



**Department of
Political Science**

DOCTORAL THESES

for

Tibor Malkovics's Ph.D. Dissertation

“SCRATCHING EACH OTHER’S BACK?”

*An Analysis of the Network of Relations between the Radical (National)
Right
and the Hungarian “Guards”*

Supervisor:

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Budapest, 2010

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1. Theoretical introduction

1.1. Political and social background

After the democratic turn there was an emergence of *neonationalism* and *neotraditionalism* in Central and Eastern Europe, too. As a new set of phenomena, this was strongly related to the characteristics and the outcome of the transition. It entailed an emphasis on historical continuity and an urge to strengthen national identity, which gained importance especially in the newly established nation-states, due to the weak legitimacy of the new elites. Many politicians expected to gather ideological support for their political goals from extreme nationalism, which, as a result of the reinterpretation of national identities as well as political battles, motivated the reappearance of authoritarian tendencies. Although these trends seemed to become marginalized after the democratic consolidation, radicalism and extremism have remained strong in the political arena. Similarly to the history of West European right-wing radical mobilization, it was again proven that “crisis movements” are inextricably linked with the turmoil generated by social transition and the problems of modernization deriving from the need to “catch up with the West”.

According to *Sir Winston Churchill's* ironic *bon mot*, “*democracy is the worst form of government, except for all those other forms that have been tried from time to time.*” We can thus assume as well that constitutional democracy, even with all its shortcomings, is the only possible means at present to achieve high-level legitimacy. Besides, democratic processes and institutions themselves will not result in less equality and more social vulnerability. Moreover, by the beginning of the 21st century democracy has become such a strong marker of the spirit of our time that even those political parties that are openly right-wing claim to be “*national democrats*” or “*central democrats*”. Since theoretically each and every interest or ideology is free to find its organizational form in democratic regimes, the radical organizations are indeed bound to use “*real democracy*” as a catchword. In those democracies where the law allows organizations to influence the work of the government and the

parliament, as well as decision-making, the protection of rights is theoretically effective in the case of radical groups, too (as it has been pointed out on several occasions by, for example, the “hard core” of the Fall 2006 rioters and the founders of the Hungarian guards themselves). As Philippe Breton writes, “Democracy has the unique capacity ... to give space to other discourses, which are not necessarily democratic” (Breton [2000] p. 54).

As a result of this radical conditioning of “democratic” interests and needs, many researchers think that with the acceptance and strengthening of these radical claims, societies will soon get used to the idea that there is nothing wrong with violating the constitutional rights of minorities or breaking constitutional principles (see: Bayer [2002]; Decker [2003]; Betz [2004]; Cuperus [2006]). Lately, we could hear such claims not only from former members of the “new right” but also the politicians of *Jobbik – The Movement for a Better Hungary (JMMP)*, who have frequently presented their exclusionary ideology through “coded” messages. What is the most alarming about this is that if these populist ideas about “the people’s rule” are taken up by the political elite, radical rhetoric will be elevated to the level of “acceptable ideologies” and incorporated into democratic discourse. This will easily lead to the destruction of the very constitutional basis of democracy. The “*blackmailing*” effected by “national radicals” will channel political discourse in the public sphere in a way that some of their programs will become part of mainstream politics, thereby legitimizing a false notion of people’s rule based on collectivism, as well as its related political expectations.

This phenomenon is visible not only in Western Europe but in Central and Eastern Europe as well. In Hungary right-wing radicalism first emerged within the democratic parties that effected the regime change, and only later did it become an independent ideology. At the time of the democratic transition, radical factions in Hungary were formed within the legitimately operating moderate right-wing parties, which was not characteristic in Western European countries. Hungarian examples include *István Csurka* and his plebeian populist wing in the *Hungarian Democratic Forum (MDF)*, *Izabella B. Király*, who

supported skinheads (members of the *Hungarian Youth Association*), or *József Torgyán*, under whose leadership the skinhead “youth faction” within the *Independent Smallholders’ Party (FKgP)* enjoyed the party’s support.

1.2. Description of the research problem, the subject of research, the population and the observational unit

In my dissertation I map the network of relations between Hungarian right-wing (national) radicals and the national guards that have existed since 2007, and show the similarities and differences between “eastern” and “western” versions of right-wing radicalism. The results of this comparison may explain why the connection I just mentioned entails the formation of national guards (maybe with the exception of the *Italian National Guard* or the “*Black Guard*”), since in several countries of Central and Eastern Europe the rise of right-wing radicalism came with the formation of semi-legal *irregular forces*.

Hungary is in the forefront concerning the formation of these groups. Hungarian national guards were among the first ones to be formed in the summer of 2007, and in the same year the *Budapest Prosecution Service* was one of the first public authorities to apply for the dissolution of the *Hungarian Guard Association for Protection of Traditions and Culture* at the *Court of Budapest*. The prosecution service decided to submit an application for dissolution because it claimed that the Hungarian Guard broke the organizational law with its activity: its demonstrations and the public statements of its leaders qualified as discrimination and verbal violence against minorities. The lawsuit started in March 2008, and the trial was first adjourned until May, then in December, after a long trial, the guard was dissolved. An appeal was submitted right away, so the court decision became final only on July 2, 2009.

