Revisionist Visuals in Public Squares: A Symbolic Reframing of Hungarian National Identity?

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Abstract:

This study focuses on the recent changes in two of the prominent public squares in Budapest, *Kossuth Lajos Tér* and *Szabadság Tér* from the period of 2011-2017. In recent years the Fidesz government has made several controversial changes within these two public spaces, namely adding two statues, one former American President Ronald Regan and a statue commemorating the "Victims of German Occupation.", as well as the return of the Lajos Kossuth square into its pre-1944 form. These changes begs the questions: What kind of memory regime does the changes in Szabadság and Lajos Kossuth squares reveal? How do the monuments, their design and style reflect the socio-political reality, especially in terms of reframing Hungarian national identity? How do these revisionist changes impact Hungary's communitarian socio-political activity?

To answer these questions, it was necessary to use the theories of Banal Nationalism, Memory Politics and Sociology of Architecture. Moreover, Discourse Analysis and methods of Sociology of Architecture were used as tools to analyse the finer details behind the nationalist discourses and the changes in the abovementioned public spaces.

Using these theories and methods, the analysis produced the following findings: These new editions of the public spaces have sent shock waves into Hungarian society due to their historical-political significance alongside sending a 'specific' state message of historical revisionism and convenient forgetting of Hungary's complicity in Inter-War period terror and the Holocaust. Therefore, accommodating Fidesz's ongoing legislative attempts to reinforce a revisionist and irredentist memory regime, thus attempting to reframe the Hungarian national historical identity from the 1920 onwards; which has an eerie similarity to the efforts of the

Communist regime in Hungary in relation to the past. Furthermore, the government's message has the intention to convey the definitive"truth" about the interwar period. However, this forceful conveying of the message is sparking a counter-reaction, since the part of history the government attempts to re-write is a controversial one. In fact, it might be a dividing point in Hungarian society. Finally, the debates indicate that Hungarian nationalism is starting to heat up, so to speak, with the tensions in relation to the issue of national identity reflecting the socio-economical tensions in the country.

Keywords: Memory Politics, Irredentism, Public Memory, Public Spaces and National Identity formation

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"In the last centuries, the Parliament and the Kossuth Lajos Square have become the symbols of Hungary. This is why this reconstruction is "the reconstruction" of Hungary too. […]"[1]

Introduction:

On the night of April 13th 2017, a protester, testing the judicial system in Hungary, threw paint at the House of Terror. The response of the government for this act was that this act was that this act desecrated the memory of the national heroes who suffered during the fight for independence from the Fascist and Communist dictatorships. As such, the vandalization of the pictures of these heroes is an unacceptable and reprehensible act.[2] This also revived certain discussions about the past, and especially about the revisionist cultural politcies of the Fidesz government

The memory and identity politics Fidesz has followed and even implemented during their first sting in government (1998-2002), were the signs of the current principle in their memory policy in the cultural initiatives. These came through in every aspect of their policies, from the inauguration of museums hyper emphasising the crims of communism whilst downplaying the atrocities committed during the interwar period and the emphasis on conservatism, Christianity and membership to Fidesz as being the ideals for national identity. This discourse was controversial during their time in power, and this also created tensions between the government and the people who objected to their narratives of the nation and its past. After the defeat of the party in the 2002 elections, it seemed that Hungary finally overcame these simplistic narratives.

[1] "Kossuth Tér: Avatás A 'megújulás' jegyében - Képek!," (Kossuth square: inauguration under the sign of "renewal"-pictures) *NÉPSZAVA Online*, accessed December 31, 2016, http://nepszava.hu/cikk/1013908-kossuth-ter-avatas-a-megujulas-jegyeben---kepek. [translated from Hungarian; source of translation: author's Own]

[2] Lovas Gergő, "Festékkel Dobta Meg a Terror Házát Egy Tüntető," (A protester threw paint at the House of Terror) April 14, 2017, http://index.hu/belfold/2017/04/14/lemoshato_festekkel_dobta_meg_a_terror_hazat_egy_tunteto/. [translated from Hungarian; source of translation: author's Own]

However, the financial crisis and numerous scandals of the Socialist government led to the resurgence of this revisionist narrative.

Since the Hungarian right-wing government came into power in 2010, there has been a return to the abovementioned discourse pertaining Hungarian national identity, national memory and the interpretation of 20th century national history. This is reflected in a section of the Hungarian National Creed, found in the Hungarian Basic Law of 2011, which is essentially the government's version Hungarian Constitution:

> *"Our nation had lost its sovereignty on the 19th of March 1944. We consider the 2nd of May 1990, the day of the first general elections, as the date of the restoration of that sovereignty. This is the day we will consider as the beginning of our nation's new democracy and constitutional order."*[3]

Additionally, Paragraph 21 of the Basic Law further emphasises that point by arguing that all of the political organisations that came from the German Occupation and the Communist regime were illegal and therefore have to be punished.[4] The importance of these laws is that it comes from a document that justifies the legal rehabilitation of the interwar regime, also called the Horthy regime. This regime was responsible for the war crimes and the atrocities commited against the Hungarian Jews. As such, the rehabilitation sparks some concerns and controversies.

In accordance to the principles of the laws and Creed of the Basic law, there have been several changes in terms of memory of the past, as exemplified by the changes in the Hungarian history textbooks. Some of those memory politics changes since 2010 have also happened in public spaces, of which I will focus on the statue of Ronald Regan, erected in 2011 (see

[3] "Nemzeti Jogszabálytár," (National Law Archives) accessed December 31, 2016, http://www.njt.hu/cgi_bin/njt_doc.cgi?docid=140968. [translated from Hungarian; source of translation: author's Own]

[4] Ibid.

Appendix 11, picture 1) and a memorial for the victims of the Nazi German occupation of Hungary in 1944 in Szabadság square in Budapest, and the redesigning of Lajos Kossuth square from 2014 until 2016, also in Budapest. These will the changes in public spaces I will analyse, for they were made in central points of Budapest, which is in itself the capital. Szabadság square is one of the squares where there have been a lot of changes due to the changing political ideologies that were in power during the 20th century. As such, this square is perceived to be an ideal place to solidify and symbolically legitimise a political power by putting or removing certain monuments, as well as to attempt to re-write, so to speak, the national history of the country. This importance is further emphasised by the location of the square itself: Szabadság square is located in the central part of the city, at a crossroads between the Hungarian Parliament and the rest of the city centre. Lajos Kossuth square, on the other hand, is more obvious: it is the square that surrounds the abovementioned Parliament. As such, any statues or memorials on that square can be considered as project of the political power to establish their legacy on the nation via symbolisms.

Research Question:

From the historical context, there is a trend in changing certain works in public squares if they were not in line with the political ideology ruling at the time. Consequently, any changes to the squares could be considered a change in the symbolic meaning of the nation, as well as the policy of remembering the past. Therefore, the changes also imply a change in the narrative about the nation and its inhabitants, the specific narrative being analysed is that this government is continuing the legacy of the pre-1944 regime. Following the time frame of 2010 onwards, the

proposed research questions are: What kind of memory regime does the changes in Szabadság and Lajos Kossuth squares reveal? How do the monuments, their design and style reflect the socio-political reality, especially in terms of reframing Hungarian national identity? How do these revisionist changes impact the Hungary' socio-political activity?

Literature Review:

There is a considerable amount of literature on the trends in Historical Revisionism in Hungary since the end of the Communist regime. This literature comes from a multitude of disciplines and mostly from Hungarian authors, but all have something to contribute to the issue.

Historical Revisionism:

Historical revisionism, in this specific context, refers to the re-examination and re-evaluation of the interwar period in Hungary. Andrea Pető differentiates revisionism and revised historiographical revisionism using Avizer Tucker's terminology, which is the proclivity to for "therapeutic values" over "cognitive values" and the attempts to mix fiction with knowledge, based on "bad philosophies, invalid arguments and misunderstandings of contemporary epistemology and philosophy of science".[5] This is usually achieved via three strategies: significance-driven, or the change in the perception of historians over what are significant events; Evidence-driven, or the revisionism based on new evidence; and value-driven, or the re-

[5] Andrea Pető, "Revisionist Histories, 'future Memories': Far-Right Memorialization Practices in Hungary," *European Politics and Society* 18, no. 1 (January 2, 2017): 42, doi:10.1080/23745118.2016.1269442.

evaluation of historical events due to a change in system and hierarchy of values.[6] Revisionism is usually made with the intention to give a more positive view on the political system ruling at the time. However, it is worth noting that revisionism "is non-history. It is a manipulation, or a selection, of the facts."[7]

This revisionism has been popular in the Hungarian society, especially for people with conservative leanings. Randolph L. Braham gives a pretty accurate summary of this revisionism and its goals:

1. Bring about the rehabilitation of the Horthy era and the revitalization of the national Christian principles that had guided it;
2. Absolve Hungary of any guilt for the Holocaust by placing ultimate responsibility on the Germans;
3. Deflect attention from the Holocaust by focusing on the "positive" experiences of the Jews since their emancipation in 1867 and on the rescue activities of Christian Hungarians during the German occupation, including Horthy's halting of the deportations in early July 1944. [8]

This popularity can be reflected by the political initiatives made by the FIDESZ government during the 1998-2002-time period, as well as the current government's memory politics, as seen above. However, Braham argues that, due to the lack of unquestionable moral guidelines when talking about the Holocaust in Hungary, "history-cleansers", as he calls them, have been given an opportunity to absolve the country of any responsibility in the Holocaust by rewriting the Horthy in order to "safeguard the national honor of Hungary," starting in the immediate aftermath of the fall of the Communist regime.[9] This policy continued through the 1990s,

[6] Ibid.
[7] Ibid., 43.
[8] Randolph L. Braham and others, "Hungary: The Assault on the Historical Memory of the Holocaust," in *The Holocaust in Hungary* (Central European University Press, 2015), 3, https://www.ceeol.com/search/chapter-detail?id=425329.
[9] Ibid., 9–10.

especially when compensating the victims of Communism who themselves stole from the Jews, as Braham summarises the revisionism during the pre-1998 period.[10]. As Eric Beckett Weaver put it, referring to the 1998-2002 period, "Fidesz attempted to strengthen and redefine Hungarian national identity."[11] The 1998-2002 was just the intensification of the assault on the Holocaust memory, as Braham puts it.[12] This was because according to Weaver, they "felt that after a decade of transition Fidesz felt it was time to develop a new, unified image of Hungary."[13] Furthermore, Braham argues that this drive for re-definition indirectly encouraged the "history-cleansers" to actively revise the history. The examples he gives are: the attempt to absolve the gendarmerie, who collaborated with the Nazis in rounding up, ghettoizing and deportation of the Jews in Hungary; an attempt to make a "Hungarian exhibition" glorifying the Horthy regime and downplaying what happened to the Hungarian Jewry; "denationalization", or the transfer of the responsibility for the Holocaust to the Germans; "generalising", or claiming that the tragedy of the Jews is linked to the trauma that the Hungarians suffered as a result of the Treaty of Trianon, or the claim that the Hungarians were the last to suffer from the Third Reich, meaning that the Hungarians suffered as much, if not more than the Jews; Making monuments generalising the Holocaust as part of the larger losses of life during the Second World War; "trivialization and relativisation", or the view that the Holocaust was another example of humanity's inhumanity to other humans; and finally, overemphasising the crimes of the communist regime, equating the crimes of fascism with communism, like with the example of equating Auschwitz with the Gulags.[14] Braham brings up one of the most public figures of this revisionism: Dr. Mária

[10] Ibid., 12.
[11] Eric Beckett Weaver, *National Narcissism: The Intersection of the Nationalist Cult and Gender in Hungary* (Oxford, England ; New York: Lang, 2006), 136.
[12] Braham and others, "Hungary," 12–26.
[13] Weaver, *National Narcissism*, 138.
[14] Braham and others, "Hungary," 13–21.

Schmidt. Originally a rising star in Hungarian academia for her study of the Holocaust during the Communist era, she quickly changed her interest after the fall of the regime to the unmasking of the crimes of the Communist era. As such, Braham claims ,she gives all of these arguments listed above in order to justify her point of view, as well as ignoring the larger context (history, socio-economics, morality), just like many of her ideologically-oriented contemporaries. As a result, she quickly became one of the most influential persons when it came to memory politics, since she was given many of the projects listed above during the first Fidesz government such as the House of Terror.[15] The reasoning for this drive can be found in this statement:

[T] the coalition government of Fidesz-Hungarian Civic Party (Magyar Polgári Párt) […] which entered office in 1998 were the first government to attribute strategic importance to symbolic image formation.[16]

The authors of this statement, Zsófia Frazon and Zsolt K. Horváth, elaborate on this point by arguing that this coalition government was the first political power to react to the symptomatic crisis in Hungary at the time: *the lack of symbolic-political content in the identity formation of the country*.[17] Morerover, according to Edit András, one of the claims for this symbolic image formation was "*that the process of political change was not completed by previous liberal-leftist-socialist regimes*"[18]

Some of the examples Weaver then gives the initiatives to achieve this goal are: the formation of the Ministry of National Cultural Heritage with the intent to develop the national culture and protect its heritage and the national monuments; the move of St. Stephen Crown from

[15] Ibid., 18–20.
[16] "23.pdf," 306, accessed June 3, 2017, http://epa.oszk.hu/00000/00036/00047/pdf/23.pdf.
[17] Ibid., 306.
[18] Maria Hlavajova and Simon Sheikh, eds., *Former West: Art and the Contemporary after 1989* (Utrecht: BAK, basis voor actuele kunst ; Cambridge, MA, 2016), 192.

the Hungarian National Museum to parliament; the programmes and competitions in preparation for the millennial celebration of Hungarian statehood in 2000, where the children needed to express their "belief in our ancestors, and hope of our future"[19], and what it meant to them; the announcement of a self-image repair programme, or Country Image Programme, as Fidesz called it, for the nation, which included the creation of the Homeland and Fold-Knowledge subject for schoolchildren, teaching them about traditional life in Hungary and Greater Hungary; and, most interestingly for the topic of this paper, the creation and restoration of many public monuments, many connected to commemoration of Trianon and Greater Hungary.[20] This according to Weaver, was just a part of the attempt to link party loyalty, in this case to Fidesz, to Hungarian national identity. In short, the true Hungarians are the one who support Fidesz.[21] This is also apparent in certain actions and speeches, some of which evoke the interwar period: the call to wear the cockade during the 2002 elections to show support for the party; the controversy over the use of the term *élettér*, which translated to German is *Lebensraum*, a term used to justify the conquest made by Hitler during the Second World War; and, finally the statement that "the homeland cannot be in opposition" during a speech after the 2002 election defeat, implying that the party is equivalent to the nation.[22] This is reflective of what Ildikó Szabó describes as the exclusive national construction that the party was expressing from 1996 until 2003. This construction was also the attept to answer the questions of: I) what is the Hungarian nation, II) What does it mean to be Hungarian and III) who are the Hungarians.[23] From this logic, Szabó

[19] Weaver, *National Narcissism*, 136.
[20] Ibid., 136–37, 138–40.
[21] Ibid., 140.
[22] Ibid., 140, 144-145,155-156.
[23] Ildikó Szabó and others, "A Nemzet Fogalmi Konstrukciója a Fidesz Diskurzusaiban 1998 És 2006 Között," (The construction of identity formation in Fidesz's discourses between 1998 and 2006) *Politikatudományi Szemle*, no. 3 (2007): 132. [translated from Hungarian; source of translation: author's Own]

argues that during this time period, the exclusive interpretation of national identity meant that the Hungarians are the communities that support Fidesz. As such, this excluded those who did not support them, and meant that belonging to the political right wing in Hungary was equivalent to belonging to the nation.[24] The dimensions of this national belonging were, according to her: the national belonging as a feeling and action-based community, the nation as a value-based community; the nation that was made to be defeatist, and the struggle against that feeling; the nation as the alternative to parliamentarian legitimation; the political representation of the nation, with an emphasis on the leader; the labelling of the left-wing as the political and national enemy; and the interlinking between the nation and the of left-wing social thematization, or social anti-capitalism.[25] These themes are relevant, for they reveal aspects of the national identity and memory politics of the Fidesz government which made the changes in Szabadság and Lajos Kossuth squares and the basis for their nationalist rhetoric. This changed in 2003, when the Fidesz party changed their rhetoric by striving to culturally nationalising the whole of society, as Szabó notes. This meant that the exclusionary view of national belonging was changed to a more inclusive one, which was, in my opinion, due to the fact that the party lost the 2002 elections and became an opposition party.[26] According to András, the attempt to renationalise, as she calls the process, does not need to go far into the nation's past to create a myth, since the stake in this whole process is the perceived greatness of Hungary, not its existence.[27]

Apart from the examples mentioned, the other initiatives which can be considered within this category include: the House of Terror and the House of Fates, along with the National Theater and Millenium Park, as Szabó notes in *The construction of identity formation in Fidesz's*

[24] Ibid.
[25] Ibid., 133–54.
[26] Ibid., 133.
[27] Hlavajova and Sheikh, *Former West*, 193.

discourses between 1998 and 2006.[28]. She elaborates further by arguing that by constructing the National Theater in a different location and based on different plans than originally intended, they expressed the statement that they did not want to share any community space with their political opponents.[29] Finally, the Millenium Park represents the intention to link the past and the present, according to her, and an example of this intention in public space.[30] These examples reflect the hyper focus on the atrocities committed by the Communists on the Hungarians and the downplay of the role of the Hungarians in the mass killing of the Hungarian Jews. Sophie Wahnich also notes on this matter, as well as summarising the issue of revisionism in the House of Terror, the fact that

