

MASARYK UNIVERSITY

European Master's Degree in Human Rights and Democratisation

A.Y. 2016/2017

# Radical Rights

Framing Freedom of Expression and  
Press Freedom in the illiberal state:  
The case of Hungary

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## **Abstract**

Exploring political contestation at the intersection of human rights and democracy, this thesis examines discursive construction of freedom of speech and press freedom in Hungarian right-wing politics. Focusing on Jobbik-Fidesz interaction over rights framing, the study highlights radical right influence on mainstream discourse and interaction effects on the wider political environment. Actors' frames and framing strategies are analysed within their larger discursive context of meta narratives and master frames using methods of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). While Jobbik and Fidesz diverge in their framing of hate speech and the limits of freedom of expression, they meet in a common conceptualization of a guided press freedom, with serious implications for the functioning of independent media. It is further argued that Fidesz's appropriation of Jobbik master frames marks their radicalization, increasing radical right-mainstream border permeability and legitimizing radical right ideas and imagery in mainstream political discourse.

**Key words:** Right-wing radicalism, freedom of expression, press freedom, liberal democracy, illiberalism, critical discourse analysis, Hungary.

*To my wife Elin and our sons, Valter and Melker. I love you.*

## List of acronyms

AP	Associated Press
CDA	Critical Discourse Analysis
CoE	Council of Europe
ECHR	European Convention on Human Rights
EU	European Union
FkgP	Independent Smallholders' Party
HVIM	Sixty-Four Counties Youth Movement
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
KDNP	Christian Democratic People's Party
MIÉP	Hungarian Justice and Life Party
MSzP	Hungarian Socialist Party
MTI	Hungarian Telegraphic Office
MTVA	Media Services and Support Trust Fund
SzDSz	Hungarian Liberal Party
UN	United Nations
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
ZOG	Zionist Occupation Government

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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Background

[W]e have already put our uprising behind us. Compared to us, the current rebels are debutantes [...] We announced our own Hungarian political and economic system, which we have constructed in seven years of hard work. It is made to measure and according to our taste.<sup>1</sup>

Viktor Orbán

There is a global trend of a hollowing out of liberal democracy. Freedom House in their Freedom in the World 2017 report observe a decline in global protection of political rights and civil liberties for the 11<sup>th</sup> year in a row. In their Freedom of the Press report of the same year the organization warns that global level press freedom stands at its lowest point in 13 years. On a European level, these dual trends are exemplified in the case of Hungary. Its press is categorized as “partly free”, and in a comparative view Hungary is the European country which has seen the largest overall decline in Freedom House rating over the last 10 years, -16 in aggregate score.<sup>2</sup> During a speech in 2014 the Hungarian prime minister Viktor Orbán publicly denounced the Western model of liberal democracy and declared his goal of building an “illiberal state”. Earlier the same year the radical right party Jobbik consolidated their position on the national political stage, entering their second consecutive period of representation in the national parliament and increasing their share of the vote from 16.7 % to 20.2 %. Representing an ideology openly critical of liberal democratic principles, they have become known for their paramilitary rallies, Holocaust relativisation and hateful racist speech against national minorities. How is freedom of expression understood by these challengers of liberal democracy? What is their vision of press freedom? How does discursive interaction over the meaning of these rights play out in a context where illiberalism has been declared the goal of a reformed state?

In the Western political tradition constitutional rights have become an integral part of the concept of democracy, forming what we have come to know as liberal democracy. It is a political order establishing rules and procedures that seek to counterbalance or “tame” the forces of democracy to avoid the “tyranny of the majority”. The tension between popular rule and human rights is brought

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1 Prime Minister’s Office, “Prime Minister Viktor Orbán’s State of the Nation Address”, *kormany.hu*, 2017-02-14 [2017-06-07].

2 Freedom House, *Populists and Autocrats: The Dual Threat to Global Democracy*, Freedom in the World 2017 summary, pp. 10, 18, 21, 23.

to the foreground of political debate as populist and radical right politicians emphasize popular sovereignty and embrace a narrow proceduralist version of democracy as majority rule embodying the unrestrained will of the people. Yet even the most minimalist definitions of democracy commonly acknowledge that a certain level of protection of individual freedom is essential to the functioning of democracy. The present thesis takes as point of departure the identification of freedom of expression and freedom of the press as key democratic rights, forming part of a tentative “overlapping consensus” between minimalist illiberal and more extensive liberal definitions of democracy. In analysing evolving processes of discursive interaction over the framing of these rights the aim is to assess the impact of the radical right on the political mainstream and highlight some resulting challenges for democratic society.

## **1.2 Scope and limitations**

The research is carried out in the form of a case study of Hungarian right-wing political discourse on freedom of expression and freedom of the press. Within this context focus will be on the radical right contender Jobbik and the main actor of the mainstream right, the ruling government party Fidesz. At the heart of the study lie strategies and narratives employed in the contest over meaning; the discursive mechanism of framing.

## **1.3 Research questions**

1. How does the radical right in Hungary frame freedom of expression and freedom of the press?
2. In which ways/to what extent do they influence the mainstream right’s framing of these rights?
3. What are the effects of this radical right-mainstream right interaction for the democratic system and the political environment?

The study highlights political confrontation at the intersection of democracy and human rights. It is primarily an inquiry into subjective interpretations of the nature, limits and justifications for freedom of expression and press freedom and their discursive construction in the Hungarian context. The research probes into potential implications for the democratic system, looking at questions of liberal democracy and democratic borderlines that arise within and as a result of illiberal and radical right discourse on democratic rights. This being said, it is important to point out that this is not a study of quality of democracy. Furthermore, the study is not concerned with trends in electoral support or parliamentary vs. extra-parliamentary strategies of the far right. This means

that a discussion of broader patterns of radical right mobilization in Hungary and Europe is outside the scope of the present thesis.

#### **1.4 Outline**

The study revolves around the democracy-human rights nexus of liberal democracy and how this delicate relationship is being played out in a Hungary characterized by illiberalism. Starting out from an overview of democratic theory highlighting conflicting versions of democracy and the human rights that (to a varying degree) are thought to be indispensable for its realization, I will analyse the interaction effects of the radical right on their political environment with regard to the conceptualization of two of these key democratic rights: freedom of expression and freedom of the press. The approach can be summarized as an inquiry into dynamic interpretive processes focusing on democratic concepts, rights, actors and context.

**Concepts and rights.** A brief overview of normative democratic theory relating to liberal democracy, the debate on so-called “illiberal democracy” and human rights related to democracy provides the theoretic framework of the study. Deconstructing the concept of liberal democracy, this section examines the tradition of constitutional liberalism and its marriage with democracy in the Western context. This is contrasted with the more minimalist concept of “illiberal democracy” and its challenge to the liberal order. Some contentious rights issues at stake are outlined, and freedom of expression and freedom of the press are presented as areas of debate but also of a possible overlapping consensus in terms of key democratic rights. The section will also deal with radical right classification and definitions. The subsequent method chapter presents the theoretical model for discursive interaction between the radical right and the mainstream right that will be applied and methodological choices in discourse analysis. Taken together, this first stage provides the theoretical backdrop of the analysis.

**Actors in context.** The next stage is the case study of Hungarian political discourse, focusing on contestation over the nature and limits of freedom of expression and press freedom within the social and political order. Outlining the profiles of the radical right party Jobbik and their evolving frames on freedom of expression and freedom of the press within master frames and meta narratives, I will examine interaction effects of the radical right on its political environment. The study highlights the processes whereby radical right and mainstream right actors through political discourse influence each other’s interpretation and implementation of these key democratic rights. Representing the mainstream right as well as the government, Fidesz is singled out as the



establishment co-actor or antagonist of Jobbik in discursive interplay. Political action and discourse are throughout the case study contextualized, taking into account institutional and discursive opportunity structures and reflected against established theoretical frames of normative political theory on democracy, liberalism and human rights.

The study ends with a discussion on the findings of the case study, summarizing similarities and differences in frames and framing strategies. Here the impact of the Hungarian radical right on the mainstream right will be assessed, along with some possible systemic repercussions of their discursive interaction in the field of communication rights.

## 2. Theory

### 2.1 Liberal democracy

The term democracy has undergone many shifts and shades of interpretation since its inception in the city-states of ancient Greece. It has also seen a dramatic rise in popularity and status. If democracy used to be one out of many forms of government, today it reigns as the only acceptable label for legitimate governance. From Norway to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, there is hardly a contemporary sovereign state that does not claim to be a democracy. Of course this does not mean that there are only democracies in the world, and there is tremendous variation in political organization and the ways in which the "rule of the people" is institutionalized and put into practice. Today the exclusive direct democracy of the small city state demos has been replaced by some form of representative democracy, in which citizens of a large nation-state regularly elect their representatives and produce a legislature and executive.<sup>3</sup> Democracy has also been profoundly shaped by liberal and socialist ideas about individual rights and human equality, expanding the scope of the demos and laying down rule and guarantees for legitimate governance under the rule of law. In other words, modern democratic theory democracy commonly refers to some version of *liberal democracy*. In his overview of the evolution of the concept, Jean Grugel shows how liberal democracy after the end of World War II rose to hegemony as *the* accepted form of democracy. In the ideological struggles of the Cold War, democracy in Europe and North America came to denote the political arrangements of the West in the "Free World vs. Communism" dichotomy. In this period, under influence from behaviourism, so-called empirical democratic theory conceptualized

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3 For an overview of this scalar and conceptual transformation see Robert A. Dahl, *Democracy and its critics*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989.

democracy in descriptive, rather than normative, terms.<sup>4</sup> For Grugel this approach is exemplified in the work of Joseph Schumpeter, who advocated a minimalist version of democracy as a competitive procedure for choosing elite political representatives. For Schumpeter “... democracy does not mean and cannot mean that the people actually rule in any obvious sense of terms ‘people’ and ‘rule’. Democracy means only that the people have the opportunity of accepting or refusing the men who are to rule them”<sup>5</sup>. Empirical democratic theory has been criticised for an overly procedural understanding of democracy and a narrow focus on formal democratic structures. Another point of critique is its obvious Western bias and the risk of democratization becoming a neo-colonial project. But perhaps the greatest problem is its false assumption of level-playing-field-pluralism and inattentiveness to structural privileges and inequalities generated and sustained by capitalism. As Grugel notes this is a fatal weakness, since the would-be universal standard fails if it can not even accurately describe the Western model to be exported and copied elsewhere.<sup>6</sup>

Taking a different approach democracy can be conceptualized as the utopian ideal, an ideal that in turn serves as model for political systems in the “real world”. One classic version of this approach is Dahl’s normative model of democracy. In his democratic theory democracy is the ideal model and *polyarchy* the proposed term for describing the liberal democratic approximation of that ideal. For Dahl polyarchic institutions are necessary – but not necessarily sufficient – for “the highest feasible attainment” of democracy on a large scale, as in the modern nation state.<sup>7</sup> The seven institutions of polyarchy are government power constitutionally vested in (1) *elected officials*, regularly chosen in (2) *free and fair elections* conducted under conditions of (3) *inclusive suffrage* where most adults have the right to vote and the (4) *right to run for office* (although Dahl admits a higher age limit here than for the suffrage). Furthermore the polyarchic order guarantees citizens (5) *freedom of expression*, especially in political matters, a right to seek out (6) *alternative information* and legal protection of such information sources, and a right to form associations under conditions of (7) *associational autonomy*.<sup>8</sup> In this model individual rights occupy a central role in satisfying the criteria for a democratic process, in fact certain rights – by Dahl referred to as primary political rights – are integral to the process itself.<sup>9</sup> And this is true not only for the right to vote and the right to stand for office, without which democratic elections would be made impossible. For Dahl associational autonomy, freedom of expression and the right to alternative information are also

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4 Jean Grugel, *Democratization: a critical introduction*, Houndmills: Palgrave, 2002, pp. 12-18.

5 Joseph Schumpeter, quoted in Grugel, p. 19.

6 Grugel, pp. 20-22.

7 Robert A. Dahl, *Democracy and its critics*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989, p. 222.

8 Ibid.

9 Dahl, pp. 170-173.

indispensable for and inseparable from democracy. They are required for meeting the democracy criteria of citizens' inclusive and effective participation in the political process, their enlightened understanding of issues subject to democratic decision-making that affect their lives, and for guaranteeing that the demos are in control of the democratic agenda.<sup>10</sup>

Dahl's polyarchy model is mentioned as an example of how individual rights are interwoven in and inseparable from democratic processes and institutions under a liberal democratic understanding of the concept. Naturally there exists much disagreement between theorists on the exact nature of this relationship and the appropriate bottom line or common minimum standard for a human rights compatible democracy. An academic debate that puts light on this precarious balance is the one that has arisen around the prospects for a democracy separated from Western-style liberalism, a so-called illiberal democracy.

## **2.2 Illiberal democracy**

The concept of illiberal democracy has been launched by the US political commentator Fareed Zakaria. In his article titled "The Rise of Illiberal Democracy" Zakaria argues that there is a global trend towards illiberal democracy, in which the two strands of Western-style liberal democracy – democracy and liberal constitutionalism – are coming apart.<sup>11</sup> For comparative purposes Zakaria bases his definition of illiberal democracy on categories used by Freedom House in their Freedom in the World reports, where the world's countries are ranked according to their performance on the two broad categories of "political rights" and "civil liberties".<sup>12</sup> An illiberal democracy is thus defined as a country between dictatorship and consolidated democracy, scoring higher on political than civil liberties. Illiberal democracy is characterized by few civil and economical liberties and a strong executive, centralizing power in its own hands at the expense of other branches and levels of government (horizontal and vertical usurpation). Zakaria underlines that illiberal democracy cannot simply be labelled a transition phase between autocracy and consolidated liberal democracy. The number of illiberal democracies is increasing and few of them develop into liberal democracies. Instead, they seem to be consolidating in their illiberal form.<sup>13</sup>

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10 Dahl, p. 222.

11 Fareed Zakaria, "The Rise of Illiberal Democracy", *Foreign Relations*, Vol 76 Issue 6, 1997.

12 Political rights groups questions under the three subcategories of electoral process, political pluralism and participation, and functioning of government. Civil liberties contains questions in the four subcategories of freedom of expression and belief, associational and organizational rights, rule of law, and personal autonomy and individual rights. Source: Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2017, *freedomhouse.org*, 2017 [accessed 2017-07-10].

13 Zakaria.

Separating the concept from its liberal prefix, Zakaria defines democracy narrowly as majority rule of political representatives voted into power through competitive multiparty elections. However, Zakaria concedes that his minimalist definition of democracy requires that certain measures be taken to ensure "open and fair" elections. There must be "... some protections for freedom of speech and assembly",<sup>14</sup> but it is unclear how this should be guaranteed and whether in his view protecting these freedoms in the form of individual rights is sufficient to make a system democratic. Furthermore Zakaria does not specify how free and fair elections must be to meet the threshold requirement of his minimalist democracy, and what level of degreeism the model acknowledges. While Western style democracies are mainly described as being more liberal rather than more democratic than their illiberal counterparts, Zakaria introduces degrees of democracy in commenting that elections in illiberal democracies are rarely "as free and fair as in the West today".<sup>15</sup> Another point of uncertainty concerns the level of enfranchisement necessary for meeting the democracy threshold. For Zakaria allowing women to vote makes a system more democratic, which implies that a system without universal adult suffrage still can be democratic.

Constitutional liberalism is defined by Zakaria as a political system establishing and respecting the rule of law, separation of powers and certain civil and property rights. Its institutions place restrictions on government power. The central essence of constitutional liberalism – and the goal of government – is "[protection of] the individual's autonomy and dignity against coercion", that is respect for negative freedoms.<sup>16</sup> Grounding constitutional liberalism in Roman and Greek traditions, Zakaria argues that it is historically the essence of the Western model of government. Appreciation of these roots is for him necessary if Western powers are to be successful in supporting the emergence of liberal democracy worldwide. According to Zakaria consolidated liberal democracy has greater chances for taking hold in a transitional society with a history of "liberal autocracy" than in a society with no previous experience of constitutional liberalism. The history of North America and Western Europe shows that non-democratic regimes with distinctive liberal elements have commonly transitioned into liberal democracies. In contrast, Zakaria argues, states in democratic transition that go for democracy without constitutional liberalism seldom consolidate into liberal democracies. Introducing democracy in an ethnically divided society lacking tradition in constitutional liberalism is in his view especially dangerous, since it opens the door to nationalist populism that heightens ethnic tensions and risks leading to violent conflict. Zakaria concludes with implications for US foreign policy, arguing that the country should spend less energy on introducing

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14 Ibid.