The reformulation of a legally dissolved guard movement also occurred first in Hungary, in the presence and with the assistance of the leaders of JMMP. They quoted an article of law that states that if a community (movement) does not qualify as a social organization, it can continue its activities. They argued that the organizational nature of the Hungarian Guard

does not conform to the legal definition of organizational structure, since it is not associated or connected with any association or other group that would legally qualify as an organization. Therefore, the *Hungarian Guard* was by no means the legal successor of the dissolved *Hungarian Guard Association*; consequently, it could not be accused of any illegal act which would obviously sanction the activity of the dissolved social organization. For the same reason, the active members of the organization could not be penalized for offences on grounds of a government decree that had just come into effect. Similar arguments came up in lawsuits that were started for the dissolution of other guard-like forces.

In the meantime, it could be seen on the Internet that the units commonly referred to as “guards” started to take off or “update” their websites. Thus, in the last part of my dissertation I try to prove, with the help of *network relations analysis*, that despite the obvious conspiracy concerning the “guards”, the relations both between the paramilitary organizations and the radical right-wing (national) political organizations, and between the radical organizations and extreme right-wing organizations have remained intact.

The reasons for this are the following: 1. The extreme right came to accept as authentic figures some radical right-wing politicians and activists (such as *Vona*, *Budaházy* and *Toroczka*). 2. They share an ideological basis that favors extreme nationalism, antisemitism, and racism or “xenophobia”. 3. Although in the 1990s, the strategic unity between the traditional “*national socialists*” and “*national radicals*” was broken, several new conspirative meetings were held to restore this unity. All these initiatives significantly contributed to the success of JMMP as a political party at the 2010 parliamentary elections. 4. Besides, the sporadic western Hungarist immigrant groups also urged to reestablish this alliance, calling for the support of the members and advocates of neonazi and skinhead organizations for JMMP.

Finally, on June 4, 2010, another guard named *Hungarian National Guard* was formed on the ruins of the *Hungarian Guard* [and of its splinter group called Independent Hungarian Guard (Protective Wing)], which had been

pushed into the background, with their operation made impossible, during the time of the 2010 parliamentary elections. This organization chose the design of its Árpád-striped badge on the basis of Rákóczi's flag, and its motto also referred to the Rákóczi War of Independence: *Cum Deo Pro Patria Et Libertate* (that is, *With God for the country and for liberty*).

As can be seen, Hungary is a leader in terms of reformulating national guards as well.

2. Research structure, methodology, and theses

2.1. Plurality of research methods

In my dissertation I attempted to prove the existence and operation of the network of relations between right-wing (national) radicals and the extreme right-wing, and the national guards on the basis of my quantitative empirical research and with the use of analytical methods less frequently applied in political science. My primary source of data was the Internet, the World Wide Web, and I tested my hypotheses with the empirical analysis of information obtained on the Internet.

In political science it is not unusual to apply a variety of research methods; sociological methods are often employed to study political phenomena. *Political sociology* is a *hybrid*, that is, it lies on the interdisciplinary territory of political science and sociology (see: Sartori [1969]; Dogan [2003] p. 117). Thus, political sociology combines explanations for the dimensions of social and political structures.

2.2. Structure of the dissertation

In **Chapter 1**, I first outline the theoretical introduction, then I formulate the most important hypotheses of the dissertation. After that I outline the development and changes – that is, the theoretical traditions – of my analytical method, which is network analysis. I define the concept of *Social Network Analysis (SNA)* and discuss the advantages of this method.

Next, I identify the research problem and define the subject, the population, and the observational unit of my research. In this part I also describe the process of sampling, and the method of data collection and analysis. I define the time limits of the research, and explain the area of sampling and data collection.

In the next part of the dissertation I define the terms applied in the work, and outline and discuss the relevant literature in the field. As part of **Chapter 2**, I deal with the most important terms related to the political-historical background of my topic, especially with the nature of regular and volunteer military organizations, militias, guards and other national military groups, revolting units, guerilla troops and commandoes, while in **Chapter 3** I explain the terms of neoconservatism and “the new right”, right-wing radicalism, right-wing (national) radical trends and extreme right.

In **Chapter 4**, I give an overview of guard-type organizations in the framework of a “west-east” dimension. The goal of this historical overview is to give a comparative analysis of the characteristics of these organizations. As far as “western” regular and irregular guards are concerned, I mention the British Household Division and the Home Guard, the French Guard Nationale and the francs-tireurs (“free shooters”), the US National Guard, and various radical militias and guerilla troops from North and Latin America.

As for the Italian guards, I present a selection of organizations from the “Redshirts” to the fascios and squadros. I give an overview of German guards from the irregular troops organized after World War I to the SA and the SS, the “black Elite Guard”. I also point out the fact that the formation of auxiliary troops and the “national” Waffen-SS legions of European volunteers during World War II led to a certain “de-elitization” of the SS. Finally, I mention two contemporary examples, those of Poland and Hungary, where some historical aspects explain the presence of paramilitary guards in the country. As for Hungarian guards, I give a historical overview of units formed officially, that is, within the state’s “monopoly of violence”, from the Hungarian Royal Noble Body Guard to the Republic Guard Regiment; and also discuss in

detail a selection of units formed outside the state monopoly of violence, namely, the armed force and the officers' detachments formed after "Great War", the "Scrubby Guard", and the commandoes and "guards" of the Arrow-Cross Movement.