[I] in Hungary, the notion that contemporary generations are linked to the first part of XXth century history is completely refuted whether or not on an intimate level. The aim is to obliterate the fact that Hungary was ever concerned with the rise of fascism in the 1930s or collaboration before Hitler's conquest and the creation of the Hungarian Nazi Arrow Cross. This movement takes up only two of the forty rooms of the ***House of Terror*** *and equally no in-depth explanation is offered to understand its origins. The tale told here is that of a poor, dismembered Hungary, whose sovereignty is not recognised and whose population is never in control of its history. Even regent Horthy is presented as a meaningless ruler in whose absence Hungary was invaded.*[31]

She elaborates further by arguing that another aspect of historigraphical relativism which affects the whole of Europe concerning the Holocaust is that the focus on the victims, which leads to the blurring of the executioners/perpetrators and the victims, which in turn leads to the spread of the absence of political responsibility for the role of the country in the Holocaust.[32] Ágnes and Gábor Kapitány go further on this argument with the House of Terror as the specific

[28] Szabó and others, "A Nemzet Fogalmi Konstrukciója a Fidesz Diskurzusaiban 1998 És 2006 Között," 130. [translated from Hungarian; source of translation: author's Own]
[29] Ibid., 130–31.
[30] Ibid., 131.
[31] Sophie Wahnich, ed., *Politics of Collective Memory: Cultural Patterns of Commemorative Practices in Post-War Europe*, Cultural Patterns of Politics 1 (Wien: Lit-Verl, 2008), 51.
[32] Ibid., 55.

example by arguing that the strong emphasis on the victim role of Hungary creates a sense of historical determinism of the past. As Éva Kovacs states in her chapter *The Cynical and the Ironical-Remembering Communism in Hungary*,

> *The House of Terror thus creates a historical narrative that paints a picture of Hungarians as the victims of both Nazism and Communism. In this narrative, the communist terror persists well beyond the actual fall of communism–if not to this very day.*[33]

This quote brings up some of the points of the revisionism, namely the historiographical relativization of the Holocaust and the implied re-valuation of the interwar period. Moreover, this re-evaluation, as well as Horthy's role as regent and the duality between the sending of Jews to labour or death camps and the rescue of the Budapest Jews, is making a more positive image of the Horthy period which is inaccurate to the facts and evidence of the times.[34] On the subject of victimhood, Frazon and Horváth argue that everything that is part of the House of Terror, from its external look to the rooms in it, emphasises the victimhood narrative and the commemoration of these victims.[35] Furthermore, according to the Kapitánys, the emphasis on the resistance to fascism in the narratives regarding the museum is also made with the goal to remove responsibility of the Hungarians for Fascism by implying that it was a German ideological import.[36] Finally, Frazon and Horváth also point to the rhetorical point at the time, which is the closing of the past and creating a clean slate by making the definitive commemoration of the abovementioned victims, therefore healing the wounds, at least in

[33] Eva Kovács, "Cynical and the Ironical: Remembering Communism in Hungary," *Regio – Minorities, Politics, Society*, 2003, 165.
[34] Wahnich, *Politics of Collective Memory*, 129–30.
[35] "23.pdf," 325–33.
[36] Wahnich, *Politics of Collective Memory*, 130.

theory.[37] Emila Palonen summarised it best the effect these little details have on the overall message of the museum:

> *The critique of the museum focused on the fact that the view of history has been used for political purposes. The main focus is on Communism, only two of the thrity-odd rooms focus on the Hungarian Nazis, branded as "bloodthirsty" and any elaboration of the background to the rise of Nazi regime reduced to a statement that Germany occupied Hungary in 1944.*[38]

This revisionism, Braham argues, came back as a result of the 2010 elections which brought back Fidesz into power. Refering to the National Creed of the Basic Law that was referred to in the introduction, he argued that this provided a legal framework and a political directive favourable for revisionism. Additionally,

> *By this constitutional provision, the Orbán government appears to pursue two major objectives: to establish a historical continuity between the Hungarian state of the Horthy era and the Hungarian state of the post-communist period and to convince the world that Hungary had lost its sovereignty in the wake of the beginning of the German occupation and, as a victim itself, not responsible for the subsequent destruction of the Jews.*[39]

This, in turn, has erased the fact that the German occupation army was generally well-received by the Hungarians at the time, Braham claims. This also includes the fact that the invasion happened with barely any resistance and that the Hungarian infrastructure continued to help the Axis war effort.[40] Another aspect of revisionism came up with the advent of Internet: the focus on the positive aspects of Hungarian history (Jewish emancipation of the 19th century, Horthy

[37] "23.pdf," 333–46.
[38] "Emilia_Palonen.pdf," 6, accessed June 4, 2017, http://users.ox.ac.uk/~oaces/conference/papers/Emilia_Palonen.pdf.
[39] Braham and others, "Hungary," 21.
[40] Ibid., 21–22.

saving many Jews during the Summer of 1944, the protection some Jews received from the armed forces, etc…) in order to rehabilitate the Horthy regime. Again, Braham argues that this selectively chooses the examples in order to push an agenda, since this narrative ignores the discriminatory system which put them into these situations, as well as the fact that the rest of the country had been made "free of Jews" before the order.[41] The commemoration of the 70th anniversary of the Holocaust in 2014, which was represented by the memorial for the victims of the German Occupation, which will be one of the statues that I will focus on, was also characterised by this revisionist drive. Braham gives the examples of the Rememberance Committee, under the leadership of János Lázar, a state secretary with a controversial image for unveiling a statue of a writer convicted in Romania for war crimes, Albert Wass; the House of Fates project, dedicated to the child victims of the Holocaust, which was entrustred to Mária Schmidt; the foundation of VERITAS Historical Research Institute (*VERITAS Történetkutató Intezet*), with a historian with a reputation of being a defender of the Horthy regime at its leadership, Dr. Sándor Szakály; and finally, the aforementioned statue, which I will talk in more detail later.[42]

Historical revisionism seems to be a re-evaluation of the interwar period, especially in regards to the Horthy regime. The goal seems to be to rehabilitate the regime by shifting the responsibility of many of the controversial issue surrounding it, namely the anti-Semitism and the collaboration with the Nazis during the Holocaust. The historical revisionism does not end there, however: there have been changes in recent years on Szabadság and Lajos Kossuth squares. These changes have happened, as mentioned before, on two essential squares when

[41] Ibid., 22–24; R. L. Braham, "An Assault on Historical Memory: Hungarian Nationalists and the Holocaust," *East European Quarterly* 33, no. 4 (1999): 418.
[42] Braham and others, "Hungary," 26–29.

discussing Hungarian national identity and its symbols. Both squares earned this perception due to the fact that their importance is based on the use of these squares in the past, such as the Szabadság square.

History of Szabadság Tér:

The revisionism, as with many projects, are important in regards to the built world. This is due to the fact that many of the projects are intended to project the government's intentions to its population and what it should celebrate. This is true of the histories of both Szabadság and Lajos Kossuth squares, where a lot of the national cultural initiatives came through in Hungary.

The square was formerly a location for a prison and stable for the Austrian Army, known as the New Building (Újépület) until its destruction in 1897. As Eric Thorstensen summarised the square's history, it was also the location for the execution of the leaders of the 1848-49 Revolution and War of Independence.[43] Therefore, it is clear that the destruction of the place was also a symbolic move, since the prison was a symbol of the foreign Habsburg occupation of the country, as well as the first attempt from the current political regime to remove the trace of the previous one, according to Thorstensen.[44] During the interwar period, the square was the site of four irredentist monuments, erected in January 1921 as allegories for North,South, East and West. Each of these monuments, seen in Appendix 1, represented a certain part of the lost territories from the Trianon peace treaty and the revenge policy that was followed at the time, as Miklós Zeidler noted in his chapter *Irredentism in Everyday Life in Hungary during the Inter-*

[43] Erik Thorstensen, "The Places of Memory in a Square of Monuments: Conceptions of Past, Freedom and History at Szabadság Tér," *Hungarian Cultural Studies* 5 (January 1, 2012): 5, doi:10.5195/AHEA.2012.71.
[44] Ibid.

war Period.[45] This treaty was made at the end of the First World War between the victorious Allied powers and the newly formed nation of Hungary. Essentially, Hungary lost 71.4% of its territory and 63.6 % of its population, a sizable portion of which were ethnic Hungarians, to the neighbouring countries. As Miklós Molnár noted, this event created a national shock and trauma which is carried on to this day in certain circles.[46] As an immediate consequence, irredentism was popular among Hungarian society and embraced by the Horthy regime, which was a reactionary conservative "kingdom without a king", to paraphrase Molnár's description of it.[47] As a result,

> *The Trianon shock thus became a lasting national malady that ever since 1918-1920 has ravaged the minds and hearts of most Hungarians, notwithstanding the fact that during the past three-and-a-half decades the open discussion or teaching of the nature and impact of this treaty has been a taboo in Hungary.*[48]

Miklós Zeidler describes the irredentism of the interwar period accurately when he categorises it into three major types: The simplification of Christ's sufferings as an analogy for Hungary; Fictitious parallels with the1848–49 Revolution and War Of Independence in order to create a narrative of a united independence movement which convinces everyone to join their side in the struggle against Hungary's enemies; and finally, the third type is the making of the twin symbols of the conquest-home-defence, so that the image of the conquering hero defending his homeland

[45] Miklós Zeidler and others, "Irredentism in Everyday Life in Hungary during the Inter-War Period," *Regio-Minorities, Politics, Society-English Edition*, no. 1 (2002): 73.
[46] Miklós Molnár, *A Concise History of Hungary*, Cambridge Concise Histories (Cambridge, U.K. ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 262.
[47] Ibid., 264–68.
[48] Steven Béla Várdy, "The Impact of Trianon upon Hungary and the Hungarian Mind: The Nature of Interwar Hungarian Irredentism," *Hungarian Studies Review* 10, no. 1 (1983): 23.

with all that he has got against the homeland's enemies, including sacrificing himself for country and God.[49]

The abovementioned monuments were chosen, according to Zeidler, because of its central location, its aesthetic and representative dimensions, its large size, its "uselessness" and its short, tumultuous history.[50] symbolised the four corners of the lost territories in varying symbolic ways. Zeidler mainly describes these symbolic ways as thickly laid historical symbolism mixed with romantically heroic imagery.[51] The Horthy regime was also characterised by the anti-Semitism within the politics and fabric of the nation's society. This narrative was interwoven with the abovementioned irredentism, since the rhetoric at the time was that the war was lost because of the betrayal of the local Jews, the "enemy within". As a result, Hungary gradually imposed more and more restrictions via laws, which started with the Numerus Clausus of 1920, which restricted the number of Jews to be enrolled in universities.[52] However, this was not the last anti-Semitic law to be conceived and implemented, as anti-Semitism only became more popular with the Great Depression and the radicalisation of the far-right.

The next anti-Semitic laws took a decade to be formed and implemented, but put more and more restrictions on the Jewish population in Hungary. These were: quota in the Jew's numbers in journalism, arts and engineering, among others with *The First Hungarian Jewish law* in 1938[53]; forbidding the Jews to marry Christians, as well to forbid them to get Hungarian

[49] Zeidler and others, "Irredentism in Everyday Life in Hungary during the Inter-War Period," 72.
[50] Miklós Zeidler, *A magyar irredenta kultusz a két világháború között*, (The Hungarian irredentist cult in the interwar period) Regio könyvek (Budapest: Teleki László Alapítvány, 2002), 17. [translated from Hungarian; source of translation: author's Own]
[51] Zeidler and others, "Irredentism in Everyday Life in Hungary during the Inter-War Period," 73.
[52] Ignác Romsics, ed., *Magyar történeti szöveggyűjtemény, 1914-1999. 1: […]*, (Collection of Hungarian historical texts, 1914-1999 volume 1) Osiris tankönyvek (Budapest: Osiris, 2000), 157–58. [translated from Hungarian; source of translation: author's Own]
[53] Ibid., 289–91.

citizenship and to be a representative in the Hungarian parliament and/or state officials and employees, amongst other jobs unless as a representative of the Israelite organisation, and many other restrictions, with *The Second Jewish law* in 1939[54]; Finally, *The Third Jewish Law*, formulated in 1941, made further restrictions in terms of intermarriage between Jews and non-Jews, as well as putting more punitive measures against the Jews.[55]

In the following years, the Horthy regime put two other monuments on the square in the same vein of symbolism: one of them was the National Flag. As Zeidler described its topographic location, especially in relation with the abovementioned irredentist statues:

The statues formed a semi-circle and in the middle was placed the Nation's Flag with pro-Hungarian quotations from the Italian dictator Benito Mussolini and the British press magnate Viscount Rothermere, which was unveiled on 20 August 1928.[56]

A couple of years later, on October 6th 1932, the national day of mourning the executed 1848-49 leaders of the Hungarian Revolution and War of Independence, the *Statue of Hungarian Grief* was unveiled, the result of Émile Guillaume. This commemoration reflected, according to Zeigler, by the imagery of the grieving naked mother, who projects grief and despair over the loss of her children.[57] Finally, the statue of General Harry Hill Bandholtz, who was the commander of the American forces who prevented the pillaging of the Hungarian Art Museum from the Romanian troops in 1919, was unveiled in 1936. This indicates, in his opinion the final piece of irredentism, its international dimension:

With their complex system of symbols and indirect references, the monuments of the "irredentist pantheon" in Szabadság square not only intended to express the bereavement of the Hungarian

[54] Ibid., 309–16.
[55] Ibid., 334–36.
[56] Zeidler and others, "Irredentism in Everyday Life in Hungary during the Inter-War Period," 73.
[57] Ibid., 74.

nation, but also aimed at showing the sympathy for Hungary of the world's leading powers' (Great Britain, Italy, France and the USA – but not Germany).[58]

As a final note, Zeidler also pointed out that this irredentism symbolism was also used for other squares in the city, as well as nationwide. Moreover, irredentism appeared in the naming of public spaces, events, arts, sports, slogans, and many more; making it impossible to avoid, since it became part of everyday life.[59]

Other public works that are worth mentioning which were erected in Szabadság square include: the Eternal Lantern, built to commemorate the national martyrs 1848-1849 Revolution in 1926; a memorial for István Széchenyi in 1930, called Flourish; and finally, a bronse bowl commemorating the people who died in the New building in 1940. In all of these cases, Thorstensen argues that the justification for it is related to what Zeigler considers to be part of the second irredentist type: the correlation between the 1848-1849 War of Independence and the Post-Trianon world, and the continuity between the two time periods.[60]

The irredentist monuments, along with all of the statues that were connected to Irredentism as well as the statue of Bandholtz, were removed after the end of the Second World War. However, as Thorstensen notes, the monuments referring to 1848-1849 were kept in place, due to the differing view that these monuments symbolise the anti-imperialist struggle of Hungary against the Austrians.[61] Furthermore, as Tony Judt argues,

The Communists' stated objective in 1945 and 1946 was to 'complete' the unfinished bourgeois revolutions of 1848, to re-distribute property, guarantee equality and affirm democratic rights in a part of Europe where all three had been in short supply.[62]

[58] Ibid., 74–75.
[59] Ibid., 75–88.
[60] Thorstensen, "The Places of Memory in a Square of Monuments," 8, 10, 14–15.
[61] Ibid., 15.
[62] Zeidler and others, "Irredentism in Everyday Life in Hungary during the Inter-War Period," 15.

As per the logic of this argument, the irredentist statues were replaced by a gigantic memorial for the fallen Soviet soldiers on May 1st 1945, seen in Appendix 2. This was also made as a grave for some of the fallen soldiers. Thorstensen described the function of the memorial very concisely and accurately:

This replacement can be seen as the crushing of Horthy's conception of freedom both ideologically by the Soviet Communism and concretely by erecting a new monument, an obelisk which connotes past grandeur as well as imperial power in the tradition we know both from Rome, Paris, and London.[63]

Over time, this memorial became the symbol of the Soviet occupation of the country, to the point that it is central point of discussion in the current post-communist Hungary and how to cope with the memory that it provokes, as Thorstensen notes multiple times, and was the impetus for his study of the square.[64] As time went on, more memorials were erected, such as the statue of Széchényi, a memorial plaque of Cardinal József Mindszenty, among many others. Thorstensen argues that the latest additions were made in the context of de-communisation, especially in the case Mindszenty, an outspoken critic of Communism.[65] However, the central importance of the Soviet memorial remained, which causes controversies and conflicts within Hungary due to the image of the past it represents.

In sum, the Szabadság square gained its central importance in Budapest and Hungary due to the fact that throughout its history, it was the site of the changes in narratives about the nation.

[63] Thorstensen, "The Places of Memory in a Square of Monuments," 15–16.
[64] Ibid., 1, 16, 28.
[65] Ibid., 17–18.

