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GOD, HOMELAND, FAMILY.
“Traditional family” as the antithesis of gender in Hungary

Faculty of Social Sciences

Master's thesis

January 2024

ABSTRACT

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Master's thesis
Tampere University
Master's Programme in Social Science Research

Gender as a social construct and a scientific concept has become a central notion in public discourse, in the academia and in right-wing politics as well. Through the right-wing political discourse about gender, the so-called “traditional family” stands as a main opposer of a claimed “gender ideology” and as the last pillar of “normal” society. This above-mentioned phenomenon can be identified globally, mostly in right-wing populist political discourses, where the term gender works as a floating signifier, while the term “traditional family” functions as a guarantee of normality and sanity.

This thesis first aims to focus on the construction of the “traditional family” and its role in the right-wing gender discourse of Hungary, specifically in the interviews given by the Hungarian Prime Minister, Viktor Orbán. Secondly, it focuses on who are constructed as the “others”, enemies present in the given discourse, analyzing how these enemies are framed and gendered. This thesis analyzes interviews with the Hungarian Prime Minister, Viktor Orbán between 2014 and 2022, his 3rd and 4th governmental period. The data includes 53 interviews and were analyzed with the methodological toolkit of Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis.

The results indicate that the notion of “gender” and “traditional family” are used together in the analyzed discourse, both of concepts serves the purpose of reinforcing certain kind of ideology related to gender. Moreover, the analyzed data demonstrates, that several types of “enemies” could be identified as the opposers of “traditional family”, such as “gender”, “LGBTQ”, and “immigration”.

Keywords: gender, traditional family, LGBTQ, immigration, feminist critical discourse analysis, Hungary, right-wing populism

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1. Introduction

Recently, there has been growing interest in gender in politics, although the term was present in the academia and in social discourse for a long time. Many researchers have studied gender as a concept within right-wing populist parties in the EU in general (Berthet 2022, Kantola & Miller 2021), and in Central and Eastern Europe in particular (Grzebalska & Pető 2018, Szikra 2014, Krekó & Enyedi 2018, Sayan-Cengiz 2021, Pells 2018, Kováts 2018). All these aforementioned studies have focused on the politics itself and its communication about gender, the linked notions such as traditional family, feminism, and illiberalism. In addition, they have pointed out the connection between populist politics, gender and the notion of “traditional family”.

Gender as a social construct and scientific concept has been open to different interpretations, in the 2010s it was highly emphasized in some European countries in the field of politics and in public discourse as well. On prevalent interpretation the government may have an influence on it, but the ways of understanding it are always multifarious. In the center and eastern-European countries such as Poland, where right-wing populism (RWP) has gained significant support, gender as concept and as social construction is used as the primary enemy of the nation and the so-called “traditional family” (Kováts 2018, 2017).

Since the establishment of the second Orbán government in 2010, the demonization of what has been termed as “gender-ideology” has risen in Hungary as well. During this time gender and so-called “gender ideology” started to be introduced in governmental and public discourse, in contrary to the previous period, when the debate about gender was not present in this above-mentioned discourse. In addition, the Catholic Church has occupied a significant role, in constructing the enemy of Hungarian society, namely constructing “gender ideology” and waging a war against it (Pető & Kováts, 2017).

It is not just in politics and in mainstream discourse that gender has become the dominant theme in Hungary since 2010 but in academia as well. Many scholars have shown how the Hungarian government's discourse about gender – frames feminism and LGBTQ rights issues unfavorably. (Pells 2018, Kováts 2020). Moreover, Pető and Kováts (2017) have argued, that the government started to establish and introduce policies and laws, which had unfavorable influence on gender equality and the position of sexual minorities. Many anti-gender campaigns ran in the past decade which tended to frame gender and the “gender ideology” as the opposite of the “traditional family” and its values.

In the past 12 years under the leadership of the Fidesz-KDNP right-wing coalition led by Orbán, the media's power relations have changed as well. Public media became fully restructured and controlled by the government, and many independent media outlets were also bought by governmental friendly companies. Many independent radios and news portals ceased to operate with fewer and fewer counter-arguments to the government's narrative being presented as a result (Bodoky, 2019).

In 2022, Fidesz won the majority of the votes again in the parliamentary election, thereby giving Viktor Orbán and his government the chance to continue their governance and create additional political discourse that serves their politics and ideologies.

In my thesis, I will analyze the political discourse of the Hungarian prime minister, Viktor Orbán through his interviews given to the state-owned Kossuth Radio. I will focus on how he constructs gender, feminism, sexual and gender minorities and immigration as threats to the “traditional family” which, in turn, he constructs as the pillar of Hungarian nation. My data covers eight years starting from the third Orbán government in 2014, when immigration and anti-gender discourses started to become visible and took power in public and political discourse, until 2022 – when the fourth Orbán governmental period has ended.

2. Gender and its projection to “traditional family”

In this chapter, I focus on the main concepts like gender and sex division, gender understanding and the role of the “traditional family”. Additionally, I will tackle gender as a social construction and its presence in everyday life. Furthermore, I will review the research background and situation of politics and gender, also transformation in understanding gender, where the “gender ideology” emerged as one of the greatest enemies of “traditional family”.

2.1. Gender transformation(s)

In the past two decades, gender as a global phenomenon started to be more politicized by the right-wing populists while anti-gender discourses were used as a political tool. In these discourses gender and “gender ideology” is understood as the opposite of the “traditional family”, as something unnatural, as a fear of changes, of unknown which led to the loss of the national identity and to the strengthening of the West, its “values” and ideas (Graff 2022 pp.1-14, Kováts 2018, Vida & Bellè 2022). In the middle of the 20th century, Simone de Beauvoir in *The Second Sex* (1949) declared that gender roles and norms are constructed by the given society. She argued that because gender is socially constructed, all the related formal and informal norms can be changed, therefore these are not fixed, nor inherently eternal. These forms of social construction are applicable to the “traditional family” as well, namely, it is determined by structures defined by society. Beauvoir’s famous statement that “*one is not born, but rather becomes, a woman*”, was and remains a determining starting point for gender studies, for gender itself as a social concept and for other related social issues as well.

The literature on gender and the different approaches in research areas are very diverse. Mikkola (2022) argues that it is important to highlight that gender and sex do not exist side by side, they carry different meanings, and one’s sex does not have a direct understanding of one’s gender. Moreover, the division of gender, sex and the discourses around these, plays an important role in women's oppression. As Beauvoir's (1949) writing refers to it as well, by the distinction of sex and gender, societal roles, norms, and attitudes became questionable, and gender as a social concept is divided from sex as biological determinism.

Gender itself can be analyzed from a more comprehensive perspective within a societal structure concerning other social phenomena. It contains socially constructed roles and norms and stands in connection with femininity and masculinity (Connell, 2015). It also can be analyzed through the social construction of gender relations, such as the gendered family, gendered classroom, gendered workplaces, gendered media and representations, gendered bodies and intimacies, and also the relationship of gender and politics (Kimmel & Aronson 2011). Gender division is present in almost every field of society. Women are a substantial part of the workforce, are located lower in the hierarchy, and their work is more connected to nursing, caring or teaching. Furthermore, women are the ones who carry out unpaid domestic work, and a higher percentage of them have part-time work. This gender division is reflected in the gender pay gap as well, and also in women's presence in politics and other higher positions. The phenomena of this above-mentioned division, strengthened the existence of the gendered societal structure, which is inherently patriarchal and repressive. Connell (2015) states that: *“Gender is the structure of social relations that centers on the reproductive arena and the set of practices that bring reproductive distinctions between bodies into social processes”*. Given how tightly gender, reproduction and care are interwoven, it is not surprising that discourses related to family, a central location of reproduction and care, are harnessed in anti-gender campaigns of right-wing populists and anti-gender movements.

In gender politics, the most progressive movement which tackled inequality issues and injustices has been feminism. Different lines of feminism raised several issues, like women's presence in politics, working-class women's rights, and issues, and LGBTQ rights, and they have also raised the question of gendered violence as a political issue (Connell, 2015). It can also be argued that gender is a societal structure itself which causes inequalities. Nonetheless, different approaches examine gender roles, and norms in policies and institutions, challenge the unequal structures and biological determinism, and also questions the injustices and inequalities which were caused by patriarchal power structures (Kantola & Lombardo 2017).

Contemporary research literature uses the term gender and anti-gender not just to refer to roles and norms but to a wider understanding, defining policies, movements, and ideologies. It could be understood as an “empty signifier”, so as the anti-gender or the so-called “gender-ideology”, that functions as a mobilizing tool as well (Graff 2022 pp.15-37, Graff 2021, Kováts 2018, Kováts & Pöim 2015).

As it is visible from the above-mentioned literature about the development and the change of the term of gender, the women question is crucial, what is the role of women, how it should be “placed” and “understood” in a societal structure, how to change the roles and norms imposed on women, including the place that she holds in a family. Also, the question of how gender is understood and how gender relations are organized, are equally important. Moreover, current gender studies are questioning the gender binary and the heteronormative order, and also challenging how we understand family as a concept. More importantly a fight against the oppression of women, in a way that by challenging “traditions”, also means challenging the structure and legitimacy of patriarchal or “traditional” order of the society.

2.2. Anti-gender discourses and movements

Anti-gender discourses are often highlighting the importance of community, “traditional family”, and its values, and not the least the importance of motherhood. “Traditional families” in these above-mentioned discourses are referred to as a heteronormative concept and its thought to consist of a heteronormative couple and their biological children, and several conservative values are attached to it, and as the last remaining lampion which is able to protect nations against the “gender ideology” which tends to deconstruct the “normativity” (Graff, 2022 pp. 38-67, Băluță & Tufiş 2023).

Graff (2022, pp. 15–37) argues that gender is opposed as a concept, as an ideology, as a theory, and also as a social and political practice, by right-wing conservatism. Anti-gender discourses and campaigns are present and are a leading concept in the Catholic church too. Anti-gender discourses construct the understanding of gender as a socially constructed concept as a danger to children, families and reproduction. Right-wing politicians are using gender rhetoric to succeed in banning abortion, erasing sex education in schools, discrediting gender studies, and also to prevent the introduction of marriage equality, to avoid the ratification of the Istanbul Convention (Arato & Cohen, 2017). It is used also in politics to demonize the opposition and strengthen the power of the government. The demonization of “gender” and the fight against it, in Spain started in 2004 (Alonso & Espinosa-Fajardo, 2021), in France in 2012 (Stambolis-Ruhstorfer & Josselin, 2017), in Italy in 2016 (Garbagnoli, 2017), in 2017 Poland (Graff & Korolczuk, 2022) and also in Hungary (Pető & Kováts, 2017) – all these campaigns argued in favour of “traditional family” as a model for organizing gender relationship and society, and also for child protection. Also, in Hungary and Poland family policies are created as an

answer to the so-called “gender ideology” and are advocated by the Catholic church. In Poland to defend the Christian Culture and to expand the ideologies of right-wing populism and ultra-conservatism a network has been established, namely the Tradition, Family, and Property (Datta, 2019), which aim to promote an ultraconservative view on sexual and reproductive rights, fighting against abortion rights. These kinds of networks are present all across Europe. Transnational actors such as the World Congress of Families (Kalm & Meeuwisse, 2020), tend to popularize pro-life ideas, anti-LGBT, anti-gender, and so-called pro-family movements. All these networks are like right-wing conservative political channels (Evolvi, 2023).

The Catholic Church has a huge role in the mobilization against “gender ideology”. The opposition to gender in the Vatican already started in 1990, when the Vatican opposed the inclusion of the term “gender” in UN conferences (Buss, 1998). Since then, for conservative anti-gender groups, gender has become a synonym for the civilization of death, the deconstruction of women, and the opposition between good and bad. Between conservative Catholics groups, gender becomes a term that is equal to moral degeneracy and modernism. As is visible in anti-LGBTQ demonstrations and in the anti-gender demonstrations, the cross is a symbol as the protesters are in the opinion that they are facing the devil who needs to be exorcized. Gender is the enemy of the church, and the traditional understanding of family becomes “Holy”, an idea with which it is possible to fight “gender” and the so-called “gender-ideology”. Furthermore, those who are seen to promote “gender ideology” are also seen as having abandoned their faith (Graff, 2022). This form of religious anti-genderism combined with right-wing populism is present in Poland and Hungary as well. The Catholic church oppose women's reproductive rights and they are making links between family planning, LGBTQ rights, feminism and decline of the “traditional family”, which are thought to threat the whole Christian civilization. One of the main aims of the Catholic Church regarding the gender issue is to defend the “traditional families” and their values (Graff 2022, Grzebalska & Pető 2018).

