

## **Resentment and reorganization: anti-western discourse and the making of Eurasianism in Hungary**

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RESENTMENT AND REORGANIZATION:  
ANTIWESTERN DISCOURSE AND THE MAKING OF  
EURASIANISM IN HUNGARY

Umut Korkut

INTRODUCTION

A pro-European but antiwesternist discourse has historically characterized the Hungarian nationalist conservative right discourse. For certain segments of the right-wing political and cultural elite, the non-domestic has always been the West. In their resentment to the non-domestic, their understanding of what makes the West has ranged from liberalism, autonomy and partitioning, capitalism, economic and political liberalization, and recently federalist European integration. The rejection of such implications of Westernism or westernization has made them forge a counter discourse to what they have historically understood the West to be. They have ideologically separated the West from Europe. Inasmuch as they have scorned the former, they have believed that they could transform the latter with the very help of Hungarian national virtues. Western Christianity as religion has occupied a crucial place in their quest. At times, they have emphasized Hungary as a bastion of Christianity in contrast to secularizing tendencies in West – suggesting that Hungarians chose Catholicism and has stood by Western Christianity despite the West. More recently, this attitude became the underlying factor in anti-immigrant policies and politics. At other times, they have depicted Hungarian society as the western most extension of Eurasian peoples, and as religious, family-oriented and traditional as Eurasian people should be.

Moreover, the nationalist conservative elite pursued an antiwesternist discourse in the international arena as well, in order to accrue economic gains in non-western Eurasia. Their antiwesternism came with a search for distant cousins in a broad Eurasian geography that extends all the way to Japan. Antiwesternism gained strength particularly in times of crisis, be that political or economic. Overall, it has been a useful tool for the Hungarian political elite to foster the morale of the nation by offering an alternative geopolitical affiliation with probable economic gains – even if these gains remained mythical and were never to be accrued. This has been the most permanent element of Hungarian Eurasianism since the 19<sup>th</sup> century. This article deals with this aspect of Eurasianism as a form of expressing antiwesternism in Hungary.

In order to shed light on these processes, this study deals with the discursive framing of Hungary as an extension of Eurasia in Europe. The main narrative in support has been Hungarians' kinship with the Turanian people, i.e., the non-Slavic and non-Chinese people of the East. In this framework, this article depicts the political and economic references to “what makes Hungary” or “who is Hungarian” as a form of new and anti-western morality that have guided the nationalist and conservative right. Furthermore, this study also elaborates on formulation of kinship and references to Eurasian people on the part of the political elite as a mechanism of social control seeking to economize social and political relations.

The period under study is from the interwar period to current politics. Considering this period, this study delineates, first, the discursive framework within which the right-wing political and cultural elite have historically framed the Hungarian polity within an Eurasianist framework and, second, how this historical legacy manifests itself currently in resentment to the liberal and progressive values of

the West, especially much lately since the failure of left-liberal transformation in Hungary under the guidance of the Europeanization meta-narrative.<sup>1</sup>

Hereby, the argument is as follows. A reframing of Hungary's past and a parallel mythical construction of the East, either as a homeland in faraway lands or as a space that has hosted true Hungarianness, have qualified the resentment to West. This has become more manifest since the beginning of the global financial crisis in 2008. This resentment has not been merely toward the West as geography, but also to those that subscribed to western progressive ideals. As an alternative, the nationalist conservative right has proposed more traditional, religious, patriarchal, communitarian values vis-à-vis the individualism that the liberal West has represented. While at times they have responded to westernization with Europeanization imbued with Hungarianness; at other times, they have totally rejected the West and went as far as propagating a "Turanian", i.e., Eastern alternative.

To this extent, they have pursued "symbolic creations to manipulate social relationships"<sup>2</sup>, social representation<sup>3</sup>, and collective memory. On the one hand, they have generated images of a "new past" to produce a stock of common knowledge and information that people share in the form of common-sense to arm themselves with a new identity and discursive tools against those of their liberal, westernized opponents. On the other, much recently, the "creation of a new past", though fictitious and not empirically grounded, has served for "economization" of social and political relations.<sup>4</sup> Therefore, the "new past" is social construction mainly, if not wholly,

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<sup>1</sup> Umut Korkut, *Liberalization Challenges in Hungary: Elitism, Progressivism, and Populism* (New York: Palgrave/Europe in Transition: The NYU European Studies Series, 2012).

<sup>2</sup> David R. Maines, Noreen M. Sugrue, and Michael A. Katovich, "The Sociological Import of G.H. Mead's Theory of the Past," *American Sociological Review* 48(April) (1983), pp.161-173.

<sup>3</sup> Serge Moscovici, *The phenomenon of social representations*. In: R. M. Farr & S. Moscovici. eds., *Social Representations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984).

<sup>4</sup> Koray Çalışkan and Michel Callon, "Economization, part 1: shifting attention from the economy towards processes of economization." *Economy and Society* 38: 3 (2009), pp. 369-398.

shaped by the concerns of the present.<sup>5</sup> It propagates “images and symbolic constructions of the past”<sup>6</sup> to serve the current political goals. To that extent, the political elite also embeds economization of social and political relations into the recent phase of Eurasianism, and aims to re-define the current civic and private spheres – as the much exalted centers of power of the recent neoliberalism.<sup>7</sup> Eventually, insomuch as their transformation of the collective memory of the past succeeds, the right-wing ideology can contravene the earlier influence of liberalism, and establish its own hegemonic neoliberalism.

In order, in the first section, I will present how antiwesternism has historically gained a fundamental place within the intellectual traditions of the Hungarian conservative and nationalist right. I will foreground a history of ideas in Hungary that has substantiated antiwestern intellectual traditions. To this extent, I will give an overview of Eurasianist and Turanist thought patterns that gripped the interwar identity debates. In the following section, I will first illustrate my understanding of moral politics as an essential tool for the right-wing to contravene the liberal influence. What I mean by moral politics is a type of politics that vies for a new political system that not only bolsters an ideologically defined morality, but also strives to govern it. I will then shift my attention to Hungarian anti-westernism as a discursive tool to consolidate a new type of domestic moral politics implying social control aligned with nationalist and conservative political identities. In studying moral politics, I will pursue three research questions. That is (1) what is new in moral politics in Hungary? (2) what ideological tenets of moral politics promote alternative

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<sup>5</sup> Lewis A. Coser, trans. and ed., *Maurice Halbwachs On Collective Memory* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1992).

<sup>6</sup> Barry Schwartz, Yael Zerubavel, Bernice M. Barnett, „The Recovery of Masada: A Study in Collective Memory,“ *The Sociological Quarterly* 27: 2, pp.147-164.

<sup>7</sup> Esra Özyürek, *Nostalgia for the Modern State Secularism and Everyday Politics in Turkey* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2006).

geopolitical orientation? and (3) how can new moral politics seek social control on its opponents? In conclusion, I will re-instate how the re-introduction of Eurasianism serves to foster a new elite hegemony.