15 Zakaria.

16 Ibid.

elections and instead focus on consolidation of democracy and the “gradual development of constitutional liberalism”.<sup>17</sup>

Zakaria’s article has received much attention in democracy debate. In a reply to Zakaria, political philosopher Marc Plattner warns against overstating the disjunction between the two constituent elements of liberal democracy. He points out that

[O]n the whole, countries that hold free elections are overwhelmingly more liberal than those that do not, and countries that protect civil liberties are overwhelmingly more likely to hold free elections than those that do not. This [...] is the result of powerful intrinsic links between electoral democracy and a liberal order.<sup>18</sup>

In Plattner’s view, it is not possible to keep the two concepts of liberalism and democracy apart. For him the liberal principle of all men being born free and equal, although proclaimed under conditions of limited suffrage, “... inevitably transformed liberalism into liberal democracy”.<sup>19</sup> Against this background promoting 19<sup>th</sup> century style liberal autocracy seems an implausible road to liberal democracy in today’s world. Once the equality genie is out of the bottle the citizenry are unlikely to be persuaded into giving up on a the enticing prospect of a right to participate in their own governance. Another problematic aspect of Zakaria’s account is the role of capitalism and its link to democracy. Zakaria puts forward a version of the modernization theory of democratization. According to this theory liberal constitutionalism is the necessary foundation for successful capitalism, which in turn inevitably leads to economic growth and the emergence of liberal democracy.<sup>20</sup> The problems of this model become evident in Zakaria’s confidence in the economically successful “liberalizing autocracies” of East Asia. How liberalizing can these models be said to be except in terms of economic liberalization? Even in cases where countries have some previous experience of constitutional liberalism (as Singapore under British colonial rule) they seem to easily settle for an illiberal version of democracy. As critics of the modernization theory have argued deepening capitalism in non-democratic countries might lead to the consolidation of elite-controlled capitalist authoritarianism rather than democracy.<sup>21</sup>

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17 Ibid.

18 Marc F. Plattner, “Liberalism and Democracy: Can’t Have One Without the Other”, *Foreign Relations*, Vol.: 77 Issue: 2,1998.

19 Plattner.

20 See Grugel.

21 Grugel, p. 49.

The debate surrounding illiberal democracy shows how hard it is to wholly sever democracy from its liberal influence, particularly when it comes to certain individual human rights safeguarding genuine democratic elections. But the question remains, which human rights are both necessary and sufficient for reaching a minimum threshold of a democratic process?

### 2.3 Key democratic rights

Within the international human rights corpus that has evolved since the adoption of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) certain human rights have been articulated that are widely held to be intimately tied to the notion of democracy. The most obvious example is the right to political participation based on the principle that government authority shall be based on the will of the people, a will that "... shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections [...] by universal and equal suffrage and [...] held by secret vote or by equivalent free voting procedures."<sup>22</sup> Within the United Nations system this right is declared in UDHR article 21 and further codified in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) article 25.<sup>23</sup> These provisions are most certainly examples of democratic rights, aimed as they are at securing participation in democratic governance. But, apart from participation rights, which other rights should be regarded as key for guaranteeing a democratic process and democratic institutions? Based on a common ground between the classical liberal democratic account of Robert Dahl stipulating a wide range of rights and institutions necessary for polyarchy and the narrow illiberal democracy described by Zakaria there are a few strong candidates for a list of key democratic rights. Far from being exhaustive, the list nonetheless points to areas of possible "overlapping consensus" between otherwise widely diverging conceptualizations of democracy.<sup>24</sup> For Dahl the right to vote, the right to stand for office, associational autonomy, freedom of expression and the "right to alternative information" are integral to democracy. This list is surprisingly close to what Zakaria envisages for an illiberal democracy; "protections for freedom of speech and assembly" are hard to imagine without some kind of legal guarantees in form of individual rights. And although this is not developed in Zakaria's thesis, it may be presumed that open and fair multiparty elections also require some form of political participation rights and freedom of association (how else would the multiple parties be able to form in the first place?). Freedom of assembly, freedom of association, freedom of expression and rights of democratic participation are common in both accounts. In the

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22 United Nations, Universal Declaration of Human Rights (adopted 10 December 1948) UNGA Res 217 A(III) (UDHR), art. 21.

23 United Nations, International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (adopted 16 December 1966 entered into force 23 March 1976) (ICCPR), art. 25.

24 The term "overlapping consensus" is borrowed from Martha Nussbaum and her version of the capabilities approach to human development, see Martha Nussbaum, *Creating capabilities; the human development approach*, Cambridge, London: Belknap Harvard, 2011.

following these rights will be called key democratic rights. Now it could be pointed out that both of these authors are writing in a liberal tradition, and although Zakaria is describing the contours of a narrow illiberal variety of democracy he nevertheless does so from within a distinctly liberal North American context. Still when free and fair elections are proclaimed by illiberal and authoritarian politicians they are commonly keen to make the impression that voters have had the opportunity to freely express their will, and vehemently deny accusations of limitations on freedom of expression and press freedom. A certain amount of freedom of speech is inherent in the very concept of a process of articulating a political choice without undue interference or coercion – that is, the idea of “free and fair” elections.

The central role of free speech and the role of the press in political discourse, not least of the populist and radical right, has become evident during the 2016 US presidential election, the debate on “fake news” and predictions regarding an emerging era of “post-truth politics”. These events bring to attention one of the key arguments for freedom of expression articulated in the liberal tradition, namely John Stuart Mill’s truth argument. In short, Mill argues that freedom of expression is valuable for promoting the search and discovery of truth in society. This speaks against the use of censorship, because “... if any opinion is compelled to silence, that opinion may, for aught we can certainly know, be true. To deny this is to assume our own infallibility.” Mill goes on to build an argument for free speech, stating that “... since the general or prevailing opinion on any subject is rarely or never the whole truth, it is only by the collision of adverse opinions that the remainder of the truth has any chance of being supplied.”<sup>25</sup> The argument supports a society of open speech and a plurality of voices, not only for reasons of personal self-fulfilment but also in the interest of the common good.<sup>26</sup> Here it should be underlined that freedom of the press serves a distinct democracy function that is not necessarily protected through general provisions for freedom of expression. Although press freedom in the UN human rights framework is not treated as a separate right but subsumed under freedom of expression, there are good reasons for making a distinction between the two in their relation to democracy. In liberal democratic theory press freedom is viewed as one of the pillars of a free and democratic society, evident in expressions describing the media as “watch dogs” or as the “Fourth estate” and freedom of the press as a “bulwark of liberty”.<sup>27</sup> Dahl also seems to acknowledge the need for a specific protection of press freedom, with his democratic right to

25 John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty*, Kitchener: Batoche Books, 2001 [1859], p. 50.

26 For a detailed analysis of Mill’s argument, see Ulf Petäjä, *Varför yttrandefrihet? Om rättfärdigandet av yttrandefrihet med utgångspunkt från fem centrala argument i den demokratiska idétraditionen (Why Freedom of Speech? On the Justification of Freedom of Speech on the Basis of Five Central Arguments in the Democratic Tradition)*, Växjö: Växjö University Press, 2006 [Swedish doctoral dissertation with summary in English].

27 Wiebke Lamer, “Promoting the people’s surrogate: The case for press freedom as a distinct human right”, *Journal of Human Rights*, Vol. 15 Issue 3, 2016.

seek out alternative sources of information and legal protection of these sources. The political potential of the two rights can be discerned in the way in which authoritarian-leaning politicians use the concepts. Actors that are negative towards the media and journalists and show a disregard for liberal freedom of the press tend to express more appreciation for freedom of expression – a concept that in the case of the radical right is used to legitimize aggressive rhetoric or outright hate speech, e.g. against religious and ethnic minorities. As Lamer has pointed out a free press wields a unique political power, it is vital for informing the public, facilitating the formation of public opinion, checking against corruption and power abuse and for ensuring that the public “... receive the information they need in order to make government accountable to them.”<sup>28</sup>

Lifting press freedom as a distinct human right alongside freedom of expression enables an analysis of similarities and differences in framing between the two types of communication rights, and a reflection on their respective democratic functions. The present study will focus on freedom of expression and freedom of the press understood as key democratic rights, meaning that some minimum core content of protection regarding these fundamental freedoms is essential for any good faith reading of democracy – be it minimalist majoritarian proceduralist or extensive liberal constitutionalist in nature.

## 2.4 Defining the radical right

The setting for analysing framing of the communication rights of freedom of speech and press freedom is political discourse involving actors in the right end of the political spectrum. There is an abundance in definitions for describing this group of actors, including the far right, the radical right, the extreme right or the populist right – or some combination of these terms. The question of definition and scientific categorization is a lively academic debate, on which I will not go into detail here.<sup>29</sup> However, a short note on choice of wording might be in place. Using the word “far” or “extreme” somehow signifies a distance from other political parties in the mainstream. Under a critical approach this can be taken as a distancing statement by the researcher, consciously defining and stigmatizing discourse and policies that *should* be clearly separated from mainstream politics and even stamped out as undemocratic. However, as Minkenberg notes, it may be unwise to decide the question of whether these actors reject democracy already at a definition stage.<sup>30</sup> The far or extreme right labels may also be problematic when the focus of the research is proximity to – and

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28 Lamer.

29 For a thorough discussion on classifications, see Cas Mudde (2007), *Populist Radical Right Parties in Europe*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

30 Michael Minkenberg, *Pattern, Process, Policies: Conceptualizing Radical Right Impact*, paper for the ECPR General Conference, 2015.



sometimes overlap with – the mainstream, as it is in the present case. In the following I will use the term “radical right”. Minkenberg defines right wing radicalism as

[A] political ideology, the core element of which is a myth of a homogeneous nation, a romantic and populist ultra-nationalism which challenges the concept and reality of liberal and pluralistic democracy and its underlying principles of individualism and universalism.<sup>31</sup>

Within this definition radicalization attaches to the use of categories for sociopolitical exclusion and inclusion based on a primary we-group of “nation”, “people” or “race”.<sup>32</sup> Building on the works of Kitschelt and Carter Minkenberg develops a typology of the heterogeneous actors under the radical right umbrella, comprising the autocratic-fascist, racist or ethnocentrist, populist-authoritarian and religious-fundamentalist categories. In this typology Jobbik is labelled an autocratic-fascist party, embracing racist ideas, leaning towards political violence and drawing inspiration from historical fascist and authoritarian movements. Fidesz are hesitantly categorized as a radical right party of the populist-authoritarian type.<sup>33</sup> Other theorists have also been ambivalent in their classification of the party. Mudde refers to Fidesz as a nearby competitor of Jobbik pursuing radical right policies while not being a radical right party, yet he sometimes calls Fidesz a “new far right party” and Orbán a “far right politician”.<sup>34</sup> In the present study the illiberal nationalist-conservative Fidesz will be regarded as a radical right borderline case, and the discourse analysis will look into radical right interaction and influences in the context of their ongoing ideological transition.

### **3. Methodology**

Combining analytical models of political science research into radical right movements and methods of critical discourse analysis (CDA) of far right discourse, the study takes an explicitly interdisciplinary approach. The aim is to enable a rich analysis and discussion on the complex and interrelated factors involved as political agents interact in a strand of political discourse targeting its own institutional structures.

#### **3.1 Minkenberg’s interaction process model**

My analysis of interaction effects of the radical right within its political environment is based on the process model outlined by Michael Minkenberg. In this model, inspired by concepts from social movement research, the radical right is understood as a collective actor that can manifest itself in

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31 Minkenberg.

32 Ibid.

33 Ibid.

34 Cas Mudde, *On Extremism and Democracy in Europe*, London: Routledge, 2016, p. 111, 146.

party politics as well as in social movement organizations (non-parliamentarian groups/networks) or subcultural milieus (small extremist groups/loose networks). The forms of radical right organization and relative strength of the relational links within this collectivity will vary according to context. Minkenberg proposes a three-step approach of a) mapping far right profiles, b) sketching patterns of mobilisation and c) analysing processes of political interaction and interaction effects.<sup>35</sup> Conceptualising the radical right as a collective actor has the advantage of moving away from narrow party research and enabling the study of the multi-faceted political organization around radical right ideas. However, since the focus of the present study is on the radical right interacting with(in) and seeking to influence the political mainstream, autonomous extremist groups of the far right subcultural milieu will not be covered. Thus the central protagonist is the radical right party and closely related movement organizations, this is also motivated by time and space constraints restricting the scope of analysis.

I will apply Minkenberg's process model in a slightly adapted form, starting with a mapping of actor profiles within their respective sociopolitical contexts and proceeding to processes of discursive interaction. Emphasis is on the last step of analysis, that is on processes and interaction effects. Since the present research is not concerned with comparing the electoral fortune of the radical right, the topic of "patterns" will be approached in a slightly different way than in the original model. To the extent that trends in far right development and mobilisation are discussed, these are treated within the case in the historical contextualisation of profile mapping setting the stage for the discursive process. The patterns highlighted in this study are discursive patterns in the evolution of narratives on communication rights and the possible systemic implications of radical right-mainstream interaction. In the profile mapping I will conduct literature studies, outlining the actors' profiles and some main discursive themes recognized in previous research. The aim here is to provide an overview of the cast of characters and present some leading academic voices on radical right development.

Under Minkenberg's model the radical right is understood as a challenger contending with mainstream political parties over the framing of key democratic rights. Interaction in this forum of "contentious politics" is read against a backdrop of broader social change, and the ways in which these processes are interpreted by the contending actors as opportunities or threats and tied to "master frames" that in turn inform the framing of other political issues. In this context two levels of interaction can be distinguished: the *agenda setting* and *policy making* levels. In addition to the

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<sup>35</sup> Minkenberg.

contending actors who are active both in agenda setting in public discourse and policy making in parliamentary and governmental work, the model envisages a role for the general public on the level of agenda setting. As the “gallery” of the forum the public are not seen as merely passive spectators but an active party that might react, intervene and counter-mobilise in answer to events in the arena. Public action and opinion in turn has “feedback effects” on political parties and government.<sup>36</sup> This perspective on the public has certain strengths in that it applies a dynamic rather than static view of the political environment, but it might also entail problems of demarcation between semi-active spectators in the stands and fully fledged actors on the arena. To keep the process model focused on the radical right and the establishment right as actors in discursive interplay I will implement a restricted view of the public, narrowed down to public opinion as expressed in elections and civil society voices commenting on controversial events entering the actors’ discourse on freedom of expression and press freedom.

Painting “unfolding patterns of interaction” requires a dual focus on processes as well as settings,<sup>37</sup> a relationship that in discourse analytical terms might be described as the dialectic between text/talk and context.<sup>38</sup> Using concepts from social movement research and discourse studies this study looks at political and discursive *opportunity structures* as central contextual factors. Opportunity structures are defined by Sidney Tarrow as “consistent – but not necessarily formal or permanent – dimensions of the political environment that provide incentives for people to undertake collective action by affecting their expectations for success or failure”.<sup>39</sup> Aspects of the political and legislative environment that should be taken into account include the configuration of the party system and the existence of legislation restricting the manoeuvring space for political actors, such as criminalization of extremist organizations and limitations to freedom of speech (e.g. provisions on libel and hate speech).<sup>40</sup> Discursive opportunity structures refer to narrative factors enabling or constraining discursive action on a specific issue. In the words of sociologist Ruud Koopmans and colleagues:

Discursive opportunities determine which collective identities and substantive demands have a high likelihood to gain visibility in the mass media, to resonate with the claims of other collective actors, and to achieve legitimacy in the public discourse.<sup>41</sup>

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36 Minkenberg, pp. 12-16.

37 Mc Adam quoted in Minkenberg, p. 14.

38 Ruth Wodak & John E. Richardson (eds.), *Analysing fascist discourse*, London: Routledge, 2013, p. 7.

39 Tarrow, quoted in Minkenberg, p. 12.

40 cf. Minkenberg, p. 15.

41 Ruud Koopmans, Paul Statham, Marco G. Giugni and Florence Passy, *Contested Citizenship: Immigration and Cultural Diversity in Europe*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005, p. 19.

As Bartek Pytlas points out, discursive opportunities is a particularly useful term for clarifying how contextual factors of culture or history are always mediated through political and discursive representation.<sup>42</sup> In the case of radical right mobilization, broadly shared or dominant narratives on nation and nationhood are especially potent discursive opportunity structures.<sup>43</sup>

### 3.2 Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)

Zooming in on processes of far right-mainstream interaction, my analysis of discourse is based on concepts and methods of the critical discourse analysis (CDA) approach. The CDA approach is used as a collective term for a rather diverse field of related research on discourse, united by a focus on the role of discourse in producing, reproducing and challenging social power and inequality. I will mainly follow methods of the discourse-historic approach articulated by Ruth Wodak and Martin Reisigl. In this vein discourses are understood as "... linguistic social practices that constitute nondiscursive and discursive social practices and, at the same time, are being constituted by them."<sup>44</sup> The special interest in the connection between discourse and power makes CDA well suited for analysing political discourse on the institutionalization of common rules establishing what may and may not be said in a specific setting – that is, the rules governing the production of text and speech in society. In this struggle mechanisms of exclusion/inclusion, domination and marginalization are brought into relief, e.g. when some kinds of speech and speakers are deemed to be more worthy of protection than others and certain limitations to freedom of expression are deemed more legitimate than others. CDA is problem-focused and geared towards social emancipation, taking a critical stance to the language of the powerful. One aim is to de-mystify discourse and lay bare the ideological motivations and biases of political actors.<sup>45</sup> CDA research also rejects the illusion of detached objectivity in social research, acknowledging that the analyst him-/herself is situated in the social fabric, affected by and in turn influencing social structures. This calls for transparency and self-awareness regarding background and motivations. A Swedish citizen, born in Ethiopia, I am approaching the subject of radical right conceptualization of communication rights as a proponent of liberal democracy and open, pluralist and culturally diverse societies. Since I am not a Hungarian citizen nor speak Hungarian this calls for humility in analysing actors and speech embedded in a social and cultural setting which is not my own. In this sense I take the position of an outside observer. At the same time it is the position of someone looking at liberal democracy from within a common European context of struggle over meaning of its shared heritage

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42 Bartek Pytlas, *Radical Right Parties in Central and Eastern Europe: Mainstream party competition and electoral fortune*, London: Routledge, 2016, p. 58.