The so-called gender ideology is constructed as a major threat to Europe and European nations, by proponents of the anti-gender movement. In France, the *La Manif pour Tous* anti-gender movement aimed to oppose same-sex marriage, described it as “destructive, obscurantist, anti-social, anti-popular and anti-natural” (Stambolis-Ruhstorfer & Josselin, 2017), while in 2013 people were protesting in the name of the „natural family”. In Germany, anti-gender discourse received a lot of publicity as well, for example, in 2014 parents opposed sex education in school – with the motto of „Marriage and Family!

Stop gender ideology and sexualization of our children” (Villa, 2017). In the Czech Republic, a group of women, named Angry Mothers, were “fighting” against feminism, genderism, and immigration (Graff, 2022 pp.114-137). All the above-mentioned anti-gender movements present children as in danger because of the so-called gender ideology and by it, legitimizing their power. The conservative “Christian leaders” present themselves as the ones who save our children and families and their values from evil influence. Anti-gender discourses and movements are fused with politics and the church but it also has visibility in policies.

Political anti-gender discourse constructs a major binary position between those who belong to “us” – the local population and “innocent” politicians – and “them”, the enemy, who are constructed as consisting of the “elite”, who is corrupt and promote the “gender ideology”. The “us” is fused with the church and anti-gender movements, who are calling for action in the name of the protection of the Christian values and “traditional family”, (Graff, 2022. 92-113) by these discourses activate collective emotions, such as resentment, fear or nostalgia. The so-called “gender ideology” is presented as a global and liberal force against which the resistance is local that also includes national sovereignty and also economic autonomy.

2.3. The role of the “traditional family” in anti-gender discourse

As it is visible from the literature above, the presence and usage of the concept of “traditional family”, plays an important role in anti-gender discourses all around the world. For the mostly right-wing and or conservative political parties, the social, political discourses have the construct of traditional family at their core, used as a skeleton and being dressed up with, for example, anti-genderism, anti-immigration and so on.

The question arises: what is the role of the family in such anti-gender discourses. Family can be understood not just as an institution, and policies but as an ideology as well (Linnamäki 2022, Hernández & Bámaca-Colbert 2016), which means that the “value” of the family is way higher than the “value” of the individuals that are inside of this unit, highlights the distinguished importance of the family relations not just regarding the individuals, but the society as well. The role of the “traditional family” in these anti-gender discourses is to be present as an irreproachable institution, which is also superior compared to other social institutions, and also serve as an example to those.

Framing specific form of family life as morally superior, and taking the position of protecting this family model, can be used as a tool to legitimize one's power and to pave way for specific policies. For example, the Hungarian government introduced a seven point family-policy package in 2019, that included favorable loan options to newly married couples who are planning to have children, the preferential loans extension for purchasing family home, different kinds of subsidies for family car purchases, definitive exemptions from personal income tax payments for women who have had and raised at least four children, the creation of new creche places, the possibility for grandparents to look after the children instead of their parent. (Elemzés, 2019) As it can be seen, these policies are not available for everyone, mostly just for middle and upper-middle class families, and do not affect the question of poverty, exploitation, marginalization or parity. From this example we can see what family means for right-wing populist politicians, how many people are excluded, based on their family type and social status.

The form of the so-called "traditional family", also includes social norms and roles of the male and female members of the family. These kinds of roles decrease women's rights and renegotiate their places in society and in family. By familism, the strengthening of the idealized "traditional family" is easily achievable by placing in contrast on non-heterosexual couples, communities and other family models. "Traditional family" also aims to keep up the primary male breadwinner model that was introduced scientifically by Nancy Fraser (1994). By keeping this family model members in male dominated nuclear families where the husband supports his wife, while she is doing the unpaid, underrated domestic labour causing her economic insecurity, dependency, subordination, ergo restrengthening the patriarchal social structure.

In most countries where anti-gender discourses are present, they are mostly led by right-wing governments that are economically influenced by neoliberalism which also has an effect on the understanding of the family. In the above-mentioned paragraph I argue that the aim of the anti-gender discourse is to protect the traditional forms of the family, and by it causing many disadvantages for women. In countries where market orientation is the primary standpoint, also the understanding of the traditional family changing in a way, that also women are required to take part of the labour market while having their unpaid domestic work. This new form of women subordination by society is named *neoliberal neo-patriarchal* order (Campbell, 2014), which is an "advanced" form of male domination

fueled by neoliberalism. The “othering” of women as a part of the “traditional family” it is maintained within this new form of neo-patriarchal order.

The concept of *othering* was coined first in postcolonial theories (Spivak, 1985), and it referred to the process in which the colonizers defined themselves against the colonized ones, also marginalizing, excluding and positioning them into an inferior position. Simone de Beauvoir in her most famous and groundbreaking writing *The Second Sex* used the concept of *self* and the *other* to describe the men as a self and women as “other”. She broadened the perception of othering, concerning gender and also to social and hierarchical disparity. Beauvoir underlines that the women’s understanding of oneself is not defined by themselves but by the way men have determined them (Hughes and Witz, 1997, p.48-49). Language and power are fundamental pillars in creating oneself and the *other* as its opposer (Baumann & Gingrich, 2004). Both Spivak and Beauvoir’s interpretation of othering is based on a multilayered social differentiation and on the means of oppression and subordination. Chrenshaw’s (1989) definition of intersectionality, that has become widely applied in feminist theorizing further nuances the concept of othering by pointing out how oppression takes places through multiple axes of gender, sex, race, class, ethnicity and so on.

‘Othering’ is not present only within the discourses on “traditional family” but in a wider understanding as well. When right-wing populists use the term “traditional family”, they create a division between “us” and “them”. The “us” are the normal, the “traditional family” in opposition to “others”, that in different contexts could refer to different actors. The intersection of gender and immigration (Lennon & Alsop, 2020 pp.122-151) is used for stigmatizing immigrants in the name of protecting the “traditional family”.

3. The Hungarian case

In the following I will discuss the Hungarian case. At first, I will introduce the history of the current ruling party Fidesz, and its connection to Viktor Orbán. Moreover, I will tackle the rearranged media landscape in Hungary and its importance in political discourse, after which I will focus on the current ongoing gender discourses in Hungary, and at last, I will present the Hungarian family policies, which are playing an important role in the given discourse.

3.1. The short history of Fidesz

The history of Fidesz goes back to 1988, when in a small hall of Bibó College, Hungary, Viktor Orbán and 35 other students founded the FIDESZ (Fiatal Demokraták Szövetsége), the Alliance of Young Democrats. They have identified themselves as an independent youth organization (Lendvai, 2018, ch. 3), who gathered in the name of freedom and their commitment to democratic transformation. (Fidesz, 2020). The young law and economy students perhaps did not have any idea that they are establishing one of the most successful political parties in the current history of Hungary. In the founding document the main goal was to gather politically active, reformist and radical youth.

In 1989, at the second congress of Fidesz when the historical changes allowed it, the Alliance decided to transform the formation into a political party, so they will have the chance to participate in the upcoming free elections. During that time, Viktor Orbán has taken part of one of the Geroqe Soros' Open Society Foundation grants in Oxford. In 1990 Orbán has returned to Hungary, and at the same time his political career started to rise, at first just as a party member but later as the leader of Fidesz. In the first free parliamentary elections the party members have taken their places in the opposition, supporting and popularizing liberal economic, social and educational policies. In that oppositional time period, Fidesz's MPs also formed strong criticism regarding the nationalist and antisemitic governing parties, and their strong ties with the Catholic Church. In 1992 Fidesz joined the Liberal International and Viktor Orbán as the vice-president of the party hosted the Liberal International congress in Budapest in 1993. (Lendvai, 2018, ch. 3). In the elections of 1994 Fidesz lost the elections because of internal disputes, but four years later, in 1998, they won the election with the support of right-wing parties, and Viktor Orbán became the youngest prime minister in the history of Hungary (Lendvai, 2018, ch. 4).

Through the first Orbán government (1998 - 2002) many changes have been implemented in the political institutional background: the power of the Prime Minister's Office has been extended and it became the center of the decision-making processes, and by this, parliamentary control has been weakened. As a result of the changes, the prime minister became the main figure of political communication. Ideological changes have also appeared in this time period, liberalism has been left behind, religiousness and strong strings to Catholic and Protestant Churches has been strengthened. (Lendvai, 2018, ch. 5). In 2002, Orbán and his government lost the elections and were pushed back to opposition where Fidesz started to establish their strong and long-lasting media empire.

Starting from 2002, Fidesz has been in opposition for eight years, however, a major political event has taken place at that time. In 2006, Fidesz had the chance to build a narrative against the ruling “left wing” government, when Ferenc Gyurcsány, the actual Prime Minister gave a speech to his fellow party members, in which he stated that they were lying to their voters in the last couple of years. The speech was leaked to the public media, and Fidesz built its narrative about the current government being illegitimate (Lendvai, 2018, ch. 7). As a consequence of the leaked speech demonstrations against the government became a daily regularity. On the anniversary of the 1956 revolution, the demonstrations against the government shifted from peaceful gatherings into violent revolts. On 23th of October, the public TV headquarter was attacked: 326 civilians and 399 police officers had been injured (Lendvai, 2018, ch. 7). Until May 2009, Ferenc Gyurcsány, has kept his position as PM, while Fidesz kept strengthening their media empire (Lendvai, 2018, ch. 7). The elections of 2010 brought the second Orbán government (2010-2014), and with it a strong far-right shift in the politics of Hungary (Lendvai, 2018, ch. 8). After the second Orbán government Fidesz has continued to collect and keep the majority of the votes and governmental power in 2014, 2018 and in 2022 as well.

3.2. The rearranged media landscape in Hungary

On the 15th of March, 1989 a mass demonstration was organized in Budapest in the name of the freedom of press. The demonstrators marched to the state-run, one-sided Hungarian Television and declared that the Hungarian Media belongs to everyone (Bodoky, 2019). The co-organizer of this mass demonstration was the “Young Democrats Party” Fidesz. The demonstration was successful, the Hungarian media outlets belonged to everyone.

Based on RSF's (Reporters Without Borders) World Press Freedom Index which evaluates several categories, such as pluralism (how different opinions and positions are presented), media independence (measure that how independent they are from political, governmental, business and religious power), environment and self-censorship, legislative framework, transparency, infrastructure and abuses, in 2013 the Hungarian press freedom was ranked in the 56th. In 2020 it fell by 26 points and it "reached" the 89th place of 180 (rfs.org, 2021). These 26 points fell is the outcome of Fidesz's new media empire (Central European Press and Media Foundation), which was built over the years and in 2020 owned 476 Hungarian media outlets (Bátorfy, 2018). Before the second Orbán government, several independent editorials existed, but starting from 2010 the pro-government media empire started to swallow, acquire or dissolve many of the non-governmental editorials.

Nothing shows this better than the percentage of the reach of the pro-government and non-governmental news media (ATLO, 2020). In 2020 the percentage of the pro-government radio stations were 93%, the percentage of pro-government TV stations was more than 50%, and the pro-government regional paper's percentage in 2020 were 100%. Only the daily, the weekly and the online newspapers percentage were higher in the non-governmental side than in the pro-governmental side. This outcome shows how the Hungarian free press was transformed into a machinery of right-wing propaganda.

In the past decade, several changes occurred between the pro-government and independent media ownerships. It started with Origo (Kingsley, 2018) which was one of the most read independent news portals. It has been sold to New Wave Media, becoming part of the Orbán media empire, and nowadays it is one of the most racist, and anti-immigrant news. A year later Népszabadság, which was a printed daily newspaper founded in 1956, was bought and dissolved by the above-mentioned media company. In 2020, Index (Thorpe, 2020), another leading news portal had been sold to Orbán's empire. These are just the highlighted examples on how influential media sites were made impossible to function or cornered by Fidesz in the past decade. The line continued in 2021, when Hungary's leading independent radio station was taken off the air after the Hungarian Media Council decided that they were not going to renew Klubrádió's (RSF.org 1, 2021) license. After all the changes of the ownership of these radio stations, the state-owned Kossuth Rádió works as one of the primary communication channel between the Prime Minister, Viktor Orbán and the Hungarian people.

