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Populism and Contested Articulations of National and European Identities: Argumentation and Art

Draft paper for the *8th International Conference – Europe Inside-Out: Europe and Europeanness Exposed to Plural Observers* conference between 28th and 30th September 2018, Lucca, Italy

Réka Deim, PhD Student
Amsterdam School for Heritage, Memory and Material Culture
University of Amsterdam
R.Deim@uva.nl

Marija Sniečkutė, PhD Student
European Studies
University of Amsterdam
M.Snieckute@uva.nl

Abstract

Populism is not only one of the contemporary trends in European societies but also an important space of articulating national identities, quite often in opposition to the European identities. Populist politicians claim a certain vision of national identities via political discourse and by the appropriation of memory sites and art. Nonetheless, discourse analysis and art practices also provide means to challenge populist imaginations. Therefore, the major purpose of this presentation is to suggest the usefulness of integrating argumentation and art theoretical insights for the purpose of a better understanding of and responding to the populist phenomenon. In this paper, populism is understood as a "thin-centered ideology" (C. Mudde) that considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogeneous and antagonistic camps, "the pure people" versus "the corrupt elite," and which argues that politics should be an expression of the general will of the people. The paper focuses on the discursive and non-discursive construction of the opposition between the people and "the other" in terms of values, which is elaborated in reference to the concept of the "heartland" (P. Taggart). The key points are exemplified by the Hungarian case, and, in particular, the analysis of Prime Minister Viktor Orbán's speeches, memory politics and cultural policy.

Key words

Populism, National and European Identities, Hungary, Argumentation, Memory Politics

Short biographies

Réka Deim (born in Budapest) is a researcher and art critic based in Amsterdam. She graduated in Cultural Analysis from the University of Amsterdam (UvA) in 2013 and earned master's degrees in Art History and English Literary Studies at the Pázmány Péter Catholic University, Budapest in 2011. She is currently a PhD candidate at the UvA's Amsterdam School for Heritage, Memory and Material Culture, department Media & Culture. Her research revolves around the juncture of art, cultural memory and oral history, focusing on conflicting memories of the communist era in Hungary. As an art critic she writes for various art magazines in Hungary about international exhibitions and events.

Previous project participations include: *Transitland. Video Art from Central and Eastern Europe 1989-2009* as editorial assistant (Ludwig Museum–Museum of Contemporary Art, Budapest, 2009); *Inside the OMA/AMO Archive* as co-author (OMA–Office for Metropolitan Architecture, Rotterdam, 2013); *The Venice Biennial Ideological Guide* as research assistant (Jonas Staal's project for the 55th Venice Biennial, 2013); *We Roma. A Critical Reader in Contemporary Art* as proofreader (BAK–basis voor actuele kunst, Utrecht, 2014).

Marija Sniečkutė is a PhD researcher at the department of European Studies, University of Amsterdam. She has academic background in Argumentation and Philosophy (Research Master, *'cum laude',* University of Amsterdam), Sociology and Criminology (B.A. and M.A., Vilnius University). Her current research focuses on nationalism, Romanticism, populism, European intellectual networks, cultural history, and discourse analysis. Recently, she has been an author and contributor to *Encyclopedia of Romantic Nationalism in Europe* (ed. Joep Leerssen, Amsterdam University Press, 2018).

Introduction

Populism is not only one of the contemporary "trends" in the European societies, but also an important space for articulating national and European identities, the relationship between which is sometimes quite tense. Populist politicians claim a certain vision of identities not only *via* political discourse, but also through the uses of such visuals as memorials and art. Textual and visual representations also provide us the means to respond to and challenge populist imaginations. Therefore, the major purpose of this paper is to suggest the usefulness of integrating argumentation and art theoretical insights for the purpose of a better understanding of and responding to the populist phenomenon.

Populism is one of political "buzzwords of the 21st century", a contested concept. Scholars define it as an ideology, a movement or a syndrome. The term "populism" is used to denote as various phenomena as anti-immigration, xenophobia, clientelism and economic mis-managment. Some scholars have argued that the concept "populism" should be altogether abandoned because of its analytical weakness, while the *ideational* social scientific perspective[i] contends that the concept is too central in politics to let it be abandoned, and it is possible to sharpen up theoretical tools so that the phenomenon of populism would be adequately understood, explained, evaluated and differentiated from other phenomena. In this paper, following the ideational perspective, populism is regarded as "a thin-centred ideology that considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogenous and antagonistic camps, 'the pure people' versus 'the corrupt elite', and which argues that politics should be an expression of the [general will] of the people"[ii].

Due to the centrality of the values in populism, the idea of a "thin-ideology" (originally coined by M. Freeden) is taken up together with Taggart's idea of "the heartland". Ideology is also "logically and culturally elaborated frameworks of interpretations", they are heuristically useful because they provide interpretative possibilities; they are sort of mental maps which people employ when making sense of politics[iii]. "Full" ideologies (e.g., *fascism*, *liberalism)* "contain particular interpretations and configurations of all major political concepts attached to a general plan of public policy that a specific society requires", while "thin" ideologies are those whose morphological structure is restricted to a set of *core concepts* which alone are unable "to provide a reasonably broad, if not comprehensive, range of answers to the political questions that societies generate"[iv]. Populism as a thin-centred ideology has restricted morphology, and it is necessarily attached to other ideologies, where it gets sometimes assimilated into (e.g., nativism prominent in Europe, socialism in Latin America). Populism's attachment to other ideologies explains the diverse shapes populism can take, internal contradictions, which it might have by connecting to contradictory ideology, and its longevity due to high level of adaptability.

Taggart also highlights the adaptability of populism. In his view, the values of populism are derived from a particular notion of "the people", or, as Taggart calls it, "the heartland", which is

> "an idealised conception of the community populists serve <...> The heartland is a construction of an ideal world, but unlike Utopian conceptions, it is constructed retrospectively. Unlike other ideologies that derive their visions of the future from the key values (such as egalitarianism or communitariansim), populism derives values it has from its conception of the heartland <...> There are variety versions of the heartland, which explains why populism is attached to some very different positions from Left to Right. <...> [Populism] lack[s] core […] <...> and "the values advocated are derived from other sources than populism."[v]

In this paper, the concept of "the heartland" is used as a methodological tool to discuss populists' articulation of national and European identities, which are related to the two key concepts of populism, "the people" and "elite". The concept *the people* is a vague political concept and necessarily an abstract construction, a myth; it "is never a primary datum but a construct."[vi] In populist discourse, the concept "the people" is mostly used in one of three meanings: as *sovereign* (the people as ultimate source of political power and the real "rulers"), as *common people* (as a group of people having specific cultural traditions and popular *values*) and as *nations* (natives who form a community with a common life). Importantly, the concept of "the people" is binary, which means that it is defined in opposition to the concept of the "elite". The relationship between two concepts is antagonistic and normative: we are speaking of "good" people and "bad" elite. The second key concept of *populism*, is the (corrupted) *elite,* which is the construction of the populist actors, and identified on the basis of various of criteria, e.g., political power, economic means. Various secondary criteria are being used as well. Just as it is with the concept of "the people", the concept of "elite" is a binary concept and defined in an antagonistic relation to the concept of "the people". And just as it is the case with the concept of "the people", a specific (though inferior) set of values is attributed to the elite.

How do populist articulate national and European identities in textual and visual means, and – importantly – how can we respond to the populist, sometimes powerful, claims to reality? The paper will discuss this question by analysing speeches and memory politics of a noteworthy populist politician, the Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán. In the last decade, his politics has been increasingly organized around the concept of "illiberal democracy"[vii].