43 Minkenberg, p. 13; cf. Mudde 2016, p. 119.

44 Ruth Wodak & Martin Reisigl, "Discourse and Racism", in *The Handbook of Discourse Analysis*, Deborah Schiffrin, Deborah Tannen & Heidi E. Hamilton (eds.), Hoboken: Wiley, 2003, p. 383.

45 Ruth Wodak & Michael Meyer, *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis*, London: SAGE, 2001, p. 10.

and common values. Underlying this research is not only a desire to deepen my own understanding of the phenomena at hand and make a contribution to the field, however modest, but also to help in articulating possible responses in better facing challenges to a democratic weak spot – the openness that also makes societies vulnerable, but without which there can be no democracy.

The discursive sphere under study is political discourse, what Wodak & Reisigl name political “fields of action”, especially the functions of public opinion formation, political self-presentation and expressions of political power. Following the discourse-historic strand, I will take a triangulatory approach to context looking at the immediate language/text-internal factors (such as collocations) as well as intertextual connections (to other texts/fields) and the broader historical and sociopolitical context of the discursive event and topic under discussion, where this is relevant.<sup>46</sup> Context triangulation and highlighting the dialectics between discursive practice and surrounding context both serve to increase the validity of the study. Utilizing the toolbox of Wodak & Reisigl the actual discourse analysis will be guided by a three-step approach of context and topic mapping, identification of discursive strategies and of specific linguistic means and realizations. The same authors highlight five discursive strategies in the context of discriminatory speech that are also of use here:

1. *Nomination* (naming/referring to speakers, recipients and other subjects)
2. *Predication* (evaluative or stereotypical attributions)
3. *Argumentation* legitimizing inclusion/exclusion of talk, text and actors
4. *Perspectivation* (from which viewpoint/perspective is the utterance made?)
5. *Intensifying or mitigation* strategies – in which manner are statements made (overtly/covertly)? Are they mitigated or intensified?<sup>47</sup>

As explained above, the focal point of this study is strategies and means involved in articulating frames on freedom of expression and freedom of the press. Following early formulations within social psychology and social movement research frames are here understood as “schemata of interpretation”<sup>48</sup> that help simplify and organize individual experience and serve as a guide for action. Collective action frames are frames utilized for the purposes of collective mobilization of current and presumptive supporters and demobilization of opponents, described by Benford &

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46 See Wodak & Reisigl, p. 385.

47 Wodak & Reisigl, p. 386.

48 Erving Goffman, quoted in Robert Benford and David Snow, “Framing Processes and Social Movements: An Overview and Assessment”, *Annual Review of Sociology*, Vol. 26 (2000), p. 614.

Snow as "... action-oriented sets of beliefs and meanings that inspire and legitimate the activities and campaigns of a social movement organization".<sup>49</sup> Framing is in this view a process for "... negotiat[ing] a shared understanding of some problematic condition or situation ... define[d] as in need of change, make attributions regarding who or what is to blame, articulate an alternative set of arrangements, and urge others to act in concert to affect change".<sup>50</sup> This is boiled down to the three framing tasks of *diagnostic framing*, *prognostic framing* and *motivational framing*,<sup>51</sup> categories which will be used to appreciate the functions guiding framing of key democratic right in the present study.

### 3.3 Note on case selection

As a case study I have chosen Hungary. A strong radical right, swift and far-reaching legal reforms and the articulated ambition of the radical right leaning nationalist-conservative government to establish an "illiberal" system makes this an ideal case to study radical right-mainstream interaction and illiberalism in practice. While much has been written on the so-called illiberal turn of Hungary and the role of the radical right in this process, previous studies have for the most part been focused on human rights protection from a legal perspective, changes in quality of democracy or the electoral fortune of the radical right in a comparative view.<sup>52</sup> Here focus is on freedom of expression and press freedom and the ways in which they are discursively constructed within the context of a mainstream right illiberal project and simultaneous radical right mobilization. With regard to democracy and democratization processes Hungary constitutes an especially well-suited case for studying democratic rights. As a relatively new democracy emerging from totalitarian communist rule following a dramatic regime change in the late 1980s, the country has been on a road of democratic transformation for the last decades.<sup>53</sup> However, it is a process that has been far from straightforward and problem free, as we can see by looking at the Freedom House reports cited above. On the European political scene Hungary has held a relatively high profile for the last few years, especially in the context of the EU and its debate on migration. In today's polarized political discourse in Europe Hungary is often painted the illiberal captain of Eastern Europe, alternatively portrayed as the bold rebel standing up to the oppressive Brussels authorities. In the study we will see some of these frames wired around international image and national self-perception actualized

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49 Benford & Snow, p. 614.

50 Ibid., p. 615.

51 Ibid.

52 See eg. Mudde 2016; Pytlas; Miroslav Mareš & Vratislav Havlík, "Jobbik's successes. An analysis of its success in the comparative context of the V4 countries", *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 49(4), September 2016.

53 For a good overview of Hungary's transition to democracy, see Juan Linz & Alfred Stepan, *Problems of democratic transition and consolidation: southern Europe, South America, and post-communist Europe*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996.

as discursive opportunity structures of the actors. Taking into account the interplay between the national and international levels, focusing Hungary enables a study of the radical right in an illiberal, yet liberal European context. The actors in the Hungarian case – Fidesz and Jobbik – have also been particularly active in reaching out to partners and building political alliances on the regional and international levels,<sup>54</sup> something that is clear not least in their self-presentation and well-established English language web presence.

The discourse analysis is based on online content published by the actors, reflecting arenas for self-presentation and political debate and commentary on current events. The main primary sources are the actors' websites (including party programmes/manifestos published online) and, where applicable, party news media. In the case of Fidesz the web platform is that of the Hungarian government. The time frame is set to 2010-May 2017, capturing the period passed since the current radical right contender Jobbik first entered into the national legislature. Using site internal and Google advanced searches on “freedom of expression”/“freedom of speech” and “freedom of the press”/“press freedom” I have gathered comprehensive corpora on the parties' discourse on these topics mediated through online platforms. This is complemented with searches on “media” and “the journalists”, including texts that contain evaluative judgement of these as collective actors/part of systems. The communication rights corpora are subsequently used to identify and analyse frames and framing strategies on freedom of expression and press freedom during the period. To limit the dataset, and also because of limitations regarding language, social media sites have not been included in the search. Statements exclusively uttered in and directed at a municipal level (such as via local party chapters' own sites) or an international level (such as sites of party MEPs) have also been left out, since focus is on national level political discourse. Searchable archived versions of websites have been included where such platforms have been available.

#### **4. Analysis**

The first stage of the discourse analysis consists of mapping and analysis of Jobbik's frames on freedom of expression and freedom of the press, reflected against meta narratives and master frames in the party's discourse. In the next step of analysis radical right-mainstream interaction is highlighted in samples of Fidesz speech on these topics. Discourse samples will be chosen that are illustrative of mainstream right positioning in relation to Jobbik in relation to shared themes. As a

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<sup>54</sup> See eg. Pytlas. For the international activities of Jobbik and connections to Russia, see Krisztián Szabados (ed.), *The Truth Today Is What Putin Says It Is: The Activity of Pro-Russian Extremist Groups in Hungary*, Budapest: Political Capital, 2017.

background we will also look at two Fidesz texts in the 2011-2012 discussion on communication rights in the wake of new media legislation and the new constitution. This early debate sets the political and legal framework for the discourse and provides a kind of baseline for the evolving frames on the nature and limits of communication rights in a democratic society.

#### 4.1 Jobbik

The organizational roots of Jobbik can be found in Hungarian radical right and national-conservative university student clubs, and the direct predecessor Association of Right-Wing Youth (*Jobboldali Ifjúsági Kössőség*, Jobbik) formed in 1999. Following the 2002 electoral failure of the earlier far right party Hungarian Justice and Life Party (*Magyar Igazság és Élet Pártja*, MIÉP), members of the Association of Right-Wing Youth and some Fidesz figures formed Jobbik in October 2003. The party failed to reach parliament in their first election in 2006 (where they ran in coalition with MIÉP), but managed to gain in publicity and popularity through their role in the anti-government public protests following the “Oszöd speech” scandal later that year. In a leaked recording from a closed party meeting the socialist premier Ferenc Gyurcsány in frank and rather profane language admitted, among other things, lying the public about the state of the Hungarian economy in order to win the elections.<sup>55</sup> Alluding to the wording of an infamous 1956 state radio broadcast, Gyurcsány said the ex-communist Hungarian Socialist Party (*Magyar Szocialista Párt*, MSzP) had lied “in the morning, at night and in the evening”.<sup>56</sup> The political opposition to the right was not late to jump on the 1956 connection, both Fidesz and Jobbik drawing parallels between the legitimacy-crising government in 2006 and the events of the Hungarian Revolution. Jobbik and other far right groups managed to gain momentum in the widespread public protests and riots that followed, culminating in anti-Semitic demonstrations and the hardliner extremist siege against the headquarters of the Hungarian Television. This has proved a defining experience the Hungarian far right, the leadership of Jobbik later referring to themselves as the “generation of 2006”.<sup>57</sup>

Following heavy mobilization of the party organization in the late 00s Jobbik experienced an early success in the European Parliament elections in 2009, winning 14,8 % of the votes and 3 seats. However, their national-level breakthrough came in the 2010 parliamentary elections, where they won 16.7 % of the votes and entered the Hungarian parliament as the third largest party. During the run-up to the 2014 elections and in the following years the party has consciously sought to tone down its extremist profile, a process the party leadership refers to as “becoming a people’s party” -

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55 Pytlas, pp. 35-37.

56 Ibid.; Anna Seleny “Revolutionary Road”, in *Twenty Years After Communism: The Politics of Memory and Commemoration*, Michael Bernard & Jan Kubik (eds.) Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014, pp. 47-48.

57 Seleny, pp. 47-48; Krisztián Szabados (ed.), p. 11.



by outside commentators often dubbed a “cuteness campaign”.<sup>58</sup> In 2014 Jobbik managed to stay in parliament, increasing their share of the national vote to 20.2 %, further consolidating their position the following year by winning a parliamentary by-election in the district of Tapolca. Jobbik’s stable and high level of electoral support stands out in a regional comparison. And in contrast to forerunner MIÉP, which struggled to reach out beyond Budapest, Jobbik has relatively solid support across the whole country. The party is somewhat stronger in peripheral and rural regions compared to central and urban areas.<sup>59</sup>

Jobbik’s ongoing process of party make-over has not been without difficulties and internal tension. One example is the attempts at washing off the anti-Semite label. When the party leadership in December 2016 sent Hanukkah greetings to Rabbi Slomó Köves, the Jobbik chapter of Vecsés publicly renounced the move on their Facebook page: “Jobbik in Vecsés does NOT send greetings to the Jews for Hanukah (or f..k knows what)! If someone still has this deranged idea in their heads, we distance ourselves from them.”<sup>60</sup> Jobbik’s relationship to the extra-parliamentarian radical right movement is complicated. In 2007 the party founded the paramilitary organization The Hungarian Guard, which quickly gained high visibility for their racist antiziganist rhetoric and intimidating rallies in Roma populated communities. The organization was disbanded by the Budapest Tribunal in 2009, however shortly after this two new guards were formed; the New Hungarian Guard and the Hungarian National Guard, among other successor organizations.<sup>61</sup> Despite pursuing a more moderate profile in the public eye the party maintains close ties to several extremist satellites, among them the Sixty-Four Counties Youth Movement (*Hatvannégy Vármegye Ifjúsági Mozgalom*, HVIM) and the Army of Outlaws.<sup>62</sup>

Many theorists have noted the relative salience of the socio-cultural conflict dimension in East and Central Europe. Pytlas suggests that this facilitates diffusion of radical right ideology into the mainstream and leads to far right parties in the region being less niched than their Western counterparts.<sup>63</sup> Minkenberg notes that the dominant concept of nationhood provides a particularly strong discursive opportunity structure for the far right in Central and Eastern Europe, since the

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58 For Jobbik’s view on the process see eg. Jobbik, “VONA: NAZI STIGMATIZATION IS OLD HAT”, *jobbik.com* 2015-04-28 [accessed 2017-06-20]. For political commentary, see eg. Krisztián Szabados (ed.).

59 Miroslav Mareš & Vratislav Havlík, “Jobbik’s successes. An analysis of its success in the comparative context of the V4 countries”, *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 49(4), September 2016.

60 Krisztián Szabados (ed.), p. 25.

61 Krisztián Szabados (ed.), p. 20.

62 Both organizations were founded by László Toroczkai, the Jobbik-delegated mayor of Ásotthalom and since 2016 one of the vice presidents of the party. Toroczkai was also the leader of the 2006 TV building siege. See Krisztián Szabados (ed.), p. 11-13.

63 Pytlas, p. 67.

post-1989 political discourse on these themes already “embodies a dose of ultranationalism”.<sup>64</sup> In his analysis electoral and organizational fluidity together with far right-mainstream border permeability are general features of the far right in Eastern Europe, something that he chiefly explains with the general under-institutionalization of party systems in the region.<sup>65</sup> As Mareš & Havlík point out, Hungary is a special case in that the political system has traditionally been dominated by the nationalist-universalist cleavage with parties positioning themselves as left or right according to cultural values. The long tradition of radical nationalism, bound up with the salience of injustice frames on the 1920 Trianon treaty, has enabled Jobbik to “... build on lasting, shared, and multi-generational feelings of injustice, which creates almost 100 years of solid ground for such organizations occupying the extreme right of the Hungarian party system.”<sup>66</sup> Through the Treaty of Trianon, which set the peace terms after the First World War for the Hungarian side of the dismantled Austro-Hungarian Empire, the Kingdom of Hungary lost around two-thirds of its territory to surrounding states. The event is by many Hungarians regarded a national trauma and Trianon revanchism is a central theme for the Hungarian radical right including Jobbik.<sup>67</sup> In terms of institutional opportunity structures national legislation on hate speech plays a crucial role. In Hungarian law this issue is addressed in Fundamental Law.<sup>68</sup> Hate crime provisions are another factor to take into consideration, and the amended 1978 Criminal Code contains provisions on hate crime that further restrict the manoeuvring space of the radical right.<sup>69</sup> We will come back to the legal framework in the Fidesz presentation when looking at how it is being used in demarcation and distancing towards Jobbik and violent paramilitary actors on the radical right scene.

Jobbik’s English language web presence is mainly channelled through the website [jobbik.com](http://jobbik.com). The platform carries *inter alia* party news, speeches and electoral material. The Jobbik discourse analysis is based on a corpus of the party’s online speech on freedom of expression and freedom of the press in the 2010-May 2017 period. In the following I will present the topics and themes of the Jobbik speech under analysis, frames on the rights under study and some discursive strategies employed in their making. References to democracy or the political system are of special interest, as are links to master frames since they point us to the function and role Jobbik ascribes these rights. First let us turn to the English version of the 2010 electoral manifesto, a political programme that

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64 Minkenberg, p. 13.

65 Minkenberg, p. 11.

66 Mareš & Havlík.

67 Ibid.; Pytlas; Minkenberg;

68 See The Fundamental Law of Hungary, (Consolidated text as on 1 October 2013).

69 See Act IV of 1978 on the Criminal Code (as amended 2013).

sets the stage and in a condensed form presents some of the central topoi and master frames of the party.

#### 4.1.1 Meta narratives and master frames – the 2010 electoral manifesto

Already in the subheading of the document “Radical change” the tone of the colonialism frame is set, as it is explained as a “... manifesto for national self-determination and social justice”.<sup>70</sup> The underlying presumption is that the Hungarian nation is not fully free to decide its own fate, that sovereignty rests with some authority other than the people. Here hints to an oppressive, occupational power can be discerned, a master frame that we shall have reason to return to further on. The authors are named and valued as enlightened and authoritative “experts whose hearts, as well as minds, are in the right place”.<sup>71</sup>

Hungary is described synecdochally as “our communal home”, placing the speakers and the sympathetic recipients in the same intimate domestic idyll whose peace has been disrupted and which is now in deep crisis. At the time of writing Hungarian economy had been brought to the knees in the wake of the 2008 financial crisis and soon the country would be asking the IMF for help, so there was already a certain crisis awareness in society for Jobbik to build on.<sup>72</sup> In the manifesto the nature and symptoms of the crisis are initially only alluded to, the tone being motivational and directed at social and political mobilization. Politicians maintaining the present defunct system are described as criminals and dishonest liars responsible for the disrepair of the household. It is suggested that the political establishment are deceiving the public into thinking that the desperately needed change is not possible, that they themselves are too cowardly to apply the bold solutions that exist to remedy the situation and restore the national home. The movement’s sympathizers are described as the “[w]ell-meaning people of the Hungarian nation ... a people yearning for both justice and self-determination” uniting in solemn determination for revolutionary change:

There *is* an alternative. Hungary, and the Hungarian nation, is not only possessed of a past, but a future also. The time has come: The moment has arrived when people seeking justice no longer await the arrival of change from politics, but rather, themselves effect change within politics itself!<sup>73</sup>

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70 Jobbik, *Radical change – A guide to Jobbik’s parliamentary electoral manifesto for national self-determination and social justice*, Jobbik Foreign Affairs Committee, 2010, p. 1.

