"Resignation is our greatest enemy"

The Case Study of the Ligetvédők Environmental Movement

Alexandra Pálóczi

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Change

Centre for Development and the Environment

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Abstract

Access to nature and green areas is a real battle in many cities around the world. However, these battles can be very different in nature, resulting in various outcomes depending on the context and the actors. This thesis examines a case from Hungary, namely the Ligetvédők movement. The aim of this qualitative study is firstly, to provide a case study about the strategies, narratives and impact of the movement. Secondly, to explore and understand how the contemporary Hungarian political context has influenced the functioning, narrative and strategy of the movement. Thirdly, to understand how the movement relates to some similar environmental movements of the past and present, and what are the main links with these movements. The thesis draws theoretical frameworks from theories related to both social movements and civil society: framing theory, political opportunity structures theory and monitory democracy theory. Accordingly, the Ligetvédők movement is examined from several perspectives, the micro and meso levels of the movement, and the macro aspects. I present the broader historical context of the movement as well, to which I go back to the time before 1989, when the Soviet repressive regime determined the life not only of Hungary but of the whole of CEE region. In addition, I compare the challenges of the Ligetvédők movement with the Gezi Park movement and the Tree movement in the "age of upgraded authoritarianism". The findings from this research reveal that the movement carried several frames: an environmental frame, a radical left frame, and a more moderate civic frame thematising the 'right to the city', besides the political framing of the project. The confluence of these frames created the ecopolitical master frame, which for a short period of time resulted in the frame resonance with the experiences of broad social groups. As a result, the movement could successfully mobilise large masses on two occasions. Nevertheless, the counter-frames developed by the Városliget Ltd. were successful in weakening and discrediting the movement. Moreover, the specificities of the political system and the scarcity of political opportunity structures in the country made it even more difficult for the movement to mobilise effectively, while the movement has been steadily weakened by internal processes and conflicts too. For these reasons, the movement has only partially fulfilled the three examined civil society functions: to build community, advocate and engage in public communication and monitor accountability.

Keywords: environmental movements, Hungary, civil society theory, political opportunity structure theory, framing theory, monitory democracy, social media

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And last, but not least, thank you to my future child who joined me in the last 4 months for inspiring me in the last stage. You are already my biggest motivation.

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List of abbreviations and acronyms

CEECs	Central and Eastern European countries'
CMEA	Soviet and Council for Mutual Economic Assistance
EDCs	economically developed countries
ENGOs	environmental non-governmental organisations
EUR	Euro
Fidesz	Alliance of Young Democrats–Hungarian Civic Union (Magyar Polgári Szövetség)
GONGOs	governmental organised non-governmental organisations
GNP	gross national products
GROs	grassroots organisations
HUF	Hungarian Forint
LDCs	lesser developed countries
LMP	Politics Can Be Different (Lehet Más a Politika)
NGOs	non-governmental organisations
NIMBY	not-in-my-backyard
NSD	Norwegian Centre for Research Data
PI	personal interview
UFV	Independent Women's Union
United States	US
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

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1 Introduction

1.1 Background

Airborne dust, the sound of machinery, enclosed areas, cut tree roots, excavated soil and construction noise – no, we are not on a suburban construction site but in one of the first public parks of the world, namely in the City Park of Budapest (hereafter Városliget) in the heart of the city, in Hungary on a nice, sunny autumn afternoon in 2019. Approaching the centre of the park there is more and more noise and dust, and, in some parts, a narrow traffic corridor is the only way for the small hydraulic shovels, dog walkers, cyclists, and strollers. Where you go to find some peace and to leave behind the throbbing buzz of the city, even for a half-hour, there you face more strongly what you are running away from.

Access to nature and green areas is a real battle in many cities around the world. However, these battles can be very different in nature, resulting in various outcomes depending on the context and the actors. This chapter briefly introduces the case of the Városliget from Hungary, which has been a space of real and symbolic conflicts since 2013, as well as related issues such as urban environment, politics, and activism. By setting the 'scene' and introducing the main actors, we get closer to understanding the importance of research and its main purpose. In the following paragraphs the main background information about the Liget Project and the Ligetvédők movement will be presented, as well as the theoretical approaches and the research methodology.

The conflicts started when the Liget[1] Project, formerly known as the 'Museum Quarter', was officially established by a Government Decision (in short by the "Városliget Law") which says that "new national public collection of buildings" – that is museums – will be renewed and built between 2014-2020 in Városliget (1397/2013. [VII. 2.] Korm. határozat, 2013). Later, in July 2014, the Budapest Assembly – which had a pro-government majority at that time – accepted the modification of city park building regulations, called "Building Regulations of the Városliget"[2]. The new regulations made it possible to realise the Liget Project as it states that the proportion of the built-up area increases to 7% from a previous 6.3%[3]. The "Városliget

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[1] Liget means park, grove.
[2] Városligeti építészeti szabályzat (VÉSZ)
[3] The 0.7% surplus means 7000 m^2 in the park (32/2014. [VII. 15.] Főv. Kgy. rendelet a Városligeti építési szabályzatról, 2014). Note, incidentally, other public parks have rules that only 3% can be built on (Partizán, 2020).

Law" and the "Building Regulations of the Városliget" provide the legal background for the project and declare that the owner of the trustee rights is the state-owned Városliget Real Estate Development Ltd. (hereafter Városliget Ltd.). The law stipulates that the facilities under construction – or already completed – will be the property of the Hungarian State because the park as a property was transferred to the state-owned Városliget Real Estate Developer Ltd. (hereafter: Városliget Ltd.) for 99 years.

As I mentioned, the park is considered one of the first public parks in the world, and is also a UNESCO World Heritage Site (Budapest city park, n.d.). Its historical significance in the country and its role in the life of the capital (Nagy, 2002; Szilágyi et al., 2015; Csapó & Lenner, 2016; Szaszák & Kecskés, 2018) make the case noteworthy nationally. Moreover, the announced position of the project by the Városliget Ltd. as "Europe's largest and most ambitious urban cultural development" (Megújuló Park, n.d.) advances it to a remarkable topic internationally too.

From 2013, there were debates about the developments in professional circles. However, from March 16, 2016, as the building site was fenced for the first time, a civil initiative – the Protectors of the Liget (hereafter Ligetvédők) movement – started to demonstrate and work to stop the construction work. Their main objection to the project was that the "Városliget Law" and the "Building Regulations of the Városliget" were legally preposterous and the management of the project did not take into account the criticisms and opinions of many major professional, civil society and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) when designing the project. Moreover, the communication about the project was misleading and incomplete, the project could cause significant environmental damage during and after construction and prioritized tourism and economic interests over the recreation function (Ligetvédők, 2018). Around 50 activists lived in a camp in the Városliget from March 2016 until an eviction in July 2016 and many activists took part in the movement from home while going about their everyday life (family, school, work). The movement was physically present continuously in the park until April 2018 but as a result of internal conflicts and splits into smaller groups, few remained active. However, the movement did not cease completely, but the activists stood up for the park

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Due to new regulations, the percentage of the built-up area in the Városliget would no longer be decided by the Budapest local government. The right was taken away by law from Budapest, which can at most adapt its city planning plans to the government-backed construction concept (Ráday, 2014).

in their way, with different means, such as tracking and documenting construction irregularities by taking photos and videos to inform the public.

Figure 1: *Ligetvédő activists are protecting a tree in the park* (Ligetvédők Fotók, 2017)

The original goals included to stop the construction; persuading the project developer, Városliget Ltd., to launch a real public consultation with civil society; and to achieve the renewal of the Városliget as a public park, but, over time as construction progressed, these goals have shifted toward minimizing the damages, documentation, and prevention of new construction (Ligetvédők, n.d.a). However, being an activist in a movement and practicing the democratic rights of expressing disagreement against a government project in today's Hungary leads us to tackle a broader issue. Their struggle provides grounds to discuss how grassroots social and environmental movements operate in a non-democratic system.

From 2010 – since the right-wing party Fidesz (Alliance of Young Democrats – Hungarian Civic Union) started to govern in Hungary, with a two-third majority led by Viktor Orbán – Hungary has been moving away from a liberal democratic system. This means in practice that the democratic institutions do not function properly, the media system is distorted, and the government tries to discredit the civil initiatives and NGOs (Müller, 2011; Rupnik, 2012; Bajomi-Lázár, 2013; Innes, 2015; Nagy, 2017; Buzogány, 2017; Beauchamp, 2018; Wilkin, 2018). Nevertheless, the latest municipal elections in October 2019 brought about a moderate opposition success – in ten of the twenty-three County-Cities, as well as in Budapest, the

candidates of the opposition parties have won – which may have opened up new opportunities for the Ligetvédők movement.

The significance of the movement can be seen in the context of the international and the Hungarian environmental civil society movements and the degree of attention given to them. Their story, presence, protests, non-violent resistance, and their legal initiatives to challenge building permits have received a lot of media attention, especially in the first two years of its existence. As well as the reaction of the powers against them during and after the protests, several criminal proceedings have since been instituted against activists, the legitimacy of which is questionable (Hegyi, 2017). However, despite the hurdles and challenges, the movement has been around for five years. After the municipal elections, some of the activists started to work together with the new city administration of Budapest so they can share all the practical and legal knowledge gained and pieces of evidence that can help the city administration to influence the outcomes, find the legal and political opportunities and change the plans of the project.

Although some construction work has begun, the fate of some planned construction in the park is still undecided. Negotiations between the movement and the new city administration of Budapest and legal battles between the government and the city administration are still happening in October 2020 while I am writing these lines. The project continues to be an important issue in the public debate, and it has become a symbolic case in the country. During the writing process, I intend to keep abreast of and take into consideration the latest news and progress of the project – besides the conducted research –, thus providing a comprehensive and thorough study about the case.

1.2   Aims and research questions

The main objectives of my thesis are threefold. Firstly, to provide a case study about the strategies, narratives and impact of the movement – mainly from the activists' perspective but also including the city planners' perspectives. Secondly, I wish to explore and understand how the contemporary Hungarian political context has influenced the functioning, narrative and strategy of the movement. Thirdly, to discuss how the movement relates to some similar environmental movements of the past and present, and what are the main links with these movements. Hence, I would like to examine the Ligetvédők movement from several perspectives, the micro and meso levels of the movement such as personal and group narratives,

relationships, motivations, grievances, and meaning-making processes. As well as the macro aspects, that is, how the political and social structure of the country has affected the movement and vice versa.

Accordingly, based on my aims, the main research question is as follows: *How and with what results has the Ligetvédők movement been working and operating within the Hungarian political context?*

In order to answer the main research question, further sub-research questions need to be answered in the different chapters: What are the historical and political contexts of the environmental movements of Hungary? How can the political and social context be described in the case of the Liget Project and the Ligetvédők movement? How did the movement organise itself, what kind of strategy and communication strategy and stories has the movement had during the different periods of the project considering the political environment? How have other similar movements – specifically the Gezi Park movement from Turkey and the Trees movement from Vietnam – operated in similar non-democratic political environments? Based on the traditions of social movements and civil society case studies, I combine qualitative interviews and literature review to address these questions.

1.3 Rationale

The Liget project has been the subject of various academic studies. Esteve Amorós (2017) analyses the concept and the potential risks of the developments. However, besides the descriptions and analyses, he emphasises only the positive outcomes of the project – mainly the potential growing green areas – and does not mention the opponents, the demonstrations, and the possible negative effects. Szilágyi et. al (2015) put more emphasis on the critiques of the project, such as the social recreational deficit, ecological consequences, and the changes in the ecosystem of the urban green area because of the development. They claim that the biggest fault of the project is that it does not take into consideration the park as a value itself (Szilágyi et. al, 2015). The project would sacrifice the value of the park at the altar of tourism. The management should have included in the project a proper impact assessment of the environmental overloads and created a rehabilitation plan with the replacement of trees and further compensations. This impact study was not released at the beginning of the project. Yet, it is clear that the project would have negative effects on the environment and the ecological system of the park (Szilágyi et al. 2015; Szilágyi and Fekete 2018). As are all the old parks with mature trees, Városliget is

particularly sensitive to any changes that take place there. Any artificial intervention has a greater or lesser effect on the habitat capacity, water balance, local climate or soil quality. Moreover, taking into consideration that the urban climate is much drier and warmer nowadays, the vulnerability of the ecosystem of the park is even greater (Szilágyi et. al, 2015).

Réka Saáry (2018) examines the local people's perceptions of their role regarding urban development projects in general and in the case of the Liget Budapest Project in particular. In her quantitative research, she outlines the most common problems that can regularly emerge during urban development projects, and classifies respondents based on their attitude towards these developments and the Liget Project. She claims that the respondents are not satisfied with the urban developments in general. Commonly, and specifically in the case of the Liget Project, residents perceive "some negative aspects of neoliberal urban development" and they think these projects are "not or not always in the communities' interest and there is a lack of meaningful participation opportunities" (Saáry, 2018, p. 79). Smith, Sziva and Olt (2019) approach the project – besides two other cases in Budapest – from the perspective of "overtourism" and resident resistance, which take us a bit closer to the resident's attitudes. They analyse the comments of Ligetvédők's Facebook page to see the content of the posts and comments and how people relate to the issue of tourism in the case of the Liget Project (Smith, Sziva and Olt, 2019). They found out that the main topics include "the impact of the environment, park, and its trees on the wellbeing of the residents" (Smith, Sziva and Olt, 2019, p. 387). Of the 6000 comments, 30 contained the keyword "tourism" and all 30 were negative about the project in terms of tourism. Besides, they perceived a strong anti-government opinion on the site: in the description of the 'About' section and in the comments, people mention "corruption, real estate speculation and naming the project as «flagship buildings of the regime»" (p. 387).

Nikolett Watson-Puskás (2017) presents case studies on urban resilience in Budapest as well. She, in turn, emphasises how the bottom-up initiatives challenge the top-down policymaking by demanding their rights back for a sustainable and healthy city and empowering communities. In her studies, she introduces the Ligetvédők group as an example of challenging the status quo by advocating for participatory democracy, uniting NGO-s, and professionals for reclaiming rights to the citizens and demanding environmental justice (Watson-Puskás, 2017). Emma Gothár (2017) explores in her comparative study how the top-down approach can be interpreted in the case of the Liget Project as she studies the different political systems' approaches towards

parks and the environment generally based on the example of Városliget in Hungary and Tiergarten[4] in Germany. She argues that, despite the similarities between the current and previous environmental damaging decisions, which decreased the amount of green space in the park, the current Hungarian illiberal system has different approaches to the Városliget than the previous regimes or the German approach to the Tiergarten. The Liget Project would change the functions of the park significantly as it could no longer function as an urban public park, but as a Museum Quarter, alias as a cultural tourist attraction. Hence, the current Hungarian regime has ecologically controversial priorities, as the representative functions and symbolic power demonstration determine strongly how the government relates to the environment.

The above literature reviews several aspects of the Liget project and touches upon the issue of urban resilience regarding the project. However, none of them studies the Ligetvédők movement in itself as a unique case despite the movement being an important part of the story of the park and the project as well. Their presence and activities from the beginning raise questions on what impact they could have on the outcomes of the project, how their physical and mental fight for the park can be interpreted and how the political context determined their opportunities. Based on my literature research, no one has done a thorough analysis of the functioning, communication and role of the movement, taking into account the specifics of the political system and the internal operations of the movement. This thesis aims to fill this gap.

1.4 Conceptual and theoretical overview

1.4.1 Civil society, social movements, environmental movements

In order to determine the nature of the movement and find the appropriate conceptual and theoretical frameworks to examine the movement, I looked at the descriptions available on the largest public surface of the movement. It can be seen from the self-definition of the Ligetvédők movement on their online platforms, that they emphasise their belonging to civil society. On their webpage, they write, "We are an active community of civilians who truly care about the fate of the Városliget…"[5] (Ligetvédők, n.d.a), while on their Facebook page, they write that "Ligetvédők is a civilian movement that aims to keep Városliget as a public park and actively

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[4] Tiergarten is one of Berlin's big city centre parks. It covers an area of 210 hectares, making it the second largest inner-city park in the city after Tempelhof Park and the third largest in Germany. Gothár (2017) examines "how Budapest Városliget and Berlin Tiergarten symbolize different political regimes' approaches to the environment, including different environmental and broader political values in different periods of their history under diverse political regimes" (p. 5).
[5] Translated by the author

protests against being built in the park"[6] (Ligetvédők, n.d.b). So, the civil nature of the movement is an important element, which indicates that I should see them as part of civil society and look at them as a civil initiative. Additionally, due to the profile of the movement, that is, that they link their activities primarily to environmental protection, it also suggests that the movement can be understood as an environmental movement, which is a form of a social movement.

So, the Ligetvédők movement can be examined on the basis of theories of civil society and social movements. However, there is a wide range of definitions, conceptualization, and selective approaches to civil society and social movements (Whitehead, 1997; White, 2004; Fine, 2007). Moreover, the political relationship between state and society was theorised in many different ways (Trägårdh & Witoszek, 2013; White, 2004). With the advancement of social science and political philosophy, more and more definitions and approaches emerged that made it almost impossible to universally use or highlight one definition. At the same time, it is precisely the breadth of concepts that allows scholars of civil society and social movements to take the most relevant approaches to a given study. To clear the theoretical ground, in the following, I will discuss the most significant conceptual and theoretical frameworks for examining civil society and social movements and their relations to different political systems.

Gordon White (2004) describes civil society as "an intermediate sphere of social organisation or association between the basic units of society – families and firms – and the state" (p. 9). Although this general description situates civil society in society, a more practical approach is needed to understand the civil sphere, which White (2004) captures as follows: "an intermediate associational realm between state and family populated by organisations which are separate from the state, enjoy autonomy in relation to the state and are formed voluntarily by members of society to protect or extend their interests or values" (p. 10). This is a widespread and practical approach that sees civil society primarily in some forms of organisation that exist independently between the state and the families, and which asserts its interests. These organisations are often identified as non-governmental organisations (NGOs), which are relatively large organisations that are established officially, financially supported domestically or internationally and employ professionals (Mercer, 2002). There are international, national or regional NGOs and they can be distinguished also by the field in which they operate[7] and on

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[6] Translated by the author
[7] For example, business-friendly international NGOs (BINGOs) and environmental NGOs (ENGOs).

the basis of belonging to a particular interest group[8]. The different NGOs make it even more difficult to see through and understand the civil society sector, which is often associated with these non-governmental or non-profit organisations while in many cases their "civicness" is called into question by their professional functioning and connection to politics or the business world (Trägårdh & Witoszek, 2013).

The question naturally arises how to categorise the movements, protests and civic actions that do not operate within such an organisational framework but have developed spontaneously and are active parts of the social world. Hasenfeld and Gidron (2005) remind us, based on the civil society concepts of Foley and Edwards (1996), that there are two civil society concepts that can be distinguished by their goals. 'Civil Society I' concept "refers to volunteer-run associations, networks of civic engagement and the production of social capital in fostering collective trust and in strengthening democracy" (Foley and Edwards (1996) cited in Hasenfeld and Gidron, 2005, p. 99). On the other hand, the 'Civil Society II' concept "refers to groups that do challenge the state", which includes "movements that struggle against authoritarian regimes" and "the new social movements that are concerned with social, cultural and quality-of-life issues" (p. 99). In that sense, civil society encompasses also the different forms of civic engagement – the term widely used by Robert Putnam (2000) – and movements that start from below and are directed towards the state. These movements are regularly referred to as grassroots organisations (GROs) – or grassroots movements – that are smaller organisations, do not employ paid staff, and the members "work" there voluntarily and out of conviction. They are financially more unstable and usually, they need different support to operate from donors or NGOs (Mercer, 2002). Since the Ligetvédők movement is not an officially established or registered organisation and it operates voluntarily without a strict organisational framework, it carries the peculiarities of a grassroots movement which, as part of civil society, seeks to achieve its goal in a non-democratic framework.

By contrast, Howard (2013) distinguishes between civil society and social movements and he argues that only those organisations that are formally organised can be seen as part of civil society. In that sense he excludes the spontaneous mobilisations and loose organisations because comparing them to those movements to the wider context of civil society, they tend to

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[8] Therefore, we distinguish between for example business organised NGOs (BONGOs), politically organised NGOs (PONGOs), donor organised NGOs (DONGOs), governmental organised NGOs (GONGOs), and the list could be continued even further.

rise and fall more frequently. It seems a rather reductionist approach. I would argue that in the case of the Ligetvédők movement, in terms of their activities and the broader political and social context, their existence indicates that they are seen as part of civil society. In this sense, the theories of civil society provide an appropriate theoretical framework for studying their activities and roles.

1.4.2 Theoretical approaches to study civil society and the state

1.4.2.1 Role of civil society in the state

The theoretical debates about the role of civil society are also closely related to the conceptualization of civil society and its relation to the state. Theories of civil society from the Enlightenment to the second half of the 20th century are the results of the history of Western thought and thinkers such as John Locke, Charles Montesquieu, Alexis de Tocqueville, Antonio Gramsci and Jürger Habermas. These theories were linked to states which have historically been tied to the political emancipation of feudalism, monarchy, and the state (Paffenholz & Spurk, 2006). These approaches are widely used in understanding the role of civil society in liberal democracies, but it is questionable whether they can be transferred to other non-Western contexts (Lewis, 2002; Mercer, 2002; White, 2004; Paffenholz & Spurk, 2006). They paint an idealistic picture of the civil society, while also describing the concept in a normative way including what civil society should be like.

Since the 1980s, the study of civil society has expanded due to the democratisation processes in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and Central and Eastern Europe, and more and more complex analytical frameworks and empirical research have emerged to understand the role of civil society and its relation to the state. Arato's (1992) definition makes a distinction between movements and institutionalized civil society. Agreeing with Eastern European researchers, he attaches crucial importance to the movements in the institutionalization of civil society and assigns great importance to the organisations that define the nature of civil society. Moreover, in agreement with Western European analysts of new social movements – such as Alain Touraine –, he believes that less comprehensive or existing movements at the level of opportunity play a key role in keeping alive and even developing the spirit of democratic and liberal institutions (Arato, 1992).

There is also an approach that defines the concept of civil society in a broader and more neutral way. Baker (2004) argues, civil society is a fundamentally neutral sphere that exists on its own

without any organisational framework, regardless of their actions. Such a perception of civil society can be linked to the Hegelian civil society concept, which does not associate good values with civil society and bad ones with the state but sees a dynamic relationship between the two (Witoszek & Trägårdh, 2013). Hence, modern debates intend to overcome the ideal picture of the civil society. Accordingly, more research focuses on the cases when the civil society cooperates with the state, and their relationship can be potentially symbiotic and mutual or even it can make civilians vulnerable to the state (Howard, 2003). Recent research includes studies about crime organisations, which are also interpreted as part of the civil society (Witoszek & Trägårdh, 2013).

The different traditions, which are related to the historical and cultural context and political system, are still influential on how civil society is studied. However, the much-cited comprehensive work – Civil Society and Political Theory – of Cohen and Arato (1994) sought to develop a theory that could be applied to multiple contexts. According to this, in an authoritarian system, civil society takes on an opposition role. At the same time, in liberal democracies, civil society was created by self-construction and self-mobilisation, in which they have an institutionalised and generalised role by law. Their political role is not to control but the generation of influence through democratic associations and discourse in the cultural public sphere. This mostly assumes a diffuse civil society that cannot be seen as an opposition to the market and the state (Cohen & Arato, 1994). Accordingly, it is correct to argue that "only a democratic state can create a democratic civil society; only a democratic state can sustain a democratic state" and that the state must play an important role in creating a vibrant civil society (Howard, 2003, p. 38).

Approaching the concrete study of a movement of today's Hungarian civil society, out of the many conceptual frameworks and approaches, I move on to the part of the literature that examines the possible roles of civil society in a non-democratic context.

1.4.2.2 Role of civil society in a non-democratic political environment

The literature can be systematised into two main areas of research regarding the relationship between civil society and non-democratic political systems. One is the civil society and social movements' role in democratisation and transitional processes of the 1980s and 1990s, and the other is the recent research of the 2000s and 2010s on the movements in the contemporary authoritarian and hybrid regimes (Cavatorta, 2012a; Lewis, 2013). The transitional literature in

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the Eastern European context gives the historical and cultural context of the examined case of the Ligetvédők movement and the Liget Project, while newer research of the new movements introduces the global context and the challenges of the movement today.

Transitional literature

As Samuel Huntington (1991) states, the third wave of democratisation started in the 1970s, in Spain, Portugal and Greece and continued in the 1980s and the early 1990s in many countries of Africa, Latin-America, Asia, then in Central and Eastern Europe with the collapse of the former Soviet Union. The process of democratisation is usually divided into three phases: political opening, the collapse of the previous regime, and then the consolidation of the new system (Böcskei & Hajdu, 2019). The role of civil society, NGOs, and social movements in the democratisation process of the 1980s and 1990s in Latin America and Eastern Europe is a well-studied yet debated area (Cavatorta, 2012b). The concept of civil society has also become "a category born of the spirit of radical opposition[9]" (Arato, 1992, p. 54) and a political slogan – such as civil society against the communist state. (Seligman, 1997; Howard, 2003). Following the changes in Eastern Europe and the disintegration of communist-type state systems, the concept could not break away from its political implications (Seligman, 1997).

The core of the liberal vision is that NGOs strengthen the civil society which supports the process of democratisation. Whereas in the 1990s there was a clear consensus on the crucial role of civil society in the democratisation process, however, the role of the civil society as an instrument of democratisation is contested in subsequent research (Cavatorta, 2012b; Hajdu & Böcskei 2019). As Cavatorta (2012b) argues (based on Tempest (1997) and Grugel (2000)) the vital role of civil society is exaggerated. Nevertheless, to understand the Eastern European civil society during the 1980s and 1990s, specific cases need to be demonstrated. In the second chapter, I will present the civil society actors and their role in some countries in the Central and Eastern European region, through examples of environmental protection and opposition.

Civil society in today's hybrid regimes

The awakening of civil society in the authoritarian context of the 21st century was mentioned first in connection with the democratisation process of the Arab Countries in which, as Kubba (2000) argues, civil society activism had a vital role, in spite of the challenging political

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[9] Translated by the author

environment. However, a decade later it seemed that the democratisation transition paradigm "had lost its explanatory power" (Cavatorta, 2012a, p. 76) because the authoritarian countries had introduced seemingly liberal reforms which helped them to survive and strengthen their legitimacy, so these systems did not move towards a more democratic functioning. The renewal of the authoritarian rules is reinforced by the emergence and spread of semi-democracies/autocracies alias hybrid regimes (Cavatorta, 2012b). Hybrid systems are widespread in many Latin American countries (Haiti, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru), post-communist Eurasia (Albania, Croatia, Russia, Serbia, Ukraine) and African states (Ghana, Kenya, Mozambique) (Böcskei and Hajdu, 2019).

Hence, the paradigm of authoritarian persistence became the ruling paradigm of the 2000s, which emphasised the resilience of authoritarian regimes primarily in connection with political events in the Arab world (Cavatorta, 2012a). Therefore, the events of the Arab Spring cannot be compared to the democratisation process of Eastern Europe and Latin America (Cavatorta, 2012a). Nevertheless, the case brought back the question of the validity of both paradigms and revealed that in the "age of upgraded authoritarianism" because of the new online spaces and the ideological resilience of activists, the issue of civil activism needs to be rethought (p. 81). It is important to note that the literature provides more empirical examples from purely authoritarian countries; however, due to the repressive nature of the political system, which is also partly characteristic of the hybrid regimes, they can also serve as an important example. Despite the strategies, ideologies and institutions of the non-democratic countries being different, based on the main features of the operations, there are significant similarities (Cavatorta, 2012b). In the fifth chapter, I will present the links between the Ligetvédők movement and the movements of other repressive regimes by comparing two concrete examples: the Gezi Park movement from Turkey and the Trees movement from Vietnam.

1.4.3 Theoretical approaches to study social movements

Research on social movements has received increasing attention since the 1950s. Social movements are in a constant state of flux, which is why there is not just one definition, but a variety of approaches (Ágh, 2018). A time-honoured and most commonly used definition is that of Charles Tilly, who described social movements as a series of contested performances, manifestations and campaigns by which ordinary people make collective demands on others (Tilly & Wood, 2020). Goodwin and Jasper (2014) take a similar approach to defining social movements, but also emphasise that social movements seek to change some aspect of their

society by means outside the institutions. Nevertheless, like in the case of the civil society, studying social movements was quite limited to the Western European and American academic perspectives until the 1980s and also took over various aspects from the history of concept of the civil society (Arato & Cohen, 1988). It is therefore not surprising to think that social movements can also influence the spread of democracy and play a role in regime change (Goodwin & Jasper, 2014).

Movements can be very different in terms of their aims and intended effects. Social movements aim to enforce, invalidate or uphold the rules of social institutions and/or to achieve a social (or socially related) good that is a public good[10] (Farkas, 2019). Any issue that directly affects the natural environment or environmental sustainability, that seeks to change the environment, or that expropriates or seeks to market an environmental asset is called an environmental issue (Glied, 2013). As such, it also has an impact on society, as the creation, maintenance and protection of a healthy environment is everyone's responsibility. We can therefore say that every environmental interest is also a social interest (Glied, 2013).

The first environmental organisations were founded at the end of the 19th century in Western societies such as Britain and the United States due, inter alia, to the political structure of the two countries as they have been allowing, and even supporting, the free association of citizens in pursuit of various political goals (McBeath & Rosenberg, 2006). As McBeath & Rosenberg (2006) summarise, in Western, economically developed countries (EDCs), which covers liberal democracies, there are various environmental movements that are private and non-profit organisations, independent of the state, and a separate part of civil society. While, in lesser developed countries (LDCs), which includes democracies and authoritarian regimes, there more local, grassroots movements and environmental non-governmental organisations (ENGOs) and less at the national level (McBeath & Rosenberg, 2006). These movements and organisations are most related to different threats to the local urban or rural environment. It can also be observed that authoritarian countries generally prohibit, but at least hinder, the establishment

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[10] In this sense, social movements may, for example, aim to raise wages, reduce working hours, reduce corruption, increase welfare spending and thus improve welfare services, and overthrow the government. In addition, there are movements such as peace movements, anti-nuclear movements, environmental movements, or movements for a particular way of life or lifestyle which may not be considered as direct social movements in terms of their aims, but which in many ways are still social movements because of the indirect impact their activities have on society (Farkas, 2019).

of these organisations and movements and tend to work with NGOs set up by the government (GONGOs), which have limited autonomy (McBeath & Rosenberg, 2006).

There are many theoretical frameworks for the study of environmental movements as social movements. I will briefly describe the different approaches, and in the next unit I will summarise the conceptual and theoretical frameworks within which I examine the Ligetvédők movement.

Theories of collective behaviour or collective action are based on a behaviourist interpretation of social processes and are applied to the study of social phenomena that involve a kind of collective action, such as panic, mass hysteria, strikes and social movements themselves (Mikecz, 2010). Collective action is caused by the dissatisfaction, anxiety and grievances of individuals, which they seek to resolve through action (Buechler, 1999). The theory of resource mobilisation is another major approach, which sees the movement as a rational actor. According to this theory, collective action is based on tactical reasoning, which involves participants making a cost-benefit calculation in order to achieve the expected benefits (McAdam, 1982). It was the first theory that acknowledged the significance of influences outside the social movement (Johnson, 2000) whereas collective action theory sees culture and society as a context (McCarthy & Zald, 1977).

Political process theory and within that, the political opportunity structure, are popular approaches in social movement research. In this way, the macro-aspects become visible to study. In other words, the embeddedness of social movements in society as a whole, which was a big shift in social movement theory in the 1980s (Pickvance, 1997; Goldberg, 2019). Political process theory can be traced back to the work of Charles Tilly (1978) and Douglas McAdam (1982), who, in two different but overlapping works, have provided complementary explanations of the birth of movements[11]. According to him, political opportunity can create a positive and hopeful attitude among the population that can help mobilising groups to emerge and work. Hence, the emergence of political resistance is influenced by factors such as the level of organisation, collective trust in political action and the system of political alliances (McAdam, 1982). The latter is in fact the political opportunity structure, which refers to the

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[11] Tilly (1978) described the genesis of social movements as being based on a mix of interests; in other words, what potential actors have to benefit from mobilisation; what the potential costs of failure are, and the chances of success. McAdams (1982) identified somewhat distinct determinants behind the rise of the American Civil Rights movement: the political opportunities, the political structures that might increase the chances of success; the strength and networks of organisations.

openness and closeness of the political system and elite groups. This also includes social characteristics, such as informal political customs, and social groupings as other political actors. The political institutions of a society influence the strategy, organisation and effectiveness of social movements. They express the extent to which the everyday and political social structure of a given society provides feasible opportunities for the emergence and effective functioning of movements to achieve particular goals (Mikecz, 2010). People respond to political opportunities by engaging in contested politics and then they are able to create new opportunities through collective action (Tarrow, 1994). This implies a certain level of organisation within the group concerned. People who are better integrated in their communities are more likely to participate in protest actions (Mikecz, 2010).

The political opportunity structures theory has been criticized from many points of view, but as Goodwin and Jasper argue (2004), it cannot be bypassed[12]. As Farkas (2019) argues, three main components of the political opportunity structure can be well delineated: the openness or closedness of formal access to policy decisions; the stability or instability of political organisation; and the availability and strategy of potential allies. Moreover, the advantage of the model is that it provides a clear framework for characterizing different types of regimes[13], for which different movement strategies can be explored (Goldberg, 2019).

Another major theory of movement research is framing analysis. The concept of frame was introduced in social sciences by Ervin Goffman (1974). He defines primary frames as a "schemata of interpretation" by which individuals "locate, perceive, identify, and label" their own life and world phenomena (p. 21). The use of frames is rarely conscious. They primarily help us to guide action both individually and collectively and help us in a situation to understand what is happening (Goffman, 1974). However, information can be understood in several ways, depending on the context in which it appears. Goffman (1974) calls it "keying" when an action with a specific meaning takes on a different meaning in a different situation. The interpretation of the information is greatly influenced by how it is presented, what details are highlighted from it, that is, what "frame" is around it. Hence, framing "can be understood as taking some aspects of our reality and making them more accessible than other aspects" (Kuypers, 2009, p. 181).

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[12] Most criticisms focus on the lack of clear definitions of even the most basic concepts. In addition, there is no specific definition of what is included in the political opportunity structure, making it a broad metaphor for most researchers, allowing for the study of myriad variables and mechanisms.