Orbán introduced the concept of "illiberal democracy" following his 2014 victory, when the populist strategy of fighting "the elites" under the flag of historical justice proved to be effective in shifting voters to the right.[viii] The most important challenge Orbán identifies then is community organization in order to keep Hungary independent and competitive because, in his view, successful societies will be "not Western, not liberal, not liberal democracies, and perhaps not even democracies" in the future.[ix] The refugee crisis provided the Hungarian government a great opportunity to promote the "global regime change" and the replacement of Europe's "liberal" identity on a transnational level.[x] In 2018 Orbán formulates a new goal to become a leading force in Europe in order to change what he calls the "politics of the 68's elite" by the "anti-communist, Christian-committed, national-minded generation of the 90's."[xi] Expanding the scope of the vision of "illiberal democracy" to Central Europe, justified by historical urgency, he aims at unifying anti-immigration forces within the EU before the upcoming European election.[xii]

The term "illiberal democracy" initially refers to political systems combining the presence of free elections with the lack of constitutional liberalism. Political scientist Fareed Zakaria highlights the tensions between the theoretically and historically different concepts of democracy and constitutional liberalism. He argues that in the West democracy has meant liberal democracy for almost a century, "a political system marked not only by free and fair elections, but also by the rule of law, a separation of powers, and the protection of basic liberties of speech, assembly, religion, and property."[xiii] However, the simultaneous rise of democracy and liberalism seems to be only a coincidence and illiberalism has been on the rise within democratic frameworks. The main difference between democracy and constitutional liberalism lies in government authority.[xiv] While the essence of a democratic government is absolute sovereignty of the majority, it is also its weakness if governments claiming to represent the majority grow increasingly autocratic.[xv] This scenario occurs when the institutions of democracy, which serve as checks and balances against the government, fail to protect the rule of law and basic liberties.

Fidesz has been systematically transforming both the institutions of democracy and the concept of "illiberalism." Dismantling the notion of "illiberal democracy" from negative connotations, Fidesz interprets it as an alternative *ideology* within the democratic framework in order to legitimize its *political system*. According to the party's narrative, "liberal ideology" is obsolete due to its uncritical approach towards the financial system, corporate dominance, multiculturalism and political correctness, which have colonized Europe both economically and culturally. In contrast, "illiberalism" offers the political system and ideology of the "new era" to emerge because of the failure of "Western liberal values." Juxtaposing the concepts of "illiberalism" and "liberalism" as two ideologies that are currently at war, complex political and historical meanings are overtly simplified and portrayed as good and evil in the struggle for independence. "Illiberalism" stands for a pragmatic, well-defined value system of an "imagined community"[xvi] based on Christian culture, traditional family model and national interests (economic protectionism and anti-immigration). In contrast, "the other" is constructed from abstract, transnational phenomena, such as globalization, multiculturalism, immigration and open society – "all-in-one" represented by Brussels and the so-called Soros-plan.[xvii]

The concept of "illiberalism," as the premise allowing the government to legitimately pursue its centralizing political measures, has been prominent in recent Hungarian politics. In accordance with the "illiberal" vision of the state, the implementation of structural changes begun shortly after he Fidesz-KDNP alliance won election in 2010. The government proclaimed then the System of National Cooperation (Nemzeti Együttműködés Rendszere, in short: NER),[xviii] which aims at providing a clear and long-term political direction carefully embedded in a historical framework. During its 2010-2014 term, the government laid the foundations of the new system by means of restructuring institutions, changing the constitution and the electoral system. In the second term between 2014-2018, the stabilization and centralization of power dynamically continued, including weakening of independent courts, decreasing media pluralism, limiting civil society and attacking academic institutions, such as the Central European University and the Hungarian Academy of Sciences.

The concept of "illiberal democracy" is at the core of an important lengthy speech given on 6 July 2018 by the re-elected Hungarian Prime Minister Orban at the 25th Bálványos Summer Free University and Student Camp. It can be used as a good example of the populist text, which provides sufficient material to call attention to its argumentative features, argumentative construction of the key populist concepts ("the people" and "elite"), which are intrinsically related to the articulation of the national and European identities, as well as open up the space for a thought on how the populist text might be effectively countered. These issues are at the focus of the subsequent sub-chapter.

Orbán's Hungarian "Heartland" and Its Enemies: Argumentative Constructions and Responses

Orbán begins his post-electoral speech (2014) by pointing out the victory which "we", i.e., he and Hungarians, won despite those who turned against them, or, as he terms, "evil", which also made possible "the good be victorious". Orbán proceeds arguing that the world has radically changed after the West European financial crisis in 2008. He compares the current changes to the changes, which occurred after WWI, WWII and the 1990's events. Viewed from a

"liberal world view", the changes are shocking, but are completely explainable when viewed from a more realistic perspective. Given the decline of the liberal construction of the world, Orbán forwards his major claim: the state is an organizing principle and the goal of the Hungarian state is to make the Hungarian nation competitive in the global market. In his eyes, liberal democracy is unable to achieve this goal, and therefore "a new method of Hungarian state [<...>] following [<...>] the era of liberal democracy" should be formulated. After addressing a few "obstacles we must overcome to make this a reality", Orbán ends the speech with an optimistic note: "It could easily be the case that, since anything can happen, our time will come".

As it has been noted before, the populist text operates the opposition between *good* "Us" (the people) and *bad* "Them" (elite). Orbán begins the speech with the contrast between "Us" (winning the election) as *good* in presence of "Them" as *evil* clearly endows his message with a populist flavor. It is noteworthy that, contrary to the widespread observation that populist politicians speak vulgar and prefer appeals to the common sense rather than rational discussions, Orbán's speech is very polite (he repeatedly uses the expression "Ladies and Gentlemen") and he refers to the norms of reasonableness (e.g., "we slowly grasp the *knowledge* that if we take a good look around and properly *analyse* everything <...> it is a *fundamentally justified intellectual task* [to extrapolate these processes with regards to the future]". Curiously, his conception of *reasonableness* is somewhat elitist in character: even though Orbán argues it is "Us" who properly analyse and eventually see the radical changes and problems of liberal democracy, he also acknowledges that initially people do not perceive the abrupt changes,[xix] thereby implying that his (government's) role to lead the people is "a fundamentally justified intellectual task".[xx] Even though Orbán appeals to feelings,[xxi] they are intertwined into rationally framed speech. And since the people are portrayed as somewhat not (yet) knowledgeable, and definitely less knowledgeable than the government, the split and tension pops up between "the people" and "Me-as-the speaker-of-the people".

Who are those "we", "the people", and who are excluded as "Them"? And how does Orbán construct "the people" with his language use? The people is the Hungarian people, Hungarians, who, importantly, are perceived as "Hungarian nation". One of the central premises that Orbán explicitly accepts is the distinction between the "state" and "nation": "<...> the state is nothing more than a form of organising the community, which in our case sometimes coincides with the country's borders and sometimes doesn't". Thus, the Hungarian nation is first of all a community, which he molds from different angles. First of all, the Hungarian nation transgresses the *territory* of the Hungarian state ("cross-border Hungarians"). The Hungarian nation is also constituted *historically*: it is "we", who witnessed "three great changes in the global regime during the 20th century [the end of the WWI, WWII and 1990]". Thus, the nation does already exist; however, he also puts forward a claim that the nation should still be created ("the Hungarian nation is not simply a group of individuals but a community that must be organised, reinforced and in fact constructed"). The transition from the claimed (and imagined) existing community of Hungarians (living within and outside the borders of the Hungarian state, and historically continuous) to the Hungarian community-under-construction is absent, and the move reminds more of a logical abyss than a chain of reasoning. Still, Orbán clearly sees the continuity between the historical Hungarian nation and futuristic Hungarian nation as he says that

> "Hungary's citizens are expecting Hungary's leaders to find, formulate and forge a new method of Hungarian state organisation that, following the liberal state and the era of liberal democracy and while of course respecting the values of Christianity, freedom and human rights, can *again make the Hungarian community competitive*"[xxii]