3.3. Anti-gender discourses in Hungary

In Hungarian politics, the term *gender* appeared first in 2010, in an amendment (which was submitted by the “socialist” government), in a context where it was mentioned that preschool teachers should prevent the strengthening of gender stereotypes, facilitating gender equality in the society. A Fidesz MP noticed it and called it a form of “gender ideology”; in his understanding using the term “gender” and fighting gender stereotypes was equal to losing sexual identity, and leading to the “culture of death”, which represents the opposite of “creaturehood”. The expression of “culture of death” originates from Pope John Paul II's encyclical letter which was popularized in Hungary as well by Gabriele Kuby.

The so-called “gender ideology” is presented as an enemy of the catholic church too, the book of the German Catholic sociologist and writer Gabriele Kuby is widely used as a reference in the government and governmental-friendly media outlets. In his book, Kuby argues that “gender ideology” led to an increase in abortion and the popularization of pedophilia. The Hungarian Catholic Church adopted the viewpoint as well, also Kuby's book was translated into the Hungarian language with the title of “Christian Man in a Modern World” (Juhasz, 2015). In many countries, the anti-gender discourses were supported and built on The Lexicon on Ambiguous and Debatable Terms Regarding Family Life and Ethical Questions, published by the Catholic Church in 2006. The “lexicon” was translated into Hungarian in 2012, and its contents include for instance explanations on differences between men and women in professions allegedly resulting in the natural differences between men and women and not discrimination. In a previous article, Kuby argues that the equal rights of women are just the first step toward a *slippery slope*, and it leads us to the mingling of sexes. According to her, even though women's equality seems like a beautiful cloak, it leads to “gender ideology” which deconstructs and destroys the “traditional family” and its values which are the pillar of the nation. (Pető & Kováts, 2017)

In right-wing media, the above-mentioned ideas and arguments have gained enormous publicity. In April 2010, when the Fidesz government came into power, the 2nd Orbán government removed the amendment from the school's curriculum. (Pető & Kováts, 2017) After this first appearance the concept of gender as a social construction has disappeared from parliamentary debated for a couple of years, and around 2014, the Orbán government started to refer to gender as “gender ideology” as the enemy of society and the “traditional family”.

Starting from 2014, “gender-ideology” and its evilness is strongly connected to the West or-and Brussels, in the public discourse formed by the government. In 2014, the European Parliament discussed the Estrela and the Lunacek report, which contained the sexual and reproductive rights as well as formed a report against homophobia and other forms of discrimination based on sexual orientation. As a response to these two reports, the Hungarian right-wing and state-owned media published several articles about the evilness of “gender ideology”. Starting from the second Orbán government in 2010, human rights, women’s rights, feminism, LGBTQ, and gender started appearing in the government's public discourse, framed through negative definitions and understandings. (Abou-Chadi & Gessler, 2021) New directives and “language usage” became determinants in public discourse heavily influenced by the Fidesz, through the public broadcasting and media empire which is under the governing party's control. (Grzebalska & Pető 2018, Kováts, 2018) The Fidesz-KDNP ruling coalition started to implement actions against “gender ideology” and feminism as enemies of the nation, family, and religion in discourse and to construct a neoliberal neo patriarchal society, where the “traditional” gender roles and norms are the determinant. By “gender ideology”, the Hungarian government means anti-family, pro-gay anti-life ideologies. Instead of gender equality and such policies, the current government manages family mainstreaming programs and ideologies as the opposite of gender, gender ideology, and gender mainstreaming. In the past 10 years, gender issues were addressed scarcely in the context of work-life balance and part-time work. The Department of Equal Opportunity was merged with the Department of Social and Family Affairs, and gender equality issues have not been discussed since 2010 in the eyes of the law. Another fact that supports the government's anti-gender and anti-feminist approach is that the Istanbul Convention, which is dedicated to protecting women in case of domestic violence and preventing violence against women (Hera & Szego, 2023), was not ratified by the Hungarian government.

3.4. Family Policies

In 2011, the Orbán government introduced and adopted a new constitution. Besides many other changes, they proposed that this new law protects the fundamental right to life from the moment of conception and this new constitution also states that marriage is only possible between a man and a woman (Hungary's Constitution of 2011) As is visible, the first above-mentioned change restricts the right to abortion, meaning that access to it would be more difficult, since both the fetus and the mother are treated

equally as individuals. The second law change excludes same-sex couples from the institution of marriage.

In 2019 February, the government announced as I have mentioned it before, a seven-point family policy package, these policies being i) preferential loans for newly-wed couples planning to have children ii) the extension of preferential loans under the former family home purchase scheme (CSOK) iii) mortgage subsidies iv) definitive exemptions from personal income tax payments for women who have had and raised at least four children v) a subsidy program for families raising at least three children so they can purchase a car seating at least seven people vi) the government creation of 21000 creche places over three years vii) the possibility for grandparents to look after young children instead of their parents and to be eligible for earnings-related child-care benefits (GYED) (Linnamäki, 2011). As it is visible from the family policy package, it is more like a demographic policy than an actual family policy. It does not contain the questions and issues of the given educational system, the child and family poverty that are presented in Hungary, the same-sex couples' issues and possibilities nor the care for the elderly people of the country. All the above-mentioned policies are trying to increase the fertility rate among women. and force women back to traditional gender roles – in the shape of giving them all these helping policies. At the same time increasing the popularity of the current right-wing government and its ideology.

In countries where women are firstly the caretakers of the families, leads to inequalities inside the families, and at the workplace as well, moreover, determines the women's places in society. The family policies create division not just between men and women, but between social classes and ethnicities as well. Pro-natalist goals are to increase the size of the population. The good way to reach that goal is to criminalize abortion and introduce generous maternity leave, benefits, and state contributions to child-rearing. (Durst, 2002)

4. Conceptual framework

In this chapter I will introduce two main concepts on which I built the framework of the thesis and which supports the analysis as well. The two concepts are: *familism* and *intersectionality*. Familism as a concept will serve to understand the meaning and the importance of the “traditional family” in gender discourses. Moreover, I will present the different analyzing approaches of intersectionality and these understandings.

4.1. Familism

Familism could be interpreted as a unique social condition or as an ideology. The social family, refers to institutions, regulations, laws, economical context that gives the lead to people to live in a family, to legalize their relationship and being identified as married. In addition to that the ideological familism it refers to, and could be associated with positive values and attitudes regarding the family. In this second case family becomes the center of the social discourse, it will be understood as the fundamental pillar of a society, (Dupcsik & Tóth, 2015) it also could be used as a metaphor of positive feelings, of secureness and togetherness. The social and ideological familism has grown together by time, by having the institutional and legal background and also all the positive values could offer both economical and emotional security as well in a micro-level.

Esping-Andersen (1999) argues that *familism* could be approached in two ways. The first way of understanding it would be to interpret it as a “pro-family” politics that goes hand in hand with Christian conservative values, tries to restore the so-called “traditional family” beliefs and attitudes. The second way to understand and interpret familism goes along with a women friendly welfare state, whose aim is to decrease the weight of the family caring within the family. Familism in this second form of understanding could be interpreted as de-familialization through which women would be able to reach economic independence and also the family burdens would be lessened and shared more equally. The conservative understanding of familism and its policies are present in the labour market in a way of protecting the career and the earnings of the men, and by it restrengthening the male- bread-winner model. From this approach the aforementioned model of familism gives the women primary household responsibilities and by that diminish the economic independence of women and by it perpetuate the

patriarchy and the traditional family dependencies. Namely, women's economic dependence on male, and the male's social reproduction dependency on women. The term of defamilialization is not equal to "anti-family", in contrast; the household responsibilities and the caring work are loosened up and shared within all of the family members. And on the other hand, familism is not equal to "pro-family" and countries whose policies support the idea of *familism* are often closely related to the Catholic church and its principles.

In the Hungarian context, the first interpretation of familism could be identified, the "pro-family", conservative and Christian understanding of it, which is reflected in the way of governance. Starting from the second Orbán government one of their main goals was to strengthen the conservative family policies (Grzebalska & Pető, 2018) The ninth amendment of the Hungarian fundamental law clarifies the importance of the protection of families, which includes Christian culture and it is heteronormative. Moreover, heteronormativity was framed in the above-mentioned amendment as an indispensable phenomenon for the mental and physical development of Hungarian children, the prohibition of certain media content that is available to people under the age of 18. This content is defined as that which *"depicts sexuality for its own sake or promotes or displays deviations from the sex at birth, gender reassignment or homosexuality"* (Government of Hungary, 2021a, 3. §)

In my thesis, I understand Orbán's family policies and his rhetorical use of the idea of the "traditional family" values and attitudes that he connects with it, as a form of conservative familism.

4.2. Intersectionality

The term intersectionality was coined by Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw in 1989 in relation to Black feminist activism. Crenshaw (1989 p.149) defines intersectionality as the following: *"Intersectionality is a metaphor for understanding the ways that multiple forms of inequality or disadvantage sometimes compound themselves and create obstacles that often are not understood among conventional ways of thinking"*. In terms of gender analysis, intersectionality is essential, different dimensions of social practices need to be taken into consideration, such as class, race, sexuality, age, nationality, ethnicity etc.

Walby (2009, pp.58-99) uses the term "complex inequalities" to intercept the synchronism of the social inequalities and also the difference of values regarding gender, class, ethnicity, race, religion,

nation, linguistic community, sexual orientation and age. She argues that there are at least six different approaches in which intersectionality could be analyzed.

1. The criticism of false overgeneralization, which highlights the importance of acknowledging the division within a category of women by class, ethnicity, and geographical existence as well.
2. The approach of reductionism, which means that a cluster of social inequalities have the same primary standing point.
3. The approach of micro-reductionism, in general it is used to analyze groups at the point of intersection, usually it is connected to case study, ethnographic and narrative methods of enquiry
4. This approach rejects the use of categories altogether, the aim is the destabilization of group categories. It leads to a postmodern and poststructuralist analysis.
5. The performance centered and focused approach, and by it deconstructing the notion of the human agent.
6. The segregationary reductionist strategy's aim is to find the root of each social inequalities and to create a better analysis of the categories.

In my analysis I will focus on Walby's first approach on intersectionality: on pointing out the false overgeneralizations in the data, regarding women, class, ethnic, sexual minorities and also the importance of the geographical locations.

5. Research questions

Through the years “traditional family” became a sharp opposite of gender and the so-called “gender ideology” in Orbán’s and his government’s rhetoric. Although the understanding of gender is not clearly defined by right-wing politics in their discourse, it clearly goes behind the socially constructed characteristics of women and men.

Moreover, the notion of the “traditional family” just as in the case of gender and the so-called gender ideology, goes behind the meaning of the nuclear family model. It embeds not just “traditional” roles and norms which are divided between men and women, but also the “value” of such family (familism) is higher in a societal level.

The creation of enemies or scapegoats are essential to right-wing conservative governments, because this is a way they can play the role of the saviors, the role of being a part of the “pure people” against the “evil elite”.

Therefore, my research question in this thesis are:

1. How is the role of the “traditional family” constructed in the Hungarian MP, Viktor Orbán’s gender discourse?
2. What kind of enemies can be identified as opposers of the “traditional family”, and how do these enemies are embedded into gender discourse?

6. Methodology, Data and Limitations

In this chapter, first I will present the data that I collected and that I will use during my research, moreover the process through which it was collected and selected. Afterward, I will present the methodological approach that I chose to examine the research question, namely, with the toolkit of Feminist Critical Discourse analysis, with the help of which I investigate the role of “traditional family” in Orbán’s gender discourse, during the past eight years in Hungary. I will conduct the analysis through a feminist lens. The limitation of the collected data will be presented in the latter part of this chapter.

6.1. Data

I analyze 53 interviews conducted with Viktor Orbán, the Prime Minister of Hungary in the state-owned Kossuth Radio. As a timeframe, I chose the 3rd and 4th governmental periods, starting from 2014 until 2022 April. As I mentioned above, gender discourses started to be present in the prime minister's speeches, interviews, and official statements in the middle of 2010 and strengthened over 2022.

