

POLITICAL PARTIES AND NATIONALISM IN VISEGRAD COUNTRIES

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Types of election manifestos produced by Hungarian political parties

Isolationist type

The first type of Hungarian political manifestos consists only of one MIÉP manifesto for the general election of 2006. Since we examined this manifesto in detail above, there is no need to exhaustively describe the main features of the isolationist category. Let us just mention the main characteristic of this group.

According to MIÉP, nations are objectively existing entities that, in the international arena, are represented by nation states. States and governments are reflections of the nation's values and culture and therefore they have a moral duty to introduce such policies and measures that will ensure the nation's long term survival. Survival is here understood not just as simple preservation of the lives of members of the nation but also as conservation of its cultural heritage and distinctive spirit. For the isolationist approach, the Hungarian nation is shaped by its Christian values, common history, connection with the soil, way of life and at least partly by the colour of the skin. National identities should be protected from destructive and alien influences from abroad and the state should take care of this. Its role is especially important in defending the nation from the plot set up by international capital and banks against the Hungarian nation. The nation, backed by the state's authority, should expel foreign influence in Hungary and rather build a society based on traditional values.

Greater nation type

The group of manifestos stressing a greater nation is predictably defined by its concern for the Hungarian nation. This notion transcends virtually all the chapters of the manifestos of Fidesz-MPP, MDF's manifesto from the 2006 general election and also, with some important differences, that of Jobbik.

The approach of the greater nation group is mostly visible in the way all four manifestos justified the policies they proposed. The most rightful cause and also reason for implementation of the policy or

measure is its positive effect on the Hungarian nation. To put it in other words: the well-being of the Hungarian nation was the moral value through which one should consider one's acts. This approach had a decisive influence on the policies and measures chosen by the political parties. But let us first take a look at the reason why, this is so and how the documents of the greater nation group portrayed the Hungarian nation.

For Fidesz-MPP, Jobbik and MDF (in the context of its 2006 manifesto), the Hungarian nation is more than just the sum of Hungarians sharing the same values, history and culture. The nation is a more super-temporal and complex phenomenon. The nation and its identity is not primarily dependent on the characters, values and achievements of living Hungarians. Rather it poses certain essential characteristics which are represented by and inherent to all members of the Hungarian nation. These characteristics were shaped throughout the centuries by the common history of the Hungarian Kingdom and by the homeland where most Hungarians lived for the last thousand years. Hungarian soil and way of life were so important for the nationalist parties that they even called for the prohibition of selling Hungarian soil to foreigners. Christianity and its values also had a defining influence on the character of the Hungarian nation. Affiliation to Christianity and to the Christian moral code is especially stressed by MDF, which suggested that even if the state is officially secular it does not mean that the government could not be affiliated with the Christian church.

Bearing in mind the nation-centric approach of Fidesz-MPP, Jobbik and MDF in respect of its 2006 manifesto, we should also point out that the examined manifestos dedicated themselves to the protection of the identities and cultures of other communities too. In fact they considered traditional minorities to be part of the nation. If there was an inherent moral value in the existence of Hungarian identity and culture, the same went for other nations; and even if the Hungarian state is not the original state of the minorities living in Hungary, they should receive protection and the rights to live according to their own traditions and wishes.

Since there is an inherent moral value in the promotion and cultivation of the nation, nationalist manifestos considered the state and

its government to be morally obliged to pursue these values. The state primarily represents its constituting nation and because of that it should preferentially take care of its wellbeing. National identity as it was defined above should be strengthened among the citizens of the state. For this purpose, nationalist parties are willing to use state resources and even model them in order to achieve this goal. In this respect all available state resources should be used for the education system, through public media and diplomacy, to the armed forces.