In **Chapter 5**, I discuss the chances for the formation of contemporary irregular or illegitimate guards in the "west" and the "east". My aim here is also to point out similarities and differences between these geographical areas. As can be seen, in Western Europe there are "only" loose fronts of resistance (e.g. in Austria or contemporary Germany); in Spain and Northern Ireland, separatist terrorist groups often endanger public order with their attacks. In this respect Southern Europe is "the odd one out", since it is the only place in the "western region" where an organization similar to the Hungarian guards was formed; namely, the Italian National Guard.

Thus, the "craze of organizing guards", which motivated this dissertation, can be considered a primarily Central Eastern European phenomenon, since the illegal paramilitary units of the continent were formed in this region. The formation of the Romanian Noua Dreaptă, the civil war guards, militias and guerilla troops in Serbia and the other successor states of Yugoslavia, the Czech National Guard, the Slovenskú Pospolitost' – Národnú Stranu (SP-NS) in Slovakia, the Bulgarian National Guard, the Hungarian Guard, and its successor, the Hungarian National Guard, as well as the Hungarian National Defence Association, the National Liberation Front of Hungarian Defenders, and the Army of Outlaws shows this tendency. (With the exception of the Bulgarian and Czech National Guards, all non-Hungarian guards are anti-Hungarian, so the Hungarian Guard and its successor organizations can in effect be considered "lonely units" in the region.)

Finally, in **Chapter 6**, I analyze the network of relations between Hungarian irregular units formed outside the state monopoly of violence and the political parties, movements and organizations, as well as answer the questions raised in the hypotheses of the research. In the analysis of the network of

relations I examine the sample of the research, and identify and analyze the network relations of the sampled organizations and their web pages.

2.3. A new aspect of the research: SNA as a research method in political science

The analytical method mentioned in Chapter 1 – Social Network Analysis – can be considered a new approach in Hungarian political scientific research. But what do the terms *social network* and *Social Network Analysis* (SNA) mean? *Stanley Wasserman and Katherine Faust* [1994] give the following definition of the first term: a social network is made up of a certain number of agents and the relations between them. The agents can be individuals, organizations, companies, nations, that is, collective social units, and the relations may be defined as a set of certain types of ties. How can we define and describe these ties? According to Zsófia Kürtösi, a *tie* creates a contact between agents, which can have different kinds of content. It can entail the transfer of 1) *tangible assets* (e.g. barter, trade, gift) or 2) *non-tangible assets* (e.g. information, advice) from one agent to the other. It may also refer to 3) *biological relations* (e.g. relatives, marriage), 4) *physical connection* (e.g. road, bridge), association, group affiliation (e.g. club members, group members), or 5) *one person's valuation of another* (e.g. friendship), as well as 6) *formal relations* (e.g. authority, power) (see: Kürtösi [2002]).

The starting points of social network analysis are the patterns that can be identified within the interaction between individuals and groups. Since the characteristics of an agent (e.g. age, gender, ethnicity) may be considered constant, regardless of context, while the relations are context-specific, they can vary according to the changes in interaction. Thus, the goal of relations analysis is not only to describe characteristics but also to interpret the social-structural context. This latter aspect is what social network analysis adds to the traditional lines of characteristic-based research. The reason for this is that the pattern of the existing and missing relations between the subjects of the network forms a peculiar network structure. This also points to the central problem of network

analysis: the aim to explain the differences in the relations between the subjects within the network. As David Knoke and James H. Kuklinski write, “The structure of relations between the subjects and their situation within the network have important effects on behaviour, perception and attitude both in terms of the individual units and the whole system” (Knoke-Kuklinski [1988] p. 13, Albert-Dávid [1994]).

Therefore, SNA makes it possible to give the quantitative analysis of relations between various participants (e.g. individuals, groups, organizations, nation states). Many disciplines, such as physics, biology, psychology, sociology and political science employ this method. However, in political science, it has been rarely used, even though it is very effective for the examination of relations between political actors. Among the users of this method are Knoke, who summarized the results of two decades of political network analysis in the research of voter preferences, social movements, formal organizations, and elites in his work (Knoke [1990]). Thus, when examining social movements, the standpoint offered by network analysis may also be applicable, since it regards collective action as dependent on social context and the ties of individual actors (see: Diani-McAdam [2002]). Moreover, the method can also be effectively used in the analysis of policy networks of nation states (Knoke [1990; 1995]), as well as in the examination of supranational formations (see: Thurner-Binder [2008]).

2.4. *Theses*

The most important theses of my dissertation, which I wanted to prove empirically, are the following:

1. At the time of high-tech devices of communication (e.g. mobile phones, the Internet, email, etc.) the mechanisms of organizing political movements are now different from what they were before. Thus, this issue can be approached theoretically from the point of view of a postmodern political concept, but also from the angle of campaigning (marketing) methods provided by the structure of “4D” communication, that is, “*new media*”, and the networks of relations based on them. *Social Network Analysis* (SNA) is a

useful method for examining social movements, since it regards collective actions as dependent not only on the social context but also on the ties of individual actors. Thus, it can be applied in the analysis of both political networks and supranational political formations, as it enables the researcher to map the network of their relations, as well. With the method of SNA both the analysis of relations between political participants and the positions (centrality or marginality) of the respective actors within the network can be identified. These analyses normally give a better explanation to the phenomena related to acquiring such positions than any other available parameter, since it is not the characteristics of actors (basic parameters) but the structural situations (resources) that have a greater explanatory power in the case of such analyses.