### Antiwesternism in Hungarian intellectual traditions

Why should we study antiwesternism in Hungary? While Hungary is geographically located in Europe and culturally and politically has been a part of Western Christianity for centuries, still the nation maintains an ambiguous link with Eurasia. This may be a result of being at the periphery of the European system for a long time, but surely the recent recourse to novel geopolitical aspirations such as Eurasianism of its conservative and nationalist right-wing political elite serves to maintain this ambiguous relationship and pursue strategic gains. Furthermore, given Hungary's geopolitical position at the outer flank of the European Union and in the neighborhood with Ukraine, Russia, and the Caucasus, Eurasian narratives and networks in Hungary, the venues for the expression of this narrative, and alternative political ideologies and life-styles find themselves largely at home in Hungary. This is not a recent phenomenon, but as I will delineate below, has its historical roots all the way back to the interwar period.<sup>8</sup>

While antiwesternism has emerged as a political discourse in other eastern and south-eastern European states intermittently, the Hungarian antiwesternism has distinctly aspired for a geopolitical alternative. This sets the Hungarian version essentially separate from similar trends in other EU states including the Baltics.<sup>9</sup> This alternative has been an elite-constructed, mythical, nostalgic East that promised

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<sup>8</sup> Umut Korkut and Emel Akçalı, "Deciphering Eurasianism in Hungary: Narratives, Networks, and Life-styles", in: Marlene Laurelle. ed., *Relations between Russia and the Extreme Right Parties in Europe* (Lanham, Boulder, New York, London: Lexington Books, 2015), pp.175-192.

<sup>9</sup> Emel Akçalı and Umut Korkut, "Neo-Turanism and Its Performance: Everyday Geopolitics of Hungarian Far-right," *Eurasian Geography and Economics* 53:5 (2012), pp. 596-614.

Hungary more prosperity, peaceful relations, hospitable environment, and a kind of homely feeling. In their quest, conservative and nationalist political right has deliberately delineated an Eastern myth for Hungarian collective imagination. The East has been a space which offered a more confident political and economic existence for Hungary thanks to either collaborative, friendly relations with Eastern people's extending all the way to Japan or prosperity and peace in the mythical land of Turan. Thereby, the proponents of the eastern myth strove to establish a "community by discourse"<sup>10</sup> and turn resentment into geopolitical alternation. In this context, as Eurasianist and Turanist ideals overlapped significantly, I will discuss them collaboratively.

The linguist Max Müller's 1854 book entitled "On the Classification of Turanian Languages" is considered to be the origin of the Turanist idea. The linguist grouped all languages that did not fit in with the existing language groups into the Turanian language group and although this was a haphazard generalization the qualifier generated the Turanian myth for the nationalist soul searching at Europe's semi-periphery.<sup>11</sup> The Huns or Attila was celebrated in Renaissance, whose rulers and their historians sought to create a national history for an emerging state by reaching back beyond the Magyar conquests of the ninth and tenth centuries to imagine the foundation of Hungary by the Huns. The emphasis of Hunnic relations in Hungary dates back to the 15<sup>th</sup> Century. The Hungarian King Matthias Corvinus claimed Attila as his ancestor, and as János Thuróczi's *Chronica de gestis*

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<sup>10</sup> Robert Wuthnow, *Communities of Discourse* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 1989).

<sup>11</sup> József Schmidt, "Turánizmus," *Nyugat* 20 (1925), available at <http://epa.oszk.hu/00000/00022/00382/11720.htm>.

*Hungarorum* (1488) set out, Attila – like Corvinus – was a skillful general and an enlightened monarch.<sup>12</sup>

As Hungarians felt the brunt of being a part of the Habsburg Empire in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries, this relationship with the “victorious Eastern” also implied kinship with Turks. With respect to the 16<sup>th</sup> Century battles with the Ottoman Empire, as an example, the conservative journalist historian Sándor Pethő writes. “Among the people of Turkic race storming Europe, only the Hungarians remained as a genus without a brotherly branch. As Bulgarians and *Bessenyők* disappeared of the stage of history; the Hungarians stood alone against the solidarity of the Aryan universe of Christendom. The question was either to become Christian or disappear.” However, later religious difference unleashed a life and death duel between the two *rokonfajta* (kin nations) [Hungarians and Ottoman Turks]” which the Turks won with military superiority and religious fanaticism that transformed the whole the Turkish nation into an army.<sup>13</sup> Later, Hungarians bandwagoned onto what Farkas indicated as “the attention toward the East, as foreign policy of the [Austro-Hungarian] monarchy, and the eastern fashion that could globally be felt”. This had a remarkable impact to enhance the Asian oriented interest in Hungary. In Hungary, we can find the sources of the modern manifestation of *keletiség* (easternness) as a political ideology at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century.<sup>14</sup> The Eastern interest in this respect was an expression of disappointment with Europe and glance towards the East as the real address of

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<sup>12</sup> Christopher Kelly, *Attila the Hun Barbarian Terror and the Fall of the Roman Empire* (London: Vintage Books, 2008), pp.228-229.

<sup>13</sup> Sándor Pethő, *Világostól Trianonig A Mai Magyarország Kialakulásának Története* (Budapest: Enciklopédia R.-T. Kiadása, 1925), pp.11-15.

<sup>14</sup> Ildikó Farkas, “A turánizmus,” *Magyar Tudomány* 7 (1993): 860-868.

brotherhood.<sup>15</sup> As we will see later, this has eventually become an undertone of relations with Eurasia especially in the interwar period.

Such sentimental stimulation encouraged the Hungarian Turanists most notably well-known academics, politicians and nobles inaugurated the *Turáni Tarsaság* (Turan Society) in the same year.<sup>16</sup> The founding book of the society states its aim as to teach, to develop, and to recognize the sciences, arts, and economies of Asian and kin nations of Hungary in Europe, and harmonize them with Hungarian interests.<sup>17</sup> In brief, the activities of the Turan Society comprised of organizing informative conferences about other Turanic societies and organizing anthropological, socio-economic research trips in Anatolia, the Caspian Sea region, the Caucasus and inner Asian lands to study the economic conditions of these locations.<sup>18</sup> According to Önen, although in the initial years, the interest of the public opinion towards these activities remained limited, with the support of official institutions, such activities gained an increasing public interest in time.<sup>19</sup>

While Turanism contributed to the Hungarian intellectual sphere until the World War II<sup>20</sup>, it was also divisive. Some considered it as neither linguistic, nor historical, nor ethno-geographical nor political, but merely geographical,<sup>21</sup> for others this signified civilizational, racial, or simply historical associations sometimes at the face of maltreatment by the West. At the extremes, we have reactionary works such as by Miklós I. Gömbös<sup>22</sup>, which states that Hungarians are not without kin and they can turn to their Asiatic brethren at the face of their deception by the West at the end of

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<sup>15</sup> Nizam Önen, *Turanlı Hareketler: Macaristan ve Türkiye (1910–1944)* (Ankara: Ankara University Press, 2013), pp.28-29.

<sup>16</sup> Tarık Demirkan, *Macar Turancıları* (Istanbul: Türkiye Ekonomik ve Toplumsal Tarih Vakfı, 2000), p.26.

<sup>17</sup> *A Turáni Tarsaság Alapszabályai* (1910).

<sup>18</sup> Balázs Ablonczy, *Teleki Pál* (Budapest: Osiris Kiado, 2005).

<sup>19</sup> Önen, *Turanlı Hareketler: Macaristan ve Türkiye (1910–1944)*, pp. 31-32.