As we already explained for nationalist manifestos, the nation is not defined by national borders and consequently the role and duty of the national state are not limited by artificially drawn borders but, on the contrary, they have to transcend them. The logical consequence of the nationalist worldview was reflected in an assertive foreign policy towards those countries which possessed significant Hungarian minorities. For Fidesz-MPP, Jobbik and MDF it was a question of the highest importance to reunite the Hungarian nation again. This goal was not advanced literally, at least not in public. Rather the manifestos of these parties centred on advocacy for autonomous status and powers for Hungarians abroad. The nationalist parties were also prepared to support foreign Hungarian communities without regard for the governments of the involved countries. However they deserve not only financial, cultural and political support from their homeland but since they are an integral part of the nation, and the Hungarian state is a body and tool of this nation, Hungarians outside Hungary should have the right to influence Hungarian politics and public life. That is the reason why all three parties in the examined manifestos supported the establishment of some kind of preferential status for foreign Hungarians with the sum of civil rights.

Jobbik represents the more radical version of the above described category. All of the features defining this group of manifestos are more explicitly present in the Jobbik manifesto of 2010. Besides the already mentioned features, Jobbik also explicitly stressed its aversion to postmodern values which were destroying traditional families. These were in sharp contrast to the values of the Hungarian identity. Finally Jobbik, more than the other two parties falling into the greater nation category, emphasized its distrust towards foreign capital and investments. Jobbik saw it as an attempt to take over the Hungarian

economy and its national wealth. However, these specific differences do not alter the common understanding and worldview of the parties classified as falling within this group.

Paternalistic type

Two electoral documents form the next identified type of manifestos. The approach of the paternalistic parties can be interpreted as an attempt to find a compromise between the aggressive nationalist politics and the attitude which dismisses the inherent value and importance of national identity. Paternalistic manifestos try to closely follow the national interests of the Hungarian nation and at the same time to ensure equality for all citizens. This was the approach of the 2006 MSzP and 2010 MDF manifestos.

The notion of the national community, with its shared spirit and values, appealed to the paternalistic documents. For them, everybody who shares a common language and cultural background with the Hungarians belongs to the national community. The paternalistic parties understood the nation to be defined by shared experiences, history, values and cultural heritage. By embracing the Hungarian identity one becomes Hungarian because one shares and understands what is it to feel like Hungarians. In this definition of the nation there is no need for blood or even soil because it is fully supplemented by the shared spirit. This spirit, though, should be cultivated among all those who consider themselves to be Hungarians.

In the specific circumstances of Hungary this definition of the nation had important consequences, especially for foreign policy issues. Significant Hungarian minorities in the neighbouring Romania, Slovakia, Serbia but also Ukraine, Austria and Croatia were considered to be an integral part of the Hungarian nation. These communities of foreign Hungarians should be supported in their struggle to sustain their identities and cultural heritage. The paternalistic parties advocated autonomy for Hungarian minorities in the countries where conditions for such a step existed. In this respect European regional policies were considered to be very helpful. However, both MSzP in 2006 and MDF in 2010 would not risk conflict and confrontation with their neighbours over this issue.

With all the emphasis on the shared national identity there is a danger that one would neglect the second half of the story. Besides national spirit and culture, the paternalistic manifestos paid attention also to the citizenry and civic values. Both parties in their respective documents stressed that the state's role and duty is towards both the nation (as defined above) and to the citizens of the country without regard to their identities and worldviews. This duty is not just a formal claim but it translates itself into the policies aimed at the integration of the Roma population into the society. Both MSzP and MDF in the examined manifestos stressed the need to solve the cycle of social exclusion of Roma people. The first step in this effort should be reform of the education system to prevent segregation of Roma pupils and also to get them out of non-stimulating environments.

Paternalistic manifestos in general condemned aggressive and simplistic nationalism based on the rejection of everything non-Hungarian. However they acknowledged the importance and value of national identity for all those who feel like Hungarians. It is important and, at the same time; the state's duty to cultivate the national culture and to make it possible for Hungarians to be proud of their nation. At the same time the state should not promote Hungarian national interests and its culture at the expense of other communities and ethnic minorities. On the contrary, it should make sure that these groups also receive support for their culture and, more importantly, that they are protected from any kind of discrimination.

