countries –especially with Islam. The second part of this thesis focuses on an analysis of the impact of the refugee crisis on the European Union, the failures of the EU to adopt a common approach towards the refugees from Syria, and the EU initiatives. As the Syrian refugees / asylum applicants constitute a large part of the asylum applicants / refugees in the EU and because the core documents do not differentiate among the refugees based on their nationality. Havlová and Tamchynová simplify the EU position towards the refugees by assuming that it holds true for the Syrian refugees specifically. They question whether there should be a special condition applied to Syrian refugees only. In conclusion, they found that the European Union has not been able to effectively apply the common asylum policy towards the refugees, particularly those from Syria. This is despite the fact that the principles of the common asylum policy should be applied in the Schengen area based on the Dublin regulations, which is a system of fingerprint database in Europe for unauthorized entrants to the EU. The regulation is aimed to garner responsibility from Member States for the transfer of an asylum policy throughout Europe.

## 2.6 Political Discourse Analysis

Political Discourse Analysis (PDA) literatures are varied. To narrow the perspective, four mainstreams of research on political discourse analysis are found. Each focuses on the following: (1) political elites (2) media discourses (3) actors from the civil society and (4) ‘mixed’ discourses (Randour, Perez, & Reuchamps, 2020). For instance, studies conducted by Wodak & Boukala (2015) analyse political discourse from political speeches, while Musolff (2017) analyses political discourse in press articles. Gruber (2015) discusses political discourse in parliamentary debates while Fenton-Smith (2017) studies the topic of diplomatic condolences. In social media and civil aspects, scholars such as Kreis, (2017) examines the political discourse through tweets; Hanauer (2011) discusses the political discourse through the art of graffiti; and Perez & Reuchamps (2012, 2015) analyse citizen forums’ political discourse. However, this thesis focuses mainly on the political discourse of the right-wing populists in Hungary, specifically that propagated by Prime Minister Viktor Orbán. The political discourse analysis is done through in-depth textual analysis of anti-refugee and migrant campaigns, including speeches held by Prime Minister Viktor Orbán. Therefore, studies by Wodak & Boukala (2015), Mayaffre and Scholz (2017), and Van Dijk (1997) are considered useful and will be examined.

Linguistic research on political discourse has focused mainly on speeches produced by political elites. Hall (2006: 201) defines discourse as “a coherent or rational body of speech or writing; a speech, or a sermon”. Kampf (2015: 2-3) defines discourse as that which “encompasses both spoken and written forms of language, and is employed in an endeavour to understand how

actions are performed, goals realised, and meanings produced across various layers of context”.

Azodi & Salmani (2015) define political discourse as “a complex form of human activity which is based on the recognition that politics cannot be conducted without language” (p. 183). According to Van Dijk’s definition, a discourse is considered “political” when it is produced by a political actor carrying out a political action in the context of communication, such as public speeches and official addresses. Van Dijk’s works are inspired by Michael Foucault’s approach, which explores cognition, power, and discourse relations (Van Dijk, 1997). The political discourse analysis developed by Van Dijk helps to clarify the essential function of discourse as a method to “control people’s minds, ideas, knowledge, opinions, and their personal and social representations” (Utku & Köroğlu, 2020: 3). Van Dijk contends that discourses are likely to have the power to dominate and reproduce racism within societies. Also, political discourses tend to be future-oriented because the claims on certain issues from the political actors are usually part of an agenda-setting. Politicians use discourses to direct the masses towards particular actions. Van Dijk aims to formulate and explain which discourse is political and which is not. His analysis is based on “the reproduction of power and dominance through discourse” (Van Dijk, 2003). Van Dijk, thus, categorized political discourse into three dimensions: the political actors, the political scope, and the context of communication (Van Dijk, 1997: 12–14).

Most studies in political discourse analysis concentrate on oral discourses. For example, Wodak and Boukala’s research (2015) is often associated with discursive and framing analysis. Mayaffre and Scholz (2017) analyse speeches made during the presidential campaigns in 2007 and

2012 of the former President of France, Nicolas Sarkozy, using text statistical methods. Mayaffre and Scholz (2017) conclude that President Sarkozy used a political discourse technique of turning himself into a celebrity in order to represent his political party's identity. Mayaffre and Scholz discuss that the rise in populist rhetoric is a result of the limited creativity of politics in capitalism era (Crouch 2004). They also find that Nicolas Sarkozy's discourse relies on the construction of opposition to a large extent of populism tones. Nevertheless, the main opponent of President Sarkozy's discourse seems to be the elites, which are presented as those who hijack and suppress the people. For example, President Sarkozy's speech contains the use of "those", the pronoun which the audience do not know whom the President specifically refers to. This leads to a construction of "us and them" opposition although it can be presumed that President Sarkozy refers to "the Parisian elites" (Mayaffre & Scholz, 2017: 6). In regard to this, the political actor who conducts the discourse is likely to be making a judgement on behalf of the people.

Wodak & Boukala's study (2015) explores discourses made during the European financial crisis in 2008. They found that discourses circulated during this period tend to be related and attached to nationalism and security. Wodak & Boukala (2015) also find a link between the opposition of "us and them" in the form of identifying what are considered as European values and what are not. This formation of "us and them" has been used by right-wing populists to separate "us—the real Europeans", who are always represented as "more democratic and civilised", from "them—the others", who have been portrayed negatively as a threat to the coherence of the country (Wodak & Boukala, 2015: 87; Utku & Köroğlu, 2020). In summary, the inclusionary and

exclusionary rhetoric have become part of European political discourses, including discourse about migration and global economy, with the concept of: “We” have to defend “Ourselves” against “Them”, the Roma, Jews, and Muslims (Wodak & Boukala, 2015: 89). In this rhetoric, political actors tend to use the language or other symbolic systems to determine the boundaries and define similarities and differences between ‘Us’ and ‘Them’. Wodak and Boukala’s study (2015) on political discourse analysis places emphasis on right-wing populist parties. Their research puts forward the notion that discourses disseminated by right-wing populists are frequently based on the distinct boundaries of “Otherness”. One of the most unique characteristics of populism is that populist actors tend to position themselves as “saviours” who defend the local population, whether they be the Hungarian, Polish, Slovak, Czech, or any other ethnicity applied, against “the elites” and “the foreigners”. Populist actors are likely to create the rhetoric of exclusion to convince the people to believe that “foreigners” are a threat to the nation and that they refuse to assimilate themselves into “our” culture.

# CHAPTER III

## THE CAUSE FACTORS OF THE VISEGRÁD GROUP'S NEGATIVE POLICY ON THE EUROPEAN MIGRANT CRISIS

*A brief introduction to the chapter*

*To understand the Visegrád group's negative policy implemented in the European migrant crisis, I propose four case factors that are essential to analyse actions taken by the Visegrád group's government and political leaders during the past years of the crisis. A basic knowledge of the introduction to the history of the Visegrád group, the summary of the political events related to the European migrant crisis, and the rise of populism in the Visegrád group is necessary. Therefore, my aim in writing this chapter is to provide readers with an overview of the Visegrád group's historical development, from the motives of origin to the rise of populism and its negative implementation in the European migrant crisis. In addition, to examine each hypothesis cause factors of: history, economics, security and defense, and populism on the Visegrád group's negative policy implementation in the European migrant crisis.*

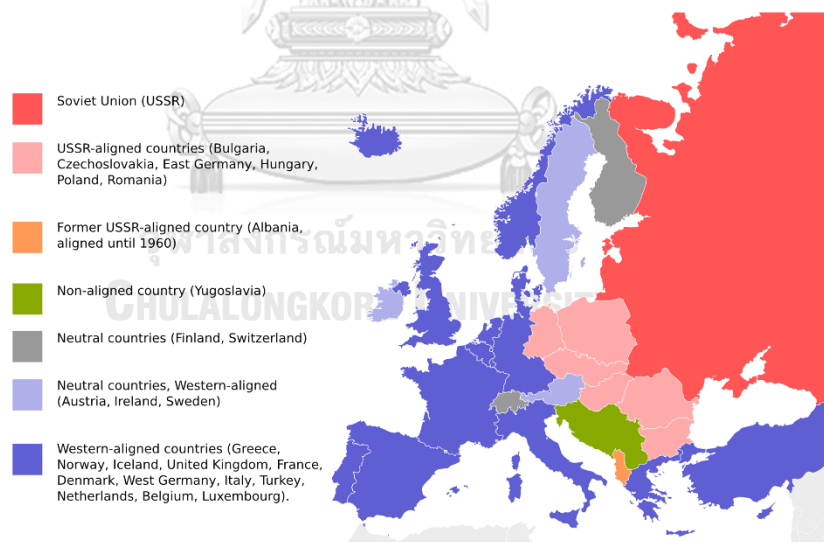
### 3.1 The History of the Visegrád Group: Motives and the Origin of the Visegrád Cooperation



*Figure 5 Visegrád Castle*

Source: <http://www.visegradgroup.eu/about>

To understand and to be able to analyse the Visegrád group's policy against the European migrant crisis, it is necessary for academic scholars and the readers to understand the group's history, the motives of origin, the foundation values, the implications and the process of the 2004 EU accession, and its cooperation as a partnership. The historical development of the Visegrád group can be traced back in the early 1990s when the program named Glasnost (openness) and Perestroika (renew) were introduced after the end of the Cold War by Mikhail Gorbachev, the USSR leader at the time. This has resulted in the cancellation of the Brezhnev Doctrine of 1989, which leads to the abolishment of Soviet influence and domination in Central and Eastern Europe. This has created a huge impact on the countries in the region, a historical changing point for Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and Poland.



*Figure 6 Political Situation in Europe During the Cold War*

Source: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eastern\\_Bloc](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eastern_Bloc)

After the dissolution of the Soviet Union and communism, the idea of the Visegrád group originated. An alliance of three states: Czechoslovakia, Hungary and the Republic of Poland, was



formed and was brought to the summit meeting held in the Hungarian castle town of Visegrád on 15 February 1991. The key state leaders in the meeting were: Václav Havel, the President of the Czechoslovakia, Lech Wałęsa, the President of the Republic of Poland, and József Antall, the Prime Minister of Hungary.<sup>11</sup> There was a similar meeting held in 1335 attended by John of Luxembourg, King of Bohemia, Charles I of Anjou (Charles Robert), King of Hungary, and Casimir III, King of Poland.<sup>12</sup> The meetings of the Visegrád's countries leaders show their close relationship among the countries' political elites. Also, it demonstrates that the idea of coalition of the group was originated long before in its history.

The dissolution of Czechoslovakia took effect in 1993, then, the Czech Republic and the Slovak Republic became independent countries, resulting in an increase of members to four– the Czech Republic, Hungary, the Republic of Poland and the Slovak Republic. However, the East-West polarity which was overcome after the fall of the Berlin Wall was not an end to division and dichotomy in Europe. The post-communist states in Central and Eastern Europe were struggling with economic and political instability. As a result, the Visegrád group, or V4, was founded based on its historical development as a cultural and political alliance of four Central European states located in the centre of Europe. The main purpose of the alliance was to support its member states' accession to the European Union and NATO (Dangerfield, 2014), supported by a group declaration, which was open for democracy and a free market economy. By its collaboration in various aspects,

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<sup>11</sup> Visegrád. (2011). History of the Visegrád Group. Retrieved from <http://www.visegradgroup.eu/about/history>

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

they could meet the EU's requirements and succeeded in becoming Member States of the European Union and NATO. The four countries have worked together on numerous issues, such as advancing military, leveraging its economic partnership, and creating energy cooperation. Apart from the drives in meeting the EU conditions and requirements, in order to be a member of the EU and NATO, all Visegrád countries needed to accept EU conditions and requirements and would have to go through integration processes. The group also had to adopt EU core values: solidarity, freedom, democracy, human rights, equality, shared responsibilities, and rule of law. Additionally, the idea of becoming a Member State of the EU was because the group wanted to remove the communist influences that it had experienced during the communist era. Therefore, the leaders of Czechoslovakia (at the time), Hungary, and the Republic of Poland, agreed to start this regional cooperation and partnership so that they could prepare themselves for becoming Member States of the European Union. Also, Europeanisation could be a method to gain back the Visegrád's historical greatness after forty years under perpetuated communism influenced by the Soviet Union. Besides, by enhancing cooperation, the four countries could eradicate the sense of antagonism among themselves and move forward to further integration and partnership. In short, it can be concluded that the founding of the Visegrád group was driven by pragmatic intentions. The Visegrád group was quite familiar with the communist propaganda based on the construction of the ideological of the national security and imperial expansion control over satellite regimes. This has been imbibed in the characteristics of people born after World War II. The generation has been affected and had been under the influence of communism and its long-lasting political propaganda. Under the

influence of communism of the Soviet Union, capitalism was negatively described as a villain while the communist regime was portrayed the opposite. The Visegrád group has been under the influence of the communist regime for forty years, resulted in a group's unique sense of shared real-socialist experience. Svetlošáková (2007) sees that this socialist experience among the countries in the Visegrád led the group to the production of an international stratum of dissident intellectuals and activists. In my perspective, the group's experience under the communist era is one of the most important and unique characteristics of the Visegrád group in its history.



*Figure 7 Logo and Map of the Visegrád Group*

Source: <http://www.visegradgroup.eu/>

In modern politics, the Visegrád group is considered to be one of the most initiative-oriented institutions located in Central Europe. The core cooperation of the group is based on its mutual benefits and is seen at all levels—from the smallest part of individuals' networks and connections to cultural institutions. Activities of the non-governmental associations among the group, such as co-research, experts and think tanks, to the highest-level of political and diplomatic meetings. Activities within the Visegrád group are implemented by the cooperation between ministries in the form of joint projects mainly in the field of internal security, defense, environment,

science, culture, and education. Moreover, collaboration in tourism, justice, energy, transportation, and information technologies are also escalated.<sup>13</sup>

However, the Visegrád group has a unique characteristic that makes it different from other regional groups in that it is not institutionalized in any form. The Visegrád group was founded exclusively on the principle of periodical meetings between country representatives from the high-level meetings of prime ministers and heads of state to specific expert consultants. Official summits of the Visegrád prime ministers takes place on an annual basis. Between these summits, one of the Visegrád countries holds presidency, part of which entails the responsibility for drafting a one-year plan of action. Therefore, when analysing the Visegrád group actions towards any particular issue, academic scholars must bear in mind that the Visegrád group has no formal authority in order to enforce member countries to follow. To be specific, there is no legal binding among the group. The only organisation within the Visegrád that is institutionalized as a platform is the International Visegrád Fund. The fund was established in year 2000 with the aim of supporting the development of cooperation in culture, scientific exchange, research, education, exchange of students and development of cross-border cooperation and promotion of tourism—which represents the civic dimension of the Visegrád cooperation. In most cases, the fund provides financing to activities of non-governmental organizations and individual citizens. Apart from grant programs, the fund awards individual scholarships and artist residencies which contribute to the exchange of views in the Visegrád group and neighbouring countries.

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<sup>13</sup> Visegrád. (2011). Aims and Structure. Retrieved from <http://www.visegradgroup.eu/about/aims-and-structure>

Without legal binding, this means that the member countries have no requirement to agree on every issue. Each country still has its own sovereignty when it comes to decision-making on its internal affairs. Nevertheless, in regard to the current migrant crisis in Europe, it is seen that the Visegrád group has agreed upon a common position: to reject the EU relocation and resettlement of refugees and migrants. Each country of the Visegrád group has implemented policies in the European migrant crisis in the same direction: to negatively control and reduce a number of illegal migrants into the member countries. The group has strengthened its relationship and cooperation and calls for the delivery of results-oriented solutions.

Throughout the history of the Visegrád group, there have been agreements, disagreements, and conflicts among the four-member states. There were both stages of a “closer” integration and disintegration tendencies among various shared issues and interests within this sub-regional partnership. The cooperation of the four countries seems to be rooted in their shared history. However, under the surface of the group’s cooperation, there are blurred lines of unity reflected in many situations, for instance, the Energy Union. Despite the Visegrád’s general support for European Union integration in energy, they have different opinions and positions on the Energy Union from the very beginning (Mišík, 2016). On the contrary, the current European migrant crisis has shown that this is the issue in which all member states of the Visegrád group are in agreement, somehow, the crisis has united the group to become even stronger.

The main research question of this thesis which I have stated in the first chapter is: What are the cause factors of the Visegrád group’s negative policy implemented in the European migrant

crisis? All the Visegrád countries, the Czech Republic, Hungary, the Republic of Poland, and the Slovak Republic are extremely opposed to the refugees and migrants, while other countries, such as Germany and Sweden have a different position. The European Union has proposed a relocation and resettlement scheme, requiring Member States to accept a certain number of refugees and migrants based on a quota system. The European Union has imposed a 250,000-euro-per-migrant fine if the countries refuse to accept the quota. The purpose of this is to lessen the burden on the countries located next to borders and to share responsibilities which is one of the foundation values of the European Union. The Visegrád group, however, claimed that this quota was unfair and an ineffective method on solving the migrant crisis. Moreover, the group views this scheme as a threat to its sovereign power, that the European Union intervened in the control of national borders which finally will bring in terrorists and criminals. For example, the then Prime Minister Beata Szydło of Poland announced in April 2017 that her country will continue with a “prudent and reasonable migrant policy” and “the Polish government under my leadership, from the moment we took responsibility for Poland, will not accept this resolution as we consider it bad for Europe”.<sup>14</sup> This is consistent with the then Slovak Prime Minister Robert Fico who said he will not allow a large Muslim community in his country.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Kettley, S. (2017). Poland Blasts EU over Migrant Crisis Quotas: ‘We Will Resist Blackmail and Pressure’. Retrieved from [www.express.co.uk/news/world/788343/European-Union-migrant-crisis-Poland-EU-quotas-Beata-Szydlo](http://www.express.co.uk/news/world/788343/European-Union-migrant-crisis-Poland-EU-quotas-Beata-Szydlo).

<sup>15</sup> Gabrizova, Z. (2016). Slovak PM: ‘It's Impossible to Integrate Muslims’. Retrieved from [www.euractiv.com/section/central-europe/news/slovak-pm-it-s-impossible-to-integrate-muslims/](http://www.euractiv.com/section/central-europe/news/slovak-pm-it-s-impossible-to-integrate-muslims/).



Translation: “SECURITY IN DIFFICULT TIMES: For the People, For Slovakia”

*Figure 8 Standing up for Slovakia by Robert Fico (second from left)*

Source: Euroactiv<sup>16</sup>

Hungary and the Slovak Republic also refused to accept the EU's proposed quota; the two countries have brought the case to the European Court of Justice (ECJ).<sup>17</sup> This is one of the many cases showing that the Visegrád positioning on European migrant crisis contradicts the solidarity concept of the European Union. The European migrant crisis clearly demonstrates that some European Member States view the crisis differently and the Visegrád group refused to adopt refugees and migrants' resettlement quota that the European Union has requested.

Ironically, throughout the history of the Visegrád group, there were times in which the people of these four countries were refugees themselves, as in the case of Hungary. When Hungary was invaded by the Soviet Union in 1956, resulted in more than 200,000 Hungarians fleeing their

<sup>16</sup> Gabrizova, Z. (2016). Slovak PM: 'It's impossible to integrate Muslims'. Retrieved from <https://www.euractiv.com/section/central-europe/news/slovak-pm-it-s-impossible-to-integrate-muslims/>

<sup>17</sup> Zalan, E. (2017). Commission takes Orban's Hungary to court. Retrieved from <https://euobserver.com/political/140197>.

country and becoming asylum seekers and they were warmly embraced at that time. In contrast with today, when Hungary is dominated by right-wing government with its anti-refugee and migrant rhetoric, the Hungarian government has launched an anti-refugee and migrant campaign nationwide to stimulate a negative sentiment of the Hungarian to be strongly oppose towards asylum seekers. The Hungarian right-wing government led by Prime Minister Viktor Orbán has claimed that illegal migrants affect the country's economy and security. Allowing refugees and migrants into Hungary could result in Hungarians losing their jobs. Prime Minister Viktor Orbán has portrayed the refugees and migrants as a threat to Hungary and European cultures and values. He has also been propagating that refugees and migrants are allied with the Islamic State and their entry are likely to bring more terrorists. The Hungarian right-wing government, therefore, conducted a political campaign attacking the refugees and migrants directly. As a result, these hate campaigns have raised attacks against immigrants and ethnic minorities group in Hungary and other countries in the Visegrád group (Zunes, 2017).



### **3.2 Proposal of the Hypotheses Four Cause Factors**

The following section presents my proposed four cause factors: history, economic, security and defense, and populism that are essential for analysing negative actions and policies implemented by the Visegrád group's governments and leaders during the European migrant crisis. I shall begin with the history factor.



### 3.2.1 The History Factor

#### 3.2.1.1 A Brief History of Hungary: From the Ottoman Empire to Modern

##### Hungary

The history of Europe, similar to other parts of the world, was full of geopolitical competitions between neighbour countries, and wars both inside and outside the continent. To understand Hungary's stance in the European migrant crisis and be able to analyse Prime Minister Viktor Orbán's rhetoric and propaganda, one has to understand the history which shapes modern Hungary, those includes: the wars and the occupation of Hungary by the Ottoman Empire from 1541 to 1699, World War I (1914–18) and World War II (1939–45), the Holocaust (between 1941 and 1945), and post-communist Hungary (2004 onwards). I shall discuss the history of Hungary to give readers a broad overview in order to understand how Prime Minister Viktor Orbán has used particular historical reference to reinforce his political agenda and to legitimize his negative policy implemented in the European migrant crisis, which shall be discussed in Chapter Five of this thesis.

##### Wars between Hungary and the Ottoman Empire

Over centuries, many Hungarian Kings and militaries battled against the Ottoman expansion into Hungary as the country shares a border with Western Europe. The war between the Ottoman Empire and Hungary began around the fourteenth century which eventually led to the defeat of the Hungarians at the Battle of Mohács in 1526 which was a decisive victory for the Ottoman Empire and the end of Hungary as a kingdom (Stone, 2020). King Louis II was thrown off his horse and killed during the battle (Kareem, 2017). During 1526-1538, Hungary was polarized and was in a

period of civil war. At the time of opposition, two kings were elected by the nobility, one side was Ferdinand of Habsburg who claimed succession through past royal agreements. The other side was János Szapolyai, Hungary's richest landowner. However, neither of them could fully rule over Hungary. This continuation of internal conflict made Hungary weaker. As a result, when Hungary was occupied by the Ottoman Empire in 1541, the country was partitioned into three sections as follows:

1. The "Royal Hungary" ruled by the Habsburgs on the country's western and northern areas
2. "The Principality of Transylvania" ruled by elected Hungarian princes on the country's eastern area
3. On the central and southern areas, ruled by the Ottoman Empire



*Figure 9 Royal Hungary, Principality of Transylvania, and the Ottoman Empire*

Source of figure: Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc.<sup>18</sup>

For 158 years of the Ottoman's occupation in Hungary (1541-1699), they set up a system by which to extract the most resources from the territory, such as destruction of villages, towns, use

<sup>18</sup> Vardy, N. A., & Carlile A., M. (2018). History of Hungary. Retrieved from <https://www.britannica.com/place/Hungary/History>.

of lands, livestock, as well as famine, slave raids, deforestation and depopulation (Kareem, 2017). Also, Hungary was used as a buffer state between the Ottoman Empire and European countries, Hungary became “a no-man island before the gates of Vienna, as well as a battlefield for the constant struggle between the Habsburgs and Ottomans and its alternating fortunes.” (Lendvai, 2003) . One of the most interesting points of the Ottoman occupation was the impact of ethnicity over Hungary. Before the Battle of Mohács, the number of ethnic Hungarians which are *the Magyars* was estimated to be around 4 million, a total of 75-80 per cent of the population. However, the wars by other groups in neighbouring areas, such as the Serbs, the Slovaks, and the Romanians resulted in the decrease of Magyars in Hungary, and by 1600, the ethnic group was estimated to be only half of the original number.

By the end of 1699, an alliance named The Holy League was created by Pope Innocent XI in 1684 in order to be a united force against the Ottoman Empire, the league was comprised of the Holy Roman Empire, the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, the Papal States, the Tsar of Russia and the Venetian Republic (Whaley, 2018). The Holy League started to retake territories back from the Ottoman and succeeded in doing so by 1697. In the following year, the Ottoman Empire and the Holy League signed the Treaty of Karlowitz which marked the end of the Ottoman rule of Hungary. As a result, the Ottoman Hungary and the Principality of Transylvania were transferred to the Habsburg Empire and became a part of the Austrian Empire (Cook & Stevenson, 2005). As Hungary continued under Habsburg’s power and Austria’s rule, there was mass immigrations by different groups into Hungary. This resulted in a decreased number of Hungarians as low as 35

percent of the total population of Hungary. Moreover, the rule by “foreigners” and their attempts to lessen the role of the Hungarians was further diminished. One of the most significant loss is that the Hungarian language was turned into a “peasant language” and was replaced by Latin and German as they became official languages used in administration or business. However, in 1848, revolutions were spreading throughout Europe, leading to the rise of Hungarian nationalism and national identity along with the demands of modernisation, social, and economic reformation (Cook & Stevenson, 2005). The uprising from Hungarian ethnic groups, supported by other minorities in Hungary succeeded in the separation of the empire, established under an independent Hungarian government. However, the situation brought other minority groups to call for independence as well, eventually, the Austrian Empire, led by Franz Joseph, attacked Hungary with the support of Tsar Nicholas I of Russia and finally won the battle. Even though the Austrian declared victory against the Hungarians in battle, it was clear that reformation was needed. Finally, the two (the Austrian Empire and Hungary) agreed to create a dual monarchy system, thus, Austria-Hungary was established in 1867 and became a large multinational country, the second largest in Europe after Russia (Stone, 2020). This emergence of Austria-Hungary brought back a sense of territorial integrity and stability to Hungary that it did not have since the Ottoman wars (Kareem, 2017).



*Figure 10 Austria-Hungary Empire*

Source of figure: <https://jgstoronto.ca/central-european-special-interest-group/image001/>

In 1868, Hungary passed the “Nationalities Law” which stated that all ethnicities were part of this new Hungarian nation. On the contrary, this law was aimed at strengthening a process of “Magyarization”, to emphasize Hungarian culture and language to gain dominance (Burcea, 2009). After the Hungarians got into power, they treated minorities the same as the Austrians did to them, for instance; minority languages were banned at the government levels.

### Hungary and the World Wars

A trigger point which led European countries into brutal conflict of World War I was the assassination of the heir to the throne of the Austria-Hungary Empire, Archduke Franz Ferdinand, on 28 June 1914 (Clark, 2014). The assassination took place in Sarajevo by a Bosnian Serb Yugoslav nationalist named Gavrilo Princip. The death of Archduke Franz Ferdinand created a chain of events that would lead to the outbreak of World War I. The war divided the European powers into two coalitions: The Triple Entente, consisting of France, Russia and Britain, and the Triple Alliance of Germany, Austria-Hungary and Italy (Clark, 2014). World War I, also known as

the Great War, brought many disasters to both the Triple Entente and the Alliance, the Hungarian economy was in ruins and on the brink of collapse. The country experienced revolution and counter revolution (Stone, 2020) which brought Hungary into instability and the country was completely in chaos. As a consequence of the war, Hungary had to sign the Treaty of Trianon which resulted in the loss of huge territories (Romsics, 2002). Hungary lost its territory from 325,408 square kms to 92,962 square kms. This made more than three million Hungarians who then lived in the successor states of Romania, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, and Austria, homeless. The country's population went down from 20,866,447 to 7,615,117. Not only did Hungary lose its human resources, but also its important economic and natural resources which were on Hungarian land that were seceded away. Moreover, a lot of money had to be paid for war reparations, and finally led to the country limitation in the number of armed forces. The revision of the Treaty of Trianon was an important issue for Hungarian politicians and the people but the country was too weak after the war and still was not able to recover from the disasters, thus, Hungary was not in a position to negotiate. Moreover, the unstable economic situation in Hungary was one of the reasons for the rise of right-wing radicalism in Hungarian politics.<sup>19</sup> As a result, Hungary necessarily tied its economy to Germany in order to help reduce the internal economic problems. The country developed its relationship with Germany and in 1940, signed the Tripartite Pact of alliance between Germany, Italy, and Japan. This Treaty would soon after obligate Hungary to enter World War II. By 1943,

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<sup>19</sup> Vardy, N. A., & Carlile A., M. (2018). History of Hungary. Retrieved from <https://www.britannica.com/place/Hungary/History>.

Hungarian leaders started back-channel talks with the British and Americans after numerous defeats and loss. Hitler suspected Hungary would back out of its pact and turn to the Allies. Therefore, Hitler decided to occupy Hungary in March of 1944. Soon after the German occupation, the Soviet Union was pushing back to attack Germany. By April of 1945, the Soviet Union had pushed all the Germans out and then occupied Hungary (Stone, 2020).

### Hungary under the Soviet Union and Post-communist Hungary

After the Soviet Union occupied Hungary, they attempted to place Hungary under Soviet Communist influence. The Soviet Union took years to evolve its influence over Hungary with a slow plan to install a communist regime in Hungary (Trașcă, Ruggenthaler, Borhi, & Békés, 2015). Later when Hungary had an election, Mátyás Rákosi, the leader of the Hungarian Communist Party won and took power in the government resulting in many changes, such as the formation of the “State Protection Authority” (Államvédelmi Hatóság or ÁVH) in order to demolish the opposition parties (Magdolna, 2019). Additionally, more changes were applied to education and economic systems in an attempt at nationalization. The role of the church in society changed under political pressure. However, these nationalized policies and communist party were deeply unpopular among the people. Later in 1953, a great deal of uncertainty erupted in both the Soviet Union and countries under its influence when Nikita Khrushchev gained power after Joseph Stalin’s death (Trașcă, Ruggenthaler, Borhi, & Békés, 2015). Hungarian people started to protest by organising a peaceful demonstration with a list of demands for change. People disembodied a large statue of Joseph

Stalin. The authorities in Hungary responded to the demonstration with arrests and tear gas. The situation worsened and the police fired into the crowd, killing some. This turned what started as a peaceful protest into a Hungarian revolution in 1956 (Magdolna, 2019).



*Figure 11 A Disembodied Statue of Joseph Stalin's Head on the Streets of Budapest*

*During the Hungarian Revolution, 1956<sup>20</sup>*

Photo credit: <https://rarehistoricalphotos.com/stalin-monument-budapest-1956/>

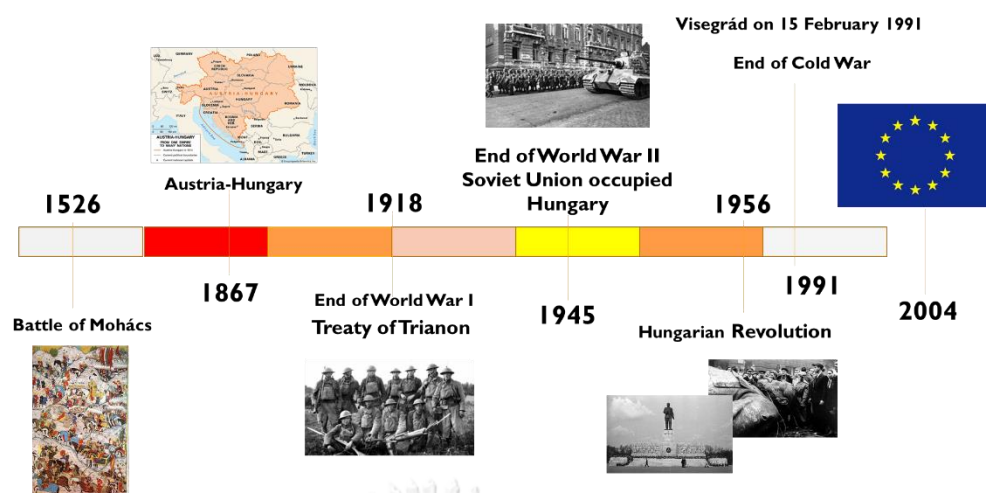
Finally, there were clashes between the Hungarians and the Soviet troops which resulted in a replacement of pro-Soviet hardliner, Ernő Gerő with Imre Nagy on 25 October 1956 and a temporary withdrawal of the Soviet troops. As the Soviets left, Nagy pushed for political

<sup>20</sup> This is not an accurate copy of the original but only an artistic recreation by sculptor Ákos Eleőd.



reformation and eradicated the one-party system by broadcasting over the radio that Hungary would withdraw from a defense treaty between the Soviet Union and seven other European countries, the “Warsaw Pact”. This led to another entry of the Soviet troops to crush the revolution. This caused deaths of 2,500 Hungarians as well as created 200,000 Hungarian refugees who fled to Budapest, Austria, Western Europe, and the United States to escape death or imprisonment. The 1956 Hungarian Revolution only lasted from 23 October 1956 to 10 November 1956 but the brutal response to it became ingrained in Hungarian collective memory (Magdolna, 2019).

After the short revolution of 1956, Hungary remained under the Soviet shadow. However, the country started its slow evolution in the 1960s. The country aimed to be a more open country after the iron curtain period with the notion of “he who is not against us is with us.” The clamp down and imprisonment towards opposition that occurred after World War II up to 1956 eased slightly. Over decades of János Kádár’s rule, Hungary went through evolutionary political, economic, and social reform. This slow evolution paved the way for a peaceful transition from communism to democracy in 1989 with no interference from the Soviet Union. Hungary had its first free parliamentary elections in March and April of 1990. Later in the same year, the Soviet troops left Hungary. The country moved towards Western European democracy by participating in NATO in 1999 and joined the European Union in 2004 (Dangerfield, 2014; Hudec, 2016).



*Figure 12 Summary Timeline of the History of Hungary*

Source: The Author of This Thesis

### 3.2.1.2 National Trauma and Xenophobia

According to Hiers, Soehl, & Wimmer (2017), history is one of the most significant causal forces that shapes the processes of nation-building and formation of the modern state. National building is centred on national identities, on shared ancestry, and ethnic commonality, such as languages, culture, national arts and music, clothing, and religious beliefs. I agree with the concept developed by Anderson (1991). He proposes a concept of imagined community whereby history is one of the political tools in creating a sense of nationality, making people who do not know each other be able to imagine and feel that they belong to the same community at a certain boundary. Therefore, it is not a surprise that history is chosen as an instrument for reconciliation through a compulsory education system in almost every country, which is evident from the case study of Hungary. Also, nationalism, the “feeling of belonging to a certain society” has been chosen as a technique of creating fear and is propagated through the modern media system by populist

politicians (Haraszti, 2015). In the case of Hungary, Prime Minister Viktor Orbán actions towards migrants and refugees are an example of populist techniques. The Prime Minister has used a collective trauma to transform a particular national historical event into a collective memory. According to Hirschberger (2018: 1), the term collective trauma refers to:

[t]he psychological reactions to a traumatic event that affect an entire society; it does not merely reflect an historical fact, the recollection of a terrible event that happened to a group of people. It suggests that the tragedy is represented in the collective memory of the group, and like all forms of memory, it comprises not only a reproduction of the events, but also an ongoing reconstruction of the trauma in an attempt to make sense of it.

The nation-building process systematically allows any ethnic group, which in this case is the Hungarians, to define the meaning of who they are and be able to differentiate those who are not. The inheritance of national ethnic and lack of civic bonds make individuals feel less hospitable to different ethnic groups. According to Hirschberger's definition of collective trauma, Prime Minister Orbán has brought up a part of history when Hungary was invaded by the Ottomans (Muslims) or loss of its territory in the Treaty of Trianon to create a collective trauma of “national common pain” among the Hungarians. The violence, committed by foreigners along its history, has helped Orbán to uphold the negative image of foreigners while presenting a positive image of Hungary, by claiming that the country was a victim, thus, leading to the creation of xenophobia among the

Hungarians. At the same time, he has created a new group narrative of migrants and refugees who are perceived as a source of crimes and terrorism and used it as a scenery setting to highlight the current policies and actions of the incumbent government. The creation of national trauma and xenophobia in Hungary helps explain its influence on anti-refugee and migrant sentiment in contemporary European society.

