

Political Campaigning in the Age of Populism: The Hungarian National Election of 2018

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Abstract

The thesis is a case study that aims to investigate how populist political communication functions and how populism contributes to the functioning of political campaigns. Based on a mixed, qualitative and quantitative content analysis, the thesis investigates the 2018 Hungarian National Elections' mass audience campaign materials: posters, flyers, and billboards. The focus is on all of their elements: slogans, pictures and texts. This way, the thesis contributes not only to the better understanding of populist political communication but examines the largely overlooked topic of populist visual communication. The results suggest that populism has a strong impact on political campaigning, visible in the focus and strategies of campaign materials. Although populism affects political communication, campaigning and advertising, populist parties do not tend to set the agenda and there is a clear difference between populist and non-populist parties' political communication. Non-populist parties tend to attack strong populist parties and use populist strategies to catch up with them, but their communication does not become purely populist.

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Introduction

Communication is an important political activity because it can create, present and hide reality. In addition, political communication can be a tool to bring tension in society to the surface, and a way to find solutions to social, economic and political issues (Szabó and Kiss 2012). Political theorists mostly agree that the quality of political communication determines the “health of democratic societies”, therefore it plays a crucial role in sustaining democracy (Iyengar and Simon 2000). In the past decades, politics has become mediatized, political marketing is flourishing and the political actors are aware of the power of political advertising that has become crucial to their campaign strategy (Szabó and Kiss 2012).

As Aalberg and others point out, populism has spread all over the world and has become a common phenomenon in many democratic countries, it is important to explore populist political communication and its impact on the changing political scene as well as media environment. Furthermore, they assert that “it is more important now than ever to map, dissect, and explicate the phenomenon of populist political communication. As populism increases over time and space, we need to understand how communication may be related to populism’s growth.” (Aalberg et al. 2017, 3)

Here the question arises: What does populism mean? Why should we care? Populism is a controversial term and a popular subject of research. There are many theories and definitions. Some define it as thin ideology (Freeden 1998; Mudde 2004; Wirth et al. 2016; Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser 2017), others as a style (Wodak 2015; Moffitt 2016), as a communication style (Jagers and Walgrave 2007; Aalberg and de Vresse 2017; Aalberg et al. 2017) and some consider populism a discourse (Hawkins 2009). Despite the many different approaches, there are three commonly

recognized criteria of populism. One of them is that the populists claim to speak and act in the name of the people, the second is that they create the image of the people's enemy, which is often the elite. The third point is that, these two homogenous groups have to be in an antagonistic relationship: populists are in "good fight" against the enemy to bring liberation or salvation to the people. This thesis does not intend to formulate a new definition; therefore, by populism I understand a thin-ideology that affects the political actors' communication style which has to convey the above mentioned criteria.

Political communication plays a key role in the spreading and flourishing of populism. Investigating populist political communication may help us better understand this phenomenon since populism "becomes visible in the political communication strategies or discursive patterns of the populist actors" (Kriesi and Pappas, n.d., 9). There are increasing numbers of studies that try to explain and gain an in-depth understanding of the topic. Populism has been investigated in various communication channels, like party broadcasts (Jagers and Walgrave 2007), news broadcasts (Bos, van der Brug, and de Vreese 2011), speeches (Hawkins 2009) and the press (Akkerman 2011), however, there are still many gaps to fill and the need to bring new insights to. For example, there is a limited amount of research about party competition and the effect of populism on political campaigning. In addition, visual communication is largely overlooked by studies in general as there is little systematic analysis of politics related to visuals, especially populist politicians' visual communication is an unpopular topic.

Even though the topic is very popular among scholars, it still raises many questions, so it is worth exploring. Because of space and time limits I investigate only a small section of the subject in the thesis: I concentrate on political communication in the age of populism, focusing on political

campaigning. Therefore, the research questions are the following: How does populist political communication function in general? How does populism contribute to the functioning of a political campaign? Does the populist environment influence the political campaigns of non-populist parties? And more specifically, what are the main characteristics of the campaign period of the 2018 Hungarian National Election?

Analyzing political campaigning is important because people's general interest in politics is growing during campaign periods; the national campaign materials are present everywhere on streets, television, radio and the Internet. Even those people meet politics during the campaign periods who are generally not interested in it. Kriesi asserts, "political communication and its effects are best studied in the framework of a political campaign" when political communication is relatively steady. He sees political campaigns as series of intensive communication events that are used by political actors to influence voting behavior. (Kriesi 2012, 11).

Political campaigns, especially before elections produce a wide range of materials. Parties select the content of their campaign material extremely carefully because they try to send the most powerful messages about "true issues" to the people through paid advertisements. Posters have a very long history and a central role as non-verbal communication tools. (Van den Bulck 1993; Farrell and Schmitt-Beck 2002) They emerged together with the birth of competing political parties. Even though there are new methods developed to attract voters, posters do not lose their importance: they are still must-have elements for campaigns. Posters are the combination of slogans, pictures and texts. In addition, they can reach mass audiences, as they are almost everywhere in evidence. As Holtz-Bach and Johansson assert, posters are the best campaign tool to create attention. They highlight that posters have not only the classical announcement function,

but also a mobilizing function. Moreover, posters are inexpensive, easily duplicable and send messages directly to the people not going through the filter of the media. (Holtz-Bacha and Johansson 2017)

According to Dumitrescu (2010) and Teer-Tomaselli (2006), posters are ideal source for studying patterns of the political actors' competition and political communication during elections. Therefore, in this thesis, I will focus on posters, slogans, flyers, homepage banners and billboards, and will concentrate both on their text and images, since messages transmitted by images are of outstanding importance. I have chosen these campaign genres as the subject of this thesis because they contain messages considered most important. These materials with short texts and images are quick sources of information, which irrespective of the voters' will, certainly have an influence on them. Therefore, they have a substantial role during the campaign period.

Based on the studies outlined above, my hypothesis is that populism has strong influencing power; consequently, I presume populism affects political communication and political advertising regarding issue preferences during campaign period. I assume that regardless of non-populist parties' communication style, populist parties will strongly influence other parties' political campaigning regarding the topics and focus of campaign materials. In addition, I hypothesize that there will be a clear difference between populist and non-populist parties regarding their political communication. The populist parties will use strong populist type of communication, so they will use the "us" versus "them" rhetoric, while the non-populist parties will use informative communication even about the same topics and issues. Therefore, I assume that there are two possible outcomes regarding non-populist parties: (1) non-populist parties will fail to meet expectations and they will start to use populist rhetoric to catch up with the strong populist parties,

or (2) they will meet the theoretical expectations and they will run informative, non-populist political campaigning.

The aim of the research is to extend the current academic knowledge about populism and populist campaigning. Hungary is an important case because the governing party, *Fidesz*, is the most successful populist party in Europe (Boros and Kadlót 2016; Foundation for European Progressive Studies 2017; Mudde 2015; Batory 2016). As *Fidesz*¹ gained electoral success three times in a row, twice they could form a government with supermajority². They have been governing with majority in coalition with the Christian Democratic People's Party (KDNP) since 2010. It is not a unique phenomenon for populist parties to win national elections, but their supermajority is exceptional. Lendvai (2012a, 207) argues that this success has helped to spread and strengthen populist attitudes. Overall, the recent Hungarian government is not an unusual populist government, but Hungary is a good case where populist tendencies and effects of populism might be most visible. It would be more difficult to observe in other cases.

The thesis investigates the period between 1 April 2017 and 31 March 2018. I have chosen this time interval because the general election was on 8 April 2018, and there are analytical advantages of investigating political advertising during election campaigns: great intensity in a short period gives the possibility to pay more attention to a small slice of the campaign, which is the condensed version of the actual political reality. Another advantage is that campaign materials have carefully chosen content, aimed at capturing people's increased attention.

¹ *Fidesz* – Hungarian Civic Alliance

² In fact, *Fidesz* won on the elections four times: once in 1998, and then three times in row in 2010, in 2014 and in 2018. Nevertheless, it considered to turn from liberal ideology to populism only after the first period of governance, in 2005. (Debreczeni 2012)

The contribution of this in-depth case study expands knowledge on political communication and populism. It offers a better understanding of populism in general and the recent political situation in Hungary in particular. Furthermore, it identifies effective strategies in visual and written political communication, determines populist trends during the election campaign and explores how the strong populist environment affects other parties' political communication. Finally, yet importantly, this thesis helps to identify areas for further research. The relevance of this thesis is not only due to the fact that the impact of populism on political campaigning has not been well-researched but also because the way of political advertising is presumably changing rapidly and drastically. (Iyengar and Prior 1999)

I am aware that this thesis may have limitations. For instance, as it is a single case study, findings might be difficult to generalize. In addition, there is the constantly changing legal environment related to campaigning, that might have important effects. A further issue can be that the genre analyzed in this thesis concerns only short texts in general, thus yields limited information. Therefore, it is possible that populist elements, one out of the two homogenous group or their antagonistic relationship is not present, although if I looked at the other genres of political communication, for example speeches, the result could be different. However, with a well-designed research method, this thesis provides reliable information and ensures replicability of its findings that could be generalized to other cases. It is hoped that despite its limitations, the thesis helps to gain more in-depth knowledge about political campaigning and populism that further research on other cases could further scrutinize.

The thesis is divided into five chapters. The introduction is followed by the first chapter that provides an overview of theories of political communication, political campaigning, political

advertisement and in addition, discusses the agenda setting theory. To narrow down the topic, I present the highly contested term, populism and discuss the most important findings and theories about populist political communication and populist political campaigning. The second chapter establishes the historical background of this thesis and gives insights into the last decades of Hungarian politics, focusing on the governing party, *Fidesz*, since it is widely considered to be a populist party. In the third chapter, I discuss the specific research methods and the operationalization of my assumptions based on the theory. Chapter 4 presents the analysis of the 2018 Hungarian National Campaign materials. This is followed by the conclusion of the thesis, where I list the major findings and possible interpretations.

Chapter 1: Populist political communication and campaigning

Populism has become a popular topic in academia. The number of studies is increasing dramatically as populism has become an everyday phenomenon in many countries. Populism undoubtedly influences political communication since it is visible through communication. As Blumler and Kavanagh (1999) asserts, in our third age of political communication, in the age of media abundance there are five trends that reshape political communication with one of them being populism³. Therefore, in the following chapter, I am going to present the most relevant findings and theories of political communication, political campaigning and advertisement, agenda-setting, populism, populist political communication and campaigning.

1.1 Political communication

According to Esser and Pfetsch, “political communication is about the creation, shaping, dissemination, processing and effects of information among actors from the political system, the media and the public”, furthermore, political communication is the exchange of information and messages between three participants: political actors, citizens and the media. Besides, political communication may affect the legitimation of authority, the share of political power and people’s

³ In the first age political communication got only secondary role besides political institutions and beliefs. The second age was about the professionalization of political parties, whose communication was affected by television news. In the today’s “third age of media abundance” there are five trends that may reshape political communication: “intensified professionalizing imperatives, increased competitive pressures, anti-elitist populism, a process of ‘centrifugal diversification’, and changes in how people receive politics”. (Blumler and Kavanagh 1999, 209)

interest and opinion. Esser and Pfetsch argue that today`s political communication has become the mixture of public and personalized communication including mass media, social media, established and non-established communicators. They add that the boundaries between politics and entertainment are fading (Esser and Pfetsch 2017, 1-2).

McNair (2011, 6), in his book, “An Introduction to Political Communication”, points out three elements of political communication in democratic societies that are most relevant. They are (1) political organizations, like parties, public organizations, pressure groups, terrorist organizations and governments, (2) the media and (3) the citizens. The interaction between these elements is where political action is evolving. In this thesis, I concentrate on these elements; I analyze the messages of parties which are sent to citizens through different campaign materials.

1.1.1 Political campaigning and political advertisement

Political campaigning is a strategic communication tool that aims to represent and express ideas, convince the public and raise awareness. (Philipps, Schölzel, and Richter 2016, 88). Its crucial role and persuasive power is beyond dispute. (Swanson and Mancini 1996; Farrell and Schmitt-Beck 2002). In recent decades, advertising has become an essential element of election campaigns (Grbesa 2005). According to Iyengar and Prior (1999), commercial advertising is “pervasive and inescapable”. It is a massive business, the parties are spending enormous amounts of money on it during campaign periods, especially during elections (Fulgoni, Lipsman, and Davidsen 2016). Moreover, in recent times, we can observe that voters choose parties in the same way as consumers choose products. We have become consumers in all areas of life. (Lilleker and Lees-Marshment 2005)

Posters, flyers, and billboards are non-verbal communication tools visualizing political messages, which are available to everybody; therefore, they affect the whole population of a country. Scholars argue (Van den Bulck 1993; Farrell and Schmitt-Beck 2002), election posters are the most dominant, absolutely necessary channels to spread information. The main goal of using posters during an election campaign is to convince voters and make them familiar with candidates and parties (Sharndama and Mohammed 2013). Posters offer extensive information about political communication but do not offer extensive information about candidates, policies, party programs or other issues, so they emerge mostly in persuasive campaigns (Cheles 2001). Therefore, what to include in posters is a strategic decision for parties.