The "make the people great again" does refer to the past, and in line with Taggart's idea of the heartland, i.e., an ideal world which is constructed retrospectively. The values (of Christianity, freedom and human rights) are seen as crucial in constructing "the Hungarian people/nation". Thus, in agreement with Taggart's observation, "Unlike other ideologies that derive their visions of the future from the key values (such as egalitarianism or communitariansim), populism derives values it has from its conception of the heartland". However, Orbán constructs the future Hungarian nation not only on the basis of the values of the "heartland," but also on an explicit *re-definition* of one of the major values (definitely in liberal democracy), i.e., *freedom.* He explicitly criticizes "the liberal organization of society [which] is based on the idea that we have the right to do anything that does not infringe on the freedom of the other party"; and instead of the liberal understanding of freedom, he proposes to organize society according to the principle "one should not do unto others what one does not want others to do unto you". By virtue of these language use moves, and by targeting the liberal understanding of "freedom", Orbán explicitly gets involved in the ideological battle against individualism (liberalism) and takes a stance in pro-communitarianism (nativism). In this way, and in agreement with the conception of populism as a "thin-ideology" (Freedman), Orbán's version of populism gets the ideological content from attaching to the concepts of liberalism and nativism. The period of liberal democracy in Hungary is seen as dismantling the Hungarian nation.

How does an individual relate to the community in Orbáns futuristic visions? For one, and as it was mentioned before, by respecting "the values of Christianity, freedom and human rights", and secondly, and crucially, Orbán sees that such a relation is a *work-based* relation. The core of the imagined nation is a middle working class.[xxiii] By endorsing the views of "one of the richest people of America", Orbán claims that "Instead of an economic model that is built from the top going down, we need an economic model that grows from the middle". Racist views also

crawl in, even though by not committing to them directly.[xxiv] The core of the nation – the working class – acquires meaning by mostly contrasting it to "foreign" (immigrants, West Europe and institutions (e.g., Soros' foundation) which support immigrants, "large corporations that employ foreign workers", EU distributors of the funds, who receive much more than someone in a similar position in the Hungarian administration system). In short, the Hungarian nation is envisioned as a community of people, whereas each individual has a relation to the community by work relation and have shared values of Christianity, freedom (understood differently than in liberal democracy) and human rights. The Hungarian nation is as a homogeneous community defined against "the Other-outside" (e.g., immigrants, EU and other institutions supporting immigration) and the "Other-within" (e.g., previous government advocating liberal democracy, large companies, NGO's (e.g., OSF) which conceal foreign interests). Clearly, the major "Other" is the elite, which does not protect the interests of the Hungarian nation in the "great global race for decades to come". The usage of the word "race" presupposes that there are winners and there are losers, the race is competitive if not openly combative, therefore – it implies – if the Hungarian nation will not be strong enough, it will definitely loose the race, if not die. It is also important to stress that nowhere in this speech Orbán speaks against the European identity as such, or denies that Hungary is a European country. Rather he targets specific aspects of Europe: Orbán criticizes the EU bureaucracy which supposedly abuses Hungary's national interests as well as West Europe associated with liberal democracy. In this way, the Hungarian national identity is articulated in opposition to the European identity, which is related to the values of liberalism propagated by the dominant West European and EU discourse. It is also the way, in which Orbán clears out the way for his later (2018) articulations of the Hungarian national identity as a truly (thus compatible with the) European identity, whereas the concept of "European" is given another meaning, not least due the weight given to "Central Europe".

The question on how to respond to populism is always a tricky question, which does not yield clear-cut answers. According to the political scientist Mudde:

> "The best way to deal with populism is to engage – as difficult as it is – in an *open dialogue* with populist actors and supporters, the aim of the dialogue should be better understand the claims and grievances of the populist elites and masses and to develop liberal democratic responses to them. At the same time, practitioners and scholars should focus more on the *message* than the messenger."[xxv]

If to take up this suggestion seriously, then argumentation theoretical tools might be particularly useful in envisioning effective responses to the populist messages. At a very general level, it would be useful to identify populists' grievances by cutting them out from the reasoning web and list them for an independent evaluation from a political theoretical perspective. For instance, Orbán argues that the Hungarian liberal state was incapable of protecting community assets and families falling into debts as a few proofs showing that the Hungarian liberal democracy was not able to protect the interest of the Hungarian nation, which in turn serves as the reason that we "must break with the liberal principles and methods of social organization and in general with the liberal understanding of society" (see Appendix). Consequently, the issues of community assets and family debts could be separated as legitimate issues, which deserve to be answered. At a more particular level, if to treat a populist text dialogically, populists' discourse could be subjected to critical questions following, at the very basic level, argumentation schemes (a specific relation between the arguments and standpoint) being used.[xxvi] An illustrative case is Orbán's argument that the post-2008 (West European financial crisis) times are the times of "regime change".

Orbán supports this claim by three lines of argument. First of all, he claims that the post-2008 events are the times of the "regime change" because they are analogous to the three major events of the 20th century, which were the cases of the regime change, i.e., after WWI, after WWII and after 1990. Before suggesting that post-2008 events and the three events are similar, he secures the similarity of the times following WWI, WWII and 1990. According to him, the latter three events were the cases of "regime change" because it was immediately clear to everyone that regime change was going on. In his words, "The joint characteristic of these <...> is that when these changes occurred it was clear to everybody from practically one day to the next that from now on they would be living in a different world from one they had been living in until then". Already here, one may question whether Orbán articulates an acceptable premise: is it the case that all people from the very first days of the wars and 1990s events were perceiving the events as the changes of the world order? Irrespective to acceptability or unacceptability of this premise, it is clear that the major claim is supported by *appeal to people*, or, in other words, *ad populum* argument, which can be used fallaciously or not. Orbán claims that the post-2008 transformations are similar to the changes which these three events induced: "The statement that I would like to put forward as the starting point of my speech today is that there is a change of similar value and weight going on in the world today". Curiously, when drawing the analogy between, on the one hand, the events following WWI, WWII and 1990, and, on the other hand, current world, it quickly collapses: three events were regime changes because everyone perceived them immediately as such and the importance of the changes following 2008 events are not grasped by people: "The significance of this change is not quite so obvious because, in contrast to the previous three, people perceive it in different way". The legitimate question then is how acceptable analogy when it is employed? In other words, the key critical question raised here is "Are there any significant differences between [the events following WWI, WWII and 1990] and [the events following the financial

crisis in 2008]?"[xxvii] Orbán forwards a further premise, quite in a Marxist way of ideology as, in his words, "fog": people would see the radical character of the changes if they would know and analyse. In this way, he seems to prepare the way of providing some knowledge and analysis to enlighten the people. What follows are two "symptomatic" arguments. First, he argues that there are immense changes (e.g., "the fact that America has been pervaded by cynism", "liberal values embody corruption, sex and violence") because "experts" (e.g., "an internationally recognised analyst", "one of the richest people in America, who was one of the first investors of Amazon") says so. Clearly, all these symptoms are considered to be indicative of the radical changes by appeals to *authority* (*ad vericundiam*), which, the same way as *ad populum,* could be done fallaciously or not. In case of the fallacy of the abuse of authority, "a proposition is presented as acceptable because some person or written source that is inappropriately presented as an authority says that it is so".[xxviii] An observer sensitive to rhetoric would also point out that in this text a set of authorities is selected, which presupposes an implicit criterion for selection, which could be also questioned; moreover, rhetorical strategy of presenting arguments as the opinions of "experts" is intended to convince audience by framing controversial opinions as objective facts instead. And finally, Orbán provides the third argument on why the post-2008 events are world order changes: the post-2008 is the regime change because all these opinions of experts (on changes) are present in the public discourse. In his own words: "Prior to 2008, saying something like that would have meant being excluded from a discussion between gentlemen". So the argument scheme employed is symptomatic: There is a regime change after 2008, because all these topics are discussed in public discourse (and an implicit premise here is: the discussion of these issues in public discourse is a symptom of the regime change). The major critical question then is: Is it possible all these sensitive/controversial issues may be discussed in public discourse without regime change taking place? ("Aren't there also other non Y's that have the characteristic Z?"); and: Is it possible that the regime change would occur without discussions of these sensitive/controversial issues in public discourse? ("Aren't there also other Y's that do not have the characteristic Z?").[xxix] Hopefully, this short analysis illustrates the argumentative features of a populist text (including the use – and abuse – of "the people" for classificatory purposes) and a few concrete ways to question the claimed acceptability of arguments.

