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Budapest versus Brussels: Viktor Orbán's Politics of Memory against the European Union

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Abstract

Since Viktor Orbán came to power in 2010, disputes between Hungary and the European Union have increased. Among the contested issues are legislative changes, Hungary's new constitution as well as the so-called refugee crisis. While the European Commission criticizes violations of EU law and EU principles, Orbán accuses "Brussels" of illegitimate interferences with domestic affairs. In this context Orbán frequently uses historicizing arguments, which means that he invokes Hungarian history in order to explain present-day politics. Orbán paints a picture of brave Hungarians who repeatedly fought for freedom in the past, and who repeatedly became the victims of foreign Empires. Today, he claims, Hungarians are in a similar situation again, yet this time they have to defend their freedom against the European Union. While doing so, Orbán often blurs the line between past and present and creates a strict antagonism of "us against them". Historically, "us against them" refers to freedom fighters against communists. Today, "us" refers to a Christian Hungary that values work, family and national sovereignty, and "them" refers to a global liberal elite, represented by the European Union and others. After 15 to 20 years of combatting historical narratives, Orbán's vision of the past gradually turned into the dominant one between 2006 and 2010. With his divisive understanding of Hungarian history, Orbán presents his Fidesz party as the legitimate heir of the 1956 freedom fighters, while the liberal and left camp is delegitimized on these grounds. Orbán's narrative is rhetorically strong and appears self-contained at first glance, yet the thesis at hand will reveal that his connections between past and present often lack consistency. While the historicizing arguments employed against the EU often have a comprehensible core, they are inflated by additional, manipulative and historically questionable points.

Abstrakt

Od Orbánova nastoupení k moci v roce 2010, vzrostly spory mezi Maďarskem a Evropskou unií. Mezi sporná témata patří legislativní změny, nová ústava Maďarska a takzvaná uprchlická krize. Zatímco Evropská komise kritizuje porušování práva EU a zásad EU, Orbán obviňuje "Brusel" z nezákonných zásahů do domácích záležitostí. V tomto kontextu Orbán často argumentuje historií, což znamená, že se dovolává maďarských dějin, aby vysvětlil současnou politiku. Orbán vykresluje obrázek statečných Maďarů, kteří v minulosti opakovaně bojovali o svobodu a kteří se opakovaně stali oběťmi cizích říší. Dnes tvrdí, že Maďaři jsou opět v podobné situaci, ale tentokrát musí bránit svobodu vůči Evropské unii. Během toho Orbán často rozostřuje hranici mezi minulostí a současností a vytváří striktní antagonismus "my proti nim". Historicky spojení "my proti nim" označuje bojovníky za svobodu proti komunistům. Dnes "my" označuje křesťanské Maďarsko, které si váží práce, rodiny a národní suverenity, a "oni" se odvolávají na globální liberální elitu zastoupenou Evropskou unií a dalšími. Po 15 až 20 letech soutěžících historických vyprávění se Orbánova vize minulosti postupně změnila na dominantní v letech 2006 až 2010. Za pomoci svého chápání maďarských dějin Orbán prezentuje svou stranu Fidesz jako legitimní dědice bojovníků za svobodu z roku 1956, liberální a levý tábor je z těchto důvodů delegitimizován. Orbánovo vyprávění je rétoricky silné a zdá se na první pohled logické, nicméně současná práce odhalí, že jeho spojení mezi minulostí a současností často postrádají konzistenci. Ačkoli historizující argumenty používané proti EU často mají srozumitelné jádro, jsou nafouknuty dalšími, manipulativními a historicky spornými argumenty.

Key Words: Hungary; Viktor Orbán; Memory Politics; Populism; European Union

Klíčová slova: Maďarsko; Viktor Orbán; Paměťová politika; Populismus; Evropská unie

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1. The author hereby declares that he compiled this thesis independently, using only the listed resources and literature.

2. The author hereby declares that all the sources and literature used have been properly cited.

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Prague

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1. Introduction

1.1 About the Topic

The thesis at hand analyzes how Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán pursues a populist strategy that aims at delegitimizing the European Union on the basis of memory politics. The four key topics of (1.) populism, (2.) hostility towards the EU, (3.) memory politics and (4.) Orbán's politics are all interdependent and shall be outlined briefly.

All over Europe, populist political forces are on the rise. Populists claim to represent a homogenous group of the "pure" people vis-à-vis an allegedly corrupted elite. Whether corrupted or not, most European countries do have economic, political and cultural elites supporting liberal democracy, free markets and European integration. Against this background, populists often "diagnose" legitimate issues that established forces tend to neglect while large parts of the population consider them to be important. Syriza in Greece and Podemos in Spain, for example, rose in opposition to austerity measures backed by established parties and the EU. On the other end of the political spectrum, Poland's Law and Justice party (PiS) or Germany's Alternative für Deutschland (AfD) gain support from criticizing European immigration policy. While pointing at legitimate issues, the problem of populism is that it does not provide feasible solutions and deteriorates political culture by delegitimizing opponents instead of acknowledging pluralism.

Populism in Europe is inextricably related to the European Union. Speaking of Western Europe, almost all major parties gradually switched their ideological reference points throughout the past decades: while the political left traditionally understood "the people" in the context of class belonging, for the political right "the people" has been a matter of national belonging. These contrasting visions of *le peuple social* and *le peuple national* (Manent, 2012) diminished with every step of European integration, as the national project and the social project were traded for a European one which vacates space on both left and right. Post-socialist party systems are younger, yet the formation of anti-EU populism has similar roots. In most of the countries in question, the majority of political stakeholders took neo-liberalism and the conditionality of future EU accessions for granted in the years after

1989, which in the long run creates a vacuum on the edge of the political spectrum. This accounts in particular for countries in which people perceive the transformation as a failure because their economic situation remains unfavorable. Populists in old and new Member States frequently portray the EU as one of their main "enemies", firstly because it favors market liberalism and Europeanization over the social and the national, and secondly because the EU is perceived as a part of the above-described corrupted elite.

Interestingly, in some post-socialist countries populists use questions related to collective memory, too, in order to refine their anti-EU messages. Invoking memory in order to draw conclusions to present-day politics is called memory politics. Populists who actively use memory politics can most likely be found in countries with fragmented memory regimes. The term fragmented memory regime refers to a situation in which political stakeholders of different camps have fundamentally diverging visions of the country's past, and in which at least one of these stakeholders tries to delegitimize his opponents on the basis of memory issues. As populists often oppose the European Union, populists in fragmented memory regimes often blend their EU criticism with accusations based on memory issues.

The tenuous point of memory politics is that collective memory – unlike history – is not based on facts, but on a personal and emotional narrative that provides identity. Thus, memory politics can be described as "selective remembering and forgetting" (Bernhard & Kubik, 2014a) for the purpose of power politics. This selectivity allows to invoke memory in manipulative ways.

In the case of Hungary, Orbán's strategy unites both populism and memory politics: firstly, he invokes the "traditional" populist antagonism of the Hungarian people on one hand and a corrupted elite from Brussels on the other. Yet secondly, he invokes Hungarian collective memory in order to sustain the criticism with his vision of Hungary's past. The most important point of this narrative is the 1956 uprising against the Soviet Union, from which Orbán creates a narrative of Hungarians as brave freedom fighters, suppressed by a foreign Empire. This motif of victim and suppressor is applied to other historical events, too, and is translated to contemporary politics by replacing the different foreign Empires with the

European Union, and the freedom fighters with Orbán and his followers. This is insofar manipulative as Orbán's vision of the past simplifies history, negates certain historical issues, overstates others, and, simply speaking, intertwines history and mythology.

1.2 Research Question and Assumptions

The research question, which shall be answered towards the end of this thesis, is as follows: Where could the line be drawn between reasonable parts of Orbán's historical narrative on one side and manipulative ones which help delegitimizing the political opponent, yet lack consistency, on the other? To give a well-founded answer, three assumptions shall be proved throughout the work:

1. Hungary has a fragmented memory regime which is based on contesting interpretations of 1956, and became salient because the negotiated transformation of 1989 allowed "old" and "new" political stakeholders to compete with each other.
2. Against this background, Viktor Orbán uses memory issues in order to delegitimize not only domestic competitors, but also the European Union.
3. Orbán's strategy is one of populism and demagogy which frequently manipulates the audience by mixing history and mythology, which produces historically questionable outcomes.

1.3 Methodology

The thesis follows a qualitative approach. A qualitative approach has been chosen because the assumptions and the research question refer to interpretations of the past, and not to "technical" questions that might be answered with quantitative tools. The thesis works with two different kinds of sources: firstly, it is based on secondary literature published by various scholars, secondly it works with speeches held by Viktor Orbán in a pre-defined period. The main method is content analysis.

With the help of secondary literature, a framework will be created that allows to interpret Orbán's speeches. This framework mainly consists of knowledge on the role of memory in political competition in general and in Hungary in particular. It provides an understanding of

how memory is used and reshaped for political purposes, and it indicates key topics. In the case of Hungary, key topics include Communism, suppression and resistance, often attached to key events such as 1848, 1956 or 1989. This framework allows to conduct a content analysis of Orbán's speeches, as it indicates which of his discourses need to be checked thoroughly as to whether they combine these topics with EU criticism.

Content analysis has been chosen because it operates "directly on text or transcripts of human communications, […] the investigator easily may search through the text to retrieve portions meeting specific criteria" (Weber, 1990, p. 10). Weber distinguishes between two different themes: manifest and latent ones. While manifest themes are "physically countable" and bear an explicit meaning, latent ones are rather underlying, or can be derived from the manifest ones. Speaking of Orbán, 1956 can be considered a manifest theme while the feeling of being a victim is rather a latent theme.

As to the content analysis, all speeches held by Orbán between April 2010 and February 2017 and published in the Prime Minister's official online archive were analyzed. This accounts for a total number of over 400 speeches, out of which 62 contained the above-described manifest and latent themes in connection with EU-criticism, and were thus analyzed in-depth. This includes guest articles in newspapers as well as radio interviews, given that they were published among his "normal" speeches in the official online archive. The period (April 2010 to February 2017) was chosen because April 2010 marks the beginning of Orbán's current time in power and he often refers to it as the beginning of a "complete renewal". Moreover, April 2010 was chosen out of pragmatism, as all his speeches held since then can be found in a single official online archive and translated into English. Neither is the case for earlier speeches. The period ends in February 2017 because it is the time of writing this thesis.

1.4 Literature Review

As to populism, Mudde (2004) and Batory (2015) are the most important authors referred to. What is important about Batory is, that she provides the concept of "populist-in-government", which is interesting because most other scholars claim that populism and

governmental responsibility represent a contradiction. Apart from populism, the related concept of demagogy will be disclosed with the help of Fenimore (1838) and Morlock (1977). Additionally, basic insight will be given into conspiracy theories, as Orbán's ideas sometimes contain elements that could be best described by a fear of conspiracies. Among the standard works are Pipes (1999) and Hofstadter (1967). While the former presents an analysis of worldwide examples of conspiracy theorists, the latter actually writes about the United States in the McCarthy era, yet his conclusions are universally applicable.

Regarding memory politics and memory regimes, a model elaborated by Bernhard & Kubik (2014a) is among the core theories used for this thesis. Their model allows to systematically analyze memory politics in post-socialist democracies and builds upon an observation made 20 years after the breakup of Communism: in most of the countries in question, the events of 1989 are not interpreted as something positive, but are highly contested and still dominate discussions between different political camps today. Other relevant authors include Halbwachs (1925), who is considered the father of memory studies, Hartog (2012), who writes about memory regimes, Mink & Neumayer (2016), who trace major European developments of the past decades in terms of memory and politics as well as Berger (2009), who examines the role of history and mythology in the construction of national identities in modern Europe.

This general literature on memory issues will be complemented with literature referring to the Hungarian case. Benziger (2011) explains, why 1956 plays such a prominent role in the Hungarian memory regime, and Seleny (2014) describes how Orbán impropriates 1956 and how 1989 relates to 1956 in his narrative. On the other hand, Kiss (2016) seeks to answer why the political left is incapable of creating a historical counter narrative that is able to successfully compete with Orbán's one. Her work is actually dedicated to the foundation of Budapest's "House of Terror", a highly politicized museum dealing with Hungary's past under Communism and Nazism, yet the story surrounding the foundation of the House of Terror allows to draw conclusions to the Hungarian memory regime in general. In order to put the Hungarian memory regime into a broader context, the respective situation in two other Central-Eastern European countries, Poland and Czech Republic will be analyzed, too.

While the situation in Poland bears many similarities with the Hungarian one, Czech Republic is, simply speaking, characterized by the absence of competing historical narratives. This analysis, which is based on elaborations by Bernhard & Kubik (2014b) and O'Dwyer (2014), is insofar interesting for the Hungarian case, as it confirms the great influence of the transition process on memory issues in politics.

Concerning the contemporary political situation in Hungary, Kiss (2002) is crucial as she describes the evolution of Fidesz from a leftist opposition force to today's right-wing party. Moreover, Seleny (2014) describes the development of Hungarian politics between Orbán's first term in power (which lasted until 2002) and the second one (which started in 2010), and Batory (2014) provides an analysis of the 2010-2014 election period under Orbán. Among Orbán's key topics since 2010 is the idea of creating an illiberal democracy, which stands in opposition to liberalism as promoted by the EU. Regarding illiberal democracy in general, an article by Zakaria (1997) is crucial, and regarding the specific case of Hungary official speeches held by Orbán are used to identify what his vision of an illiberal democracy actually means.

As outlined in the previous part on the methodology, Orbán's speeches play a key role. They help to identify conflicts between Hungary and the European Union and provide Orbán's position in such disputes. The EU's respective counter positions will be outlined with the help of official documents (such as reports by the European Parliament) as well as newspaper articles from various international newspapers.

1.5 Thesis Overview

The thesis is divided into seven chapters. The following chapter will give an overview of relevant theories. It thereby focuses on memory regimes, memory politics, and the role of mythology in the construction of national identities, as well as on populism, demagogy and conspiracy theories. Thereafter, the third chapter will provide an in-depth analysis of the current political situation in Hungary. This refers to the evolution of Fidesz throughout the past three decades, to Orbán's narrative of "us against them" as well as to his vision of creating an illiberal democracy.

Having theoretical knowledge on memory politics (second chapter) as well as insight into the political situation in Hungary (third chapter), the fourth chapter aims at applying these theories on Hungary. Firstly, Orbán's vision of Hungary's past will be disclosed and juxtaposed to the narrative of the left. Thereafter, an excursus to Poland and Czech Republic will show that while ruptured transitions rather lead to uncontested situations like the one in Czech Republic, negotiated transitions intensify the left-right divide of politics and lead to competing historical narratives, as can be observed in Hungary or Poland.

The fifth chapter is dedicated to conflicts between Hungary and the European Union. Firstly, the chapter explains the four most disputed issues. This includes the 2008 global financial crisis, understood by Orbán as a European and Western crisis, that turned Hungarians into victims of these forces. Moreover, several legislative changes, such as the new media law and changes to the judicial system provoked tensions between Hungary and the EU, and the new Hungarian constitution from 2011 became disputed, too. Most recently, the so-called refugee crisis and the European Commission's plans for mandatory resettlement quotas led to disputes between the Hungarian government and the Commission. Secondly, having explained these disputes, the chapter analyzes in how far Orbán uses historicizing arguments in order to delegitimize the EU's positions. Frequently occurring arguments include, that "Brussels" interferes into domestic issues and treats Hungary as a colony, similar to how "Moscow" treated it in the past, or that Hungary defends its Christian traditions dating back to Saint Stephen against a European Union that exchanged Christian values for liberalism and political correctness.