Iyengar and Prior (1999) point out that in political advertising there are no rules. The political actors can use this tool as they wish; there is a lack of accountability or a code of ethics. Moreover, there is no intention to use any limitation or accept any rules. They call the phenomenon “comparative advertising”, where a harsh tone and controversial techniques are acceptable to all. Based on the arguments of Iyengar and Prior political advertising may change dramatically over time since there is no legal or moral control over how political actors may spread their messages through political advertising.

Posters used to be unidirectional communication tools but by now they have become bidirectional. That is to say, there is a phenomenon, which has become an everyday issue: the defacing of election posters in order to express opinion. According to Philipps, Schölzel and Richter “the defacement of election posters is more than a tactical intervention in everyday life. Activists use this within the public realm, but outside the dominant modes of making sense, in order to challenge public consciousness” (Philipps, Schölzel, and Richter 2016, 89). Defacing of campaign material

has an important implication for this thesis, as we can observe that it is not only activists, but political parties are also defacing each other's campaign material, in order to turn them into their own message carrier tools, namely to turn them into their own posters. These new, modified campaign materials, which are instruments to compete in a cost-effective way, are also included and are the objects of my analysis. It worth paying attention to this phenomenon because "researchers rarely investigate the forms and functions of such contentious practices" (Philipps, Schölzel, and Richter 2016, 89).

The colors used by politicians are part of their communication and often determine the design of campaign materials. Colors strengthen and express the sympathizers' affiliation. (Földvári n.d.) The function of colors is identification, indication of identity and distinction. Historically, blue is the color of aristocrats and green is the color of the folk, the plebeian. (Szilágyi 2010) These days blue is the color of the conservative, right-wing political actors and of the elite. In addition, blue is the main color of the European Union. Furthermore, blue is associated with being moderate, calm and sublime. In contrast, red is the color of labor movements, socialism, communism and social democracy. Liberals often use yellow, but they sometimes use red and blue as well. Orange is used in politics with different purposes and ideologies. It means friendliness and confidence. For instance, it is the color of the Irish protestants and the Orange Revolution in the Ukraine. Green is the color of the green parties but in Northern Ireland the Catholics and in Islamic countries the nationalists and the religious parties use it. According to Szilágyi (2010) the green parties' main agenda is environmental protection. Földvári states that black and red are the colors of anarchists. Since 2016-17 purple and turquoise has been associated with the Clinton family and with György Soros. The Clinton family argues that it is the combination of the Democrats' blue and the Republicans' red. The meaning of purple is fresh, smart, young. (Földvári n.d.) Red can symbolize

the suppressed crowd who are ready to take blood sacrifice. The purpose of using green by parties in Europe is to symbolize the distance from the former political elite and to highlight that they do not belong to the left-right division, but they represent something new. (Szilágyi 2010)

1.1.2 Agenda setting theory

Media has a pivotal role in political agenda setting (McCombs and Shaw 1974; Gamson 1992), although the extent to which the media has an impact is disputed. When McCombs and Shaw discussed for the first time the agenda-setting theory, they were talking about the agenda-setting function of mass media. They were claiming that “in reflecting what candidates are saying during a campaign, the mass media may well determine the important issues – that is, the media may set the ‘agenda’ of the campaign” (McCombs and Shaw 1972, 176). According to Walgrave (2016) “political agenda-setting refers to the process of issue salience transfer from the media to the political agenda”. That is to say, the media can influence politicians’ political communication.

However, not only the media and its coverage influence parties but also parties influence the media. Hopmann and others point out that “political parties have substantial influence on which issues the news media cover during election campaigns, while the media have limited influence on party agendas”. They also highlight that there are no findings yet why some parties are more successful in convincing the media to use their issue agenda. (Hopmann et al. 2012, 173). Hopmann’s “extended version” of agenda setting theory seems convincing: there is constant interaction between parties and the media. However, the original theory can help us to better understand the dynamic.

There are two different theories of parties' issue choices according to the existing literature. According to the issue ownership theory (Budge and Farlie 1983; Robertson 1976) the parties concentrate on their own topics, which leads to issue divergence. That is to say, all political parties care about different issues, rather than responding to each other's. According to the theory, this is the strategy of sure winners and sure losers. The riding the wave theory (Ansolabehere and Iyengar 1994; Sigelman and Buell 2004; Wagner and Meyer 2014) implies that parties pay attention to topics of the people's main interest, which are coming from the media. The result is issue convergence. This means that eventually every party deal with the same issues and the result is a competitive situation. Besides, the parties are developing into catchall parties.

Dalmus et al. investigate issue competition between parties across different communication channels. They state that there is proof of both theories, which suggests that there are other influencing factors of issue choice. Through quantitative content analysis on the 2011 Swiss federal elections, they found that issue choices vary across various communication channels. Furthermore "while a stronger focus on each party's core issues can be detected in paid advertisements, issue convergence increases in election manifestos and proves to be highest in press releases" (Dalmus, Haenggli, and Bernhard 2016, 1), moreover "paid advertisements revealed strong ideological core orientation, election manifestos contained statements on a larger variety of issues" (Dalmus, Haenggli, and Bernhard 2016, 18).

I am not analyzing the agenda setting power of the media on political actors. I rather focus on the impact of populism on parties' issue choice and whether populist parties have the power to set the leading agendas for political campaigns. Therefore, I rely on the agenda-setting theory. In this thesis speaking about the agenda setting power of political parties during campaigning means the

possible impact of a particular party on the other's way of campaigning. The agenda setting theory helps me to discover how a populist party's political communication contributes to the functioning of political campaigning, whether it can "set the set the "agenda" of the campaign" (M. E. McCombs and Shaw 1972, 176) and whether they can influence and determine the topics, speed and focus of campaigning. This will help me to investigate whether the populist environment can influence campaigning and whether it can encourage parties to use populist elements.

1.2 Populism as a concept

In the following paragraphs, I summarize the recent and most important findings and the theoretical debates on populism, trying to clarify what different scholars mean by populism. The task is challenging, because the term 'populism' is quite controversial and highly contested with numerous definitions and approaches and little common understanding among them. Despite the many different approaches to populism, there are three commonly recognized core elements of populism. One of them is claiming to speak in the name of the people, and the other is the constructed picture of the enemy, that is often the elite. These groups have to be in conflict with each other. Populism shows many forms (Taggart 2004). Margaret Canovan (1981) describes seven forms of populism, but similarly to other scholars agrees that all types of populism share some common features, and unsurprisingly it is always their claim to represent the people's interest against the elite.

While Paul Taggart (2004, 275) criticizes the existing definitions, and says that there is "inherent incompleteness" in all of them, Mény and Surel (2002) describe populism as an empty shell. In public discourse the term 'populist' is often used wrongly as a simple synonym to a "bad"

politician (Aalberg et al. 2017; Ionescu and Gellner 1969). Aalberg and Vresse (2017, 5) call it the “expression of democratic malaise”. Agnes Batory strongly argues that populism is harmful. She states that “the main harm comes from populists’ disrespect for, and undermining of, the foundations on which the notion of limited government and pluralist democracy rests: independent institutions, constitutional checks and balances and civil rights and liberties for the protection of minorities”. Moreover, she claims, that populism is the opposite of constitutionalism and that populism and “the notion of consolidated liberal democracy are logically not compatible with each other” (Batory 2016, 284). In contrast, other scholars (Mudde 2004; Rooduijn 2014) argue that populism is not an anomaly, just something different from the usual, which “has become mainstream in the politics of western democracies” (Mudde 2004, 542). Similarly, Stanyer, Salgado and Strömback (2017) claim that populism is an essential part of democracy.

There are several different theories about the roots of populism. Taggart (2004) speaks about the weakening of representative democracy in Europe which opens the door to populism and let it to flourish. More than a decade later, Taggart and Kaltwasser built a compelling theory about the emergence of populism. They claim that these days only democratic systems are commonly accepted in the Western world. Therefore, in order to gain and keep power, political actors must keep at least the semblance of democracy. That is to say, populism may be a compromise, a tool or a mask to hide the real purpose when they would prefer a different system (Kaltwasser and Taggart 2016). In line with this, Bozóki states that “hybrid regimes, populist politics and illiberal democracies constrain the political activity of citizens and move in an authoritarian direction. The reason why authoritarian leaders like the concept of ‘illiberal democracy’ so much is that it offers an opportunity for them to present themselves as (some sort of) democrats” (Bozóki 2017). The

important element in both theories is that politicians want to convince everybody that they are legitimate since they are elected by the people through free and fair elections.

Benjamin Moffitt (2016) sees populism as a political style. He argues that the development of the media plays a pivotal role in its creation. Other scholars argue that populism is a political communication style. For instance, Jagers and Walgrave (2007, 322) state that populism is “a communication frame that appeals to and identifies with the people and pretends to speak in their name... It is a master frame, a way to wrap up all kinds of issues.” Besides, populist politicians are anti-elitist, and they consider society as a homogenous group, split along a single cleavage. Anti-elitism in practice means that populist political actors create an enemy (or more enemies) who they blame for all problems. Elites can be political elites, the media, the state, intellectuals and economic powers.

For Rooduijn (2014, 728) populism is about “the characteristic of a specific message rather than a characteristic of an actor sending that message”. Some scholars highlight the pivotal role of research on populist political communication because “populism is mostly reflected in the oral, written, and visual communication of individual politicians, parties, social movements, or any other actor that steps into the public sphere” (Aalberg, Esser, Reinemann, Stromback, et al. 2017, 2).

Wodak successfully tackles this issue in his book, “The Politics of Fear: What Right-Wing Populist Discourses Mean”. She affirms that populism is a political style “in the sense of a complex ‘syndrome’ which mixes heterogeneous and theoretically incoherent elements in a strategic way—of course, these elements need not all emerge simultaneously.” She notes that it is important to distinguish left and right-wing populism and separate them from each other. The reason is that

they have different characteristics: “right-wing populism presents itself as serving the interest of an imagined homogenous people inside a nation state, whereas left-wing populism or other parties also employing populist strategies have an international stance, look outwards and emphasize diversity or even cosmopolitanism” (Wodak 2015, 47). These are important statements that I investigate in this thesis as well.

Cas Mudde’s name is associated with the phrase, “populist Zeitgeist” which has characterized liberal democracies since the 1990s. He defines populism as a “thin-centred 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”. Populism, as thin-centred ideology lacks additional values alike “real” ideologies. This definition highlights the contrast between elitism and pluralism. Furthermore, Mudde points out that populist politicians claim to “speak in the name of the ‘oppressed people’”, furthermore the meaning of ‘elite’ always depends on the meaning of ‘people’. If we know who the ‘people’ are, the ‘elite’ is their enemy. (Mudde 2004a, 553)

According to Mudde (2004, 547) “populism can be easily combined with very different (thin and full) other ideologies, including communism, ecologism, nationalism or socialism” but “the core concept of populism is obviously ‘the people’”: “the consciousness of the people, generally referred to as common sense, is the basis of all good”. Populist political actors do not intend to change the people’s way of thinking and way of living as other ideologies do. (Mudde 2004a, 553). That is to say, while full ideologies want to affect all areas of life, populism as thin ideology does not intend to affect everybody’s way of living. They may use nudging, so they can change attitudes, rights of people may be violated, the quality of (liberal) democracy may decline, but populists do

not want to control all areas of life and there is no force to accept the ideology. As Hawkins states, populism is a set of ideas that “lacks the precision of classic ideologies such as socialism or liberalism.” Furthermore, he asserts that “populist discourse is like an ideology in that it is a set of fundamental beliefs about how the world works and tends to compel its believers into political action. But unlike an ideology, populism is a latent set of ideas or a worldview that lacks significant exposition and ‘contrast’ with other discourses and is usually low on policy specifics.” (Hawkins 2009, 1945)

According to the NCCR Democracy’s Working paper, there are many forms of populism described as thin ideology. Their proposed definition of populism is the following: “Left-wing populism defines the people as a class and sees them opposed to an economic elite; right-wing populism, by contrast, defines the people as an ethnos and sees them opposed to a political and cultural elite” (Wirth et al. 2016, 9). In addition, populism is not an exclusively right or left-wing phenomenon, although the first critiques of populism in Europe came from the left in the 1960s and populism is often associated with nationalism, separatism, Xenophobia and radical, anti-democratic thoughts (Mazzoleni, Stewart, and Horsfield 2003). In Europe populism is often confused not only with Xenophobia but with Euroscepticism, too (Bernhard 2016).

Some scholars (Freeden 1998; Mudde 2004; Aalberg, Esser, Reinemann, Strömbäck, et al. 2017) see populism as a set of ideas and agree with the approach of thin-centered ideology. They think that “populism is a general, abstract concept about politics and society that is open to a diverse set of more concrete political ideas and programs, depending on both national and historical contexts” (Aalberg, Esser, Reinemann, Stromback, et al. 2017, 13).

Taggart claims that populist actors generally emerge very fast, they quickly achieve great success, but their presence is not sustainable, therefore they can enjoy only short-term success (Taggart 2004). Maybe his statement made sense in 2004, when he wrote his study, but practice shows the opposite. Not only do populist parties grab power, but they are able to establish long and strong governance, for instance in the Hungarian case.

As it can be seen there are many approaches to populism, there is no common agreement on its exact content. But what is important is that as Kriesi and Pappas argue populism “becomes visible in the political communication strategies or discursive patterns of the populist actors” (Kriesi and Pappas, n.d., 9). Moreover, there is no consensus on whether it is a style, an ideology, a movement or a set of ideas, but all scholars agree on the two antagonistic groups as key elements of populist political parties and politicians: anti-elitist political actors, who are creating enemies and justifying their actions with the people’s true interest, be that real or fictional. What is more, political communication is reemerging, inseparable from populism in time of mediatized politics.