<sup>20</sup> Ali Engin Oba, *Türk Milliyetçiliğinin Doğuşu* (Ankara: Imge Kitabevi, 1995), p.13.

<sup>21</sup> Ablonczy, *Teleki Pál*

<sup>22</sup> Miklós Gömbös, *Turáni Kérdés* (Bonyhád: At Raubitschek Izór, 1922).

the World War I. Hereby, the reference is to the 1920 Trianon Treaty that cost Hungary a large part of its territory. A parallel reflection on the Hungarians' relationship with the West was presentation of Hungarians as the civilization makers. One can note Paikert's work to this extent on Hungarian's relation with the original creators of civilizations, such as Sumerians, Hittites or the Cretans as well as lost civilizations of Himalayas and Central Asia.<sup>23</sup> Paikert, thereby, emphasized that the Turanian creativity is immemorial and great in the past as well as in the future.

In the post-Trianon Treaty political landscape that saw Hungary losing chunks of its territory after World War I, the most important institutions which defined and controlled the terms of public speech were government bodies and social organization of the right and extreme nationalist right. This is where I believe the social control mechanism had resided. The interwar irredentist public atmosphere was a factor, which the official politics had the opportunity to utilize, neglect or stifle. The controllers of public life grasped the first, instinctively and consciously at the same time and thus the content and the tone of dominant anti-Trianon emotions were defined by domestic propaganda with the government's approval or exactly to its liking. In this way, general public opinion became a projection of the propaganda. Under these circumstances public thinking was essentially defined by simplifying voices, which, on the one hand, provided an understandable, comforting and self-absolving explanation for the break up – such as the formula of a honest victim and a cruel enemy for demonizing opponents – and at the same time it tamed down the partition of the country insofar as it put it on a moral level, away from the world of political realities. Instead of realistically exploring the causes and consequences, the mythical concept aimed at a national self-therapy and mobilization, made public

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<sup>23</sup> Alajos Paikert, *Turáni Mult, Turáni Jövő* (Különlenyomat a Turán, 1931), pp.3-7.

thinking schematic and public opinion more uniform. The irredentist theme became a part of everyday life.<sup>24</sup> As we will see, later this irredentism fed into the development of Turanism at its later stages to formulate the terms of an alliance with the Eastern nations at the face of disappointment with the West.

Beyond intellectual history, in background of the more “scientific” debates about Turanism lied the racial roots of Hungarians. Hereby, one can mention the conflict between whether Hungarians have a mixed blood between the Finn-Ugor and Ural-Altay nations, advocated by the Hungarian Turkologist Ármin Vámbéry,<sup>25</sup> and more racially fixed elaborations on Hungarian genes by the racist biologist Lajos Méhely (sometimes spelled also as Méhely).<sup>26</sup> According to the latter, while the Hungarian peasantry bore the characteristics of Finn-Ugor nations both with their physical characteristics and work habits, the Hungarian nobility should have been of Turkic origin given their gallantry, statesmanship, and strong physical features. After all, according to this ideology, it was the Turanian people that have always established major and powerful empires, glorious deeds of war, magnificent leaders, and all achievements of civilization bears their names.<sup>27</sup>

Yet, as Ablonczy underlined, along civilizational or racial debates, the Turanist movement sought economic advantages in enhancing Hungary’s relations with the Eastern nations. For Hungary, Turanism practically promised new markets in its competition with Germany and Austria as well as a political position to balance Pan-Germanism and Pan-Slavism.<sup>28</sup> At a meeting of the Turan Society on 31 January 1914, the vice-president Alajos Paikert stated that Hungary does not have any

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<sup>24</sup> Miklós Zeidler, “Irredentism in Everyday Life in Hungary during the Interwar Period,” *Regio* (2002), pp. 71-88.

<sup>25</sup> Ármin Vámbéry, *A Magyarság Keletkezése es Gyarapodása* (Budapest: Franklin-Tarsulat, 1895).

<sup>26</sup> János Gyurgyák, *Magyar Fajvedők* (Budapest: Osiris, 2012).

<sup>27</sup> Farkas, “A turánizmus,” p.865.

<sup>28</sup> Ablonczy, *Teleki Pál*, p.90.

colonies and it does not endeavor to possess any. However, there was a need for economic expansion, support the other brotherly nations of Turan, and instigate exalted feelings of reciprocity and togetherness.<sup>29</sup> One can underline a tone of “white men’s burden” in Paikert’s conceptualization of the role that the Hungarians were to play vis-à-vis their Turanian brethren. Gömbös went as far as calling out for “digging out the hard clot of the Asia”. He continued: “dig, dig, dig out the past, [not only that but also] the Hungarian past”.<sup>30</sup> As such, the Hungarian elite pursued Turanism as a quest to seek political and economic benefits beyond their borders, the Turanic symbols-pagan warriors on horseback, roaming the Asian steppes became constant elements of the symbolism and rhetoric that Turanists aspired.<sup>31</sup>

As an extension of the ideal, Japan has also featured in Turanist dreams as a frame of reference. Crucially, references to Japan in Hungarian Turanism also fed into what we may call “Hungarian imperialism”. As Farkas indicates within the Austro-Hungarian monarchy, as a part of an influential major power, Hungary could present itself in Europe as a “kingmaker” of politics. The political elite at the time had framed the millennium celebrations of Hungarian *honfoglalás* (Hungarian settlement in the Carpathian basin) as a manifestation of the fundamental role Hungary occupied in the Danube area. The idea of Hungarian self-contained imperialism illustrated itself in a Hungarian display of “major power consciousness”. This imperialism configured the expansionist version of Turanism with the desire to spread Hungarian industry towards the East (primarily the Balkans), establish first economic then political space towards the East. This was the particular inclination of the Turanist idea that fostered

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<sup>29</sup> László Szendrei, *A Turanizmus* (Gödöllő: Attraktor, 2010), p.17.

<sup>30</sup> Gömbös, *Turáni Kérdés*, p.9.

<sup>31</sup> Paul A. Hanebrink, *In Defense of Christian Hungary. Religion, Nationalism, and Antisemitism, 1890–1944* (Ithaca, NY and London: Cornell University Press, 2009), p.118.

friendship beyond the two European Turanian nations, namely Bulgaria and Turkey, to Japan as a victor of 1904-1905 Russo-Japanese War.<sup>32</sup>

To this extent, 1 June 1924 saw the establishment of the Magyar-Nippon Society<sup>33</sup> with an active role played by István Mezey. The origins of the society date back to the role that Japan played for the return of the Hungarian prisoners of war after the W.W.I, who were taken to Siberia. The Hungarians noted the role that Japan played in protecting and providing for the safe return of these prisoners of war, and the Magyar-Nippon Society presented the case for deepening of relations between the two countries.<sup>34</sup> Similar to the Turanian movement, one can note diverging interests within the Magyar-Nippon Society as well. Enhancement of mutual knowledge between Hungary and Japan was one of the aims of the society, and the general theme of its work partially related to Turanism.<sup>35</sup> In this context, in 1925 the Society emphasized the difference between the Hungarian and Japanese Turanism. Having noted that “Asia is for Asians” character of Japanese Turanism attractively hastened the interest of the Turanian nations, the cultivation of economic and cultural links received more emphasis in the Hungarian Turanian movement than political alliance.<sup>36</sup> Nonetheless, this period also saw exchanges between the Hungarian and the Japanese Turanists. One should note the travels of Benedek Baráthosi Balogh from 1903 to 1914 to collect more information of Hungarians for the everyday history of ancient Hungarians in Amur River, Sakhalin and Hokkaido regions to collect

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<sup>32</sup> Farkas, “A turánizmus,” p. 862.