71 Jobbik 2010, p. 1.

72 Akos Valentinyi, “The Hungarian crisis”, *voxeu.org*, 2012-03-19 [accessed 2017-07-11].

73 Jobbik 2010, p. 1. Italics in original.

Virtues of the own movement and the strengths of its programme are skilfully highlighted through positive self-presentation and contrasting negative other-representation, subtly using logical fallacies. It is asserted that the message is for “... every sensible, respectable and fair-minded Hungarian”, implying that those receiving it in so doing prove themselves as worthy members of the nation. It also implies that those who reject Jobbik are foolish, unworthy *etc.* A hand is stretched out to bystanders, “... those who had so far lacked the courage to listen to their better judgement”, to join in the uprising for radical change: “The more that people become aware of Jobbik’s conceptions, the more they end up discovering that they have always been Jobbik supporters, and have simply not realized this fact beforehand.” Thus an impressive, slumbering majority is conjured – a people for the movement.

In line with the second of the two functions of collective action framing, that of demobilizing antagonists, the text declares that the manifesto aims at “... disheartening those who viewed neither Hungary as their homeland nor looked on the Hungarian nation as their people”. Active non-sympathizers are here understood to be beyond salvation as the English summary references the party chair’s prayer that God guide Jobbik in achieving the ultimate goal put forward in the manifesto, namely “Hungary’s revival”. This sets the tone for a polarizing and exclusionary conceptualization of the Nation vs. its Internal Enemies that is to ring throughout the rest of the 2010 manifesto, with far-reaching consequences in terms of who is included in the constructive and productive force rebuilding the nation – that is, who is truly part of society and the sovereign people. The visionary conclusion of the introduction in a religiously flavoured language paints the rebirth of the nation, bringing the programmatic goal close to the heart of Griffin’s minimalistic fascism definition of “palingenetic ultranationalism”.<sup>74</sup>

Militaristic imagery permeates the nativist and protectionist economic agenda, vividly describing how “[t]ens of thousands of Hungarian families have ended up the victims of both foreign banks and foreign construction companies”,<sup>75</sup> and important economic sectors have “fallen into foreign hands”<sup>76</sup>. The exploitation of the Hungarian nation is in this narrative effectuated through an unholy alliance of communist-cum-capitalist elites and foreign corporations, who have greedily enriched themselves through a corrupt post-1989 privatization process. In a term shorthandedly denouncing the two previous social democrat-liberal governments along with their economic policies, the

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74 Griffin, “Staging The Nation’s Rebirth: The Politics and Aesthetics of Performance”, in *Fascism and Theatre: Comparative Studies on the Aesthetics and Politics of Performance in Europe, 1925-1945*, Günter Berghaus (ed.), pp. 11-29, Oxford: Berghahn Books, 1996.

75 Jobbik 2010, p. 10.

76 *Ibid.*, p. 4.

“Liberal-Left free-for-all” is found guilty of dealing out the deathblow to struggling Hungarian public companies.<sup>77</sup> The Liberal Enemy theme is further elaborated under “Family policy and Population issues”, where Jobbik vows to defend the institution of the nucleus family against attacks from “... a liberalism whose objective is to put the family unit on an equal footing with every conceivable alternative living arrangement or deviant lifestyle”.<sup>78</sup> At a quick glance the party’s general outlook in the areas of family, population and social welfare would not seem to stand out as controversial in a mainstream conservative/Christian democrat camp. However, the radical propositions and a strongly nationalist and polarizing tone grounds the programme firmly within the radical right end of the spectrum. Jobbik’s population policy is Janus-faced: one side looks to the Nation that shall multiply and expand, the other looks to the Minority Other that has to be contained. The text declares Jobbik’s aim to resolutely turn around the population crisis of an ageing and shrinking population, and introduce reforms that promote increased childbearing in “healthy families”<sup>79</sup> of nationally proud Hungarians “so that the nation grows”.<sup>80</sup> Political reforms include a family taxation scheme, early retirement options for mothers and replacing the child benefit system with a “Stay-at-Home Mothers’ Subsidy”. This stands in sharp contrast to the depiction of the Roma minority population, whose high fertility rates are seen as a problem. The professed goal is to discourage Roma families from having children, to halt “... the regrettable practise of the bearing of children for the purposes of economic subsistence through the state benefits receivable.”<sup>81</sup> The national invigoration theme is the main rationale behind proposed investments in health, sports, agriculture and education. In relation to the latter Jobbik aims at making the young “possessed of an unapologetic love of their nation”, in this vein they also plan to launch “... a Hungarian National Nursery Scheme, whose goal will be the inculcation of children with an appreciation that their country’s traditions are their own.”<sup>82</sup> Here also special measures are proposed in relation to the Roma minority; assimilation into the majority population beginning from nursery school age and the creation of a National Institute of Gypsy Methodology.<sup>83</sup>

Jobbik speech on Roma is mainly organized under the master frame of “Gypsy crime”. Pytlas notes that the highly discriminatory frame was introduced on a national scene by Jobbik in 2006, helping

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77 Ibid.

78 Jobbik 2010, p. 9.

79 See Jobbik 2010, p. 17: “That healthy families have healthy children, is Jobbik’s goal, and our aim is that a greater number of such families have more children than they do at present. That Hungary’s children be raised in a sound and upright manner is an important aim. The kind of generation the country is in need of, is one (...) which feels a sufficient bond between themselves and their national identity and heritage.”

80 Ibid., p. 9.

81 Ibid., p. 12.

82 Ibid., p. 13.

83 Ibid., pp. 11-12, 14.

the party to politicize and establish frame ownership over an issue that until then had remained largely dormant as a result of mainstream parties' disinterest and incoherent and half-hearted policies. Through the "Gypsy crime" master frame Jobbik has largely managed to steer public discourse on the Roma minority, forcing other parties to react to their proposals for a "new Roma policy".<sup>84</sup> The master frame is firmly established in the 2010 manifesto under "Gypsy issues", where it is asserted that Roma are by nature criminal, lazy, ignorant, unwilling to work and to adapt to a changing society. Radical measures to remedy the alarming situation are painted against a dramatic backdrop of societal crisis/doom: "The continuation of the Gypsy people's circumstances along their current course is nothing short of a potential time-bomb, and if it is not subject to concerted intervention, our mutual home could sink into a state of virtual civil war."<sup>85</sup> For Jobbik socio-economic factors are secondary (or irrelevant) and the key to understanding social problems in Roma communities is to be found in innate qualities of the "Gypsies", most notably "Gypsy crime" for which tougher measures are required. Tackling Gypsy crime is presented as the main *raison d'être* behind a re-established Hungarian Gendarmerie, a central proposal of Jobbik's programme and one that for many Hungarians evokes dark memories of the past. In the inter-war period the special rural police force of the right wing autocratic Horthy regime was known for ruthless methods, especially against Roma communities. The Gendarmerie also played a key role in carrying out the rounding up and deportation of Jews during the late stages of the Second World War.<sup>86</sup>

In Jobbik's discourse Roma are anti-social, hostile elements in the social body who have alienated themselves from the rest of society. The party sees a pressing need for "... [returning] the Gypsy people to a world of work, education and lawfulness".<sup>87</sup> The language bears certain religious overtones, it is implied that the Roma have turned away from the "right way" and are on a path of sinful living. This picture is strengthened by the leading role Jobbik envisages for the churches in the "concerted intervention" of respectable society to halt the looming catastrophe. Here "Gypsy crime" latches on to another central topos; the Christian identity of the Hungarian nation. In Jobbik's programme "integration" of the Roma minority is one of the primary social tasks of the churches. To make sure that there will be no misunderstandings in the terminology used it is clearly stated that "Gypsy integration [as opposed to alienation] [sic.] means assimilation."<sup>88</sup>

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84 Pytlas, ch. 7.

85 Jobbik 2010, p. 11.

86 See eg. S.K, "The return of the Hungarian Gendarmerie?", *hungarianspectrum.org*, 2009-07-13 [accessed 2017-06-23].

87 Jobbik 2010, p. 11.

88 Jobbik 2010, pp. 11-12.

Freedom of speech is addressed in the 2010 manifesto in a passage on human rights and the rule of law. It is declared to be a prioritized civil and political right, alongside freedom of association and freedom of assembly. Here is referred specifically to the 2009 court decision to dissolve the party's paramilitary wing the Hungarian Guard. After pursuing the case to the highest national instance (which upheld the initial ruling), Jobbik chair Gábor Vona eventually lodged an application with the European Court for Human Rights, which unanimously ruled that there had been no violation of his freedom of association under art. 11 of ECHR.<sup>89</sup> For Jobbik the banning of the Hungarian Guard reveals the ruling elite's fears of initiatives aimed at "... awakening either of feelings of Hungarian self-awareness, or a desire for self-preservation", representing a "perverse desire" to restrict freedom of association. The Hungarian Guard, it is asserted, "never once transgressed a single law", what it did was to give a "... powerful voice to society's profound sense of dissatisfaction".<sup>90</sup> In this caption of events, dissolving the Hungarian Guard not only represents an illegitimate limitation of associational freedom but the oppressive silencing of a megaphone for the nation. The manifesto declares freedom of speech an absolute right which may not be restricted;

We will resist all undertakings which attempt to control Freedom of Speech – and which in pretending to oppose hate speech, end up opposing the most fundamental principles of democracy – and endanger the open and free debate of questions concerning the fate of both the Hungarian nation and the world; historical events both in the present and the past, and issues relevant to the future.<sup>91</sup>

Restrictions excluding hate speech from free speech protection are regarded as undemocratic pretences employed in the interest of preserving the existing (unjust) political order. In the chapter's introduction it is stated that Hungary of the social democrat/liberal government "... is no longer a state which operates under the rule of law".<sup>92</sup> Restoring the rule of law and ensuring respect for human rights is in the following intrinsically tied to a historic legacy of freedom fights and the struggle for the survival of a unified Hungarian nation, leading up to Jobbik's present revolutionary programme. The authors also object against hate speech restrictions and other limitations on the ground that it has a chilling effect on free debate on societal issues pivotal for the fate of the nation and, indeed, the world. This connects to the classical truth argument for freedom of expression famously articulated by Mill, according to which freedom of expression should be protected on the

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89 *Vona v Hungary* App no 35943/10 (ECHR, 9 July 2013).

90 Jobbik 2010, p. 24.

91 Jobbik 2010, p. 24.

92 Ibid.

ground that it provides the most favourable conditions for the search for truth in society.<sup>93</sup> “Historical events” should here be understood in the context of competing national history frames in general, and the “truth” regarding European and Hungarian interwar and Second World War history in particular.

Once the term “Freedom of (...) Speech and a free press”<sup>94</sup> is mentioned, but the latter element is not developed further. The strong and principled defence of absolute freedom of speech can thus be contrasted with the framing of media’s role under “... a media, cultural and educational policy serving national interests and values”.<sup>95</sup> In the discussion on media regulation, the Liberal Other theme is reinforced through the oppression frame of the Liberal Dictatorship. Using the society-body metaphor this “unhealthy, virtual autocracy of opinion” is charged with intentionally destroying national consciousness and causing an “emotionally damaged, even physically injured, society”.<sup>96</sup> Hungarian media are described in derogatory terms as greedy and immoral, having “lost ... ethical and professional respectability”. Jobbik’s solution is a reformed public service charged with the primary task of developing national identity.<sup>97</sup> In line with their national revival policy Jobbik seek the rehabilitation and constitutional protection of “ancient national symbols”; the Holy Crown of St. Stephen, historic flags and the emblem of the Turul bird – charged symbols embedding Jobbik’s nationalist narrative in Hungarian national-historic myths.<sup>98</sup>

#### **4.1.2 Topics and themes in communication rights speech**

Having been introduced to some dominant themes and frames in Jobbik’s political discourse, let us turn to an overview of the topics of the texts under study. What do Jobbik talk about when they talk about communication rights?

A general pattern is that there is considerably more material from the 2014-May 2017 period (15 texts) than from 2010-2014 (5 texts).<sup>99</sup> Most texts are from 2015, and this is also when some older material was republished on the site. The main themes of the texts mentioning communication rights are *national liberation* (master frame), *defence of hate speech/hate crime* (often antisemitic/antiziganist and tied to the first theme) and *protesting anti-press freedom/freedom of expression measures*. This theme targets the Fidesz-led government, equating them with socialists,

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93 See theory section above and Petäjä.

94 Jobbik 2010, p. 24.

95 Jobbik 2010, p. 1.

96 Ibid., p. 14.

97 Jobbik 2010, p. 15.

98 Ibid., see also Pytlas.

99 The breaking point between the two periods is 6 April 2014, the date for national elections.



liberals and the former communist regime under the Fidesz North Korea dictatorship and Bolshevik-Jew frames. Connecting to the last topic there is the closely related theme of *marking against Fidesz-controlled media*, portrayed as partisan and untruthful. These last two topics are only found in the second time period, where they dominate the rights speech. In part this probably reflects Jobbik stepping up their game as a contender for government take-over in the 2018 elections. The distribution of topics over time reveals another interesting pattern. Pro-hate speech exclusively appears in the 2010-2014 period, where it dominates the discourse (4 out of 5 texts<sup>100</sup>). All of these texts contain antisemitic speech or directly relate to events where Jobbik have made antisemitic statements. Hate speech resurfaces as a topic once in the later time period, this time in the context of marking against hateful anti-Jobbik speech.<sup>101</sup> Placing the speech on democratic communication rights within the larger context of Jobbik's development, the move away from rehabilitation of hate speech is most probably related to the "people's party" make-over process mentioned earlier. Noteworthy in this regard is that most of these texts were in fact re-posted on the website in late 2014 and 2015, revealing an interesting dynamic of simultaneous distancing from yet gravitating towards extremist discourse. We will come back to this complicated self-presentation dynamic when we take a closer look at dominant freedom of expression and press freedom frames.

The thematic mapping above shows that speech on democratic communication rights occupy a strong strategic position in Jobbik's discourse. Frequently, these rights are mentioned in contexts where they are also the topic of discussion and attached to the main message that is to be conveyed. Framings of the rights are also used in the context of radical right meta narratives. Looking at the speakers behind the statements, speech under the master frame topics of National Liberation and Liberal Dictatorship is the exclusive domain of senior party leadership and key figures (such as MPs). Unsurprisingly, they also own the themes of international politics and marking against internal/far right opposition, and dominate the strategic texts positioning Jobbik against the Fidesz government.

#### **4.1.3 Frames on freedom of expression, press freedom and the media**

How then are rights of democratic communication and media's role in society framed? The table below shows the distribution of rights and media frames based on main categories during the studied period.

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100 There are in total six texts, but one is a double. It is a 2012 verbatim republishing of the last two chapters of the 2010 manifesto.

101 The term "hate speech" is not used. This is likely due to Jobbik's "absolute freedom to hate speech" frame causing ambivalence towards the term in the context of hateful anti-Jobbik speech.

Table 1, Rights frames

Frame	2010-2014		2014-May 2017		Total
	FoE	PF	FoE	PF	FoE/PF
Right/freedom	2	1	3	5	5/6
Bogus right/freedom	-	1	1	1	1/2
Principle/value	-	-	1	-	1
Bogus principle/value	-	-	2	-	2

Table 2, Media frames. Media frame without accompanying rights frame in brackets.

Frame	2010-2014	2014-May 2017	Total
Media, positive	-	2 (0)	2 (0)
Media, negative	4 (2)	6 (3)	10 (5)

Not surprising communication rights, when not portrayed as a scam, are almost exclusively framed as rights/freedoms under attack, curbed or denied. This is illustrated by dictatorship frames of enemy representation, chiefly the Liberal Dictatorship and Fidesz North Korea frames. The former portrays the liberal element as foreign to Hungarian society, it is something imposed by the Occidental Other through an imperialist EU (latching on to occupation framing). The North Korea frame attaches to the Fidesz government and its head Viktor Orbán, sarcastically referred to as the “Dear Leader”.<sup>102</sup>

Bogus rights and principles are ascribed the hypocritical or submissive liberals/leftists within the country, and the West and EU outside it. These poor substitutes for rights are often contrasted with a real freedom of speech or the press defended by Jobbik, notably freedom to hate speech and freedom to truthful (ie. ultranationalist) reporting on part of the press. The two freedom of expression texts of the 2010-2014 period both stipulate that it is an absolute right which allows for no limitations (see Table 1 above). In both cases the right is thought to be embodied in a freedom to “hate speech” - something that will be guaranteed under a future Jobbik government. In one text reference is also made to freedom of expression as a natural right. This is done in the context of an article on Serbian authorities pressing charges against the Jobbik MP István Szávay for unauthorized political activities in Voivodina, Serbia.

<sup>102</sup> See Jobbik, “Another step towards total media dictatorship”, *jobbik.com*, 2016-10-31 [accessed 2017-05-09].

I am not only entitled but also obliged to represent our Hungarian brothers and sisters living outside our current national borders [...] As an MP I feel responsible for the Hungarians living in the territories torn away from us and for taking care of the Hungarian minorities living in the neighbouring countries [...] Based on the freedom of speech and opinion, we have the natural right to express our political views and present our arguments abroad so that we could inform the public about the political programme we wish to implement in Hungary.<sup>103</sup>

The statement is interesting in that it takes the responsibility of keeping together the natural Hungarian nation artificially torn apart (Trianon reference) and ties this to a natural right that can be invoked irrespective of temporary (and unjust) political arrangements. Tellingly, this right is not applied consequently to all Hungarian political actors. When Viktor Orbán and other government officials visited Voivodina in 2016, Jobbik accused the government of supporting pro-European and anti-Hungarian campaigns in the region. Applying the North Korea frame, Orbán is dubbed “Kim Jong Viktor” and the whole event is compared to the isolationist East Asian dictators’ carefully directed factory visits.<sup>104</sup> The texts under the anti-Fidesz and rights infringing measures topics are all geared towards portraying Jobbik as the true champion of communication rights in contrast to the dictatorial Fidesz and its lying “lackey media”. This is the only context in which the media are framed in a positive light, once as key societal actors under attack by a dictatorial government and once as victims of government occupation (see Table 2 above). Under these themes the restoration of press freedom is framed with increasing clarity as an electoral pledge, a trend that seems to mark a strategic shift in how Jobbik use communication rights as a weapon in the political battle against Fidesz.