1.2.1 Populist political communication

Mazzoleni, Stewart and Horsfield (2003) assert that populism affects the policies and the political actors’ rhetoric. Populists often use an aggressive tone, “verbal radicalism and symbolic politics with the tools of contemporary political marketing to disseminate their ideas among the electorate” (Betz and Immerfall 1998, 2). Wodak argues, that right wing populist parties use specific rhetoric and content; they “successfully construct fear”. By causing fear they easily convince the people that they need higher level of security. (Wodak 2015, 1) In line with this, by analyzing the 2015 Greek election and referendum campaigns, Boukala and Dimitrakopoulou (2017) found that Greek

populists besides stigmatizing their opponents “developed their rhetoric on the basis of a politics of fear and a politics of hope.” Other scholars (Rico, Guinjoan, and Anduiza 2017) assert that populists attempt to trigger negative emotions, for example anger to get support but their findings suggest that fear and populism do not have any connection.

Hawkins in his paper “Is Chávez Populist? Measuring Populist Discourse in Comparative Perspective” understands populism “as a Manichaeian discourse that identifies Good with a unified will of the people and Evil with a conspiring elite” (Hawkins 2009, 1042). Hawkins states that the core element of populism is the representation of the popular will. In addition, populists assign everything to a moral dimension, they see everything in black and white, often refer back to national and/or religious leaders and call for systemic change. The populists’ people are the majority of the society and in order to satisfy them, rights of the evil minority can be violated. Moreover, the “conspiring elite has subverted the will of the people” and cannot respond to the people’s demand. There has to be a struggle between these two homogenous camps of the society. He asserts, that “the mass of individual citizens are the rightful sovereign; given enough time for reasoned discourse, they will come to a knowledge of their collective interest and the government must be constructed in such a way that it can embody their will” (Hawkins 2009).

According to Jenne (2016, 2) “populist governments invoke the notion of a separation between the national people and elites, charging the latter with exploiting the former” moreover, “populists seek to ‘rewrite sovereignty’”. Denton argues that if we want to determine the characteristics of populist communication, we should first think about what characterizes the liberal rhetoric. He contends that “the liberal is the collected, matter-of-fact solver of problems that worry us all. The

populist is the champion for the little man, us ordinary folks beset by machinations of corrupt politicians”. (Denton 2017, 269)

Some argue that populist politicians are endowed with such abilities and personal qualities that enable them to gain attention and popularity among people and media. Mudde states that populist politicians are often characterized as charismatic leaders who are using direct communication. According to him, these common features “facilitate rather than define populism”. He argues that “the current success of populist actors cannot be separated from the general trend towards strong party leaders and more direct communication between party leadership and party supporters which has developed over the past decades”. (Mudde 2004a, 545)

Similarly, Benjamin Moffitt argues that the media is the core element of today’s populism. Therefore, when investigating populism there should be a great emphasis on the media. He points out that “the rise of contemporary populism is intimately related to shifts in the media landscape that have not been examined in depth in the literature on populism” (Moffitt 2016, 70). According to Moffitt (2016), populist actors use two methods in the mass media. One is control, which means that populist political actors attempt to supervise and/or own parts of the media; the other is celebrity, meaning that they try to mix politics and entertainment.

Can we look at populism as a marketing strategy? Do politicians use it to concentrate on their individualistic position and increase media attention instead of representing a political ideology and offering solutions to problems? Is populism responsible for the depoliticization of politics in general? As we can observe, politics has become less about ideology and more about marketing strategies and short-lived trends. As populism has emerged and has become successful in many countries, it has become part of everyday political rhetoric. As Stanyer, Salgado and Stromback

assert, “features of political discourse usually attributed to populism and the populist political style have become a more or less constant feature in many countries’ politics.” (Stanyer, Salgado, and Stromback 2017, 357)

There are very few studies dealing with populist visual communication especially in Europe. One of them is a very short description by Sophie Schmalenberger. She analyzed the Hungarian Prime Minister’s usage of images on Facebook in 2016 focusing on the photos of Viktor Orbán. The photos were mostly spontaneous or at least they wanted to achieve this effect and were of a remarkably high quality. The pictures depict a serious, important and busy politician who cares about the future of Hungary and the wellbeing of Hungarians. Schmalenberger points out that the Hungarian flag is often in the background of the photos, which reminds the viewer of whose name the political actor is acting in. According to her analysis, there were many signs of belonging to the nation and being part of the people. In addition children are often seen in the pictures, furthermore in some photos he is in direct contact with ordinary people, who are of course happy to meet Orbán. (Schmalenberger 2016). In line with Schmaleberger’s analysis, Denton states that if we turn to the messages encoded in visual effects, populists often occur among ordinary people, close to each other. But “the Republican leader stands alone, above, or otherwise apart from the people”. Furthermore, “leaders presented at arm’s length from small number of individuals in the foreground who then shake hands or even exchange brief hugs are liberal figures.” (Denton 2017, 272)

To sum up, populism certainly affect the political actors’ communication strategies and their relationship with media. Populists use “unique” way to communicate with their audience. They create a world where everything is black and white, there are no shades: moral good and bad, fear

and hope, majority and minority, national people and elites. These features appear in both texts and visuals so focusing on them form the main part of this thesis.

1.2.2 Populist political campaigning

In the limited amount of research about populist political campaigning, one important study by Bernhard, examined eight countries between 2010 and 2014. Based on quantitative content analysis of press releases, he summarized that ideological extremist, radical right and far left parties are more likely to use populist rhetoric during national election campaigns in West-Europe (Bernhard 2016). An earlier work by Bernahard, Hanspeter and Weber added that campaigns foster more intensive populist political communication than “normal” political communication (Bernhard, Hanspeter, and Weber 2015).

Wodak lists ‘external political communication’ as a feature of populist political communication and determines 14 popular topics of right-wing populist parties which are present in advertising, in the formation of public attitudes, opinions and in political control presented through speeches, election rallies, TV debates, TV interviews, posters, leaflets, comics on the internet, in election manifestos, slogans and so on. Table 1 lists the above mentioned discourses and topics (Wodak 2015, 49).

Table 1 Discourses and topics of right-wing populist parties

(Wodak 2015, 49)

Discourse 1	Immigration, Migrants, Asylum Seekers
Discourse 2	Cultural and Family Values
Discourse 3	The 'Homeland' - the Nation and its Grand History
Discourse 4	Gender Politics
Discourse 5	The 'Pure' Language - Mothertongue
Discourse 6	Globalization
Discourse 7	Occident versus Orient - Christianity versus Islam and Judaism
Discourse 8	Communism
Discourse 9	Citizenship and Belonging - 'Pure' People
Discourse 10	Security, Law and Order
Discourse 11	EU- and Euro-scepticism
Discourse 12	Market Economy
Discourse 13	Democracy and the People
Discourse 14	Privileges and Corruption

Wodak (2015, 65) claims that right-wing populist parties' and mainstream parties' political communication differ in their content and in their "specific discursive strategies that realize these content". In addition, Jenne (2016) asserts that the nation's sovereignty is a popular topic of populist campaign, that is under attack and it has to be defended.

All things considered, it seems reasonable to assume that populist political campaigning has to include the claim to represent people and the blaming on 'others' who are often the elite. Practicing issueless politics and mixing politics and entertainment also characterize populist political campaigning. In addition, there are specific topics that are popular among populists, for instance immigration, security, law and order and privileges and corruption, thus I focus on the emergence of these issues and topics in the analysis.

Chapter 2: The Hungarian context: Political situation and the *Fidesz* phenomenon

In the following paragraphs, I introduce and explain the relevant part of Hungarian politics, focusing on *Fidesz*, since it is widely considered to be a populist party, as already mentioned above. Therefore, I expect *Fidesz* to deliver populist campaigns. The introduction of the Hungarian context is important because campaign materials often convey short messages and their interpretation depends on understanding the context, so even a one-word campaign slogan can be perfectly understood.

Despite the many definitions and understandings, most scholars agree on which parties are populist and which are not. For example, in the case of Hungary there is a general agreement, according to which the recent Hungarian governing party, *Fidesz*, is a populist party (Batory 2016; Körösényi and Patkós 2015). Some scholars, for example in the book "Right-Wing Populism in Europe" edited by Ruth Wodak, Majid KhosraviNik and Brigitte Mral (2013), add the far-right party, Movement for a Better Hungary (commonly known as *Jobbik*), to the list. However, *Jobbik* is under constant change, they are on the move towards the center and yet their rhetoric often conveys populist elements. Thus, it is hard to categorize it. All things considered, it seems reasonable to put the main focus on the strong populist governing party, but also pay particular attention to *Jobbik*.

When *Fidesz* was founded in 1988, as the Alliance of Young Democrats, the idea was to create a party with liberal ideology. In 1990, *Fidesz* was one of the six parties, who got into Parliament with 8.9 % of the votes and their voters increased over time. At the time of the foundation, Viktor Orbán was already a major figure and he has been the leader since 1993. (Batory 2016). With time,

the party has changed a lot. For a while it became the major, mainstream, moderate center-right catch all party and Viktor Orbán has become the leader of the united right-wing after the election in 1998 and *Fidesz* kept its position until *Jobbik* emerged and split the right (Körösenyi and Patkós 2015). It was founded in 2002 and became a party in 2003. (Wodak 2015) Ever since *Jobbik* has become a major party, which is a big achievement in the Hungarian context because as Enyedi argues, previously “most of the vote shift happened among the established parliamentary parties.” (Enyedi 2016, 213)

After 1998, a bipolar competition could be observed on the right side *Fidesz* with KDNP against the left side MSZP with SZDSZ. This situation has driven the politicians in to competition, where the parties outbid each other. Enyedi points out, that “contrary to relevant theories, the high degree of competitiveness did not force politicians to cater to the long-term interests of the voters.” Instead, parties tended to make unrealistic pledges.(Enyedi 2016, 214) *Fidesz* and KDNP have become representative of patriotism, nationalism, Christian-conservatism and Euroscepticism, while MSZP and SZDSZ of cosmopolitanism, secularism and pro-market, pro-integration policies (Batory 2016).

The *Fidesz*-KDNP coalition has the overwhelming majority in Parliament since 2010. That means that they had electoral success three times in a row. In addition, twice, in 2010 and in 2018 they won with supermajority. It resulted that the *Fidesz*-KDNP coalition have almost full immunity to external and internal pressure. During their governance they took advantage of their situation many times. For instance they redrafted the Constitution, reorganized the media institutions and regulations (Batory 2016), modified the checks and balances (Körösenyi and Patkós 2015; Müller 2011), weakened the rule of law (Müller 2011), limited the power of the Constitutional Court, and

nationalized private retirement pension. In addition to all of this, the *Fidesz*-KDNP coalition exchanged the previous four ombudsmen to a single “parliamentary commissioner for human rights”. (Bánkúti, Halmai, and Scheppele 2015, 148) The new, “illiberal” constitution “undermines the independence of various political institutions and guarantees virtually unlimited powers for the ruling party” (Jenne and Mudde 2012, 147).

The theories about illiberal democracy and their connection to populism are crucial because the Hungarian Prime Minister, Viktor Orbán self-declared in 2014 that he is building an illiberal democracy. At the Bálványos Free University and Student Camp in Transylvania, he was speaking about “the reorganization of the Hungarian state” and he admitted that “the new state that we are constructing in Hungary is an illiberal state, a non-liberal state. It does not reject the fundamental principles of liberalism such as freedom, and I could list a few more, but it does not make this ideology the central element of state organization, but instead includes a different, special, national approach”. Orbán argued, that liberalism is for selfish individuals, so the best solution is to turn to illiberal democracy, which can serve the whole nation (Orbán 2014)

Viktor Orbán, the leader of *Fidesz* brought a new dimension to Hungarian politics. He started as a "transformative leader" with autocratic features. He has changed the nature of the country's democracy. His politics raise many question, but it is sure that he had a great influence on the Hungarian politics in the past decades. (Körösényi and Patkós 2015) According to Anton Pelinka (1999), political leadership is, when without the particular person the politics would be different, the person effects the future of the country and creates history. On this basis, it can be stated that Viktor Orbán has real political leadership.