As such, it is one of the central arenas for political powers to clash upon. However, it is not the only square in Budapest to have this role in Hungarian national identity

History of Kossuth Lajos Tér:

The changes in Szabadság square happened in parallel to the changes in another important square, the Lajos Kossuth square. These changes also unveils the wider XXth Century history of Hungary and the changing national values which happened during this time period. However, the origins and importance of the square come from the developments in 19th Century and the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. Kossuth Lajos square was formed from an amalgamation of dock squares in the 2nd half of the 19th century in preparation for the construction of the Hungarian Parliament.[66] András Gerő, in his book *Térerő: A Kossuth Tér Története (Power of the Square: The History of Kossuth square)*, also gave a good summary of the process over which the initiative of the construction of the Hungarian Parliament was made. The initiative was started in 1880, and from the start, there were discussion and debates over where to put this Parliament: the shortlist for the Parliment included three locations, with the alternatives being near the current area of Károly Boulevard-Imre Madách Square, the other being at the crossroad of Erzsébet square, the Ferenc Deák street (Small Boulevard) [current Bajcsy-Zsilinszky Street] and Marrokkói Street [current Attila József Street]. However, the decision was made to make it on the then-named Tömö square due to financial reasons and due to the fact that the city was expanding in that direction.[67] That decision was followed by another debate, this time over the

[66] András Gerő, *Térerő: A Kossuth Tér Története*, (The Power of the Square: the History of the Lajos Kossuth square) Habsburg Történeti Monográfiák 3 (Budapest: Új Mandátum, 2008), 11–12. [translated from Hungarian; source of translation: author's Own]
[67] Ibid., 13–14, 21.

look and design of the building itself. The main questions were over whether to put the Parliament in parallel or perpendicular to the Danube and which side the entranceway would open (towards the Danube or towards the city), as well as the exact location of the building within the square.[68] On the other hand, one of the choices made early on during this process was the architectural style of the building, which was the neogothic style. This choice was not coincidental, according to Gerő, who points to the fact that the intention of the government was not only to emphasise the monumentality of the building, but also to follow the style of the British parliament, since it was the building housing the British constitutionality, which was considered to be the ideal model amongst the Hungarian political elite. This was because there was a perception that the Hungarian constitutionality was about the same age as the British constitutionality due to the founding documents of both constitutionality were written at the same time (Magna Carta in 1215, the Golden Bull in 1222).[69] In turn, that style, according to Gerő, influenced the process of the plans for the Parliament. This includes all of the aforementioned issues and topics.[70]These issues are: the visual representation of the nation via the art style of the Parliament, the selection of famous Hungarians in order to form the various national identities that came through the various political regimes of the XIXth-XXth centuries and the importance of the square in that identity formation, among many others.

The current design of the parliament was a result of these discussions. The reasoning behind the decisions made, from the neogothic style to the monumentality of the building, to summarise Gerő, was that the Parliament would achieve the goals of accurately representing the "constitutional and free" nation at the time in all of its glory and majesty. As such, the goal of the

[68] Ibid., 21–22.
[69] Ibid., 22,p.27.
[70] Ibid., 22.

building was not just to house the Representatives of the country, but to become an unforgettable symbol of the nation and its past. Additionally, one of the goals was for the Kálmán Tisza-led government to leave their mark, so to speak, on the country, by making the Hungarian Parliament a memorial for them.[71]

The construction of "the Gothic House, the building of the Hungarian Parliament, the temple of constitutionality"[72], Seen in Appendix 14, was finally finished in 1904, using the design of Imre Steindl, who became the commissioned chief architect after a competition. Shortly thereafter, the Gyula Andrássy[73] statue was erected on December 2nd 1906 (See Appendix 3). As Gerő recorded the process of the statue from its conception shortly after the death of Andrássy on Febuary 18th 1890 to its erection on the southern side of the square, along the shores of the Danube, the goal of the statue, sculpted by the winner of the competition, György Zala, was to memorialise and commemorate one of the most important man of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy.[74] The next projects on the square were the erection of statues during the interwar period. During this time period, the Horthy regime, as it is commonly called, erected five statues. However, I want to concentrate on three of them, since they will be part of the focus of this paper, as well as the focal point of comparison with the communist period, as I will explain later. The three statues were of: Lajos Kossuth[75] (See Appendix 4) on November 6th

[71] Ibid., 22–24.
[72] Ibid., 27.
[73] (March 3rd 1823- February 18th 1890); First Prime Minister of Hungary and first Foreign Affairs Minister of the Austro-Hungarian Empire; Source: "Magyar Életrajzi Lexikon 1000-1990," accessed June 1, 2017, http://mek.oszk.hu/00300/00355/html/ABC00003/00292.htm. [translated from Hungarian; source of translation: author's Own]
[74] Gerő, *Térerő*, 51–58.
[75] (September 19th 1802- March 20th 1892); Journalist and politician, one of the most significant figures of the Hungarian Revolution of 1848-49; Source: "Magyar Életrajzi Lexikon 1000-1990," accessed June 1, 2017, http://mek.oszk.hu/00300/00355/html/ABC07165/08465.htm. [translated from Hungarian; source of translation: author's Own]

1927, István Tisza[76] (See Appendix 5) on April 22nd 1934 and Ferenc Rákoczi the IInd[77] (See Appendix6) on March 2nd 1937. In all of the abovementioned statues, the theme of national unity and of the belief of recovery were present, as Gerő noted. Moreover, according to him, these four statues are the representations of the spiritualisation of the square, or the addition of the square being not just the square which houses, so to speak, the Hungarian Parliament, but is also a place of worship of the nation.[78] The difference is that in each of the cases, the approach and angle of that theme was different. In the case of the Kossuth Statue, it was erected 34 years after Kossuth's death, during which time the erection of a statue in his honour was a constant source of debate and of initiatives to create it.[79] The final product, so to speak, was created by János Horvay. The decision from 1914 was to place it in front of the entranceway to the Parliament, which was carried to the final plan. Furthermore, the design of the statue gives the air of melancholy, as if representing the aftermath of the failed revolution of 1848-49, which is contradictory to his reputation as an agitator, as Gerő points in his overview of the statue.[80] The reason for this, he argues, was that if Kossuth was represented as an agitator, it would have reminded people of who he was against: the kingdom which Horthy was supposed to lead as its regent. It also helped that the design, which was formulated during the dual monarchy, also fitted the worldview of the Horthy regime.[81] Finally, the statue was also erected on the 100th

[76] (April 22nd, 1861- October 31st 1918); Conservative politician and Prime Minister during the First World War; Source:"Magyar Életrajzi Lexikon 1000-1990," accessed June 1, 2017, http://mek.oszk.hu/00300/00355/html/ABC15363/15755.htm. [translated from Hungarian; source of translation: author's Own]

[77] (March 27th 1676-April 8th 1735); Last Transylvanian Prince, leader of the Kuruc Freedom fight against the Habsburgs; Source: "Magyar Életrajzi Lexikon 1000-1990," accessed June 1, 2017, http://mek.oszk.hu/00300/00355/html/ABC12527/12687.htm. [translated from Hungarian; source of translation: author's Own]

[78] Gerő, *Térerő*, 59–69. [translated from Hungarian; source of translation: author's Own]

[79] Ibid., 59–60.

[80] Ibid., 60–61.

[81] Ibid., 61–62.

anniversary of his birth, and the date of the erection was also the day the square gained its current name.[82] This is important to note, since there has been no change of the square's name up to this day. Gerő argues that it is revealing of two things: one, that Kossuth is one of the most important Hungarian national heroes which every political party and system need to respect and use in order to legitimise as a national government; two, that the symbolic meaning of the name gave one further role in the square's importance, since a lot of important events ,such as displays of power from the political power in place at a specific time and protests against that power, happened at the same square.[83] In other words, the square has gained its essential importance in Hungarian national identity with the current name, since it invokes one of the most respected Hungarian national heroes, the name being Kossuth. However, this is not the last time the Horthy regime portrayed a famous person as a national hero for their political purposes.

In the case of the Tisza statue, which was erected on the front of the Parliament's northern or Upper House entrance, the case for national identity-building, so to speak was clearer: as the wartime conservative Prime Minister of Hungary who was assassinated by supporters of the revolution which ended the Hungarian Monarchy in 1918 and founded the short-lived Hungarian Republic. As such, he presented not only a martyr of a system which was antithetical to the Horthy regime, but also a figure for idolisation, since he represented the stronghanded nationalist conservatism which the regime was characterised by and considered themselves to be the standard bearers of it.[84] Finally, in the case of the Rákóczi statue, which was sculpted by János Pásztor and Dénes Györgyi, it was a way to use the myth of the pre-1848 freedom fighting Hungary fighting against foreign oppression. Moreover, Rákóczi became over

[82] Ibid., 13.
[83] Ibid., 13, 95–196.
[84] Ibid., 65–67.

time one of the most important figures for Hungarian national identity, second only to Kossuth himself. However, in the post-Trianon context of the erection of the statue in the southern part of the central area of the square, the prince facing Kossuth (although looking at the Parliament), it was erected for two reasons: one, to belatedly celebrate the 200th anniversary of Rákóczi's death; second, to use his myth to imbue the traumatised Hungarian society with a strong sense of a national identity, especially infused, so to speak, with the revisionist nationalism which the regime was promoting, according to Gerő. This was also because, in the government's eyes, Rákóczi represented one of the earliest representatives for the Hungarian sovereignty and national identity, within and outside of the borders of the nation[85] One further point emphasise this: the fact that one of the sides of the statue has the prince's motto in latin, "For the Homeland and Freedom with God.", as seen in Appendix 7)[86]

This recurring theme and initiatives happen because, as László Kontler notes, the trauma caused by the Trianon Peace Treaty caused the irredentism and nationalism to develop in Hungary, which was further accentuated by the Great Depression.[87] He also points out that the cultural policy was to emphasise the argument that Hungary was "culturally superior" to its neighbours who had the lost territories. This was reflected by the proportion of the budget allocated to culture during that time (10%) and the number of initiatives to educate the children of the Christian and national values.[88] This permeated through the whole of Hungary, and irredentism became part of the country, so to speak.

[85] Ibid., 67–68.
[86] Ibid., 69.
[87] László Kontler, *A History of Hungary: Millennium in Central Europe* (Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 326–27.
[88] Ibid., 356–57.

The monuments were removed by the communist regime and replaced over time with statues that were more in line with their ideology: The Kossuth statue was replaced by another representation of Kossuth that was more "revolutionary" on September 19th 1952, the date of the 15th anniversary of Kossuth's birth (See Appendix 8); the Tisza statue was replaced by a statue of Mihály Károlyi[89] on March 3rd 1975 (See Appendix 9); finally, the Andrassy statue was replaced by one of József Atilla[90] on December 21st 1980, the year the Hungarians celebrated his 75th birthday (See Appendix 10). These changes reflect the domination of communism in cultural life at the time which started shortly after the end of the Second World War, as Kontler points it out.[91] To further summarise Kontler, this cultural domination turned into a monopoly in the 1950s, which led to the implementation of Socialist Realism, among many other measures mimicking Stalinism, as the official national architecture of the state via the nationalisation of the infrastructure and the elimination of the private and independent actors in the country (i.e.: mainly the church).[92]

After the 1956 revolution, the Kádár regime decided to reign in the extremist measures put in place and give concessions in order to gain the "silent majority". This included general de-Stalinisation, with Kontler giving the example of the education policy as one of the areas of this policy[93] This was expressed by the motto "He who is not against us is with us" and the Three Ts (Tilt, Tűrt, Támogatott) which guided cultural life in Hungary for the next decades of communist

[89] (March 4th 1875- March 19th 1955); Prime Minister of the post-World War One Hungarian Republic; Source:"Magyar Életrajzi Lexikon 1000-1990," accessed June 3, 2017, http://mek.oszk.hu/00300/00355/html/ABC07165/07472.htm. [translated from Hungarian; source of translation: author's Own]

[90] (April 11th 1905- December 3rd 1937); 20th century Hungarian poet posthumously celebrated; Source:"József Attila," accessed June 3, 2017, http://magyar-irodalom.elte.hu/sulinet/igyjo/setup/portrek/jozsefa/jozsefa.htm.

[91] Kontler, *A History of Hungary*, 403. [translated from Hungarian; source of translation: author's Own]

[92] Ibid., 408, 414–18.

[93] Ibid., 432–37, 444.

rule. In essence, Kontler argues that these policies "liberated" the artists to create freely, within certain limits.[94] This was criticised from the beginning, as he points it out, due to the "abandonment" of communism and its principles[95]

The reasoning behind the statues were varied, but all carried the function of promoting the values of communism by celebrating either revolutionary fervour or promoting certain people as national heroes, so to speak. The replacement of the Kossuth statue for the other was simple: the emphasis, from the design of the statue to the justification, was on Kossuth being the agitator, the pre-communist tribune who fought against foreign imperial oppression and for the working classes. As such, the communist government, the argument went, were the only inheritors of his principles and values.[96] The replacement of Tisza to his political opponent at the time, was noticeable due to their opposite values: while Tisza was a conservative politician, Károlyi was a proponent of progressivism at the time. He was also the leader of the abovementioned Republic when the Hungarian Commune took power in 1919. For this reason, among the other reason that Gerő points out, namely the fact that as an opponent of both the Horthy and the Rákosi regimes, he was a perfect person to celebrate for the post-1956 "popular front" political power, namely the Kádár regime.[97] In between the Kossuth and the Károlyi statue, a national flag pole was put on the square in 1965, which, according to Gerő, had the function of labelling the square as the location for the self-representation of the state as well as being another of the spiritual and symbolic location for the Hungarian national identity. Furthermore, the events of 1956 have made it clear to the Kádár regime that the spiritualisation of sorts of the square that the Rákosi

[94] Ibid., 434, 443, 445–48.
[95] Ibid., 450–51.
[96] Gerő, *Térerő*, 70–72. [translated from Hungarian; source of translation: author's Own]
[97] Ibid., 73–74.

regime followed was non-viable, therefore it needed to be changed.[98] This is one of the indications of the differences in terms of political approach between the two abovementioned communist regimes. Similarly to the previous case, the József statue was erected to celebrate a posthumously labelled national poet who was part of the underground Communist Party during the Horthy regime. As such, it was not only a celebration of a national hero, but also promoted the "popular front" line and the de-politicization discourse the government was following, as Gerő noted in his book.[99]. With this last statue, he argues, the re-spiritualisation of the square, which was shattered by the end of the Second World War, was finally complete. Only, it was the communist version of that spirituality that was completed.[100] It was also during the communist time period that the square reached its complete and current shape in 1972, as Gerő points it out.[101]

It is also worth noting that the statues were kept there after the fall of the communist regime. However, that does not mean that the square was left alone. In reference to making October 23rd a national holiday in 1990 in remembrance for the 1956 revolution, a memorial for the 50th anniversary of the revolution was erected near the Kossuth statue, named "revolutionary flame". According to Gerő, this was in order to commemorate the revolution, but more specifically, the mass shooting that happened during that event which caused the deaths of many Hungarians.[102] As such, it was a post-communist case of spiritualising the square and the nation by extension, which is essential for any political regime to do so in order to legitimate their claim as the sovereign state of Hungary, Gerő argues.[103]

[98] Ibid., 73.
[99] Ibid., 74–75.
[100] Ibid., 75–76.
[101] Ibid., 27.
[102] Ibid., 77.
[103] Ibid., 80.

In summary of the history of Kossuth square, like Szabadság square, it has become one of the central areas of Budapest from the 19th century onwards. This is due to the fact that, again like Szabadság square, many of the central initiatives to frame Hungarian national identity via the built world happened in that square. Both squares were also the sites of changes whenever a major political and ideological shift happened. As such, the recent changes in those squares are the latest in terms of (re)defining Hungarian national identity via statues and the symbolisms behind them. However, in order to contextualise and explain the changes and their role in the wider context of identity formation, certain theories need to be looked at.

Theoretical Framework:

These changes in public spaces can be seen from three theories and approaches. These theories are: the banal nationalism approach, the theories related to the politics of memory, and the sociology of architecture theories. All of these theories have different approaches and starting points, however, they cover most of the aspects of the parallel changes in the discourse of Hungarian national identity by the current government and the changes in Szabadság and Lajos Kossuth squares.