How then does the Jobbik discourse relate to issues of democracy? What is the perceived connection between communication rights, the role of the media and the democratic system? We have already touched upon this in the overview of dictatorship frames on the enemies of absolute freedom of speech. Only in a small proportion of the sample texts (25 %) is democracy explicitly referred to in conjunction with the rights discussed. In almost all of these cases (4 out of 5) it is used to defend hate-speech and discriminatory language. The odd case concerns the refugee debate and EU’s suppression of migration critical voices wanting to “protect Europe”. It is a short press release on a July 2015 meeting with the EU Committee of the Regions, reporting that delegates from Hungary (including Jobbik representatives) and several other states were run over when a

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103 Jobbik, “SERBIAN AUTHORITIES PRESS CHARGES AGAINST A SIGN”, *jobbik.com*, 2016-02-21 [accessed 2017-05-09].

104 Jobbik, “KIM JONG VIKTOR VISITS FACTORY IN VOIVODINA”, *jobbik.com*, 2016-04-15 [accessed 2017-06-25]

Committee report “[promoting] unconditional and full support of migration” was endorsed without a discussion. For Jobbik this is evidence of a dictatorial practice “... in utter contradiction with the principles of democracy and freedom of speech so often advocated by the EU, which is basically a dictatorship of liberals, covered in sugar coating.”<sup>105</sup>

As we have seen the essence of absolute freedom of expression in Jobbik’s view is allowing “honest” and “truthful” speech of the kind that is commonly labelled as hate speech. The antagonists of this freedom are the current national and European political regimes, branded with polarizing dictatorship frames. What becomes clear in the above mapping and analysis of the texts on democracy and rights is that a denial of freedom of speech (understood as anti-minority hate together with a suppression of anti-immigration voices) for Jobbik equates a negation of democracy, even amounting to a denial of sovereignty.<sup>106</sup> To better understand how Jobbik’s arguments are constructed and the discursive strategies involved we shall now look more closely at a few examples of rights and media framing within the ever-present master topoi of antisemitism and antiziganism.

#### **4.1.4 Gyöngyöspata 2011: A people’s victory over the lying media**

In March and April 2011 Jobbik-affiliated and other radical right paramilitary groups conducted a series of operations in Roma populated neighbourhoods in the town of Gyöngyöspata. The far right vigilantes performed provocative marches for the maintenance of public order and the prevention of “Gypsy crime”, and there were clashes with local Roma in which several individuals were injured. During the weeks that the patrolling took place many Roma families were evacuated with the help of the Hungarian Red Cross, something the government referred to as a planned “excursion”.<sup>107</sup> In connection with the events the mayor of the town resigned, and the mayoral by-election that followed was won by Jobbik.<sup>108</sup>

We will look at an article about the Gyöngyöspata mayoral elections. The preamble to the text sets a triumphant tone and underlines the magnitude of this political victory, with party chair Gábor Vona declaring that Gyöngyöspata will become “... a showcase and positive example of Jobbik mayoral leadership”.<sup>109</sup> The text gives Jobbik’s background to the events of the spring and heavily criticizes

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105 Jobbik, “Discussion of migration in the Comedy of the Regions”, *jobbik.com*, 2015-07-11 [accessed 2017-05-09].

106 See Jobbik, “Anti-Zionism is not anti-Semitism”, *jobbik.com*, 2015-01-25 [2013-09-25] [accessed 2017-05-09].

107 Spiegel Online, “Right-Wing Militants on Patrol: A New Wave of Anti-Roma Violence in Hungary”, *spiegel.de* 2011-04-27 [accessed 2017-06-27]; Political Capital, “The second season of patrolling in Hungary”, *politicalcapital.hu* 2011-05-04 [accessed 2017-06-27].

108 Political Capital, “The second season of patrolling in Hungary”

109 Jobbik, “Jobbik wins mayoral by-election ahead Fidesz”, *jobbik.com* 2011-07-21 [accessed 2017-05-09].

the “manipulative” media reports of international and establishment media. Paramilitary actors are euphemistically referred to as “civil groups” that set out to protect local residents who had “... turned to Jobbik for help and support against petty crimes mostly committed by – in their own words – gypsies.”<sup>110</sup> Interestingly the Roma master frame is here mitigated through externalization of its formulation, something that also serves to justify the discriminatory language by presenting it as public sentiment. In Jobbik’s view the population’s endorsement of their mayoral candidate means a vindication of the malicious media campaign against them and proves the media reports false: “The real picture has now finally surfaced as the majority of the people in Gyongyospata voted for the Jobbik candidate. Facts are facts and the people voted for Jobbik in spite of the false, manipulative media coverage.”<sup>111</sup> The resignation of the former Fidesz mayor is presented as a natural result of “... the obvious positive changes Jobbik and the civil groups delivered” and the paramilitaries’ operation is contrasted with that of the regular police, who are denounced for being “... more keen to harass the civil groups than fulfilling their original duties”.<sup>112</sup> Using the strategy of victim-victimizer reversal the authors place the paramilitaries as victims instead of the Roma population they were targeting. And the police were indeed found guilty of harassment, but not of the violent radical right groups. To put the Jobbik narrative into perspective it can be mentioned that The Hungarian Civil Liberties Union (TASZ) sued the police of Heves county for failing to protect the Roma minority of Gyöngyöspata during the 2011 patrolling incidents. In February 2017 the Curia, Hungary’s Supreme Court, found the police guilty of harassment against the Roma for failing to adequately react to the threat of anti-minority violence and disperse the vigilante groups. Additionally, the court found that the police practice, during and after the patrolling period, of routinely fining Roma for minor offences constituted discrimination.<sup>113</sup> Other statements made by some of the radical right actors in connection to the 2011 Gyöngyöspata events confirm the deeply antiziganist agenda behind the coordinated action. Zsolt Tyirityán, the openly fascist leader of the Jobbik-affiliated Army of Outlaws,<sup>114</sup> one of the groups involved, compared the situation of the Roma community in Hungary to that of the Afro-Americans during the American civil rights movement of the 1960s:

[V]arious Zionist circles incite the Gypsies against the majority population, just as they did in the 1960s in respect to the blacks in the U.S. And, as a result of this goading, the Gypsies, an

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110 Ibid.

111 Ibid.

112 Jobbik, “Jobbik wins mayoral by-election ahead Fidesz”.

113 Budapest Beacon, “Curia faults Hevesi county police for failing to disperse extremists at Gyöngyöspata in 2011”, *budapestbeacon.com* 2017-02-08 [accessed 2017-06-27].

114 Krisztián Szabados (ed.).

alien race, try to occupy living-space against which we have to react in the spirit of healthy self-protection.<sup>115</sup>

Tyirityán's stark words bear echo of the Nazi doctrine of securing *Lebensraum* for the German race. The biologically racist language is intensified by the use of the word "healthy" to describe the self-defence of the Hungarian race – the social body of the nation – against the "Gypsies", portrayed as an invasive species or a disease. As we have seen earlier Jobbik use bodily health in a similar figurative sense in their 2010 manifesto, when talking of promoting increased fertility of Hungarians in "healthy families" (coupled with discouraging and preventing Roma births).<sup>116</sup> For Tyirityán the Roma threat is underblown by Jews conspiring against the Hungarians. The Jobbik MP Lorántné Hegedűs, in commenting on the Gyöngyöspata affair also makes the Jewish-Roma conspiracy connection:

The time has come to state it clearly: Israel is bent on conquering Hungary. This is a fact; as evidence, it is enough to look at the all but total monopoly of Israeli investments and real estate developments. And the Gypsies are a kind of biological weapon in this strategy. They are used as a means against the Hungarians just as, to use a simple analogy, a snow plough is hitched to a truck.<sup>117</sup>

Hegedűs' statement simultaneously connects to the Jobbik narrative of racial-ethnic war between Hungarians and Roma and the neo-nazi radical right meta narrative of a Jewish world conspiracy, often referred to as the Zionist Occupation Government (ZOG).<sup>118</sup> Through the use of the biological weapon metaphor she establishes a connection between the two minorities that form the centrepiece of Jobbik's xenophobic and racist ideology. In the next text we will see how party chair Gábor Vona further elaborates this link in a vivid framing of conspicuous hate speech while also trying to distance himself and the party from Nazism and antisemitism.

#### **4.1.5 Nazism distancing-gravitating: The "Gypsy-Jew-Homosexual Bermuda triangle"**

One text in the dataset is especially illustrative of the complicated choices of self-presentation as Jobbik strives to modify its image. In a 2015 interview with the party news site *Alfahír* (co-published on *jobbik.com*) Vona comments on an earlier statement about cutting off the "wildlings", i.e. rooting out extremist hateful speech from the party. Despite the stated goal of stamping out such speech as unacceptable, the party president all the same glides into defending hate speech. The text lucidly illuminates the well-known radical right strategy of dissociation; distancing from, yet

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115 Zsolt Tyirityán, quoted in Political Capital, "The second season of patrolling in Hungary".

116 Jobbik 2010, see also 4.1.2 above.

117 Lorántné Hegedűs 2011-05-01, quoted in Political Capital, "The second season of patrolling in Hungary".

118 See Anton Shekhovtsov, "European Far-Right Music and Its Enemies", in *Analysing fascist discourse*, Ruth Wodak & John E. Richardson (eds.), pp 277-296, London: Routledge, 2013.

gravitating towards, Nazism and antisemitism.<sup>119</sup> When we enter the interview Vona is answering a question on the party leadership's methods for disciplining rogue members.

[...] I am very angry when someone is willing to destroy the selfless efforts of a lot of people, just because he is unable to step out of the "Gypsy-Jew-Homosexual" Bermuda triangle.

– **Does this mean they must not deal with this Bermuda triangle?**

– Every issue must be dealt with in the proper way. There is a tough and provocative homosexual lobby, but those who go to these marches to fight them are actually doing them a favour. The anti-Semite vs. Nazi debate belongs to the 20th century. Jobbik is a 21st-century party, so we want to leave behind these infertile debates of the past. It won't be easy, because there are grave social and historical wounds to heal mutually. The core experience for Christian Hungarians is the activity of the Commissars in 1919 and certain figures of the Communist retaliation, while the Holocaust means the same for the Jewish community (...) This is an issue that can and should be discussed, just like you can express your opinion about Israel's international policy. I believe the discourse on such issues could take us ahead instead of backwards, if we all could go beyond our limits.<sup>120</sup>

The above dialogue is dense with references, layered meanings and seemingly contradictory strategies. In line with an absolute freedom to hate speech Vona has no principal objections towards high-pitched hate rhetoric or discriminatory action against minorities. What makes him angry is that such behaviour endangers the "people's party" process of the movement, not that the agent incites hate, hurts members of minorities or violates free speech – let alone endangers democracy. The Bermuda triangle metaphor is a double-edged frame. While Vona apparently launches the picture to summarize unacceptable forms of anti-minority hate speech, the expression at the same time sets a meta frame on hated minorities that subtly establishes a mystic bond between them. The Bermuda triangle reference alludes to a "no-go-zone", non-navigational waters from which you cannot escape. It brings to mind mysterious disappearances of ships on treacherous waters. Vona seems to suggest that there is a certain domain or level of discriminatory speech which should not be entered, because it will only bring the speaker down and damage the party in the process. In the interviewer's critical question and Vona's subsequent reply an interesting drawback move can be discerned. The moderate anti-hate speech frame is immediately "mitigated" (from a radical right hardliner point of view) and qualified as the Bermuda triangle and its constitutive elements are treated as issues of grave concern that must be "dealt with". After distancing himself from the gay lobby, Vona goes on to explain the need for pushing the boundaries of the discourse on Jews. The statement relativises the genocide against the Jews and Hungary's role in it through the talk of

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119 Ruth Wodak & John E. Richardson, "European fascism in talk and text - Introduction" in Wodak & Richardson (eds.), p. 3.

120 Jobbik, "Gábor Vona on the wildling", *jobbik.com*, 2015-04-24 [accessed 2017-05-09].

“mutual wounds” on both sides. In a history revisionist move Vona attempts to place Hungarians and Jews as opposing warring parties in a supposedly symmetrical conflict dyad. Referencing the historical grievances of “Christian Hungarians”, the Jews are equated with the communists through the well-known radical right Communist-Jew frame. He both wants to leave the “debates of the past” and calls for a fresh and honest discussion of the issues. In this we are led to understand that the issues must be discussed in a new way, the right/Jobbik way, requiring all *other* actors to move beyond their current limits. Naturally, the cusp is directed at the Jews and other political opponents that need to leave behind the false safety of the revealed truths in the dominant Holocaust historiography.

When asked about how to deal with “the Gypsies” Vona emphasises that they constitute a special case, the “truly decisive” issue. This means that while the unacceptable anti-minority hate frame is “mitigated” and revised in relation to Jews and homosexuals, it is redrawn in relation to Roma who are practically excluded. Echoing the ethnic war metaphor of the 2010 manifesto Vona declares that “Hungarian-Gypsy co-habitation is a bomb ticking away” and calls for an end to “evasive, politically correct statements”.<sup>121</sup> Integration (assimilation) of the Roma is to be achieved through a tougher minority policy that is re-orientated from the current practice of “giving rights and benefits” to demanding that the Roma meet responsibilities.<sup>122</sup> This connects to the Jobbik theme of the unthankful, lazy Rom who refuses to work, lives off crime and still enjoys the benefits of targeted positive discrimination schemes and social welfare. For Jobbik such policies aimed at breaking the social and economic exclusion and marginalization of Roma are completely unsustainable, since Roma individuals are viewed as criminals by nature (Gypsy crime) and thus incorrigible (with the possible exception of Roma achieving complete assimilation through denial of their cultural/ethnic identity and incorporation into the social body of the nation). Vona’s incremental amendment of the initial statement on unacceptable hate speech, with the Roma having to tolerate the most “critical” discussion, reinforces the centrality of the Gypsy crime frame for Jobbik discourse and underscores the Roma community’s vulnerable position in society.

The wildling article is the only dataset text in which a communication right is described in neutral or non-threat terms. When asked what Jobbik would do if a new, even-further-right party appeared in Hungary Vona answers: “Nothing. If there is a need in the Hungarian society for such a party, then we must respect that. That's what democracy and the freedom of speech is all about.” Freedom

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121 Jobbik, “Gábor Vona on the wildling”.

122 Ibid.



of speech and democracy are described in neutral language as primary principles of the political system. In the inter-textual context above we have seen what these principles are thought to be indifferent towards. They have nothing to say against hate speech and anti-minority-campaigns, and there is no limit beyond which such action and discourse threatens democracy, quite the contrary: tolerance of every shade of extremist political expression is a test of true adherence to democracy and freedom of speech. Thus Jobbik's stated ambitions in stemming hate speech are in the article immediately moderated – by ideological master frames and a strict adherence to absolute freedom of speech and the rules of the democratic game.

Vona's discursive strategies in refuting the party-internal "wildling" criticism sheds further light on Jobbik's view on democracy. At one point the interviewer points out the tension between the core voters who got Jobbik into parliament and who now may be disappointed in the more moderate party profile pursued and the recent sympathizers embracing the new image of the party. When asked who the party really represents, Vona explains that reaching parliament was only a partial goal and the movement must not be distracted from the primary goal of saving Hungary. He portrays the critics of the party leadership as selfish and less knowing, since they fail to understand the grand strategy of the people's party process.

Of course, we are highly grateful to anyone who has been actively working for our cause, but I don't like it if someone boasts about it and claims something in return. We must continue working modestly and humbly, not for ourselves but for a community which is none other than the Hungarian nation.<sup>123</sup>

Further on Vona states that the ultimate judges of Jobbik's policies are "the people down here, and the divine up there". The statements are indicative of a populist reasoning openly defying classic representative democracy. Calls on the party to represent the interests of the people who voted for them is presented as unreasonable demands for personal favours. In their own view Jobbik represent and answer to the malleable people or nation as a collectivity, not to individual voters. Ultimately the only one who can hold the party representatives accountable is God in heaven.

## 4.2 Fidesz

The main player of the mainstream right in Hungary is Fidesz, who have been in governing position non-stop since Jobbik entered into parliament 2010. Technically the party rules together with the coalition partner Christian Democratic People's Party (*Kereszténydemokrata Néppárt*, KDNP), a small satellite party which will not be in focus in this study since Fidesz is the completely dominant

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123 Jobbik, "Gábor Vona on the wildling".

part in the partnership. As we have already noted, there is some debate on how to correctly categorize Fidesz as a party. In the context of this study Fidesz is targeted for being the nearby competitor of Jobbik, but it should also be borne in mind that the party constitutes a radical right borderline case.