Körösényi and Patkós assert that Viktor Orbán has a different communication style comparing to his predecessors. He uses everyday speech style and emotional communication. He is self-confident, optimist, moreover he broke with the inferiority complex of the Hungarians. His communication has strong anti-establishment elements with constructed enemies. (Körösényi and Patkós 2015) In line with this, Jenne finds that *Fidesz* has been using a unique communication style since the party came into power. (Jenne 2016) According to Enyedi and Tóka Viktor Orbán's rhetoric has changed after *Fidesz* lost on the first round on the National Elections in 2002. They state that in that time he started to use direct communication to mobilize people against the communist, cosmopolitan and capitalist enemy. (Enyedi and Tóka 2007) Enyedi highlights that *Jobbik* and *Fidesz* shared for a while common populist strategies. For instance they turned claimed that there is a need to defend the country, they turned against Brussels, furthermore, "against multinational corporations, international agencies, and foreign powers." (Enyedi 2016, 215)

Timmer describes populist advertising in Hungary. She focuses on the parties' political communication through political advertisements. According to Timmer, the Hungarian populist campaign in 2015 was characterized by anti-immigrant sentiments, Xenophobia and intended to strengthen the fear from foreigners. The billboards seemed to target the "illegal immigrants", but in fact, the campaign addressed the Hungarian people. In 2016, after building the border fence, the flow of refugees decreased. Nevertheless, the Hungarian government started a second billboard campaign. These new billboards addressed mostly Brussels. Brussels became the enemy, who poses a threat to the country with the EU's migrant quota plan. In 2017, the government constructed a new enemy. The new national consultation attacked the civil sector. (Timmer 2017) Bathory points out that "in addition to specific "enemies" within and outside Hungary, the *Fidesz* narrative also identifies the "other" in ideational terms: liberalism and elitism". (Batory 2016, 290)

This short overview presents the Hungarian changing political situation in the last decades. As it is discussed above *Fidesz* with the leadership of Viktor Orbán played crucial role in changing the political environment. The bipolar competition with unachievable promises has been replaced by the overwhelming majority of *Fidesz* and their newly created rules and strategies including the division of society into two groups: the enemy and the elite.

Chapter 3: Measuring populism

As I already discussed, populism is a highly contested term; therefore, it is not an easy and unequivocal decision how to measure and operationalize it. I do not classify parties as populist. I rather rely on secondary data for this choice and concentrate on measuring the populist elements of the campaign materials produced by the different parties. According to the literature review, there is common agreement that populists split the society into two homogeneous groups that are in constant antagonist relationship. Thus, to classify a party's political communication as populist-type of communication it must comply with these criterion: simultaneously speaking against the constructed image of the enemy and claiming to speak and act in the name of the people. It is important that the society's two camps must be in antagonistic relationship. (Figure 1)

As seen in Figure 1 there are topics, issues, different characteristics and ways of using visual communication that are considered to be populist or are more likely to characterize populist political actors, but these are only additional features of populist political communication in this thesis. As Mudde argues, these features "facilitate rather than define populism". (Mudde 2004, 545) They do not define populist political communication, only help to identify what strategies they employ to transmit the message about "us" versus "them" and present different shades of populism. Using "populist" topics does not automatically make a party populist. It is a more complex phenomenon. Parties may use populist strategies to gain popularity, but if they do not use the strong distinction between the good people who are against the bad enemy, only for example the "populist topics", they are not classified as populist.

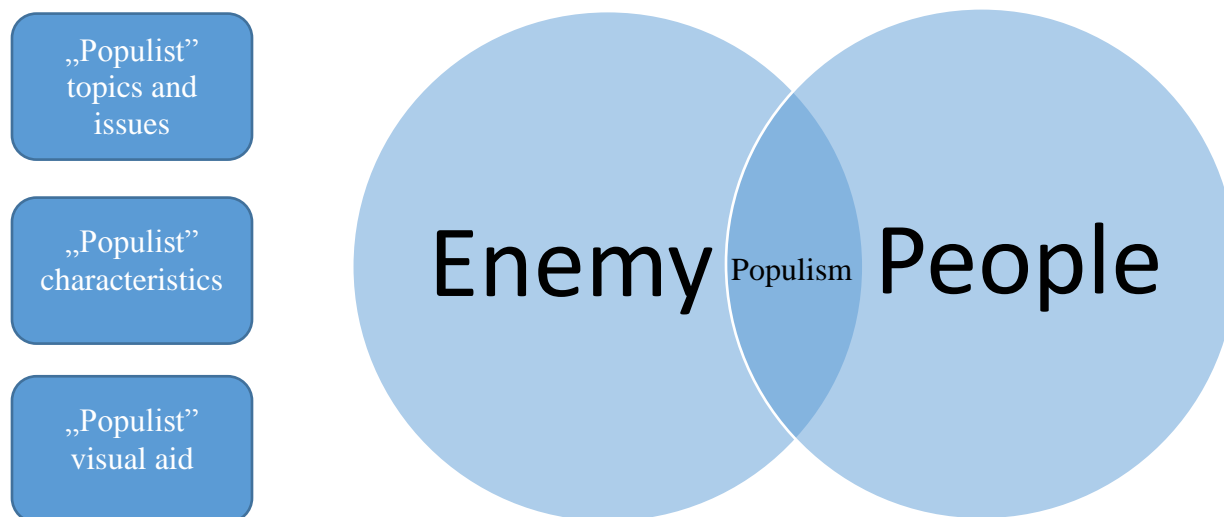


Figure 1 Defining populism

These criteria enable me to decide whether a party uses populist political communication during the campaign period and helps to operationalize, analyze and compare parties' political communication. Nevertheless, I admit that populist political actors have their own rhetoric, topics, and visual aid. By visual aid I mean, for example, the visualization of the two antagonistic groups in the society through color selection, therefore I will focus on these characteristics too.

3.1 Specific methodology of the thesis

The best method to conduct the research about the 2018 Hungarian National Election' campaign materials is a large-scale content analysis. According to Kaid and Holtz-Bacha (2006), this is one of the most important approaches to understanding political advertising. Content analysis enables us to identify the characteristics of messages and can help discover meanings and hidden messages that are not straightforward at first sight (Iyengar and Simon 2000). Through the mixture of

qualitative and quantitative content analysis, it is possible to “draw inferences about the meaning and intention of a text through an analysis of the usage and frequency of words, phrases, and images, and the patterns they form within a text” (Halperin and Heath 2017, 336). Furthermore, I can uncover the “meanings, motives, and purposes in textual content” (Halperin and Heath 2017, 336). The strength of this method is that with a well-designed codebook the research is replicable and reliable (Krippendorff 1989; Neuendorf 2017).

Stanyer, Salgado and Stromback (2017) show two approaches to investigate populist political communication with different starting points for the analysis, different main focuses, empirical objects of study and perspectives on populism (Table 2). These two are the actor-centered approach and the communication-centered approach. The actor-centered approach concentrates on the political actors and understands populism as a “thick” ideology. While the communication-centered approach focuses on political communication and defines populism as “thin” ideology. In this thesis the communication-centered approach is used to investigate, analyze and compare all relevant political actors’ political communication. The focus will not be on the parties, but rather on their messages and strategies to transmit these messages.

Table 2 Investigating populist communication

(Stanyer, Salgado, and Stromback 2017, 354)

	Author-centered approach	Communication-centered approach
Starting point for the analysis	Identifying the characteristics of populist political actors	Identifying the characteristics of populist political communication
Focus	Actors defined as populist	Communication defined as populist
Empirical object of study	Actors defined as populist	All relevant political actors
Perspective on populism	Populism a “thick” ideology decoupled from how political actors communicate	Populism a “thin” ideology determined by how political actors communicate

I identify the characteristics of populist political communication with the combination of deductive and inductive methods. According to Patton, “inductive analysis involves discovering patterns, themes, and categories in one’s data. Findings emerge out of the data, through the analyst’s interactions with the data, in contrast to deductive analysis where the data are analyzed according to an existing framework”. (Patton 2002, 453) In this thesis I work with some preestablished, deductive criteria but additional inductive criteria are added during the investigation as I progress with the data analysis.

The focus of the analysis is both on texts and images for the message that is being transmitted. I code all data from the national campaign materials of the 2018 Hungarian National Election. I start the theme-based categorization and content coding with pre-analysis. This means that in order to get an initial understanding of the themes, multiple reading is needed. The next step is to categorize the data on the themes identified and merge with the underlying themes from the existing literature.

After this step, the next stage is the refining of themes and concepts by analyzing and coding the data. I pay attention to the populist core elements, topics, messages, symbols, additional populist characteristics, and keywords. To sum up, after gaining deep knowledge of the texts and finding their key words and key-topics, I code all data and organize them into themes and sub-themes.

Drawing on the appearance of certain words, terms and topics as well as the different strategies employed in a frequency table allows us to determine the trend of political communication and it will point out the difference between populist and non-populist political communication. With this method, I can determine the special topics, which characterize populist political communication and search for the differences between mainstream parties and populist ones.

According to Harold Lasswell (1948), message transfer can be analyzed from five different aspects. Lasswell's five-question model is focusing on the message sender. The model helps to analyze political communication: who says, what, through what channel, to whom, and what is the effect of the message. (Figure 2)

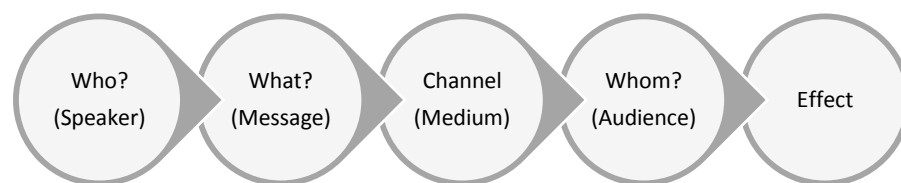


Figure 2 Harold Lasswell's five-question model

In the case of my research the speaker will be the party or the party leader, the message is the campaign materials' message, the channel will be the poster, slogan, billboard, banner, flyer or flyer like Facebook post, the "whom" question focuses on the target group of the messages and the effect is about the populist messages and their influencing power. (Lasswell 1948) The model can serve as a good starting point of categorizing the data. Additionally, inspired by Merkovity (2014), I attempt to answer the "why?" and "how?" questions to get a complete picture about the intention and the communication style of the political actors.

I noted already that in our time and society, visuals have a central role: visual technologies are continuously surrounding us. In the words of Gillian, the images conveying messages are "never innocent". She asserts that "it is important to think about how power relations are also at play in what is made visible" (Gillian 2016, 14).

The research design of the visual content analysis is challenging, since there are few previous studies or guides focusing on populist visual elements compared to text-based content analysis. However, in this thesis I use the guide presented by Gillian (Figure 3). As she suggests, I focus on the content, colors, symbols, spatial organization of the pictures, because these are their most important components and may contribute to the critical understanding of visual campaign materials. She claims that colors are not only affecting people, but they also highlight the most important elements in the picture. (Gillian 2016)

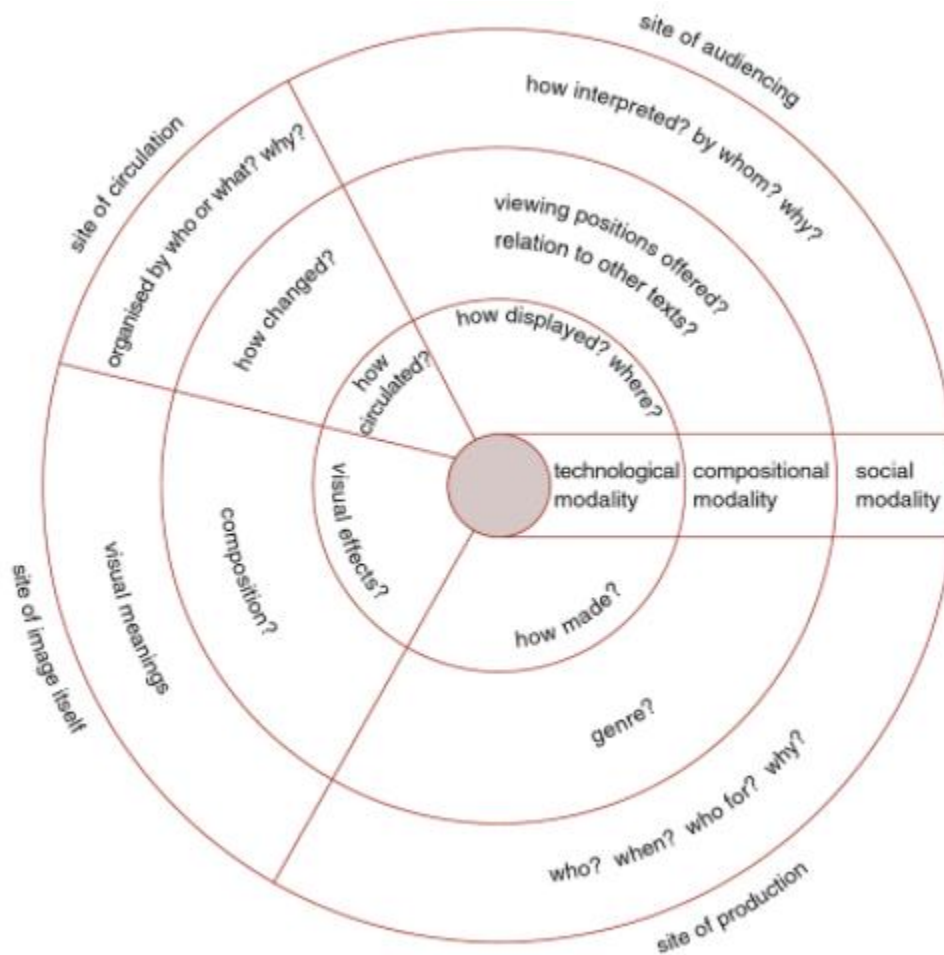


Figure 3 Gillian's method of visual analysis

(Gillian 2016, 25)

According to Gillian, “the focus of shots is also important”. “Deep focus is when the foreground, middle ground and background of a shot – all of the frame’s geographical plane – are in focus. Shallow focus means that one of these grounds is more in focus than the others. Shallow focus is sometimes used to direct attention to a particular character or event in a scene...” (Gillian 2016, 70) Based on her suggestions I code the focus of the campaign materials as well.