2. According to earlier reports issued by the *National Security Office (NBH)*, the Hungarian radical (national) right-wing organizations work separately from each other: they are small, isolated groups with rivalling leaders and ideologies, so there is no danger for them to develop into a united radical political movement or organization.¹ As opposed to this, by now the small radical circles, which have been active and expanding since the fall of 2006, have formed an effective alliance, by means of common operations organized and mobilized via the Internet and mobile connections, as well as the political marketing supported by the foundation of guards and easily identifiable labels and symbols. This unity first made a shocking effect on the public at the time of the 2009 EU elections, and then in 2010, when – partly as a result of the intensive and collective right-wing strategies for the delegitimization of the government – it largely contributed to the success of *Jobbik – The Movement for a Better Hungary (JMMP)* as a political party at the parliamentary elections. (This process actually became disadvantageous for the moderate right-wing parties, as well, such as *Fidesz-KDNP*.)

3. With the analysis of the major elements of “*policy making*” – even with an examination that did *not* include all aspects – I could prove, by looking at the networks of relations between the web pages of the examined organizations, that the structural characteristics of these networks not only disqualify the statements made by *NBH* in their yearly reports but also partly suggest that radical right-wing expansion in Hungary does not necessarily adapt to the “western trends” but departs from them in certain respects. In the background of the unity between Hungarian radicals, network relations showed the

¹ See: *NBH Yearbooks 1999-2008*. <http://www.nbh.hu/bmenu7.htm>.

presence of the “prestige principle”. This might mislead the superficial observer, since at first sight it may seem that radical (national) right-wing organizations do not keep close contact with organizations more extreme than themselves; however, my Internet-based research proved that the latter (more extreme) groups like to refer to their ideological and practical cooperation in action with the former groups, and when it comes to particular demonstrations, they like to be present on their side. The reverse may not be case, which corresponds to what is written in the international literature on political science. However, with the help of *network analysis*, an intensive network of relations can be identified.

4. In Western and Central and Eastern Europe, regular and irregular guards have historical traditions. In European countries, the formation of guards related to radical parties or movements greatly depends on the particular country’s democratic traditions, fights for independence, its position as a successor state after World War I, and finally, its state socialist past as a whole. In those postcommunist countries of Central and Eastern Europe where the intermediary institutions of the civil sphere are more firmly embedded in society, and where the historical roots of independent statehood or the development of a unified nation state are stronger, guards did not form at all, or if they did, they took the form of irregular “neoconservative” or “new right-wing” paramilitary organizations, whose ties to the historical extreme right are weak. These radical organizations are more likely to find the roots of their identity in national-conservative traditions alive between the two world wars (e.g. in Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic). In other countries, such as Serbia, tradition and new conflict situations together motivated the formation of such armed forces, while in Slovakia and Bulgaria, partly in the name of neonationalism and neotraditionalism, the ideologies of these guards are much more strongly connected to “fascist phenomena” during the interwar period.

2.5. Sampling, methods of data collection and analysis: The examination of the network of relations between radical and extreme right-wing organizations

The development of the method of Social Network Analysis (SNA) is related to the institutional restructuring of sociology after World War II. Its major points can be summed up as follows: 1. The primacy of relations (connections between the members of the population under scrutiny) over attributes is postulated. 2. There is a well-established set of special terms used in the analysis. 3. The

actors – the nodes of networks – may be individual persons, but even in that case they act as representatives of organizations, events and positions. Finally, actors come into contact with each other in a *controlled* (e.g. based on sympathy) or *uncontrolled* (based on a common ideology) way.

In my dissertation, therefore, I do not present the characteristics of individual organizations, but the features of their network of relations, their *network analysis*, in order to prove the hypotheses raised in the theoretical part, that is, to indicate the positions of radical (national) right-wing and extreme right-wing parties, movements and organizations within their network of relations, as well as their centrality or marginality. It is not the characteristics of the individual actors (their basic parameters) but their structural situation (resources) that had the greater explanatory power, since, as John F. Padgett states, these resources are also the decisive factors in “*policy making*” (Padgett [1993] pp. 1259-1319).

My aim with the project was not to make a comprehensive analysis but simply to give a structural presentation of a network of relations on the basis of the web pages of radical right-wing and extreme right-wing organizations selected for the purposes of the dissertation, as well as to disprove the hypothesis according to which contemporary Hungarian extreme right-wing subcultural organizations operate “alone”, isolated from radical (national) right-wing political parties.²

A basic assumption of the research is that *the links on the examined web pages that point to other organizations also indicate existing relations between these similar organizations*. When choosing the population (e.g. radical right-wing organizations) and the observational unit (e.g. the particular web pages) I opted for the web pages because I assumed that the pages of the examined organizations are accessible for an ever growing public; moreover, the web pages clearly show the existence of horizontal relations hypothesized in the theoretical part of the dissertation.

² See: *NBH Yearbooks 1999-2008*. <http://www.nbh.hu/bmenu7.htm>.

For collecting data, I used *snowball sampling*, or *respondent-driven sampling*, which enabled me to “ask” each participant to “suggest” further available participants for the research. Thus, the most influential members of the extreme right-wing and radical (national) right-wing groups “made suggestions” for other web pages (which they considered as the most influential or powerful in their group) by creating a link to them on their own home page. As such, the data collection of the research was indeed progressing by snowball sampling. Besides, the “suggested” links were followed up on two separate tracks, and the results of the sampling were represented in a matrix.