Banal Nationalism:

Banal Nationalism was developed by Michael Billig in the book of the same name. In the book, he argued that *"[T]the reproduction of nation-states depends upon a dialectic of collective remembering and forgetting, and of imagination and unimaginative repetition."*[104] As such, banal nationalism is an approach to understand the ways nationalist ideas seep into our daily lives. According to Billig, language is an important part of the banalisation of nationalism, since it "plays a vital role in the operation of ideology and in the framing of ideological consciousness."[105]Jon E. Fox and Cynthia Miller-Idriss, in their article *Everyday Nationhood*, go even further and say that there is a form of "talking the nation, which consists of the frequency of the mention of the nation in conversations or speeches, as well as the nation being part of the conversation due to the unconscious disposition about the nation that informs the discoussions.[106] Additionally, *"[T]the battle for nationhood is a battle for hegemony, by which a part claims to speak for the whole nation and to represent the national essence."*[107] This is important, since it contextualises the actions of the government as a struggle of representation of national identity and of the nation. On the question of memory, Billig argued that an essential element of a national identity is the fact of remembering and forgetting. It is remembered through everyday actions, such as waved flags, folk songs and, more importantly for this topic, monuments. These ways of remembering, in turn, makes nationalism part of everyday life.[108] Fox and Miller-Idriss have also another aspect which could be important for the analysis of monuments: "performing the nation". This is when people perform the nation via everyday rituals, such as drinking tea or eating eggs for

[104] Michael Billig, *Banal Nationalism* (London ; Thousand Oaks, Calif: Sage, 1995), 10.
[105] Ibid., 17.
[106] J. E. Fox and C. Miller-Idriss, "Everyday Nationhood," *Ethnicities* 8, no. 4 (December 1, 2008): 538–42, doi:10.1177/1468796808088925.
[107] Billig, *Banal Nationalism*, 27.
[108] Ibid., 37–46.

breakfast. Further performances can come during massive events where the ritual of attaching oneself to a national symbol happens, such as a spoting event [109] In essence, this quote summarises Banal Nationalism in regards to the everyday flagging of nationhood, as Billig calls it: "Their unobtrusiveness arises, in part, from their very familiarity"[110]

Michael Skey gave a couple of criticisms of the banal nationalism approach which are relevant for this thesis: Banal nationalism is too focused on the top-down-phenomena and does not analyse the bottom-up aspects of banal nationalism the role of the media in national identity formation cannot be assumed, as Billig claims, since it transmits multiple messages regarding identity; the notion of a homogenous national society is another assumption, since the media can have editions for different (national) identities within the same territory, for example Britain or Switzerland; Banal nationalism does not address how different social groups react to a particular media or political speech; the role of globalization in nationalism is limited in this notion; finally, banal nationalism does not cover instances of heating or cooling nationalism, such as the case of the events leading to the Rwandan genocide or the gradual routinization of national symbols in Norway in the 1920-1930s.[111] Billig' response to these criticisms was that he did not intend to end any debates on the role of media in Banal Nationalism, as well as argue that Banal Nationalism did not assume the homogeneity of any of the national public's opinions, but rather that "*arguments about the nature of the nation are the norm*".[112] At the same time, he acknowledges that the media does transmit multiple and conflicting messages, it does not mean that Banal Nationalism does exclude the

[109] Fox and Miller-Idriss, "Everyday Nationhood," 545–46.
[110] Billig, *Banal Nationalism*, 174.
[111] Michael Skey, "The National in Everyday Life: A Critical Engagement with Michael Billig's Thesis of *Banal Nationalism*," *The Sociological Review* 57, no. 2 (May 2009): 335–42, doi:10.1111/j.1467-954X.2009.01832.x.
[112] Michael Billig, "Reflecting on a Critical Engagement with Banal Nationalism – Reply to Skey," *The Sociological Review* 57, no. 2 (May 2009): 347, doi:10.1111/j.1467-954X.2009.01837.x.

possibility for people to participate in sense-making, since the approach focuses more on the unconscious forms of nationalism, not the conscious forms of it, where the competing narratives come from. Moreover, these debates assume the naturalness, according to Billig, of a world based of nations, which was the reason for the approach to be developed by distancing itself from the conscious sense-making aspects of nationalism.[113] On the criticism of the limited understanding of the role of globalization, he argues that Skey misunderstood his argument. What Billig argues is as follows: one, under the assumption that nationalism is global, then so is Banal Nationalism; second, there are non-Western democratic states; third, non-Western nations are also places where national symbols are being reproduced daily. The misunderstanding, according to Billig, comes from the fact that the focus of the book was on Western democracies, which intentional in order to reveal the "mundance" practices of nationalism in those countries.[114] Finally, he acknowledges the calls for the analysis of sub-national and supra-national phenomena, including the analysis of their everyday practices. However, he also argues that the focus on these nationalities, alongside the analysis of the developing countries's nationalism, which is contrary to what he intended with the writing of the book, which was more analysis of the Banal Nationalism of the United States of America, the most powerful nation in the world.[115] He calls the situation, using Zerubavel" wording, an "elephant in the sociological room".[116]

While this theory was originally created to explain the "hidden" ways nationalism is expressed in the West, I think that this theory can also partially explain the ways developing countries may try to re-write national identity in the wake of a change in regimes. In the

[113] Ibid., 348.
[114] Ibid., 349.
[115] Ibid., 350–51.
[116] Ibid., 351.

context of Hungary, banal nationalism could explain the goal of the government in making the changes in those public squares. This is because the government looks as if they are trying to (re)canonize the symbols of the interwar period with these initiatives, so as to make these symbols become again part of the Hungarian national identity. As such, Banal nationalism, in my opinion, could be used to theorise on the intentions of the Hungarian government in regard to the initiatives in Szabadság and Lajos Kossuth squares. Furthermore, Skey's argument of heating and cooling nationalism gives a perspective into the possible processes over which new national symbols become banalised over time. This is especially true also to the ways the reactions to the irredentist policies of the Fidesz government might be an indication of the heating nationalism in Hungary. Nevertheless, this theory only gives a partial picture of the issue, in my opinion. This is the reason why an overview of other theories need to be used in conjunction with Banal Nationalism, such as the theories surrounding memory politics.

Politics of Memory:

The recent events can be interpreted as strategies of remembrance and memory, in which case there is a need to look at some of theories surrounding the concept of politics of memory, and see if it is applicable to this context. Politics of memory theories are diverse and come from multiple disciplines, as Jeffrey K. Olick, Vered Vinitzsky-Seroussi and Daniel Levy note in the anthology *The Collective Memory Reader*. The disciplines that they list include: sociology, historiography, psychology, and anthropology, and many others.[117]

[117] Jeffrey K. Olick, Vered Vinitzky-Seroussi, and Daniel Levy, eds., *The Collective Memory Reader* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 41–47.

The definition of the concept of memory that Olik et al. give is very good in regards to explaining what is meant by memory in the study of it, with a reference to classical literature: "***Memoria**, mother of the muses (including **Clio**, the muse of history) is the basic form of our relationship to the past of our existence in time*".[118] This definition is crucial, since it gives a context in the objective of any memory politics, as well as connect memory to identity formation. Another definition which gives another lens which is equally important for the topic of this paper: "memory is *the present of the past*"[119] This indicates the role of memory in shaping our present, as well as the ways the past endures in the present-day which includes the built world. Therefore, any changes to it is a change in how people relate to their own past, such as the changes in Szabadság and Lajos Kossuth squares. Ernest Renan, on the other hand, argues in *What is a Nation*? that nation building involves not only remembering certain events, but also forgetting. As such, the construction of a nation is a cycle of remembering and forgetting.[120] Moreover, "A nation is a soul, a spiritual principle."[121] As such, Renan argues, half of that principle lies in the possession of a past that is worth remembering, as well as the relationship between the feeling of the sacrifices made by the ancestors, and the sacrifices that people are willing to do for the future of the nation.[122] This is something that is also noted by Walter R. Fisher, when he analysed the relation between storytelling and community formation:

[118] Ibid., 6.
[119] Ibid., 476.
[120] Ibid., 80–81.
[121] Ibid., 82.
[122] Ibid., 82–83.

Any story, any form of rhetorical communication, not only says something about the world, it also implies an audience, persons who conceive of themselves in very specific ways[123]

He elaborates further on this argument by stating that

Communities are co-constituted through communication transactions in which participants co-author a story that has coherence and fidelity for the life that one would lead. One many adhere to a story because it sanctions a life one must live in order to survive or succeed. This sort of adherence creates communities by concession or conformity. One may also adhere to a story because one senses in it an honoured perception of oneself. Such adherence creates communities by election or conversion. From this view, truly transcendental stories are those that show or reveal us to ourselves ontologically, they account for our Being-what we are and what we can be.[124]

In a way, memory politics is also linked to social memory, which James J. Fentress defines it as "articulate memory"[125] This explains in part the role of the historical revisionism that the government is promoting with the changes in Szabadság and Lajos Kossuth squares in terms of identity (re)formation, since memory plays a crucial role in it. Additionally, this could point to the fact that changes are made with the intention to canonize and/or banalize the new symbols and heroes.

Another concept to remember is the concept of collective memory. Developed by Maurice Halbwachs, the concept explains the way groups remember events. To summarise the notion, collective memory, unlike history, is a fluid form of remembering the past, which

[123] Lewis P. Hinchman and Sandra K. Hinchman, eds., *Memory, Identity, Community: The Idea of Narrative in the Human Sciences*, SUNY Series in the Philosophy of the Social Sciences (Albany, NY: State Univ. of New York Press, 2001), 323.
[124] Ibid.
[125] James Fentress, Chris Wickham, and American Council of Learned Societies, *Social Memory* (New York, N.Y.: American Council of Learned Societies (POD), 2012), 47.

is carried from one generation to the next, developing along the way.[126] This is important to note, since it explains the way the past carries on to the present. This could arguably include the built world, which sometimes represent the memory of the past from the present. On a related note, Eviatar Zerbavel, in *Social Memories: Steps towards a Sociology of the Past*, also argue that personal memories are influenced by our social environment, especially from people close to us (family and friends). Therefore, our memories of our life and of the past can be developed or repressed, so to speak.[127] This is what Zebraviel calls "Mnemonic Socialisation", which teaches us about the social rules of remembering and of the "Mnemonic Tradition". These processes create "Sociobiographical memory", which is the prime driver of pride or shame in our identity, whether it be personal or national self-identity.[128]

Two concepts from Pierre Bourdieu can be used to contextualise memory studies in sociology, since many of the sociologists use these two concepts to explain it. These two concepts are habitus and capital. Habitus, as Bourdieu defines it, is something that structures social structures via the forms of life-styles that are encouraged and promoted in a specific society, from food to sports.[129] In turn, these practices create the rules of society and its expression of it, or the playing field if we use Bourdieu's analogy of the concept.[130] The other concept, capital, is defined by Bourdieu as thus:

[126] Olick, Vinitzky-Seroussi, and Levy, *The Collective Memory Reader*, 142–49.
[127] Ibid., 221–22.
[128] Ibid., 222–24.
[129] Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, Reprint1984 ed. (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2000), 170–225.
[130] Ibid., 226.

Capital is accumulated labor (in its materialized form or its 'incorporated,' embodied form) which, when appropriated on a private, i.e., exclusive, basis by agents or groups of agents, enables them to appropriate social energy in the form of reified or living labor.[131]

He elaborates by stating that there are different forms of capital: economic, cultural and social capital. Each are converted in different way: economic capital is converted into money and property you have; cultural capital can be converted into education, cultural objects and higher qualifications; and finally, social capital converts into reputation, titles and social networks.[132] These two concepts are essential for this thesis, for it helps answering some of the questions of this thesis. The way it answers them is that the concepts brings the two separate dimensions of the built world: the habitus with the role of the built world in developing the norms and values of the national values in Hungary, and capital with the government's rhetoric creating the cultural capital that it wants to use to change the foundations of that national identity.

Bourdieu's concept is not the only key concept in terms of conceptualising memory politics. A third concept to consider is Eric Hobsbawm's invented traditions. In his words, invented tradition is

taken to mean a set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past.[133]

[131] "The Forms of Capital by Pierre Bourdieu 1986," accessed May 23, 2017, https://www.marxists.org/reference/subject/philosophy/works/fr/bourdieu-forms-capital.htm.
[132] Ibid.
[133] Olick, Vinitzky-Seroussi, and Levy, *The Collective Memory Reader*, 271.

This definition is important, for it puts into perspective the way memories are created. moreover, with the repetition part of the definition, memory politics are linked with banal nationalism by the gradual routinization of sorts of the norms and values of the nation a certain group's elite want to build and mould into their ideal.

The final concept to consider before going into memory politics is Benedict Anderson's Imagined Communities. To summarise, he uses that term to define the nation, which is also imagined as limited and sovereign. It is imagined because of the perceived feeling of belonging to a community with people that member of that community will never meet or hear of them. It is imagined as limited due to the territorial and other borders between the nation and the other. It is imagined as sovereign due to the legacy of the Enlightenment era and soverignity as the opposition of the dynastic realm. Finally, the imagination expands to the feeling of community due to the conception of the nation as a profound even-level company.[134]

Memory politics can also be considered as part of cultural politics. As David Bell and Kate Oakley define it, cultural policy is "the way the state interacts with supports, represses or regulates different cultural forms […]."[135]. In turn, their definition of culture is quoted from Storey: "*the texts and practices whose principle function is to signify, to produce for to be the occasion for the production of meaning*".[136] In other words, culture is the forms of expression of the meaning of social norms, and cultural policy is the way the state interacts with that expression. The political use of culture, Bell and Oakley argue, is to make a

[134] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, Rev. and extended ed., 13. impression (London: Verso, 2003), 5–7.
[135] David Bell and Kate Oakley, *Cultural Policy*, Key Ideas in Media and Cultural Studies (London New York: Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group, 2015), 16.
[136] Ibid., 17.

"better" society, or one that is moulded in the intended image of the ruling elite at the time. At the same time, it is usually a more mundane form of policy, since it is part of public policy.[137] Clive Gray argues that it is concerned with:

> *Community cultural development, cultural diversity, cultural sustainability, cultural heritage, the cultural and creative industries, lifestyle culture and eco-culture, planning for the intercultural city, cultural planning* ***per se****, support for national languages, "currently controversial issues in the wider society", […], "the production of cultural citizens" as well as being concerned with "representation, meaning and interpretation" and being a "transhistorical political function"*[138]

One of the most important aspects of cultural policy, Bell and Oakley point out, is urban cultural policy. This is due to the fact that general trends in demographics reflect the importance of the city in modern times, as well as the cities being the location of many of the greatest cultural legacies, or the "support infrastructure", as they put it.[139] In a way, cities are the centre of culture and, as such, any policy on culture needs to address the urban environment. This is important, for it brings out the importance of the urban in culture. This could also be important in the context of national cultural policy, which Bell and Oakley also note as an important part of cultural policy. In sum, they describe it as forms and initiatives via culture to create and mould national identities, such as the case of *Grands Projets* in France, which, according to the authors, had the goal to reassert French greatness and exceptionalism.[140] On a related note, the authors also argue that "[T] there is an obvious connection between culture and nation formation, therefore: culture is conscripted into

[137] Ibid., 58–59.
[138] Ibid., 8.
[139] Ibid., 78–80.
[140] Ibid., 109–12.

helping define the nation"[141]. They elaborate on this statement by connecting Anderson's notion of imagined communities, Hobsbawn's concept of invented traditions and banal nationalism to cultural policy. The argument goes as follows: the national state is a work of "fiction"; therefore, the narratives and initiatives surrounding "national culture" is a tool to hide that fictionality and unify the people living in that nation, since culture is a useful and effective tool to form identities; as well as inventing the foundations for the present and the future of the nation-building process, in theory.[142] Additionally, any rejection or changes to the conventional narratives about the nation just add to the overall message and reminder to people of belonging to the "nation", which is subtly done through the news outlets, TV shows, and many more.[143] In my opinion, this argument can also apply to the real world, since it is a daily reminder of the nation you are living in. Bell and Oakley also note that

> *[M] much of the work of community imagining and takes place in the realm of everyday life; while exeptional events might loom large as moments when the nation was reimagined […] much cultural nation-building is made up of small acts or forms of banal nationalism*[144]

Moreover, according to them, banal nationalism can appear in various forms, such as the abovementioned *grands projets*, which are attempts to "rebrand" the nation in an increasingly globalised world, as well as a restatement of the "national values"; and in cultural policy being an indicator of the national character, so to speak, since national cultural policy, whether it be "heavy-handed" or non-interventionist, is in itself a statement about the nation-state and its culture. This last point is important to the authors, since it reveals the role

[141] Ibid., 112–13.
[142] Ibid.
[143] Ibid., 113–14.
[144] Ibid., 114.

of national political culture in national identity formation, as well as being a form of banal nationalism.[145] This part is important to note, since it connects cultural politics and, by extension, memory politics to banal nationalism, especially in cases of cultural initiatives or changes in the built world, such as the changes in Szabadság and Lajos Kossuth squares in Budapest.

Bell an Oakley also note that, in order to understand the specific national cultural policy, knowledge of the examined nation in question is necessary. However, they also argue that it is difficult to differentiate cultural policy and national culture. As such, case studies are necessary in order to differentiate the two notions, such as the case of the changes in Szabadság and Lajos Kossuth squares.[146] In turn, this method gives an answer to a question: does a change in political regimes change the cultural policies ? The answer to that question seems to be straightforward. However, Bordat, using the example of Mexico in 2000, the year of a political change in that country, proved that it is possible that the political change can barely affect cultural policy, if at all, especially in a seismic way.[147] In any case, all the states have three roles vis-a-vis culture policy, as Bell and Oakley simplified it:

i) *Control, censor and prohibit forms of cultural expression,*
ii) *Provide forms of protection for national culture, and*
iii) *Promote national culture and enlist culture in broader national promotion*[148]

These roles can be seen in the recent changes in the analysed public spaces, as I will explain in detail when I analyse the changes in chapter 5.

[145] Ibid.
[146] Ibid., 115.
[147] Ibid., 120–21.
[148] Ibid., 126.

Régine Robin-Marie gave a good summary of the context in which memory has a role in our societies:

"Wherever one looks, one sees a past commemorated or desecrated, celebrated or stashed away, being told, transformed, invented even, but always it is enmeshed in the present."[149]

Jan Assmann also wrote on memory something interesting and especially relevant to this topic:

Through its cultural heritage a society becomes visible to itself and to others. Which past becomes evident in that heritage and which values emerge in its identificatory appropriation tells us much about the constitution and tendencies of a society.[150]

In this quote, we can find some of the elements of the notion of memory being used as a social tool. This emphasises the role of the built world in creating, developing and maintaining national memory national identity, especially monuments and statues. It also implies the role of the built world in banalizing the new national identity narratives and symbols. This also reveals that the general politics of memory can also be seen as part of a political regime which in turn creates its own version of the past.

