



The refugee crisis, the illiberal populist challenge and the future of the EU: is illiberal democracy on the march? The Case of Hungary

PhD. Assistant Professor Mészáros Edina Lilla

Faculty of History, International Relations, Political Science and
Communication Sciences, International Relations and European Studies
Department, University of Oradea, Romania

meszaros.edina@uoradea.ro

Introduction

- Although the term 'illiberal democracy' was coined in the 90's by Fareed Zakaria in a highly intriguing essay published in *Foreign Affairs*, it gained prominence in Europe following the Hungarian PM, Viktor Orbán's speech delivered at Băile Tușnad in 2014.
- In his view, democracies do not necessarily have to be liberal, as liberalism is not a precondition for the formation of some form of democracy, citing countries like Singapore, China, India, Russia and Turkey as role models for future competitive societies.
- Since then, we have seen various attempts from the government to establish this 'new form of democracy' in Hungary, by turning away from political liberalism, restricting constitutional rights and consolidating government prerogatives. The V4 countries (but mainly Poland) seem to embrace this new ideology, denoting a deliberate willingness to shift towards illiberal democracy.

Objectives and hypotheses

1.

Analysing and understanding the path leading towards illiberal democracy in Hungary is the main objective of the current research.

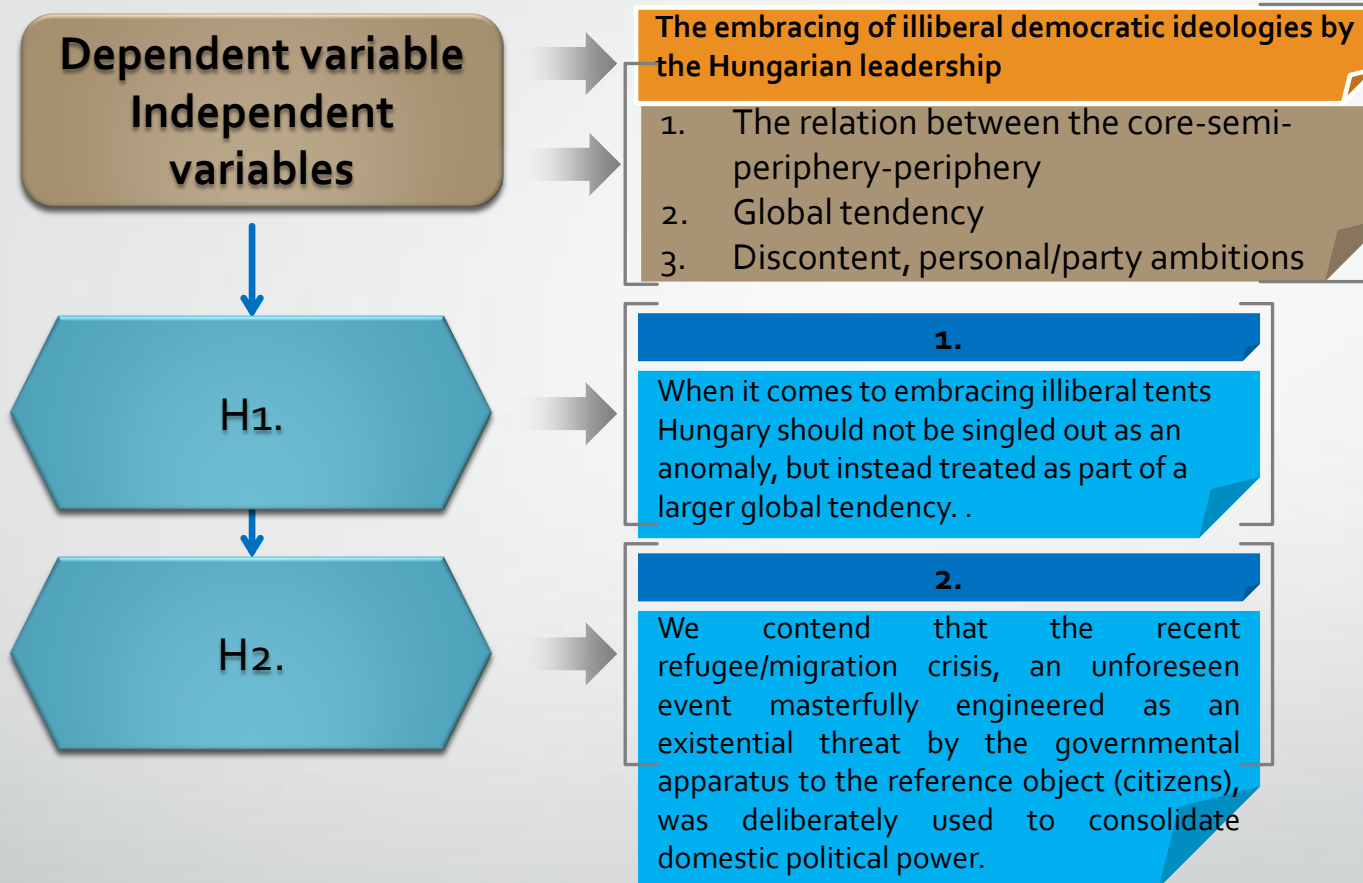
2

By using the world-systems theory of Immanuel Wallerstein, we endeavour to assess the transition of Hungary towards illiberalism, as an outcome of its position occupied (allied with its own national political cultural traditions) within the existent modern world-system and also that of a constant juggling between liberal and illiberal tendencies.