The Federation of Young Democrats (*Fiatal Demokraták Szövetsége*, Fidesz) was founded in 1988 by students and other young democrats under the leadership of Viktor Orbán. Founded as a young liberal party Fidesz was one of the players in the democratic opposition to the socialist one-party regime and active in the round-table talks of the early democratic transition.<sup>124</sup> Until the year 2000 the party was a member of the Liberal International, Orbán for a period occupying the post of vice-chair of the organization.<sup>125</sup> Following an internal split between a liberal and a more conservative wing, where the former fraction broke off to join the Hungarian Liberal Party (*Szabad Demokraták Szövetsége*, SzDSz), the party made a sharp national-conservative turn in the mid 1990s. Pytlas calls the move a conservative volte-face, and notes that it led Fidesz to embrace the “religious-national” ideology represented by the governing party Hungarian Democratic Forum (*Magyar Demokrata Fórum*, MDF) that they up until then so strongly had protested against. The latter party later joined Fidesz as junior coalition partner when the party came to power for the first time in 1998.<sup>126</sup> An indication of Fidesz’s new ideological orientation is its embracing of the romantic-nationalist myth of the Holy Crown of St. Stephen. In the parliamentary debate on which national coat of arms to adopt, Fidesz was against the prevailing right wing proposal of adopting the one emblazoned with the Holy Crown. By the time Fidesz reached office, however, Orbán had changed position towards the mythical symbol and ordered the crown to be moved from the national museum to a prominent position in the national parliament.<sup>127</sup> After a narrow defeat in the 2002 elections, Fidesz managed to propel back to power in 2010 and win a 2/3 super majority in parliament. Just like Jobbik, Fidesz managed to capitalize on the discreditation of the leftists and liberals after the Öszöd speech scandal in 2006. This is one important factor behind the crushing Fidesz victory in 2010, augmented by the fragmented political landscape with below-the-threshold parties (among them MDF, the winners of the 1990 elections, and liberal SzDSz) and new contenders not very well-known to the public.<sup>128</sup> Pytlas mentions as another factor that Fidesz had managed to take control of the right end of the

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124 Pytlas, p. 39; Jacques Rupnik, “Hungary’s illiberal turn: How things went wrong”, *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 23 Issue 3, 2012.

125 Wilfried Martens, *Europe: I Struggle, I Overcome*, Berlin, Heidelberg: Springer, 2008, p. 193.

126 Pytlas, p. 39.

127 Ibid.; Hungarian Spectrum, “National symbols and their importance: The case of the coat-of-arms and Hungary’s national holiday”, *hungarianspectrum.org* 2015-08-20 [accessed 2017-06-29].

128 Miklós Bánkuti, Gábor Halmai & Kim Lane Scheppele (2012), “Hungary’s illiberal turn: Disabling the constitution”, *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 23 Issue 2012:3.

spectrum after 2002 when the radical right MIÉP and Independent Smallholders' Party (*Független Kisgazda-, Földmunkás- és Polgári Párt*, FKgP) dropped out of the parliament. In his analysis, Fidesz's accommodative strategy towards Jobbik's predecessors on the radical right flank and co-optation of radical right issues can help explain the party's sharp (and electorally successful) right turn.<sup>129</sup>

#### **4.2.1 Fidesz legal reform – rewriting the rules of the game**

Since the return to government power in 2010 and initially backed by its super majority Fidesz has undertaken an ambitious programme of legal reform that includes pushing through a new constitution, adopting new media laws and a vast array of “cardinal laws” taking a position between constitutional law and ordinary law. The extensive reforms have received much criticism within and outside Hungary for infringing on human rights, unduly restricting the manoeuvring space of the political opposition and entrenching the governing party's hold on power.

Fidesz's reform programme should be viewed in a wider European context. As a member of the Council of Europe and a party to the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR), Hungary has obligations to respect, protect and fulfil freedom of expression as laid down in the Convention.<sup>130</sup> Hungary is also a member of EU, and both of these key regional players have engaged the Fidesz-led administration in a dialogue over the legal reforms and their compatibility with human rights norms and European values. Still the EU for all the heated debate has been rather hesitant in its response to the radical moves of Fidesz. As several commentators note Fidesz's membership in the European People's Party (EPP) – the biggest group of the European Parliament – has served as an effective buffer shielding the Orbán government from EU criticism.<sup>131</sup> Nonetheless the EU has seen itself forced to react in some instances, as in 2012 when the European Commission launched infringement proceedings against Hungary for arbitrarily lowering the retirement age for judges, compromising the independence of the Central Bank and for changes regarding the data protection authority.<sup>132</sup> In 2013 the European Parliament also adopted the so-called Tavares Report, which among other things criticized the constitutional reform in process and substance, concluding that it was incompatible with the European values laid down in art. 2 of the Treaty of European Union

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129 Pytlas, p. 40.

130 Council of Europe, Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (European Convention on Human Rights, as amended) (ECHR), Protocol no. 1 art. 3.

131 See eg. Pytlas and Rupnik.

132 European Commission, “European Commission launches accelerated infringement proceedings against Hungary over the independence of its central bank and data protection authorities as well as over measures affecting the judiciary”, press release 2012-01-17.

(TEU).<sup>133</sup> The new Hungarian constitution was drafted and approved by the Fidesz-controlled parliament under minimal input from civil society and the political opposition. Since the Fundamental Law entered into force in January 2012 it has been amended six times. This has raised criticism regarding an instrumentalization of the constitutional process to further and entrench current government policies rather than serve as a framework for other legislation, among others from the Council of Europe's European Commission for Democracy through Law (Venice Commission). In its June 2013 opinion on the 4<sup>th</sup> constitutional amendment the Commission among other things expressed concern about limitations on the role of the Hungarian Constitutional Court as a direct response to recent Court judgements striking down government legislation, limitations on political advertisements barring such advertising in commercial media, and vaguely phrased restrictions on the freedom of speech prohibiting its use for "... violating the dignity of the Hungarian nation or ... any national, ethnic, racial or religious community."<sup>134</sup> The Venice Commission underlines that the latter provision raises serious risks that the freedom of speech is used to stifle criticism of Hungarian state officials and institutions.<sup>135</sup> The ban on political advertisement in non-public service media introduced in the fourth constitutional amendment was modified in the subsequent fifth amendment, permitting commercially broadcast political advertisements if these are carried for free. However, as noted by Hungarian NGO watchdogs, this does not change much from the old provision, since it remains up to the commercial outlets themselves and their sense of social responsibility if "... messages of the political parties are conveyed to the voters during marketable airtime or not."<sup>136</sup> It is not hard to see how this kind of legislation hampers the climate of political debate and the ability for the general public to form an informed opinion on the political programmes of the parties, a condition only exacerbated by the dominant position of government affiliated media in the country.

While much has been written elsewhere on Fidesz legislation in relation to European practice and human rights standards, I will here concentrate on how Fidesz themselves have publicly argued for press freedom and freedom of expression related provisions of the 2010 Media laws and the 2012

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133 European Parliament, Report on the situation of fundamental rights: standards and practices in Hungary (pursuant to the European Parliament resolution of 16 February 2012) (2012/2130(INI)), Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs, <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//NONSGML+REPORT+A7-2013-0229+0+DOC+PDF+V0//EN> [accessed 2017-07-12], para. 58.

134 The Fundamental Law of Hungary, (Consolidated text as on 1 October 2013), Article IX (5); European Commission for Democracy through Law (Venice Commission), Opinion on the fourth amendment to the Fundamental Law of Hungary adopted by the Venice Commission at its 95th Plenary Session (Venice, 14-15 June 2013), CDL-AD(2013)012, paras. 48-53.

135 Venice Commission, para. 141.

136 The Hungarian Helsinki Committee, "NGO Comment to the 5<sup>th</sup> amendment to the Fundamental Law", Opinion of the Hungarian Helsinki Committee, the Hungarian Civil Liberties Union and the Eötvös Károly Institute, *helsinki.hu* 2013-10-31 [accessed 2017-07-01].

Fundamental law. Starting out with two texts responding to criticism against Fidesz legal reforms we will trace formulations of an anti-hate speech stance, something directly confrontational to Jobbik's framing of communication rights. This will be the first point for measuring Jobbik-Fidesz interaction.

#### 4.2.2 Hate speech

In January 2011 the Ministry of Public Administration and Justice published an article on the government's *kormany.hu* platform titled "Reply to the criticism of the international media". In the article the government rejects the "... unfounded, at times outright absurd accusations" articulated by the media regarding the new Media Act.<sup>137</sup> The government throughout the text tries to show how the changes entailed by the new law are in line with current practice in European democracies. In a passage reflecting on limitations of press freedom, the authors rhetorically ask: "Who would dispute that human dignity, the protection of privacy, the prohibition of hate speeches or the protection of children are primary issues of public interest, based on which even the press can and should be restricted to a certain extent?"<sup>138</sup> Although the highly leading question raises issues of fundamental importance it is far from self-evident which press freedom limitations that the Hungarian government think that all should be able to agree upon. The question starts out with wide and diffuse categories, goes on to hate speech and ends with child protection – through accumulation of justified aims it is constructed to make the reader agree by the end, also to the first propositions. And even if one accepts for example prohibition of hate speech as a legitimate aim the actual limits need to be drawn. From the later constitution writing process we can see how the Fidesz lawmakers have kept hate speech provisions so vague that they risk not meeting the ECHR requirement that a freedom of speech limitation is "foreseen by law".<sup>139</sup> What is clear from the above quote is that the Fidesz-headed government sees principled limitations to acceptable speech protected by communication rights, and one of the red lines is hate speech. This can be contrasted to the absolute freedom to "hate speech" that is the prevailing master frame of Jobbik on the issue.

Another central self-presentation text of the 2011-2012 debates on the comprehensive legal reforms is the 2012 "Manual on Human Rights", published by the Ministry of Public Administration and Justice and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The document, prepared in the wake of Hungary's review under the UN Human Rights Council's Universal Periodic Review (UPR) mechanism the year before, aims to present "... a comprehensive picture about the human rights situation in [the]

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137 Ministry of Public Administration and Justice, "Reply to the criticism of the international media", *kormany.hu* 2011-01-03 [accessed 2017-06-07].

138 Ibid.

139 See Venice Commission.

country.”<sup>140</sup> It is styled as a Q&A policy document and presents the reasons for introducing a new Fundamental Law and some aspects of fundamental rights protection, including freedom of expression and rules for media actors in the light of recent media legislation. The first topic of the fundamental rights section is hate crime provisions, and here the authors mark against certain elements of the radical right. Clearly referring to anti-Roma rallies such as the one in Gyöngyöspata in the spring of 2011, the text mentions how the Criminal Code has been amended as a direct response to recent events in which “... several extremist groups attempted to intimidate certain communities.”<sup>141</sup> Naming the groups extremist marks ideological distance to self, placing these actors beyond the pale of normal politics and established norms in society.

Official distancing from radical right violence and hate rhetoric seems to be a central point in Fidesz’s positioning strategy against Jobbik. In the few texts where Jobbik are mentioned or referred to in the communication rights dataset they are mentioned jokingly in passing, labelled as criminals (mirroring Jobbik’s framing of mainstream parties) or branded as overstepping the boundaries of political discourse. The latter text is the only one where Fidesz talks about Jobbik at any length, and the subject is to mark against hateful speech of the radical right opposition party. The article was published in the aftermath of an incident in November 2012 where Jobbik MP Martón Gyöngyösi, a key figure within the party, during a parliamentary debate called for lists to be created over Jewish parliamentarians. Gyöngyösi’s statement was made in the context of a question time in parliament, where he accused the government for pursuing an Israel-biased foreign policy: “... I believe that the time has come (...) to consider making a list of Jews living in the country, especially those who are in the Hungarian Parliament and the Hungarian government, who, indeed, [pose] a national security risk to Hungary.”<sup>142</sup> As Eva S. Balogh notes in her analysis of the incident, the move was made during a session presided over by the Jobbik deputy speaker of parliament, who did not see any reason to interfere with Gyöngyösi’s speech. Summing up the brief standard communiqué (apparently re-used from denunciations of previous racism/antisemitism incidents)<sup>143</sup> and denunciations from various government representatives, the government one week after the incident wrote on its website that it had “strongly and determinedly condemned” the statement of Gyöngyösi.<sup>144</sup> In the article antisemitism and racism are referred to as “malicious voices

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140 Ministry of Public Administration and Justice & Ministry of Foreign Affairs, “Manual on Human Rights”, 2010-2014.kormany.hu, 2012, [accessed 2017-06-12] p. 1.

141 Ibid., p. 7.

142 Martón Gyöngyösi, quoted in Hungarian Spectrum, “Hungarian far-right party claims that Jews are a threat to national security”, *hungarianspectrum.org*, 2012-11-27 [accessed 2017-07-03].

143 Hungarian Spectrum, “Hungarian far-right party claims that Jews are a threat to national security”

144 Prime Minister’s Office, “The government and its members strongly and determinedly condemned the remarks made by Jobbik MP Márton Gyöngyösi”, 2010-2014.kormany.hu, 2012-12-04 [accessed 2017-06-08].

incompatible with European norms”, and Gyöngyösi’s remarks are condemned as unacceptable and representing a dangerous racial theory that “... facilitated the division of the nation [and] is contradictory to the protection of human rights and human dignity.”<sup>145</sup> Apparently the government had noted the national and international criticism of a tardy response and decided to demonstrate its concerted refutation of Gyöngyösi’s speech. Interestingly the communication’s statements not only refer to universal or European norms and values but also to *national* unity in the light of history. As in most instances where Fidesz bring up the Holocaust or historic persecution and suffering of Jews, the crimes of the communists are also mentioned. Minister of Human Resources Zoltán Balog is referenced as saying that “... the hate speech organized on a state basis during the communist dictatorship is still alive today, and ... it is our task to act forcefully against it.”<sup>146</sup> It is not clear what this one-party state hate speech is thought to have been or which specific elements thereof Balog sees carried on in Jobbik’s discourse, but this kind of simultaneous far right/far left condemnation is characteristic of the Hungarian government who often criticize the West for one-sidedly focusing on the crimes of the Nazi regime and neglecting or downplaying those of the Communist regimes.<sup>147</sup> The move however, under the guise of balanced historiography, risks distorting historical events in that it more or less elevates totalitarian communist crimes to the level of genocide. A similar strategy can be observed in Jobbik, albeit with stronger relativisation (or outright denial) of the Holocaust and, as we have seen above, attempts at constructing a symmetrical conflict between Hungarians and Jews using explicit “double genocide” arguments. Less than ten months before his list-of-Jews proposal in parliament Martón Gyöngyösi had made an appearance in a Jewish Chronicle interview where he among other things questioned the Jews’ right to talk about what happened in the Second World War because of Israel’s treatment of the Palestinians, in his view amounting to a “Nazi system”. He also questioned whether 400.000 Hungarian Jews had really been deported or killed during the war, referring to official estimates as a “... fantastic business to jiggle around with numbers.”<sup>148</sup> That time Gyöngyösi’s comments were strongly criticized in international press and by the political opposition, but the government did not publish a condemnation of the kind made in the November incident. Jobbik, writing in defence of Gyöngyösi, accused “Hungarian and international media subdued to Zionist control” for inciting a campaign against him,<sup>149</sup> thereby framing the press as an integral part of the ZOG.

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145 Ibid.

146 Ibid.

147 See eg. Ministry of Public Administration and Justice, “Socialism is part of 20th century, just as WWII, says Deputy Prime Minister”, *2010-2014.kormany.hu*, 2012-08-20 [2017-06-08].

148 The Jewish Chronicle, “Hungary's far-right: Jews not welcome here”, *jewishchronicle.com*, 2012-02-02 [accesses 2017-07-04].

149 Jobbik, “Gyöngyösi did not commit Holocaust denial”, *jobbik.com*, 2015-01-16 [2012-12-14] [accessed 2017-05-09].

The other texts in the dataset addressing hate speech show that Fidesz and the government in their self-presentation are keen to mark against hate speech and present this as a logical consequence of defending democracy and the freedom of speech. However, it should be noted that Fidesz have been criticized for antisemitic and antiziganist tendencies.<sup>150</sup> For example, in his analysis of Jobbik-Fidesz framing interaction in the field of Roma minority policies Pytlas points out a Fidesz double-speak strategy in relation to Jobbik's discriminatory "Gypsy crime" master frame.<sup>151</sup> A more comprehensive analysis of Fidesz's policy and discourse on hate speech is a research subject in its own right and would require broadening the empirics to include speech targeting Jews and Roma. Not surprisingly, overt discriminatory speech is absent from the Fidesz texts on freedom of expression, freedom of the press and the role of the media included in the present study. While not drawing any conclusions on the role of hate rhetoric in the governing party's discourse in general, it can be concluded that official framing of communication rights is not supported by pro-hate-rhetoric arguments. Instead, Fidesz speech on this subject means a clear rebuttal of Jobbik's master frame of Absolute Freedom to Hate Speech.

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150 See Pytlas; Bernard Rorke, "Hungary's Fidesz and its 'Jewish Question'", *opendemocracy.net*, 2014-09-22 [accessed 2017-07-12].