Michael Bernhard and Jan Kubik, in their book *Twenty Years After Communism: The Politics of Memory and Commemoration*, propose a theoretical framework on this concept. This theoretical framework is based upon two notions: *mnemonic actors and memory*

[149] Wahnich, *Politics of Collective Memory*, 29.
[150] Jan Assmann and John Czaplicka, "Collective Memory and Cultural Identity," *New German Critique*, no. 65 (1995): 133, doi:10.2307/488538.

regimes.[151] Both parts play a role, according to them. The definition of mnemonic actors, to paraphrase them, are the actors (individuals, the states, private organisations, etc.) participating in the construction, development and maintenance of the memory regimes. The typology for it is that there are four ideal types of actors, which in turn determines the memory regimes via their interactions with each other: These four types are: the mnemonic warriors, the mnemonic pluralists, mnemonic abnegators and mnemonic prospectives.[152] These four types have to consider a couple of questions concerning the past, according to the authors. These questions are based on Harold Lasswell's definition of politics: "*who* gets *what, when* and *how*", Bernhard and Kubik adding why to it.[153] These questions are answered with two strategic considerations in mind, according to Bernhard and Kubik, as well as three general hypothetical factors that determine the answers. The strategies to consider are the positional, or the political strategy, and the semiotic, or cultural strategy, both dealing with the evaluations of the possible consequences of any decision.[154] These decisions, as well as the abovementioned typology and strategic considerations, can be influenced, according to the authors, by these three factors:

(1) cultural constraints imposed by the meanings, values and identities "enshrined" in the discourses (narratives, culture) actors know and consider using;
(2) cultural choices that actors make within these constraints (for example, assumption of specific political-cultural identities or use of specific ideological themes); and
(3) structural-institutional constraints of the political field in which they act.[155]

[151] Michael H. Bernhard and Jan Kubik, eds., *Twenty Years after Communism: The Politics of Memory and Commemoration* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2014), 8.
[152] Ibid., 11.
[153] Ibid., 12.
[154] Ibid., 11.
[155] Ibid., 12.

The four ideal types answer these questions in various ways and use different strategies to answer them: mnemonic warriors are usually the people promoting a single, monolithic and mythological view of the past which is the only "true" one, with the contradicting views of the past coming from "mistaken" or "false" sources, which are propagated by obscurantists. As such, the warrior's view of memory politics is one of "Us vs. Them" mentality, prompting them to fight the "obscurantists" in order to make them illegitimate views of the past or destroy those alternative ideas of the past, since they are corrupting the soul of the group via their "false" relation to the past. Moreover, the "obfuscators" are also making it more difficult, according to the arguments made by mnemonic warriors in this typology, to solve the present problems, since they delay the acceptance of the "true" and proper foundations of the nation, which could solve effectively all of the problems.[156] By contrast, Mnemonic pluralist, in this typology, acknowledge and recognise the multiple narratives for a single event. As such, the "truth" lies in the dialogue between the multiple narratives, and the pluralists strive in making memory politics that is accommodating for the multiple narratives.[157] The third type of mnemonic actors, the abnegators, are the actors who tend to ignore memory politics, either because of the assumption of a monolithic vision of the past or by choice, sometimes trying to forget certain events. Therefore, they tend to ignore and avoid the cultural wars, viewing them as a useful tool to help with the present.[158] The fourth and final type of mnemonic actors, the mnemonic prospectives, tend to be the actors who believe that they are the only ones that have the tools to make a better future for everyone. Similarly to the mnemonic warriors, they tend to have a monolithic view of

[156] Ibid., 13.
[157] Ibid.
[158] Ibid., 14.

the past, but prospectives tend to focus on the future, and try to mobilize the country in order to create their vision of it, using the past as a way to teach the principles of their vision.[159]

The interaction between these four typologies create the various memory regimes, as mentioned before. According to Bernhard and Kubik, there are three main types of regimes: the *fractured* memory regime, which is the result of the mnemonic warrior's discourse of "us vs. them", making sharp distinctions between the "truth" and the "falsehoods"; the *pillarized* regime, which is a regime that is filled with multiple narratives coexisting with each other, which negates the partisan politicisation of the past; and the *unified* memory regime, which is based on an agreement of the past via a large consensus on the past or an avoidance of talking about the past for fear of politicizing it.[160] This typology is important, since it could explain a lot about the current changes in Szabadság and Lajos Kossuth squares and the memory politics behind it. Moreover, it creates a typology which helps explaining the logic behind the recent decisions in the two public squares analysed in this paper. The Popular Memory Group, comprised of British Cultural theorists, also argue something similar to this concept by stating that "dominant representations may be those that are most ideological most obviously conforming to the flattened stereotypes of myth."[161] Their argument is that the "dominant" memory, or the memory currently represented and publicly accessed, is the one represented by the dominant power. In turn, this means that this representation can either become part of the collective memory, or can be replaced.[162] This certainly explains the social context of the usefulness of removing certain "controversial" statues from a previous regime, such as the case of the redesigning of Lajos Kossuth square.

[159] Ibid.
[160] Ibid., 17.
[161] Olick, Vinitzky-Seroussi, and Levy, *The Collective Memory Reader*, 255.
[162] Ibid.

Another theoretical aspect comes from Heidemarie Uhl, who argues that historical points of references, such as national holidays, are not stable fixtures of identity. Their position is dependent on the political and social will of the community. In a way, the conception of a historical canon is a site of completion, so to speak, of different interests.[163] Additionally, the common knowledge of a certain community, she argues, cannot be used as a neutral account of events or of universal culture, but are instead subjective accounts[164].More interestingly for this topic, she also wrote:

> *"[T]the material symbols that we find in the public space such as museums, memorials, monuments, street names, etc. thus function as media for the hierarchies that are inherent in memory: they are indicators of what can be said in public in which social space, for they link the level discursive constructions with the level of action of those involved*."[165]

This quote is very relevant, since it links further the politics of memory, discourses and the built environment. As such, the theories of the politics of memory are applicable to the context of changes in two of the central public spaces of Budapest. On a related note, Assmann also argued in a handbook on cultural memory that culture is part of memory, since the cultural memory is a storage and objectification of symbolic forms which transcend time and space, so to speak.[166] This could be connected to what Marla Mälksoo pointed out in her article *"Memory must be defended": Beyond the politics of mnemonical security*. In it, she argued that memory "emerges as a vital self-identity need as it is invoked to constitute the central narrative of a state about its past in order to form a core part of its consistent sense of

[163] Wahnich, *Politics of Collective Memory*, 61.
[164] Ibid., 62.
[165] Ibid., 63.
[166] Astrid Erll and Ansgar Nünning, eds., *Cultural Memory Studies: An International and Interdisciplinary Handbook*, Media and Cultural Memory 8 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2008), 110–12.

the self in the present."[167] This quote brings out two points: one, that memory is an essential element for the legitimation of a state; two, that in order to secure their current position and legacy, the states may need to change their stance and even certain policies in order to canonize, so to speak, their own interpretation of the past and of the common memory of the nation's population. On the first point mentioned above, Duncan Bell goes even further in *Trauma and World Politics* by arguing that memory is an essential element of identity, since identity requires a common consensus on the interpretation of the past and of certain major events. All of these points further emphasise the argument that memory is essential for any identities to be formed, especially national identity. Therefore, any changes in memory politics is also a change of identity politics. It also points to the flexibility of identities due to the flexibility of the historical points of references. As such, any of these changes are a shifting of what is considered as essential parts of national identity, which have been in fact just visible parts of national symbolism in the everyday life of its citizens, such as the case of Szabadság and Lajos Kossuth squares. In turn, there is a possibility that the changes could be done with the intention to banalize the new symbols, from the logic of this train of thought.

Finally, there is one last point to note: the background of the changes in Hungary can also be seen through the lens of the theories of politics of memory. Most notably, it is about the recent anti-communist discourse and de-communisation measures. Bernhard and Kubik made a relevant point on this issue:

[A] a radical regime change, such as that experienced in Eastern Europe in 1989, is not only about the reconfiguration of economic interests, redistribution of political power, and reordering of social relations. It is also about ***the reformulation of collective identities*** *and*

[167] Maria Mälksoo, "'Memory Must Be Defended': Beyond the Politics of Mnemonical Security," *Security Dialogue* 46, no. 3 (June 2015): 224, doi:10.1177/0967010614552549.

*the **introduction or reinvigoration of the principles of legitimizing power**. These two tasks cannot be realised without a re-examination of the group's past- their historical memory*[168]

Additionally, Robin-Marie made an interesting point on this topic:

*"In the countries of Eastern Europe after the fall of the Wall, there was some difficulty in finding one's historical bearings and everything connected to Socialism since 1945 was totally demonized, which, by the swing of the pendulum, which is History's secret, allowed finding excuses for those who had flirted with Fascism and, in order to resist the USSR, chosen to become allies of the **Wermacht**, the SS, and other Fascist forces"*[169]

This quote is important, since it reveals the possible implications of the changes in Szabadság and Lajos Kossuth square, namely the restoration and glorification of the pre-1944 regime, otherwise known as the Horthy regime. This can also be related to what Alexandra Barahona de Brito, Paloma Aguilar and Carmen González-Enriquez wrote on the subject of memory making, in where the argument went that transitions are difficult times to create balanced memories, instead becoming fertile grounds for us vs. them narratives, as well as justifications for being martyrs despite perpetrating transgressions. Additionally, there will be selectivity in what memories will be chosen, as the quotes above suggest.[170]

In sum, the theories of memory politics point to its importance in national identity formation. As such, any changes in memory politics can be interpreted as a change in the features of the national identity being scrutinised. Furthermore, there is a link between memory politics and banal nationalism, since memory politics is the tool with which to

[168] Bernhard and Kubik, *Twenty Years after Communism*, 8.
[169] Wahnich, *Politics of Collective Memory*, 35.
[170] Carmen González Enríquez, Alexandra Barahona de Brito, and Paloma Aguilar Fernández, eds., *The Politics of Memory: Transitional Justice in Democratizing Societies*, Oxford Studies in Democratization (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 35–39.

replace the accepted national symbols and put the new symbols in visible spaces so as to eventually become part of everyday life and of national identity. Additionally, both theories acknowledge the fact that the public space plays a role in the creation of both theoretical notions already discussed. In my opinion, this is the case in the changes in Szabadság and Lajos Kossuth squares. Furthermore, the memory regimes typologies also help in identifying what kind of policies the Fidesz government follows, as well as the specific memory regime it falls into. In this case, it falls into the fracture memory regime, since the government is attempting to creative a singular narrative which they claim to be the truth. As such, they reject all other "truths" as misconceptions or selective versions of it. Nevertheless, there is lack of answer over how these changes happen and in what form, especially if the changes are made in the built world. For that, certain theories and approaches from urban sociology is necessary to use.

Sociology of Architecture:

Before going into the discussions related to the sociology of architecture, a definition of the term architecture is necessary. According to Guy Ankerl, "*architectural space is a created object and thus involves the designer's creative intention.*"[171] This is important to remember, for it reveals the fact that designs of buildings do not come from a vacuum. He then elaborates on the relation between sociology and architecture, which is the consideration from sociology that architecture is a form of communication. Therefore, it is also a source and tool for communication and other social networks due to its capability to manipulate a

[171] Guy Ankerl, *Experimental Sociology of Architecture: A Guide to Theory, Research and Literature*, New Babylon 36 (The Hague: Mouton, 1981), 15.

person by affecting their senses.[172] The senses which can be affected by the products of architecture are: Visual, Auditory, Olefactory and Haptic (skin), all of which can mix to create the environment and effect the architect design his building/statues to have.[173]

The sociology of architecture is a relatively new strand of social science that looks at the built world and analyses its symbolic value in relation to the different strata of certain societies. This new approach can be considered as part of urban sociology. Mike Savage, Alan Warde and Kevid Ward gave an overview of this strand of sociology in *Urban Sociology, Capitalism and Modernity*. In it, the authors point to the Chicago School of sociology and pre-World War 2 British Sociology as the roots of urban sociology. As such, the focus was on urban life and the issues surrounding it.[174] This strand of sociology was in the decline after the Second World War, according to the authors, until the 1990s, as a reaction to developments in the urban spaces of US cities at the time.[175] The topics and issues urban sociology is dealing with are: The question of whether or not there is a distinct "urban" experience; the question of identities of urban spaces; the relationship between the social order and urban life; the connection between social and affective relationships and the urban environment; the history of urbanisation; the features of cities and public squares; the sources and possible solutions to urban problems (pollution, poverty, street violence, etc…) finally, the role of politics in urban life.[176] This is also relevant when talking about urban culture, as Savage et al. call it, as it is a point of discussion in it. There are two theories regarding urban culture: Louis Wirth' "urban way of life", which distinguishes urban and rural ways of life by

[172] Ibid., 42–48.
[173] Ibid., 67–145, 207–334.
[174] Mike Savage, Alan Warde, and Kevin Ward, *Urban Sociology, Capitalism and Modernity*, 2. ed, Sociology for a Changing World (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 8–22.
[175] Ibid., 22–33.
[176] Ibid., 3.

the difference in the nature of the social interactions[177]; and, more interestingly for this topic, Georg Simmel's approach, which distinguishes urban culture from the older, more traditional cultures and smaller cities/towns from earlier periods and societal structures due to the effects of modernisation and the culture it produces.[178] This culture of modernity, Savage et. Al also point via reference to authors who have developed Simmel's approach, such as Clark, was developed through the change in visuals, such as the topics of painting and the development of Modernism as a general art style. This also applies, from the logic of this argument to the built world, with the example of John Urry's elaboration of the tourist "gaze" and its connection to initiatives to build vistas and viewing points, so to speak.[179] This is important, for it partially explains certain reasoning of initiatives of the built world, such as the changes in the Szabadság and Lajos Kossuth squares.

The built world can also be considered to be one of the arenas for nation building. Daniel Levy and Natan Sznaider argue that

> *[T] the nation-state, at the turn of the twentieth century, depended for its coming into existence on a process by which existing societies used representation to turn themselves into new wholes that would act immediately upon people's feelings, and upon which they could base their identities- in short, to make them into groups that individuals can identify with.*[180]

In short, there was a need for symbols in order to build nations in the early 20th century. This also points to the fact that nation-building is a constant use, reuse and change of symbols in order to shape the culture and identity of the nation, at least in theory. This is also applicable for the built

[177] Ibid., 107–8.
[178] Ibid., 122–27.
[179] Ibid., 127–30.
[180] Olick, Vinitzky-Seroussi, and Levy, *The Collective Memory Reader*, 466.

world, which is a form of art and symbolism in the public space which can be used to form the national identity.

Paul Jones, in his book *The Sociology of Architecture: Constructing Identities*, he argues, using Pierre Bourdieu's analogy of the playing field in regards to architecture, that the architects are linked to the commissioners of their work. Therefore, they play a role not only in constructing buildings, but also in constructing the foundations of the social structure that is being implemented by the political elite.[181] In his words, the focus of the approach

> *has been on some of the ways in which high-profile architect's professional practice-including but not limited to the design of built forms-has been mobilized in the context of state and wider political projects.*[182]

On the other hand, Jones argues that one of the main concerns of sociology is the ways power is socialized in the cultural domain and how the structure of power become "natural."[183] The relationship between these two dimensions is what sociology of architecture is essentially looking. Moreover, one his claims made in the book is that

> *architecture should not be considered a neutral or free-floating cultural form, but rather as an inherently social production that reflects one way in which those with political power attempt both to materialise this status and to make it socially meaningful.*[184]

This combination of arguments implies the importance of the built world in the construction of a new social order, which arguably is the case in the subject of this thesis.

[181] Paul Jones, *The Sociology of Architecture: Constructing Identities* (Liverpool: Univ. Press, 2011), 10–25.
[182] Ibid., 166.
[183] Ibid., 1–2.
[184] Ibid., 166.

This is also emphasised by Jones, who argues that architecture is also a form of discourse, not only because of the speeches attached to them, but also because of the role of architecture being a carrier of social meaning with the goal to objectify, represent and reconstruct societies. As such, architecture could be interpreted as the visual form of the socially constructed meanings, as well as the visual form the "discourses of belonging", so to speak, of the states, which is one of their major concerns.[185] Architecture is also important for the construction of national identities because of their cultural and symbolical importance. Using Clifford Geertz's definition of national cultural symbols, which are

> *devices designed to render one or another aspect of the broad process of collective self redefinition explicit, to cast essentialist pride or epochalist hope into specific symbolic forms … [that] can be described, developed, celebrated and used.*[186]

, the concept of imagined communities and the debates in Victorian England over the construction of Westminster as an example, Jones argues that architecture is a tool for national identity formation due to the architectural styles, such as neo-Gothic, Modernist and neo-Baroque, are assigned meanings by society in general.[187] Finally, memorials and monuments have a special role in societies according to Jones. That role is to commemorate certain events, as well as mark certain events and persons as important for national identity, create collective memories by becoming what Dolores Hayden calls a "storehouse for social memories"[188] and also for political systems to position themselves in relation to the past, present and future.[189]

[185] Ibid., 28–30.
[186] Ibid., 50.
[187] Ibid., 49–66.
[188] Ibid., 98.
[189] Ibid., 92–103.