[13] such as strong and closed, strong and open, weak and closed or weak and open

After the mid-1980s, the role of symbols, ideas and meaning in mobilisation efforts came to the fore again (Sarfati, 2015). Framing processes and social movement organisations were linked by David A. Snow and his colleagues (1986). The authors see the shortcoming of previous research in focusing too much on grievances and their socio-psychological manifestations, rather than on their interpretation and the differences and variations that affect the nature of collective action, depending on organisations, individuals and time (Mikecz, 2010). Snow et al. (1986) emphasise that participation is constantly renegotiated among individuals in a process of meaning-making. They argue that "frame alignment is a necessary condition for movement participation, whatever its nature or intensity". (p. 465) Activists react to the world or certain segments of it, so they also frame the world in which they operate. In that sense, framing refers to the process of the signifying work or meaning construction (Benford & Snow, 2000). Hence, the theory seeks to capture the complex process of meaning-making and negotiation of a movement and individual interpretation. Framing analysis looks at the micro and meso levels in understanding a movement as a whole and its context (Mikecz, 2010). The interpretative work of activists actively determines the strategic action, resource acquisition efforts, and viability over time of the social movements (Snow et. al, 1986). Snow and Benford (1988) identify three core framing tasks: diagnostic, prognostic, and motivational framing which can be analytical considerations for movement studies. Accordingly, the frames developed in a social movement, on the one hand, articulate problems, and on the other hand, outline proposed ways of solving these problems, and thirdly, they encourage action, and they facilitate the development of motives for participation in the movement (Benford & Snow, 2000). In order to mobilise effectively, social movement activists need to develop and communicate frames that are aligned with the views and sense of identity of potential movement participants (Campbell, 2005; Farkas, 2019)

However, these concepts do not offer precise guidance for analysing movements properly and no methodological guidance has been developed for a specific analysis (Benford, 1997). The critical examination of the movement framing literature from an insider's perspective shows how some of the concepts and aspects can be misleading during the analysis (Benford, 1997). Benford's (1997) key proposals for improving the framing literature include that the researcher should take emotions into account when examining a movement and apply several theoretical frameworks that complement framing theory well.

The new social movement theory was developed largely as a response to the limitations of classical Marxism in the analysis of collective action (Buechler, 1995). The blurring of the boundaries between the private and public spheres, the politicization of everyday life; and the symbolic and cultural forms of politicization have led to a focus on ethnicity, gender and sexuality (Mikecz, 2010). Theories of new social movements in the context of their own intellectual traditions are best exemplified by Manuel Castells (Spain), Alain Touraine (France), Alberto Melucci (Italy) and Jürgen Habermas (Germany) (Buechler, 1995).

1.4.4 Theoretical synthesis to study the Ligetvédők movement

The theories of social movements and civil society described above thus offer a multitude of theories for the study of a movement. Since I want to examine the Ligetvédők movement from several perspectives, the micro and meso levels of the movement (personal and group narratives, relationships, motivations, grievances and meaning making processes), and the macro aspects (how the political and social structure of the country has affected the movement and vice versa), the conceptual framework of both civil society and social movement theories will be part of my thesis.

As I wrote before, the movement is fundamentally based on the action of civilians. Hence, it is important to understand how they have been able to function as a civil movement and what role they have played in a non-democratic political environment. Furthermore, as Cavatorta (2012a) suggests, the thesis will pay close attention to the role of new online spaces, which became a new arena for activism. Paffenholz and Spurk's (2006) model, in which civil society is assigned seven functions that can contribute to improving democracy, can be a good analytical tool for understanding the role of the Ligetvédők movement. The seven functions are citizen protection; monitoring accountability; advocacy and public communication; socialization; community building; mediation and facilitation between citizens and the state; and service delivery. Although the movement operated in a non-democratic political context, the following functions are highly relevant in examining how and with what results the activists were able to build community, monitor accountability, advocate and engage in public communication in this particular political context. These functions were also particularly relevant for the environmental movements in the democratisation process of the 1980s (Paffenholz and Spurk, 2006). The "monitoring for accountability" function is primarily concerned with monitoring the activities of the state administration and the government and controlling and holding the authorities to account. This function of monitoring power is also linked to Keane's (2013)

theory of monitory democracy. Keane (2013) sees the antidote to traditional democracy in the monitoring functions of civil society, which provide extra-parliamentary avenues for checking and balancing power. As I indicated earlier, the Ligetvédők movement operates in a non-democratic political system. The concept of monitory democracy may be even more interesting in terms of how this has been achieved despite the characteristics of a non-democratic political environment. In addition, community building and advocacy and public communication were also important strategic issues within the movement.

Framing theory and the theory of political opportunity structures will be the main frameworks for understanding these functions, but also concepts related to emotions, identity and resources will be introduced. Moreover, the theoretical background and practical implementation of non-violent resistance to the physical protection of the park will contribute to a full understanding of the strategy of the movement. Regarding the framing analysis of the movement, the three core framing tasks – diagnostic, prognostic, and motivational framing – will give the backbone of the analysis (Benford & Snow, 2000). Snow et al. (1986) theorise that the effectiveness of the frames can be further enhanced if they are able to reach multiple audiences and support bases. Frames can therefore resonate not only with the views of one social group, but also with many, and this requires the development and application of an integrative master frame that brings together the different frames. This allows a complex audience to be addressed and broader coalitions to be built. In this thesis, I would also like to examine whether such a master frame has been developed to help the movement reach out to a wider range of social groups. Furthermore, I intend to understand how credible the frames of the movement were; in other words, whether the frame consistency, empirical credibility, and credibility of frame articulators were achieved (Snow & Benford, 1988, Benford & Snow, 2000).

Nonetheless, because of the dynamic and constantly changing nature of the framing process, which cannot be understood without the elements of the socio-cultural context, the framing analysis will be linked to political opportunity structures of Hungary. According to Benford and Snow (2000), political opportunity structure is one of the factors – besides cultural opportunities and constraints, and the targeted audiences – that might affect framing processes. They argue that "the movement framing literature has also attended to such macro factors by investigating how political opportunity structures constrain and facilitate collective action frames" (p. 628). Meanwhile, they draw attention to the fact that political opportunities may limit or facilitate the collective action but the degree of political opportunity is not a clear, declared and easy-to-read

structural entity (Benford and Snow, 2000). "Rather, its existence and openness is subject to debate and interpretation and can thus be framed by movement actors as well as by others" (p. 631). As Katy Pickvance (1997) argues, political opportunity structure theory is particularly applicable in the context of Eastern Europe. Therefore, the activists' interpretation and framing processes of the Hungarian political opportunity structures will be examined, as well as how their interpretations influence the actions, strategies and communication of the movement.

New communication technologies and social media have also played a major role in monitoring, community building and advocating and engaging in public communication. Thus, the thesis will discuss how these functions were supported or hindered by the social media and online platforms used by the movement. As Shirky (2011) argues, social media has displaced the old mobilisation structures and has evolved into a new coordination tool for many popular movements around the world in recent years. He also claims that the global communication system has become increasingly dense, complex and participatory. Therefore, there is an expanded potential for collective action thanks to better access to information and more opportunities to speak in public (Shirky, 2011). Social media is present even in authoritarian countries, giving ordinary citizens a voice by bypassing platforms linked to the official state and the traditional media system. Even repressive state apparatuses are ineffective in silencing and censoring these voices on social media platforms (Shirky, 2011). The analysis of the work of the Ligetvédők movement will thus include an exploration of the relationship between social media and the movement. I will examine how social media has influenced community building, accountability monitoring, advocacy and public communication in a non-democratic political environment.

1.5   Research design and methodology

1.5.1 Research strategy

As a student of social science, my interests were connected to environmental politics and movements and civil society in non-democratic countries. It quickly became clear that I wanted to choose a country-specific topic of my home country, which can highlight global issues as well. I read about the Ligetvédők movement in the summer of 2019. The more I read, the clearer it was that the case covers many areas of concern that can be discussed in a thesis. Since I had no personal involvement with the movement or the project and I knew little about them, I could start the research with curiosity, interest and a desire for knowledge and understanding.

As I wish to understand how activists organise themselves, what and how they act to reach their goals, how the political environment influenced them, my thesis is about subjective perspectives and multiple realities and interpretations. These objectives are aligned with the strategy of the epistemological position of interpretivism, which "requires the social scientist to grasp the subjective meaning of social action" and "gain access to people's 'common-sense thinking' and hence to interpret their actions and their social world from their point of view" (Bryman, 2012, p. 30). It seeks to understand human behaviour empathetically instead of finding the explanation and the forces that are thought to intervene. There are different traditions in the interpretivist stance – the hermeneutic–phenomenological tradition and symbolic interactionism – overall, each tradition is considered to be the opposite of the positivist view of the objective reality (p. 31).

Looking at my ontological position based on how 'organisation' and 'culture' are examined in my thesis, I accept that an organisation and a culture have an external reality, which is referring to objectivism (Bryman, 2012). Transposed to the topic of my thesis: political systems in general and specifically the Hungarian political system, the Hungarian culture and the political culture can be seen as a pre-given reality in which the case is embedded, which shapes the perspective and perception of the people. However – continuing to carry on the conceptualization of Bryman (2012) – "it is not an inert objective reality that possesses only a sense of constraint: it acts as a point of reference but is always in the process of being formed", which leads us further to a constructivist position (p. 34). Constructivism acknowledges the pre-existence of organisation and culture but it points out the role of the individuals who actively participate in the social and meaning construction of the social reality (Bryman, 2012). In my thesis, the conceptualising and analytical chapters are written from a constructivist standpoint. It means that during defining and describing the political context, which is based on a critical review of the literature, I sought to find the academic consensus of the description and analysis of certain concepts and phenomena, thus providing the most objectively descriptive features of the political context.

1.5.2 Single-case study design

As I presented earlier, the Ligetvédők movement was not examined in itself as a unique case, despite the richness and timeliness of the case. To fill this gap, the single-case study research design is the most appropriate approach. This design makes it possible to entail "the detailed and intensive analysis of a single case" (Bryman, 2012, p. 66) which "is an object of interest in

its own right, and the researcher aims to provide an in-depth elucidation of it" (p. 69). It is important to note that the term 'case' does not always refer only to one location, community or organisation but the extensive examination of a social phenomenon that extends through spatial boundaries (Bryman, 2012). In the case of my research, I apply it to one community which allows a fairly detailed study. Besides that, I do not ignore the reality that a single-case study cannot represent a certain class of objects (Bryman, 2012).

My study combines more features of the different types of single-case studies (Yin, 2009). The Ligetvédők movement can be seen as a unique case in the Hungarian context but in the global context it can be interpreted as a typical one since similar movements emerged in the last decade (Krutenko, 2017; İnal and Pál, 2019; Szulecka and Szulecki, 2019). Furthermore, I strive to include a longitudinal element since the history of the movement dates back 4 years, which has brought about many changes that have to be taken into account in order to answer the research questions. This longitudinal element is realised as follows: in the first half of the interviews, I asked retrospective questions from the informants about past events and their impact on the present. Hence, the main past events they highlighted are incorporated into the research. Moreover, I chose 4 more interviewees who had significantly different opinions and viewpoints about the movement and made short follow-up interviews one year later by asking them specifically about their assessment of the new city administration and the opportunities of the movement and their prospects.

Additionally, although it is a single-case study, one way to understand the relationship between different regimes and protests is to make historical and cross-national comparisons that show how movements protested in different political contexts, what repertoires they had at their disposal and what the consequences were. These comparisons can be made in high and low-capacity regimes, democracies and non-democracies (Tilly, 2010). Therefore, to understand the relevance of the movement and its wider context, I look back to a time in history – the East-Central European region of the 1980s – when civil and environmental movements played an important role in the final days of the then Soviet-style communist regime. In this way, I intend to show how the movements of that time functioned in that non-democratic regime. In addition to the Ligetvédők movement, I will also bring in two other movements from the 2010s that tried to act locally in different types of non-democratic regimes, in Turkey and Vietnam. In doing so, I would like to demonstrate what the main interconnections between these movements might be and where the effects of the different political set-ups are reflected in the functioning of the

movement. In this respect, the thesis will include comparative elements, but the main focus and theme will be the Ligetvédők movement.

1.5.3 Fieldwork interviews

My fieldwork lasted between 2nd September and 2nd October 2019 in Budapest. However, after the municipal elections in Hungary on 13th October 2019, which brought the success of opposition parties in Budapest, I realised that new aspects of the case have opened up that could enrich my study. Hence, I decided to spend one more week in Budapest between 6th November and 15th November 2019. Furthermore, I conducted follow-up interviews in summer and autumn 2020. In the following sections, I present the interview process with the different samples and the challenges I faced during my fieldwork.

Before I plunged into the mysteries and challenges of the fieldwork, I tried my best to prepare for theoretical and practical arrangements (O'Leary, 2017). During the preparation, I was getting familiar with the field of study by reading the literature, following the news and watching videos about the case. When both the direction of my research and the planning of my research became clear, I decided to conduct qualitative interviews to get to know different-minded people's values, attitudes and perceptions thoroughly (Byrne, 2004). Within that, the semi-structured interview is a method that makes it possible to be more flexible and creative during the interviews because, besides the defined questioning plan, the interviewer has more freedom in the order of questions and to ask questions outside of the planned questions (O'Leary, 2017). Hence, the interview can flow more naturally, and interviewees can share their stories and speak more freely. From my thesis point of view, that was essential as I wanted to get to know the different viewpoints of the case as extensively as possible. To explore and understand the various perspectives, two samples were determined: activists of the Ligetvédők environmental movement; and city planners who work on the Liget Project or those experts who had a wider impact on Budapest city planning and the politics of the city. Before the fieldwork, I wrote an interview guide for each sample, which was the backbone of the conversations (see Appendix II). The language of the interviews was Hungarian since this is the mother tongue of the interviewees – just like for me – so they could express themselves more naturally, explain their opinions, feelings and various events in nuances and describe them accurately. All the interviews were recorded with a recording device.

1.5.3.1 Semi-structured interviews with the activists of the Ligetvédők movement

I contacted the activists through their Facebook page in August 2019. At the admin's suggestion, I searched and joined their hangout Facebook group (Ligetvédők | Társalgó, n.d.) where I wrote a call for interviews, to which some activists applied and contacted me directly, so I could start the interviewing process. I applied a purposive sampling strategy, which means that I did not choose the participants on a random basis (Bryman, 2012). The first criterion was that the interviewee had taken an active role in the life of the movement. Secondly, I sought the maximum variation sampling to ensure a wide variety of the activists' interests and tasks in the movement (Bryman, 2012). Thirdly, I wanted to talk to activists from various social backgrounds so, in terms of their gender, age, occupation, education, I was striving for a high degree of dissimilarity among the interviewees. Thus, I did not determine strict expectation in advance but during the fieldwork I recorded in a diary who I interviewed and what their demographic and social background was.

As I mentioned, some activists contacted me through their Facebook group; however, I got many contacts and suggestions from the activists who I interviewed so snowball sampling was part of my sampling strategy as well (Bryman, 2012). The people who were interviewed at the early stage of the interview process can be interpreted as gatekeepers who helped me to gain access to other informants (Bryman, 2012). After the interviews, some of the interviewees gave me other activists' phone numbers or called them directly asking permission to give their contact details. In that way, I was connected with those "key activists" who did not see my call in the Facebook group but are important participants in the story of the movement. The suggested interviewees had very different tasks and roles in the movement and they came from diverse social backgrounds, so I was able to reach out to activists who fit in with the sampling strategy.

I conducted fourteen semi-structured interviews with the activists (see Appendix I). Moreover, I interviewed two lawyers and a sympathiser scientist who based on their interests, belong to the sample of the activists. The interviews took place on different locations – cafes, private homes, school, and some of them happened in the Városliget – and they lasted between 1-3 hours. All in all, the activists were very helpful and, although some of them were mistrustful during the conciliation – they were afraid that the managers of the Liget Project had entrusted me with the task – on providing them the information letter (see Appendix IV) that was approved by the Norwegian Centre for Research Data (NSD), they shared their thoughts with me confidently.

In addition to the semi-structured interviews, I include ethnographic elements into my research methods. However, because of the limitation of the time and the scope of the research, it can be seen as a micro-ethnography since I was focusing on a particular aspect of the topic for a relatively short period of time (Bryman, 2012). My aim was to get an insight into the life of the movement: how they organise themselves and how they implement certain actions. The participant observations took place in the field and on online surfaces too, so I also applied the method of virtual ethnography (Fielding, Lee & Blank, 2008). Virtual ethnography is based on the principles of traditional participant observation, but it takes place in online spaces such as social media. Physically, I could attend one smaller demonstration on 21st September for the sycamores that were in danger because of the construction. Moreover, during the second phase of my fieldwork, between 6th November and 15th November 2019, I could attend a lawsuit on a group vandalism charge against one of the interviewees. After the fieldwork, I stayed in the hangout Facebook groups[14], so I could follow constantly the latest news and activities online. Moreover, I was able to follow through Facebook the main emerging issues within the movement, how the activists document the different phases of the construction, and gain insight into the interactions between activists. I was also able to search back for previous posts and articles referred to by the activists in their interviews. I was therefore able to observe the online activities of the movement in depth, using the methodology of virtual ethnography.

1.5.3.2 Semi-structured interviews with the city planners

I selected the city planners sample to conduct interviews because those experts who work on the Liget Project or have a wider impact on Budapest city planning and the politics of the city have the most relevant and up-to-date knowledge and information regarding the project and the movement. Also, they are in a decision-making position and have power to influence the outcomes of the project and public opinion. In this case, a stratified purposive sampling strategy was applied, so I was searching for typical individuals within subgroups of interest (Bryman, 2012). Moreover, I employed the snowball sampling as well and I sought help from interviewees to establish other contacts who could be relevant for my research (Bryman, 2012). Nevertheless, I faced challenges to find informants who were willing to give interviews[15]. I

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[14] (Ligetvédők | Társalgó, n.d.; Ligetvédők kibeszélő csoport - Itt konzultálunk a Városligetről, n.d.; Milyen legyen a Városliget most..?, n.d.)

[15] Regarding the ministry level, unfortunately, even though I tried to reach them or other secretariats in other ways, I did not succeed in getting the interview. In the case of the previous city administration of Budapest (in office between October 2010 and October 2019), I could only email the Head of Department of Urban Planning with

searched for interviewees by the following criteria to cover different levels of decision-making: officer at the ministry who influences the project; green party politician who has an insight into the Liget Project and the Ligetvédők movement; officer at the Budapest city administration before and after the municipal elections; manager of the Liget Project; communication officer at the Liget Project; and independent urban planning expert. In the end, I could conduct interviews with the following persons: the strategic director of the Liget Project; a communication officer of the Liget Project; vice-president of the green party (Politics Can Be Different – Lehet Más a Politika [LMP]), an independent urban planning expert and the Deputy Mayor for Participation and Sustainable Development of the new city administration (in office from October 2019).

1.5.4 Secondary sources

In addition to the primary data collected during the fieldwork, I have also used a wealth of secondary sources in my analysis. As I mentioned, I am a member of various Facebook groups of the Ligetvédők movement in which I can see a lot of inside information and content shared by the activists. Besides the internal Facebook groups where the activists communicate with each other, I contemplate analysing the main external communication channel of the movement and the project to understand better how they frame and narrate their goals and stories to people. One of the key platforms for both the movement and the Liget project is their website, where all information, including key messages and arguments, can be found in a summary. The other key platform in terms of emerging issues is Facebook, where both parties communicate on their own pages and it can be detected how they frame their messages to the public. Moreover, I encompass the most important news about the movement and the project until May 2021 which has appeared in the national media.

1.5.5 Processing and analysing the data

During the data collection process, I managed to collect a large amount of data, which I then processed according to the objectives of the research. I saved the interviews in the cloud provided by the university, where I stored the interviews by date and code names I had set for the interviewees. I transcribed the audio files and saved them as text documents. During the interviews, I also took handwritten notes containing the main themes and keywords that

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some questions. However, in their reply, only the legal reference of the "Városliget Law" and the "Városliget Building Regulation" was sent but the questions were not answered.

emerged. These, together with my previous literature notes, provided me with the codes that covered the most prominent themes and issues linked to the topic of the thesis (for the list of codes, see Appendix III). I created more specific codes[16] by reading the transcribed interviews and analysing the webpage and Facebook page of the project and the Ligetvédők movement, thus immersing myself in the details told by the activists and exploring how the themes and events were recalled and interpreted by them. Coding the issues raised helped to capture the information presented in a transparent way, but there is a risk of decontextualising the content when coding (Bryman, 2012). Therefore, as I wanted to interpret personal experiences and stories in a more complex way, I did not rely only on the codes for the analysis but also took into account the whole narratives told by the interviewees. In this way, I was able to understand the interviewees' reconstructed accounts of events and the relationships between events and contexts – drawing on the methodology of narrative analysis (Bryman, 2012).

1.5.6 Limitations and ethical considerations

During the research and interviews it became clear that there are many limitations to this study. Because of the multifaceted and grassroots nature of the movement, there are many perspectives that have come together within the movement. Also, beyond the movement, there were several actors active in the defence of the park who were nevertheless shaping events. Although I had the opportunity to interview such actors, there are certainly more activists, individuals and stakeholders associated with the movement who could have provided valuable information. In addition, the homeless people who also lived in the Ligetvédők camp and then lived in tents in the park after the protests were also outside the scope of my research. However, I was able to interview all the key figures and groups identified by activists, including local residents of the area, the founder of the movement, political activists, far-left thinkers, vegans, radical activists and external experts who assisted the activities of the movement.

Moreover, generalisation and representativeness, cannot be achieved in most cases of qualitative research since it is not the purpose of it, which is a general criticism of this research design. Instead, the aim of the thesis is trustworthiness, including credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability, and a thorough examination of a single case that engages a theoretical analysis (Bryman, 2012). The indicator of the quality of the research is how the

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[16] I did not use a coding program but recorded the codes and their corresponding quotes in an excel spreadsheet I made myself. This way I was able to see the issues raised in an easy-to-understand system for myself. I summarised the codes in a word document as well.

researcher constructs the theoretical reasoning, how the data supports the generated arguments and how the theory is developed out of the findings (Bryman, 2012).

Nevertheless, to take on the role of the researcher on this topic means that I am an active creator of how the research is framed, interpreted, analysed and presented. As Bryman (2012) argues "there is a double interpretation going on: the researcher is providing an interpretation of others' interpretations" (p. 31). Moreover, there is a third level of interpretation as my interpretations are connected to the literature, theories and concepts. The analysis of the project and the movement, therefore, is written through my own lens, summarising the literature, the information about the case and the perspectives of the activists, in which the constructed arguments and correlations are the interpretation of the researcher. Thus, my conclusions cannot be regarded as unquestionable truths but rather like a contribution to the common knowledge and discussion of the topic from one perspective.

My choice of the topic alone may reflect a kind of bias, as being interested in the work and operation of the movement may indicate that I value their work. I cannot deny that bias. At the same time, to eliminate this, I wanted to get to know the "other side", that is, the position and arguments of the project managers, both about the project and the movement. Nonetheless, I do not intend to evaluate the project but since my main focus is on the strategy of the movement, the thesis is biased in the sense that it presents the critical arguments and thoughts of the activists in a larger proportion. I would like to give voice to the activists in a way that was not given before. Moreover, as a Hungarian student who writes about a politically sensitive topic connected to her homeland, where there is an "ongoing efforts to side-line voices and perspectives that authorities find unfavourable (...) have discouraged open criticism of the government and other politically sensitive speech" (Freedom House, 2021), may raise important questions. Being in a position to do my studies in Norway, and probably living here for the next few years, is very liberating in terms of not having to worry about being negatively affected by the consequences (such as not getting a job because of the critical point of view of the thesis) of the written thesis directly. It relieves me a lot of the burden of self-censorship. At the same time, knowing that I may be attacked, even informally, for the divisions and animosities connected to the topic[17], I cannot exclude a degree of caution on my part. However,

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[17] In any case, for those who read these lines and the following chapters and think that I have brought my country into disrepute as a traitor, here it is for them until the end of time: I love and respect my home country endlessly. Being critical is expressing that love.

being aware of this, I have made a conscious effort not to let it hinder my analysis of the topic. In this, I have been most guided and inspired by the stories and experiences of activists who have stood up for their values with truly exemplary courage.

The other big ethical dilemma has to do with the personal information and data of activists. Although most of the activists openly acknowledge their affiliation to the movement, and several agreed to put their own names in the thesis, given that they could face potential attacks or discrimination for the stories they tell, I decided not to put their own names in the thesis. I have therefore changed their names in all cases, thus protecting their anonymity and privacy. I also paid particular attention to both data management and storage. All data and personal information used and handled are approved by the NSD.

1.6 Outline of the thesis

In the second chapter, the historical context will be discussed by looking at the environmental movements in Central and Eastern Europe. I review the general characteristics of the environmental movements of the region at the end of the 20th century. Within that, I will present one instance – the case of the Danube Dam and the Danube Circle – from Hungary in more detail. In the third and fourth chapters, I will focus on the operation and communication strategies of the Ligetvédők movement. A brief presentation of the political context of Hungary and the short story of the Városliget will be presented in order to understand the background of the project and the invisible mechanism that influenced the opportunities and operation of the Ligetvédők movement. Hence, these two chapters will concentrate on the framing processes of the movement. Moreover, I will examine the two civil society functions of the movement as defined by Paffenholz and Spurk (2006): how the movement built community and how it advocated and engaged in public communication in a non-democratic political context. In the fifth chapter, I aim to explore how the Ligetvédők movement fits into the contemporary movement context and trends through a literature review of the Gezi Park movement (Turkey) and the Trees movement (Vietnam). My purpose is to provide a better understanding of the role of the social media in advocating and engaging in public communication in the "age of upgraded authoritarianism". Furthermore, I aim to illustrate the activity of movements within Keane's (2013) theoretical framework of monitory democracy. Finally, in the concluding chapter I summarise the main insights of the thesis, answering the research questions and outlining further research directions on the topic.

2 Environmental Movements and Protests in Central and Eastern Europe: a Historical Perspective

In the introductory chapter, the background, the main aims, and the methodological and theoretical framework of the thesis were presented. In this chapter, the historical context and concrete cases that can be linked to the Ligetvédők movement will be discussed. The purpose is to place my study into a broader context, provide examples of other environmental movements in non-democratic countries, and exemplify the connection between the political systems and the environmental movements. In doing so, I would like to investigate how the Ligetvédők movement fits into the historical context, and I intend to lay the groundwork for exploring the relationship and connections between these movements in the conclusions. Accordingly, I review the general characteristics of the environmental movements of Eastern Europe at the end of the 20th century. Within that, I will present one instance – the case of the Danube Dam and the Danube Circle – from Hungary in more detail.

2.1 Central and Eastern European environmental movements from the past

The events of the past, determine the identity and narrative of a nation or certain group of people (Liu & Hilton, 2015). Accordingly, if we would like to understand the current case of the Ligetvédők movement and the Liget Project, it is essential to put it in a historical context and to present how and why civil society and environmental movements and protests developed in Hungary and, more broadly, in Eastern Europe. Of course, this does not mean that the events of the present follow directly from the historical context, but it is also important to see and recognize the connections from this perspective – if any.

The transitological literature pays great attention to Central and Eastern European countries' (CEECs)[18] movements that have a specific pattern compared to other parts of the world in the

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[18] According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) definition, Central and Eastern Europe includes the following countries: Albania, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, the Slovak Republic, Slovenia, and the three Baltic States: Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania (Central and Eastern European Countries [CEECs], n.d.). Moreover, the region is most interconnected on a historical, economic and social level.

1980s (Manning, 1998; Piotrowski, 2015). The countries under the communist Soviet regime had specific characteristics which are mostly referred today as the post-socialist context that implicate the social-economic conditions described as the "eastern backwardness" (Ágh 1998; Piotrowski 2015). The cultural context of the movements has been a significant factor in the formation of the environmental movements in the region in that period, as it is in the case of today's movements (Piotrowski, 2015). The various comparative case studies shed light on the general context of civil society and the democratisation process of the 1980s and 1990s.

It can be seen that the role of civil society and movements in the process of democratisation and transition was indeed more complex than the image of idealized civil society suggests (Baker, 2004). Discussion about the Eastern European civil society, in turn, is often associated with the self-organised civil society which was opposed to the repressive Soviet Union (USSR) in the 1980s and resulted in a reconstructed civil society and democratisation in the region (Arato, 1991; Cohen & Arato, 1992; Bernhard, 1993). When I mention civil society, I mean to include grassroots social movements and protest movements, as well as environmentalists, environmental movements and the dissidents who were also essential components of the oppositional strategy. As Adam Fagan (2004) argues, the interpretation of these movements created a kind of "conceptual fusion of environment, democracy and civil society" (p. 3). Moreover, certain concepts became widespread in the academia and politics of that time, such as participation, empowerment, deliberation, or European public sphere (Miszlivetz, 2008).

The movement scene of the CEE countries was very diverse. They were brought to life primarily by grievances caused by the repressive Soviet system. However, which areas became the focus of the movements, along with which strategy, and how they were able to communicate and mobilise, developed differently. For example, in Poland, where the first social movements emerged in the 1970s, the working class and their cause became the main mobilising force. The birth of the Solidarity Movement was the first legal opposition movement in Eastern Europe, with 10 million members in a short time, and it became the dominant challenger of the Polish communist regime (Bernhard, 1993). The movement brought together much of the workers, the intelligentsia, and the peasantry. Based on the case of Poland, Michael Bernhard (1993) argues that civil society has been a driving force in the democratisation process in post-Soviet countries. However, as Burnell and Calvert (2004) point out, it can only be stated with certainty that civil society activities and movements were part of the disintegration of the communist

system and the process of democratisation, but not always was the civil society the driving force of these processes.

In Czechoslovakia, East Germany and Hungary, the events and movements developed differently than in Poland. The issue of environmental protection seems to have been a common point in the aforementioned countries, with different emphases and significance, but the subject of many initiatives. In addition to peace campaigners, human rights activists and Eastern European workers protesting against the communist regime, environmentalists also played an important role in this fight (Fagan, 2004). At the end of the 1980s, increasing attention was paid to environmental issues, especially greenhouse gas emission and ozone depletion (Fagan, 2004). The strategy of 'high growth at all costs' in the communist countries caused enormous ecological damage – if not ecocide in the region (Davis, 2004).

As for the political situation in the Soviet member states, the softening of the authoritarian system was observed in the 1980s, during which closed structures became more open, giving more space to different movements and unconventional behaviours (Carmin & Hicks, 2002; Tarrow, 2011). Thus, there were changes in the political opportunity structures that gave more freedom to access politics and the various associations, the resources needed for activism, including media coverage, and the publication of scientific knowledge (Carmin & Hicks, 2002). As Carmin and Hicks (2002) summarise, in unstable authoritarian regimes, institutions are in a state of transition and government does not have full control over society. While opportunities remain limited, the opportunity structure is more open as the elite becomes increasingly divided. In these situations, the credibility of state-backed organisations declines, underground associations and dissenting actions become more frequent and visible, alternative media are gaining ground, and some scholars are using their knowledge against the regime. In addition, external forces cause increased activity between existing networks and emerging groups, thus having a significant impact on general institutional structures as well as on specific policy arenas.

2.1.1 Invisible threats by the Soviet socio-economic system

For many movements that emerged during the 1980s, the main issue that was symbolising the discretionary and dictatorial nature of the communist system was the environment. The citizens believed that the Soviet Union brought upon them an environmental disaster, such as the 'phosphorite wars' in Estonia; Baikal, Chernobyl in Russia; and the Danube dam in Hungary

(Jancar-Webster, 1993; Manning, 1998). Environmental problems became truly visible and tangible as in the spectacular disasters such as Chernobyl, but they were much more deeply embedded in the region, and were present in many areas even invisibly, destroying biodiversity, ecological balance and human health on a daily basis (ZumBrunnen, 1992). In the study of Craig ZumBrunnen (1992), the Soviet and Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA) environmental quality and resource use data were compared to data of the Unites Stated (US) in order to present the main environmental challenges of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) – within that Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary.

Regarding the international comparison between the USSR and the US in 1986, the problem of air pollution in the Soviet Union was clearly evident (ZumBrunnen, 1992). Based on the data of "the atmospheric releases from stationary sources", the economy of the Soviet Union emitted over three times as much suspended solids (approx. 1.3 times as much lead, almost as much sulphur dioxide and carbon monoxide) as the US, while its economy was perhaps only one-half to two-thirds the size of the gross national product (GNP)[19] (p. 391). Moreover, "the national aggregate air-borne discharges from non-stationary sources or auto-transport sources", painted a similarly devastating picture of air pollution in the Soviet Union (p. 392). Despite a much smaller car fleet, the Soviet Union mass-produced nearly 75% more air pollutants than the United States. This was likely to be an even worse rate in larger urban areas, but the vast area of the Soviet Union masked the real level of pollution. Overall, stationary sources of airborne pollutants were most common in Poland and Czechoslovakia, while car transport sources accounted for a much larger share in Soviet cities. The difference was due to the significant structural differences between member states in the production and consumption of energy and fuels (ZumBrunnen, 1992).

Furthermore, the region's other largest environmental problems were the quality and quantity of water resources and forest damage, which resulted in severe or even irreversible adverse soil change, nutrition loss, increased level of destructive soil erosion that meant substantially bigger exposure to floods and avalanches (ZumBrunnen, 1992). Forest damage was mainly linked to industrial activities and coal-fired power plants in Eastern and Western Europe too, which involved acid precipitation[20]. Thus, the majority of the damaged trees and forests were in

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[19] See Investopedia Staff (2020), for the definition of GNP.
[20] Due to westerly and south-westerly winds, Eastern Europe was polluted not only by its own high-sulphur economy, but also by acid rain from coal-fired power plants and fumes from chemical plants in Western Europe (mainly in West Germany).

Eastern Europe. For example, in Poland, 20% of the total forest area consisted of dying or already dead trees. In Yugoslavia, the proportion was 10%, however, in the more industrialized Slovenia, it jumped to 33% (ZumBrunnen, 1992). The largest forest wasteland was at the East German and Czechoslovakian border, in the Erzebirge Mountains (Krusne Hory Mountains). In addition, considering all of the environmental pollution, Czechoslovakia was the most polluted country in Europe due to inefficient, heavy industry which was the essence of the Soviet model (ZumBrunnen, 1992).

There is an academic consensus that environmental problems came about largely due to the specific mode of operation of the system, more concretely, the doctrine of economic development connected to the communist ideology, limited participation of society in decision-making processes, and the restricted flow of information (Jancar-Webster, 1993). However, the environment, in general, was not on the blacklist as a topic which was banned from public discussions, so the emerging environmental issues opened the possibility to channel the resentments and grievances against the system into these issues – along with the fact that there were indeed serious environmental problems caused by the system (Jancar-Webster, 1998).

As ZumBrunnen (1992) argues, environmental degradation resulted in independent environmental movements throughout the region; therefore, ecological problems called into question the legitimacy of central-administrative economic institutions and governments. The environment in the region had a curiously "unpolitical" status, thus becoming a means of critically questioning political authorities. The strategies of environmental movements, their internal organisation, their relationship with the public and the state were related to the types of pollution and shaped by events of the countries (Fagan, 2004).

Referring to Václav Havel, Barbara Jancar-Webster (1998), argues that the grassroots initiatives that dealt mainly with environmental issues "represented the rebirth of civil society" in the Soviet countries since they were able to motivate many to protest and provoke various actions (p.70). Nevertheless, the environmental movements had mainly a symbolic power and role in overthrowing the communist system and this has not provoked major protests in all countries (Bernhard, 1993; Jancar-Webster, 1993; Manning, 1998). The symbolic power was also reflected in the fact that these movements received the most significant support from people when environmental issues were turned into a political issue, as was the case with the Danube dam and the Danube Circle movement in Hungary or the Soviet student environmental movement. Hence, the issue of the environment became politicised. Some movements, for

example Baltic, Ukrainian, Slovak and Moldovan environmental groups (Jancar-Webster, 1998), adopted a strong nationalist programme, so in some cases, the environmental and national themes were mixed (Manning, 1998).