The collected interviews were officially translated from Hungarian to English and were published in two official governmental websites, kormany.hu, which is the official site of the Hungarian government, and miniszterelnok.hu, which is the official website of the Prime Minister of Hungary. These websites contain Viktor Orbán’s speeches, interviews, and any other official statements given by him. I selected the interviews, which were conducted during the above-mentioned time frame, in the state-owned Kossuth Radio. In the rearranged Hungarian media landscape, not only the top 10 most viewed TV channels are owned by the government or are pro-governmental, but the most listened news radio channel is Kossuth Radio. This aforementioned governmental radio station coverage reaches 96 percent of the total territory of Hungary (nmhh.hu). Orbán gives interviews in the aforementioned radio regularly, usually two or three times a month, and because of the high reaches’ percentage of the radio, it serves as an immaculate way to transmit the political and ideological messages and insights.

The collected interviews were broadcasted in “180 Minutes” and „Good morning, Hungary” programs. The “180 Minutes” was the most listened to radio broadcast between 2007 and 2018. The morning program was broadcasted every weekday from 6 AM to 9 AM. After 2018 the above-mentioned morning broadcast name was changed to “Good morning, Hungary”. Between the given time period there

were 149 interviews broadcasted with the prime minister, Viktor Orbán and the transcript of these interviews is available on the above-mentioned two websites. From these 149 interviews, I have selected 53, which most closely touched the themes that I am interested in this thesis, namely, how, why and from which directions the “traditional family” is under attack according to Orbán, and how these narratives relate to understanding gender. The written form of the analyzed interviews was, between 10 and 15 pages each.

After collecting the interviews, I processed those in the Atlas.ti program, I highlighted quotations based on deductive codes that are related to gender discourses in Europe or-and in right-wing political discourses. These deductive codes were “gender”, “family”, “protection”, “Westernness-Brusselism”, “Christianity”, “LGBTQ”. Later on, I discovered other key words that appeared through the interviews as related to gender and “traditional family” discourses. I added inductive codes, such as “immigration”, “national superiority”, “woman-motherhood”.

In each code I was focusing not just to the specific keyword, but also the context of the codes meaning, and any other indirect reference to it. In terms of “gender” I was focusing the different understandings of it, first of all how the interviews are referring to “gender” or to the so-called “gender ideology” used by the Hungarian political discourse. According to this understanding of “gender”, gender aims to deconstruct the differences between men and women, destroys the structure of the “traditional family” based on the marriage of a man and a woman, spread the idea and the ideology of homosexuality and transgender, makes the Hungarian children uncertain in their sexual orientation and gender identity (Kováts, 2022). In terms of “family” my focus was on how the “traditional family” is framed in these interviews in relations to immigration, policies, gender, etc. moreover, I was looking into the social structure of the family, how it was built as a central pillar. In terms of “protection”, I was examining two main aspects. First how the Prime Minister frames himself and his government as “us”, the protectors of the nation, and secondly how those groups of people are framed from whom the Hungarians need to be protected, (immigrants, gender, Brussel, etc.). Under the code of “Westernness-Brusselism” I was exploring from the interviews how and why is the West is framed as an enemy, which are the arguments behind it and also, how it affects “traditional family” as the pillar of the Hungarian society. Under the code of “Christianity” I was looking into arguments that determine the “right” side in against “them”, how Christianity and Christian values are presented as an essential pillar for “traditional family” and at the same time serve as an opposite for gender and the so-called Western word and values. In the code of

“LGBTQ” I was analyzing the context in which Viktor Orbán talks about non-heterosexual people and communities, which are the arguments behind these phenomena in a Hungarian context.

I have added three inductive codes that would be relevant in context of traditional family, gender and Hungary. The first code was “immigration”. In terms of this code, I was focusing on how immigrants are described in these interviews, physically, ideologically and also what are its affection to the “traditional family”, and also, I was examining the arguments that are connecting this social phenomenon to the West. The second code I added is “national superiority”, by this I was focusing on how Hungary and the Hungarian society are presented as superior compared to the West, which are the arguments in those terms. Moreover, I was looking for how the “traditional family” as the “only” family model in Hungary underlines the sanctity of the Hungarian society, and everything else, such as immigrants, LGBTQ people, etc. are excluded from it in these interviews. The last inductive code was “women-motherhood”. I have noticed that Orbán framed many societal issues and discourses in terms of how that particular problem or phenomena would affect the Hungarian woman and more importantly mothers. Such a framing pattern is present in connection to immigration, LGBTQ and gender.

6.2. Feminist critical discourse analysis

Fairclough’s (1995) model of critical discourse analysis (CDA) as an interdisciplinary approach based on linguistic and social theory is a tool to analyze the role that language plays in the construction of knowledge, ideology and power. CDA recognizes language as a social practice that needs to be analyzed in its social context to point out the existence of dominance, power, and the role in which social inequality is created. The two main aspects of his CDA are divided into two particular disciplines. First, the power in discourse, analyzing the strategies, language structures and common features used to create power, and second, the power behind discourse, which analyzes the sociological and ideological reasons for the given discourse.

The aim of CDA is to uncover the power structures, to point out the meaning and ideologies which were created with language, to comprehend the power of language and question its understanding, and also to point out the inequalities toward marginalized and oppressed people. Fairclough’s three-dimensional critical discourse analysis model analyzes the i) description, considering the text itself, what is the language like going through as a text not considering the context ii) interpretation, analyzing the motivation behind it, considering the production of it, interpret the ideologies that are presented, the

audience, the author, the form in which it is presented and where, also to consider who is benefiting from it, iii) explanation of a given discourse, place the given text into the broader societal context, considering the cultural norms, values, the power distribution and the current political climate.

Through CDA the relationship between power and language can be pointed out, and in addition through such an analysis, the notion and the interconnection between power, history, and ideology is essential and unavoidable. The notion of power refers to pressure from above, unequal power relations and dominance – at institutional and social group levels as well. History shows the way which led to the present circumstances and arguments, and ideology reflects to the leading ideology that powers and feeds the mainstream and establishing unequal power relations (Wodak & Meyer, 2001).

Wodak (2015) argues that four categories of language legitimation can be distinguished in right-wing populist rhetoric. The first one is the *authorization*, that tries to obtain legitimacy by referring to authority, the second is the *moral evaluation*, that uses the values system as a reference of legitimation, the third is the *rationalization*, in this case the source of legitimation is knowledge claims and arguments, and the fourth is the *mythopoesis*, that tries to reach legitimation by narratives, about the past or even the future. The right-wing populist political ideology, rejects the existing political consensus, is anti-elitist, creates the distinction between the *corrupt elite* and the *pure people*. Moreover, creating and proposing the picture of the *enemy*, and to bury the distance by *othering*. In terms of the form and the content of the right-wing communication, the specific audience targeting is important, they are also using short answer to broad and complex questions, complex political processes are reduced to the level of slogans.

Gendered discourses beside others, such as immigration, the superiority of a nation, etc. are also rooted in right-wing populist rhetoric. Since man are the “losers” or the “victims” of the social changes, modernization and globalization, in terms of they have lost the main wage earners position within the family, and with it their authority in this macro word also has been decreased. (Wodak, 2015) In the new understanding of gender relations, woman is now beside being a reproducer, a commodity and a caretaker, it also has become a producer in the sense of taking part in the bread winning. The old gendered models were not erased but it got implemented into a new form of male domination, namely into the neoliberal neo-patriarchal mode, in which the women became the new “other” in terms of family. (Campbell, 2014). Gendered bodies are crucial in populist rhetoric, with the aim of reproducing the dichotomy of “us” against the “them”, the regulation and owning of the female body is essential. All these regulations and “vulnerability” of the gendered body can be seen through the abortion regulations,

family policies and by keeping up the new form of male domination the neo-patriarchal societal structure. (Mostov, 2021)

Under the umbrella of CDA, feminist CDA allows indicating the primary focus of the research to the political perspective of gender, power, and ideology in a given discourse. Lazar (2005) states that the aim of FCDA is to analyze and point out discourses, which help to preserve the patriarchal social order, whereupon men as a social group are privileged and women as another social group are disadvantaged and excluded. Analyzing gender as a social category provides the space and the chance to point out how, besides the two main social categories of men and women, gender intersects with other categories of social identity, like sexuality, ethnicity, age, disability, social class, position and geographical location (Lazar, 2007). By utilizing it, the aim is to point out the social inequalities and injustices that are represented through language, moreover, with a feminist perspective, the (unequal) power distributions and the oppression of patriarchal and hierarchical structures could be analyzed. FCDA's aim is to identify the discursively produced and resisted power structures through text, and the textual representation of gender as a social concept. (Lazar 2005)

With the help of the chosen methodology in this research I will analyze how the role of the “traditional family” is constructed in the Prime Minister's gender discourse, focusing on “othering” that are present in the data. Firstly, by analyzing the text without its context, after interpreting it and lastly to put into the current Hungarian social context taking into consideration social norm, values, political and ideological background as well. By it I will be able to focus on the power relations, dominance inequalities and oppression as well. Through the analysis I will focus also on Wodak's rhetorical tools, specifically if any of the four rhetorical approaches could be identified through the data.

6.3. Limitation

A thesis like this, which is focusing on a broad topic with a very narrow perspective, contains several limitations. I have identified three main limitation aspects: spatial, *timeframe* and *discourse* limitation.

1. Spatial limitation: geographically I was looking into the political discourses within the borders of Hungary, although it has an effect on Hungarians who have migrated from Hungary. Moreover, the political discourses of Orbán about gender, family, immigration

do not end at the borders of Hungary, but goes behind this to Transylvania for example (1 million Hungarians), where the given media relations are supporting Orbán's politics and also getting it financial coverage from the Hungarian government (Sipos, 2023).

2. Time Frame limitation: I am looking into just a specific time period, between 2014 and 2022, although the political discourses about gender, "traditional family", etc., cannot be limited into this timeframe. These above-mentioned discourses existed beforehand and are existing after the researched period as well. The intensity of the given discourse changes, but their presence is certain. Before 2014 gender related discourses in political communication were not that significant, but in contrast to after 2022 they got even stronger and more significant than ever before.
3. Discourse limitation: I am looking only into interviews with the Prime Minister, Viktor Orbán, and this does not cover the gender discourses in Hungary. This discourse has many layers even within the pro-governmental side, not to mention the opposition. The researched discourse is very moderate, and it does not highlight for example the very anti-gender political and public discourses that the pro-governmental media broadcast.

With all these aforementioned and identified limitations, the thesis conceives the opportunity of further research and investigation within the topic. The spatial limitation could be broadened outside the Hungarian borders, the time frame could be expanded and also the discourse could be analyzed in many layers.

6.4. Ethical Perspectives

Since my research data includes just written and public interviews that are available for everyone, in my case the research issues and perspectives differ from for example interview-based research. In that case the ethical perspective would be broader and would require in given cases the respect of anonymity, the proper handling of the given information, confidentiality, informed consent and also to keep in focus how the research would affect the participants. Moreover, the personal presence of in the researches is essential, to keep the boundaries and being non-partial.

In this thesis some of the above-mentioned ethical issues and approaches are not applicable, but there are other or sometimes similar perspectives that can be essential to the research. Doing research in social science, in some cases it also means stating a normative approach as a standpoint, and positioning

the researched topic relative to that. By setting up the above-mentioned approach, it also means predefining the “good” and the “bad”, and also stigmatizing the given actor or approach but also the group of people who have their “faith” in that.

In terms of my research, it means that not to set up the normative approach in which Viktor Orbán, the Hungarian Prime Minister in the “bad” political actor and the West and the western approaches and ideas about gender, family, LGBTQ, etc. are the eternal “good”. For me as a Hungarian, who is deeply involved in the above-mentioned topic and approaches, and who does not agree with Orbán’s arguments, it is important to keep the distance and not be biased in either way. My ideological and political opinions are not relevant in this thesis, but rather to understand the reasons and arguments from a point zero, and interpret those in a scientific text.

Regarding my thesis, when a political actor, Viktor Orbán, has a large audience and trusts his political approaches, policies and programs and who has won the election by two-third, it means that he has got a wide legitimacy from the society. At this point it is my duty as the researcher of the topic to keep an eye on the broader societal phenomenon that this causes, trying to understand it and also to highlight the meanings of it.

The goal of the thesis is not to proclaim a moral judgment on Viktor Orbán’s political approaches toward gender, traditional family, LGBTQ, etc. and by doing it confirming that the West holds the truth. But in contrast, to understand the mechanism and the pillars from an objective point of view and not use the Western approach as a normative one.