### 3.2.2 The Economic Factor

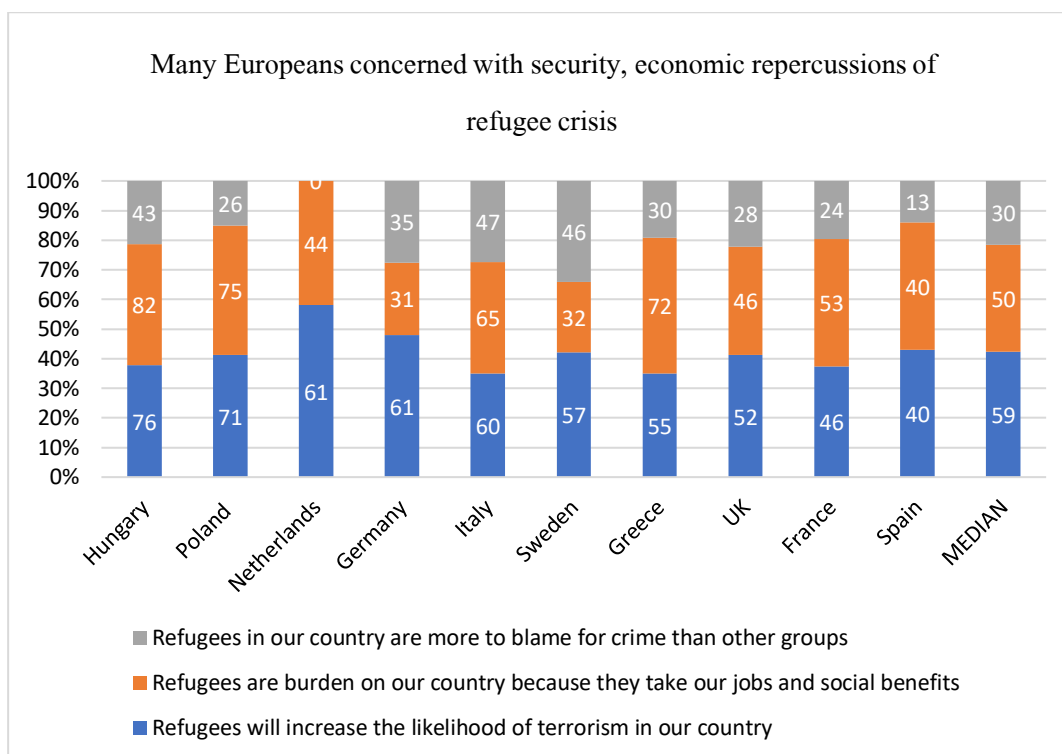
After millions of refugees have entered Europe, the Member States of the European Union are facing a challenge of unprecedented alarm. The situation was getting more controversial and had turned into a crisis. It is clear that the Syrian war has had an impact on generating the high number of refugees in Europe. The high number of Syrian refugees has created significant stress on the European Union's economic system similar to what it had experienced with the Euro crisis over the past decade. Thus, “the EU’s current institutional and legislative arrangements were clearly not up to dealing with the huge influx of migrants, and the crisis laid bare deep divisions among the member states” (Brady, 2017). Some scholars such as Lehne (2016) see the European migrant crisis as a situation which leads to the greater integration of Europe, or less Europeanization, or the emergence of a new core of committed Member States. The European migrant crisis leads to a widespread debate among the European Union Member States as to whether they should take the region’s humanitarian obligation, to accept and integrate the migrants and refugees into their own society, or not. The economic impact of migration is also a topic of huge debate on whether it will

bring advantages or disadvantages to a country's economy. The tension among public and authorities is increasing. Political dialogue is also concerned with economic matters: are the refugees good or bad for member countries' economic growth? Should they be treated as economic migrants or political refugees? The difference between migrants and refugees is that migrants are in search of better life conditions, while the latter is more likely to seek shelter (UNHCR). Because the economic gaps between Europe and other countries are wide, this has made Europe become one of the most attractive destinations for migration (Kugiel, 2012). This phenomenon will remain as long as there is disparity in economics.

At the Visegrád's group summit in January 2018, Polish Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki, Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, the then Slovak Republic Prime Minister Robert Fico and Prime Minister of the Czech Republic, Andrej Babis, gathered in Budapest for the discussion of migrant crisis and economic issues. The group jointly issued a statement in support of the development of the European common market but against the compulsory relocation of refugees among EU member states (Radio Poland, 2018). The group agreed on a cohesion policy and competitiveness in the common market on the basis that these policies will lead Europe to greater social and economic convergence among the Member States, which is conducive to the EU as a whole. In contrast, the Visegrád group strongly opposed the obligatory relocation and resettlement scheme proposed by the European Union. From a macroeconomic point of view, the impact of refugees on the economy appears moderate, stemming in the short term from increased public spending, and, over time, a slight rise in labour supply (European Commission, 2016).

However, in the case of Hungary, Prime Minister Viktor Orbán claimed that refugees are “Muslim invaders” because, in his opinion, these refugees are motivated by economic reasons, they are only seeking for a better life, not running for their lives (Schultheis, 2018). Refugees are heading to Germany not because they are refugees but because they want a German life. To conclude, there is possibility that Prime Minister Viktor Orbán refused to accept the EU relocation and resettlement scheme because of economic reasons.

Although the European migrant crisis has fuelled fears of terrorism, the crisis is not the only concern of the Europeans. The Pew Research Center illustrates that many people are worried about refugees becoming their countries’ economic burden. According to the survey by Wike, et al (2017) from the Pew Research Center, populations in five nations out of ten agree that refugees will take away their jobs and social benefits. This group of respondents identified that the economic issue is their greatest concern. Those countries (sort by maximum) including Hungary, the Republic of Poland, Greece, Italy and France. On the opposite hand, only two countries: Sweden and Germany, with at least half of the population say that refugees would make their nation stronger because of their work and talents. In another survey showing the perceptions of the European people towards the refugees, the results showed the highest negative sentiment belonged to Hungary. Eighty two percent of the Hungarian respondents view refugees as a negative impact on their country’s economy, and that refugees are a burden. The survey results are shown in figure 13 and 14.



Note: Netherlands excluded on question about crime (Q51b) due to administrative error.

Figure 13 Survey on European Perception Toward Refugees on Economic Impact 1

Source: Spring 2016 Global Attitudes Survey. Q51a-c. Pew Research Center

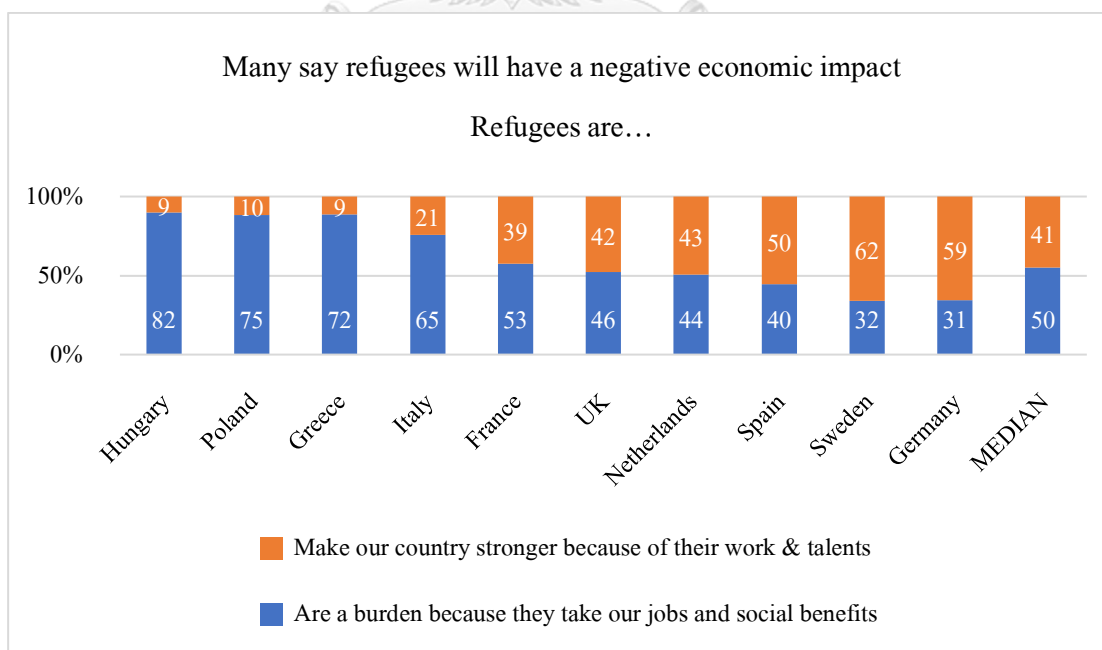


Figure 14 Survey on European Perception Toward Refugees on Economic Impact 2

Source: Spring 2016 Global Attitudes Survey. Q51a. Pew Research Center

From analysing the economic impacts of refugees on European countries, it is clear that in the short term, most countries' focus has been either about money or on managing and supporting a large number of asylum seekers. The short-term impact will be fiscal spending shock, accepting refugees means an additional expenditure for the country because when the refugees arrive, the government has to absorb costs relating to processing their applications and subsidizing their settlement including housing, food, education, and health. This has caused worries to the European citizens and make them sceptic toward accepting such large number of migrants into their countries. However, according to the estimation by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the expenses spent on refugees is equal to only 0.1% of the GDP of the European countries (Aiyar et al., 2016). By neglecting this statistical fact, right-wing governments and populist parties in Visegrád group have taken this as an opportunity to portray refugees as a terrorism threat to European society and encouraged the growth of xenophobia and islamophobia among its citizens (Poddar, 2016). The consequent fear spread over Europe leading to a drop in approval-ratings in countries such as Germany (Buergin, 2016), which has been recognised as one of the European countries with the most open-door policy toward refugees and migrants.

A major concern among the European Member States is that they have to increase the budget when dealing with the large number of refugees created by the process of accepting and integrating of refugees. The fiscal costs come before the fiscal benefits, and they are afraid that these costs will weaken the countries' economic system. According to the survey mentioned in figure 13 and 14 earlier, some European citizens perceive that refugees will take away their jobs



which will lead to the spread of poverty within Europe (Wike, Stokes & Simmons, 2016). While some others raised concerns over wages dropping due to the demand and supply of labour. This has resulted in a greater difficulty of integration between native citizens and refugees.

There is evidence showing that the economic impact of refugees can be positive. Analysts estimate that the German government has spent 0.7% of its total GDP. However, this spending has generated an increase of around 0.4% in Germany's GDP (Stähler, 2017). According to this finding, I think that this superficial analysis of fiscal spending shock has led people to think that their country has to spend a lot of money on refugees rather than spending on something that would directly benefit the citizens. However, aside from the upfront costs of processing, there might also be a positive outcome. Statistics show that by receiving refugees, it is possible that they can generate an increase in GDP. A host's economy, in fact, may not be harmed significantly. However, this depends on the policy of a particular country, the number of refugees, and cost per refugee. These factors should be monitored because the outcome might be different if the flow of refugees reaches a certain level.

In the long-run, the government will receive fiscal benefits only after the refugees enter the labour market (Poddar, 2016). Therefore, the government has to be able to identify the skills that the refugees possess and provide necessary training so that it could turn out to be an investment instead of a burden. Besides, a large percentage of refugees entering the EU are young and skilled in different professions, therefore, this could be an opportunity to correct the labour shortage in some European countries. A study by Zunes (2017) confirms that a number of refugees from Iraq

and Syria are well-educated doctors, lawyers, and professors, as well as small-business owners, who were forced to leave their homes when the Islamic State (ISIS) seized their homes and imposed totalitarian rule. This is likely to be the case since most of the poorer and less-educated refugees cannot afford the high costs of transportation across the country to Europe.

However, it will take a few years for refugees to be able to adjust themselves to the new society and be able to add value to the economy. A study by Cortes (2004) claims that after years of integration, refugees will generate growth to the economy each year more than the original cost of receiving them (Cortes, 2004). The researcher found that when lower-wage immigrants enter into a host country, they tend to raise wages for the community (Peri & Foged, 2015). This is due to the reason that as refugees come in, they mostly fill jobs that require less language skills while natives are likely to move to jobs that require more native skills, such as jobs that require talking to customers. Immigrant workers have pushed labour market for more specialization in jobs, creating better and more high-skilled jobs for natives. Besides, many European countries are aging societies while most refugees are younger, they tend to replace the working age population and support the overall economy. The integration of refugees in the labour market, thus, is particularly advantageous to these kinds of societies. The rejection of European Commission's proposal to allocate refugees through a quota system across all EU members by the Visegrád group's government somehow contradicts its own benefits because these nations will have much to gain from migration in their aging societies. The percentage of population decrease in Hungary is 5% with a higher share of senior citizens (Cseresnyés, 2019), which means that in the future they will

have to face a slow growth in the economy and more pressure on the fiscal system due to increased expenses on health services and pensions. The statistics are shown in figure 15. The situation of working population in Europe has gradually shifted toward old-age dependency. Figure 16 shows the forecast of the total dependency ratio of each European country. Old-age dependency ratio in the European Union will tend to increase until 2060, which means that by 2060, only 5 people out of 9 adults will be eligible for the labour force. The dependency ratio could be a result of two factors driving this trend: first, low fertility rates and higher life expectancy, second is a result of higher quality of life and medical advancements. The fertility rates in countries such as Hungary, the Republic of Poland and the Slovak Republic are as low as 1.3 compared to the replacement fertility rate of 2.1 (Bodewig 2015). Hence, there is a possibility that the arrival of refugees could be a part of boosting the country's economy because they would create demand for many services such as food, housing, infrastructure, and real estate. Peri & Foged (2015) states that an economy is not a zero-sum game, I agree with such a conclusion.

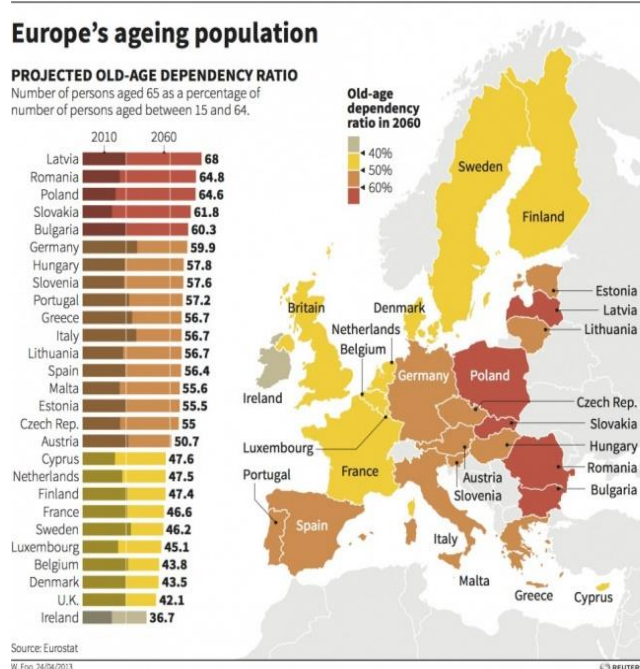


Figure 15 Europe's Aging Population with the Data of the Visegrád Group

Source: <https://blogs.thomsonreuters.com/answerson/europes-ageing-population-graphic-day/>

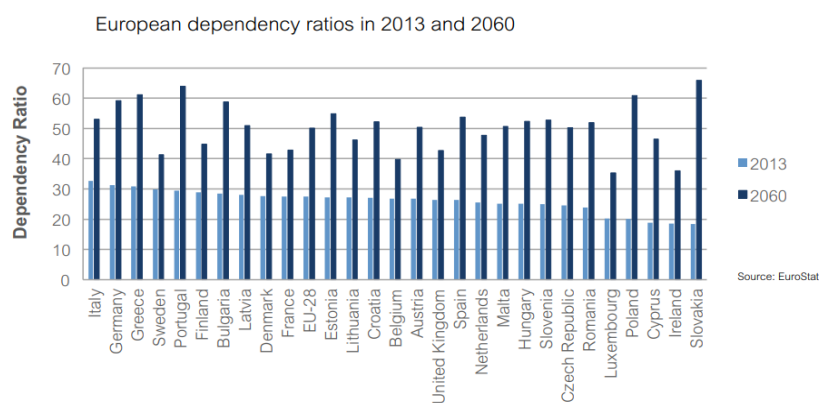


Figure 16 European Dependency Ratios in 2013 and 2060

Source: EU Factpack

In addition, the short-term and medium-term economic effects on refugees and migrants depend on the Hungarian government's ability to assimilate refugees into the labour market. If the government is able to identify the skilled labour, provide necessary trainings, and integrate them

into the right labour market, asylum seekers are less likely to be a burden. As mentioned earlier, Europe, including Hungary, is facing a demographic problem of aging society. Therefore, matching the aging gap with the right skilled workers could be beneficial for European countries. In Germany, the local Chamber of Trades (HWK) in Dortmund, after the industrial city had been suffering from an unemployment rate at 12.7%, was able to fill its gap by inviting refugees to take necessary tests, such as math and language. It finally chose a number of refugees from Syria, Congo and Eritrea to train as opticians, electricians, mechanics, metal workers and parquet floor fitters (Bellon & Copley, 2015). On the contrary, in Hungary, Prime Minister Viktor Orbán views the arrival of refugees not as a humanitarian issue, but as a Muslim invasion threatening Hungary's economy. Prime Minister Orbán, thus, exploits the crisis by creating a narrative through a campaign called "If you come to Hungary", which shall be discussed in detail in Chapter Five. The Hungarian government, through a billboard campaign, instigates the fear of losing jobs to the refugees among the Hungarians. In my opinion, this is Orbán's technique of creating politics of fear in order to legitimise his ruling power. The campaign billboards installed in public places propagate the rhetoric in Prime Minister Viktor Orbán's attempt to stimulate xenophobia among the Hungarians. This is done for the purpose of gaining support from voters, and justifying his negative policies implemented towards refugees and migrants. To conclude, the creation of fear over losing jobs to the refugees is only a political technique conducted by right-wing populists like Prime Minister Orbán and his ruling Fidesz party. The fact is Hungary has been receiving financial support from the European Union on migration and border management since 2015. This means that the Hungarian government has a separate

budget to manage the crisis. Therefore, the claim made by Prime Minister Orbán that receiving refugees will affect the country's tax and budget is invalid. On the contrary, the budget spent on the Hungarian government's propaganda to promote its rhetoric and negative policies against refugees and migrants are from the taxpayers. The instigation of economic threat and the fear that the refugees and migrants will take away jobs from the locals is done by the Hungarian Prime Minister to justify his role as the protector of the economic interests of Hungary.

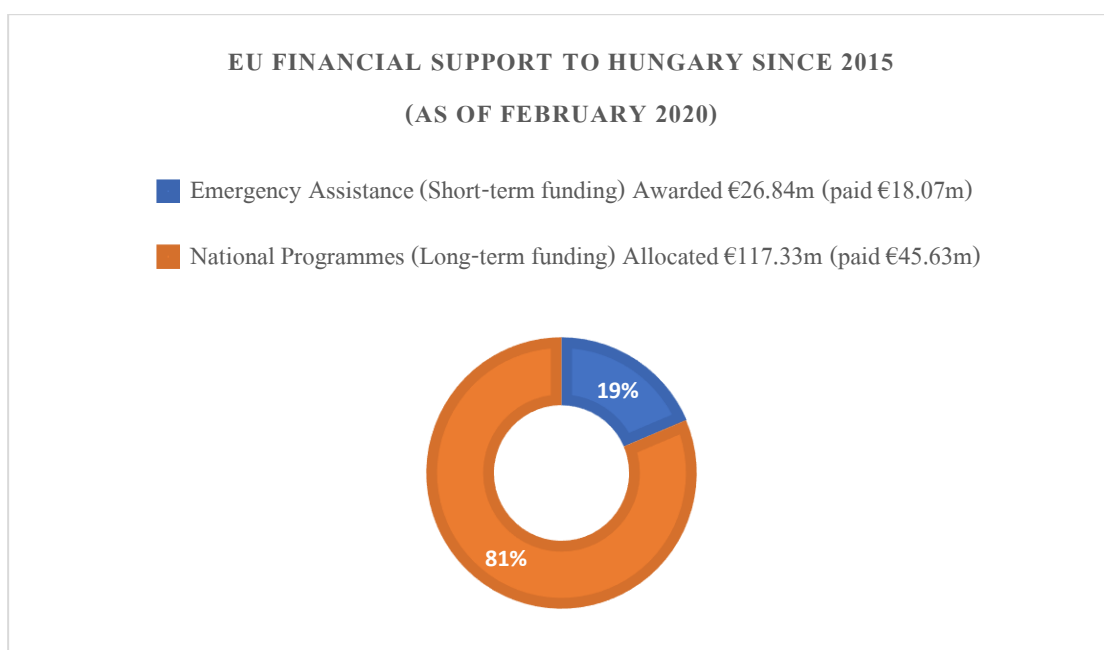
According to the European Commission's data (2020), The European Union's financial support to Hungary are provided from two sources of funding as follow:

1. **The asylum, migration and integration fund (AMIF)** is given to support the EU Member States for managing refugees and migrants flow, such as asylum, integration, and legal issue.

2. **The internal security fund (ISF)** is given to support the protection of security and border management, which is composed of two instruments: ISF Borders and Visa and ISF-Police.

The majority of the EU's sources of funding is allocated to Member States' national authorities at the beginning of each long-term EU budget period (European Commission, 2020) and are managed and implemented by Member States' authorities through national programme agreed with the Commission as a long-term funding. Moreover, the European Union provides its Member States a short-term funding for emergency assistance under AMIF fund, which is awarded to national authorities upon request of Member State. Since 2015, Hungary has been awarded both long-term (national programme) and short-term (emergency assistance) funds with a total support

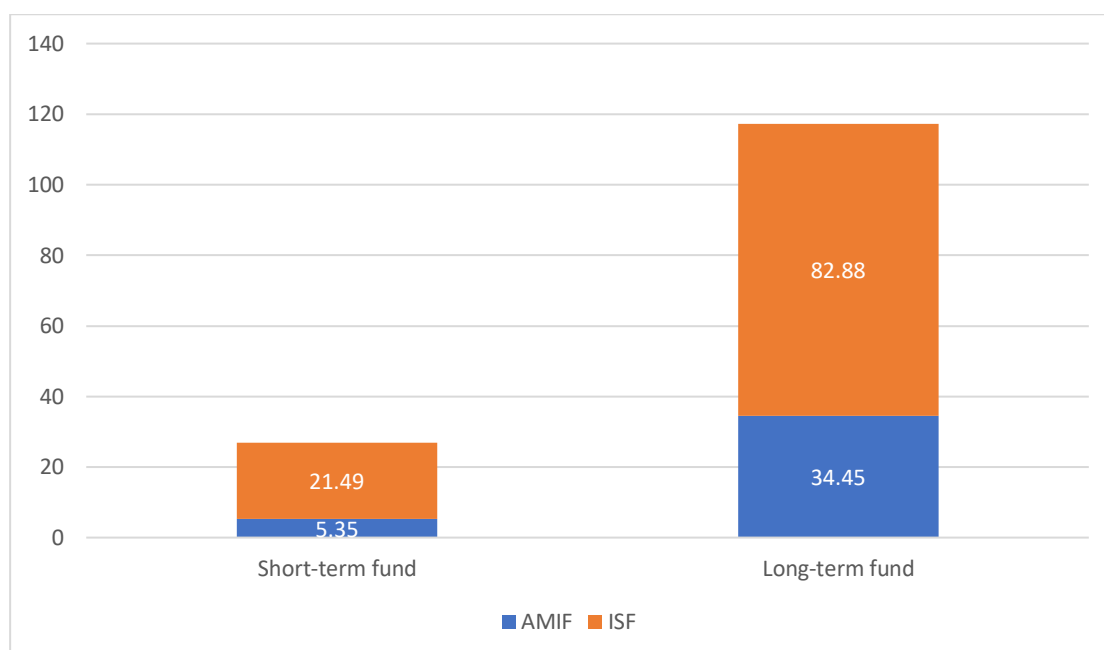
of €144.17 million (figure 17), including the €39.80 million from the AMIF and €104.37 million from the ISF. The details can be found in figure 18 (European Commission, 2020).<sup>21</sup> According to the European Union financial support to Hungary, the country receives a subsidy for a total of €144.17 million for managing the migrant crisis, which is considered a huge amount.



*Figure 17 EU Financial Support to Hungary Since 2015 (As of February 2020)*

Source: European Commission factsheet

<sup>21</sup> Out of the total AMIF allocation of € 39.80 million to the Hungarian national programme for the period 2014-2020, an amount of € 2.253,24 was de-committed in December 2019 in line with Article 50 of Regulation (EU) No 514/2014.



*Figure 18 The Proportion of Fund from AMIF and ISF to Hungary*

Source: European Commission factsheet

*Table 2 Projects Supported by Emergency Funding: Emergency Assistance Awarded to Hungarian Authorities*

Ongoing projects:

| Fund | Award Decision Taken | EU Contribution | Title of the Action                                                              | Responsible Entity   |
|------|----------------------|-----------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|
| ISF  | 15 February 2019     | €20m            | Addressing the migration management situation on the external borders of Hungary | Ministry of Interior |



Finished projects:

| <b>Fund</b> | <b>Award Decision Taken</b> | <b>EU Contribution</b> | <b>Title of the Action</b>                                                                                           | <b>Responsible Entity</b>                   |
|-------------|-----------------------------|------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| AMIF        | 3 September 2015            | €4m                    | Emergency measures for the improvement of the Hungarian reception capacity and for the support of public proceedings | Office of Immigration and Nationality (OIN) |
| ISF         | 8 July 2015                 | €1.49m                 | Humane and EU conform handling of extreme migratory pressure on Hungary                                              | Hungarian National Police                   |
| AMIF        | 23 December 2014            | €1.35m                 | Capacity-building of asylum reception and human resources in order to respond effectively to migration pressure      | Office of Immigration and Nationality (OIN) |

Source: European Commission factsheet

Hungary is described as one of the most Eurosceptic countries in the European Union. Paradoxically, the majority of Hungarians has a largely positive or a neutral view of the EU. Fifty two percent of the Hungarians has positive attitude towards the EU and thirty seven percent has neutral opinion on the EU, and wants Hungary to remain its membership to the EU. On the contrary, only eleven percent of Hungarians has negative views towards the EU (Eurobarometer, 2019). To

explain this paradox, despite receiving the budget from the European Union, Prime Minister Viktor Orbán has portrayed the European Union as Hungary's enemy. He criticizes and blames the EU as strongly as possible, especially on the European migrant crisis. If EU institutions, such as the European Commission and the European Parliament, were enemies of Hungary, then voters might regard the EU's action as a threat to Hungary's sovereignty, and may finally shift their supports to Orbán. In regard to this, Hungary is one of the most pro-EU countries led by one of the most Eurosceptic governments. However, even Prime Minister Orbán has transformed his Fidesz party from a liberal youth party into a right-wing conservative nationalist one, and has succeeded in appealing to Eurosceptic Hungarians though it is not likely that he will lead Fidesz to a fully anti-EU party. To explain, Hungary's economy is obligated to the European Union. For the 2014–2020 EU funding period, "Hungary is one of the countries that benefits most from EU funding" (European Commission, 2014). The country's economic growth is, in fact, committed to the European Union subsidies, with 4.5 % of its wealth (Gross National Income: GNI) generated by EU investment. Ninety five percent of all public investments in Hungary is co-financed by the EU. In 2012, Hungary's public expenditure amounted to around EUR 47 billion (HUF 14,082 billion), which is less than the EU budget of EUR 136 billion (HUF 40,750 billion) for the same year (European Commission, 2014). The number represented fifty one percent of Hungary's GNI while other 27 Member States received only around one percent of the Union's GNI in comparison. Thus, Hungary, among other European Members States, is one of the members which receives the highest proportion of the EU fund throughout the EU financial period 2014-2020. The EU provides funding

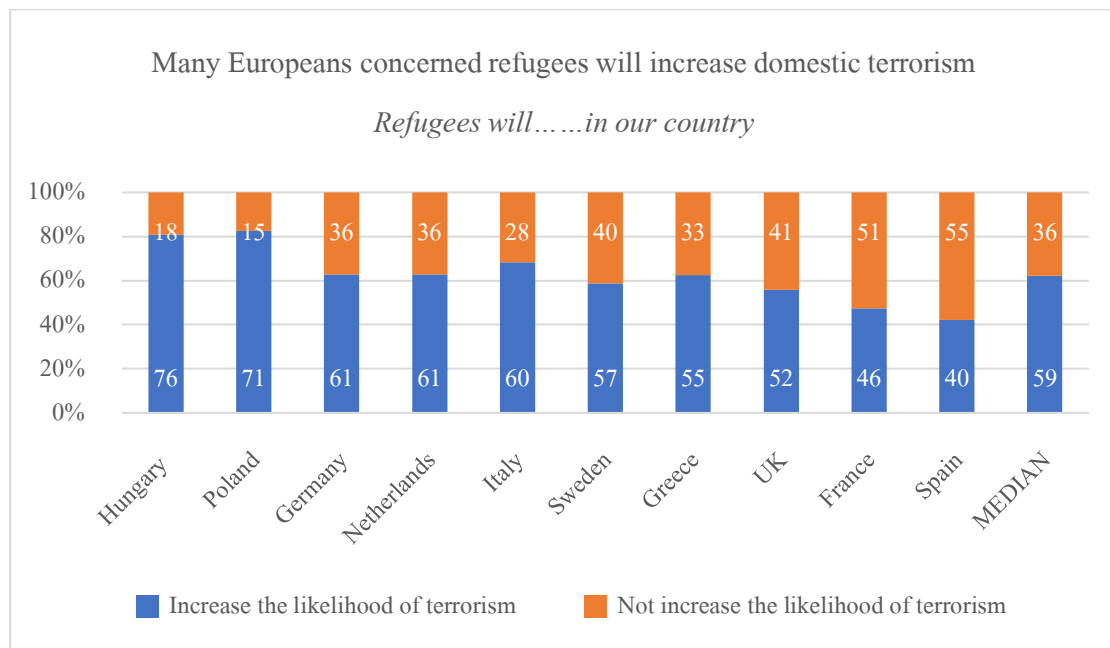
for Hungary for a broad range of areas, such as economic growth, jobs competitiveness, agriculture and rural development (Europa.eu, 2019). For example, the EU has contributed EUR 168 million to the modernisation of the Hungarian section of the Szentgotthárd–Szombathely–Sopron railway line to improve accessibility of the Western Transdanubia region as well as connections between Hungary and its European neighbours (European Commission, 2014). Thus, despite the Hungarian government's "Let's Stop Brussels" campaign, Prime Minister Orbán would not think it wise to lead the country into an exit from the European Union like the case of Brexit. It is possible that Prime Minister Orbán regards the European Union in terms of an interest-based institution that ensure the country's economic growth. With the European Union, Orbán will remain in the position. Without EU's funding and subsidies, Hungary's economy might be in decline, and that would lead to unpopularity of the government under Fidesz's ruling. Orbán will lose his power, which is unacceptable to him. That explains why the Hungarian government rejects criticism and Prime Minister Orbán himself does not care how his government is criticized as long as he can exploit the crisis by hijacking the European institutions for his domestic political agenda.

To clarify, the European parliamentary watchdog (2018) has requested for a tougher examination on Hungary regarding its transparency in EU budget spending. The European Parliament's Budgetary Control Committee reported that 36% of public projects in Hungary had only one bidder (Rankin, 2018). This means that the sole bidder won the EU-funded infrastructure contracts with no or little competition. The bidder is likely to be an oligarch with connections to the Fidesz party or to the Prime Minister Orbán, such as family, friends, and supporters. The

European commissioner for neighborhood policy and the European Parliament's Budget Control Committee presented a document to show the public that Hungary accepted a penalty of a 10% decrease in the EU funds during 2014-2020 EU budget period (Reuters, 2019). Through the acceptance of this penalty, it can be assumed that the Hungarian government really mismanaged the EU budget.

### 3.2.3 The Security and Defense Factor

The European migrant crisis has not only created concerns over countries' economy but also raised fears about terrorism among European citizens. It is true that there were several terrorist attacks in many areas, such as the Charlie Hebdo attack in Paris in 2015, Brussels bombing in 2016, and truck attack in Berlin in 2016. The higher number of terrorist attacks in Europe since the outbreak of the Syrian refugee crisis, has led people to believe that the movement of refugees from the Middle East is the main reason and would increase European security challenges. The European migrant crisis has created a huge challenge for security at the European level. Such events have raised scepticism among European governments and its citizens on whether they should put greater emphasis on humanitarian grounds or security. The migrant crisis and the threat of terrorism are very much related in the minds of many Europeans as Pew Research Center survey illustrated in figure 19. It is clear from the survey that the Hungarians view refugees as the source of terrorism as high as 76%, followed by the Poles at 71%. This number is considered to be the highest among other European countries.



*Figure 19 Many Europeans Concerned Refugees will Increase Domestic Terrorism*

Source: Spring 2016 Global Attitudes Survey. Pew Research Center

The surge of refugees into Europe has featured prominently in the anti-immigrant rhetoric of right-wing parties across Europe. The media has been used as an instrument for right-wing populist propaganda to make people believe that refugees and migrants are a threat. As a consequence, the bombarding of messages has reproduced and propagated racism and hate-speech among the Europeans. Right-wing political parties have begun to outline the perception of societies, shaping citizens toward a more nationalist tendency. Right-wing governments and populist leaders use the media to lead European citizens to the false conclusion that European culture and values are in danger from the threat of Syrian refugees, and that Europe needs to be protected. The Visegrád group has taken negative actions by claiming that the European Union should follow the principle of “unity within diversity,” where “the identity of the EU member states is respected”

(Radio Poland, 2018). All of these examples are indicators of a lack of confidence and scepticism in the existing political mechanisms and ideologies in Europe. For instance; the referendum held on 23 June 2016, for the decision of Brexit, was one of the evidences showing that people started to believe that the existing European political system would not be able to solve the problem in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Not only was there a lack of confidence in the existing system but also reinforcement of the belief that the European Union is a source of chaos or problems. The failure of the European Union on its policy implementation to the crisis is also one of the most criticized actions. While the European Union is in the process of managing the refugee crisis, the situation at the borders and in the refugee camps have worsened. The skirmishes between the refugees and borders authorities have led to violence. With low employment opportunities and the difficulty of integrating within the new society, refugees start with a negative attitude towards the country. Over time, they could develop feelings of hopelessness and desperation which may lead them to become radicalized (Haider, 2014). Correspondingly, this will make the host society likely to become less hospitable. However, does this necessarily mean that the refugees will increase terrorism? A study by Lischer (2005) finds little evidence to support the connection between a person's difficult conditions and violence. Another researcher, Brady (2017), also finds that even though the risk of radicalization among refugees due to psychological and socio-economic conditions is real, there is no significant difference with any other group in engaging in terrorism. Additionally, a special report on counter-terrorism and human rights by Ben Emmerson presented to the UN General Assembly in September 2016 confirmed in the same direction that terrorists are not likely to take advantage of refugee flows

for terrorism activities and there is not enough evidence that refugees are more disposed to radicalization than other groups of people. Furthermore, a research conducted by United Nations (UN) in September 2016 showed that very few refugees commit terrorism acts. It also added that most states have responded to the refugees only from the security aspect, omitting the policies that violate basic human rights which is a counter-product of creating more radicals. The lack of human rights could become conditions of terrorism and spike an increase in support of terrorism by refugee and migrant communities (UN Report, September 2016). The argument is supported by Milton, Spencer & Findley (2013), who found two factors of the host country: treating them poorly and the terrible living conditions. This would lead the subset of smaller groups of refugees who turn into terrorists and act against the host state. It can be concluded that the connection between refugees and terrorism is vague and complicated. While there is much debate on the possibility of refugees becoming radicalized, it seems that the current research supports the notion that state policies that have been used directly in the refugee crisis potentially increase security challenges.