2.1.2 Cracks in the perfect image of the Soviet system

In Czechoslovakia, Poland and East Germany, one of the main environmental problems was air pollution and sulphur dioxide emissions, which were mainly due to industrial production and, to a lesser extent, to domestic consumption (Fagan, 2004). Although Poland was at the forefront of the liberation of civil society, environmental protection was not the unifying issue and weak environmentalism remained a characteristic of the country[21] (Szulecki, Borewicz & Waluszko, 2015). In East Germany environmental protection received slightly more emphasis, while in Czechoslovakia it drew special attention. In Hungary, there was a specific case that embodied the problem of environmental protection within the Soviet Union and was able to mobilise large masses.

2.1.2.1 East Germany

In East Germany, there were several smaller environmental movements, which were brought together, primarily the Ark-Green Network, that was formed from 150 unofficial ecological groups. One of their biggest actions was a secretly made film with West Berlin filmmakers – entitled Bitter things from Bitterfeld – about the ecological disasters, the air-quality problems of the country, and the Bitterfeld region (ZumBrunnen, 1992). They also unveiled a planned 2 million tonnes of West German waste export to Eastern Germany, which the government scheduled to finish by 1989. The film successfully drew attention to the ecological emergency, especially in the Bitterfeld area, to which increased attention was paid after the change of regime.

The other significant movement in East Germany, was the Green Movement, which related two issues: the nuclear power programme of the country and the political alliance with the Independent Women's Union (UFV) and the Green Party[22]. Regarding the nuclear programme,

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[21] Mostly, nuclear energy and air pollution were the main focus of environmental movements but these were narrowed down to local matters (such as the successful campaign against the Żarnowiec Nuclear Power Plant) and did not trigger mass or popular protests (Szulecki, Borewicz & Waluszko, 2015).

[22] The short-lived alliance with the UFV which was broken by the UFV, revealed after the regime change that the political and economical factors were more important for the voters than the environmental efforts since the Green Party did not enjoy wide public support (ZumBrunnen, 1992).

the movement highly criticized the programme and its safety record referring to the Chernobyl disaster.

The issue of nuclear power was very controversial in many other countries as well, such as in Poland, Yugoslavia and the aforementioned East Germany. This theme was a common intersection in the Soviet era between the ecological and environmental movements, the anti-nuclear movement and the peace movement, and between Eastern Europe and Western Europe (Kőszegi & Szent-Iványi, 1983; Matthew & Gaulin, 2002; Giugni, 2004). Thus, ecological protests often overlapped with peace advocacy. The common struggle for peace, and the aim of "creating nuclear-free zones" in terms of nuclear weapon and nuclear power, were present to some extent in each of the movements mentioned above; however, all this meant something different in the political context of Eastern Europe and Western Europe. In the latter, it was more about avoiding a nuclear war, while in the east, it had an everyday significance, namely, to be isolated from any war (Kőszegi & Szent-Iványi, 1983). In the west, the expression of critical opinion and forming groups were not restricted because they did not mean a challenge of the social order. In Western Europe, the young intellectuals, as the key players of these movements, were able to use advanced communications network relatively freely (Kőszegi & Szent-Iványi, 1983). In the eastern part of the continent, in turn, the authorities explicitly feared that the peace movement could attract opposition thinkers and become a major topic of opposition thinking. This, of course, was true for any social initiative, but they saw the chances of this being particularly high in the case of the peace movement. Thus, although the Eastern governments agreed and supported the Western peace movements and recognized their claims as legitimate at the official level, they did not know how permissive they could be in terms of talking about it.

However, unlike the other countries of the Soviet bloc, in East Germany unofficial peace movements began to operate, with the Evangelical/Lutheran Church as their umbrella organisation (Hadjar, 2003; Tismaneanu, 2014). Moreover, the peace movement, anti-nuclear aspirations, environmental issues, and civil law issues were intertwined and became the main themes of the protest movement. A key feature of the country was that the political change took place quite peacefully, in which the initiatives of civil groups – that have essentially become opposition groups but not opposition movements – played a major role in the development of

the mass demonstrations[23] (Hadjar, 2003). As Hadjar (2003) argues, the combined strength of the church and alternative groups became catalysts for protests, bringing to the fore topics that were not discussed at all in the public or private spheres before. The churches provided the opportunity and space for like-minded people to meet, where issues of peace, civil rights and the environment were discussed, and related groupings were formed. Thanks to the interlacing of the church and the protest movement, the environmental protection efforts gained ground but it was all linked to civil rights and peace efforts. Thus, the Lutheran Church nurtured opposition identities and values and discussed unifying issues that could bring together poorly organised opposition groups. During the 1989 revolution, the church played a key role in overthrowing the communist regime in East Germany (Pfaff, 2001).

2.1.2.2. Czech environmentalism

Traveling further into another former Soviet country, as I mentioned in the previous sections, Czechoslovakia was the most polluted country in the Soviet bloc. By the mid-1980s, Czechoslovakian citizens were exposed to 3 million tonnes of sulphur-dioxide[24] per year, of which a large portion came from Poland (Fagan, 2004). As a consequence, people's health steadily deteriorated, respiratory diseases among children and adults were more common, life expectancy reduced, while medical expenditure increased (Davis, 2004; Fagan, 2004). Moreover, 70% of Czechoslovak rivers were heavily polluted (ZumBrunnen, 1992).

However, these problems became slowly apparent to the public (Carmin & Hicks, 2002). In the early 1980s, there was the first demand from Prime Minister Lubomír Štrougal to examine the environmental conditions of the country, the results of which were published in 1983. Although a longer-term environmental programme was developed until 1986, as critical groups were still operating as an isolated opposition movement – in Charter 77[25] – there was no opportunity for public critical resolution. The new political trend, glasnost, introduced by Gorbachov in 1985,

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[23] The regular protests were called „Leipzig demonstrations", which took place on Mondays, so its other name was "Monday demonstrations" / "Montagsdemonstrationen" as well (Hadjar, 2003). This period of change – the peaceful revolution – was also known in German as Die Wende, in other words, the turning point.

[24] In addition, other ambient pollutants, such as nitrogen oxides, carbon monoxide, ammonia, fluorine, chlorine, volatile hydrocarbons, phenol, hydrogen sulphide, arsenic and lead aerosols, were present– each as a by-product of industrial production (Fagan, 2004).

[25] Charter 77 was a political statement issued by the Czechoslovak opposition in 1977, originally signed by 243 individuals, mostly intellectuals. The Charter was addressed and handed over to the Prague government. The document protested against the violations of the Helsinki Final Act and the human rights guaranteed by the United Nations. The signatories were led by Professor of Philosophy Jan Patočka, Václav Havel and Jiří Hájek (Bolton, 2012). In the next 10 years, 2,500 people signed, despite discrimination against supporters by the communist authorities, especially in Czechoslovakia, where six leaders of the Charter were prosecuted and sentenced in 1979, to severe prison terms.

in turn, provided greater freedom of speech, reduced repression, and gave activism new opportunities (Carmin & Hicks, 2002). Environmental movements first began to form in northern Bohemia, where pollution was highest. Scholars and state-backed groups were formed at first, while Charter 77 put pressure on the government as well by sending a document to them, which included 28 demands for environmental improvement. Moreover, the Movement for Civil Liberties, a coalition of national political organisations, was formed to push for reforms, including better environmental practice (Carmin & Hicks, 2002).

As the population became aware of the environmental issues and as political pressure eased, more and more civilians became actively involved in the movements by the late 1980s, and as ecological matters became more embedded in society, more and more civil and independent initiatives raised environmental or ecological issues (Davis, 2004). An increasing number of local groups took action by holding public discussions and disseminating petitions focusing on environmental protection. Soon enough environmental opposition became one of the most important ways for citizens to resist the communist regime since it provided a relatively safe stance due to the semi-legal status of environmentalists (Carmin & Hicks, 2002; Davis, 2004).

Many were indeed motivated to save the environment and believed that this required radical political and social change, while for others, the movement was more of a useful tool for the greater goals of eradicating communism. Either way, the environmental movement became one of the most significant elements of the Velvet Revolution[26] (Davis, 2004; Riches & Palmowski, 2016). On November 18, 1989, the Civil Forum was established, in which the human rights leaders of the Charter 77 movement were also included. The purpose of the Forum was to bring together and organise the various opposition groups and enter into negotiations with the government. By December, the new government was formed, and the main opponents of the communist regime came to power: Alexander Dubček became Speaker of Parliament, and Václav Havel became President of the Republic. The transition and subsequent periods further expanded the opportunities and sources of activism. Moreover, independent environmental organisations became important parts of Czech governance and many movement leaders got

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[26] The fall of Communism in Poland, Hungary and East Germany (from August to October 1989) also sparked protests against the Czechoslovak regime in Prague and Brno. Initially, these were suppressed, but state security forces were less and less able to take action against the growing number of protesters. The concept of Velvet Revolution is used to describe the process that took place between 17 November and 29 December 1989, during which power in Czechoslovakia , held by the Czechoslovak Communist Party, was handed over to the human rights movement in a relatively peaceful manner. The protesters were peaceful and gave flowers to the armed police officers facing them (Riches & Palmowski, 2016).

positions as ministers, members of parliament, party activists and agency officials (Davis, 2004).

The role of Vaclav Havel is particularly important in this story. As a writer, environmentalist, political philosopher, civil activist, and dissident, he contributed to, and took an active role in, weakening the communist system. After the Velvet Revolution, he became the first President of Czechoslovakia, and then the first president of the Czech Republic after the dissolution of the Czech Republic and Slovakia. His significance lies in the fact that he not only acted against the repressive system by its actions, but also summarised and theorised the true nature of the system, his philosophy and ecological views in high-impact theoretical works[27] – such as the essays "The Power of the Powerless and Politics" and "Conscience" – and offered an alternative vision: living in the truth. He meant that the individual living in truth, that is, the one who lives at his own discretion, opposes the life prescribed by the state. Power gains legitimacy if citizens obey it, but if that does not happen, a free society in which non-lying rituals frame an individual's life can be restored (Havel, 1978). It also underpins this idea in his thinking about civil society according to which an essential and vital part of a democratic state is a vibrant and multi-layered civil society, which can authentically embody living in truth (Davis, 2004). This, according to Paehlke, serves the cause of environmental protection at least as much as vice versa: "the environmental movement has consistently helped to strengthen democratic practice in important ways" (quoted in David, 2004, p. 376).

Havel's ecological views were also an important part of the anti-communist arguments and set out his vision of the post-communist world. Havel (1991) looked at nature as something that cannot be seen separately from humans. As he argued,

> The natural world, in virtue of its very being, bears within it the presupposition of the absolute which grounds, delimits, animates, and directs it, without which it would be unthinkable, absurd, and superfluous, and which we can only quietly respect. Any attempt to spurn it, master it, or replace it with something else, appears, within the framework of the natural world, as an expression of hubris for which humans must pay a heavy price, as did Don Juan and Faust[28]. (p. 251)

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[27] His intellectual predecessors – Masaryk and Patocka – who had a great influence on his work, were also committed to theoretical approach and science, and played an active political role as well (Capps, 1997).

[28] These thoughts were recalled by a smoking factory chimney, which evoked bad feelings in the author's childhood self. For Havel, it has become a symbol of an era that seeks to transcend the boundaries and norms of

Nevertheless, Havel was not in favour of the abolition of science, but merely sought to draw attention to the fundamental crisis of the modern world. He captured the disappearance of the sense of responsibility that the inhabitants of one and the same planet feel for each other. At the same time, he did not see a universal key, nor an ideology as a solution, or the way for salvation, but he proposed "an elementary sense of transcendental responsibility", "responsibility to the order of being" and "archetypal wisdom, good taste, courage, compassion, and, not least, faith in the importance of particular measure" (quoted in Capps, 1997, p. 311-312). Accordingly, he also argued that political change in his country should be triggered by autonomous civic initiatives rather than official institutions.

Barry (2013) interprets Havel's ecological thinking from a dissident perspective. According to this, challenging current economic, social, political ideas, suggests linking green thinking with a basic oppositional practice. As an opponent of the Soviet system, Havel envisioned political change along with a change in consumer culture which meant a transition from unsustainability and emphasis on the importance of individual responsibility (Barry, 2013). However, in a deeply divided culture and a repressive totalitarian system where "they" dominated "us", made this turn quite complicated. According to Berry's (2013) explanation of Havel' thought, the expected cultural turn in green politics goes beyond the concepts prevalent in socialism, such as "production", "supply-side solutions", "competitiveness", and increasing "labour productivity" (p. 9). Living in the truth and taking individual responsibility gives green dissidents the opportunity to rebel against manipulation – which can take place on a wide spectrum – be it intellectual letters, worker strikes, rock concerts, or demonstrations. These acts may reverse or rebalance the usual focus on rights and freedoms while making progressive criticisms of consumption (Berry, 2013).

In the end, however, the mass environmental sentiments did not last as long as activists had expected. As Davis (2004) argues, early environmental protection was probably more of a specific response to the very unique political-social circumstances. After the euphoria of the Velvet Revolution, the right and left wings of the Civic Forum movement split into two separate political parties, and after the 1992 elections, the centre-right Civic Democratic Party (ODS) led a coalition government led by economist Václav Klaus, who immediately launched an

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the natural world and to subordinate it entirely to its own interests. He sees it as a scientific, rational knowledge of the world, nothing more than the absolute of objectivity in which a man of the technology age wants to find solutions through technology, such as a chimney-mounted filter. However, the existence of the chimney is not questioned, as people see that things that are useful to them are made in the factory (Havel, 1988).

ambitious privatization plan. Klaus did not really support environmental issues and considerations in his quest to create a free market (Fagin & Jehlicka, 1998). So, after 1989, "structural, procedural, economic, and socio-cultural factors all played a key role in limiting the success of Czech environmental groups" (Davis, 2004, p. 375).

2.1.2.3 The dam breaks – the case of the Danube

An example of a powerful environmental movement is the Danube Circle which stopped the hydro-electric dam project at the 120 kilometres long section of the Danube on the Czechoslovakian and Hungarian common border between Gabčíkovo and Nagymaros.

In Hungary, as in the rest of the Eastern European countries during the communist era, various conflicts gave rise to autonomous civic initiatives, but they operated with a narrow social base as informal movements and subcultures in the 'second public' (Gergely, 2009). The official bodies performed environmental protection tasks at the official level; however, these were mostly apparent activities without any substantive content work. Social communication on ecological issues was one-way only – citizens were not given the opportunity to have a meaningful say in decisions about the environment. As only the issues that were significant from a political perspective, could be on the political agenda, the substantive communication – in specific cases – also had to politicise the green issues (Gergely, 2009). From the mid-1980s, new types of action-oriented 'movements' began to emerge, which opted for this strategy, such as the Danube Circle.

The history of the Danube dam system began in the 1930s when the governments of the Danube countries began to work on improving the navigability of the Danube and ensuring that the regulations also provided opportunities for hydropower production. Accordingly, the purpose of the dam was to generate electricity, ensure shipping, flood protection, and regional development. The plans for the dam system were first developed in the late 1950s[29]. After that, the plan changed several times, sometimes for economic, sometimes ecological, hydrobiological, sometimes environmental, but mostly for political reasons. The contract for the joint construction and operation of the Gabčíkovo – Nagymaros dam system was concluded

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[29] In 1956, the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (COMECON) states decided on the complex utilization of the Danube, the so-called section of the Danube from Bratislava to the Black Sea, which has already included water dams for energy purposes. As part of this, the Hungarian-Czechoslovak dam project was developed in 1963, approved in 1974, and the intergovernmental agreement on implementation was signed in 1976[29] (Fitzmaurice, 2018).

between Hungary and Czechoslovakia on 16 September 1977, which the Hungarian side signed in 1978 and enacted in a decree-law. Along with the contract, an agreement was signed that the parties would provide mutual assistance during the construction. Moreover, it included the division of the amount of electricity generated by 1989, as well as the implementation schedule and the work undertaken (Fitzmaurice, 2018). However, due to economic reasons and the need for an environmental impact study, a 5-year delay was agreed upon in 1983. On August 1, 1984, the Danube Circle was formed by János Vargha, who was a biologist at the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. After the state encrypted the data on the dam, activists collected the details of the plan and the agreement as small mosaic pieces that could be made public. It became clear that not only environmental but also political responses to this problem were needed, such as freedom of access to information, lack of legislation on the registration, and operation of social organisations (Fleischer, 1993). The movement started to spread samizdat leaflets and organised public debates, and talked about the project in Radio Free Europe, aiming to educate people about the impending environmental damage. The following year, they struggled with economic difficulties and asked to carry out an environmental impact assessment of the dam system, which led to delays in the work.

The government did not back down, and in 1986, a demonstration organised by the movement was banned, while a loan agreement was signed with Austria, which accepted repayment of the loan with the electricity produced by the dam for 20 years after the construction of the dam. In the following period, in turn, the conflict intensified and, in addition to environmental concerns, minority problems also arose from the right-wing conservative and nationalist side, according to which the project would have the most negative impact on the life of the Hungarian minority in Slovakia (Duray, 1987; Fürst, 2006). The protests, therefore, did not stop, and in the spring of 1988, a major demonstration took place on the banks of the Danube organised by the movement. A few months later, the initiative of the Danube Circle, a scientific Danube Conference was held in September 1988, where they criticised the dam system with scientific arguments – but in a comprehensible way for the public. Shortly afterward, tens of thousands protested against the constructions in front of the Parliament, in a demonstration the like of which had not been seen since the 1956 revolution. Nevertheless, in October 1988, Parliament decided that construction should continue, but a series of protests ultimately led to results. In May 1989, Prime Minister Miklós Németh suspended the constructions in Nagymaros and in July the constructions in Dunakiliti in July were stopped (Fitzmaurice, 2018).

The suspension of the project resulted in many conflicts and legal, administrative struggles between the countries involved in the field of international law (after the break-up of Czechoslovakia, especially between Slovakia and Hungary), which are a separate part of the literature (Lammers, 1998; Lefeber, 1998; Fürst, 2006). From the point of view of the thesis, however, the most important lesson of the story is that in a weakening of the authoritarian system, an environmental issue which was transferred into the political domain, could yield a series of popular protests. These demonstrations are seen by many as a breeze of regime change, while others question the significance of the movement in the process of democratisation. Critics most often see that an important project for clean energy production has been thwarted by protests just to express displeasure against the system in this way. However, the fact is that there has never been an example of a similar grassroots movement in the communist era that sided with people from such broad sections of society and that, at the same time, summed up the grievances against the political system.

2.1.3 The decline of the European movements

One of the most important tasks during the period of consolidation of democracies is to build and consolidate democratic institutions and to encourage civil society and citizens to participate in politics and adhere to democratic rules (Whitehead, 2002). It takes a long time; Whitehead (2002) suggests at least a generation until democratisation actually becomes reality, and the process can even be reversed if civil society loses faith in democratic institutions. The period of consolidation in Central and Eastern Europe in the 1990s developed differently. While some countries began to adopt Western liberal democratic patterns successfully (e.g., Estonia, GDR, Poland, Czech Republic, Hungary), in some countries transition paradigm did not reach its endpoint and they chose the authoritarian neo-nationalism way to stabilize political power, resulting in the formation of hybrid regimes (e.g., Albania, Serbia, Ukraine, Russia) (Jancar-Webster, 1998; Vladisavljević, 2014; Böcskei and Hajdu, 2019). This has significant implications for both civil society and social movements.

The trajectories of each country, city, and movement have their own peculiarities, which became even more diverse during and after the 1990s. However, the typical trend of the beginning of the 1990s is unquestionably the decline in civil society activity, the weakening of movements and the low level of mobilisation (Jancar-Webster, 1998; Manning, 1998, Piotrowski, 2015).

Political and economic institutional factors played a role in the decline of the movements, including the weakness of green political parties in the early 1990s during the first democratic elections. The green parties did not or only in a coalition were able to start working in the parliaments of the post-soviet countries (Jancar-Webster, 1998; Manning, 1998). The political and economic model of Western Europe was seen as an example of the good life and prosperity for the governments of the CEE countries that they wanted to achieve. As Jancer-Webster (1993) puts it, "The failure of »real socialism« has automatically been translated into the victory of »real free market capitalism«" which resulted in a different kind of economic growth fixation, than what communist productivity meant, where environmental considerations were pushed into the background (Fisher, 1993; Jancar-Webster, 1998). Moreover, despite the need to create a free-market economy, much of the region's economic activity remained in state hands. Thus, in fact, there was no profound change in the economic governance of the countries, but the former modes of economic operation were supplemented by the peculiarities of the capitalist mode of operation (Jancar-Webster, 1993). As early as the 1990s, there were concerns that the transition from an administrative-command system to a free-market socio-economic system would not solve environmental and pollution problems (ZumBrunnen, 1992).

The external circumstances have also changed the nature of the movements as well as the Western donor funds that have largely supported environmental issues[30] (Jancar-Webster, 1998). As Jancar-Webster (1998) argues, the environmental movements went through a transformation during and after the process of regime change. With the professionalization of movements and the decline of bottom-up initiatives, more and more ENGOs have emerged and become organisationally and structurally democratic institutions which focused on lobbying instead of protesting. Kerstin Jacobson and Steven Saxonberg (2013) link this phenomenon to the notion of "NGO-ization".

The economic opportunity literature evaluates it as a positive effect, among others that the ENGOs brought about a more stable operation and finance, increased capacity and keeping environmental issues on the table (Fisher, 1993; Jancar-Webster, 1998; Jacobson & Saxonberg, 2013). At the same time, greater professionalism brought with it the "funding game", building relationships with Western donors instead of mobilising, the emergence of a gap between

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[30] for example, World Wide Fund for Nature (WWFN), International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), United Nations Environment Programmeme, (UNEP), Environmental Partnership, and the Open Society, Danish and Baltic environmental NGOs (Jancar-Webster, 1998).

professional activists and society, and the loss of local perspectives (Jancar-Webster, 1998; Jacobson & Saxonberg, 2013).

The historical legacy of communism tended to reinforce the negative effects of the relationship between the authoritarian state and society (Jacobson & Saxonberg, 2013). The transition period in the 1990s was characterised by a fragmentation of public activism. Most citizens tried to avoid the public sphere and, as far as possible, spent their lives with their families or friends. Cynicism and suspicion towards public organisations remained part of people's daily lives, as well as mistrust in civil society organisations and even greater mistrust of the state, public institutions and politicians (Jacobson & Saxonberg, 2013). Nevertheless, Jacobson and Saxonberg (2013) challenge these observations and argue that negative effects were not justified in all cases and the notion of "NGO-ization" needs to be further nuanced. As they present the previously published research, quite a few organisations refused to participate in the funding game and focused on strengthening local ties, or precisely because of foreign funding, they dared to operate in areas that were previously taboo topics. In some cases, co-operation with the state appeared to be an advantage, the influence of which could be decisive during the outcome of a case (Jacobson & Saxonberg, 2013). Moreover, Piotrowski (2015) identified in the 2000s that movements tended to be organised spontaneously around local cases, mainly in the urban environment, trying to avoid politics, and not staying active for long. In most cases, they can be interpreted in terms of the "right to the city" and "the city as a common" conceptual framework (Lefebvre, 1996; Harvey, 2012). Given this emphasis on the local issues and the "not in my backyard" (NIMBY) mentality, Piotrowski (2015) sees the failure of the global justice movement as the local mobilisations neglecting the national or regional policies.

In contrast, populist or right-wing parties have been able to successfully mobilise relatively large masses. One reason is that the definition of the left-wing has become more problematic after socialism. Anti-communist sentiments were strong, and this curbed the formation of left-wing groupings. In parallel, with the professionalization and the "NGO-ization" of grassroots movements, which made them economically dependent, which in many cases resulted in the softening (de-radicalization) of groups and the neglect of the political dimension (de-politization) (Piotrowski, 2015). Nevertheless, besides these general commonalities, the social movements became more diffuse in the CEE region. Over time, post-socialist roots have become less and less dominant in the presence of environmental movements. Urban social

movements are strong features of Central and Eastern Europe today, but they are not unique to this region. (Piotrowski, 2015).

2.2 Conclusions

The purpose of this chapter was to adumbrate the historical context of Central and Eastern Europe focusing on the environmental movements. The literature on democratisation tends to romanticize the role of civil society and movements, while recent research takes a more critical approach to this issue. One of the most significant legacies of the Eastern European revolutions is the victory of civil society over the communist regime – which in many cases leads to an idealised approach to civil society and in some cases gives an exaggerated role to these movements (Fagan, 2004). It is clear that there is a more complex and dynamic relationship between civil society and the state than the liberal tradition suggests about the autonomous civil society.

Environmental movements were in a special position among CEE movements in the 1980s. It seems clear that the environmental movements have wider leeway in broadening the public discourse and pushing politics towards more democratic and transparent governance, even in purely repressive systems. At the same time, the functioning and possibilities of the movements depended heavily on the system and political context in which they operated, as well as what form of protest they chose and how they framed their mission. In the Czech Republic, the environmental movement became more and more important, while opposition circles grew stronger, leading to the Velvet Revolution. In East Germany, the peace movement, environmentalists and the evangelical church worked together to weaken the existing system. In Hungary, the Danube Circle movement – although it did not help the change of regime in itself – contributed to showing the weaknesses and destructive activities of the system. As more and more people were engaged, more and more grievances surfaced. For the politically active people, the experience of protesting against the system was provided by participation in the Danube movement, which was tangible and contained the flaws of the system: uneconomic, megalomaniacal, undemocratic, and unconcerned with people or nature. Nevertheless, after the rapid and spectacular rise of civil society movements in the 1980s, it was followed by a subsequent decline by the early 1990s (Manning, 1998). Based on the functionalist model, environmental movements were merely a symbolic means of expressing criticism of the ruling system, which, with the disintegration of the Soviet Union, no longer stood its ground.

3 Where did the park go? – Liget Project and the Ligetvédők Movement

In the previous chapter, I reviewed the general characteristics of environmental movements in Eastern Europe in the 1980s and 1990s. It gave the historical context which can help one to understand the legacies and the specifics of the region. In this chapter, I would like to show even more specifically how the Ligetvédők movement worked within the current Hungarian illiberal system, how they protected the park, and what impact they had on the development of the Liget Project. A brief presentation of the history of the Városliget and the political context of Hungary will help us to understand the background of the project and the certain invisible mechanism that influenced the opportunities and operation of the Ligetvédők movement.

Through interviews with activists, we can get even closer to their personal stories and what aspects they considered important in protecting the park. This will bring us closer to understanding the community building activity of the movement, which is an essential function of the civil society (Paffenholz & Spurk, 2006). Hence, the chapter sheds light on the complex and multifaceted activities of the movement. The theory of framing provides a basis for analysing the different perspectives of activists. I will examine two core framing tasks in the meaning-making process of the movement: the diagnosis and prognostic frames. The diagnostic frame involves identifying the problem and the "enemies" and describing the chain of events, while the prognostic frame covers strategies, tactics and goals of the movement (Snow & Benford, 1988). In what follows, I will list what activities the activists had physically, as well as the reaction of the authorities. I aim also to explore what internal conflicts have developed within the movement that affected their functioning.

3.1 Short history of the Városliget (Liget)

Pest, Buda and Óbuda (Old-Buda) were different cities before 1873. When the government unified it, 300 000 inhabitants lived there but after the next decades' developments, by 1910 the population increased to 1 million (Magyar, 2013). To understand the broader role and context of the Városliget, it is essential to look back to those years when Budapest became a metropolis and the greatest scale developments took place that determined the image of Budapest for the next century. Erzsébet Magyar (2013) noted that most of the city's gardens and parks were established at the end of the 18th century and the first half of the 19th century

and the only public park was the Városliget. The foundations of the spirit and design of the city park were laid out by Heinrich Nebbien between 1813-19. By 1830 the park was completed, with the carefully planned structure, promenade system, and flora of selected groups of trees, shrubs, and bushes.

In the 1880s and 1890s, the developments were realised in the spirit of the idea of a "national park", which meant that this place was devoted to the national literacy and a wide range of social groups (Magyar, 2013). Later, the Millennium Exhibition at the end of the century caused a significant reduction in the green space in the park. The Városliget became a kind of national memorial ensemble by the building of the Millennium Monument and the Castle of Vajdahunyad. In spite of the continuous expansion of the green areas at that time, the city was not able to keep up with the growth of the population and of the built-up area. The proportion of public parks per person in m^2 has been steadily decreasing since the 1850s (Magyar, 2013). There was a subdivision between the different green areas among the different social classes[31], and the Városliget was the only public park which could fulfil its function as a public park in the city. After 1914, due to the First World War and the shortage of labour and money, all the parks in the city and their trees were damaged as the population got firewood from there. Nevertheless, during and after the world wars, the Városliget could preserve its central role among places of the leisure activities due to its various recreational facilities[32].

After the world wars, some parts of the city had to be reconstructed while other parts had to be developed and this is still happening up to the present days. As Bence Gál (2017) argues, one of the challenges of the metropolises and big cities nowadays is to create "liveable" and "sustainable" cities which are more rational, greener, healthier and more attractive to residents. That is why the emphasis should be placed on the development of community and cycling, public areas, public institutions, their surroundings and green areas. This is especially relevant and true for Budapest, where over the past decades a significant socio-economic transformation has taken place which has brought about drastic changes in the structure of the capital, and that has to be answered by means of architectural and urban planning. He advocates that these

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[31] It was determined which park was visited by the poorer (Népliget) or middle classes (Margit Island). The Városliget was popular among all the social classes as there were a variety of cultural and entertainment facilities, however, there was a kind of custom system that precisely defined the spatial use of the park (Magyar, 2013).
[32] such as Capital the Zoo, Circus of Budapest, the Hungarian Museum of Science, Technology and Transport, Vajdahunyad Castle and the Budapest Amusement Park

planning should be aligned with the image of the city and a comprehensive city concept and a long-term vision are needed to be designed during the planning (Gál 2017).

3.2 Political, social and legal context of the Liget project

Before describing the plans of the Liget project, I will present the political, social and legal context in which the plans were made and in which the Ligetvédők protected the park. The political processes of the last decade have had a major influence on the development of this project, as well as on how an environmental movement can act, mobilise and protest.

Jan-Werner Müller (2011) writes about "The Hungarian Tragedy" after the first year of governing Fidesz as the party began to transform the political system to a system in which "national values" are dominating and this became an important part of the constitutional amendment. Moreover, by limiting the powers of the Constitutional Court, the government has weakened the independent bodies charged with government oversight. Müller (2011) describes accurately the strategy of Fidesz and Viktor Orbán at an early stage: building a one-party state, polarizing, making people hold the right national values, and engaging people in politics. What Müller sees as a tragedy is that Hungary seemed the "best hope for a liberal post communism[33]" after the regime change in 1989 but it has become "the first member state of the European Union to slide back into authoritarianism" (p. 6). Jacques Rupnik (2012) claims that Hungary can be an emblematic case of the transition away from democracy.

In terms of the concentration of political power, the prime minister Viktor Orbán had and still has a significant role in the development of the system – the influence of the prime minister in the system is well summarised in the concept of Orbanization (Wilkin, 2018). In 2014, after the second electoral victory of Fidesz, Orbán even more clearly indicated the direction of their politics in a public speech at a Summer University in Transylvania:

> We have to abandon liberal methods and principles of organising a society. (…) Hungarian nation is not a simple sum of individuals, but a community that needs to be organised, strengthened and developed, and in this sense, the new state that we are building is an illiberal state, a non-liberal state. It does not deny foundational values of liberalism, as freedom, etc. But it does not make this ideology a central element of state

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[33] Similar processes can also be observed in Turkey. Many looked at the Party for Justice and Development (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi – AKP) party with great hope and trust, in which they had to be disappointed.

organisation, but applies a specific, national, particular approach in its stead. (Orbán, 2014)

In the same speech, Orbán cited Singapore, China, India, Turkey, and Russia as examples of illiberal political regimes that he sees as success stories in terms of making their countries prosperous in an increasingly competitive global economy.

Starting from the political situation in Hungary and the case of the Ligetvédők, the movement mobilised and operated on a difficult track. In regard to NGOs and civil society, Veronika Nagy (2017) claims that the Fidesz was successful in silencing the voices of the political opposition and thus enabling more mass surveillance by anti-EU references and linking NGOs with liberal Western values and national betrayal. Ádám Nagy (2016) also lists "seven deadly crimes" committed by the Hungarian state against the civil sphere: the alienation of non-profit regulation; the abolition of civil autonomy; deterioration of civil funding; the inextricability of mergers; changing the meaning of the civil ethos; increasing bureaucracy; and the setting civil society as a scapegoat[34]. At the same time, alongside various measures, the media is an important tool in demonstrating power as none of the measures or projects would have been effective without the transformation of the media system which had an important role in spreading propagandistic messages. Media has discursive-, access-, and resource power, which can influence the creation of frames, the range of voices in public, and the actions of governments and states (Bekkers et al., 2011). The transmutation of the media systematically happened from 2010 and the government increasingly centralized the media in Hungary[35] (Bátorfy, 2017; Róka, 2019). With the transformation of the media system and the suppression of independent, critical media, the communication of environmental movements became more difficult too.

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[34] This was also reflected in the report of the Freedom House. The civil society rating declined from 6,75 (2010) to 5,00 (2018) continuously and then to 4.50 (2020) on a seven-point scale where 7 representing the highest level of democratic progress and 1 the lowest (All Data Nations in Transit 2005-2020, n.d.; Filippov, 2020).

[35] The Media Council which manages the established supervisory body called National Media and Telecommunications Authority (NMHH) became Fidesz-dominated and the public service broadcaster became extremely biased towards the government as well (Bajomi-Lázár, 2013). Bajomi-Lázár provides the concept of the party colonization of the media through the example of Hungary. He defines it as a "strategy aimed at extracting from the media resources such as airtime, frequencies, positions and money, and channeling them to party loyalists in order to reward them for various services" (Bajomi-Lázár, 2013, p. 76). As well as, state advertising was an important tool in distorting the media market, censoring and building a non-critical media empire coordinated with the government (Bátorfy & Urbán, 2019). This problematic change of the media system is also traceable in the report of the Freedom House, as the independent media rating fell from 5,25 (2010) to 3,50 (2018) and then to 3,25 (2020) (All Data Nations in Transit 2005-2020, n.d.; Filippov, 2020).

Looking at the conditions in Hungary, it can be seen that parallel realities emerged regarding the democratic functioning of the country. Research of András Bíró-Nagy (2019) shows that democracy as a political system enjoys general support in Hungary. However, after the large-scale Fidesz election success in 2018, there are already a majority of those who see the situation negatively in relation to the current functioning of democracy. One of the important features of Hungarian democracy is that the belief in the accountability of politicians has faltered (Bíró-Nagy, 2019). As a result, divergent narratives are developing in the Hungarian society. Accordingly, different measures and events are also interpreted in very different ways. Thus, the case of the Liget Project and the protection of the Liget were also told in very contrasting narratives which are described in more detail in the next chapter.