One of the most critical points of the analysis was related to sampling. Also, I had to deal with the methodological problem of how to delineate the population to be examined. I had to choose between the *realistic* and the *nominalist approach*, and I finally decided to go for the latter: I took as my starting point the organizations mentioned in the theoretical part of the dissertation (altogether 68 organizations), and started to follow up on their links in two “waves” or tracks with the help of snowball sampling. This way a network of relations of 120 organizations was mapped. A connection was considered “a relation” if a specific home page gave a working link to another page, or if the home page obviously presented another organization in a supportive way. This unsophisticated approach enabled me only to record the direction of relations (that is, I could only check whether two organizations mutually mentioned each other on their web pages, or whether the relation was only unidirectional). This did not provide me with any information on the strength and particular content of the connection. I simply assumed that the linking entailed some kind of ideological affiliation or spiritual community. For the purposes of this dissertation, I entered only those links in my database that pointed to organizations, and excluded those that connected to news portals or personal pages (they will be the subject of a future research project). The reason for this was that I primarily aimed to present an organizational network of relations that – developed into a strategic community – could contribute to the strengthening of JMMP into a really “*new power*” at the time of the 2009 EU

elections and delegate three representatives to the European Parliament, and later 47 representatives to the Hungarian Parliament at the time of the 2010 national elections.

I used the following codes in the building of my database: 1. whether or not the web page was official; 2. in which wave of sampling the organization found its way into the database; 3. degree of legality and type of organizational form; 4. degree of radicalism; 5. nationality and place of foundation; 6. level of organization; 7. paramilitary or civil organization; 8. information on the use of arms/weapons; 9. proof of watching and guarding, and safekeeping activities at events; 10. evidence for activities related to guarding traditions and cultural legacies; and 11. proof of activities related to crisis management, maintenance of tombs, and environmental protection.

The charts of the analysis were created in the sociological-statistical computer programs *Ucinet 6.* and *SPSS 17.0.*

2.6. Time limits of the research

I started my Internet research in December 2007, a few months after the formation of the first guards. When in 2008 I compared the web pages with my database, I was surprised to see that several of these pages were terminated or suspended. Thus, I decided to attempt to prove the uninterruptedness or continuous existence of the network of relations between the radicals and the extreme right-wingers on the basis of the sample I checked again in the period starting right after the legal attempt to dissolve the Hungarian Guard Association, that is, between December 2008 and the end of August 2009. This network of existence was continuously traceable in this period, despite the legal reprisals and certain *conspirative factors* (for example, the web page of *HVIM* does not have any links; however, it may still provide interesting data for the members of the movement and those competent in reading the movement online). I also updated my database by adding the organizations founded since the time I started my research.

I had to prove the existence of those relations that I suspected were there because they had not been researched in most of the studies, even though they could give an answer to the question whether the members of former extreme groups had an effective role in the formation of the various guards that provided a legal context for organization, and in the strengthening of right-wing (national) radicalism in Hungary. In the course of my web page analysis, I found a lot of evidence to qualify these hypotheses.

In the case of the *Independent Hungarian Guard (Protective Wing)*, an example to prove the existence of these relations was when the organization participated in a demonstration together with the former leader of the *Blood and Honour Cultural Association (VBKE)*.

3. Results and new research findings

3.1. The most significant results of the research

An important result of my research is that I give a comprehensive overview of the various “guards” and irregular paramilitary forces in Europe and Hungary. Although similar units appeared during the feudal period, the reasons for the emergence of contemporary guards are rooted in modern phenomena. In the postcommunist countries as well, it is the peculiarities of democratic transitions, rather than the historical past, that led to the formation of guards.

This was partly preceded, and partly paralleled by, a process in which radical (national) right-wing groups gained power. Many of these groups in the “east” initiated the formation of armed forces. Lately, several radical right-wing parties and movements have achieved great success at the polls and gained seats in the European and national Parliaments. However, despite their loud success – or maybe exactly because of that –, European societies generally feel the need to curtail the operation of such organizations and gatherings.³

³ A Hungarian proof of this trend may come from the results of a survey made by Median Public Opinion and Market Research Institute. See: *Ki mint fél, úgy ítél - A radikális jobboldal megítélése. [Your Fears Make Your Judgements – Opinions about the Radical Right] (30 August 2007)* <http://www.median.hu/object.9eed0a8-efc2-4286-81ea-4fe22cc801af.ny>.

Another result of my research is to point out that the radical economic transformation that came with the democratic transition in Central and Eastern Europe, the blow to social and job security that characterized Western European welfare states, and the rise of radical right-wing parties uncannily resemble the processes of the interwar period, when, as a result of the profound social, political and welfare shock caused by World War I and the Great Depression, Italian fascism and German national socialism came to power. But this analogy is misleading, since the historical situation is wholly different today. Contemporary “revolutionary” tendencies emerge within a different historical context, and extremist movements lack the support of the economic elite and the major strata of the bourgeoisie, without which no party can gain exclusive political power. Moreover, as the past couple of years show, the international situation does not encourage the strengthening of these tendencies either. Right-wing radicalism is not a good option for the *moderate parties* to form a coalition with, and such attempts may also easily elicit sanctions from the European Union, as a result of which these governments might become isolated within the community of democratic states.