When deciding on how to code populist visuals, I have to rely more on inductive technics. First, I collect as much information as possible about populist visual communication from the existing literature but later I focus on the reemerging characteristics and topics. Besides all this, I look for the possible visual representation of populist elements. I analyze the usage of colors, their specific combinations, people portrayed and their position to the others. I am looking for party logos, national symbols and in addition, I will pay attention to whether the messages of pictures are positive or negative.

I examine those parties' political campaigns, who were on the polling organization's⁴ list on 1 April 2017. Practically this means that I concentrate on those parties' political communication who were present at least one year before the 2018 National Election. I assume that those who are not on the lists are too small or do not have too much influence, so they would not serve a relevant and adequate amount of data. Specifically, I investigate the following parties:⁵

1. Together (*Együtt*)
2. Democratic Coalition (*Demokratikus Koalíció*, DK)
3. Dialogue for Hungary (*Párbeszéd Magyarországért*, *Párbeszéd*)
4. Hungarian Liberal Party (*Liberálisok – Magyar Liberális Párt*, MLP)
5. Hungarian Socialist Party (*Magyar Szocialista Párt*, MSZP)
6. Movement for a Better Hungary (*Jobbik Magyarországért Mozgalom*, *Jobbik*)
7. Fidesz-Hungarian Civic Alliance (*Fidesz – Magyar Polgári Szövetség*, *Fidesz*)
8. Politics Can Be Different (*Lehet Más a Politika*, LMP)

⁴ <http://kozvelemenykutatok.hu/>

⁵ In brackets, there are the parties' Hungarian names and their abbreviations.

9. Hungarian Two-tailed Dog Party (*Magyar Kétfarkú Kutya Párt*, MKKP)
10. Momentum Movement (*Momentum Mozgalom*, *Momentum*)
11. Christian Democratic People`s Party (*Kereszténydemokrata Néppárt*, KDNP)

To analyze the dynamics and the change in political communication of the 2018 Hungarian National Election, I analyze two time periods: the data collected from 1st April up to 30st November 2017, and from 1st December 2017 until 31st March 2018. This method enables me to identify the fluctuation of preferences expressed by parties and to follow the campaign in process.

The aim is to collect and analyze all existing data (posters, billboards, slogans, flyers and homepage banners). The best procedure for this investigation is to obtain data from various sources through making photocopies of the materials that are displayed. I use online sources, like official party homepages and Facebook and printed sources, like mailshot and photographs of campaign materials.

3.2 Operationalization

Since there is limited research about populist political campaigning, most of the information gained from the literature review is not campaign specific. Therefore, I have to live with the assumption that populist political communication and populist political campaigning have the same or very similar characteristics. Therefore, in this thesis, I consider as a populist campaign material all that conveys both elements of populism: (1) references to the people as a homogenous group who must be defended against (2) the dangerous “others” who are often the elite.

The literature review helped the deductive category application and the preliminary analysis of the data resulted in the inductive category development. The analysis and coding were done with the help of the NVivo Software. The codebook (see in Appendix 1) presents all categories and codes that are coded and analyzed in this thesis, including both visual and textual categories. These codes and categories are divided into three big groups: basic information, core elements of populism, topics and issues, visual aid and other characteristics.

It is challenging to identify populist features during campaign period, because the parties generally treat each other's as enemies during this period. So, it is important to highlight the difference between average, (hostile) campaigning and populist type of campaigning. In the case of populism "we", the homogenous, pure people have to be against "them", who are bad and profoundly immoral. To consider a campaign material to be populist, the "us versus them" conflict must be present. Only referring to the people, and only referring to the enemy in itself does not make a campaign material populist. Simple references to specific groups like women, men, students, pensioners are not considered populist. References to the "others" always have to be negative. References to other politicians are registered populist only if the politician is presented as a dangerous enemy, who is part of the political elite. It does not matter whether the material refers to a group of people, to the political elite, or to a specific politician. The important issue is whether these people / politicians / groups are identified as threatening enemy. In short, a message is coded under the category, "populist enemy" if it is hostile towards the threatening "others" who are often but not necessarily the political, economic elite.

Figure 4 represents example of a campaign material, which conveys only one of the core elements of populism but since it does not include both elements, it is not considered to be populist. It is a

banner from the homepage of Dialogue for Hungary. It states that “Everybody counts for us”. They want to represent everybody, not only one group of a society against others. The enemy is not present on this banner at all. Figure 5 is an example of the populist political campaign material where both elements are present. This billboard belongs to *Jobbik*. It says that while the enemy, Viktor Orbán and men related to him are stealing, the people are working, and this results in low wages. In the bottom left corner, you can read the party’s slogan which states *Jobbik* is standing on the side of the people (folk). In short, there are the working people (parent code), more specifically the folk (child code) and the government related political elite (child code) as the enemy (parent code) who cause harm to the country. The antagonism is observable not only through text but through the strategy of choosing a black and white picture of the enemy.



Figure 4 Example of core elements of populism – People



Figure 5 Example of core elements of populism 1.

The flyer which is a product of *Momentum* (Figure 6) is a good example how indirect references to the enemy and to the represented people are still coded as populist. This flyer states that those who are stealing should be locked up in jail. With this material, the party refers indirectly to the enemy (parent code) that is the political elite (child code) and to the good people, who are not thieves. In addition, a small Hungarian flag is present on the flyer that symbolizes the represented people. Although the billboard points to the enemy it does not claim directly to represent the people, but it does separate the society into two separate groups.



Figure 6 Example of core elements of populism 2.

The thesis focuses on populist topics and issues as well, for example nativist policies, immigration and security, law and order since these are quite popular topics of populist right wing parties (Bale et al. 2010). The presence of these topics alone does not have a party or a campaign material populist but identifying topics used by populist and non-populist parties through the analyzed 12 months enables me to answer the question about populist parties' influencing power hence it will be observable whether other parties take up populists' topics. In addition, I am looking for other

characteristics, which are considered to be populist and/or emerged often during the analyzed period. This category can be divided into two subcategories: tone / style and specific populist features. An example to tone / style is the harsh, aggressive, negative tone, verbal radicalism, violent language and to specific features the attacking out-groups, anti-immigrant sentiments and Xenophobia.

Chapter 4: The 2018 Hungarian National Campaign materials

4.1 Description of data

The thesis examines ten Hungarian political parties' national electoral campaign material that are the combination of slogans, pictures and texts. I focus on all of these elements in this chapter. At the beginning of the research, I planned to investigate eleven parties' campaign materials, but the Christian Democratic People's Party was almost completely silent in the period analyzed; as they are part of the governing coalition (n=6). A homepage banner in the limited material from the first six months of the period analyzed emphasizes that in line with their name, they support Christian democracy and they demand "MORE light!" Later they turned to the slogan: "Christian Democratic People's Party for the families". Other campaign materials discussed the party's conservative views about the family. Because this party does not serve sufficient amount of data, I exclude them from this analysis. I do not merge their material with their coalition partner, *Fidesz*, since the above discussed campaign messages of KDNP are not in line with the governing party's rhetoric. Merging the two parties' campaign materials would distort the results. The governmental campaign materials are coded as part of the *Fidesz* campaign because *Fidesz* used the governmental campaign to transmit their messages (Index 2018; 24.hu 2018) and their messages and strategies do not fundamentally differ.

After 12 months of data collecting from 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018, the data consist of a total of 358 different campaign materials and 62 slogans from 10 different Hungarian parties. Table 3 shows the numbers of campaign materials collected from each party. As it can be seen, most of

the data was collected from *Momentum* (n=66), the governing party, *Fidesz* (n=58) and from LMP (n=56). The least data is from *Párbeszéd* (n=14) and MLP (n=11).

Table 3 Processed data / Parties

Name of the party	N
Együtt	28
DK	25
Párbeszéd	14
MLP	11
MSZP	19
Jobbik	47
Fidesz	58
LMP	56
MKKP	34
Momentum	66
SUM	358

43.87 % of all campaign materials were collected from the first six-months and 56.13 % from the second period. The higher activity in the second period analyzed is easily attributed to the approaching national elections. It can be said generally that the official homepages of the parties were not very active regarding sharing campaign materials, as the websites tended to be used to share articles. Some parties, for instance the Hungarian Liberal Party, rarely updated their website. In contrast, the parties were actively using the possibilities offered by Facebook, billboards, flyers and posters.

Most of the advertisements (47.5%) were using both text and visuals. 37.5% of the campaign materials contain mainly text and only 15% of them were mostly visual. The majority of the coded data had only one-sentence text (52.5%). Only 5% of the material consisted of four or more sentences. The rest contained two or three sentences (42.5%). That is to say campaign materials using mostly visual elements or long texts were not popular. So, in line with general tendencies, the Hungarian campaign in this regard was not different from other campaigns. The parties tended to choose the middle way: short, maximum three-sentence messages with some visuals. These short texts and images are quick sources of information and have a substantial role during the campaign period.

4.2 Overview of each party's campaign

In the following section, I summarize each party's political campaigning in the period analyzed. The overview includes the proportion of populist messages in parties' campaign materials and their specific characteristics. After the overview, I turn to the systematic analysis of the findings. I do consider important to summarize each party campaign in order to provide the reader with a basic understanding of the political campaigning scene before I turn to the more systematic analysis that often refers to this contextual background.

16.20 % of all campaign materials were coded under *Fidesz* (n=58). I coded under “*Fidesz*” not only the party's campaign materials, but the governmental materials from the analyzed period as well since the state and the party communicate with the same purpose and manner. Furthermore, in some cases it was hard to distinguish between governmental and party campaign materials.

The majority of *Fidesz* campaign materials (68.97 %) were populist. That is to say 40 of them included the “us” versus “them” rhetoric. *Fidesz* in their populist political advertisements use nationalist, nativist rhetoric. The party claims to be the defender of Hungarians against the enemies, who are closely linked to each other: immigrants, and the political and economic elite. There were several strategies to refer to the enemy, for instance the use of black and white pictures or direct and indirect visual or text references. The represented people and their symbols often vanish and positioned in the background. The leader, Viktor Orbán was presented in the role of a serious, purposeful politician who cares about the future of the country. *Fidesz*’ non-populist campaign materials were focusing on self-praise and more particular issues: cultural and family values, unemployment and wages.

It is noteworthy that *Fidesz* used different communication on Facebook than on printed materials. On the internet the materials conveyed harsher and more complex messages. In contrast, on the streets some of the materials did not have very informative messages: “Stop”, “Stop Soros” or simply pointing out their Euroscepticism by stating “Stop Brussels!” Another billboard that bears a negative message stating that “The UN wants us to accept migrants on a continuous basis. Hungary decides, not the UN!”

MLP was not active on the streets at all. Their homepage was rarely updated in the analyzed period. 36.36% of their campaign materials were collected from the party’s homepage. The party served limited amount of data: seven pieces from Facebook, four from their homepage, and 0 from the streets. MLP used mostly, in 63.64 % of the time their Facebook page. Disregarding the very low number of materials MLP’s campaign contained mostly non-populist messages (90.91%). Only one of their campaign materials featured the two camps of populism and their antagonistic

relationship. Their campaign materials were poorly designed, even though they used consistently their logo's colors (mainly blue with some white and black). One of the few issues they dealt with was the legalization of marihuana. On their homepage the party pointed out its belief in liberal values. Speaking about the ideology of the party was quite unique during the campaign period analyzed.

MSZP started with rather harsh aggressive campaigning but later their campaign messages and style changed. The reason is that their original main candidate resigned, so at the end they had a common candidate with *Párbeszéd*. However, 36.84 % of their campaign material conveyed populist political communication. These populist campaign materials often represented the enemy in black and white. The party's enemy is the ruling political elite, namely the government and the people related to *Fidesz*. MSZP called for justice that can be achieved only with them. They consistently used the red-orange-white materials with emotional messages. For example, one of their billboards says: "Let's do justice! The rich have to pay!".

On the other hand, *Párbeszéd* included populist messages quite rarely (14.29 %). The party's populist enemy was the Prime Minister and the government. In addition, they were attacking the government's relationship with Russia. In general, they claim to represent everyone. Their non-populist campaign materials focused mostly on the introduction of the candidate(s).

MSZP and *Párbeszéd* decided in February 2018 that they would run one joint common candidate, Gergely Karácsony, who was initially the leader of *Párbeszéd*. Thus, they turned to common messages that emphasized that they were "the alliance of change". Their campaign materials were not very informative, mostly focusing on introducing their candidate. Colors of the coded materials were identical to those of the Hungarian flag.

Jobbik's campaign materials were mostly populist (63.83 %). Both of their populist and non-populist campaign materials often focused on the party's leader and included nationalist symbols. Their enemies were the government, *Fidesz*, Viktor Orbán and all related persons in addition to immigrants. *Jobbik*'s message states that bad government destroys the country: it is stealing the money from the people and working against the interest of the people. In addition, similarly to MSZP, it pointed at the rich and at the governing political elite. There was a billboard that stated for example: "You are working. They are stealing. Therefore, there is no money for education." They claim to do the opposite and give back to the people, what they deserve. In addition, they often present their enemy in black and white.