<sup>33</sup> Instead of Hungarian-Japanese Society, I will use Magyar-Nippon Society all throughout the text in order to reflect the origins of this society in Hungarian and Japanese rather than fully Anglicizing the term.

<sup>34</sup> Ildikó Farkas, “A Magyar-Nippon Tarsaság,” in: István Szerdahelyi and Péter Wintermantel, eds., *Japanológiai Körkép*, (Budapest, 2007), 87-109, p.88.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 92

<sup>36</sup> Farkas, 93

Manchu and Ainu artefacts.<sup>37</sup> In the 1920s, Baráthosi Balogh and his Japanese counterpart Juichiro Imaoka became the voice of Turanism in Japan, bringing the earlier Tungus theory of Kitagawa Shizako together with the Turanist movement in Hungary.<sup>38</sup>

Amidst these exchanges, Japan featured as a country with which Hungary could establish industrial, economic, and commercial links. To this extent, it is crucial to note Nándor Metzger, the correspondent of the Hungarian News Agency in Tokyo, reporting about his evening program.

The evening time serves for me to extend with societal propaganda the import of Tokaji wine, Szeged paprika, and Hungarian medicinal specialties in Japan. [...] Us, poor Hungarians, we lack money for expensive advertising in newspapers. Here, only after establishing personal connections, we can echo the Hungarian case only through establishing personal acquaintance either intellectual or material.<sup>39</sup>

As we will see below, this economizing approach to Eurasianism, along with emphasizing the “bridge” function of Hungary for connecting East and West, have been recurrent themes in Hungarian foreign policy.<sup>40</sup>

In the second half the 1930s, while the Turanist still called for a unity between the Turanian nations and the bridging role that Hungary could play between Europe and Asia, there also emerged a bifurcation in the Turanian ideology. Its expansionist and the defensive versions had separated from each other. The former pursued its ideology first following the aspired alliance between the Turanian nations such as Bulgaria and Japan, and second with an emphasis on the racist character in Turanist

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<sup>37</sup> Gábor Wilhelm, “Benedek Baráthosi Balogh Collection in the Museum of Ethnography, Budapest: Artifacts, Manuscripts, and Photos”, in: *Museum of Ethnography, Budapest Baráthosi Balogh Collection Catalogues* (Hokkaido, 1999), pp.85-89.

<sup>38</sup> Sinan Levent, “Common Asianist intellectual history in Turkey and Japan: Turanism” *Central Asian Survey* (2015). DOI:10.1080/02634937.2015.1062601.

<sup>39</sup> MOL P 1384 8<sup>th</sup> batch cited in Farkas, “A Magyar-Nippon Tarsaság,” p.96.

<sup>40</sup> See Farkas, “A Magyar-Nippon Tarsaság” for a depiction of debates in *Távol Kelet*, the official paper of Nippon Tarsaság, pp.97-98.

ideology.<sup>41</sup> In this context, the defensive version of Turanism looked for establishing alliance with the Turanian nations to balance the pan-German and pan-Slavic influences on Hungary. In this vein, the Turanists called an “end to the age of servility to the West”, pledged not to “shed more blood in the defense of the Occident”, and called for the “unification of all Turanians” against the dual evils of “Semitic corruption and Aryan decadence”.

In the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Turanism became part of the extreme rights’ official rhetoric.<sup>42</sup> The turning point for the Hungarian Turanists in the 20<sup>th</sup> century was the emergence of Italian fascism. The Turanists started to admire Mussolini, considering him as the leader of a bloodless revolution and admiring his resistance to socialist irrationality, anarchy and his struggle to establish rule and order.<sup>43</sup> There were conspicuous efforts to implement fascism in Hungary at this period and reaching beyond Italy, the Hungarian Turanists also looked for ways to co-operate with their Turkish counterparts.<sup>44</sup> In this context, despite its previous emphasis on economic and cultural links, some proponents of Turanism in Hungary, primarily István Mezey, adopted a pro-Japanese tone with response to Japan’s troubles in the international system in the aftermath of its occupation of Manchuria.

Mezey justified Japanese expansionism referring to increasing population in Japan without any possibilities for migrating, and the need for raw materials and markets for the [growing] Japanese economy.<sup>45</sup> Hence, the Hungarian-Japanese approachment under the frame of Turanism, turned into emphasizing common aims, and a symbol of Hungarian expansionism as Japan joined Germany over the course of

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<sup>41</sup> Farkas, “A turánizmus,” p. 865.

<sup>42</sup> Rudolf Paksa, *A magyar szélsőjobboldal története*. (Budapest: Jaffa, 2012).

<sup>43</sup> Szendrei, *A Turánizmus*, p.26.

<sup>44</sup> Demirkan, *Macar Turancıları*, p.58.

<sup>45</sup> István Mezey, *Az új mandzu császárság* (1936/1) in Farkas, “A Magyar-Nippon Tarsaság,” p. 101.

the W.W.II.<sup>46</sup> In this respect, the supporters of Hungarian-Japanese relationship emphasized the special interest of Japan towards Hungary, the special position of Hungary between East and West, and the realization of Hungary's bridge role in this respect, and references to fresh spirit of Asia for the issue of renewal of old Europe.<sup>47</sup> Furthermore, the mutual fear of Soviet Union strengthened the political ideological service of Turanism as a basis for approachment between Japan and Hungary. That Hungary should be in a military bloc in Central Europe friendly with Japan and against the Soviet Union in case Japan has started reckoning with Soviet Union in the Far East found support within the Hungarian diplomatic circles.<sup>48</sup> Overall, the discursive construction of Hungarians are alone, without any relatives in Europe especially following the Trianon Treaty, and among the foreign nations Hungarians stay alone with their Eastern roots contributed to a search for alliances in the Turanian lands among the Hungarian elite.<sup>49</sup> In the aftermath of the catastrophic World War II and the installation of the communist regime, however, the Turanist discourse ebbed away and the alleged Scythian-Hunnish roots of Hungarians became at best marginalized.

## ANTI-WESTERN RESENTMENT, NEW MORAL POLITICS, AND SOCIAL CONTROL

Moreh states that the best to conceive Turanism old and new is as a search for the "ancestral homeland" (*őshaza*). In this sense, home is more than a place; it is an emotionally based and meaningful relationship between people and their

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<sup>46</sup> Farkas, "A Magyar-Nippon Tarsaság," p. 103.

<sup>47</sup> Farkas, "A Magyar-Nippon Tarsaság," p. 105.

<sup>48</sup> Mihály Jungert-Arnóthy moszkvai követ jelentése Mamoru Sigemicu japán nagykövettel folytatott beszélgetéséről (27.10.1938). Uo. 15/1. Tétel, 180/pol.-1938.sz. in Balázs Ablonczy, "Lándzahaegység, néprokonság, small talk," in: Pál Pritz, Balázs Sipos, and Miklós Zeidler, eds., *Magyar külpolitikai gondolkodás a 20. Században* (Budapest: Magyar Történelmi Társulat, 2006), available at, <http://mek.oszk.hu/05200/05284/05284.htm>.

