# CAN THEORIES OF MAINSTREAMING TRAVEL FROM WEST TO EAST?

## A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE FRENCH NATIONAL FRONT AND JOBBIK MOVEMENT FOR A BETTER HUNGARY

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## Abstract

Radical right populist parties have reached unprecedented electoral success in recent years and given their consolidated position in the party systems they are here to stay. My MA will compare the Hungarian Jobbik party's moderation to the ideal-type of populist radical right, the French Front National (FN) to provide evidence for and reveal the true nature of the mainstreaming. Despite the differences between their historical legacies and structural context, the two parties seem to converge on the outcome dimension: they influence their environment in a functionally equivalent way. I will argue that contagion theory's concepts can travel the Eastern-European radical right-wing, providing evidence that it's not a condition-specific trend but a more general phenomenon. I aim to reveal the conditions under which mainstream parties and government policies are likely to shift to the right or adopt populist tendencies

Existing literature on party effects and contagion is primarily Western-Europe-based. Although it's almost a cliché, that since 2010 the governing party practically implements Jobbik's program, there is very few academic works that supports whether Jobbik is in fact 'copying' FN deliberately or its change is a consequence of unique structural differences. I will use qualitative text analysis and discourse analysis to analyze politicians' discourse, that allows me not only to code legislative texts (a single linguistic instance) but the broader social practice these exist in. Then, I compare the findings of the paired analysis.

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## INTRODUCTION

Radical right-wing and anti-immigration populist parties have been emerging in most European democracies and have consistently enjoyed widespread electoral success. The recent rise and consolidation of the party family in many of Europe's party systems showed that far-right success is not an isolated phenomenon,[1] and has generated a considerable body of research. The chances of these parties assuming governance is quite low – although not impossible – due to institutional-political constraints. However, the discourse generated by populist rhetoric is able not only to influence major party positions but – as I will argue – governmental policies too.

Many scholars have studied the factors underlying the electoral performance of the new populist radical right (Carter 2011, Kitschelt 2007, Mudde 2007) adopting the supply-demand approach (Klandermans 2004). Previous research on party moderation usually revolves around the inclusion-moderation thesis, based on the Downsian moderation theorem (1957) stating that inclusion in democratic procedure and institutions results in party moderation (Akkerman & de Lange & Rooduijn 2016, 4). There are a number of case studies exploring this phenomenon in the case of the Front National (Courmont 2014; Balent 2013; Shields 2013; Almeida 2013 and Williams 2011), but the conceptualization and measurement of such tendencies varies across studies. It is the purpose of this MA thesis to contribute to such research, by defining and operationalizing party change so that it is comparable across countries through a comparative perspective. This might additionally reveal some of the features of mainstreaming and its observability that researchers have ignored so far. Moreover, it is an East-West comparison that tests whether the theories developed in the case of Western-European far-right parties apply to the East.

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[1] The radical right-wing party family in Europe received 5,5 % of the votes in 1980 on average in Parliamentary elections, and a mean of 14 % in 2004 (Norris 2005, 236-239), making it the third strongest, dynamically developing party family (Róna 2014, 45).

The rise of the radical right party Jobbik in Hungary is not a new phenomenon. Since their first breakthrough result (in the 2009 EP elections), they achieved the status of one of the strongest opposition parties. Their ideological positions changed over time, but it is debatable if this is only at the level of rhetoric or in actual policy stances. The issue ownership of the Roma problem in a heavily sensationalized media environment helped Jobbik to raise support and to consolidate (Róna & Karácsony 2011, Róna 2014), but since the 2010 elections – where they succeeded to come in third after the two major parties, despite the widespread assumption of the crystallized two-party nature of the Hungarian party system, they rather tend to follow or conform to the agenda, being rather a catalyst than initiator in Mudde's model (2013). The 2014 elections (where they got 20,5% of the votes, becoming the biggest competitor to the governing party in certain areas) proved that Jobbik is incontestably a stable party electorally and some of its will was forced on its political opponents with an absolute government majority. It took on a more consolidated, mainstream image and populist agenda, raising corruption of the elites to being one of its leading issues. On the one hand, they succeeded to broaden and diversify their voter base by attracting new, more moderate voters from every layer of society (Karácsony & Róna 2011; Róna 2014; Mandák 2015; Kovarek & Farkas 2017). Since 2010, a unique phenomenon has been unfolding in Hungary, with the mainstream right governing party Fidesz constantly shifting to the right, implementing the radical party's program. Since the 2014 elections, they appear to set the agenda with their populist rhetoric, bringing the traditionally radical right-wing issue of immigration to the forefront in a country that has not faced the challenges of multiculturalism and religious pluralism.

I compare Jobbik's ideology with the "master case" of the populist radical right. The Front National, a long-established party scored consistently high in local, national and European-level elections in my timeframe (Stockemer, 2017), partly as the outcome of the consolidating strategy of the party's new leader (since 2011), Marine Le Pen. The moderation of the party –

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generally referred to as the *dédiabolisation* – is generally accepted, although positions differ whether the change was one of style (Almeida 2013, Balent 2013) or substance (Shields, 2013). Authors of the former approach refer to the continuity in the party program, where "the FN remains deeply rooted in its old ideological axioms" (Almeida 2013, 176), or use the term 'Marine factor' to emphasize a personal political project over a real ideological shift. (Courmont, 2014). The Front National lead other parties in France to co-opt (partially) the agenda of the party, mainly centered around anti-immigration and public security issues (Minkenberg 2002). With the revival of the populist element in the party's rhetoric and the down-toning of its radical edge, the FN has attracted voters from all social strata, and the mainstream right governing party replied to this success by accommodating some of their positions. I will systematically review the existing literature and the competing conceptualizations and methodologies of the mainstreaming of the FN and apply the selected concepts and indicators systematically, to the Hungarian case, since in this latter case no such research exists so far.

Despite the substantial differences between the historical, structural and institutional contexts of their respective party systems, the two parties– *Jobbik* and the French *Front National (FN)* – follow a functionally equivalent strategy of mainstreaming. The nature of these similarities in the adopted tendencies of converging to the political mainstream constitute the puzzle if we contrast it with the differences in their structural context and historical legacies of their respective countries, including their own ideological positions on radical right key issue dimensions.

My research questions are therefore the following: given that Jobbik appears to be adopting a more mainstream agenda, similar to that of the Front National (FN), despite their different institutional-political contexts, can we apply the Western-Europe based research methodology in an Eastern European context? Might this provide insights about the supposed divide between

Western- and Eastern-European radical right-wing parties and about the appropriate methodology to analyze party change? My thesis aims to answer the question whether the Western-European theories can travel to the East and whether Jobbik is deliberately following the FN's *dédiabolisation* strategy, or following an independent but similar path, as a result of the domestic context. As I present a comparative view on the ideological trajectories of the two parties, as a function of their political environment and past, I will aim to formulate a more general theory of mainstreaming applicable to Eastern-European radical right-wing parties, demonstrating that it is not a condition-specific trend but a more general phenomenon.

My MA thesis fills in a gap of the literature, regarding the change of Jobbik. The scarcity of studies regarding the mainstreaming of Jobbik is possibly attributable to the general perception that the change of Jobbik is only temporary. Although there are studies that analyze the Jobbik's change (see Table 3.) they tend to apply a different methodology, focusing on the analysis of individual party candidates. Contrarily, I will analyze the possible mainstreaming of Jobbik based on a framework, that is based on a thorough review of relevant literature regarding the radical right party that is the "standard" for mainstreaming.

An East – West comparative work as such has been absent so far, even though comparing the radical right across Europe has the potential to broaden the scope of the theory of mainstreaming by testing the hypotheses on a post-communist Eastern-European context. Based on the comparative analysis, I will argue for the convergence trend of the Eastern and Western-European far right. The ideological comparison of radical parties with different historical contexts adds to the current literature. The outcomes of the research test Western theories in an Eastern-European context, thus confirming the validity and generality of the theory and serve as a basis for further comparative studies, and contribute to the comparison of Eastern and Western European radical right populist parties in terms of political opportunity structures, post-communist traditions and immigration versus Roma issues among other topics.

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This thesis will follow the following structure: first, I provide a comparative overview on the ideological trajectories of the two parties, as a function of their political environment and past to support my point about the East – West differences that – at first sight – seem to contradict the identical tendencies the two parties follow. I will use qualitative content analysis to reveal the nature of these changes, and whether a substantive shift has occurred in the ideological positions on key issues in the period from 2009 to 2018 in the case of Jobbik, more specifically from the point that marked the beginning of ideological change for the parties and up to the latest elections. I rely on the existing academic literature concerning radical right populism, party moderation and contagion and test them using qualitative discourse analysis of primary documents. With a qualitative discourse analysis, I will attempt to draw the main tendencies the parties adopted in the indicated period. Finally, I present the results of my analysis, showing a convergence between the Central Eastern– and Western–European types of radical right-wing populist movement. My case-selection is justified by the parties' representativeness of their party family and their stable status in their respective party systems. Jobbik is the most relevant Central-Eastern-European case of a radical right populist party. It is almost common knowledge, that since their 2010 victory, the governing mainstream right coalition implements the radical right's political program (Böcskei & Molnár 2017). I compare Jobbik with the "master case" of the populist radical right, the Front National (Stockemer, 2017), similarly successful in recent presidential elections.

I do not attempt to form a normative opinion about these parties. Empirical understanding and categorization that I will do may seem close to opinion statements, especially when treating such a research topic, but it is important to point out that research is not political journalism, therefore, I do not attempt to influence the reader in any way. At the same time, I realize there is no such thing as value-free research and many aspects in qualitative research depend on the researcher's own deliberation, which is why I aim to be self-reflexive throughout the project.

# CHAPTER 1 – CONCEPTS OF RADICAL RIGHT AND 'MAINSTREAMING' IN COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE

## 1.1. Literature review

The literature on radical right-wing populist parties is one of the broadest in the study of parties and party systems. (Stockemer, 2017). When it comes to party change, studies of the radical right might examine this complex phenomenon through four dimensions: (1) the party's ideology; (2) the leadership styles of the leaders including party structure or the composition of the party elites and their relationship with the media; (3) the party members; and (4) the electorates (Stockemer, 2017). One could add, the context of the specific political environment, historical legacies and party development; secondly, the effects and interactions of party change on the party system and on the political agenda. Modern party leaders are concerned more with party image. As a result of the deliberate moderate shift, they mostly managed to exclude the most radical elements at least from the public image, such as – the occasionally not-so-latent racist or anti-Semitic or Holocaust-relativizing comments made by party representatives (Róna 2014, Stockemer 2017) or even by removing the radical-leaning members of the party. This strategy succeeded in gaining wider electoral support and acceptance (Balent 2013, Shields 2013, Courmont 2014), although there is undoubtedly a continuity regarding their stances: their preferred courses of action have not changed substantially in their core issue, or even radicalized on some aspects (Almeida 2013) and a duality can be detected in their public appearance. Although many are responsive to their more mainstream style, it is difficult to break entirely with their past image. It is indeed a question whether they actually want to, considering the loss of their original electorate.

