

Viktor Orbán's Hungary: Orbunist Politics and Philosophy from a Historical Perspective

Gellért Rajcsányi

The parliamentary election of 2010 opened a new era in the politics of Hungary. Initially, many were surprised by the introduction of the System of National Cooperation through a declaration¹ right after the election, but now, after eight years, one can really see that there is indeed a new era, a new system in Hungary. However, one can discuss^{2, 3} whether it is really a system of national *cooperation* or not.

Not everyone is capable of creating a new political system or era. To do that, real political talent is needed. Viktor Orbán has political talent. After defeating—or surviving—his earlier political rivals, now, at the young age of 54, he is the grand old statesman of Hungarian politics. It is also not by chance that Mr. Orbán is now a well-known player⁴ at the European level of politics either.

The last hundred years were a historic helter-skelter for the Hungarian nation.⁵ Thriving years, crisis, collapse, rising from the ruins and ashes—all of these happened to the Hungarians (and to the neighbouring nations) in the 20th century, and not just once. Unlike the Britons or Scandinavians, the people of Central Europe had to start their political and economic system, and their own lives and careers, all over, again and again, even within one generation's lifetime.

Those who wanted to be in politics in these countries had to deal with all the hopes, fears and tensions of these societies that had accumulated in the past century. Although there are many hopes and many fears, Mr. Orbán is a master of dealing with these issues.

I am going to attempt to explain it all in this article.

¹ "Declaration and programme of the System of National Cooperation", http://www-archiv.parlament.hu/irom39/00047/00047_e.pdf.

² "Populists in government? Hungary's 'system of national cooperation'," <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/13510347.2015.1076214>.

³ "Hungary: the Fidesz project," <http://www.batory.org.pl/upload/files/pdf/Aspen%20EN.pdf>.

⁴ "Viktor Orbán—the conservative subversive," <https://www.politico.eu/list/politico-28/viktor-orban/>.

⁵ "Ignác Romsics: Hungary in the twentieth century," http://www.atlantiszkiado.hu/konyv.php?ID_konyvek=12632.

A THOUSAND YEARS OF NATIONAL *KULTURKAMPF*

Around the year 1000, a century after the nomadic Hungarian tribes entered and settled down in the Pannonian Basin, the Hungarian suzerain's son was baptised and took the name Stephen, and began to organise a European feudal Christian state from the covenant of tribes.⁶ For this he used Western help by inviting priests, scientists, craftsmen, soldiers and knights into the country from the West. After this, rebellions against the establishment of a Western state lasted for decades.

The fight between Stephen and his main opponent, the pagan Koppány, is a perpetual symbol of the dividedness of Hungarian politics, culture and society, a symbol of the endless fight between “Western” and “Eastern” ways of thinking.

The disagreement between pro-West (at first Christian, feudal, then later pro-Habsburg, liberal, then progressive and leftist or Western conservative) and nationalist or pro-East (patriotic, nationalist and perhaps sympathising with Eastern powers) figures and movements has been constantly present ever since, albeit under different names with different emphases. This struggle has determined Hungary's fate in the last two decades as well. For anyone who wants to enter Hungarian politics and be successful, it is inevitable that he or she will have to face these ruptures and take a standpoint in the debates about them, while he or she might even use them in policymaking or just in everyday superficial political communication.

THE HELTER-SKELTER OF 20TH-CENTURY HUNGARIAN HISTORY

The 20th century, which has the most effect on today's Hungarians, was rife with the fights of pro-West and pro-East politicians and movements. In fact, there had never been such dramatic swings to either of the two sides in Hungarian history in the previous 100 years. In the Austro-Hungarian Empire's peaceful period, pro-system conservatives and liberals faced nationalists fighting for independence. Between 1918 and 1920 pro-Soviet communists and other leftist fought against and were finally defeated by the reactionary, conservative and semi-authoritarian system of Governor Miklós Horthy. During the 25-year governance of Miklós Horthy the mainly pro-West but fundamentally conservative system took tough action against the seditious far right and radical leftist forces.⁷

⁶ “Stephen I of Hungary,” https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stephen_I_of_Hungary.

⁷ “Horthy—the Admiral on the Endless Sea of Hungarian Self-Delusion,” http://hungarianglobe.mandiner.hu/cikk/20120618_horthy_the_admiral_on_the_endless_sea_of_hungarian_self_delusion.