Current changes in the labour market are also different from the situation the cataclysmic depression caused during the interwar period. The social and political climate has also changed, and as a result, today’s “charismatic leaders” can unite extreme parties and movements only for a short while. In their political rhetoric, they like to stress their wish to build *direct democracy*, a peculiar term to actually denote *anti-democratism*, and they talk about *xenophobia* and *ethnocentrism-ethnopluralism* instead of *antisemitism*.

It is especially changes in the world of labour and economic-social crises that create a “market” for radical right and extreme right-wing ideologies. This also explains the large-scale migration of votes to radicals, as can be seen, for example, in France, Austria and Hungary. Parallel with the acknowledgement of these changes, charismatic political leaders, who mobilize people with extremist slogans, gain power in the middle of rising social *anomie*. Faith in democracy in general, and trust in politics and representative

democracy are shaken, which leads to the strengthening of *scapegoating* and of the fear of *difference*, *immigrants* and *migrant workers*. Relative impoverishment also motivates the spreading of these attitudes, further ruining social solidarity and pointing to the lack of social cohesion and positive identification. The “*double standard of meritocracy*” that radicals use to question the fairness of social hierarchies leads to a renewed impetus to racism (see: Grajczjár [2007]). Therefore, economic changes, and individual ways of experiencing and responding to these changes have contributed to the general strengthening of these attitudes, regardless of party preferences. Many people have become responsive to extremist, radical and populist slogans, which has increased sympathy for right-wing political endeavours.

Although some of the *negative motifs* of contemporary radical phenomena already emerged during the 19th century, today’s extremists like to refer to their *positive predecessors*. Such a positive predecessor in Hungary is the *National Guard (Army National Guard)* of 1948. However, the activists of JMMP, clad in their guardian and traditional horse herder uniforms, bring to life only part of the *Kuruc* and *outlaw* bravado that can be linked to the traditions of independence fights. They, however, also recall the antisocial and anti-property attitude that was characteristic of those outlaws pardoned by Franz Joseph I whose “ideology” was manifested in their gangs’ looting and robbing the population. In the case of present-day guards, this “*outlaw avenger attitude*” offers a whole range of interpretations. Their *anti-elitism*, therefore, also entails the questioning of the protection and safety of private property.

There are a number of reasons why guards and such paramilitary groups were founded in Central and Eastern Europe, which may even vary country by country. As far as the guard movement is concerned, in Hungary it was István Simicskó (KDNP), MP for Fidesz-MPSZ, former state secretary for secret services, who first proposed in 2001 the formation of a voluntary National Guard, modelled on the Army National Guard of 1848, whose members would be trained to become reserve national guards. He first suggested the name of

Auxiliary Guard Force, then *National Guard*.⁴ His proposal was also connected to the upcoming termination of compulsory recruitment in the Hungarian Army. Simicskó's idea, which was then a reaction to real challenges, was later "usurped" by Gábor Vona and JMMP in the name of national radicalism, and within a couple of months they founded several paramilitary groups that took organizational forms.

The formation of illegal paramilitary organizations, which operate outside the state monopoly of violence, had not been an unknown phenomenon in Hungary. After the democratic transition, similar "private armies" already came to operation, such as the *Hungarian National Front Line (MNA)*, led by István Györkös, which was one of the "pillars" of the *Hungarian Wing of the Hungarist Movement (HMMSZ)*. MNA was known to put a great emphasis on discipline and military training.⁵ The "soldiers" of the organization fought in the Yugoslav civil war at Vukovar and Osijek (Eszék) on the Croatian side; and their commemorations of the siege of Budapest in the Buda Castle can be regarded as military demonstrations of power. Gábor Vona and JMMP partly legalized these units by providing a legal framework of operation with their recruitment to the units. This endeavour coincided with the April 2007 plan of László Toroczka and György Budaházy to organize a "*parallel Hungary*". What was new was simply the wish to create a dynamically developing and legal organizational framework for them, different from that of the illegally operating "*guerilla troops*". For the European and national parliamentary elections, JMMP neglected ("betrayed") the guardians. The organization found itself turning more and more into a political advertisement. With its foundation, JMMP took the opportunity to attract the radical members of moderate right-wing parties, the sympathizers of former radical (national) right-wing parties, and the membership of far-right organizations that had earlier been dissolved.

⁴ Simicskó István disassociated himself with the Hungarian Guard right after its foundation. In fact, he warned everyone against organizing an "armed banderium". According to the chair of the National Security Committee, it would be unfortunate if political forces recruited guards, and if the members of extreme right-wing movements or a "new workers' militia" wanted to guard the nation according to their own standards.

⁵ This illegal organization was formerly known as the Hungarian National Socialist Task Force. Its centre is still in Bőny, and as MNA is an illegal movement, the number of its members is hard to estimate. Györkös's son, Kolos Györkös also succeeded in getting a seat in the local government of the village.

The traditional neonazi extreme right and its paramilitary units had been marginalized since the turn of the millenium. Their supporters were trying to find new organizational frameworks, “swinging” between extreme ideologies and right-wing radicalism. For them, the foundation of the Hungarian Guard was thus a way out of the dead-end street of the far-right subculture.