A substantial part of academic research aims to reveal the causes behind the electoral success of such parties, with the parallel challenge of creating a clear conceptual framework of the diverse parties the term radical right-wing populism (Mudde 2017) covers. The prevailing

theoretical framework of the literature of radical right is a binary structure of demand and supply sides (Klandermans 2004). The demand side studies underlying factors giving rise to the popularity of populist radical parties and the supply side examines the momentums influencing political actors (Norris 2005, Mudde 2007). Nonetheless, factors of the demand side are necessary but not sufficient conditions (Van der Brug 2005) in explaining the success of radical right-wing parties. More recent research challenged the traditional approach, proving that economic and societal positions alone do not define voters' party preferences and voters tend to not develop crystallized attitudes, rather opinion statements, that can be influenced by social interaction (Zaller 1993). Party success is partly a function of ideology – the "winning formula" of ideology consisting of authoritarianism, nativism and populism (Kitchelt 1995; de Lange 2007) and we cannot ignore the prominent role of issue-ownership in the emergence of radical right-wing parties (Karácsony & Róna, 2011).

## 1.2.    *Radical right party family & shared elements of ideology*

The definition of 'radical right-wing populism' is a challenge in itself, since the actors do not define themselves neither as radical nor as populist. In a field so full of competing concepts – such as populism, radical right wing or anti-immigration parties – it is of vital importance to set clear definitions. I will take the definition of Mudde (2007), according to which all radical-right populists share the three elements of nativism, authoritarian tendencies and populism (Mudde 2007). To be able to compare the two parties based on their ideologies, I set up a theoretical framework, essential for a comparative methodology. Furthermore, I join to the debate, whether radical right-wing populist parties in Europe can be considered to belong to one party family, regarding their differences.

Although they exist in different institutional and historical contexts, the parties in my comparison are part of the radical right-wing party family – one that shares its core principles and clearly form a party family (Kitschelt 2007, Ignazi 2003, Norris 2005, Mudde 2007).

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Common traits mix populism, a democracy-concept or a rhetorical style rather than ideology representing the will of the "pure people" against the corrupt elites (Mudde 2007; with a radical right-wing 'host ideology' including nativism, authoritarianism, euro-skepticism and welfare chauvinism (Kitchelt 1995; de Lange 2007). Nativism is a combination of nationalism and xenophobia, holding "that states should be inhabited exclusively by members of a native group and that non-native elements are fundamentally threatening to the homogenous nation-state" (Mudde 2007, 19). Ultimately, most of their program revolves around an ethno-centric worldview in the minimalist definition of the term 'nation' (Mudde 2007, 15-20). It is of a lesser importance whether the "out-group" is immigrants, as is the case in most of Western Europe, or native minorities, as is traditionally the case in Eastern Europe (Kitschelt and Bustikova 2009, Minkenberg 2017) – this tendency has changed only very recently, in 2014, with the flow of immigrants entering the EU from the Balkans route, in Hungary.

An alternative way for defining radical right-wing parties is a structural approach, one in which we classify radical parties as a function of their position in the party system on a one-dimensional left–right continuum (Akkerman – de Lange – Rooduijn 2016). It is important to note that the anti-systemic nature of these parties does not necessarily mean they would be extremist. In the case of this study, the parties under analysis do not (or have ceased to) refuse democratic rules altogether, but they denounce the existing political elites and would change some of the democratic procedures and institutions (Carter 2011), that would – according to their populist claims – ameliorate the representation of the 'common people.'

In recent years, a deradicalization strategy has been conducted by both parties, meaning that formerly radical parties (often expressing racist and anti-semitic views) considerably toned down their rhetoric, made changes in their leadership and program. The aim of these changes might be the transformation of the party to appeal to every layer of voters, or to reduce the rejection of voters, or trying to appear as a respectable political party (Courmont 2014, 140).

Populist radical right parties may employ rhetoric that does not represent their ideology under the condition they expect it to serve their electoral advantage, so the change might be (1) only a stylistic moderation, (2) a leadership strategy of the new party leader(s) or it can happen that it is actually (3) substantial ideological change. At the same time, there are signs of continuity in the official party programs and policies that show the continuing salience of nativist ideology, defining every other issue, except for economic issues. It appears that these are mostly vote-seeking strategies, which were successful regarding their electoral performance but had an even greater consequence on the party system and political discourse by making more radical language acceptable and spilling its ideas into the mainstream.

The theories explaining the success of radical right-wing parties are not equally applicable to Western and Eastern-European democracies. Given that the Front National of France and Jobbik movement for a Better Hungary appear to be adopting a more mainstream (ideological) agenda, are there core differences in their ideology and what do these reveal about the supposed divide between Western and Eastern – European radical right-wing parties and party change? (To what degree and in what aspect is Jobbik's ideology different from a typical Western-European radical right-wing party?

### 1.3.    Differences in national contexts

"One should dedicate a greater attention to the case-specific trajectories via which the engineering of far right movements and parties takes place within different social and political environments" (Petsinis 2015, 285)

The differences of the political-historical contexts and – partly as a consequence – the ideological positions of the FN and Jobbik are the central elements around which my research is built. My assumptions are based on the works focusing on either Central-Eastern or Western-European radical right (Bruebaker 2017, Minkenberg 2017, Pirro 2015), but with a novel, comparative perspective. I do not only contrast the ideological elements of the two sides for the

sake of comparison – although it is filling a gap in the literature – but with a purpose to solve the puzzle between these differences and the functionally similar outcomes on the level of effects of these parties.

A consensus among scholars of post-communist Europe exists, that long-run continuities distinctly characteristic of post-communist Europe are crucial in shaping the contemporary political outcomes in the region (Brubaker 2017, Minkenberg 2017, Pirro 2015). There are two major views about the differences between Eastern and Western-European radical right. One is grounded in the modernization theory and argues that as Eastern-European democracies and party systems increasingly resemble Western-European ones, so do their radical-right parties. (Bustikova 2014) The other view claims that Eastern-European radical right is a "sui generis phenomenon," (Minkenberg 2017, 5), defined by the persistent effects of its particular past and processes of the present alike.

I argue that despite the differences in the institutional and historical context, the legacies of radical right parties and their partly persisting differences, there is convergence between East and West, but these changes can be attributed to the universal tendency of mainstreaming.

**Table 1 Differences and similarities regarding the parties**

| FN | Jobbik |
|---|---|
| **Source factors**: party organization, leadership, issue focus | |
| Growing emphasis on 'civilizationism' (cultural values and identity) | Ethnic-territorial conception of national identity |
| Anti-immigration discourse as the most important issue | Xenophobia directed towards "internal outsiders" |
| *Laïcité* and secularized "identitarian Christianism" <br> Islamophobia → a "threat to democratic order and incompatible with Christian identity" | Religious-nationalist agenda and inseparable concept" of Hungarian national identity and Christianity |

| **Exogenous factors**: party system dynamics | |
| --- | --- |
| Western | Post-soviet |
| Semi-Presidential | Parliamentary |
| **majoritarian**, 2-round, first-past the post, single member constituencies | **Mixed**, one-round, 2-ballot (one single-member district + party list + 'lost votes' on the district list) but leaning towards majority representation |
| Multiparty system<br>Strong culture of popular resistance | Central power-block + smaller parties (?)<br>Underdeveloped civil-society |
| Multinational society | Roma community (5-10%) |
| **Similarities** | |
| Moderation<br>Established parties of their party systems with solid electoral support | |

### 1.3.1. Historical legacies

The general claim "history matters" is particularly true to the formation of the radical right in Central-Eastern Europe, however, we must determine a particular legacy that shapes the present outcomes. The "common denominator" is the fundamental distinctiveness of the region is its state communist experience, together with the individual countries' *longue durée* past (Bernhard & Jasiewicz 2015, 314). These "pre-communist and communist-era legacies are not 'alternative explanations' but rather reinforce each other and have jointly shaped a variety of contemporary outcomes" (Ekiert & Zeblatt 2013, 95), such as a version of nationalism that is centered on ethnic and territorial rather than civic dimensions (Kohn 1944; Smith 2001, 39 – 42) of national identity.

Contrary to France – and most of Western Europe – where the radical right emerged in the 1980s and have grown in importance ever since, radical right parties in Central and Eastern Europe emerged after the regime changes (Bustiková 2014) and even immediately after, they

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"were not really a major political force." They were "more extremist, but (far) less successful" (Mudde 2005, 165) than their Western counterparts, due to the nature of the post-communist transition and nation-building (Minkenberg 2017).

The demand in society for any ideology, in other words, the cultural resonance of the messages of a given ideology, is determined by political culture, identity and legacies. In the case of the radical right, the criteria the national identity is based on is particularly relevant, since it determines the degree of openness in a society. A vast literature explains how a political nation,[2] like the French emerged in the nation-building processes of the 19th century. Contrary to most of Western-Europe though, Hungary's chance to have an independent nation-state have not come until the national tragedy of the Versailles peace treaties at the end of World War I contributed to the territory-oriented national identity (Minkenberg 2017). Not only the consequences of this national awakening – happening under and against a multinational empire – but the post-war revisionism and irredentism were aggravated by the fact that (…) "open discussion (about) this treaty has been a taboo in Hungary" in the following decades (Vardy 1983, 23). In 1989 the state communist regime came to an end, and the ideological void it left has been filled by the party ideologies "drawing from the (…) pre-communist and communist heritage" (Tismaneanu 2007, 35). Accordingly, the radical right formed its ideology based on the grievances and traumas on the national identity of the past, lending it its distinctive 'national-radical' flavor.

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[2] Citizenship based on the shared norms, political values and institutions

### 1.3.2. Political opportunity structures

Political opportunity structures or party and cleavage structures influence how the radical right develops and behaves (Mudde 2007) and party systems in the two countries under consideration differ considerably, mostly following the East – West dichotomy I have coined above.

In Western Europe the emergence and success of the radical right can be attributed to the 'new' universalism–particularism dimension, drawing from issues of immigration, cultural diversity, political integration and distributive deservingness, complementing and partly replacing the traditional socio-economic state–market cleavage. The changing cleavage structures thus reformulated the traditional French bipolar multiparty system, dominated by the traditional left-right cleavage with the Socialist Party and its allies on the left and the center-right party group led by *Les Républicains* (previously *UMP*). The two main new conflict dimensions are organized along the exclusivist – integrationist pole and another, secondary interventionist–neoliberal pole (Gougou & Persico 2017, 314). The same model of 'old' and 'new' cleavages cannot be applied directly to Central-Eastern Europe, since all cleavages are relatively new or renewed (Minkenberg 2017) and the immigration issue has entered the political sphere only very recently.

The demand for radical right parties is also associated with the generally lower support for democracy and democratic order in Central Eastern Europe. Although survey data on Hungarian patterns for democratic support show that (European Values Survey) the democratic political culture is indeed consolidated in Hungary (Fuchs 2017, 167-168; Shin 2007, 11) and normative support for democratic values is consistently high (PRC 2017), the level of trust in public institutions and politicians is in the decline, mainly due to high corruption perception. The deepening economic and political crisis at the end of the 2000s resulted in lower popular mobilization (Greskovits 2015) and an increasing discontent with democratic performance (Ágh 2013). Such mistrust in the current elites open opportunities for new populist parties

(Engler 2016), such as the radical right Jobbik and another centrist, green party that also appeared in 2010.

Emergence of new actors in the party system as a consequence of distrust and a failure of traditional parties to represent a large part of the population and to adjust to the grievances of the electorate (Bornschier & Lachat 2009) has also happened in France, with the difference that emerging actors range from extreme right to the hard left, like the *La France Insoumise* (France Unbowed), with multiple central actors. Since 2014, the right-wing FN has established itself as a third force (*tripolar* nature of the French political landscape).

