

# **FATIGUE**

## **CENTENARY OF TRIANON - MEMORY POLITICS IN ORBÁN'S HUNGARY**

**ANDRZEJ SADECKI, CHARLES UNIVERSITY IN PRAGUE**

**ESR5: POLITICISATION OF COMMEMORATIVE PRACTICES IN EASTERN EUROPE**

**WP2: POLITICS OF MEMORY**

**FATIGUE: DELAYED TRANSFORMATIONAL FATIGUE IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE:  
RESPONDING TO THE RISE OF ILLIBERALISM/POPULISM**

**COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS WORKSHOP,  
12.06.2020**

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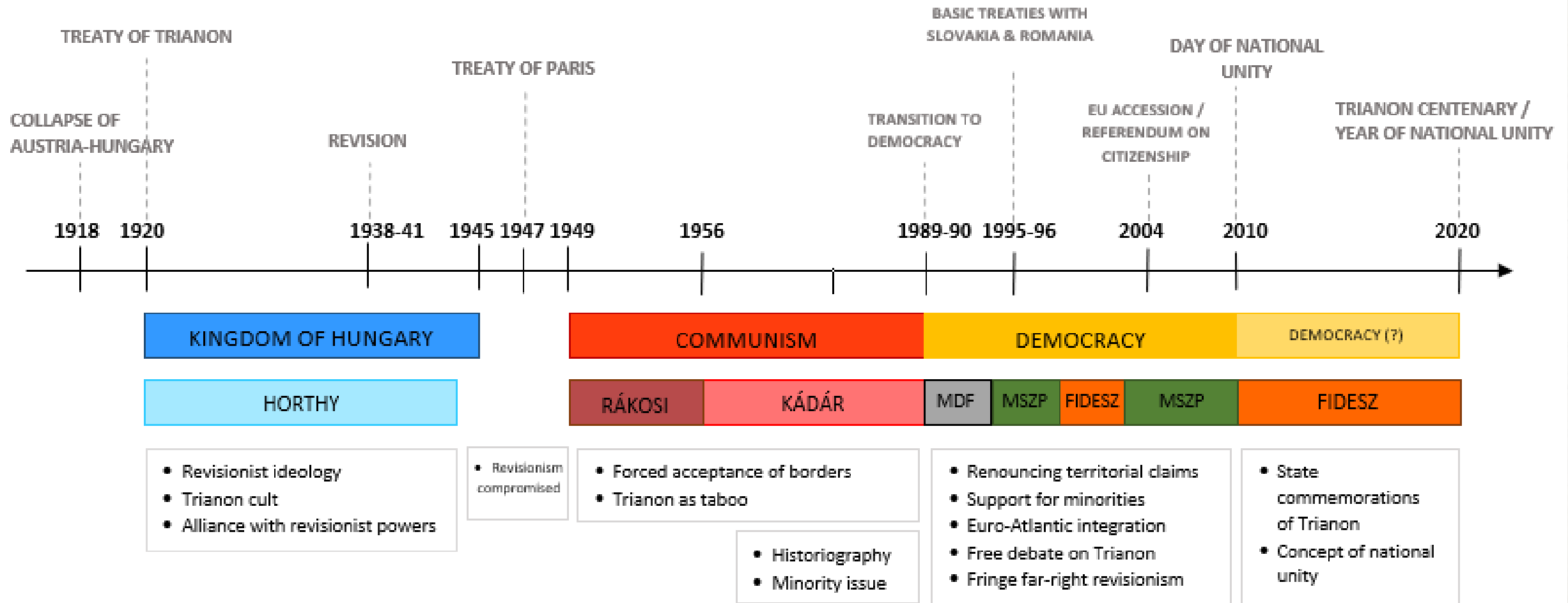
# RESEARCH PROJECT

- Aim: examine links between culture (memory) and politics in the context of populist rule of Viktor Orbán in Hungary
  - Case study: commemorations of the centenary of the Treaty of Trianon in Hungary
  - Research questions:
    - How do the mnemonic actors employ narratives about Trianon in order to challenge or legitimise power?
    - How do the narratives about Trianon reinforce their general narratives?
    - What are the narratives, who are the mnemonic actors and how the historical policies are shaped?
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# THEORETICAL ASSUMPTIONS

- Collective memory is socially constructed (Halbwachs 1925/1992), it's not a „mystical group mind” (Olick, Robins 1998)
- Collective memory as interaction of three factors: 1. intellectual and cultural traditions; 2. memory makers. 3. memory consumers (Kansteiner 2002)
- Past is produced in the present, thus is susceptible to instrumentalization and manipulation. However, mnemonic actors are not totally free in constructing historical narratives, they have to take into account the visions of the past cultivated by their audience (Bernhard, Kubik 2014)
- Collective memory both constrains and enable policies, as it shapes frameworks for foreign policy and domestic politics (Müller 2002)
- Two components of commemorative practices: 1. semiotic practices (content of memory politics) and 2. institutional practices (formulation of the content) (Bernhard, Kubik 2014)

# TIMELINE: MAIN PERIODS AND MILESTONES



# SELECTED SURVEYS

- **Publicus** (for Népszava, 20-26.02.2020, 1009 persons):

*Trianon is the biggest tragedy of Hungary's history:* agree – 83%, disagree- 14%.