Therefore, the foundation of the guards was a warning sign exactly because it provided a legal framework of operation for elements that had been heavily rejected before. As such, this process started to pose a general threat to democracy. My research has also shown that the home page of the Hungarian Guard is among the most popular links of extreme right web pages.

Besides the Guard, other paramilitary organizations were also formed, such as the Nyíregyháza-based Army National Guard, and the MOVE, which soon split, and its more militant division founded the National Liberation Front of Hungarian Defenders. Among these organizations were the National Guard, and later the Carpathian Home Militia, and several other formations or so-called “traditional societies”. One of the most well-known, and maybe also the most “belligerent”, of these organizations is the Hungarian Guard.

Obviously, it is not a feeling of nostalgia for the past that primarily motivates the formation of these guards, but the problems of the present day. The predecessors of these guards were all formed as a kind of reaction to Hungary’s loss of World War I and the ensuing national catastrophe. The guards founded after the democratic transition in the countries of the region are the results of the social and existential shock that derived from the transition (and only in some exceptional cases were they the products of a new period of civil warfare, in territories lying south of Hungary).

The mobilization of right-wing (national) radicals is present in all of Central and Eastern Europe. This process includes the formation of guard-type units in many countries. In the whole of our region, there are *five basic reasons* for the organization of guards: 1. the *failure of paternalist or welfare regimes*; 2. *corruption* in privatization and state affairs; 3. *accession to the European Union* (which many think has disproved all high hopes); 4. the unsolved *problem of*

ethnic minorities' "integration into the nation"; and 5. the negative consequences of globalization.

In Europe, since the end of World War II, the legal monopoly of violence includes only the army and police force of the state, so any attempt at taking over this monopoly is prohibited by law. Thus, the European public is concerned about the reorganization of guards in our region. Their appearance recalls the nightmare of *Weimarization*, *coups d'état* and attempts at *subverting state power*, and the fear that the strengthening of political populism – the effect of which can be registered in Central and Eastern Europe – may put an end to democratic consolidation.

Before 2004 and the EU-accession, just like before Hungary's NATO-accession, the spreading of populist and radical ideologies was hindered, as the majority of Hungary's population did not want to be rid of the alternatives offered either by NATO or by the EU-integration. However, after 2004, this "hindrance" could not moderate public opinion any more. Shortly after the accession (in Hungary in the fall of 2006), radical sentiments started to become stronger. The relations between moderate political parties gradually worsened as well. Both the governmental and the economic crisis motivated the expansion of radicalism.

In my dissertation I attempted to give an *analysis of the network of relations* between the moderate right, radical right-wing and extreme right-wing organizations, and thereby show the connection between the radicals and the extremists, which remained intact despite the dissolution of the Hungarian Guard Movement. *The official home page of the Hungarian Guard was proved to be a strong node of the network*, followed by the home page of JMMP and HVIM, and even the mere examination of similarities in their relations points to a homogenous group of these organizations. Therefore, every structural aspect – in accordance with what I postulate in the theoretical part of the dissertation – constructs these organizations as central, thus having an extended network of relations, from the point of view of radical (national) right-wing and extreme right-wing web pages in my sample. Besides, as the results of my research

show, although most of the extreme right-wing organizations operate illegally, they still have contact with legal radical (national) right-wing organizations, since the extremists like to refer to them in their weblinks.

In light of the results, the research can be extended, first, to several European countries, and second, with content analysis, and data from interviews and questionnaires. These, however, must be the subject and task of another research project.

3.2. The most important new findings of the dissertation

The new aspect of the dissertation is the analysis of the social and political background and the world of relations that contextualize the foundation of guards. It shows the network of relations between right-wing (national) radicals and the extreme right, which is based on the “prestige principle”. An important new feature of the work is to emphasize the significant historical antecedents of militia-type or guard-type organizations working within or outside the state monopoly of violence, both in Europe and in Hungary. Therefore, they provide either legally or illegally coded historical messages that are still useful from the point of view of initiating the organization of national defence and auxiliary forces. This also holds true for both the historically acceptable and unacceptable organizations. In the past centuries, need, despair, fear and direct threat have often motivated people to form alliances to protect their smaller or greater communities. This was the case with the National Guard of 1848 and 1956, when there was need to keep internal order, protect the achievements of the revolution, and fight back foreign intervention with a militia-based, extended “guard”. And there was also need for the sudden transformation of these law enforcement units into armed forces in the protection of the country, which formed the basis for, or the auxiliary to, the independent national army as well as the defence of Hungary.

In both historical situations it was vital that the National Guard was organized by the legitimate, new political elite. They were built on civil courage; however, the units were not formed separately or as guerilla troops, but

were legalized by becoming directly subordinated to the leaders of the respective revolutions. It is necessary to note this, since today certain social groups make initiatives that are important from some point of view (e.g. territorial defence, crisis management, etc.), but often the way these are realized does not conform either to the expectations of the majority of the population, or to legal regulations or parliamentary decisions. Moreover, the unofficially organized guards are dedicated in terms of party politics and movement ideologies, so, exactly because of their exclusionary ideas, they do not enjoy the unanimous support of the society, as they are formed illegally and not for the protection of all the people of the nation.