7. Analysis

In this chapter, I will use the conceptual framework and the methodological toolkit of Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis to present the findings of the given inquiry. The analysis is divided into two subchapters, the “us” and the “them” and both subchapters contains three main elements that I have identified as being used by Orbán when in his self-descriptions or self-identifications. I have found that for Orbán, the “us” equals the Hungarian people, and that this “us” is characterized by superiority and sovereignty, will and ability to protect women, families and borders, and Christianity, and that the “them” is a more diverse group consisting of those who promote gender ideology, LGBTQ people and those who promote their rights altogether with immigrants. Moreover, through the analysis, another pattern could be recognized, specifically that all the main elements or approaches had a local and a western reach as well. Orbán’s main arguments on one hand, relate to the local, Hungarian context, but on the other hand, go beyond that and build distinctions in an international manner as well, giving roles to the European Union or more broadly to the “West” as well. Both the “us” and “them”, and its understanding used by Orbán, will be examined in relation to the construction of the “traditional family”. In the following, I will discuss the analyzed data in the aforementioned thematic order.

7.1. “Us” - the people

Mudde (2017, p. 5-6) argues that one of the essential attributes of the understanding of populism and populist politics is that there is always an appeal to the “people” which contradicts the given society's “elite”. Moreover, a critique of the establishment and the “exaltation” of the common people is embedded within this appeal, the critique from the “pure people” toward the “corrupt elite”.

The concept of “pure people” possesses different understandings; it can be interpreted as *people as sovereign*, *people as the common people* and *people as the nation*. People as sovereigns are construed as the rulers, whose will have to be heard and acted upon, in contrast to “the elite” who does not act in the will of the people. The understanding of common people refers to cultural traditions and values. Confront these common values with the “elitist” judgments toward commonness and traditions. The third understanding of the term, the people as the nation, refers to the national community within certain borders (Mudde, 2017)

In the following analysis, I will examine how the Hungarian Prime Minister characterizes the “us”, which are the main themes where the presence of “us” the people is emphasized. Moreover, I will focus on how these highlighted areas are built upon the protection of the “traditional family” and how the arguments are framed to keep up the distinction between the “pure people” and the “corrupt and evil elite”.

I have identified three main approaches or themes in conjunction with which the „us” is identified and argued as the protector of the “traditional family”. The first one is in linkage with Hungarian nationality and sovereignty, the second is the protectors of women, families and borders and the third one is Christianity. In the following I will discuss the three identified approaches that lead us to the understanding of the “us” in this Hungarian context with the chosen method.

7.1.2. “Us” – National superiority and sovereignty

„...the Hungarian model”, and which we believe offers the Hungarian people the most opportunities and the best opportunities. It rests on four pillars: the first is policy promoting competitiveness; the second is policy serving to create a workfare economy; the third is policy supporting families, a policy that is demographically-oriented; and the fourth is policy which seeks to strengthen our identity. It is always from this perspective that we look at the future, and any decision in connection with any one pillar must also strengthen the other three pillars. (Interview 12)”

Right-wing populists regularly use the notion of giving power to the people and authorizing them to make decisions on societal issues to gain support (Zaslove & Meijers, 2023). In Hungary, the current ruling Viktor Orbán’s government was using the same tactic, by organizing several referendums to legitimize their power and policies. In 2016 a referendum was initiated on the EU’s immigration quotas and policies. The referendum’s question was framed as it suggested that the European Union is threatening and disregarding Hungarian sovereignty and the constitution of Hungary: *Do you want the European Union to be able to impose the mandatory resettlement of non-Hungarian citizens in Hungary without the*

consent of the Parliament? Another referendum was the so-called *Child Protection Act*, where the same framing could be identified, and which was referred to, through the analyzed interviews as well.

a) Local – Hungarian approach

Through the interviews Orbán refers to Hungarian society as something eternal, even mentioning “proof” that tends to underline the “always” existing society and its strong strings to “traditional family” and children, and by it referring to the exceptional value of family as an institution that has been also presented by Hernández and Bámaca-Colbert (2016).

“Hungarian world, is based on a family system. It is worth looking at the relevant documents. In Hungary this cohesion of families is an old thing, an ancient thing. This is an uplifting force, and as it is within us, the Hungarians love children. You only need to look at the news, in which every item related to children, whatever the details, is immediately received with highly positive emotions. (Interview 12)”

By using the wording “*family system*” and adding that it could be found on relevant documents, he is referring to the nuclear or the so-called “traditional family” model where, as Fraser (1994) has presented, the main breadwinner are the men and the women are dependent on them. If we are looking at the so-called relevant document that Orbán mentions, such as the Hungarian constitution (Government of Hungary, 2021a, 3.) that declares that the mother is a woman and the father is a man, or even the existing family policies outlined by Linnamäki (2011) which aim to strengthen the “traditional family” model and at the same time to exclude other family models and non-heterosexual couples. By stating that the importance of families and the cohesion within is something ancient he is using the rhetoric of mythopoesis introduced by Wodak (2015), which referring to narratives from the past and legitimizing his standpoint.

Regarding EU level decisions, that has an affect on all of the member states, Orbán often takes the position of an outsider, who is trying to defend the national sovereignty and strengthen the superiority of one’s nation.

“... ‘Whoever is right before all the others is considered to be a heretic’. Now, from this point of view Hungary is seen as a heretic. But after a few months – or in some cases, a year or two – it always turns out that we’re right. (Interview 7)”

From the foregoing quotation, it is visible that Orbán talks about Hungary which is always under attack by “others”, by opposers. Opposers, who based on Baumann and Gingrich,(2004) it is understood or represented as inferior to “us”. The truth is attacked by the liars and speculators, but in the end, because of its eternal and unique position, Hungary is always right. Using the word “heretic” strengthened the differences between “them” and “us”, and maintaining that, also strengthened the collective national identity.

By proving that Hungary stays always on the proper side and it consistently has the right answers, Orbán brings several topics into the discussion, like immigration or demographic questions. Regarding the immigration policies and their consequences for the countries, he says that:

“So despite the fact that one can say that we Hungarians have proved to be right, while this may be true it did not make us happy at all, because here a dark prophesy is turning into reality. (Interview 1)”

By using the wording Hungarians and not the Hungarian government, Orbán involves the “pure people” which based on Mudde’s (2017, p. 5-6) interpretation, it is understood as people as the nation, and as an acting body which leads to a distinctive national identity. The people can identify themselves with the victory of being right (again) unlike the “other” inferior ones. By “dark prophecy” he refers to the EU not being able to “defend” its external border, and Hungary has to defend the sovereignty of the nations and their freedom. In terms of the demographic question, through the interviews, Orbán states that Hungarians can overcome this problem by themselves, they do not require any help from others, unlike all the “others”.

“But Hungarians think differently – I, for one, certainly do. What we need are not numbers, but Hungarian children. Therefore we do not accept migration as the solution to our demographic problems. We believe that we are capable of solving these problems ourselves. (Interview 19)”

The immigration and the demographic issues of Hungary are merged in this ongoing discourse. Orbán states that the issue of demography is not only just about the numbers, but is also a question of

national identity and sovereignty. The answer to the demographic issue in Hungary cannot come from outside, or be solved by “others” but only by Hungarians, by Hungarian children who are raised in “traditional families” and by the traditional “values”. Although Orbán tries to form this issue to be a part of the national sovereignty discourse, but the Hungarian family policies presented above by Linnamäki (2022) are working toward increasing the fertility rate among women. He continues by stating that the only help Hungary needs is the obtain of God. By this, the collaborative alliance between the Hungarian nation and the church has been pointed out.

“We are able to support our families through our work, we are able to stand on our own two feet, we are not dependent on handouts, and we are not dependent on anybody else’s mercy – except God’s. In Hungary we are able to create a good life for ourselves from our own resources; and this conclusion is true not only individually, but also collectively.

(Interview 21)”

Through the interviews, Orbán states that the Hungarian nation does not require any help from other countries, and also that immigration does not answer the issue of demography which is getting urgent and more visible. To strengthen the vigorous national belonging through the interviews, the usage of wording and the threats toward Hungarian sovereignty was used. The exclusion of others, and elevating the “traditional family” to a pedestal as the sole savior of the Hungarian nation, referring to Hungarians as one acting body, the people as the nation and by using the narratives from the past combining it with the eternal truth of the church, these all declare the superiority, the strong identity and the sovereignty of Hungary and its people.

b) Western – EU approach

The question of national identity and sovereignty is displayed on an international level as well. To highlight the threat toward these aforementioned ideas, which based on the foregoing quotations are uniquely present in Hungary, the enemy is named by its name, the scapegoat has been created and pointed to. Wodak’s (2015) term of scapegoats is referring to a group of people who threatening or damaging one’s nation, in this case, Orbán uses the term for Brussels and for the Leader of the European Union. The antagonism between Hungary and Brussels is constructed in a way that the former is seen as unique and strong, while the latter attacks its determination.

“Well, Hungary is a country with faith in its own future. These events – being attacked in Brussels – do not deter us from our goals, and they will not change our goals. Hungary will continue to pursue its own path, as it has done so far. (Interview 8)”

By saying that Hungary has *its faith in its own future*, Orbán sends the message that they are not waiting and they are not placing the future of the country in the EU's hands, therefore they can and will make it on their own, even if they are attacked by them. To underline the importance of national sovereignty Orbán deepens the contradictions between the nations, that want to have their independence and Brussel, which wants to overrule these:

“The European nations – now I’m talking about those in the European Union – will rebel against the Brussels’ policy of continually seeking to appropriate powers from the nation states, which it does sometimes openly, and sometimes by stealth. Brussels’ wants to interfere in everything, so that we have less and less of a chance to decide on our own lives. (Interview 6)”

In the discourse of national sovereignty, by creating the “us” and “them” dichotomy, Orbán talks in the name of the other Central and Eastern European countries that create the “us” against the repressive “them” which signifies Brussels and Western European countries. By using the word “rebel” Orbán is putting Hungary and other right-wing conservative government countries in a position where they are against the establishment and fighting for their freedom, specifically for sovereignty and for the democratic will of one's nation.

“Westerners are used to telling us Central Europeans how to be modern, how to be successful, how to build capitalism and the market economy, explaining what democracy is, and so forth. Now they are suffering from a lack of success: their figures are poorer, ours are better, and the reason is that we are doing things differently from them. (Interview 6)”

He prompts the question of freedom, which according to him have different meanings for Western and Central – Eastern European nations. He uses it as a dividing line between the enemy, the evil West, and the pure nations, such as Hungary. As how also Graff (2022 pp.1-14) and Kováts (2018) argues, these kinds of division representations are one of the main rhetorical tools of the right-wing populists. He pictures central Europeans as anti-bureaucratic in contrast to the West where capitalism and market economy lead all, he is mocking their understanding of freedom and democracy. Orbán was justifying

the correctness of non-western countries by their unsuccessfulness, and by legitimizing the right-wing governmental point of view.

7.1.2. “Us” – Protectors of women, families and borders

“Even though men find it hard to acknowledge this, even though we may have something to do with the matter as well, the situation is that women will eventually decide how many children will be born, what kind of a family they’ll live in and how. At the end of the day, it is for the women to decide. (Interview 8)”

In 2019, Viktor Orbán in his annual review speech announced a seven-point plan, in which he tried to protect women and Hungarian families not just from immigration, LGBTQ, gender, etc., but also from increasing prices. In this plan, he promised a ten million HUF discounted loan for those women who have one or two children, and after the third child, forgetting the remaining debt. Additionally, another mortgage takeover was announced by the state, for those families that have four or more children, and those women who have four or more children are exempt from personal income tax for the rest of their lives (Tóth, 2019). Although, according to Orbán, women can freely decide if they would like to have children or not, the “protection” that he offers has a price, and the price is to have as many children as “possible”.

a) Local – Hungarian approach

Through the interviews in order to create the understanding of “us” as protectors of women and families, the Prime minister uses a personal tone, shares personal experiences to connect more with the people, to make the expression that he is one of them, who live the same experiences by living the life of an ordinary people. The personal touch, the illusion of standing on the side of the ordinary people against the common

enemy, helps him to get legitimization as the leader of the Hungarian “traditional families” that are the pillar of the nation.