<sup>49</sup> Farkas, "A turánizmus," p.867; Ablonczy, *ibid.*

environment. Thus, being at home is a mode of being whereby we are oriented within a spatial, temporal, and sociocultural order that we understand.<sup>50</sup> However, what is particularly of interest in the Hungarian case is how political and cultural resentment to the West in the shape of Eurasianism offered an alternative also to the morality that the West has represented. The mode of prevalent anti-Westernism adopted Eurasianism following the global financial crisis, particularly, propagated a mythically constructed East resting on social representations of a community alternative to the West. To this extent, a new type of moral politics as a counter-discourse to westernization set the mode of resentment. This does not mean that nationalist conservative politics became fully rejectionist of Europe per se. Yet, they emphasized particular value systems of non-European people in order to correct the wrongdoings of the West. In order to explore the unfolding of this process, in this section, I will first illustrate my operationalization of moral politics and then the recent Hungarian anti-westernism, led by the conservative right Fidesz and the extreme right Jobbik Party, as a discursive tool to promote a new domestic “moral politics” following on from the historical legacies depicted above.

The Fidesz victory in April 2010 election in Hungary delivered a conservative revolution called the “revolution of ballot boxes”. In the words of Orbán, the constitutional revolution of Fidesz is a citizen/bourgeois revolution; not a bloody one like the Bolshevik Revolution, but aimed at ensuring that revolutionary morale be anchored in Hungarian democracy.<sup>51</sup> In an assertive and defiant manner, Fidesz made its own constitution to generate Hungary that the right wing has craved for decades. It has hence veered away extensively from its liberal origins during the political

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<sup>50</sup> Chris Moreh, “The Asianization of national fantasies in Hungary: A critical analysis of political discourse,” *International Journal of Cultural Studies* DOI: 10.1177/1367877915573781 ics.sagepub.com

<sup>51</sup> Viktor Orbán’s Speech at the Civic Picnic at Kötese, “Új kezdet,” available at, [http://www.miniszterelnok.hu/cikk/uj\\_kezdet](http://www.miniszterelnok.hu/cikk/uj_kezdet) (May 30, 2010).

transformation, and could introduce its nationalist conservative politics adopted in late 1990s fully into Hungarian politics thanks to its two-thirds parliamentary majority. Simultaneously, Fidesz commenced a revolutionary economic transformation to beat the two inherent problems of Hungarian economy, that is, high debt and unemployment. The hegemony-aspirant program of Fidesz has pursued alternative modernization, strong state, and nation vis-à-vis its liberal foes. Furthermore, the global economic crisis and the resultant insecurity also replenished Orbán's new economic project that qualified being in debt as anti-Hungarian and a sign of the lack of moral standards. To this extent, Fidesz represented the 2008-2009 crisis not only as a global crisis, but rather a crisis of western values, or defined more broadly, of the western system.<sup>52</sup> Under such circumstances, political discourse is shifting again, driven by the rediscovery of yet another new/old theory that would place Hungary at the heart of the new system, in an "ethical" home untainted by the West's "crisis of values".<sup>53</sup>

To this extent, the underlying element of anti-westernism and the emphasis on the need for a new morality illustrate how fundamentally the reacquisition of morality, alternative to its western element, has been embedded into new conservative politics in Hungary. Thereby, we need to understand what is so typical of the new moral politics different from its western version.

Morality is an imaginative concept. Our fundamental moral concepts, our understanding of situations, our reasoning about these situations are imaginatively structured.<sup>54</sup> Moral politics vies for a political system that not only bolsters an

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<sup>52</sup> István Németh, "Új világrend felé a 21. Század elején: Kína szerepe," in: András Inotai and Orsolya Juhász, eds., *Stratégiai Kutatások 2009-2010*, (Budapest: MTA Világgazdasági Kutatóintézet és Miniszterelnöki Hivatal, pp. 9-34.

<sup>53</sup> Korkut, *Liberalization Challenges in Hungary*

<sup>54</sup> Mark Johnson, *Moral Imagination Implications of Cognitive Science for Ethics* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1993), p.15.

ideologically defined morality, but also strives to govern it. A great many people in liberal democratic and illiberal electoral democratic systems believe that the way out of our present moral confusions is to get clear about the ultimate moral principles or laws that ought to govern our lives and learn about how to apply them rationally to the concrete situations we encounter every day. While people disagree about the sources of moral principles, they all agree that living morally is principally a matter of moral insight into the ultimate moral rules, combined with the strength of will to do the right thing that is required by those rules.<sup>55</sup> In this context, moral politics is extensively studied in the US.<sup>56</sup> It has been considered widely a tool employed by conservative or neo-conservative political agendas in this literature, although Lakoff refers to conflicting moral action between the liberals and the conservatives to indicate that we should not write off the liberal stance as immoral at the outset.<sup>57</sup>

In the European context, moral politics is a research theme that is developing in studies of populism and reaction of the right wing to the European liberal agenda.<sup>58</sup> The new proponents of moral politics reject the agenda of liberalism essentially as the non-domestic. In the Hungarian context, this rejection comes with a search for a more beneficial alternative geopolitical association that manifests itself in the form of Eurasianism. Moving further from Holmes's "integralist forms" within supporters of conservative traditionalist socio-political relations, we can note four registers. They

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<sup>55</sup> Johnson, *Moral Imagination Implications of Cognitive Science for Ethics*, p.ix.

<sup>56</sup> *inter alia* Thomas Frank, *What is the Matter with Kansas? How Conservatives Won the Heart of America* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2004); George Lakoff, *Moral Politics How Liberals and Conservatives Think* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2002). Jason Hackworth, *Faith Based Religious Neoliberalism and the Politics of Welfare in the United States* (Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 2012); Robert B. Horwitz, *America's Right Anti-Establishment Conservatism from Goldwater to the Tea Party* (Cambridge: Polity, 2013); Theda Skocpol and Vanessa Williamson, *The Tea Party and the Remaking of American Conservatism* (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 2013).

<sup>57</sup> Lakoff, *Moral Politics How Liberals and Conservatives Think*.

<sup>58</sup> Daniele Albertazzi and Duncan McDonnell. *Populists in Power* (London: Routledge, 2015); Korkut, *Liberalization Challenges in Hungary*; Marlene Laurelle ed., *Relations between Russia and the Extreme Right Parties in Europe* (Lanham, Boulder, New York, London: Lexington Books, 2015).

are, in order, framework of meaning; practice of everyday life; idiom of solidarity; and as a consciousness of belonging linked to a specific cultural milieu.<sup>59</sup> I argue that moral politics offers a comprehensive category whereby these registers can find expression. The emergence, consolidation, and long-term maintenance of moral politics derive from the capacity of political actors to convince the wider public on the tenets of their ideologies. Thereby, the emergence of micro foundations of moral politics indicates the consolidation of a new moral order in the long-term. To this extent, this article proposes that we need to understand how mythically constructed geopolitical alternatives help to re-formulate identities in order to bolster new moral agendas.