### 1.3.3. Majority–minority relations

While, in Western Europe, immigrants are defined as the 'other' and are a core agenda element of FN, in Hungary, resentment has been traditionally directed towards national ethnic minorities, particularly the *Roma minority*, mixed with a deep-rooted tradition of anti-semitism. The ideology of Jobbik has mixed these two elements, although their public stance on these issues have consolidated to the point that they no longer make open xenophobic or anti-semitic statements, although distributive deservingness and authoritarian proposals that may affect the disadvantaged groups of Hungary still make part of their policy.

The immigration issue in Hungary – despite its relatively low significance as an actual policy problem in this part of Europe – has come to the forefront recently, with a large momentum. Although hostility towards ethnically or culturally defined "others" and general xenophobia (European Values Survey) has been higher in Hungary (Zick et al. 2011 in Minkenberg, 2016, 53-54.) than in Western-Europe, this sentiment has been aggravated by the radical right parties (including the governing party). Despite the fact that the proportion of non-EU foreigners in Hungary, as in most V4 countries, stays under 1 % (Eurostat 2017) meaning that most Hungarian citizens do not have any or regular personal experience with immigrants, the concern

over immigration approaches the levels of Western-Europe. When citizens are questioned about their main concerns, the frequency of immigration mentioned as the top concern has risen extremely sharply (by 57 points between 2011 and 2016) in Hungary (Perrinau 2016). At the same time, in France, a country that has a considerable population of *immigrés* and French citizens of immigrant descent, the same indicator has moved upwards with 8 points in the same time period.

## CHAPTER 2 – MAINSTREAMING

The term 'mainstreaming' can be applied to a variety of situations, like the convergence between mainstream parties or between radical and mainstream parties (Akkermann, de Lange & Rooduijn 2016). In this case, however, I will refer to the term more narrowly, as the process in which radical parties are becoming more like mainstream parties.

To understand the concept of mainstreaming, we must first define the 'mainstream' that a party is approaching, which is often defined simply as the opposite to radical parties as well as the starting point, a 'non-mainstream' position. Mainstream parties are therefore conventional (Kitschelt 1989) or established parties (Sartori 1976) as opposed to anti-establishment or anti-systemic parties. This definition is inherently a circular one, where mainstream is defined to contrast with the non-mainstream (Akkerman, de Lange & Rooduijn 2016). Thus, mainstreaming is the process by which radical parties start to lose their non-mainstream features. Radical parties can move to the mainstream and de-radicalize their reputation by moderating their issue positions, eliminating radical symbolism in their communication and personnel, expand their issue agenda and accept republican norms and principles. Although there are extremities in both ends of the left-right scale, here I examine radical right-wing parties, that can be defined through their ideological positions, evolving around rather cultural (European integration, law and order, identity, immigration) than socioeconomic issues, built around one core element of ideology (Akkerman et al. 2016, 7) – in the case of the FN, this issue is immigration (CHES 2017). The radical right-wing core ideology is basically the combination of nativism, authoritarianism and populism (Mudde 2017). Populism is a combination of a core ideology (as the radical right) and anti-establishment attitudes – a position often combined with, but not permutable with anti-systemness, which means the refusal of democratic politics and polity as such (for a more detailed conception of the radical right see the conceptualization section).

Radical parties can also be defined as a function of the party system they exist in. Notably, if non-mainstreamness is construed as a particular party's spatial position as compared to its mainstream or centrist competitors, radicalism can be defined as one that exists on the fringes on the traditional left-right scale. Even though it is deeply simplifying, from such a structural point of view, the options of such a party are either moderation, radicalization or stability in the coordinate-system of mainstreamness (Almedia 2013, 167). Hence, mainstreaming is the process of moving closer to the center on this hypothetical scale or the adoption of positions perceived as more mainstream. The different dimensions of mainstreaming can be understood as a function of the different objectives that scholarly literature attributes to parties. Notably, the office-seeking, policy-seeking and vote-seeking strategies of parties presuppose different motivations behind their moderating tendencies.

Rogers Brubaker – studying the change of Western-European radical right-wing parties – comes to the conclusion that mainstreaming is one of the most important tendencies of Western European radical right parties, that consists of adopting the basic Republican values of mainstream culture and applying it selectively so as to support their original exclusionist preferences. Such values are their growing emphasis on European culture and identity, the adoption of certain liberal ideas (gay rights, freedom of speech), a secularized, "identitarian Christianism"[3] and philo-Semitism, through which they promote themselves as defenders of diversity and particularity (Betz & Johnson, 2017). Brubaker briefly calls this phenomenon *civilizationism*, driven by an image of 'threatening Islam,' that proves that these parties still define themselves in terms of 'us' and 'them', however now not in national, but in broader, civilizational terms (Brubaker 2017). This change is definitely recognizable in the case of the FN, that transformed itself from a classical racist, nostalgic and latently anti-Semitic party into

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[3] 'Christianism' as referring to a concept of group identity of belonging rather than of religious belief (Bruebaker 2017)

a new populist one (Carter 2011), based on the classically liberal values of *laicité*; women's rights, philo-semitism and freedom of speech – all applied almost on all occasions as an opposition to Islam.

## *2.1. Explanations for mainstreaming*

According to the ideological immobility theory (Downs 1957, 110-11), parties are conservative institutions, they do not change unless they are under some kind of internal (e.g. a leadership conflict) or external pressure (Harmel and Janda 1994, Harmel and Svasand, 1997, 316), particularly in the case of electoral losses (Harmel and Janda, 1994, 267). This interpretation builds on the Downsian theory of elections as markets, where political parties are rational actors competing for votes along a (one-dimensional) spatial continuum. The hypothesis implies that, 'in a democracy, (parties) always acts so as to maximize the number of votes it will receive' (Downs 1957, 137). However, parties cannot 'put on whatever costume suits the situation. Once a party has placed its ideology "on the market," it cannot suddenly abandon or radically alter that ideology without convincing the voters that it is unreliable' (1957, 142). Therefore, mainstreaming in its Downsian framework can be interpreted as a combination of office- and vote-seeking strategy, where parties are adapting their positions to voters' preferences.

The inclusion-moderation thesis, building on the same theory, says that participation in democratic institutions and procedures de-radicalizes and amends the ideology of a political party, as a consequence of a need for consensus and day-to-day activities in office (Berman 2008). At the same time, inclusion into office alone is not sufficient to de-radicalize, since there remain radical parties that maintain their radical profile (Akkermann, de Lange & Rooduijn 2016). Moreover, it would be quite an unrealistic hypothesis to assume that the two parties under consideration have de-radicalized as a consequence of their inclusion in the democratic game. Although they are permanent actors in politics, they are under-represented in national-level legislation (particularly in France, due to their majoritarian electoral law) and they usually

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refuse cooperation with other parties, as part of their highly accentuated anti-establishment appeal.

### 2.1.1. Electoral success

The new radical right parties appeal to a wider share of voters, from every social class. Contrary to the traditional view about the radical right, longitudinal data is no more an appropriate tool to describe the electorates of these parties. Although the FN still has its voter base in the working class and those who do not benefit from the consequences of globalization, it broadened and diversified its voters base significantly to include every segment of society. In Jobbik's case, there is even less of a clear pattern of class composition, since a clear shift from lower educated, older blue-collar voters to young, intellectual professionals occurred when Jobbik took the place of its dismantling predecessor MIÉP, even though the majority of their supporters come from rural rather than urban areas. Examining attitudinal variables might show the issues parties adopted mirrors public opinion or whether the agendas of parties influences the general public's issue-perception. Not all of the issues have the same level of importance in the popularity of radical right-wing parties, rather, there are a few key issues with a particular concern to citizens (e.g. immigration, public security, traditional values) that the radical right can capitalize on (Balent 2013), although ideological motivations can be complemented by economic and demographic factors in explaining voting behavior.

Regarding the mainstreaming of the radical right in Europe, mostly Western-Europe-based research created the current defining theories of the discipline – a historic-institutional background that is similar to but could not be equated with the party systems of post-communist countries (Brubaker 2017, Harmel & Svasand 1997, Mudde 2007; Van Spanje 2010; Van Spanje and Van der Brug 2009). Although multiple works are treating the Central and Eastern European radical right (Minkenberg 2017, Pirro 2015, Róna 2014), comparative studies are sparse and no more than one academic study exists about the effects of the "Eastern counterpart

of the FN," Jobbik in the 2010 – 2014 period, when the party change has only started so one can only lean on speculations whether the claim that Jobbik's strategy is actually 'copying' its Western counterpart is true.

## 2.2. Measuring mainstreaming (methodology)

Depending on the definition of 'mainstream' and 'radical' as I have discussed above, measurement of mainstreaming differs across the three dimensions of radicalness, anti-establishment positions or being a niche party. While the two former dimensions can be measured by looking at issue positions, the latter is primarily a matter of issue salience (Akkerman, de Lange & Rooduijn 2016, 32).

As we can see in Table 2, there exist two major schools on the measurement of the nature and salience of issues. One is relying directly on the content analysis of election manifestos, official programmatic texts, campaign material or a more general discourse of parties. The choice of the sources that the authors analyze and the coding schemes are crucial in this case, since it can seriously affect the conclusions. The other approach is based on systematic surveys of country specialists, referred to as 'expert scores.' These are useful for a number of reasons, most significantly because they provide information on parties' policy positions in a comparable and standardized format, across a wide range of countries (Benoit & Laver 2006, 5). Although it is an easy and fast way for comparability, these surveys are based on secondary perceptions, therefore it is not clear whether they hold the absolute truth about the ideological change of parties. The difficulty in analyzing party moderation lies in our inability to tell whether the core ideologies of parties has actually changed. The perceived change in the image of a radical right party does not mean that the ideological change is substantial, it could also be a part of the party's vote-maximizing strategy. Nevertheless, in that case it is equally important to reveal the core issues and changes that the leaders adopted, because of their resonance in the electorates. This is what the authors attempt to answer, using different methodologies such as discourse

analysis or applying a structural approach. In the following, I review the different approaches and methods authors have used to establish mainstreaming as a concept and how this conceptualization has affected their conclusions about the underlying reasons and outcomes of the famous "*dédiabolization*" strategy of the Front National.

Another sign of mainstreaming can be detected by the personal changes or by a shift in the power balance within the party between the radical and the more moderate elements or in the party organization itself. Since radical right-wing parties tend to be hyper-centralized, led by a charismatic personality, the shift in tone occurs when the leader of the party changes. This was the case in the FN, when the founding father Jean-Marie Le Pen was replaced by his daughter in 2011. Personnel changes also happened within Jobbik, although the same party leader who led the party at its most radical times as well, headed the change.

## CHAPTER 3 – METHODOLOGY

Although there exists a wide variety of discourse analysis, I consider Narrative Discourse Analysis to be the most suitable to analyze radical right-wing politicians' discourse in the broadest possible way (Mayer & Wodak, 2009, 2015). As a central element of discourse analysis, I would not only conduct textual analysis (a text being a single linguistic instance), but analyze it within a broader social practice. I will investigate the key elements and symbols in the discourse of party leaders that might manifest themselves in parliament (eg. pre-agenda speeches) or out of parliament, in protests, year-assessment speeches. This means coding not only programs, but key themes and positions of the party ideology that might manifest themselves in parliament (eg. pre-agenda speeches), out of parliament (such as in protests, year-assessment speeches) and the content and visual message of the party's official newspaper.