In the Second World War, Hungary eventually became an ally of Nazi Germany, which led the country to a national catastrophe and destruction by the end of the war. The country was occupied by the Soviets as enemy territory and communists from Moscow wended up even the remains of what still existed of the independent, Western-style civil society in Hungary. The 1956 revolution was an uprising against the eastern tyranny, but the Soviets and their political proxy, János Kádár, defeated it.⁸

Between 1956 and 1989, generations of Hungarians, millions of people, grew up under the Kádarian era, including Viktor Orbán. After the initial victimisations, Kádár very slowly began to loosen the strictness of the regime. Gradual welfare provisions, beginning in the 1960s, led to a slow increase in the general living standard, which stabilised Hungarian society. This was the so-called “goulash communism”.⁹ The majority of people accepted the mono-party system in exchange for relative wellbeing and calculable-yet-slow prosperity growth. People could have a car, television and even a weekend cottage. After a period of time, they could even travel abroad every few years and even to the West. Later, Southern fruits, followed by Western clothing brands and electronic gadgets began to appear on the shelves of stores.

People had secure yet very slightly productive jobs. There were functioning healthcare and educational systems as well. It was possible to plan for a future, to get ahead in life, and, in the 1980s, even to be an individual entrepreneur, which was unique in the Eastern Bloc at that time. These memories from the 1970s and 1980s still live very vividly in the minds of millions of Hungarian people—including Viktor Orbán—from the young generations to the currently eldest Hungarians.

It is not by accident that I write about the phenomena mentioned above in such detail. If we want to understand current Hungarian events, we have to consider this sort of social imprinting.

Viktor Orbán, like many Hungarians—including the author of this article—was born in this Kádarian Hungary. His family's story and also his early personal career's are rather typical stories of development in the Kádár era even compared to the rest of Hungarians'.

FORMATION YEARS IN THE KÁDÁR ERA

Orbán was born in 1963 in the Transdanubian town of Székesfehérvár, only 60 kilometres from Budapest. He spent his early childhood in the nearby villages

⁸ “Hungarian revolution of 1956,” <https://www.britannica.com/event/Hungarian-Revolution-1956>.

⁹ “Salami Reconstructed: ‘Goulash Communism’ and Political Culture in Hungary,” https://www.jstor.org/stable/20174994?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents.

Alcsútdoboz and Felcsút, the latter being still his country base.¹⁰ According to available biographical data, Orbán's grandfather arrived as a poor man to this village at the time of the Second World War and settled down in a house at the end of the village. Viktor Orbán's father, Győző, grew up as a country boy, just like his son who later became Prime Minister. Győző, who was known as a strict man, strived for success from poverty. He attained more and more important positions in the local farmers' co-operative and finally the family could move to Székesfehérvár.

The Orbán family continued to prosper in the 1980s and could even afford to send the young Viktor to study law at university in the capital city of Budapest. Orbán, coming from a rural background, was first exposed to metropolitan high culture, civil intellectual life, "liberal" lifestyle and all its circumstances at Budapest as a young adult. Orbán himself talked about these experiences in interviews at the early stage of his career.

These personal information are not at all irrelevant for understanding Orbánism. Viktor Orbán's family went through an incredibly significant leap of living standard and wellbeing in the Kádár era that most probably would have been unimaginable in the previous historic eras of Hungary. The story of the Orbán family is from a certain point of view the success story of the Kádár era—even if the young Orbán eventually came to realise the unbearable restrictions of the mono-party system of the socialist dictatorship.

An intellectually challenging atmosphere, equilibrating between opportunities and restrictions, was what typified the Bibó István College¹¹ of the Eötvös Loránd University in the 1980s.

Orbán received no ideological upbringing at home but he was interested and open and picked up the ideology of contemporary liberalism from his professors. He was confident and impatient and soon became a doctrinaire liberal and a critic of the declining socialist system. He studied the Polish Solidarity movement, which later turned out to be helpful when organising Fidesz. He also went to study the history of British liberal philosophy at the University of Oxford with a scholarship that was provided by the foundation of György Soros, who is today the arch-enemy of Viktor Orbán and the Fidesz party.¹²

Orbán and his fellow members formed FIDESZ in 1988. The abbreviation stands for Alliance of Young Democrats and the party identified itself as an alternative radical liberal force. The prominent figures of the party were young, agile, well-prepared lawyers, who immediately started to attack the monolithic legal system of the regime.