Moreover, the Liget Project was legitimized by defining the legal framework in 2013 which was already greatly influenced by the transformation of the political system at that time. By then, the institutionalized environmental protection has weakened several times. The Ministry of Environment and Water was abolished and integrated into the Ministry of Rural Development in 2010 (Környezetvédelmi és Vízügyi Minisztérium, 2011). The environmental protection is present at the State Secretariat level as a State Secretariat for the Environment. In 2017, the National Inspectorate for Environment and Nature was dissolved by merger separation (Megszűnik az Országos Környezetvédelmi és Természetvédelmi Főfelügyelőség, 2016). Hence, environmental protection, which has already been weakened, was becoming more and more opaque.

The downsizing of the environmental institutional system was key to the continuation of Fidesz's national economic policy and to the implementation of various investments. The peculiarities of the political system are also reflected in the legislation, which thus influenced the development of the project and the movement as well. Important, large-scale investments and constructions are declared by the government to be "a matter of priority for the national economy[36]", which can be implemented at a faster pace (Építési jog, n.d.). The Liget Project also became a priority state matter, which was not subject to the traditional procedure and is subject to special rules. It means that permitting procedures are faster and it became easier to obtain the necessary permits.

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[36] Translated by the author

During the creation of the Building Regulations of the Városliget there was a pro-government majority in parliament and Budapest City Council, so the representatives of the opposition parties did not have any chance to vote against the decisions efficiently. The created law and regulation ensure the legitimacy of the project but several articles pointed out the legal anomaly of the project both in the creation of the laws and in their later amendments (Konferencia a Ligetről, 2014; Ráday, 2014; Garay, 2015; Garay, 2016; Bathó, 2016; Erő, 2019, Gulyás, 2019).

3.2.2. Plans of the Liget Project

First, István Tarlós, Fidesz Mayor of Budapest (2010-2019) raised the idea of a museum quarter, but he did not imagine it in the Városliget, but in the rust belt behind the Nyugati railway station. The concept was later referred to as the Andrássy Quarter, which would have run from the Buda Castle Quarter through Andrássy Avenue to Városliget and was linked to Géza Szőcs State Secretary for Culture.

The idea of a Museum Quarter in Budapest was outlined more concretely in 2011, shortly after Fidesz came to power (Hajdu, 2019). One important motivating factor was the relocation of the National Gallery from Buda Castle, where Fidesz wanted to create a government quarter, which was partly achieved by taking over the Carmelite monastery. The mastermind behind the concept was László Baán[37], who became the Ministerial Commissioner responsible for the Liget Budapest project. According to the original plans of the Liget Project launched in 2013, its aims are the renewal and rehabilitation of the park and the creation of the 'Museum Quarter' which would be composed of four new or reconstructed buildings in the park – namely the New National Gallery, The Museum of Ethnography, The House of Hungarian Music and The City Park Theatre – and the Capital Circus of Budapest, the Zoo, the Hungarian Museum of Science, Technology and Transport, and Vajdahunyad Castle would develop as well (Megújuló Park, n.d.).

The Zoo's renovation also includes the Biodome project, a 50,000 square metre enclosed tropical hall. This is also part of the Liget Project, but it is planned to be financed by the capital city. The project also includes two elements that are not located in the park, but on other sites: Museum Restoration and Storage Centre and the Komárom Fortress. In addition, the project contains the renovation of the Olof Palme House – transferring it to the Millennium House –,

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[37] Since 2004, László Baán has been the Director of the Museum of Fine Arts, which is also located at one of the "entrances" to the Városliget.

the creation of new playgrounds, dog parks, the construction and renovation of sports fields and a jogging track, a rose garden, a garden for the blind and underground car parks.

The first plans included the Museum of Photography, Architecture Museum and Ludwig Museum which were eventually dropped from the plans, as well as the Hungarian Museum of Technology and Transport. In its place, the project management want to create the Hungarian House of Innovation

NEW OR RENOVATED BUILDINGS PLANNED IN THE PARK ACCORDING TO THE LATEST PLAN

HUNGARIAN HOUSE OF INNOVATION

UNDERGROUND GARAGE

BIODOME (PANNON PARK)

NEW NATIONAL GALLERY

HUNGARIAN HOUSE OF MUSIC

UNDERGROUND GARAGE

MUSEUM OF ETHNOGRAPHY

VÁROSLIGET THEATRE

SOURCE: PARTIZÁN (2020)
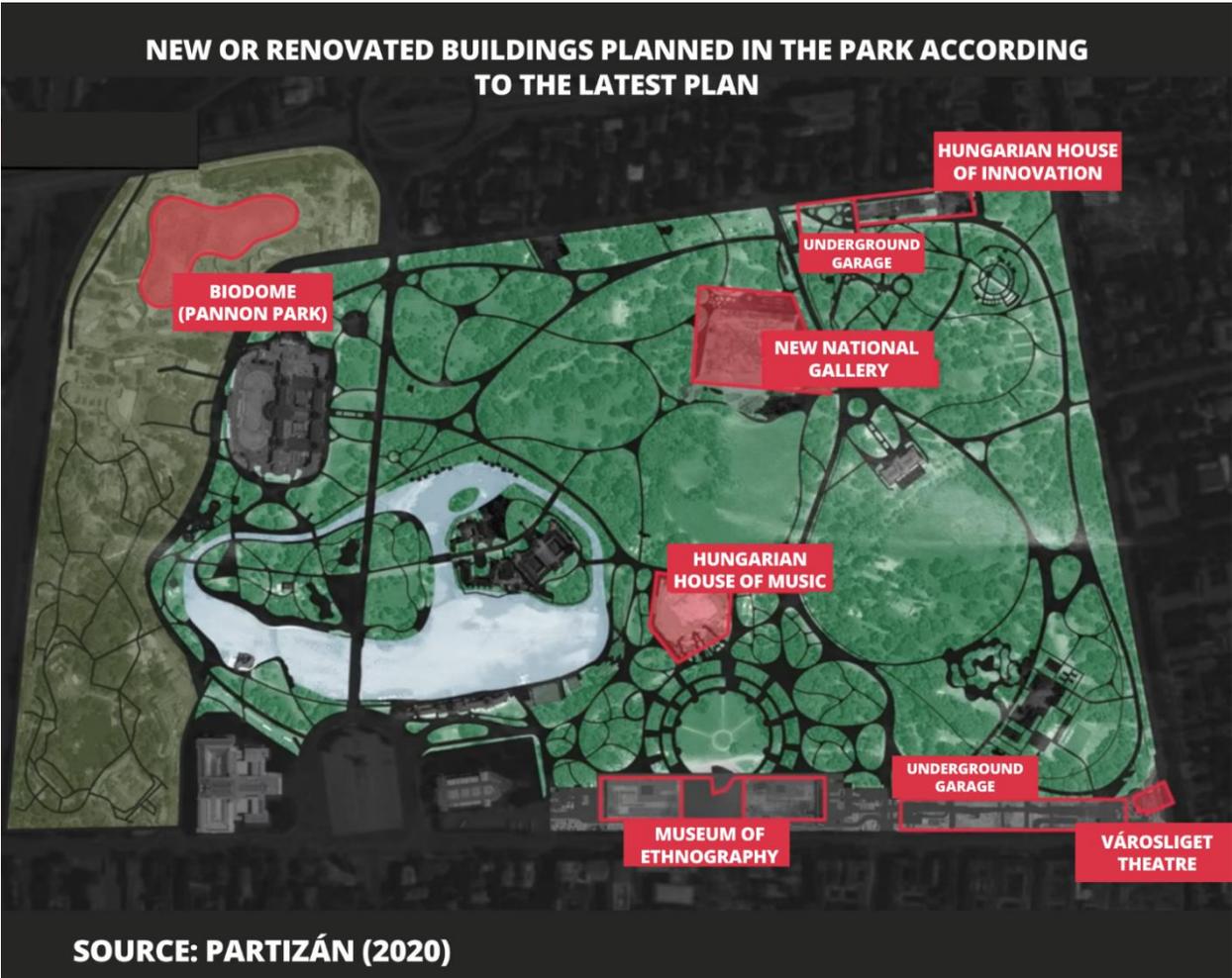
Figure 2: *The current plans of the Liget* (Partizán, 2020)

In 2012, before the investment regulation was enacted, the government estimated HUF 50-60 billion (EUR 160-190 million) for the renewal of the city park which has increased to HUF 250 billion (EUR 800 million) by 2018 and this may still not be the final costs (Domokos, 2018). According to the latest information, based on an interview with the CEO of Városliget Ltd. (Benedek Gyorgyevics), the final amount could be around HUF 300-350 (EUR 1 billion) (Partizán, 2020).

After the 2019 municipal elections, the new opposition municipal government took the initiative to prevent the start of construction work, figuring in the plans. This meant that the National Gallery, the Városliget Children's Theatre and the House of Hungarian Innovation could not be built. Construction work on the Museum of Ethnography and the House of Hungarian Music was already well underway at the time, so their plans were not changed. However, this started a "war" between the Budapest city government and the government. The current position is that the above three buildings will not be built, but the government is trying to pressure the city government to change its mind.

3.3 The story of the Ligetvédők Movement

The beginning of the movement can be traced back to before the first tree felling in 2016. In 2013, with the release of the plans of the Liget Project, several professional groups – architects, urban planners, social scientists, and philosophers alike – began to protest. Among other things, an Urbanist Forum called Városliget - Város - Vár[38] was organised, where representatives of the mentioned professional groups spoke and expressed their concerns about the Liget Project. In addition, one of the districts involved – Zugló – collected 20,000 signatures against the construction of the Liget Project (Várnai, 2015).

Some already participated in these earlier actions before the movement, such as marking trees in the park with coloured ribbons, organising a torchlight procession and planting trees, or collecting signatures. Thus, there were already organised groups that preceded the emergence of the movement. These less integrated social networks can reach many individuals and play a significant role in the evolution of movements, spreading views and mobilising (Campbell, 2005). The various civil and scientific interest groups were, therefore, already active before the movement was formed, but their actions did not have the desired impact. This made it clear to many that physical protest would be necessary. As an activist puts it:

> The Ligetvédők movement was basically based on physical resistance, as there was theoretical, legal, professional, and petition resistance even before the Ligetvédők movement. In fact, the real reason for the creation of the movement was that we had had

[38] In English translation: City Park – City – Castle. However, in the Hungarian meaning there is a meta meaning as the Vár means 'castle' and 'to wait' as well. Translated by the author.

enough that there were no results of the trial, the forum, and the other attempts to influence the development of the project. (Andrea, PI, 2019)[39]

The work of the various interest groups was joined in early 2016. A sociologist university lecturer who teaches and researches on the topic of network communication and social media began to consciously organise the movement.

> I was aware that Facebook was capable of building something, an effective resistance. In fact, it was also a social media experiment on my part. I took part in a lot of Liget demonstrations that were there at the time, and I saw them as extremely weak, and I saw that they would not be able to prevent anything. I wanted to build something that would actually protect the Liget. (Zalán, PI, 2019)

As a prelude, Zalán also recalled that he already made a poster for the ARC[40] (FACE) Exhibition in August 2015 with two of his friends, entitled "Let the Liget be my garden[41]". By the time the poster went out for the exhibition, Zalán had made a Facebook page with the same name that he had introduced to some of his friends, and then waited for the right moment to start promoting the page.

> Basically, I was waiting to see when an event would come – an issue that can spread on social media – and I know that those who think like me will react heavily on it. In fact, I was waiting for the first small tree cut, and then I started campaigning and started building the relationships that were needed. (Zalán, PI, 2019)

He contacted other activists who advocated for the Liget before the beginning of 2016. Besides the aforementioned Facebook page, he created a Facebook group for discussion and another Facebook group which functioned as an alarm chain. Zalán developed the page and the groups in a way that by the time the first tree cutting came, there were enough people on the online and telephone alarm chain who could be mobilised for the first action.

Before that even took place, a civil picnic was organised for saving the park on March 14th, 2016, which was attended by about 150 people. Some interviewees reminisce that it was

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[39] All texts quoted from activists are translated by the author.
[40] ARC is an annual exhibition, which is the most visited public exhibition in Hungary. It has been held since 2000 and is about freedom of creativity. Today it is a traditional part of the cultural offer in Budapest, and its significance goes beyond the exhibitions. In 2015, the theme of the exhibition was "Hungarian Dream".
[41] Translation by the author.

disappointing how few came, but others see it as a good start to building the movement. By this time, activists were already prepared for the fact that tree felling was likely to begin soon. Three days later, on the morning of March 17, the first alarm on the alert chain arrived that the logging had begun. Those who could quickly went out into the park, and when there were more, some people jumped into the fenced area and stopped the felling. Activists asked for the tree felling permit, and it turned out that they did not wait for the two-week appeal period required to wait after such a permit was issued. That was the point when the felling was stopped.

> It was the big scandal I knew was going to be another step and we were going to expand. By then, we had built up what media we were calling, and we were inviting journalists to report live right away, so I was already talking live on Klubrádió at 8:30 a.m. The plan was for at least enough people to come to have a team with whom we could jump in the felling area, and then as that happened, we became more and more and the media started to report on us as well. (Zalán, PI, 2019)

On this first day, Zoltán Illés, the former Secretary of State for the Environment of the Fidesz government between 2010 and 2014, also appeared at the protest, who, together with the Ligetvédők, obstructed the felling of trees. His battle of words with police officers became one of the most watched viral videos of the day[42] (Newsroom Hungary, 2016). This day was therefore a meaningful beginning in the history of the movement and nurtured high hopes in the activists. This is how Andrea recalls this moment:

> We really saved the trees with our bodies. And it turned out there was a legal hurdle to that as well. We saw that this project can be stopped. There was already a bigger meeting that day. The Ligetvédők (Protectors of the Liget) became our name and we figured out our tree logo too. I suggested this motto that "resignation is our greatest enemy" because there is an Anna Lindh[43] memorial stone in the park on which there is this quote. (…) There were a lot of videos on that day, reporters were coming, and there was a really big

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[42] Zalán consciously prepared to create viral content in the Liget. He said that:
We don't make a viral video by making a viral video ourselves. We don't stage it. You create the conditions in which the virus is created. We have had a lot of these virus-like messages linked to us, and it has gone viral, that you can resist any power, including the Orbán government. It was a very big deal at the time, to finally have somebody who was actually doing something, not just talking.
[43] Anna Lindh is a Swedish Social Democrat politician, lawyer, Member of Parliament from 1982-1985 to 1998-2003, President of the Swedish Socialist Youth Association (1984-1990), Minister of the Environment (1994-1998) and Minister of Foreign Affairs from 1998 until her tragic death in 2003.

bang. And from this day until the police evicted the camp on July 6, it was the heyday of the movement. (Andrea, PI, 2019)

Figure 3: *Ligetvédők logo* (Ligetvédők, n.d.b.)

The moment, when a group develops a sense of being able to change the situation together can be best described as "cognitive liberation" (McAdam, 1982). This process usually happens when an everyday event becomes symbolic. Although logging is not strictly speaking a daily occurrence, the fact that activists were able to prevent logging gave the feeling that the project could be stopped by real action. It became a symbol that joint action can bring success. From the point of view of the movement's self-understanding and meaning making, this event thus became the beginning of the movement's history.

Later on, several important and symbolic events occurred that were significant for the movement and can be considered milestones in its history. These, and a brief history of the movement, are illustrated in the timeline below.
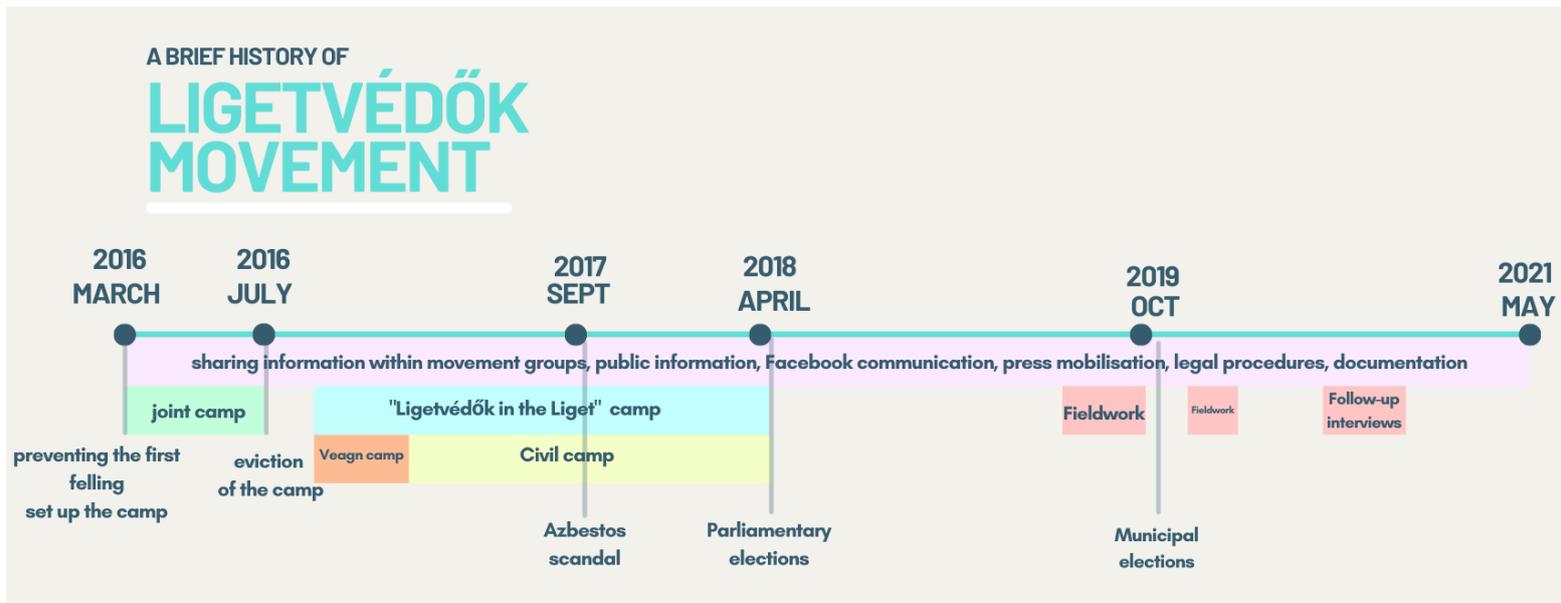
Figure 4: *The milestones of the Ligetvédők movement*

3.3.1 Different people, different diagnosis frames

From the point of view of the strategy of the movement, it is crucial how the movement defines the source of the problem, and who it identifies as its enemy. Benford and Snow (2000) define identification of the problem and naming the enemy as the diagnosis frames. The idea of Gamson's (1995) injustice frame is similar to the diagnostic frame. According to the approach of injustice frame, the recognition of injustice is rather a visceral recognition, with specific actors (often named) who are participants in a social playground of more general significance. However, the injustice components in a movement's diagnostic frames are often present, as both focus on responsibility (Benford-Snow 2000). The source of the problem, the enemies and injustices were identified by the activists of the Ligetvédők. However, the heterogeneity of the movement led to the emergence of different frames within the movement.

Zalán's social media strategic plan worked in the sense that the initial successes and actions of the movement, which were reported on Facebook and reported in the media, encouraged others to join. The heterogeneous community began working together, full of hope and sought to bring together different motivations to save the park in March 2016. They occupied an area designed for the Ligetvédők Camp next to the buildings of the former Hungexpo office buildings, where later a restaurant called "Kertem" operated.

Members of the movement were equally keen to stress that people from very different social backgrounds joined. Anyone who went there and wanted to join could do so. Older people, young people, parents, intellectuals, entrepreneurs, manual workers, students, unemployed, and homeless people all became activists. Hence, the composition of the movement consisted of very different social groups. About fifty people lived in the camp, and there were still a few hundred people who were very active in the daily life of the movement. Many found this diverse community very attractive, but some found it challenging to integrate into this heterogeneous group.

> After the first news, I started to notice them and looked up to them as they were able to occupy an area in the park. That is when I started contacting them. I went to the camp first, and I got into quite random situations there, so the contact was not very successful. It was a little disappointing, I saw that it would be difficult if I also became part of the movement. I have not yet participated in any other movement. It was a cultural and social

shock, and it took a lot of perseverance and patience to find my place in the movement. (Csaba, PI, 2019)

The motivations of the activists were also very different, but for many, they had one thing in common, namely that they were personally affected by the project because they live in the neighbourhood and often go out to the park to relax and play sports.

> I live less than 1 km from the park and since we moved here, I went out to the Liget every day where I did Nordic walking. I made friends, and we had a small group. It was a social and health event. I took this whole Liget project as a personal insult. This is actually about transforming the park into a tourist destination. Instead of the terrain of families, children, dog owners and athletes living in the crowded District VII., VI. or Zugló (District XIV.), they wanted to create an area for the gentlemanly population in high heels for having luxury dinner. (…) This outrage led me into the movement. For us who live in District VII., Liget is really our garden. And we do not want unnecessary buildings in our garden. (Andrea, PI, 2019)

For example, György's apartment is right next to the park, and Brigitta and Annamari live also 10 minutes away from the park with their families. Viktória teaches at a school near the Liget. In this regard, most activists said that they think personal involvement was very important for motivation in participation. Usually, if someone sympathised with a case, it was not enough to become an activist. "Many people need to feel the impact of the case on their own life in order to really take people out on the street and get them to take action" (György, PI, 2019). Thus, these "not in my backyard" (NIMBY) attitudes could move many off the couch, however, for most of the activists, the Liget project was a much broader issue: social, environmental, and legal case. In addition to all this, it was very much a political issue, which was also a motivating factor for many.

> For me, this is less of an environmental issue and more of a political issue. Basically, I did not like much of what and how it developed in the country, but I did not see what could be done. When I saw that they were starting to cut down the trees in the park and this was being prevented by local residents by kicking the door and climbing on the fence, I felt that there is such a thing in this country that can be called civil courage and with civil disobedience one can stand there. It was very appealing to me right away. We were organising ourselves from below, and it was really organised by the residents and has

already achieved results. It made me completely electrified that there is a social organisation for a good cause, and it felt like something can really be done for it. (Dávid, PI, 2019)

Thus, when the movement emerged, two approaches met regarding identifying the problem. One diagnostic frame approached the protection of the park from the point of view of the destruction of the local environment and unfair decision-making, while the other approached the protection of the park from the broader political-social injustices. Based on the interviews, it was not possible to draw a clear line between which group was in favour of the different approaches. The trend shows that it was primarily the local civil population that approached the problem directly because of local injustices. While groups who did not live near the park but were interested in public affairs and political issues saw the source of the problem in broader political and social contexts. There were also local residents who, although approached from the perspective of the local problem, ultimately blamed the political system itself. In addition to these approaches, there were those in each group who also saw the socio-economic system of the world itself as one source of the problem: that is, the capitalist system that encourages continuous development and growth, while pushing all other values into the background.

Because of the different ways of interpreting the source of the problem, the definition of the enemy was also interpreted in different ways. Ultimately, however, most activists concluded that because the project was initiated by the government – and the law they created – they were one of the main opponents of the movement. In addition, Városliget Ltd., which has been in charge of implementing the Liget project, was also considered an enemy. Before the local elections in October 2019, the Fidesz-led municipality of Budapest was also considered an enemy of the movement, but after the elections, this changed with the formation of the opposition municipal government. Yet, there was no consensus within the movement on the extent to which the new city administration could be considered an ally of the movement.

3.3.2 "What now?" – How the movement worked?

In addition to defining the problems and the enemies, it is very important regarding the strategy of the movement and the core framing tasks, to answer the question "what now?", "what can be done?". Benford and Snow (2000) refer to the response of these questions as prognostic frames. In the following, I will present the response of the Ligetvédők to these questions, how they organised themselves and what concrete actions they took to protect the park.

Although Zalán is associated with the formation of the movement and the initial recruitment strategy on Facebook, as a small community was formed, he did not want to be a leader in the movement. The movement was not a registered organisation, which was a conscious decision. The members did not want to formalise the movement and they did not want to have leaders or faces who could then be attacked personally. The goal was to form a community and the community to lead itself.

> It is a great experience to see what it means to have 15 people in one group. One person is one force, but in a group of 15 people, it can be up to 150 or even 1000 force because the essence of the group is to bring solutions out of each other. (Zalán, PI, 2019)

At this stage of construction, it was a matter of determining what they were going to do. It was all done through joint thinking. When there were ten of them, those ten people discussed what the next steps should be to get to thirty, and then there were ongoing joint decisions about how to move forward. The movement soon began to operate along the principles of participatory democracy. This functioning is not unique in the story of social movements, as Polletta (2012) writes about in her book. It means a rather progressive and complex operation in which different skills, interests and talents are equally valuable (Polletta, 2012).

As Castells (2006) argues, bottom-up democracy and direct exercise of power, as well as participation and consensual decision-making, are integral to ecological movements. This is because the emphasis on control over space and locality is a distinctive aspiration of the environmental movement. Human existence, experiences, goals, and individual ambitions are always locally-based. These can best be channelled directly through active participation and consultative decision-making.

In the case of the Ligetvédők movement, plenary sessions were held every day where everyone was given the opportunity to speak. There was always a moderator – always a different person – and there was another person who counted the speakers. A serial number had to be asked if someone wanted to speak, and everyone could comment, then there was a vote at the end on each topic. The operation was basically done in such a way that everyone could decide what they would undertake or want, and then the community voted in the meeting about the idea. Therefore, the plenary did not decide from above what the tasks were, but everyone added their own ideas on a voluntary basis and then that person had to implement them – alone or with the help of the others – if it was supported.

In addition, different working groups were set up for different tasks. There were working groups that dealt with how practical things would be in the camp and created liveable conditions. Those activists who did not live outside the camp also participated in the life of the camp through the plenary sessions, or they cooked food for those living outside and brought them hot drinks when it was cold. Meanwhile, the alert chain continued to expand, more and more people signed up who could be alerted if something happened in the park.

Most activists remember this period as the golden age of the movement. The major pressing issues were identified, they held non-violent resistance and resistance techniques training, and the camp gradually and steadily expanded. By the first week, they already started brainstorming what they could do to get the attention of the press and the public. The first concrete task was to organise the first big meeting of the Ligetvédők, where the sympathisers they saw on Facebook were invited to such a walk-in and gathering. They made graphics that showed simply and clearly what the problems were with the project and showed in their own reality what was going to happen in the park. This information was distributed on Facebook. They wrote press releases, which one of the guys handed to the press, so in the beginning, quite a few newspapers reported about them as well.

3.3.3 How did the protesters protect the park physically?

By setting up a camp in the park, the environmental protesters were able to constantly guard and monitor any construction and felling. Their primary goal was to prevent or slow down construction. To this end, several different resistance techniques were developed, such as blocking, chaining to a machine, climbing a tree, and chaining to a tree. These actions, as members of that movement called each other, were carried out by "radical activists".

During the blocking, the activists sat in front of the machines, preferably as many as possible, and did not allow the machine to work or be driven. It was important for the demonstration area to be reported to the police where the action took place. In addition, one activist said that it was also advisable to say that they were having a picnic when a security officer asked why they were not allowing the machine to move. For chaining to the implement, a special metal tube was developed to ensure that they could not be easily removed from the machines. There was a case where the machine had to be disassembled in order for an activist to be removed. When climbing the tree, the defenders of the park mounted a small seat on the tree and tied themselves that way. They also tried to position themselves so that they could not be easily reached or

moved. When the authorities told them to climb down the tree, they did not say they would not climb down, they just did not tell when.

In these situations, the biggest challenge was endurance, as they had to spend hours or even an entire day on the machines when they climbed high, and the Emergency Management officials could not remove them. Many people thought that it would have been important for not only two or three people to chain themselves, but at least ten, and not a few dozen more to be there, but a few hundred, and then these actions could have been even more successful. Overall, they were still able to "win" days with these actions.

These non-violent resistance techniques can be traced back to the first half of the 20th century, when Mahatma Gandhi launched his non-violent, passive resistance movement, Satyagraha, in India (Gandhi, 2012). Since then, the literature has examined the topic from many aspects, and research based on empirical experience has expanded significantly. Nepstad, (2013) distinguishes two directions in the literature which developed in parallel. One that sees nonviolence as a mere tactic, and the other looks at it in a much broader sense. According to this, nonviolence can be interpreted from the point of view of the theory of political power and can be described as moral ideology, strategy, and technique by which state oppression can be turned to the advantage of the movement. According to Cunningham (2013), nonviolence is chosen by smaller, geographically distant, self-determination movements, and is more common in non-democratic countries where people are excluded from political power.

For the Ligetvédők movement, nonviolence was a comprehensive strategy that was included in the movement's constitution (A Ligetvédők Alkotmánya, n.d.). The activists tried to preserve the peaceful nature of the demonstration in as many situations as possible, and the techniques they used were also suitable for this. In doing so, they also aimed to preserve their reputation and promote the movement. In addition, they were able to show the difference between them and the power, which in several cases was violent against them[44]. Based on this, Cunningham's (2013) theory that a non-democratic political environment has an effect on a movement's choice of nonviolent strategy in their protest is reasonable in the case of the Ligetvédők movement. However, activists have not been able to maintain fully the non-violence modus in all situations. As one activist put it, it was not clear exactly when an action would be violent.

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[44] see 3.2.4 for the reactions of the authorities

...even in this nonviolence, everyone else has a different idea what it is. To throw a cake in someone's face, is it nonviolent now or not? Obviously, the Molotov cocktail is already, but if I throw a painted balloon on something, is it violence? Or is there violence against things? (Dávid, PI, 2019)

Hence, there were frontiers of nonviolent resistance that activists used. Such was the case with the demolition of fences and canvas-covered cordons in situations where builders wanted to keep out of curious eyes what was happening on the construction site. At such times, activists resolutely tried to tear down the fence or take off the canvas covering the cordon. In those situations where it was obvious that environmentally damaging activities taking place, they tried to get into the construction site and prevent what was just happening. Not only radical activists but the moderates took part in these actions. The tactic was to cause as much confusion in as many places as possible at the same time, thus confusing the people in the security service. As highlighted by several, activists were able to work well together in these situations.

One activist talked about how it also mattered a lot during a demonstration that someone knew techniques on how to move and control crowds. Communication was key during the protests. If there was a confusion among the activists on a demonstration, they tried to use a tactic, as he called it the "ant tactic". It meant that when he met one of the activists in action, he said they should meet at a certain place ten minutes later and pass this information on to others. In that way, in the crowd, more people heard about the plan relatively quickly, especially the radical activists. Ten minutes later, they met at the location and discussed what to do next. However, even so, in many cases, what they did and how they reacted was spontaneous. It was everyone's basic principle not to hurt people, but there were still illegal actions in which some activists took part. For example, the vandalizing and cutting down of giant advertising posters, visuals, which were mainly done at night. There were also activists who were not fundamentally led by nonviolence and were unable to keep basic rules within the movement.

In summary, when asked "what can be done?", the response of the Ligetvédők was that the park must be physically protected. Thus, the prognostic frame was based on the activists' message that the project could be stopped if the population united and used non-violent resistance to block the construction. An important part of their action plan was to mobilise as many people as possible and inform the public about the project's drawbacks, shortcomings and irregularities. Thus, community building, which is an important function of civil society Paffenholz and Spurk (2006), was of particular importance to the movement. It fulfilled this

function in the sense that a community of people from different social backgrounds was formed, acting towards a common goal.

3.3.4 Reactions of the authorities

The interviewees unanimously reported two days that were the most defining moments in the story of the movement in terms of the physical protection of the park. One took place on June 28, 2016, at the former Museum of Transport, when Ligetvédők overturned the cordon and climbed onto the building or chained themselves to the building.

> ...when they began to place a cordon around the Museum of Transportation, the police were watching the security people who were taking people out of the announced demonstration. For example, the Ligetvédők jerked the cordon, then the security guard went and pushed off a 60-year-old man. There were no specialists trained in peaceful solutions to such a demonstration. When we were removed and we were pushing back and forth in the crowd, I clung to the fence so they could not take me away, then they hit me in the stomach. It was a tense situation. I am not saying I cannot accept such a pumped bouncer reacting that way. But we were at an announced demonstration. From the outset, we should not have faced a confrontation, but the police should have made any decision and taken action. Either disperse or defend the demonstration. It was a demonstration of strength here so that the police would not be put in an embarrassing position, but it was solved with security people. (Dávid, PI, 2019)

Here, it is important to distinguish between people in the police and those in the security service. Városliget Ltd., the company associated with the Liget Project, employed security services that were responsible for protecting the construction sites. In most cases, activists confronted them, and they were the ones who acted aggressively in most cases. However, in many situations, the activists called the police when they could not agree with the security guards. Most activists complained that in these situations, police officers did not protect the civilians at the officially announced demonstration but assisted the work of the security service. Activists have therefore tried in most situations to inform the security guards of what is happening, as far as possible, by means of a loudspeaker. They tried to explain the peaceful intentions of the activists, mainly to avoid accidents. If police were called, the demonstrators also tried to communicate with the police. These situations were documented on camera throughout, in case of any possible excesses. Nevertheless, as David's description shows, there were excesses. During the events

at the Transport Museum, for example, one activist who chained himself to the roof was taken by the police to the psychiatric ward and had to spend the night there.

The other milestone in the physical protection of the park was the eviction from the camp area on 6 July, 2016. Police evicted activists from their camp as part of an irregular property protection procedure[45]. The movement tried to prepare themselves to be evicted, coming up with different techniques to prevent it, such as chaining themselves to a stable point. However, the activists were heavily outnumbered, with around 200-300 police officers present against 40-50 activists, so the eviction happened in a quite short time. The images of the number of the police and information about the circumstances spread on social media, and by the afternoon, 2,000-3,000 demonstrators had appeared in the Liget. During the demonstration, when security guards tried to put OSB sheets around the fence, the Ligetvédők tried to prevent it and knocked them down but two activists were dragged into the fenced area. As a result, other activists tried even harder to break down the OSB sheets. This incident led to the proceedings in which 9 activists were charged with gang assault. Besides that, several infringement and criminal proceedings have been initiated against the activists.

Most informants felt that these two days were the most violent when the power showed its true face – both because of police overcrowding and because of security guards' excesses that the police failed to prevent. Nevertheless, there were many cases – in addition to these two demonstrations – where demonstrators have been treated violently or unfairly. For example, when activists stayed on the machines for an extended period of time and were covered with blankets because it was cold, police removed the blankets from them. "The police would have been tasked with protecting civilians because the radical activist is equally 'civil' and cannot

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[45] One of the building rights lawyer sympathizers associated with Ligetvédők, who acted on several occasions in favour of the movement, explained the situation as follows:
The decision about the property protection procedure made by the clerk was irregular. Városliget Ltd. requested property protection from the clerk. In order for someone to apply for property protection, there are formal conditions as to what the application should look like, what the application should contain, and the law clearly states that if it is not submitted in this form and does not indicate the content elements which are mandatory, it must be rejected without a substantive examination. The clerk could not have made a decision ordering the Ligetvédők to leave because the application itself did not correspond to a substantive examination of this. But even if the clerk made that decision, and let's assume it was legal — it was not anyway — then he has to take care of it all along the process. But they did not even notify the people involved in advance, the decision was suspended at the gate that morning, and then the evacuation of the area began. Moreover, if an area is to be emptied, it must be emptied together with movables. The properties of those who have been removed from the camp, should not be locked away from them afterwards. They should have taken care of them even then. Or those movables should have been taken into custody and then given them back to the activists at some point. Or they should have made sure they were taken out. That was not the case. They never got back much of their belongings; we could only get some of them. Because of this, I went to court as a lawyer, but the civil court was also quite guided from above. The Ligetvédők went to the Supreme Court but received no appeal.

be unreasonably assumed to be a hooligan. They were there with peaceful intentions" (Csaba, PI, 2019). Activists were also injured while they were removed from the metal tubes they made.