### 3.1. Sources

It is pivotal, which sources one chooses to regard as a proxy for party ideology. As I have presented it in the chapter concerning the different studies concerning the FN, authors differ in this regard, but party programs and discourse analysis of the party leaders is a recurring element. My methodology is based on the assumption that more direct forms of communication with the electorate such as press releases, speeches in public events or demonstrations are a proxy for the true ideology of party leaders, policy programs fulfilling a more formal vote-seeking purpose. Contrasting these two types of sources might allow the researcher to make observations regarding the nature of the party change. I attempt to ground my analysis not only on the rhetoric and public communication used, but on the extent of ideological change and actual policy positions in the official documents of the party on its key issue dimensions.

Textual analysis of the official party documents is the first element of my content analysis framework, since "text constitutes a major source of evidence for grounding claims about social structures, relations and processes" (Fairclough, 1995, 209). Party programs give a clear

overview of party ideology and politicians are to a certain extent bound to them (Laver and Garry 2000, 620) and are appropriate for comparative content analysis between countries and over time (Klemmensen et al. 2007, 747) , since these documents are either coded in the relevant databases of the Comparative Agendas Project (CAP) or easily available for coding online. On the other hand, election programs often fulfill the image function towards undecided voters, and their aim is vote-maximizing, so they cannot be perceived as an honest communication channel for their core constituency. Fpr the 2010-2014 parliamentary cycle, I will partly rely on previous literature. The documents I analyze are sets of official programmatic texts of each election period, primarily election manifestos, focusing on the positions on core issues of the party.

On the other hand, the discourse on immigration, national minorities and 'politically incorrect' elements of ideology characteristic to radical right parties often appears in an implicit form, especially so in programmatic texts I will analyze. As such, the key issues of the party cannot be seen solely based on the program, it is essential to interpret the texts in their broader discursive context they exist in to be able to grasp the radical nature and changing of the party ideology. Speeches, statements and press releases can reflect the change in the discourse of the party and the image that it tries to communicate towards their public – although instances of speech can change drastically, depending on the type of audience. In this category, we can analyze not only oral but visual communication forms as well: campaign posters and visual messages are a central element in radical right parties' communication strategy. I will apply content analysis in written (direct citations in press outlets), oral (speeches) and visual (images and posters of electoral campaigns) data as well as specific policy positions of the radical parties and the parties I suppose they have an effect on, then compare my findings. Parties can broadcast their message through different channels to their electorate. Here I will focus on the official online journals of the party (jobbik.hu; alfahir.hu), since every party can establish the

clearest form of communication through its official channels (Róna & Molnár 2017, 173) and I will incorporate independent media sources in my analysis, since in both our cases, the causal chain of affecting policies includes the agenda-setting ability of parties and the catalyzing power of media.

In my content analysis framework, the intertextual coherence between the programmatic texts and the discourse will reveal the how the parts of other texts constitute additional meaning and change the relevance of the existing text. In this case, intertextuality explains how the rhetoric used in politicians' speeches and press releases of the party give salience to specific parts of the program and explains how the electoral program are transformed into visual messages of the campaign. For this level of analysis, I rely on other textual sources including press releases of the party in their official online site (jobbik.hu and Alfahir.hu), campaign messages and direct comments in mainstream media.

### 3.1.1. Issue Ownership and the Media

The radical parties in question – and radical right-wing populist parties in general – owe a large part of their success to the ownership of a particular key issue, that concerns the grievances of people. Ownership of an issue means that a party is perceived to handle the issue better than its opponent or the incumbent party by voters. A candidate can frame the voter choice as a decision to be made in terms of the particular problem, that they consider a key issue (Petrocik 1996, 826-27). In electoral campaigns, candidates can increase the salience of these problems (by indicating it is a central problem of the country). In doing so, they can turn voters' perception of their ability to "handle the issue" to votes (Petrocik 1996, 826-27). Placed in the context of spatial party competition, this means that parties cannot only compete by taking positions on issues, but by emphasizing particular problems (Budge et al., 1987), thereby acquiring electoral advantage. Radical right-wing parties may increase the salience of certain issues, in a European setting usually immigration or minority-related security problems (in Central-Eastern Europe).

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As any other explanatory theory of radical right-wing party's success, issue ownership is not applicable alone, but plays a considerable role (Karácsony & Róna 2011, Minkenberg 2001) not only as an explanatory variable of electoral success, but as a tool for influencing public and political discourse.

# CHAPTER 4 – MAINSTREAMING OF THE FRONT NATIONAL

**Table 2. Studies on the mainstreaming of the FN**

| Author | Definition of mainstreaming | Method | Sources / data used |
|---|---|---|---|
| Balent (2013) | A vote-seeking "strategy of adopting more measured language and offering credible proposals on issues of concern to voters" (2013, 162) to present the party as a credible alternative to govern | Discourse analysis (on core issues) Structural analysis of exogenous and source factors (Party structure; Political context) Outcomes: electoral success / public image | • Party program; • Communication & rhetoric; • Detailed election results and opinion polling data |
| Courmont (2014) | Changes in party image and symbolism to lend legitimacy and respect to the party | Discourse analysis Public image Structural analysis of exogenous and source factors (Political context; Within-party personal changes) | • Rhetoric and party image • opinion polling data |
| Almeida (2013) | Reframing policy options and extending old frames to other policy areas without changing their preferred course of action. | Content analysis and discourse analysis on core issues | • Official programmatic texts • Campaign material |
| Shields (2013) | 'Republicanizing' party values and symbolism, renewal of personnel, policies and discourse to transform the party from perennial outsider to a normal participant in mainstream politics. | Content analysis Outcomes: public image / electoral success | • Official programmatic texts, • Detailed election results and opinion polling data |
| Ivaldi (2016) | | Content analysis Discourse analysis (Relative salience of core issues) | • CHES data (expert scores) • Programs and manifestos |
| Williams (2011) | Repositioning and refocusing of the party, as a vote-seeking strategy | Comparative structural analysis based on opportunities and constraints | • exogenous factors: party system dynamics • source factors: party organization, leadership, issue focus |
| Stockemer (2017) | Strategic reorientation that could be interpreted both as a narrative shift in the FN's vision, and as a superficial makeover of party image. | Comparative content analysis of key issues and party programs | • Official programmatic texts • Press releases • positions of the regional chapters • ideological proposals presented by the *FNJ* |

As we can see, most of the authors in my sample use some form of qualitative content analysis to demonstrate mainstreaming of the Front National, complemented by electoral results and public opinion data to verify the ideological change of the party by its strategic outcomes. Analysis of party programs is present in most of the cases, complemented by the analysis of some kind of communication of the party outside of its programmatic texts. When performing content analysis on programmatic texts of the FN, the authors often analyze the extent of change of positions and relative salience of their core themes. These are most frequently nationality and identity, their relationship with religion and the concept of *laïcité*, societal issues, European integration and more recently economic policy.

Depending on the author – and consequently on the method of analysis – we might regard the de-radicalization project as a vote-seeking strategy to broaden its electoral constituency and appear as a respectable party capable for governing (Stockemer), as a personal strategy of Marine Le Pen (Balent) or as a more complex program, having multiple purposes, but having the '*Lepenisaton*' of minds at its core (Courmont). In the case of Almeida's work, the author argues that the "brand management strategy" of the FN serves to attract voters. Therefore, here we can rely on the 'Downsian' theory of mainstreaming, where moderation is driven by electoral incentives. According to Downs, in a democratic competition for voters, 'political parties in a democracy formulate policy strictly as a means of gaining votes' (Downs 1957, 137) Following Almeida's interpretation, the FN's strategy to attract the widest possible share of votes forces it to abandon its radical and sectarian positions and to adopt broader, more centrist platforms capable of attracting support outside their original constituency (Berman 2008, 6). Balent argues similarly, that *dédiabolisation* is merely a personal vote-seeking strategy of Marine Le Pen. Conversely, Courmont concludes that the biggest consequence of the "new look" is not the limited (albeit not impossible) possibility of a Front National victory in national elections, but the impact it has on other parties (notably of the mainstream right) and

on the minds of the French people (referred to as the '*Lepenisation*' of minds), turning FN-issues into the center of attention and being a reference for other political parties, mostly for the mainstream right. The normalization of the party was succesful in the sense that neither the media, neither a large part of society treats the FN as the pariah it once was, so its ideas are not only present in the political discourse, but to a large extent, determine the political agenda.

Although there are differences in the interpretation, all of the authors agree that although significant changes have been made in the message, there is rather continuity in FN style and strategy, only with a better leadership both quantitatively and qualitatively (Williams 2011). We can see 'dédiabolization' as a gradual evolution since 2002, during which the core themes have been partially replaced by a 'new national-populism' related to issues concerning identity, culture, 'globalisation, European integration and mass immigration' (Taguieff 2012, 24), and there had been a change in party image and symbols. However, these appear to be rather the result of a strategic calculation than a real ideological shift (Balent 2013), since its ideas and agenda mostly unchanged (Courmont 2014) and the party culture still remains largely unreformed (Shields 2013), regarding itscontinuing anti-establishment populism and niche party structure. As Almeida puts it, behind an 'ostentatious veil of republican acceptability, the FN remains deeply rooted in its old ideological axioms' (2013, 176).

### *4.1. Change in the ideology*

Nationality is still undoubtedly the central organizing idea of the FN ideology. Contrary to the republican concept of national identity grounded in the French revolution according to which "foreigners have the right to cultivate the peculiarities of their personal lives" provided they respect the rules of public order and share a set of shared political values (Schnapper 1994), the identity-conception of the FN is based on a closed, ethno-cultural conception of the nationhood, founded on inherited and unchangeable components with authoritarian and welfare chauvinist elements. What has changed is the emphasis on the cultural values of the European civilization

as a whole, on the republican idea of laïcité. This 'civilizationist' aprrproach now enables the party to practice "an ostensibly liberal defense of gender equality, gay rights, and freedom of speech" (Brubaker 2017, 3) as opposed to the perceived values of Islamic cultures.

Regarding economic policy, the field in which the contribution of Marine Le Pen appears to be most substantial, a shift towards 'economic and social populism' is observable, one of anti-liberal and anti-capitalist inspiration, accompanied by a redistributive statism and protectionism (Ivaldi 2012, 3). This move can be both interpreted as a sign of continuity, since populism was a part of the 'old' FN-image, or as a sign of consolidation, since the party's economic program has gained relative importance and shifted the ideological placement of the FN to the left.

### 4.2. Power balance within the party

To keep its anti-establishment image and gain new supporters, giving the party a new face— that of a more respectable party (Stockemer 2017, 14) – the FN seeks to reach a new strategic equilibrium between 'normalization' and 'differentiation'" (Ivaldi 2016, 241). The duality exists between Marine Le Pen striving to "normalize" party image (Courmont 2014, 143) in order to appear as a credible alternative to government by *adopting a more restrained and respectable rhetoric and* following the political agenda as opposed to her father Jean-Marie Le Pen's legacy of demarcation, meaning being at the outermost limits of the political system offgers an anti-establishment choice for the French voters. The inner party tensions show how such a mainstreaming strategy does not happen to be a one-way process. After the extreme nationalist and catholic traditionalist streams that ostracized the FN to the political margins, a change lead by Bruno Mégret and the GRECE[4] professionalized the party and transformed the

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[4] *GRECE*, the Research and Study Group for European Civilisation (*Groupement de recherche et d'études pour la civilisation européenne*) is a think tank that represents the 'New Right' movement aimed at winning over prospective voters by condemning cultural mixing and the distortion of Western identities through immigration. They profoundly inspired the FN's ideas when leading figures from this group joined the party (Balent 2013).

ideology, still with the core theme of national identity, but based on more acceptable terms 'civilisations' and differentialism, proclaiming the richness of identities in the world but rejecting multiculturalism (Balent 2013, 173), leading to a split in 1998 (Courmont 2014, 141). Marine Le Pen, elected party chair in 2011 succeeded to maintain a power balance between the hard-liners and her supporters, attempting to reach a synthesis of the voters gained due to their new image and the xenophobic, racialist and anti-Semitic fractions, partly by expelling the most extreme fringes out of the party[5]. The real disagreement is therefore about the primary goal of the party: is it gaining political office or maintaining the party's extremist heritage.