¹⁰ "Viktor Orbán," https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Viktor_Orb%C3%A1n.

¹¹ "Bibó István College," <http://bibo.elte.hu/rolunk/bibo-istvan-college/>.

¹² "A useful punching bag': why Hungary's Viktor Orbán has turned on George Soros," <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/jun/22/hungary-viktor-orban-george-soros>.

THE LONG AND WINDING ROAD OF FIDESZ FROM LIBERALISM TO “POPULIST” CONSERVATISM

The death of the dictator János Kádár and the re-burial of the 1956 revolutionary Prime Minister Imre Nagy, who was sent to death by Kádár, is today part of history. Orbán, in a rather anti-communist speech at the re-burial ceremony, called upon the Soviet troops to leave the territory of Hungary. This courageous speech defines his political image even today.

The Fidesz party that first won seats in parliament in 1990 has come a long way since then.¹³ Orbán became the unquestionable leader of the party within a few years. The party had all its successes and failures, good and bad times, under his lead.

The question of how the initially liberal Orbán turned conservative, and according to some interpretations even nationalist and populist, interests Hungarians and international critics to this day.

The author of this article thinks the changes were mainly due to a personal learning and maturing process which of course was completed by Realpolitik calculations. The young and aspiring liberal Orbán naturally soon faced older liberal politicians, intellectuals and media elite who attempted to influence him in his decisions. Orbán began to leave doctrinaire liberalism behind and sought the connection with Hungarian reality and the deep flows of Hungarian history. He achieved this partially by rediscovering his country roots. Parallel to this, a cultural fight and ideological war started between the left wing liberal elite and the Orbán-led political right, and it is still unfinished today. This is the contemporary manifestation of the conflict between Western versus Eastern thinking that I have mentioned at the beginning of the article.

The Orbánian shift to the right can also be explained by the fact that in 1994 the larger liberal party SZDSZ formed a coalition with the post-communist MSZP, which was led by Gyula Horn.¹⁴

Orbán's Fidesz previously did not ally with the communist party's successors, partially due to anti-communist beliefs and partially based on political calculations. In 1994, the right wing in Hungary was in a devastated state, which created room for Fidesz to become a liberal party open to the right wing and conservative value system.

Meanwhile, a doctrinaire liberal group of leading Fidesz politicians left Fidesz to join the liberal Free Democrats who governed with the post-communist socialists. In the second half of the 1990s, new politicians emerged in Fidesz, including

¹³ “Fidesz,” <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fidesz>.

¹⁴ “Election of 1994 in historical perspective,” <http://www.jasonwittenberg.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/1994-Hungarian-Election.pdf>.

many moderate conservatives from the Hungarian countryside and other conservative, right wing urban politicians, intellectuals and personalities who found a new home after the devastating defeat of the first conservative government in 1994. This new class of politicians, having joined an established party, became more and more dependent on the personal decisions of Mr. Orbán, whose leadership in the party became unquestionable to this day. From those years on, the politics and ideology of Fidesz was exclusively shaped by Viktor Orbán (with the help of an often changing small group of advisors and campaign consultants).

Fidesz won the 1998 elections with this intellectual background and Orbán became Prime Minister at the young age of 35. This situation remained until the surprising defeat at the 2002 elections, after which again the post-communist socialists formed the government despite four years of successful Fidesz governance.

For Viktor Orbán, who basically entered politics right from university, politics is a constant learning process. Unlike many of his peers he does not win or lose by applying one and only one political recipe.

In the middle of the 1990s, he reinvented himself and his party by making a shift from a liberal ideology to a more conservative value system. In 2002, this still slightly elitist liberal-conservative “bourgeoisie” politics led to electoral defeat.¹⁵ Orbán had to rethink his politics, image and communication again in order to regain the majority of the votes.

The new solution was returning to the people, to the crowds. This is what in Fidesz circles they call becoming a people’s party¹⁶ and what critics claim is a populist change of direction.¹⁷

The main point of the three-decade-long political shifts of Orbán is that a talented, aspiring country boy with no political and ideological background meets a world explaining ideology in his most responsive years, and after many years he finds the way back to his country’s social reality and Realpolitik. He breaks out from doctrinaire liberalism to adopt conservatism, and then leaves behind the conservative elitism in favour of popular national politics and successful mass communication. These changes mean an increase in popularity, election wins, and deeper embeddedness in Hungarian reality for Viktor Orbán and his party.