Finally, the sixth chapter will analyze, how coherent the historicizing arguments brought forward against the EU are. It will thus put emphasis on answering the research question. Three main historicizing motifs can be identified when looking at Orbán's speeches, they can be summarized under the catch phrases (1.) "we are victims", (2.) "we are courageous" and (3.) "we are Christian". For each of these motifs the chapter explains how Orbán creates a connection between past and present and how he uses them to praise Hungary and blame the EU, based on his vision of the past. This vision of the past, however, is a selective one, it completely leaves out certain parts of Hungary's history and reinterprets other parts in

questionable manners. Against this background, the chapter will analyze motif by motif, which parts of it are comprehensible, and which parts are manipulative. Thereafter, the conclusion (seventh chapter) will summarize the main findings and will return to the three assumptions presented in this introduction.

2. Theoretical Background

2.1 A Theoretical Framework for Memory Regimes in Post-Socialist Democracies

Memory politics work on the basis of collective memory, an issue that has first been studied by Maurice Halbwachs, whose book "Les Cadres sociaux de la mémoire", was published in 1925. In his book, Halbwachs claims that translating something as individual as memory into the society context is a completely new concept[1]. According to Halbwachs, memory differs insofar from history as that the latter is rather factual, while the former is rather about emotion and personal commitment to the narration (no matter whether one really experienced the respective event, or whether it is a narration from previous generations)[2].

The French historian François Hartog argues that the world's "old" democracies find themselves in an existential crisis, in which their politicians turned from pro-active approaches to merely reactive ones. He calls this attitude "présentisme", or "court-termisme", pointing at the self-conception of politicians to be pragmatic problem-solvers focused on the here and now rather than developing broad visions of the future. It is this crisis of democracy that catalyzes the development of memory regimes. Their salience can be understood as a counter reaction to "présentisme" as they provide daily politics with some sort of overarching meaning again[3] (Hartog, 2012, pp. 12ff.).

Collective memory and memory regimes form the basis of memory politics. The latter can be understood as a political strategy that focuses on anchoring specific narrations of history in order to use them as vehicles for purposes related to political power, such as legitimizing one's own power or delegitimizing the claims of adversaries. Most of the available theories on memory politics – or even memory in general – are fragmented and point at single sub-fields instead of approaching the topic systematically. Addressing memory issues with topically fragmented theories instead of overarching ones can be considered a problem and

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[1] "On n'est pas encore habitué à parler de la mémoire d'un groupe, même par métaphore. II semble qu'une telle faculté ne puisse exister et durer que dans la mesure où elle est liée à un corps ou à un cerveau individuel" (Halbwachs, 1925, p. 97).
[2] "C'est en ce sens que l'histoire vécue se distingue de l'histoire écrite: elle a tout ce qu'il faut pour constituer un cadre vivant et naturel sur quoi une pensée peut s'appuyer pour conserver et retrouver l'image de son passe" (Halbwachs, 1925, p. 118).
[3] "L'instrument du régime d'historicité aide à créer de la distance, pour […] mieux voir le proche" (Hartog, 2012, p. 13)

bears certain dangers, Confino (1997) claims.[4] However, under the given limitations, the thesis at hand cannot fill this gap and thus works with a narrow, yet coherent and adequate concept by Bernhard & Kubik (2014a). The authors call their theoretical framework "A Theory of the Politics of Memory", yet despite this all-embracing name, one should be aware that the model is limited to official political memory in post-socialist democracies. The model is limited to post-socialist democracies, because a broader (i.e. European or global) approach would not allow a discerning analysis of the situation in these countries. On one hand they all share a certain part of history, yet on the other hand the memories of this group bear tremendous differences (for example regarding the interpretation of 1989). A broader model would not be able to identify such important details. Apart from post-socialist democracies, the model is also limited to official political memory. Official political memory refers to a form of memory that can be propagated by the state, by political parties or other relevant stakeholders (in this case the Prime Minister of Hungary). Before going into detail about their model, some explaining remarks are necessary.

Before going further into detail about politics of memory, the three key terms introduced in this chapter could be summarized as follows:

Collective Memory	Memory Regime	Memory Politics
Halbwachs (1925): Collective memory is the memory of a specific group. It does not necessarily stem from the direct experience of the group's individuals. What counts is rather personal and emotional commitment to the memory.	Hartog (2012): Memory regimes provide an overarching meaning to the "daily business". Bernhard & Kubik (2014a): The different "visions of the past" in a given group (such as a nation), together with their related practices, form memory regimes. Such visions of the past pick up (and if necessary try to reshape) collective memory.	Bernhard & Kubik (2014a): A given stakeholder employs his vision of the past in political competition. The way in which it is employed is interdependent with the type of the memory regime.

table 01: definitions of collective memory, memory regime and memory politics
source: author's own, summarizing information provided throughout the chapter

[4] Alon Confino writes in this context: "The history of memory defined topically becomes a field with neither a center nor connections among topics. It runs the danger of becoming an assemblage of distinct topics that describe in a predictable way how people construct the past." (Confino, 1997, p. 1387)

As Mink & Neumayer (2016) put it, “in no post-communist country today is there consensus on definitively closing the ‘file’ of the communist past. On the contrary, the impression is that the importance of the past for political life is growing with time precisely because its moral and socio-political consequences have not really been checked, resolved or overcome” (p.1). This very observation also represents the starting point for the Model of Bernhard & Kubik: according to the them, in 2009 and 2010 – 20 years after the fall of Communism – the commemorations in almost all post-socialist countries have been characterized by mutual allegations and disputes over different interpretations of the past, rather than by national celebrations. Against this background, it is crucial to understand that the regime changes of 1989/1990 have been more than just a redistribution of political and economic power. The breakup of the old system produced a wide empty gap with regard to interpretations of the past. Being free from communist suppression, vast parts of national history needed to be reinterpreted. This accounts for the communist era itself, but also for all other parts of history that were subject to “communist storytelling”. At the same time, the breakup of the old non-democratic system brought the new situation with it that political stakeholders from then on had to legitimize their power claims. Linking both issues leads the authors to the conclusion that in all countries in question, political stakeholders created their own visions of the past and applied a form of “selective remembering and forgetting” (p. 8) for the purpose of legitimizing their power.

According to the model by Bernhard & Kubik (2014a), four dimensions should be considered when analyzing memory regimes. Namely, the authors provide (1.) a typology of four different mnemonic stakeholders, (2.) a typology of three different memory regimes, (3.) ways of how memory regimes are being created and how mnemonic stakeholders arise, and (4.) which implications different kinds of memory regimes have on Democracy (see also table 02).

As to the typology of mnemonic stakeholders, the biggest emphasis will be put on the group of “mnemonic warriors” (as this is the group Viktor Orbán can be attached to). Other groups are “mnemonic pluralists”, “mnemonic abnegators” and “mnemonic prospectives”. What is typical of mnemonic warriors is that drawing a contrast between “us” and “them”

represents a key part of their narrative. In this regard, “we” are the ones who have the “true” vision of the past, while “they”, the political opponents, are the ones whose vision of the past is allegedly wrong. This contrast is exclusive: it claims that “our” vision is absolute. From this perspective, all problems could be solved if only all political stakeholders committed to this “single truth”, if it becomes the common ground on which the whole society stands. The warrior approach delegitimizes all political stakeholders who have different understandings of the past, and thus shifts the “blame” for political failures on “them”, on all those who do not agree with “our” vision of the past. Besides, mnemonic warriors tend to blend past disputes with present or future ones, as they insist that all contemporary political debates are overshadowed by (alleged or real) antagonisms from the nation’s past. All in all, their concepts, their practices and their arguments can be understood as “mission-like”. Contrary to mnemonic warriors, mnemonic pluralist acknowledge that other stakeholders could have their own understanding of the past, and that this is legitimate. They set great store on dialogue and discussion and assert that different visions of the past can co-exist. The third group of stakeholders are mnemonic abnegators. They try to avoid memory politics, based on the assumption that the society shares a common and widely accepted understanding of the past. The fourth and final group of stakeholders are mnemonic prospectives. Like mnemonic abnegators, mnemonic prospectives try to avoid memory politics, yet based on a different reasoning. For them, history should not have major influences on contemporary politics, as they argue from some kind of “post-historic” position (Bernhard & Kubik, 2014a, pp. 13ff.).

From this typology of stakeholders, conclusions could be drawn with regard to the typology of memory regimes. Three different types of memory regimes can be identified: firstly, “fractured memory regimes” arise when there is at least one mnemonic warrior in the political sphere of a country. Secondly, the presence of mnemonic pluralists and the absence of mnemonic warriors leads to “pillarized memory regimes”. Thirdly, “unified memory regimes” are possible if all stakeholders belong to the group of mnemonic abnegators. These different memory regimes are no static concepts, they are subject to

dynamic developments, depending on factors such as the salience of certain political topics at a given time (ibid., pp. 16ff.).

Thinking of how such memory regimes arise, two components are involved - semiotic and institutional practices. While the former focuses on the meaning of collective memory and is content-centered, the latter is technique-centered and describes institutional practices that are necessary to implement and disseminate certain understandings of the past. At the same time, the creation of memory regimes is subject to constraints. Firstly, there are structural constraints, referring to preconditions such as the character of state socialism or the way in which the liberation from Socialism happened. The latter is insofar crucial as countries with negotiated transitions are more prone to fractured memory regimes than countries with rupture-like transitions, which is linked to the political vulnerability of present-day stakeholders who participated in negotiations. The second sort of constraints are cultural constraints. This refers to existing and often unofficial narratives of the past, the self-conception of a society, and broadly accepted social values (ibid., pp. 19ff.).

The fourth and final “pillar” of Bernhard’s & Kubik’s model gives assumptions on the impact that different memory regimes have on Democracy. Emphasis shall be put on fractured memory regimes, as this is the prevalent situation in Hungary. One of the adverse influences that such memory regimes have on democracy is the interlinkage between questions of political legitimacy and disputes about visions of the past. If certain democratic political stakeholders are denounced as illegitimate because they have a different understanding of the past, then this is problematic with regard to democracy. Another negative impact is that political culture suffers if political opponents are understood as enemies rather than competitors. Such conflicts also translate onto the civil society level. In fractured memory regimes, political differences also coin social interactions, which leads to a lower level of interpersonal trust. Apart from this, fractured memory regimes are prone to political instability and higher electoral volatility (ibid., pp. 28ff.)

	Types of Mnemonic Actors and Their Dominant Strategies			
	Mnemonic warriors	Mnemonic pluralists	Mnemonic abnegators	Mnemonic prospectives
Who are the participants in memory politics?	Us versus them.	Us and them.	Those who dwell on the past, not us.	Expansive and exhaustive us.
What is the predominant vision of collective memory?	Memory is non-negotiable, as there is only one "true" vision of the past.	Negotiation on memory issues, but within an agreement on the fundamentals of mnemonic politics.	Low salience of memory issues for politics.	The riddle of history has been solved; both the past and the future are known.
When are the events to be remembered happening?	**In a single mythical past** (wrongs of the past are part of the tissue of present politics).	(Probably) in **multiple pasts**. Different interpretations of the past exist.	**Never** mind when, it is not important. There is no time like the present.	**In the future**. Teleological orientation. There is an inevitable or desirable and attainable state.
How is the mnemonic contest to be carried out? What are the culturally prescribed strategies of action?	Defeat, deny power to, delegitimize alternative visions of the past. Do not negotiate, avoid compromise.	Practice respect, toleration for alternative views of the past on the basis of a common understanding of the fundamentals. Be ready to negotiate or disagree.	Avoid mnemonic contests. They are a waste of time.	Focus political energy on building a "brighter" future and challenge competing visions of the past in the name of the correct revolutionary interpretation.
Why is it worthwile or not worthwile to engage in mnemonic struggle?	**Fundamentalism**: our "true" vision of the past legitimizes our claim to power.	**Pluralism**: there are several visions of the past that are acceptable. Our claim to power rests on our effort to institutionalize a frame for their coexistence.	**Pragmatism**: propagating a predominant vision of the past is not seen as worthwile in comparison to responding to present-day problems.	**Utopianism**: An idealized future is attainable but requires action in the present.

table 02: types of mnemonic actors and their dominant strategies
source: Bernhard & Kubik (2014a), p. 15

2.2 Memory and Myths as Tools of Politics and National Identity in Europe

The model of Bernhard & Kubik presented in the previous chapter focuses on the politics of memory in post-socialist democracies. As the authors mainly analyze the status quo and how it evolved under the respective national circumstances, the European dimension of memory politics shall be analyzed in this chapter. Firstly, an approach by Mink & Neumayer (2016) will be discussed. They identify four major developments of memory politics throughout Europe. One of these developments is the collision of diverging collective memories of old and new Member States after 1989, which is crucial in order to understand Orbán's narrative. Secondly, Berger (2009) adds a fifth development. He explains how myths are used in the construction of national identity in modern European states, which is insofar important as memory politics usually "play" with national identity and its historic background.

According to Mink & Neumayer, four developments can be observed. Not all of them can be found in every country – some are mutually exclusive while others overlap. The trends could be summarized by (1.) reconciling, (2.) reactivating historical conflicts, (3.) turning memory into state policy, and (4.) dividing a unified Europe through contesting memories.

Firstly, Mink & Neumayer identified so-called "intensive reconciliationism", which describes international relationships between former victims and former oppressors that are characterized by the will to reconcile. Key words introduced by different scholars include "apology diplomacy" and "pardon policies". "Politics of regret", as they are called, too, are often accompanied by historians coming together in bilateral or international committees. An example of this could be the relationship between Germany and France after World War II.

Secondly, and contrary to this, there is a trend that can be described as reactivation of historical conflicts. It is a trend, in which "conflictual memory is reactivated and memory-related representations [are] used politically either to stigmatize or discredit a political opponent or, more broadly to reopen a historical 'case' in hopes of changing the verdict" (p. 1). Mink & Neumayer provide the example of Germans expelled from Sudetenland after

World War II. With the EU's 2004 enlargement, they increasingly (publicly) insisted on their memory of expulsion, and thus tried to separate their fate from the defeat of Nazi Germany. Such assertions were made possible only after 1990, with the end of stabilized power relations in Europe.

Thirdly, Mink & Neumayer observe that all over Europe memory increasingly becomes the subject of normative or legal policies, which means that the state intervenes in questions regarding the interpretation of the past. The authors summarize this trend with "use the dead to govern the living" (ibid.), and refer to Poland's PiS party (Law and Justice), which actively advanced their concept of "history policies" while being in government between 2005 and 2007 (ibid.). To give another international example, Katyń is worth being mentioned. In 1940, tens of thousands of Poles were murdered by Soviet troops in the forests of Katyń, an event that still strains Polish-Russian relations today. In April 2010, President Lech Kaczyński and a delegation sought to visit Katyń, to commemorate the victims of the massacre. While approaching Smolensk airport, the airplane crashed and all 96 passengers, including the president, were killed. Kaczyński's brother Jarosław and other PiS members later tried to create links between the events of 1940 and 2010, i.e. by naming them "Katyń 1" and "Katyń 2". Drawing this connection helped the government to maintain anti-Russian sentiments and to underline their role as "'doorkeeper to the European Union" (ibid., p. 6).

Fourthly, the EU eastern enlargement turned the previously unanimous European memory into a set of fragmented and diverse ones. Up to the 1970's, the paramount interpretation of the past has been that "Germans alone were guilty of the atrocities committed during the Second World War, the corollary of this being the myth of resistance and the uncontested 'victim' status of Nazi-occupied countries" as Mink & Neumayer (2016, p. 2) put it. From the 1970's on, the interpretation became more universal: instead of the "victim countries versus Germany" narrative, European unity was put to the foreground and presented as the only solution that is able to prevent atrocities such as the ones committed by Nazi Germany. However, after 1990 these widely accepted narratives were replaced by competing ones. With Central Eastern European countries embarking on their way towards the European

Union, their interpretations started to challenge the existing, Germany-centered ones. For instance, unlike in the new Member States, the "old" European narrative did not incorporate crimes committed under Communism, since Nazi Germany had always been the point of reference. In this context, cruelties from the Stalin period play an important role, as the "old" Western European memory widely neglects them and almost exclusively revolves around the Holocaust. Moreover, different interpretations of 1945 contribute to the new competition of narratives. For Western European countries it has been the beginning of democracy, for Central Eastern European countries it has been the prolongation of suppression (ibid., p. 2).