This is an important topic in the academic literature when a system reveals its brutality (Sharp, 1973). When the authorities attack unarmed civilians, it can have several effects: either weaken or strengthen movements (Nepsted, 2013). A particularly offensive action by a dissenting party, the physical assault of a member of the group, or the arrest of a leader of the emerging movement can make a significant contribution to the spread of interpretive frames and to the development and flourishing of the movement (Smelser, 2011).

As Nepsted (2013) quotes Hess and Martin (2006), these may become a "transformational event" when they are more widely publicized. Or, the violent actions of the power can have the effect of "political ju-jitsu" or "backlash" Hess and Martin (2006). To achieve this effect, three conditions must be met. The first condition is that the resistance must remain non-violent. If activists react violently, the state can claim that force was needed to keep the situation under control. If the civilians remain peaceful, the public is likely to see the violence used by the authorities as disproportionate and unnecessary. The second condition is that the assaults must be shown to the public concerned. Third, the audience that sees oppression must be large and dominant enough for the authorities to take their outrage seriously (Hess & Martin, 2006).

In these situations, two conflicting interests emerge between the two parties: civilian resistance attempts to amplify outrage over the attacks, and state power tries to minimize it (Nepsted, 2013). In the case of Ligetvédők, both days strengthened the movement in the sense that as a result of the incidents, far more people appeared in the park and joined the demonstrators than before. Supporters, seeing the action of power, stood by the activists.

> I sensed that when the power acted with such violence, it always aroused a great deal of sympathy from the local population of Budapest, and then a great many came in person. There were times when thousands of people came out to the park to express their sympathy. They stood with us for such a case. It provoked such a spontaneous sympathy movement. (György, PI, 2019)

The movement also sought to get as much media coverage of these events as possible, and to make their own videos and photos, which were constantly shared on Facebook. "These actions are only worth something if they become a press event, whether it is on TV or can even reach

the government level that something is happening here. That was the hardest thing to get across to the public" (Csaba, PI, 2019).

At the same time, there were activists who saw that these events have not been fully reported in the opposition media[46], and recordings have not reached many when the authorities were clearly abusive towards activists, even older, weaker people. It was also a double-edged sword, according to many, because the media like to report on something when there was already bloodshed. This, in turn, distracted attention from why the activists were protesting and focused attention on the fact that there was a riot.

In summary, the story of the movement shows that these two events were the culmination of a physical demonstration when most of the residents of Budapest and supporters of the movement were present to protect the park. Of the conditions set by Hess and Martin (2006), which should have been necessary for "backlash": the peaceful nature of the demonstration was realised while the power was violent, and all communicated through multiple channels. However, the third condition, the outrage of the audience, was not enough for the authorities and power to back down. In retrospect, especially in the case of the eviction of the camp on 6 July, activists evaluated that it was a missed opportunity that could have been a turning point for the outcome of the project.

> People sat down at the end of the demonstration. They should not have done. I do not know why we could not go back. We missed our big chance. The camp could have been reclaimed, there were a lot of people, but a lot of people were scared. Not that they were turbocharged by the situation, but it reassured people. (…) If we went in there, broke the fence, and reclaimed the camp with more than 1,000 people, it would have been a victory. Instead, everyone was there outside the fence and there they shook their fists. And as that did not work, we lost the area. After that, a lot of people from the movement disappeared and resigned. (Brigitta, PI, 2019)

As Priska Daphi (2017) points out, space plays an important role in the life of occupy movements and in the formation of collective identity. Space also plays a central role in transformative events and influences the organisation, goals and repertoire of the movement.

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[46] As I claimed before, in Hungary, the media system is distorted, which means that plenty of the mediums are influenced by the government or owned by a government-related businessman. By opposition media, I mean those mediums, which are independent or can be linked to opposition parties.

With the closure of the camp, the movement no longer had a permanent place to hold meetings and organise programmes. The dissolution of the physical unit also brought to the surface the differences and conflicts within the movement. Hence, the big demonstration on July 6 failed to become a transformative event, and the dissolution of the camp became a negative transformative event that weakened the unity of the movement.

As the movement became fragmented over time, the chances of more violent action increased even more (Pearlman, 2011). This did not happen, as the number of activists decreased. Nevertheless, the movement did not cease completely, but split into separate groups with separate camps. The last camp was disbanded in April 2018, after the parliamentary elections.

3.3.5 The main breaking points and conflicts within the movement

The decline of the movement was not only due to external causes. As I mentioned earlier, there were several internal conflicts between activists – partly due to ideological differences, personal conflicts and partly due to different visions of the movement. In theory, successful movements are those that are heterogeneous and can appeal to several social groups (Chenoweth & Stephan, 2011). However, in the case of the Ligetvédők, as the number of activists diminished over time, different ideologies, positions and visions of the movement became more apparent.

The main ideological fault line was that there was a group of self-proclaimed anarcho-communists who were mostly characterised by far-left thinking. There were also more moderate civilians – especially people living in the park area – with less extreme views who were called the "mainstream" or "petty bourgeois Ligetvédők", and vegans who set up a separate camp for a while, where only vegan products could be consumed. Many of the vegans were radical activists who were physically involved in a lot of the actions. They were mostly characterized by far-left thinking, with a broader concern for the environment and climate change, and a strong narrative of criticism of capitalism and the Orbán regime as well.

After the dismantling of the joint camp on 6 July 2016, the "Ligetvédők in the Liget" camp and the vegan camp were established in the park, and later another camp was set up, run mostly by moderate civilians. The "Ligetvédők in the Liget" camp was mostly made up of people from the margins of society – homeless and unemployed – and they were joined by those who could best be described as far-left thinkers, many of whom, were in intellectual occupations. This group also included activists who were, among others, activists affiliated to one of the political

parties according to other activists. They lived in the camp habitually. The vegan camp was soon disbanded mainly because they could not get along with the other groups, who did not want to accept the vegans' rules that only vegan food could be allowed in the camp. Therefore, two camps, "Ligetvédők in the Liget" and "mainstream Ligetvédők" remained from September 2016 until the elections in April 2018. The activists of the "mainstream Ligetvédők" did not live in the camp as most of them had work or other commitments, but they organised round-the-clock guarding of the camp. They had a caravan and later a yurt with community funding.

In addition to the physical split of the movement, there was also a split in the online space, resulting in the creation of new Facebook groups and Facebook pages. One of the founding members, who consciously built the Facebook community from the beginning, was excluded from the Facebook page he created. There were some who tried to remain neutral in this situation and tried to keep in touch with both camps[47]. Among far-left thinkers, many saw people divided into groups by social status. However, activists in the moderate civil camp claimed that the main problem was that it was impossible to work with a lot of people from the other camp because they were unwilling to cooperate on anything.

> ...the movement was not prepared for the fact that there are people with whom it is not possible to work. For example, someone who shows up drunk as a skunk and yells at everyone when, for example, the meeting is supposed to be held, and then everyone tries to be understanding that they have problems, but 2-3 people still hold up a company and disrupt it. (Csaba, PI, 2019)

There were also ideological and perceptual differences. What the different groups could not agree on the most was how to deal with the homeless among the activists, how to relate to the politics, and the boundaries of what constitutes violence. A strong anti-power and anti-capitalist attitude prevailed among the activists of the "Ligetvédők in the Liget". Therefore, they were

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[47] Andrea, for example, experienced the situation as follows: Unfortunately, there was a nasty public rift when a new communications team was formed who, let's not sugarcoat it, stole the Island Defenders site that was called Let the Island Be My Garden and then renamed Island Defenders. There was another one called Island Defenders. The point is that here it was a case of squeezing out, and those Island Defenders who brought in a bit of that far-left thinking were sought to be squeezed out and were squeezed out. I have not been involved in this anymore, not because I am a left-winger, but perhaps because I am a psychologist and have always tried to be a bridge, like a sheepdog trying to go round and round, to see whether we should reconcile for the sake of a common goal and common interests and whether everyone should take a step back and put their egos a little further away because we are not enemies of each other, but enemies of the project, but I have not succeeded.

accepting of the presence of homeless people and were not concerned with the image it projected to the public.

> The other camp was in favour of being one big company and one big brand. We were not in favour of that. We were in favour of being a spontaneous team that wanted the same thing. This is an anarchistic approach, that is a corporatist approach. We believed in anarchy and autonomous power and they believed in brand and image (Zalán, PI, 2019).

In the mainstream team, there was indeed such a desire to create a professional movement, working along a relatively conscious strategy, with a strong emphasis on communication and image. The moderate activists saw that people who were not able to cooperate should have been excluded much earlier. While the far-left thinkers were totally opposed to excluding anyone, as they saw this as undermining the democratic and inclusive nature of the movement. They also found that the homeless people living outside the camp, who had nothing to lose, were more adventurous and took part in a lot of action, so they helped the movement. They believed that the physical protection of the park was much more effective, while the communication tasks were less so. Some of the radical activists called the mainstream camp "armchair Ligetvédők", who only posted on Facebook and edited newspapers but did not risk their physical safety. However, the mainstream group argued that as much as they tried to show solidarity with people on the margins of society, they were a major handicap in mobilising. Residents of the area – who might have agreed with the aims of the movement – were alarmed by the image they saw in the Ligetvédők camp, even in the previous joint camp and could identify with the movement.

Regarding the issue of relating to politics, the mainstream group basically took the position at the beginning that they should avoid politics as much as possible, avoid the opposition parties, because they saw that the Liget project was an issue regardless of political affiliation, and many people did not like. Later, this changed over time and they saw that the political sphere was inescapable in the identity and communication of the movement.

> As we saw that it depended on political will, we actually became an integral part of the opposition movement. We could not go on doing this, that we are not opposition. Because we are. Precisely because the current political will ignores the fact that this is an unpopular project among their voters too. And at this point, the people who were, let's say, generously described as far left, but who wanted to ask for the help of the left parties in the first place, and who were therefore excluded by the mainstream part of the

movement, we are now almost at the same point with them. So there has been this kind of slide of the movement in this opposition direction. (Andrea, PI, 2019)

However, the mainstream group still tried to distance itself from politicians and distrusted them. Politicians were only allowed to participate in the movement as civilians, although some say that a politician can never be a civilian. There were a few people involved in politics who were in the movement, but most of them were praised by the activists because they really never showed up in party logo clothing or brought party politics into the life of the movement, but they were very active and took part in the different actions. The movement became one of the opposition movements and, although they avoided political statements in the beginning, as time went on, they communicated more and more openly on political issues related to the Liget.

But in the meantime, fewer and fewer people were active and the defence of the Liget seemed increasingly hopeless. Many of the activists, regardless of their ideological standpoint, claimed the participatory democracy contributed to the disintegration of the movement, because the amount of consultation and the continuous voting made effective action impossible. That was why some people acted independently and refused to participate in collective decisions. "It was a very time-consuming thing to talk like that, there were several times that the discussion has degenerated into a debate about why we talk like this, why we do not talk normally, but that was the structure of the meetings" (György, PI, 2019). Károly saw that there was more substantive work in the working groups, and more unnecessary discussion took place in the plenary sessions. "Also, there were always a few who allowed themselves to react and talk without following the rules" (Károly, PI, 2019). Zalán argued that operating on the principles of participatory democracy was one of the reasons for the death of the movement because it was a very slow and tedious process and after a while, no one wanted to take part in it.

Later, there were also many conflicts about the donations – which were collected to pay for the various offences – but there was no good agreement on the exact use to which they should be put. Activists agreed that there were many different people, with very different motivations and wills, which could not be reconciled and unified at many points. They saw that group identities are a natural part of such a heterogeneous community and most people did not know how the movement could have been organised differently to avoid such divisions. However, for a long time this was not felt for the public, because there were several actions where activists from different camps acted together and were able to put personal conflicts aside. In the long term, in turn, effective cooperation could not be sustained.

3.4 Conclusions

In this chapter, I have presented the political, and social context of the Liget project, as well as the main elements of the formation and initial strategy of the Ligetvédők. In order to understand the functioning of the movement, I focused on the diagnostic frame and the prognostic frame, which belong to the three core framing tasks, based on framing theory (Snow & Benford, 1988). By presenting the diagnostic frames, we were able to understand the grievances of the activists and reconstruct how they saw the problems of the Liget project. According to the diagnostic frames within the movement, several approaches emerged. One direction is based on the injustice arising from the local impact of the project, while the other is based on the frustration arising from the national political situation. There were also critiques of capitalism. The main strategic element of the movement was non-violent resistance in order to physically protect the park. Their main response to the prognostic frame, in other words, to the question of "what could be done" was therefore to build a community and defend the park. By building community, the movement also fulfilled an important civil society function (Paffenholz & Spurk, 2006). In this respect, there was consensus among the activists, but as the movement was made up of very heterogeneous social groups, several ideological and conceptual fault lines appeared in the movement. These fault lines became apparent after the dismantling of the joint camp when separate campsites were set up. One group was best characterised by a far-left mindset that also drew on the ideology of anarcho-communism. This group also included activists living on the margins of society. The other group was the more moderate civilian population, characterised by an oppositional attitude, but they did not define themselves primarily in political terms, but rather focused on their civic role. This group aimed to professionalise the movement and saw the development of a unified image as an important task. The third group was the vegans, who for a time formed a separate camp and for whom the cause of protecting the Liget was an important issue from both an environmental and a political point of view. They were closer to the far-left thinkers. The main areas of disagreement between the different groups were: the presence of homeless people, the limits of non-violent resistance, the relationship with politicians and politics, the rules of participatory democracy and the communication of the movement. In the chapter, I have also looked at the reaction of the authorities, which, according to the activists, took a clear stance on the issue. The security services of the Liget project often acted violently against civilians, while the police stood idly by and failed to protect activists participating in the officially announced demonstration. All groups attributed the reasons for this to the Hungarian political system.

4 Communicative strategies for environmental resistance

In the previous chapter, I discussed the political and social context of the Liget project, the plans of the project, the formation and initial strategy of the Ligetvédők, and the people and personal relationships within the movement. To understand the operation of the movement, I examined two of the core framing tasks: diagnostic and prognostic frames. According to these, several interpretations emerged within the movement during the process of identifying the problem and developing the action plan. In this chapter, I will further nuance the different narratives and framing within the movement. The main focus of the chapter will be on the movement's communication strategies, alongside which I will also present the main elements of the project's communication.

I intend to interpret the communication activities and arguments of the movement using framing theory, political opportunity structure theory and narrative analysis. Regarding the framing activity of the movement, I will examine the third core framing task, the motivational frame in the meaning-making process of the movement, that is, how the movement tried to encourage people to participate (Snow & Benford, 1988). I would also like to study whether a master frame has evolved in relation to the movement that could cover a wide range of areas and values and was able to orientate various movement organisations and different cultural groups. To do so, I will also explore what specific narratives and arguments were the main elements of the communication, as reported by the activists. This will also allow us to better understand another civil society function described by Paffenholz and Spurk (2006): advocate and engage in public communication in this particular political context. Moreover, I will write about how the activists perceived the political conditions, how their perceptions changed over time, and how this affected the story of the movement. To understand the full picture, I will look at the counter-narratives and counter-frames that emerged from project management and government, and how these affected the frame credibility of the movement.

4.1 How did activists encourage people to take action?

In addition to the physical protection of the park, the movement sought to inform, involve and mobilise people as widely as possible. Much of this work was done primarily on Facebook and other online communication channels (YouTube, Instagram, website and medium page), but

there were other means of slowing down construction, such as legal action. The communications working group was the biggest working group in the community and it had a lot of creative people. Their main goal was to raise awareness of the harmfulness of the project, to win over people, and thirdly, to emphasise their own civic nature. They wanted to stress to the public that regardless of the parties, this was a local affair with no party politics. The activists figured out how to report on camp life, how to inform about what was happening in the park, and they organised events. They produced leaflets, liaised with the press and conducted guerrilla sticker campaigns in the neighbourhood. The activists also had many opportunities to appear on the radio, especially on Tilos Radio's Street Radio programme, which was very much about protection of the park. Some people tried to lobby the mayor through their personal contacts and tried to convince the mayor of the capital to back out of the Liget project in various ways – without success.

A lot of emphasis was put on the organisation of various activities and programmes. There was a tree hugging activity involving children, a Liget walk to discover the flora and fauna of the Liget led by a retired biology teacher, children's activities, crafts and a small community garden were also arranged. Free concerts and various performances were organised as well. Hence, in the case of the events organised directly in the park, community of the movement was built through arts and stimulating creativity. There were also city-level events – such as the Protect Budapest Trees organised by Greenpeace, or the Green Budapest Protestival – in which the movement was involved, either because activists helped to organise them or because the aim of the programmes and events was in line with the objectives of the Ligetvédők movement. The larger urban events sought to address and involve the residents and to draw attention to the general problems of the steady reduction in the urban green area and the trend of cutting down trees in the area of construction or urban development. These activities were an attempt to build an alternative urban reality, intertwining an emphasis on the importance of the environment and green spaces with a critique of neoliberal urban development (Carmo, 2012).

The "green Budapest" narrative was reinforced in general, especially at the Green Budapest Protestival event in September 2016, when several urban NGOs and movements such as Greenpeace, Clean Air Action Group (Levegő Munkacsoport), Budapest Urbanists Association, Protectors of Buda Castle (Budavárvédők), CivilZugló Association, Orczy Park movement, Római Part movement, the Association for the Protection of the Environment, and the Ligetvédők movement. These organisations and movements supported the Ligetvédők, and

there were several overlaps between them. However, there was no formal partnership, but rather cooperation on specific occasions. Greenpeace, for example, held several training sessions on non-violent resistance when the movement was first formed, but over time they ceased to be actively involved in the movement. There were also young people returning from the Heathrow movement, who also joined the Ligetvédők movement for a while.

Activists registered that these programmes were able to reach out to local residents, but they were not able to reach beyond a certain group of people who were already interested in green issues and were not able to get enough people on board in order to protect the park. As one of the activists put it:

> We tried to communicate many times that it is okay that we are called the Ligetvédők, but we are not just that, we are a group of people who have joined. You can come, you can join, and we will be even stronger. We really tried to reinforce that. We always felt and saw that they sympathise with us, they come to events or demonstrations, but it was very difficult to get them actively involved. (Dániel, PI, 2019)

Many people see that one of the main problems was the image of the camp – homeless or hippie image –, and that there was an unintentional outer circle and inner circle, so that those who joined early and became active in the movement were the insiders, and the others were often excluded from the active shaping of the movement.

In the building phase, the mainstream activists sought to develop a coherent brand – with a logo, a slogan, graphics, a social media strategy, a press relations strategy – and professional operation[48]. The initial conscious strategy of building, in turn, eroded over time, and activists saw that after a while they had no conscious strategy. In the absence of a concrete strategy, events were always assessed after the actions, and they did not plan the next steps in advance. What was identified as a sure point was that the activists were constantly trying different ways to reach as many people as possible. However, in the area of communication, the members of the communication working group detected a lack of targeted communication[49]. As the movement grew, the division of tasks was not well distributed over time. Some activists took

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[48] Some activists working as freelancers were experienced in project-based division of work and wanted to spread this within the movement. In addition, there were attempts to share tasks as a quasi-digital media agency, but this could not be achieved.

[49] Many people were either bored with the topics, others were not even familiar with the basics or basic concepts, and for them the details of the road were dull and were meaningless.

on too much – and after a while they got burned out. For many, determined full-time activism was seen as a job that cannot be done without pay, whether it was physical protest or intellectual, creative work. Branding and community building were very time-consuming and creative tasks that required a committed person and a huge investment of time. However, the movement was far from having the financial resources and organisational set-up to pay a few full-time activists.

The main motivational frame of the movement was therefore to emphasise that the protection of the park is a shared responsibility. Through various community activities and programmes, the activists wanted to involve the local population and show them that this park was a park for everyone, a community place where it did not matter where people come from. In addition, through cooperation with other NGOs and grassroots movements and various urban environmental protests in which the movement was represented, the movement wanted to encourage a broader action of the population, raising awareness not only of the immediate, but also of the wider urban environment, and making the development of a green Budapest a common cause. However, as the movement became less active and fragmented, this motivational frame became increasingly insignificant and there were more desperate attempts to involve the local population, but with less and less success.

4.2 Comparison of the communication: arguments, narratives, frames

Although the Ligetvédők movement was fundamentally organised for physical resistance, they played a major role in how communication about the project was shaped in the public and what narratives and arguments were presented. On one side, Városliget Ltd. spread their argumentation on their own and their preferred online and offline channels, while on the other side, the Ligetvédők movement and the opponents of the project wanted to find their way to confute the Városliget Ltd.'s arguments and present their standpoints. This "communication war" evolved along with the evolution of the project and the story and the actions of the movement. However, they used different tools and they influenced people differently.

The public opinion on the project was hard to gauge – at least based on the polls that have been done so far. These polls produced very contradictory results on the surface. The project was supported by the citizens based on a survey commissioned by the Városliget Ltd. and conducted by Ipsos Zrt. It claimed that 69% of park users agreed that new, state of art cultural institutions should be added to the Városliget if the green area of the park would develop and its size would

increase (Liget Budapest, 2016). However, other surveys, such as the research by Sonda Ipsos' and the Medián Opinion and Market Research Institute's results showed the opposite: more than 80% of the residents of Budapest were against the Liget Project and local people would like to preserve the public park characteristics of the Városliget (Ipsos Public Affairs, 2016; Greenpeace 2016; Saary 2018).

These opinion polls were also important tools for both sides – supporters and opponents of the project – to base their legitimacy on. At the same time, in the case of opinion polls, it was easy to control and influence respondents through different questioning techniques and sampling methods (Schorber, 1992; Schwarz, 1999). An important factor was how questions were framed, what information was given before the questions, and what response options were given when answering. This was one of the reasons for the different results of the polls. During the 2019 municipal elections, where one of the main topics was the fate of the Liget project, these polls became important again.

Závecz Research conducted a survey for 24.hu in the autumn of 2019, which showed that not only politicians but also the Budapest population was divided by the investment, but many more people were against it (Mázsár, 2019). 62% would stop the project and operate the Városliget as a public park, and 32% of the residents supported the construction of a museum district. Young people between 18-39-year-old were the most opposed to the project, with only 28% in favour. The rejection was even higher among people with higher education: 68% would stop the project (Mázsár, 2019).

According to another public opinion poll commissioned by Városliget Ltd, conducted by Inspira Research Group and published in December 2019, 80% of the Hungarian population over 18 years of age supported the full implementation of the Liget Project, given the specific plans (Liget Budapest, 2019). 84% of the respondents thought it was important that new, modern cultural institutions should be added to the Liget in a way that the green areas of the Liget were increased and renewed, and new buildings were built on the site of demolished buildings or parking lots: exactly as the original project plans. This was confirmed by the fact that 86% of respondents believed that the new buildings would represent a positive change from the current state of the park (Liget Budapest, 2019).

Despite the different results, it was clear from all the surveys, whether they addressed the population of Budapest or across the country, that people did not want the project to damage

green space, even if they supported the new buildings in the park. Hence, the message to the project managers was clear: they must do everything possible to communicate that green area would not be reduced and that there would be more green surfaces in the Liget than there was before. Meanwhile, thanks also to the activities of the Ligetvédők, tree protection became more and more a widespread topic in public. It was therefore important for the project management to create a green and sustainable image for the project. In contrast, the aim of the Ligetvédők became to demolish the green image and expose the biases of the project.

Hence, the environmental protection frame became very prominent in the communication of the project and the Ligetvédők. In the following, I will examine how the project and the movement used this frame in their communication.

4.2.1 The magic: how the concrete turned green?

The management of the Liget project has devoted considerable resources and attention to the communication and marketing of the project. Both online and offline tools were used. As the project progressed, they tried to emphasise the "green" and "sustainable" nature of the project and that the green area was not decreasing but increasing. The movement believed that they played a major role in getting management to put so much emphasis on green messages – although they claimed that this was mostly present at the level of communication. In the following, I present the communication tools for greening of the Liget project and the arguments of the Ligetvédők.

When the initial plans were unveiled, the concept for the park was presented as a Museum Quarter. This soon became the Liget Budapest Project and Liget Project – currently, both names are common. The name change was certainly an important step in developing a green image. In fact, the Museum Quarter would have reinforced the concept that museums would be the essence of the park. In the long run, this would probably have failed to convince many people of the importance of turning a public park into a museum district, while for many people the main experience of the park is quiet, relaxation and closeness to nature (Szilágyi et al., 2014). The name Liget Project, however, carries part of the name Városliget. Thus, by retaining the original function of the park in the name of the project, the project management was able to give the impression that the project would not affect the character of the Városliget.

Figure 5: *Previous logo of the Liget Project*
(Liget Budapest Project, n.d.)

Figure 6: *Current logo of the Liget Project*
(Liget Budapest Project, n.d.)

In autumn 2019, the project logo was changed as well. At first the logo was a rectangle in the shape of the park with the words Liget Budapest, which was changed to a logo with a figure resembling blades of grass in front of the Liget Budapest inscription. The logo was therefore changed in a direction that emphasises proximity to nature. These branding tools – the name of the project and the logo – were intended to reinforce clearly defined communication messages, namely that the project did not degrade the environment and would make the park even greener.

In addition, the Ligetvédők pointed out that the branding of the Liget project included PR articles that appeared in various trade magazines or online newspapers. However, most of these did not indicate that they were paid advertisements or PR articles. The same was done for the various prizes awarded to the Liget project or the buildings of the project, which were widely advertised by the project management. However, several of these competitions involved more winners and the project was successful mainly in the field of real estate development, where the relationship of the proposed building with the city and its social context was not considered (Átlátszó, 2018). This was the case, for example, at the International Property Awards, where three buildings of the Liget project were given awards: the Museum of Ethnography, the Hungarian House of Music and the Biodome. These buildings won awards before they were completed and were essentially decided on the basis of their visual design. In addition, more than three hundred 'best' prizes were awarded in some 40 categories in this real estate competition, and the cost of entering the 'competition' was around HUF 500,000 (EUR 1,380) (Átlátszó, 2018). With these awards, the project managers were able to campaign effectively about the ambitious and internationally recognised buildings being constructed in the park.

According to the Ligetvédők, these awards were nothing more than hanky-panky similar to the visual plans used to advertise projects and buildings.

The vagaries of visual design were pointed out by several experts, including the President of the Budapest Urbanists Association, who wrote that the visual plans were highly manipulated and did not reflect the true scale and sizes of the buildings (Ráday, 2016). The plans – which were often depicted from a bird's eye view – also did not show the technical content of the buildings and the reduced vegetation because the small trees planted in place of the old, felled trees were out of proportion to the height of the building (Ráday, 2016). Furthermore, the plans have not shown where in the park and to what depths utilities would be laid, nor how deep the foundations of the buildings have been. These works also have destroyed the park's environment and soil structure, as well as disrupting the park's groundwater supply (Erzsébet, PI, 2019). In particular, underground car parks have posed a risk of waterlogging of the surrounding houses due to the upset groundwater supply, or of groundwater disappearing from under the building, which could cause the houses to crack (Erzsébet, PI, 2019). The Ligetvédők also tried to communicate the errors and misleading information exposed by experts, for example in the case of the Ethnographic Museum, that the size of the trees drawn on its roof is not realistic, because trees cannot grow that big on a concrete roof with a few centimetres of soil on top, because the tree cannot take root that big. However, they found that it was difficult to get these messages across to many people, because "most people simply looked at the visual plans and saw that the grass would be nice and green. This information was of interest to a narrower group of intellectuals who read and understood the content" (Csaba, PI, 2019).

In addition, the sustainable nature of the project has been emphasised by Városliget Ltd. in that the buildings will be built using sustainable energy sources – including a requirement that at least 25% of the buildings' energy use must be from renewable sources. The strategy director, Zoltán Rostás said in the personal interview that they have developed their own energy concept with an energy mix, which means the usage of solar energy, geothermal energy and, as a pioneer, district heating. According to the Ligetvédők, this in turn means the installation of hundreds of ground probes for each building, which will require significant areas to be dug up and then regraded. For district heating, even though the Széchenyi Spa, which has thermal water, is located in the park, the project was not given permission to use its water. Therefore, this solution requires excavation work for the district heating lines. Thus, although the project has been keen to emphasise that the Liget will be a zero emission zone, which will be run using

sustainable and smart solutions, activists argue that since these solutions involve damage to the environment, they are not an environmentally friendly solution. Because of the utility infrastructure, trees have been constantly dying and in many cases the roots and the environment have not being taken care of. Thus, although the trees have not been cut down, underground and infrastructure works could cause their death in the long run.

Similarly, the project management tried to frame tree replanting as a sustainable solution. When Városliget Ltd., realised the outcry over the tree felling, the management decided to replant the trees, rather than cut them down.
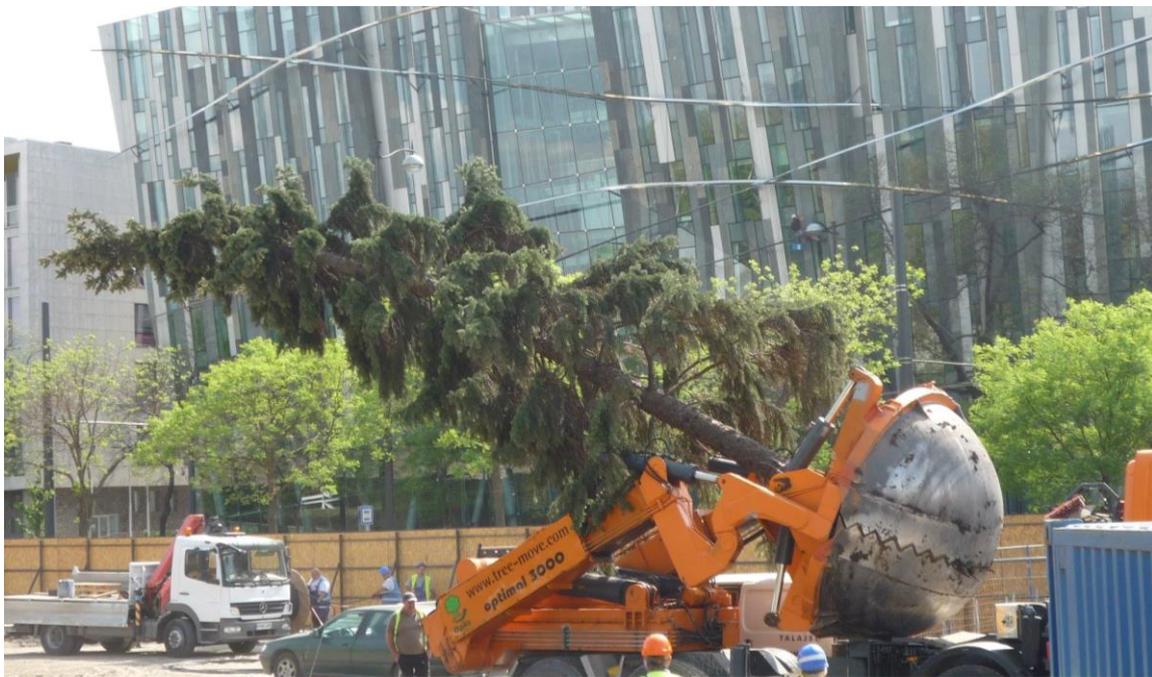
Figure 7: *Replanting a pine tree (during the growing season)* (Bardóczi, 2018)

This was done to reassure the public and to show that no damage to the environment was being done by the Liget project and that all trees were being saved.

However, the activists were not convinced. One of the successful actions of the movement back in 2017, was the chasing away of the tree replanting machine that the Városliget Ltd. ordered from Germany, when the activists blocked the machine. They said replantations were rather very expensive tree fellings since older trees would dry out and die soon after replanting[50]. The

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[50] The thoughtlessness of the replantation was also reflected in the following quote from a landscape architect in a closed Facebook group:
Although the press is full of the Valton security guards and the sudden disappearance of the police officers who had been securing the announced Ligetvédők demonstration before and after. However, the more important images of the slap-fighting for the press are a good cover-up for the fact that the conflict arose because the Ligetvédők wanted to block the movement of the Opitz tree replant machine. Why did they do this? Because even the

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images of the felling were well used by the activists in their communication, as these were the powerful images to which public opinion reacted strongly, as they embodied the destruction of the park. Nevertheless, the more complex messages about tree replantation were harder to get across to the public because they saw that many people were convinced by the message of saving the trees by replantation. Likewise, as Sándor Guba, the communication officer of the Liget project said, the management has found it challenging to deliver more complex messages, for example in cases where diseased trees had to be felled. In these cases, communication should have been better prepared, so that not only deterrent images of tree felling were shown.

At the same time, the green strategy of the project worked better, and the narrative that the Liget project would increase the proportion of green space in the park became a narrative that many people could embrace. The Városliget Ltd. claimed that the project would increase the proportion of green space by 5%. However, the movement, in accordance with other media, said that this would be done by including the lake and roof gardens as green areas, depending on their quality. Therefore, it is possible that while the built-up area increases from 5.7% to 7%, the proportion of green surfaces also increases from 60% to 65% (Bathó 2016; Tamás 2016). These reactions and information, in turn, reached fewer people, according to the Ligetvédők.

As I mentioned earlier, after the municipal elections, when an opposition leadership came to power in Budapest and certain elements of the Liget project were threatened, public persuasion became even more crucial.

A grassroots initiative came in handy for the Liget project: a petition from a rural town to save the Liget project. Interestingly, the petition was shared almost immediately on the Liget Project Facebook page. In fact, the owner of the social media account, Városliget Ltd., spent money on the cause: it was also advertised as a paid ad on Facebook (Pálúr, 2019). The petition was also mentioned by Prime Minister Viktor Orbán in an interview, in which he said that a decision on

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Városliget Ltd.'s own tree replanting protocol – heralded with great fanfare – contradicts the replanting during the growing season and without preparation. Which is all well and good, but certainly not to give the replanted trees a chance to survive. But of course, money doesn't matter if you have something to spend blindly. Replanting has become a magic word, which nobody really understands, if only because it was also lied about in a huge announcement earlier that the Liget Budapest programme does not affect existing green spaces. Of course, if that were true, no trees would have to be replanted. But this is the most beautiful picture. It shows a giant pine tree being replanted. The pine tree has no capillary root system and can only absorb water and nutrients through symbiotic fungi. They also have a shallow root system near the surface. That's where it spreads out. That is why they are practically unreplantable at this age. If Opitz is really serious about this (there's money to be made for which professional integrity is no longer so important), it should stop advertising itself as being so or so successful in replanting. It can replant. But if its patients die, that's another statistic, isn't it? (Bardóczi, 2018).

the questionable elements of the project should be taken as soon as possible. At the same time, he said he did not want to impose a decision on the people of Budapest that they did not want, but he saw that many people spoke out to save the Liget project – sending a message that many people support the project (Pálúr, 2019). By comparison, the 2016 petition of CivilZugló, which collected 20,000 signatures, mainly from Budapest residents, to stop the construction of museums on the Liget, was not shared by the Liget Project, nor was it mentioned by the Prime Minister. Hence, the petition about saving the project also became a tool of the communication and propaganda machine of the Liget project.