The western association for the Hungarian liberal elite has always signified a level of civilization imbued by economic and political openness. In the beginning this implied a more equal re-stratification of society, land reform, freedoms and rights for all including the Jews, economic transition to industry and trade, and a general embourgeoisement of the society.<sup>60</sup> Much recently, in the 1990s, the European Union membership element has become the main anchor of the process of westernization. The Europeanist claim in the 1990s was crucial, as the then East European nationalism was based on the idea that these nations were not any more the “poor” relative” of Europe, but fully fledged “civilized” nations just being allowed to join their “natural homeland Europe”. Then, their main perspective was that of sneering the real East against which countries like Hungary represent the bridgehead of the

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<sup>59</sup> D.R.Holmes, *Fast Capitalism, Multiculturalism, Neofascism* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2000).

<sup>60</sup> See Paul Bödy, “Joseph Eötvös and the Modernization of Hungary, 1840-1870. A Study of Ideas Individuality and Social Pluralism in Modern Politics,” *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society* New Series, 62: 2 (1972), pp. 1-134 and David Haglund and Umut Korkut, “Going Against the Flow: Sinn Féin’s Unusual Hungarian “Roots,” *The International History Review* 36: 1 (2015), pp. 41-58.

West.<sup>61</sup> Overall, the western orientation has also implied rapid changes in socio-economic relations such as privatization, gender rights, social policy reforms, and a more developed regime of rights and freedoms for ethnic and sexual minorities. This brought with itself a comprehensive shake up in domestic and public life of the society as well as re-making of privileges in socio-economic relations.

In order to contravene these tendencies, the anti-western tendencies in the nationalist conservative right-wing discourse have proposed a type of moral politics imbued by social representations of Hungarian society alternative to the West. There were also nativist opponents to this transformation during the early years of transformation as well. One can mention Csurka and his MIÉP (The Hungarian Justice and Life party) party after he broke up from the conservative MDF (Hungarian Democratic Forum) - the party that gained office after the first democratic election. However, in their case anti-Bolshevik, anti-liberal, anti-Semitic stances were more important than the course of westernization in Hungary per se.<sup>62</sup>

In a way, especially in the aftermath of EU membership, an alternative socio-economic framework, inspired by a mythically constructed East both in present and the past represented a more traditional, patriarchal, religious society, implied an alternative to the westernization goal of the liberals. Within this myth, the nationalist conservatives both among the ranks of Fidesz and Jobbik claimed, Hungarians could be more confident of and comfortable with their life styles, gender relations, and general socio-economic system. This myth made the East an illiberal alternative to the liberal west. This alternative system required a re-organization of the society, which I have introduced above as the basis of social control, in order to undo the Western

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<sup>61</sup> Attila Melegh, "Floating East: Eastern Europe on the Map of Global Institutional Actors" *unpublished paper*.

<sup>62</sup> Korkut, *Liberalization*, p.186.

effect on family systems, economic production and markets, social stratification, and role of religion in society. Let us below to how Eurasianism related to this system building.

## ECONOMIZATION OF SOCIAL RELATIONS TO FOLLOW THE EURASIAN PARADIGM

In order to depict the social control mechanism that Eurasianism pursues more clearly, I will depart from Wendy Brown's work on the role that "economization of subjects".<sup>63</sup> Çalışkan and Callon define economization as a process defining the dissemination of neoliberal market metrics to all other spheres of life and human activity.<sup>64</sup> Hence, according to Brown, neoliberal *homo oeconomicus* takes its shape as human capital, seeking to strengthen its competitive positioning and appreciate its value. *Homo oeconomicus* as human capital is concerned with enhancing its portfolio value in all domains of its life and activity undertaken through practices of self-investment and attracting investors. This type of economization configures the state as the manager of a firm and the subject as a unit of entrepreneurial and self-investing capital.<sup>65</sup> Henceforth, human capital replaces labor as all market actors are rendered as capitals. To this Foucault adds that multiplying the enterprise from within the social body is what is at stake in neoliberal policy and what makes neoliberalism more much than a set of economic policies. Rather it is a matter of

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<sup>63</sup> Wendy Brown, *Undoing the Demos Neoliberalism's Stealth Revolution* (New York: Zone Books, 2015).

<sup>64</sup> Çalışkan and Callon, "Economization, part 1".

<sup>65</sup> Brown, *Undoing the Demos*, pp.33-34, 41.

making the market, competition, and so the enterprise into what could be called the formative power of the society.<sup>66</sup>

To this extent, the search for new geopolitical alliances in Hungary should be understood within the Prime Minister Orbán's role of shifting the people from one comfortable reality to a new and less familiar one in a new environment within which a new system of sensemaking takes place.<sup>67</sup> The rest of this section explores how a new definition of morality surfaced in Hungary as the Prime Minister appealed to the collective rationality of the public to endorse his search for geopolitical alternatives to alleviate the impacts of the crisis and failure of liberalism. I consider this new morality as the narrative that contributes to economization of society following non-western and illiberal social relations.

In 2010, in his first speech after becoming Prime Minister, delivered to the Hungarian Permanent Conference, a body that represents Hungarian ethnics in the neighboring countries, Orbán stated that while there should be no doubt that they belong to the Western world, "from now on, this fact will suggest another connotation. In a simplified or caricaturized way, we are sailing under the Western flag, but in world economy an Eastern wind blows. And the sailor that does not take into consideration according to which wind to rotate the sails will doom himself and his cargo".<sup>68</sup> What started then as *keleti nyitás*, i.e., opening to the East, as initially required by the new economic realities, more recently came to mean a new political identification.

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<sup>66</sup> Thomas Lemke, "From State Biology to the Government of Life: Historical Dimensions and Contemporary Perspectives of 'Biopolitics'," *Journal of Classical Sociology* 10: 4 (2010), pp. 801-818.

<sup>67</sup> Marian Iszatt-White, "Methodological crises and contextual solutions: An ethnomethodologically informed approach to understanding relationship," *Leadership* 7: 2 (2011), pp. 119-135.

<sup>68</sup> Orbán's Speech delivered at Hungarian Permanent Conference on 5 November 2010, available at, [http://index.hu/belfold/2010/11/05/orban\\_keleti\\_szel\\_fuj/](http://index.hu/belfold/2010/11/05/orban_keleti_szel_fuj/)

In July 2014, Orbán promised to institutionalize an illiberal state in Hungary in order for the country to manage a post-2008 crisis world where “anything became possible”, while alluding to the “success of illiberal and perhaps non-democratic countries such as Singapore, China, India, Russia and Turkey” as “stars” in international economic performance. Emphasizing the achievements of illiberal countries, Orbán continued, that in order for Hungary to prosper in the race for global competitiveness, it should explore ways to tear itself away from the dogmas and ideologies of Western Europe such as liberalism.<sup>69</sup> This discourse simultaneously pervades and responds to a sense of insecurity felt in the Hungarian public sphere and legitimizes the discursive positioning of Orbán vis-à-vis the liberal metanarrative Europeanization that gripped Hungarian politics since 1989.