Anti-nationalist liberal type

The last type of Hungarian political manifestos is, for their antipathy towards and condemnation of the nationalist political style and ideology, called anti-nationalist. The parties and documents falling into this group significantly differ from the previous group by their commitment to the individual rather than the collective. There is no collective identity without individuals who shape it. Nations or other communities are not spiritual entities which bear some moral value. Anti-nationalist-liberal manifestos stressed that only individuals are the subjects and objects of moral acts. Both manifestos of SzDSz, the

only manifesto of LMP and the 2010 election manifesto of MSzP meet the characteristics of the anti-nationalist type.

Understanding of identities and their construction is a crucial element that distinguishes anti-nationalist election documents from the other types of manifestos. All of the documents of this last type at least briefly explain their view on the emergence of identities, their role in the life of an individual as well as in the life of the state. SzDSz, LMP and MSzP in 2010 believed that identities are not given and primordial. Rather each person and community decides more or less intentionally about the allegiances, loyalties and cultural milieu it wishes or feels that it wants to belong to. Identity is an issue of choice more than anything else. In this respect the mentioned parties stressed the right of every group or citizen to choose its own language, culture or religion.

The fact that identities are not something that a citizen is born with gives less credit to the ideologies and attitudes which mount the national identity in the centre of their political program. If the nation is not a moral value itself, issues concerning the cultural policies, education, migration and even foreign affairs become less emotional and categorical. This leaves enough space for policies that aim at mutual understanding and protection of minorities that are no longer considered to be a potential threat to the nation. Consequently, there were no more national interests in the sense of the interests of the cultural and spiritual community but rather state interests, defined by the state's responsibility for all of its citizens.

In harmony with this approach, anti-nationalist manifestos saw the state as a neutral actor which should not promote or give preference to any specific cultural tradition, interpretation of history or set of values. On the contrary the government should protect all communities and especially those which faced social exclusion. Because of this, all three parties SzDSz, LMP and MSzP dedicated whole chapters of their manifestos to evaluate and propose measures and policies which aimed at the integration and empowerment of Roma citizens. Among others they all called for effective abolishment of segregation in the educational system which systematically discriminates against Roma pupils. SzDSz, LMP and MSzP expressed their strong opposition to the exploitation of the social ramifications of the problems

connected with the deprivation and exclusion of Roma population to political games of the rightwing parties. Anti-nationalist parties were worried that anti-Roma and anti-minority sentiments would eventually undermine the democratic and liberal foundations of Hungarian society.

Moreover, for the anti-nationalist parties it was not just right to protect minorities but they also valued the diversity. The variety of the different cultures and lifestyles was praised by these parties and they wanted to make conditions in Hungary such that different cultural communities will flourish there. On account of this, the anti-nationalist parties had a more positive attitude to immigration and also to the alternative arts.

The anti-nationalist parties were in general pro-European. They considered Hungary and its society to be clearly part of the European cultural space. They advocated for an open Hungary that embraces the European values of tolerance, equality and human rights. They also stressed the fact that in the modern world new challenges keep cropping up and that the nineteenth century design of the nation state is not able to cope with these challenges without the help of other states. This is the *raison d'être* of the European project and all three parties supported the further deepening of European integration. SzDSz even went so far as to call for the establishment of a European federation.

Conclusion

Based on the previous analysis one can easily reach the conclusion that Hungarian political life and its party system went through decisive changes between the general elections of 2006 and 2010. These changes manifested themselves particularly by the polarization of the party system and by the deepening of the ideological gap between the relevant political parties. This tendency is illustrated on the one hand by the rise in support for the greater nation type of manifestos and, on the other hand, by the shift of the MSzP and MDF parties towards a less nationalistic approach in their manifestos.

With the exception of the anti-nationalist group, in general the Hungarian types of electoral manifestos commonly spoke about a

nation of fifteen million Hungarians in and outside the borders. The notion of the united nation is very important in Hungarian politics and certainly it is very difficult to get solid electoral support without stressing the importance of the ties with Hungarian communities abroad. The Hungarian nation as a community is a very broadly accepted perception. At the same time we should also note that among the Hungarian parties there was only one which defined the nation in terms of ancestry and race. Other parties, even those which embraced the nation-centric worldview were considering minorities to be part of their nation.