In addition to the direct communication tools, the activists mentioned another tool that they believed was important in convincing the public: the Liget Park Forums. These forums were organised by the Városliget Ltd. during 2016 and 2017, where the project could be discussed in public. These were attended by the movement, together with other NGOs at the beginning, but they found that everything could be discussed – where to put benches, bins in the park, what toys to put in the dog park – but not the most important issues of whether to have museums in the park. Thus, they did not participate in these forums afterwards. However, the activists claimed that this was a good opportunity for the project management to say that there were public consultations to involve the various NGOs in shaping the project. It represented that the project management did their utmost to provide information to the public, thus trying to create the appearance of democratic decision-making regarding the project.

Besides the branding and communication tools listed above – name, logo, PR articles, visuals, tree replanting, opinion polls, public forums – the project has communicated continuously online and offline in different platforms. Facebook, Instagram, YouTube have been important online platforms for them, where they regularly upload content about the different phases of the project, the construction works and the completed project elements. Offline, they have published several publications about the project. The Ligetvédők, communicated through similar tools and channels, but as they became less active in the movement and their financial and human resources did not even approach those of the Liget project, they were unable to communicate effectively disadvantages of the development to the wider public. Thus, although the environmental frame was used extensively in the movement's communications, in the long run they were ineffective in conveying to the public the negative environmental impacts that the project may cause during construction and after completion. Meanwhile, the green image developed by the project management of the project had a greater impact on the public.

4.2.2 Consumption vs. culture vs. recreation: what is the park for?

In terms of the developments, the main difference between the narrative of the Ligetvédők and the narrative of the project management was that they had a different understanding of the role of the public park based on the history of the park. In addition, in communicating the project, Városliget Ltd. was reinforcing the narrative of the Fidesz government by strengthening national sentiments and emphasising the benefits of neoliberal economic policies. Narratives about the role of the park were framed in several ways, which appeared in the movement's communication. On the one hand, far-left activists within the movement framed the project in terms of social inequality and the critique of the consumer culture of capitalism. On the other hand, the more moderate civic activists emphasised the 'right to the city' frame, arguing that the park does not belong to tourists but to the local residents. Meanwhile, the project management framed the project around its cultural significance, the Városliget as a space for entertainment and a tourist destination as an engine of economic growth.

As the debate between the strategic director of the Liget project and a local historian in the columns of Válasz online shows, the Liget project's justification was based on a particular historical period of the park. According to one of the most controversial statements by the Városliget Ltd., which was highlighted by the local historian: in the conceptual foundations of the museum district, the Városliget was never a "traditional" park and was more of a fusion of nature and culture (Majkó, 2019a). The strategic director rejected this accusation that, according to the project management, the park was never a traditional park. He stated in his article that it was a "fake news" because his position was as follows "Városliget has always been a public park in a different way from the other park, because in addition to the recreational green space, it has always attracted visitors with its ever-expanding range of gastronomic, entertainment, cultural and sporting facilities" (Rostás, 2019). According to him, the approach that the park can be divided into a space for entertainment and recreation along the Kós Károly promenade was wrong, as there have been institutions on both sides of the park, several of which have had entertainment and commercial functions. He believed that the claim that the existence of these institutions was the result of forced decisions was not true, as they have become beloved by the people of Budapest over the last 100 years and have become part of the park's tradition.

In her response, Majkó (2019b) reaffirmed her three claims that a recurring element in the project's communication was that the Városliget was not considered a public park; the history of the Liget has been adapted to the goals of the Liget Budapest project and a tradition has been

created from the previous "overbuilding" of the public park. According to her, Rostás ignored the first 70-80 years of the park when he claimed that it has always been a mixed-use area, and he neglected the fact that previous city governments in the 19th and 20th centuries spoke out against various constructions in the park on several occasions, but these were overlooked by the governments. She mentioned that even the Fidesz city administration would have developed the museum district elsewhere if the government had not taken away the right to decide on the park by law. In essence, Rostás's conclusions really intertwined the fate of the park with political will and underlined that it was in the interest of the national community to see the project fully implemented (Rostás, 2019).

The main narrative of the Ligetvédők reinforced the narrative of the local historian: the main purpose of the park was to be a park. To do this, it would have been enough to rehabilitate degraded green areas and demolish redundant buildings. The activists saw the project as making the park even more overused and losing its original function. This is evidenced, among other things, by the fact that only HUF 15 billion of the HUF 250 billion-budget[51] for the project is earmarked for park renovation, with the rest for buildings, catering and other functions (Partizán, 2020). The activists thought that one of the main objectives of the project was to promote consumption in the park despite the project management's insistence that this was primarily a cultural investment. The Ethnographic Museum, for example, will be 35,000 square metres, of which only 7,000 square meters will be exhibition space, the rest being offices, event spaces, cafés and shops. In terms of proportions, the building is therefore far from being dominated by museum and cultural functions (Partizán, 2020). According to the art historian who spoke in the Partizán documentary, it was clear that it was not a single concept, but just a series of ill-conceived ideas to build different museums in the park. The plans were constantly changing, and from one day to the next buildings were dropped from the plans, such as the Museum of Photography, which before that would have been one of the very important museums in the city centre (Partizán, 2020). In addition, several small catering and other service units are still planned in the park these days. According to the activists, the park should not be a collection of such attractions. The fragmented structure of the park, which guides people in a controlled way, takes away the free character of the park.

The more extreme left activists approached the project from the theoretical framework of gentrification, whereby the public park and its surroundings would be transformed into a place

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[51] This is a total cost according to a given calculation, but since then higher costs have come to light.

from which the poorer classes were squeezed out, depriving them of the opportunity to walk, play and relax in the park for free. Instead, the focus was on encouraging consumption, in which a certain section of society could not participate because of its financial constraints. Thus, the public park has ceased to serve the public, and instead has become a destination for an elite class and tourists, rather than for local residents. The majority of mainstream activists also agreed with this narrative. Social justice was therefore an important issue for the movement.

However, there was also a strong narrative among local residents that they had a 'right to their city' and that an investment of this magnitude could not be made without the involvement of civic groups. Constructions have been very dusty and noisy, while a large part of the park had been fenced off, with narrow passageways for pedestrians, cyclists and dog walkers to pass together, while construction machinery has been also running around. These problems have had a major impact on the daily lives of the local residents and their use of the park. This was why, according to activists, it would have been essential to involve the public before such a project starts, as it was their lives that have been affected by the construction.

Many were also outraged by the ever-increasing cost of the project, which has been largely paid to the contractors close to the government. Moreover, the architectural plans are still not publicly available. There were no concrete data and calculations available on the construction and maintenance of the buildings. For example, in the case of Biodome, where it is estimated that the annual wage cost would be HUF 1 billion and the energy demand of the facility would be comparable to the entire energy demand of a medium-sized Budapest district, the official calculations are lacking so it is not possible to know these pieces of information precisely (Partizán, 2020). This, in turn, deprives the public of the right to know and control what, among other things, is the tax they pay and what impact the project will have on their lives.

In summary, in this section, I have presented two frames developed by the movement: one is social injustice and the other is the right to the city. Both frames point out that the park will lose its function as a recreation area due to the project and that it will not be an area accessible and usable for everyone. In contrast, there have been Liget project-related frames for the role of the park. Starting from the history of the park, the project has focused on the cultural and entertainment function of the park. Taking this further according to the logic of capitalism these functions would make the park the scene of consumption and tourism instead of recreation.

4.2.3 Is it all about politics?

In addition to the frames listed above, the activists stated that the political context had a major impact on both the protests and the project. Demonstrators saw that the history of the movement was affected by the fact that they demonstrated in a non-democratic country.

From the very beginning of the project, it was seen that the government made lawfulness lawful in order to make the project happen; that is, they used their two-thirds power to pass laws that were completely at odds with previous laws. Even the former Fidesz mayor of Budapest, István Tarlós, said that the park was taken from the capital by force of law and that they did not want to hand it over (Partizán, 2020). With the creation of the Városliget Law, the modification of the Building Regulation of the Városliget and the declaration of the project as a matter of priority for the national economy, Fidesz, with a two-thirds majority, showed that they were above the law. One of the activists tried to find out whether it was possible to launch a referendum initiative on the matter, but the laws that had been created did not allow it, so the right to legally launch a referendum on the matter was taken away (Partizán, 2020).

As for the political opportunity structure, it became clear that all decisions depended on the will of Fidesz and there was very little chance of effective resistance. Activists felt that this situation alone discouraged many from getting involved in the movement. As Lopes (2014) summarised Osa & Schock's (2007), issues of oppression, censorship, threat, and potential costs can hinder individuals from participating in mass mobilisation. Indeed, the institutional system of public participation in Hungary has serious shortcomings. This is mainly due to a crisis of confidence at the political and social level, and low levels of social capital and capacity to participate (Glied, 2013).

According to the activists, the general public sentiment was that many people feared that their livelihoods would be threatened if they participated in the movement and they would be labelled as oppositional. In talking to the public, the movement members felt that, although many people agreed with the aim of the movement, there was a real fear that people would not sign the petition or be in any photos. "People are increasingly taught that if you stand up for your rights, you will not win, so you should stay at home and mind your own business" (Brigitta, PI, 2019).

The authorities tried to use legal means to discourage the public from protesting. During the protests and blockades, many people were financially fined, which did not have to be paid as a result of the procedures, but this required going through the legal process. Later, they also tried

to discourage activists by telling them that they would have to pay for the damage when a machine could not work because of the blockade. One activist put it this way:

> They were careful not to make too big martyrs out of activists, but they made sure that people are discouraged from taking action and participating in various activities. These misdemeanour charges have been applied to anything in a totally unethical and unruly manner. So were the dispersals. That was how they inconvenience people. You can lose your job easily, as happened with one of us. You don't even have to work for the state, it's enough if your boss supports Fidesz to lose your job. (Károly, PI, 2019)

When the movement tried to obstruct the works through various non-violent methods, the authorities did not use open violence against them. At the same time, the police stood idly by, and did not protect citizens in several instances where security personnel protecting the park were violent towards protesters. In fact, on several occasions, there was evidence that demonstrators were prevented from exercising their constitutional right to assemble when they were removed from a declared demonstration area. In addition, the government-affiliated media took a clear stance and tried to portray the movement in the most negative light possible and discredit it. It is also a characteristic of the political system that in a distorted media system, propagandistic communication rather than credible information is the norm (Bajomi-Lázár, 2013; Bátorfy, 2017; Róka, 2019). According to lawyers and advocates working with the Ligetvédők, the independence of civil courts was also highly questionable.

Later, when activists reported the irregularities to the police, they stopped after a while because they feared they would be fined for not having called the police legitimately. "I do not dare risk my own security to call the police because they cut the root of a tree – while everyone else walks by" (Brigitta, PI, 2019).

In spite of the setbacks, the movement endured for a long time. However, the activists unanimously saw the 2018 parliamentary elections as a very big turning point. Here are a few statements:

> I think that the 2018 election sealed our fate, but we have held out until then. If Orbán hadn't been re-elected then, we could have won, we delayed the project for 2 years, but after that it was no longer defensible, and the movement had fallen apart. (Zalán, PI, 2019)

I think that on 8 April 2018, its fate was sealed. If I remember correctly, they were going to hand over these museums in 2018 and in two years they have barely managed to make a dent, they probably didn't want to risk it after the scandal broke out before the election. I think if the elections had gone differently, the movement could have been a complete success. (Dániel, PI, 2019)

Because they waited until the election, there was an apathy among those who wanted change. (...) And then the Liget project started with great vigour, they knew exactly what was going on. The movement fell into different groups, they won the election, people were in apathy, and then they went full steam ahead. (Brigitta, PI, 2019)

As a result of the elections, the movement disbanded all its camps. Then, although there were small demonstrations, as many put it, the "post-war fighting" and documentation began, which could not have had much result or impact on the project.

Overall, activists perceive that there is too much money and too much political interest in the Liget project, which cannot be stopped. Their overall perception suggests that the illiberal political and social environment in Hungary is not conducive to such movements, and in fact creates more obstacles and difficulties for them to mobilise effectively.

Nevertheless, as András Lányi, one of the most prominent researchers in Hungarian environmental and political ecology and an active player in green politics and green movements said in the interview, it is not a foregone conclusion which issues can be successfully pursued in today's political environment. He sees that one important factor is how much critical mass a movement can mobilise, and another important factor is how much governmental, political and economic interest is concentrated around an issue. Chenoweth and Stephan (2011) also argue that mass participation can have a more successful outcome. If a movement can rally enough mass to pose a major threat to the legitimacy and power of the government, it can be successful. Lányi argued that where the Orbán government sees great strength, it can retreat, but where it sees weakness, it attacks in full force. In the case of the Liget, this critical mass was not achieved. The project is indeed too big and too many interest groups are involved in its implementation.

The 2019 municipal elections brought a turnaround in terms of the formation of an opposition municipal government in Budapest, so the political opportunity structure for the protection of

the Liget seemed to have expanded. I contacted some activists again more than half a year after the municipal elections, asking them how they evaluated the opportunity of the movement and saving the Városliget.

According to the activists, there was definitely a strong intention on the part of the city administration to involve civil society and the Ligetvédők movement in stopping the Liget project. At that time, work had already started on two major projects – the Museum of Ethnography and the Hungarian House of Music – but not on the National Gallery, the Hungarian House of Innovation and the Children's Theatre. The city government has appointed a new deputy mayor, Gábor Kerpel-Fronius, Deputy Mayor for Transparency, Participation, Innovation and Sustainable Development, with whom members of the Liget movement held several meetings. The activists tried to provide assistance based on the information, documents and legal experience they had gathered so far. However, many felt that the city administration has not done enough to use the experience of the Ligetvédők and to really start involving them.

According to Lányi, the city administration should have joined the legal fight and challenged building permits. He believed that it would have been much more powerful if the city administration of the capital were involved, not just civil society. He also claimed that the practice of not holding the Városliget Ltd., to which the park officially belongs, to account as a mistake. According to him, an important opportunity was also missed when the old impact study was used as a basis for amending the Building Regulation of the Városliget and not enough attention was paid to highlighting the shortcomings of the building regulation issued in 2018. If they had been more thorough in this case, they could have created a legal basis to challenge the breaches of the 2018 regulation at a later stage. But this did not happen. In addition, the activists also argue that the city government should have put much more and stronger political pressure on the government.

Within the movement, there were different views on the extent to which the new opposition city leadership of Budapest has lived up to expectations and how much the political opportunity structure has expanded with their election. Some activists said that the compromise reached by the city administration to build the Museum of Ethnography and the House of Music, but not the National Gallery, the House of Innovation and the Theatre, was acceptable. Others, in turn, thought that this compromise should not have been made and that all construction should have been stopped and a public consultation should have been launched, as was promised in the election pledge. What most activists appreciated, however, was that at least some kind of

consultation with the civil sector has started. The local government continuously have been trying to compensate in other areas for the lack of participation regarding defence of the park and creating opportunities for the involvement of NGOs and the local residents within an institutional framework in other cases and generally.

Gábor Kerpel-Fronius, who conducted meetings with the Ligetvédők from the city administration, found that the negotiation process with the activists was not easy. The different views on the park were very prominent in the discussions and the activists were not able to negotiate with a unified position, which made the process difficult. There was also the idea of appointing a representative of the Ligetvédők to bring together the different views, but this did not happen eventually due to internal conflicts and slowness of the Ligetvédők. Because of the slowness of the capital's office, in turn, the city administration did not join the court proceedings initiated by the civils in connection with the building permits. Furthermore, according to the Ligetvédők, despite the emergence of green thinking and the emphasis on participation in the nearby VI., VII. and XIV. districts, legal assistance from their side has also been lacking. Although there was an intention to process the documents and evidence of irregularities collected by the activists, this has not happened so far. Thus, the police reports initiated by the activists have not been followed up.

According to Kerpel-Fronius, the main problem has been that Városliget Ltd. has been shutting itself off from the negotiations, and therefore the city administration could not take any meaningful action. Also, the current political environment gives limited the possibilities to the municipality. However, political pressure has been used to keep the government and Városliget Ltd. under constant pressure to stop further construction in the park.

There is a series of conclusions about the political opportunity structures that can be drawn from the stories of the activists. The Fidesz-led government has limited the ability to protect the park in many ways. As far as the project is concerned, the laws they passed gave the project a legal basis, despite the fact that they were clearly in conflict with previous national regulations. In the broader structure, the imbalance in the media system, the erosion of the independence of the judiciary and hostile measures against civil society have all negatively affected the movement's potential. In many cases people were afraid to stand up for the park, even if they agreed with the aims of the movement. Activists felt that the re-election of Fidesz in 2018 has severely limited their opportunities, and the resulting hopelessness and lack of motivation has discouraged many from taking further action. The 2019 municipal elections,

which brought opposition successes in Budapest, slightly improved the chances of protecting the park, but the slow and indecisive action of the new city administration and the obstructionist strategy of the government and Városliget Ltd. have continued to limit the political opportunities of protecting the park. For this reason, most activists argued that the fate of the park remained in the hands of the political arena, and that civic and public participation in the decisions was not really possible. Power has continued to impose its own concept on the population, and key decisions have depended on political negotiations and deals.

4.3 Headwinds in the transmission of the messages of the movement

The movement has tried to get its message across to the public in several ways. The question arises as to whether the frames described in the previous sections could have collectively formed a master frame that could orient the different movement organisations and the different cultural groups and resonated with the culture of the wider society (Snow & Benford, 1992).

In terms of the Hungarian environmental movement, it was the Zengő movement[52] after the regime change that first gained major political momentum after the demise of the Danube movement, and thus re-politicized the green movement. In that case, it was the ecopolitics frame that became the master frame and was able to thematise the issue of the environment as a complex social problem requiring a movement action and a political response (Scheiring, 2008). In the case of the Zengő movement, three different interpretative frames emerged: a traditional environmentalist frame; a liberal democratic frame; and a radical democratic frame. Scheiring (2008) argues that the coalition and network of active participants and supporters behind Zengő was made possible by the master-frame of integrative ecopolitics.

In the case of the Ligetvédők movement, several frames emerged, the combination of which could lead to the creation of the ecopolitical master frame as well. The movement emphasised the environmental frame, which highlighted the environmental impact of the project, approaching it from the perspective of how the trees and flora and fauna of the park would be threatened by the construction. The radical left frame criticised social inequalities that the

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[52] On 13 February 2004, the environmentalists and residents of the surrounding villages of Zengő Hill (located in southwestern Hungary) took action to prevent logging workers from starting work on the construction of a NATO radio relay station on the hill. The movement then began active protests and eventually succeeded in getting the then government to abandon the radio locator on Zengő, a mountain that provides habitat for unique fauna and flora and strictly protected plants, including the Banat peony.

project could cause, claiming that the project would lead to the gentrification of the neighbourhood and turn the park into a place of consumption instead of recreation – thus also touching on the critique of capitalism. The moderate civic frame can be summarised along the lines of the concept of 'right to the city', which implies that the project did not take into account the will of the neighbourhood residents and is not decided democratically. The political frame, I have argued, along with the main breaking points within the movement, was a point of contention among activists. One group of activists wanted to link the defence of the park openly and explicitly to politics, while the other half of the activists tried to avoid party politics as much as possible. This changed over time, and the movement communicated more openly about the political aspects of the project, but still tried to keep opposition parties at arm's length so as not to merge with the movement.

All of the above frames have contributed to the creation of the ecopolitical master frame for the Ligetvédők movement. At the two milestones of the physical defence of the park – the demonstration at the Transport Museum and the eviction of the camp – the above-mentioned frames were able to mobilise very different social groups, individuals, and NGOs. The different frames resonated well with the grievances of a particular group and were able to create a symbolic link between the movement and its target audience, making the goals promoted by the movement acceptable, mobilising supporters and demobilising opponents (Snow et al., 1986). However, this temporary frame resonance was unsustainable in the long run. It could not mobilise even larger masses and was not in itself sufficient for the movement to succeed.

The communication activities of the government and the Városliget Ltd., and the counter-frames they developed vis-à-vis the movement, have contributed greatly to the deactivation of the arguments of the movement and the discrediting of the contents of their master frame. The Városliget Ltd. has been able to successfully expose its environmental arguments to the public thanks to the communication and branding tools described in the previous sub-chapter. In other words, it positioned the project against the environmentalist frame of the Ligetvédők as a project that has taken environmental protection seriously and has done everything possible to save the trees and increase the green surface in the park. This was greatly helped by the visual design, the replanting of trees and the emphasis on increasing the green surface in the park at the level of communication. The project management was also able to use the frame of the 'right to the city' in the communication of the project, as the project management organised citizens' forums and consulted with several civil organisations at different stages of the project.

However, as I have argued earlier, these did not allow for discussion of substantive issues, such as the inclusion of new buildings in the park. Nevertheless, the project management was able to communicate that the project was transparent and involved the public in its planning. In addition, the management and the media linked to the government tried to make the civil nature of the movement as unbelievable as possible in order to emphasise the political nature of the movement.

The credibility of the frames and master frame of the movement has thus been successfully challenged by the project's communication and by the media associated with the government. Hence, the frame resonance has weakened, and the credibility of the movement has also diminished.

Gábor Ferencz (2015) summarises the frame resonance conditions based on Snow and Benford (1988) and Benford and Snow (2000) as follows. Two interacting factors are responsible for the level of frame resonance: the credibility and emphasis of the interpretive frame. Credibility is a function of three additional attributes. The frame consistency refers to the extent to which the opinions, demands, and actions expressed by the movement organisation coincide. There can be inconsistencies between beliefs and demands, or between framing and action – these can discredit efforts. Empirical credibility refers to the construction of interpretive frames and to events in the world. In fact, it is not about the 'factuality' or general plausibility of the frames, but about the need for it to be plausible in some future or current context, especially for current and potential supporters. The last factor that affects the credibility of the interpretative frames of collective action concerns the credibility of the frame articulators. The status and expertise of the frame articulators may also contribute to greater resonance (Snow & Benford 1988, Benford & Snow 2000).

In terms of the frame consistency of the Ligetvédők, that is the extent to which the beliefs and demands of the movement were basically consistent, but not completely. The movement pursued a strategy of non-violent resistance to defend the park, but it was easy to highlight in the media those moments when, for example, the defenders were dragging the fence or shouting loudly, which many people considered as far from non-violent. In addition, the consistency of the movement's environmental frame was questionable. The homeless people living in the camps, and later the "Ligetvédők in the Liget" camp, which mainly involved people living on the periphery of society, showed that those activists were not protecting their environment. Rather, they were the 'polluters': littering, unhygienic and rather harmful to the environment.

This element was well used by the government-linked media and project management to weaken the environmental frame of the movement. At the same time, even if it was not shown in the media, it was enough for the residents and park users in the area to see the conditions in the camp and question whether the environmental movement was really protecting the environment. As one of the informants put it:

> That if locals came to join the movement, we would get, 'Oh my God, what is this?' This is a leper colony and they turned out of there. (...) I was specifically told by families that 'listen, I don't agree with the Liget project, but I don't like who's in the movement'. Not to mention that journalists came from different newspapers and put these people on premier plans. (Brigitta, PI, 2019)

Regarding the empirical credibility of the frames of the Ligetvédők, in other words, how realistic the future environmental damage and social injustice described by the Ligetvédők seemed, was also not necessarily in favour of the movement. It was difficult to comprehend the imminent threats because people experience the destruction of the park in a very different way. By emphasising the communication of the visual plans and the increase in green surfaces, the project management was able to dispel many doubts about the realism of the threats voiced by the defenders of the park. At the same time, there were also those who, seeing the construction works, experienced the scenarios that the movement had formulated for the future of the park as realistic and tangible.

Nonetheless, the credibility of the frame articulators was compromised most. The activists felt that there were constant attempts to discredit them and to reinforce in people's minds that the movement was nothing more than a collection of homeless people, hippies and drug addicts or that the movement was an anti-government liberal movement whose aim was nothing less than the overthrow of the government. This was compounded by the fact that many in the "Ligetvédők in the Liget" group were affiliated to political parties, and they repeatedly turned up at party-affiliated protests – for example MSZP, Párbeszéd, DK[53] – which also reinforced the image that the movement was not a civil environmental movement. Some of the activists believed the managers of the Liget Project deliberately allowed the joint camp to exist for almost 4 months because they suspected that sooner or later the activists would tire, there would

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[53] MSZP: Hungarian Socialist Party. Párbeszéd: Dialogue for Hungary Party. DK: Democratic Coalition. These three parties are a spin-off from the former large MSZP party and can be described as left-wing parties.

not be many of them and they expected internal conflicts as well. After the eviction, when the two camps were created, many people assumed that the homeless activists of the "Ligetvédők in the Liget" camp did not stay in the Liget by accident, but that the company connected to the project had deliberately left the homeless in the park so that they could be used to discredit the movement and show who the Ligetvédők were.

The movement tried to counteract this trend, for example by making a video (Ligetvédők, 2016) about who the Ligetvédők were and showcasing the diverse community that made up the movement. According to activists, this did not really reach the desired effect, and many felt that the conditions in the camp strengthened the negative image. Nevertheless, most activists argued that the public should have noticed the damage the Liget project was causing, the dust from the construction, the disappearance of the park. However, they could not effectively explain these arguments because most people were preoccupied with the fact that there were homeless people in the park.

Overall, the activists saw that they also had a big disadvantage compared to the project. The project management has worked with a much bigger communication budget, while the movement did not have a specific communication budget. Thus, it was not difficult for the media supporting the project to divert attention from the real aims of the movement and to draw attention to the problems caused by its presence in the park. The activists I interviewed believed that the majority of the population saw them as the drug-addled hippie homeless or fanatical greens or left-wing liberals who do not want to see progress in the city and can only obstruct the realisation of this valuable project. In addition, they were clearly classified as part of the opposition movement. According to Andrea, education of environmental citizenship should start at a much lower level, such as litter picking, composting, not throwing away cigarette butts. She said the entry threshold for the movement was very high because many people did not have the luxury of being prosecuted or having their boss see what they do in their spare time.

Thus, the counter-frames of the project management led to the weakening of the frame consistency and empirical credibility of the movement and damaged the credibility of the frame articulators. The movement, therefore, had less chance to address and mobilise even broader sections of society. Despite the fact that not only people with oppositional views but also many people who support the ruling party have been against the project, according to the surveys, the movement has not been able to reach them at all.

4.4 Conclusions

In this chapter, I focused on the communication strategies for environmental resistance of the Ligetvédők movement. To do this, I looked at the motivational frame of the movement – as the third core framing task – to motivate people to act. The movement emphasised that the protection of the park was a shared responsibility and wanted to involve as many people as possible by organising programmes. However, this could not be effectively communicated and organised in the long term due to internal conflicts, external circumstances and lack of material and human resources. At the same time, a kind of communication war has evolved between the movement and the project management. The movement developed several frames: an environmental frame focused on environmental protection, a radical left frame focused on social injustice and critique of capitalism, and a more moderate civic frame thematising the 'right to the city'. In addition, the political framing of the project became increasingly important in the communication of the movement over time. The confluence of these frames gave rise to an ecopolitical master frame, which for a short period of time resulted in the frame resonance with the experiences of broad social groups, and thus successfully mobilising large masses on two occasions. As the communications officer of the Liget project explained, during the active period of the park protection, in 2016 and early 2017, the project was mainly forced to communicate in a reactive way, but from mid-2017 onwards, they were able to communicate proactively. The counter-frames developed by the Városliget Ltd. supported by different communication tools were successful in weakening the frames of the movement. The project management has adopted the environmental frame of the movement by developing a green and sustainable image of the project. In addition, there was a conscious strategy to discredit the movement, while at the same time there were elements in the functioning of the movement that weakened the credibility of its frames. Furthermore, the Hungarian illiberal system offers few opportunities for effective resistance, and it uses insidious means, not spectacular intimidation, to make people unwilling to stand up for their rights and their environment. The 2018 elections, which strengthened Fidesz's grip on power, resulted in a narrowing of the political opportunity structure, allowing the Liget project to continue unchallenged. The municipal elections in autumn 2019, when an opposition mayor of Budapest was elected, could have brought a turning point in the defence of the Liget. However, due to the still narrow political opportunity structures, the slowness of the municipal office and the very different visions of the Ligetvédők, activists have so far been prevented from becoming actively involved in the work of the new city administration. This situation reflects that decisions on such matters in Hungary have been

primarily in the hands of the politicians, and that civilians and the general public, although important, had a limited influence on the resolution of the conflict.

As a result, the movement could not break through the invisible walls of indifference, nor could it move significant masses that would have forced the government or the project management to retreat. At the same time, the movement has achieved important results in some respects. Two planned buildings[54] were cancelled from the plans. The Transport Museum will be realised in a rehabilitated brown-field zone. The planned constructions have been significantly delayed compared to the original plans. According to several activists, as a result of the movement, the previous mayor initiated the "Ten thousand new trees to Budapest!" capital programme[55]. Moreover, the protection of trees and green spaces has become increasingly important at city and national level thanks to the activities of the movement. Therefore, even if the movement could not fully perform their advocating and public communication functions along the specific case, the movement was generally able to advance and raise awareness the "green cause" in Budapest and Hungary as well.

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[54] Museum of Architecture and Museum of Photography
[55] István Tarlós, the previous mayor of Budapest initiated the "Ten thousand new trees to Budapest!" capital programme in 2016, which was the same year when the demonstrations in the Liget started.

5 Environmental Movements and Protests in the "age of upgraded authoritarianism" –
A Comparative Perspective on Hungary, Turkey and Vietnam

In the previous chapters, I focused on the Ligetvédők movement, its operation, framing and communication strategies. In this chapter, I would like to look at the movement from a comparative perspective in a non-democratic context. In doing so, I intend to explore how the Ligetvédők movement fits into the contemporary movement context and trends, and search for connections between these movements, including similarities and differences in their political contexts and activities. Within this, I will examine their activities in relation to what the use of social media meant for the functioning of the movements and how they were able to exploit its potential in a political environment where the media system was heavily influenced by the powers that be. In this way, we can understand two civil society functions described by Paffenholz and Spurk (2006) through the functioning of these movements: advocating and engaging in public communication and monitoring accountability. Regarding the monitoring function, Keane's (2013) theory of monitory democracy provides the theoretical framework and the stories told by the Ligetvédő activists provide the empirical experience of how and with what results control can be achieved in an oppressive system.

5.1 Protect the park and fight against authoritarianism

It can be seen that by the beginning of 2010 the state of democracy improved a lot in the last two decades. As the 2010 Freedom House report informs us, there were far more countries in the free category in 2009 than in 1989, and most of the countries that made significant progress 20 years ago have retained these improvements (Puddington, 2010). During the 2010s, in turn, the already emerging signs of a decline in democracy were growing stronger, while the strong authoritarian countries have not eased either. By 2015, democratisation in post-communist Europe and Eurasia has not simply slowed or halted but has been actively pursued by the political forces in power to make this process a failure (Habdank-Kolaczkowska, 2015). In 2020, the phenomenon was simply described as "democracies in decline" whenever democracy in all regions of the world is attacked by populist leaders and groups that reject pluralism (Repucci, 2020), such as in countries in Europe (e.g., Poland, Italy), Asia (e.g., Turkey, Russia),

Latin-America and the US[56]. According to Vladisavljević (2014), the political regime is the formal and informal organisation of the centre of political power and its relationship with society, which largely determines the identity, interests, abilities, and behaviours of the regime elite and dissident groups (Fishman 1990, Vladisavljević, 2014).

In Turkey, the AKP was founded in 2001 and since 2002, and it has been successful in general elections and led the government without a coalition (Kilicdaroglu, 2015). Authoritarian governance and the Islamic-conservative imagination began to strengthen soon after they got on the government, resulting in restrictions in the private sphere, such as family life (childbirth, abortion, divorce), sexual orientation, and alcohol consumption (Bozkurt, 2015; Özen, 2015). This authoritarian direction has been closely linked to the rule of the country's former prime minister, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, between 2003-2014, who has been the president of Turkey since 2014 (Karaveli, 2016). The literature considers this system to be electoral authoritarianism (Arbatlı, 2014). The fact that Turkey has shifted from the partly free category to the not free category in 2018 according to the Freedom House reports, and Hungary from the free to the partly free category in 2019, are not individual phenomena, but the results of processes that can be fitted into a general trend.

In contrast to Turkey and Hungary, where democratic features have been continuously dismantled step by step, we can speak of a long-standing, stable authoritarian political system in Vietnam, where there has been no substantive change in the system. Vietnam's turbulent historical past – French rule, Japanese occupation, division of the country, American military intervention known as the Vietnam War – is still dominant in thinking about the country (Háda, 2015). However, the country was reunited in 1975 and has undergone many changes[57].

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[56] (see among many others, Bugaric 2008; Simonyi, 2014; Baggini, 2016; Kazin, 2016; Karolewski & Benedikter, 2017; Jutel, 2018; Rydliński, 2018; Campos-Herrera & Umpierrez de Reguero, 2019; Daly, 2019; Petschauer, 2019)

[57] Since then, its population has doubled (to nearly 100 million) and it has become one of the fastest-growing economies in the world thanks to the đổi mới ("recovery") economic reforms announced in 1986 (Vietnam Population LIVE, n.d.; Diez, 2016). The country was able to achieve this economic growth without having to reshape the political system – unlike in Eastern Europe, where the communist bloc collapsed – but enough to reshape and open up the economic system. And this economic success has further strengthened the Communist Party – a phenomenon that can be observed in other communist countries, such as China and Cuba (Diez, 2016). However, economic liberalization following the Doi Moi reforms has not been as successful as in China, and loss-making state-owned companies continue to be key players in the economy due to government influence. Wealth inequality is constantly increasing, which is also facilitated by government policy (Klemenits, 2018). Although the current General Secretary and President, Nguyen Phu Trong, has announced an anti-corruption campaign, in many cases the lands are being appropriated by the state and handed over to foreign investors (Klemenits, 2018).

Regarding the comparison of the environmental movement scene, the case of the Gezi Park in Turkey serves as a similar instance in time and in the course of the action to the Ligetvédők Movement. To involve another similar movement, but from another type of repressive system, I look at the Vietnamese Trees movement and the authoritarian regime there. At the same time, it is important to note that a systemic comparison cannot be fully realised, as countries rest on different political, economic, civilizational, and cultural foundations (Juhász, László & Zgut, 2015). Both Vietnam and Turkey meet the criterion of having an autocratic political system, however, there are differences in the degree of repression. As an illiberal democracy, Hungary is the least authoritarian of the three countries, authoritarian tendencies are stronger in Turkey, while Vietnam is clearly a dictatorship.