Ideologically, conservative right-wing proponents of the policy that supports opening to the East primarily list problems in the European economy such as its current political structures, the introduction of the euro as an economic project, the center-periphery conflict leading to “colonization of the periphery” by the center.<sup>70</sup> However, Orbán’s opposition to the West had deeper roots than economy. In 2007, Orbán stated that “a new political and spiritual era started in Europe and a new type of politics is evolving” at the dawn of liberalism of 1968 with its moral relativism, demands for full individual freedoms, and feeble communal bonds.<sup>71</sup> According to Orbán, liberalism of 1968 resembled neoliberalism, and they needed a renewed emphasis on national character and social market economy to maintain the market, society, individual freedom, and communal interest. Instrumentally, this renewed

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<sup>69</sup> Speech at Tusványos Summer School 2014, Tusnádfürdő, 28 July 2014, available at, [http://mandiner.hu/cikk/20140728\\_orban\\_viktor\\_a\\_munkaalapu\\_allam\\_korszaka\\_kovetkezik\\_beszed\\_tusvanyos\\_2014](http://mandiner.hu/cikk/20140728_orban_viktor_a_munkaalapu_allam_korszaka_kovetkezik_beszed_tusvanyos_2014).

<sup>70</sup> György Szretykó, *Az Európai Unió Válsága és a Keleti Nyitás Lehetőségei*, available at, <http://kgk.sze.hu/images/dokumentumok/kautzkiadvany2013/makropenzugy/szretyko.pdf> (2013).

<sup>71</sup> Viktor Orbán’s speech at Tusnádfürdő Hungarian Summer School, 21 July 2007), available at, [http://orbanviktor.hu/beszedekek\\_list.php?item=25](http://orbanviktor.hu/beszedekek_list.php?item=25).

emphasis would curtail “individual freedom [which] after a while batters away the order of procreation and forces unnatural life styles upon the European peoples”.<sup>72</sup> It is evident that while critical of neoliberalism, Orbán also uttered a clear message that increased freedom would bring forward unnatural life styles and was sinful.

At the same time, Orbán has raised issues of Europe, liberalism, and conservatism imbuing the message that liberalism was perilous for Europe and that Fidesz could counter this menace in Hungary and Europe. Orbán qualified European and Christian credentials of Hungary, while enmeshing a series of conservative concepts in how Europe with Hungary should be.<sup>73</sup> These manifestations showed that Fidesz was skeptical and rejectionist of the liberal tradition of West, but not what Orbán affiliates with Europe, namely, national traditions and sovereignties, family, cohesion, and Christian solidarity. As I illustrate below, these very issues appear of importance to the Eurasian discourse as well.

What guides the belief that freedoms lead to decadence in Fidesz-led elaboration of the crisis of the liberal system originates from Tilo Schabert’s post-liberal and autocratic political stance on leadership. Schabert’s writings particularly on order echoes in the “illiberal” democracy narrative of Fidesz.<sup>74</sup> Schabert argued that human beings would hardly continue to exist, beyond savagery at least, if their lives were not maintained by some form of economic, social and political order. Yet, as a paradigm of civilization, modernity means exactly the complete negation of any such order. The idea of “modern civilization”, therefore,

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<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

<sup>73</sup> Viktor Orbán’s Speech on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the Treaty of Rome, “Boldog születésnapot, Európa”, January 2008, available at, [http://orbanviktor.hu/beszedekek\\_list.php?item=13](http://orbanviktor.hu/beszedekek_list.php?item=13); Viktor Orbán’s Speech at the 19th birthday of Fidesz, “Az új Nyugat-nemzedék”, 30 March 2007, available at, [http://orbanviktor.hu/beszedekek\\_list.php?item=12](http://orbanviktor.hu/beszedekek_list.php?item=12).

<sup>74</sup> Zoltán Bretter, “Félreolvasó kör Tilo Schabert, Machiavelli és G. Fodor – Mit ért saját példaképeiből a magyar jobboldal?” 26.03.2015, available at, <http://magyarnarancs.hu/publicisztika/felreolvaso-kor-94308>

embodies a paradox. “Modernity” stands in absolute contradiction to civilization. Neither a modernity of civilization – a “modernized” order of life; nor a civilization of modernity – an order of life in a “modern” anarchy – can actually be achieved. Instead, there is only continuing conflict. Or to put it more succinctly, the “modern” may account for the crisis of modern civilization.<sup>75</sup> If these ideas appeared merely within the frame of increasing authoritarianism in the country, one could have imagined them as regression in democratic standards. However, as they are bandwagoned to increasing interest in Eastern semi-democracies or authoritarian systems, we have grounds to debate the anti-liberal narrative within the frame of Eurasianism. Moreover, if we consider this narrative within the frame of Orbán’s above noted discourse on work and limitless freedom, we would have grounds to appreciate how social relations are economized following the “imagined” Asian work ethics that brings forth efficiency rather than limitless freedom of liberalism.

The economization of political relations with the East is more straightforward to explain. According to the then Under-Secretary of Foreign and External Economic Relations Péter Szijjartó, who became the Foreign Minister in 2014, the Hungarian opening to the East rests on four pillars. These are: first, building close ties with the Far East – especially with China; second, strengthening cooperation with Caucasus countries such as Georgia, Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan, as their trade strategies fit well with the supply structure of the Hungarian market; third, paying more attention and refining the trade links with the Arab world; and finally, concentrating on the Western Balkans.<sup>76</sup> Truly, looking for new markets during the economic crisis has been a common trend in Austria, Germany and the UK.<sup>77</sup> Yet, as Kálnoky states,

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<sup>75</sup> Tilo Schabert, “A Note on Modernity,” *Political Theory* 7: 1 (February, 1979): 123-137.

<sup>76</sup> György Szretykó, “Az Európai Unió Válsága és a Keleti Nyitás Lehetőségei,” available at, <http://kgk.sze.hu/images/dokumentumok/kautzkiadvany2013/makropenzugy/szretyko.pdf> (2013).

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

there is no talk of an Eastern opening in Germany in order to connote a basic market search with a new geopolitical direction.<sup>78</sup> When interviewed the Hungarian Ambassador to Kazakhstan suggested that while the Westerners go east to look for new markets they come with their capital. Hungary lacks this capital, but it has historical and cultural capital with which it can reach to the East.<sup>79</sup>

Particularly in effect to the relations with Japan, the Prime Minister Viktor Orbán's speech at the presentation of Suzuki's new model in its factory at Esztergom is also noteworthy. Reflecting on Hungarian car industry and the time frame during which Suzuki has operated in Hungary over the past 25 years, Orbán states:

There was a car manufacturing industry in Hungary before the Second World War, but it was swiftly ended by communism; we Hungarians only had the chance to tinker with our own COMECON cars at home in the privacy of our garages, so as to create the impression that they had something to do with us [...] with Suzuki Hungarian families could at last own a "western" car – which through an irony of fate is actually from the Far East. This is why we Hungarians still regard each and every model made by the company as our own.<sup>80</sup>

While in the same speech Orbán also goes into details about the "work ethics" of the Japanese and how the Hungarians also wish to ascribe to the Japanese belief in "work alone can bring about long-term advancement and prosperity for the inhabitants of the country, for the purposes of this article what matters most is his identification of Hungarians with the Eastern that appears Western. In the interwar period, as I illustrated above, it was also common to see Eastern markets promising new opportunities for Hungary. We can then consider Orbán's discourse in relation to Nándor Metzger's attempts in the interwar period as to how Hungary should make itself visible in Japan. In both instances, the East is pragmatically connoted to

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<sup>78</sup> Bálint Kálnoky, "Hungary's 'Opening to the East' and Turkey," *Hungarian Review* 1 (2013), 29–32.