The second point to be illustrated here pertains to *values.* Values are particularly important to the populist discourse, because they are related to the concepts of (good) people and (bad) elite. Values are not necessarily envisioned as beliefs that are shared by separate individuals, but in case (as it is here) "the people" is a *nation,* values are *constitutive* of 'the people". In populist lips, values often become strategies by which a vision of "the people" is constructed, which also means that they function as a device to exclude other people from the *polis.* In this sense, it is not surprising to find that the sphere of the values – what they are, how they are expressed in action, what they should be, who possess them, etc. – become the stage where populist fight for the life, i.e., for definition. And Orbán is not an exception, or rather, he is a superb example of how the fight for the core values of democracy are being fought. In order to illustrate it, and to see it clearer, argumentation theoretical tools such as *argumentation structure* (see Appendix) are particularly useful.

Orbán attacks the value of *freedom* ("we have the right to do anything that does not infringe on he freedom of the other party") as it is understood in Western liberal democracy. He sees it as the key principle by which the (liberal) state is organized. As we see from the argumentation structure, criticism of this meaning of freedom serves as the grounds to criticize liberal democracy as such. Therefore, we could say, that understanding Orbán's grievances on the liberal understanding of the concept of freedom, helps us to understand his claimed repulsion of liberal democracy as such. His criticism is quite straightforward: this principle of *freedom* is problematic because it is problematic in *practice*: the major problem is that in practice the strongest always wins and there is no any principle of justice, which would determine the boundaries of freedom ("Conflicts on the acceptance of mutual freedom are not decided according to some abstract principle of justice, but what happens instead is that the stronger party is always right").

For one, Orbán's criticism raises a question: can we reject the principle, the value because it is supposedly not working *in practice* (on the factual grounds)? And are the premises that – in case of conflict about freedom, the strongest always wins; in case of conflict on freedom, there is no principle of justice at work – acceptable? Since both questions seem to be problematic, and both issues form the grounds in support the claim that liberal democracy should be abandoned, the claim itself becomes quite shaky.

Orbán also provides a positive vision of *illiberal democracy*, and Hungary is envisioned as the state where illiberal democracy is already and will continue to be enacted. Illiberal democracy replaces the previously discussed principle of *freedom* with another principle, which should be the key principle for organizing the state: "one should not undo others what one does not want others to do unto you". The question is – is it a new understanding of *freedom*? If so, what does it imply? And how this principle can be interpreted and implemented particularly to benefit the Hungarian national interest, at least? How this principle can *cause* the Hungarian nation to be competitive on the global market (and Orbán is explicitly claiming that a new method of state organization will make the nation competitive, while liberal democracy failed to do that). Still, ambiguity remains: clearly, freedom is important for Orbán's vision (the new principle of state organization should respect the values of *Christianity, freedom,* and *human rights*); he rejects the liberal democratic understanding of freedom, but at the same time contends that Hungary as "an illiberal state, a non-liberal state. It does not reject the fundamental principles of liberalism such as freedom, and I

could list a few more". All that raises more questions than provides answers, which in itself might be a valuable response to the populist discourse, which juggles with the definitions of values, and – in line with the observations of many scholars of populism – is primarily a critical and ideological rather than constructive and programmatic political talk.

Visual Articulations of National and European Identities in the Public Sphere

The following section discusses the negotiation of identities through memory sites by analyzing how narratives are visually articulated and mediated in the public sphere.[xxx] The reinvention of history is approached from the perspective of "illiberal democracy," a political system *and* ideology set forth following the election victory of the Fidesz-KDNP alliance in 2010. The construction and transmission of official narratives that propagate "illiberal" values will be investigated with an interdisciplinary approach that combines insights of political science, memory studies and art/cultural theory. The analysis focuses on the shifting articulations of national and European identities, the cornerstones of which have been laid down by the Declaration of National Cooperation[xxxi] and the Imre Steindl Program, the government's large-scale reconstruction plan targeting the Parliament area.[xxxii] Finally, recent implications of the official ideology will be briefly discussed in relation to the arts.

References to past greatness of Hungary that never really existed (the "heartland") occur in various historical contexts within the party's historical narrative that aims at constructing a Eurosceptic national identity. This framework places emphasis on *sovereignty* through the concepts of the *victim narrative* and *anti-communism*, articulated through both textual and visual representations. Central to the notion of *sovereignty* are the interwar Horty era (1920-1944), the last fully sovereign Hungarian regime before the communist takeover and Hungary's freedom fights, particularly the 1956 revolution, a key reference point not only Hungarian collective memory but also in the history of the Cold War.[xxxiii] In sync with this, in the frame of the Imre Steindl Program the pre-1944 image of the Kossuth Square has been reinstated, housing memorials that commemorate the most important freedom fights, including the revolutions of 1948 and 1956.[xxxiv] The reconstruction propagates the narrative of disrupted sovereignty between 1944 and 1989 – also inscribed into the country's Constitution since 2011[xxxv] – and it implicitly embraces the legacy of the Horthy regime,[xxxvi] a highly problematic period given the overt anti-Semitism of the 1930s.[xxxvii]

The official narrative links the freedom fights with the 2010 electoral victory and transforms the narrative of disillusionment of post-socialist Eastern European societies for their failure to catch up with the West into a narrative of external domination. Orbán employs the memory of the 1948 and 1956 revolutions already in his 1989 speech to grant legitimacy to the regime change[xxxviii] and, building on this foundation, he shifts the date of Hungary's liberation from 1989 to 2010.[xxxix] The Declaration of National Cooperation opens with a new periodization of 20th century history, suggesting that after the interrupted continuity of Hungarian sovereignty – by the German occupation, the communist regime and the transition period – the time has come in 2010 for "another revolution in the voting booths" to reclaim independence.[xl] The document reinterprets the transition period, much of which was characterized by efforts of European integration, claiming that Western democracies are to blame for the difficulties of the period, which "led to vulnerability instead of freedom, indebtedness instead of autonomy, poverty instead of prosperity, and a deep spiritual, political and economic crisis instead of hope, optimism and fraternity."[xli]

The idea of sovereign Hungary goes hand in hand with the *victim narrative* that portrays Hungarian history as a series of tragedies. It has become essential in NER's interpretive framework to maintain anti-EU sentiments by blaming external forces for the country's sufferings prior to 2010.[xlii] The narrative is propagated by memorial sites, such as the House of Terror Museum[xliii] and the Monument to the Victims of the German Occupation in the Freedom Square. The Monument manifests the *victim narrative,* reaffirmed by the idea of the disrupted course of history.[xliv] It represents Hungary as the allegorical figure of Archangel Gabriel, holding the state symbol in his hands, with Germany above him in the form of an imperial eagle, attacking Hungary. Due to its controversial aesthetics, the memorial has been widely criticized for falsifying history by denying Hungary's responsibility in the Nazi crimes and the Holocaust,[xlv] excluding narratives concerning anti-Semitism and anti-Jewish legislation in the 1930's and of collaboration with the Nazi regime. Ever since its construction, protesters have been gathering in the site to place their own counter-memorials and raise awareness in the diversity of overlooked narratives. The still active protest group of the "Living Memorial" has also been organizing discussions on the spot to reflect on conflicting memories generated by Fidesz's memory politics.[xlvi] The counter-memorial stresses that memory is a social practice and cannot be overwritten by top-down memory politics.[xlvii]