Environmental movements – the Ligetvédők movement, the Gezi Park movement, and the Trees movement – have generated significant protests in their own countries. The case of Gezi Park came to the fore in 2013, the protest of the Trees movement in 2015, and the Ligetvédők in 2016. What they have in common is that the movements were primarily aimed at protecting trees and the urban environment, but at the same time, many other layers of meaning were associated with them during the protests. Despite the strategies, ideologies and institutions of the non-democratic countries being different, based on the main features of the operations, there are significant similarities as in the case of Hungary, Turkey and Vietnam (Cavatorta, 2012b).

All three movements had to mobilise in a political environment in which the opportunity structures were narrow due to varying degrees of authoritarian tendencies. Moreover, because of the bias of the mass media and the distortions in the media system, it was not easy for them to get their own lived reality and narrative to many. However, social media fundamentally changed the formation, operation and communication of movements (Lopes, 2014). In social media images, sounds, and audiovisual content play an even greater role alongside text. Dissemination of these contents on social media can help to frame issues quickly and deeply and adjust promptly the frame alignment process by many-to-many communication (Bekkers et al., 2011). Social media thus essentially defined the mobilisation strategy, operation, and communication of the Ligetvédők movement, the Gezi Park, and the Trees movement. Hence, it could function as a mobilising structure where the own narratives of the movements.

Independent environmental movements and organisations and grassroots citizen-led activism, which are not supported by the government and generally do not directly and openly criticize the decisions of the given government, are more in a special position in an authoritarian or

hybrid regime context (Vu, 2017). This is also confirmed by Freedom House's 2019 report that environmental activists were able to successfully mobilise local affairs in more authoritative countries as well – for example, against building a battery factory in Belarus or against building a dam in Montenegro (Buyon, 2020). The demands of eco-activists, such as the closure of landfills, the cleaning-up of waterways, and the reversal of environmental degradation, are usually local in nature and indirectly political, which may explain why governments have been willing to tolerate and even accept them. In both free and non-free societies, "environmental protests have become ciphers through which citizens can advocate against corruption and for good governance—and expect results" (Buyon, 2020, p.16). The three movements from Hungary, Vietnam and Turkey also meet this criterion, as they started as an environmental movement whose primary goal was to protect a particular urban green area. This special situation of them was also a decisive circumstance in how they framed the goals of the movement and how they shaped their strategies.

5.1.1 The representation of power and the symbolic design of space

In addition to the authoritarian shift of the Turkish and Hungarian political systems, Akçalı & Korkut (2015) draw attention to another important connection: Erdogan and Orbán strongly support both conservative social construction and urban planning schemes that serve not only the political and socio-economic interests of their supporters, but also the two capitals are important symbolic spaces for strengthening their power, and their goal is to associate both Istanbul and Budapest with more traditionalist and conservative themes. Thus, urban transformations take place within the battles of neoconservative leaders for cultural and social capital, where cities can become rebellious cities – though, as we shall see, with varying degrees of resistance (Akçalı & Korkut, 2015).

The representation of power and the symbolic design of space are especially applicable in the case of the Liget project in Budapest. Museums, as spaces of culture, provide a great opportunity to strengthen national sentiments and form identity politics, which is in line with the objectives of the illiberal system (Gothár, 2017; Hajdu, 2019). As Gothár (2017) points out, Városliget has already been used several times by different political systems for symbolic power demonstrations. So far, however, it has been able to retain the function of a public park with these transformations. Functions as a public park include environmental, recreational, educational, entertainment, cultural, and political opportunities that reflect environmental, social, political, national, and historical values. Urban public parks indicate social change and

past political decisions too. In addition, these parks and gardens are spaces of liberal philosophy, democratic values, social coherence, and an enlightened mindset, and mediums of symbolic power demonstration and representation (Gothár, 2017).

The plans of the Liget Project thus reflect the operation of the Hungarian illiberal system with its top-down methods, based on Gothár's (2017) argument. In doing so, the project attempts to develop a political era into a monumental monument, as well as to make the system's own narratives as a guide in thinking about the park. This would eliminate the former function of a public park by reducing the green areas of the park in favour of museums and tourist attractions since the development also aimed to boost tourism, attracting 1.5 million tourists a year to the park. In addition, from the point of view of power representation, an important argument in favour of the Liget project is that the National Gallery can move out of the Buda Castle, which can become the power centre of the capital as a government quarter.

The urban planning of Turkey is also characterised by the deployment of different symbolic significance. The hegemony of the government is largely made up of ideological symbols and religious and cultural codes, more precisely a specific blend of conservatist, Islamist and nationalist symbols and codes which are understandable and attractive to many in spite of the fact that economic growth did not lead to a reduction in inequalities or an improvement in the personal living conditions of individuals (Bozkurt, 2015). After the "lost decade of the 1990s" with the lack of economic progress and unstable political environment (Özden & Bekmen, 2015), the AKP brought economic growth and stability even during the global financial crisis of 2008 (Özen, 2015). The stability and growth were manifested in major infrastructure projects, massive construction, modern roads, and huge shopping centres which were of symbolic significance and contributed to building and maintaining the hegemony and popularity of the AKP (Bozkurt, 2015). Özden and Bekmen (2015) claim that this form of governing can be grasped as neoliberal populism which combines the previous decades' features of populism with the difference that it is a "controlled populism", according to the neoliberal economic policy agenda set by the international financial institutions. In addition to agreeing with historical populism in that people are seen as political actors, neoliberal populism seeks to forge new non-class forms of identity and representation that reintegrate social relations into the increasingly moralized ideas of community and seek to disconnect social conflicts from the material relations of power (Özden and Bekmen, 2015).

Accordingly, it can happen that, in many cases, these mega-projects, residential developments were "wrapped in green" and both the government and Erdoğan defined themselves as environmentalists as they planted trees during their governance[58] (Özkaynak et al., 2015). This strategy, as I have argued in the previous chapter, has also been strongly implemented in the case of the Liget Project, as the image of the development has been shaped to look green and sustainable. Alike, the tree planting programme of the previous Fidesz-led city administration also wanted to strengthen the narrative of green Budapest, thus wrapping the image of the city administration in green and forgetting the polluting and environmental damaging investments.

Meanwhile, in both countries environmental legislation is designed without expert consultation so that it is possible to construct buildings in important areas, even protected areas, for economic reasons. In Turkey, there have been several protests in rural and/or urban areas about mining activities, dam and hydropower projects, thermal and nuclear power plants, and other gentrification and urban redevelopment projects (Özkaynak et al., 2015). However, the biggest protests over the past decade in Turkey have been over the Gezi Park[59]. The park was not particularly known until the ruling party-dominated city council decided that the former Taksim barracks in the park would be rebuilt as a shopping mall (Kilicdaroglu, 2015). The residents of the area set up the Taksim Solidarity Platform and protested against the project with a petition in late 2012, claiming it was the only green area in the neighbourhood. The protest continued in April and May 2013 with a smaller number of participants, who spoke out in defence of the park and trees. On May 28, a group of environmental activists decided they wanted to guard the park and set up a small camp. However, the peaceful demonstration drowned in riots as police tried to disperse the protest using tear gas and violence. A symbolic picture of the demonstration was a photo of a "woman in red" who was being sprayed by a cop with a pepper spray (Toor, 2013). The violent treatment from the police provoked outraged reactions in the social media. By May 31, the size of the protests grew significantly and spread to Ankara, Antalya and Izmir, while the police became more violent, firing tear gas, pepper spray and water

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[58] Erdoğan brought up this argument when environmentalists protested against environmental destruction, such as the protests against the small-scale power plant in the north-eastern Anatolian and Black Sea regions of Turkey. The commitment and confidence in scientific and technical processes puts ecological considerations in the background and sees environment protection only in the need of planting trees. In contrast, looking at environmental indicators such as the Environmental Performance Index, the environment in Turkey appears to be largely degraded. According to this, biodiversity is constantly declining, and air pollution and overexploitation of its fish stocks cause the greatest environmental damage (Özkaynak et al., 2015). Özkaynak et al. (2015) therefore primarily blame the country's dominant modernist discourse, which emphasises rapid economic growth and "catching up" with the West.

[59] Located next to Taksim Square, Taksim Gezi Park is in the Beyoğlu district of Istanbul, one of the last green areas in the district where there were military barracks from the Ottoman Empire until 1940.

cannons at the protesters. As in more and more cities public spaces were occupied, protest groups brought out the real oppressive face of government (Özen, 2015). The aims of the demonstration broadened and developed into a two-month-long anti-government demonstration in which about 3 million people participated physically, and even more online (Özen, 2015). As a result of the police brutality, eight people died and more than 8000 people were injured (Saatçioğlu, 2015). The case has received significant media and scientific attention.

In Turkey, the shopping centre planned for Taksim Square, in which the government wanted to turn the living space into a commodity, can be interpreted primarily as part of the prevailing neoliberal tendencies. In the case of the Liget Project, the neoliberal influence can be seen in the creation of a tourist area in the park, which can be also seen in that way as a commodity.

Another example of an environmental movement that was able to mobilise large masses, for which, although physically a different part of the world, at the same time, in terms of the characteristics of the movement, parallels can be discovered with the Gezi Park and the Ligetvédők movement. The city administration of Hanoi had started to cut out trees on the boulevards of the city in March 2015. They wanted to get rid of around 6700 trees on the behalf of a renovating project that the government framed as a "landscaping project" (Vu, 2017). In a few days, the city administration managed to cut down around 2000 trees – most of which were healthy – without any consultation with the public, while on social media more and more images began to spread about the felled trees, accompanied by outraged opinions, and the "6,700 people for 6,700 trees" campaign began. However, because of the political context of Vietnam, this outrage could not be further developed into an open demonstration against the decision of the government (Vu, 2017). The protest never questioned the government openly. Rather, the power and expertise of the city administration was questioned (Gillespie & Nguyen, 2019). In doing so, however, the government was criticized, albeit indirectly. In the authoritarian setting of Vietnam, the Trees movement could successfully communicate, frame strategically their actions and create an alternative reality which helped them to achieve their goals and set back the tree fellings (Duong, Vu, & Nguyen, 2019).

5.1.2 Ecological search for freedom

In Turkey, there were not clear and identifiable goals pursued by the protesters. As Walton (2015) quotes Slavoj Žižek (2013), "The protests are not 'really' against global capitalism, 'really' against religious fundamentalism, 'really' for civil freedoms and democracy, or 'really'

about any one thing in particular. However, the messages of the movement can be well interpreted with the help of framing analysis.

Yusuf Sarfati (2015) identifies two main collective action frames developed by the protesters: a diagnostic and a motivational frame. The former to identify the social grievances, while the latter to provide inspiration to people to participate. In these frames, the grievances of urban, educated, post-materialist youth[60] were summarised primarily. The first master frame diagnosed injustice caused by the Erdoğan government. The protesters criticized the authoritarian policies and neoliberal urban development projects of the AKP government, which can be labelled as "right to the city" frame (Sarfati, 2015). One of their main allegations was that the opinions of the residents about their own living environment were ignored by the authorities. Moreover, as a result of the neoliberal urban policy, the size of liveable areas has been decreased, the historical characteristics of the cities have been destroyed, and more and more projects are being implemented that result in gentrification in the area (Sarfati, 2015). The protesters considered that type of urban policy highly undemocratic[61]. Hence, the protesters called for the establishment of a truly democratic system that makes it possible for citizens to participate in local political decisions that directly affect them. Thus, the second master frame closely related to longing for democracy, which Sarfati (2015) calls as "fight against authoritarianism" frame. This frame includes the protesters' concerns about the loss of individual liberties as well as their demand for freedom, which are framed as a collective problem and as a goal to be achieved together.

Hence, whilst protesters of the Gezi Park articulated some general goals and values beyond government, such as democracy, the transformation of neoliberal capitalism, and the environmental protection, they primarily protested against the government and the arrogant leader, Prime Minister Erdoğan, who embodied the authoritarianism of the AKP (Özen, 2015). Erdoğan's statement of 2 June 2013, greatly contributed to the unity of the different groups, as he called the protesters purely criminals and looters (çapulcular) which was then used in social media in a rewritten form (çapulcu, meaning a subversive figure) by the protesters in their self-

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[60] According to the statistics in the study of Sarfati (2015), "educated, urban, middle class youth constituted one of the main societal pillars of the uprising" (p. 32): 63.2 % of the protesters were under 25 years old, and 81% of them were under 30 years old.
[61] As Sarfati (2015) draws attention to, democracy was conceptualized in these arguments "as a participatory democracy and not a representative, elitist democracy" (p. 33).

determination (Kilicdaroglu, 2015; Walton, 2015). Erdoğan and the state-owned media also tried to discredit the movement by developing counter-frames[62] (see footnotes).

In the even more authoritarian Vietnam, open protest runs the risk of state-controlled media interpreting and presenting the narrative of a movement as an open political attack, questioning their legitimacy or authorities may even act more drastically, such as arresting activists, which discourages many people from taking action (Duong, Vu & Nguyen, 2019). So, when the activists tried in vain to initiate communication with the authorities, they had to find creative ways of protesting that could not be labelled as an anti-government action. In the spirit of this, the movement organised actions such as "Biking for Trees" and "Tree Hugging" that were not related to politics and they were able to proclaim and frame them as cultural or fun events (p. 144). The activist deliberately avoided the term of protest and promoted their events as a picnic or green walks. Nonetheless, while the fate of the trees remained a civic issue on the surface, deep down it was a political matter (Vu, 2017). The online activities alongside the street "protest" questioned the symbolic order of the state (Duong, Vu & Nguyenc, 2019). In addition to strengthening civic engagement and civic awareness, the movement also drew attention to the importance of accountable and transparent governance linked to the development of a more democratic political culture (Vu, 2017). Environmental activism opened up new avenues for Vietnamese civil society, as well as strengthening the relationship between organised and non-organised movement groups, by cooperating during the campaign, and thus shaped the relationship between state and society (Vu, 2017).

As I demonstrated in the previous chapter, the Ligetvédők movement was also associated with several frames and layers of meaning. In their communication, they often highlighted how wrong it was for the residents of the city to be left out of the decision-making process and to decide without them on issues that affected them. Accordingly, the "right to city" was also decisive in their framing processes. Moreover, the environmentalist frame aimed attention at the ecological aspects of the defence of the park and the radical left frame focused on social injustice and gentrification in the neighbourhood that the project could cause, while they

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[62] The government focused on disintegrating various groups of people and preventing the movement from expanding in conservative social segments by building hostile ties between Gezi protesters and conservative masses. In this, counter-frames have become the main tools of counter-mobilisation. The government set the demonstrators as non-native and anti-democratic forces and actors who were a threat to national security and religion, and who were also supported by foreign organisations (Sarfati, 2015). In addition, the government also used the "coup propaganda", spreading that a coup attempt was taking place against them and with that, a wound deep in collective memory was torn open by the AKP (Kilicdaroglu, 2015).

included the critique of capitalism as well. The activists tried to uncover the "green-painted" picture of the developments such as increasing of the green areas, and the sustainable smart solutions of the new buildings. In addition, the political framing of the project became increasingly important in the communication of the movement over time. Nevertheless, although the Ligetvédők integrated into their communication the problems of the political system several times, the "fight against authoritarianism" did not appear openly and directly in the framing of their strategy as in the case of the Turkish movement. In their summary document, which describes what the problems are with the Liget project, they state that "Liget is today's small Hungary" (Ligetvédők, 2018). They also openly criticize project-related corruption, illegal legislation and police action. However, they tried to avoid all statements about party politics, but they realised quite soon that the link between the project and the government could not be circumvented. Thus, over time, the project was clearly associated with the government, and each time the project was criticized, the government was also criticized. For many activists, defending the park meant standing up for democracy, protesting against the system and weakening the government. At the same time, they did not have the goal of overthrowing the Orbán regime. Their main goal and focus throughout were the Liget Project and related criticisms.

5.2 Environmental movements in the digital world

5.2.1 The role of the social media in the movements

An important aspect of understanding today's movements in these political environments, is the opportunities provided by social media for civil society and movements which has also been largely addressed in the literature (Hoffmann, 2012; Lotan, et al., 2011; Castells, 2015; Vu, 2017). Grievances alone cannot generate movement, a mobilisation structure is needed that can channel these grievances (Buechler 2000, Lopes, 2014).

The internet provides a free public space that in most cases is not controlled by the state or the government, which can thus become "spaces of autonomy" (Castells, 2015, p. 2). Social movements are part of the network society[63] in the information age (Castells, 2010; Castells, 2015) when "the creation, processing, and transmission of information becomes a source of

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[63] "A network society is a society whose social structure is made of networks powered by microelectronics-based information and communication technologies" (Castells, 2004, p. 3)

productivity and power" (Castells, 2005, p. 57)[64]. Hence, the exercise of state power can no longer be sufficiently effective by the use of coercive forces, but greater emphasis is placed on the control of the human mind through the mechanism of symbolic manipulation and the construction of meaning in people's minds (Castells, 2015). According to Castells (2015), the meaning creation is come true by interacting with the natural and social environment, that is, by networking. Networking is "operated by the act of communication"; in other words, "sharing meaning through the exchange of information" (p. 6). As a result of the digital communication technology which equips the users to build digital networks, the movements as reorganisers of social life can exercise counterpower and change power relations because of the free autonomous communication.

Castells (2015) argues that the online community network builds a sense of togetherness that helps overcome the feeling of fear – which is especially aroused in people by non-democratic systems – and brings people to occupy urban spaces when they face humiliating decisions of power (Castells, 2015). In that way, the free online communication on the social media platforms (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, blogs) and the physical occupation are blurring, which results in a "hybrid public space of freedom" (p. 23). Moreover, censorship and propaganda are not at all effective in silencing citizens when they have access to social media (Shirky, 2011). By the operation of networks of counterpower that disrupts the different networks of power, power can be destabilized or even a dictatorship overthrown.

The political use of social media has changed the traditional way of organising social movements. It offers more sources of information, facilitates and speeds up communication and is a cost-effective way of coordination of a movement (Shirky, 2011). The emergence and use of social media thus simplify the process of movement organisation and management and can act as a catalyst for movements across the world (Ozalp, 2013).

As I wrote earlier, the Hungarian media system has been significantly distorted in the last 10 years and state-controlled media have prevailed. In July 2014, the number of active Facebook users in Hungary was 4.8 million, which has increased to 6.7 million by 2020 (Medve, 2020). Thus, a significant proportion of the population of 9.7 million uses this platform. In the case of the Ligetvédők movement, social media – mainly Facebook – was also crucial in organising their internal and external communication. Their official external communication interface is

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[64] Translated by the author

the Ligetvédők Facebook page, which is currently followed by 22,000 people. In addition, there are several smaller groups where events in the park are discussed by members. The largest of these is the Ligetvédők talk group, which has 2,000 members, and the Ligetvédők lounge, which has a thousand members. There are several pages that do not run under the name of Ligetvédők but can be linked to the protection of the Városliget. The contents of these pages also reinforce the narrative of the movement. Hence, Facebook functioned simultaneously as a mobilising and an information tool. During the 2016 demonstrations and protests, a whole communication team worked on the maintenance of these platforms and the information, images, news, events that appeared there were able to mobilise. Today, however, there is no mobilisation on these platforms, but rather information. In addition, the documentation of the project's work is done in Facebook groups, which hold more than 1,000 photos to date[65].

Like other communist regimes, freedom of expression and assembly are extremely limited in Vietnam. There is no free press, however, the number of Internet users is constantly increasing, especially among the younger generation, so through social media, various forums, and blogs, it is possible to discuss certain issues. In parallel, the government, fearing the political consequences of public dissatisfaction, has recently allowed some room for criticism, as long as it does not jeopardise the stability of the system. At the same time, the National Defence and Security Council is severely cracking down on perceived or real opponents of power, all those who could threat the legitimacy of the one-party system (Klemenits, 2018). According to human rights organisations, Vietnam is still one of the toughest police states, where members of the press or civil society are very easily imprisoned and disappeared. Activists and bloggers are severely punished, as are political opponents[66] (Klemenits, 2018).

Hence, social media played a major role in Vietnam in the communication of the movement as it provided a space where urban citizenship could develop, spread, and ultimately influence the state thanks to the conscious communication strategy of the movement (Duong, Vu & Nguyen, 2019; Gillespie & Nguyen, 2019). The interviewed online advocates in Gillespie and Nguyen (2019) research argue that the "terrain for future struggles for urban citizenship resides in the autonomous, self-generated networks of online movements" (p. 988). The "6,700 people for 6,700 trees" page wanted to reach 6,700 likes at first, but it got 10,000 likes in one day and

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[65] May 2021
[66] Thus, it is not surprising that research in Freedom House categorizes Vietnam as 'not free' and a total score calculated from the weighted scale of political rights and civil liberties is 20 out of 100 (Vietnam, n.d.).

reached 60,000 in two weeks. Images of the protests have crawled Facebook, Twitter and YouTube alike. Because of the information spreading on social media, the state-controlled media could no longer ignore the street protests and were compelled to report them in some way (Gillespie & Nguyen, 2019).

In Turkey, social media had a similar role. Since the mainstream media reported unreliably and not credibly, the media has become part of the collective action frames and the dysfunctional operation of which has been pointed out. Therefore, in the transmission and dissemination of the messages, social media (mainly Facebook and Twitter) played a crucial role as a mobilising structure due to its decentralized and horizontal operational mode that the government could not control (Sarfati, 2015; Vatikiotis & Yörük, 2016). Therefore, social media fulfilled the information and mobilising function. One of the metrics for that, of those who took part in the demonstrations, 69% followed the events on social media, while only 7% did so on television (Vatikiotis & Yörük, 2016). In addition, these digital platforms helped the protesters to keep in touch and coordinate the activities[67] and the logistics, such as supporting the demonstrators who stayed in the park with shelter and food (Sarfati, 2015). Nevertheless, the messages of the government were also communicated in social media and state propaganda to both national and international target audiences (Kilicdaroglu, 2015; Sarfati, 2015). Thus, digital media and online space have become the sphere where framing contests have taken place between the government and the protesters (Sarfati, 2015).

For all three movements, therefore, social media had a major impact on the development of cases and functioned as a mobilising tool. In the case of Hungary, Facebook can be considered a key platform for communication and connection. Communication between the activists took place there, internal information was shared in the movement group, and external outreach and community organising communication also received a great deal of emphasis in the online space. Also, reports from news portals also appeared there. The footage of the camp's liquidation, which prompted many to appear in person, was also published on social media. In the case of Turkey, images, and footage of police brutality also came out there, amplifying the wave of protests. In addition, the practical organisational tasks of the movement took place

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[67] Moreover, various, sometimes surprising forms of civil disobedience (for example, the "standing man") and political humor were also deployed by the protesters to make their voices heard. These successful actions brought together the various protest groups, and the previously described two collective action frames were able to make it even stronger and more unified to express grievances and demands of the demonstrators against the power (Sarfati, 2015).

there. In the case of Vietnam, the Facebook site called "6700 people for 6700 trees" was the first mobilising force, and later images of the felled trees on social media were the ones that deepened and intensified the protesters' anger. (Gillespie & Nguyen, 2019).

At the same time, however, social media cannot balance completely the unequal power relations between a movement and an authoritarian system. This is because social media platforms are used by the representatives of the authorities too – as has happened in Turkey and Hungary – where they can spread the counter-frames with which they can discredit the movements. In addition, the production of content requires intellectual resources, which are more often held by those in power, as full-time paid staff work on strategy and communication. Another major advantage for them is that Facebook, for example, gives paid advertising a greater reach. Thus, the party with greater financial resources can buy itself more visibility and gain an advantage. Grassroots movements that do not have a stable financial backing and organisation behind them cannot pay the advertising sums that the state or a state-subsidised company can pay.

Furthermore, due to the horizontal nature of the movements, in other words that they do not have a unified organisational framework, do not have a leader, and over time, strategic decision-making weakens, they are less and less able to communicate effectively. Meanwhile, representatives of power, among whom there is usually a strong leader, or even a personal cult, can mobilise much more cumulatively. Additionally, in countries where the mainstream media, that is media owned by public and private companies, is more closely linked to the government, it reinforces the narrative of power as opposed to the narrative of the movement on social media.

5.2.2 Who is watching who? – the role of the movements examined from the perspective of the theory of monitory democracy

Moreover, when discussing the role of the internet, it is essential to take into account the wider developments of the new information and communication technologies (ICTs), which have also had and continue to have a major impact on society and the operation of NGOs and various development projects in developing countries (Keane, 2013; Trägårdh & Witoszek, 2013). The concept of monitory democracy applied by John Keane (2013) raises important issues for democracy, civil society, and the new information technology. He argues that neither Huntington's concept of "third wave" nor Fukuyama's theory of the "end of history" approach today's democracies precisely. According to him, the historical changes in democracies lie in the way society is interwoven with different power-scrutinising institutions which bring about

the transformation of representative democracies into "post-representative democracies", where there is "one person, many interests, many voices, multiple votes, multiple representatives" (Keane, 2013, p.25). In that way, this is the most complex form of democracy (Keane, 2013). Institutions that can cause the fragmentation of power are everywhere – within and beyond government, even across borders. Thus, the individuals and organisations that exercise power are regularly subject to public scrutiny and public debate by a range of extra-parliamentary bodies (Keane, 2013). Hence, monitoring is multi-directional in which both public institutions and the people have a controlling function. In this process, the opportunities provided by the new media play a major role, which is broadening people's horizons and opportunities to represent their own interests, teaching them to keep an eye on power. In addition, society has a controlling function in the non-democratic environment thanks to the Internet as a space of autonomy. It may be more difficult to disseminate information given that the state also exercises stronger control over society than in a liberal democracy. At the same time, the "communicative abundance" can also cause confusion. A message-filled society can be to the detriment of democracy (Keane, 2013).

Regarding understanding the role of civil society in the era of monitory democracy, the civil society watchdog function can bring us closer to it. Buzogány (2015) argues that the literature distinguishes between collaborative and conflictive strategies of civil society. A collaborative strategy usually comes into play when government actors demand the knowledge and expertise of non-governmental actors, in return for which they gain greater influence in the political decision-making process. Civil society is interpreted within the state in this case. However, when civil society is understood outside the state, they can have a watchdog function, which in turn reinforces the conflicting strategy. As a watchdog, civil society monitors and evaluates the development of policies and assesses the level of commitment of policy actors to their implementation, exposing any perceived shortcomings to the wider public. The monitoring function also appears in a study by Paffenholz and Spurk (2006) in which they associate seven functions with civil society. One of these is monitoring accountability[68], which is directed at the activities of central powers, state facilities, and government. It is also a way of controlling and holding accountable central authorities.

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[68] This function is traced back to the separation of power by Montesquieu.

The monitoring function was performed by all three movements, in the sense that in each case there was a strong emphasis on the issue of transparency, and in each case, the lack of transparent decision-making was questioned. From all three cases, it becomes clear that authoritarian systems' decision-making processes also affect different urban planning processes. As with most decisions, they exclude the involvement of citizens and do not report on the background of the various decisions, the preparation of the projects, the details, the implementation process, but want to force these decisions from the top to the bottom. This was accompanied in each case by misleading communication about the projects, (in Vietnam, that a city renewal project is being implemented, in Turkey, that the project will have an important economic growth effect, and in Hungary, that the proportion of green spaces will increase). However, the movements were able to build up their own narrative and shed light on another slice of reality.

5.2.2.1 Monitoring activities of the Ligetvédők

The monitoring function is especially significant in the case of the Ligetvédők movement. Since I have collected primary data from activists of this movement, I will present their examples.

Corruption by politicians has always been an issue in the country; however, from 2010 it has become even more of a major problem in the public sector, mainly regarding EU grants and public procurements (Fazekas, Tóth & King, 2013; Wachs, 2014; Fazekas & Tóth, 2016; Tóth & Hajdu, 2016). As the Liget Project is a public investment, the issue of corruption also arises. The costs of the development are constantly increasing[69], and it can also be traced that most of the public procurement of the project – about two-thirds of them – are won by entrepreneurs close to the government, such as family members or friends (Havai, 2017; Csikász, 2019; Jandó, 2019; Katus, 2019a; Katus, 2019b, Pálúr, 2019; Vég, 2019). The issue of corruption connected to the project was not uncovered by the Ligetvédők, but they played a big role in making this information reach as many people as possible.

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[69] Construction costs of the Hungarian House of Music tripled, the Museum of Ethnography doubled, Biodome quadrupled, and the 2019 annual report of the State Audit Office of Hungary records that the Városliget Ltd did not perform its reporting tasks in accordance with the legal requirements (Partizán, 2020). In addition, the strategy adopted by the project management is to design several smaller separate projects under 300 million, because this means that tenders do not have to be made public, are by invitation only and there is more control over who wins the deals (Partizán, 2020). Another reason for the continuous increase in prices was the lack of a precise budget plan calculated in advance to cover macroeconomic developments, such as the weakening of the forint. There was also no anticipation of an explosion in construction prices.

Asbestos scandal

The biggest project of the Ligetvédők movement, which is related to the monitoring function, has been the continuous documentation of the demonstrations and construction. After the camp's dismantling, activists continued to spend much of their time monitoring construction and enforcing the law. For example, when they saw a truck with very muddy wheels coming out of the construction site, they stopped it and told the driver to wash the wheel and then leave the area. In such situations, drivers usually resisted, resulting in police being called. On such occasions, the police officers acknowledged the violation of rules and ordered the truck driver to wash the wheel and then leave the construction site. These were small things, but they could still cause a few hours of disruption. Similar irregularities were found in cases where the lorry was not properly lashed or where contaminated debris was transported improperly.

However, activists saw that these incidents have not had any major repercussions – except in one case. The Ligetvédők was successful in drawing the attention of the public and residents to the fact that the demolition of one of the old buildings – the Petőfi Hall – was not carried out properly, and asbestos was still present in the demolition area and was not properly removed from the site. In December 2016, Városliget Ltd. announced that the building site was free of asbestos (MTI, 2016). In April 2017, the Ligetvédők movement posted that during the excavation of the building's foundation, it was likely that there would be additional asbestos cement pipes that would need to be safely removed (Ligetvédők, 2017a). The activists requested a contract for asbestos removal from Városliget Ltd. in a public interest information request, which was not granted to them on two occasions (March and June 2017), citing various reasons (Ligetvédők, 2017b). The activists accessed the demolition site in mid-August 2017, from where they sent some samples of drain pipe debris to an independent expert company (Kör-ker Ltd.), who found that the samples contained blue and white asbestos (chrysotile 2-4% and crocidolite 10-12%) (Ligetvédők, 2017b). The health limit is 0%.

Városliget Ltd. also commissioned a study from the same expert firm, which yielded similar white and blue asbestos rates (Kör-Ker Kft., 2017). The results of the study stated that this debris does not alter the concentration of inorganic particulate matter (asbestos fibre) in the air to the extent that it poses a health risk to the people being in the park and the former Petőfi Hall demolition site. The company issued a statement that did not deny that asbestos may be present in the demolition area (Liget Budapest, 2017). They claimed that since asbestos was found in bonded cement, it was not dangerous at all. Nevertheless, they also ordered the removal of

demolition debris containing asbestos cement from the site by a contractor and covered the area with inert material 5-10 cm thick until further construction work could begin, which was also proposed to them by Kör-Ker Ltd. (Kör-Ker Kft., 2017; Liget Budapest, 2017).

According to the Ligetvédők, this statement was a de facto acknowledgement that asbestos-contaminated debris remained on the construction site and were not properly disposed of before (Ligetvédők, 2017c). Moreover, the concentration of asbestos fibres should have been measured earlier, during the active demolition works.

Asbestos becomes dangerous during the demolition of old buildings, when it is released into the air from the bound cement. Therefore, asbestos-containing waste is hazardous waste and improper disposal is a criminal offence. For this reason, any building containing asbestos-containing materials must be demolished according to specific standards: the work area and the workers must be adequately protected. This, according to the Ligetvédők, should have been done before demolition, precisely to avoid exposing demolition workers and visitors to the park to the dangers of asbestos-containing airborne dust. The activists filmed the work every day and observed little evidence of adequate asbestos abatement activities at the demolition site (Ligetvédők, 2017b). The demolition started in February 2017 and continued into September, which also meant that for months there was uncovered hazardous waste in the park, which was actively used by residents, families, and sports and recreation enthusiasts. The movement billboarded the park to warn visitors to the park of the asbestos hazard. If it had not been a true asbestos scare, the activists would have been prosecuted by the police for public nuisance, but it was the police that also informed the disaster management of the presence of hazardous waste.

Most media of national importance – including opposition media – reported the case and it generated a lot of coverage. Meanwhile, the Liget Budapest Facebook page did not share its own statement in September 2017 (only in a comment under a post). In fact, one of the company's employees tried to discredit the movement, as did a state secretary. The former said that the movement was obstructing the demolition work (Ligetvédők, 2017d), the latter that the case was a scare-mongering by malicious protesters (Rétvári, 2017).

Challenge of building permits

In addition, the mother of one of the activists, who works as a lawyer and specialises in building law and identifies herself as a sympathizer of the movement, teamed up with the CivilZugló Association and the Ligetvédők movement to challenge the architectural permits of several

buildings, citing various irregularities (Garay, 2017; Szalai, 2019; Liget Budapest Projekt – közigazgatási és peres eljárások, n.d.). Quite a few of these were also successful and the architectural permits for the given buildings were revoked, however, many of the constructions were already in an advanced state at the time. Later, the permits were reissued.

> We started to appeal these permits, which included environmental permits and building permits, one by one, and then challenge them in court. What we challenged were building cases, all of which, without exception, were annulled and remitted for a new procedure, mostly because of procedural irregularities[70]. In the new procedures, either the same permits were reissued, and we were back in court, or the authorities have covered up and have not even pursued the environmental proceedings. The Liget is being built in the meantime. (Éva, PI, 2019)

One of the irregularities, which was a typical error in the procedures, was the total exclusion of CivilZugló from the exercise of its client rights. They were not sent documentation, they were not allowed to inspect the documents, were barred from seeing the planning documents and were not allowed to make a statement. Another very serious mistake of the authorities was that the environmental authority had a change of organisation. As a result of that change of organisation, the same person who had made the first instance decision was the one who decided on the appeal. On this basis, the previous procedures were terminated, and new procedures were opened, which had not been decided at the time of the interview. The lawyer said that "even under the rules they have developed, they cannot conduct a proper procedure". She claimed that the project could not be blocked by legal means in plain sight[71]. She believed it was the determined civil opposition that could cause further delays.

According to the lawyer, the legislative environment was a complete reversal of pre-2010 constitutional principles. On the one hand, the requirements that are in force today for any other construction project in Hungary – how much can be built, how high, what environmental and archaeological considerations need to be examined – have been repealed by the legislation here,

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[70] The lawyer explained that there is a difference between civil courts and administrative courts in the Hungarian legal system. In the case of civil courts, independence has been greatly eroded in recent years. However, in the case of administrative courts, there are still traces of independence and in most cases a fair judgement has been delivered. At the same time as the legislation is designed to allow the park to be built on, it is not actually possible to prevent construction from taking place. However, it is very important to draw attention to these procedural irregularities and to try to challenge them within the limits of the law.