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[5] Eg. On the 2011 May Day rally she kept the skinheads out and in a special party congress of 2015, she expelled her father, former party chair Jean-Marie Le Pen.

# CHAPTER 5 – MAINSTREAMING OF JOBBIK

Although there exists scholarly literature on the mainstreaming of Jobbik, it invariably bases its conclusions regarding the mainstreaming on the examination of the candidates in individual constituencies (Mandák 2015; Kovarek – Farkas 2017; Róna – Molnár 2017) rather than the content analysis focusing on official programs that I have presented in the case of the FN. The scarcity of studies is partly due to the fact that such change is considered temporary by many of the analysts.

**Table 3. Studies about the mainstreaming of Jobbik**

| Author | Methodology | Sources |
|---|---|---|
| Mandák (2015) | Content analysis + interviews | • Party program,<br>• institutional background |
| Kovarek – Farkas (2017) | MP candidates' analysis | • Organizational- or party ties (past)<br>• Values and key issues<br>• Personal appearance |
| Róna – Molnár (2017) | Expert scores based on content analysis + MP candidate analysis | • Parliamentary activity<br>• Party chair's interviews<br>• Protests, party events<br>• Covers of the official party newspaper |

## 5.1. 2010 program

The 2010 election program seems to contrast the general communication style prior to and following the 2010 elections. Based on the structure of the program, it seems like the document of any other party. Only sporadic radical and anti-elitist elements speak to the radical right nature of the party, including the title of the document '*Radical change*', but these elements do not occupy a disproportionately large portion of the 68-page program. The document follows the general structure of a 'negative' enumeration pointing out the faulty measures and consequences of the "past 20 years" referring to the twenty years of modern Hungarian

democracy, followed by the substantive part of the program, similarly edited in 'positive' points about the "better future" they offer.

### 5.1.1. Minority question

The minority question is discussed under the 'Just society' chapter of the program in a comparatively short section, relative to the salience of the issue in the rise and electoral success of Jobbik. The section makes a reference to the number one key issue of the party in the 2010 elections: "everyone, regardless of political affiliation agrees that the question of Hungarian-Gypsy cohabitation is one of—if not the—most severe question of Hungarian society" (Jobbik 2010, 40). It despises the static and exclusionary nature of the political correctness culture and the narrative that the "left-liberal" elites use to approach the problems of the Roma minority, presenting them as socially and economically disadvantaged "victims" of society and – as a characteristically populist rhetorical move – it claims to be the first one to speak the truth.

> "The majority of the (Roma) society lives outside of law, work, and education, and it seems that they not only lack the potential, but the intent to break out. Generations grew up not seeing their parents go to work. […] part of the [Roma community] no longer wants integration, work or learning, only aid provided by society" (Jobbik 2010, 40).

The measures proposed connected to the minority problem can be mostly summarized under the concepts of distributive deservingness and more rigorous law and order measures. One of the leads in the Social policy chapter of the program reads "Jobs instead of allocations: who does not want to work, should not eat!" (Jobbik 2010, 35). The program suggests that persons who have good health and are of working age, but are unwilling to do the job they offer, do not receive any cash benefits. Similar propositions that the party raised during their 2010-2014 parliamentary cycle were about introducing the institution of a social card and measures to "abolish abuses of aid," that basically would have tied cash benefits to living conditions. In

view of the conditions of the Roma community, it is clear which group would have been the most affected by such measures.

### 5.1.2. Hungary's place in the world and cultural policy

The psychological-ideological motifs behind the radical right-wing ideologies, anti-Semitism, and the conspiracy worldview are similar: the resistance to change and the creation of a unified homogeneous community. One of the common aims of radical right ideology is an attempt to prevent and reverse social changes in the direction of modernization, the means of which are to create a homogenous nation-state and to return to traditional social patterns. This attempt is mixed with a strong religious stance and the peculiarities of Hungarian 'national radicalism' (Minkenberg 2017). The elements of such ideology appear in the program on various occasions, in the cultural policy, education policy, 'national policy' and religion policy sections.

The cultural policy partly appears to be a statement against the condescending attitude of the liberal cultural elites of Hungarian cultural life that maintain a "soft dictatorship in culture" and suggests a cultural policy built on the protection of "our ancient national symbols unworthily attacked in recent years" and a "general abolition of public denominations related to negative historical persons or ages, removal of their sculptures" aiming to replace them from national heroes from the radical right almanac. It seems that the main aim in cultural and educational policy is not the highest level of culture, but to preserve and to pass on the national-radical and "traditional Hungarian values that the liberal education policy of the last twenty years has often mocked" (Jobbik 2010, 47).

> "We make religious studies or moral studies obligatory to strengthen the roots of our country based on Christian foundations and to understand the norms to be followed" (Jobbik 2010, 49)

Self-identifying as a "conservative, radical, national-Christian" (Jobbik 2003) party, Jobbik is quite pronounced on religion and issues concerning the nation in the wider sense. The 2010

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program emphasizes the social utility of "historical churches" and faith, referring to the norms of Christianism, inseparable from the national identity and morality.

Moreover, pagan and Turanic symbols of the long-term past can stand next to Christianism in Jobbik ideology. These elements might seem contradictory at first but they are reconcilable when contrasted with modernity and more specifically to globalization, establishing a stance from where Western multiculturalism, consumerism and neoliberalism can be comfortably criticized (Kowalczyk 2017). It also allows Jobbik to position Hungary as the victim of the imperial ambitions of policies of the West, of which the treaty of Trianon, that they mention in the preface for the national policy chapter (Jobbik 2010, 55), is one such instance.

### 5.1.3. Law & Order measures

As classic programmatic elements of the radical right, Jobbik promotes "more severe penalties, the reduction of thresholds of crime against property" and "in case of the most serious offences against life, [Jobbik] reclaims the possibility of capital punishment, undertaking the possibility of rethinking our international treaties." Also, it would strengthen the state enforcement agencies financially and by strictly sanctioning physical attacks against official persons" (Jobbik 2010, 66).

Authoritarianism appears in the education policy section as well, with an aim to "eliminate the violence and disorder within schools" it intends to put an end to the lenient, negligent practice and introduce stricter sanctions against perpetrators (students)" of "damaging acts" and to "punish school absenteeism more strongly" (Jobbik 2010, 50).

### 5.1.4. Populist elements

Besides being a radical right-wing party, the 'anti-establishment option' nature of Jobbik is very apparent not only from party events but also in the program. As a radical right party, Jobbik is quite pronounced on its anti-globalization position and its opposition to international organization, first and foremost the European Union, that it considers to pose an imperialist

threat on the "sovereignty of the Hungarian nation" that "shall not be the prey of imperialist powers and international capital" (Jobbik 2010, 5).

The anti-systemic stance is part of the party's self-identification from the first successful election campaign it ran, as in the preface it states that it aims to represent a „silent" but discontent majority (Jobbik 2010, 5). The anti-corruption measures are introduced by another term popularized by the party "politician crime," not differentiating between the two major established parties, as both are accomplices in Jobbik's vision, where "immunity does not serve anymore its original function, only the impunity of politicians" so it advocates its abolishment. The anti-elitist rhetoric spares neither the right-wing, nor the "left-liberal" party, the latter used as a curse-word in itself.

### 5.2. Discourse in the 2010 campaign

As I have referred to above, the relative importance of the minority issue cannot be understood solely based on the program. In 2009 Jobbik politicized a "new and salient issue which had not been politicized before, (…) which contributed most of all to the formation of the radical community" (Karácsony & Róna 2011, 72). The Roma problem itself is not new, and neither are tensions between the Roma and the majority population. The largest minority of Hungary occupies a disadvantaged place in society with lower qualifications, higher unemployment and criminality rates and higher birth rates than non-Romas, leading to tensions with the majority population. However, between 2006 and 2009 several atrocities and homicides occurred,[6] where the perpetrators were Roma. The Jobbik gained awareness and support on the waves of

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[6] The most notorious ones were the Olaszliszka mob law murder of a teacher, the brutal murder of popular handball-player Marian Cozma in Veszprém as well as crimes, including assassinations committed against members of the minority group.

public attention following the events, by creating the Hungarian Guard,[7] thus "owning the issue" as a large part of the electorate accepted it as "the most credible party regarding the issue" (Karácsony & Róna 2011, 78), that they positioned as a much more salient problem compared to its actual weight. One part of this diagnosis is correct, as far as the pollical elites have indeed abandoned the existing problem of social integration and development in the past, but it is not as surmountable as they have presented it in the campaign. This segment of the program only makes sense in the environment of the election campaign and discursive context it exists in.

Similarly, law enforcement measures to "eliminate Gypsy crime" can be better understood within the broader social practice. The faux-criminological term 'Gipsy-crime' itself was created by Jobbik (Juhász 2010), referring to "a socio-culturally defined" phenomenon that states there are certain forms of crime "specific to this minority" (Jobbik 2010, 40) and so are the expressions of "livelihood crime" or "livelihood population growth." As a response to the problem of "municipalities struggling to tackle the problem of children unable to integrate" (Jobbik 2010, 41) the party did not refuse to embrace the idea of segregation in schools either.

Another minority that was targeted implicitly or explicitly by party rhetoric in almost every public event, but is left out of the program are the **Jews**. In this case, the constitution of "us" and "the other" come together both on the vertical and the horizontal dimensions (Taguieff, 1995, 32-35). It feeds into the horizontal dimension between the "real Hungarian people" and the "outsiders" either within the borders or outside and into the vertical one as well, between the "people" and the faceless cosmopolitan elites spreading liberal values, standing behind the forces of global imperialism, aimed at bringing down Hungary's national sovereignty. This

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[7] A quasi-military organization, with the purpose of ensuring order and security by eliminating or deterring "potential criminals – the Romas," authoritarian symbolic and notorious from their intimidating parades in settlements with a partly Roma population.

position is thus a mix of anti-establishment attitudes, conspiracy thinking and anti-Semitism, where the violent statements about the Jews and the Israeli state, Holocaust-relativization and the proposal of anti-Semitic measures are justified by the notion of being threatened by the perceived imperialistic ambitions of "*Israel bent on conquering Hungary"* or Jews as part of a "shadow government" (Krekó 2011), exercising a *"total monopoly of Israeli investments and real estate developments"*as put by a member of parliament of Jobbik (Hegedűs 2011). This otherwise salient element of the ideology only appears implicitly in the foreign policy section of the program, manifested in the friendly relationships with the Muslim countries of the Middle East.

Besides the issue-ownership of the Roma-issue, one of the movements bringing public awareness to Jobbik in their campaign was the installation of patriarchal crosses before Christmas in public places throughout Hungary. Even the official slogan and greeting ("may God give a better future") seems to be proof of the special place of religion for Jobbik. However, these symbols seem to serve more as signifiers of their national-radicalism and right-wing ideology than religious faith, since Jobbik supporters are not more religious than Hungarian society on average.

### 5.3. Jobbik in 2010

Assessing the radical nature of the party manifesto and their campaign overall is a tricky task, due to the dual communication the party uses, adjusting its communication style according to its audience. In their official documents they seem to be a party like others, that conforms with the system, even if their proposed measures are characteristic to the radical right (such as preferring tax benefits over allocation, the paternalistic institution of a social card or stronger policing, stricter punishments).