34.78 % of the *Momentum*'s campaign materials were populist. The party criticized the Hungarian past and present political elite, especially *Fidesz*, who destroys the country for instance by stealing. Through their populist campaign materials, they presented themselves as national defender and claimed that without them the future would be dark. In general, they used purple background with white letters and often added a small sign of national belonging, for example the Hungarian flag.

The Hungarian joke party, MKKP unsurprisingly produced a campaign full of humor and irony. 9.09 % of their campaign material are considered to be populist. These materials attacking the government and criticize the government's relationship with Russia. They targeted the Hungarian political elite, mainly the government but they ridiculed politics in general. However, they included many serious issues in their campaign, for instance corruption and foreign policy.

Együtt's campaign included non-populist (57.14 %) and populist (42.86 %) campaign materials. The party characterized Viktor Orbán as a thief and tax evader, whose photo often occurred on the campaign materials. *Együtt* was campaigning with the slogan, stating that "The future belongs to

the brave!” The party’s non-populist campaign materials focused on numerous issues, for instance higher education, LGBTQ rights and corruption. Their slogan and the buzzwords showed their ideology and the direction they would like to drive the country in. Among the often-used words they had, for instance, “new era”, “European life”, “freedom” and “rightfulness”.

The majority of DK’s campaign materials were non-populist (52%). Their populist messages included Hawkin’s cosmic proportion (2009): DK states, that the electorate’s decision will have profound effects. For example, they ask on one of their billboards: “Orbán or Europe?” They used the colors of their logo consistently. In addition, they often included symbols of the European Union in their campaign materials. The party’s main message was “We will do it with Gyurcsány!” and “There is no bargain with Orbán!” DK’s most frequent topics and issues were health care, retirement and voting rights.

LMP had slightly more populist campaign materials (53.57 %) than non-populist (46.43 %). The party with the only female candidate fought against the recent Hungarian government, its relationship with Putin and against everybody related to them. They identified their enemies as liars and thieves who should be put into prison. LMP represent themselves and the people colorful, mostly with green and white. In contrast the enemy is often showed with dark colors. Their represented issues were: environmental protection, family support, the need to support single-parent families.

To sum up this overview proves that the strong populist environment effects most of the political scene. That is to say, most of the parties engaged to various extents in populism and/or used populist political communication strategies, such as presenting everything as antagonism, painting

everything in black and white and claiming that there is the need to defend the people against the enemy, became common for almost all.

4.3 Core elements of populism

Table 4 presents the number and the percentage of populist messages in each parties' campaign materials based on the results of my coding. This results support Bernhard's findings, according to which ideological extremist parties are more likely to use populist rhetoric during national election campaigns (Bernhard 2016). *Jobbik* can be included into the far-right extremist category, although they attempted moving towards the center. *Fidesz*, in contrast moves from center-right towards far-right. As Enyedi argues (2017), there is no significant ideological difference between the two parties. So, in line with the arguments and as it can be observed *Fidesz* and *Jobbik* had the highest percentage of populist materials comparing to all of their campaign materials produced during the analyzed one-year period, well in line with my expectation for these two parties considered populists by many. As the table implies MLP, MKKP and *Párbeszéd* had the least populist campaign. LMP, DK, *Együtt*, MSZP and *Momentum* formed a moderate group.

Table 4 Emergence of core elements of populism in each party's campaign

Party	SUM of the campaign materials (n)	People vs enemy (%)
Együtt	28	42.86
DK	25	48.00
Párbeszéd	14	14.29
MLP	11	9.09
MSZP	19	36.84
Jobbik	47	63.83
Fidesz	58	68.97
LMP	24	53.57
MKKP	34	9.09
Momentum	66	34.85

Table 5 names the parties' enemies and their represented people separately, depending on the definitions adopted by the parties. There is not much variation in the creation of the enemy image: the parties can be divided into three groups based on whom they consider the enemy. One group has only one member: *Fidesz*. It is characterized by attacking immigrants and all supporters of immigration. They claim that György Soros and everybody and everything that can be linked to him is illegitimate, antidemocratic and want to exert pressure on the government. Noteworthy that all enemies named by *Fidesz* are external enemies and linked to each other. *Fidesz* claims that György Soros is the fault why Brussels forces Hungary to accept immigrants in order to make his vicious plan a reality: let the immigrants to invade Europe.

Table 5 Enemies and the represented people of the parties

Party	Enemy	People
Fidesz	Immigrants, immigration Economic and political elite: György Soros, Brussels, EU & European Parliament, UN, NGOs	Hungary, Hungarians, Homeland Own voters, majority, “we”, Europeans Defenders of Christian Hungary and Europe Hungarians beyond the borders
Jobbik	Political elite: Viktor Orbán, <i>Fidesz</i> & the Government & associates Immigrants, immigration	Homeland, Folk “We”, “you”
DK	Political elite: Viktor Orbán, <i>Fidesz</i> & the Government & associates	Many people’s Hungary Europeans
MLP	Political elite: Viktor Orbán, <i>Fidesz</i> & the Government & associates	
MSZP	Political elite: Viktor Orbán, <i>Fidesz</i> & the Government & associates	Hungarians, “You”
Együtt	Political elite: Viktor Orbán, <i>Fidesz</i> & the Government & associates	Hungary, Hungarians “You”, “we”
Párbeszéd	Political elite: Viktor Orbán, <i>Fidesz</i> & the Government & associates; Moscow, Russia & Putin	Everybody, people Majority
LMP	Political elite: Viktor Orbán, <i>Fidesz</i> & the Government & associates Moscow, Russia & Putin	People
MKKP	Political elite: Viktor Orbán, <i>Fidesz</i> & the Government & associates Moscow, Russia & Putin	
Momentum	Political elite: Viktor Orbán, <i>Fidesz</i> & the Government & associates; Political elite in general Moscow, Russia & Putin	Hungary Europeans “Us”, “you”

Besides *Fidesz*, *Jobbik* looks at immigrants as potential external enemies, but *Jobbik* belongs to the second group, which includes all opposition parties. Their enemies are the Government, *Fidesz*, Viktor Orbán and the people closely linked to them. Most of these parties have been disturbed by Viktor Orbán, *Fidesz* and the Government and by their ever closer relationship with Putin's Russia. This means that they use populist political communication by dividing the country into two antagonistic groups in their populist materials: everything and everybody related to the government (enemy, "them") and everybody else (people, "us"). The most frequently targeted persons were Viktor Orbán, the leader of *Fidesz*, Lőrinc Mészáros, one of the wealthiest Hungarians with close relation to Viktor Orbán, Antal Rogán, the Minister of the Prime Minister's Cabinet Office. DK, MLP, MSZP, *Jobbik* and *Együtt* attacked only Orbán, *Fidesz* and the Government, so they have only internal enemies. *Párbeszéd*, LMP, MKKP and *Momentum* pointed on Moscow, Russia and Putin as well so, they named both external and internal enemies.

Mudde states (2004) that the creation of the enemy depends on who the represented "the people" are. But despite the expectation, the third column in the table does not show such a commonality. The represented people are in general the "good" people, the Hungarians, who are often mentioned as "we", "you" or "us". *Fidesz* has the longest list of those who need to be protected. It is noteworthy that DK speaks about many people's Hungary and not about Hungarians and people in general. In addition, *Párbeszéd* highlights that we, the good majority are against them, who are the bad minority. This is clearly a populist way of communication. Furthermore, some of the parties narrowed down their targeted population: *Momentum* call the attention for "our children's future", *Fidesz* talks about the need to strengthen the families, *Párbeszéd* wants to help for poor people, DK for students, workers, retired and/or sick people, *Együtt* together with *Momentum* supports NGOs, LMP focuses on families including single parent households and youth.

References to certain parts of the society like the above mentioned parties did, are basically not references to the “populist good people”, since they are not treated as one of the two homogenous groups who are in an antagonistic relationship with each other.

Contrary to prior expectations, *Fidesz* does not use populist communication in all campaign materials. Wodak’s argument seems to be right. She asserts that populism is complex and all of its elements do not have to be visible always (Wodak 2015). As it is observed, both core elements of populism are present simultaneously in 68.9 % of the time. However, the main message of *Fidesz* is quite populist: “we”, the strong, proud, sovereign Hungarians have to fight against “them”, who are mostly the immigrants and their supporters, the elite. Basically, containing every element of the definition of populist political communication.

As it is discussed in Chapter 1, the link between populism and fear emerges in many studies. For example, Szilágyi (2010), Boukala and Dimitrakopoulou (2017) state that populists aim to cause fear among people. Wodak wrote “The Politics of Fear: What Right-Wing Populist Discourses Mean” (2015), in which she successfully tackles the link between populism and fear. Timmer (2017) argues that the Hungarian populist campaign in 2015 already intended to increase the fear from foreigners. In contrast, Rico, Guinjoan and Anduiza (2017) claim that populists trigger negative emotions, but there is no relationship between populism and fear.

Fidesz’ campaign clearly shows that the element of causing fear was significantly present in the materials. They communicate that without the party the country would be under threat, so the people must vote for *Fidesz* in order to protect them from irreversible consequences. For instance, a billboard that bears a negative message stated that “The UN wants us to accept migrants on a continuous basis. Hungary decides, not the UN!” This kind of misleading message can cause fear

and anxiety and build on the initial assumption that most of the people are not checking whether the content is true, which is an underestimation of the electorate's intellectual abilities. According to Median's investigation (2015), 58% of the Hungarians think that migrants are aggressive and they do not respect the Hungarian laws and traditions. 52% of the Hungarians think that it is possible that Muslims will be slowly the majority in Europe and they will force the Europeans to adopt their religion and their culture. The government could cause the rising fear, but the campaign can be a strategic reaction to the growing fear as well. It is also possible that the two processes run in parallel and reinforce each other. What is sure is that the strategy of talking fear is central for the campaign of the governing party.

The communication of *Fidesz* conveys another important element as well. The framing of the issues echoes Hawkins' understanding of populism. He argues that populists often increase the importance of issues "by ascribing cosmic proportions to them". (Hawkins 2009, 1063) The party is harsh with NGOs, especially with those, who in their opinion can cause harm to them (see Figure 7). Not only does the party outcast those organizations that criticize them, but it sees the organizations as political opposition and claims that many are threatening the country. They claim that Hungarian civil society is not civil society at all because it is controlled by the economic and political elite from abroad, for example by György Soros. *Fidesz* refers to employees of NGOs as "Soros soldiers", "mercenaries" or "foreign agents" who are paid to work on the so called "Soros plan". They claim that if we allow this so called plan to be implemented, it would cause irreversible negative consequences, for instance immigrants would invade Europe and endanger European values.



Figure 7 Fidesz' Facebook post on 20 May 2018

“György Soros and the civil organizations connected to him want to exert pressure on the government illegitimately with antidemocratic tools through foreign organizations and governments. This is unacceptable.”

As a reaction to the governmental campaign about the “Soros-plan” *Momentum* launched a campaign with positive messages. The “Hope-plan” with children in the focus saying, “We do not give our future!” (Figure 8) and others with an only green lamp saying, “Let’s activate Hungary!”



Figure 8 Momentum Movement's positive campaign

(Momentum 2017a)

Momentum and *Jobbik* had at a certain point of the period analyzed very similar messages with very similar meanings. Both parties were referring to today's political elite as thieves who must be locked up in the prison. This commonality is especially interesting because these parties have very different ideological bases. *Momentum* as a centrist party believes in liberal values, openly stands for civil rights and for the European Union. In contrast, *Jobbik* is a conservative, radical, nationalist right-wing party. (see Figure 9, 10)



Figure 9 Momentum Movement's flyer - "Because of this you will sit in the jail"

(Szabolcsihír 2017)



Figure 10 Jobbik's billboard – "We exclude migrants. We increase wages. We put the thieves in the jail. Everything has a limit"

(Jobbik 2017)

The messages of *Momentum*, *Jobbik*, MSZP and LMP are examples that fit to Hawkins' (2009) understanding of populist political communication, where political actors turn against the evil ruling minority because they changed the system to their own interest without taking into account the people's (the majority's) will. Therefore, they want to change the existing system and demand immediate and definitive solution. *Momentum's* and *Jobbik's* campaign with the above mentioned blackmailing message is in line with MSZP's harsh slogan: "Let's do justice! The rich have to pay!" Another campaign material of *Jobbik* points at the rich, governing political elite: "You are working. They are stealing. Therefore, there is no money for education." Similarly, LMP claims that the members of the government are thieves as well (see Figure 11). As Figure 11 presents, LMP uses black background with white and orange letters to represent the bad Hungarian government and white background with green and black letters to show their favored Polish government. The dark background with the governing party's orange color and the word "stealing" in the center position is in contrast with the pure white background combined with LMP's green. This campaign material is a good example of the populists' moral good and bad presented through

both text and visual elements. In these cases, the parties' programs are foggy. It is unclear what the parties want to offer the people and how they want to achieve it.



Figure 11 LMP - Representing the government as thief

The most memorable campaign material from the analyzed period is the scaremongering poster of the government see in Figure 12. This minimalist and racist campaign material is shocking even though there is nothing brutal about it. We see only a queue of migrants. The picture does not lie, does not want to hide or explain anything, does not try to convince people and it does not want to justify or explain the message as well. But for a Hungarian citizen, the message and the intention of the poster is clear: the government claims to defend its citizens from the threatening immigrants.