*We should never accept the decisions taken in Trianon:* agree - 54%, disagree – 41%.

*There is no sense in dealing with the Trianon question anymore today:* agree – 46% agree, 51 – disagree.

- **Soreco Research** (for Trianon 100 Research Group, May 2020, 1045 persons, CATI)

78% interested in history (especially family history)

43% know the year when Trianon treaty was signed

70% approve giving citizenship to Hungarians abroad, but 58% disagree about giving them voting rights

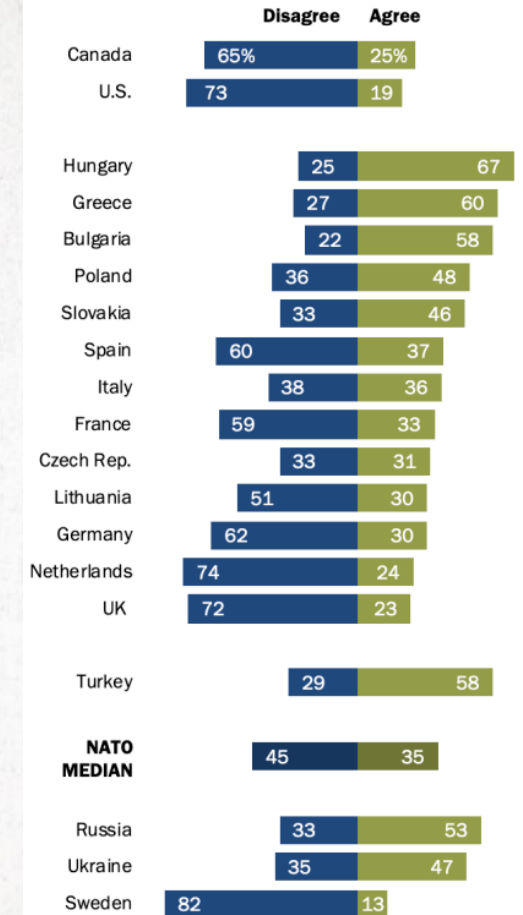
28% had a relative who moved in the past from the lands beyond the current borders

- **Pew Research** (May 2019):

67% agree that there are parts of neighbouring countries that really belong to us.

## Europeans divided over whether parts of neighboring countries belong to them

% who \_\_\_ that there are parts of neighboring countries that really belong to us



Note: Don't know responses not shown. Sweden, Ukraine and Russia are not NATO member states.

Source: Spring 2019 Global Attitudes Survey, Q50f. "NATO Seen Favorably Across Member States"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

## **ANALYSIS: FIDESZ/GOVERNMENT NARRATIVES**

- **National Unity (beyond the borders):**

*Every Hungarian individual and community which was put under the authority of other countries is part of an unified Hungarian nation (Declaration of Parliament, 2010)*

- **Victimhood, uniqueness and survival (sources of strength):**

*The [Trianon] diktat saw two thirds of the country's territory and 63 per cent of its population shorn from us; thus one in three Hungarians found themselves outside our borders. The verdict was obviously a death sentence. History has not recorded a nation that could survive such a loss of blood. (...) Today, one hundred years after the Trianon death sentence, I can tell you that we are alive and that Hungary still exists. And not only are we alive, but we have escaped from the grip of the surrounding circle of enemies. (Viktor Orbán, 16.02.2020)*

- **Central European cooperation:**

*I see that, together with Slovakia, Serbia, Croatia and Slovenia on re-established national foundations, we can find a common voice and broad cooperation. We can even form alliances. History has once again given the peoples of Central Europe the opportunity to build a new system of alliances based on their own national interests. Thus they have the ability to protect themselves from threats approaching from both the East and the West. (Viktor Orbán, 16.02.2020)*

## ANALYSIS: FIDESZ/GOVERNMENT NARRATIVES

- **Blame on the West:**

*The West raped the thousand-year-old borders and history of Central Europe (...) We will never forget that they did this. And when we thought that neither the arrogant French and British nor the hypocritical American empire could sink deeper than this, they could still do so. After World War II we were thrown to the Communists without heartache. (Viktor Orbán, 6.06.2020)*