3

We argue, that this transition towards illiberalism was a lengthy process fuelled by deeply rooted discontents and personal/party ambitions, while the ostensible disillusionment over the management of the refugee crisis, served as the perfect pretext or *casus belli* to question the policies and the competence of Brussels and its shared EU vision

Hypotheses



Structure

1. Literature review, conceptual delimitation

Term 'Illiberal democracy'

Fareed Zakaria

2. Qualitative discourse analysis

Bálványos Speech

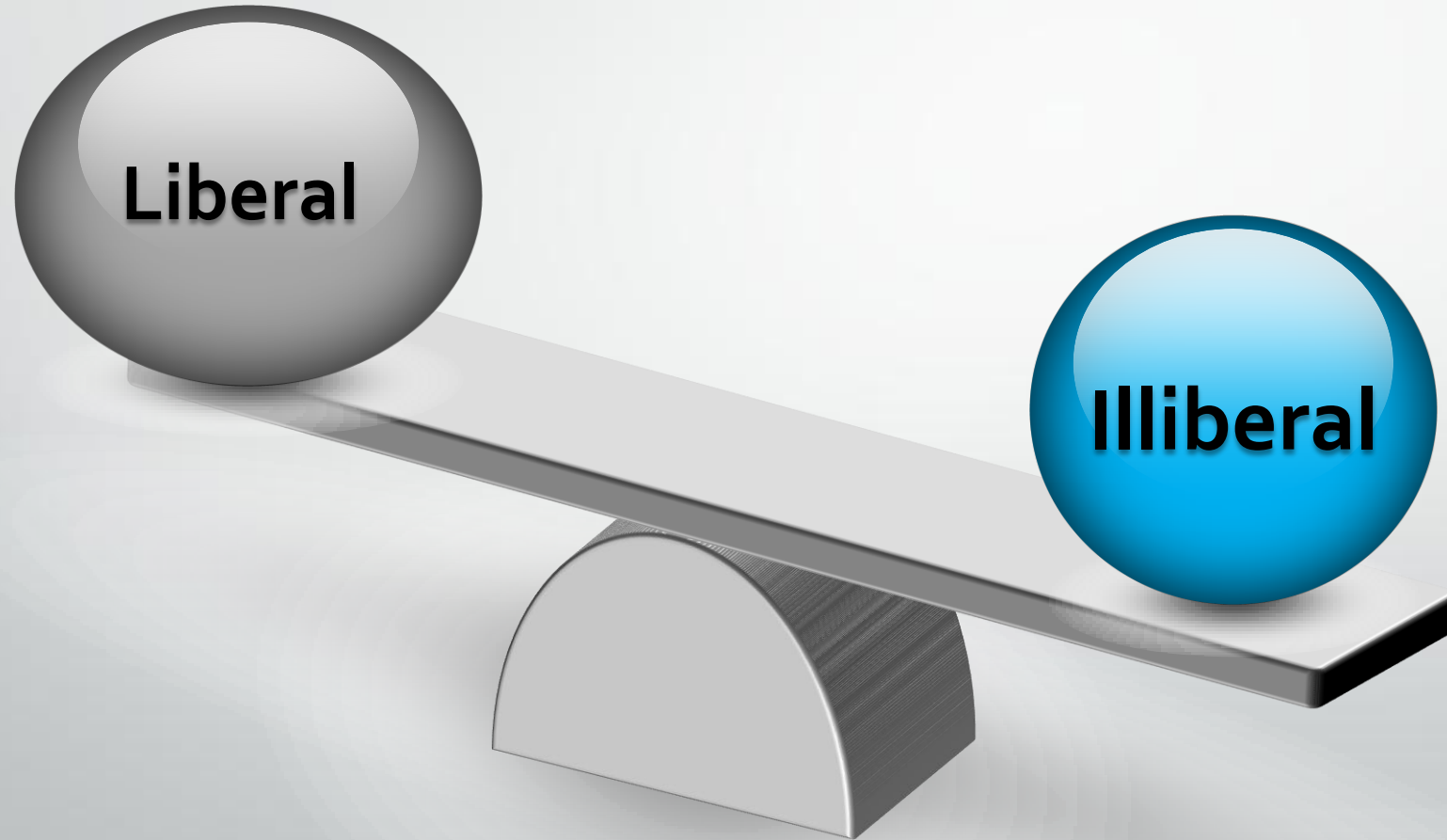
**3. World-Systems Theory Immanuel
Wallerstein, Core-periphery model**