First, the failure of the European Union institutions to initiate an appropriate policy or method apply to the crisis. Second, the continuation of the war and conflict in Syria. These two factors would intensify European citizens' concerns and more scepticism, creating less confidence in the European Union. Right-wing political parties and nationalist movement use the European refugee and migrant crisis to promote an atmosphere of fear and uncertainty among the populations (Brady, 2017), particularly in the case of Hungary. Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, criticizes the European Union for not being able to find an appropriate solution for the crisis. The Hungarian

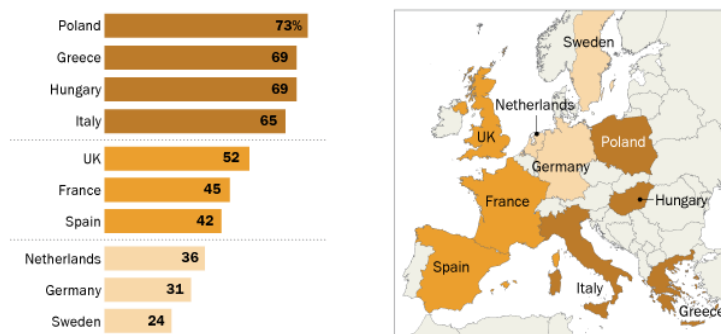
prime minister also links the inability to control migration by the European Union to be a source of terrorist attacks and increased threats (Orbán, 23 July 2016). This kind of perception has spread throughout Europe and has impacted the existing political system of liberal democracy and the European core value of human rights. There is strong support for right-wing politicians or political parties and polarisation among many countries in Europe such as Marine Le Pen of the National Front in France, the winning of parties outside the mainstreams, or the attack on Muslim mosques or other symbolic artifacts. France and Switzerland, for instance, have implemented the policy of “burkini ban”, there are also some drives in Germany and Austria (Agerholm, 2017). The attacks on mosques and ban of burkini are examples showing that the fear of Islam is spreading throughout Europe and the impact has never been more prevalent. The most important key is how safe do populations perceive themselves to be? and this reflects on election results as in the case of Brexit. One of the possible reasons why Britain voted to be out of the European Union could be because they wish to return to an independent state and to close its borders to prevent incoming refugees and migrants. This closed-door policy is becoming a symptom of an era of uncertainty and change in modern European politics.

Pew Research Center conducted a survey on how Europeans view refugees coming from Syria and Iraq (Figure 20 and 21). The results show that a large number of Europeans see refugees as a major threat to their country. The first highest three countries that have negative view towards refugees are: Poland (73%), Greece (69%), and Hungary (69%). The results clearly show the negative perception of Europeans toward refugees.



### Many Europeans see refugees from Syria and Iraq as a major threat

% saying large number of refugees leaving Iraq and Syria is a major threat to their country



Source: Spring 2016 Global Attitudes Survey.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Figure 20 Many Europeans See Refugees from Syria and Iraq as a Major Threat

Source: Pew Research Center

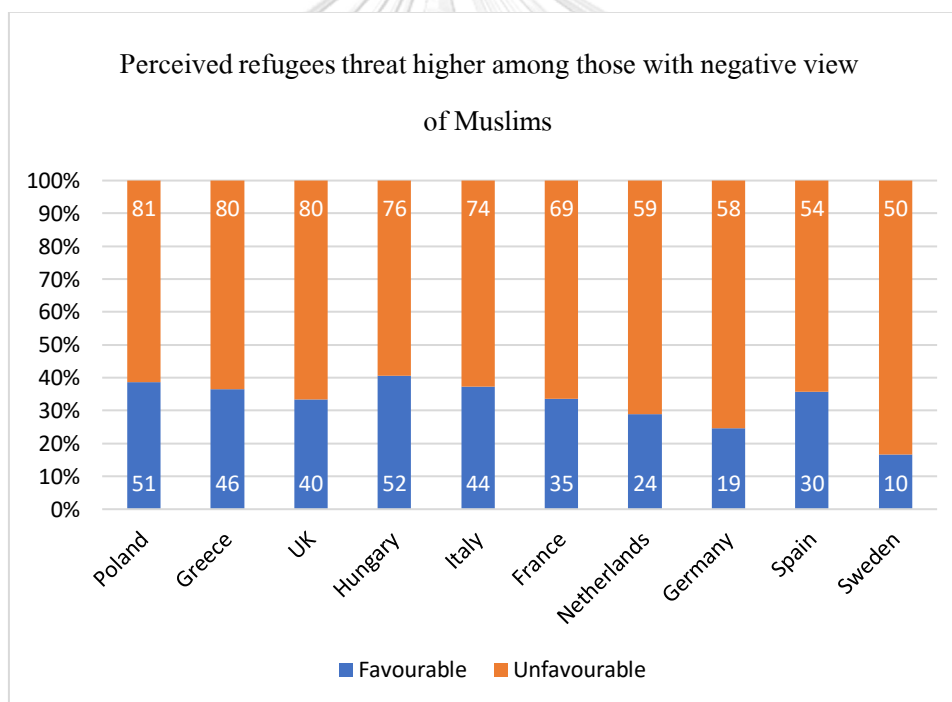


Figure 21 Perceived Refugee Threat is Higher Among Those with Negative View of Muslims

Source: Spring 2016 Global Attitudes Survey. Pew Research Center

### 3.2.4 The Populism Factor: The Rise of Populism in the Visegrád Four

The Narodnik movement in the Russian empire during the late 19th century was one of the very first movements of revolution against elites of the Tsar. The ideology of Narodnichestvo (народничество) translated as “peopleism” or “populism” (Gherghina, Mişcoiu, & Soare, 2013: 358). Though this movement received only small success, it inspired other movements across eastern Europe in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century including the area countries of the modern Visegrád group today. After the end of the Second World War, the idea of populism was absent from Europe for a while due to the focus on moderate political parties in Western European countries. According to Mudde & Kaltwasser (2017), it was not until the late 1990s that populism was put forward as a relevant political force and had a significant impact over mainstream politics in Europe. Moreover, the Visegrád group at the time was under the influence of Marxism and Leninism. Then, after the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the Eastern Bloc in the early 1990s, there was a rise in populism in the Visegrád group. Referring to the definition of populism by Mudde (2017), which I had discussed in Chapter Two of literature review, many political parties in the first elections in the Visegrád group countries portrayed themselves as representatives of “the people” against the “elite” of the Marxist and Leninist governments in the previous decade. Later, the populist political parties in the Visegrád group made a claim that the real revolution had not occurred during the transition from Marxist under Soviet Union to liberal democracy under the European Union, and that they were campaigning for such change. For example, The Czech Civic Forum party campaigned using

the slogan “Parties are for party members, Civic Forum is for everybody” (Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2017: 36).

At the beginning, the formation of the Visegrád group was based on the clear objective of integrating and becoming a Member State of the European Union as I have discussed earlier in this chapter. The integration process, according to the European Union Article 49, which lays down the conditions that a candidate country must meet to become a Member State, has somehow created suppressed conflicts and negative viewpoint in the Visegrád countries. In order to achieve this goal, governments of the four candidate countries had to push through legislations and privatizations, and though these had positive effects on the country’s development, such action were unpopular among people in society. This social problem that was left out a decade ago, now has become apparent as Eurosceptic sentiment towards the European Union, which later paved the way for the rise of populism.

After the group become a Member State of the European Union, elections were successfully held, the Visegrád group has created a new political atmosphere characterized by populism. Political parties have lost their will to pursue further reforms because the primary goal of the integration to the European Union was already fulfilled and the previous consensus was achieved. However, the country did not take the opportunity to encourage cooperation among political parties, especially with their different political spectrums. The legacy of communism has formed the parties’ views of their political opponents as rivals, not as partner to cooperate with (Trașcă, Ruggenthaler, Borhi, & Békés, 2015). Additionally, liberalisation and globalisation have

created a line between the “haves” and “haves not”. Some groups of people have benefited more than others from this rapid change from communism to liberalism and response to this inequality varies in each state. For instance, communist parties in the Czech Republic and the Slovak Republic have been strongly opposed to privatization. They claimed that national treasure such as healthcare facilities should belong to the country and stay non-profitable. These claims have become the rhetoric of populists among the former communist countries (Bonansinga, 2015).

In my view, it is quite difficult to change the mindsets of people who have been either affected by or have grown up under communist ideology and its propaganda. It will take time to bring change to the people. One of the most unique characteristics of communist regime is the state-controlled economy. This means that people need to ask permission from the government before taking any action, hence, it leads to an environment of corruption. Throughout history, all the Visegrád countries have faced corruption scandals. As in the case of Hungary, Zoltán Székely, a then chairman of the Public Procurement Committee, was under investigation. Some politicians were forced to leave due to corruption, some decided to resign. Furthermore, the anti-corruption campaign frequently overlaps with an anti-communist or de-communization. Later, communism has become a “threat” as populists use statements resembling the ones that were used during the communist era. To summarize, the complicated system of seeking permission under the communist regime is a key to magnifying the corruption among politicians and government officers in the Visegrád group, creating dissatisfaction among people. All the scandals of corrupted officers have discredited governments and the ruling class and weakened the belief and confidence in the

democratic system among people. Finally, this has encouraged an anti-corruption trend which has become the fuel for the rise of populism. The Visegrád group was founded based on pragmatic idea of becoming a member of the European Union and away from the influence of the communist Soviet. Due to many years under communist regime, the Soviet Union leaves the Visegrád group a legacy of rhetoric and discourse. During the transition period to liberalism, communism was put as “bad” and a “threat” to society. However, by the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Europe has had to encounter the Syrian refugee crisis and populism was again associated with the issue. The previous “communist threat” is now replaced by “refugee and Islam threat”. In short, the villain of communism and corruption was substituted by refugees from the Middle East. Islamophobia and xenophobia were shown repeatedly through offline and online media to create an atmosphere of “fear” of “the other”. Populists claim to represent themselves as representative of “the people”, that it is legitimate to conduct a policy in the name of “protecting our Europe”, after they have used media and convinced people to believe in such a discourse. As a result, right-wing political parties have succeeded in gaining more votes and popularity by “acting in accordance with the interests of the people”. This explains why populist politicians in the Visegrád group: Prime Minister Viktor Orbán of Hungary, the leader of right-wing political part in Poland named Law and Justice Party Jarosław Kaczyński, and the then Prime Minister of the Slovak Republic Robert Fico, have emerged to become the alternative leaders for Visegrád’s political mobilization. On the other side, the rise of populism and nationalism in Hungary is the result of the failures and the lack of political acumen of Hungarian liberals and the left. To summarize, I see the action of the Visegrád political leaders and their

policies against the refugee and migrants as a repetition of its own history and political discourse, a replacement for something to blame so that a certain political party could continue their ruling power and be re-elected (Bonansinga, 2015). The founding objective of being a Member State of the European Union has now been accomplished. The current form of the Visegrád political system is only authoritarianism rule covered with democracy, even though elections are held, a market-based economy still exists, freedom of people movement is allowed. In fact, these are just an “illiberal democracy” with populist politicians slowly dissolving the separation of powers and seeking to influence or reduce judicial and media independence. The democratic left has been almost eliminated from the politics of the new former-communist European Union Member States.

In conclusion, I see that the European migrant crisis has become a tool for right-wing populists in the Visegrád group to distribute its public discourse in threats emerging from refugees and migrants. Other factors: history, economic, and security and defense which I have discussed earlier, are only being used by right-wing populists to back up their negative policies implemented toward refugees and migrants. The creation of a state of fear-mongering rhetoric, with the discourse in threat framing, has helped right-wing populists succeed in distracting their citizens away from national policies and issues such as health, education, and welfare, which directly affect their lives and living. Populists have managed to divert the people’s attention from incumbent government’s ineffective policies to focusing only on the threat from refugees, which most of the time are false advertising and misrepresentations. What could be better than the political technique of shifting the focus of voters to a threat issue while you are transforming the country into an illiberal state? In my

perspective, right-wing populists in the Visegrád group use the European migrant crisis as an instrument in order to fulfil their domestic political objectives.

### **Viktor Orbán: The Rise of Hungary's Right-Wing Populist Leader**

Viktor Mihály Orbán was born on 31 May 1963 (Lendvai, 2017: 11). He spent his childhood in a village of Alcsútdobó as the eldest son of the entrepreneur Győző Orbán and the special educator, Erzsébet Sípos. He studied law at Eötvös Loránd University in Budapest before receiving a scholarship from the Soros Foundation to study political science at Pembroke College, University of Oxford, in 1989 (Lendvai, 2017). Ironically, Orbán later went against George Soros by implying that Soros has cooperated with the European Union to flood Hungary with Muslim refugees and migrants. In January 1990, Orbán returned to Hungary to run for the country's first post-communist parliament. The young Orbán, together with other students from the Bibó István College for Advanced Studies, were opposed to the communist regime and pushed for political changes. They founded a liberal party named "Fidesz – Hungarian Civic Alliance" (Fidesz – Magyar Polgári Szövetség) in 1988. On June 16, 1989, Viktor Orbán held his radical political speech urging Hungary's democratic transition, listing political demands to the communist leadership for free elections and asking the Soviet troops to withdraw from Hungary (Szilágyi & Bozóki, 2015). The Fidesz party in this period represented a strong liberal voice for the rule of law and transparency amongst the disorderly processes (Szelényi, 2019).



*Figure 22 Young Viktor Orbán's famous speech in 1989*

Source: <https://visegradinsight.eu/viktor-orbans-shifting-allegiance-to-imre-nagy/>

The first term in which the Fidesz party led the Hungarian government in coalition was between 1998 and 2002. During this period, Hungary joined NATO in 1999. However, the Hungarian Socialist Party, MSZP (Magyar Szocialista Párt), was elected and able to form a renewed centre-left coalition in 2002 and retained its coalition government for the second term in the 2006 election. Shortly after MSZP's winning of the second term, the then socialist Prime Minister Ferenc Gyurcsány held a speech to his party congress which was leaked to public. The content of the speech created resentment among the Hungarians, which led to demonstrations against the then Prime Minister. The leak of the Őszöd speech (Őszödi beszéd) was a major turning point in Hungary's post-communist political history. The then Prime Minister Ferenc Gyurcsány, in his speech, admitted that the government under his leadership achieved nothing in spite of being in power. He lied about the financial situation of the country to the Hungarians for the purpose of winning re-election in 2006 (The Guardian, 2006). The English translation of a brief excerpt of Őszöd speech is shown in the following:



There is not much choice. There is not, because *we have screwed up*. Not a little but a lot. No country in Europe has screwed up as much as we have. It can be explained. *We have obviously lied throughout* the past one and a half-two years. *It was perfectly clear that what we were saying was not true*. (...) We are beyond the country's possibilities to such an extent that we could not conceive earlier that a joint government of the Socialists and the liberals would ever do. And in the meantime, *we did not actually do anything for four years*. *Nothing. You cannot mention any significant government measures that we can be proud of, apart from the fact that in the end we managed to get governance out of the shit*. Nothing. If we have to give an account to the country of what we have done in four years, what are we going to say? Some came who did not bother whether they would have a place in the county government, because they understood that *this bloody country* is about something else. (...) I know that this is easy for me to say. I know. Do not keep bringing it up against me. But this is the only reason it is worth doing it. I almost perished because *I had to pretend for 18 months* that we were governing. Instead, *we lied morning, noon and night. I do not want to carry on with this*. *Either we do it and have the personnel for it, or others will do it*. I will never give an interview at the end of which we part with each other in argument.

Never. I will never hurt the Hungarian left. Never. (Rydliński, 2018: 96; BBC news.com, 2006)

The then Prime Minister Ferenc Gyurcsány's speech

at a party congress on 2 September 2006

The then Prime Minister Ferenc Gyurcsány admitted that he had lied to the electorate about Hungary's economy in order to stay in power, and that the government had achieved nothing in terms of applying effective policies and measures to Hungary (Müller, 2011). He also mentioned Hungary inappropriately by using the phrase "this bloody country". Prime Minister Gyurcsány also said that the party governed by "doing nothing" but "lying morning, noon and night", and jeopardized the future of the country. The Őszöd speech led to distrust in country's leader among the Hungarians, with voters feeling betrayed and humiliated by their representative. The inappropriate use of language in the above speech led to demonstrations calling for the leader's resignation. However, the then Prime Minister Gyurcsány refused to resign, and defended his position by claiming that "the statement 'we lied' did not refer to the overall state of the economy but was about 'general lies' told by politicians over several years" (The Guardian, 2006). As a consequence, the public sentiment has shifted negatively against the incumbent government. This incident led the MSZP to its unpopularity and the declination of the Hungarian political left after eight years of the socialist rule. The failure of the then Prime Minister Gyurcsány illustrates that speech is not just words and sentences. It shows the importance of discourse analysis to the extent that words and rhetoric can bring about political transition at a national or even international level.

The Ószöd speech propelled a significant change in Hungarian political history, which eventually led to the rise of right-wing populist leader like Orbán, and the formation of an illiberal democracy state in later years. In addition to the Ószöd speech, another factor that supported the success of the Hungarian right-wing party was the financial crisis in 2008. The crisis resulted in Hungary's economy shrunk by almost seven percent. Hungary reached an agreement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for a \$25 billion bailout (Imf.org, 2008). This is when the IMF has imposed strict economic measures to Hungary. Orbán and the Fidesz party, was then able to form their political landscape based on citizen's dissatisfaction with the previous government, with the promise of more justice, efficiency, jobs creation, supporting local businesses to boost Hungary's economy, and create a state of democracy with the removal of communism (Krekó & Enyedi, 2018). This has paved the way for the Fidesz party to win the general elections in 2010 with a landslide victory. Figure 23 shows the Fidesz party winning of 227 out of 386 seats in the 2010 Hungary's parliamentary elections.

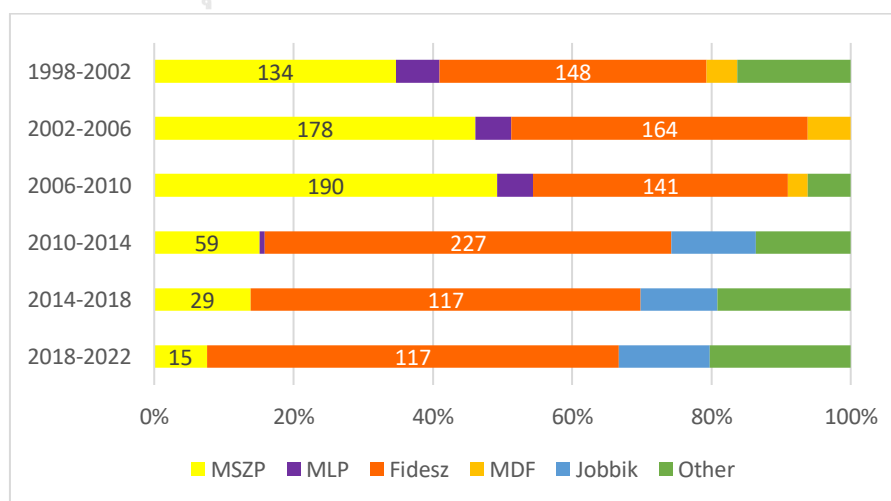


Figure 23 Composition of the National Assembly of the Hungarian government (1998-2022)

Source: <https://www.parlament.hu/web/house-of-the-national-assembly>

Viktor Orbán's landslide victory in 2010 was considered a significant change for Hungary and right-wing populists in Europe. The economic crisis in 2008 and a speech made by the then Prime Minister Ferenc Gyurcsány were two key factors that supported the success of the Hungarian right-wing party. The failure of Gyurcsány's government allowed Viktor Orbán to gain legitimacy and power in order to reconstruct Hungary's "democracy" over the following years. When Orbán was elected, people hoped that he would exercise his power to implement Hungary's necessary reforms as he had promised. On the contrary, Viktor Orbán chose a different path. He claimed that the past 20 years of transition had been in vain, and that the real regime change had only just begun in 2010 under his rule (Lendvai, 2019). The revelation of his intention upon this is reflected in the remark he made in the election campaign in 2010, when he stated that "We need to win only once, but then properly" (Economist.com, 2020). Orbán has been dedicated to taking a firm grip of his power ever since.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE VISEGRÁD GROUP AND THE EUROPEAN MIGRANT CRISIS

*A brief introduction to the chapter*

*To understand the European migrant crisis, readers should have a background knowledge of war in Syria, the rise of ISIS, and world politics. However, an in-depth analysis of the entire global implications of this prolonged conflict is beyond the scope of this thesis. Therefore, the aim of writing this chapter is to give a brief context of the migrant crisis in Europe and its connection to the Visegrád group. The following section will be an examination of the significance of “populism” in relation to the European migrant crisis through an in-depth case analysis of Hungary.*

#### **4.1 Causes of the Migrant Crisis in Europe: The War in Syria**

Generally, no one wants to leave their homes to move to other countries no matter how appealing the factors are. There are various motives and factors that force people to leave their homes and seek for better places. However, it is not easy to clearly identify those factors since some of them are related to deep psychological ones. Nonetheless, the European migrant crisis brought about the worst factor, a threat to life (Kugiel, 2016). The war in Syria has resulted in the evacuation of 6.6 million Syrians domestically by the end of 2015, and 4.9 million Syrian refugees

worldwide.<sup>22</sup> Because of four-and-a-half years of civil war, more than half the total population or about 11 million Syrians' lives are endangered. In 2015, Syrians was the country that generated the highest number of applications for asylum in Europe, statistics are shown in table 3 and figure 24.

*Table 3 EU Top 10 Nationalities Claiming Asylum and Their Recognition Rates in 2015*

| Country        | Claims submitted | Claims decided | Recognition rate |
|----------------|------------------|----------------|------------------|
| 1. Syria       | 368,350          | 166,665        | 97%              |
| 2. Afghanistan | 181,415          | 19,310         | 67%              |
| 3. Iraq        | 124,965          | 26,045         | 86%              |
| 4. Kosovo      | 72,480           | 37,620         | 2%               |
| 5. Albania     | 67,950           | 41,410         | 3%               |
| 6. Pakistan    | 48,015           | 18,905         | 26%              |
| 7. Eritrea     | 34,130           | 30,120         | 90%              |
| 8. Nigeria     | 31,245           | 18,090         | 24%              |
| 9. Serbia      | 30,065           | 21,860         | 2%               |
| 10. Iran       | 26,575           | 8,210          | 65%              |

Source: ESI European Stability Initiative Berlin-Brussels-Istanbul Refugee Crisis through Statistics:

A compilation for politicians, journalists and other concerned citizens 30 January 2017

<sup>22</sup> Global Trends in World Displacement in 2015, *UNHCR*, June 2016, [www.unhcr.org](http://www.unhcr.org).

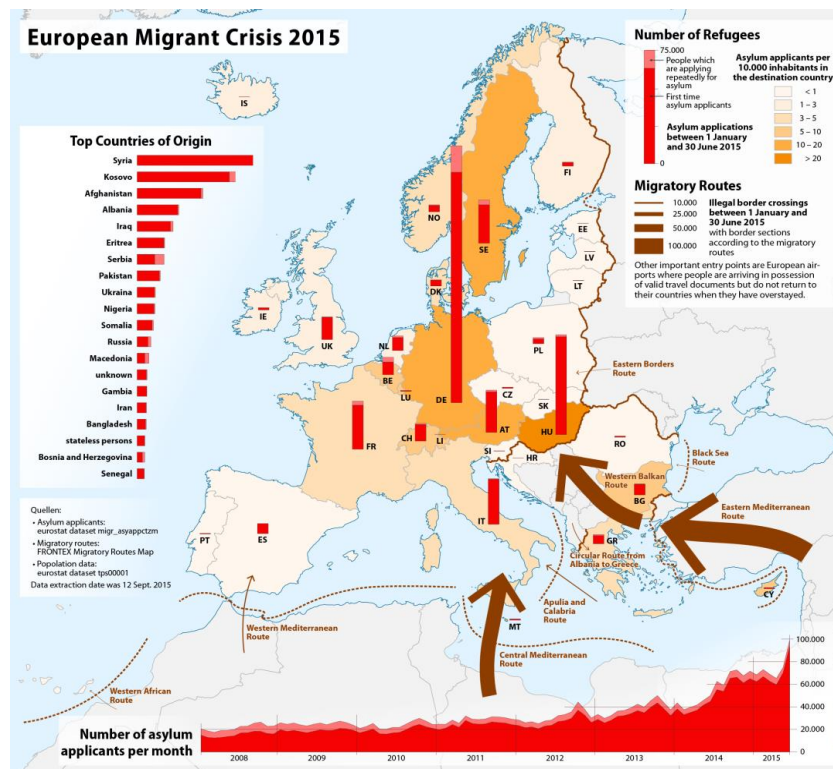


Figure 24 Asylum Applications in the European Union (EU) between 1 January and 30 June 2015

Source: Eurostat

People from other conflict zones were also among the big group asking for asylum, for instance; Afghanistan, Iraq, and numerous African countries (Kugiel, 2017). However, this research focuses on the war in Syria due to the fact that the number of refugees entering to Europe through the Visegrád group are those who have been affected mostly by conflict and war in Syria. The ongoing war in Syria and conflicts in other parts of the Middle East and Africa will continue to force Syrians to leave their home country.

Firstly, one must understand that the war in Syria is not only about domestic politics, but it is part of a consequence of the Arab Spring erupted during 2010 and 2012. The Arab Spring is the phenomenon of social mobilization against authoritarian regimes in the Middle Eastern and

North African countries (Otero & Gürcan, 2016) . In December 2010, the Arab Spring started in Tunisia, the Tunisian working class and civic organisations began their social mobilisation to force Tunisian President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali to resign. Within three weeks, Egypt, Libya, Syria, and other countries in the Middle East were inspired by this success and began their own mobilisations too.

Syria's uprising turned into a violent civil war in 2011. Syria has international alliances with Iran, Russia, and China, therefore, there must be an intervention by Western powers led by the United States, the United Kingdom and France. The proxy war to support the opponents of the Bashar al-Assad's regime (Otero & Gürcan, 2016) was conducted by the West, on the other end, Iran and Russia backed the Assad government. The most critical part is that when the U.S.A. invaded and started a war in Iraq, it produced non-Syrian radical Islamists and resistance movements in the Middle East region.

The civil war had caused most of the Syrian refugees to move to neighbouring countries, including Turkey, Lebanon, and Jordan. However, a large number of Syrian refugees were also travelling to the European Union, creating a division among European governments and public opinion on how to deal with this fast-growing flow of refugees. The public discussion and debate focused on how the European Union would respond to the crisis and what is the most appropriate policy for this humanitarian crisis.

Another factor that helps to increase the number of refugees in Europe is a geological location between the Middle East and Europe. The border distance between the Greek and Turkey is



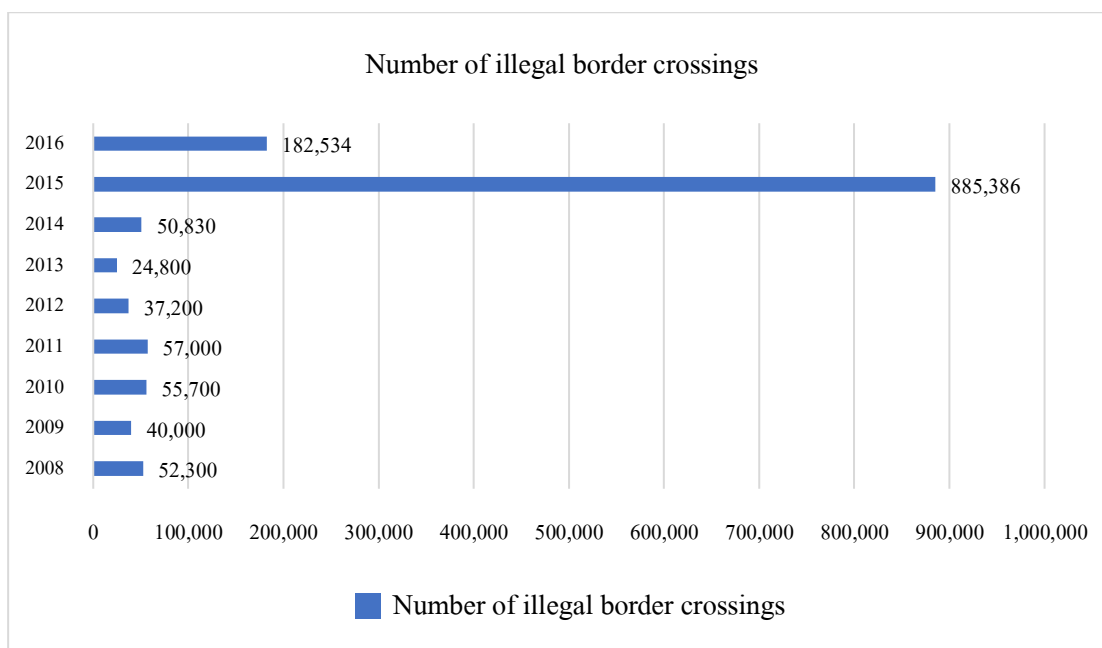
only 3 kilometres (Figure 25), which makes this route the shortest, easiest, and cheapest for refugees to reach Europe.



*Figure 25 Greek-Turkey Land Border at the Evros (Maritsa) River*

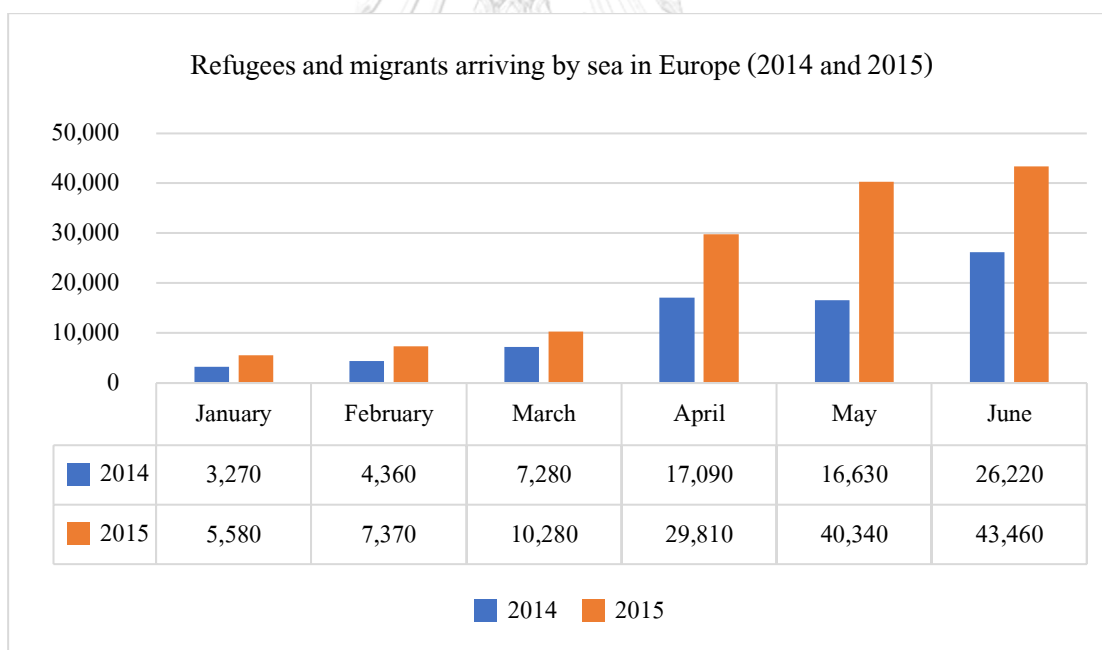
Source: Greek Turkish Bulgarian Borders and Maritsa River.svg

The sea and land routes are quite difficult to control, especially the borders. The shortest route that refugees have been using to enter Europe is through Turkey, the area of Turkey has been a connecting point between Europe, Asia, and the Middle East since ancient times. Turkey is a popular route among refugees, and this has made the country host more than 2 million refugees from Syria, and become a transit hub for many other migrants from Asia and Africa. The number of irregular entries to the EU via Turkey to Greece increased sharply from 2014 to 2015 as shown in figure 26 and 27. Most of the refugees and migrants who used this route in 2015 came from Syria, Afghanistan and Somalia, respectively.



*Figure 26 Illegal Border Crossings on the Eastern Mediterranean Route in Numbers*

Source: Frontex<sup>23</sup>



*Figure 27 Refugees and Migrants Arriving by Sea in Europe (2014-2015)*

Source: Governments, UNHCR / 29 June 2015

<sup>23</sup> Frontex. (2018). Migratory Routes. Retrieved from <https://frontex.europa.eu/along-eu-borders/migratory-routes/eastern-mediterranean-route/>

The vast majority of refugees arrived in Europe by sea. However, some of them entered Europe by land, primarily via Turkey and Albania. Therefore, it is necessary that the Visegrád group is involved with the issue because of its geographical location, especially Hungary, which shares its border with Serbia, one of the refugees and migrants' routes to Europe. The route map of refugees arriving in Europe by land and sea is shown below.



Figure 28 Migrants Route from Middle East to the West (by land)

Source: Immobilizing mobility: Border ethnography, illiberal democracy,

and the politics of the “refugee crisis” in Hungary

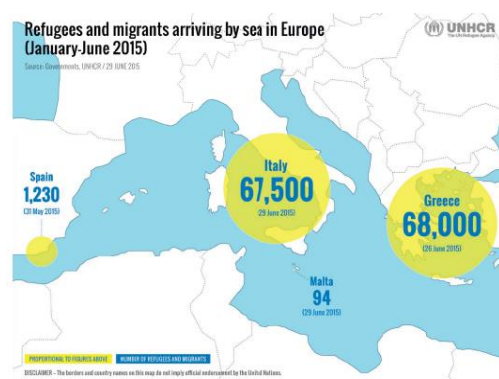


Figure 29 Migrants Route from Middle East to the West (by sea)

Source: UNHCR



*Figure 30 Refugees Arriving by Sea*

Source: UNHCR



*Figure 31 Migrants at the Greek-Macedonian Border Near Gevgelija, 24 August 2015*

Photo Credit: <https://www.cbc.ca/news/world/greece-macedonia-border-clashes-1.3533408>

#### 4.2 The Visegrád Group and the European Migrant Crisis

Many European countries are struggling to find a potential solution to house the refugees and integrate them into the host countries (Damoc, 2016). The topic has been widely debated, creating a clash between two differing perspectives within the European community on whether states should serve as a host for asylum-seekers. Germany is known to receive the highest number of refugees for humanitarian and probably for economic reasons. Chancellor Angela Merkel perceived the refugee crisis as a great opportunity for Germany to alleviate its labour shortages (Carnegie Council, 2016). As a result, Merkel tends to welcome refugees more than other EU Member States' leaders. On the other hand, there are states which have chosen a different approach and stated clear that they are not willing to accept any refugees and even enthusiastically tried to “cash in on keeping migrants out” (Bakker, Cheung, Phillimore, 2016). Hungary has built a physical border fence in cooperation with the Czech Republic, the Slovak Republic, and the Republic of Poland to prevent illegal entry of refugees and to boost control over the inflow of migrants (Damoc, 2016). The Visegrád four are clearly seen as a group of countries in the European Union which do not welcome refugees and migrants. They have refused to accept refugees from EU's proposed relocation scheme, such action is in contradiction to the EU's core value of “solidarity among Member States”. The group's negative standpoint towards refugees and migrants, as a result, has received heavy criticism on the world stage as a “Big, bad Visegrád”.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> The Economist. (2016). Big, Bad Visegrád. Retrieved from [www.economist.com/news/europe/21689629-migration-crisis-has-given-unsettling-new-direction-old-alliance-big-bad-visegrad](http://www.economist.com/news/europe/21689629-migration-crisis-has-given-unsettling-new-direction-old-alliance-big-bad-visegrad).