According to a minimum-criteria of democracy, lawful conduct and the political set of tools (whether they resort to violent actions) determines the extremist nature of a party. Based on this

Schumpterian (procedural) criteria, we can establish that Jobbik is not an anti-systemic or anti-democratic party after 2010, since their participation in democratic elections proves they accept the basic rules of democratic order and the legitimacy of elections – although criticizing the functioning and certain principles of liberal democracy. Actual violence can be rarely attributed to the party, although it encouraged and incited violence against minorities through its unofficial channels and party representatives alike. The main objection to my argument might be the Hungarian Guard, a pseudo-military organization that violated the principle of monopoly of violence and threatened minority populations. Nonetheless, it could not be called a paramilitary organization since there were no unlawful possession of arms and after its dissolution in 2008, the new movements replacing it conform to the ban of authoritarian symbols. To sum up, in the wake of the 2010 elections, Jobbik could not be considered an anti-systemic party, since it accepted the basic rules of the democratic game by running in the elections and refraining from actual violence.

However, if we expand the criteria to the respect of individual and collective freedoms and rights, the respect for international treaties and anti-minority manifestations in party ideology, together with the language used by party representatives, it proves to be an extreme or radical-right party. After the analysis of the elements of party ideology, it is reasonable to assume that in 2010 the party did not conform with the norms and values of liberal democracy: the proposed limitation of general suffrage (based on education level), the party leader's harsh critique of the values of liberal democracy and authoritarian vision of governance, with the ideal of Hungary's quasi-authoritarian Horthy era and its violent stance towards the Roma minority, sexual minorities and the Jewish community. Although the program does not contain overtly racialist or anti-Semitic comments and the Roma-problem appeared in the program in form of claims for changes in the security and welfare policies of the state, their language was far more radical in their public statements, inventing expressions such as "roma-crime," "roma-terror" or

"population growth for livelihood," expressed their discriminative and segregating opinions, proposals for relocation and collective punishment. Their non-official online forum kuruc.info had separate 'Roma-crime' and 'Jew crime' columns. It is however important to note that the party has not engaged in violent acts itself. The text analysis shows that on the interactional level Jobbik has treated the Roma problem as its primary issue, that, by controlling the agenda,[8] they succeeded to present as a primary issue on a national level.

### 5.4. 2014 (the change)

In this section, I follow the practice of Stockemer (2017) of presenting the structural context and performing content analysis on the public messages of the party to understand the true nature of the mainstreaming. The moderate turn certainly started even before the 2014 parliamentary elections. Although the 2014 electoral program has not changed significantly from that of the 2010 one, the public discourse of the party leaders has consolidated perceivably. In line with their 2014 manifesto, titled "We say it. We solve it." (Jobbik 2014), the image broadcasted by the 2010 program: a conservative, right-wing, Christian party has clearly remained. I consider that the 2014 program did not show the signs of a substantial change, neither regarding its language nor the key issues of the party. On the other hand, the signs of the transformation were apparent in a series of campaign messages and their communication preceding, and even after the elections.

The 2013-2014 campaign appeared as the ultimate sign for becoming a catch-all party with the colorful image, their mainstream messages and the changing appearance of the party representatives. The election material, widely referred to as the "cuteness campaign" in the critical press – unlike previous traditions of focusing on radicalism and national identity –

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[8] The Jobbik party was seen as the most credible party to offer a solution to the Roma problem in Hungary (Karácsony – Róna 2014)

emphasized the 'young' nature of the party, referring to its outstanding support within the younger age group (see Image 1 in Appendix), accompanied by the message that Jobbik aims to represent "every righteous man" of Hungary. At the time, Vona emphasized that their changing image would not result in a substantial shift in the policies endorsed by the far-right party, all the more so, because Jobbik's policies had never been extremist or racist in the first place. All that needed to change, Vona claimed, was their communication (Bíró-Nagy & Győri 2017, 26). This itself is true, based on conclusions uniquely on the comparison of the 2010 and 2014 election programs, but not as much so if we base our analysis on the broader party discourse.

Although the "cuteness campaign" remained in collective knowledge as a catchy title and a surprising novelty as the launch of Jobbik's mainstreaming, but national radicalism and far-right elements were still very much present in the party at this point. Other campaign items clearly reinforced the message of the program: nation, home, and family as their core values (see image 2 in Appendix), complemented by the triple catchword of "livelihood, order and accountability!" (Vona 2014) confirming the law & order attitudes of the party. Supporting my argument about the remaining far-right identity, the promise of creating a gendarmerie or their support for chemical castration (Alfahir.hu, 2014) or Vona's pledge to suspend diplomatic relations with Israel (although connected to the Palestinian independence, a classically left-wing issue in Western-Europe) (Mandiner 2014).

### 5.5. 2018 program

The 2018 election program abandoned the most radical elements of the previous manifestos and seems to have an emphasis on anti-corruption measures and national identity as the title suggests: "*With a Hungarian heart, with a common sense and with clean hands.*" The minority question has clearly been moved to the background. Compared to the 74 mentions of the word "Gypsy" in the 2010 program, this one only mentions it four times. Taking into consideration

the style of the document, the linguistic instances have moderated too: the program does not feature any of the pejorative terms used in former cases.

### 5.5.1. New issue dimensions

The document's structure and the topics it puts an emphasis on reflects the shift in the key issue dimensions of the party. The program starts with a chapter titled "stepping over to the 21st century," in which one can find traces of the anti-globalization attitude, but also endorsing some aspects of modernity as an opportunity. The "Hungarian heart" chapter reflects the nationalist attitudes of the party in their economic policy, aiming to support Hungarian strategic sectors against "foreign multinational corporations and Fidesz Oligarchs" (Jobbik 2018, 20), showing that the party may have moderated its rhetoric but did not lose its anti-elite populism. The law and order measures suggested in the 2010 and 2014 programs have not been completely eliminated, but rather shifted in focus. The claim for "tighter penalties" are now applied to corruption – "politician-crime" as they refer to it – and to their plans for an "autonomous border control" (Jobbik 2018, 27).

One element that is an absolute novelty is that the program endorses issues traditionally from the left, such as women's equality so that "women in Hungary do not need to choose between family and career in Hungary" (Jobbik 2018, 62). The slogan "equal wages for equal work" (62) emerges in another emphasized chapter, that discusses at length the wage union initiative that Jobbik wishes to be "in the forefront of" (36). This does not only mark a change in their attitude towards the European Union, that changed from "we cannot imagine Hungary's future within the EU framework with current trends" (Jobbik 2010, 75) to "rejecting closer integration" and supporting a Europe of sovereign nation states (2018, 36) – it also happens to be the key issue of the campaign.

> We are committed to the cooperation of European states and nations, but we do not want
>
> to assist in creating a super-state without value. […] Jobbik is a concept of a Europe of

Nations that seeks to cooperate between European countries to keep national self-determination more than the present, significantly narrowing the scope and number of mandatory Community acts by returning the powers of the national parliaments. (Jobbik 2018, 59)

### 5.5.2. Civilizationism (Western-European radical right direction)

In line with the mainstream direction, the national–Christian identity seems to be fading and changing: in a 2017 programmatic statement, there is only one reference to religion, but connected to the issue of migration, multiculturalism, and the notion of European identity.

"Europe was built on […] Greek thinking, Roman law, and Christian morality. We believe that Europe's future can also be based on these values, which we must protect today very strongly" (Jobbik 2018, 58)

Christianity is framed in broader, more European terms here, where under the preservation of tradition and culture we understand the whole civilization. This 'Europianizing,' approach, based on self-definition in not strictly national terms (Brubaker 2017) is not new to Western-European radical right, but an established strategy to appear as a party endorsing liberal values while still defining society in terms of 'us' and 'them' as referring to immigrants "endangering European identity and culture". While Jobbik still refuses to "force itself to" Western-European multiculturalism. Even though it criticizes the Catholic church and the Pope himself on the grounds of the refugee crisis of 2015, it claims to undertake the "historical responsibility in the 21st century to preserve the original Christian values" (Jobbik 2017a) of the continent. This issue became the main point of disagreement against the EU, of which "the relevant treaties conflict with the interests of the European population." (58)

Although in 2018, Jobbik merely could follow the migration-centered agenda dictated by the ruling party, it pointed out that "Jobbik was the first to stand by the physical, technical and legal

strengthening of our southern border" and that they "will continue to demand the establishment of an independent border guard," trying to mix the anti-immigration and anti-corruption rhetoric when referring to "accepting neither rich, nor poor migrants" (Jobbik 2018, 58)

### 5.6. Discourse of the 2018 campaign

Changing its perception is not easy for initially radical parties, since the media, the public and other parties confront them with their previous statements. Gábor Vona did not only redefine Jobbik as a changing political force that aims to represent all social strata, he had to tackle the image of the party's radical past.

> "Change in politics is not a shameful thing. Jobbik has gone through a development process, from a niche party to becoming a people's party. And I was the engine of that change. As leader of the party, I met first with the experiences, stimuli, feelings and experience that motivated Jobbik to change" (Vona 2017b)

The party attempted to refrain from anti-Roma politics (Juhász 2017, 45), and consciously distanced itself from its past behavior. The party chair repeatedly called their former statements "unfortunate" and wished to "concentrate on the future" (Vona 2017a), expressing his apology to Jews and Gypsies who have been hurt in the past (Vona 2017b). The mainstreaming on their former core dimensions is detectable not only through the lack of anti-Roma statements on the national level, but the normalization of the discourse in addressing the problem, like the promise to "find the responsible Roma leaders with whom we can work together in order to catch up with the Roma" (Alfahir.hu 2017c), since "the raising of the Gypsy requires credible leaders who say and represent that integration not only entails rights but also obligations" (Vona 2017d).

Moving away from the radical image was also apparent in their changing focus. They turned away from the national-radical discourse and their focus on Hungary's quasi-authoritarian past figures, that the governing party has partly privatized. Besides strengthening the Jobbik's anti-

establishment element by focusing on the corruption of the ruling elites (see Appendix images 3 and 4) also embraced new issues traditionally from the left such as the wage union initiative, emigration from Hungary (Alfahir 2017d), gender equality, standing up for freedom of the press (concerning shutting down a major opposition newspaper Népszabadság) and was open to consider cooperation with the "new opposition parties" (Alfahir 2018a).

One of the main topics that Jobbik tried to divert the attention from in the governing party's powerful anti-immigration discourse in the run up to the elections was the campaign for the wage-union initiative. The once anti-EU party offered a constructive initiative of European politics, launching a European Citizens' Initiative for Europe with a basically left-wing populist message of equal pay for equal work. The initiative was not only repositioning Jobbik's EU policy – "we belong to Europe. The question is not that, but the "how" (Alfahir 2017a, 2017b) – but also aimed to show the party as a professional, potential ruling force.

Another element of this renewal – connected to the anti-establishment stance – was self-identifying as a party for a new generation of politicians and as a party for the younger generation. They tried to communicate this image by focusing on the issues of the youth, who have been overrepresented in their constituency even before this explicit strategy (Juhász 2017, 21). They connected the problems of students to the emigration issue in Hungary (24.hu, 2017), appearing as the advocate of their rights. Moreover, their pursuit of an image as a party of a new political culture, as opposed to the established, corrupted elites of Hungarian politics from the left or the right alike, they claimed to "create a modern-minded, open-minded politics." (Stummer 2017) The party chair confirmed this narrative by commenting "the key question of Hungarian public life is whether it will be able to cross the 21st century" and comparing his party to the Politics Can Be Different *(LMP)* green party in this regard "linked not only by the question that they both entered Parliament in 2010, but by the fact that they both create a new political culture, which is an integral part of substantive debates" (Vona 2017d).