While Mink & Neumayer speak of developments that each fall into a specific time of European history, Berger (2009) presents another string that, regardless of time, exists alongside the other developments. He refers to "mythistory", a phenomenon that has a genuinely national dimension but is common to all European countries. "Mythistorians" are stakeholders who intertwine mythology and history in order to construct a national identity. Berger suggests that "myths were often perceived by nation-builders as being far more powerful in mobilizing people than history, so that the combination of myths and history became an even more attractive amalgam to make sense of the world, to provide a master key to explain the present and predict the future, to integrate diverse social and political groups, to legitimate political regimes and also to work towards the emancipation of groups suffering discrimination and persecution" (Berger, 2009, p. 494). In this context, he suggests that while some historical events are overstated, others are understated. This does not necessarily mean that glorious events are favored over defeats, because what counts is rather the creation of a coherent narrative based on continuity, sometimes revolving around a specific motif such as the idea of Poland as "Christ of nations", suffering from the forces surrounding it. In Europe, however, most states and nations do not have continuous histories, which increases the likelihood of using mythology for the above-described purposes (ibid.). Against this background the post-Soviet era represents a time in which "mythistory" is frequently used as a tool supporting the respective national revival (ibid., p. 498).

2.3 On Populism, Demagogy and Conspiracy Theories

Apart from memory issues, the concept of populism is crucial to understand the Hungarian case. According to Mudde (2004) populism can be understood as "thin-centered ideology that considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogenous and antagonistic groups, 'the pure people' and 'the corrupt elite', and which argues that politics should be an expression of the *volonté générale* (general will) of the people" (p. 543). Batory (2015)[5] adds to this that populism represents an antithesis of liberal democracy as well as of constitutionalism. This accounts for the undermining of civil rights, checks and balances and institutions, as well as for disregard towards existing political institutions. Such tendencies are stronger in less consolidated democracies, because in consolidated democracies the system itself is not questioned by major political stakeholders and "anti-system messages" do not find significant support among the electorate (p. 284).

Coming back to Mudde's definition, populism claims to represent "the pure people", a homogenous group that stands against "the corrupt elite". Yet, the question remaining is what happens to this antagonist construct once populists gain power and, technically speaking, become a part of the elite, too. Some scholars claim that the combination of populism and power is not viable in the long run, because representing the elite and at the same time being against the elite exclude each other. Thus, once coming to power, populists either become less populist, get weakened from internal conflicts or fail completely in the light of this balancing act (Taggart, 2000, p. 100). Whether Orbán is a populist or not shall be discussed later (see chapter 3). However, assuming that aforementioned definition of populism applies to Orbán – despite being power for seven years now – it becomes evident that further theories are needed. Against this background, Batory (2014) developed the concept of "populists-in-government". She claims, that populists can indeed remain in power without attenuating their populist stance. Ruling populists can, for example, weaken competing parties through systemic changes, which strengthens their own power perspectives, even in the case of a loss in popularity (p. 293).

[5] Agnes Batory is a professor at the Central European University in Budapest.

Moreover, the question of who belongs to the elite could be reinterpreted and redirected to outside stakeholders, such as the European Union or other stakeholders that are not genuinely political. This becomes possible, because in the narrative of ruling populists, "the people" and the populists themselves are one, and from this follows that every criticism towards the governing populists can be reinterpreted as criticism towards the people (ibid., p. 289).

Apart from populism, the partially overlapping concepts of demagogy and conspiracy theories shall be outlined briefly. The German journalist Martin Morlock describes demagogy as follows: "A demagogue is one who at a convenient occasion openly campaigns for a political goal by adulating the masses, appealing to their feelings, instincts and prejudices, who is guilty of agitation and lies, exaggerates or simplifies the truth, presents his goal as the goal of all who stand on the right side, and presents the manner, in which it is implemented, as the only possible one"[6] (Morlock, 1977, p. 24).

Morlock builds his definition on the foundation of James Fenimore Cooper's 1838 treatise "On Demagogues" (published in his collection "The American Democrat"), which has been one of the first theoretical works on demagogy and remains influential until today. Cooper describes the prototypical demagogue as "a leader of the rabble" (p. 98) and claims that demagogues delude the masses asserting a "deep devotion" to their interests, yet in fact they work first and foremost to safeguard their own benefits. Almost poetically, Cooper writes that "the true theatre of a demagogue is democracy, for the body of the community possessing the power, the master he pretends to serve is best able to reward his efforts" (p. 99). Cooper points at the relationship between the individual and the nation, and writes that populists always claim to serve the nation as a whole, without acknowledging that the people consists of different parts with different wills and opinions. While proclaiming to

[6] author's own translation from German: „Demagogie betreibt, wer bei günstiger Gelegenheit öffentlich für ein politisches Ziel wirbt, indem er der Masse schmeichelt, an ihre Gefühle, Instinkte und Vorurteile appelliert, ferner sich der Hetze und Lüge schuldig macht, Wahres übertrieben oder grob vereinfacht darstellt, die Sache, die er durchsetzen will, für die Sache aller Gutgesinnten ausgibt, und die Art und Weise, wie er sie durchsetzt oder durchzusetzen vorschlägt, als die einzig mögliche hinstellt." (Morlock, 1977, p. 24)

speak on behalf of the whole nation, a demagogue actually just speaks on behalf of a part of the nation, and thus opposes “the will of the entire people, in order to effect his purposes with a part” (p. 100).

The conspiracy theory specialist Daniel Pipes provides manifold examples of conspiracy theories that have originated since the early 19th century in different parts of the world. Conspiracy theorists fear conspiracies such as the alleged Jewish conspiracy, a fear that culminated in Hitler’s regime. Those who fear conspiracies, he claims, almost always turn into conspirators themselves. Hitler, for example, fearing Jewish conspiracy, reacted by creating a system of conspiracy. Pipes speaks of “conspiracism”, because he identifies a set of ideas that has a strength similar to other “-isms” that occur again and again throughout history (Pipes, 1999). Another scholar, Richard Hofstadter, writes about conspiracy theories in the United States at the time of McCarthy, yet his conclusions can be applied globally.

> *A feeling of prosecution is central to the paranoid style, but whereas the clinically paranoid person perceives a world hostile and conspiratorial against him or herself, the spokesperson for the paranoid style finds it directed against a nation, a culture, a way of life whose fate affects not himself alone, but millions of others. [...] His sense that his political passions are unselfish and patriotic, in fact, goes far to intensify his feeling of righteousness and his moral indignation"* – (Hofstadter, 1967, p. 4)

According to Hofstadter, conspiracy theorists

> *“start with such defensible assumptions and with a careful accumulation of facts, or at least of what appears to be facts, and […] marshal these facts toward an overwhelming 'proof' of the particular conspiracy that is to be established. It is nothing if not coherent - in fact the paranoid mentality is far more coherent than the real world since it leaves no room for mistakes, failures, or ambiguities. […] What distinguishes the paranoid style is not, then, the absence of verifiable facts [...] but rather the curious leap in imagination, that is always made at some point in the recital of events”* – ibid., p. 36f.

Marcus (1999) takes up Hofstadter's definition and adds that while conspiracy theories operated on fertile grounds in the Cold War era, nowadays they are advanced by a "crisis of representation", by the lack of conceptual frames that can explain an ever-faster changing world (p. 4). The latter situation could also be described by what Hartog calls "présentisme" (see chapter 2.1).

3. Hungarian Politics under Viktor Orbán

This chapter aims at giving an overview of contemporary Hungarian politics and puts emphasis on the role of Viktor Orbán. Firstly, the evolution of Fidesz from a liberal opposition group in the late 1980s to a center-right mainstream party in the 1990s and later to a populist governing party that proclaims a "system of national cooperation" will be outlined (chapter 3.1). Secondly, Orbán's key narrative ("us against them") will be explained (chapter 3.2). Thirdly, his vision of creating an "illiberal democracy" will be analyzed (chapter 3.3). This part also seeks to answer whether Orbán represents a European frontrunner with his illiberal approach (which is what he claims), or whether Hungary is rather an isolated case, from which no conclusion for other countries could be drawn.

3.1 Evolution of Fidesz

Fidesz was founded in 1988 as liberal opposition group and played a major role in Hungarian political life at that time already, with Viktor Orbán being a prominent member from the beginning on. In 1990, Fidesz entered the Hungarian parliament, yet in the 1994 elections the movement stayed significantly behind its goals, which led to a strategic re-orientation. Fidesz transformed into a conservative mainstream party, and this strategic decision proved to be successful: in 1998 Fidesz gained 30 percent of the votes and formed a coalition government. At the same time, the 1998 elections marked the beginning of a continuously increasing left-right polarization that exceeds the divide known from other European countries. With ever-more unrealistic promises, this polarization adversely affected political culture, as communication between parties of different camps became increasingly inhibited and political competitors turned into enemies that tried to delegitimize each other. In this political atmosphere of "competing populisms", Fidesz lost the 2002 elections and two election periods under Socialist rule followed. Yet, the 2002 defeat represents another turning point for Fidesz' political strategy. From 2002 on, the antagonism of "us against them" was increasingly brought forward. With "us" representing the nation, all political claims of "them", the governing Socialists, become per se illegitimate, because they are allegedly against the Hungarian people. Moreover, this narrative not only creates a mere divide between "us" and "them", but extends the notion to an antagonism between the

nation (represented by “us”, Fidesz) and the state (represented by “them”, the government), which means that Fidesz took an absolute approach and abandoned traditional patterns of political debate between equal competitors (Batory, 2015 p. 286f.). To say it with Orbán’s words, in the aftermath of the 2002 defeat he stated that he cannot accept Fidesz’ opposition role, because “the fatherland cannot be in opposition” (Kiss, 2016, p. 249).

As mentioned, Hungary was governed by Socialist-led coalitions between 2002 and 2010, yet 2006 represents a crucial turning point due to several scandals in which the Socialists were involved, and which were followed by severe riots. Eventually, the government never fully recovered from these events, and Orbán was able to include the scandals into his narrative of “us against them”. The trigger of these riots was a leaked tape of Prime Minister Ferenc Gyurcsány from the Socialist party MSZP (Magyar Szocialista Párt). The tape revealed, that the government consciously told the untruth about the state budget during the 2006 election campaign. Moreover, the leaked material was perceived as cynical by many Hungarians, since Gyurcsány requoted a 1956 radio broadcast, saying “we lied in the morning, we lied in the evening, and we lied the whole day on all wavelengths”. In consequence, Hungary witnessed several months of street protests and riots, including violent clashes between protesters and police forces. The scandal became public in autumn of 2006, just half a year after MSZP won the parliamentary elections with 43 percent of the votes. The government managed to remain in office, yet the party’s popularity declined significantly and was further damaged by the impacts of the imminent world financial crisis (Seleny, 2014, pp. 47ff.).

The 2010 and 2014 elections were both won by Fidesz with a two-third majority regarding seats in parliament. When Orbán speaks of his mission of a “complete renewal” (see chapter 3.3), he interprets the broad popular support as warrant for his transformation plans. In the 2010 elections, Fidesz gained 53 percent of the votes and 68 percent of the seats in parliament respectively. Among the reasons for Fidesz’ 2010 victory were people’s dissatisfaction with the Socialist government, the negative impact of the financial crisis, as well as the electoral system, which favors large parties (see also table 03), Batory (2014, p.

291) analyzes. Contrary to this, Orbán's large-scale changes (such as the new constitution) did not play a major role in voter's decisions, because they were not even announced during the election campaign. In the 2014 elections, Fidesz gained 45 percent of the votes (down from 53 percent in 2010), or 67 percent of the seats in parliament. Fidesz' second consecutive election victory can partially be explained by people's approval of the party's politics, e.g. the election promise of reducing utility charges (against criticism from the European Union). On the other hand, Fidesz also benefited from its own changes to the electoral system carried out in the previous election period. In consequence, Fidesz was able to secure almost the same share of seats in parliament (68 percent in 2010, 67 percent in 2014), despite the decline of votes from 53 to 45 percent (see table 03).

	1990		1994		1998		2002		2006		2010		2014	
	votes	seats	votes	seats	votes	seats	votes	seats	votes	seats	votes	seats	votes	seats
MSZP 1)	10.9	8.5	33.0	54.1	32.9	34.7	42.1	46.1	43.0	49.2	19.3	15.3	25.7 d)	19.1 d)
SZDSZ 2)	21.4	23.8	19.7	17.9	7.6	6.2	5.6	5.2	6.5	5.2	-	-	-	-
Fidesz 3)	8.9	5.4	7.0	5.2	29.5	38.3	41.1	42.5	42.0	42.2	52.7	68.1	44.9	66.8
KDNP 4)	6.5	5.4	7.0	5.7	2.3 a)	0.0 a)	3.9 a)	0.0 a)	a)	a)	a)	a)		
MDF 5)	24.7	42.7	11.7	9.8	2.8	4.4	b)	6.2	5.0	2.8	2.7	0.0	-	-
FKGP 6)	11.8	11.1	8.8	6.7	13.2	12.4	0.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	-	-	-	-
MIEP 7)	-	-	1.6	0.0	5.5	3.6	4.4	0.0	2.2	0.0	-	-	-	-
Jobbik 8)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	c)	0.0	16.7	12.8	20.3	11.6
LMP 9)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	7.5	4.1	5.4	2.5
Others	15.8	2.8	11.2	0.6	6.3	0.3	2.1	0.0	1.1	0.0	1.1	0.3	3.7	0.0

1) MSZP - Hungarian Socialist Party
2) SZDSZ - Alliance of Free Democrats – Hungarian Liberal Party
3) Fidesz – Hungarian Civic Alliance
4) KDNP - Christian Democratic People's Party
5) MDF – Hungarian Democratic Forum
6) FKGP – Independent Smallholders Party
7) MIEP – Party of Hungarian Justice and Life
8) Jobbik – Movement for a better Hungary
9) LMP – Politics Can Be Different

a) KDNP split in 1997, had some MP's elected for Fidesz in 1998 and 2002, before reuniting and running on a joint list with Fidesz in 2006, 2010 and 2014 (and operating effectively as a faction within Fidesz)
b) MDF ran on a joint list with Fidesz in 2002
c) Jobbik ran with MIEP in 2006
d) MSZP ran with a coalition of centre-left parties in 2014

table 03: elections in Hungary 1990-2014 (share of votes and seats; %)
source: derived from Batory, 2014, p. 287, with data from the Hungarian National Election Office

3.2 "Us against Them"

Viktor Orbán frequently speaks of the 2010 elections as a turning point in Hungary's recent history, as the point where "we", the Christian Hungarian nation, finally turned the page against "them", the ones who betrayed "us" for decades (and who continue to threaten "us"). While it is relatively simple to define who belongs to "us" (hard-working Hungarians from lower and middle classes who believe in Christianity and the nation), the concept of "them", of the enemies, is a rather fluent umbrella term that embraces the Hungarian opposition, international NGO's, the EU and the West in general and their political and business elites in particular, liberals and international media. In many cases Orbán does not provide a clear delineation of the different adversaries, which can be explained by his understanding of "them" as a "global network" of "media gurus, unelected international organizations and their local offices" (Orbán, 2017b). With regard to the EU, Orbán claims that "in Brussels the most important positions are held by liberal globalist forces which represent the status quo. They know each other, they are unison, […], and they have the same mindset: Brussels is dominated by this type of interpersonal network." (Orbán, 2016z).