The group has tightened its cooperation to become even stronger, and we can see this through their aligned negative policy implemented in regards to the migrant crisis and negative expressions of the four leaders in the media.

The vast majority of refugees arrived in Europe by sea, so generally, the Eastern and South-Eastern European countries are the first frontier for refugees coming from Afghanistan, Iran, Syria and Iraq. The majority of them endeavoured to continue to Germany (Hafez, 2015).



*Figure 32 Migrant Route to Germany*

Source: [www.bbc.com](http://www.bbc.com)

After the influx of refugees to Europe, different opinions and metaphors have emerged, with some viewing them as offensive rather than as individuals with rights. Evidence to confirm this can be seen from countries in the Visegrád group. On September 2015, the Czech Republic's then Prime Minister Bohislav Sobotka and the Slovak Republic's then Prime Minister Robert Fico agreed that any measures by the European Union for refugees and migrants should be taken by Member States voluntarily. They preferred to financially support or provide experts and receive refugees who get asylum. However, medical professionals supported the closure of their countries'



borders with the reason that refugees would bring in “disease” (Ignatieff, 2017) for which there are no empirical claims at all. It was a political metaphor to portray the refugees as a collective threat to the nation, a discourse in threat framing technique. Consequently, the rights based on the 1951 convention that should be granted to the refugees was not applied in the case. In accordance, in the same period of autumn 2015, Viktor Orbán, the Hungarian Prime Minister defended his policy on closing Hungary’s border by giving reasons that refugees and migrants are a source of threat and terrorism. He claimed that the refugees are harmful to Christian civilization and that he would be acting as a protector of Christian culture in Europe. His standpoint was strongly supported by the Fidesz party. The Hungarian government’s goal is to preserve Hungary's own ethnic identity by shutting out refugees and migrants. Such a statement has been made by Hungary’s top diplomat and Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Péter Szijjártó, who clearly said that the Hungarian government has a clear policy on national preservation and would not allow Muslim refugees and migrants to destroy its values (Gutkin & Cobus, 2019). Péter Szijjártó stated the following:

We think that the illegal migration is a threat to the European future, a threat to the European culture and to the European civilization. We are a country which sticks strictly to national identity, which would like to preserve religious heritage, historic heritage and cultural heritage. We have a very clear policy that we want to preserve Hungary as a Hungarian country. We have a right for that. It's a sovereign right of Hungary to decide whom we would like to allow to enter the

territory of the country, and with whom we would like to live together. That must be a national decision ... a matter of national sovereignty, and we don't want to give that up, and we do not accept either Brussels, New York or Geneva taking these kinds of decisions instead of us.

Péter Szijjártó, Hungary's Trade Minister, 2019

From my perspective, it appears from the quotation that right-wing populist politicians in Hungary clearly express their position by using economic and cultural resentment to create the perception of crisis. Péter Szijjártó, according to above statement, constructs a Hungarian national identity narrative to differentiate between the Hungarians and the Muslims refugees and migrants. From the cultural aspect, he sets a cultural superiority to accommodate xenophobia and islamophobia discourses among the Hungarians and utilizes cultural and religion differences to create antagonism. Furthermore, Szijjártó infers that the decision on allowing the refugees and migrants into Hungary should be made according to the will of “the people”, who believe themselves the main constituents of the nation, while, in fact, are driven by top-down populist strategies.

A negative standpoint of the Visegrád group, especially Hungary, becomes more apparent when the European Union proposed to relocate 160,000 refugees across the continent in summer 2015, and the decision was legally binding. However, the Republic of Poland and Hungary openly opposed the scheme and had not taken in a single refugee. The Czech Republic also requested to withdraw from the scheme by citing security concerns. The Czech Republic also claimed that



security policy should be under national control, and not dictated by European authorities. Similarly, the Slovak Republic which was supposed to take 902 relocated refugees decided to receive only 16 refugees. The Visegrád group has relocated 28 refugees in total out of a combined quota of 11,069 (Barigazzi, 2017). Also, the four countries published a Joint Statement of Heads of Governments of the V4 Countries in Bratislava on 16 September 2016 which used the terminology of “flexible solidarity”. This turned to be a guideline that would allow each member state in the Visegrád group to make a voluntary decision over the refugee issue based on their potential (Winterbauer & Végh, 2017).

The claims made by the Hungarian government are factually incorrect and misleading. Right-wing populists attempt to distort the truth and contrive a negative viewpoint among the Hungarians of a secret plot which outlines the European Union and George Soros’s plan to bring more refugees and migrants to Europe. The position of the Visegrád group stands out as a common voice implying that the European Union wants to introduce mandatory resettlement quotas. The response from the European Commission regarding the Hungarian government’s campaign of “Let’s Stop Brussels” is the following: “resettlement of refugees from outside the European Union was and will always be on a purely voluntary basis” (European Commission, 2019). The European Union only seeks to realize the efforts by the Member States to show solidarity, such as sending border guards and giving financial contributions (European Commission, 2019). The decisions adopted by the Council of Ministers, for example, required Hungary to accept a very limited number of asylum seekers, which is 680 of the 34,710 who were found eligible for relocation (European

Commission, 2019). Hungary did not carry out its obligations and did not relocate a single one. To find out if the Visegrád group's claim is false, the statistical data provided in table 4 proves that the number of asylum applicant ratio per population in the Visegrád group is very limited in accordance with the European Commission's response. This means that accepting the proposed resettlement quotas from the European Union would not harm the group both in cultural and economic aspects. The peak of the European migrant crisis was between 2014-2016, the registered asylum applicant ratio per 100,000 local population to the Czech Republic was 11 in 2014, 14 in 2015, and 14 in 2016. For Hungary, the number was slightly higher with 433 applicants in 2014, 1,797 in 2015, and 299 in 2016. The number of asylum applicants in the Republic of Poland and the Slovak Republic were even less compared to the first two countries. The Republic of Poland received an asylum applicant ratio per 100,000 local population at 21 in 2014, 32 in 2015, and 32 in 2016 while the Slovak Republic came with the rate of 6 in 2014, 6 in 2015, and only 3 in 2016. The ratio is considered very limited and would not harm the Visegrád group's economy. The group, therefore, has enough capability to mandate its obligation.

*Table 4 Asylum Seekers ratio per population in the Visegrád Group (2010-2019)*

| Czech Republic                                 | 2010       | 2011       | 2012       | 2013       | 2014       | 2015       | 2016       | 2017       | 2018       | 2019       |
|------------------------------------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Asylum applicants                              | 775        | 750        | 740        | 695        | 1,145      | 1,515      | 1,475      | 1,445      | 1690       | 1915       |
| Population                                     | 10,462,088 | 10,486,731 | 10,505,445 | 10,516,125 | 10,512,419 | 10,538,275 | 10,553,843 | 10,578,820 | 10,610,055 | 10,649,800 |
| Asylum applicants per 100,000 local population | 7          | 7          | 7          | 7          | 11         | 14         | 14         | 14         | 16         | 18         |
| Hungary                                        | 2010       | 2011       | 2012       | 2013       | 2014       | 2015       | 2016       | 2017       | 2018       | 2019       |
| Asylum applicants                              | 2,095      | 1,690      | 2,155      | 18,895     | 42,775     | 177,135    | 29,430     | 3,390      | 670        | 500        |
| Population                                     | 10,014,324 | 9,985,722  | 9,931,925  | 9,908,798  | 9,877,365  | 9,855,571  | 9,830,485  | 9,797,561  | 9,778,371  | 9,772,756  |
| Asylum applicants per 100,000 local population | 21         | 17         | 22         | 191        | 433        | 1797       | 299        | 35         | 7          | 5          |
| The Republic of Poland                         | 2010       | 2011       | 2012       | 2013       | 2014       | 2015       | 2016       | 2017       | 2018       | 2019       |
| Asylum applicants                              | 6,540      | 6,885      | 10,750     | 15,240     | 8,020      | 12,190     | 12,305     | 5,045      | 4110       | 4070       |
| Population                                     | 38,022,869 | 38,062,718 | 38,063,792 | 38,062,535 | 38,017,856 | 38,005,614 | 37,967,209 | 37,972,964 | 37,976,687 | 37,972,812 |
| Asylum applicants per 100,000 local population | 17         | 18         | 28         | 40         | 21         | 32         | 32         | 13         | 11         | 11         |
| The Slovak Republic                            | 2010       | 2011       | 2012       | 2013       | 2014       | 2015       | 2016       | 2017       | 2018       | 2019       |
| Asylum applicants                              | 540        | 490        | 730        | 440        | 330        | 330        | 145        | 160        | 175        | 230        |
| Population                                     | 5,390,410  | 5,392,446  | 5,404,322  | 5,410,836  | 5,415,949  | 5,421,349  | 5,426,252  | 5,435,343  | 5,443,120  | 5,450,421  |
| Asylum applicants per 100,000 local population | 10         | 9          | 14         | 8          | 6          | 6          | 3          | 3          | 3          | 4          |

Source: Eurostat (2020)

### 4.3 Populism, Xenophobia, and Islamophobia in the Visegrád Group

The Visegrád group has not been very familiar with Islam, or at least not as much as other countries in Western Europe have. There is only a small group of Muslims or Muslim migrants in the four countries when compared to Western Europe countries, and this small group are mostly comprised of younger generation, such as students in universities. The Muslim community in the Czech Republic is small, comprising between 5,000 and 20,000, or less than 0.02 percent of the total population (Heijmans, 2017). The Czech Republic has only two mosques—one in Brno, and the other in Prague. The Slovak Republic is the only EU member state with no mosque at all (Heijmans, 2017). Therefore, the average Czechs, just like the Slovaks or the Poles or the Hungarians, are rarely exposed to Islamic culture. Thus, their attitudes towards Muslims tend to be formed and influenced mostly by mass media and subjective opinions. Muslims in this group of countries comprise less than 0.5 percent of population. Nonetheless, they have to face hatred from their fellow citizens. Islamophobia among the Visegrád group can be evidenced as a result of fear of the unknown.

As I have already discussed earlier that the Visegrád group's right-wing leaders use the government's-controlled media to create a perception that Muslims equal radicalism. The media under the government influence is being used as an instrument to emphasize that Islam is a major cause of terrorism attacks that have occurred in Europe. As a result, the Visegrád group has successfully used the media to create fear of Islam among Visegrád citizens, which builds up suspicious and negative attitudes towards Muslims as shown in earlier statistics and surveys.

Politicians have made and created the perception of Muslims as terrorists who induce violence, and represent Muslim invasion over an imagined superior white Christian community (Hafez, 2017). According to Matti Bunzl's essay in the Journal of the American Ethnological society entitled "Between anti-Semitism and Islamophobia: some thoughts on the new Europe" Bunzl argues that:

Islamophobia is a phenomenon of the present, marshalled to safeguard a supranational Europe. With the declining importance of the nation-state, Islamophobia threatens to become the defining condition of the new, unified Europe. That is, Western Europe, has received most of the attention when it comes to any conversation about Europe. However, Islamophobia is as rampant in Central and Eastern Europe.

(Bunzl, 2008)

From my perspective, according to the above quotation, Islamophobia has been partly acknowledged by the population of Western European countries as a form of racism while anti-Black and antisemitism are widely not acceptable in the public space. This might be because Islamophobia carries a more direct implication for the daily lives of Muslims who live in Western Europe, where they comprise higher ratios of the entire population (Hafez, 2017). However, in Central European countries such as Hungary, where right-wing populist ruling government have established their hold of power, there is a move towards promoting a strong form of antisemitic and Islamophobia campaigns as is seen in the case of George Soros. In the Visegrád group, where there is only a small number of Muslims, Islamophobia has become the means toward gaining,

stabilizing, and widening of domestic political power and is more rampant in Central and Eastern Europe (Bunzl, 2008). Although Muslims in the Visegrád group are minorities according to the numbers shown in figure 33, Islamophobic attitude is among the highest in Europe. The society's fear of Muslim is presented through racism and expressions against Muslims who are perceived as a threat.



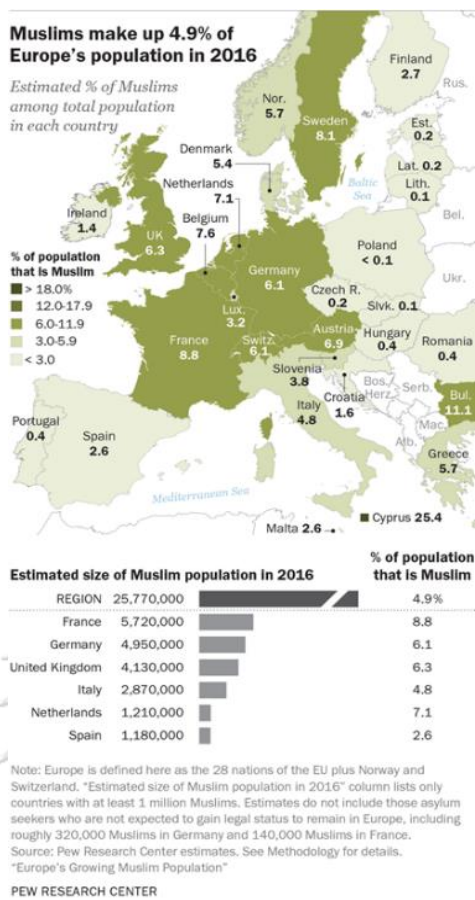


Figure 33 Muslim Population in Europe in 2016

Source: Pew Research Center<sup>25</sup>

According to a survey published by Pew Research Center in April 2015, in the Czech Republic, Hungary, and the Republic of Poland, the Muslim community does not exceed an estimated of 0.1 percent, and in Slovakia comprises only 0.2 percent of the total population. At the same time, according to a Pew Research Center study published in July 2016, the most negative views on Muslims can be found in Eastern and Southern European countries. The highest number of unfavourable views on Muslim can be found in Hungary (72 percent of respondents), followed

<sup>25</sup> Hackett, C. (2017). 5 Facts about the Muslim Population in Europe. Retrieved from [www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/11/29/5-facts-about-the-muslim-population-in-europe/](http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/11/29/5-facts-about-the-muslim-population-in-europe/).

by Italy reaching 69 percent, and Poland with 66 percent. Additionally, 37 percent of the Hungarians and 35 percent of the Poles believe that Muslims tend to be part of extremist groups. The negativity towards Muslims among those nations is higher than towards the Roma group (72 percent vs. 64 percent in Hungary and 66 percent vs. 47 percent in Poland), the survey results are shown in the table below.

*Table 5 Unfavourable view of Roma and Muslims among European countries*

| <b>Many Europeans rate Roma, Muslims unfavourable (%)</b> |              |                |             |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|--------------|----------------|-------------|
| <i>Unfavourable view of....in our country</i>             |              |                |             |
|                                                           | <b>Roma*</b> | <b>Muslims</b> | <b>Jews</b> |
| Italy                                                     | 82           | 69             | 24          |
| Greece                                                    | 67           | 65             | 55          |
| Hungary                                                   | 64           | 72             | 32          |
| France                                                    | 61           | 29             | 10          |
| Spain                                                     | 49           | 50             | 21          |
| Poland                                                    | 47           | 66             | 24          |
| UK                                                        | 45           | 28             | 7           |
| Sweden                                                    | 42           | 35             | 5           |
| Germany                                                   | 40           | 29             | 5           |
| Netherlands                                               | 37           | 35             | 4           |
| <b>MEDIAN</b>                                             | <b>48</b>    | <b>43</b>      | <b>16</b>   |

Note: \*In UK, asked as “Gypsies or Roma”

Source: Spring 2016 Global Attitudes Survey. Q36a-c.

Pew Research Center

Source: [www.pewglobal.org](http://www.pewglobal.org)<sup>26</sup>

<sup>26</sup> Mitchell, T. (2016). Negative Views of Minorities, Refugees Common in EU. Retrieved from [www.pewglobal.org/2016/07/11/negative-views-of-minorities-refugees-common-in-eu/](http://www.pewglobal.org/2016/07/11/negative-views-of-minorities-refugees-common-in-eu/)

In this context, a survey conducted by the Chatham House (The Royal Institute of International Affairs) shows that public opposition to any further migration from predominantly Muslim states is also widespread in European countries. Together with Belgium, Hungary rated the third highest country where support for stopping immigration from Muslim countries stood at 64 percent of respondents, followed by Austria with 65 percent. The highest was Poland with 71 percent. There is no data on the Slovak Republic and the Czech Republic in this survey, but the World Values Survey reveals that rejection of Muslims is also widespread in these two countries. There is evidence to show that Muslims are not welcome in the Slovak Republic, the number is no less than other countries in the Visegrád group. The negative expressions were openly expressed through statements made by the Visegrád leaders. The then Slovak Prime Minister Robert Fico stated that “Islam has no place in Slovakia. It is the duty of politicians to talk about these things very clearly and openly. I do not wish there were tens of thousands of Muslims” (Chadwick, 2016). Moreover, the Slovak Republic has been attempting to adopt a measure for making Islam an unrecognized religion in the country by limiting its religious activities. The Islamic Foundation in the Slovak Republic estimates the number of Muslims at around 5,000. However, in 2016, the parliament voted to pass legislation that effectively prevented Islam from being an official religion in the country, the law requires religious groups in the Slovak Republic to have at least 50,000 followers in order to operate its religious activities, such as a construction of religious establishments, an operation of a religious school or qualification for government subsidies, and it requires only 20,000 signatures to pass this law. According to Reuters, the Slovak Republic is the



only EU Member State that has no mosque in the country.<sup>27</sup> In fact, both the Slovak Republic and the Czech Republic are ranked the highest in their anti-Muslim attitudes. In the Czech Republic, 45.5 percent and in the Slovak Republic 68.4 percent of respondents stated that they refused to have Muslims as neighbours compared to 25.7 percent in Poland (Miheljak, 2006). In the Czech Republic, Muslims (identified as Arabs) are the second least-liked group right after the Roma minority (Bonansinga, 2015). To conclude, the data reveals a high potential for the emergence of anti-Muslim mobilization in the Visegrád group.

Poland's Law and Justice Party known as PiS is the ruling centre-right party in Poland. It is considered the most successful political party at a national level. PiS is also widely known for its negative attitudes towards refugees. The party has, same as other countries in the Visegrád group, repeatedly reproduced statements and hate-speeches of the European refugee crisis as a Muslim invasion (Pędziwiatr, 2017). Likewise, right-wing populist parties in the Czech Republic mobilizes against the construction of mosques in the country. In a statement, the President of the Czech Republic Miloš Zeman, stated that "the influx of refugees was an agenda of the Muslim Brotherhood who would conquer Europe by what is often referred to in the Islamophobic discourse as demographic Jihad" (Day, 2016). While the Czech Republic and the Republic of Poland are dominated by centre-right parties in adopting anti-Muslim discourse, the Slovak Republic, in contrast to other countries in the group, is dominated by a traditional right-wing populist party.

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<sup>27</sup> Reuters. (2016). Slovakia toughens church registration rules to bar Islam'. Retrieved from <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-slovakia-religion-islam/slovakia-toughens-church-registration-rules-to-bar-islam-idUSKBN13P20C>

After the terrorist attacks in Paris and Brussels in 2016, the then Prime Minister Robert Fico of the Slovak Republic stated that “Islam is not compatible with our culture” (Zaviš, 2017). Such rhetoric was reproduced by one of the political parties in the Slovak Republic named Kotleba-L’SNS, which claimed that the country was flooded by “hordes of Muslim immigrants,” who “cannot and do not want to accommodate to our laws and social norms” (Kluknavská & Smolík, 2016). At this point, it can be concluded that Islamophobia has become a mainstream political discourse by media and right-wing political leaders in the Visegrád countries.

However, the phenomenon of anti-Muslim hatred was addressed when several countries or a group in civil society attempted to prevent and combat hate speech, hate crimes, and discrimination that is currently happening. For example, the European People’s Party (EPP) has chastised the KDNP in Hungary on the grounds of its racist statements towards Muslims. Islamophobia currently plays a significant role in European politics: it is becoming an essential condition of a new regionalism within illiberal democracy states (Hafez, 2015). At a national level, the most obvious case is Hungary where its Prime Minister Viktor Orbán publicly announced his model of an “illiberal democracy” followed by his strategy of setting a policy targeting on anti-refugees and migrants that undermine Hungary’s democracy. These actions include law amendment, the intervention of administration of justice, anti-refugee and migrant campaigns, all of which lead to an absolute power of Orbán’s government (Gosling, 2019; Kingsley, 2018). At the European level, the Visegrád group reflects its effort to work together on a common interest based on right-wing populism that advocates anti-refugees and migrants. In this regard, they prefer to

follow nation state governments rather than the European Union. The tension between the European Union and the Visegrád group started in 2015 when the four countries were against the EU's proposed relocation and resettlement quota system. To solve the crisis, the European Parliament agreed at 449 votes on refugee relocation scheme and quotas, to redistribute the number of refugees equally to each Member State in order to reduce the burden borne by forefront countries such as Italy, Greece, and Germany. Apparently, Germany had received the highest number of refugees according to its basic laws and rights. In contrast, Hungary proposed to build a barrier and fences (at the time of my writing, the fences have already successfully been built) to prevent illegal refugees. Furthermore, Hungary and the Slovak Republic claimed that the quota was inappropriate and was not an effective method to solve the crisis. In the same direction with Hungary, the Czech Republic, the Republic of Poland, and the Slovak Republic have tightened their border controls to prevent illegal refugees from entering their countries. In summary, the Visegrád group has disagreed on the relocation and resettlement scheme and quota proposed by the European Union, with the claim of refugees posing as terrorists (Bonansinga, 2015; Feher, 2015). This, again, has further divided the European Member States into two opposite positions. To show its resentment, the Slovak Republic has brought the case to the European Court of Justice against the EU over its decision to relocate 120,000 immigrants to the country. Robert Fico, the then Prime Minister of the Slovak Republic conceived the quota as “nonsensical and technically impossible” (Rettman, 2015).

The Visegrád group claimed that a closed-door policy to the refugees is the only way to preserve its Christian value and culture, to prevent society from Islamization. The Visegrád group

wants to preserve and strengthen its common cultural background, intellectual values, and common roots by refusing to accept refugees. They also claim that allowing refugees into the countries is an exposure to the risk of Islamist terrorism and a threat to homogenous Visegrád society. As a result, the political leaders of the Visegrád countries, from Prime Minister Viktor Orbán of Hungary to Prime Minister Andrej Babiš of the Czech Republic, have used Islamophobia and xenophobia to create fear and discourse towards refugees and migrants to justify their political actions. Hungary's ruling government, the Fidesz party, has started an aggressive campaign simultaneously on antisemitic and Islamophobia as I shall discuss in Chapter Five. Prime Minister Orbán decided to build walls and fences at the border connected to Serbia, other Visegrád member states tend to follow Hungary's path to preventing refugees from entering their countries. Since the attack of 9/11, anti-Muslim sentiment has spread across Europe, so it is easier for people in the Visegrád group, most of whom are not familiar with Muslims, to view them as an enemy. Moreover, the cultural differences between European society and Islam is, somehow, incompatible in the eyes of the Europeans. This has led Europe, in general, to fear that the continent will be Islamized.

As previously discussed, one of the main objectives of the Visegrád group's cooperation, after the fall of communism, is to become a Member State of the European Union. The group has been going through the process of democratization, privatization, and economic development, to become a Member State of the European Union, and has had to parallel its policies, including the minorities' policies, with the Union's regulations and schemes. The Visegrád group is still considered a young state in the process of becoming democratic. A study conducted by Luboš

Kropáček, a professor at Charles University and an expert on Islamic philosophy and modern Islam, found that in the Czech Republic, attitudes towards Muslims has become more negative since the fall of communism. The study explains that this negativity is the result of a need for a new enemy replacing the threat of communism. The Visegrád group, therefore, has actively prevented refugees from entering to the region with its closed border policy. They are working on any method to keep the refugees out (Moreno, 2010).



## CHAPTER V

### A CASE STUDY OF HUNGARY

#### *Brief introduction of the chapter*

*The Visegrád group has been accused of not fulfilling their obligations outlined in a 2015 plan to relocate refugees and migrants within the European Union. Hungary is one of the countries that has been criticized for its negative attitude and policy toward the refugees<sup>28</sup> as can be seen from Hungary's rejection of the plan to relocate 160,000 refugees from Greece and Italy to the European Member States. Nonetheless, Hungary was one of the countries that has taken legal action in the European Court of Justice (ECJ) against the mandatory proposed quota. The aim of writing this chapter is to take the readers through an in-depth analysis of Hungary's case, and investigate the rhetoric messages that Prime Minister Viktor Orbán of Hungary has used when campaigning to his voters. Orbán has also used political discourse, populism, and Eurosceptic rhetoric, empowered by the concept of Islamophobia and the "fear of others" to stimulate negative attitudes towards refugees and migrants. Populism has played an important role behind Hungary's negative policy implemented to deal with the European migrant crisis.*

Hungary was one of the member states of the Warsaw Pact, which was established in 1955.

After the end of World War II, the Russian army remained stationed in Hungary. The Hungarian

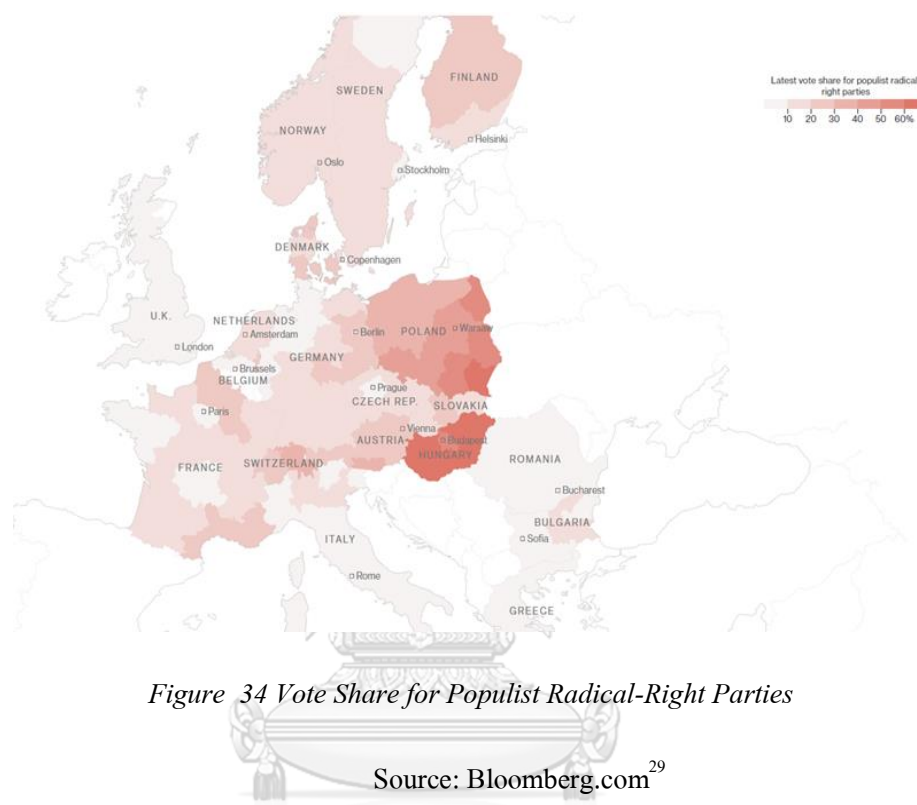
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<sup>28</sup> BBC. (2017). EU Targets Poland, Hungary and Czechs for Not Taking Refugees. Retrieved from <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-40259268>

Revolution erupted in 1956 with the intervention of Russia. Later, the Soviet troops started to withdraw from Hungary in March 1990 with its last troop leaving in 1991. After the withdrawal of Russia, Hungary's political system was liberal democracy for almost 30 years. Hungary enjoyed its liberal environment including a multiparty system with free elections and a strong opposition. Free elections were held to ensure respect of citizens' political rights, with real freedom of the press. The Constitutional Court and the Ombudsman's Office were established to protect the rule of law. Human rights were generally respected and religious freedoms were not restricted. This liberal atmosphere lasted until the governments started to lose in elections and politicians were criticized heavily by the media. Hungary joined the European Union later in 2004, there was a rise in right-wing populism. Since then, Hungary right-wing populist party started to gain more votes in the parliament. The popularity of right-wing and populist parties is not seen only in Hungary but also across Europe. In 2017, it was visible all over Europe that populist and radical right-wing parties have become increasingly popular among voters. In many countries, nationalists got higher scores in European Parliament elections. Hungary's populist radical right parties got a share of 60 (Figure 34).

The most renowned right-wing populist political party in Hungary is the Fidesz. The party started to gain power in 1988 and won a landslide victory in the 2010 parliament election. Therefore, 2010 is the beginning year for the Fidesz party to establish its strong position in the Hungarian parliament. From that time, the Fidesz party has been widely seen as an incoming party which would replace the current unpopular ruling political parties that were riddled with corruption

scandals. The Fidesz party has continued its victory until the present under the leadership of Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, who later played the most important role in both domestic and international politics especially in the context of the European migrant crisis.



The Hungarian government, led by Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, has blamed the refugee crisis as Europe's misguided approach to migration. Moreover, much of the hate campaigns were intentionally created by Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán himself and the Fidesz party. Orbán argued that the quota system would "redraw Hungary and Europe's ethnic, cultural, and religious identities, which no EU organ has the right to do" (Sereghy, 2017). Prime Minister Orbán also openly called Muslim refugees and migrants as "the Trojan horse of terrorism" (Gorondi,

<sup>29</sup> Tartar, A. (2017). How the Populist Right Is Redrawing the Map of Europe. Retrieved from [www.bloomberg.com/graphics/2017-europe-populist-right/](http://www.bloomberg.com/graphics/2017-europe-populist-right/).



2017), and argued that they would jeopardize Europe's Christian culture and identity. In Orbán's opinion, multiculturalism is only "an illusion" because Christian and Muslim societies "will never unite" (Agerholm, 2018).

Prime Minister Viktor Orbán further claimed that the refugees will continue coming to Europe without an end because they were not really escaping from the war but rather looking for a better economic opportunity and Hungary only has a short time to defend its border, thus, it depends on the citizens' decision. A recent attack in Europe, such as the Charlie Hebdo in Paris, was used by Prime Minister Orbán to claim that the shooting was carried out by terrorists who were in fact Muslim refugees. Throughout the twentieth century, Hungary has been acting as the "Christian guardian" of Europe and its nationalistic ideology has been widely spread as discussed in previous chapter. Therefore, this symbolic comparison and logic of thinking had already existed before the current European migrant crisis. Prime Minister Orbán has built political power on the use of such populism and political discourses which construed Islamic faith as a disease. This notion has been present in Europe, throughout its history since the eighth century, seeing Islam as the invasive other (Ignatieff, 2017).

To summarize Prime Minister Orbán's narrative, the refugees are potentially terrorists, they are profiteering pseudo-victims, and lawbreakers. Muslim refugees are likely to destroy Hungary's cultural uniqueness. Prime Minister Orbán responded to the critics on the issue of refugees that Hungary prefers to remain migrant-free, culturally separated and homogenous, and that the country will not adopt multiculturalism. Moreover, the Prime Minister conducted a

discourse of Hungary being a “defender of European Christianity”. He reproduced and elevated the sentiment of xenophobia among the Hungarians by connecting the refugee crisis with its territorial loss after the 1918 collapse of the Habsburg commonwealth. Orbán exaggerated the incident by giving an interview in the Wall Street Journal warning that unless the European Union adopts a tough policy on solving the refugee crisis, Europe will be at risk caused by refugees coming from the Middle East (Feher, 2015). He continued to portray refugees as enemies in both domestic and international politics. The European migrant crisis has become a mechanism to justify his political actions and discourses. Prime Minister Viktor Orbán created enemies and presented himself as the defender of Europe. Orbán gave an interview with a Swiss Weekly newspaper, claiming that he is working hard on keeping the Muslim refugees out of Europe as a defender of national interest.<sup>30</sup> He also mentioned that Hungary has, in the past, defended Europe from the Muslim Ottoman Empire. At the present, Hungary, led by Orbán, will be a defender of Europe once again.



Figure 35 Prime Minister Viktor Orbán's Interview in the German-Language Swiss Weekly Newspaper Die Weltwoche, Published in the 12 November 2015 Edition

Source: Hungarytoday.hu

<sup>30</sup> Hungarytoday. (2015). Viktor Orbán, Defender of Europe – Swiss Weekly's Interview with Hungarian Leader in Full. Retrieved from <https://hungarytoday.hu/viktor-orban-defender-europe-swiss-weeklys-interview-hungarian-leader-full-50008/>

## 5.1 Populism through Political Discourses in Hungary: Anti-Refugees and Migrants

### Campaigns

One will not be able to understand populism in Hungary unless one understands its political background and how Viktor Orbán rose to national prominence. In 1980s, when the communist regime in Hungary was starting to decline, Orbán was the one who gave a memorable radical speech urging Hungary's democratic transition from communism to liberalism. As a result, the Fidesz party was founded as a liberal movement, pandering to the votes of a younger anti-communist generation and campaigning for parliamentary democracy. The Fidesz party, founded in 1988 under the former communist government (1949-1989), eventually evolved into an establishment conservative party, and had continued to portray Islamophobia concept and its negative position toward refugees and the party has played an important role in Hungary's modern politics since 2010. Initially, the Fidesz (Alliance of Young Democrats) was an anti-communist party, a liberal youth party with a Western-friendly environmentalist movement that did not admit members over the age of 35.<sup>31</sup> Nevertheless, the party had changed its focus shifting to right-wing in the early 1990s, turning from liberalism to a right-wing nationalist party. The Fidesz party is led by Viktor Orbán, who was first elected to office for a four-year term in 1998.