¹⁵ “Like Déjà Vu All Over Again: The Hungarian Parliamentary Elections of 2002,” http://kenbenoit.net/pdfs/Benoit_2002_JCSTP.pdf.

¹⁶ “The 21st Congress of Fidesz,” http://2010-2015.miniszterelnok.hu/in_english_article/the_21st_congress_of_fidesz.

¹⁷ “In the name of the people,” https://www.policysolutions.hu/userfiles/elemzes/250/in_the_name_of_people.pdf.

THE FIDESZ AS “ORBÁNIST” MOVEMENT

After the 2002 defeat, Viktor Orbán reorganised Fidesz as a national movement. Although they were in opposition, they had an enormous political base and Orbán built networks, media and economic background for his political community. The role of Mr. Lajos Simicska, the long-time friend—and now foe—of Viktor Orbán in business was crucial in these projects.¹⁸

At the 2006 election, Viktor Orbán once again lost to the left with a very small margin, but the socialist Prime Minister of the time, Ferenc Gyurcsány's, leaked lie speech (the so-called speech of *Őszöd*)¹⁹ led to protests and street riots in the autumn of 2006. The left-liberal parties collapsed under the leadership of Gyurcsány, who clung on to power for another three years, while the radical right wing party Jobbik emerged from the crisis. In these years, only one potential governing option remained in the political, economic and social crisis: Viktor Orbán and Fidesz.

The idea of a new system had begun to unfold in Orbán's vision before 2010, even while he was expecting a landslide victory. After completely defeating the liberal and socialist powers in 2010, with Fidesz gaining a two-thirds majority in parliament, Orbán executed the new system.

The essence of this new system is the so-called central power sphere, a large centrist and stable people's party—Fidesz—that is strongly organised and rooted in Hungarian social reality. On its left, one finds the eroded remains of the small leftist and liberal parties, while the radical right wing is positioned to the far right from Fidesz. This central power is called the System of National Cooperation in Fidesz's communication.

The prefiguration of Orbán's new system can be found in Hungarian history. Such a centre-based, strongly directed governing party—the Liberal Party—governed the country for 30 years at the time of the Austro-Hungarian Empire.²⁰ A similar centrist party governed the country in the Horthy era between the two World Wars. These strong and pragmatic central parties with right and left wing opposition parties on both sides were able to create balanced and stable political periods. The majority of Hungarians bruised by historical cataclysms were willing to accept this deal for the sake of political stability. Besides the Monarchy and the Horthy era the final decades of the Kádár era were built on this deal in some sense, even if at that time there was no political plurality and capitalist system based on private property.

¹⁸ “Meet Lajos Simicska,” <https://budapestbeacon.com/meet-lajos-simicska-fideszs-enigmatic-oligarch/>.

¹⁹ “Őszöd speech,” https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/%C5%90sz%C3%B6d_speech.

²⁰ “Kalman Tisza and the Liberal Party,” <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Kalman-Tisza>.

THE FUNDAMENTS OF THE ORBÁN GOVERNMENT

The last eight years of Orbán's governance that will continue from the election of 2018 builds on patterns that are strongly fixed in Hungarian political history, social psyche and consensus.

The fundamentals of the new system are the following:

1. Strong central government that leads the country out from the pre-2010 political, social and economic crisis.
2. Government policy that aims to strengthen national sovereignty after the significant international defencelessness which came after the political changes of 1990.
3. A strong and active state which generously supports the middle class—which is considered the class that maintains the whole society—with tax benefits and family policy programmes.
4. Strict and tight yet sustainable and balanced budgetary, fiscal and monetary policies that are nothing like the previous socialist, failed economic philosophy.
5. Other heterodox (unorthodox) economic policies that differ from the neoliberal consensus, serve clear stability and sovereignty goals, and can in the end lead to a sustainable budget and economy.
6. Patriotic politics which are based on Hungarian interests, on the protection of Hungarian minorities living in the neighbouring countries and on nurturing historical pride.

The final goal of Orbánian politics is to create a stable and effective state, and to regain national sovereignty in international politics, while building a strong national economic elite and middle class in Hungary which can be the basis of a sovereign, strong country. These policies are the fundamentals of the new Orbánian politics.