Before going further into detail about how Orbán distinguishes between "us" and "them", "good" and "bad", "national" and "global", Zygmunt Baumann's thoughts on globalization shall be disclosed, as the antagonism created by Orbán is inextricably related to the process of globalization. Baumann claims that globalization "divides as much as it unites". While businesses, trade and information become increasingly globalized or unified, a parallel trend of localizing can be observed, too. "What appears as globalization for some means localization for others; signaling a new freedom for some, upon many others it descends as an uninvited and cruel fate" (Baumann, 2006, p. 2).

Globalization leads to new inequalities: on one side, the "globalized intellectuals" or, to use Orbán's term, the "liberalist globalist elite" enjoys the scarce commodity of mobility and takes it for granted to define values, rules and norms. Yet on the other side, this inequality keeps a large group of people "localized", which, in a globalized world, equals social deprivation and degradation. Moreover, Baumann speaks of increasing separation and

identifies a breakdown in the communication between the “globalized elite” and the “localized rest” (Baumann, 2006, p. 3f). Against this background, Orbán as representative of the “localized” assumes the existence of a “global network” that pulls the strings in the background and wants to impose a strictly liberal agenda on all societies of Europe and the West, usually against the will of the majority of the population (which reminds of Hofstadter’s thoughts on conspiracies, see chapter 2.3).

Speaking with Orbán, this elite affirms that they were the ones who defend democracy while every election that does not turn out in favor of their representatives is branded by them as a threat to democracy. This liberal elite allegedly denies nation states, and through their propagation of “open societies” they actually “destroyed democracy” [sic] because over the past decades they replaced the pure competition of arguments by a competition in which the politically correct argument is always the true and winning one (Orbán, 2017b). Orbán, one might counter, replaces the “pure competition of arguments” by a competition of his position (which represents the good) and positions of the opposition (which are per se illegitimate).

According to Orbán, this liberal elite is constantly losing ground, as proven by election results in Europe and the United States. However, in consequence “the lords of globalist politics are not searching for the fault within themselves, but are instead blaming the people and the nations. They have decided they will not surrender their positions, but will crush any will of the people that opposes the open society and liberal governance” (ibid.). In Orbán’s narrative, the whole Western world is currently witnessing a “rebellion”, which emerges as a consequence of the described antagonism between “us” and “them”, together with “their” alleged unwillingness to step back and acknowledge the new non-liberal reality. Thus, Hungary is engaged in a twofold battle. Firstly, it is fighting a “battle for sovereignty”, against the European elite that wants to deprive Hungary of its freedom by superimposing all kinds of rules and by pulling purely domestic political issues onto the European level. Secondly, this “battle for sovereignty” also has a social dimension, it is “intertwined with an intellectual rebellion against political correctness, enforced isolation and stigmatization” (Orbán, 2016z). In this context it is interesting to see Orbán’s interpretation of the Horthy

regime. Usually his references are indirect ones (see chapter 6), however, in his 2016 State of the Nation Address Orbán referred to Horthy in a direct manner. In the speech, Orbán says that Hungary is on its way towards becoming a prosperous nation. This could be compared to the prosperity of the post-Compromise decades, yet it could also be compared to the Horthy era: "We could also define our current situation in comparison with the Horthy era. This, however, is rather perilous, swampy and nightmarish terrain, and is best avoided." (Orbán, 2016e). Directly after drawing the comparison to Horthy, Orbán pulls it back again. This rhetoric construct could be interpreted as a mirror of his idea that the truth on one hand and political correctness on the other pose a contradiction.

Hungary, Orbán claims, is the vanguard of this "rebellion", which is a role that emanates from the country's specific history and character. From his perspective, Hungary is the forerunner of a movement that works towards transforming the present liberal democracy into an "illiberal democracy", as he phrases it. For the past 20 years the advocates of liberal democracy in the Western world have found themselves in severe and ever-aggravating struggles, which is due to them "falling captive to ideologies". "Ideological thinking has overruled reality-based thinking", Orbán claims (Orbán, 2016y). Since 2010, when he came to power, Hungary has been the first country to acknowledge liberal democracy's struggle and to revert the direction of politics. Putting such a strong emphasis on the year 2010 as a turning point also mirrors the mission-like attitude that is characteristic for mnemonic warriors. In Orbán's narrative, 2010 can be understood as the year in which Hungary finally liberated itself, in which the "mission" started. Having been branded as a "black sheep" at first, now, according to Orbán, more and more countries realize that the Hungarian path is a success story in terms of economic progress and national sovereignty. Middle class wages and consumption are on the rise, full employment is about to be reached, private debts are decreasing[7], rating agencies are upgrading Hungary's scoring, and from the political

[7] Private debts in foreign currencies have been a special problem in Hungary at the time of the 2007 world financial crisis and put many families into difficult financial situations. For a certain period of time this issue was a recurring motif in Orbáns speeches. Several times he depicted Hungarian families as victims of Western political and business elites. Thus, Orbán used problems connected to foreign currency loans as proof of the failure of Western political and business elites. At the same time, the issues served as justification for re-nationalizing several institutions and companies, thus regaining national sovereignty.

perspective Hungary's national sovereignty has been restored and is constantly being defended against outside attacks (Orbán, 2017b). Orbán claims that all this was "our" success, the success of a new Hungary that is based on national and Christian identity. Before 2010, when "they" ("the liberal globalist elite", as he calls them in more recent speeches, represented by MSZP) had been in power, they "turned their back" to the Hungarian nation and did not fight for their interests. Thus, the prosperous Hungary "we" accomplished since 2010 stands in contrast to "their" Hungary, which "brought immense indebtedness on us, record unemployment, abuse of power, widespread corruption, escalation of crime, the rise of extremism, the emergence of ideologies that reject human dignity and equality, the deployment of the police against peaceful citizens, a capital on the verge of bankruptcy and a countryside in decline" (Orbán, 2011a).

3.3 Towards Illiberal Democracy

In a widely recognized article from 2007, the American journalist Fareed Zakaria describes Illiberal Democracy as a system in which rule of law, civil liberties, freedom of speech and the like are curtailed by democratically elected politicians who go beyond constitutional limits. Zakaria exemplifies this phenomenon with a quote by the American diplomat Richard Holbrooke, who said about the 1996 elections in Bosnia that the elections were "free and fair", but that those elected were "racists, facists, separatists, who are publicly opposed to [peace and reintegration]. That is the dilemma" (Zakaria, 1997). Hungary might not fulfil all of these characteristics to 100 percent, and there are indeed different degrees and different understandings of the term "illiberal democracy", yet it is interesting to see that Viktor Orbán explicitly ascribes his government to this concept. In a 2013 speech, Orbán claimed that Western Europe had always been a role model for Hungary, and that almost every Hungarian, including himself, always thought that once Communism is over, all Hungary needs to do is to simply copy the politics and the system of the West in order to become successful. However, over the past few years, with the alleged moral and economic decay of Western societies, things changed and Western Europe lost its role model function (Orbán, 2013f). In another speech, Orbán explicitly mentioned India and other emerging countries as the ones Hungary should model itself after (Orbán, 2013e). Against this background,

Hungary should transform into an illiberal democracy. One possible explanation of Orbán's approach could be found in Andrew Janos' "The Politics of Backwardness in Contintental Europe". Even though he explicitly refers to the period up until 1945, he develops a logic that could be applied to Orbán, too. Janos points at the interdependency of economic prosperity and political authoritarianism. He claims that the latter arises when the former lacks, and suggests that peripheral countries are more prone to such a development.[8]

Orbán introduced his new "rules" in a remarkable speech at the 2014 Bálványos Summer Camp in Băile Tuşnad, Romania. Liberal democracy, he explained, is a concept that in the future will be incapable of being competitive in the global context. Orbán suggests that

> *"there is a race underway to find the method of community organization, the state, which is most capable of making a nation and a community internationally competitive. […] the most popular topic in thinking today is trying to understand how systems that are not Western, not liberal, not liberal democracies and perhaps not even democracies, can nevertheless make their nations successful. The stars of the international analysts today are Singapore, China, India, Russia and Turkey. […] If I think back on what we have done over the past four years and what we will be doing during the upcoming four years, then things can indeed be interpreted from this perspective. Meaning that, while breaking with the dogmas and ideologies that have been adopted by the West and keeping ourselves independent from them, we are trying to find the form of community organization, the new Hungarian state, which is capable of making our community competitive in the great global race for decades to come."* – Orbán, 2014k

[8] Janos develops hypotheses that explain patterns of economic, cultural and political inequality between countries that are at the core and countries that are at the periphery of Europe. He assumes that peripheral countries are economically weaker and politically less stable. Janos suggests that economic scarcity and political authority are interdependent, he claims that the weaker the economy, the stronger authoritarianism gets. While core countries are politically, culturally and economically more innovative, their developments provoke expectations and imitations in peripheral countries. However, such expectations cannot be fulfilled, and imitations do not reach the same quality because factors like innovativeness or certain society structures lack. When expectations run ahead of productivity, authoritarianism increases because the public budget is put under pressure, and an imbalance arises that cannot be controlled on the basis of liberal democratic principles (Janos, 1989).

Orbán often remains on a very general level when speaking about his vision of an illiberal democracy, yet the above statement allows to infer certain points. Without naming concrete issues, Orbán refers to "what we have done over the past four years", thus every major political decision – from nationalizations in the banking sector to changes of the electoral system – can be taken as a product of an illiberal society organization. For a better understanding, Orbán's vision of illiberal democracy can be divided into three dimensions: (1.) the functioning of market economy, (2.) the nation, and (3.) civil liberties.

Firstly, regarding market economy, Orbán emphasizes the role of a strong state and market restrictions. Before going into detail about this, it is crucial to understand that Orbán frequently uses "negative" arguments when speaking about illiberal democracy. This means, that he rarely explains why illiberalism is desirable, but rather why liberalism failed. For instance, he accuses liberal democracy of being "unable to protect community assets" (Orbán, 2014k) and of being guilty of Hungarian families falling into "debt slavery" (ibid.). Thus, one can infer that in his understanding illiberal democracy equals the restriction of market forces and speaks out against privatizations of state assets. Speaking of financial markets, Orbán creates an antagonism between "traditional" work and the former. He describes illiberal democracy as an "era of the work-based state" (ibid.), that is about to be realized. Apart from this, Orbán claims that "the liberal Hungarian state was also incapable of protecting the country from falling into debt" (ibid.). In this logic, illiberal democracies set great store by fiscal discipline regarding their budgets.

Secondly, "the nation" plays a major role in Orbán's understanding of illiberal democracy. He asserts that "the Hungarian nation is not simply a group of individuals, but a community that must be organized, reinforced and in fact constructed" (ibid.). Orbán acknowledges that the nation needs to be constructed [sic], which is remarkable because he admits that "the nation" is a political tool that provides identity by deliberately including certain groups and excluding others. This approach is not new and can be observed almost everywhere, yet politicians in liberal democracies usually use this tool in a rather subtle way and fear being branded as nationalists if they apply restrictive notions of "the nation". Liberal Democracy, according to Orbán, "challenged the very idea of the existence of national interests" (ibid.).

From this one can conclude that illiberal democracy puts national interests to the foreground. If national interests are advanced, other interests naturally have to stand back. On one hand, this can refer to purely foreign interests. Yet, on the other hand, the current state of Hungary-EU relations implies that the Hungarian focus on national interests is also detrimental to larger international interests, interests that serve Hungary rather indirectly by advancing the continent as a whole.

Thirdly, regarding civil liberties, Orbán's notion of "freedom" is crucial. When speaking about freedom, he often refers to national sovereignty, and interprets freedom from a national perspective. Individual freedom, on the other hand, is often portrayed in a negative way as individualism, and is frequently mentioned in connection with liberalism's alleged failures. For instance, Orbán claims that in liberalist Europe, self-fulfillment comes before the family and Christianity, which is detrimental to the nation (Orbán, 2012c). In more recent speeches, Orbán claims that international NGO's also support an individualist, non-Hungarian lifestyle. He denounces them as promoters of political correctness, and as undemocratic, because they allegedly influence decision makers through an interpersonal non-transparent elite network (Orbán, 2017b). They are obstacles that need to be overcome on the way towards illiberal democracy (Orbán, 2014k).

Implementing these three rather "semiotic" dimensions (market economy, understanding of the nation, civil liberties) requires institutional changes, too. These institutional changes and practices are partially in accordance with democratic principles, while they partially also go in the direction of Zakaria's definition, who points at the restriction of democratic principles. Introducing the new constitution, for example, contributes to the implementation of a new understanding of the relation between the individual and society which is not per se anti-democratic. On the other hand, however, the constitution is insofar contradicting democracy, as the parliamentary opposition was excluded from the drafting process (see chapter 5.4). This is questionable with regard to democratic principles, and apart from such "technical" questions, curtailing democracy is also about soft measures, such as delegitimizing opposition forces.

Orbán claims that "there is a race underway to find the method of community organization, the state which is most capable of making a nation and a community internationally competitive" (Orbán, 2014k). He considers Hungary to be a frontrunner in this race, and suggests that slowly but surely all European nations will realize that Hungary's path towards illiberalism is worth being followed:

> *"Foreign countries around the world were for a long time unable to decide whether to look on Hungary as a black sheep or as a European success story. It somehow did not feel right to acknowledge the achievements of a Hungary that did not heed their great words of advice."* – Orbán, 2015b

> *"We were black sheep, but now we are a success story, and this is also acknowledged – although perhaps reluctantly – by those who don't like what we have achieved and how we have achieved it"* – Orbán, 2017b

Contrary to Orbán's view, some observers suggest that Hungary's development does not represent a blueprint for the whole of Europe because Hungary's current situation can be traced back to specific preconditions that do not apply to other countries. For instance, Batory (2015) claims that Fidesz faces relatively weak opposition from the European Union and that it cannot be compared to the wave of other far-right parties emerging in Western Europe. While the latter are mostly young anti-system parties, Fidesz used to be an established conservative mainstream party, that changed its positions later on. From these days, Fidesz still has important ties to the much-criticized European elite, and the party is still a member of the European People's Party (EPP). This provides the party with "a certain degree of leeway, particularly vis-à-vis the EU" (p. 285).

Moreover, as already outlined in chapter 3.1, the support for Fidesz' ideological approach is weaker than the party asserts. Fidesz benefits from the electoral system which disproportionally favors large parties. Besides, the 2010 election campaign did not mention most of the changes carried out during the following election period. Finally, in the 2014 elections, Fidesz lost seven percentage points compared to 2010 (but retained the same number of seats due to changes of the electoral system).

Finally, most other European countries have a less dominant left-right divide. This, again, is a specifically Hungarian issue that has its roots in Hungarian history. Partially, this divide can be traced back to the way in which the transformation to democracy happened. Hungary witnessed a negotiated transformation which allows delegitimizing left-wing forces as successors of the old regime. This issue will be discussed in-depth in the following chapter, which outlines Viktor Orbán's memory regime.