**Hungary's place in the modern world
system**

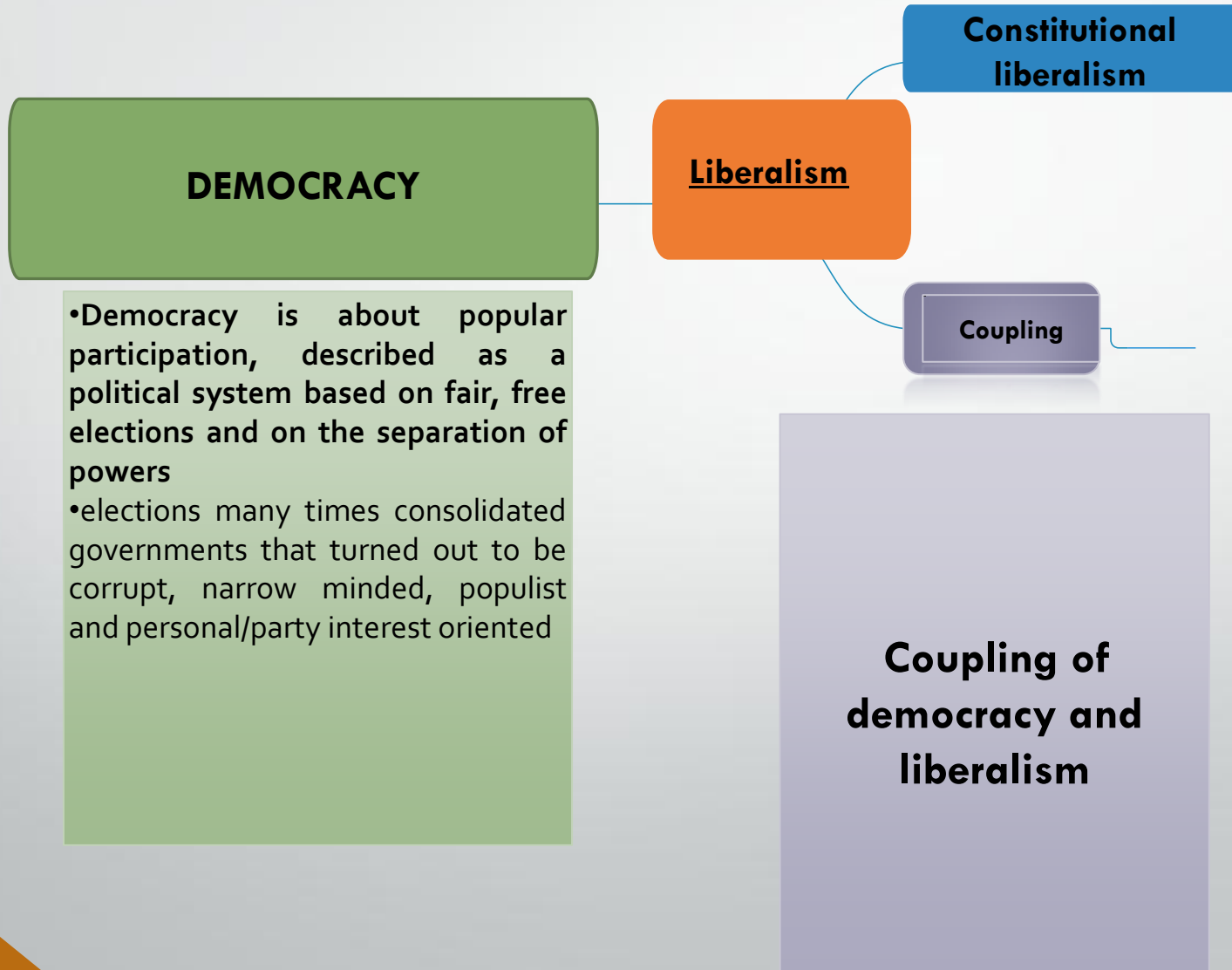
4. Illiberal policies

**Case study: refugee crisis –empowering
domestic leadership**

Democracy



Conceptual delimitation



Constitutional liberalism does not refer to the process of electing a government, primarily being focused on the aims and modus operandi of that government; which is liberal because it cherishes individual freedom and dignity over any type of coercion, and constitutional due to its choice to prioritize the rule of law and equal treatment for all under law.

2014 Bálványos speech/ Qualitative discourse analysis

Decay of the liberal world order as a symbol of freedom, which instead became a henchman of the large multinational corporations

2008
economic
crisis
Profound
changes

Race of
successful
nation-
building

Finding the best formula of state-building, i.e. community organization that could enable the consolidation of internationally competitive nations and communities.