<sup>79</sup> Interview, February 2015, Astana

<sup>80</sup> Viktor Orbán's speech at the presentation of Suzuki's new model, 5 March 2015, available at, <http://www.kormany.hu/en/the-prime-minister/the-prime-minister-s-speeches/viktor-orban-s-speech-at-the-presentation-of-suzuki-s-new-model>.

Hungarian identity so that Hungarians can reach out and find their true economic potential.

Beyond Fidesz, more recently, this desire to reach out to the Eastern nations finds expression in the politics of the extreme right Jobbik in Hungary under the banner of neo-Turanism. In essence, this ideology aspires to terminate Hungary's alliance with the Euro-Atlantic community and instead form a cultural, political and economic alliance with the Uralo-Altaic tribes of Siberia and Russia, and even Mongolians, Koreans, and Japanese.<sup>81</sup> The most daring declaration of Eurasianism among Jobbik ranks occurred in January 2010. Two Jobbik politicians, Márton Gyöngyösi and Tamás Hegedűs authored a long report entitled "The Strategic Turn towards the East" in the party newsletter *Barikád*. Hereby, the emphasis was that not only that the center of gravity in world economy was shifting towards the East due to the financial crisis in the West, but also the eastern societies showed that they could maintain their integrity, traditional community and value systems better than the westerners.

The authors referred to the increasing importance that the Shanghai Cooperation Organization acquired lately as an opponent of the unipolar American hegemony, how the post-Cold War considerations of Huntington and Fukuyama on the future of the Western domination were bound to fail, and the deep crisis in Europe not only in terms of economy but also values, demography, and Christianity. In this picture, the authors depicted Hungary lacking economic sovereignty, with a national self-consciousness in tatters, and general health and demographic indicators rapidly worsening. In other words, the Hungarian people had become frustrated, unhappy, and desperate. The authors suggested that a change in foreign policy orientation could

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<sup>81</sup> Akçalı and Korkut, "Neo-Turanism and Its Performance".

present the Hungarians with an economic and spiritual pedestal without which the country could not elevate itself from the crisis that they delineated. Hence, it was unquestionable that the country had to move away from the aging and decadent West – buckled under the strain of internal cohesion and identity problems, and move towards the firming East, which represented economic and demographic advantages.<sup>82</sup>

Reflecting on the crisis and the conservative and extreme right response, Csizmadia, Csery, Jenei, Lakatos, Nagy, Novák and Paár indicate that there are many similarities between the modern politics of Hungary and the politics during the global economic crisis of the interwar economic environment that generated Turanism, namely the importance of non-allied politics, economic unorthodoxy, and finally hostility to banks and elites.<sup>83</sup> There are also significant ramifications of extreme-right positions for Orbán inasmuch as he depicts the Western liberals and international capitalists as the main actors that brought forth Hungary's economic and political collapse in the 2000s. This has recently also triggered a welfare chauvinist anti-immigrant discourse and a referendum against the migrant quota imposed by the EU both directed at proponents of multi-culturalism in West in the shape of left-liberal politics as those seeking to destroy European societies and Europe.<sup>84</sup>

## CONCLUSION

This article has placed the current anti-westernism voiced and practiced by the conservative right Fidesz and the Jobbik party within a historical framework. It illustrated that their anti-westernism is the culmination of a long tradition of a search for beneficial relations and moral politics for Hungary outwith Europe. In its current

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<sup>82</sup> “Stratégiai fordulat Kelet felé Part I,” accessed 25 October, 2014, <http://alfahir.hu/node/45595>.

<sup>83</sup> Ervin Csizmadia, Péter Csery, András Jenei, Júlia Lakatos, Atilla Tibor Nagy, Zoltán Novák, and Ádám Paár, “A Magyar jobboldal természetrajza. Miért olyan a Fidesz, amilyen, és lehetne-e más?” *Élet és Irodalom* (17 May 2013): 1–8.

<sup>84</sup> Viktor Orbán's Speech at Tuznádfürdő Hungarian Summer School, 27 July 2015, available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vatM4R5Yr9k>.

shape this search expresses itself as a counter-discourse to Europeanization metanarrative that set much of the tone for the transformation in Hungary since early 1990s. In contrast, the nationalist and conservative right has proposed more traditional, religious, communitarian, patriarchal as well as productive values vis-à-vis the individualism that the West has represented.

Theoretically, the article reflects on social representation and collective memory literatures to illustrate that “identities are intentionally or deliberately chosen, used, and/or strategically manipulated”.<sup>85</sup> Following Hopf’s theoretical work, this article shows that conservative and nationalist political and cultural elite in Hungary engage in a collective soul search on what formulates Hungarian identity, particularly at times of political and economic turmoil. They foster new identities alternative to that of their conceived challengers. In this effort, they also refer to commitment to traditional socio-economic relations within the Hungarian society to generate the basis of a vigorous engagement with the modern world.<sup>86</sup> Yet, they also deliberately associate new elements to these identities in order to oppose the non-domestic that westernism propagates. Given the economic productivity and benefits oriented goals of the formulations of these new identities, I have contextualized them within the frame of economization.

In this respect, the article centrally focused on identity making as an essential element of Eurasianism in Hungary. Coser noted that for Halbwachs the past is a social construction mainly, if not wholly, shaped by the concerns of the present. In this context, Halbwachs argued that the beliefs, interests, and aspirations of the present shape the various views of the past as they are manifested respectively in every historical epoch. Then, collective historical memory acquires both cumulative

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<sup>85</sup> Ted Hopf, *Social Construction of International Politics. Identities and Foreign Policies, Moscow 1955 and 1999*, (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2002), 3.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid.

and presentist aspects. It shows at least partial continuity as well as new readings of the past in terms of the present. A society's current perceived needs may impel it to refashion the past, but successive epochs are being kept alive through a common code and a common symbolic canon even amidst contemporary revisions. In other words, Halbwachs' work shows how the present affects the selective perception of past history inasmuch as he stressed that our conceptions of the past are affected by the mental images we employ to solve present problems, so that collective memory is essentially a reconstruction of the past in the light of the present.<sup>87</sup> I have deliberated on not only the current emphasis on Eurasianism, but also the reflections of Hungary's relations with Eurasian nations extending all the way to Japan, considering this very framework.

In this context, a repeating attempt in the discourse of the Hungarian right-wing elite has been the making or revising of collective memory of the past to respond to the current problems of the present in order to transform problematic into non-problematic in collective rationality. This attempt saw both the ideological transformation of the West as well as the East for the consumption of Hungarian public. The image of a morally corrupt liberal system has been associated to the West, whereas all references to economic self-sufficiency, productivity and family have been associated with the "illiberal" that Hungary should attempt to grow into following Eastern templates. The search for establishing social control over the public to this extent has been unique. Overall, this article depicts the formulation of a new hegemony in Hungary in the shape of Eurasianism and shows the impact of this ambiguous ideology over Hungarian political history.

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<sup>87</sup> Coser, trans. and ed., *Maurice Halbwachs On Collective Memory*, pp.25-27, 34.