4. 1956 and 1989 as Focal Points of a Fractured Memory Regime

4.1 Orbán's Memory Regime

When analyzing speeches of Viktor Orbán, it is striking that he puts great emphasis on the events of 1956 while 1989 finds less attention. If 1989 is mentioned, then the main point is usually not Hungary's transition to democracy, but to the opening of the border to Austria in 1989:

> *"perhaps our geographical position every thirty years causes history to suddenly thrust us into the main current of debate on the future of Europe. In 1956, after the Soviets pulled out of Austria, we sought to push the Iron Curtain back beyond our eastern border. We were brave and attacked the Soviet tanks with mere Molotov cocktails. In 1989 it was we who had to open our border, to let Germans find their way to other Germans. We were courageous and did this, despite the fact that Soviet forces were stationed here."* – Orbán, 2016w

> *"As Chancellor Helmut Kohl, the great refounder of the state, said: 'The Hungarians knocked the first brick out of the wall'. We could add that the draught which blew through the resulting hole took with it the entire communist world order"* – Orbán, 2016u

When speaking of 1989, Orbán frequently mentions Hungary's credits in the European context, yet he barely speaks about the transition in Hungary itself. This is insofar logical as, from Orbán's perspective, 1989 was followed by two decades of moral decay and liberalism (see chapter 3.1). In particular after the 2006 riots, Fidesz representatives frequently spoke of the transition as a "so-called transition" and of a "so-called regime change" (Seleny, 2014, p. 55). However, the first of the above quotes offers another interesting line of thought, namely that 1956 and 1989 are interdependent events. Seleny puts it as follows: "Political stakeholders transformed 1956, a historical moment of national unity, into a polarizing memory that fractures how Hungarians see 1989" (p. 38).

Why is such a high value assigned to 1956? Three major reasons can be identified. Firstly, the above-mentioned ambiguity of the 1956 movement and the decades of a "muted" 1956 allowed almost all 1989 stakeholders, to present themselves as "rightful heirs" of 1956, because all of them found their camp involved. Naturally, this increased competition between different narratives and turned into a "memory battle" (Kiss, 2016, p. 248) at the latest with Fidesz' 1998 election victory. On one hand, right wing representatives started to create an exclusive narrative revolving around the contradiction between those who stood up for Communism and those who fought against it. On the other hand, pluralists tried to draw a more balanced picture, taking into consideration more than just the two absolute and contentious positions of communists and their adversaries. At that time, no stakeholder was successful at creating an absolute and generally accepted narrative of 1956, yet they all framed it as a "us and them process" (Seleny, 2014, p. 38ff.). Karl Benziger, a US scholar who specialized in Hungarian memory issues, wrote about his 1992 Fulbright teaching scholarship in Hungary, that "what I found most fascinating during my stays was the variety of factional interpretations and their construction. What was left in and what was left out were all marked by furious responses from political parties excoriated in the context of these narratives" (Benziger, 2010, p. 3) Exemplary for Fidesz' position in the competition about how to interpret 1956 is a personal decision of Orbán during his first period in power between 1998 and 2002. The government decided to cut the subsidies for the "1956 Institute" by 90 percent, because – as admitted by a high-ranking Fidesz Member – the institute researchers are "disproportionately emphasizing in their research the role of left-wing or reformist communist participants, who preferred the revolution to promote democratic socialism rather than a complete break with any left-wing ideology" (Kiss, 2016, p. 248).

Secondly, 1956 became such a strong symbol in contemporary Hungary because – simply put – Fidesz won the above-described "memory battle". They did not yet win it in the 1990s, but after the 2006 riots and finally with the 2010 election victory, Fidesz managed to make memory (its memory) a subject of legal and normative state policies. Speaking with Mink & Neumayer (see chapter 2.2), they successfully managed to "use the dead to govern the

living”. With the help of its irreconcilable narrative, Fidesz branded the communist period as an evil era that does not know any nuances between different ideological streams or different phases within this era. This, of course, also applies to the interpretation of 1956. Taking the 1989 perspective, Fidesz usually speaks of a “double betrayal” - first, the freedom fighters were betrayed by communists, and later, in 1989, they were betrayed by a tokenistic transformation to democracy, a transition “that failed to sweep away the communists and provide the moral clarity that they perceived to be the driving force of 1956” (Seleny, 2014, p. 39). In this context, Fidesz “sought to highlight rifts obscured by the compromise, invoking 1956 to sharpen political identities and ideological division” (ibid, p. 40). Nowadays, the prevailing Fidesz-backed interpretation of 1956 is that the freedom fighters were a homogenous group representing the whole Hungarian nation in their will to put an end to Socialism. Yet, this narrative negates the diversity and ambiguity of the 1956 movement, which actually started with the aim to reform socialism, led by a “large, unruly and ideologically diverse group” (ibid.; see chapter 6 for further details).

Thirdly, 1956 plays such a prominent role because it represents a point of strength and courage that allows pushing the ambiguities of the communist era to the background. So-called “goulash socialism” – trading a relatively high degree of political freedom and an acceptable standard of living for refraining from criticism towards the political system – led to a society in which the contrast between proponents and opponents of Communism has been less clear-cut than asserted by Fidesz’ narrative (ibid., p. 39). According to this narrative, erecting and maintaining Communism has been a process carried out solely by foreign forces while Hungarians are presented as a homogenous group of victims, without any noteworthy collaborators or supporters of the regime (Kiss, 2016, p. 245). Thus, invoking Hungarian courage of 1956 contributes to forgetting the ambiguities of Socialist Hungary.

The above-mentioned points imply that the present-day understanding of 1956 is inextricably related to the events of 1989. Thus, it is crucial to take a closer look at how the transformation started in Hungary in 1989. In early 1989, protests urged the party to negotiate with opposition groups, and a roundtable was set up. In May of the same year,

General Secretary János Kádár was forced to resign by reform-oriented party members. Kádár's resignation is of symbolic importance because he had been in power since 1956 and, consequentially, the day he left office marks the beginning of new discussions and interpretations of the 1956 events. The Hungarian roundtable negotiations were insofar specific as they were widely characterized by an "overarching spirit of compromise" (Seleny, 2014, p. 41). Not only the Hungarian opposition, but also the Hungarian Socialist Worker's Party (MSzMP) shared the goal of abolishing the Brezhnev doctrine[9]. MSzMP's position derived from the fact that polls saw the party at up to 40 percent of the votes, which made them relatively independent from Moscow. Additionally, reformist party members declared their openness to overcome the Soviet narrative of 1956 and even approved the exhumation and reburial of Imre Nagy - from the party's perspective an undertaking that was risky on one hand, but connected to the hope of gaining popular support on the other (ibid., p. 40ff.).

The person of Imre Nagy as well as his burial and exhumation turned into crucial events with regard to the competition between different visions of Hungary's past. Nagy was the Hungarian Prime Minister ("Chairman of the Council of Ministers") during the 1956 revolution and was executed by the Kádár regime in 1958, buried in an unmarked grave in Budapest. Nagy, who committed to communism up to his death, was among the co-founders of the Hungarian state from 1948. While his reformist approaches were retorted by the Hungarian Worker's Party General Secretary Mátyás Rákosi, Stalin's death in 1953 strengthened his positions and Nagy finally became Prime Minister that year. Nagy, who still faced resistance within the party, was ousted in 1955, yet returned to power on October 23, 1956, supported by students and workers in a situation of instability. On October 30, Nagy joined the demands of creating democracy in Hungary. On November 1, he announced Hungary's withdrawal from the Warsaw Pact. After the Soviet invasion on November 4, Nagy fled to the Yugoslav Embassy, and was arrested a few weeks later when leaving the embassy (Benziger, 2010, pp. 2ff.).

[9] The so-called Brezhnev doctrine from 1968 justified Soviet military interventions in Warsaw Pact member countries.

In June 1989, 300.000 Hungarians came to the streets of Budapest to witness Nagy's reburial, joined by opposition forces as well as MSzMP representatives. Against this unity, Orbán soon started to attack MSzMP and to deny the political scene's diversity by presenting the antagonism between communists and non-communists as a sole and absolute dividing line without any regard to differences between hardline and reformist communists (ibid., p. 43). In a 1989 speech, Orbán said towards MSzMP:

> *"We cannot understand that those who were eager to slander the Revolution and its prime minister have suddenly changed into great supporters of Imre Nagy. Nor can we understand that the party leaders, who made us study from books, which falsified the Revolution, now rush to touch the coffins, as if they were charms of good luck"* – cited after Benziger, 2011, p. 9f.

In Orbán's logic, all remaining communists were guilty of having killed Nagy, which naturally made them vulnerable in everyday political discussions. Yet, contrary to today's dominance of Orbán's narrative, János Kádár was hardly a persona non grata when he died in July 1989. The funeral was attended by thousands of Hungarians, for whom the funeral was a matter of dignity, not of dispraise. Besides, MSzMP's successor party won several elections since then (see chapter 3.1).

4.2 The Lack of a Left-Wing Historical Narrative

Despite the above-mentioned electoral successes, MSZP and the Hungarian left in general remained unable to develop a coherent and popular counter-narrative to Orbán's vision and instead rather pursued a neo-liberal approach akin to Tony Blair (see also chapter 6, p. 61). Prime Minister Péter Medgyessy, who unexpectedly defeated Orbán's Fidesz' in the 2002 elections, remained unable to present an alternative vision of history, instead he was looking "at the task of governing as a giant collective housekeeping" (Kiss, 2016, p. 250). Applying the model of Bernhard & Kubik introduced in the second chapter, the Socialists at that time could be characterized as a mixture of mnemonic pluralists and mnemonic prospectives, yet far from developing a historical narrative equally strong as the one presented by mnemonic warrior Viktor Orbán. As Kiss (2016) puts it, "in lieu of a viable

narrative identity, they claimed to represent non-political peace, pragmatism, expertise, 'a safe pair of hands', rejecting 'divisive' and unnecessary ideological conflicts" (p. 250), which turned out to be a political failure in the long run. Medgyessy's government faced a serious crisis when the Fidesz-leaning newspaper Magyar Nemezet published documents showing that Medgyessy worked for the Secret Police under the old regime. Publishing these leaked documents was legally questionable and the division for which Medgyessy worked had been a rather "harmless" one which employed many other famous Hungarians, too. Yet, unlike the other ones (whose cases did not produce any public outcry), Medgyessy kept secret about the issue. As a consequence of the revelations, Medgyessy had to resign as Prime Minister in September 2004. This affair exemplifies once again the vulnerability of socialist politicians in post-socialist democracies with negotiated transitions, which in this case is even aggravated by the fact that Medgyessy had already been finance minister under János Kádár's regime (ibid.).

Medgyessy was followed by Ferenc Gyurcsány, who had the advantage of being younger and without any "legacy" of the Kádár regime. Gyurcsány can be viewed as the first Socialist high-level politician who made attempts at creating a coherent historical narrative of Hungary's recent past and the role of the Socialists. However, his attempts remained weak, and he still put more focus on reconciliation (which includes admitting the Socialist's faults) while the development of a vision of the past remained a side product. One of his most regarded essays in this context was published in January 2007, yet the newspaper was one with a target-group consisting of left-leaning intellectuals (who would read his essay anyway), and the time of publishing was a time of crisis (after the 2006 riots), which both make it seem rather like a defense than a self-confident interpretation of the past. In the essay Gyurcsány juxtaposed the right (whose representatives "live in the past") with the left, which is modernizing Hungary and making the country "fit for the 21st century". In his newly developed narrative, he drew a line from 1953 to 1956 to 1968 to the reforms of the 1980's, and from these socialist-driven reforms, the transition to democracy was just the next logical step. Against this background, Gyurcsány wanted to popularize the thought that the left slowly but constantly modernized and democratized the country through internal

struggle (Kiss, 2016, p. 251ff.). However, Gyurcsány's narrative remained weak. Firstly, it was hampered by the fact that the reforms mentioned were born out of pragmatism, not out of ideological conviction and with pride. Secondly, he and most parts of the party kept emphasizing reconciliation, which is a weaker approach than the definite one followed by Orbán. Thirdly, the Socialists still remained vulnerable to attacks pointing at their past.

For the Socialists, it was increasingly difficult to counteract Orbán's historical narrative, which he ingrained deeply after 1998 and which obtained even more tail wind with the 2006 riots. While the Socialists under Gyurcsány had one last election success in 2006, the leaked tapes of Prime Minister Gyurcsány made their approval rates plummet. Here, it is crucial to understand that Gyurcsány's words ("we lied in the morning, we lied in the evening, and we lied the whole day on all wavelengths") were a reference to the communist regime's language used in 1956, which made them appear cynical and which put MSZP's vulnerability as MSzSP's successor party to the foreground again.

As a consequence of the scandal, Hungary witnessed severe turmoils, the left-right cleavage intensified and socialist politicians faced insults and offenses whenever they appeared in public. Jobbik leaders went so far to call Socialists "degenerate", "moral corpses" and "weeds to be eradicated", and Fidesz' assaults have been just slightly less extreme (ibid., p. 54). As Seleny puts it, "the year 2006, then, marked a radical phase in the deterioration of political discourse and mnemonic fragmentation" (ibid, p. 49). Prime Minister Gyurcsány was weakened and had to leave office after a no-confidence vote in 2009. He was followed by Gordon Bajnai, who lost the 2010 elections against Fidesz.

After two election periods (and until today), the left remained incapable of presenting an alternative historical narrative. Their focus was still rather on reconciliation, and the strategy was a mix of denial and defense when speaking about the own history, and a narrative of modernization, when speaking about the future (Kiss, 2016, p. 257).

4.3 Memory Regimes in the Central European Context

This chapter shall give a brief overview of memory regimes and memory politics in other Central European countries. The two countries on which the focus will be set are Poland and Czech Republic. These two countries with their communist era memory issues were selected, because one of them – Poland – has significant similarities to the fragmented memory regime of Hungary, while the other – Czech Republic – features a completely different, almost uncontested memory. Both can be traced back to the respective 1989 transition. Thus, the chapter will reiterate what the previous two chapters already highlighted with regard to the Hungarian case – namely that the character of the transition tremendously influences the character of present-day politics.

In Poland, Solidarność had challenged the regime since the early 1980's and made the country a frontrunner in terms of the transition to democracy and market economy. In February 1989 first roundtable negotiations took place, leading to partially free elections and the sharing of power between the opposition and the communist regime. Similar to Hungary, the transition was a negotiated one, and likewise, this negotiation provoked a stark divide between the left and the right in the decades thereafter. Bernhard & Kubik (2014b) exemplify this divide by analyzing the 2009 commemorations in Poland. The political left draws a positive picture of the negotiations, yet partially euphemizing their own role, which – unlike asserted in 2009 – was based rather on pragmatism than on enthusiasm for democracy. This accounts for former PZPR (Polish United Worker's Party) representatives, as well as for the post-communist SLD (Democratic Left Alliance). Solidarność, too, assessed the negotiations rather positively in 2009, yet already in the years after the negotiations the union was torn between its "reformist" and "revolutionary" wings. While the former group advocated for reconciliation and forgiveness towards regime representatives and wanted to stick to the roundtable agreement, the latter was pushing for more economic reforms and the isolation of former communists in Polish politics. Finally, the "revolutionaries" around Lech Wałęsa came out on top (p. 63ff.). The political right, on the other hand, interpreted the negotiations as "an agreement between elites, that denied voice to the people" (ibid., p. 65), which comes close to Orbán's vision of the Hungarian

negotiations. In Poland the most important party on the political right is PiS (Law and Justice). More radical voices within the party, such as Antoni Macierewicz (who is currently Minister of Defence), view the roundtable as a “national betrayal” from which just a few members of the opposition elite benefitted, and he even claimed that the roundtable was “overseen by Moscow” (ibid.). Over the past years, PiS increasingly turned into a mnemonic warrior, while the political left was rather acting as mnemonic pluralists. The Civic Platform, which was in government from 2007 to 2015, took the role of mnemonic abnegators and pluralists, focusing mainly on modernization (ibid., pp. 65ff). PiS, like Fidesz in Hungary, considers the transition as a failure, allowing the old communist elite to continue manipulating Polish politics. Even though some PiS members (such as Lech Kaczyński) participated in the roundtable negotiations, PiS creates the narrative of a betrayal for which the liberal left should be held responsible. According to this narrative, Poland has not been a free country apart from a brief period in 1992 and the 2005-2007 PiS-led government. Against this background, PiS’ 2016 election victory is considered as regaining national sovereignty against a corrupted liberal-left elite that is steered by “Brussels” (The Economist, 2016; Polityka Insight, 2016).