The era
of the
'working
state'

Backlash
against
NGO's

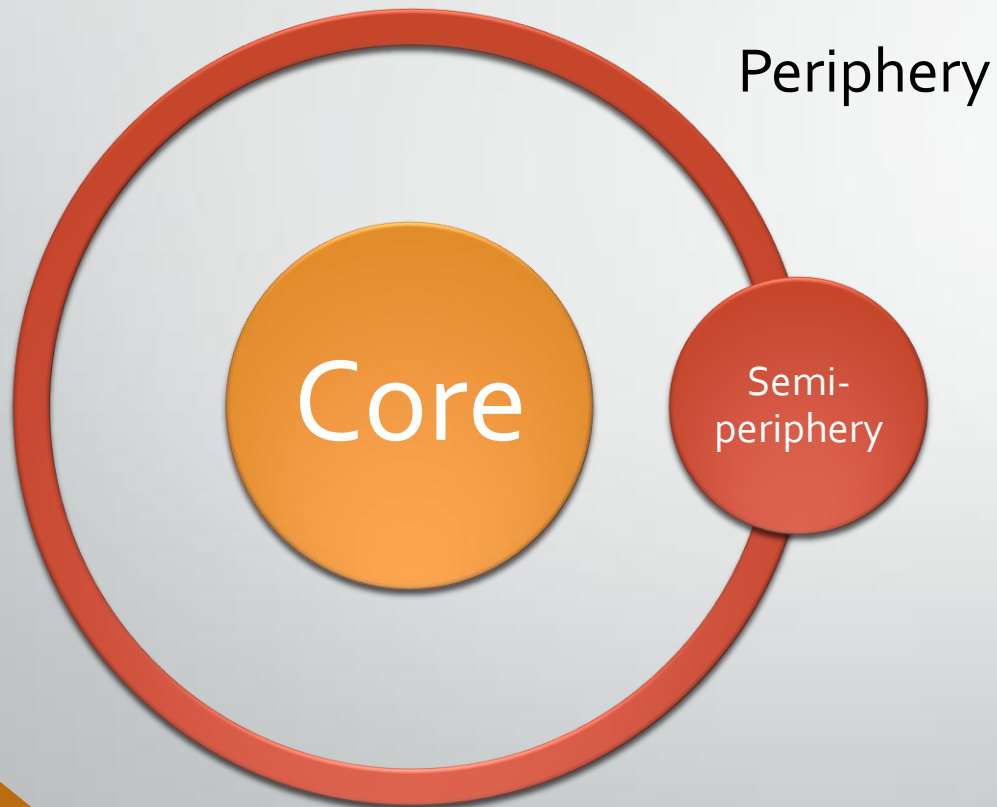
Failure of liberal
democracy to
protect
community
assets
necessary for
self-sufficiency

Singapore
China
India
Russia
Turkey

The states that have developed such formula and will be also trendsetters in the upcoming decades "are not Western, not liberal, not liberal democracies and perhaps not even democracies"