### 5.7. Internal conflicts or re-organization?

Even though the party chair adjusted his communication style and most of the leadership followed the new line, the openly stated de-radicalization strategy did not mean that every layer of the party has changed, and radical forces and extremist thoughts do still exist at Jobbik at every organizational level. Some members, not only on the regional chapters but in the national level maintained their relations to the most radical niche-organizations and continued to use radical language. According to Zsolt Tyirityán, Toroczkai "welcomed" the foundation of the new radical "Identity generation" with an ideology based on "race and nationality, believes in autocracy based on authority." (Tyirityán 2017). The proposal to introduce a constituency restriction, despite being promoted as a "realignment and education policy concept" aimed to encourage voters born after 1990 to complete their primary education (Vona 2017a) and to end the "practice of buying votes of [Gypsy] people […] for chicken and potatoes" (Dúró 2017), contradicts the "mainstreaming" strategy. Although the exclusion of citizens who do not attend primary school from the institution of voting was likely to meet with many voters' sympathy, it means the unconstitutional limitation of a democratic fundamental right and, on the other hand, it is implicitly directed against Roma. As such, it can be interpreted as a "gesture" towards radical voters, just as the confirmation of the idea of "gypsy crime" as an "existing criminological phenomena typical of the Roma minority" (Vona 2017c). These instances show that the anti-Roma sentiment is very much present in contemporary Hungary, although the artificially incited anti-immigration position has relegated all other enemies to the back row (Juhász 2017, 9).

The party reflected to the migrants' crisis, mainly by following the narrative of "protecting our borders" (Alfahir 2015), does not differ too much of the government's own position. However, this makes it only less radical in the sense that the whole political context shifted to the right, but it does not make it less xenophobic. They opposed the idea of social and housing aid to

migrants, the more radical members referring to them as *"hundreds of prospective jihadist terrorists"* (Toroczkai 2017a) who "litter, do drugs, fight, and the police simply cannot (or do not want) to handle the situation effectively" (Volner 2017). Toroczkai, who also serves as the mayor of Ásotthalom, was the first to introduce the (since constitutionally annulled) decree, that he called the "burka ban" as a clear message to the whole world that we did not ask for mass migration" (Toroczkai 2017b). Regarding the above radical statements, the press talks about the re-arrangement of the moderate line. I would not take such events as conclusive evidence for the reorganization of the party, but it certainly revealed some of the internal disagreements within the party leadership.

Above all, we cannot take mainstreaming as a strictly linear process, neither in case of the FN, neither in Jobbik. Similarly to the former, the start of the mainstreaming process of Jobbik in 2013-2014 has opened up conflicts between the party's moderate and radical wings, and just as in that case, the real conflict was about the primacy of party goals between those who put electoral success first, referred to as the "moderates" or those who would rather maintain or go back to the more radical tone. It is not a surprise that most of the manifestations summoning the previous, extreme attitudes of Jobbik came from the "radicals", such as László Toroczkai, Krisztina Morvai or Előd Novak or figures of the Hungarian radical right close to Jobbik, like György Budaházy or Zsolt Tyirityán. The hostility toward the "moderate wing" came not only from the leadership but also from local chapters in the impoverished northeast, where Jobbik is twice as successful as in Budapest.

The disagreement and its management is subject to two competing interpretations. According to the "internal conflict" narrative, the tensions have been kept under control by the chair, Gabor Vona, who was nevertheless re-elected party chair with 80.5% of the vote in 2016, where some significant personnel changes were made to underpin the – now openly stated – moderating strategy. Contrary to the FN, where the big leap has been brought about by a personal change,

the party leader took on the role of leading the moderation of the party himself, initially only to moderate the communication, but later publicly admitting his desire to transform Jobbik into a people's party. The "division of labor" interpretation, that refers to the double perspective of the party to keep its core constituency, broaden and diversify its voter base and reduce its refusal among the electorate. On the one hand, it seeks to appear as an acceptable choice to the actors who would be an obstacle to it and on the other, it continues to embrace radical initiatives if they do not alienate important voter groups. In this regard as well, Jobbik resembles the FN, as it channels the mainstream rhetoric to potential voters on both sides of the political spectrum (eg. the wage union initiative that targeted left wing voters), and its extreme stances to keep their radical audiences (coming from MPs like Laszlo Toroczkai and Janos Volner). This might be one of the reasons why tensions between the otherwise opposing positions within the party were mostly left unnoticed over the years, although this does not mean that conflicts were or still are absent.

### 5.8. Political context

As I have argued above, most of the authors interpret mainstreaming as a vote-seeking strategy, since, based on the Downsian idea that parties do not change unless they are under internal or external pressure (Harmel and Svasand, 1997, 316). In the case of Jobbik, this external pressure came from the governing party Fidesz-KDNP, that was increasingly shifting to the radical right space. As the government had realized many symbolic nationalist measures and employed communication strategies of the radical right party. The radicalization was not only of political discourse but also of legislative action by the governing party, that implemented several program points that were pioneered by Jobbik, gained back a number of voters.

The issues 'borrowed' from Jobbik, implemented by Fidesz include various topics. Jobbik's emphasis on religion and its permissive attitude towards segregation in primary education came to life due to Fidesz, as the governing party introduced mandatory ethical education or religious

courses in public schools and in a segregation case court hearing the Minister of Human Resources stated that social development can also be achieved in segregated environments (Balog 2013). The authoritarian nature of Jobbik's program and the idea of capital punishment have also surfaced in a discourse of the prime minister. Other issues including the anti-globalization measures and the tax on multinational corporations (Jobbik 2010) was implemented by Fidesz in the form of sectoral taxes, including the banking, energy and telecommunications industries. The Eastern foreign policy orientation of Jobbik's 2010 program was clearly adopted by the government, that launched the politics of "Eastern opening," followed by a series of high-level diplomatic visits to Eastern illiberal democracies such as Russia, Turkey, Azerbaijan or China.

Similarly, Jobbik was the first to voice its concerns over the immigration issue, that later became the leading message of the governing party's communication. The start of the "migrant crisis" in the summer of 2015 reorganized the power balance between Jobbik and Fidesz-KDNP. The government party seized the opportunity to conflate and to 'own' the issue of irregular immigration, and has dominated Hungarian public discourse pretty much ever since. This meant that the radical right party has been challenged on its own ground, against a rival with incomparably more resources and with an issue that overshadowed any other narrative.

### *5.9. Future expectations*

Regarding the latest developments and personal changes in the Jobbik leadership – I am referring to the renouncement of the party chair Gábor Von and the 2018 general assembly – political analysts and publicists alike started to contemplate the future direction of Jobbik. Some are visualizing the radical about-turn of the party, some – who might interpret the moderation as a 'personal strategy'– are evaluating the former party chair's resignation as part of a longer-term plan, of which a return as chairman or PM candidate might be part of in the next elections, when Jobbik might be in a better situation to cooperate with the mostly left-wing opposition.

However, here again, I would point to the non-linear nature of party change. The election of the new party chair Tamás Sneider – although the MP candidate analysis method (Kovarek – Farkas, 2017) would classify him as a radical party member, due to his appearance, past behavior and membership in radical organizations, he appears to be a loyal follower of the mainstream line, formerly lead by Vona and are expected to continue to pursue a strategy aimed at more mainstream voters. The stepping down and removal, respectively of more radical party members László Toroczkai and Dóra Dúró[9] (who probably want to return to more markedly right, bringing back the more "radical" discourse) further corroborates this presumption.

On the other hand, the 46 % of votes that Torockai, a party member considered hard-liner won and the fact that the leadership members openly criticizing the current strategy (László Tororczkai, Dóra Dúró, János Volner among others) clearly indicate the persisting **division** in the party. In any case, it is difficult to carry out the plan, so that only slightly more than half of the party can identify with it. If, however, the Sneider-wing compromise with the Toroczkai wing, then the problem may be that because of the incoherence and the new turn, the average voter will not be able to follow the Jobbik policy at all.

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[9] Jobbik politicians forming a more radical platform within the party. The latter has been excluded from the Jobbik's parliamentary fraction as a consequence.

## CHAPTER 6 – WAS MAINSTREAMING SUCCESSFUL?

Taking into account that the most widely accepted interpretation of mainstreaming is vote-seeking, I hypothesize that successful moderation consists of the widening and diversification of the voter base. These data indicate the size and the diversity of the party's electorate, allowing us to make an inference about the success of the party's strategy in (1) gaining more votes and (2) reducing its refusal across the population – in other words, it is open to any layer of society.

### 6.1. Front National

The *dédiabolisation* has certainly enhanced the party's respectability (Balent 2013). In a 2012 survey between the presidential and the legislative elections, a majority of respondents (51%) indicated that they see the FN as "a party like others" (TNS–Sofres 2012) and a repeated question among UMP supporters found that 72% shared this view. Hence, the mainstreaming was certainly successful in the sense that the overall rejection of the party diminished. Also, the electorate of the FN have become more equal in terms of income, education, gender and the urban-countryside dimension, meaning that it is no more a party of the 'blue-collar working class' as much of the previous literature suggested.

The mainstreaming of the FN under the leadership of Marine Le Pen makes the party much more impactful in the sense of setting the political agenda and having an impact on French people's minds than the highly improbable possibility of getting the support of the majority of voters and winning national elections. The 'Front National's success does not solely lie in the results themselves, but in the party's omnipresence during the campaign' (Courmont 2014, 150) and the effect it might have is multiplied now, that a large portion of society accepts it as a normalized party. Marine Le Pen did not only succeed to turn FN into the center of attention, it became a factor that can shape public opinion positions on major issues and sets the political agenda. Most notably, their stance on immigration policy was pervasive enough to dominate

the 2012 elections. So much so, that the center-right candidate Nicolas Sarkozy succeeded to outperform expectations at the second round by adopting the discourse.[10] Also, the media gives inadvertent support to them – not in the sense of agreeing with FN stances, but at the first level of agenda-setting, that Cohen (1963, 13) explains as such: the press "may not be successful much of the time in telling people what to think, but it is stunningly successful in telling its readers what to think about."

The salience of the immigration issue is not the only marker of the consequences of the mainstreaming of the FN. The dismantling of the 'cordon sanitaire' against the FN is another sign of how the new FN has the capacity to influence political discourse without acceding to power in the institutional sense. The 'republican front' of 2002, helping Jacques Chirac to his reelection with a stunning 82.1%[11] has partly broken down. In the 2012 election campaign Sarkozy spoke of Marine Le Pen as 'legitimate' and 'compatible with the Republic' (Sarkozy 2012). The change in the attitude of the center-right towards FN can be traced based on similar statements of party leaders. It has changed from complete refusal, through the "***ni-ni***" (neither-nor) of Jean-Francois Copé (no alliance with FM, but no alliance against it either) (Copé 2014). Now the FN – UMP (*Les Républicains* since 2015) cooperation or even coalition in local elections is no longer off limits.

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[10] In the 2012 presidential elections, UMP-candidate Nicolas Sarkozy tried to unite the center-right and attract FN supporters in the second round, by threatening to halve the number of legal immigrants each year and to pull out of the Schengen zone. Even though he was defeated by the candidate of the *Parti Socialiste*, he still managed to gather 48.4% (much higher than the expectations) in a large part due to the support of FN voters.