The case of Czech Republic, on the other hand, exemplifies how ruptured instead of negotiated transitions, can lead to memory regimes that are not fragmented, but unified or at least pillarized. Unlike in Hungary or Poland, the Velvet Revolution brought with it a complete break with the old system. As O’Dwyer (2014) argues, the main dividing line does not run between political parties from the left and right wing, but between parties on one hand, and the civil society on the other (p. 174). Most political parties in Czech Republic are either mnemonic abnegators or pluralists, they do not politicize 1989, because there is just one widely accepted interpretation (1989 as the “end of a nightmare”) and no room for narrative competition. Moreover, the relative stability of the Czech party system and the comparatively successful transition contributed to the emergence of a single, uncontested vision of the past. In this context, political parties showed a certain “apathy” towards the 2009 commemorations, which on one hand can be traced back to their abnegator and pluralist attitudes, and on the other to the collapse of the Topolánek government which

made “normal” political business more important than commemorations. Civil society organizations, on the other hand, used the commemorations to accuse the political elite of failing at keeping the “spirit” of 1989. Interestingly, mostly young protesters who were still children in 1989 went to the streets in 2009. They demonstrated against a political elite that lives in a far-away “bubble” and is rather interested in their own benefits than in the ideals of 1989. For instance, Václav Klaus with his ever-changing positions, was among the ones attacked (ibid., pp. 176ff.). All this shows how irrelevant 1989 is as a polarizing factor in Czech politics.

5. Employing Memory Politics Against the European Union

The current chapter explains the most important conflicts between Hungary and the EU. At the same time, each chapter will analyze in how far the Hungarian side employs historicizing arguments to underline its position. Main disputes between Hungary and the EU over the past years include causes and consequences of the recent global financial crisis, the 2010 amendment to the constitution, the new media law, the abolition of the National Bank's independence, the lowering of the retirement age for judges, as well as the "refugee crisis" in general as well as the proposed quota system in particular.

Most of Orbán's arguments revolve around what is perceived as illegitimate interference with domestic affairs. In this regard, he often speaks of "Brusselism", a term he uses to describe the alleged attitude of calling for European solutions whenever any problems emerge, without contemplating whether a European solution actually makes sense in the given context (see e.g. Orbán, 2016a; Orbán, 2016b).

The analysis is based on the official English translations of all relevant official speeches held by Viktor Orbán between April 2010 and February 2017, published in the official online archive of the Hungarian Prime Minister. Around 400 speeches were screened for relevance, 62 of them were analyzed in depth (see list of references).

5.1 Overarching Historicizing Arguments Brought Forward Against the EU

Before going into detail about how Viktor Orbán uses his vision of the past in specific political discussions between Hungary and the EU (chapters 5.2 to 5.5), those historicizing arguments that are of a general nature and address a broader context shall be outlined here.

Firstly, a recurring motif of Orbán's speeches is to present Hungary as historical victim while Europe[10] is presented as a perpetrator, or at least as someone who is guilty and tacitly accepts that Hungary is being subordinated to imperial powers. Some of these accusations

[10] As described in chapter 3.2, Orbán often applies a diffuse concept of "them". This accounts in particular for speeches addressing a broader context, where no proper delineation between Europe, the EU, European countries etc. is being made.

can be exemplified by a speech held by Orbán on the Memorial Day for the Victims of Communism in February 2017. In this speech, Orbán elaborates the thought that Communism was an intellectual product of the West. This conception of a West that is responsible for Communism is not new and was advocated, for example, by the Russian poet Joseph Brodsky who lived in the United States after being expelled in 1972. In a widely regarded 1985 New York Times article titled "Why Milan Kundera is Wrong About Dostoyevsky", Brodsky underlines that the Soviet Union's ideological framework is based on ideas of Marx and Hegel: "The atrocities that were and are committed in that realm, were and are committed not in the name of love but of necessity - and a historical one at that. The concept of historical necessity is the product of rational thought and arrived in Russia by the Western route" (Brodsky, 1975). Thereby, he presents a counter position to Milan Kundera who paints an antagonism between the good West and the dark East. In his essay "The Tragedy of Central Europe" he writes that Central-European countries have been kidnapped by the East, by a world order that is completely foreign to them as Central Europe forms an inherent part of the West in terms of culture and history (Kundera, 1984).

While Orbán insists on Hungary's belonging to an (idealized) West, he at the same time follows Brodsky's understanding of the West as the force that is responsible for Communism, which seems to be contradictory. In the West, Orbán claims, the intelligentsia kept praising their ideological construct while closing their eyes towards crimes committed under Communism. Even today, after the fall of Communism, this blindness among European elites keeps existing. The European Union, Orbán says, is reluctant to condemn crimes committed under Communism and no trials similar to the Nuremberg trials were ever held. As described by Mink & Neumayer (see chapter 2.2), the breakup of Communism brought with it a new competition of memory regimes revolving around the question whether Nazi crimes and communist crimes have the same gravity. Until then, the Western European memory regimes widely focused on German atrocities. Orbán's juxtaposition of victim and culprit, of Hungary (respectively Central Europe) and Western Europe, ends in the conclusion that "it is no accident that Europe has a guilty conscience when it comes to the crimes committed by Communism" (Orbán, 2017d).

It is an inherent part of Orbán's narrative that certain historical schemes either persist until today or repeat themselves. At the unveiling of a statue of the Hungarian writer Gáspár Nagy in January 2017, Orbán indirectly compared the language used by European elites to the language used by communist elites. This comparison is based on a frequently invoked accusation of Orbán towards Europen elites, namely that they use a politically correct language, a language that does not allow to say certain truths because they do not comply with their liberal way of thinking (see chapter 4.1). Orbán honors Gáspár Nagy for his role around the events of 1956 with the words that

> *"he had the courage to write things which others dared no more than say, and he spoke of things about which most people chose to remain silent."* – Orbán, 2017a

In the very same speech, Orbán concludes by linking the present-day Hungarian government to 1956 freedom fighters, and the alleged political correctness of European leaders to communist censorship:

> *"Together with those poets, today we ask ever more urgently about the fate of our country, and that of an unhappy, hypocritical Europe, which hangs by a thread while modern myths are used to silence our continent's acquiescent conscience"* – ibid.

Orbán often claims that political correctness is used as an instrument that helps imposing imperial attitudes to the detriment of Hungary. He compares the European Union to the Empires Hungary was subordinated to, the only difference being that they changed their instruments and do not use hard power anymore ("they do not transport us to camps, and they do not send in tanks"), but soft power ("the international media's artillery bombardments, denunciations, threats and blackmail" (Orbán, 2016g)). Orbán presents Hungary as a force that resists, that fights for its freedom and its independence against a European elite that allegedly wants to create the "United States of Europe", an Empire-like entity that resembles the Soviet Union and threatens Hungary:

> *"Only our own national independence can save us from the all-consuming, destructive appetites of Empires. The reason we stuck in the throat of the Soviet Empire and the reason it broke a tooth when it tried to bite on us was that we*

asserted our national ideals, that we stood together and did not surrender the love of our homeland. This is also, why we shall not accept the EU's transformation into a modern-day empire. We do not want them to replace the alliance of free European states with a United States of Europe. Today the task of Europe's freedom-loving peoples is to save Brussels from sovietisation." – (Orbán, 2016w)

Apart from these rather general history-based accusations, some of Orbán's historicizing arguments can be attached to specific conflicts between Hungary and the EU. These conflicts shall be disclosed in the following chapters, starting with the causes and consequences of the 2008 financial crisis on the Hungary-EU relationship.

5.2 Hungary-EU relations: Global Financial Crisis

When Viktor Orbán came into office in April 2010, Hungary had not yet recovered from the consequences of the world financial crisis which hit the country harder than most other EU Member States. In the case of Hungary, private household mortgages in foreign currencies were of particular concern and led a significant number of Hungarian families into severe financial situations.

In this early stage of Orbán's time as Prime Minister, historicizing arguments put forward against the European Union were still of a more general nature than today. In EU disputes, references to particular dates in Hungarian history (such as 1956) were made less often. Instead the logic was rather that Hungarians are a Christian nation and that the Hungarian people maintained moral values connected to its 1.000 years long Christian tradition dating back to St. Stephen. The European elites, on the other hand, allegedly lost these values. They frequently deny their Christian roots, and this is what finally led to the 2008 financial crisis, Orbán claims. Despite using different arguments today, the typical juxtaposition of victim (Hungary) and culprit (EU) can be found here, too.

The values that Hungarians – in contrast to European elites – allegedly hold up are often described by Orbán with the term "ora et labora"[11]. The connection of both faith and work

[11] "Ora et labora" stems from the Benedictine monastic context, and the full phrase actually is "Ora et labora (et lege), Deus adest sine mora", translated as "work and pray (and read), God will aid you without delay". In other contexts, it is also

equals the self-perception of Hungarians as put forward by Orbán. Against this background, he creates an antagonism between Hungarians that follow "ora et labora" on one side and irresponsible financial markets on the other. It is no coincidence, Orbán claims, that 1.000 years ago Saint Stephen offered the crown to the Virgin Mary, and "not into the safekeeping of a foreign power, and [...] not into a financial institution" (Orbán, 2012c). This criticism targets the EU ("foreign power") as well as financial markets. At the same time, it is crucial to understand that from Orbán's perspective both are inextricably related (which he would later, in the second half of the decade, frequently describe as an "interpersonal network of liberalist globalist forces", see chapter 3.2). How these forces stand in contrast to "ora et labora"-Hungarians can be exemplified by the following quotations:

> *"In Brussels, they think that market logic can be used to remedy any and all social troubles. [...] The political version of market supremacy is liberal individualism. [...] This culture and politics has developed its own way of speech, its themes, its vocabulary and reasoning. This is the language of moral relativism. [...] Perhaps a Europe that represents Christian values would not have allowed people to consume the future of their families with unsecured loans. [...]"* – Orbán, 2013b

> *"It is my firm belief that a Europe that represents Christian values would perhaps not have allowed people to squander the future of their families by taking on irresponsible loans."* – Orbán, 2012c

In the same speech, Orbán continues that besides the negation of "ora et labora", the core of Europe's problems consists in the denial of European elites towards traditional concepts of "nation" and "family". He diagnoses a "crisis of families, communities and the nation", concepts that "in the early stages of capitalism were precisely what made us successful, [...] because they fitted into a Christian system of morals" (Orbán, 2012c). Thus, Orbán connects his understanding of "work", "faith", "nation" and "family" to the financial crisis, which was partially caused by European elites who allegedly lost these values. This construct, in which everything is related to everything, and which suggests that there was one absolute solution

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called "ora et labora, pro Deo et rege" (for God and the king). Interestingly, Orbán just explains that "ora at labora" symbolizes the Hungarian people, yet he misses out on explaining the second part of the saying, which leaves open space for interpretations about who represents God or the king. Thus, it remains open whether the latter should refer to Orbán.

that would solve all problems (return to a traditional understanding of Christianity, the nation etc.), seems to be a typical characteristic of mnemonic warriors as described by Bernhard & Kubik (2014a, see chapter 2.1).

5.3 Hungary-EU relations: Legislative Changes regarding Media, Judiciary and the Central Bank

While the aforementioned implications of the world financial crisis have been among the key topics of Viktor Orbán since the very beginning of the election period, in 2011 and 2012 several legislative changes were put on the agenda, leading to tensions with the European Union. In this context, the EU considered the independence of the media, the judiciary and institutions such as the Central Bank under threat. Orbán, on the other side, considered these objections as illegitimate interferences into domestic affairs.

In the aftermath of the 2010 election success, the new government soon established a new media authority which is strongly influenced by the government. The authority manages public TV and radio stations through a newly erected foundation and also supervises private TV and radio stations as well as print and online media. It can impose fines if media coverage is considered to be "unbalanced". From the international perspective the introduction of the law has been highly controversial and faced criticism from several supra-national organizations (such as OSCE or EU) as well as from NGO's (such as "Reporters Without Borders").

Applying the model of Bernhard & Kubik (2014a), the media law can be understood as an *institutional practice* that supports the creation or consolidation of the government's memory regime, as it provides the government with influence on broadcasting contents. However, the law also has an economic dimension related to state capture, or more precisely "media colonization", as Bajomi-Lázár (2013) puts it. He argues that the new media law with the new media authority led to an enlargement of the state apparatus, the creation of new positions for loyal officials, as well as the satisfaction of personal business interests. Against this background, he speaks of "a strategy aimed at extracting from the

media resources such as airtime, frequencies, positions and money, and channeling them to party loyalists in order to reward them for various services” (Bajomi-Lázár, 2013, pp. 73ff.).

Orbán himself defended the controversial media law in several interviews and speeches directed towards the domestic as well as the international audience. Regarding the international audience, Orbán’s arguments remain rather general. In a meeting with international journalists in Budapest he complains about double standards, illegitimate interference in domestic issues and the unwillingness of liberal political actors to accept that there is a democratically elected conservative government holding a two-third majority (Politico, 2011). Towards the domestic audience, Orbán repeats similar arguments, yet he additionally goes more into detail about the actual intention of the law. In an interview with the right-wing daily Magyar Nemezet he explains that the law provides a solution for the existing financial and structural deficits of public broadcasting, thus creating a public broadcasting system that is economically sustainable in the long run. Under the current circumstances, where the government holds a two thirds majority in parliament, it is a normal democratic procedure that the chairpersons of the new media authority are close to the government, Orbán claims. Apart from these “technical” necessities, the law has a more overarching purpose and should protect human dignity and children: “It is the same situation as with cars that have constantly gotten faster and more powerful, so that first belts, later air bags, then child seats and new braking systems were introduced. The media law is not about freedom of speech. It's about the need to ensure the protection of human dignity and our children” (authors own translation[12] of Viktor Orbán, cited after Magyar Nemezet (2010). More recently (and pointing at the issue from a broader perspective), Orbán even suggested that it is Western Europe, where freedom of press is threatened, not Hungary. Being subject to social and political pressure of liberal forces, media outlets in Western Europe lost their neutrality and stick to political correctness (Orbán, 2017b; Orbán, 2016b).

[12] “Ami pedig a törvény célját illeti: ugyanaz a helyzet, mint az autóknál, amelyek egyre nagyobb teljesítményűek, és egyre gyorsabban száguldanak, úgyhogy először be kellett vezetni a biztonsági övet, aztán a légzsákot, gyermekülést, újfajta fékrendszereket. A médiatörvény nem a szólásszabadságról szól. Arról van szó, hogy az emberi méltóságot és a gyermekeink védelmét biztosítani kell.” (Magyar Nemezet, 2010)

Despite threatening Hungary with an infringement procedure, the EU never launched such a procedure. Infringement procedures are issues brought to the European Court of Justice by the European Commission due to an assumed infringement of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU (TFEU) or other EU law. Instead, the European Commission put informal pressure on Hungary, which finally led to a slight attenuation of the media law. Most observers, however, claim that these changes were of a minor and ineffective nature (Sedelmeier, 2014, pp. 113ff.). Besides, the Hungarian constitutional court decided in December 2011, that parts of the law are unconstitutional, as they limit the freedom of written press (Deutsche Welle, 2011). Yet, according to the Commission's position, the new law should not only be analyzed from a merely "technical" perspective, but should be put into the bigger picture. In February 2012, EU Commissioner Neelie Kroes explained in a speech, that "in the EU, respect for media freedom and pluralism is not, and should not be, only about the technically correct application of EU and national law. Rather, it is also about implementing and promoting fundamental democratic principles in practice. Ultimately, media pluralism and freedom depend on the right atmosphere and political culture" (Kroes, 2012)

Apart from the media law, additional legislative changes led to tensions with the European Union, which intensified in spring 2012. One of the laws that faced strong international criticism had the intention to lower the retirement age of judges from 72 to 60 years. The European Commission initiated an infringement procedure over the issue, and in July 2012 the Hungarian Constitutional Court decided that the law was unconstitutional because such a tremendous change needs a more gradual implementation (Reuters, 2012). Orbán critics claim that actual intention of the law was to replace older, independent judges with ones that are more loyal to Fidesz (see e.g. Kornai, 2015, p. 34ff.). Around the same time, Hungary's plans to abolish the independence of the National Bank became a contested issue between the government and the European Union. Like in the case of the aforementioned changes to the judicial system, the European Commission reacted with an infringement procedure to the abolition of the Central Bank's independence. In addition, the EU used the instrument of issue linkage in order to influence the Hungarian government. Between 15

and 20 billion EUR of financial assistance by the International Monetary Fund were linked to the restoration of the Central Bank's independence (Sedelmeier, 2014, p. 113ff.).