For Fidesz, communism is the paragon of ideologies imposed on Hungary by external powers, therefore, *anti-communism* occupies a central role in NER's narrative framework. The demonization of communism has become especially manifest since the latest elections. In 2018 the black granite obelisk of the Memorial of the Victims of the Soviet Occupation was inaugurated in Budapest, where Viktor Orbán commemorated the victims, saying: "We know that there is no communism with a human face. The real face of communism is called Gulag."[xlviii] He also underlines the link between National Socialism, communism and modern imperialism as ideologies that have emerged "West from us." [xlix] Emphasizing the responsibility of the "West" for the communist takeover of 1948, which he claims to

have been "a result of the compromise between the Soviets and the West,"[l] he makes the distinction between "us" and "them" crystal clear in order to maintain a "sense of extreme crisis."[li] This sort of "doublespeak" employs the memory of communism to propagate "illiberal" political objectives disguised as commemoration.[lii]

The memorial site of the Martyrs' Square represents major shifts in the meanings attributed to communism. Since the early 1990's the square has been housing the Memorial of Imre Nagy (1896-1958). The bronze figure standing on a bridge symbolizes his role in 1956 as the Prime Minister of the revolution.[liii] Nagy's legacy gained enormous significance in 1989 as Hungary's transition from the communist to the liberal democratic order was marked by his rehabilitation and reburial ceremony.[liv] In the early 1990's he was officially recognized as a "martyr of the nation"[lv] and the Imre Nagy Memorial in the Martyr's Square was inaugurated in 1996. However, due to his problematic position as a former Stalinist politician and a reform communist, his figure has become increasingly uncomfortable for the Fidesz government[lvi] so his statue will be relocated in the frame of the Imre Steindl Program and the former memorial to the victims of the "Red Terror" in 1919 will be reinstated in the its place. [lvii] In recent representations of Fidesz's memory politics, the short-lived Hungarian Soviet Republic of 1919 has gained importance to propagate anti-communist sentiments.[lviii] The shifting meanings attributed to the Martyr's Square demonstrate the interrelatedness of the concepts of *sovereignty*, the *victim narrative* and *anti-communism* in Fidesz's memory politics.

The three key concepts discussed above revolve around the vaguely defined vision of the "heartland"[lix] and outline the narrative framework of the "illiberal" political and ideological system. Prior to 2018 the Hungarian state signified the romanticized vision of the past, based on which "illiberal democracy" has been built. In Orbán's 2018 speech at the Bálványos Summer Free University and Student Camp, however, "illiberalism" is expanded beyond the national domain, and the pseudo-nostalgia for a past that never took place implies a broader, "European heartland":

> "In Christian Europe, work and human dignity were honored, man and woman were equal, family was the foundation of the nation, the nation was the foundation of Europe, and states guaranteed the security. In today's open society in Europe there are no boundaries, European people can be replaced by immigrants, the family has become a voluntarily varied form of coexistence, nation, national consciousness and national sentiment are regarded as negative and obsolete and the state no longer guarantees security in Europe."[lx]

Recognizing the tendency that post-communist societies with their shared histories and post-communist disillusionment, and without strong traditions of constitutional liberalism, multiethnic population and immigration are easily tempted by "illiberalism," Orbán currently promotes the idea of an economically strong Central European region.[lxi] In so doing, his focus shifts from building the Hungarian *political system* to the further development of the "illiberal" *ideology* before the European elections.

One of the main objectives formulated by Orbán in 2018 is the creation of a new intellectual and cultural approach: "Now the task ahead of us is to embed the political system into a cultural era. This is why it is logical, and not at all surprising that the most exciting debates today have exploded in the field of cultural policy."[lxii] The first signs of the new direction appeared in the pro-government newspaper *Magyar Idők*, which labeled the Opera's *Billy Eliot* show as "gay propaganda"[lxiii] and criticized the Frida Kahlo exhibition in Budapest for "promoting communism."[lxiv] Attacks of such induced heated debates rapidly growing into a *culture war*,[lxv] where the representatives of diverse perspectives found themselves in the frontline between "liberal" and "illiberal" ideologies. The government's ability to impose its ideology is possible because the centralization of culture has already been carried out by the inclusion of the Hungarian Academy of Arts as a state institution into the Constitution in 2011.[lxvi] The power of the "public body committed to national tasks concerning the arts"[lxvii] has been growing due to massive state support and funding and today it is the most powerful institution controlling virtually every actor and institution of culture.

The cultural sphere's dependency on the ideologically one-dimensional official body has far-reaching consequences. The politically committed institution polarizes the scene by dismantling its autonomy and its internal logic. This situation produces new strategies and compromises to cope with the system for individuals and institutions alike. Cultural dissent grows inevitably reactionary as it relies on the institution system and it has to redefine its identity in relation to the imposed ideology. The intensity of independent art practices and civic actions is also decreasing, not only because of the lack of funding but also due to self-censorship, which has emerged on all levels of the hierarchy.[lxviii]

At the same time, the changing cultural climate stimulates critical reflection that challenges political and ideological limitations. Measures that considerably limited media plurality, academic freedom and civil society in the past eight years have met massive opposition.[lxix] The cultural sector was also severely implicated by the structural changes,[lxx] and the emergence of cultural resistance has manifested in civic and artistic (re)actions, interventions and events that demanded autonomy for arts.[lxxi] It remains to be seen, however, whether diverse cultural actors trapped in between the binary opposition of "illiberal" and "liberal" ideologies will be able to overcome the symptomatic reactionary articulations to constructively imagine alternative spaces of culture.

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i Mudde, Cas and Cristóbal Rovira Kaltwasser. Populism: A Very Short Introduction. Oxford University Press, 2017.

ii Mudde, Cas and Cristóbal Rovira Kaltwasser. Populism: A Very Short Introduction. Oxford University Press, 2017: 6.

iii In Freeden's view, the most important characteristic of ideologies is that they have morphologies, i.e., they are "combinations of political concepts organized in a particular way" (Freeden, 1996, p. 75). A morphology that displays core, adjacent, and peripheral concepts (Freeden, 1996, p. 77). For example, an examination of observed liberalism might establish that liberty is situated within their core, that human rights, democracy, and equality are adjacent to liberty, and that nationalism is to be found on their periphery. On a further examination of a specific case, it could be found that liberty may be given a particular meaning (liberty as self-determination) because of its close association with the adjacent concept democracy, while conversely, democracy may be given a particular meaning (limited popular government) because of its structural interlinkage with liberty. In short, the concepts acquire meaning via structural interlinkages with other concepts, while taking into consideration their mutual proximity. Importantly, in Freeden's conceptual model, peripheral concepts have also time and space dimension, thereby bringing up socio-historical context into picture, by rendering such a context constitutive of particular meanings of ideologies.

iv Freeden, Michael. Ideologies and Political Theory: A Conceptual Approach. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996: 99.

v Taggart, Paul. Populism. Buckingham: Open University Press, 2000: 95.

vi Laclau, Ernesto. On Populist Reason. London: Verso, 2005: 48.