[11] In 2002 Jean-Marie Le Pen scored the best result in the party's history with an astonishing 16.9 % of the national vote in the first round of the presidential election, bypassing the socialist candidate, Lionel Jospin, thus making it to the second round as the first leader of a nationalist party to accede to the second round of a presidential election in France. In the second round, he was defeated by the center-right Jacques Chirac with an improbable majority, as a result of the republican coalition of the mainstream parties, thus revealing the limits of the old FN-leader. (Stockemer 2017, 22-23)

## 6.2. Jobbik

The effects of the mainstreaming of Jobbik seem to be very similar to that of its Western counterpart. The Hungarian press analyzed a lot of Gábor Vona's aspirations to transform Jobbik into a people's party, from the start of the mainstreaming tendency in 2013 on, that gained Jobbik 20, 22% percent of the vote in the 2014 parliamentary elections, ensuring 23 seats in parliament. The success can be partially attributed to their professional campaign based on a more moderate image, but also to the lack of political challenges from both sides of the spectrum. This was a huge achievement, compared to the results of 2010, when Jobbik won 16 % of the vote, but even more if we compare it to the support measured before the moderate turn at the end of 2013 of 8 % (Rona & Molnár 2017) although they have not yet been able to beat the left. On April 12, Jobbik reached its peak by winning its first individual constituency on a by-election of Tapolca. On the national elections, it won 19,63% of the vote, but with a higher turnout overall.

Regarding the composition of its constituency, Jobbik remained the most popular among its traditional voter base, notably young, Eastern-Hungarian men. Low qualifications, income or education level did not have a significant impact on Jobbik-votes in any of the election cycles it competed in, that challenges the most frequent assumption found in the literature, that unsuccessful and disaffected people are not necessarily more likely to vote for the extreme right than educated, privileged citizens (Karácsony & Róna 2014, 71), although their share in the electorate further diminished in the latest elections.

The general opinion about the party has also improved, since refusal of the party diminished: the share of those who "would not, under any circumstances" vote for Jobbik went from one of the most refused parties (in competition with the left-wing formation MSZP) in December 2013 (Róna & Molnár 2017, 191) to 15 percentage points lower in 2016 (Lakner 2017, 163).

## CONCLUSION

Most importantly of all, I have found conclusive evidence of substantial mainstreaming in the case of Jobbik, meaning the party follows the path of the FN by gradually moderating its style and content over time, which gained the party a broader and more diverse audience, but this tendency is definitely not visible in all the activities of the party. It is not an easy task to assess mainstreaming, especially because the boundary between radical and mainstream has become increasingly blurred in Hungary due to the change in the rhetoric and action of the governing party. Additionally, the dual speech of party leaders impedes us from knowing when they are sincere and when their considerations are strategic. However, based on the analysis solely of the party programs, there is no substantial mainstreaming. On the other hand, if we analyze the documents in context – that is, together with the broader party discourse – we can comfortably establish the deradicalization tendency, just as in the case of the FN. The relative weight of the issues that their 2010 campaign was focused on and what gave the party its radical right character has been reduced in the 2018 election program, but not to a decisive extent. The reason for this is that the 2010 program did not reflect the importance attributed to the issue, that became apparent when analyzing the party's discourse in their 2010 campaign. More importantly, the strategy to become more moderate is apparent both from the mainstream press outlets' broadcasting and from the party's own media. The statements of party representatives have moderated considerably not only in style but in subject as well. The issues emphasized are following the agenda and the party is ready to embrace affairs that classically form the political terrain of the left.

The turn towards a more moderate, Western-style radical right party, although it might be following the tactics of the FN or the other Western radical right parties is mainly a response given to the governing party's strategy. I would not rule out the possibility altogether that the Jobbik had studied the mainstreaming of its French counterpart to adopt new issues in order to

win over voters, I consider that the most credible interpretation of this mainstreaming is that of a response given to the changing political context in Hungary. Jobbik's moderation has been subject to various interpretations by the press. One of the most broadly accepted ones fits the vote-seeking strategy narrative and my hypothesis about a reaction to the party system changes as well. As Jobbik could stabilize its presence in politics after 2010, it could start to develop its office-seeking strategy to break the glass ceiling towering over every niche party. Mainstreaming could serve the purpose to represent Jobbik as more credible and capable of governing, or as the "strongest challenger" to the governing coalition Fidesz-KDNP. Also, as Fidesz, who are increasingly occupying the radical right space have privatized many of Jobbik's initial ideas and program points on the rhetorical and the implementation level (section 5.8.), Jobbik faced a challenge about its targeted voters. We might decode this as a choice between competing with the more resourceful governing party for radical right votes or opening to all the layers of society (as the party leader has stated repeatedly) by appearing more moderate and acceptable to the ideologically more 'mainstream' voters.

Returning to my initial point, although I do not think that the diffusion hypothesis of mainstreaming can solely explain the moderation of Jobbik, I do not refuse categorically that the details of Jobbik's 2018 electoral program, aimed to win new voters have been designed after the examination of the FN's "new look." Just as Marine Le Pen, who made constant efforts to "normalise" the FN's image and to end its identification as an extreme-right movement (Courmont 2014, 143) in order to break out of political isolation, the "moderate" wing of Jobbik adopted similar rhetoric twists and issues. This is especially true of the convergence regarding their economic policy, although it is driven by populism rather than any other clear agenda (Courmont 2014, 144), the illiberal invocations of liberalism (Brubaker 2017, 3) and a more mainstream 'Europeanizing' approach to address the immigrant-question.

The application of the literature to the Hungarian case was not an easy task. Considering that some of the authors have not stated their methodology clearly in their studies and the sources they based their analysis on differed substantially. Therefore, I chose what appeared to be the lowest common denominator to apply to the case of Jobbik, that is, content analysis of the party's programmatic texts and discourse analysis on the core issues, complemented by the structural analysis of exogenous (party structure) and source factors (party structure, internal power balance). As one can see, my results were therefore very similar to that of the FN-related literature. I could not draw a decisive conclusion of the party program, only by taking into account the party discourse and official texts. I found that mainstreaming is not a straight, one-way movement in either case. The reason for the fluctuations in the tonality are due to the internal power balance between the factions of what the voters see as "moderates" and "radicals." The term does not necessarily mean that the inter-party cleavages are between the more extreme members, but rather a conflict of interest between the purposes to follow, notably to pursue entering into office or to stay authentic, keeping the radical voice.

Many authors who treat mainstreaming refer to the 'danger' of radical right parties with a toned-down rhetoric, gaining a larger share of votes. We could ask the question whether the change and the widening acceptance of formerly extreme right parties such as the FN and Jobbik is truly a problem if it had moderated its policy positions and communication style. The normative effect of radical right populism on the attitudes of the public and on specific policies and parties have been a recurring theme in this thesis. Generally, right-wing radical parties and the publics they direct their messages to might result in a climate of insecurity and "is one of the potential breeding grounds of xenophobia" (Betz 1993, 422-423). In the case of successful radical right parties, their ideas and policies might be contagious and affect other parties and government policies too. Their mainstreaming might be 'dangerous' if – despite the change in the public perception – we have no reason to conclude that their ideological stances have changed

significantly (except the economic policy, which is now clearly a leftist one).[12] In this case, the more acceptable, ostensibly democratic and moderate packaging of their anti-immigrant xenophobia and authoritarian measures can result in a more widespread support for these ideas. On the other hand, while these parties might sincerely moderate themselves by following the rules of electoral competition and vote-maximization, as long as there is a demand for extremism in society, new formations on the fringes will take up the radical right space.[13]

My thesis serves as a basis for further comparative studies, and contributes to the comparison of Eastern and Western European radical right populist parties in terms of political opportunity structures, post-communist traditions and legacies of radicalism among other issues. As I have indicated in the introduction, this thesis serves as a base study for further comparative works as well, because the tendencies I present in my comparison show undeniable similarities to other countries of both Western and Northern-European (the Netherlands, Nordic countries) and Central-Eastern (Austria, Czech Republic, Poland) parts of Europe, so the ideological comparison might be broadened to include other countries.

A general conclusion can be drawn from the thesis regarding mainstreaming. Although the relevant case studies are mostly based on Western-European cases, the main hypotheses I outlined in the 'Mainstreaming' chapter have been corroborated by this example as well. As I have determined mainstreaming in both cases, the Downsian electoral theory – where parties are competing for a maximum of votes in elections – predicts that niche parties, if they wish to enter office will have to moderate their ideology. At the same time, the hypothesis that parties

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[12] Based on the Chapel Hill Expert Survey (CHES) scores, measuring party ideology positions on a variety of issues and issue salience on a quantified scale, based on party manifestos and official party documents. According to the CHES survey, the positions of the FN on law and order, immigration policy and their position on left-right scale have not changed significantly (CHES 2017).

[13] Organizations such as the Strength and Determination *(Erő és Elszántság)*, the 64 county Youth Movement *(HVIM)*, the Hungarian Self-defense Movement *(MÖM)*, the Outlaw Army *(Betyársereg)* or Identity Generation in Hungary or the Identitaires (formerly *Bloc Identitaire*), the Group Action Defense *(GUD)* or French Action *(Action francaise)* among others are frequently more radical than the political parties we tend to analyze the most often, not shying away from more openly xenophobic or even racialist and anti-Semitic comments.

once placing their ideology "on the market," cannot suddenly abandon or radically alter that ideology without convincing the voters that it is unreliable (Downs 1957, 142) is especially true to radical right parties. This might also account for the duality of the discourse that has been revealed in both cases.

In addition to being office-seekers, parties might also be policy-seekers, that is to be able to affect the political agenda. This is what is referred to as '*Lepenisation*' in France and it has been successful in dominating the public discourse. However, this can also backfire, if the party that has been adopting the exclusivist narrative of the radical right (in the Hungarian case the governing party) takes the lead and owns the dominant frames of the agenda. However, as my cases suggest, both scenarios might lead to the mainstreaming of the radical-right wing party.

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**APPENDICES**

**Image 1** 2014 poster campaign of Jobbik 1.



The sign ("Cannot stop the future: the most popular among young people") and the appearance of the party members in a colorful group of young people is in a sharp contrast with Jobbik's 2010 campaign focusing on messages of "Radical change" and "20 years for 20 years" referring to the past 20 years of Hungarian democracy and their plans to hold the ruling elites accountable for their corruption.

Source: https://www.jobbikit.hu/hirek/utcakon-jobbik-uj-oriasplakatja

**Image 2** 2014 campaign poster of Jobbik 2.



Source : https://szebbjovo.hu/a-jobbik-a-csaladokat-celzo-plakatkampanyt-inditott/

**Image 3** 2018 campaign poster of Jobbik 1.



Jobbik's poster featuring PM Viktor Orbán and businessman Mészáros Lőrinc. The sign says "THEY steal. WE take it back (turn it into wage increase)"

Source:
https://alfahir.hu/2017/04/30/jobbik_plakatkampany_korrupcio_jakab_peter_elszamoltatas

**Image 4** 2018 campaign poster of Jobbik 2.



Jobbik's poster featuring Prime Minister Viktor Orbán "the boss," businessman Lőrinc Mészáros close to the government and the pm himself as "the stooge," the communication strategist Árpád Habony as "the liar" and Minister of the PM's Cabinet Office Antal Rogán with the slogan "Gangsters."

Source :
https://index.hu/belfold/2017/09/26/plakat_fidesz_jobbik_simicska/?token=4ceae8924a0c95d544758a27390b0396