The 2011 media law was among one of the most contested issues between Hungary and the EU at that time, leading to discussions in the European Parliament and to objections by the European Commission as to whether it complies with EU law. Unlike with most other issues, in the case of the media law Orbán rarely uses historicizing arguments targeting the EU. The main reason behind this is, that he refuses to enter any discussion about the law, claiming that there were no concrete objections to the law, but only general statements that lack profundity. On such a basis, no real discussions were possible, he claims. Instead, Orbán accuses the EU of applying double standards because other Member States allegedly have similar laws, to which no objections were ever raised (Politico, 2011).

Orbán's use of historicizing arguments is completely different with regard to other legislative changes made by the government towards the beginning of the first election period. In reaction to the abolition of the Central Bank's independence, changes to the judicial system (lowering the retirement age of judges) and the abolition of the independence of the national data protection authority, the European Commission initiated infringement actions against the government in Budapest in early 2012. Against this background, tensions between Hungary and the EU intensified in spring 2012 and reached their apex when the Commission announced the suspension of 495 Mio EUR of EU funding due to the Hungarian budget deficit being above the 3% threshold (BBC, 2012; Politico, 2012).

In this situation, Orbán used the anniversary of the 1848 revolution in order to attack the EU in a general manner by creating links between the Habsburg rule and the latest EU actions. In this speech, he complained about unequal treatment and assured the audience that he will not allow Hungarians being treated as second-class EU citizens. Moreover, he accused the European Union of treating Hungary as a colony, and added that "we are more than familiar with the character of unsolicited assistance, even if it comes wearing a finely tailored suit and not a uniform with shoulder patches" (ibd.).

5.4 Hungary-EU relations: Adoption of the New Constitution

In 2011 a new Constitution was adopted by the Hungarian Parliament which came into force on Jaunary 1, 2012. It followed the 1949 constitution, the first written constitution of Hungary. Unlike many other post-socialist countries, Hungary did not adopt a new constitution in the years after the breakup of the Soviet Empire. The constitution's preamble is characterized by ample references to Hungary's history. It starts with a reference to St. Stephen and the role of Christianity in Europe ("We are proud that our king Saint Stephen built the Hungarian State on solid ground and made our country a part of Christian Europe one thousand years ago"). The preamble also comprises the "bulwark of Christendom" motif ("We are proud that our people has over the centuries defended Europe in a series of struggles and enriched Europe's common values with its talent and diligence") and emphasizes that the Hungarian nation spreads far beyond the state border ("We promise to preserve the intellectual and spiritual unity of our nation torn apart in the storms of the last century"). Moreover, the preamble underlines the role of the family and the nation, of faith and work ("We hold that the family and the nation constitute the principal framework of our coexistence, and that our fundamental cohesive values are fidelity, faith and love. We hold that the strength of community and the honour of each man are based on labour, an achievement of the human mind"). The constitution's preamble points at Hungary's "historical constitution", proclaiming that the 1949 constitution is invalid ("We honour the achievements of our historical constitution and we honour the Holy Crown, which embodies the constitutional continuity of Hungary's statehood and the unity of the nation. […] We do not recognise the communist constitution of 1949, since it was the basis for tyrannical rule; therefore we proclaim it to be invalid"). Finally, the preamble points at Orbán's slogan of "renewal": "We hold that after the decades of the twentieth century which led to a state of moral decay, we have an abiding need for spiritual and intellectual renewal" (Fundamental Law of Hungary, 2011).

Thus, as Orbán puts it, the new Constitution puts emphasis on "life", "family", "the nation" and "human dignity" (Orbán, 2011b). With these values at its core, the constitution explicitly forms a counter response to liberal forces in Europe, Orbán claims:

> *"One of the reasons why we elaborated a constitution of this kind was that we felt we must face up against those European political and intellectual trends and forces which aim to push back and undermine Christian culture, Christian civilization and Christian values''* – Orbán, 2012c

When it comes to emphasizing Christianity, Orbán again accuses the EU of applying double standards, as the Greek constitution begins with the Holy Trinity, "which clearly troubled no one, but a reference to God in a single sentence in the new Hungarian constitution became a European scandal" (Orbán, 2016j)

Apart from this "broad" discussion, several "technical" details found entry into the discussion. When voicing its concerns, the European Commission often referred to a report by the so-called Venice Commission (European Commission for Democracy through Law), an expert body that was formed in 1990 and originates from the Council of Europe. The Venice Commission is specialized in constitutional law and represents 60 countries, among them all 28 EU Member States. The aforementioned report acknowledges the necessity of a new constitution, yet it also points at weaknesses of the constitution. Among other issues, the report points at the impreciseness of the preamble which leaves too much room for interpretation. This accounts for the whole preamble, but in particular for the concept of "historical constitution" (see above), the report says (Venice Commission, 2011, p. 7f.)

In February 2012, the European Parliament adopted the resolution 2012/2511 "on the recent political developments in Hungary" (European Parliament, 2012). In the pursuant report, the European Parliament goes into detail about different concerns related to the process of drafting and adopting the constitution[13] (European Parliament, 2013). In reaction to this report, Orbán complains about "double standards" and that the report "constitutes a real danger to the future of Europe" as it breaks the founding treaties and "disregards the competences of the European Union" and "would bring one of the Member States of the European Union under control and guardianship" (Orbán, 2013c).

[13] In its report, the European Parliament notes for example that the short timeframe for the adoption of the Constitution restricted the possibilities of a substantial and thorough debate in parliament. Moreover, concern is voices over the fact that the draft has been elaborated by coalition representatives, under the exclusion of a parliamentary commission that has been set up for the purpose of drafting the constitution (European Parliament, 2013).

Generally speaking, Viktor Orbán uses two different strings of arguments to justify the need for a new constitution. Firstly, he speaks of the need to revive traditional Christian values and the importance of the family and the nation. Secondly, he often argues from a historical perspective. In this context, Orbán calls the previous constitution from 1949 a "temporary solution solidified into permanence", and adds that for Hungarians "this is not an unfamiliar experience; it reminds us of Soviet troops, who were supposedly stationed in Hungary on a temporary basis" (Orbán, 2015d). In another speech he argues similarly that the previous constitution was not more than an interim solution that did not represent the spirit of 1956. From this one can conclude for the new constitution that it

> *"draws a clear demarcation line from the period that crippled Hungarians, that provides closure for the past and creates a final foundation, thereby secures the future of Hungary"* – Orbán, 2011a

Having the historicizing nature of the constitution's preamble in mind, the words of a "final foundation" seem to mirror a decisive characteristic of mnemonic warriors. As pointed out in chapter 2.1, they typically tell a narrative that claims to possess the only and absolute truth about a nation's history.

When defending the constitution against criticism from the EU, Orbán uses two different historicizing arguments. On one hand, he avails himself of the already familiar juxtaposition between a European Union that lost its Christian values and a Christian Hungary that stands in the tradition of Saint Stephen (Orbán, 2012c). On the other hand, he places the constitution at the core of his renewal and claims that it stands in line with Hungary's 1848 and 1956:

> *"Yes, we Hungarians have two revolutionary traditions: one leads from 1848, through 1956 and the fall of Communism, all the way to the Fundamental Law and the current constitutional order; the bloodline of the other transition leads from Jacobin European ancestors, through 1919, to Communism after World War II and the Soviet era in Hungary"* – Orbán, 2016g

While the constitution represents the "positive" revolutionary tradition, the "negative" revolutionary tradition is not yet dead, and could be reinvigorated by foreign forces:

> *"Not even the uplifting mood of a celebration day can let us forget that the tradition of 1919, too, is still with us – though fortunately its pulse is just a faint flicker. Yet at times it can make quite a noise. But without a host animal, its days are numbered. It is in need of another delivery of aid from abroad in the form of a major intellectual and political infusion"* – (ibid.)

Being familiar with Orbán's rhetoric, one can assume that the foreign "intellectual and political infusion" points at the European Union, to which he refers later in his speech.

5.5 Hungary-EU relations: Refugee Policy

With the beginning of Orbán's second election period in 2014 and in the context of intensifying migration flows into Europe, the EU refugee policy attracts increasing attention in Orbán's speeches. The Orbán government takes strict anti-immigration positions and voices the fear that Hungary's and Europe's Christian culture could be first blended with Islamic elements and later taken over by them. European elites allegedly play a decisive role here: firstly, they want to use the refugee crisis to finally cut Europe's Christian roots, secondly, apart from such cultural questions they have economic questions in mind. According to this logic, masses of refugees are deliberately let into Europe in order to satisfy economic stakeholders, yet to the detriment of the local population, as expressed by Orbán in his 2017 State of the Nation address:

> *"Countries are transformed into railway stations, with everyone being able to move in and out freely. And finally, through dismantling the rules of economic self-defence, the foxes are let into the henhouse, to engage in free competition. And, if the foxes keep winning, nobody can do anything about it. […] And if the poor, slowly-awakening citizens do after all dig in their heels, they'll be flooded with a few million migrants: 'If these fuddy-duddies in Europe, who are unwilling or unable to shake free of their Christian roots and patriotic feelings, won't take heed, then let's dig deeper and replace the subsoil of European life. Let masses of people from*

> *different religious backgrounds – who have been raised with different morals and different traditions, and who have no idea about Europe – come and teach us a lesson'. This is how the world's most bizarre coalition of people smugglers, human rights activists and leading European politicians was created, with the aim of systematically bringing millions of migrants into Europe. Where will all this lead?"*
> – Orbán, 2017b

Apart from this, the underlying logic pursued by EU elites is allegedly that Muslims will become future left-wing voters, which is why Europe's leaders insist on the influx of migrants (Orbán, 2016s).

One of the most contested issues in this regard has been the proposal of a European relocation scheme according to specific quotas for each country. The proposal was brought forward in spring 2015 by Western European politicians, such as German chancellor Merkel (The Telegraph, 2015). It has been formulated under the impression that the vast majority of refugees were hosted by a small number of Western European countries. The proposal faced criticism from the Visegrad group, yet in September 2015 a relocation scheme for 120.000 refugees was approved by the Council of Justice and Home Affairs with the votes of most Western European countries, the Baltics and Poland against the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Romania and Hungary. According to the quota, Hungary should have accepted around 1.300 refugees, mainly from Greece and Italy. However, politicians from Hungary and other European countries questioned its feasibility, given that open borders within Europe make it difficult to keep refugees in their new host country once being relocated (The Guardian, 2015). After all, the implementation of the resettlement mechanism started slowly, turned out to be inefficient, and finally failed in the light of technical difficulties and the unwillingness of national governments to participate. One year later, at the September 2016 EU summit in Bratislava, the system of mandatory quotas was officially abandoned and more flexible alternatives based on voluntary contributions in different forms were discussed (Euractiv, 2016).

One of Orbán's main arguments against the resettlement scheme is that Germany unilaterally decided to let refugees into the country without checking whether they stay

illegally in the EU or not. In consequence, as Orbán puts it, "we – the other European countries – were not allowed to sit at the table when that decision was made, [thus] we cannot be expected to share the consequences of this decision at the international level" (Orbán, 2016i). Moreover, in reaction to the resettlement scheme, Orbán initiated a national referendum, which was held in October 2016. The aim of the referendum was to strengthen the position of the Hungarian parliament against what is perceived as interference with domestic affairs by the European Union (Orbán, 2016d). The referendum asked:

> *"Do you agree that the European Union should have the power to impose the compulsory resettlement of non-Hungarian citizens in Hungary without the consent of the National Assembly of Hungary?"* – (ibid.)

In this context, it is interesting to see that Orbán compares immigrants to invaders. Even though a great part of the immigrants in question are Muslims, Orbán does not invoke the Ottoman Empire. Instead, he compares the resettlement scheme to the Soviet invasion in 1956. Orbán compares migrants to Soviet soldiers, and thus one can infer that he considers Brussels to be the commander, comparable to Moscow in 1956:

> *"For instance, if the Soviets occupy Hungary, that is a danger as we saw in '56. But it's equally a danger to freedom if strangers appear in the territory of a country without controls of any kind whose customs and ideas about life are vastly different from ours, and who transform our free society, whether overnight or gradually, but against our will. So therefore it's hard to talk about '56 and freedom by detaching them from the context of the world today, and life today."* – Orbán, 2016t

Throughout Europe the referendum has been controversial. Some observers noted that first and foremost the poll is not about the actual question whether 1.300 additional refugees should be relocated to Hungary. Instead it should rather be understood as a strong symbol created and employed by Orbán: "The refugee issue for Orbán is really just a means to an end – and that end is a cultural counter-revolution in Europe and an end to liberal Europe", claims Gerald Knaus, director of a European think tank (The Guardian, 2016a). Moreover,

observers claim that the legal consequences of the referendum were unclear and that it is rather a tool that helps distracting from domestic problems (ibid.). Finally, the referendum failed because with around 44 percent the voter turnout stayed below the minimum of 50 percent. However, out of those who participated, 98 percent voted "no". After the referendum, both sides presented themselves as winners: despite their failure, the referendum supporters referred to the number of 98%, while the referendum opponents interpreted the outcome as a backlash for Orbán's attempt to initiate a cultural counter-revolution in Europe (The Guardian, 2016b).

Concerning migration, Orbán works with two different kinds of historicizing arguments. Firstly, he repeats the fear that Christian Europe with the values and norms Hungarians are used to would be in danger due to the influx of Muslim immigrants. The second set of arguments depicts Hungary as country that is writing history by defending Europe in an unselfish manner. The argumenta revolve around 1956, 1989 and Communism in general. In this regard, Orbán claims that

> *"In Hungarians, courage and common sense co-exist well, side by side. We have never yearned for a role which exceeds our strength, and we have rarely swung our axe at a tree which then falls on top of us. Nevertheless, perhaups our geographical position every thirty years causes history to suddenly thrust us into the main current debate of Europe. In 1956, after the Soviets pulled out of Austria, we sought to push the Iron Curtain back beyond our eastern border. We were brave and attacked the Soviet tanks with mere Molotov cocktails. In 1989 it was we who had to open our border, to let Germans find their way to other Germans. We were courageous and did this, despite the fact that Soviet forces were stationed here. And now, in 2015-2016, it is we who have had to close our border to stop the flood of migration from the South. Not once did we request the task – it was the work of history, and was brought on us by fate."* – Orbán, 2016w

Orbán invokes how Europe benefitted from Hungarian braveness in the past, and he concludes that Hungary's present-day migration policy is the logical continuation of these historic events. The first sentences of this quote ("we have rarely swung our axe at a tree which then falls on top of us") seem questionable when looking at Hungary's role during the Second World War, yet incoherencies like these shall be discussed in the following chapter. Apart from the "1956 - 1989 - 2016" logic, Orbán claims that the decades of withstanding Communism had left a tremendous influence on Hungarian identity until today. As he puts it, "Under Communism we didn't let them turn us into Homo Sovieticus and eradicate our culture" (Orbán, 2016s), which is why today Hungarians set great store by independence, and do not want to be deprived of their national and cultural identity through large-scale immigration (ibid.).