The foundations of the current Orbán regime can be traced back to the period after Fidesz's 2010 electoral (Krekó, 2018) . The year 2010 is marked as a turning point for the Fidesz party and Viktor Orbán. After Fidesz had shifted towards right-wing in the late 1990s, Viktor Orbán's victory

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<sup>31</sup> Fidesz. (2020). Our History. Retrieved from <https://fidesz.hu/int/add-tovabb/our-history>

in a national election in 2010 allowed him to implement a new constitution in Hungary. The victory of the right-wing in Hungary has become an inspiration for right-wing populists in other countries in the Visegrád group to implement its tendencies in national politics. Orbán was re-elected in 2014 in his third consecutive term in the latest national election in April 2018 (Rankin, 2018). This has made Fidesz become the leading populist party in Hungary with more than 60 percent share of the total vote which means the party controls the majority vote in the parliament. As a consequence, in the period of Fidesz government, Hungary had passed over 800 laws that restructured almost all its public institutions. Those laws are, for example, the new bill in 2019 on cultural institutions which regulate culturally important institutions throughout Hungary to be under government's new financing scheme directed by the country's central budget (Cseresnyés, 2019). Besides, a National Cultural Council was established to supervise those cultural institutions. This means that any unit that does not align with the Fidesz party will not receive supporting fund for its activities. This is a method to exercise control over cultural activities which comes after a series of press freedom limitations, anti-refugee and migrant policies, and judiciary independence limitation that had already been adopted earlier. Another example of a bill that Hungary's parliament has passed was on research scientists. A network of research institutes across Hungary usually supervises under a two-hundred-year-old institution named the Hungarian Academy of Sciences (MTA). However, after the right-wing Orbán's government passed the new bill, at least 15 scientific institutes were transferred to a newly formed state network named Eotvos Lorand Research Network (ELKH). The problem is ELKH is directed under a board appointed by Prime Minister Viktor Orbán (Gosling,

2019). Orbán's government has undermined all independent institutions in the country including the education system, and has turned Hungary into a state against the rule of law.<sup>32</sup> Orbán and the Fidesz party have consolidated their political power in Hungary by transforming the electoral system to ensure its advantages in the elections that would follow. Prime Minister Viktor Orbán was re-elected for a third term in the latest national 2018 election. He is well-known as a leader of an "illiberal democracy" state who thrives on conflict among European Union Member States on the European refugee and migrant crisis (Krekó & Enyedi, 2018).

Since the European migrant crisis erupted in 2015, the Fidesz party has become much more radical and even more prejudiced than it was before (Krekó, 2018).<sup>33</sup> The party, had moved further right, even more right than the Jobbik (Hungarian: Jobbik Magyarországért Mozgalom) (Schultheis, 2018), a party with neo-Nazi roots which attempts to rebrand itself as a traditional European conservative party.<sup>34</sup> The Fidesz party has mainly focused on its opposition to human rights groups and asylum seekers entering or passing through the country. This has made the Hungarian government, under the ruling of Fidesz party, raise its voice against the European Union on refugee and migrant issues. In another aspect, the European migrant crisis reflects European institutions' inability and ineffectiveness in solving the crisis. This has become a foundation for

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<sup>32</sup> Snijder, F. (2018). Hungary Elections Extend Viktor Orban's Grip on Power. Retrieved from <https://theglobepost.com/2018/04/06/2018-hungary-elections-orban-fidesz-populist/>

<sup>33</sup> Strickland, P. (2017). How Is Hungary's Far Right Changing? Retrieved from [www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/12/hungary-changing-171209110936676.html](http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/12/hungary-changing-171209110936676.html).

<sup>34</sup> Mátyás, B. (2016). Right Wing Political Shift of Fidesz. Retrieved from <https://www.attac.hu/2016/11/right-wing-political-shift-of-fidesz/>

populist politicians, particularly in Hungary, to win a positive position among its sceptical citizens.

The Fidesz party, led by Viktor Orbán, has widely used Eurosceptic and populist rhetoric to convince the voters that the European Union has failed to manage the crisis and would allow refugees to the country. European citizens have started to perceive that the traditional elite and existing politicians of the European Union are inefficient, powerless, and fail to solve contemporary problems mainly the inflow of refugees, social, and economic problems. Consequently, populist leaders have developed their political positioning and gained more popularity at the European regional level, and become a part of modern European politics (Danaj, Lazányi, & Bilan, 2018).

| Viktor Orbán, Hungarian Prime Minister. (Age: 57 – as of July 2020) |                                                                                               |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>1988</b>                                                         | His Fidesz party, a liberal movement, is created                                              |
| <b>Late 1990s</b>                                                   | Fidesz shifts to the right. In 1998 Orbán becomes prime minister                              |
| <b>2002</b>                                                         | Loses an election, saying it was “stolen”                                                     |
| <b>2010</b>                                                         | Returns to power as premier                                                                   |
| <b>2012</b>                                                         | Controversial new constitution comes into force                                               |
| <b>2014</b>                                                         | Re-elected prime minister                                                                     |
| <b>July 2014</b>                                                    | Declares he is moulding Hungary into an “illiberal state”, citing Russia and Turkey as models |
| <b>Since 2015</b>                                                   | Start of hard-line anti-immigration policies                                                  |
| <b>December 2017</b>                                                | Hungary sued by the EU over political freedoms, immigration                                   |

|                     |                                                             |
|---------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>January 2018</b> | Orbán foresees “a year of great confrontations” with the EI |
|---------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|

*Figure 36 Victor Orbán Ten Years Timeline (1988 – 2018) on his Consolidation of Power*

Source: AFP<sup>35</sup>

Islamophobia, that had challenged many established traditions of Western political parties, was chosen by right-wing populists, specifically during the summer of 2015, when the debate on Islam became one of the most prominent and omnipresent topics in Hungarian media and politics (Sereghy, 2017). The arrival of around one million refugees to Europe in 2015 made the right-wing populist party position itself as a defender of “Christian Europe”. The language used in public media in Hungary is similar to that used in the period of anti-Roma and antisemitic, only at this time it is changed to anti-Muslim sentiment. An anti-refugee and migrant rhetoric are obviously seen in Hungary’s mainstream media. Prime Minister Viktor Orbán and the Fidesz party started their political discourses in 2015 in the national campaign against refugees and migrants. The campaign can be considered as a political communication strategy of the Hungarian government to create a negative sentiment towards refugees and migrants among Hungarian citizens. The first campaign was initiated by the Hungarian government named “If you come to Hungary” campaign. The billboards were launched throughout the country as shown in figure 37 and 38, and were set up with three messages in the Hungarian language translated as:

<sup>35</sup> Snijder, F. (2018). Hungary Elections Extend Viktor Orbán’s Grip on Power. Retrieved from <https://theglobepost.com/2018/04/06/2018-hungary-elections-orban-fidesz-populist/>



1. If you come to Hungary, you cannot take away the work of the Hungarians!



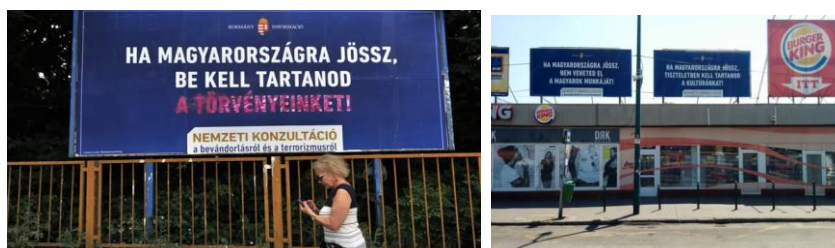
2. If you come to Hungary, you have to respect our culture!



3. If you come to Hungary, you have to respect our laws!

Figure 37 A Set of Billboard Campaigns on Refugees and Migrants

Source: Budapest business journal<sup>36</sup>



<sup>36</sup> Keszthelyi, C. (2015). Government to Address Immigrants on Billboards. Retrieved from [https://bbj.hu/politics/government-to-address-immigrants-on-billboards\\_98686](https://bbj.hu/politics/government-to-address-immigrants-on-billboards_98686).





Figure 38 “If you come to Hungary” Campaign Billboards Launched Throughout Hungary

Source: <https://budapestbeacon.com/fidesz-wont-say-whether-government-received-free-or-discounted-advertising-space/>

At first glance, it seems that these messages are aimed at refugees and migrants, but the fact is these messages are written in a language which can only be understood by the Hungarians. It means that these messages are directly communicated to the Hungarians rather than to the refugees and migrants. As a result, these campaigns are aimed with a view to developing a negative attitude and suspicion among Hungarian citizens towards refugees and migrants. In May 2015, a “national consultation” conducted by the Hungarian government was sent to every household of Hungarian citizens aged over 18—altogether 8 million people<sup>37</sup> both in paper and online formats as a part of the government’s communication strategy to reinforce the billboard messages and to keep the migrant crisis topic on the public agenda (Marton, 2017). The campaign project had cost the Hungarian government HUF 300 million.<sup>38</sup> The letter included two pages: the first was a personal

<sup>37</sup> European Commission, (2015). Hungary: Government's National Consultation on Immigration and Terrorism Creates Widespread Debate. Retrieved from <https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/news/hungary-governments-national-consultation-on-immigration-and-terrorism-creates-widespread-debate>

<sup>38</sup> Keszthelyi, C. (2015). Government to Address Immigrants on Billboards. Retrieved from [https://bbj.hu/politics/government-to-address-immigrants-on-billboards\\_98686](https://bbj.hu/politics/government-to-address-immigrants-on-billboards_98686).

message from the Prime Minister Viktor Orbán. The second page was the consultation survey. The letter and the questionnaire in original and translated version are shown in the figures 39, 40, and 41, respectively.



**Tisztelt Honfitársam!**

Mi, magyarok 2010-ben úgy határoztunk, hogy minden fontos kérdést megbeszélünk egymással, mielőtt döntéseket hozunk. Ezért indítottunk nemzeti konzultációt többek között az ország új alaptörvényéről, mindannyiunk szociális biztonságáról, a nyugdíjasok helyzetének javításáról. És ezért indítunk most is nemzeti konzultációt a megélhetési bevándorlás kérdéséről.

Mint bizonyára emlékszik, Európát az év elején példátlan terrorcselekmény ráta meg. Párizsban ártatlan emberek életét oltották ki kegyetlen hidegvérrel és ijesztő brutalitással. Mindannyiunkat megdöbbentette mindaz, ami történt. Ez az emberi ésszel felfoghatatlan szörnyűség ugyanakkor azt is megmutatta, hogy Brüsszel és az Európai Unió nem képes megfelelő módon kezelni a bevándorlás kérdését.

A megélhetési bevándorlók törvénytelenül lépik át a határt, és miközben menekültnek állítják be magukat, valójában a szociális juttatásokért és a munkalehetőségért jönnek. Csak az elmúlt néhány hónapban mintegy húszszorosára nőtt a megélhetési bevándorlók száma Magyarországon. Ez egy új típusú fenyegetést jelent, amit meg kell állítanunk.

Mivel Brüsszel kudarcot vallott a bevándorlás kezelésében, Magyarországnak a saját útját kell járnia. Nem fogjuk hagyni, hogy a megélhetési bevándorlók veszélyeztessék a magyar emberek munkahelyeit és megélhetését.

Döntést kell hoznunk arról, hogyan kell védekeznie Magyarországnak a törvénytelen határátlépésekkel szemben. Döntenünk kell, hogyan korlátozzuk a robbanásszerűen növekvő megélhetési bevándorlást.

Tisztelettel arra kérem, lépjen velünk kapcsolatba, mondja el nekünk is, hogy mit gondol a főtett kérdésekről, töltsd ki, és küldje vissza a kérdőívet. Számítok a véleményére.

Üdvözlettel:

**Orbán Viktor**

*Figure 39 The First Page of National Consultation Letter on Immigrations and Terrorism, a Personal Message from the Prime Minister of Hungary, Viktor Orbán.*

Source: Europa.eu<sup>39</sup>

<sup>39</sup> European Commission. (2015). Hungary: Government's National Consultation on Immigration and Terrorism Creates Widespread Debate. Retrieved from <https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/news/hungary-governments-national-consultation-on-immigration-and-terrorism-creates-widespread-debate>

**Dear Hungarian Citizen,**

In 2010 we Hungarians decided to discuss every important issue before decisions are taken. This is why we launched national consultations on issues which have included Hungary's new Fundamental Law, social security as a matter concerning us all, and the improvement of the situation of pensioners. And this is why we are now launching another national consultation, this time on the issue of economic immigration.

I am sure you will remember that at the beginning of the year Europe was shaken by an unprecedented act of terror. In Paris the lives of innocent people were extinguished, in cold blood and with terrifying brutality. We were all shocked by what happened. At the same time, this incomprehensible act of horror also demonstrated that Brussels and the European Union are unable to adequately deal with the issue of immigration.

Economic migrants cross our borders illegally, and while they present themselves as asylum-seekers, in fact they are coming to enjoy our welfare systems and the employment opportunities our countries have to offer. In the last few months alone, in Hungary the number of economic migrants has increased approximately twentyfold. This represents a new type of threat – a threat which we must stop in its tracks.

As Brussels has failed to address immigration appropriately, Hungary must follow its own path. We shall not allow economic migrants to jeopardise the jobs and livelihoods of Hungarians.

We must make a decision on how Hungary should defend itself against illegal immigrants. We must make a decision on how to limit rapidly rising economic immigration.

Please contact us and give us your response to the questions we are asking. Please complete and return the questionnaire. I am counting on your opinion.

With regards,

**Viktor Orbán**

*Figure 40 An English Translation of the First Page of a Personal Message*

*from the Prime Minister of Hungary, Viktor Orbán.*

Source: <http://www.kormany.hu/en> (Website of the Hungarian government)

According to the first page of the personal message from the Prime Minister Viktor Orbán we note that, first, he mentioned the terror of the Charlie Hebdo incident in Paris and attack in Brussels. Then, he blamed the European Union for not being able to solve the migrant crisis which led to the attacks. Orbán highlighted the term “economic migrants” with the intention to deliver the message that refugees and migrants were coming to Europe to take away the jobs and livelihood of the Hungarians, to take advantage of the country’s welfare system and employment opportunities, while at the same time, neglecting to mention the fact that these refugees and migrants were escaping from war which endangered their lives. Orbán further convinced the Hungarians that they should not follow the European Union directions since the EU had failed to manage the crisis. Orbán reconfirmed that Hungary is an independent state with its own sovereignty and the people have the power to decide on how Hungary should handle the issue. This shows that Orbán was abandoning the foundation values of the European Union that emphasises solidarity among the Member States. It is true that each Member State in the European Union still holds on to its sovereignty, however, actions taken by Orbán did stimulate Euroscepticism, which I think does not help in propagating a better solution. Generally, national consultation aims at collecting feedback about a certain topic to weigh the opinion of the public and conclude on a resolution that should be made. However, in my perspective, Orbán’s messages are filled with fearmongering and scapegoating because at the time of issuing the letter, between January 2015 to May 2015, the topic of the migrant crisis had not been current on the public agenda in Hungary. This means that Orbán intentionally brought the issue to the public domain in order to arouse a stream of xenophobia and

negative sentiments towards refugees and migrants in Hungary. This is the Hungarian government's method of settling the political agenda in the public sphere by using the national budget of taxpayers. The answers to the questions were supposed to represent the public opinion; however, the results were never presented in public. The questions, which shall be discussed next, are rather rhetorical.



**NEMZETI KONZULTÁCIÓ**  
a bevándorlásról és a terrorizmusról

Kérjük, töltsse ki a kérdőívet!

**1]** Sokféle véleményt lehet hallani az erősödő terrorcselekményekkel kapcsolatban. Ön mennyire tartja fontos kérdésnek a terrorizmus térnyerését (a franciaországi vérengzés, az ISIS riasztó cselekményei) a saját élete szempontjából?

☐ Nagyon fontos ☐ Fontos ☐ Nem fontos

**2]** Ön szerint az elkövetkező években lehet-e terrorcselekmény célpontja Magyarország?

☐ Komoly esély van rá ☐ Előfordulhat ☐ Teljesen kizárt

**3]** Vannak, akik szerint a Brüsszel által rosszul kezelt bevándorlás összefüggésben van a terrorizmus térnyerésével. Ön egyetért ezekkel a véleményekkel?

☐ Teljesen egyetérték ☐ Inkább egyetérték ☐ Nem értek egyet

**4]** Tudta-e Ön, hogy a megelőzési bevándorlók törvénytelenné lépik át a magyar határt, és az elmúlt időszakban húszszorosára nőtt a bevándorlók száma Magyarországon?

☐ Igen ☐ Hallottam róla ☐ Nem tudtam

**5]** Sokféle véleményt hallani a bevándorlás kérdésével kapcsolatban. Vannak, akik szerint a megelőzési bevándorlók veszélyeztetik a magyar emberek munkahelyeit és megélhetését. Ön egyetért ezekkel a véleményekkel?

☐ Teljesen egyetérték ☐ Inkább egyetérték ☐ Nem értek egyet

**6]** Vannak, akik szerint Brüsszel politikája a bevándorlás és a terrorizmus kérdésében megbukott, és ezért új megközelítésre van szükség ezekben a kérdésekben. Ön egyetért ezekkel a véleményekkel?

☐ Teljesen egyetérték ☐ Inkább egyetérték ☐ Nem értek egyet

**7]** Támogatná-e Ön a magyar kormányt, hogy Brüsszel megengedő politikájával szemben szigorúbb bevándorlási szabályozást vezessen be?

☐ Igen, teljes mértékben támogatnám ☐ Részben támogatnám ☐ Nem támogatnám

**8]** Támogatná-e Ön a magyar kormányt, hogy szigorúbb szabályokat vezessen be, ami alapján őrizetbe vehetők a magyar határt törvénytelenül átlépő bevándorlók?

☐ Igen, teljes mértékben támogatnám ☐ Részben támogatnám ☐ Nem támogatnám

**9]** Egyetért-e Ön azzal a véleménnyel, hogy a magyar határt törvénytelenül átlépő bevándorlókat a lehető legrövidebb időn belül vissza kell fordítani a saját hazájukba?

☐ Teljesen egyetérték ☐ Inkább egyetérték ☐ Nem értek egyet

**10]** Egyetért-e Ön azzal, hogy a megelőzési bevándorlók, amíg Magyarországon tartózkodnak, saját maguk biztosítsák az ellátási költségeiket?

☐ Teljesen egyetérték ☐ Inkább egyetérték ☐ Nem értek egyet

**11]** Egyetért-e Ön azzal, hogy a bevándorlás elleni küzdelem legjobb eszköze, ha az Európai Unió tagországaik segítik azon országok fejlesztését, ahonnan a bevándorlók érkeznek?

☐ Teljesen egyetérték ☐ Inkább egyetérték ☐ Nem értek egyet

**12]** Egyetért-e Ön a magyar kormánnyal abban, hogy a bevándorlás helyett inkább a magyar családok és a születendő gyermekek támogatására van szükség?

☐ Teljesen egyetérték ☐ Inkább egyetérték ☐ Nem értek egyet

**A KÉRDŐÍV VISSZAKÜLDÉSE INGYENES.**  
**HATÁRIDŐ: 2015. JÚLIUS 1.**

Adatvédelmi tájékoztató: Az Ön név- és lakcímadatát a Közigazgatási és Elektronikus Közszolgáltatások Központi Hivatala (1095 Budapest, Balázs Béla utca 35., a továbbiakban: KEKÖK) által vezetett személyes- és lakcímtérképtartásból a Miniszterelnökség (1055 Budapest, Kossuth tér 1-3.) és a polgárok személyi adatainak és lakcímének nyilvántartásáról szóló 1992. évi LXVI. Törvény 16/A. §-a alapján, személyre szóló tájékoztatás, véleménykérés céljából igényelheti. A Miniszterelnökség a küldemények megismeréséhez, adatfeldolgozásához a KEKÖK-t, kértbiztosítóját a Magyar Posta Zrt.-t bízza meg. Személyes adatait a Miniszterelnökség az adatok átvételétől számított 90 napon belül törli. Személyes adatainak kitöltését a KEKÖK-nál, valamint bármely fővárosi és megyei kormányhivatali járási (fővárosi kerületi) hivatalnál kezdeményezheti. Az adatkezelést a Nemzeti Adatvédelmi és Információszabadság Hatóság nyilvántartásba vette.

Feladó: Miniszterelnökség

Figure 41 The Second Page of the National Consultation Letter Issued by the Hungarian government, a questionnaire.

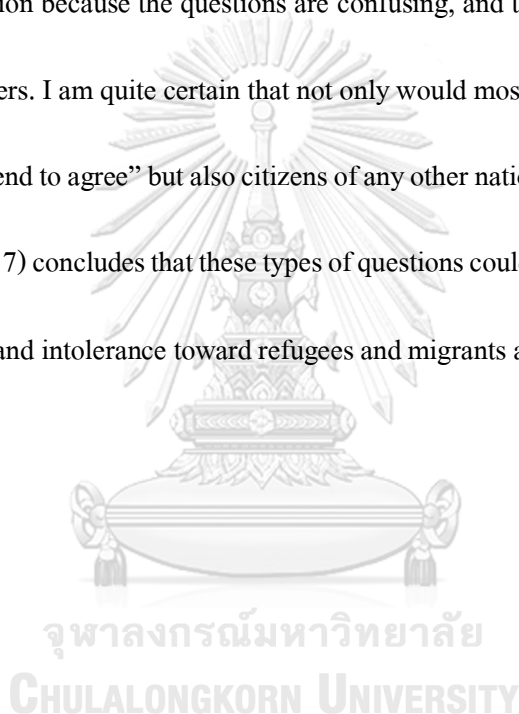
Source: Europa.eu<sup>40</sup>

<sup>40</sup> European Commission. (2015). Hungary: Government's National Consultation on Immigration and Terrorism

Creates Widespread Debate. Retrieved from <https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/news/hungary-governments-national-consultation-on-immigration-and-terrorism-creates-widespread-debate>

Apart from the biased message sent by Prime Minister Orbán on the first page of the consultation letter, I find that the questionnaire on the second page also carried a high degree of misleading. The English translation of the questionnaire is shown in figure 42. Almost every question is designed to influence respondents on the particular issue of refugee and migrant crisis by misguiding them with various discourses. The letter and questionnaire could be interpreted as an agenda and setting. Attached to the first page of the letter is a questionnaire survey in which twelve questions are asked with an option to answering by choosing among ready-made answers (Marton, 2017). By analysing the English translation of the questionnaire, I find that out of the three answers to each question, there are two negative and one positive answer. However, there are always two answers that are in favour of supporting the government's negative policy towards the refugees and migrants. The three answers to the questions are: first, "fully agree"; second, "tend to agree"; and the third is "do not agree". The limitation is that with only three answers, two out of them in favour of the government, leaves the respondents with not many choices but to either "agree" or "tend to agree". To answer "do not agree" tends to be an extreme choice considering the proposed issue directly affects their lives. Besides, there is no space for participants to further explain their answers, for instance, questions number 7 and 11 give no options for the participants but rather ready-made choices. A pattern of repetition is seen throughout the questionnaire, the biased tone towards refugees and migrants is repeated in the same words or phrases a few times to embed negativity. Repetition is seen more as a rhetoric that could be in the form of a full sentence, a word, or a phrase, repeated to emphasize its significance. Moreover, question number 12 appears

to be set to ask the respondents about a moral dilemma, forcing participants to choose between either, only to support refugees and migrants or to support the Hungarian government. Psychologically, people tend to choose answers which support their own country rather than foreigners. In my opinion, these type of questions does not reflect accurate answers of the participants. Therefore, it is preposterous for the Hungarian government to claim that the answers represent public opinion because the questions are confusing, and they mislead the participants to pre-determined answers. I am quite certain that not only would most Hungarians choose to answer “I fully agree” or “I tend to agree” but also citizens of any other nations would have given the same answers. Marton (2017) concludes that these types of questions could contribute to the already high existing xenophobia and intolerance toward refugees and migrants among the Hungarians.



**NATIONAL CONSULTATION  
on immigration and terrorism**

Published by the Prime Minister's Office

**Please complete this questionnaire.**

**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

**2] Do you think that Hungary could be the target of an act of terror in the next few years?**

There is a very real chance    It could occur                      Out of the question

**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

**5] We hear different views on the issue of immigration. There are some who think that economic migrants jeopardise the jobs and livelihoods of Hungarians. Do you agree?**

I fully agree                      I tend to agree                      I do not agree

**6] There are some who believe that Brussels' policy on immigration and terrorism has failed, and that we therefore need a new approach to these questions. Do you agree?**

I fully agree                      I tend to agree                      I do not agree

**7] Would you support the Hungarian Government in the introduction of more stringent immigration regulations, in contrast to Brussels' lenient policy?**

Yes, I would fully support the Government  
I would partially support the Government  
I would not support the Government

**8] Would you support the Hungarian government in the introduction of more stringent regulations, according to which migrants illegally crossing the Hungarian border could be taken into custody?**

Yes, I would fully support the Government  
I would partially support the Government  
I would not support the Government

**9] Do you agree with the view that migrants illegally crossing the Hungarian border should be returned to their own countries within the shortest possible time?**

I fully agree                      I tend to agree                      I do not agree

**10] Do you agree with the concept that economic migrants themselves should cover the costs associated with their time in Hungary?**

I fully agree                      I tend to agree                      I do not agree

**11] Do you agree that the best means of combating immigration is for Member States of the European Union to assist in the development of the countries from which migrants arrive?**

I fully agree                      I tend to agree                      I do not agree

**12] Do you agree with the Hungarian government that support should be focused more on Hungarian families and the children they can have, rather than on immigration?**

I fully agree                      I tend to agree                      I do not agree

*Figure 42 An English Translation of National Consultation Questionnaire on Refugees and Terrorism*

Source: <http://www.kormany.hu/en> (Website of the Hungarian government)



After the Hungarians were bombarded by Orbán and Fidesz's hate campaigns advertised in newspapers, TV, radio ads, and billboards as I have shown above, there was a wave of resistance from those who did not agree with the government's anti-refugee and migrant campaign. A satirical political party in Hungary named Magyar Kétfarkú Kutya Párt – MKKP (Two-Tailed Dog Party) launched a counter campaign to poke fun at the government. The MKKP built a campaign against its Prime Minister's controversial anti-immigrant referendum on the EU relocation scheme which was held on 2 October 2016. The MKKP launched a slogan mimicking the government's billboards. The message was directed at Prime Minister Orbán, for example, the statement "If you come to Hungary" campaign series was put up as "If you are Hungary's Prime Minister, you must respect our laws!". The MKKP also used a social media blog named Vastagbőr (Thick Skin) to create public awareness on Orbán's rhetoric and his propaganda on refugees and migrants. From my perspective, Orbán actively spread his anti-refugee and migrant message during the time before the referendum because he set this as a strategy to obtain longer-term political benefits from the campaign that played with deep xenophobia and islamophobia and the creation of distrust toward the Europe Union. This was an opportunity for Orbán and his Fidesz party to spread fearmongering among the population about refugees and the migrant crisis which led the party to gain a stronger domestic support.



Figure 43 Examples of Campaign Against Anti-Immigrant Rhetoric by Two Tailed Dog Party

Source: Telegraph.co.uk<sup>41</sup>

After the first campaign against refugees and migrants, Prime Minister Viktor Orbán and his ruling government continued with their second campaign of “Did you know?”, with the aim of creating Eurosceptic sentiments, a distrust in the European Union. The second phase campaign was focused mainly on the messages against Brussels. After the first campaign of “If you come to Hungary”, the Hungarian government amplified its political propaganda with a second campaign

<sup>41</sup> Nolan, D. (2015). Come to Hungary - We're Already Working in London' Says pro-Immigration Billboard Campaign. Retrieved from [www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/hungary/11679642/Come-to-Hungary-were-already-working-in-London-says-pro-immigration-billboard-campaign.html](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/hungary/11679642/Come-to-Hungary-were-already-working-in-London-says-pro-immigration-billboard-campaign.html).

targeting Brussels, using the concept of populism: the people versus the elite (Judis & Teixeira, 2002). Prior to the referendum on the European Union's proposed relocation and resettlement scheme, Orbán continued to convince people on how elites in Brussels had forced Hungary to accept a mandatory quota system. He succeeded in persuading 98% of the participants to vote “reject” for the relocation scheme proposed by the EU even though the validity ballots were found at 40.4% out of a 50% threshold.<sup>42</sup> It is clear from the campaign series that Orbán’s government attempted to connect the refugees and migrant crisis with violence and terrorism. The Hungarian government claimed that, with the help from the European Union, refugees and migrants were able to enter Hungary, and that would lead to more terrorist attacks and economic downfall.

Staykova, Otova, and Ivanova (2016) argued that anti-elitism was a populist strategy used for defending and acting as a protector of interests on behalf of “the people”. One of the main characteristics of populism is anti-elitism, which was strongly evident in the case of populist Hungarian politician Prime Minister Viktor Orbán. Similar to Staykova, Otova, and Ivanova (2016), Mudde defined populism as:

an ideology that considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogeneous and antagonistic groups, ‘the pure people’ versus ‘the corrupt elite’, and which argues that politics should be an expression of the *volonté générale* (general will) of the people. (Mudde, 2004: 543).

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<sup>42</sup> BBC. (2016). Hungary PM claims EU migrant quota referendum victory. Retrieved from <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-37528325>

Under these circumstances, Hungary can be considered one of the best cases to explain the characteristics of populism. After the examination of the second campaign against Brussels, it is obvious that Orbán had delivered a picture of the European Union representing a corrupted elite which, according to Orbán, poses a global threat to the nation through a relocation scheme and open-door policy for refugees and migrants. There were two campaign series named “Did you know?” and “Stop Brussels”. In the “Did you know?” campaign, Prime Minister Viktor Orbán portrays the European Union as a bureaucracy dominated by pro-migration elites who want to open the door for refugees to destroy Europe. A true villain. On the other hand, he puts himself as a defender of Hungary who is doing everything he can, in order to protect the original pure people of Hungary. This was shown through advertisements on billboards, television, radio, online and prints, with the aim to inform the public about the possibly negative consequences of the acceptance of the EU’s quota system.<sup>43</sup> The messages were set to convince people that if they vote accept to the quota scheme, it would lead to an increased number of violent and terrorism attacks. In another way, the Hungarian government began the campaign to prepare voters on the subject of the referendum as it can be noticed that a campaign has underlined and highlighted the date of the referendum as a reminder, a strategy to set the deadline for voters that their decisions on the subject of migration must be made on this 2nd October referendum. At the bottom of each billboard there

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<sup>43</sup> Budapest Business Journal. (2016). Hungarian Gov't Attacks 'Migrants' in New Campaign. Retrieved from [https://bbj.hu/politics/hungarian-govt-attacks-migrants-in-new-campaign\\_119453](https://bbj.hu/politics/hungarian-govt-attacks-migrants-in-new-campaign_119453).

follows the statement: “Referendum, 2016. October 2”. The example of the campaign is shown in the figure below.



*Figure 44 A Billboard Campaign Launched in Hungary for the Run-Up Referendum on Refugees on 2 October 2016*

Photo Credit: Krisztina Rozgonyi. <https://univiennamedialab.wordpress.com/>

The billboards are intentionally link migration with terrorism and crime to generate hate against migrants. BBC reported that the Hungarian government had spent €10m (£8.5m; \$11.2m) in the campaign using public money (Thorpe, 2016). The messages in “Did you know?” campaigns appearing on the billboards are translated:

1. Did you know that since the beginning of the migrant crisis, more than 300 people have died in Europe in terror attacks?
2. Did you know that since the start of the migration crisis there has been a sharp increase in the cases of harassment against women in Europe?
3. Did you know that the Paris attack was carried out by immigrants?

4. Did you know that Brussels wants to deport the equivalent of a town of migrants to Hungary?
5. Did you know that nearly one million immigrants want to come to Europe from Libya alone?
6. Did you know that there has been less money spent on healthcare since the beginning of the migrant crisis?



Figure 45 The Hungarian Government's "Do you know?" Campaign

Source: BBC (Thorpe, 2016)

Each billboard appears to present facts concerning the problems caused by migrants. In fact, there are no reference sources for those "facts" presented. These are rhetoric leading people to the understanding and quick conclusions of: do you want to be killed in your own house? Do you want your town to be taken over by Islamists? Do you want your women to be harmed and raped? Do you want foreigners to take your jobs? To take the benefit system which belongs to you? All of these conclusions would lead to the answer to the question for the referendum on 2 October, that is: "Do you want the European Union to be able to mandate the obligatory resettlement of non-

Hungarian citizens into Hungary even without the approval of the National Assembly?” (European Parliament, 2016). The question implied: do you want bureaucrats in Brussels telling you, the proud Hungarian people, what to do? This is one of the examples of Orbán and the Fidesz’s rhetoric on the migrant crisis issue.

The result of the Hungarian national referendum on 2 October 2016 was that, more than 98% of participants voted against the EU’s relocation quota even though the result was invalid due to the number of voters being less than 50% (Kingsley, 2016). However, Prime Minister Viktor Orbán exaggerated the results and set the vote as a triumph. The government claimed that the Hungarians have decided that they do not want to receive the quota of migrants. The campaign, though it failed to gain 50% of electorate, successfully convinced those Hungarians who went out to vote. The results showed that the campaign “Did you know?” did not only succeed in negating people’s attitude but also functioned as a propaganda that could shape voters’ behaviour. As a matter of fact, the EU scheme would relocate just only 1,294 refugees from Greece and Italy to Hungary, the number was so small considering the capacity of Hungary. Therefore, the referendum was purposely conducted to pursue a political agenda rather than seek accurate answers. To conclude, right-wing populist leaders of Hungary systemically and strategically transformed the country to an illiberal state which would later lead to the unstable future of liberal democracy within Hungary herself.

Despite receiving funding from the European Union, Prime Minister Orbán and his ruling government conducted the “Stop Brussels” campaign. Ironically, they have used the train line,



which was partly funded by EU budget, as a billboard to advertise their nationalist message (Figure 46). A national consultation attached with a letter from Prime Minister Viktor Orbán was sent out to Hungarian households in year 2017, entitled “Let’s Stop Brussels!” (Állítsuk meg Brüsszelt!). By this time, the readers would recognize that the Hungarian government used the same method and pattern as they had done in the “If you come to Hungary” campaign and a national consultation regarding migrants’ issue. Only this time the content was changed to contain an anti-EU undertone.



*Figure 46 The Hungarian Government’s “Stop Brussels” Campaign*

Source: <https://euobserver.com/political/142758>

A letter of introduction from Prime Minister Viktor Orbán is shown in figure 47 and the translation of the letter is:



Esteemed Compatriots!

I am writing to you because we again stand before very big decisions. Brussels has come forward with several plans that endanger our national independence and the security of the country. The bureaucrats want to force us to annul the utility-fee cuts and to receive illegal immigrants. If it was up to them, they would deprive us of the opportunity to decide ourselves regarding tax cuts and the means of job creation. Because the government would like greater transparency regarding the issue of foreign-supported agent organizations, we can expect heavy attacks in this domain as well. We must stop Brussels! We will not permit them to make decisions above our heads. We must defend our borders, while we must prevent settlement [of migrants in Hungary]. We also insist that we keep the regulation of taxes, wages and utility fees in our own hands. We must make the networks sustained from foreign money transparent as well. The help of the Hungarian people is needed in order for us to successfully hinder the dangerous plans of Brussels. This is why I am asking that you to stand up for national independence as well, assist the government in its struggle and to fill out the enclosed questionnaire.

Hungary is depending on You!