The “dangerous” immigrants are depicted on the picture as a faceless mass consisting of mostly young men with darker skin. This campaign material was released at the end of the campaign period to strengthen the main message of the government that has been spread through numerous channels in the last years. This poster confirms the statement of Iyengar and Prior (1999), according to which, in “comparative advertising” political advertising is not regulated morally and legally; the political actors are not accountable so they can send any message in any way. The example supports their argument according to which in this kind of situation the campaign materials tend to use harsh tone and controversial techniques. As political marketing strategies are in constant change, there is a danger that similar messages will be commonly accepted and used in the future. Such a change would confirm the argument of Stanyer, Salgado and Stromback (2017). They say that populist political communication strategies tend to become a common feature in many countries.



Figure 12 " The Hungarian government's "STOP" campaign

4.4 Issues, topics and the agenda setting power of populist parties

The following subchapter discuss the issues and topics that emerged during the campaign period. Moreover, I demonstrate how and to what extent populism may influence parties' issue choice for the campaign. As it is observed, *Fidesz* tends to use different strategy in this regard, compared to other parties. The parties do not follow the topics represented by *Fidesz*, but their issue choices are closely related to the party and its corresponding ideology. That is to say, populists did not set the agenda of the campaign, they influenced other parties.

Table 6 presents the parties' issue choice in the two analyzed periods: the two most popular topics of each party are included in the table. The table shows whether parties followed each other's issue choices and/or whether they included "populist topics". The most common populist topics were immigration and nativist policies as well as calls to protect the homeland. As it can be observed privileges and corruption and health care were the topics most often presented by parties during the periods investigated. Retirement, environmental protection were popular topics as well. The two parties that had the highest percentage of populist campaign materials, *Fidesz* and *Jobbik* were consistent in their issue choices. Other parties did not follow either *Fidesz* or *Jobbik* in their represented topics.

Table 6 Issue choices of parties in the period analyzed

Party	First 6 months		Second 6 months	
	<i>Issue1</i>	<i>Issue2</i>	<i>Issue1</i>	<i>Issue2</i>
<i>Fidesz</i>	Nativist policies, Immigration	Security, law and order	Nativist policies, Immigration	Security, law and order
<i>Jobbik</i>	The Homeland, sense of national belonging, nationalist rhetoric	Privileges and corruption	The Homeland, sense of national belonging, nationalist rhetoric	Privileges and corruption
DK	Health care	Privileges and corruption	Privileges and corruption	Retirement
MSZP	Privileges and corruption	Retirement	Retirement	The world of work, wages
<i>Együtt</i>	Privileges and corruption	Foreign policy	Privileges and corruption	Health care
<i>Párbeszéd</i>	Privileges and corruption	Health care	Privileges and corruption	Environmental protection
LMP	Environmental protection	Privileges and corruption	Privileges and corruption	Cultural and family values, family support
MKKP	Foreign policy	Privileges and corruption	Privileges and corruption	Nativist policies, Immigration
<i>Momentum</i>	Environmental protection	Education	Health care	Privileges and corruption

Looking at Wodak's (2015) list that determines 14 popular topics of right-wing populist parties, *Fidesz* and *Jobbik* indeed included half of them into their campaign: they often spoke about immigration, cultural and family values, the "Homeland", the "pure" people, security, law and order, EU- and Euro-skepticism and privileges and corruption. However, if we look closely at these topics, we can observe that these are closely linked to each other in the Hungarian context: the safety of the "Homeland", the "pure" people" and their cultural and family values has to be defended against the political and economic elite who supports and facilitates the threatening immigration.

Fidesz concentrated mostly on nativist policies, immigration and on security, law and order. These topics are connected to each other and to sovereignty issues and to nationalist rhetoric as well, in addition, are linked to the government's opinion about immigration. Their issue choice is not surprising, since it is a popular topic of populist right wing parties (Bale et al. 2010). Other parties were talking more about particular issues, for instance about education, health care and environmental protection. According to Hawkins (2009) representation of an issue is populist if it is "painted" in black and white, framed in moral terms and are presented as affecting people everywhere. In contrast speaking about narrow issues while giving space to disagreement is rather a pluralist feature.

The most popular topics supports Wodak's argument, who argues that the right-wing populist parties claim to serve the people's interest inside the country, while left-wing populists and other parties that are using populist strategies are looking outwards as well. (Wodak 2015). When *Fidesz* started the negative campaign against European Union the left and centrist parties were speaking about European Union and European identity positively. Noteworthy, that the government makes

distinction between being member of the European Union and having European identity. They are proud Europeans, but they do attack European Union. When they speak about Brussels, they refer practically to the “bad” European Union. For example, there is the slogan “Hungary is a strong and proud European country. Thank you!” In contrast, another governmental material says: “Stop Brussels!” In addition only the two right-wing party, *Fidesz* and *Jobbik* were talking about immigration as something that should be stopped. The other parties did not consider it important or necessary to include this topic into their campaign.

Comparing the two period analyzed, the topics and issues considered to be important in the first and in the second six months did not differ a lot. All topics and issues presented in the first six months were popular in the second six months as well. Only one topic emerged only in the second six months: NGOs, which is the consequence of the government’s attack against NGOs that are supported from abroad. However, this topic did not become a mainly represented issue of parties.

As it is discussed above, *Fidesz* built up this campaign on people’s fear and it fits well into the series of threat campaigns. Their issue choices confirm this argument as well. According to a public opinion poll that is the result of 1000 face-to-face interviews, 34% of the people answered that “bankruptcy and disappearance of health and social security systems”, 28% that “terrorism, extremism, and political violence” and 19% that “migration and demographic change” “has the greatest likelihood of threatening our way of life and our children’s future”. Furthermore 72% of the Hungarians think that “the peace of Europe is threatened on multiple fronts, from terrorism to a resurgent Russia to an influx of migrants.” Almost half of the respondents (48%) think that “the only way to address the problems of migrants and terrorism is too close to the borders of Hungary regardless of the effect such a move would have on the free movement of people in the European

Union.” The interviews were done at the beginning of March 2017 (Ipsos 2017). According to Eurobarometer 83, Spring 2015 Hungarians think that the most important issues in European Union are the immigration (43%), the economic situation (26%), the state of Member States’ public finances (26%) and terrorism (20%). (Eurobarometer 2015)

According to the findings, the issue ownership theory (Budge and Farlie 1983; Robertson 1976) is supported by the strategy of *Fidesz*, since the party concentrated to its own preferred issues. *Fidesz* did not speak about issues raised by other parties. The use of this strategy can be traced back to high confidence since it is the strategy of sure winners and sure losers. The riding the wave theory (Ansolabehere and Iyengar 1994; Sigelman and Buell 2004; Wagner and Meyer 2014) is supported by other parties since there was issue convergence. That is to say the parties dealt with the same issues: they were blaming the recent governing coalition for their privileges, corruption and because they ruined the social support system.

4.1 Slogans

Altogether 63 slogans were collected during the analyzed period. The slogans main message was the need for change. 33.33% of them included it. These slogans came mainly from the opposition parties as they are opposing the status quo of the “bad” government. For example, LMP’s slogan says: “Let’s start a new era!” The common slogan of MSZP and *Párbeszéd* have an even clearer message: “Change! Now!” According to the Manichaeian world view, used by Hawkins (2009) calling for systematic change is a populist feature if the focus is not on particular issues. However, it does not mean that third of the slogans were populist. As it is discussed in the second chapter, the populist characteristics in addition to the antagonistic relationship of the two homogenous

groups are only helping but not defining populism. However, it is important to track the emergence of populist characteristics in slogans besides the core elements because these short sentences separately are not providing sufficient amount of information about populist political communication.

Another populist political communication characteristic may be that the parties included often in the slogans short, easy action words, like “Let’s do justice!”, or “Stop Brussels!” As the examples show these slogans attempt to mobilize people against the threatening others. Another populist characteristic is being harsh (Iyengar and Prior 1999). 19.05% of the slogans were quite harsh (19.05%) conveying the message that somebody or something must be stopped, for instance Brussels, mercenaries of Soros, Orbán or the immigrants. 23.81% of the slogans referred to enemies, 28.57% of the slogans are coded under the category: “Us” / people. The parties often highlighted in their slogans who they are representing: mainly Hungary, Hungarians, but *Párbeszéd* refers to “everybody”. Specific issues and themes were usually not included into slogans. However, the most popular topics were Paks2⁶, immigration and corruption. Other topics were so rare that they are irrelevant.

As it is discussed above in the overview of each party’s campaign *Fidesz* and *Jobbik* had the highest percentage of populist messages in the period analyzed. *Jobbik*’s main message was easily understandable through slogans. The party declare that they are “on the side of the people”, “with Hungarian heart, common sense and clean hands” and they want “change of government! Now!” In contrast, *Fidesz*’ main slogan is not very informative. It says: “Hungary is the first for us!” The

⁶ Paks2 is a nuclear project which means building two new nuclear reactors in Hungary, Paks. All slogans that include this topic strongly disagree with it.

governmental campaign materials gave much more information, their goal was to name and attack their enemies: “Stop Brussels!”, “Stop Soros!”, “Don’t let Soros laugh in the end!” As it can be seen the Fidesz’ and the governmental campaign materials complemented each other: one named who they represent and the other the enemy.

To sum up, these key sentences of the campaign in general did not express the parties’ ideology, did not highlight previous achievements or addressed particular issues. The main characteristics of the 2018 Hungarian National Election’s slogans are populist characteristics: call for a change, harsh tone and issueless promises. Looking at the short sentences of slogans could be challenging as they do not give enough information and make difficult to identify populist characteristics, however, it is clear that Fidesz and Jobbik use the most populist rhetoric in slogans, while other parties do this to much less extent.

4.2 Visual content analysis

Most of the campaign materials included both text and images. Photos of the opponent / enemy and photos of the candidates were the most popularly used images, but *Momentum* and the Hungarian Two-tailed Dog Party were the parties that often used images other than photos.

During the period analyzed great emphasis was put on expressing Hungarian identity. Many campaign materials included Hungarian symbols, for instance the Hungarian flag or the colors of the flag, implying that the party represent the Hungarian people. This can mean that they represent every citizen, but also as the populists mean it, only a certain part, the “good” citizens.

4.2.1.1 Colors

According to my best knowledge there are no researches investigating whether populist use different colors or the same but differently. However, the colors used by parties shows relevant patterns: these expressed affiliation, highlighted information and made distinction between the represented “good” people and the “bad” others.

It can be said that the parties used a relatively large number of colors during this campaign period. The most often used colors were white (n=192), red (n=102), black (n=96), green (n=87) and yellow (n=75) and blue (n=63). The reason for the frequent occurrence of red, white and green colors may be the conscious strategic decision to use the colors of the Hungarian flag.

DK and *Momentum* follow the same path regarding their use of colors. They consistently use the colors of their logo. The difference between the two parties is that while the Momentum Movement often includes some small, colorful graphics, or the Hungarian flag, the Democratic Coalition rather use their campaign material to introduce their candidate. *Momentum*’s purple color was not related previously to any party in Hungarian politics. As it is mentioned in the literature review, purple recently became associated with György Soros and Clinton. Clinton argued, that purple is the combination of the Democrats’ blue and the Republicans’ red. The meaning of purple is fresh, smart, young. (Földvári n.d.) So it can symbolize their intention to represent new kind of politics and the will to keep the distance from the existing political elite.

LMP’s green has the same meaning. As Szilágyi argues (2010) green is used to point out that the party belongs to the new political wave, furthermore, rejects and keeps distance with the former elite besides being a green party that fights for environmental protection. In addition, the green

color may symbolize the represented group in the society: the folk, the plebeian instead of the aristocrats. LMP seems to be a good example of Szilágyi's description.

Fidesz prefers to put its leaders or its enemies in the focus of the campaign material. Furthermore, they often represent their enemies in black and white, similarly to MSZP and *Jobbik* (Figures 13, 14, 15). In contrast they present themselves colorful. Showing the world in black and white with no shades, suggesting that everything is good or bad, is not only eye-catching but it is a visualization of Hawkins's (2009) populism definition. He says that populists assign everything to a moral dimension, they see everything in black and white. The populist people are the majority of the society and in order to satisfy them rights of the evil minority can be violated. So, it is clearly a populist feature since it symbolizes the polarized society and the moral good and bad. As the three parties have completely different ideologies, the similarity of the posters is surprising.⁷



Figure 13 Poster of the government, *Fidesz*: Don't let Soros laugh in the end!

⁷ Similar strategy has chosen by LMP and discusses above (Figure 11).



Figure 14 Poster of the Hungarian Socialist Party



Figure 15 Poster of the Movement for a Better Hungary

It is obvious that parties use specific colors to reflect their ideologies or to refer to and symbolize other parties. For instance, the Hungarian Socialist Party uses the same orange color to denote *Fidesz* (see Figure 13) as LMP does on the billboard against Putin (see Figure 16), although LMP uses a reddish orange color. The choice orange is a logical decision, since it is the official color of *Fidesz* and the little red could refer to the communists' Soviet Union. On the LMP's material the

green background with yellow and white letters is clearly a sign of the green-liberal origins of the party. (Figure 16)



Figure 16 LMP - Instead of Putin you decide about the future! Referendum about Paks2!

(LMP - Facebook, 22 May 2017.)