151 Pytlas, chapter 7.



### 4.2.3 Liberalism and illiberalism

Appropriating the label attached to their policies rather than rejecting it, Fidesz and Viktor Orbán have openly embraced illiberalism. In a by now infamous speech made at the 2014 Bálványos Summer Free University and Student Camp in the Romanian town of Băile Tușnad (Tusnádfürdő in Hungarian), Orbán declared the failure of liberal democracy and the Fidesz government's goal of building an "illiberal state" in Hungary. In the speech Orbán refers to the 2008 financial crisis as a decisive system-shift point of reference for younger generations, comparing it to global regime changes after the first and second world wars and the fall of the Berlin wall. Highlighting what he sees as the failure of the Western liberal order, mentioning Russia, China and Turkey as examples of successful nations in a global race, Orbán asserts the need for "... breaking with the dogmas and ideologies that have been adopted by the West" and states that "... a democracy does not necessarily have to be liberal."<sup>152</sup> The theme of liberal failure/decay vs. competitive illiberalism is an important theme of Fidesz political discourse. In the following we will highlight Jobbik-Fidesz discursive interaction by focusing on texts within the communication rights dataset that also deal with liberalism and/or a liberal order. This liberalism filter will help us narrow down to a field of sample texts that are illustrative of Fidesz's position on freedom of speech, freedom of the press and the role of the media – related both to the political system and to the radical right competitor Jobbik. Meta narratives on liberalism and the liberal world order are key to both parties and are partly overlapping. More specifically, looking at texts on communication rights and liberalism enables Jobbik-Fidesz comparison in relation to a central frame used by the radical right contender. Jobbik's Liberal Dictatorship frame is one of two main dictatorship frames of restrictions on freedom of expression/the press, the other one being Fidesz North Korea – a frame unlikely to be mentioned by the dominant ruling party.

All in all there are seven communication rights and liberalism texts in the collected Fidesz dataset encompassing the period from 2010 to early May 2017. These texts all have in common an overall topic or motif of asserting the "Hungarian way" in the face of the liberal West, and especially the EU. The centrality of the texts and their message are underscored by their sender. In six out of seven texts it is prime minister Viktor Orbán himself, in four of them directly quoted in transcribed speeches and interviews published in their whole length. The remaining text is an interview with László Trócsányi, the Minister of Justice. The position of the speaker is important to bear in mind when analysing the dignity and impact of the speech, especially since the Fidesz-headed

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152 Prime Minister's Office, "Prime Minister Viktor Orbán's Speech at the 25th Bálványos Summer Free University and Student Camp", 2010-2014.kormany.hu, 2014-03-30 [accessed 2017-03-07].

government as we will see routinely presents itself as the rebel or underdog challenging the elite. In power for eleven out of the last fifteen years, serving as the incumbent for the seventh consecutive year, Orbán and his ministerial are themselves part of the political elite in Hungary and Europe. They have a uniquely strong position to carry out their own policies on the national level with minimal consultation with other parties and stakeholders. Their voice is a voice of political power proclaiming the foundations for its policies and the road ahead for the nation.

Most of the liberalism texts are from 2015, and here the theme of the invading Illegal Migrant enters the discourse. The wider discursive context of these texts is the so-called refugee crisis that emerged as European states and the EU were struggling to find a political response to the rapidly increasing numbers of refugees finding their way to Europe. Hungary was one of the states that took the lead in a restrictive approach to migration within the European debate, and the Illegal Migration master frame of Fidesz is present in all communication rights and liberalism texts 2015-2017. The frame intimately connects to other frames on the struggle against the Liberal Enemy, and together they play an instrumental role in establishing the Fidesz story of national liberation.

In his February 2015 State of the Nation speech Viktor Orbán recounts the progress made so far by his government and points out the road ahead, and he has good reason to celebrate. He can look back at a year in which Fidesz managed to win the national elections once again and stay in power together with KDNP, although the coalition recently lost their two-thirds parliamentary majority in a by-election won by an independent candidate. For Orbán this episode proves the allegations of an undemocratic system in Hungary false:

[T]here can be nothing seriously wrong with this democracy, not to mention the freedom of the press – without which an independent socialist candidate could surely not have won. What is more, we lost our two-thirds parliamentary majority, and western comrades may finally feel reassured that we are good democrats; over there, a good democrat is one who loses – or if by chance they win, one that is weak.<sup>153</sup>

Press freedom is here used instrumentally to prove that the Fidesz-tuned political order is democratic. In an initially defensive rhetoric answering to previous critique of Hungarian democracy and press freedom Orbán skilfully goes to attack against his Western European politician colleagues, calling them losers and painting them as weak. While the political setback disproves allegations of despotism and shows that the governing party are democrats, Orbán makes sure not to

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153 Prime Minister's Office, "The next years will be about hardworking people", *kormany.hu*, 2015-02-28 [accessed 2017-06-07].

stay in the position of a weak loser. He is not late to use this episode to fortify a warrior's image, warning against tireless attacks of surrounding enemies seeking to destroy what the nation has built over the past five years. The lesson to draw from the temporary defeat is that the party must not to slacken in what may seem like a comfortable position but keep on fighting the good fight: "We can now see that we shall not have a single moment of peace; we shall be under continuous and ruthless attack, a permanent negative campaign."<sup>154</sup> Throughout the speech Orbán in militarist language talks about his government's policies as an armed struggle – posing himself as the freedom fighter rather than the incumbent Prime Minister. The enemy is the liberal west and invading migrants and Europe and Hungary are ominously described as a common homeland lost and "... besieged by waves of modern-day migration".<sup>155</sup> The situation, according to Orbán, is caused by the failure and collapse of "liberal multiculturalism", and Hungary must therefore let go of "the delusion of the multicultural society". Answering to this dark picture Orbán presents the prognostic frame of a "new era of national politics", during which Hungary leaves the sinking ship of liberal Europe to assert herself through "a sovereign and proactive foreign policy".<sup>156</sup> The Hungarian nation is defined in biological terms as a body, and it is further asserted that for all the criticism of the new Hungarian model Hungary has won international recognition as freedom fighters of "... a special species ... [doing] what comes natural to them".<sup>157</sup> As we will see, imagery borrowed from the natural world is a recurring rhetorical grip in the construction of Fidesz's Hungary as a "natural" community under threat.

The general pattern emerging from the material is a heavy emphasis on press freedom, predominantly framed as a right/freedom whose standing in Hungary is proved by for example pointing at the presence of oppositional media outlets or varied and "balanced" reporting of the refugee crisis. A wide and deep press freedom of Hungary is contrasted with a narrow and restricted press freedom of the liberals and the West, suffocating under the limitations of political correctness. In a January 2016 national radio interview Orbán comments on the alleged mass sexual assaults on New Year's Eve in Cologne and other German cities, explaining that liberalism is undermining democracy and harmful for freedom of speech and press freedom.

[T]he liberal mentality – liberalism in its present form [...] – has turned against freedom. The fact that liberals have turned certain principles into rigid dogmas and want to make them compulsory is bad for freedom of speech. [...] In the name of liberalism and freedom they

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154 Ibid.

155 Ibid.

156 Ibid.

157 Ibid.

suppres [sic.] all negative news associated with refugees or migrants, as certain developments in real life do not coincide with their ideological views and they want to take in immigrants, thinking that it is good that are coming into a country. But in fact they are doing something bad in the name of freedom in democracy [...] As a result, today freedom of the press is much wider and deeper, much more diverse in Central Europe than in many Western European countries.<sup>158</sup>

Here liberalism, a main ideational current behind the formulation of individual rights, is re-cast as a straitjacket for freedom of speech, freedom of the press and democracy itself. The text poses liberalism as turned against its own core concept of freedom. Liberal elites are portrayed as deceptive liars withholding important information from the people if it collides with their own narrow conception of reality. The implication is that “negative news”, the now suppressed alternative reporting on “certain events in real life”, represent the plain yet uncomfortable truth – reality “as it is”. Through the conjunction “but” Orbán reveals the true state of things, the subsequent judgement about “doing something bad” contrasting to both a thought censorship on migration reporting and the act of taking in migrants in the first place. The truth argument for freedom of speech is used in a similar way to how Jobbik uses it in their framing of communication rights. For Jobbik press freedom and freedom of speech protect the right to speak the truth about the Minority Other. In Fidesz’ case, it is the truth about the Migrant Other. In the national radio interview Viktor Orbán depicts migrants as aggressors, invaders and burglars “who have broken into our homes”, and proposes that EU build “lines of defence” to stop immigration.<sup>159</sup> In Fidesz and the government’s view, liberal politicians in the West are not only withholding “negative news” about migrants but also actively manipulating the media coverage to artificially keep the support of their constituencies and stay in power. Speaking to a conference of Hungarian diplomats in the autumn of 2015 Orbán refers to the press as the lawless arena for street fight politics, claiming that an elite-people divide in European politics is covered up by “orchestrated journalism” of liberal elites.<sup>160</sup> Also in this context the existence of press freedom in Hungary is asserted and the proof presented is the broad spectrum of press reports on the “migrant crisis”.

There have been numerous reports of The Hungarian government trying to influence media coverage of the migration issue. In August 2015 a leaked memo revealed that guidelines had been issued by the media authority MTVA instructing public television employees to avoid footage of

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158 Prime Minister’s Office, “Prime Minister Viktor Orbán interviewed on Kossuth Rádió’s “180 Minutes” programme”, *kormany.hu*, 2016-01-14 [accessed 2017-06-07]

159 Ibid.

160 Prime Minister’s Office, “Viktor Orbán’s speech at a meeting of the heads of Hungary’s diplomatic missions abroad”, *kormany.hu*, 2015-09-07 [accessed 2017-06-07].

women and children in reports on the situation of refugees and migrants in the country.<sup>161</sup> Hungarian authorities have also repeatedly denied journalists access to zones where migrants and refugees are being held, and international journalists have been obstructed in their work when covering the migration situation. In September 2015 Hungarian police targeted international journalists reporting from the Hungarian-Serbian border. At least seven journalists were allegedly beaten by police, among them a Slovakian journalist who was beaten with a baton, detained and questioned when making contact with refugees. An Associated Press (AP) camera man was forced to delete footage and a Radio Television Serbia crew had some of their equipment damaged by Hungarian police.<sup>162</sup> Press freedom monitoring organizations have also noted that the general news landscape is affected by media legislation providing incentives for a copy-paste journalism where the freely available content of the state news agency MTI is merely republished by other actors. Rules for media providers requiring them to carry news while at the same time prohibiting commercials during news programmes make it hard for other actors to compete with MTI.<sup>163</sup> In keeping with a critical perspective on discourse analysis, rhetoric about a high level of press freedom cannot be viewed in isolation from political action impacting on the day to day functioning of the press. From the examples above it appears that reaching the goal of a “balanced” reporting on the refugee issue and exposure of the Migrant Other’s true face requires a higher degree of proactive media control than the Fidesz-led government would like to admit.

The illegal migration and undemocratic liberal elite themes are in Fidesz discourse joined together in the Liberal Migration Conspiracy frame on the refugee situation in Europe. The frame establishes that liberal Western elites are responsible for the sudden upsurge in the number of migrants (carefully avoiding the obliging term “refugee”) arriving in the EU and through an unholy alliance with “foreign agent” NGOs and human smugglers they are using immigration as a weapon to radically transform the demography of Hungary and Europe. Prime minister Orbán lucidly explains this liberal elite scheme in his 2017 State of the Nation address:

[I]f the poor, slowly-awakening citizens do after all dig in their heels, they’ll be flooded with a few million migrants: “If these fuddy-duddies in Europe, who are unwilling or unable to shake free of their Christian roots and patriotic feelings, won’t take heed, then let’s dig deeper and replace the subsoil of European life [...]” This is how the world’s most bizarre coalition of

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161 Freedom House, “Freedom of the Press 2016: Hungary”, *freedomhouse.org*, 2016 [accessed 2017-07-07]; The Guardian, “Hungarian TV ‘told not to broadcast images of refugee children’”, *theguardian.com*, 2015-09-01 [accessed 2017-07-07].

162 Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), “In Hungary, police beat journalists covering refugee crisis at border”, *cpj.org*, 2015-09-17 [accessed 2017-07-07]; Freedom House, “Freedom of the Press 2016: Hungary”.

163 Freedom House, “Freedom of the Press 2016: Hungary”; Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), “Criticism of Hungary’s media controls keeps growing”, *cpj.org*, 2012-01-24 [accessed 2017-07-07].

people smugglers, human rights activists and leading European politicians was created, with the aim of systematically bringing millions of migrants into Europe.<sup>164</sup>

Revealing the conspiracy by putting conspiring words in the mouths of his liberal antagonists, Orbán establishes them as enemies of the Christian faith and patriotism. These values are posed as natural and organic, using plant life metaphors (roots, subsoil) for describing them as intrinsic qualities of the people and the land they inhabit. Hungary is in this picture a natural community threatened with extinction under the pressure of invasive species. Elements of the The Liberal Migration Conspiracy can be found also in Jobbik's discourse on migration and refugees. In January 2016 the radical right paramilitary profile and Jobbik mayor László Toroczkai expressed the view that the "... illegal migration [which] destabilizes Europe [...] is supported, assisted and operatively organized by NGOs operating illegally in Hungary while receiving billions of HUF from abroad", mentioning the Hungarian-American businessman and liberal philanthropist George Soros as one of the backing donors.<sup>165</sup> In both Jobbik and Fidesz discourse George Soros represents the liberal enemy whose ultimate goal is to eradicate traditional national communities and enforce a cosmopolitan world order. Orbán frequently refers to the liberal system as the "open society", with the aim clearly directed at George Soros and his Open Society Foundations. According to this view the open society concentrates power in the hands of a liberal elite referred to as "the global network". Here the narrative of National Liberation connects to an underlying master narrative of a liberal world government, another area where the Fidesz and Jobbik stories overlap. The dense network frame for global elite governance is a central concept in Jobbik's Founding Charter Manifesto of 2003, where it is explained that the whole political system is controlled by an "underlying monopolar, intertwined network".<sup>166</sup> The network is described as the elite behind the Communist regime that retains its grip on power, assuming a new liberal guise:

While the Communist regime was openly destructive of natural human communities, national identity, historical churches, local patriotism and families, today's network, under the aegis of a media-controlled multi-party political system, is making covert efforts to disintegrate them. The current political regime has given in to the globalism that subdues the entire world and provides enormous financial resources to loosen up our traditional values in order to create an ultra-liberal, so-called open society<sup>167</sup>

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164 Prime Minister's Office, "Prime Minister Viktor Orbán's State of the Nation Address", *kormany.hu*, 2017-02-14 [2017-06-07].

165 Jobbik, "Enough is enough! Toroczkai presses charges against illegally operating aid organizations", *jobbik.com*, 2016-01-22 [accessed 2017-07-12].

166 Jobbik, "MANIFESTO – Founding charter", *jobbik.com*, 2015-01-26 [accessed 2017-07-08].

167 Jobbik, "Anti-Zionism is not anti-Semitism".

Here we can see that the aforementioned Liberal Migration Conspiracy bears striking resemblance to the elite conspiracy Network frame of Jobbik. In both cases a globalist elite enemy is described as being in defiance of nature, anti-national, anti-patriotic, anti-Christian and bent on conquering the world. Fidesz' elite conspiracy framing of the refugee situation in 2015 appears to be a practical application of a more general, already existing frame. It skilfully incorporates the topical issue of resistance to non-European immigration in a wider narrative of struggle for national survival and self-determination in the face of a global oppressive regime. In the 2017 state of the nation speech Orbán develops these interlinked themes and celebrates 2016 as a year of popular national uprising against the “sinking liberals”, a people’s rebellion against the “lords of globalist politics”.<sup>168</sup> One of the countries mentioned to exemplify this trend is USA, where Donald Trump has recently won the presidential elections after a divisive and polarizing electoral campaign involving aggressive rhetoric against Muslims and Mexican immigrants. Citing as further evidence election campaigns in Western Europe involving significant radical right parties (e.g. France and The Netherlands), Orbán declares a popular uprising and delineates the battle lines: sovereign nations vs. globalists and federalists, voters vs. Brussels bureaucrats. Within this story of popular uprising freedom of speech and freedom of the press occupy a central role. The freedom struggle against the unaccountable and corrupt elite is the protest of the overlooked and the silenced, those “whose mouths have been gagged in the name of political correctness”, it is a rebellion against “the power brokers sitting in their palaces with ivory towers and television studios ... the swarm of media locusts and their owners”.<sup>169</sup> Just like in Jobbik’s Liberal Dictatorship frame press freedom is in the text described as a right curbed by an oppressive liberal regime suppressing the oppositional people’s voice. A bearing point in this description is negative representation of liberal media as a tool of the powerful to subordinate the masses. In the 2017 state of the nation speech the strategy of media othering is escalated to a level not seen in the earlier texts under study. Media workers and journalists are portrayed as vermin, a swarm of locusts capable of devouring everything in their path. The metaphor paints the media as something unwanted, detestable and a menace – a plague threatening to descend upon the land. Referring to the media locusts as having “owners” invokes the image of a twisted domestication, implying that the insect media workers are useful pets owned and directed by masters. The pet-master metaphor as a picture of total submissiveness is also used in the nomination and predication of Western liberal leaders. These are referred to as “properly house-trained politicians” obediently rejecting “populism” and regarding it as a virtue to be deaf to the will of the people.<sup>170</sup> This framing strategy against political opponents is used by Jobbik in an

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168 Prime Minister’s Office, “Prime Minister Viktor Orbán’s State of the Nation Address”

169 Ibid.

170 Ibid.

antisemitic version when other parliamentary parties are derogatorily referred to as “Israel’s dogs” bribed or intimidated to submission.<sup>171</sup>

In the introduction to the speech Orbán places History as an autonomous subject defying all predictions and mocking the guardians of the liberal world order. With a reference to Francis Fukuyama’s famous work he explains that history “... didn’t read that History itself is at an end [...] It took a sharp turn, broke through and swept away the carefully designed dikes and departed from its predetermined course”. At the end of the short digression he triumphantly declares that “History is us – not just in Hungary, but throughout Europe.” Interestingly, in Fidesz’ discourse the deterministic language proclaiming the victory of Western liberal democracy is reversed; it is the “sinking liberals” that are doomed, judged and rejected by History. This framing of political opponents as backward forces in the process of going under is also used by Jobbik, who apply it to “the sinking left” knocked over by a “liberal domino”.<sup>172</sup> In Jobbik’s story liberals and leftists alike belong to History and are bound to perish. While they remain hopelessly mired in outdated ideological debates of the twentieth century a new political landscape with other default lines is materialising. This development is spearheaded by the twenty-first century party Jobbik who will occupy the centre of a redrawn political scale, replacing the disintegrated left-right framework. For Jobbik ex-liberal Fidesz are pretenders desperately trying to reinvent themselves, they too are a party of the past who will be unable to withstand the force of the movement of the future – Jobbik.<sup>173</sup>

Fidesz discourse on freedom of expression, the press and liberalism varies with the political level. Internally liberalism is described as anti-thetical to democracy and communication rights and the liberal EU/West as the enemies of freedom. The tone, however, is different in texts directed at a European audience. In an April 2015 EurActiv interview the Minister of Justice states that “[d]emocracy is a very important European value”,<sup>174</sup> before explaining that there are different interpretations of this common value in terms of constitutional law. Illiberal democracy is presented as the embodiment of a conservative school emphasizing collective rights and the common good, as opposed to a neo-liberal school focused on individual rights. The correct or desirable balance between these concepts is not developed further, and democracy is presented as a concept that is open to different – but equally legitimate – interpretations. In a debate in the European Parliament

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171 See Jobbik, “Gábor Vona: “When the last straw breaks the camel's back””, *jobbik.com*, 2015-01-16 [2013-03-19] [accessed 2017-05-09].