Sincerely,

Viktor Orbán,

The Prime Minister of Hungary

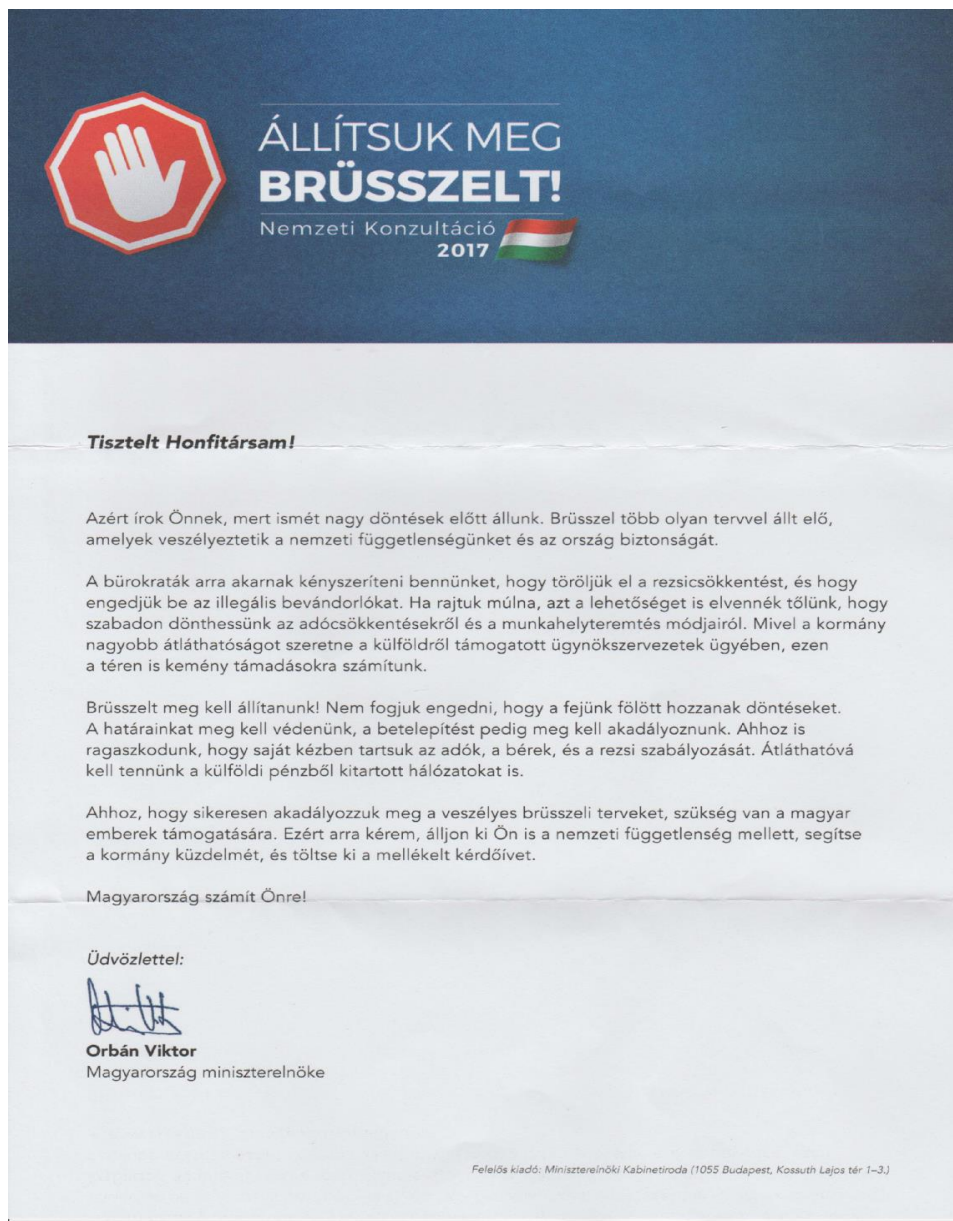


Figure 47 An Introduction Letter from Prime Minister Viktor Orbán in “Let’s Stop Brussels”

*National Consultation in 2017.*

Source: <https://theorangefiles.hu/the-lets-stop-brussels-national-consultation/>

In my opinion, the introduction letter from Prime Minister Viktor Orbán reflects his use of rhetoric and misleading messages, especially an open accusation of the European Union. For example,

*“Brussels has come forward with several plans that endanger our national independence and the security of the country”*. Firstly, these “several plans” are not explained and it is a claim without any evidence shown to the public. Orbán blames the Union stating that it would endanger Hungary’s national independence and security while in fact the number of the relocation is only around 1,200 migrants. By using the word “the bureaucrats”, Orbán means the management level at the European Union, which is made with an intention to link the EU to the corrupt elites who are working against the people. Orbán accuses the European Union by stating that the EU “wants to force us to receive illegal immigrants” while neglecting the solidarity concept of the European Union and is only concerned about the burdens that Italy and Greece have to take. He instigates a reign of terror with the EU as a villain so that people would stand up to “Stop Brussels!”. Orbán misled the people to an understanding that the European Union has abandoned nation state’s sovereignty by “making decisions above our heads”. He uses strong words to stimulate anger and fear among the people. Orbán, then, claims that Hungary’s borders must be defended to prevent the settlement of migrants in Hungary, omitting the fact that those migrants are escaping from war in another region and that Hungary is not in the war time that the country has to defend its border. In the final part of the letter, he writes that only the Hungarian people can decide for the incumbent government to put up a fight against the EU’s secret plans. It appears that Orbán and the government is relying on the people’s decision and assistance. The government acts according to the expression of the “*volonté générale*”, which in fact, is the will that has already been pre-planned. Enclosed with the letter is the questionnaire which is designed to get public opinion on how Hungary should

act regarding various issues posed by the European Union. Each of the question provides only two answers, and those two answers are clearly extreme. The respondents are only able to choose either black or white without any chance to further explain their answer. Extreme response bias could possibly create a tendency for respondents to answer in the extreme even if they do not hold extreme views. The pattern of the campaign “If you come to Hungary” is being reproduced here again. Moreover, a total of HUF 4.242 billion is confirmed to be the amount spent on the “Let’s Stop Brussels” national propaganda. The Orbán government spent HUF 2 billion on press promotion, HUF 987.9 million on TV ads, HUF 693.6 million on online ads, HUF 316.3 million on ads in public spaces, and HUF 244.8 million on radio ads (Keszthelyi, 2017). The questionnaire (Figure 48) consisted of six questions. The translation of the questionnaire is shown in table 6.

*Table 6 A Translation of Let’s Stop Brussels National Consultation*

| No.    | Question                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|--------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1.     | Brussels is preparing to make a dangerous move. It wants to force us to annul the utility-fee cuts. What do you think Hungary should do?                                                                                                            |
| Answer | <p><b>a.</b> We should defend the utility-fee cuts. We should insist that Hungarian energy prices be determined in Hungary.</p> <p><b>b.</b> We should accept the plan of Brussels and rely on large companies to determine utility-fee prices.</p> |
| 2.     | Terrorist attacks have followed one after another in Europe over the recent period. In spite of this, Brussels wants to force Hungary to receive illegal immigrants. What do you think Hungary should do?                                           |
| Answer | <b>a.</b> In the interest of the security of the Hungarian people, illegal immigrants should be placed under supervision until the authorities can make a decision regarding their cases.                                                           |

|        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|--------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|        | <b>b.</b> We should permit illegal immigrants to move freely in Hungary.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| 3.     | By now it has become apparent that, in addition to human traffickers, certain international organizations have encouraged illegal immigrants on their way to Hungary to engage in unlawful activity. What do you think Hungary should do?                                                                                   |
| Answer | <p><b>a.</b> Activities that assist illegal immigration—such as human trafficking and the popularization of illegal immigration—should be punished.</p> <p><b>b.</b> We should accept that there exist certain international organizations that can encourage the circumvention of Hungarian laws without consequences.</p> |
| 4.     | More and more foreign-supported organizations are operating in Hungary with the objective of interfering in the internal affairs of our homeland in a non-transparent way. Their operations could endanger our independence. What do you think Hungary should do?                                                           |
| Answer | <p><b>a.</b> We should compel them to register themselves, disclosing the country or organization on behalf of which they are functioning and the objective of their operations.</p> <p><b>b.</b> We should permit them to continue to conduct their risky activities without supervision.</p>                              |
| 5.     | Job creation has been successful in Hungary over the past years because we took our own pathway. However, Brussels is attacking the job-creation measures. What do you think Hungary should do?                                                                                                                             |
| Answer | <p><b>a.</b> We Hungarians should continue to decide regarding the future of the Hungarian economy.</p> <p><b>b.</b> Let Brussels decide what should be done in the economy.</p>                                                                                                                                            |
| 6.     | <p>Hungary has committed itself to cut taxes. Brussels is now attacking our homeland because of this.</p> <p>What do you think Hungary should do?</p>                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Answer | <b>a.</b> We should insist that we Hungarians are able to decide on tax cuts.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |

b. We should accept that Brussels dictates the magnitude of taxes.

Source: <https://theorangefiles.hu/the-lets-stop-brussels-national-consultation/>

**ÁLLÍTSUK MEG BRÜSSZELT!**

Nemzeti Konzultáció 2017

**Kérjük, töltsd ki a kérdőívet!**

- Brüsszel veszélyes lépésre készül. A rezsi-csökkentés eltörlésére akar kényszeríteni bennünket.  
Ön szerint mit tegyen Magyarország?  
☐ a. Védjük meg a rezsi-csökkentést. Ragaszkodjunk ahhoz, hogy a magyar energiaárakat Magyarországon határozzuk meg.  
☐ b. Fogadjuk el Brüsszel tervét, és bízzuk a nagyvállalatokra a rezsidíjak megállapítását.
- Az elmúlt időszakban egymást követték a terrortámadások Európában. Ennek ellenére Brüsszel kényszeríteni akarja Magyarországot, hogy az illegális bevándorlókat engedjük be.  
Ön szerint mit tegyen Magyarország?  
☐ a. A magyar emberek biztonsága érdekében felügyelet alá kell helyezni az illegális bevándorlókat addig, amíg a hatóságok döntenek ügyükben.  
☐ b. Engedjük, hogy az illegális bevándorlók szabadon mozoghassanak Magyarországon.
- Mára kiderült, hogy a Magyarországra tartó illegális bevándorlókat az embercsempészek mellett bizonyos nemzetközi szervezetek is törvénytelen tevékenységre ösztönzik.  
Ön szerint mit tegyen Magyarország?  
☐ a. Az illegális bevándorlást segítő tevékenységeket – mint az embercsempészet és az illegális bevándorlás népszerűsítése – büntetni kell.  
☐ b. Fogadjuk el, hogy létezhetnek olyan nemzetközi szervezetek, melyek következmények nélkül buzdíthatnak a magyar törvények kijátszására.
- Egyre több külföldről támogatott szervezet működik Magyarországon azzal a céllal, hogy hazánk belügyeibe átláthatatlan módon beavatkozzon. Ezek működése veszélyeztetheti függetlenségünket.  
Ön szerint mit tegyen Magyarország?  
☐ a. Kötelezzük őket arra, hogy regisztráltak legyenek, vállalva, hogy melyik ország vagy szervezet megbízásából, és milyen céllal tevékenykednek.  
☐ b. Hagyjuk, hogy továbbra is ellenőrizetlenül fejthessék ki kockázatos tevékenységüket.
- Magyarországon az elmúlt években azért volt eredményes a munkahelyteremtés, mert a saját utunkat jártuk. Brüsszel azonban támadja a munkahelyteremtő intézkedéseket.  
Ön szerint mit tegyen Magyarország?  
☐ a. A magyar gazdaság jövőjéről továbbra is nekünk, magyaroknak kell döntenünk.  
☐ b. Döntse el Brüsszel, hogy mit kell tenni a gazdaságban.
- Magyarország elkötelezte magát az adócsökkentés mellett. Brüsszel most emiatt is támadja hazánkat.  
Ön szerint mit tegyen Magyarország?  
☐ a. Ragaszkodjunk ahhoz, hogy mi, magyarok döntsünk az adócsökkentésekről.  
☐ b. Törödjünk bele, hogy Brüsszel diktálja az adók mértékét.

**A kérdőív visszaküldése ingyenes.  
Feladási határidő: május 20.**

Feladat kiadó: Miniszterelnöki Kabinetiroda (1055 Budapest, Kossuth Lajos tér 1-3.)

Figure 48 “Let’s Stop Brussels” National Consultation Launched by the Hungarian Government

Source Credit Photo: <https://theorangefiles.hu/the-lets-stop-brussels-national-consultation/>

After a series of: “If you come to Hungary”, “Did you know?”, and the “Stop Brussels” campaign, the Hungarian government proceeded to its next campaign in October 2017 targeting

George Soros. The government launched a new campaign of “Stop Soros”, which targeted George Soros, a new political victim of Prime Minister Orbán’s propaganda. George Soros is a Hungarian-Jewish born businessman who survived Nazi-occupied Hungary, who later migrated to America. He is known as a very successful investor and a billionaire philanthropist.

The accusation against George Soros reflects Prime Minister Viktor Orbán’s tactic of formulating a state-enemy and an ethnic nationalism with antisemitism tropes. Soros was framed as the hidden master of all non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and being the force in the European Union that manipulates the agenda of migrant crisis (Gergely, 2015; Torreblanca, 2020). This plot is the reproduction of a conspiracy theory widely read and believed by Russian forgery from 1903 in “the Protocols of the Elders of Zion”, the document in which a group of Jews was accused of secretly manipulating the world by giving support to political and economic movements, both capitalist and communist. The anti-Soros rhetoric is linked with the Freemasons, the Illuminati, and Rothschild banking (Kalmar, 2020). This plot seems to be suitable for Soros because he is a Hungarian-Jew capitalist. Soros is also a former hedge fund manager and currency speculator who made billions by weakening the economy in several countries (Walker, 2017). The prosperity and success of Soros allowed Orbán to exploit the antisemitism discourse by reviving centuries-old stereotypes of Jews as greedy or being a moneylending at high rates of interest. It was the same method as the Nazis, or any other anti-Semites, have employed throughout history. This clarifies why Soros has become an important target and was demonized as an evil Jew. Moreover, Soros has been consistently promoting democracy, human rights, participatory capitalism, and political

liberalism. He founded his “Open Society Foundations” in 1993, with the stated aim of supporting individuals and organizations across the world to fight for freedom of expression, advancing justice, transparency, accountable government, and promote justice and equality. He also founded a number of organizations that have been working on civil society, such as Open Society foundations (OSF) and Central European University (CEU) since the end of the Cold War. Soros’s foundations are always in support of minority rights, civil-society initiatives in Hungary and across Central and Eastern Europe as well as supporting programs of immigrants and cultural assimilation through transnational organizations. This has made him a symbolic figure who stood up against Hungary’s ultra-conservative right-wing nationalist government led by Prime Minister Viktor Orbán. In summary, the demonization of ethnic minorities is often preceded by oppressive governments. In the case of Hungary, Prime Minister Viktor Orbán and the Fidesz-ruling government chose to use antisemitic tropes to demonize George Soros because he is a successful Hungarian-Jew, who is perfect fit with the stereotypes of Jews. Orbán, then, has an opportunity to act as a defender of the Hungarians from the Jews. This opened a window for him to exploit hatred in order to gain political supports.

In June 2018, the Hungarian parliament passed a legislation that criminalises any individual or group that offers help to illegal refugees and migrants. This new bill was clearly passed in order to restrict the act of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and human rights groups related to the migrant issue. Within this Stop Soros law, individuals or groups that help illegal refugees and migrants will receive a prison sentence. In addition, the parliament amended a



law stating that an “alien population” would not be granted permission to stay in Hungary.<sup>44</sup> This law also supported the previous referendum as a strike on the European Union over its refugees and migrant relocation scheme. To exaggerate the difficulties of the situation, the Hungarian government released another national consultation on the issue of George Soros. Prime Minister Viktor Orbán and the government openly announced through various media that George Soros has a plan of helping the elites in the European Union to bring the refugees and migrants into Hungary. Minister of State Szabolcs Takács at the Prime Minister Orbán’s Cabinet Office stated there was a link between the European Commission and Soros network. He said that:

This elite (*Brussels*) want to turn the European Union into an immigrant continent – a mission in which they have found a partner in the Hungarian opposition (*by this he means George Soros*). Mr. Timmermans’ (*Frans Timmermans, the Vice-President of the EU Commission*) performance today provides clear proof that he regularly meets George Soros and the NGOs supported by the Soros network. This is the most tangible evidence that what we are saying is reality. The EU institutions that have been taken over by pro-migration forces fear that during the European Parliament elections the anti-migration forces will gain in strength, and therefore they are trying everything they can to force their policies onto Member States. They are subjecting

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<sup>44</sup> Hungary passes anti-immigrant 'Stop Soros' laws. (20 June 2018). *Theguardian.com*.

countries opposing this to political blackmail, financial threats and manipulative pressure.

(Szabolcs Takács at the Prime Minister Orbán's Cabinet Office,

February 20, 2019)<sup>45</sup>

According to the statement, the Hungarian government is undoubtedly accusing the European Union over the migrant crisis. Takács tried to claim that the EU's proposed scheme was done with the purpose of bombarding Europe with refugees and migrants by elites in Brussels who are in cooperation with George Soros. Another apparent example of the anti-Soros campaign is that the Hungarian government had put efforts to shut down the Central European University (CEU) on an accusation of corruption in Hungarian society. As a result, Soros decided to re-open a CEU campus in Austria and move the headquarters of the Open Society Foundations (OSF) out of Budapest to Berlin, Germany.<sup>46</sup> In addition to this, Orbán's government's condemnation on Soros bombarded the nationwide media again. The "Stop Soros" campaign is shown in figures below.

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<sup>45</sup> Gulyás, G. (2019). The link between the Soros network and the European Commission is obvious. Retrieved from <https://www.kormany.hu/en/prime-minister-s-office/news/the-link-between-the-soros-network-and-the-european-commission-is-obvious>

<sup>46</sup> Donadio, R. (2018). How Hungary Ran George Soros Out of Town. Retrieved from [www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2018/05/orban-european-union-soros/560480/](http://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2018/05/orban-european-union-soros/560480/).



Figure 49 A Government Billboard Displaying a Campaign Against George Soros in October 2017 (1)

*Translated Caption: “Don’t let Soros have the last laugh.”*

Source: <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-hungary-soros/hungarian-government-to-end-anti-soros-poster-campaign-spokesman-idUSKBN19Y0UQ>



Figure 50 A Government Billboard Displaying a Campaign Against George Soros in October 2017 (2)

*Translated Caption: “They would tear down the fence together.”*

Source: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/04/hungary-elections-populist-test-europe-180402085924266.html>

Apart from the billboard campaign, the Hungarian government has implanted the notion of antisemitism among the population by sending out another national consultation letter to Hungarian households. This is a similar pattern of the consultation letter discussed earlier in this chapter. This

time, the national consultation focuses on Soros. The tone was set to call for preventive measures during this dangerous moment that was, as claimed by the Hungarian government, unleashed by Soros. Orbán's government accused Soros of cooperating with the elites in Brussels using the mechanism of European policy to force Member States to open a window for foreign international organizations with a plan of settling a million migrants in Europe with the money support for each immigrant funded by taxpayers. Orbán's most criticized speech of the migrants is the "Trojan wooden horse" of terrorism.<sup>47</sup> In this speech, Orbán accused Soros of his intention to weaken the soul of European Christian society by allowing the refugees into Europe, to hollow Europe from the inside out in the same way as the Trojan horse. Orbán further convinces his citizens that Soros's humanitarian activities on refugees and migrants were indoctrinating Hungarians into agreeing on mass migration. In conclusion, George Soros was demonized as a billionaire who collaborated closely with the corrupted elites in Brussels in order to allow a flood of Muslim refugees into the region. Europe would become unrecognizable if Soros and his allies succeeded in opening Europe's borders. He convinced his people that:

They want to take our country away. Opposition parties in the service of foreign interests want to come to power. They want to give power to opposition politicians in the pay of foreigners so that they can demolish the fence and accept from the hand of Brussels the compulsory settlement quota,

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<sup>47</sup> Wintour, P. (2017). Hungary to detain all asylum seekers in container camps. Retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/mar/07/-hungary-to-detain-all-asylum-seekers-in-container-camps>

and in this way turn Hungary into a country of immigrants in order to serve the financial and power interests of their clients.

(Viktor Orbán in his final speech of the campaign, April 6th, 2018)<sup>48</sup>

As per the above statement, Orbán exaggerated that the elites in Brussels want to take Hungary away from the Hungarians by cooperating with opposition politicians and the funding provided by George Soros. Brussels, the opposition politicians, and Soros, would bring migrants into Hungary through an open-door policy and the relocation scheme. Hungary will be full of migrants because of Soros's money and the interests of the clients in Brussels. This is when Orbán set up a heroic scene to convince the Hungarians to believe that in order to prevent Hungary from the elites in Brussels and Soros, only he and the Fidesz party's hard policies on migrants can protect the country from these foreign threats. In order to do so, it implied that the Fidesz party and Orbán must be the government. It appears that Orbán has given the decision power to the people of Hungary as they are the ones who could determine the fate of the country. However, this is a populist technique of creating the politics of fear in order to achieve a hidden political agenda which in this case is to win an election so that the incumbent government would be able to strengthen its domestic political power. A national consultation is generally considered as a political mobilization tool concealed as public opinion. A translated version of questionnaire in Hungary's national consultation on George Soros is shown in table 7.

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<sup>48</sup> Kormany.hu. (2018). Prime Minister Viktor Orbán's speech at the final Fidesz election campaign event. Retrieved from <https://www.kormany.hu/en/the-prime-minister/the-prime-minister-s-speeches/prime-minister-viktor-orban-s-speech-at-the-final-fidesz-election-campaign-event>

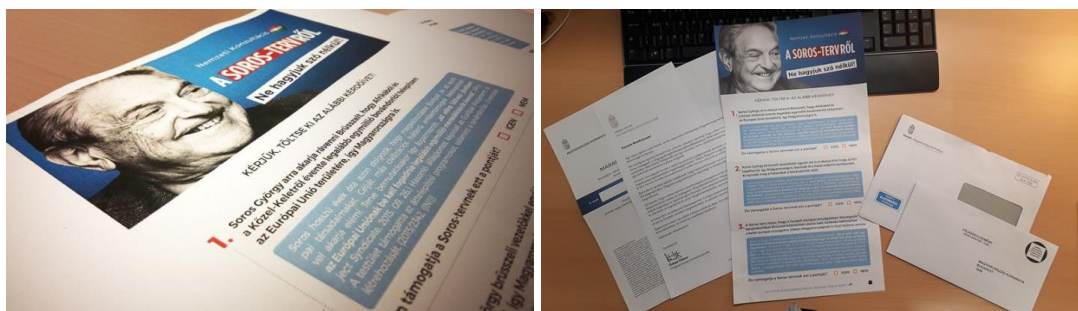


Figure 51 A National Consultation Letter on Soros's Plan

Source: <http://abouthungary.hu/news-in-brief/national-consultation-on-the-soros-plan/>

Table 7 Hungary National Consultation Questionnaire on Soros's Plan

| No. | Questions                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|-----|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1.  | George Soros wants to convince Brussels to resettle at least one million immigrants from Africa and the Middle East annually on the territory of the European Union, including Hungary as well.                                                  |
|     | Do you support this point of the Soros plan? YES NO                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| 2.  | George Soros, together with leaders in Brussels, also plan to have the member states of the EU, including Hungary, take down the border protection fences and open the borders for immigrants.                                                   |
|     | Do you support this point of the Soros plan? YES NO                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| 3.  | It is part of the Soros' plan that Brussels redistributes immigrants gathered in Western European countries on a mandatory basis, referring in particular to Eastern European countries. Hungary would be required to take part in this as well. |
|     | Do you support this point of the Soros plan? YES NO                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| 4.  | Based on the Soros' plan, Brussels should require every member state, including Hungary, to pay 9 million HUF in mandatory state aid for every immigrant.                                                                                        |
|     | Do you support this point of the Soros plan? YES NO                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| 5.  | George Soros would also like to see migrants receive lighter sentences for the crimes they commit.                                                                                                                                               |
|     | Do you support this point of the Soros plan? YES NO                                                                                                                                                                                              |

|    |                                                                                                                                                                                   |     |    |
|----|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|
| 6. | The goal of the Soros' plan is to diminish the importance of the language and culture of European countries in order to make the integration of illegal immigrants happen sooner. |     |    |
|    | Do you support this point of the Soros plan?                                                                                                                                      | YES | NO |
| 7. | It is part of the Soros' plan to launch political attacks on countries objecting to immigration and impose strict penalties on them.                                              |     |    |
|    | Do you support this point of the Soros' plan?                                                                                                                                     | YES | NO |

Source: Cabinet Office of the Prime Minister (1055 Budapest, Kossuth Lajos tér 1–3.)

AboutHungary.hu<sup>49</sup>

Hungary shifted more to right-wing conservatism and nationalism; the Hungarian government went beyond an advertisement campaign to the passing of a law. The parliament decided to pass a Stop Soros law in June 2018. The purpose of this law was to strictly prohibit providing any kind of assistance to undocumented immigrants by individuals and organizations.<sup>50</sup> This is another case of how Orbán's government has transformed the country to the extreme right. This bill means the Hungarian government would have additional power to jail its political opponents by accusing them of helping the migrants. The Stop Soros law is a bill that implies human rights are harmed. Fearmongering is aroused. The main intention of the bill, in my opinion, is to undermine the opposition groups and local rights campaigners.

George Soros has been framed in a conspiracy theory with the implication that he is destroying Hungary through migration. Soros is known as a rich and a powerful man who had

<sup>49</sup> Kovács, Z. (2018). A new chapter in Hungary-US political relations. Retrieved from <http://abouthungary.hu/blog/a-new-chapter-in-hungary-us-political-relations/>

<sup>50</sup> Beauchamp, Z. (2018). Hungary Just Passed a 'Stop Soros' Law That Makes It Illegal to Help Undocumented Migrants. Retrieved from [www.vox.com/policy-and-politics/2018/6/22/17493070/hungary-stop-soros-orban](http://www.vox.com/policy-and-politics/2018/6/22/17493070/hungary-stop-soros-orban).

earned billions from his ability in stock trading and investment. Therefore, when Orbán implicated Soros with the accusation of “destroy[ing] the lives of millions of Europeans with his financial speculations”, it appeared to be a valid claim for most people. Besides, the anti-Soros campaign was conducted underpinning an antisemitic theme that plays on racist stereotypes based on the notion that Jews control the global financial system. In my opinion, this is an attack on basic democratic rights by an elected government. Orbán and the Fidesz party have discredited the opposition politicians and groups who, in fact, are their competitors in the national election. Apart from campaigning and undermining the opposition, Orbán and the Fidesz party also passed legislation against the rule of law and limited the independence of the Hungary court and judicial system. Orbán and his allies have tightened their control over media to mute criticism and functioned as a very important mechanism for launching their political propagandas. Orbán’s intention of bringing an end to “liberal democracy” and introducing a “Christian democracy” has been openly declared as per his speech below:

We need to say it out loud because you can’t reform a nation in secrecy: The era of liberal democracy is over, rather than try to fix a liberal democracy that has run aground, we will build a 21st-century Christian democracy.<sup>51</sup>

Viktor Orbán speech in parliament, May 2018

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<sup>51</sup> Nordlinger, J. (2018). The Era of Liberal Democracy Is Over. Retrieved from [www.nationalreview.com/corner/the-era-of-liberal-democracy-is-over/](http://www.nationalreview.com/corner/the-era-of-liberal-democracy-is-over/).



According to Orbán, illiberal democracy is equivalent to Christian liberty. Illiberal democracy rejects the fundamental principle that a democracy can only be achieved through liberalism. While liberalism believes that we should liberate ourselves in order to be free, illiberalism focuses on common interest, to protect national culture and border. Orbán also describes that the essence of illiberal democracy is the protection of Christian liberty; liberal democracy cannot exist without Christian culture before it (Kovács, 2019). According to Orbán's definition and explanation, I can see how he uses this notion to convince the Hungarians to believe that this transformation of illiberal democracy is legitimate.

## 5.2 Analysing Populism in Hungary

This section offers an analysis of Prime Minister Viktor Orbán's selected speeches, interviews, addresses, and comments on the European migrant crisis during 2015-2016. The Hungarian government led by Prime Minister Viktor Orbán was one of the very first member countries in the European Union that openly rejected refugee and migrants' relocation and resettlement schemes. The Hungarian government has criticized the EU institution for not being able to handle the crisis effectively. In October 2016, Hungary held a referendum on whether to accept 1,294 refugees based on a mandatory EU relocation quota. The result of the referendum was 98% voted for rejection as I have already discussed in the previous section. However, that referendum was invalid because of the proportion of voted participants. Overall, Hungary received 29,432 asylum applicants in 2016, however, the country decided to accept only 425 asylum seekers

(BBC, 2017). The following year in September, Hungary received none of the refugees. Table 8 presents the EU proposed scheme and number of migrants relocated from Italy and Greece as of September 2017.

*Table 8 The Number of Relocation of the EU Proposed Scheme (as of 4 September 2017)*

| Member States        | Relocated from Italy | Relocated from Greece | Member States         | Relocated from Italy | Relocated from Greece |
|----------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| Austria              | 15                   | X                     | Luxembourg            | 111                  | 271                   |
| Belgium              | 259                  | 677                   | Malta                 | 47                   | 101                   |
| Bulgaria             | X                    | 50                    | Netherlands           | 762                  | 1,595                 |
| Croatia              | 18                   | 60                    | Poland                | X                    | X                     |
| Cyprus               | 34                   | 96                    | Portugal              | 299                  | 1,116                 |
| Czech Republic       | X                    | 12                    | Romania               | 45                   | 682                   |
| Estonia              | X                    | 141                   | Slovenia              | 45                   | 172                   |
| Finland              | 755                  | 1,196                 | Slovakia              | X                    | 16                    |
| France               | 330                  | 3,948                 | Spain                 | 168                  | 1,089                 |
| Germany              | 3,405                | 4,447                 | Sweden                | 511                  | 1,392                 |
| Hungary              | X                    | X                     | Liechtenstein         | X                    | 10                    |
| Ireland              | X                    | 487                   | Norway                | 815                  | 693                   |
| Latvia               | 27                   | 294                   | Switzerland           | 778                  | 344                   |
| Lithuania            | 27                   | 355                   |                       |                      |                       |
| Total                |                      |                       |                       |                      |                       |
| Relocated from Italy |                      |                       | Relocated from Greece |                      |                       |
| 8,451                |                      |                       | 19,244                |                      |                       |

Source: European Commission Relocation and Resettlement 6 September 2017

The statistics shown in table 6 presents the fact that Hungary only accepted a small number of asylum applicants. Ironically, Prime Minister Viktor Orbán and the Fidesz party spent an estimated 5.7 billion forints (euro 19 m; pounds 16.3 m; \$21 m) on their series of political campaigns. They set their strategic communication through online and offline media; a series of hate campaigns were launched by phases as has already been discussed. Firstly, the Hungarian government had launched an anti-refugee and migrant campaign “If you come to Hungary” which ran on billboards, followed by a national consultation on the refugee and migrant issue. Secondly, “Did you know?” and “Stop Brussels” campaigns were introduced to the public in 2016 in a referendum related to the European Union’s proposed relocation and resettlement scheme. After that, the Hungarian government began the “Stop Soros” campaign, with another national consultation on Soros’ plan. The parliament did take a step further by passing a Stop Soros law. In my view, Orbán’s government have directly and indirectly linked refugees and migrants to violence and terrorism. He instils islamophobia and a fear of terrorism among the Hungarian population. This is done in order to gain political support from citizens and voters. Orbán had turned Hungary into an authoritarian state with his control over mainstream media. He uses media as an instrument to shape public opinion by setting up a political agenda at a time he sees appropriate.

In summary, a populist politician like Prime Minister Viktor Orbán has been using the European migrant crisis as an instrument to create fear of terrorism and hate of Islam. The technique of fearmongering xenophobia, Islamophobia and antisemitism through public media has rendered him successful in building an essential foundation of illiberal democracy. First, Orbán blamed the

migrants as a source of terror, he then continues to blame the European Union. Finally, he blamed George Soros for cooperating with the opposition groups in order to destroy Hungary. We have seen how Orbán's "blame of the others" technique was presented through each of his political campaigns. The migrant crisis became a tool for Orbán and the Fidesz party to achieve their own political purposes, and to maintain Orbán's power in the government. Moreover, Orbán and the Fidesz party have firmly controlled both the legislative and executive system. They formed a hybrid regime by amending and dominating every aspect of social life including commerce, education, arts, churches, and even sports. This has created the irregular development of nondemocratic practices across various sectors of the Hungarian society. For instance, the courts which function and operate, though with some degree of independence, are working under pressure from the executive (Krekó & Juhász 2018). It is clear from my analysis that Prime Minister Orbán and his Fidesz party have managed to run an extremely super-focused political campaign. Orbán conveys to his fellow citizens that a vote for him and the Fidesz is a vote for Hungary remaining Hungarian, Christianity with its true traditional values. In contrast, a vote for an opposition candidate would open the floodgates to the entry of uncontrollable number of migrants from the Middle East and Africa. The reason that this kind of mindset found a ground on the Hungarians successfully is because xenophobia was implanted in Hungary long before in its history. It was the impact of the collapse of the Habsburg commonwealth, or the country defeated in World War II, that were the major causes of its territorial losses after the 1918 (Haraszti, 2015). Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, therefore, has chosen to amplify particular historical events in Hungary and use them as instruments

to generate xenophobia among Hungarian citizens. The creation of national trauma, together with a stimulation of nationalism, could lead to fear or hatred of losing to foreigners. The difference is that Orbán has changed the target from the enemies of communism to Muslims, the European Union, and George Soros. A special condition that gives Orbán an advantage is the war in Syria which has created new international conflicts and the high number of refugees and migrants to Europe. Thus, Orbán has used this crisis to set himself and the Fidesz party as defenders of national interest. He encouraged the Hungarian people to fulfil their duties of being good Hungarian citizens by voting for him so that he and his Fidesz party can protect the people against the invasion of Muslims and refugees.

After going through Orbán's campaign series, I observed that he started his political strategies even before the Hungarians were aware of the refugee and migrant crisis. He set an agenda by sending out a national consultation whereby participants were led by ready-to-made questions and answers as explained in the earlier section. Moreover, the anti-refugee and migrant campaigns were amplified through various terrorist attacks in other part of Europe such as France and Germany. This provided Orbán with the opportunity to turn the situation into a calling stream for protecting Europe and Christianity. In conclusion, Prime Minister Viktor Orbán aggravated the migrant crisis for his own political agenda. He has twisted a liberal democracy concept to illiberal democracy via the use of populism, which finally lead to authoritarian rule. This hybrid regime created challenges in the modern politics of the European Union. His actions deeply weakened the basic democratic

rules and principles of liberal democracy in Hungary. This is considered a threat to the core values of democracy in Europe.



*Figure 52 Viktor Orbán, Hungary's Prime Minister, Delivering a Speech During a Public Ceremony in Budapest, Hungary, on Thursday, March 15, 2018.*

We can see that a political leader in populist politics is indeed the central performer on the political stage. Prime Minister Viktor Orbán's advertorial messages became a 24-hour news cycle which continued to enhance politicians' projected images conveyed to the people. More often, this kind of image garnered more scrutiny than their proposed policies (Tanner, 2011). In my opinion, the method that Orbán used to communicate with the Hungarian people, by misleading them to focus on Islamophobia and xenophobia, was the way he distracted the Hungarians from other important national policy issues such as education, healthcare system, and welfare. These policies actually had a bigger impact on the lives of the Hungarians than the relocation of the refugees. Besides, in my opinion, instead of spending a huge amount of money on political campaigns, the Hungarian government could spend that money on other policies that are directly related to improving the quality of life of the Hungarians. When populists claim to speak on behalf of the people, they

produce what they claim to represent by covering up the aesthetic gap and claim to have direct, immediate contact with the people. The most obvious example would be the letter of national consultation which contained a message from the Prime Minister and sent directly to the people, delivering a message of threat from migrants, and convincing Hungarians to make a decision to protect Hungary and other European nations.