Another new aspect of the work is to point out that in the case of militia-type organizations which traditionally work according to the “civil-soldier” principle, the use of the name “National Guard” – the history of which may even be traced throughout several centuries – indicates a tradition of social self-organization. It shows the historical roots, embeddedness and continuity of the particular organization, and strengthens the dedication of its members to the cause of defending the nation. In the case of today’s guards operating illegally, however, it is obvious that they do not primarily stand for such a historical legacy, but rather, the outlaw nature, the (right-wing) “revolutionary traditions” – and, variably, even the “counter-revolutionary”, usurper and racist characteristics – of post-World War I troops, guards and commandos. A significant difference between the progressive traditions of the 19th and 20th centuries and the latter organizations is that the historical national guards mentioned above were organized to ward off imminent threat to the nation, and retaliation or the desire to terrorize were not among the reasons for their mobilization.

I want to make it clear that in our region the historical situation has considerably changed in comparison with the historical context of 1848 and 1956 described above. After our accession to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the European Union, there is no imminent military threat, nor is there a revolutionary situation, although the chance for neither of these can be

totally dismissed in the long run. Nevertheless, there is surely a need for volunteer militias that are subordinated to the national army, since the regular army alone would not be able to defend the country, or only at a great cost. Since national defence is a public concern, in which the whole population has to take part (and probably many will be willing to actually take part in it), the foundation of a national guard is always a current issue, and as a rational necessity, it calls for and deserves attention. Even more so since the organization of unofficial guards also indicates there is a social need for such troops; it is another problem that this need is used by ideologically dedicated organizations for their own political purposes.

I also wish to stress that militias and guards also exist in the USA, Great Britain, and the moderate countries of Western Europe, where democracy has its historical traditions, just like in most of the neighbouring Central and Eastern European countries. Still, the foundation of yet another new paramilitary organization – especially in Central and Eastern Europe – keeps causing a stir in public opinion, especially in the neighbouring countries, some of which still consider Hungary as a *risk factor*. As many of the countries in the region have their own official “new armed forces”, the major tasks of which may be related to territorial defence, in countries where there are no units similar to the Hungarian guards, or where their operation has already been suspended by force of law, illegally organized, racist, chauvinist, and militant units obviously breed distrust.

In the military practice of Hungary’s neighbouring countries, there are official guards and militias which are rightfully dedicated to the cause of territorial self-defence. These troops, however, came to life as alternatives to regular armies and militia-based territorial defence. Thus, there is a necessary need in Hungary, too, to organize a new, militia-type armed unit for the support of the Hungarian Defence Forces, which, as opposed to the guards organized by right-wing (national) radicals, is firmly embedded in the society, enjoys wide

social support, and causes no diplomatic friction with the neighbouring countries.⁶

This practice has long been in place in non-neighbouring countries. The most well-known example is the *US National Guard*, which differs from European and similarly structured armed forces in many historical and practical respects, but a firm basis for its social support, besides patriotism, is the multilevel support system that American guards enjoy today. Further interesting examples include the Scandinavian (Swedish) model, and the militias in the Baltic states, which were also organized on the basis of the Swedish model. Of course, these national guards were formed for concrete situations and perception of threat, and involve a large part of the population even today. Their basic principle is the concept of total defence, which they are meant to provide as auxiliary forces to the regular army.

European national guards are usually subordinated to the Ministry of Defence, but in many countries they work under the supervision of a separate headquarters in times of peace. They generally show historical rootedness and continuity, in most of the cases from the time of their foundation. Territorial defence is normally their top priority task. The training of such forces is thus more complicated than that of regular armies, partly because their basic characteristics are voluntary service, patriotic conditioning, and large-scale social support, since they serve a common cause. Therefore, national guards and similar organizations tend to have the support of the whole society, either in crisis management tasks or defence operations, as shown, for example, in Sweden, where the guard is supported by clubs and other kinds of social activist groups.

In my dissertation I also emphasize that, as a result of a switch to professional and volunteer armies, a section of the society which is ready to get armed is no longer convinced about the army's ability to protect the country.

⁶ After the submission of my dissertation, it was announced that the first reserve volunteers, who would serve as defenders and safeguards nationwide, were to enter service on 1 January 2011. These units would defend 57 military bases and other territories in place of civil defenders and guards. About 2000 reserve volunteers were to enter service at the beginning of 2011. See: "Szolgálatba léptek az önkéntes katonák" ["Volunteers Enter Service"], *MTI*, 2 January 2011, Sunday, *HírExtra*. <http://www.hirextra.hu/2011/01/02/szolgalatba-leptek-az-onkent-es-katonak/>.

(The professional army, even taken together with its reserve forces, makes up just a fraction of the country's adult population that can be armed in time of war.) In some social groups, however, interest in weaponry and the handling of weapons is still prevailing. (This, of course, is but one of the reasons for the foundation of illegal guards.) Thus, many are right to think that people's motivation to protect the country should not be wasted, it must be maintained, and this maintenance is better to be done within an official framework, rather than outside the state monopoly of violence, in the form of paramilitary, irregular troops, or under the influence of radical ideologies. No doubt some of the population still thinks it is necessary to receive a minimum amount of military training, which is vital in extreme situations where military skills are needed for national defence. However, these attitudes are also easy to use and abuse for political purposes.

With official support and regional cooperation, these endeavours may lead to the commencement of a peace process among Central and Eastern European societies, and could marginalize the dissident ambitions of Central and Eastern European political extremists. The cause of national defence would also be served much better by the formation of an unpolitical or "supra-political" organization than by a biased, politically dedicated, radical and internationally discarded guard.

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