Another argument from Ankerl is the fact that the nature of architecture is multifaceted. One of those facets is the fact that architecture can be used as communication tool for all of the senses (visual, sensory, auditory, etc…).[190] From these arguments, there is a picture being clearly made about the sociological analysis of the built world, which is considered in this approach as a sensory tool for the political elite to make their version of the world visible for the population they govern over/represent. As such, any changes to the built world needs to be considered as a move to change the society, whether it be its hierarchy, its moral position, or even arguably the national identity. In a sense, the built world is an indication of the path a government wants to take in terms of discourse via the symbolism that they use or discard, the location of the new/removed statues and memorials, the style of the new building contrasted with the building that it potentially replaces, etc… This can also be looked as a further link between banal nationalism and memory politics, since this arguments points to the built world being a symbolic compass of sorts for national identities.

On the subject of monuments, James E. Young also argued its importance not just in terms of aesthetics, but also in terms of the analysis of socio-economic contexts. This is because, according to him, monuments mirror not just the aesthetic changes over time, but also the political, cultural and ideological ones. As such, monuments are the built reflection of the artistic and sociohistorical contexts upon which they are built, as well as the representation of the artist and the commissioner, who lived in their own specific times.[191]

Kim Dovey also argued, using Bourdieu's theories of habitus and capitals, that architecture is silently complicit with socio-political authorities. This is done via the symbolisms that are created, the way the buildings "frame" our everyday lives, from the

[190] Ankerl, *Experimental Sociology of Architecture*, 149–59.
[191] Olick, Vinitzky-Seroussi, and Levy, *The Collective Memory Reader*, 372.

design of the rooms to the framing of pictures, and also by "re-inventing" itself, so to speak, with its changing avant-gardes.[192] On the matter of the silent complicity, Jones argues that it also meant that we keep *" a sense that architectural production is always and everywhere a political practice that has deep-rooted connections with social order."*[193] Moreover, using the same foundations of Bourdieu's theories, Neil Leach notes that "[A] architecture is often linked to questions of cultural identity".[194] He explains it by arguing that architecture can be used to project ourselves into the environment in order to identify ourselves with it. As such, in order to analyse the relationship between architecture and culture, we need to look not only at the architectural features of the analysed built worlds, but also at the narratives and discourses and performances surrounding them and the symbols attached to them which gives the built world its cultural significance.[195] From another perspective, this is also a good context for explaining what urban regimes are. Savage et al. give Stone's definition of the term, which is "informal arrangements by which public bodies and private interests function together in order to be able to make and carry out governing decisions."[196] This definition contains all of the essential aspects which contains the politics surrounding public spaces and their transformations.

In sum, the sociology of architecture is an excellent guide in uncovering the symbolism behind the monuments, as well as the socio-political contexts in which they are created. As

[192] Jean Hillier, Emma Rooksby, and Conference Habitus 2000, eds., *Habitus: A Sense of Place ; [Based on Papers Presented at the Conference, Habitus 2000, in Perth, Western Australia in September 2000]*, repr, Urban and Regional Planning and Development (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), 267–76.
[193] Jones, *The Sociology of Architecture*, 166.
[194] Hillier, Rooksby, and Conference Habitus 2000, *Habitus*, 281.
[195] Ibid., 281–92.
[196] Savage, Warde, and Ward, *Urban Sociology, Capitalism and Modernity*, 172.

such, they cover the parts of the theory that Banal Nationalism and Memory Politics barely cover, if at all

In sum, the three theories cover all aspects of the topics and issues raised with the changes in Szabadság and Lajos Kossuth squares. All of them cover a specific aspect of it, but are all interlinked with each other by the common link and its formation, development, maintenance and transformations of public spaces. Furthermore, each of these theories help answer the research questions. However, there is a lack of description in the theories over how to measure or analyse specific changes in the built world, such as this case. As such, methods need to be found and used for this paper.

Methodology:

In order to study this parallel, there is a need to study each aspect separately before comparing them. This is in order to analyse the changes in these public spaces. The methods that I will use will be discourse analysis and the analysis of public spaces via the methods of sociology of architecture. For the analysis of the discourses of the current government, as well as the counter-narratives, a discourse analysis of the differing narratives is needed to be done. The goal of the discourse analysis is to evaluate and bring out, so to speak, the various competing symbols and interpretations of Hungary's past. As for the analysis of the public spaces and the monuments in those spaces, an analysis of the available plans of the public spaces, as well as field work on those spaces, is essential. The sample size will be five statues: the Ronald Reagan statue, the Memorial for the Victims of the German Occupation

in Szabadság square and the restored Andrássy, the interwar Kossuth and Tisza statues in Lajos Kossuth square. These analyses are necessary in order to map out the changes in the symbolism of the public squares throughout time, as well as have an account of the symbolism behind the recent changes.

Discourse analysis:

Discourse analysis is a tool that was developed from many other methods, conversation analysis being one of them. Uwe Flick describes it as a mix language analysis and knowledge process analysis.[197] Additionally, discourse analysis, as he notes, is interested in the person's version of a certain event using their memory of it, the constructed narrative that comes from the memory and the content, subject matter and social context of that narrative.[198] This is important to note, since this point argues that memory plays a part in the narratives within the discourses. As such, it can be argued that in cases of memory politics, an analysis of the speeches and narratives is necessary in order to understand it. Alan Bryman gives a more detailed description by arguing that there are four themes in discourse analysis: the topic, the constructed language, discourse as a form of action and the rhetoric organisation.[199] These four topics will be important to remember, for it help explaining some of the justifications for the erection of certain statues in the past and in the case study.

For the analysis of the government speeches, critical discourse analysis will be used. The difference between normal discourse analysis and critical discourse analysis is that the power

[197] Uwe Flick, *An Introduction to Qualitative Research*, 4. ed., repr (Los Angeles, Calif.: SAGE, 2011), 340.
[198] Ibid., 338–39.
[199] Alan Bryman, *Social Research Methods*, Fifth edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 501.

and ideological dimension is looked at from a critical lens in critical discourse analysis, as Ruth Wodak and Michael Meyer point it out, as well as an extension to non-verbal communication.[200] In other words, it is also an analysis of the power relations and the social contexts. Michel Foucault is one of the important theorist for that method, as Bryman notes, due to his interest on the representational aspects of discourse as a tool of power.[201] In a sense, Critical discourse analysis connects the discourse to the wider society it comes from and appeals to. This is the reason why it is very good in discussing the message hidden behind political speeches. However, it is also very limited, since it does not give an accurate image of society and how accepted are the notions in the speeches within those societies.

The connection between discourse and national identity is analysed by Ruth Wodak, Rudolf de Cillia, Martin Reisigl and Karin Liebhart in *The Discursive Construction of National Identity*. In it the argument goes that identity has multiple facets, ranging from individual identities to national identities. All of those identities, especially national identity, they argue, is formed by the narratives that are presented in a certain society at a certain time. Using the notions of imagined communities and "collective memory", These narratives are thus varied according to the contexts and conditions of each societies.[202] This is important to remember, since it is one of the key elements in connection nationalism, its rhetoric and its effect. Moreover, the connection between discourse and Anderson's concept of imagined communities makes it clear that critical discourse analysis is a great way to analyse nationalist rhetoric. Finally, it connects nationalism, narratives and "collective memory". It

[200] Ruth Wodak and Michael Meyer, eds., *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis*, Reprinted, Introducing Qualitative Methods (London: SAGE, 2006), 2–10.
[201] Bryman, *Social Research Methods*, 508.
[202] Ruth Wodak and Angelika Hirsch, eds., *The Discursive Construction of National Identity*, 2. ed., and extended, reprinted (Edinburgh: Edinburgh Univ. Press, 2010), 7–47.

also helps in identifying the specific aspects of the memory regime the government is following. However, besides the limitation of not knowing the effectiveness of the rhetoric, there is also one more limitation which comes from this method: the fact that there is no way to know the source of the narratives and symbols being used, as well as explain the initiatives being made in the built world. Nevertheless, this method is the best at revealing these notions in the discourse. As for the limitations of it, I think that the theories and the other method that will be used will cover for it.

Analysis of the public spaces:

This analysis of public spaces will be done using some of the methods explained in *Experimental Sociology of Architecture* by Ankerl. In it, there is a part in the book that focuses on the study of architecture based on geometrical measurements and the analysis of its position. The goal of these methods, as he states, is to expose the relationship between the built world and the discussions that come from them.[203] Some of these measurements need to be used in terms of geometry/topography, as it is arguably one of the variables for the sociology of architecture, as Ankerl elaborates on the method.[204] Based on scientific methods of experimentation, Ankerl argues that there are two variables to discuss when using methods of sociology of architecture: the building in question (the independent variable) and the social interactions in the space the building occupies, whether it be ocular-visual, discursive or otherwise (the dependent variables).[205] These methods could be useful in the analysis of

[203] Ankerl, *Experimental Sociology of Architecture*, 443.
[204] Ibid., 444.
[205] Ibid., 455–78.

the Szabadság and Lajos Kossuth squares., since it is a comprehensive overview of the built world and its role in society. Furthermore, as mentioned before, these squares are the most visible representations of the Hungarian Government's memory politics. However, as Ankerl notes, there are certain caveats to this methods which are common for scientific methods: one, the theories and methods must be linked, the terms must be operationalised; the propositions must be made in terms of the actual measurements made by the designer of the building/statue, who, in turn, must measure their expectations, which can be verified later by the social interactions made around their project; and finally, have a statement which clarifies the probability of your hypothesis.[206] Moreover, one of the limitations of this method is that it does not give the social conditions around which the specific monuments are built. Nevertheless, this method is very good at analysing the impact of the built world upon the wider social context. Moreover, it is also a tool in order to analyse the impact of the monuments upon the Hungarian communities, as well as give a reflection of the political reality the government tries to symbolically project.

Limitations of the study:

Apart from the mentioned limitations for each methodology, there are two specific limitations to this study. One of them is the lack of answers considering the questions of the lack of use of irredentism in these cases. This is relevant, since the current government seems to be pushing the idealisation of the Horthy regime, which, as mentioned before, was also pushing an irredentist agenda. However, the return of irredentist symbols in these two squares have yet to happen, let alone in Budapest. Unfortunately, the study does not give the

[206] Ibid., 494–95.

reasons for this absence, as it is a focus on the changes that have already happened. Another limitation is the discussion surrounding the difference between the Hungarian government's narrative and historical reality. This difference, while important to note and essential to the topic, is something that is barely touched upon in this study. This is because the focus of the study is on the representation of the government's narrative on the built world. As such, there is a limit on how much I can discuss on the difference. Therefore, I will only refer to this difference when necessary and relevant.

The changes made in Szabadság and Lajos Kossuth squares since 2010:

Since 2010, there have been many changes in both Szabadság and Kossuth Lajos squares. The changes are important, since they are made in central points of the capital of Hungary. Szabadság square has been the site of many initiatives of the built world to symbolise the trends in national symbolism, so to speak. This might be due to the fact that it is one of the crossroads in the centre of Budapest, which makes it unavoidable if you want to have a full view of the centre of Pest or travel within the city centre. Kossuth Square, meanwhile, is the square surrounding the Parliament, as mentioned before. As such, the changes made in those squares are tantamount to changing the appearance of the city and, by extension, the country. Furthermore, any changes to the squares in its built world could be interpreted as a form of nation-building that is made to legitimise and solidify the position of the government in place at the time, as well as their legacy to the country. Therefore, there is a need to analyse the recent changes in both squares and see the messages hidden beneath them, as there is a potential for them to be used in the future for justifying the actions that may not be acceptable otherwise. On a final note, the two squares are differ

Szabadság Tér/ Transformation:

Since 2010, two statues have been added to the square: the statue of Ronald Reagan, the president of the United States at the end of the Cold War, erected in 2011, and the Memorial for the Victims of the German Occupation of Hungary of 1944-1945, erected in 2014. Thorstensen argues that "*The Reagan statue must be understood within the context of creating a canon of Hungary's past*"[207]. As such, he argues, using the government narrative, the statue was erected in order to celebrate the 100th anniversary of a man who is considered to have been one of the most militant opponents of communism.[208]. As such, the justification was made in the context of the anti-communist narrative set up by the current government, as mentioned before. Moreover, the design of the statue also emphasises this narrative. The president is walking towards the Soviet Memorial for the fallen Soviet Soldiers who participated in the "liberation" of the country (see Appendix 11, picture 2). This could symbolise the fact that president Reagan is considered to have been a key player in the fall of the Soviet regime, considered in Hungary to be a negative foreign influence that hurt the country. Also, Thorstensen argues that

by placing Reagan in Szabadság tér he becomes similar to Bandholtz in securing Hungarian national independence. Furthermore, this statue increases the symbolic tension at the square since it must be understood as a comment to the Communist obelisk. The Reagan statue negates Communism's claims to be liberating and thus affirms the irredentist story. Such explicit monuments as both the Reagan statue and the Communist obelisk tell stories that are either all black or all white – no shades of grey are allowed and History belongs to the victor.[209]

[207] Thorstensen, "The Places of Memory in a Square of Monuments," 27.
[208] "Reagan-Szobrot Avattak Budapesten," (A Reagan statue was inaugurated in Budapest) *Múlt-Kor Történelmi Magazin*, June 30, 2011, http://mult-kor.hu/20110630_reaganszobrot_avattak_budapesten; Thorstensen, "The Places of Memory in a Square of Monuments," 27. [translated from Hungarian; source of translation: author's Own]
[209] Thorstensen, "The Places of Memory in a Square of Monuments," 27.

In summary, the statue, from its original inception to its erection, was designed with the message of celebrating a notable figure of anti-communism, as well as enforce the political incentive to "decommunize" the country. Finally, it is also worth noting that it is a conservative government that celebrated a notably conservative figure, as Reagan is also perceived globally as a champion of social and moral conservatism. This is interesting, since it could be interpreted as a form of supporting the perceived conservatism that he espoused as the leader of the Republican party, a conservative party itself, and also pointing out the parallels between both parties' social and religious values. Thorstensen also seems to see the connection, since he states that "it is also possible to interpret the statue as creating a link between Hungary in the 1980s and USA in the 1980s."[210] As such, the design of the statue as well as the symbolic meaning of his "walk" towards the Soviet Memorial, indicate the emphasis on the anti-communist aspect of the Fidesz government's attempts to frame Hungarian national identity. Furthermore, as Throstensen notes on both statues mentioned here are the fact that both are symbols of two ideologically different regimes following the same type of memory regime, using Bernhard and Kubik's typology: that of the fractured memory regime, since they symbolically let no room for alternative interpretation. As such, it can be argued that the Communist regime, as well as the current government, are mnemonic warriors. Also, it can be argued that this was a transformation of the square in order to mitigate, if not completely change, the meaning of the Soviet Memorial, as well as its significance to the Szabadság square

[210] Ibid.

The other statue, on the other hand, is not as clear cut as the previous cases: the statue was first institutionalised to make a memorial via a decree from the end of 2013[211] for the 70th anniversary of the occupation and the Holocaust.[212] It was announced to the public on January 19th of 2014. As Laczó Ferenc noted, the establishment of the Civil Fund (Civil Alap) had the aim to create a commemoration of this anniversary through the involvement of the Jewish communities and making it familiar to the rest of society.[213] This was the fund which made the commemoration possible, as he points it out, as well as the source of all the controversies surrounding it.[214] This controversy was namely around the perceived official motivation

of attempting to diminish the Horthy regime's responsibility for the death of nearly one million Hungarians, including two-thirds of its Jewish population, by placing the blame entirely on Nazi Germany.[215]

More importantly, the Prime Minister of Hungary, Viktor Orbán, made this statement to answer the concerns on the memorial, as well as justify the construction of it:

"From March 19, 1944 until 1991, foreign troops have been consistently stationed in our country. During the long decades of these occupations, terrible things have happened to

[211] "Felállították a Megszállási Emlékművet a Szabadság Téren," (The Memorial for the Occupation has been erected on Szabadság square) *Hirado.hu*, accessed January 1, 2017, http://www.hirado.hu/2014/07/20/felallitottak-a-megszallasi-emlekmuvet-a-szabadsag-teren/.[translated from Hungarian; source of translation: author's Own]
[212] ATV, "„Kisiklott Emlékezés" Botrány a Holokauszt-Emlékév Körül," (Off-rails Commemoration: Scandal around the Holocaust Memorial Year) *ATV.hu*, accessed January 1, 2017, http://www.atv.hu/belfold/20140202-kisiklott-emlekezes-botrany-a-holokauszt-evfordulo-korul. [translated from Hungarian; source of translation: author's Own]
[213] Ferenc Laczó, "Integrating Victims, Externalising Guilt? Commemorating the Holocaust in Hungary," *Südosteuropa* 64, no. 2 (January 1, 2016): 176, doi:10.1515/soeu-2016-0014.
[214] Ibid., 176–77.
[215] Ibid., 177. p.178-181; "ART_Kovacs01.pdf," accessed May 14, 2017, http://simon.vwi.ac.at/images/Documents/Articles/2017-1/2017-1_ART_Kovacs/ART_Kovacs01.pdf. [translated from Hungarian; source of translation: author's Own]

Hungary and its citizens, which would have never happened if we had our independence and our national sovereignty."[216]

As such, the year of the erection of the statue was important, since it is celebrating a significant event in recent Hungarian history. Additionally, the justification is consistent with the general justification that was presented for the Reagan statue, which is the remembrance of the occupation of Hungary from a foreign power. According to Braham, the plan for the statue, along with the preamble to the Basic Law mentioned in the introduction

clearly aim to absolve Hungary of any responsibility for the Holocaust by denying its close and fruitful alliance with Nazi Germany, by identifying all casualties of the Second World War – the Jews who were destroyed with the involvement of Horthy's regime, the soldiers who died on the battlefields, and the civilians who were killed by enemy fire – as victims of the Germans.[217]

This justification seems to be close to the logic of mnemonic warriors, as it is a push for a singular narrative that is implied to be the "truth". Furthermore, Henriett Kovács and Ursula K. Mindler-Steiner argue in *Hungary and the Distortion of Holocaust History: the Hungarian Holocaust Memorial Year 2014* that his was also a gesture to the supporters of the supporters of the far-right party Jobbik. However, it instead became a symbol of the failure of the government to produce a national consensus on the ways to remember the past.[218]

The inscriptions on the statue, written shortly after the unveiling of the plan of the statue and the subsequent controversy, is also important: written in multiple languages (Hungarian,

[216] TK, "Orbán Megszólalt Emlékműügyben," (Orbán has spoken about the issue of the Memorial) *Mno.hu*, accessed January 1, 2017, http://mno.hu/belfold/orban-megszolalt-emlekmuugyben-1238365. [translated from Hungarian; source of translation: author's Own]

[217] Braham and others, "Hungary," 30.