To achieve political goals, apart from the campaign series analysed, Prime Minister Viktor Orbán also used selected historical events and national collective trauma to create anti-refugee and migrant sentiment among the Hungarian people. The recurring historical themes of greater Hungarian and Europe was used and continue to be used in Orbán's speeches and policies against refugees and migrants. In the following sample speech, Orbán has chosen an important event of Hungary's history in year 1956 to stimulate nationalism and xenophobia.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In 1848 it was written in the book of fate that nothing could be done against the Habsburg Empire. If then we had resigned ourselves to that outcome, our fate would have been sealed and the German sea would have swallowed up the Hungarians. In 1956 it was written in the book of fate that we were to remain an occupied and sovietised country until patriotism was extinguished in the very last Hungarian. If then we had resigned ourselves to that outcome, our fate would have been sealed, and the Soviet sea would have swallowed up the Hungarians. Today it is written in the book of fate that hidden, faceless world powers will eliminate everything that is unique, autonomous, age-old and national. They will blend cultures, religions and populations, until our many-faceted and proud Europe will finally become bloodless and docile. And if we resign ourselves to this outcome, our fate will be sealed, and we will be swallowed up in the enormous belly of the United States of Europe. The task which awaits the Hungarian people, the nations of Central Europe and the other European nations which have not yet lost all common sense is to defeat, rewrite and transform the fate intended for us. We Hungarians and Poles know how to do this. We have been taught that only if you are brave enough do you look danger in the face. We must therefore drag the ancient virtue of courage out from under the silt of oblivion. First of all we must put steel in our spines, and we must clearly answer the foremost, the single most important question determining our fate with a voice so loud so that it can be heard far and wide. The question upon which the future of Europe stands or falls is this: "Shall we live in slavery or in freedom?" That is the question – give your answer!

Go for it Hungary, go for it Hungarians!

*(miniszterelnok.hu, Cabinet Office of the Prime Minister)*

*Figure 53 Speech by Prime Minister Viktor Orbán*

Source: <http://www.kormany.hu/en/the-prime-minister/the-prime-minister-s-speeches/speech-by-prime-minister-viktor-orban-on-15-march>

From the above speech, we clearly see the strongly worded statements about the Habsburg Empire, the Soviet occupation and brutality that Hungarians were subjected to after World War II. In 1848,



a wave of revolutions swept across Europe, that year was marked as a year of the most widespread revolutions in European history (Sperber, 2005). The ruling structures in Europe, at the time, were challenged by an uprising in many countries with the aim of eliminating the old system of monarchies and replacing them with independent nation states. The revolutions which were led by reformers, middle classes and workers, resulted in the ending of serfdom under feudalism in Austria and Hungary (Robertson, 1980). Orbán also mentioned the 1956 revolution and used this point to show that he, too, is fighting for Hungary in the same way that the heroes of 1956 did. The Hungarian Revolution of 1956 was the first major threat to Soviet control in central and eastern Europe since the Red Army drove Nazi Germany out from the region at the End of World War II. The Hungarians were dissatisfied with the Hungarian People's Republic and the influence from Soviet rule. Consequently, a revolution erupted nationwide against the government, the revolution period started from 23 October until 10 November 1956 (Sebestyen, 2007). Clearly, Orbán was trying to convey his messages by referring to the cultural and collective traumas of foreign domination in 1848 and 1956. His message appealed to the public, encouraging the idea that they must fight in order to save Hungary and Europe. He presented the migrant crisis as a danger in the same way that Hungary had faced during the 1848 and 1956 revolutions. Orbán not only chose this particular historic event to attack refugees and migrants, but also used the concept of anti-elitism in populism to convince people that they are currently in danger caused by “the elites” from Brussels. In the last section of the speech, Orbán obviously referred to the United States of Europe which he meant the European Union. The EU was framed as a new evil empire using refugees and

migrants as a weapon against Hungary. Orbán encouraged the Hungarians to take action and make a decision over the migrant issue. If the Hungarians are to choose their own fate, then they have to prevent incoming threats.

Another example of Orbán's misuse of history is in his ceremonial speech on the 170th anniversary of the Hungarian Revolution of 1848 on March 2018. I have noticed the repetition of the word “freedom” and “the revolution of 1848”, these two terms also appeared in the previous text discussed. Orbán used a historical event that happened 170 years ago to encourage the Hungarians to “do something” to avoid becoming “slaves” again. For instance, he used an arousing phrase: “Shall we be slaves, or we shall be free?” as if the Hungarians were in a war and about to be conquered again. At the end of the speech, Orbán linked the whole speech to the coming national election that the population could decide their fate for themselves, in truth, the fate of the Hungarians has already been decided by a populist leader like Orbán. It is clear from many parts of this speech that he has tied in the history of Hungary to the recent crisis. He further pushed the invasion narrative into his speech. In the context of Hungary’s fight for freedom in 1848, Orbán stated that “The day has come which lifts the heart of every Hungarian. The day on which, in the great book of world history, a word was written in the Hungarian language: that word was “Freedom”.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> Abouthungary.hu. (2018). Orbán Viktor’s ceremonial speech on the 170th anniversary of the Hungarian Revolution of 1848. Retrieved from <http://abouthungary.hu/speeches-and-remarks/orban-viktors-ceremonial-speech-on-the-170th-anniversary-of-the-hungarian-revolution-of-1848/>

We need it because today we must talk to each other about serious matters: matters just as serious as those which had to be dealt with 170 years ago. We are the heirs of the 1848 revolutionaries and freedom fighters, because, just as 170 years ago, today we must speak honestly and directly. If we do not clearly state what is happening to Hungary and why it is happening, then no one will understand. And if we do not understand it, then we cannot make a sound decision three weeks from now.


(Orbán Viktor's ceremonial speech on the 170th anniversary  
of the Hungarian Revolution of 1848<sup>53</sup>)

In another part of this speech, Orbán directly attacks the refugees by linking the situation with the history of Hungary when it lost territory in the Treaty of Trianon (1920), as the readers will see in the analysis of the next speech. The treaty was a peace agreement after the end of World War I that was made between the Allies and the Kingdom of Hungary. The reason that this Treaty was so important to audiences because of its impact on modern Hungary. The Treaty not only limited Hungary's army to 35,000 officers but also defined the borders of Hungary. As a result of this Treaty, Hungary lost its territory of 325,411 square kilometres to neighbouring countries, hence, Hungary became landlocked with 93,073 square kilometres. This loss of land led to a reduction of population from 20.9 million before the war to only 7.6 million (Romsics, 2002). Undoubtedly, the

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<sup>53</sup> Abouthungary.hu. (2018). Orbán Viktor's ceremonial speech on the 170th anniversary of the Hungarian Revolution of 1848. Retrieved from <http://abouthungary.hu/speeches-and-remarks/orban-viktors-ceremonial-speech-on-the-170th-anniversary-of-the-hungarian-revolution-of-1848/>

Treaty could easily create a national collective trauma among the Hungarians especially when Prime Minister Orbán exaggerated the potential threats arising from the refugees, and how they do not fit with the Hungarian society and core values. Orbán concluded that the large number of refugees could overthrow Hungary. The European Union and George Soros had allowed this to happen by undermining the sovereignty of Hungary.



Dear Friends, is that *there are those who want to take our country from us*. Not with the stroke of a pen, has happened one hundred years ago at Trianon; now *they want us to voluntarily hand our country over to others*, over a period of a few decades.

*They want us to hand it over to foreigners coming from other continents, who do not speak our language, and who do not respect our culture, our laws or our way of life: people who want to replace what is ours with what is theirs*. What they want is that henceforward it will increasingly not be we and our descendants who live here, but others.

There is no exaggeration in what I have just said. Day by day we see the great *European countries and nations losing their countries: little by little, from district to district and from city to city. The situation is that those who do not halt immigration at their borders are lost: slowly but surely, they are consumed. External forces and international powers want to force all this upon us, with the*

*help of their allies here in our country.* And they see our upcoming election as a good opportunity for this.

(Orbán Viktor's ceremonial speech on the 170th anniversary of the Hungarian

Revolution of 1848<sup>54</sup>)

I have highlighted phrases in italics to point out how Prime Minister Viktor Orbán used rhetoric and a particular historical event to create Islamophobia and xenophobia. To reconfirm my assumption of the causal factors of the Hungarian government's anti-refugee and migrant campaign, I find that Orbán began to stimulate the audience that *there are those who want to take our country from us*. If the Hungarians decided to vote for the EU relocation scheme, that means the Hungarians voluntarily allowed Muslim refugees who are *foreigners coming from other continents, who do not speak our language, and who do not respect our culture, our laws or our way of life* into the country. Orbán further supported his statement by claiming that other European countries are losing their cultures and territories *little by little* because they have not strictly closed their borders. The external force, in this context, is the European Union which is forcing Hungary to accept refugees through its mandatory relocation scheme. Lastly, *with the help of their allies here in our country*, he means George Soros who is an American-Hungarian businessman. In another part of the speech from Orbán, he emphasizes that:

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<sup>54</sup> Abouthungary.hu. (2018). Orbán Viktor's ceremonial speech on the 170th anniversary of the Hungarian Revolution of 1848. Retrieved from <http://abouthungary.hu/speeches-and-remarks/orban-viktors-ceremonial-speech-on-the-170th-anniversary-of-the-hungarian-revolution-of-1848/>

We do not need to fight the anaemic little opposition parties, but an international network which is organised into an empire. We are up against media outlets maintained by foreign concerns and domestic oligarchs, professional hired activists, troublemaking protest organisers, and a chain of NGOs financed by an international speculator, summed up by and embodied in the name “George Soros”.

(Orbán Viktor’s ceremonial speech on the 170th anniversary  
of the Hungarian Revolution of 1848<sup>55</sup>)

It is obvious from the 170th anniversary speech that Orbán uses a particular historic event to justify his negative actions and policy against refugees and migrants. People who disagree with him or do not have anti-refugee sentiments would likely be condemned as a threat to their own country. In summary, in Orbán’s rhetoric, he emphasizes the linkage between the refugees, the European Union, and George Soros, claiming that they are all destroyers of Hungarian culture and European Christian values. Orbán fuels the fear that Hungary is under attack by refugees and migrants. He, then, fulfils his role as a “mnemonic warrior” to defend Hungary from Muslim invaders. The European migrant crisis becomes a tool for Orbán to tighten his authoritarian rule by weakening political plurality and opposition.

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<sup>55</sup> Abouthungary.hu. (2018). Orbán Viktor’s ceremonial speech on the 170th anniversary of the Hungarian Revolution of 1848. Retrieved from <http://abouthungary.hu/speeches-and-remarks/orban-viktors-ceremonial-speech-on-the-170th-anniversary-of-the-hungarian-revolution-of-1848/>

### 5.3 Hungary: Building Walls and Fences

When Hungary became a transit state for asylum seekers on the route to Germany and other EU member countries in 2015, Orbán responded to the situation with the decision to spend money on building wire fences at the borders connected to Croatia, Romania, and Serbia (Figure 54). However, 400,000 migrants passed through Hungary that year before the fences were completely built. A second phase of 150 km. (93 miles) was completed in May 2017, this second phase would be equipped with night cameras and heat movement sensors.



*Figure 54 Hungarian Border Fences That Have Been Built Through Its Border*

*with Croatia, Romania, and Serbia*

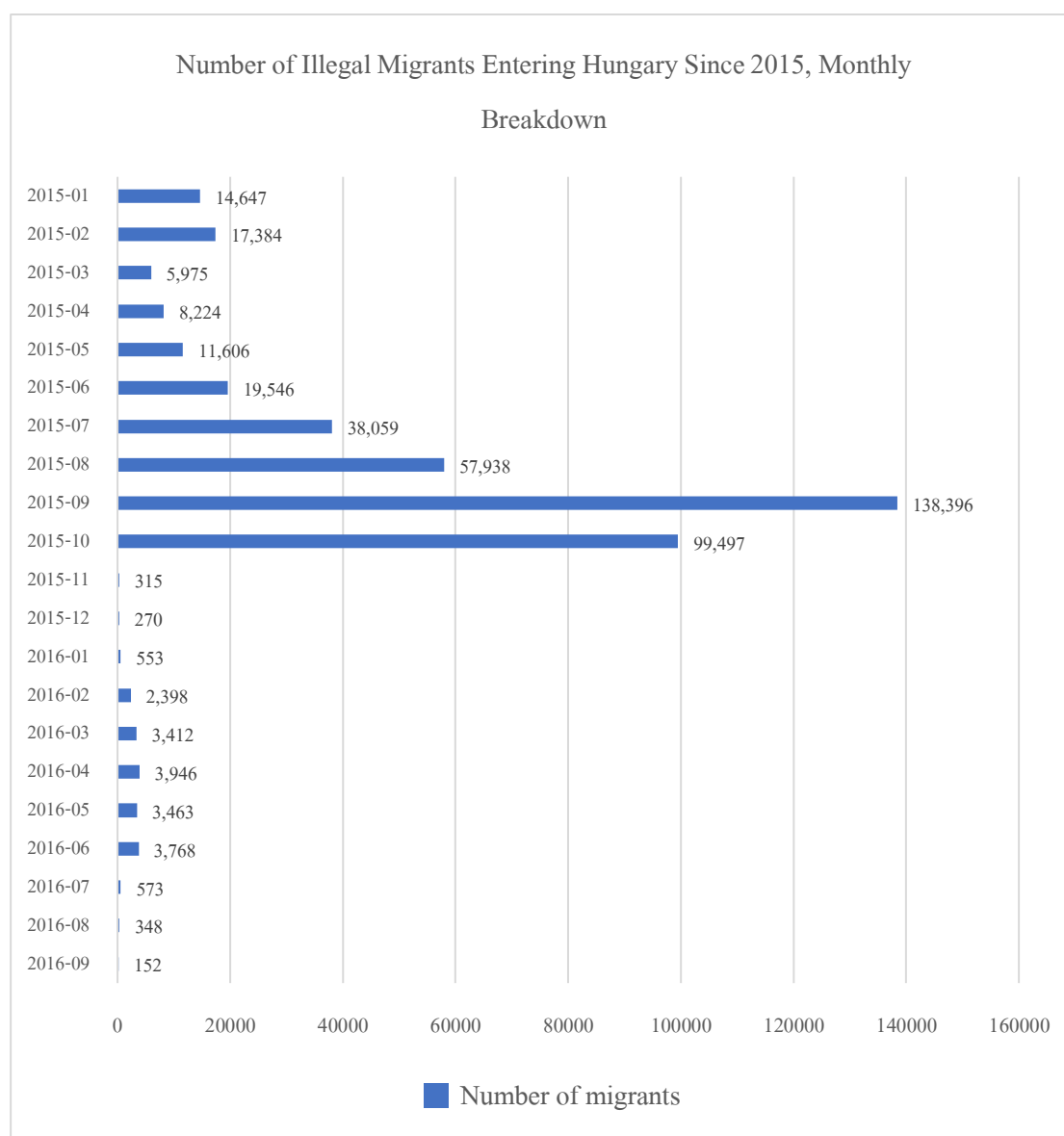
Source: Economist.com

Hungary started building walls and border barriers in June 2015 during the high influx of migrants entering Europe with the claim that the European Union was "too slow to act". Thus, the Hungarian fence was constructed at the connected border with Croatia and Serbia with the aim to tighten security of its borders. The project was completed in September. The fence between

Hungary and Serbia is 175 kilometres long, and 4 metres high. The fence is concertina wire, built by contractors and with a deployment of 900 soldiers at a cost of 30 billion forints (\$106 million) for the 4-meter (13-foot) fence and the construction of two camps to house asylum applicants (Feher, 2015). The border patrol, which was built by mid-August, is shaped as a double security fence. There was a hastily constructed outer fence made up of three rows of razor wire, scheduled to be complete by the end of August 2015. Inside that, there was a sturdier barrier of 3.5 meters (11.5 feet) tall (Feher, 2015). The objective and immediate impact of building the barrier was to prevent illegal immigrants from entering Hungary via the Balkan land route, reducing the option for the refugees to enter through only official checkpoints. This was done in accordance with international and European law. Many critics viewed this action as a move toward government-led xenophobia. However, the number of attempted illegal entries to Hungary declined greatly after the barrier was finished. In September 2015, a total number of 138,396 migrants entered Hungary, and by the first two weeks of November after the fence was constructed, an average daily number of entry migrants decreased to only 15, which was a daily reduction of more than 4,500 (Source: Police.hu - Border information). The statistical number of illegal migrants entering Hungary is shown in table 9. The route that refugees and migrants used from Afghanistan and the proposed fence built between Serbia and Hungary, and types of travel of refugees from Istanbul to Europe are shown in figure 55.



*Table 9 Number of Illegal Migrants Entering Hungary Since 2015, Monthly Breakdown*



Source: Police.hu - Border information

### Hungary's anti-migration fence



Figure 55 Hungary's Fence

Source: Theguardian.com<sup>56</sup>

Later in 2015, there was an incident at the border near Horgoš, Serbia, and Röszke, where migrants attempted to destroy a section of the new fence.<sup>57</sup> Hungarian riot police responded with tear gas and water cannons, causing the migrants to fall back, then regroup and surge forward again. Hungary was widely criticized for its use of tear gas and water cannons against migrants attempting to enter the country (Feher, 2015).

<sup>56</sup> Kingsley, Patrick. "Migrants on Hungary's Border Fence: 'This Wall, We Will Not Accept It'." *The Guardian*, Guardian News and Media, 22 June 2015, [www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jun/22/migrants-hungary-border-fence-wall-serbia](http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jun/22/migrants-hungary-border-fence-wall-serbia).

<sup>57</sup> Migrant crisis: Clashes at Hungary-Serbia border. (16 September 2015). *BBC.com*.  
<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-34272765>



*Figure 56 Hungarian Riot Police Responded with Tear Gas and Water to Stop the Refugees*

*at the Border Near Horgoš, Serbia, and Röszke*

Source: BBC.com

One of the tensions that arose between Hungary and other European Member States was about the funding of the construction of the Hungary-Serbia border fence. In 2015, Hungary and the Slovak Republic requested the Court of Justice of the European Union to reconsider the EU decision for the relocation scheme (BBC, 2015). However, the assigned Advocate General ruled that Hungary and the Slovak Republic's claims should be dismissed.<sup>58</sup> After the Advocate General made public his decision, Hungary asked the European Commission for compensation. On 31 August 2017, the Hungarian government requested that the European Union refund half of the

<sup>58</sup> Rankin, J. (2017). EU court dismisses complaints by Hungary and Slovakia over refugee quotas. Retrieved from [www.theguardian.com/world/2017/sep/06/eu-court-dismisses-complaints-by-hungary-and-slovakia-over-refugees](http://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/sep/06/eu-court-dismisses-complaints-by-hungary-and-slovakia-over-refugees)

border barrier costs which was a total of €400 million (Deutsche Welle, 2017). This request was denied by the President of the European Commission on 5 September 2017 (Heath, 2017). The Court of Justice of the European Union dismissed Hungary and the Slovak Republic's claims in a judgment dated 6 September 2017.<sup>59</sup>



*Figure 57 Migrants Crossing Illegally into Hungary Underneath the Unfinished Hungary–Serbia border fence, 25 August 2015*

Source: <http://szegedma.hu/hir/szeged/2015/08/migransok-szazai-ozonlenek-rozskerol-szegedre.html>

<sup>59</sup>Deutsche Welle. (2017). Refugee Crisis: European Court of Justice Rejects Quota Challenge. Retrieved from [www.dw.com/en/refugee-crisis-european-court-of-justice-rejects-quota-challenge/a-40375192](http://www.dw.com/en/refugee-crisis-european-court-of-justice-rejects-quota-challenge/a-40375192).

## CHAPTER VI

### CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

#### 6.1 Summary of the Research

The migrant crisis that European countries are facing today is a result of wars and myriad human rights violations in Syria. European Union Member States are all affected, but not to the same degree. The consequences are apparent even today. The forefront countries such as Italy and Greece have received a large number of refugees due to their location of being a primary route for refugees and migrants entering into Europe from the Middle East. Most of the migrants and refugees are from Syria, Iraq, and Afghanistan, areas that are affected by war. In the years 2015 and 2016, European Member States were affected by the huge number of incoming refugees. Greece and Italy remain the most critical front-line countries, however, there are only a small number of asylum applicants in these countries, as well as in Hungary. This is because most refugees' main destinations are Germany and Sweden, the two countries which received the highest number of asylum applicants in 2015. The situation of refugees and migrants in Europe remains a critical issue due to the lack of proper shelters, poor protection standards, and limited reception capacity, and the financial burdens which have fallen mostly in countries such as Greece, Italy, and Germany. The European Union has struggled to cope with the crisis. To solve the case, the European Union has proposed a new quota system to relocate asylum seekers among the EU states to share the burden more equitably. Nevertheless, four countries located in Central Europe: the Czech Republic, Hungary, the Republic of Poland and the Slovak Republic or known as the

Visegrád group, rejected the proposed quota system. The Visegrád group reconfirmed its negative stance by having a joint standpoint and implemented negative policies against refugees and migrants. Such negative policies are, for example, an investment in building walls and fences and the Visegrád's united policy against EU's mandatory relocation scheme and quota. Hungary has gone further with right-wing populism and has conducted referendums related to anti-refugee and migrant propaganda campaigns. Hungary received harsh criticism from the international community after implementing its negative policy against migrants. Hungary's closure of its borders with Croatia and Serbia, resulted in disabling thousands of refugees who wanted to reach Northern and Western Europe. In conclusion, the Visegrád group governments always spoke unanimously when it came to the refugees and migrant issue. Statistically, the four governments allowed only a small number of refugees into their countries according to the proposed EU quota, the number is shown in the following table:

*Table 10 Number of Refugees Accepted by the Visegrád Group via New EU Quota System (as of 23 July 2018)*

| Countries/Quota proposed by EU | The Czech Republic | Hungary | The Republic of Poland | The Slovak Republic |
|--------------------------------|--------------------|---------|------------------------|---------------------|
| 2,691                          | 12                 |         |                        |                     |
| 1,294                          |                    | 0       |                        |                     |
| 7,082                          |                    |         | 0                      |                     |
| 902                            |                    |         |                        | 16                  |

Source: Euroactiv<sup>60</sup>

<sup>60</sup> Zachová, A. et al. (2018). Visegrád Nations United against Mandatory Relocation Quotas. Retrieved from [www.euractiv.com/section/justice-home-affairs/news/visegrad-nations-united-against-mandatory-relocation-quotas/](http://www.euractiv.com/section/justice-home-affairs/news/visegrad-nations-united-against-mandatory-relocation-quotas/).

As a consequence, the Czech Republic, Hungary and the Republic of Poland were chastised by the Court of Justice of the EU (CJEU) for “non-compliance with their legal obligations” on the EU relocation scheme. The Visegrád countries refused to accept the EU compulsory quota, they claimed their rights and the need to protect their national sovereignties. The focus of this thesis is to examine the role of the four factors; history, economic, security and defense, and populism, that lie behind the Visegrád group's negative policy against refugees and migrants.

### **The History Factor**

History has become an instrument for Prime Minister Viktor Orbán to justify his political actions and policies implemented to stem the tide of refugees and migrants to Hungary. After analysing the campaign and speech texts, I find that a particular historical event has been repeated throughout Orbán's speeches and the government's hate-campaigns. Prime Minister Viktor Orbán chooses a historical event such as the 1848 event and the revolution in 1956, as discussed in the previous chapter, to evoke xenophobia and Islamophobia sentiments among the Hungarians. Orbán links past events and revolutions of Hungary being defeated by Muslims in the period under the Ottoman Empire, he also refers to Hungary's loss of its territory in the Treaty of Trianon after World War II. All these events lead to a national collective trauma, xenophobia, and islamophobia. History is not an isolated factor which brings Hungary or the remaining three countries in the Visegrád group to their common position against the refugee. On the contrary, history is being used to create a collective political agenda in this region. It is a fact that a part of Hungary's history was that the

country has been ruled by “foreigners”, and this is what Orbán plays up quite well in his speeches. He selects this most important event in Hungary’s history to emphasize his populist rhetoric. In my opinion, I believe that the context of losing territories to Muslims in the Battles of Mohács (1526), which was fought almost five hundred years ago, is far different from the situation underlying the current European migrant crisis. A small part of Hungary’s long history is being used to create a collective trauma in order to stimulate a hatred of Islam, and the fear of being ruled by foreigners again. I think the idea that Hungary would lose its identity over the migrant crisis proposed by Prime Minister Viktor Orbán is over exaggerated and a false claim which he has created in order to achieve his political power and legitimate rule. It is clear in many of Orbán’s speeches that he has presented himself as a defender of Hungary and that he is on the same side with the people rather than choose to be on the side of the elites. Orbán uses a technique of fear to convince the Hungarian voters that they are in great danger from Muslims, the refugees, the European Union and George Soros, so that people who believe his story would cast their votes in his favour. In summary, a populist politician like Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, has successfully used a technique of historic story telling in the plantation of fear. In my opinion, for a state or a ruler, it is quite common to create a bond among the people in order to protect the sovereignty of a nation state. However, a particular historic event and collective trauma chosen to be used at the right “time and place” by a political leader, lends evidence to the success of populism.

Another evidence showing that the Hungarian government sought to control citizens by using history is seen through the amendment of the national education system. In early 2020, the



Hungarian Education Ministry announced its modified national curriculum which aimed to attach more importance to religion and patriotic history (Thorpe, 2020). The new Hungary national curriculum includes a text which implies that Hungarian nationality is exclusively Christian. In similar vein as Prime Minister Viktor Orbán's speech which emphasized religion in stating that "We are the Hungarians: with one thousand years of Christian statehood, monumental cultural achievements".<sup>61</sup> In addition to instilling a spirit of Christianity, the government's strategy on national education is likely to impose a particular ideology in the mindsets of future generations. For instance, works from nationalist-minded authors from the 1930s, such as Ferenc Herczeg, has been made a mandatory history reading for students. The new curriculum tends to diminish the role of Hungarian Jews, in the final year of World War II when hundreds of thousands of Hungarian Jews were murdered.<sup>62</sup> This adjustment of the history curriculum and Orbán's selective choice in choosing just some aspects from the history is how he bends Hungarian society to his will.

Moreover, throughout the modern history of the Visegrád group, there were times of agreement and disagreement on particular issues, and the group, though represented as a group of common interest, is not always united as they have no formal institution to enforce legal bidding (Törő, Butler, & Grüber, 2014). However, on the European migrant crisis, the Visegrád group holds a strong and united position of standing against the European Union and the refugees. This stance,

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<sup>61</sup> Kormany.hu. (2020). Prime Minister Viktor Orbán's "State of the Nation" address. Retrieved from <https://www.kormany.hu/en/the-prime-minister/the-prime-minister-s-speeches/prime-minister-viktor-orban-s-state-of-the-nation-address-2020>

<sup>62</sup> Inotai, E. (2020). Democracy Digest: Hungary's Curriculum Crusade. Retrieved from <https://balkaninsight.com/2020/02/07/democracy-digest-hungarys-curriculum-crusade/>

in my opinion, explains the cohesiveness of the group as the situation has brought the four members closer together. However, the group's opposition to the European Union and other EU Member States could create more problems with its disruptive behaviour than help solve the crisis. Even though the four countries have shared a long history together, for instance they have all been under the influence of communism of the Soviet Union, these are not the reasons why they have a common position on the migrant crisis. Therefore, the hypothesis that the Visegrád group hold negative policy toward the migrant crisis because they have a long-shared history is unjustified. History is not an isolated factor underpinning negative policies, but an instrument used by right-wing populist politicians to create psychological factors of islamophobia and xenophobia among its people, which eventually leads to the success of populism.

### **The Economic Factor**

Regarding economic policy, populist right-wing parties are critical of globalization and its effects of international capitalism (Semul, 2018). This could be considered as an anti-establishment rhetoric and is often used to appeal to people to believe in propaganda controlled by the government. According to my analysis, the four countries have the economic capacity to accept the refugee quota because the proposed relocation number is not so high as to harm the economy (according to table 10). There are even less than 10,000 refugees and migrants for each country. On the other hand, a certain number of refugees could create a spillover effect on the host economy. The simulations on the economic impact of refugees studied by Taylor et al., (2015) find that, in

Rwanda, an additional refugee increases total real (inflation-adjusted) income within a 10-km. radius by US\$205 and \$253 annually. This economic spillover is a result of refugee employment and the trade of goods and services. Households inside the camps purchase goods and services from host country retail businesses outside the camps including agricultural, livestock, other production activities. Although this is a result of a simulation in Rwanda, this could also be applicable in the case of the Visegrád group. Impacts and effects on economic systems must be studied in depth, nonetheless that would be beyond the scope of this thesis.

*Table 11 Multiplier Effects of a \$1 Increase in Aid (cash or in-kind)<sup>63</sup>*

|                                          | <b>A</b>          | <b>B</b>            | <b>C</b>            |
|------------------------------------------|-------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Aid multipliers<br>(in \$ per \$ of aid) | Gihembe<br>(cash) | Nyabiheke<br>(cash) | Kigeme<br>(in-kind) |
| Real income<br>(inflation-adjusted)      | 1.51              | 1.95                | 1.19                |
| Refugees                                 | 0.91              | 1.01                | 0.91                |
| Locals                                   | 0.59              | 0.95                | 0.28                |
| Production effects                       |                   |                     |                     |
| Crop                                     | 0.70              | 1.07                | 0.34                |
| Livestock                                | 0.03              | 0.03                | 0.02                |
| Retail                                   | 0.63              | 0.68                | 0.42                |
| Other                                    | 0.44              | 0.58                | 0.36                |
| Trade with rest of<br>Rwanda             | 0.43              | 0.40                | 0.29                |

Source: Study by Taylor, et al. (2016)

<sup>63</sup> The 95% confidence bounds around total real-income multipliers are Gihembe (1.22, 1.87), Nyabiheke (1.52, 2.45), and Kigeme (1.10, 1.30). Results were obtained by simulating a \$1 increase in WFP transfers. In the in-kind camp, the transfer is the market value of food aid, and the partial reselling of food aid (at prices discounted 20%) was simulated as an increased local supply of agriculture goods.

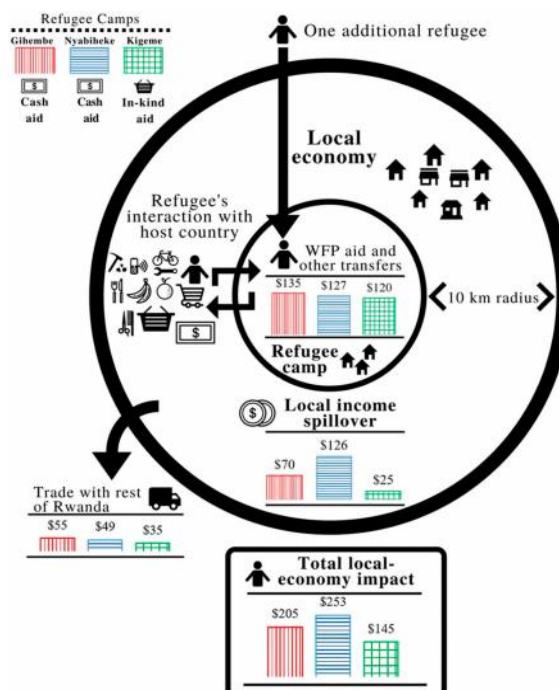


Figure 58 Impacts of an Additional Refugee on Income within a 10-km Radius

Source: Study by Taylor, et al. (2015)

From my perspective, the economic factor is, again, a myth used by Prime Minister Viktor Orbán to create the fear of job losses among the Hungarians. As analysed in the previous chapter, the campaign “If you come to Hungary” directly conveys a message to the people that refugees and migrants will take away jobs from the locals if they are allowed to enter the country. This belief is stressed in a part of another of Orbán’s speeches: “The next years will be about hardworking people” on 27 February 2015. He emphasized the fear by saying the following:

The EU – including our own state’s borders – are besieged by waves of modern-day migration, in the face of which increasingly frustrated states and governments are at a loss. And this is happening in an economic environment in which millions

of Western European citizens feel that they have to work ever more for less money, just to keep their jobs. Europe is facing questions which can no longer be answered within the framework of liberal multiculturalism.

Viktor Orbán's State of the Nation Address

(27 February 2015, Budapest)<sup>64</sup>

According to the above speech, Orbán tries to convince his people that the framework of liberal multiculturalism is not an eligible one. Western European citizens have to work hard in order to be employed. In this sense, he infers that the Hungarians must protect their jobs from the refugees and migrants. To conclude, the claim by Prime Minister Orbán that the entry of refugees and migrants to Hungary will harm the country's economy is only being used for creating xenophobia and Islamophobia. The hypothesis that the Visegrád group implements negative policy towards refugees and migrants because they do harm to the economy, therefore, is unjustified.

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### **The Security and Defense Factor**

Only one statistical study shows that the flow of refugees and migrants are the cause of terrorist attacks in Europe. On the contrary, there is an evidence showing that ISIS uses a strategy of cultivating an army of home-grown radicals living within the European Union to process the

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<sup>64</sup> Kormany.hu. (2015). The next Years Will Be About Hardworking People. Retrieved from <https://www.kormany.hu/en/the-prime-minister/the-prime-minister-s-speeches/the-next-years-will-be-about-hardworking-people>

attacks. Terrorists reach EU citizens for recruitment through online propaganda and networking via social media. It is an essential and effective channel for recruitment, radicalization, and fundraising. According to Europol's intelligence, statistics show that around 5,000 individuals from the EU were believed to have travelled to conflict areas in Iraq and Syria and have returned to the EU with operational experience, enhanced capability and mind-sets to commit acts of terrorism. However, a report by Member States, such as Belgium, shows that the phenomenon of home-grown terrorist fighters seems to be a greater threat than that emanating from returnees (Europol, 2018: 27).

Jihadist attacks are committed primarily by homegrown terrorists, radicalised in their country of residence without having travelled to join a terrorist group abroad. This group of home-grown actors is highly diverse, consisting of individuals who have been born in the EU or have lived in the EU most of their lives, may have been known to the police but not for terrorist activities and often do not have direct links to the Islamic State (IS) or any other jihadist organization.

European Union Terrorism Situation and Trend Report 2018

(Europol, 2018: 5)

ISIS has been dominating the recruitment drive for these fighters, who can use their EU passports to travel across the continent and it is difficult to detect because of the EU's open borders policy. Thus, the evidence linking the inflow of refugee and asylum seekers with terrorism is not a

valid one. On the other hand, attacks committed by right-wing extremists have rarely been reported by Member States over the past years and were therefore never prominently covered in the EU terrorism report. Fear of terrorism and anti-refugee sentiment were built to fulfil a purpose of leading the perception of the Hungarians to agree upon policies against the refugees. Orbán convinced his people not to allow refugees to enter. This can be seen through a series of campaigns which I have already discussed in the previous chapter. Again, the security and defense factor is being used to create psychological factors of islamophobia and xenophobia among Hungarians so that they would not hesitate to vote for Prime Minister Viktor Orbán and the Fidesz party. Therefore, the hypothesis of the Visegrád group's negative policy implemented toward refugees and migrants because they are the cause of rising terrorist attacks is unjustified.