- **Blame on the left-wing:**

*Hungarian left has attacked its own nation repeatedly over the past hundred years (...) Trianon borders would have been drawn very differently had the Hungarian left not betrayed its country. (László Kövér, 3.06.2020)*

# ANALYSIS: MEMORIAL OF NATIONAL UNITY



Source: own picture, 2020



Source: Index.hu, 2019



Source: Index.hu, 2019



# ANALYSIS: STATE-SPONSORED BILBOARDS AND VIDEOS



*We belonged together, we belong together.  
Weakened, but not crushed*

YouTube HU Szukaj

Trianon 100 – 2. TCR (60 mp)

472 341 wyświetleń • 19 maj 2020

1918 1920 Első világháború 342 subskrypcje

SUBSKRYBUJESZ

A YouTube video player showing a map of Central Europe. Hungary (Magyarország) is highlighted in green. White lines on the map indicate historical borders or routes. Neighboring countries like Austria, Slovakia, Romania, and Serbia are also labeled. The video title is "Trianon 100 – 2. TCR (60 mp)" and it has 472,341 views as of May 19, 2020. The channel is "Első világháború" with 342 subscribers.

YouTube HU Szukaj

Trianon 100 – 1. TCR (60 mp)

301 292 wyświetlenia • 19 maj 2020

1918 1920 Első világháború 342 subskrypcje

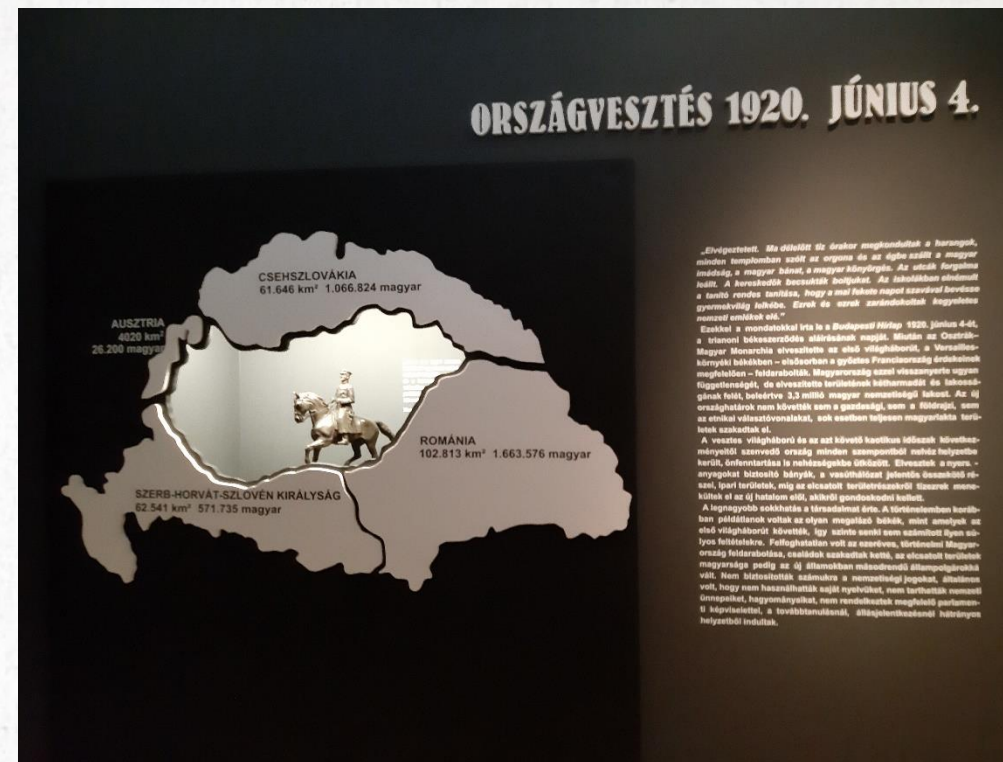
SUBSKRYBUJESZ

A YouTube video player showing a historical black and white photograph of a village square. A church with a steeple is in the background, and several people in period clothing are walking in the square. The video title is "Trianon 100 – 1. TCR (60 mp)" and it has 301,292 views as of May 19, 2020. The channel is "Első világháború" with 342 subscribers.