Theoretical pillar

I. Wallerstein's World-Systems Theory

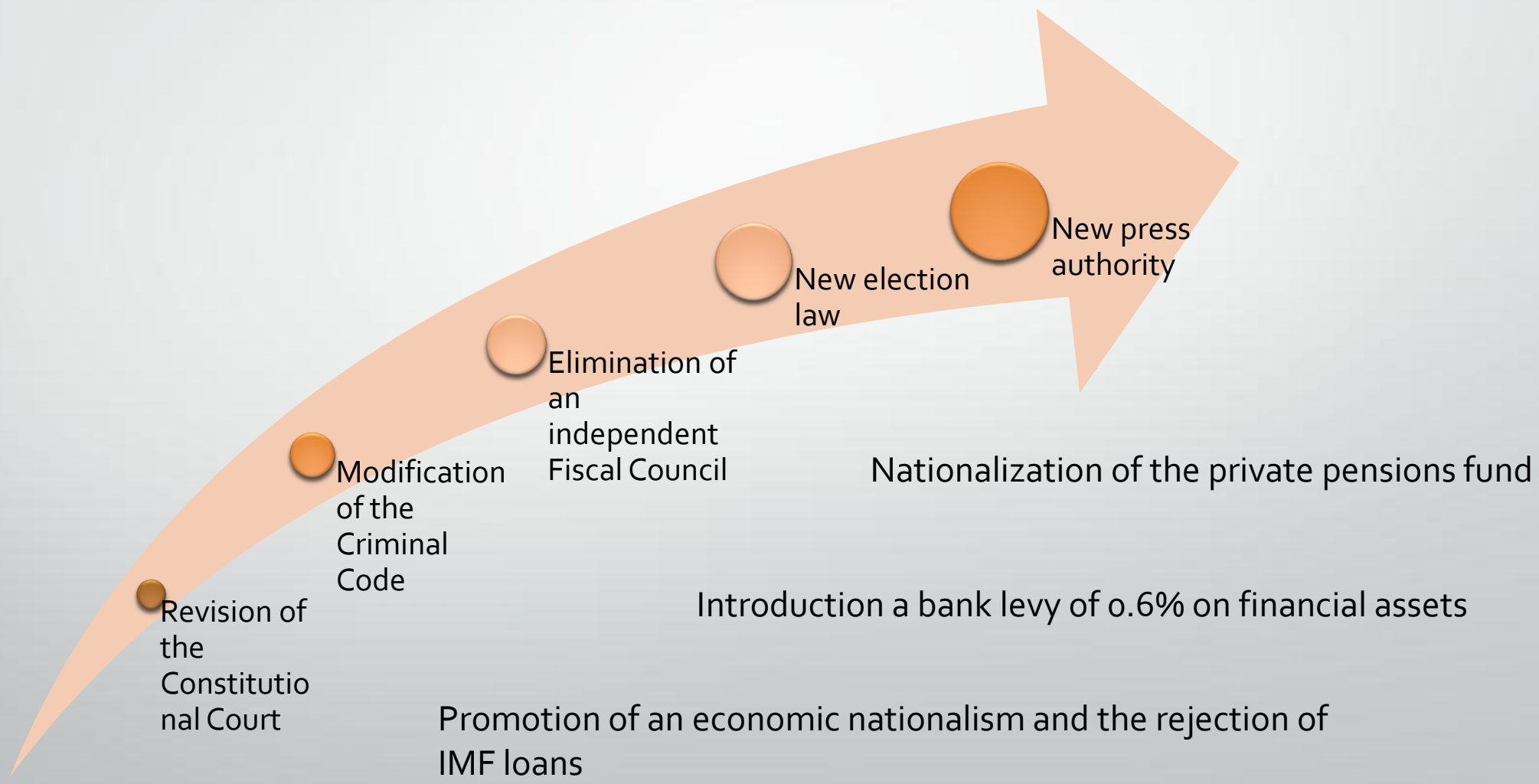


- *Hungary's role on the modern world-system:*
- Within this study we could consider embracing a non-liberal type of state and community building on the one hand, as a sign of revolt against (dissatisfaction with) the prevalent modern world system, understood as a structural relationship building dependent relations between the core, semi-periphery and periphery, and on the other hand, a consequence of their place occupied within that system.
- We also argue, that when Hungary acceded to the EU, it was more likely a part of the semi-periphery and according to various scholars, this status has maintained even today, namely through the Council of Europe, OECD, NATO, EU membership it is associated to the core and its rules and values, but in reality is still belongs to the semi-periphery.
- The feeling of always playing the part of the 'second fiddle' compared to the affluent and rich Western neighbours, members of the core, influences the psyche of Central Eastern and Eastern European countries, and implicitly that of Hungary, causing a permanent state of irritation, friction and inferiority.

Preconditions for the successful setup of an illiberal government



Hungary, illiberal democracy and the refugee crisis



**NATIONAL CONSULTATION
on immigration and terrorism**

Published by the Prime Minister's Office

Please complete this questionnaire.

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

Very relevant Relevant Not relevant

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

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

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

I fully agree I tend to agree I do not agree

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

Yes I have heard about it I did not know

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

I fully agree I tend to agree I do not agree

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

I fully agree I tend to agree I do not agree

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

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

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

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

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

I fully agree I tend to agree I do not agree

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

I fully agree I tend to agree I do not agree

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

I fully agree I tend to agree I do not agree

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

I fully agree I tend to agree I do not agree

Hungarian migrant quota referendum 2 october 2016 and the publication of leaflets with no go Zones from different EU countries

- Do you want the European Union to be able to mandate the obligatory resettlement of non-Hungarian citizens into Hungary even without the approval of the National Assembly?
- Yes No
- Results: overwhelming majority of voters rejected the EU's migrant quotas, turnout was too low to make the poll valid.
- 98% of the voters said no to the Migrant quotas
- No **3,362,224** Yes **56,1631** 1.64%
- **98.36**

A KÉNYSZER- BETELEPÍTÉS VESZÉLYEZTETI KULTÚRÁNKAT ÉS SZOKÁSAINKAT

A kötelező betelepítéssel megváltozna Európa, így Magyarország etnikai, kulturális és vallási összetétele. Az illegális bevándorlók nem tartják tiszteletben a törvényeinket, és nem akarnak osztozni közös kulturális értékeinkben.

**HA NEM CSELEKSZÜNK, PÁR ÉVTIZED MŰLVA
NEM FOGUNK RÁISMERNI EURÓPÁRA.**

„Egyetértek abban Orbán Viktorral, hogy
Európának erős külső határokra van szüksége”

David Cameron, volt brit kormányfő,
Orbán Viktorral tartott közös sajtótájékoztató

Az illegális bevándorlók nem tartják tiszteletben az európai normákat, többek között a nők jogait. A bevándorlási válság kezdete óta ugrásszerűen megnőtt a nők elleni zaklatások száma.