As of today, Viktor Orbán has left liberalism behind; in fact, according to his own words his politics is some form of illiberal politics. As he said in his “illiberal speech” in 2014: “The new state that we are constructing in Hungary is an illiberal state, a non-liberal state. It does not reject the fundamental principles of liberalism such as freedom, and I could list a few more, but it does not make this ideology the central element of state organisation, but instead includes a different, special,

national approach.”²¹ His current politics, besides all their heterodox and populist aspects, can still be considered as classical conservative and right wing politics.

It is true that the Orbán government's concept of a strong and active state and central power is far from the ideals of the Anglo-Saxon consensus. However, we are talking about a continental country, and with the strong central power, the active state can be connected with the governing traditions of France or Germany.

Hungarian society is known for a certain *étatisme* anyway. People would rather support an active state than live with the lack of a state, or the anomy (which was the case before 2010 when—arising from the failed economic and fiscal policies and from the moral crisis of the socialist government—in some Hungarian regions, public security was in a devastated state) that many people could experience directly.

The strengthening of the state and governance is especially true for the budget policies. The national debt, which got completely out of hand between 2002 and 2010 under the social-liberal governments, has been stabilised. Deficit was also taken under control and inflation was drastically reduced. Meanwhile the government has managed to reduce unemployment by creating new jobs and introducing a community work system for the most underprivileged in society. The stabilised Hungarian economic figures were appreciated by the markets as well. Hungarian bonds are very popular and the Central Bank's basic interest rate is very low.²²

The Orbán government is even more conservative in its social ideology. They have an open Christian-Democratic world view, support the major historic churches (including the Jewish community), propagate the traditional family model and support very generously the bearing of children and families' home purchasing. They support the Hungarian minorities living abroad by helping them to keep their identity (for instance, by granting them dual citizenship). These are all important goals of the government.

EFFECTS ON THE POLITICAL SYSTEM

In the last eight years, the Orbán government has made significant changes to the Hungarian political system. Having a two-thirds majority in the parliament, the governing party was able to change the foundations of the state. In Hungary, no new constitution was adopted in 1989-1990; only the paragraphs of the Communist constitution were changed, of course, significantly, according to democratic principles. As the first two-thirds majority government, the social-liberal coalition in 1994-1998 was not able to adopt a new constitution; it was Orbán's government after

²¹ “The speech on illiberalism,” <http://www.kormany.hu/en/the-prime-minister/the-prime-minister-s-speeches/prime-minister-viktor-orban-s-speech-at-the-25th-balvanyos-summer-free-university-and-student-camp>.

²² “Hungary: economic outlook,” <https://www.focus-economics.com/countries/hungary>.

2010 that had the necessary majority for such a change. However, they did it. The new constitution is based on the Fundamental Law and a number of other new rules and laws on different issues. The Fundamental Law contains all the basic rules for a liberal democracy, although some conservative values (patriotism, Christianity, traditions) are listed and emphasised in its text.

The new government changed the electoral laws, although not in the way that its most ardent critics say. There is still a mixed electoral system with country-wide party lists and 106 electoral districts. This system follows the Hungarian tradition of the last 30 years. This is a small step towards a more majoritarian electoral system that helps the strongest party to have a stable majority in the parliament. It is true that Fidesz was and still is the strongest party in Hungary, but those who say that this new system makes Fidesz unbeatable should know that in all three by-elections between 2014 and 2018, it was Fidesz that lost and the opposition parties that won. This is why Fidesz lost its two-thirds majority in the parliament.

The author of this article does not believe that there is a gerrymandering problem either. The earlier electoral districts became so demographically disproportionate after more than 20 years that it was the Constitutional Court that urged the parliament to change the boundaries. The Orbán government reduced the number of districts to 106, and these districts are now more proportionate. Unlike in the United Kingdom or the United States, there are no really traditional conservative or left wing strongholds in Hungary, because the mood of voters can change often.

To put it simply: it is not the electoral system or the boundaries of the districts that prevent the opposition parties from winning elections. It is just the popularity of the current government. If they are able to get the most votes in a district, they are going to win—which was what happened in the last three by-elections.

ORBÁN AND HIS OPPONENTS: THE RACE FOR POPULARITY

Is the Orbán government populist?—one can ask this question. To answer we should first define what we mean by populism, which is not at all obvious. To my mind usually those who talk about populism are the ones who themselves have not been able to reach out to large crowds and the majority of society in a democracy.