6. How coherent is Orbán's logic?

Orbán's historicizing anti-EU-narrative can be split into three major motifs: firstly, he claims that "we" were a victim throughout history, and today "we" are a victim of the EU. Secondly, he claims that "we" were courageous in 1956, and likewise today "we" are courageous against the EU. Thirdly, he claims that "we" have a long tradition of Christianity, and today "we" are the only ones who kept these values and defend them against the EU. In the following, these motifs shall be analyzed with regard to their validity.

	"We are victims"	"We are courageous"	"We are Christian"
Main memory related accusations of the EU	The EU is guilty of Communism and Nazism, they turn a blind eye to communist crimes	The EU threatens us like the "old" Empires, just with different tools.	The EU lost its Christian roots. Having turned into liberals, they deny Christian values
Hungary's role in this narrative	Hungarians were the victims back then, and they are the victims today	Today, we are fighting for freedom, like the 1956 (and 1848) fighters did	We were the bulwark of Christendom in the past, and today we defend Christian values against a liberal Europe
comprehensible part of the narrative	European Memory partially negates communist crimes	1956 has been a crucial date for the whole Eastern bloc	Hungary indeed witnessed neoliberal economic policies
questionable part of the narrative	Hungarians were guilty, too, see Horthy and the role of collaborators	1956 stakeholders were more diverse than asserted	Fidesz used to be a proponent of the above-mentioned ideas, too.

table 04: evaluation of the main motifs of Orbán's historicizing narrative
source: author's own

As layed down in chapter 5.1, Orbán invokes that the EU has a difficult relationship to Communism. Historically, Communism (like Nazism) is an intellectual product of the West, and today the EU is unable to condemn crimes committed under Communism, he claims. In this context, Orbán creates a clear antagonism between the EU and the West as the guilty ones, and Hungarians as victims, that suffered from Western-made Communism and Nazism. At the core, Orbán's argument is comprehensible: crimes committed under Communism indeed equal a "blind spot" in Western Europe's memory that is mostly revolving around the atrocities of Nazi Germany. The breakup of Communism revealed major gaps between Eastern and Western memory, revolving around the West's ignorance of crimes committed under Communism, about the question whether Stalinism is on an

equal footing with the Holocaust, and about the diverging interpretation of 1945 in East and West (Mink & Neumayer, 2016, p. 2; see also chapter 2.2). Against this background, Orbán addresses a legitimate issue. However, the first inconsistency is that he accuses Europe of inventing Communism (in the sense of Brodský), and at the same time praises Hungary's belonging to an (idealized) Europe, in the sense of Kundera (see chapter 5.1). Secondly, Orbán's logic is insofar inconsistent as he depicts Hungarians as a homogenous group of purely innocent victims of Nazism and Communism. Firstly, regarding Nazism, Orbáns interpretation of the Horthy regime is crucial: soon after Fidesz turned from a liberal into a conservative party in the mid-1990's, Orbán himself started to praise Hungary's 1.000 years long history, without distancing himself from Horthy era from 1920 to 1944. Critics accuse Orbán of historical revisionism because his narrative denies that the Horthy regime has any kind of responsibility for crimes committed during World War II, including the deportation and murder of hundreds of thousands of Jews. Here, a look at the new constitution is interesting (see also chapter 5.4): the preamble states that "we date the restoration of our country's self-determination, lost on the nineteenth day of March 1944, from the second day of May 1990, when the first freely elected body of popular representatives was formed". With this, as Benziger (2016) puts it, "in a single stroke the constitution legislated history by separating the Horthy regime from its collaboration with the German occupation and the Hungarian Republic from its two communist regimes" (p. 6). Secondly, regarding Communism, Orbán again emphasizes its "foreign aspect" and denies "that the vision of the future offered by communist ideology could have had any attraction for the population after 20 years of right-wing authoritarian rule and World War II" (Kiss, 2016, p. 245). Moreover, the Fidesz narrative does not mention that the communist dictatorship had victims other than Hungarian peasants and the clergy, namely social democrats and even communists, too (ibid.).

What is more, Orbán frequently underlines the freedom fighter nature of Hungarians. He refers to 1848 and more often to 1956 in order to create a link between the European Union and the Empires that suppressed Hungary in the past. In this narrative, Hungarians have been courageous in 1956, and likewise they have to be courageous today, too, against

a European Union that wants to curtail Hungary's freedom. To say it with Orbán's words, "as the heirs of 1956, we cannot accept that Europe wants to sever the roots which once made us great and which also helped us survive communist oppression" (Orbán, 2016w). The comprehensible core of Orbán's argument is that Hungarians in 1956 indeed stood up against the regime, and challenged the ruling system. However, his narrative is insofar manipulative, as the history of 1956 (as well as 1848) is more multifaceted than Orbán asserts, and subsequently the conclusions he draws from these events are questionable. The core of the dispute with the EU can be found in a fundamentally different understanding of the term freedom. For Orbán, freedom refers first and foremost to national sovereignty, which – in his understanding – is was what Hungarians fought for in 1848 and 1956, while the EU's notion of freedom is rather one of individual freedom. Orbán's narrative is insofar questionable as it denies that the 1848 Revolution was also an attempt to create a liberal state, and that intellectuals such as Lajos Kossuth in fact understood freedom as individual freedom, not as a collective right. Thus, it is contradictory to appropriate words such as "revolution" and "struggle for freedom" from Kossuth and to undermine individual freedom at the same time (Szilágyi & Bozóki[14], 2015, p. 154). Similar inconsistencies can be found in Orbán's interpretation of 1956. Benziger (2016) sees a contradiction in embracing 1956 on one hand, and pursuing illiberalism on the other. Besides, as Seleny (2014) notes, the 1956 movement was diverse, it included different stakeholders with different vivions, including those who were rather interested in reforming Communism than putting an end to it (see chapter 4).

Here, the person of Imre Nagy should be mentioned, too. Having been a national-minded communist, he stood against the soviet style of Communism, yet he was still a communist, and he only gradually aligned himself with the goals of the revolution (Benziger, 2011, p. 4). Nagy, as outlined in chapter 4.1, co-founded the Stalinist one-party state in 1948, and advocated for reforms within the framework of the existing one-party-state, and just later, on October 30, 1956, joined the demands of establishing democracy (Benziger, 2010, p. 2).

[14] Andras Bozóki participated in the roundtable negotiations and served as minister under the MSZP government. Today he at the Central European University in Budapest.

Even in prison in 1957, Nagy still advocated for Communism, claiming that the tragedy of Hungary is that "socialism and national independence became antagonists". Thus, like Orbán, he insisted on national sovereignty, yet in Nagy's view, socialism and national sovereignty are achievements of equal worth that should be realized in harmony (ibid., p. 27).

Apart from the "we were victims" and "we were courageous" narratives, Orbán places significant emphasis on Hungary's Christian tradition and employs it as a tool against the European Union which allegedly replaced these values by liberalism. He frequently invokes St. Stephen and insists on the so-called "bulwark of Christendom" narrative which can be found in the new constitution, too: "We are proud that our king Saint Stephen built the Hungarian State on solid ground and made our country a part of Christian Europe one thousand years ago. […] We are proud that our people has over the centuries defended Europe in a series of struggles and enriched Europe's common values with its talent and diligence" (Fundamental Law of Hungary, 2011; see also chapter 5.4). The European Union, on the other hand, allegedly replaced Christian values by liberalism in every dimension, whether it is their politically correct language, their notion of the family and the nation, or their emphasis of free markets (to the detriment of the hard-working people). These different aspects are all interconnected, yet they can all be traced back to Europe's alleged enhancement of "market supremacy"[15]. Orbán's reasoning in the case of foreign currency loans taken by Hungarian families exemplifies how his construct of "Christian Hungary versus liberal Europe" works in practice: "It is my firm belief that a Europe that represents Christian values would perhaps not have allowed people to squander the future of their families by taking on irresponsible loans" (Orbán, 2012c; see also chapter 5.2). The true core of Orbán's reasoning is that after 1990 "the elite" indeed prompted tremendous privatizations and excessively freed the markets from constraints. Here, the term "elite" refers to the Socialist government, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the EU (by setting strict criteria for accession candidates) and other stakeholders acting in accordance

[15] "In Brussels, they think that market logic can be used to remedy any and all social troubles. […] The political version of market supremacy is liberal individualism" (Orbán, 2013b).

with the Washington consensus. Interestingly, Socialist Prime Minister Gyurcsány explicitly equaled being left with being neoliberal, and interpreted his politics as "Third Way" in the tradition of Tony Blair, Anthony Giddens or Gerhard Schröder, who were Social Democrats, yet followed neoliberal economic policies (Kiss, 2016, p. 253f.). In this context, András Bozóki, minister in Gyurcsány's cabinet, called it irony of history that "capitalism had to be introduced by leftist forces, and in the 1990s the Hungarian left privatized in a speed envied by Margaret Thatcher and all the neoliberal-neoconservative gurus" (ibid., p. 257). However, what Orbán completely denies is that in the 1990's Fidesz started as a proponent of liberal democracy and that it was also his government (from 1998 to 2002) that prepared Hungary's EU accession, knowing that the Union emphasizes free markets. Fidesz started as a youth organization in 1988, and at the first democratic elections in 1990 Fidesz' election program set great store by the private sector and as little state interventions as possible. During the first election period (1990 to 1994), Fidesz heavily criticized the MDF-led government for its nationalist-conservative approach to politics, defended *Rechtsstaat* principles against attempts of the government to control media and curtail civil liberties, and accused the government of introducing an ideology based on nationalism and religion. In 1993, when internal rifts within Fidesz got stronger, Orbán disagreed with Fidesz Co-founder Gábor Fodor on the strategic orientation of the party. Orbán, at that time, still proposed a party program focused on free markets and a low level of state interventions, while Fodor insisted on welfare and solidarity aspects. It was just before the 1994 elections that Orbán solidified his position, introduced a more hierarchic structure (by some members described as "dictatorial"), and strategically reoriented the party towards a "moderate liberal party with strong national ties" before it completely switched to a right-wing identity during the 1994 to 1998 election period (Kiss, 2002, p. 741ff.). Moreover, the arbitrariness of Orbán's reasoning can be exemplified vice-versa, too: from 1989 until today he keeps claiming that Fidesz is the "rightful heir" of Imre Nagy, yet the conclusions drawn from this changed completely. In 1989, being the alleged heir of Nagy meant advocating for liberal democracy, while today, being the heir of Nagy means advocating for illiberalism.

7. Conclusions

In the introduction, three assumptions have been brought forward. Firstly, it has been assumed that Hungary has a fragmented memory regime, which emerged as a consequence of the 1989 events, and in which the main competition revolves around the question how to interpret the 1956 uprising against the Soviet regime. 1956 can indeed be seen as the focal point of the Hungarian memory regime, dividing left and right. There are several reasons, why it became so polarizing. Having been "muted" for almost three and a half decades, 1989 all of a sudden allowed competition between different interpretations. The diversity of the 1956 movement allowed representatives from all political camps to considers themselves as "rightful heirs" of 1956, which initiated an outright "memory battle". With the 2006 riots and the 2010 election victory, Fidesz' narrative became the dominant one. Unlike the left-wing narrative that focused on reconciliation and pluralism, Fidesz developed an absolute vision of the past. Drawing a black and white picture of the communist era in general and of 1956 in particular allows Orbán to delegitimize the political left. In this context it is crucial to understand that the transition to democracy has been a negotiated one in Hungary, which means that representatives of the old regime remained important stakeholders in the new political system. Whether single politicians were actually involved in the old regime or not, the past represents a vulnerable point for the political left as a whole as it is used by Fidesz to discredit them as "enemies of the nation".

The second assumption has been that Orbán uses memory issues in order to delegitimize not only domestic competitors but also the European Union. Orbán describes post-2010 Hungary as a "system of national cooperation", which is based on an alleged national unity of the people, the parliament and the government, and which is thus legitimized to introduce fundamental changes and which represents the beginning of national self-determination after "after forty-six years of occupation, dictatorship, and two ambiguous decades of transition" (Hungarian National Assembly, 2010). The past two decades were characterized by an allegedly corrupted elite, consisting of "globalist liberalist forces", which comprises the Hungarian opposition, the European Union and others. In Orbán's narrative,

Hungarians have long been victims of this elite, whether economically, politically or by superimposing their “moral relativism” on them. To underline this idea, Orbán frequently invokes his vision of Hungary’s history. For instance, Orbán claims that the European Union equals the Soviet Union when it comes to suppression, just that they use different tools, such as political correctness instead of military power. And like the 1956 uprising against the regime, today, Hungarians need to stand up against the European Union and defend their freedom. Besides, he frequently invokes the narrative of Hungary as the bulwark of Christendom, the nation that has a Christian tradition dating back to Saint Stephen and that defended European Christianity against the Ottoman Empire and others. Today, Orbán historicizes, Hungary again defends Christianity in Europe – this time against a European elite that prefers liberalism and individual freedom to Christian values.

The third assumption has claimed that Orbán avails himself of a populist strategy. He frequently employs manipulative strategies by blurring the line between history and mythology. According to Mudde (see chapter 2.3), populists are political stakeholders who create a deep antagonism between an allegedly corrupt elite and the people, a homogenous group whose will the populists represent against the establishment. Since Orbán belongs to the Hungarian elite, too, Batory’s concept of populists-in-government can be applied. As a populist-in-government, Orbán understands the term “elite” in a rather interpretative than technical way, comprising all influential liberal stakeholders, whether they are in the parliamentary opposition, in science, NGO’s, media or the European Union, but not the government itself.[16] Populists-in-government can also appear in the form of demagogues. Demagogy comprises techniques such as scapegoating and negligent simplifications, it appeals to feelings such as instincts and prejudices, and like populists, demagogues depict themselves as representatives of the masses. Moreover, some of Orbán’s ideas remind of Hofstadter’s elaborations on conspiracy theories (see capter 2.3),

[16] Orbán, for example, creates a contradiction between “the people” and “the elite” by saying that “this Europe will no longer be a Europe of European citizens: instead, in the coming years Europe will see realisation of the outlandish dream of some well- organised unelected activist leadership presiding over huge flows of capital, thinking in terms over and beyond the framework of nation states” (Orbán, 2015h)

such as the assumption that the refugee crisis has been deliberately caused by European elites out of strategic considerations.

As pointed out in the previous chapter, Orbán indeed avails himself of such techniques when employing historicizing arguments against the European Union. For instance, he claims that the EU has a "guilty conscience" with regard to Communism, which is insofar comprehensible as Western European memory partially negates crimes committed under Communism. However, while he blames the European Union, he negates that Hungarians collaborated, too, and that especially under so-called "Goulash Socialism" the line between proponents and opponents of the regime were less clear-cut that he asserts. A similar analysis can be made for Nazism. In this case, Orbán does not directly accuse the EU, yet it is interesting to follow his reasoning because he again presents Hungarians as innocent victim of foreign powers. He describes Nazism as "an intellectual product of the West" from which Hungarians suffered, and thus he completely ignores Miklos Horthy's involvement into Nazi atrocities but praises him instead. Moreover, as mentioned above, Orbán frequently invokes the 1956 freedom fighters as role models for today's fight against the European Union. This reasoning is insofar questionable, as he denies the diversity of those who were active in 1956, and instead presents it as a clash between the regime and a homogenous mass of protesters that wanted to topple it. Finally, Orbán frequently insists on Hungary's Christian roots, which stand in contrast to the EU's liberalism. Hungary's Christian tradition is beyond doubt, yet when juxtaposing Hungary's Christianity to the EU's liberalism, Orbán forgets that Fidesz started as a liberal youth movement and that he himself was a strong proponent of liberalism in the 1990's.

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