[218] Henriet Kovács and Ursula K. Mindler-Steiner, "Hungary and the Distortion of Holocaust History: The Hungarian Holocaust Memorial Year 2014," *Politics in Central Europe* 11, no. 2 (January 1, 2015): 58, doi:10.1515/pce-2015-0010.

English, Hebrew and Russian), it says "in memory of the victims of the German occupation". However, one thing to note is that the Hebrew translation on the memorial is erroneous, since the order of the words is wrong, as Rabbi Zoltán Radnoti.[219] This is a clear and explicit message with the purpose of making the statue a memorial for those who have suffered under a "foreign occupation", as the prime minister put it. From this message, it seems to be a message of inclusiveness, as it includes everyone in this message (i.e. includes both the Hungarian victims and the victims of the Holocaust [Gays, Roma, Jews, etc…]. The location of the memorial is emphasising the message of suffering under "foreign occupation", since it is located in front of the aforementioned Soviet Memorial, and both memorials are at opposite ends of the square. Ágnes Erőss, referring to Péter György, a Hungarian aesthete, the goal of choosing this location for the German Occupation monument is to countervail the Soviet memorial, and to at least give something new to look at in this packed square.[220] This is important, since it reveals the intention to transform the square and the role of the Soviet Memorial in the square. Therefore, the whole message of the Soviet memorial changes by the inclusion of the German Occupation memorial in order to fit the memory politics and, by extension, Hungarian national identity politics of the Fidesz government. The design of the German Occupation memorial itself, however, is more questionable, so to speak.

The memorial, seen in Appendix 12, has an angel, described as Archangel Gabriel, holding the apple of the nation, being attacked by an eagle. First a couple of explanations: Archangel Gabriel is considered in Hungarian Christian culture to be the guardian angel of

[219] "Dupla Magyarázkodásba Kényszerült a Kormány a Megszállási Emlékműről," ((The government was forced to make double explanations about the Occupation Memorial) July 21, 2014, http://index.hu/belfold/2014/07/21/orban_szerint_a_megszallasi_emlekmu_fajdalmat_es_megprobaltatast_fejez_ki/.[translated from Hungarian; source of translation: author's Own]

[220] Ágnes Erőss, "'In Memory of Victims': Monument and Counter-Monument in Liberty Square, Budapest," *Hungarian Geographical Bulletin* 65, no. 3 (October 10, 2016): 243, doi:10.15201/hungeobull.65.3.3.

Hungary. The apple is a longstanding symbol of Hungary since the Arpad dynasty ruled the kingdom as Christians. The eagle, meanwhile, could be a representative for Nazi Germany, as the design of the eagle resembles that of the German eagle which can sometimes be seen on the German flag. From these explanations, we can interpret the message of the statue as a form of whitewashing, so to speak, of the responsibility of Hungary towards the Hungarian Jews for the atrocities committed against them during the aforementioned German Occupation. This is problematic, since it can be considered as a falsification of history and the role of the Hungarian government in the ghettoization and deportation of the Hungarian Jews, not to mention the atrocities committed against the Jews (anti-semitic laws, mass killings) within Hungary and in the re-acquired territories that were lost in the Treaty of Trianon, especially in Transylvania. This is also a consequence of the memory politics and nationalist narrative being pushed by the Fidesz government. This problematic is part of the reason why this memory regime can be considered a fractured one.

In short, the memorial carries a different message than the Reagan case, namely that of the memory of the victims of the German occupation of 1944-1945 of Hungary, but both statues in the square share one point: a relation to the Soviet memorial and the intention to transform its meaning and, by extension, the meaning of the square. From this common point, it can be assumed that the changes in the square were made to change the nature of the square, since the Soviet memorial was considered as a symbol of an "illegitimate" regime. As such, the square need to be changed to fit with the ideals of the "nation", according to the FIDESZ government, as exemplified by the analysed changes. This indicates the revisionist viewpoint of the government, since the design of the memorial imply that the Hungarians are not responsible for the death of thousands of Jews during the interwar period. Moreover, these changes can also be

seen as a form of legitimising the government by claiming to be the inheritors of the last "Hungarian" government, which is the interwar regime. This is what the government also tries to change the memory of the country with these changes, so as to make their version of the "truth" more acceptable. However, there is a possibility that the government is also trying to whitewash the interwar regimes of its crimes towards the Hungarian Jews, which is an issue of collective memory, especially if the intent is to banalize the interwar regime and its symbols. This can indicate the case of a heating nationalism, which the government is trying to do in order to place their symbols and heroes into the canon of Hungarian national identity. This issue has not gone unnoticed, as I will explain in the next chapter.

Kossuth Lajos Tér/Restoration:

In parallel to the aforementioned cases, the redesigning of Kossuth Square was justified by similar arguments. The redesigning was put into law in 2011, with the goal of restoring the square to its pre-1944 look, monuments included.[221] This meant that the Andrássy statue replace the József statue, the Tisza statue replaced the Károlyi statue, and the pre-Communist statue of Kossuth replaced its Communist counterpart. The reconstruction was started in 2012, with the goal being to finish it by 2014.[222] Another reasoning for the change comes from László Köver, the House Speaker of the Hungarian Parliament, who said this during the March 15 2014 celebrations, when they unveiled the square to the public: *"In the last centuries, the Parliament*

[221] "Újraavatták a Kossuth-Emlékművet Budapesten," (The Kossuth square in Budapest has been re-inaugurated) *Hirado.hu*, accessed December 31, 2016, http://www.hirado.hu/2015/03/03/kossuth-emlekmuvet-avatnak-a-kossuth-teren/.[translated from Hungarian; source of translation: author's Own]

[222] Hernádi Levente Szabolcs Zubreczki Dávid, Földes András, Barakonyi, "Kossuth Tér, Visszatér," (Kossuth tér is coming back) March 14, 2014, http://index.hu/nagykep/2014/03/14/kossuth_ter/.[translated from Hungarian; source of translation: author's Own]

and the Kossuth Lajos Square have become the symbols of Hungary. This is why this reconstruction is "the reconstruction" of Hungary too. […]"[223] This redesigning, from these justifications, can be interpreted as another case of "decommunizing" and "nationalising" the square and, by extension, the entire nation. Moreover, this is another case of the government's memory politics, with its conservative and Christian aspects being reflected with the statues and what they embody. Finally, it indicates yet again the fractured memory regime that the government is following, as well as the unveiling of the government as mnemonic warriors. Their contrasting of the current square with the previous one is also interesting, for it creates an image that the square was "unfit" to represent the Parliament and the nation. As such, this justification is in line with the Basic Law's principles, as well as the justifications for the erections of the statues in Szabadság square. Also, the justification can be seen as a statement of intention to (re)canonize and (re)sanctify, so to speak, the square that was "defiled" by the communist monuments. In other words, the change was done with the intent to make these symbols and people acceptable parts of Hungarian national identity by putting them back into a very visible part of Budapest.

Additionally, the redesigning/restoration of Lajos Kossuth square, especially in the case of the Tisza and Károlyi statues, could be interpreted as a change of the political narrative on what constitutes Hungarian national identity. The replacement of one statue to the other can be interpreted as a political statement on the topic of which version of national identity is more preferable, in this case the conservative and Christian version of Hungarianhood that the current government is promoting. It is also worth noting that with this change, some eerie parallels with the interwar regime, who had similar views of nationhood, emerge. Additionally, the changes

[223] "Kossuth Tér." [translated from Hungarian; source of translation: author's Own]

could be a way to banalize what the current government considers as the "right" national symbols and heroes, which are more in line with their conservative Christian rhetoric and principles. This can be seen in the aforementioned changes.

In turn, the return to the pre-1944 brings back problems, all of which are similar, if not the same problems that have risen from the erection of the memorial for the victims of the German Occupation. The problems are that these statues are a reminder of a time period that is criticized and contested to this day on a political and social, which is the interwar period. In a way, this can also be considered a symbolic rehabilitation and a (re)banalization of that time period for political purposes, which seems to be part of the government's memory politics.

In summary, the changes in both square can be considered as part of a cultural and nation-building project from the government, with the aim to (re)canonise and rehabilitate the symbols and themes of the interwar period regime as part of the government's memory politics. This might be done in order to cement their legitimacy as the continuation of the last "sovereign" government of Hungary, which is another aspect of their revisionist view of the socio-political reality. This subtle rehabilitation has been noted, though, and the reactions to these changes, as well as the reactions to the changes in Szabadság square, and their arguments against the changes will be given an overview, analysis and evaluation in the next chapter.

Reactions to the changes:

The changes in Szabadság and Lajos Kossuth square were not met without any reactions, nor with only favourable reactions. In fact, there were some voices of opposition to the narratives being symbolically told. This opposition, whilst vocal, was only a proportionally small part of

the population. This silence from the majority is important in itself. However, I want to focus first on the reactions made by both proponents and supporters for each statue those being the Ronald Reagan statue, the Memorial for the Victims of the German Occupation, as well as the statues that were restored in the re-designing of the Lajos Kossuth square.

Ronald Reagan Statue:

The statue was met with barely any from either proponents or opponents. This in itself is something to analyse. The lack of reaction could be interpreted as a form of acceptance of the statue in Hungary. The reasons could be the fact that the narrative is supported by the narratives in other countries about president Reagan and his call to fame. As such, there might be a consensus on communism being perceived as an overall negative time in Hungarian history, which might indicate the agreement between the political elite and society in general. The other interpretation of this lack of reaction might be due to the fact that most of the population was paying attention to other, more pressing issues. Either way, the erection of the statue could be considered as a success of banalizing the anti-communist narrative even further into the national identity. This might have been easy due to the Hungarian context being already receptive to such narratives due to the previous memory regimes. Moreover, the lack of coverage might have helped in going under the radar. In a way, this statue might be considered as a continuation of the post-communist transition trend of subtly de-communising the country which was started soon after the formation of the first democratic government in 1990. This de-communisation, as noted before, also happened in the built world, albeit in a milder form than the one in 2010. The other two cases, on the other hand, have been met with much more resistance.

The Memorial for the Victims of the German occupation:

Kovács and Mindler-Steiner summarise the reaction to the memorial as thus:

As has been mentioned, the Holocaust Memorial Year and related debates met with many different responses. Certainly, the prevalent response was indifference. It seems that most Hungarians, and in particular those outside of Budapest, simply did not care. At the same time, however, there were a number of reactions from different groups. [224]

As referenced in this quote, the memorial was met with fierce criticisms and opposition from the moment the project was announced. This is due to the fact that, as Pető argued,

there was an absence of 'dialogic remembering,' and rather, the 'lack of common language, the imprisonment of a "true" versus "false" dichotomy is contributing to the further polarisation of the Hungarian memory culture'[225]

From the beginning, the Jewish communities were actively trying to prevent the erection of the statue by writing letter to government officials, including the Prime Minister. However, those pleas fell on deaf ears, as the government way keeping itself to the integrationist line of commemorating all of the victims, as per the logic of the Basic Law. Furthermore, the Law also forbids the government to assume responsibility for the Holocaust, which made matters worse in the relation between the government and the Jewish community.[226] Also, the monument, the government claimed, was not a Holocaust memorial, but rather one for the people who suffered

[224] Kovács and Mindler-Steiner, "Hungary and the Distortion of Holocaust History," 62.
[225] Ibid., 51.
[226] Braham and others, "Hungary," 30–32, 33–34.

during the war, as Erőss pointed it out.[227] The main line of criticisms was around the design of the statue, which many considered it a dangerous falsification of history.[228] Even Hungarian historians, such as Gerö and Rényi, agreed with this point, and gave further clarification on this point.[229] According to them, this statue represents a shifting of responsibilities from the Horthy and Arrow Cross regimes to the Nazi Germans who came to occupy the country, especially when it came to the atrocities committed against the Hungarian Jews, as Kovács and Mindler-Steiner point out. Moreover, the dedication to "all victims", they elaborate, is glossing over the fact that all of the groups that went to the camps got there for different reasons. Therefore, the suffering of the Hungarians during the occupation cannot be compared to the racial persecution that the Jews and Romani people suffered.[230] This reaction could be considered as a form of resistance to the government's memory politics. In addition, this resistance indicates possibly the fact that the current situation is one of a fractured memory regime. This is further reflected by one of the criticisms being that the monument was "being too didactic"[231]

As a further reaction, a counter-monument, called Eleven Memorial (Eleven Emlékmű) was formed. It is a cordoned line filled with stones and clipped papers that have pictures, stories, pamphlets and eviction notices (see Appendix 13). The goal of the counter-monument is not only

[227] Erőss, "In Memory of Victims," 247.
[228] HVG Kiadó Zrt, "Az Értetlenség Emlékműve," (the memorial for incomprehension) *Hvg.hu*, April 10, 2014, http://hvg.hu/velemeny.publicisztika/20140410_Az_ertetlenseg_emlekmuve; [translated from Hungarian; source of translation: author's Own] "Civilek a Megszállási Emlékmű Ellen," ((Civil organizations against the Occupation Memorial) *NÉPSZAVA Online*, accessed May 1, 2017, http://nepszava.hu/cikk/1014761-civilek-a-megszallasi-emlekmu-ellen; ATV, "„Kisiklott Emlékezés" Botrány a Holokauszt-Emlékév Körül," (Off-rails Commemoration: Scandal around the Holocaust Memorial Year) *ATV.hu*, accessed April 25, 2017, http://www.atv.hu/belfold/20140202-kisiklott-emlekezes-botrany-a-holokauszt-evfordulo-korul. [translated from Hungarian; source of translation: author's Own]
[229] "Magyarország Szerepében Gábriel Arkangyal," (Archangel Gabriel in the role of Hungary) *Hetek Közéleti Hetilap*, accessed May 1, 2017, http://www.hetek.hu/belfold/201401/magyarorszag_szerepeben_gabriel_arkangyal. [translated from Hungarian; source of translation: author's Own]
[230] Kovács and Mindler-Steiner, "Hungary and the Distortion of Holocaust History," 58.
[231] Erőss, "In Memory of Victims," 245.

to counter the memorial's symbolic narrative, but to provide an alternative, factual and personal view on the events of the interwar period. Furthermore, it was also a platform of sorts to inform the general population and the visiting tourist who would see the monument about both sides of the narratives, as well as about Jewish culture. This is due to the fact that the counter-monument has the floor covered in stone, which in Jewish culture is a representation of someone visiting the grave to commemorate someone's life. These stones, which is in Jewish culture a signifier of visiting a grave, as well as commemorating the dead,[232] could also represent the fact that people remember the Hungarian Jewish victims of the Holocaust, which, according to the critics of the memorial for the Victims of the German Occupation, the design conveys the message of the Germans being responsible for it, and not the Hungarian regimes at the time. As such, the stones are also contributing to the overall message of the counter-monument, which is the fact that Hungary collaborated in the deportation and mass killing of Hungarian Jews, and that the memorial is arguably not only falsifies history, but also insults the memory of the Jews who have died at the hands of those regimes.

Nearby the counter-monument, a soapbox of sorts is placed there opposite of two chairs standing next to each other. While the soapbox represents the political opposition to the government and their narratives about the history of Hungary, the two chairs symbolise the call for dialogue on this topic. This call is important, for it points to the fact that there are omissions and misinformation about Hungary's recent past that are being transmitted and popularised via education, discourses symbols, such as the much-discussed memorial. The soapbox, on the other hand, points to the fact that, while there is a consensus on the negative image of communism, there is a political debate on the issue of the interwar period and opposition to the narratives set

[232] "Placing a Stone | Shiva, Jewish Mourning," accessed June 6, 2017, http://www.shiva.com/learning-center/commemorate/stone/.

by government-friendly interests. This is another indication of the fractured memory regime that is currently happening in Hungary today.