“My wife always tells me, and I also meet many people – ladies in particular – who tell me that the important thing is calm, peace and security. (Interview 18)”

In this quotation, Viktor Orbán first uses his wife as a source to (over)generalize the needs of Hungarian women, and it could be said that he is just reacting to the so-called required needs. Walby’s (2009) false overgeneralization approach can be identified here, based on his wife and her needs, Orbán talks in the name of all women in Hungary, not taking into consideration class, ethnicity, and geographical differences either. Secondly, framing the message to underline his and Fidesz’s rhetoric; calm, peace, and security. Although these objectives would sound very reasonable and desired, the framing of these makes it very unfavorable, excluding “others” and scapegoating the so-called unknown and unfamiliar.

Subsequently, in the interviews he also states that the family is the “number one priority” for him, because he knows that every woman in Hungary would like to have more children that they do now, but the continuous threats and uncertainty, regarding peace and security confuses them. The false overgeneralization can be detected at this part as well, when he says that all Hungarian women want to have more children, because it is also based on the family policy that protects and supports mostly middle-class women and families. He does not talk about working-class women, Roma women or about women who do not want to have children or people who live in non-traditional families. He states that the government, with his help, solved all problems regarding this question and that they will give everything that is needed to create a family and to have more children.

“Then I could tell Hungarian ladies and the public in general that henceforward there is no need to continue battling, because everything is being defended, and all we need to do is to settle down to our lives and work hard. (Interview 18)”

While the Prime Minister discusses how he and the government provide safe and livable life for all Hungarian women and families who want to have more children, he also states what kind of families are that he is referring to and based on what ideologies and traditions of living:

“This needs men and women: we advocate an old-world, conservative policy, and for us a family means a man and a woman, with children born as consequence of that. The situation

in Hungary today is that not enough children are being born. We don't want to interfere in anyone's life, because it's for everyone to decide for themselves how many children they want; it's for everyone to pursue their own life strategies themselves. No government of any kind can influence that. (Interview 8)''

Orbán does not even try to sell the idea of being inclusive in terms of alternative family models and ways of living. This kind of clear statement that the only acceptable family model is not uniquely present in Orbán's discourse, but all present in many countries, how it was discussed and presented before (ch 2.2) in anti-gender discourses. He also states that the government does not want to interfere with anyone's life and tries to sell the idea that the government does not function as a leader but as a helper for those who require its help.

Later on, the Prime Minister refers to the "traditional family" as something "normal", "natural", as something that is the only way of living and excluding everyone who does not imagine family life in such a way.

"The way I live my life is that I think that we would like natural, normal things: the natural order of life is that you have a mother and a father, they bring you up, you learn many things in your family, you grow up and start your own family, and following generations teach their children in the way that they were taught themselves. So life has a natural, normal order. I'm trying to assist and protect this. (Interview 22)''

By representing the "voice of the people" Orbán underlines the meaning and the importance of "normal" and "natural" and even if it is not said out loud referring that everything that differs from it is unnatural and has been imported from outside. On top he added that Hungarian people besides being the pillar of normalness, equally possess "*strong national identity, community awareness, and strong family feelings*" and Hungarian women and families not just want to have more children but the most significant thing is to have Hungarian children.

"We all know that when we talk about family we primarily think of mothers because in Hungarian life everything revolves around the mother; sooner or later, everyone ends up in the kitchen when your mother or wife is making dinner. I think this is so for everyone, not only in our family. (Interview 45)''

By praising the Hungarian women, he ends up underlining and straightening Fraser's (1994) male breadwinner model, that it is a natural phenomenon for women in being the kitchen and filling up the "natural" duties. Although he meant it as a complaint for Hungarian mothers and women he ended up as a straightening of the patriarchal family orders within Hungarian society.

b) Western - EU approach

Through the interviews with the Prime Minister, he compared the Hungarian family policy and its success with other European countries and described it as something extreme that no one ever tried in Western Europe. In this case as well as the one above the definition of "us" has to be determined in counter to "others", Western countries.

"They come to us because the Hungarian family policy is unorthodox, special, stands out, it is unparalleled in Europe; we spend the largest percentage of our budget on family policy. We're trying something that others don't, and everyone wants to know whether it works or not. (Interview 45)"

By saying that the Hungarian government is spending a massive amount of money on family policy, the strengthening of the conservative understanding of Esping-Andersen's (1999) familism could be detected. The family-oriented policies are used to maintain the traditional roles and norms regarding women, but in a neo-patriarchal way that besides giving all the support for "traditional families" at the same time "encourage" them to participate in the labor market, and by it supporting or creating a neo patriarchal neoliberal societal structure.

By being outstanding in terms of helping Hungarian women with policies and protection Orbán raised the question of abortion, and stating that because of the strong (traditional) family policies and because the government has interfered with the women's lives in a way of offering them help and opportunity, the Hungarian women's have started to act differently in terms of abortion question in contrary with the West, where the states are not defending "traditional families", roles, norm and women.

“the number of abortions has fallen by 41 per cent, the number of marriages has increased, the reproduction rate... the fertility rate which used to be 1.25 – which was an absolute disaster – has now gone up to one point fifty-something, it should be 2.1. (Interview 45)”

Through his interviews, Orbán points out the threats that Hungarian women and families need to face day by day because of the so-called Brusselism, in this case, he refers to the migration issues that the European Union cannot handle properly and does create suitable policies and rules to protect the borders and the nations. The right-wing populist tools have been used in the question of women and immigration in the Western context. Orbán is creating the enemy, the scapegoat which is coming with the help of Brussel and endangering the women.

“Are we going to live together with large populations of Muslims, are we going to have parallel societies, are we going to live under the threat of terrorism, with far worse public security than today? (Interview 4)”

In the form of rhetorical questions, he pictures a very dangerous and unsafe future, where Muslim people as “others” are characterized with negative characteristics. The scapegoat creating is present in these interviews as well, he talks about the Muslims as terrorists and uplifts the fear factor in the society. Orbán goes behind the security and plays the equality card:

“Will equality between men and women not be self-evident to everyone living in Hungary, will our wives, daughters and parents be safe? And the list of questions could go on. So the future of Hungary is at stake. All I can say to the Hungarian people is that we should not take these risks. Let us protect what we have, let us protect our way of life, and let us reject the decisions of Brussels. (Interview 4)”

He portrays himself as the advocate of gender equality, picturing that equality between men and women is reached in Hungary, but not stating what he means under equality. Defending the current way of living refers to protecting the exclusion of non-traditional family models, sexual minorities, Roma people, toward working-class people and toward all kinds of “differentness” or unknown.

7.1.3. “Us” - Christianity

“Christianity is a cultural creation, and the world in which we live is indeed built on the acceptance, statements and life principles of the teachings of Christianity: equality between men and women; the respect we have for our parents; and the responsibility we feel for our children. (Interview 15)”

Based on the 2011 census, 54,3% of the Hungarian population identify themselves as Christians (ksh.hu). This percentage is way lower compared to other Central European countries, such as Slovakia, Poland, Croatia, or Austria. At the same time, the understanding of Christianity and the frequent religious practitioner percentage are lower and more diverse than the official data shows. Hence, Orbán uses Christianity as a tool of the pro-nation discourses, without much real base, and also to construct the “us” or the in-group’s identity. By working together with local priests from the Catholic Church, Christianity as one of the main values that are “under attack” was introduced to the public discourse as well, and got politicized regarding the issues of gender, LGBTQ, or immigration as well.

a) Local – Hungarian approach

The Prime Minister has broadened the meaning of Christianity, not only mentioning it as a religion, but also as a broader frame, that adopts individuals and at the same time creates and strengthens the in-group identity and at the same time frames the “others”, that are LGBTQ communities, feminists, “gender”, non-traditional families, etc.

“Every individual is a unique case, but we all think that we have a pattern of life which is rooted in Christianity: our everyday pattern of life based on Christian culture, which is ours and in which we feel at home. (Interview 13)”

By saying that being a Christian gives the same feeling as being at home, he associates Christianity with safeness, warmth, a kind of intimacy that home means, and also refers that this feeling can be found only in this in-group way of living. The “us” of the Christians means safety, and kindness

in contrast to “them”. Christian values and the Hungarian government's viewpoint are merged together, by being “pro-life” and resolving the so-called traditional values, norms and beliefs, as it was pointed out by Pető and Kovács (2017), that the Catholic Church has occupied a significant role, in constructing the enemy of Hungarian society. Christianity is present as one of the key pillars of Hungarian identity and Hungarian society. When Orbán talks about the in-group of “Christian culture”, he describes it as something that is very broad and equal:

“It determines how we think about freedom of religion and freedom of expression, how we think about personal responsibility, about the family, about our responsibility to our parents and our children, and about equal rights for men and women. (Interview 13)”

Although in the above-mentioned quotation, Orbán presents the “*Christian culture*” which aim is to expand right-wing and ultra-conservative ideologies (Datta, 2019), - that is their main ideological pillar -as inclusive, when he mentions the freedom of religion, from the interviews it is visible that he means the freedom of Christianity. He mentions the freedom of expression, what he means this freedom applies to those who have the same ideas, and way of living. As it is visible, he also connects family and equality between men and women to “*Christian culture*”, that is presented as inclusive, broad and equal, it is exclusive, narrow-minded and unequal.

Through the interviews, he defines the Hungarian society, the “us” that is inseparable from the phenomenon of Christianity and not taking into consideration the remaining almost 50%, who do not define themselves as Christians: “*the overwhelming majority want to protect Christianity, which here is not a question of religion, but a cultural framework*” (Interview 11). He talks about the *overwhelming majority* that in reality is a bit above 50%. Also, he continues: “*we want to remain Hungarians*”, Orbán says that being Hungarian means being a Christian, and those who are not in this in-group, who are not part of “us”, are not even true Hungarians, they do not belong to the majority. The division between the “us” and “them”, is set up in connection to Christianity as well in a local context.

Orbán does not talk about the almost 50% of the Hungarians, who do not define themselves as Christians. Automatically they fall to the out-group, but he refers to the more than 50% who define themselves as Christians as the majority, also by this creating the illusion that Hungary is a Christian country where the will of the people is to “return to their roots”. He does not define what this means, how returning to the root would affect the “equal” way of living between men and women.

b) Western – EU approach

He also extends the phenomena of “*Christian culture*” to Europe. Suggests that Christianity was always an inherent part of European culture. In this case Orbán refers to Europe and to the European Union as part of “us”, and those outside the EU, the potential and actual immigrants are framed as “others”.

“The (fourth) issue is European culture, which we express as Christian culture, but in reality this refers to our way of life: the way in which European people have lived up to the present day, the rules which until now everyone has accepted, are now being called into question. (Interview 14)”

The analyzed texts show an accusation of the leaders of the EU: that they want to change the current culture in Europe and by replacing it with a new ideologically motivated one:

“On the other hand, there is also an ideological motivation: they believe in a multicultural Europe; they don’t like Christian Europe; they don’t like the traditions of a Christian Europe; and they definitely don’t like Christians. (Interview 17)”

As it is visible, for Orbán multiculturalism is something undesirable, it is the opposite of Christianity. Here the “us”, the Christians are “*under attack*” by “them”, by multiculturalism, by the EU’s elite and by all other people or groups of people who fall outside of the *Christian culture*. The PM pictures himself as the savior of the whole Europe, and as the vindicator of European Christianity:

“We must return to our roots. Europe can regain its former grandeur if we protect Christian virtues, which are broad, diverse, strong and stirring; after all, we’re talking about a culture in which the heart is central, a culture built on the affirmation of love. (Interview 17)”

Returning to our roots also means returning to a certain way of living, where the “traditional family” roles and models were the dominating ones, where women were subordinated, and where the Church had a more significant power than now. As it is visible, he wants to “save” not just Hungary, but

the whole of Europe. Reflecting on the EU elite's "destructional" plan against Christianity and Christian culture, Orbán says:

*"They say that Christian culture is an asset. This is what has kept us alive throughout the past thousand years. We have no reason to give ground on this, or to surrender it.
(Interview 22)"*

Orbán uses exclusionary rhetorical tools. He creates the in and out-group division, the "us" are the Christians, who believe in traditional roles and ways of living and the "them" are the EU elites, the multiculturalist, and the ones who want to create another reality. He constructs the "eternal" "*Christian culture*" that is under attack by the evil non-Christians who want to destroy the "traditional families", want to erase Christianity that is based on equality and love.