### **The Populism Factor**

Right-wing populists claim to represent “the people,” at various points. Over the last decade, nationalists and right-wing populist parties have been expanding across Europe. These parties are defined by their positions to protect national and European culture, sometimes using the language of human rights and freedom. Right-wing parties and populism are not new, it is evidenced from time to time by politicians who have been using this technique around the world. However, populism has become a very distinctive characteristic of modern European politics especially for the right-wing politicians. Populism has been integrated to various host ideologies by political parties across Europe in order to increase support from the public and voters. The trend

is rising. Right-wing populism is considered to be a change in Europe's political environment rather than just a temporary consequence of dissatisfaction due to the existing migrant crisis. Populism was adopted by right wing parties as one of their most important and effective tools to influence the people. The government's propaganda and rhetoric on refugees and migrants has created fear over losing European identity among some European citizens, specifically in the case of Hungary. And this fear has made the people feel that right-wing parties are the panacea to the increasing threat of multiculturalism and European integration since other parties are not aggressive enough in responding to the migrant crisis. Furthermore, right wing populist parties claim that their policies are aimed to protect European identity. For this reason, populist right-wing parties tend to gain more support and win more seats in the government. Meanwhile, this could be a sign for other parties in Europe to start their reformation in order to respond to the challenge posed by the right-wing. One European leader who could be considered as a figure symbolic of contemporary European populism is Prime Minister Viktor Orbán of Hungary. He is neither the left nor the right but he has been using populism as a method to uphold his political power in the Hungarian government. Mudde (2004) clarifies in his work on Populist Zeitgeist that populism is about the relationship between "the people" and "the elite". This message is strengthened by Orbán's resistance to Brussels. Orbán has portrayed the European Union as Brussels elites and that he is helping the people of Hungary instead of participating with the elites. All policies and government services are made to ensure security for Hungary and the Hungarians. The country will be safe from threat and danger arising from the entry of refugees and migrants only when the incumbent

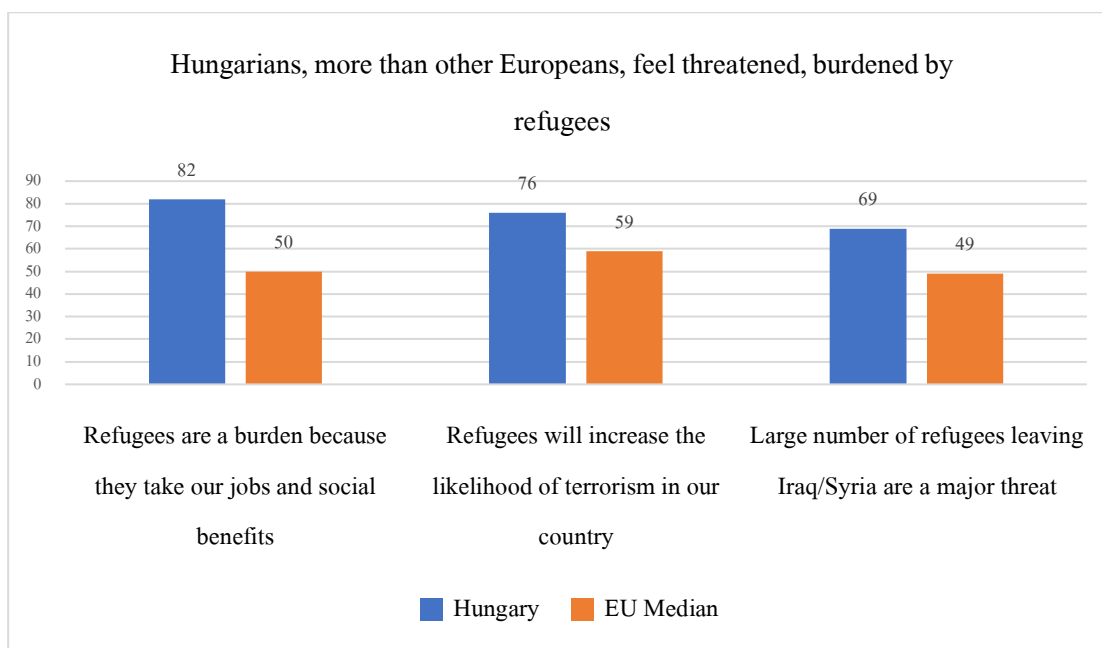


government can continue with its policies. Political leaders in the Visegrád group such as Prime Minister Orbán himself, has clearly framed the migrant crisis as a threat and a source of terrorism although there is a clear evidence that most of the terrorist attacks were carried out by radicalised European citizens. However, it can be seen from the case study of Hungary that facts might not be able to speak louder than the power of rhetoric and propaganda. In my conclusion, I consider populism as the most significant factor for the Visegrád group to implement negative policies toward the migrants and refugees.

## 6.2 Discussion and Conclusion

An examination using content analysis shows that, in the case of Hungary, populism has played an important role in shaping the perceptions of Hungarians towards refugees and migrants. The claims put forward by Prime Minister Viktor Orbán that terrorists are coming to Europe cloaked as refugees are often used in his anti-refugee and migrant campaigns. The Hungarian government, led by Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, has conducted a series of campaigns directly and indirectly attacking refugees and migrants. In the first phase of the campaign, the government conveyed a message convincing its people to believe that the inflow of refugees and migrants are threats to Hungary because they will take away jobs and they will bring in more terrorists. Sooner or later, Hungary and Europe will finally lose its Christian values and will be “Islamized”. Orbán further claims that Europe will be destroyed by Muslim invaders. In the second phase, the Hungarian government attacked the European Union by focusing on the Brussels elites. They

blamed the European Union for almost everything. In the third phase, Orbán and his Fidesz ruling party have targeted hate attacks against a Hungarian-born American billionaire, George Soros. Soros is known for his support of minorities and civil societies project including the refugees. Thus, this has cast Soros as a scapegoat for Orbán in his false claim that Soros “ruined the lives of tens of millions of people” by cooperating with elites in Brussels allowing refugees into the country (Herszenhorn, 2017). The reason that Orbán’s government attacked both insiders and outsiders is because the government is trying to distract its people from major domestic policy issues, such as welfare, health care, and education. The Hungarian people would vote for Orbán to defend their country rather than stand up against the government for check and balance. The creation of “us” against “them” technique has been used as a method for government propaganda for political purposes. In my opinion, Orbán's use of populism has succeeded in garnering a high degree of negative perception towards refugees and migrants among the Hungarians. According to a survey by Pew Research Center, the Hungarians feel threatened by refugees amounting to 69 percent when compared to median EU countries. Eighty two percent of the Hungarians strongly believe that refugees will take away their jobs while only fifty percent of other Europeans believe so. Lastly, the Hungarians tend to believe that a high number of refugees will increase terrorism attacks in the country. The survey results are shown in figure 59.



Note: EU Median based on 10 European countries, including Hungary.

*Figure 59 Hungarian Negative Perception Towards Refugees*

Source: Spring 2016 Global Attitudes Survey. Q22g & Q51a, c. Pew Research Center

Throughout the analysis of the Hungarian government's anti-campaigns, the readers of this thesis would have seen that every campaign was well-planned and strategically managed communication. Fearmongering was incited, the content has been repeated, and in this way, Orbán is able to, though not all, convince people to believe that refugees and migrants are threats. Besides, Orbán and the Fidesz party could control the most powerful instrument of the modern world, the media. This has paved the way for them to be able to communicate their political messages and spread populist rhetoric to millions of audiences in an easy and effective way. Unlike in the past, censorship and shutting down of the media by the government has been obsoleted. In modern politics, whoever can control the media is the winner. Hungary's private media has been almost

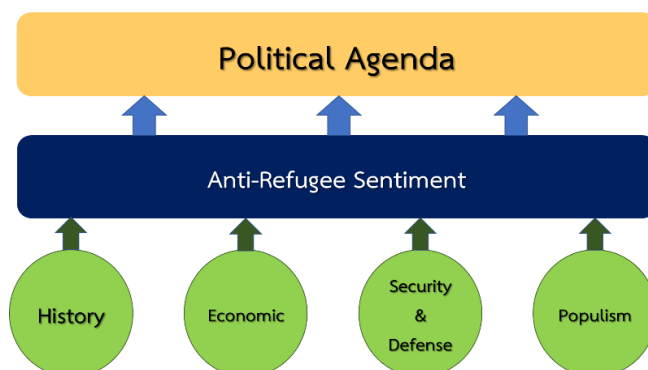
entirely under the government's influences. Fidesz has played an important role in taking control over the media since the party has received donations from those who are close to the Fidesz party and Prime Minister Viktor Orbán. Since taking power in 2010, Viktor Orbán and his allies have slowly attacked pluralism by monitoring and reshaping the legislation, and by taking control of media, to favour his party in order to increase his autocratic rule (Gerschewski, 2013). The Central European Press and Media Foundation (Közép-Európai Sajtó és Média Alapítvány – KESMA) is known as a pro-government right-wing media conglomerate established by the governing Fidesz party (Zoltán , 2019), which now has more than 500 media outlets under its umbrella including county newspapers, news channels and radio stations, numerous magazines, internet portals, tabloid and sports newspapers (as of 14 February 2020). Orbán's ability to control the national media is the key to sustaining his political power; media has become a mechanism and a very effective weapon to spread the messages which the Orbán government wants to convey to the people.

In conclusion, Prime Minister Viktor Orbán uses many different media to create anti-refugee sentiments among the public, which include a series of billboard campaigns as discussed in earlier chapters of this thesis. The Hungarian TV network also propelled pro-government messages by focusing on negative stories about refugees and migrants and linking them to crime and terrorism. For example, the M1 channel mistakenly reported that a van driving into a crowd in Münster, Germany, was an act of Islamic terrorists (The Guardian, 2018). After an investigation, authorities found no linkage of that incident and terrorism (Oltermann, 2018). Moreover, Orbán has his weekly Friday radio program broadcast, which he uses as a channel to communicate his rhetoric

and propaganda (Lendvai, 2018) . In short, Orbán has used the media as an instrument to serve his autocratic rule by spreading his propaganda and rhetoric to the public. Both online and offline media have been utilized to attack political opponents and place blame on refugees. Furthermore, national consultation surveys were sent to Hungarian households to steer public opinion particularly on the subject of the European migrant crisis. Surveys tend to lead the respondents to the conclusion that a Jew-Hungarian philanthropist, George Soros, has cooperated with the elites in Brussels, and was leading a plan with the aim to force Hungary to receive thousands of refugees into the country. If Soros's plan is to succeed, according to this propaganda, that means the Hungarian culture and European core values will be destroyed by Muslims refugees. Orbán, who is now constructing an illiberal democracy state, is totally in reversion to the young liberal activist Orbán of the 1980s. As a matter of fact, Orbán received a scholarship from the Soros Foundation to study political science at Pembroke College, Oxford (Lendvai, 2018) . Nevertheless, Soros has become an important scapegoat for Orbán.

Orbán has used history, economics, security, and populism to create anti-refugee sentiments among the Hungarian people. The government has promoted a narrative of Hungarians carefully crafted as 'victims' and has implanted ethnocentrism. Orbán also raises concerns on economic and security issues if refugees are to be allowed into the country. In summary, the goal of the Orbán's government is to create a preferable political atmosphere for Orbán to repeatedly win elections and continue his autocratic rule. Orbán builds an "illiberal democracy" state by using the democratic system to reform the state and society towards autocracy. His act of interfering in

judicial processes, culture, media, and demolishing Hungary civil society has enhanced his status as a leading right-wing populist political leader in the European Union. With the use of history, economic and security issues for creating anti-refugee and migrant sentiment, Orbán succeeded in enhancing his popularity in Hungarians' minds. Having built a successful illiberal democracy regime, the Orbán government has been steering its power in multiple public spheres, all to undermine its opponents and regain political power and extend the ruling power of his government. In conclusion, the Hungarian government has produced a series of 'hate campaigns' to set the political agenda. It appears that Prime Minister Viktor Orbán and his Fidesz government has ruled the country legitimately. For example, elections are arranged and the government seems to 'listen' to public voices through many national consultations. Orbán has, however, shifted Hungary towards a soft fascist regime with a political system that aims to seize control of every major aspect of the country's political institutions. It also aims to control social life and the media which are funded and supported by Fidesz and Orbán's empire. This new regime of soft fascism no longer needs to resort to traditional 'hard' measures such as banning elections or building up a police state. People are overwhelmed by perceptions and feelings that refugees are the source of terrorism and that the problem affects their lives.



*Figure 60 Factors Used by Viktor Orbán for Creating Anti-Refugee Sentiment in Hungary*

*to Achieve Political Purposes*

Source: The Author of This Thesis

In conclusion, I have proposed a model in this thesis, as shown in figure 60, by presenting evidences though a discussion of a case study of Hungary. Prime Minister Viktor Orbán of Hungary has been using each of the four factors: history, economic, security and defense, and populism to create an anti-refugee and migrant sentiment. He uses each factor to support and legitimise his actions in order to achieve his political agendas. From my perspective, it is quite difficult to be critical about powerful, comprehensive messages when they are campaigns of government propaganda. I state this because propaganda plays an important part in human psychology. After I have examined the case study of Hungary, I found that Orbán's propaganda was successful partly because he chose to use a method which plays on human emotions, whether it is a collective trauma or fear of Muslims or foreigners. In order to influence over and bend the Hungarian will, Orbán has infused xenophobia and Islamophobia among the citizens to shape the opinion of the people into a specific conclusion that refugees and migrants are a huge threat and will never be compatible with Hungary as a Christian society. Orbán spread his propaganda by the use of attractive slogans,

selective information, images, or control and censorship of the facts, all of these were done under his control of national media. In my view, it is hard to raise a question when we are under the influence of propaganda because the technique plays with our minds. Also, the well-organized presentation and repetition of messages that Orbán has been bombarding to the Hungarians every day whether by the news, TV programs, or billboards. could result in people's lack of self-realization that they are being propagandized.

I believe that the findings and the discussion throughout this thesis could help readers gain a deeper understanding of the impact of populism and political communication between the government and citizens. Moreover, I fully hope that this thesis reflects of how governments utilise campaigns and propaganda to sway public opinion. I believe the findings could be useful and applicable when comparing populist practices among different countries.

### **6.3 Recommendations for Further Research**

The aim of this thesis, as discussed in the previous section, is to focus on the explanation of the four factors of history, economic, security and defense, and populism on the Visegrád group's negative policies implemented towards refugees and migrants. This research is done with the aim of advancing interdisciplinary research in the field of European Studies. I believe that further research should focus more on the following points:

First, the analysis of online social media behaviour of the Hungarian government. The world today is driven by technology and social media; a lot has been changed in the last few decades



with the disappearance of the traditional press, and these changes have increased the opportunity for populists to broadcast their messages to the mass population. Political parties are relying more on media ownership and advertising in favour of growing populist discourses. Mudde (2007) discussed in his book *Populist Radical Right Parties in Europe* on the topic of how tabloids and commercial television have a close relationship with populist communication. Nevertheless, that was more than ten years ago. Therefore, I think a study on how populism uses social media as a tool in the modern world is very interesting and such a study would explore how new tools are able to convey messages a lot faster, cheaper, and to a high percentage of the population. Online media and social platforms are seen as having enhanced benefit to populism's rhetorical persuasion because both aim for the "quick kick/click" (Esser, Stepińska & Hopmann, 2016) with a broad audience.

Second, a study focusing on how the Hungarian government controls the mindset of the people through its education system. I see the evidence of how much the Hungarian government has been influencing the academic and national education system, for example, by taking the initiative to ban some fields of study, such as gender studies (Day, 2018). The exertion over university decision-making especially when university departments' finances are mostly controlled by authorities. The overall funding for universities in Hungary dropped by 30 percent from 2010 to 2014 (Kingsley, 2018). The government has invested particularly in an academic institution named National University of Public Service and a think tank called Veritas. Both institutions were established with a political aim; first was to train civil servants, policemen and soldiers, the latter

is to provide revisionist interpretations of 20th-century Hungarian history including the reign of Miklos Horthy, the autocrat who led Hungary before and during the Second World War (Day, 2018). I have already discussed this issue in the previous section.

Next, I can see government interference not only in the education system in Hungary, but also in the art aspect. An infiltration through culture and art is powerful in Hungary because theatre is more popular among the Hungarians compared to other Western European countries where stage plays are restricted for the elites. For a country with a population of just 9.8 million people, there are 60 theatres that sold 6.7 million tickets in 2016. What I am pointing out here is that what people see on the stage affect public opinion. This is the reason why it is important for the government to be able to exercise control over any public sphere. A research on the policies implemented on the cultural and arts spheres could add further value to the findings of this thesis.

Last, there should be a study on political opposition, on how the Hungarian people or the opposition parties in Hungary respond in contrast to the Orbán's government. I learn from the news that the European Union has launched a campaign in response to Orbán's but to include comments on this is beyond the scope of this thesis. To undermine democracy is a long process, which takes time, yet Orbán has continuously and strategically attacked democratic institutions. Thus, I recommend researchers to further their studies on the effects of the Hungarian government's campaigns, albeit in academia, nongovernmental organizations, or policies on the media in order to explore how people were affected by and how they responded to the campaign. Furthermore, a

psychological study from the perspective of refugees and migrants when seeing these anti-campaigns would be very useful and beneficial to academic research related to this topic.

Viktor Orbán's political ideology is to form an "illiberal democracy" based on nationalism, traditions, and Christian values. The recent Coronavirus pandemic in 2020 has brought an opportunity for the Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán to seize more power and turn Hungary into an authoritarian state. On March 30, 2020, the Hungarian parliament passed an emergency law giving the Prime Minister extra power to exercise during the time of another "crisis". By introducing such measures, Prime Minister Viktor Orbán has the right to rule by decree, no elections are allowed to be held during a state of emergency, and any "disinformation" about the virus could bring the person to jail for five years (Dempsey, 2020). The Coronavirus pandemic could be used to maintain the Hungarian right-wing populist government's extraordinary powers. The government has also blamed migrants for bringing the coronavirus to Hungary since the first cases were detected among Iranian students in Budapest (Reuters, 2020). The pandemic has become another channel to stimulate xenophobia and to raise concerns over migrants among the Hungarian population.

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# Appendix

จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย  
CHULALONGKORN UNIVERSITY

## 1. Geographical Information of the Visegrád group

| <div>TABLE 1</div> <div>Geographical information</div>   |                                                   |                                      |                                                |                                              |
|----------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|
| Country                                                  | Czech Republic                                    | Hungary                              | Poland                                         | Slovakia                                     |
| Area, thousand km <sup>2</sup>                           | 78.9                                              | 93.0                                 | 312.7                                          | 48.8                                         |
| Highest point, m                                         | Mount Sněžka<br>(Krkonoše Mountains),<br>1 602    | Kékes<br>(Mátra Mountains),<br>1 014 | Mount Rysy<br>(High Tatra mountains),<br>2 499 | Gerlachovský štít<br>(High Tatras),<br>2 655 |
| Lowest point, m                                          | Discharge of the Labe River<br>at Hřensko,<br>115 | Gyálárét (Szeged),<br>76             | Raczkí Elbląskie,<br>-1.8                      | Streda nad Bodrogom,<br>94                   |
| Longest river, km                                        | Vltava,<br>433                                    | Tisza,<br>596 <sup>a)</sup>          | Vistula,<br>1 022                              | Váh,<br>406                                  |
| Largest natural lake,<br>km <sup>2</sup>                 | Černé jezero,<br>0.2                              | Balaton,<br>596                      | Śniardwy,<br>113.4                             | Veľké Hincovo pleso,<br>0.2                  |
| Protected<br>Natura 2000 areas,<br>thousand hectares     | 1 114.8                                           | 1 994.9                              | 6 116.5                                        | 1 444.2                                      |
| Protected natural<br>areas as % of the<br>country's area | 14.1                                              | 21.4                                 | 19.6                                           | 29.5                                         |
| Number of national<br>parks                              | 4                                                 | 10                                   | 23                                             | 9                                            |
| National parks area,<br>thousand hectares                | 119.5                                             | 480.7                                | 314.1                                          | 317.8                                        |
| National parks<br>area as % of the<br>country's area     | 1.5                                               | 5.2                                  | 1.0                                            | 6.5                                          |
| Number of world<br>heritage sites                        | 12                                                | 8                                    | 15                                             | 7                                            |

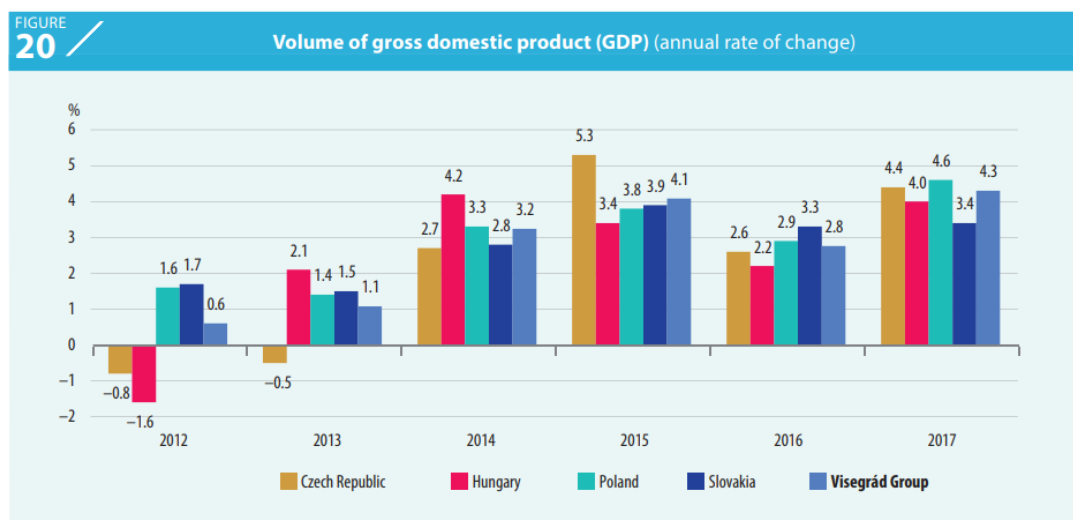
<sup>a)</sup> Length in Hungary.

Source: Eurostat, UNESCO, national statistical offices

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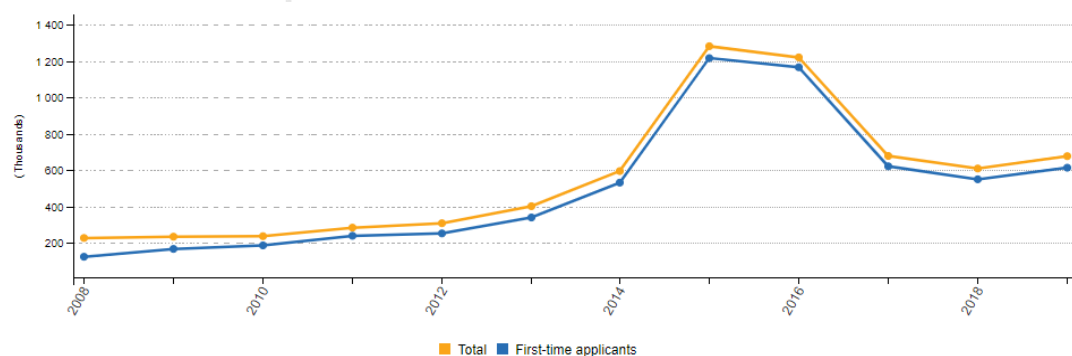
Source: Eurostat, UNESCO, National Statistical Offices

## 2. Volume of gross domestic product (GDP)



Source: Hungarian Central Statistical Office, 2018

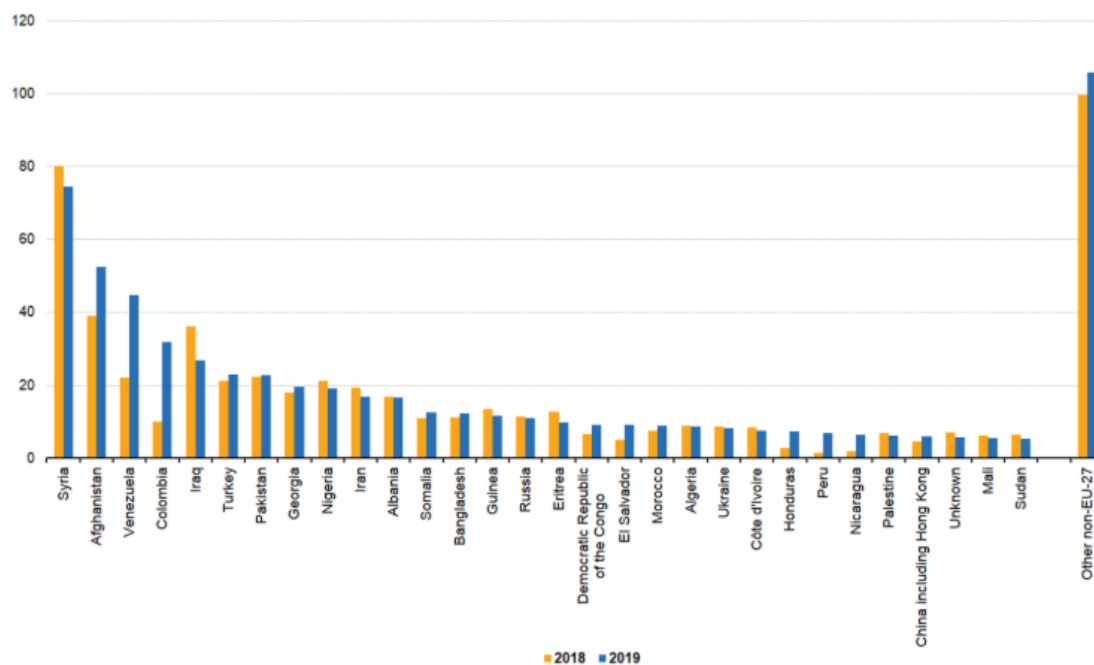
## 3. Asylum Applications of First Time Applicant for Non-EU submitted to the EU-27 Member States during 2008 - 2019



Source: Eurostat ([https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Asylum\\_statistics](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Asylum_statistics))



#### 4. Countries of Origin of (non-EU) Asylum Seekers in the EU-27 Member States, 2018 and 2019



Source: Eurostat (<https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index>.)



## 5. Relocation Carried Out by Member States and Associated Countries (As of November 2017)

| Member State   | Relocated from Italy | Relocated from Greece | Total         | Legal commitment |
|----------------|----------------------|-----------------------|---------------|------------------|
| Austria        | 15                   | 0                     | 15            | 1,953            |
| Belgium        | 361                  | 698                   | 1,059         | 3,812            |
| Bulgaria       | 0                    | 50                    | 50            | 1,302            |
| Croatia        | 18                   | 60                    | 78            | 968              |
| Cyprus         | 47                   | 96                    | 143           | 320              |
| Czech Republic | 0                    | 12                    | 12            | 2,691            |
| Estonia        | 0                    | 141                   | 141           | 329              |
| Finland        | 779                  | 1,201                 | 1,980         | 2,078            |
| France         | 377                  | 4,322                 | 4,699         | 19,714           |
| Germany        | 3,972                | 5,197                 | 9,169         | 27,536           |
| Hungary        | 0                    | 0                     | 0             | 1,294            |
| Ireland        | 0                    | 646                   | 646           | 600              |
| Latvia         | 27                   | 294                   | 321           | 481              |
| Liechtenstein  | 0                    | 10                    | 10            |                  |
| Lithuania      | 29                   | 355                   | 384           | 671              |
| Luxembourg     | 211                  | 271                   | 482           | 557              |
| Malta          | 67                   | 101                   | 168           | 131              |
| Netherlands    | 842                  | 1,709                 | 2,551         | 5,947            |
| Norway         | 816                  | 693                   | 1,509         |                  |
| Poland         | 0                    | 0                     | 0             | 6,182            |
| Portugal       | 315                  | 1,192                 | 1,507         | 2,951            |
| Romania        | 45                   | 683                   | 728           | 4,180            |
| Slovakia       | 0                    | 16                    | 16            | 902              |
| Slovenia       | 60                   | 172                   | 232           | 567              |
| Spain          | 205                  | 1,096                 | 1,301         | 9,323            |
| Sweden         | 1,202                | 1,619                 | 2,851         | 3,766            |
| Switzerland    | 877                  | 574                   | 1,421         |                  |
| <b>TOTAL</b>   | <b>10,265</b>        | <b>21,238</b>         | <b>31,503</b> | <b>98,255</b>    |

Source: Europa.eu ([https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/policies/european-agenda-migration/20171114\\_relocation\\_eu\\_solidarity\\_between\\_member\\_states\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/policies/european-agenda-migration/20171114_relocation_eu_solidarity_between_member_states_en.pdf))

## 6. NATIONAL CONSULTATION on immigration and terrorism (Questionnaire)

Published by the Prime Minister's Office

Please complete this questionnaire.

|                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                       |                     |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|
| <b>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?</b> |                       |                     |
| Very relevant                                                                                                                                                                                    | Relevant              | Not relevant        |
| <b>2] Do you think that Hungary could be the target of an act of terror in the next few years?</b>                                                                                               |                       |                     |
| There is a very real chance                                                                                                                                                                      | It could occur        | Out of the question |
| <b>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?</b>                    |                       |                     |
| I fully agree                                                                                                                                                                                    | I tend to agree       | I do not agree      |
| <b>4] Did you know that economic migrants cross the Hungarian border illegally, and that recently the number of immigrants in Hungary has increased twentyfold?</b>                              |                       |                     |
| Yes                                                                                                                                                                                              | I have heard about it | I did not know      |
| <b>5] We hear different views on the issue of immigration. There are some who think that economic migrants jeopardise the jobs and livelihoods of Hungarians. Do you agree?</b>                  |                       |                     |

|                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                          |                                    |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| I fully agree                                                                                                                                                                                            | I tend to agree                          | I do not agree                     |
| <b>6] There are some who believe that Brussels' policy on immigration and terrorism has failed, and that we therefore need a new approach to these questions. Do you agree?</b>                          |                                          |                                    |
| I fully agree                                                                                                                                                                                            | I tend to agree                          | I do not agree                     |
| <b>7] Would you support the Hungarian Government in the introduction of more stringent immigration regulations, in contrast to Brussels' lenient policy?</b>                                             |                                          |                                    |
| Yes, I would fully support the Government                                                                                                                                                                | I would partially support the Government | I would not support the Government |
| <b>8] Would you support the Hungarian government in the introduction of more stringent regulations, according to which migrants illegally crossing the Hungarian border could be taken into custody?</b> |                                          |                                    |
| Yes, I would fully support the Government                                                                                                                                                                | I would partially support the Government | I would not support the Government |
| <b>9] Do you agree with the view that migrants illegally crossing the Hungarian border should be returned to their own countries within the shortest possible time?</b>                                  |                                          |                                    |
| I fully agree                                                                                                                                                                                            | I tend to agree                          | I do not agree                     |
| <b>10] Do you agree with the concept that economic migrants themselves should cover the costs associated with their time in Hungary?</b>                                                                 |                                          |                                    |
| I fully agree                                                                                                                                                                                            | I tend to agree                          | I do not agree                     |

|                                                                                                                                                                                           |                 |                |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|----------------|
| <b>11] Do you agree that the best means of combating immigration is for Member States of the European Union to assist in the development of the countries from which migrants arrive?</b> |                 |                |
| I fully agree                                                                                                                                                                             | I tend to agree | I do not agree |
| <b>12] Do you agree with the Hungarian government that support should be focused more on Hungarian families and the children they can have, rather than on immigration?</b>               |                 |                |
| I fully agree                                                                                                                                                                             | I tend to agree | I do not agree |

## 7. NATIONAL CONSULTATION ON Let's Stop Brussels (Questionnaire)

Published by the Prime Minister's Office

| No.    | Question                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|--------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1.     | Brussels is preparing to make a dangerous move. It wants to force us to annul the utility-fee cuts. What do you think Hungary should do?                                                                                                                                         |
| Answer | <p><b>a.</b> We should defend the utility-fee cuts. We should insist that Hungarian energy prices be determined in Hungary.</p> <p><b>b.</b> We should accept the plan of Brussels and rely on large companies to determine utility-fee prices.</p>                              |
| 2.     | Terrorist attacks have followed one after another in Europe over the recent period. In spite of this, Brussels wants to force Hungary to receive illegal immigrants. What do you think Hungary should do?                                                                        |
| Answer | <p><b>a.</b> In the interest of the security of the Hungarian people, illegal immigrants should be placed under supervision until the authorities can make a decision regarding their cases.</p> <p><b>b.</b> We should permit illegal immigrants to move freely in Hungary.</p> |

|        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|--------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 3.     | By now it has become apparent that, in addition to human traffickers, certain international organizations have encouraged illegal immigrants on their way to Hungary to engage in unlawful activity. What do you think Hungary should do?                                                                                   |
| Answer | <p><b>a.</b> Activities that assist illegal immigration—such as human trafficking and the popularization of illegal immigration—should be punished.</p> <p><b>b.</b> We should accept that there exist certain international organizations that can encourage the circumvention of Hungarian laws without consequences.</p> |
| 4.     | More and more foreign-supported organizations are operating in Hungary with the objective of interfering in the internal affairs of our homeland in a non-transparent way. Their operations could endanger our independence. What do you think Hungary should do?                                                           |
| Answer | <p><b>a.</b> We should compel them to register themselves, disclosing the country or organization on behalf of which they are functioning and the objective of their operations.</p> <p><b>b.</b> We should permit them to continue to conduct their risky activities without supervision.</p>                              |
| 5.     | Job creation has been successful in Hungary over the past years because we took our own pathway. However, Brussels is attacking the job-creation measures. What do you think Hungary should do?                                                                                                                             |
| Answer | <p><b>a.</b> We Hungarians should continue to decide regarding the future of the Hungarian economy.</p> <p><b>b.</b> Let Brussels decide what should be done in the economy.</p>                                                                                                                                            |
| 6.     | Hungary has committed itself to cut taxes. Brussels is now attacking our homeland because of this.<br><br>What do you think Hungary should do?                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Answer | <p><b>a.</b> We should insist that we Hungarians are able to decide on tax cuts.</p> <p><b>b.</b> We should accept that Brussels dictates the magnitude of taxes.</p>                                                                                                                                                       |

## 8. NATIONAL CONSULTATION on Soros's Plan (Questionnaire)

Published by the Prime Minister's Office

| No. | Questions                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|-----|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1.  | George Soros wants to convince Brussels to resettle at least one million immigrants from Africa and the Middle East annually on the territory of the European Union, including Hungary as well.                                                  |
|     | Do you support this point of the Soros plan? YES NO                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| 2.  | George Soros, together with leaders in Brussels, also plan to have the member states of the EU, including Hungary, take down the border protection fences and open the borders for immigrants.                                                   |
|     | Do you support this point of the Soros plan? YES NO                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| 3.  | It is part of the Soros' plan that Brussels redistributes immigrants gathered in Western European countries on a mandatory basis, referring in particular to Eastern European countries. Hungary would be required to take part in this as well. |
|     | Do you support this point of the Soros plan? YES NO                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| 4.  | Based on the Soros' plan, Brussels should require every member state, including Hungary, to pay 9 million HUF in mandatory state aid for every immigrant.                                                                                        |
|     | Do you support this point of the Soros plan? YES NO                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| 5.  | George Soros would also like to see migrants receive lighter sentences for the crimes they commit.                                                                                                                                               |
|     | Do you support this point of the Soros plan? YES NO                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| 6.  | The goal of the Soros' plan is to diminish the importance of the language and culture of European countries in order to make the integration of illegal immigrants happen sooner.                                                                |
|     | Do you support this point of the Soros plan? YES NO                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| 7.  | It is part of the Soros' plan to launch political attacks on countries objecting to immigration and impose strict penalties on them.                                                                                                             |
|     | Do you support this point of the Soros' plan? YES NO                                                                                                                                                                                             |

## VITA

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- 1) Democracy Towards Authoritarianism Under Illiberal Populist Leaders in Hungary and Poland, published in the Central and Eastern European Review
- 2) Radical Right-Wing Politics and Migrants and Refugees in Hungary, published in the European Journal of Social Sciences.
- 3) How the Far-Right Extremists 'Scapegoat' their Political Opponents in Mass Media: A Hungarian Case Study, published in the Journal of European Studies, Chulalongkorn University.