vii It is worthwhile to stress that countering the populist discourse, brings the framework of democracy and the relationship between democracy and populism. "Democracy" is generally defined as the combination of popular sovereignty and majority rule. In most everyday usage, the term democracy usually refers to liberal democracy which refers to a political regime, which not only respects popular sovereignty and majority rule, but also established independent institutions specialized in the protection of fundamental rights (e.g., freedom of expression, the protection of minorities). Viewed from the ideational perspective, populism is neither bad nor good in itself. Populism is essentially democratic, but at odds with liberal democracy, because it holds that nothing should constrain "the general will of the (pure) people", and is fundamentally opposed to pluralism. Just like other ideologies, populism can work either as a threat or a corrective of democracy. Within liberal democracy, its most corrective potential is related to (legitimate) criticism of political establishment and giving voices to, or mobilizing, excluded people, and its most damaging effect – with undermining fundamental rights that are inherent in the liberal democratic model and institutions which seek to protect them. Interestingly, the ideational approach to the study of populism also proposes tools to evaluate populism not only in the liberal democratic regime, but also in other regimes depending on their stage of democratization of de-(democratization). Four common political regimes are distinguished: authoritarianism (no space for opposition, systemic repression), competitive authoritarianism (tolerates opposition but violates elections), electoral democracy (periodic realization of elections, where opposition might win he elections; with institutional deficits) and liberal democracy. So for example, on the road of democratization, the impact of populist discourse in the authoritarian regime might be evaluated positive, while it may be evaluated negatively in the liberal democratic regime, on its de-democratization "road".

viii Prime Minister Viktor Orbán's Speech at the 25th Bálványos Summer Free University and Student Camp. July 30, 2014. Kormany.hu, accessed 6 August 2018. http://www.kormany.hu/en/the-prime-minister/the-prime-minister-s-speeches/prime-minister-viktor-orban-s-speech-at-the-25th-balvanyos-summer-free-university-and-student-camp

ix Orbán's idea of a "work-based" or "workfare" state stands as an alternative to previous forms of state organization, the nation state, the liberal state and the welfare state. "What this means is that we must break with liberal principles and methods of social organisation, and in general with the liberal understanding of society," says Orbán. See: Prime Minister Viktor Orbán's Speech at the 25th Bálványos Summer Free University and Student Camp. July 30, 2014.

x Orbán claims that signs of the "global regime change" have started to show after the financial and the refugee crises, as world leading powers, such as the US and Great Britain have been increasingly supporting protectionist policies, national and Christian values. See: Prime Minister Viktor Orbán's Speech at the 29th Bálványos Summer Free University and Student Camp. 28 July 2018. Kormany.hu, accessed 6 August 2018. http://www.kormany.hu/hu/a-miniszterelnok/beszedek-publikaciok-interjuk/orban-viktor-beszede-a-xxix-balvanyosi-nyari-szabadegyetem-es-diaktaborban

xi Concluding the speech he adds: "For 30 years, we have thought that Europe is our future, and today we think we are the future of Europe." Prime Minister Viktor Orbán's Speech at the 29th Bálványos Summer Free University and Student Camp. 28 July 2018.

xii See for instance: "Europe's Future Hangs in Balance, Says Head of a Budapest University." The Guardian, 9 September 2018, accessed 9 September 2018, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/sep/09/michael-ignatieff-warns-europe-future-viktor-orban-hungary-budapest-university

xiii Zakaria, Fareed. "The Rise of Illiberal Democracy," Foreign Affairs (Nov/Dec), 1997: 22

xiv "Constitutional liberalism is about the limitation of power, democracy about its accumulation and use." Zakaria, Fareed. "The Rise of Illiberal Democracy," 1997: 30

xv According to Zakaria, "The tendency for a democratic government to believe it has absolute sovereignty (that is, power), can result in the centralization of authority, often by extraconstitutional means and with grim results." Zakaria, Fareed. "The Rise of Illiberal Democracy," 1997: 30

xvi Anderson, Bendict. Imagined communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism, London:Verso, 1991

xvii See: "Brussels is implementing the Soros Plan." Miniszterelnok.hu, 6 October 2017, http://www.miniszterelnok.hu/brussels-is-implementing-the-soros-plan/

xviii See: Orbán, Viktor. Nemzeti Együttműködés Programja [The Program of National Cooperation]. 22 May 2010. Accessed 6 September 2018. http://www.parlament.hu/irom39/00047/00047.pdf

xix "<...> people perceive it in a different way. At the time of the great Western financial collapse in 2008, it was not clear that we would be living in a different world from now on" See: Prime Minister Viktor Orbán's Speech at the 29th Bálványos Summer Free University and Student Camp. 28 July 2018. Kormany.hu, accessed 6 August 2018. http://www.kormany.hu/hu/a-miniszterelnok/beszedek-publikaciok-interjuk/orban-viktor-beszede-a-xxix-balvanyosi-nyari-szabadegyetem-es-diaktaborban

xx Also, when Orbán is criticizing the "liberal understanding of society" and proposing instead another key principle on which the Hungarian society should be built, he acknowledges the leading and educative role of the government: "we are attempting to build that world that we call the Hungarian society around this principle in Hungarian public thinking, within education system and through personal example with our own behaviour". See: Prime Minister Viktor Orbán's Speech at the 29th Bálványos Summer Free University and Student Camp. 28 July 2018. Kormany.hu, accessed 6 August 2018. http://www.kormany.hu/hu/a-miniszterelnok/beszedek-publikaciok-interjuk/orban-viktor-beszede-a-xxix-balvanyosi-nyari-szabadegyetem-es-diaktaborban

xxi E.g., "let me tell you about a g□□d and □nexpected devel□pment that is cl□se t□ □□r hearts"; "Sh□□ld we be afraid □r should e be instead be filled with hope?" See: Prime Minister Viktor Orbán's Speech at the 29th Bálványos Summer Free University and Student Camp. 28 July 2018. Kormany.hu, accessed 6 August 2018. http://www.kormany.hu/hu/a-miniszterelnok/beszedek-publikaciok-interjuk/orban-viktor-beszede-a-xxix-balvanyosi-nyari-szabadegyetem-es-diaktaborban

xxii See: Prime Minister Viktor Orbán's Speech at the 29th Bálványos Summer Free University and Student Camp. 28 July 2018. Kormany.hu, accessed 6 August 2018. http://www.kormany.hu/hu/a-miniszterelnok/beszedek-publikaciok-interjuk/orban-viktor-beszede-a-xxix-balvanyosi-nyari-szabadegyetem-es-diaktaborban

xxiii To quote him at length, "we have known three forms of state organisation: the nation state, the liberal state and the welfare state. And the question is, what's next? The Hungarian answer to this question is that the era of the work-based state is approaching. We want to organise a work-based society that <...> undertakes the odium of stating that it is not liberal in character". He also says that "What is happening in Hungary today can accordingly be interpreted by stating that the prevailing political leadership has today attempted to ensure that people's personal work and interests <...> are closely linked to the life of the

community of the nation, and that this relationship is preserved and in fact reinforced". See: Prime Minister Viktor Orbán's Speech at the 29th Bálványos Summer Free University and Student Camp. 28 July 2018. Kormany.hu, accessed 6 August 2018. http://www.kormany.hu/hu/a-miniszterelnok/beszedek-publikaciok-interjuk/orban-viktor-beszede-a-xxix-balvanyosi-nyari-szabadegyetem-es-diaktaborban

xxiv "the Open Society Foundation published a report <..> in which it analyses Western Europe and makes statements such as the fact that Western Europe is so busy finding a solution to the situation of immigrants that it has forgotten about the white working class". See: Prime Minister Viktor Orbán's Speech at the 29th Bálványos Summer Free University and Student Camp. 28 July 2018. Kormany.hu, accessed 6 August 2018. http://www.kormany.hu/hu/a-miniszterelnok/beszedek-publikaciok-interjuk/orban-viktor-beszede-a-xxix-balvanyosi-nyari-szabadegyetem-es-diaktaborban

xxv Mudde, Cas and Cristóbal Rovira Kaltwasser. Populism: A Very Short Introduction. Oxford University Press, 2017: 118.

xxvi See e.g., Van Eemeren, Frans and Rob Grootendorst, Francisca Snoeck Henkemans. Argumentation. Analysis, Evalaution, Presentation. London: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers, 2002.