Throughout the interviews, he talks about "us" the "Christian culture" as something equal, inclusive and love-based, but at the same time it is visible that it is unequal, it excludes women and treats them as second-class citizens, it is exclusive because it excludes any kinds of sexual minorities, non-heteronormative and non-traditional models of family.

7.2. "Them" – the others

One of the primary tools of right-wing politics is to create the division between "us" and "them", which can be used to differentiate and identify oneself or a group of people against other "them". One of the contemporary ways how othering works is manifested by the right-wing parties around the world, and also by conservative organizations. In such discourses, the targets of othering are immigrants, LGBTQ minorities, Roma people, non-traditional families (Lazaridis & Campani, 2017), and also the Beauvoirian (1997) understanding of othering the women within the nuclear family model.

In the following analysis, I will examine, who are the "others", those "them" understood separated from "us" and therefore stigmatized and positioned as inferior, in the interviews of the Hungarian Prime Minister, Viktor Orbán. Moreover, I will focus on how the group of "them" is presented as a threat to the "traditional family" model, which are the characteristics and tools that are used to define these "enemies". I will focus on both the meta text and the social context of the interviews given by Viktor Orbán, by

examining the power dimensions, the importance of his rhetoric, the given ideology behind the arguments, and the presence of dominance, inequality and oppression.

I have identified three main groups of potential “enemies”, that could be defined as “them” in the analyzed interviews, who are threatening the Hungarian “traditional family”, even by their presence, cultural differences or, by their non-traditional way of existing, referring to people or to ideas ways of living as well. The three main “themes” are gender, LGBTQ, and immigration. In the following, I will present and discuss each of them according to the method outlined above.

7.2.1. “Them” – as gender

” The Holy Father made it clear that the fight we’re fighting for the protection of families is the most important struggle from the respect of the future of Europe. He, too, can see that powerful forces are at work, especially in Brussels, in the Brussels bureaucracy to relativise the family, and used harsh words that I myself have never used before. He said we cannot allow families to be relativised. The family consists of a father, a mother and children. Full stop” (Interview 44)

In governmental communication “gender ideology” is applied as an anti-family, pro-gay, or anti-life propaganda, and instead of gender mainstreaming, the Orbán government is working on family mainstreaming programs and ideologies. In addition, the Catholic Church has also occupied a significant role, in constructing “gender ideology” as the enemy of Hungarian society and waging a war against it. (Pető & Kováts, 2017) Based on the governmental communication and the interviews analyzed, gender and the so-called gender ideology are endangering the “traditional families” and their Christian values, that are constructed as the pillars of the Hungarian nation.

a) Local – Hungarian approach

The analyzed interviews underline the political right’s approach toward the idea of social construction of gender. By reacting to it, through the texts, Orbán produces a binary classification of gender and

presents it as something eternal and unequivocal. Orbán's interpretation of the so-called "gender ideology", pointed out by Pető and Kováts (2017) fits the global right-wing populist discourse, which opposes gender equality, abortion, sexual education, LGBTQ rights, different kinds of family models, adoption of non-heteronormative and non-traditional families.

"In Hungary it seems ridiculous to even need to say that a father is a man and a mother is a woman, and that the purpose of marriage is for a man and a woman to commit to sharing their lives over the long term, so that they have offspring together and see their lives continue in the lives of their children." (Interview 32)

This quote reflects the Orbán government's full commitment on the side of the "traditional family", underlined by the 9th constitutional amendment (Government of Hungary, 2021a,3.) declaring that the mother is a woman and the father is a man. By changing the constitution of Hungary and stating that the mother is a woman and the father is a man, the government was underlying the one and only way of living in the given society, which is the model of the traditional family. One only can enjoy and have the "common people's" rights if their way of living does not deviate from the so-called traditional way of living in a family. By using the wording "ridiculous" and after stating the "natural order" of values and living, Wodak's (2015) moral evaluation of language legitimization can be identified. He was using the strength of the values of the "traditional family" which is defined as higher than the values of each individual (Linnamäki 2022, Hernández 2016).

Through the interviews by referring to his understanding of gender, Orbán uses the wording of "gender thing", not elaborating on the meaning and his insight of the term, but adding a negative moral value to it by saying that "*Hungary is a normal country*":

"And this gender thing will be on the table – which a normal Hungarian doesn't even understand, because these are the problems of such peripheral life situations that they don't concern 99 per cent of people. Hungary is a normal country." (Interview 32)

Here the dichotomy of "us", the normal people and normal Hungary is contrasted to "them", the allegedly 1% of Hungarians, who are pushed to the periphery in the discourse are well presented. By saying that a normal Hungarian does not even understand this phenomenon of gender, he tried to alienate the term and its understanding of Hungarian society.

Another topic that appears in this field, is the protection of the children as the responsibility and will of the “traditional families” and parents: *“kindergarten children don’t want to change sex without their parents’ consent. That’s because the law prohibits it.”* (Interview 48) In this above-mentioned quotation, he mixes up the meaning of sex and gender, and implies that there exists “them”, a group of people, who promote the idea that children should “change their sex”, which is against the children’s and parent’s will and the law. Does not highlight or give any explanation of the social construction of gender and the differences between sex and gender as it was referred by Mikkola (2022) that gender and sex do not exist side by side, they carry different meanings, and that someone’s sex does not have a direct understanding of its gender. Through the texts, he empathizes with the difficulty of raising a child and highlights that this so-called gender ideology and the so-called gender-madness make it even harder than it should be.

“Raising children is difficult. You’ve clearly encountered that, and so have I. I know that the most difficult time is in puberty, when children’s sexual and social behaviour is developing. We can also remember from our own lives that it was a difficult situation, and it takes time: not everyone likes you, sometimes you feel disappointed. But the answer is not to provoke them into changing sex. We must encourage them to try to live with the physical and mental features that they have, and thus to find their places in the adult world.”
(Interview 33)

As we can see in this quote, he appears as a parent, becoming even more the essential part of the “us”, a parent, whose main concern is the family and the health of the children. In Orbán’s understanding, gender is equal to one’s sex change, which leads to an unhealthy and dangerous lifestyle, that differs from how the “normal” Hungarians live: in heteronormative, “traditional families”. By transforming gender as a social construction, to “gender” as an ideology, it is used besides of others, erasing sex education in schools (Graff, 2022) in the name of protection.

b) Western – EU approach

A strong division between Western Europe and the Central – Eastern region of the continent can be determined in the interviews of Prime Minister Viktor Orbán regarding gender. The dichotomy of “us” and “them” is well-built through the interviews. The “us” are the Hungarians, the parents, the “normal

people”, and the “them” are the Western societies, EU leaders, gender lobbyists, and non-heteronormative and non-traditional families.

“In Western Europe, these exceptions – who, as you’ve said, now identify ninety, or heaven knows how many, ways of living together – are themselves sometimes uncertain about how to identify or define themselves”. (Interview 32)

Orbán uses the practice of “othering”, in Lennon and Alsop (2020) understanding the meaning of “others” in different contexts could refer to different actors. In this case by referring to “others”, he is referring to Western societies. Orbán also states that Hungary represents the “normal” society, where people live “normal” lives, and the so-called “gender-ideology” and gender identity is just an imported conception by “them”, by the Western societies.

By reflecting on the EU's approach to the so-called gender ideology, Orbán accuses the EU leaders that they are not making laws and regulations in order to protect and serve the people of the EU, instead they normalize a phenomenon that represents the minority and protect them in counter to “normal” people and families:

“Behind this whole gender debate I see a general phenomenon: in the West they want to show understanding towards a particular group of people representing a very small percentage of the population; but instead of tolerating them, identifying and accepting their differentness, they pretend that they represent the normal order of life, and they convert the rules relating to the exception into rules for human life in general. (Interview 31)

By using the term “tolerate”, Orbán suggests that these people’s opinions, practices and way of life differ from the „normal order” yet still should be tolerated, taking into consideration that they are the minority, the exceptions and “we” are the majority, the normality. He accuses the West of the deconstruction of “normativity” (Graff, 2022), which is equal to the destruction of the “traditional family” form. In this above-mentioned context, “these people” or the “others” refers to gender identity by saying that: *“identify ninety, or heaven knows how many, ways of living together – are themselves sometimes uncertain about how to identify or define themselves.”*

Through the interviews, the responsibility of the Western countries is often pointed out, and also that the EU politicians did not take seriously enough the danger that “gender” means to the people and the families.

“And in Western Europe they started by turning a blind eye to this sort of gender insanity, thinking that it wasn’t a child protection issue but a lifestyle trend, and that it would just go away. But then it didn’t fade away but became organized. (Interview 51)

By using the wording of “gender insanity” it underlines his understanding of gender and contrasts it with child protection. Gender is insane and frivolous and child protection which in this case means the opposition of gender is sane and serious. Altogether with the Western countries’ responsibility, Orbán links the popularization of “gender madness” to international organizations.

“Pressure groups and lobbying organisations have formed, backed by a large, global liberal media network. All this is being done in an attempt to make our children believe that the fact that they’re boys or girls at birth can be changed, and that such a change would be the solution to some of the problems in their lives”. (Interview 51)

Through strong anti-gender campaigns and discourses, the PM tries to strengthen the traditional gender roles and norms by presenting Western societies as chaotic ones, where children are in danger, in contrast to Hungary, where the state protects its people from the so-called gender madness. Through the interviews, Orbán is speaking to them and to the common people, stirring up anti-elitist sentiments. He does not talk about the differences between sex and gender, these two terms are meant as one, and by this, he suggests that one’s sex determines one’s roles and norms in a given society.

7.2.2. “Them” – as LGBTQ

"In Hungary there are laws relating to homosexuality. They are based on an extremely tolerant and patient approach. Hungarians are very tolerant in relation to this phenomenon. In fact Hungarians are so patient that we even accept provocations of this kind with patience – although not without comment. So we can safely say that as regards homosexuality Hungary is a patient, tolerant country. But there is a red line that must not be crossed, and this is how I would sum up my opinion: “Leave our children alone.” (Interview 30)

Besides gender, LGBTQ people's and communities' questions became crucial in the public and political discourse as well. Although registered partnership for same-sex couples was legalized in 2009 in Hungary, the institution of marriage is still unreachable. In the past decade, anti-LGBTQ communication has strengthened, a fairytale book was banned because it presented homosexual couples (Hyde, 2021), and in 2022 an anti-LGBTQ referendum was held. The referendum was called by the Fidesz ruling party, and its official purpose was to protect children from "LGBTQ propaganda". The so-called "Child-protection" referendum was invalid since less than 50% of the eligible voters took part in it.

a) Local – Hungarian approach

Through the analyzed interviews Orbán problematizes the LGBTQ question. He talks about LGBTQ "propagandists" educational presence in schools as a threat to children's "healthy" development. These kinds of framings of LGBTQ issues are not exceptional, these are present all-over European countries, and on a global scale too, mostly presented not just by right-wing conservative governments, but also by their alliances, just as transnational networks, such as the World Congress of Families, and also by the Catholic Church itself (Graff, 2022).

"We also don't want our children to see and experience things that are harmful and dangerous to their development, to their healthy development. This is why we need to create a very sophisticated legal regulation on this" (Interview 39)

By using the words "harmful" and "dangerous", the prime minister tells it explicitly that LGBTQ is something that they have to oppose, it is a phenomenon against which the children must be abhorred. Orbán puts himself and the ruling government into a position where they are the protectors against "them", using it as one of the main tools of right-wing politics. As a consequence, the protection of children and the role of the government is inseparable. Only the given right-wing government, in the case of Hungary, only Orbán and his government is capable of playing the role of the savior of the "traditional family", not allowing "rainbow activists" into schools in order to "sensitize" children:

"First of all, the state has the right to accept or reject this – but mostly to reject it, because only appropriately trained people are allowed to deal with children. Secondly, a parent has

the right – even if the state has already approved – to say, “Thank you, Dear State, but no thank you. You may consent to this, but as a parent I have the right to ensure that my child isn’t exposed to something like this.” (Interview 33)

By saying that *only appropriately trained people are allowed to deal with children*, delegitimizing and excluding everyone and everything that differs from their point of view and everything that does not fit into the right-wing conservative ideology. This quote illustrates the second approach of Orbán’s discourse towards LGBTQ issues. He plays like he is only giving the tools, but the decision was already made by the parents. By this he assigns the responsibility to parents, and suggests that the Hungarian “traditional families” are the ones who reject any kind of LGBTQ education, not the current ruling government: *“Parents protect their children and concern themselves with their healthy development. And the state exists to help parents in this” (Interview 42)*. Orbán’s familism is noticeable in how he emphasizes the power of parents in deciding how to raise their children, and represents his government as the actor who ensures this right. He highlights the importance and the value of the idealized “traditional family” and everything and everyone else if ordered under it, even the government. The opposite and hierarchical “othering” can be identified through the data. The “us” are the government, the “traditional family”, and the parents, and the “others” are the LGBTQ activists.