The *Fidesz*-KDNP coalition government used consistently blue with white letters and some red for their National Consultation campaign. The same blue color appears on the European flag that symbolizes the European Union, European identity, unity and the blue sky. (EU Publications n.d.) The choice of using the same blue may be conscious decision to refer to European identity. Although the blue color may also symbolize the party's belonging to the conservative, right-wing political elite.

4.2.1.2 Focus of the visual campaign materials

The focus of the visuals of the campaign materials varies greatly. It is a natural phenomenon to introduce politicians in political campaign materials, the Hungarian campaign is no exception. However, the parties differ in how they do this and who are included in the pictures. The most

common form is that they either show the leader(s) of the political party with a short text, or a slightly longer, informative text takes center stage without any significant visual representation. Photos of a crowd and the Hungarian flag are often used, but only in the background. Only the Movement for a Better Hungary favors the placement of the Hungarian flag in a central location. Viktor Orbán, the leader of *Fidesz* is mostly presented alone in the pictures with the Hungarian flag and a fading crowd in the background. Using the Hungarian flag and its colors possibly is a reference to the represented group of people and nationalist stance.

Figure 17 shows how the focus of the campaign materials was distributed. According to the pie chart, in 47.62 % of the cases, the focus was not on the enemy, on the people or on the leader, but for example on text. In 22.22 % of the cases the leader and in 19.05 % of the cases the enemy was in the center of the campaign material. Only around one out of ten advertisements centered on the people.

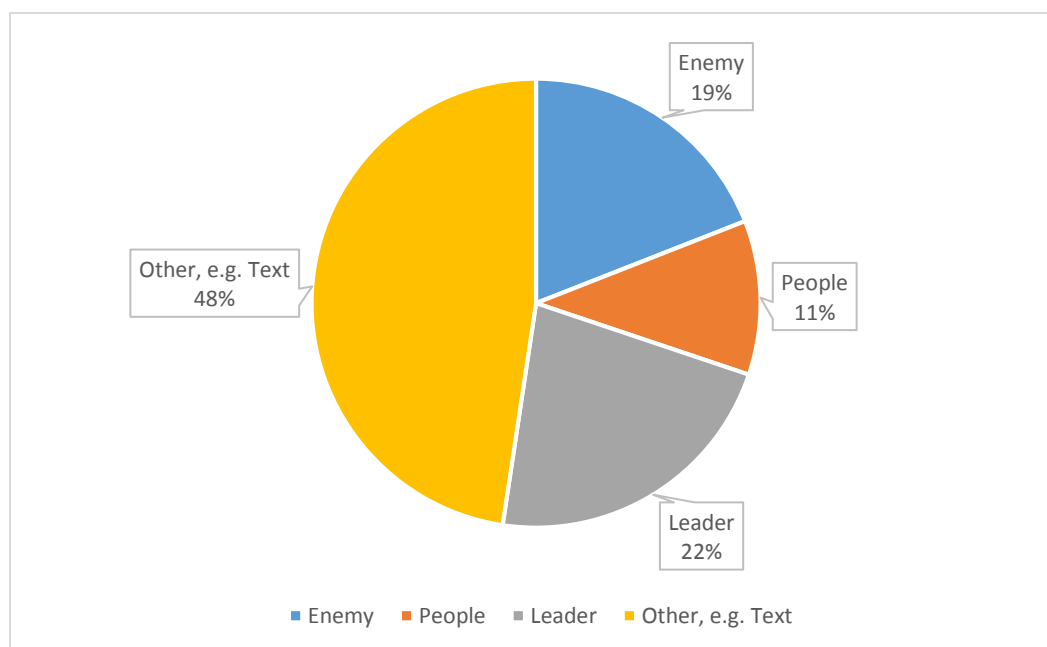


Figure 17 Focus of the campaign materials in general

4.3 Other characteristics

There were 189 campaign materials that used informal, colloquial language, direct communication informal language, 180 campaign materials attempted to mobilize people, 113 used harsh, aggressive, negative tone, verbal radicalism and/or violent language. Furthermore, 112 used irony and 90 attempted to trigger emotions. The use of informal and/or colloquial language can be the result of the politicians' wish to bring them closer to the "common people", to become one of the people. Furthermore, harsh tone and informal language is characteristics of populist political communication.

Defacement of campaign materials was present during the 2018 Hungarian Nation Election. The aim of this practice was to transform and turn the messages to opposite meaning and to use the opponents' material as an alternative communication channel. It was a practice mostly of *Momentum* (Figure 18). Their method was supplementing governmental campaign materials with their own stickers. They claimed that they did not destroy any of them, they only corrected the billboards. They argued that what they did was "a socially useful act". Their intention was clear, they selected only specific billboards. Their goal was to raise awareness of the increasing Russian influence, of Hungary' departure from European values and to fight against the disinformation campaign of the government. Therefore, they modified the government's "Stop Brussels!" billboards. The new ones say: "Stop Moscow!" and "Stop Orbán!" The letter "a" was replaced in both cases by a five-pointed star to symbolize the Communist Soviet Union (i.e. Russia). (Momentum 2017c) The defaced billboards not only ridiculed the government's populist messages but also turned into similar populist messages as the original: we have to stop the elite enemy otherwise there will be irreversible consequences.



Figure 18 Defaced campaign materials

(Momentum 2017b)

During the period analyzed, those parties, who oppose the strengthening relationship and increasing cooperation between the Hungarian government and Russia often used symbols of Russia, for example Moscow, pentacle and Putin as reference to their populist enemy.

Conclusion

Populism is no longer a negligible phenomenon in Europe. Regardless of its disputed definition, populism is visible in political communication. This is the communication that helps spread populist political actors' messages. I investigate populist political communication, its functions and contributions to the functioning of political campaigning in order to better understand these processes and thus add theoretical contribution to this field.

My analysis of the 2018 Hungarian National Elections through a systematic content analysis relied on the communication-centered approach of Stanyer, Salgado and Stromback. That is to say, I investigated, analyzed and compared all relevant political actors' political communication, focusing on the messages and strategies to transmit these messages. I defined populist political communication according to the three widely acknowledged criterion: first, speaking and acting in the name of the "good" people", second, attacking a real or created enemy and third, these two homogenous group has to be in antagonistic relationship. My codebook for populist communication is based on the different approaches to this controversial term and it includes not only the core elements of populism, but topics and issues, characteristics of visual aid and other characteristics as well. These additional features do not define populism but "facilitate" it (Mudde 2004a, 545). I believe tracking these elements and features is important in order for better understanding of populist political communication and I hope my developed codebook can further be used in future studies of the subject.

The analysis shows that there are significant differences between populist and non-populist parties' political communication strategies and populism does have strong influencing power on political communication and strategies of all parties during the campaign period. Populist political

communication strategies were used by most parties to some extent which is reflected by the campaign materials. Parties included elements that characterize populist political communication in their campaign materials but they did not do this consistently and their communication often lacked the three criteria of populist political communication. Furthermore, irrespective of the fact that the parties in general did not follow the strong populist party in issue selection, instead of pointing to their own program, they often focused on attacking *Fidesz*, the government and Viktor Orbán.

The campaign of the 2018 Hungarian Nation Election was not about expressing ideological affiliation or about party programs. The campaign materials did not try to make the voters familiar with candidates and parties. There were no unrealistic pledges. Instead, the parties' main goal was to create their image of an enemy and blame them for every possible issue relevant for Hungary. The parties tended to have one common goal: to attack the evil ruling minority and to take away their power. They included the "populist enemy" into their campaign, but did not divide the society into two homogenous group who are in antagonistic relationship. *Fidesz* was an outlier. The difference between the populist *Fidesz* and the other parties was unequivocal.

Fidesz ran a campaign fueled by fear and hatred, and their created enemy was unique among the Hungarian parties. The party focused on the need to defend the country against their enemy and on the creation of a scapegoat: György Soros, immigration and Brussels. The other parties focused mostly on the evilness of the *Fidesz* government. It is true that the parties communicated some of their goals, but there was no information on how they planned to achieve their goals. *Fidesz* did not try to defend itself, promise anything or list past achievements. There were no real issues that the governing party wanted to represent or a field where they thought that development was

needed. They did not offer solution to any social problem. They only attacked their enemies. This campaign helped to divide the country even more than before, gave space to hate speech and triggered fear instead of outlining genuine programs.

Taken together, the results suggest that the Hungarian parties according to their campaign materials analyzed can be divided into two groups. One includes all parties except the members of the *Fidesz*-KDNP coalition. The results imply that these parties tend to some extent mimic the populist communication of *Fidesz*. The other is a one-party group, *Fidesz*, with clearly populist political communication. Their campaign was characterized mostly by Xenophobia, anti-immigrant sentiments, Euroscepticism and by the turning “Brussels” and György Soros into symbols of moral evil. This is consistent with the argument according to which in political advertising there are no rules, code of ethics and there is a lack of accountability. (Iyengar and Prior 1999) Based on the arguments of Iyengar and Prior, political advertising may change dramatically over time since there is no legal or moral control over how political actors may spread their messages through political advertising. The direction of change may be towards the adaptation of populist political strategies.

Although widely used, populist visual communication, which is largely overlooked by studies in general, is characterized by using specific focus and colors. The strategic decision to use different colors for different purposes show relevant pattern. The parties used them to express affiliation and to highlight information. Populist campaign materials used colors to make distinction between the represented people and the enemy. The campaign materials were often focusing on the enemy and representing it with the combination of black and white colors only, while the “us”, the moral

good is represented with various lively colors or with such national symbols as for example the national flag.

Further research can test the findings in other countries using a different scope and case selection and demonstrate the method's applicability and reliability. I suggest that the study should be expanded to other genres. In addition, further investigation may focus on the difference between right and left-wing populist political campaigning.

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Appendix 1 – Codebook

Basic information	<i>Party</i>	
	<i>Source</i>	Homepage Street, Mailshot Facebook
	<i>Date</i>	Month, Year
	<i>Type</i>	Poster Billboard Flyer Banner Slogan
	<i>Size</i>	1 sentence 2-3 sentences 4 or more sentences
	<i>Content</i>	Mainly text Mainly visual Both text and visual
	<i>Main theme / main message</i>	
Core elements	<i>The “other” / enemy</i>	Economic elite
		Political elite
		Media
		Intellectuals
		Civil sector, NGOs
		Immigrants
		International organizations
		Brussels
	<i>The “other” / enemy – frame</i>	e.g. evil, bad, corrupt, dangerous, thieves, immoral international capital, incompetent, self-serving, serving foreign interests, betrayer of the people, threat to security and well-being
	<i>“Us” / People</i>	Ethnos
		Class
		Citizens
		Citizens abroad
		Nation

		“Imagined community”
	<i>“Us” / People - frame</i>	e.g. pure, good, oppressed, honest, hardworking, respecting law, authentic, victims of out-groups
	<i>Antagonistic relationship of the people and the enemy</i>	
Visual aid	<i>Colors</i>	Color1, Color2, Color3
	<i>Focus</i>	Leader
		Enemy
		People, mass
		Other, e.g. text
	<i>Position of the candidate</i>	Among people, close to each other; interaction with civilians
		Center
		Other
	<i>Position of the people</i>	People in the background, vanished
		Center
		Other
	<i>Position of the enemy</i>	Center
		Other
	<i>National symbols</i>	Flag / colors of the flag
	<i>Professional photos</i>	
	<i>“Behind the scene” impression</i>	
	<i>Children in the pictures</i>	
	<i>Politician</i>	Serious, purposeful, caring about the future of the country, prestigious surroundings
Topics and issues	<i>The Homeland, sense of national belonging, nationalist rhetoric</i>	
	<i>Cultural and family values, family support</i>	
	<i>Communism</i>	
	<i>Democracy and the people</i>	
	<i>Security, law and order</i>	
	<i>Sovereignty</i>	

	<i>Privileges and corruption</i>	
	<i>Education</i>	
	<i>Health care</i>	
	<i>Retirement</i>	
	<i>Foreign policy</i>	
	<i>The world of work, wages</i>	
	<i>European Union</i>	
	<i>NGOs</i>	
	<i>Nativist policies, Immigration</i>	
	<i>Environmental protection</i>	
Other characteristics	<i>Tone / style</i>	Harsh, aggressive, negative tone, verbal radicalism, violent language
		Informal, colloquial language, direct communication
		Emotional communication (e.g. triggering negative emotions as fear and anger)
		Optimism, self confidence
		Irony
		Political actor as national defender
		Cosmic proportion: affecting people's life always and everywhere
		"Strait talking": speaking in the name of the people about the "truth" (racist, stereotypic statements) that the elite does not admit. It results negative emotions towards minority out-groups
		Mobilizing people
		Simplistic solutions to problems
	<i>Specific populist features</i>	Attacking out-groups, Xenophobia, Anti-immigrant sentiments
		EU- and Euro-skepticism
		Strong anti-establishment elements

Appendix 2 – List of party abbreviation

Party	Abbreviation
Together	Együtt
Democratic Coalition	DK
Dialogue for Hungary	Párbeszéd
Hungarian Liberal Party	MLP
Hungarian Socialist Party	MSZP
Movement for a Better Hungary	<i>Jobbik</i>
<i>Fidesz – Hungarian Civic Alliance</i>	<i>Fidesz</i>
Politics Can Be Different	LMP
Hungarian Two-tailed Dog Party	MKKP
Momentum Movement	Momentum
Christian Democratic People's Party	KDNP