It is certain that the Orbán government is popular and it does everything to maintain that popularity with communication and politics that are sympathetic to the majority of people. Orbán used progressive communicational tools throughout his career and now there is a whole communicational and survey machinery behind Fidesz that is extremely professional even compared to international standards. They sense every move or flow in society and they even relinquish policies that are actually in line with their principles and value system if necessary when the

majority of society disagrees. An excellent example of this was when they withdrew legislation for stores to stay closed on Sundays.²³

Politics and communication that are aimed to reach the widest audience possible are by nature simplified and the government's constant communicational campaigns and national consultations deserve to be referred to as populist. But these simplified messages address real problems that are the concerns of the majority of people. These campaigns work: Fidesz has been the most popular party in the country for twelve straight years.

Neither the leftist liberal nor the radical right wing opposition parties can do anything effective against the government's non-stop, highly active communication and agenda setting. The left wing liberal opposition is nostalgic about the pre-2010 public life and promotes policies that the majority of people had lost their faith in at the time of the financial crisis. The left, which still has many pre-2010 characters amongst their prominent figures, is no longer wanted by the majority of people.

Jobbik, the formerly radical right wing party, is currently trying to show a more moderate profile towards the voters but they are constantly confronted with their previous radical statements, which thus destroys their credibility.²⁴

In the beginning of 2018, before the parliamentary elections in April, one of the hot topics in Hungary was whether the radical right wing and liberal leftist opposition could form a united front to defeat the centrist, embedded Fidesz. After the disastrous defeat of the opposition at the 8 April 2018 election in Hungary, this weird coalition is not coming to life. Viktor Orbán once again won a stable, two-thirds majority in parliament to form his fourth government while the vast majority of Hungarian counties and cities are also led by Fidesz politicians.

As we can see from the above-mentioned phenomena, Orbán leads Hungary as the head of a strong, centrist governing party that has clear long-time goals, while the government builds on the historical and political traditions of Hungary, and works on policies that are important for and sympathetic to the majority of the Hungarian people. For creating and maintaining mass support, Mr. Orbán uses the tools of modern communication and constantly reflects on the expectations, hopes and fears of the Hungarian public. This Orbánian recipe works.

²³ "Sunday shopping returns to Hungary," <http://abouthungary.hu/blog/sunday-shopping-returns-to-hungary/>.

²⁴ "Hungarian left's far-right dilemma," <https://www.politico.eu/article/hungary-left-wing-far-right-viktor-orban-dilemma/>.

THE CHALLENGES

History teaches us that even the seemingly most stable systems can collapse unexpectedly. Viktor Orbán in 2010 got into a winning situation with his idea of a central power sphere that is still the reality of Hungarian politics. With his thirty years of experience he has been and probably will be able to balance between the two-pole opposition with the support of the majority of Hungarians. However, time moves faster in politics than in everyday life. A four-year cycle is a long time and so is eight or twelve years in government, and especially thirty years in politics. Every politician burns out once, physically and mentally, every political system begins to rust after a while, and power tends to corrupt—to refer to Lord Acton’s classic observation.

The very stable political situation can make decision makers feel overly confident at the local and country level as well. With the lack of a strong and vigilant opposition, corruption might also find its way into the system more easily. The fast and impressive enrichment of certain people at the local or national level who are close to the government and its political networks can be displeasing too. Without the presence of a strong opposition and strictly independent “watchdog” institutions, the strong concentration of power may reach a level that will not be acceptable for the Hungarian society, which otherwise usually seeks stability.

Addressing the continuous international debates concerning Hungary, and balancing between the requirements of membership in the EU and the demand to increase sovereignty are a daily responsibility for the leaders of Hungary, and it takes up a lot of intellectual capacity. Over time the governing party and people supporting it may get tired of the constant conflicts deriving from Orbán’s personal nature and politics.

If the Orbán government does not reach consolidation after this year’s election success, and if it cannot moderate its seemingly unstoppable communicational and power machinery, the new system will not reach a sustainable equilibrium and fatal mistakes can happen in the event of a new major conflict.

The decision on what direction Hungarian politics will take is again in Viktor Orbán’s hand in 2018. His personal political qualities, merits and flaws will be more important than ever in the upcoming years of politics in Hungary.

Gellért Rajcsányi is editor in chief of the Hungarian online news magazine *Mandiner.hu*. He was born in 1981, and studied law and state governance before starting to work for several newspapers after 2003. With his colleagues he founded *Mandiner.hu* in 2009 as a pro-Western, conservative and classical liberal news magazine, gathering many younger voices of Hungarian public life.