[71] One building – the Transport Museum – had its planning permission withdrawn. But that was because the builder had another design made because he realised that, based on the original plans, it would not have accommodated the vehicles on display.

so that the conditions imposed on the project are much simpler and much less conditional. On the other hand, by declaring the project a priority issue for the national economy by the government, the authorities issue permits in violation of these otherwise very soft rules.

Inspection of 7,000 trees

Another activist, who is a retired biology teacher that I interviewed and who runs her own Facebook page about the park, cooperated with the Ligetvédők in order to check the trees registered by Városliget Zrt. and compared the map with reality and examined every single tree in the park that was shown on the map. On this basis, they took the initiative to correct the errors on the map, as they came to the conclusion that many trees were not marked on the map or were marked incorrectly[72]. The first tree map published identified 5,000 trees in the park, and this was challenged by activists on the basis of a database they had compiled. The project management then issued another tree map, which showed that there were 7,000 trees in the park, of which 300 had already been felled. However, it still contained errors, such as not recording the tree lines, the Rondo circle or the small trees. This is still problematic, for example, because it cannot be proved later that there was a tree line in a particular place, because the official documentation issued does not say that there was a tree line, but that 70 separate sycamores were cut from 4-5 plots. The latest tree register could not be effectively challenged.

Results of the monitoring activities

Activists believe that every single critical voice, every revelation, legal victory, obstruction of harmful processes, instance of informing the citizens mattered. In addition, without civilians documenting violations of the law and initiating legal action, the project would have caused much greater damage to the park. The offending atrocities, such as infringement proceedings, criminal proceedings, and the physical violence against the Ligetvédő movement encouraged a number of public figures to retreat from behind the project who initially supported the idea.

In addition, the actors of the movement see that their presence stimulated the establishment of many other local environmental movements, acting as a kind of catalyst for the local green movements in Hungary. Many turn to them if they detect that authorities are preparing to cut down trees somewhere and civilians want to prevent it or investigate the circumstances. Furthermore, one of the key topics of the 2019 municipal elections in Budapest was green

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[72] For example, invasive trees that grow from seed and need to be eradicated were listed as valuable trees, while valuable trees were designated as weed trees.

politics. The civil environmental movements in Budapest, including the Ligetvédők movement, have laid out a 25-point "green minimum statement" describing what was expected of future mayors in the field of environmental protection. The elected mayor – Gergely Karácsony – signed this declaration even during the election campaign, in addition to promising to stop the Liget project, and did not begin construction of buildings that have not yet begun. So far, it seems that he can keep his promises, and the Hungarian Innovation House, the National Gallery, and the Városliget Children's Theater, which had not been started, will not be built.

According to the managers of the Liget project, the movement had no effect on the final outcome of the project. At most they could only slow down and hinder the work while causing material and financial damage. On the other hand, according to the new city management of Budapest, the movement played a very important role in raising awareness and making the protection of the park a priority both in the city and even nationally. However, in terms of cooperation, due to the grassroot characteristics and different ideological and conceptual differences of the movement, it could not influence the processes at the official levels.

5.2.2.2. Monitoring activities of the authorities

However, not only the movement, but also the authorities monitored everything, and in the age of monitory democracy, they also had several technologies in their hands that they could use. An example of this is that during the protests, security guards made video recordings and identified people based on them. They used the images and videos shared by the Ligetvédők as well to accuse people with group rioting. One activist, who was accused, recounted that she could have been accused because of appearing in such a video and her personal identity was revealed by the police with the help of Facebook.

In addition, several activists highlighted in connection with the Liget project that the layout of the park as a result of the developments suggests to them that the aim of the project is to create an orderly and transparent park where there can be no opaque jungle-like parts. In doing so, the power wants to create a space where everything can be monitored. In this way, they take away the experience of true nature with its wide roads, paving stones, and truncated trees. The reorganisation of the park spaces by the project, therefore, strengthens the creation of controllable and monitorable spaces. Some parts of the park, for example, have already been equipped with surveillance cameras.

5.3 Conclusions

In this chapter, I examined the Ligetvédők movement from a comparative perspective in a non-democratic context. The movement was compared to the Gezi Park movement in Turkey and the Trees movement in Vietnam. I studied the activities of the movements in relation to their operation in the "age of upgraded authoritarianism" and what the use of social media meant for their functioning. First of all, social media was a very important mobilising structure for movements, where activists could organise their activities relatively easily, quickly and freely, and also inform the public about the most important events and the information they had found out. In this sense, they fulfilled the two functions of civil society described by Paffenholz and Spurk (2006): advocating and engaging in public and monitoring accountability. I summarise the further implications of the comparison in the final conclusion.

Regarding the monitoring function, Keane's (2013) theory of monitory democracy provided the theoretical framework and the stories told by the Ligetvédő activists gave the empirical experience of how and with what results control can be achieved in an oppressive system. I have given several concrete examples of the activities of the Ligetvédők movement to show how they were able to control the works, irregularities and building permits related to the project. In that they completed their monitoring role by supervising, monitoring and documenting the constructions. They also strengthened the environmental action in Budapest and nationally by showing how to stand up for their local environment. Nevertheless, neither the local district councils nor the new city administration have taken the initiative to make good use of the documentation, the evidence of irregularities collected by the movement and have not started to process them systematically. By processing these materials by authorities and fighting for the real consequences of the cases, the monitoring activities of the movement could really be fulfilled.

6 Conclusions

The main objective of my thesis was threefold. Firstly, to provide a case study about the strategies, narratives and impact of the movement. Secondly, to explore and understand how the contemporary Hungarian political context has influenced the functioning, narrative and strategy of the movement. Thirdly, to understand how the movement relates to some similar environmental movements of the past and present, and what are the main links with these movements.

Regarding answering the main research question – that is how and with what results the Ligetvédők movement has been working and operating within the Hungarian political context? – other sub-research questions needed to be answered. Accordingly, each chapter of the thesis has been designed to answer these sub-questions.

In the second chapter, I explained the historical context in which the Hungarian environmental and green movements can be placed. To do so, I had to go back to the time before the regime change in 1989, when the Soviet repressive regime determined the life not of Hungary alone, but of the whole of the CEE region. The regional interconnectedness was also reflected in environmental protection. The Soviet megalomania and unsustainable economic system contributed greatly to the spectacular and invisible destruction of the environment in the region. However, the system did not allow for open criticism of the powers that be. The issue of the environment, on the other hand, was one of the topics that could be discussed relatively openly, and it became the issue through which the movements in several countries of the region channelled their grievances against the regime. In Hungary, the protest against the Gabčíkovo-Nagymaros dam became the cause for which the Danube Circle was able to mobilise broad sections of the population. Protests and civil society movements in the region on environmental issues contributed to the weakening of the Soviet regime, but as the literature shows, the role of civil society in overthrowing the regime is in most cases exaggerated. After the rise of the movements in the 1980s, there were fewer and fewer movements active in the 1990s, and grassroots movements were replaced by professional NGOs. Meanwhile, the unsustainable socialist economic model was replaced in most post-Soviet countries by the economic model of capitalism based on promoting consumption and economic growth, resulting in steadily pushing back environmental protection into the background.

In the third and fourth chapters, I turned to the concrete case of the Ligetvédők movement and the Liget project, which has been one of the most high-profile cases of the last decade in Hungary. The case includes the specifics of the changes of the Hungarian political context – namely the construction of an illiberal political system since 2010 – while it shows the challenges and struggles of an environmental and civil movement. I presented how the Ligetvédők movement organised itself, what kind of strategy and communication strategy and stories the movement has had during the different periods of the project. Moreover, I described the political context of the case.

In doing so, I examined the framing processes of the movement. I studied the three core framing tasks in the meaning-making process of the movement: the diagnostic, prognostic and motivational frames (Snow & Benford, 1988). Several diagnostic frames emerged within the movement which were intended to highlight the source of the problem and those who could be considered enemies of the Liget project. One approach was based on the injustice arising from the local impact of the project, the other based on the frustration arising from the national political situation, while the criticism of capitalism has also emerged. The main response of the movement to the prognostic frame was to build a community and defend the park. The main strategic element of the movement was non-violent resistance in the protection of the park. By community building, the movement also fulfilled an important civil society function Paffenholz & Spurk, 2006). Regarding the motivational frame, the movement emphasised that the protection of the park was a shared responsibility and wanted to involve as many people as possible.

However, the movement has been steadily weakened by both external and internal processes. The presence of very different social groups within the movement divided the community into three groups along ideological and conceptual fault lines. One group was best characterised by a far-left mindset and activists living on the margins of society, while the other group was the more moderate civilian population, and the third group was the vegans, who after a while left the movement.

At the same time, a kind of communication war has evolved between the movement and the project management. The movement carried several frames: an environmental frame, a radical left frame, and a more moderate civic frame thematising the 'right to the city'. In addition, the political framing of the project became an integral part of the communication of the movement. The confluence of these frames created the ecopolitical master frame, which for a short period

of time resulted in the frame resonance with the experiences of broad social groups. As a result, the movement could successfully mobilise large masses on two occasions.

Nevertheless, the counter-frames developed by the Városliget Ltd. were successful in weakening the environmental and 'right to city' frames of the movement. Moreover, there was a conscious strategy to discredit the movement. In that way, project management and the government could weaken the credibility of the frames of the movement. In addition, the specificities of the political system and the scarcity of political opportunity structures in the country made it even more difficult for the movement to mobilise effectively. This deteriorated further during the 2018 parliamentary elections, resulting in the movement's activists closing their camps. The 2019 municipal elections somewhat broadened the political opportunity structure, but the issue of park protection remained largely in the hands of politicians.

In any case, the movement has played a major role in raising awareness about the protection of trees and green areas in general, and in setting an example to other local environmental movements of how to stand up for their own environment.

Overall, the conclusions described can be linked to three civil society functions defined by Paffenholz and Spurk (2006): to build community, advocate and engage in public communication and monitor accountability. In terms of community-building, the Ligetvédők movement was able to function as a real community for a while, but in the long term they could not manage the differences and conflicts within the movement. For advocating and engaging in public communication, the communication team of the movement has done a lot. They have tried to make their arguments known to the public online and offline and to expose the communication tricks of the Liget project. They have made conscious use of their press contacts and social media, but in the long term, due to a lack of financial and human resources, this has been less and less of an effort. Regarding the monitoring function, the theory of monitory democracy provided the theoretical framework to show how the Ligetvédők movement was able to control the works, irregularities and building permits related to the project. In a sense, they completed their monitoring role by supervising, monitoring and documenting the constructions. The information, documentation, evidence and experience they have gathered has not, however, been exhaustively utilised to date to hold the project legally accountable. In the future, the systematisation and legal use of these materials and photos would make the work of activists effectively channelled and well-utilised.

This thesis as a case study gives a thorough picture of the functioning of the Ligetvédők movement and the characteristics of the Hungarian illiberal system. However, the issues raised in this thesis may require further research. Although I had the opportunity to talk to many park users during the fieldwork, due to the limited scope of the thesis, the research did not cover their perception of the Ligetvédők movement and the Liget project. However, this would be important to get a more complete picture of how park users see the role of the movement in defending the park, and what arguments they have for and against the project. This could give important feedback for the movement on how their frames have resonated with the opinion of the public. In addition, while the thesis touched on different aspects of communication, it mainly looked at it from a strategic point of view. The critical discourse analysis and text-linguistic analysis of the communication of the movement and the project can shed light on further important correlations. Furthermore, in order to map the possibilities and limitations of the Hungarian civil and green movements, it could be useful to compare and analyse the Ligetvédők movement with other movements from the country taking into account recent political events and the environmental policy of the Fidesz. Additionally, as Covid-19 has defined everything in the last 1.5 years, the pandemic measures have forced many new forms of mobilisation on the movement scene. Studying these is also an urgent matter.

Environmental movements in authoritarian countries: Need for a comparative perspective

Although the thesis did not use the methodology of comparison, the placement of the Ligetvédők movement in the historical and present contexts enriches the understanding of the operation and role of the movement. In the fifth chapter, I looked at how other similar movements operated in similar non-democratic political environments through the example of the Gezi Park movement (Turkey) and the Trees movement (Vietnam). I studied the activities of the movements and their use of social media in the "age of upgraded authoritarianism". Lessons learned from the past and best practices from the present can be instructive for movements. All this can strengthen the connection between the movements. The Ligetvédők movement, for example, has also discovered parallels between the case of the Városliget and the Gezi Park. They organised a discussion in 2017 to which a Gezi Park activist was invited.

The main findings and connections of the current study are summarised in the following table:

Table 1: Comparison of the environmental movements studied in the thesis

	Environmental movements in the Soviet era (1980s)	Environmental movements in the "age of upgraded authoritarianism"		
		Ligetvédők movement (Hungary)	*Gezi park movement* (Turkey)	*Trees movement* (Vietnam)
political system in which the movements operated	authoritarianism	illiberal democracy	electoral authoritarianism	authoritarianism
political opportunity structures (POS)	- weakening political power - slowly but steadily opening POS: more freedom to access to politics and associations	- decreasing POS (especially after the elections in 2018) - slightly wider POS after the municipal elections in 2019	- decreasing POS - increasing authoritarian tendencies	- already very narrow POS - increasing authoritarian tendencies
freedom of speech and expression / media system	- limited - alternative media - "second public" - government propaganda	- getting more limited - distorted media system - increasing government propaganda - social media is completely free	- getting more limited - distorted media system - government propaganda - social media is free	- strictly limited - strong government propaganda - social media is partly free
socio-economic system	socialist planned economy	capitalist hybrid / neoliberal economy	capitalism neoliberal elements	socialist-oriented market economy
type of the movements	grassroots movements around local cases	grassroots urban social and environmental movements		
goals of the movements	- raising awareness of local environmental issues - putting pressure on authorities - expressing frustrations and grievances against the system	- "right to the city" - protest against social injustices - protest against environmental destruction - expressing frustrations and grievances against the government	- "right to the city" - "fight against authoritarianism" → open protest against the government and Erdoğan	- "right to the city" - protest against environmental destruction - protest against directly the project and the city administration - criticise the government only indirectly
operation of the movements	- mostly controlled by leaders or strong personalities	- participatory democracy - no leadership	- horizontal / diffuse - no leadership	- horizonal / diffuse - no leadership
strategy of the movements	- organising popular protests	- non-violent resistance - occupy the park	- non-violent resistance - occupy the park	- creative, non-violent actions
mobilising structure	- alternative media - second public	- personal network - social media	- social media	- social media
role of the social media	not applicable	- advocate and engage in public communication - build community - coordination of the movement - weakens the movement in the long run - it cannot balance fully the unequal power relations - not efficient in building representation capacity		

strengths and successes of the movements	- mass mobilisation - strong leadership - contributed to the disintegration of the weakening system - later on, the leading personalities achieve a significant role in the political or scientific life	- mobilisation online and offline - monitor accountability - perseverance - raising awareness of the environmental issues - raising awareness of ecopolitics - bringing together different social groups - setting an example for other environmental movements	- mass mobilisation online and offline - thematisation of authoritarianism - bringing together different social groups - drawing attention to the environmental problems - strengthening local residents' movements - turned the Taksim Square to a symbolic space - preventing building a shopping mall	- mass mobilisation → after three month the government cancelled the project - use of social media opened the political space for public participation in urban governance - bringing together different social groups
weaknesses and failures of the movements	- short period of success - the issue of environment environmental could not remain an important topic in the long run	- short period of success in protesting - heterogeneity became disadvantageous - diffuse leadership - not having a unified standpoint - different goals - cannot build an effective negotiating position - the movement could not stop the project	- short period existence of the movement - heterogeneity became disadvantageous - diffuse leadership - no concrete goals - cannot build an effective negotiating position - could not bring about significant political change	- the movement could not survive for a long time - could not bring about significant political change

As the table above shows, a comparison of environmental movements in authoritarian regimes can reveal important correlations. Among other things, the cases suggest that in movements operating under varying degrees of oppressive political regimes, issues that can be linked to the environment are often brought to the fore and other grievances that can be linked to that political regime. Hence, environmental movements can play an important role in questioning the legitimacy of regimes indirectly and can be a way of seeking freedom in repressive regimes. Or, as the case of Gezi Park shows, they can even turn into open anti-government demonstrations for local environmental causes. However, this happens in different ways, depending on the local cultural, social and political context, as authoritarian and hybrid regimes also exercise power in very different ways. Whereas in the 1980s protests took place in a weakening regime, today's movements operate in regimes that use increasingly sophisticated means to consolidate and maintain their hegemony.

The comparison also revealed weaknesses and limitations of the contemporary movements. For example, although social media works well as a mobilising structure and in coordinating the internal workings movement, it has as many setbacks. In the long run the movement cannot effectively communicate and compete with the communication machinery and counter-frames of power. Social media cannot fully compensate for unequal power relations. The party with more power and resources can still use the benefits of social media more effectively. In the case of Vietnam, however, the use of social media has been effective in terms of broadening the public discourse on the issue and forcing the authorities to respond. In the long run, in turn, there has been no significant change in the way the regime operates. The government has continued to try to control social media ever since and imprison those who openly criticise the state on social media (Vietnam: Freedom in the World 2021 Country Report, n.d.).

In addition, the horizontal and diffuse functioning of movements can sooner or later lead to their disintegration. Thus, in the absence of a unified position and purpose, they become fragmented and unable to act as a credible actor against the powers that be. Whereas in the case of the environmental movements before the regime change, prominent figures such as Havel were associated with the movements, later they were able to take on a political role.

To sum up, for the growing literature on the movements of authoritarian and hybrid regimes, it is fruitful to explore the similarities and differences between the movements. In this way, we can understand the broader issues related to the functioning of the movements. The findings are not only useful for increasing common knowledge, but also provide provide valuable insights for the activists of different movements that they can use in their operations.

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Appendix I: List of Informants

Ligetvédők sample: members of the Ligetvédők movement

Coded name	Age	Occupation
Károly*	50-65 years old	unemployed
Andrea*	50-65 years old	intellectual
György	50-65 years old	intellectual
Boglárka*	35-49 years old	manual worker
Csaba	35-49 years old	intellectual
Zalán	35-49 years old	intellectual
Viktória	50-65 years old	intellectual
Benjamin	20-34 years old	artist
Laura	20-34 years old	student
Dávid	20-34 years old	entrepreneur
Erzsébet	66-75 years old	retired
Péter	50-65 years old	intellectual
Annamari	35-49 years old	stay at home mum
Zsanett*	20-34 years old	intellectual

* I conducted the follow-up interviews too with these informants.

Ligetvédők sample: sympathiser with the movement / have done movement-related activity

- Éva (coded name): architecture lawyer
- László (coded name): criminal lawyer
- András Lányi: researcher in Hungarian environmental and political ecology and an active player in green politics and green movements

City planners sample

- Zoltán Rostás – Strategic Director of the Liget Project

- Sándor Guba – Communication Officer of the Liget Project

- Gábor Kerpel-Fronius – Deputy Mayor for Transparency, Participation, Innovation and Sustainable Development, Municipality of Budapest

City planners sample: background interviews

- János Kendernay – vice-president of the Hungarian green party (Politics Can Be Different – Lehet Más a Politika [LMP])

- István (coded name) – an independent urban planning expert

Appendix II: Interview guides

<u>**LIGETVÉDŐK SAMPLE**</u>

Introduction	
- attunement - getting to know each other - getting to know the communication style of the interviewee	- meet at the agreed place and time - short introductions - chat a bit about general topics (travel, weather, etc.)
- further attunement for the subject of the interview	- closing to the subject of the meeting - introduce the purpose of the interview based on the information letter
	- ask permission for audio record
Questioning part	

warm up questions	What do you think about environmental protection in general?
	
	Personal story of joining to the 'Liget Protectors'
	  - When?
	  - Why?
	  - How?
	  - What was the motivation?

understanding better the structure of the movement	Current role in the movement
	  - Why he/she took that position?
	  - What are her/his concrete tasks?

understanding the principles of the movement	Main principles of joining
	  - What are the main principles which determine who can join?
	  - Are there criterias of joining?

get to know the everyday operation	- Are there regular meetings? - How they organize the work?

get to know the main actions of the movement according to them	What were the biggest milestones of the movement?
	  - first: listing them
	  - and them describe the details: when, what, what kind of outcomes they had?

get to know the main aims of the movement according to them	How would you describe the main aims of the movement?

get to know the strategy of their actions	Working strategy
	  - What are the main concepts behind your actions?
	  - How do you organize your actions?

	- Who attends on your events / demonstrations? - How do you follow up the effect of your actions?
get to know their communication strategy	Communication strategy - What kind of communication platform do you use? - At what intervals and what content you post? - How would you describe the style of the communication of the movement? - What are the main aims of the communication of the movement?
get to know how they think about the impact and success of the movement	Success and failures - What do you consider the most impactful and successful action of the movement? - What do you consider the less impactful and successful action of the movement?
get to know how they perceive the movement	Own perception - What do you think about the role of the movement in the city? - What do you think about the role of the movement regarding the Liget Project? - What do you think, why is it important to have a movement like this in the city? - What do you think, what are the main values of the movement? - How would you describe the supporters of the movement and the reasons why they support the movement? What values would you attach to these people? - How would you describe the opponents of the movement and the reasons why they do not like the movement? What values would you attach to these people
get to know the future plans	Future of the movement - How do you imagine the future of the movement? - What are the potential directions in which the movement can develop? - What are the main focuses of the movement's work in the future?
Final	
make sure that all the important information he/she told me	Do you have any further information to share or something you forget and would be important to mention?
	Thank you for the interview!
	Agree on to keep in touch during the research period in case something important action will happen

	FOLLOW UP QUESTIONS AFTER THE MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS (October, 2019)
warm up questions	role in the movement before the municipal elections - Why he/she took that position? - What are her/his concrete tasks? role in the movement after the municipal elections - Why he/she took that position? - What are her/his concrete task?
perception about the opportunities	- How did you see the opportunities before the municipal election to stop the project? - Why did you think that?
understanding the beginning of the cooperation	- How the cooperation has started with the new city administration? - What were the hopes at the beginning of the work?
get to know the everyday contact	- Are there regular meetings? - How do you communicate with the new administration? - How they organize the common work?
get to know the main actions of the movement after the municipal elections	- What were the main actions and events that they organize? - Which ones were together with the new city administration? - How did they go?
get to know the main aims of the movement after the municipal elections	How would you describe the main aims of the movement after the municipal elections?
get to know their communication strategy	Communication strategy - At what intervals and what content you post? - What are the most popular contents recently?
get to know how they perceive the movement after the municipal elections	Own perception - What do you think about the role of the movement in the city since 2019 November?
get to know the future plans	Future of the movement - How do you imagine the future of the movement? - What are the potential directions in which the movement can develop? - What are the main focus of the movement's work in the future?
make sure that all the important information he/she told me	Do you have any further information to share or something you forget and would be important to mention?
	Thank you for the interview!

CITY PLANNERS SAMPLE

Introduction	
- attunement - getting to know each other a bit - getting to know the temperament of the interviewee - getting to know the communication style of the interviewee	- meet at the agreed place and time - short introductions - chat a bit about general topics (travel, weather, etc.)
further attunement for the subject of the interview	- closing to the subject of the meeting - introduce the purpose of the interview based on the information letter
	- ask permission for audio record
Questioning part	
warm up questions	Current role in the Liget Project - What are her/his tasks?

understanding better the project	Current status of the Liget Project
	  - What is the main goal of the project?
	  - What kind of constructions are happening now?
	  - When is the deadline of them?
	  - What the project did for protecting the environment?

understanding the communication of the project	- How the image of the project was developed? - Which online and offline channels the project use for communication?

get to know the first impressions	First impressions
	  - When did you hear about the Ligetvédők for the first time?
	  - What were your first impression / thoughts?

get to know their viewpoint about what they consider important activities by the Ligetvédők	Milestones
	  - What do you think, what were the most important milestones in the activity of the Ligetvédők?
	  - Why?

get to know their opinion about them	Evaluate - How do you evaluate these actions?
get to know the main aims of the movement according to them	Main aims - How would you describe the main aims of the movement?

get to know their opinion about them	Attached values
	  - What kind of values would you attach to the Ligetvédők?
	  - Why?

get to know if they take their actions into considerations	- Do you follow their work regularly?
	  - If so, why?
	  - And how?

get to know their opinion about the communication of the Ligetvédők	Communication - Do you know any of their online platform? - If so, what do you think about them? - How would you evaluate their communication style?
get to know how they think about the impact and success of the movement	Success and failures - What do you consider the most impactful and successful action of the movement? - What do you consider the less impactful and successful action of the movement?
get to know how they perceive the movement	Perceptions - What do you think about the role of the movement in the city? - What do you think about the role of the movement regarding the Liget Project? - What do you think, is it important to have a movement like this in the city? Why / why not? - How would you describe the supporters of the movement and the reasons why they support the movement? - What values would you attach to these people? - How would you describe the opponents of the movement and the reasons why they do not like the movement? - What values would you attach to these people?
	Future of the movement - How do you imagine the future of the movement? - What are the potential directions in which the movement can develop?
Final	
make sure that all the important information he/she told me	Do you have any further information to share or something you forget and would be important to mention
	Thank you for the interview!

Appendix III: List of codes

Ligetvédők movement

Physical protection of the park
- demonstrations
- eviction of the camp
- Transport Museum
- non-violent techniques
- participatory democracy

Communication
- online communication
- social media strategy
- communication working group
- narratives about the park
- organising events

Conflicts
- homeless people
- politics
- finances
- veganism
- views on the movement

Law
- lawfulness of the project
- lawfulness eviction
- building permits
- reactions of the police
- reactions of the security service

Right to city
- Liget park forums
- use of the park
- lack of green areas in Budapest
- common responsibility
- creating tourist attraction
- loss of recreational function

Project
- green propaganda
  - tree replanting
  - branding
  - PR articles
  - awards
  - visual plans
- corruption
- consumption in the park
- tourism
- public polls

Politics
- reaction of the authorities
- project-related political decision
- parliamentary elections
- municipality elections
- illiberal tendencies
- public sentiment

Social injustice
- gentrification
- pushing out the poor
- promoting consumption
- decrease green areas
- reduction of community spaces

Monitoring activities
- documentation of the construction
- documentation of the irregularities
- asbestos scandal
- checking of the tree map
- controlled park use
- reduction of freely accessible park areas

Appendix IV: Information sheets and consent forms

Note: These are the original information sheet and consent form which contain the old title, research question and deadline. The information sheet and consent form translated into Hungarian. I handed over to the interviewees and was signed by each participant.

LIGETVÉDŐK SAMPLE

Are you interested in taking part in the research project

"Can an environmental movement stop a construction?

- The strategy of the Liget Protectors and perceptions about them regarding the Liget Project in Budapest"?

This is an inquiry about participation in a research project where the main purpose is to explore and understand the strategy of the Liget Protectors and the people's perception of that environmental movement. Moreover, I would like to understand how the broader political and cultural context influence the work of the movement and people's perceptions. In this letter we will give you information about the purpose of the project and what your participation will involve.

Purpose of the project

The purpose of my master thesis is to explore how that environmental movement has developed and what extent has become an factor of the Liget project.

Main research question: What kind of role and effects have the environmental movement of the Liget Protectors' presence, strategy and activities on the outcomes of the Liget Project in Budapest?

During my project, I would like to describe the broader political and cultural context of the case. The political and cultural context include that I would like to understand the role of the Városliget in Budapest and then I would like to understand and describe the main aspects of the Liget Project. Moreover, I would like to analyze the activity, strategy and the communication of the Ligetvédők to explore the specifics of the case. Finally, I would like to understand local people's and the city planners perception of the movement. By understanding the different aspects of the Liget Project and the movement of the Ligetvédők, we can understand better how an environmental movement can be successful and effective or unsuccessful and ineffective in today's Hungary.

Who is responsible for the research project?

University of Oslo is the institution responsible for the project.

Why are you being asked to participate?

As you are part of the movement of the Ligetvédők, you and your thoughts can be an important part of the project. I have selected the "experts of Ligetvédők" sample to conduct interviews because the members who are also experts on the field own the most relevant knowledge and information regarding the Liget Project and the Ligetvédők. During my fieldwork, I conduct 3-5 interviews in that sample.
I have received your contact information from the official contact person of the movement.

What does participation involve for you?

If you chose to take part in the project, this will involve that I will conduct an interview with you. It will take approx. 1 hour 40 minutes. The interview includes questions about your personal story of joining to the 'Ligetvédők', daily operations, most important milestones, communication strategy, own perception and future plans of the movement. Your answers will be recorded by dictaphone.
I will also analyze your online platforms and I will ask local people and city planners as well to get to know their perceptions about the movement. It will be information about how they valuate and judge the work of the movement, what they think what were the biggest milestones of the movement and what is their opinion about them, how they evaluate your communication style. I will record the interview and will take notes.

Participation is voluntary

Participation in the project is voluntary. If you chose to participate, you can withdraw your consent at any time without giving a reason. All information about you will then be made anonymous. There will be no negative consequences for you if you chose not to participate or later decide to withdraw.

Your personal privacy – how we will store and use your personal data

We will only use your personal data for the purpose(s) specified in this information letter. We will process your personal data confidentially and in accordance with data protection legislation (the General Data Protection Regulation and Personal Data Act).
● Master students at the University of Oslo – Development, Environment and Cultural Changes Master Program
● Supervisor at the University of Oslo – Development, Environment and Cultural Changes Master Program
● I will replace your name and contact details with a code. The list of names, contact details and respective codes will be stored separately from the rest of the collected data as I will store them on a research server.
● However, as your occupation, position and tasks could be mentioned in the thesis, you could be recognizable. Personal information that could be published: occupation, position, tasks at Ligetvédők, personal political opinion, philosophical beliefs, criminal convictions and offences.

What will happen to your personal data at the end of the research project?

The project is scheduled to end 20.05.2020.
At the end of the project, the personal data will be anonymised and stored permanently for potential future research. The collected personal data will be stored internal to the data controller with restricted access so only I – Alexandra Pálóczi – will have an access to it.

Your rights

So long as you can be identified in the collected data, you have the right to:
- access the personal data that is being processed about you
- request that your personal data is deleted
- request that incorrect personal data about you is corrected/rectified
- receive a copy of your personal data (data portability), and
- send a complaint to the Data Protection Officer or The Norwegian Data Protection Authority regarding the processing of your personal data

What gives us the right to process your personal data?

We will process your personal data based on your consent.
Based on an agreement with University of Oslo, NSD – The Norwegian Centre for Research Data AS has assessed that the processing of personal data in this project is in accordance with data protection legislation.

Where can I find out more?

If you have questions about the project, or want to exercise your rights, contact:
- Student, Alexandra Pálóczi via paloczi.alexandra@gmail.com
- Supervisor, Nina Witoszek , at University of Oslo via nina.witoszek@sum.uio.no
- Our Data Protection Officer: Maren Magnus Voll via personvernombud@uio.no
- NSD – The Norwegian Centre for Research Data AS, by email: (personverntjenester@nsd.no) or by telephone: +47 55 58 21 17.

Yours sincerely,

Alexandra Pálóczi

Project responsible, Student

I have received and understood information about the project "Can an environmental movement stop a construction? - The strategy of the Liget Protectors and perceptions about them regarding the Liget Project in Budapest"? and have been given the opportunity to ask questions. I give consent:

- ☐ to participate in an interview
- ☐ for information about me/myself to be published in a way that I can be recognised

I give consent for my personal data to be processed until the end date of the project, approx. 20.05.2020.

(Signed by participant, date)

Are you interested in taking part in the research project

"Can an environmental movement stop a construction?

- The strategy of the Liget Protectors and perceptions about them regarding the Liget Project in Budapest"?

This is an inquiry about participation in a research project where the main purpose is to explore and understand the Liget Project, the strategy of the Liget Protectors and the people's perception of that environmental movement. Moreover, I would like to understand how the broader political and cultural context influence the work of the movement and people's perceptions. In this letter we will give you information about the purpose of the project and what your participation will involve.

Purpose of the project

The purpose of my master thesis is to explore how the project and the environmental movement have developed and what extent the movement has become a factor of the Liget project.

<u>Main research question:</u> What kind of role and effects have the environmental movement of the Liget Protectors'presence, strategy and activities on the outcomes of the Liget Project in Budapest?

During my project, I would like to describe the broader political and cultural context of the case. The political and cultural context include that I would like to understand the role of the Városliget in Budapest and then I would like to understand and describe the main aspects of the Liget Project. Moreover, I would like to analyze the activity, strategy and the communication of the Ligetvédők to explore the specifics of the case. Finally, I would like to understand local people's and the city planners perception of the movement. By understanding the different aspects of the Liget Project and the movement of the Ligetvédők, we can understand better how an environmental movement can be successful and effective or unsuccessful and ineffective in today's Hungary.

Who is responsible for the research project?

University of Oslo is the institution responsible for the project.

Why are you being asked to participate?

As you are one the city planner who is responsible for the Liget Project, you and your thoughts can be an important part of my master thesis. I have selected the "city planners of the Liget Project" sample to conduct interviews because as an expert on the field, you own the most relevant knowledge and information regarding the Liget Project and the Ligetvédők. During my fieldwork, I conduct 3-5 interviews in that sample.
I have received your contact information from the official website of the Liget Project.

What does participation involve for you?

If you chose to take part in the project, this will involve that I will conduct an interview with you. It will take approx. 1 hour and 10 minutes. The interview includes questions about general information about the Liget Project and opinion about the Ligetvédők environmental movement. Your answers will be recorded by dictaphone.
I will also analyze your online platforms of the Ligetvédők and I will ask local people and the Ligetvédők as well to get to know their perceptions about the movement. It will be information about how they valuate and judge the project and the work of the movement, what they think what were the biggest milestones of them and what is their opinion about them. I will record the interview and will take notes.

Participation is voluntary
Participation in the project is voluntary. If you chose to participate, you can withdraw your consent at any time without giving a reason. All information about you will then be made anonymous. There will be no negative consequences for you if you chose not to participate or later decide to withdraw.

Your personal privacy – how we will store and use your personal data
We will only use your personal data for the purpose(s) specified in this information letter. We will process your personal data confidentially and in accordance with data protection legislation (the General Data Protection Regulation and Personal Data Act).

- Master students at the University of Oslo – Development, Environment and Cultural Changes Master Program
- Supervisor at the University of Oslo – Development, Environment and Cultural Changes Master Program
- I will replace your name and contact details with a code. The list of names, contact details and respective codes will be stored separately from the rest of the collected data as I will store them on a research server.
- However, as your occupation, position and tasks could be mentioned in the thesis, you could be recognizable. Personal information that could be published: occupation, position, tasks as a city planner, personal political opinion, philosophical beliefs.

What will happen to your personal data at the end of the research project?

The project is scheduled to end 20.05.2020.
At the end of the project, the personal data will be anonymised and stored permanently for potential future research. The collected personal data will be stored internal to the data controller with restricted access so only I – Alexandra Pálóczi – will have an access to it.

Your rights
So long as you can be identified in the collected data, you have the right to:
- access the personal data that is being processed about you

- request that your personal data is deleted
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Yours sincerely,

Alexandra Pálóczi
Project responsible, Student

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(Signed by participant, date)