# ANALYSIS: STATE-SPONSORED EXHIBITIONS



A New World was born – 1914-1922  
Castle Garden Bazaar, Budapest



Hungarian World 1938-1940  
Hungarian National Museum, Budapest

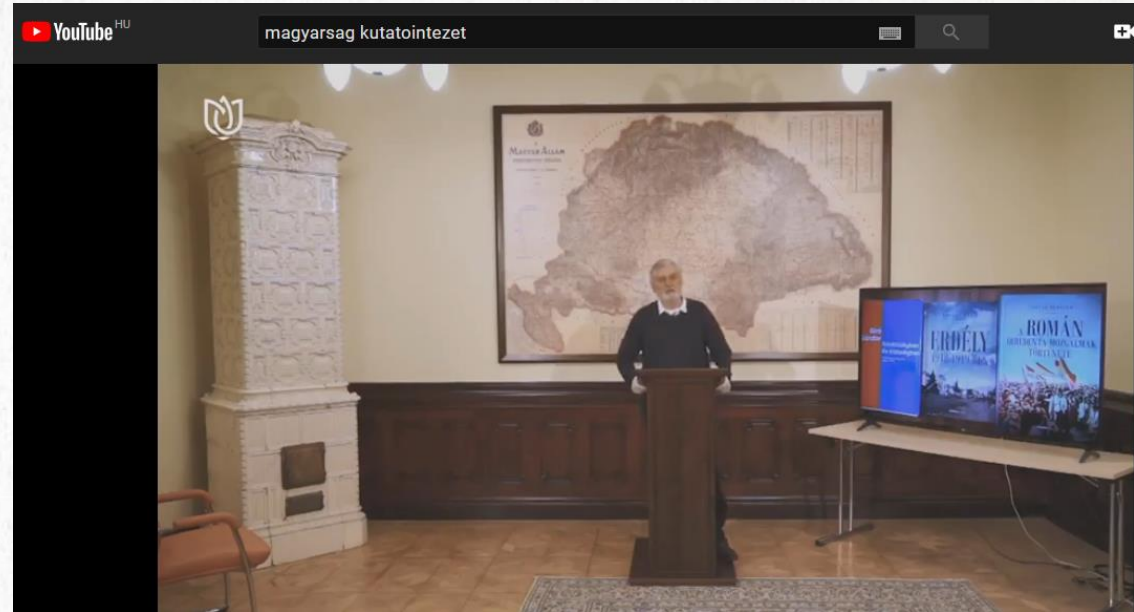
# ANALYSIS: REVISIONIST ALUSIONS



Source: Orbán's Facebook page (2019)



Source: Orbán's Facebook page (2020)



Conference at the Institute of Hungarian Studies (2020)

## ANALYSIS: OTHER APPROACHES

- Far right / revisionist parties and associations – interwar revisionist symbolic (Trianon crosses, maps of Greater Hungary, slogans), conspiracy theories (eg. role of Freemasonry), antisemitism; collecting signatures in protest of the treaty of Trianon.
- Left-wing/ liberal parties – varied: support for state celebrations (voting for the Year of National Unity) or boycott (eg. not taking part in the commemorative session in parliament), own initiatives (100 seconds of silence in Budapest announced by the liberal mayor).
- Civil society / academic approaches: presenting complex causes of Trianon, emphasis on multiplicity of forms of experiencing the dissolution of Kingdom of Hungary (local and minority perspectives, fate of Hungarian emigration); large academic projects (eg. Trianon100 Research Group of the Hungarian Academy of Science), variety of articles, podcasts, videos.

# ANALYSIS: FAR-RIGHT COMMEMORATIONS



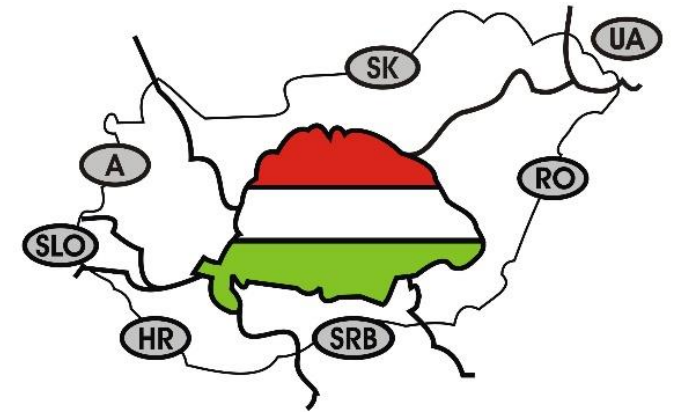
Source: own pictures (2020)

## ANALYSIS: ART AND HUMOUR



Source: Zóna, 2019

## KISEBB MAGYARORSZÁGOT!



Összefavarják a hülye nyelvjárások?  
Elege van belőle, hogy órákat kell utaznia ahhoz,  
hogy eljusson valahová a saját országában?  
Nem akar megjegyezni feleslegesen ilyen sok megyeszékhelyet?  
Leszarja Baranyát?

**Csatoljuk le a felesleges határmenti területeket!**

*Európai Unió Országcsökkentő Alapprogram  
Matuska Szilveszter Országépítő Egyesület  
Orseolo Szent Péter Asztaltársaság*

Source: MKKP, 2016 (?)