172 Jobbik, “Gábor Vona: October Thoughts”, *jobbik.com*, 2015-11-02 [accessed 2017-05-09].

173 Ibid.

174 Ministry of Justice, “There are different interpretations of democracy”, *kormany.hu*, 2015-04-02 [accessed 2017-06-07].



the same year Orbán declared that “Hungary stands up for the European ideal of the freedom of expression”,<sup>175</sup> employing free speech to establish a common ground of shared values. The use of the definite article further assumes complete consensus on the nature and limits of *the* freedom of expression. Orbán utilizes this unifying strategy to assert Hungary’s right to talk about the death penalty, opening for a departure from one of the few norms around which there really does exist a well-established European consensus: the abolition of the death penalty. Another rare occasion where Fidesz base themselves on a common European understanding of communication rights is when Jobbik’s Gyöngyösi’s antisemitic remarks in parliament are condemned as “incompatible with European norms”.<sup>176</sup> Here the function is presumably to intensify the distancing and ostracise the radical right opponent by marking belonging to a larger civilized community from which Jobbik is then excluded. These texts stand in sharp contrast to the dominating pattern of marking against the liberal West and EU in the framing of freedom of expression and press freedom, as in the 2017 state of the nation address where Orbán declared “openness of speech” a democratic value done away with by the open society: “Democracy based on argument was replaced by democracy based on correctness. From an ideological perspective this means that liberal ideology turned against the ideology of democracy”.<sup>177</sup> Here the illiberalism circle is closed, and liberal democracy is presented not only as the less preferred option but as an outright impossibility. Liberal “policing” of speech amounts to a denial of freedom of expression and ultimately a betrayal of democracy itself.

## 5. Discussion

It is time to summarize the results of the analysis and discuss some of the main findings. Answering the question of how the radical right contender frames communication rights and assessing their influence on the mainstream right in this regard entails addressing both the articulation of frames and the strategies employed in their making. For Jobbik the general frame on both freedom of expression and press freedom is a freedom under attack by an evil enemy, wanting to subjugate (alternately eradicate) the Hungarian nation. This is supported by the use of meta narratives on National Liberation and dictatorship frames on national and international enemies, mainly the Liberal Dictatorship and Fidesz North Korea frames. The struggle for sovereignty and survival of the Hungarian nation in the face of dual oppressive regimes on the national and global levels forms a backdrop against which all Jobbik’s discourse on communication rights and democracy is

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175 Prime Minister’s Office, “Hungary stands up for the European ideal of the freedom of expression”, *kormany.hu*, 2015-05-20 [accessed 2017-06-07].

176 Prime Minister’s Office, “The government and its members strongly and determinedly condemned the remarks made by Jobbik MP Márton Gyöngyösi”.

177 Prime Minister’s Office, “Prime Minister Viktor Orbán’s State of the Nation Address”.

reflected, and from which it draws its ultimate inspiration. Other narrative devices and themes vary over time. Rehabilitation and defence of hate speech and hate crimes dominates in the first parliamentary cycle 2010-2014, while the themes of marking against Fidesz media and protesting against the government's rights-infringing measures dominate the second period under study (2014-May 2017). There is a certain overlap between the two periods, as Jobbik in 2014 and early 2015 republished some older hate speech material, illustrating the pattern of simultaneous distancing-gravitating towards fascist and antisemitic/antiziganist speech visible within later communication rights texts. The shift of focus in Jobbik discourse away from controversial statements bordering hate speech should be read in the context of Jobbik's long-term strategy of transforming into a "people's party", downplaying their radical and racist image to attract new voter categories. Other possible factors include game strategic choices related to the timing of the electoral cycle and declining Fidesz support as the migrant issue started dropping on the agenda. During the height of the so-called refugee crisis in 2015 Fidesz experienced a boost in public opinion figures, something that started to decline in early 2016 as the crisis receded.<sup>178</sup> With the 2018 elections drawing close Jobbik appears to have stepped up their game against the government, a probable explanation for the increased frequency and escalating intensity with which the party employs a confrontational strategy against Fidesz in the context of discourse on rights protection.

Freedom of expression is for Jobbik an absolute right which allows for no limitations whatsoever. This is the most striking difference between the Jobbik and Fidesz accounts of free speech. In Jobbik's view anti-hate speech regulation represents an illegitimate limitation of a natural right to speak out on certain "truths", mainly pertaining to the deviant and threatening Minority Other. For Fidesz hate speech is outside the scope of free speech protection, and they go great lengths in proving their commitment to fighting it. This is evident in the early debate on Fidesz legal reform in the field of freedom of expression and the functioning of the press, where criminalizing hate speech is equated with defending democracy. Anti-hate speech rhetoric is for Fidesz an important strategy of radical right distancing, and in this context the otherwise EU critical language is replaced with the display of a united European front against extremism. By publicly demonizing Jobbik and its associated paramilitary organizations, Fidesz conjure up a radical right spectre which helps the government party pose itself as a guardian of democracy in the face of extremism. This also diverts attention from accommodative strategies of taking in radical right themes and frames. And apart

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178 Hungarian Free Press, "New poll: Fidesz, Jobbik support drops, while Socialists gaining", *hungarianfreepress.com*, 2016-01-30 [accessed 2017-07-12].

from the official stance on freedom of expression and hate speech there are important similarities in communication rights framing between Fidesz and Jobbik.

The two parties make similar use of suppression-of-truth frames for freedom of expression/press freedom restrictions of the liberal West. While the censored truth in Jobbik's case is primarily the truth about the Minority Other, for Fidesz it is the truth about the Migrant Other. These can be viewed as twin frames under the common umbrella of a radicalized us/them dichotomy, a defining element of radical right discourse. Through its government role Fidesz was in a position to launch a unified and forceful response to the rapidly rising issue of refugees and migration as the policy response crisis of Europe deepened in 2015, making it hard for Jobbik to compete on this specific issue frame. With Fidesz taking the lead, Jobbik could play the role of the radical right watch dog for the radicalized migration policies being implemented. At the same time Jobbik through its ownership over the salient "Gypsy crime" frame have largely been able to direct the Roma minority debate.<sup>179</sup> Under a common concern for preserving the homogeneity of a shared primary we-group (the nation) the actors have largely focused on different, but complementary, threats – both capitalizing on the salience of a dominant nationhood narrative that, in Minkenberg's words, already contained a certain level of ultranationalism.<sup>180</sup>

When oppositional voices within the even-further radical right criticize Jobbik's new image the party leadership seems to attempt a middle way of demarcation without confrontation. Although Vona tries to discipline the ranks when scandals threaten to damage the popularity of the movement, this is not based on freedom of speech principles but on tactical considerations. The openly professed motivation for quenching the worst forms of hate rhetoric is to prevent deviations from the people's party (or charm offensive) strategy from derailing the whole process. There are good reasons for being sceptical towards Jobbik's self-proclaimed transformation. The Absolute Freedom to Hate Speech established in the pre-2014 period, although no longer openly asserted in the debate, has not been amended and remains solid. And to the extent that their background themes and master frames are shared with the mainstream Jobbik need not let go of their "deep story", they merely have to codify or mitigate certain expressions. Fidesz keep legitimizing radical right meta narratives by colonizing master frames cast in this mould and formulating new versions of them adapted to their own meta narrative of Liberal Decay/Sinking Liberals. The most conspicuous of these is the autocratic-fascist master frame of The Network. In Fidesz's discourse the Jobbik-borrowed frame

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179 Pytlas, chapter 7.

180 Minkenberg.

represents the liberal open society's cosmopolitan conspiracy for conquering the Europe of nations. In Jobbik's original formulation, however, the liberal open society network is merely the latest permutation of a global conspiracy underpinning a monopolar world order. The same elite, we are told, pulled the strings in the former communist system. When considered in connection with the Bolshevik-Jew framing of communists and leftists, the double-genocide arguments and statements regarding an alleged Israeli strategy for conquering Hungary, it becomes evident that the network is Jewish. Jobbik's Network frame spans a bridge between the neo-nazi ZOG frame and a milder Liberal Network frame. As previously mentioned a comprehensive analysis of Fidesz-Jobbik interaction over Jewish minority framing is outside the scope of the present thesis. But the results of the analysis support the conclusion that in the context of communication rights Fidesz's polarized othering of the liberal enemy, appropriating a Jobbik master frame with neo-nazi roots, becomes the end link in a chain of diffusing radical right imagery into mainstream political discourse.

Jobbik's absolutist frame on freedom of expression is not as firm and principled in its application as in its articulation. When Jobbik themselves are victims of hateful speech, freedom of expression is used as an argument in the condemnation of this rhetoric. It becomes evident that anti-Jobbik hate is not covered by an absolute freedom to hate speech. Accusing leftist liberals of hypocrisy and inconsistency when failing to defend the freedom of speech of their political opponents, Jobbik ironically reveal their own inconsistent interpretation of the concept. Conversely, it is unclear if Fidesz's principled limitations of freedom of expression, e.g. excluding hate speech, draw a red line for their own action. Fidesz's instrumental use of the constitution as a tool for furthering and entrenching their own policies rather than a framework for the legislative and political process reveals a disregard for formal restraints on the executive power. This is visible also in their framing of communication rights, for example in the populist proposal to reinstate capital punishment. Naturally Fidesz are aware of the fact that abolition of the death penalty is a pre-condition for membership in both the Council of Europe and the EU, and its reinstatement would mean crossing a red line. This does not stop the government party from asserting their right to talk about the issue, basing themselves upon freedom of expression and opinion. The question is how this could play out when the matter that Fidesz feel a pressing need to discuss is the limits of free speech, and a cost-benefit calculation points in favour of reassessing the borders of anti-minority hate speech. As has already been pointed out earlier, a study on Fidesz hate speech policy and its relation to party discourse on national minorities could be a field for future critical research into the discursive construction of freedom of speech in the Hungarian context.

The illiberal dimension of communication rights framing is for both parties most pronounced in discussions on press freedom and the role of the media. Neither Fidesz nor Jobbik envisage an independent democratic function for the press, they do not have a distinct role as watchdogs or as a checks against government abuse. This is hardly surprising and is partly a function of the actors' disregard for the liberal democratic principle of the separation of powers, including independent media as the "fourth estate". But media's societal role in the illiberal state is also tied to the actors' definitions of truth and freedom. Truth plays a central role in both Jobbik and Fidesz's conceptualization of communication rights, visible in negative nomination and predication strategies against "lying" and "falsifying" media. In contrast to how the concept is used in Mill's classic argument for freedom of expression, truth is not an open matter. Freedom of expression is not primarily valuable for enabling the search for and discovery of truth in society, but for promoting it. Here truth is a guided truth, a truth pre-defined. It is Our truth as identified and articulated by the party, the main interpreters of the will of the nation. Under this reading the people don't need the press as a stand-in for defending their interests and ensuring accountability of their representatives.<sup>181</sup> The people already stand in continuous and direct contact with political power – through the "people's party" (Jobbik) or the national government, a pure vehicle for the "national cause" (Fidesz).

For Jobbik this guided truth approach can be discerned in both freedom of expression and press freedom framing. When it comes to freedom of expression it is present in their Absolute Freedom to Hate Speech frame and insistence on "honest" reappraisal of certain historical events (coded language for the Holocaust). The subject of unjust restrictions on free speech is the bold truth about the Minority Other, undistorted by political correctness. In relation to press freedom Hungarian and international media actors' omission to cover radical right events or failure to align with the ultranationalist version of a story covered is framed as showing a disregard for press freedom, implying a duty to patriotic news reporting. Fidesz develop press freedom's value for promoting a guided truth in a similar way, the main difference is that they are careful not to be seen as denigrating national media or conditioning their operation. In Fidesz's discourse press freedom is a right curbed or denied by the Liberal Network through its suppression of the truth about the Migrant Other. Like Jobbik, Fidesz consider international media reproducing the "wrong" kind of speech to be destructive instruments in the hands of The Network, twisting reality and disciplining and dictating public opinion. The content of their speech proves that such media outlets are not free, since press freedom is both a negative freedom *from* the liberal oppression and a positive freedom

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181 See Lamer.

to truthful reporting. Fidesz and Jobbik's accounts of an international conspiracy's suppression of press freedom are strikingly similar. The main difference is Jobbik's explicit stance on the Network's Jewish identity. Fidesz, being self-conscious of their international reputation and national and international criticism of their media policies, portray the media enemy as exclusively foreign and point to a "balanced" national news landscape as evidence for a healthy press freedom in Hungary. For Jobbik, whose political struggle narrative is that of a national liberation fight against oppressive regimes on both a national and an international level, enemy othering of national media by means of frames such as the falsifying Fidesz lackey media or the Fidesz-occupied press is a crucial element in their dark description of a close to non-existent press freedom under the Fidesz North Korea dictatorship. Under a future Jobbik government the press will be genuinely free to serve national interests and values, bringing about the developed sense of national identity and pride that the movement sees as necessary for the revival of the Hungarian nation.

Summing up it can be concluded that neither Jobbik nor Fidesz view press freedom as a distinct human right establishing guarantees for the functioning of an independent press. And it is not only a matter of press freedom being subsumed under more general provisions on freedom of expression. The freedom of media actors is a carefully circumscribed one, both in terms of negative and positive liberty, with the latter dimension relating to media's capacity and societal responsibility to channel an authoritative interpretation of truth.

What can be said then about the interaction effects stemming from the actor's contest over the meaning of communication rights? When Jobbik entered the Hungarian political stage Fidesz had already completed its sharp national-conservative turn. As a result of their accommodative strategy towards MIÉP the party had adopted certain radical right symbols, themes and frames in their policies. And at the start of the time frame for this study Fidesz virtually single-handedly undertook an extensive overhaul of the Hungarian legislation, their super-majority enabling them to construct a system according to their own taste, as Orbán so succinctly put in in the statement quoted at the beginning of this thesis. There are some traces of Jobbik interaction in Fidesz's reasoning around the protection of communication rights in the new legal order. The analysis of the early debates on communication rights in the constitutional process shows that confrontation with Jobbik and related paramilitary organizations over hate speech and hate crimes for Fidesz is an important argument strengthening their credibility as defenders of free speech and democracy.

It does not seem that Jobbik's sustained presence on the main scene of Hungarian politics has led to any significant de-radicalization or "taming" of their ideology (although mitigation strategies in discriminatory freedom of expression speech have become more pronounced as a part of a more general strategy of moderating their party image). Jobbik's continued electoral strength gives Fidesz an opportunity to appear as the not-as-far-right party keeping the extremists at bay while simultaneously pursuing an accommodative strategy of colonizing their adversarial's master frames and re-framing them in a slightly more polished form. Apart from confrontation in the field of hate speech, an accommodative strategy is the predominant approach of Fidesz in their interaction with Jobbik over communication rights. And perhaps it is here that we also find the most tangible interaction effects in terms of impact on the wider political environment. Accommodative Fidesz frames affirming radical right meta narratives anchors the borderline party ever more firmly in radical right ideology, increasing radical right-mainstream border permeability and legitimizing radical right ideas within mainstream discourse. This in turn can be expected to have an impact on the general debate climate and political environment of other parties and civil society actors active in the agenda setting and policy making forums. In this regard minority organizations and organizations with a left-leaning or liberal profile are particularly vulnerable. Also, Jobbik's polarizing negative othering of media actors and strong press freedom conditionality – even though it also targets Fidesz affiliated media – contributes to a deteriorating environment for journalists. The right-wing consensus on the meaning of truth and freedom in relation to communication rights means that Fidesz's confrontational strategy against international media and their policy of guided press freedom has a strong ally in Jobbik. And as has been argued in the theoretical background a free press can not simply be regarded as an optional add-on for a liberal-style democracy as opposed to other viable alternatives of popular rule. Interfering with the operation of the press and undermining their social position means compromising the public's right to alternative information and obstructing the formation of public opinion necessary for making informed decisions in free and fair elections. This is not only a question of illiberalisation but of actively inhibiting the most fundamental expression of democratic rule – even in the illiberal state.

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