xxvii Van Eemeren, Frans and Rob Grootendorst, Francisca Snoeck Henkemans. Argumentation. Analysis, Evalaution, Presentation. London: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers, 2002: 98.

xxviii Van Eemeren, Frans and Rob Grootendorst, Francisca Snoeck Henkemans. Argumentation. Analysis, Evalaution, Presentation. London: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers, 2002: 131.

xxix Van Eemeren, Frans and Rob Grootendorst, Francisca Snoeck Henkemans. Argumentation. Analysis, Evalaution, Presentation. London: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers, 2002: 98.

xxx Nora, Pierre. Realms of Memory: Rethinking the French Past, University of Chicago press, 1998; Rothberg, Michael. "Introduction: Between Memory and Memory: From Lieux de mémoire to Noeuds de mémoire," Yale French Studies, No. 118/119, Noeuds de mémoire: Multidirectional Memory in Postwar French and Francophone Culture, 2010: 3-12

xxxi The Declaration of National Cooperation is the founding document of the System of National Cooperation. The Declaration of National Cooperation, 2010, http://www.nefmi.gov.hu/english/political-declaration-of; See also: Batory, Agnes. "Populists in government? Hungary's 'system of national cooperation.'" Democratization, 23:2, 2016: 283-303

xxxii The Imre Steindl Program, initiated in 2011, aims at reinstating the pre-1944 image of the Kossuth Square and the Martyrs' Square, as well as at rewriting meanings attributed to the Freedom Square, which houses two WWII memorials. http://www.sipzrt.hu/a-steindl-imre-program/

xxxiii Gati, Charles. Failed Illusions: Moscow, Washington, Budapest and the 1956 Hungarian Revolt, Stanford University Press, 2006: 42

xxxiv The square houses the Kossuth Memorial, the equestrian statue of Francis II Rákóczi and a newly built memorial to the 1956 revolution. The site is named after Lajos Kossuth (1802-1894), the leader of the 1848-1949 anti-Hapsburg revolution, the most important predecessor of the events of 1956. The equestrian statue of Francis II Rákóczi honors the leader of an earlier (also unsuccessful) uprising against the Hapsburgs in 1703-1711. Finally, the Kossuth Square Massacre Memorial commemorates the victims of the 1956 revolution.

xxxv "We date the restoration of our country's self-determination, lost on the nineteenth day of March 1944, to the second day of May 1990, when the first freely elected body of popular representation was formed. We shall consider this date to be the beginning of our country's new democracy and constitutional order." Constitution of Hungary, 2011

xxxvi For instance, the present Kossuth Memorial is the reproduction of the one erected in the interwar period (in 1927) and it replaces the bronze statue erected during the communist era (in 1952). Another reproduced statue from the same period (from 1934) represents István Tisza (1861-1918), an honored politician in the interwar period, who was prime minister during WWI and murdered on the first day of the revolution leading to the Hungarian Soviet Republic of 1919.

xxxvii Bennazzo, Simone. "Not All the Past Needs To Be Used: Features of Fidesz's Politics of Memory," Journal of Nationalism, Memory & Language Politics, vol. 11., Issue 2., 2017.

xxxviii Viktor Orbán's speech at the reburial ceremony of Imre Nagy, Kormany.hu,16 June 1989. Accessed 30 August 2018. https://mno.hu/belfold/orban_viktor_beszede_nagy_imre_es_martirtarsai_ujratemetesen-320290

xxxix "At the end of the first decade of the 21st century, after forty-six years of occupation and dictatorship and two turbulent decades of transition Hungary has regained the right and ability of self-determination." The Declaration of National Cooperation, 2010.

xl Ibid.

xli Ibid.

xlii Historian Krisztián Ungváry traces back the roots of the victim narrative to the communist era, when WWII was perceived as a "battle within fascist and anti-fascist forces" and all responsibility was placed on the Germans. After the political transition it was Fidesz that first adopted the anti-totalitarian rhetoric but it essentially targeted the legacy of the communist party. In Ungváry's words, "the voice of the party was highly anti-communist, while anti-fascist issues were simply ignored." Ungváry, Krisztián. "How did we build a victim narrative? The Hungarian participation in World War II as political discourse." Visegradrevue.eu, 26 May 2015. Accessed 6 September 2018. http://visegradrevue.eu/how-did-we-build-a-victim-narrative/

xliii The House of Terror Museum was established during the first term of the Fidesz government in 2002 to represent the horrors of both the Nazi and the Soviet occupations and has extensively been criticized for relativizing history. See: "Not All the Past Needs To Be Used: Features of Fidesz's Politics of Memory," 2017; Creet, Julia. "The House of Terror and the Holocaust Memorial Centre: Resentment and Melancholia in Post-89 Hungary." European Studies, vol. 30. 2013, 29-62; Turai, Hedvig. "Past Unmastered. Hot and Cold Memory in Hungary." Third Text, vol. 23. 2009, 97-106; Ungváry, Krisztián. "How did we build a victim narrative? The Hungarian participation in World War II as political discourse," 2015.

xliv The Monument to the Victims of the German Occupation was erected in 2014 with the dual aim to commemorate the victims of WWII and to overwrite the commemorative function of the Freedom Square dominated by the Soviet War Memorial. The Soviet War Memorial (1945) commemorates the Soviet soldiers who lost their lives during the liberation of Budapest between 1944-1945. The memorial had a triple function: it served as a commemorative site, a war grave of the Soviet soldiers who lost their lives in the siege of Budapest and it was an imperial monument to represent the dominance of the Soviet Union.

xlv Erőss, Ágnes. "'In Memory of Victims': Monument and Counter-monument in Liberty Square, Budapest. Hungarian Geographical Bulletin, 65. 2016, 237-254; Erőss, Ágnes. "Living Memorial and Frozen Monuments: the Role of Social Practice in Memorial Sites." Urban Development Issues, vol. 55. 2018, 19-32; Kovács, Éva. "The Hungarian Holocaust Memorial Year 2014. Some Remarks." S.I.M.O.N. Shoah: Intervention, Methods, Documentation, 4., 2017, 109-121; Ungváry, Krisztián. "How did we build a victim narrative? The Hungarian participation in World War II as political discourse," 2015.

xlvi See interviews with the organizers (in Hungarian): "Egy nem-helyet hellyé változtatni. Interjú az Eleven emlékmű mozgalom kezdeményezőivel." Tranzitbolg.hu, 11 May 2015. Accessed 30 August 2018. http://tranzitblog.hu/egy_nemhelyet_hellye_valtoztatni_interju_az_eleven_emlekmu_mozgalom_kezdemenyezoivel/; Anita Gócza. "'Tétje lett ennek az egésznek' – Az Eleven Emlékmű két éve." Artportal.hu. 24 April 2016. Accessed 30 August 2018. https://artportal.hu/magazin/tetje-lett-ennek-az-egesznek-az-eleven-emlekmu-ket-eve/

xlvii Erőss, Ágnes. "Living Memorial and Frozen Monuments: the Role of Social Practice in Memorial Sites," 2018.

xlviii Prime Minister Viktor Orbán's speech at the inuguration of the Memorial to the Victims of Soviet Occupation (in Hungarian), Kormany.hu, 19 June 2018. Accessed 21 August 2018. http://www.kormany.hu/hu/a-miniszterelnok/beszedek-publikaciok-interjuk/orban-viktor-beszede-a-szovjet-megszallas-aldozatainak-emlekmuvenek-atadasi-unnepsegen

xlix Ibid.

l Ibid.