**TÖBB SZÁZ
„NO-GO” ZÓNA
EURÓPA
NAGYVÁROSAIBAN**



A "no-go" zónáknak nevezett területek olyan városrészek, amelyeket a hatóságok nem képesek ellenőrzésük alatt tartani. Ezekben a befogadó társadalom írott vagy íratlan normái nem érvényesülnek. Azokban az európai városokban, ahol nagy számban élnek bevándorlók, több száz ilyen "no-go" zóna létezik.

arian migrant quota referendum 2 october 2016

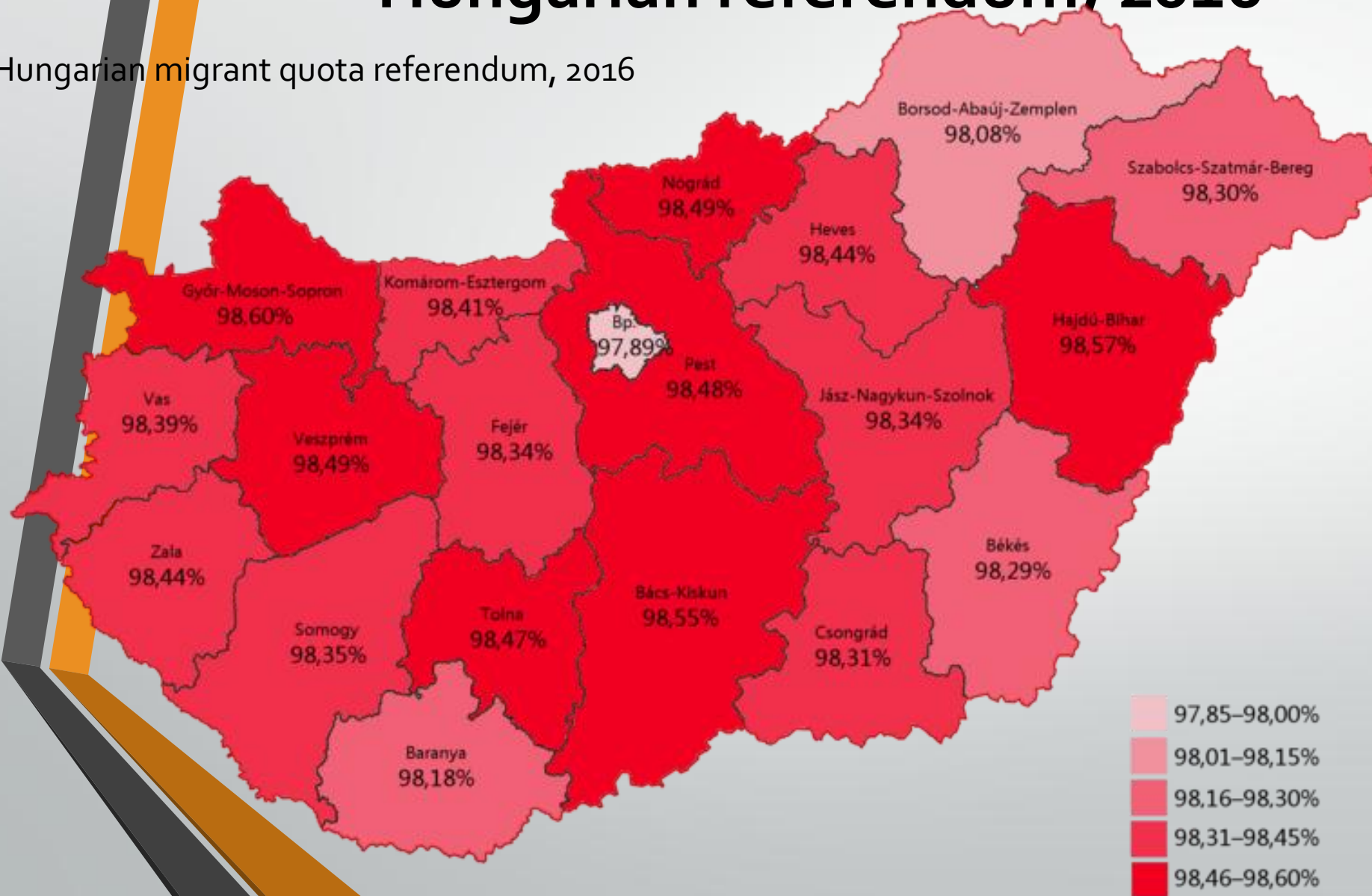
board campaign



A graphic design for the board campaign. It features a red speech bubble at the top with the word "TUDTA?" (Did you know?). Below it, the word "NEMIGEN." (Not even) is written in large, bold, black letters. Underneath, there are two crossed-out circles, indicating that the answer is "No". At the bottom, there are two white cats with red eyes, and a red banner with the text "HÜLYE KÉRDÉSRE HÜLYE VÁLASZT! SZAVAZZ ÉRVÉNYTELENÜL!" (Foolish question, foolish answer! Vote invalid!).