Other forms of critical reactions to this memorial, as noted by Kovács and Mindler-Steiner, were: the formation of Facebook groups, where people shred pictures and stories about the Holocaust; virtual commemoration platforms; and protests and marches.[233]

The reaction to these criticisms has been varied: while it is interesting to note that no government officials went to the erection of the memorial, which was done in the dark of the night,[234] the sculptor, Péter Párkányi Raab tried to defend the memorial that the critics were wrong in arguing that Archangel Gabriel does not symbolise Hungary; the apple does.[235] Thus, their criticisms are invalid. In my opinion, this changes little, as the eagle still flies towards the apple, therefore the basic logic of the criticisms still holds. The other criticism, on the other hand, is interesting: the architect complains about what he says is a political agenda by the left to attack the government because they are not in power anymore. This other argument is a little tenuous, since the criticisms came mostly from private individuals, NGOs, political parties, businessmen and fellow artists.[236] To lump them in political opposition, though, reveals a disturbing pattern: not only is this a form of dismissing criticism, it also opens the door to interpret opposition as threat to the government. In a way, this criticism could be the basis for initiating actions to silence their voices. Furthermore, this kind of reaction reveals that at least the architect is a

[233] Kovács and Mindler-Steiner, "Hungary and the Distortion of Holocaust History," 62.
[234] "Emlékmű: Nem Lesz Avatóünnepség," (Memorial: There will be no inauguration ceremony) *MNO.hu*, accessed May 1, 2017, //mno.hu/belfold/emlekmu-nem-lesz-avatounnepseg-1238328. [translated from Hungarian; source of translation: author's Own]
[235] akiraly, "A Német Megszállás Áldozatainak Emlékműve Az Alkotó Szerint Nem Is Az Áldozatok Emlékműve," (The Memorial for the Commemoration of the German Occupation is not the memorial of the victims, according to its creator) *444*, July 24, 2014, http://444.hu/2014/07/24/a-nemet-megszallas-aldozatainak-emlekmuve-az-alkoto-szerint-nem-is-az-aldozatok-emlekmuve. [translated from Hungarian; source of translation: author's Own]
[236] Ibid.; "Hallgatnak a Szoborról," (The government is mum about the statue) *NÉPSZAVA Online*, accessed May 1, 2017, http://nepszava.hu/cikk/1028609-hallgatnak-a-szoborrol. [translated from Hungarian; source of translation: author's Own]

mnemonic warrior defending his version of the truth from the "obfuscators". Nevertheless, the monument sparked a controversy, as well as a discussion on Hungary, the past, and, indirectly, Hungarian national identity. Conversly, Ferenc Lazko also states one of the relevant points regarding this discussion:

> *In relation to the Holocaust, three major questions have divided Hungarian public opinion since the end of the Second World War: the relative responsibility of Hungarians and Germans; the ideological explicability of Hungarian involvement focused on the problems of fascism and antisemitism; and, third, the way the victims ought to be categorised and remembered.*[237]

Laczó gave a very good summary on the issue of the memorial, especially in relation to the commemoration it was supposed to coincide with:

> *Due, above all, to the erection of a controversial German occupation statue in downtown Budapest, the central part of the year of Holocaust commemoration turned into a public clash between traumatic personal and family memories and Fidesz's attempt to build a new national canon. The ultimate result of the 70th year of Holocaust commemoration was a further polarisation of Hungarian public opinion. In fact, it only reinforced the bitter divisions it meant to help overcome.*[238]

In Pető's words, *"instead of a story with a happy ending, a memory war […] started"*[239]
This quote indicates the fact that nationalism, using Skey's words, is heating up. This is because there is a resistance to the revisionist narrative the government is pushing. This resistance can be considered as a further indication that the Hungarian government is following a fractured memory regime, since it erected the statue despite the protests and ignored all calls for a dialogue about the representation of the statue. As a result, the communities reacted by creating a counter-

[237] Laczó, "Integrating Victims, Externalising Guilt?," 169–70.
[238] Ibid., 187.
[239] Kovács and Mindler-Steiner, "Hungary and the Distortion of Holocaust History," 64.

monument and narrative. This reaction also indicates that the efforts of the government to rewrite history and recanonize a certain time period is not successful, since the heavy-handedness and the persistence to follow their goals of banalizing their symbols ultimately turned people against them. In turn, this made it harder to accept their revisionist narratives. However, these debates also reflect the difference between the official narrative and the historical reality that the reactions highlighted, as mentioned before. While it is an interesting topic, it is also beyond the scope of the topic.

Redesigning of Kossuth Lajos Tér:

The redesigning of the square was met with lukewarm reactions. While the official justification was following the trend of de-communisation and "national rebirth", the counter-reaction to this narrative was from politicians, who argue that it is senseless, sincethe statues that the government removed than the ones that replaced them. In addition, the replacing statues are from the interwar period, the problematic and controversial time period in Hungarian history. Furthermore, some of the choices could be considered as political in nature, since some of the figures, such as Mihály Károlyi and István Tisza, are revered on either side of the political spectrum and despised by the other. In this case, Károlyi and Tisza occupied at a certain point in time the same space in the square. However, the times at which they occupied it reveals the divisive nature of the debates surrounding Hungarian national identity.

The statue of Tisza occupied the space from its inauguration during the interwar period until its dismantlement at the end of the Second World War, and the statue of Károlyi occupied it

from the 1970s until the redesigning of the square, when the statue of Tisza returned to its place. Considering these facts, it can be seen that while Tisza is a major political figure of the Hungarian Right, Károlyi is considered as a political figure for the Hungarian Left. Therefore, since the late 2000, Jobbik, the far-right nationalist party, lobbied to remove him, since he was a symbol of the "Bolshevik" left who, in the nationalist narrative, sold the country to the Communists/Commune and to the foreigners for their own political gain.[240] To analyse this narrative in detail is beyond the scope of this paper, but suffice to say that this narrative, as reference before, is connected to the narrative of the political right being the guardians of the nation against the political left, who has "sold" time and time again the nation to foreign interests, starting with the Trianon peace treaty. The context of discourses on the political left/right divide also clarify the justifications of the government, as well as the background behind the reaction. This is also an indication of a fractured memory regime. It is also possible that the lack of strong reactions towards the redesigning is an indication that Hungarian society in general is focused on other issues and topics, such as poverty. In turn, this lack of attention might encourage the government to continue along this path, so to speak, therefore making more controversial decisions which might backfire on them.

In sum, the reaction to the changes in Szabadság and Kossuth Lajos square have been varied, from barely a squeak to an intense opposition. In the cases of the Reagan statue and the redesigning of Kossuth Lajos square, the reactions have been practically missing, so to speak, except for the reasoning of "continuity" in the case of the redesigning. This could be because of the abovementioned double-edged sword reasoning, or the fact that most of the opposition to the

[240] "Vakon Szavaztak a Kossuth Térről," (They voted blindly about the Kossuth square) *Blikk.hu*, 40:50 200AD, http://www.blikk.hu/aktualis/vakon-szavaztak-a-kossuth-terrol/wmbedsd. [translated from Hungarian; source of translation: author's Own]

symbolic politics went to the memorial for the Victims of the German Occupation. This opposition is not only political, unlike in the case of the criticism of the redesigning, but also societal, as the arguments are not only based on the opposition of the narrative posed by the memorial, but also on the disturbing implications of it. These implication surround the fact that the FIDESZ government is trying to shift the blame and responsibility of the atrocities committed against the Jews to the Nazi German occupation army, therefore not only "lifting" the Hungarians of the responsibility of the Holocaust, but also implicitly claiming that the ideology which caused it was imported. These implications were what the opposition and the counter-monument try to oppose, especially with the symbols of the soapbox and the chairs, as well as the cordon of pictures and texts revealing the actions of the interwar regimes towards the Jews. In a way, the counter-monument is a balance of the grandiose memorial and its "relativist" symbolism with its more grounded and grimmer visuals of the same events. Furthermore, it could be considered as opposition to the fractured memory regime the government, comprised of mnemonic warriors, is pushing through to the wider society. This opposition could be interpreted as a sign that the memory politics of FIDESZ government is meeting resistance, especially in regard to the implicit relativization of the Holocaust and the role of Hungary in that event. In any case, this case shows that there are still tensions within the country about Hungary's past, as well as on the issue of what are the acceptable symbols that could and should represent the nation. This tension could also be a symptom of sorts of the fractured memory regime in Hungary, as well as the heating nationalism and of the dissonance, so to speak, between the government's narrative of the interwar period and historical reality.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, the changes in Szabadság and Lajos Kossuth squares are consistent with the revisionist discourse of the FIDESZ government, both in intention and in symbolism. This also has the goal of banalising what the government consider as the "true" symbols and heroes of the Hungarian nation, which correspond with their conservative Christian and anti-Communist discourse. The justifications also are very similar to what could be considered as arguments from mnemonic warriors, since they are pushing their version of history as the single and only "truth". It is also a continuation of the interwar period symbolisms, although the virulent irredentism is replaced, so to speak, by an implicit historical revisionism via the shifting of responsibilities of the atrocities committed against the Hungarian Jews solely towards the Nazis who came to occupy and terrorise the nation in 1944. This shifting is due partially because of the narrative (and idolisation) of the Horthy regime as the "last" sovereign political power before the decades of foreign "invasion" and "terror". This narrative is also part of the fractured memory regime, since this is a push to sanctify the state's version of the "truth". As such, in order to fully succeed in their claim to continue this regime legacy and that ideal become accepted, the government tries to erase from Hungarian memory the biggest point of contention against the interwar period, that of the collaboration with the Nazis and/or the anti-Jewish laws of the 1930s. The narratives, symbols and design are further emphasised by the choice of location, being on two central squares of Budapest, the capital. Not only that, but in the case of Szabadság square, the statues revolve around the memorial for the Soviet soldiers. In a way, this indicates that the government, whilst acknowledging the importance of the memorial, tried to subvert and change the meaning of it, as well as the general feel of the square, by adding those abovementioned two statues. This

might be because of the anti-communist perspective, and the need for this government to minimise and delegitimise the symbols of the communist period, deemed to be a "foreign" and illegitimate regime which caused harm to millions of Hungarians. The difference in both squares is in how the changes happened: in Szabadság square, it was a transformation of the layout in order to mitigate the meaning and significance of the Soviet Memorial; meanwhile, the re-designing of the Lajos Kossuth square was a restoration of the pre-1944 design of the square, therefore restoring the symbolism of the regime controlling it at the time.

The narrative of the interwar period presented by the FIDESZ government creates disturbing implications for the developments in Hungarian national identity, as well as the broader implications of "changing" history in terms of the truth and the search for it. This is also where the point of resistance to the government and their memory politics project expressed, as exemplified with the counter-monument to the memorial to the victims of the German Occupation, which was supposed to be a symbol of the "integrationist" policy in terms of World War Two events, but became a symbol of the revisionist stance of the government due to its design. As such, private people, some of which are related to victims of the Holocaust, told the stories and put the information that contradicts the messages of the memorial. This tension between the competing narratives are also an indication of the fractured memory regime. It is important to note that in the case of the Ronald Reagan statue, there was no reaction to the inauguration of the statue, nor to the justifications for it. The cause of such a lack of reaction could be due to the acceptance of anti-communist symbolisms and narratives, which includes the celebration of noted opponents of it. This lack of reaction to the Reagan statue and the debate around the memorial for the victims of the German Occupation reveals the controversial and

hotly debated issues surrounding memory and identity in Hungary, especially when it comes to the ways to remember communism and fascism.

These debates also reveal the fact that in Hungary, there is period of heating nationalism which reflects the socio-economic divisions within Hungary. Whilst these divisions and its expressions of it might be beyond the scope of the paper, this broad issue might be worth researching in future research in academia.

Appendix

Image 1: Irredentist statues in Szabadság Square

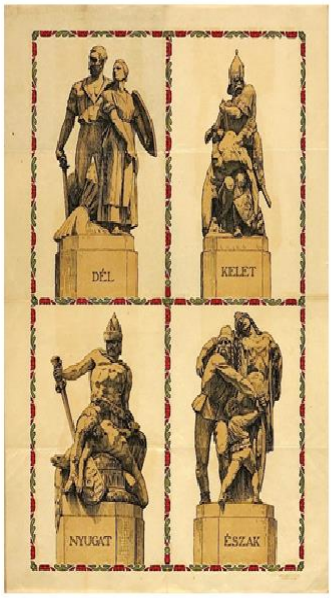


Image 2: Soviet Memorial in Szabadság Square

Sources: Image 1 : http://grofjardanhazy.tumblr.com/post/68562472839/a-trianon-szoborcsoport-irredenta-szobrai-a; Image 2: https://www.kozterkep.hu/~/2733/Szovjet_hosi_emlekmu_Budapest_1945.html/photos/10735

Image 3: Statue of Gyula Andrássy in Lajos Kossuth Square

Image 4: Statue of Lajos Kossuth in Lajos Kossuth Square

Image 5: Statue of István Tisza in Lajos Kossuth Square

Image 6: Ferenc Rákoczi the IInd Statue in Lajos Kossuth Statue

Sources: All images : author's Own

Image 7: Inscription on the Ferenc Rákoczi the IInd statue

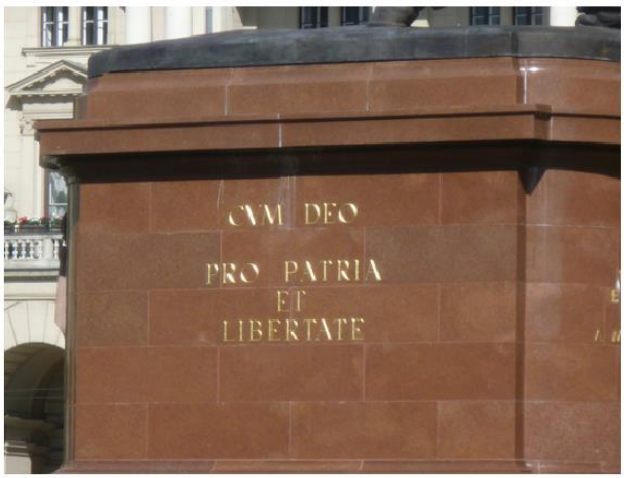


Image 8: Communist version of Lajos Kossuth Statue

Image 9: Mihály Károlyi statue

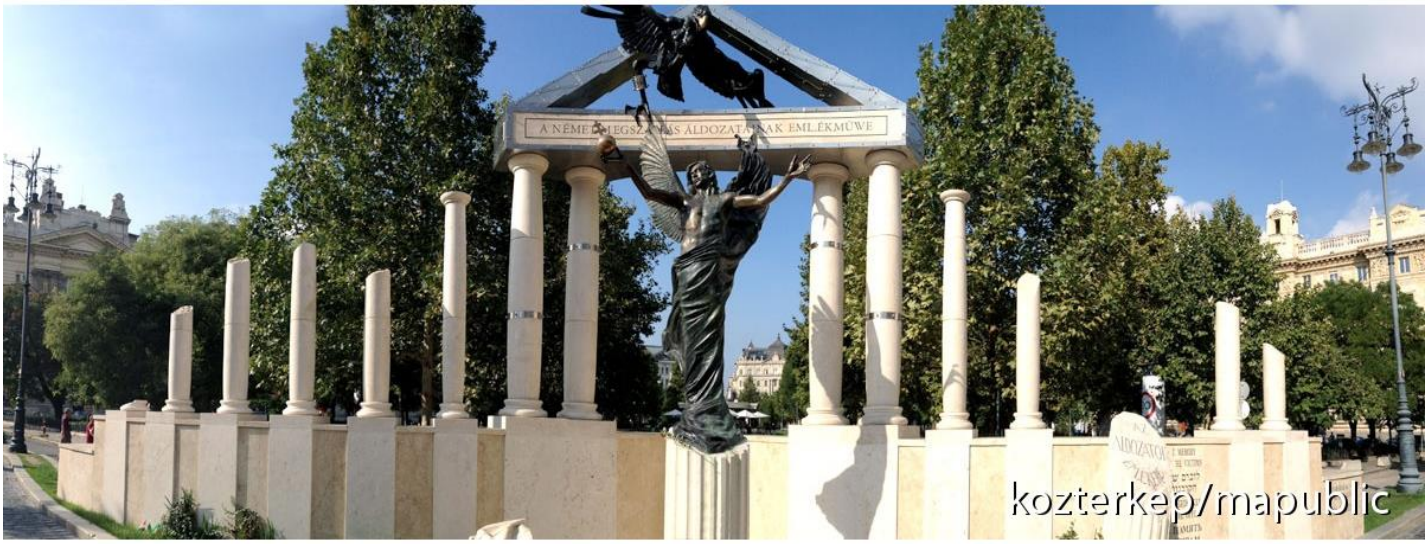
Image 10: Józef Atilla statue

Sources: Image 7 : author's own, Image 8 : https://www.kozterkep.hu/~/2416/Kossuth_emlekmu_Budapest_1952.html/photos/9551; Image 9 : https://www.kozterkep.hu/~/71/Karolyi_Mihaly_szobor_Budapest_1975.html/photos/6690; Image 10: author's own

Image 11: Ronald Reagan statue in Szabadság Square

Sources: Picture 1 : https://www.kozterkep.hu/~/15259/ronald_reagan_budapest_mate_istvan_2011.html/photos/88454; Picture 2: https://www.kozterkep.hu/~/15259/ronald_reagan_budapest_mate_istvan_2011.html/photos/88460

Image 12: Memorial for the Victims of the German Occupation in Szabadság square



Source:
https://www.kozterkep.hu/~/23908/A_nemet_megszallas_aldozatainak_emlekmuve_Budapest_2014.html/photos/180524

Image 13: The Counter-Monument (Eleven Emlékmű)

Source: http://www.origo.hu/kultura/kunszt/20150818-szabadsag-ter-eleven-emlekmu-civil-tiltakozas-renyi-szasz.html

Appendix 14: Image of the Hungarian Parliament

Source: http://www.budapest.com/budapest_kalauz/latnivalok/muemlekek/parlament.hu.html

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