li Taggart, Paul. "The Populist Turn in the Politics of the New Europe," Paper prepared for the presentation at the 8th Biannual International Conference of the European Union Studies, Nashville, 27-29 March 2003, ResearchGate, 2003: 8

lii See, for instance: "The Hungarian Soviet Republic of 1919 teaches us that an adventurous government that betrays the nation can lead to the cessation of the country. After the Second World War we learned that Hungary's most valuable asset is its sovereignty. We paid for our weakness and for the loss of our independence with hundreds of thousands of deported and forcefully displaced." Prime Minister Viktor Orbán's speech at the inuguration of the Memorial to the Victims of Soviet Occupation (in Hungarian), 19 June 2018.

liii Nagy openly supported the demands of the demonstrators, such as multi-party system, the withdrawal from the Warsaw Pact. As a consequence, he was arrested and imprisoned by the Soviet forces and, followed by a secret trial, executed in 1958. The memory of the revolution was a taboo until the fall of communism but in 1989 its legacies gained an enormous significance.

liv This was the occasion when Viktor Orbán demanded the Soviet troops to leave in his well-known speech, which marks the beginning of his political career. See: Viktor Orbán's speech at the reburial ceremony of Imre Nagy, Kormany.hu,16 June 1989. Accessed 30 August 2018. https://mno.hu/belfold/orban_viktor_beszede_nagy_imre_es_martirtarsai_ujratemetesen-320290

lv Benziger, Karl P. Imre Nagy Martyr of the Nation: Contested History, Legitimacy, and Popular Memory in Hungary, Lexington Books: Lanham MD, 2008.

lvi After serving in the Austro-Hungarian Army during WWI he was taken prisoner in Russia, where he became member of the Communist Party and joined the Red Army. There is evidence that he also acted as an informant of the Soviet secret police during his time in Moscow. After WWII Nagy became the Minister of Agriculture, delegated by the Hungarian Communist Party, with the intention to realize a land reform by distributing land among the peasants. Between 1953-1955 he was appointed as the Chairman of the People's Republic of Hungary but was soon deprived of this position for being in favor of reforms and propagating the so-called "new course of Socialism." Due to his views and his popularity, the revolutionaries reelected him as the Chairman of the People's Republic of Hungary in 1956. See also: Gati, Charles. Failed Illusions: Moscow, Washington, Budapest and the 1956 Hungarian Revolt, 2006.

lvii The relocation plan of Imre Nagy's statue has already started and the revisionist memorial is expected to be standing in the Martyrs' Square by 2019. Opponents of such appropriation of history protest against the relocation of the Nagy's statue to the Mari Jászai Square, where it would face the building of the former State Protection Authority (Államvédelmi Hatóság), the secret police of Hungary between 1945 and 1956. "Tiltakozunk a Nagy Imre-szobor eltávolítása és a magyar történelem kisajátítása ellen!"[We protest against the removal of the Imre Nagy statue and the appropriation of Hungarian history!] Accessed 30 August 2018. https://terjed.ahang.hu/campaigns/nagyimre

lviii The memorial representing the allegorical figure of Hungary fighting the monster of Bolshevism, commemorates the victims of the "Red Terror." It was erected during the interwar period and stood there from 1936 to 1945.

lix As political scientist Paul Taggart argues, the idea of a "heartland" differs from utopia because the latter imagines a future as an embodiment of certain values, while the "heartland" refers to a reality that has been experienced: "The heartland is a construction of the good old life derived retrospectively from a romanticized conception of life as it has been lived." Taggart, Paul. "The Populist Turn in the Politics of the New Europe," 2003: 11

lx Prime Minister Viktor Orbán's Speech at the 29th Bálványos Summer Free University and Student Camp. 28 July 2018.

lxi Orbán identifies five rights for the construction of the new Central Europe: 1) to protect the nation's Christian culture against multiculturalism, 2) to protect the traditional family model, 3) to protect economically important industries and markets, 4) to protect the nation's borders and reject immigration, 5) to have the "one nation one vote" principle in important decisions within the EU. See: Prime Minister Viktor Orbán's Speech at the 29th Bálványos Summer Free University and Student Camp. 28 July 2018.

lxii Ibid.

lxiii "Billy Elliot 'gay propaganda' row exposes purge in Hungary." BBC News. 26 June 2018. Accessed 13 August 2018. https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-44602026

lxiv "Frida Kahlo exhibit criticized in Hungary for 'promoting communism'" The Telegraph. 8 August 2018. Accesed 13 August 2018. https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2018/08/08/frida-kahlo-exhibit-criticisedin-hungary-promoting-communism/

lxv Kőműves, Anita. "To Viktor, the Spoils: How Orbán's Hungary Launched a Culture War from within." The Calvert Journal. 5 September 2018. Accessed 5 September 2018. https://www.calvertjournal.com/articles/show/10626/orban-hungary-culture-war-budapest

lxvi The Hungarian Academy of Arts (Magyar Művészeti Akadémia, briefly: MMA) was founded in 1992 by architect Imre Makovecz and predominantly right-wing artists as an alternative to the Széchenyi István Művészeti Akadémia (SZIMA). In the process of restructuring the cultural institutional system after 1989, the Hungarian Academy of Sciences decided to include arts and humanities (literature, fine and applied arts, cinema, theatre, architecture and music) in its academoc body and proposed the establishment of the SZIMA. In 2012, in parallel to the official academy or arts, MMA was also founded as a „counter-academy." MMA functioned as an independent institution until 2011. Upon its inclusion into the Constitution as a state institution, the government granted the ownership of Kunsthalle and the Vigadó to the MMA in 2013.

lxvii Hungarian Academy of Arts (Magyar Művészeti Akadémia – MMA) http://www.mma.hu/web/en/index

lxviii Former director of the Ludwig Museum Budapest, Barnabás Bencsik evaluates the situation of the art scene in a pessimistic tone in 2015. Bencsik, Barnabas. "Rendületlenül zakatol tovább. Nemzeti Szalon a Műcsarnokban" [Steadily pounding on. National Salon in the Kunsthalle]. Tranzitblog.hu, 16 July 2015, http://tranzitblog.hu/renduletlenul_zakatol_tovabb_nemzeti_szalon_a_mucsarnokban/

lxix In 2011, on the occasion of the anniversary of the 1956 revolution, a major opposition rally took place to protest against the government's Media Law Package, which, according to both national and international criticism, violates the freedom of speech. Following other civic actions, another major demonstration took place after the passing of the new Constitution in 2012. See: Hinsey. In 2017 a series of demonstrations took place protesting against the Higher Education Act, also called as "Lex CEU," which attacked the Central European University, the so-called "Soros-university" and tens of thousands showed support for the NGOs pressured by a recent bill.

lxx At the early stage of the NER's gradual expansion, theater and museum directors were replaced by people preferred by the establishment. These legally justifiable personnel changes were widely criticized for questionable choices and the lack of transparency in the decision making procedure, such as the cases of the New Theatre in 2011 and the National Theatre in 2013 demonstrated. The two main contemporary art institutions also received new directors: Kunsthalle Budapest in 2011 and the Ludwig Museum – Museum of Contemporary Art, Budapest in 2013.

lxxi See: András, Edit. "Hungary – A Post-Socialist Conflict Zone." The Brooklyn Rail, 16 May 2014, accessed 5 September 2018, http://real.mtak.hu/19961/1/Hungary_The%20Brooklyn%20Rail_KLNY.pdf; Básthy, Ágnes. "What Can Be Said About The State of Hungarian Art?" PoliticalCritique.org, 15 March 2017, accessed 5 September 2018, http://politicalcritique.org/cee/hungary/2017/hungary-art-protest-culture/; Szakács, Eszter. "Unofficial Art and Positive Cultural Resistance Today in Hungary." Independent Curators International, 13 October 2016, accessed 5 September 2018, http://curatorsintl.org/research/unofficial-art-and-positive-forms-of-resistance-today-in-hungary. Also, as a form of resistance, the OFF-Biennale Budapest was initiated in 2015 and took place again in 2017, organized without any state funding or institutional support. See: https://offbiennale.hu/en