Percentage of "No" votes per counties in Hungarian referendum, 2016

Hungarian migrant quota referendum, 2016



National consultation concerning Soros plan 2017



KÉRJÜK, TÖLTSE KI AZ ALÁBBI KÉRDŐÍVET!

- 1.** Soros György arra akarja rávenni Brüsszelt, hogy Afrikából és a Közel-Keletről évente legalább egymillió bevándorlót telepítsen az Európai Unió területére, így Magyarországra is.

Soros hosszú évek óta azon dolgozik, hogy megváltoztassa Európát és az európai társadalmakat. Célját más civilizációs háttérű embertömegek betelepítésével akarja elérni. Terve bemutatásakor így fogalmazott: „az előre látható jövőben az Európai Uniónak be kell fogadnia legalább egymillió menedékkérőt évente”. (Project Syndicate, 2015. 09. 26.) Hasonló álláspontot képvisel az Európai Parlament is. A testület támogatta az áttelepítési programokat, valamint a bevándorlási útvonalak létrehozását. (2015/2342. (INI))

Ön támogatja a Soros terv megvalósulását?



IGEN



NEM

National consultation concerning soros plan 2017

- PLEASE COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONNAIRE!
- 1. George Soros wants to convince Brussels to resettle at least one million immigrants from Africa and the Middle East annually on the territory of the European Union, including Hungary as well.
- Soros has been working for many years to change Europe and European societies. He wants to achieve his goal with the resettlement of masses of people from different cultural backgrounds. When presenting his plan, he described it like this: “[T]he EU has to accept at least a million asylum-seekers annually for the foreseeable future.” (Project Syndicate, September 26, 2015). The European Parliament supports a similar position. The public body has supported relocation programs and the establishment of immigration routes. (2015/2342. (INI))
- Do you support this point of the Soros plan? YES NO

1. *George Soros wants Brussels to resettle at least one million immigrants per year onto European Union territory, including in Hungary.*

Do you support this point of the Soros plan? () YES () NO

2. *Together with officials in Brussels, George Soros is planning to dismantle border fences in EU Member States, including in Hungary, to open the borders for immigrants.*

Do you support this point of the Soros plan? () YES () NO

3. *One part of the Soros Plan is to use Brussels to force the EU-wide distribution of immigrants that have accumulated in Western Europe, with special focus on Eastern European countries. Hungary must also take part in this.*

Do you support this point of the Soros plan? () YES () NO

4. *Based on the Soros Plan, Brussels should force all EU Member States, including Hungary, to pay immigrants HUF 9 million in welfare.*

Do you support this point of the Soros plan? () YES () NO

5. *Another goal of George Soros is to make sure that migrants receive milder criminal sentences for the crimes they commit.*

Do you support this point of the Soros plan? () YES () NO

6. *The goal of the Soros Plan is to push the languages and cultures of Europe into the background so that integration of illegal immigrants happens much more quickly.*

Do you support this point of the Soros plan? () YES () NO

7. *It is also part of the Soros Plan to initiate political attacks against those countries which oppose immigration, and to severely punish them.*

Do you support this point of the Soros plan? () YES () NO

National consultation concerning Soros plan 2017 Results

Nemzeti Konzultáció



A **SOROS-TERVRŐL** SZÓLÓ NEMZETI KONZULTÁCIÓ EREDMÉNYEI

A Soros-tervről szóló nemzeti konzultáció eddig minden idők legsikeresebb konzultációja.

Minden korábbi részvételi rekord megdőlt: végül összesen 2 356 811 válaszküldemény érkezett vissza (postai úton: 2 178 320; interneten: 178 491). A konzultáció eredményei megerősítik, hogy a magyarok nem szeretnék, ha Magyarország bevándorlóországgá válna.



KORMANYAT HUNGARIAN GOVERNMENT

**SOROS MILLIÓKAT
TELEPÍTENE BE
AFRIKÁBÓL ÉS A
KÖZEL-KELETRŐL**

© 2017 Magyarországi Köztársaság

**STOP
SOROS!**

Hungarian parliamentary elections 2018 and the anti-immigration rhetoric

George Soros conspiracy theory

“Brussels is not defending Europe and it is not halting immigration . . . It wants to dilute the population of Europe and to replace it, to cast aside our culture, our way of life and everything which separates and distinguishes us Europeans from the other peoples of the world.” Orban Viktor

“We created the opportunity to defend Hungary. A great battle is behind us. We have achieved a decisive victory”
Orban Viktor





Eredmények:

	IGEN	NEM
1. Egyetért-e Ön azzal, hogy a népességfogyást nem bevándorlással, hanem a családok erőteljesebb támogatásával kell orvosolni?	1 358 861 (99,18 %)	11 242 (0,82 %)
2. Egyetért-e Ön azzal, hogy az új család-támogatási programokat a továbbiakban is munkavégzéshez kell kötni?	1 335 319 (97,52 %)	33 940 (2,48 %)
3. Egyetért-e Ön azzal, hogy a fiatal házaspároknak támogatást kell adni az önálló életkezéshez?	1 345 478 (98,15 %)	25 297 (1,85 %)
4. Egyetért-e Ön azzal, hogy több gyermek vállalása esetén több támogatást kell adni?	1 312 063 (95,89 %)	56 218 (4,11 %)
Egyetért-e Ön azzal, hogy a legalább három gyermeket vállaló édesanyáknak kiemelt támogatást kell adni?	1 260 910 (93,37 %)	89 595 (6,63 %)
5. Támogatja-e Ön azt, hogy az állam ismerje el a valódi főállású anyaság intézményét?	1 277 906 (93,72 %)	85 678 (6,28 %)
6. Egyetért-e Ön azzal, hogy a kormány támogassa a gyermeküket nevelő nők munkavállalását?	1 337 350 (97,78 %)	30 366 (2,22 %)
7. Egyetért-e Ön azzal, hogy a beteg gyermeküket otthon ápoló családtagok nagyobb támogatást kapjanak?	1 352 228 (98,79 %)	16 597 (1,21 %)
8. Egyetért-e Ön azzal, hogy gyermekeink szellemi, lelki és fizikai fejlődése olyan érték, amelyet a magyar államnak is védenie kell?	1 360 435 (99,38 %)	8 551 (0,62 %)
9. Egyetért-e Ön azzal az alapelvvel, miszerint a gyermeknek joga van anyához és apához?	1 348 818 (98,78 %)	16 648 (1,22 %)
10. Egyetért-e Ön azzal, hogy a gyermeket nevelő családoknak járó költségvetési támogatások kétharmados védelmet kapjanak?	1 328 679 (97,50 %)	34 062 (2,50 %)

Democracy Index 2018/Economic Intelligence Unit

Eastern Europe 2018

	Overall score	Global Rank	Regional rank	I Electoral process and pluralism	II Functioning of government	III Political participation	IV Political culture	V Civil liberties	Regime type
Estonia	7.97	23=	1	9.58	8.21	6.67	6.88	8.53	Flawed democracy
Czech Republic	7.69	34	2	9.58	6.79	6.67	6.88	8.53	Flawed democracy
Slovenia	7.50	36=	3=	9.58	6.79	6.67	6.25	8.24	Flawed democracy
Lithuania	7.50	36=	3=	9.58	6.43	6.11	6.25	9.12	Flawed democracy
Latvia	7.38	38	5	9.58	6.07	5.56	6.88	8.82	Flawed democracy
Slovakia	7.10	44	6	9.58	6.79	5.56	5.63	7.94	Flawed democracy
Bulgaria	7.03	46	7	9.17	6.43	7.22	4.38	7.94	Flawed democracy
Poland	6.67	54=	8	9.17	6.07	6.11	4.38	7.65	Flawed democracy
Hungary	6.63	57=	9	8.75	6.07	5.00	6.25	7.06	Flawed democracy
Croatia	6.57	60	10	9.17	6.07	5.56	5.00	7.06	Flawed democracy
Serbia	6.41	63=	11	8.25	5.36	6.11	5.00	7.35	Flawed democracy
Romania	6.38	66=	12	9.17	5.71	5.00	4.38	7.65	Flawed democracy
Albania	5.98	76	13	7.00	4.71	5.56	5.00	7.65	Hybrid regime
Macedonia	5.87	78	14	6.50	5.36	6.67	3.75	7.06	Hybrid regime
Moldova	5.85	79=	15	7.08	4.64	6.11	4.38	7.06	Hybrid regime
Montenegro	5.74	81=	16	6.08	5.36	6.11	4.38	6.76	Hybrid regime
Ukraine	5.69	84	17	6.17	3.21	6.67	6.25	6.18	Hybrid regime

Conclusions

- In 2019, according to Freedom House, the situation was alarming in matters of freedom and democracy, observing a global erosion of democratic norms, starting with a decline of the electoral process, of the freedom of expression, of the safety of expats and of the rights of migrants etc. Hungary is listed among the countries registering a negative status change over the past decade, shifting from the position of *free* democracy (earned in 1990) to that of *partly free*.
- Looking at the global trends currently outlining, it can be ascertained that the illiberal tendency observed by Zakaria more than two decades ago has not lost from its impetus, in 2019 snapping into an accelerated mode. The ugly truth is that, nowadays, the Western world is not producing less democratic regimes; it is producing less liberal ones.
- According to Freedom House, in 2019 Hungary's freedom rating was 3.0, arguing that "Prime Minister Viktor Orban has presided over one of the most dramatic declines ever charted by Freedom House within the European Union".