The third approach toward LGBTQ allocates the majority to “us” and the minority to “them”. By using the technique of *othering* presented by Wodak, (2015), he buries the differences between the “us” and “them”, the corrupt others (elites) and the pure people which in this case are the “traditional families” of Hungary.

“We don’t want to accept that they tell us what should happen in schools; we parents will do so. We must make it very clear that a small minority cannot constitute the basis of general regulations, and people choosing a way of life that is different from the traditional family model — from our way of life — must understand that, too”.
(Interview 45)

By using the working of “we” he pictures himself as one of the “us”, one of the Hungarian parents whose children are in danger and have to be protected. He places himself against the “evil elite” which is threatening normality, namely the “traditional family”. Moreover, in this quote Orbán declares that the “traditional family” model is the only one that includes the majority, the “us”, the Hungarians, and all the “others” are the exceptions, the minority, the danger. The hierarchized structure between “us” and

“them” and the unequal power distribution can be pointed out as well: *“But they can’t demand that they serve as the starting point for general regulation; they’re the exceptions.”* (Interview 45) They are not treated equally; they are exceptions that need to be dealt with.

Regarding child protection against LGBTQ activists, Orbán attributes positive qualities to “us”, and illustrates Hungarians, including himself, as fighters for freedom at all stakes:

“But here there’s something much more important at stake than our own freedom: this is about our children’s freedom, and about the freedom to have the right to educate our children. When it comes to Hungarians’ children, something moves us viscerally, and touches our deepest instincts. In Hungary children are sacred. We cannot allow sexual propagandists to rampage through our schools.” (Interview 41)

As it can be interpreted, the language becomes more persuasive and direct regarding LGBTQ activists and education, describing them as sexual propagandists. To legitimize his own ideology and point of view, he is using the rhetoric of moral evaluation, referring to “traditional values” and instincts to protect the future. By analyzing the interviews, it is interesting to see how Orbán frames the “Child Protection” referendum, ergo the question of LGBTQ-related educational material. He highlights that the importance of this act is the protection of the Hungarian families and children, besides that it is visible that it is a discriminatory step toward LGBTQ people and communities. The timing of the referendum was not coincidental, it was held during the national elections, so it also served as a trigger, to point out that the Hungarian opposition wanted to deprive the families of the tools to raise their children and to promote the non-traditional family model. In contrast to that, there is the government and Viktor Orbán who is able to save the Hungarians from such evil acts.

b) Western – EU approach

Orbán highlights the role of international actors, who spoke up against the Hungarian “Child Protection” act. One of the critics was the Dutch Prime Minister, Mark Rutte. In his answer, Orbán clearly draws the line between “us” the Hungarians, and “them”, in this case, EU member state leaders and “the people”, NGOs, and LGBTQ activists.

“he thinks he has the right to tell the Hungarian people how they should live, how they should think, how they should raise their children, and what they can and they can’t

do in school. He will tell us this from Amsterdam or The Hague. This isn't an unusual attitude. He's a prime example, but there are some others who have somehow inherited these bad instincts from their European colonialist past". (Interview 33)

Orbán speaks up against the “Western” standpoint, and uses Wodak’s (2015) rhetoric of mythopoesis, which refers to narratives from the past that are used to legitimize his own point of view. By creating a strong distinction between “us” and “them”, he says that LGBTQ communities and people would not exist in Hungary, it is just a result of a force that was pushed from outside.

Through the interviews, the superiority of the Hungarians is pointed out, by saying that in Hungary the protection of the child is one of the main duties of the families and the government is serving the traditional families’ decisions. Contrary to that in Western Europe, where the families and the importance of family are not valued but questionable:

“And they believe it’s the duty of the state to limit the exclusive rights of parents, and to allow – in a state-organised way – children to be introduced to sex education material at a very early age”. (Interview 33)

He figures that Hungary does respect the opinion and the will of the “traditional families” and the governmental regulations and laws are the tools for the families regarding child protection. In Western Europe, the governments take out from the families' hands the opportunities to raise their children as they want, instead forcing them to accept the will of the governments, NGOs, and LGBTQ activists.

The line between “us” the people (Hungarians, traditional families), and “them” the elite (LMBTQ activists, homosexuals, NGOs, Western elites) is visibly drawn, and with this populist rhetoric, attempts to consolidate his power more. The continuous comparisons to Western countries serve the purpose of showing that this is a “foreign ideology”, which does not exist in Hungary, it is a force on us by the “elite”.

The whole discourse about LGBTQ is very one-sided, excluding non-heterosexual people and same-sex couples. The discourse is deeply hierarchized, the “traditional families” and heterosexual couples are presented as the normality, while the Hungarian way of life is being endangered by the West.

7.2.3. “Them” – as immigration

“For us this is not a human rights issue, and for the European people, also, this is not primarily a human rights issue, but a security issue. No one wants to give the keys of their home to complete strangers, or to take their doors and the windows off their hinges. So the people need security, and they expect their elected leaders to guarantee safety and security in their lives. But accepting a flood of migrants makes a safe and secure life impossible. Hungary is firmly standing its ground on this because we – and because I personally – proclaim the principle that the security of the people comes first” (Interview 2)

Since the summer of 2015, the “migration crisis” has become one of the vital topics of the Hungarian government. A strong anti-immigration rhetoric has been built and used effectively by the ruling right-wing government, and their anti-immigration messages and counter-narratives on this issue have been successfully spread by several state-owned media outlets (Farkas, 2022). To intensify the public discourse about immigration, in 2015 the southern border barrier was built, and in 2016 a referendum was held about the refugee crisis and against the EU mandatory migration quota. The immigration “crisis” became the political communication’s leading topic and political issue. Viktor Orbán positions himself as the opposer of the “Willkommenskultur” (“welcoming culture”), which, according to him, was introduced by the former German chancellor Angela Merkel.

a) Local – Hungarian approach

Through the years in many European countries on political and public discourse, anti-gender and immigration issues are intertwined (see. Graff 2022 pp.114-137, Lennon & Alsop, 2020 pp.122-1), since both anti-gender and immigration issues are presented as threats to the “traditional family” as the main pillar of society. Familism as we know is threatened by these two main enemies in Hungary as well. As it is visible from the analyzed interviews, one of the primary approaches is immigration being a threat. The Hungarian prime minister, Viktor Orbán emphasizes the negative qualities of “them”, and the positive ones of “us”. The dichotomous discourse about immigration is polarized between the two main actors, “us” who are protecting the “*cultural homogeneity*” (Interview 2) as one of the main aspects of

the national identity, and the “others”. The latter is the “illegal immigrants” who threaten Hungarian families and do not have any respect for women. It is important to note, that Orbán differentiate the Muslim world and the immigrants:

“The Muslim world cannot be equated with the flood of migrants, with those who broke down the border fence at Röszke or with that appalling man in Bicske who told a Hungarian woman that she should be pleased he did not rape her.” (Interview 3),

In this above-mentioned quotation he highlights the risks, stating that *“this is not primarily a human right issue, but a security issue” (Interview 2)*. The analyzed texts are persuasive and manipulative, using children as one of the main arguments against the threat that migration means *“parents should imagine their children asking them fifteen years from now why this was allowed to happen in our country” (Interview 2)*. As the above-mentioned quote illustrates, Orbán suggests that the issue of immigration is a shared responsibility, with the main goal is the protection of the families and Hungarian children.

A hierarchizing division between “us” (Hungarians) and “them” (migrants) can be identified in almost all of the interviews, complimenting the Hungarian nation and families *“we Hungarians are a good-natured people who help others” (Interview 4)*, at the same time linking immigration to terrorism, aggression, and violence against women: *“women are endangered by migration (Interview 14)”*.

The usage of rhetorical questions is another linguistic element, present in the interviews regarding the question of immigration and cultural homogeneity and projects it on equality between men and women.

“... will equality between men and women not be self-evident to everyone living in Hungary, will our wives, daughters and parents be safe? And the list of questions could go on. So the future of Hungary is at stake” (Interview 4).

The role of rhetorical questions is to bring attention to a specific topic. In this case it is used to link certain issues together, Orbán suggests, that immigration of Muslims automatically threatens equality between men and women. Rhetorical questions also work as an effective argument: as seen above Orbán points out all the “negative” aspects that migration could mean and by it also proposes a solution.

From the analyzed interviews it can be argued that Orbán is using populist rhetoric in connection to immigration. He divides the actors into two categories, firstly by putting the Hungarians into a pure

and moral position against the “illegal immigrant. Saving the “cultural homogeneity” also means “saving” the “traditional family” and its values, which means conserving the patriarchal social orders that treat men as a privileged group and women as the subordinated ones, but still maintaining the self-identity as the bastion of gender equality.

Although the different meanings of gender equality can be explored concerning family policies, domestic violence, and gender equality policies. As is visible from the Hungarian family policies that I have introduced above (Linnamäki, 2011) and from the analyzed interviews, Orbán’s understanding of gender equality is based on neopatriarchy and neoliberal structure. Women are the ones who need to fulfill their motherhood by doing all the caring and household work and besides that also anticipate the labor market. Accepting gender equality in this case means accepting that women and men fulfill their traditional roles and norms and following the values of the “traditional family”. In terms of domestic violence, the unratified Istanbul convention supports his understanding of gender equality and his determination to prevent domestic abuse.

When Orbán talks about illegal immigrants as threats who are violent and aggressive, he claims that they are different from the Europeans and the Hungarian people, and their aim is to deconstruct the “traditional family”. Regarding the socio-economic aspect of immigration, Orbán refers to solving the current demographic issue not by immigrants but by family policies. These policies are very exclusive toward working-class people by being tied to such conditions that are not favorable for the above-mentioned marginalized people.

b) Western – EU approach

Through the interviews, the responsibility of the EU leadership regarding illegal immigration is pointed out, and then constructs another enemy “the elite” of the European Union who do not care about the people and their families. He refers to them as the “elite” who do not care about the people and families who are in real danger because of immigration: “*their wives and children are not as endangered as the ordinary people’s family*” (Interview 15). Orbán points out the responsibility of NGOs and other Western countries by saying that the “others” are working on the popularization of new family models and fighting for the liberalization of drugs and he is fighting for the protection of the “traditional family” in terms of immigration.

“Over there few children are being born, as is also the case here; but there they’ve given up hope that the men and women of their own nations will be able to overcome this demographic crisis. And they’ve said that if things aren’t working out – if not enough German, Belgian or French children are being born – they’ll have to make up for the shortfall” (Interview 47)

As it is detectable from the interviews there are multiple sets of “others”: immigrants, Western countries and non-governmental organizations.

He raises the women's question to a higher, European level by saying that:

“...all European culture is based on the fact that we accept equality between men and women. Men acknowledge that they must behave and conduct their lives regarding women as their equals, and always give them the respect which is due – or even somewhat more. This is the cornerstone of European culture. This will be called into question, however, if Europe is transformed into an immigrant continent by masses of people arriving here from outside cultures.” (Interview 14.).

He pictures Europe and all its countries, including Hungary, as the citadel of equality between men and women, however it is not specified what equality means for him. In order to condemn and oppose “illegal” immigration, Orbán uses the rhetoric of moral evaluation by using “European” values, such as equality between men and women to legitimize his standpoint.

8. Discussion and Conclusion

In this chapter, I will summarize the findings of my thesis and discuss these all together with the theoretical background and methodological approach in order to get a clear understanding of the connection between the “traditional family”, gender and the enemies created in the analyzed interviews. By answering the research questions and summarizing my key findings I will also elaborate on a broader perspective on the given issues and in the end, I will discuss the possibilities of further research on the theme.

8.1. Main Findings

The analyzed data suggests that the role of the “traditional family” plays a central role in Orbán’s gender discourse. The term “traditional family” and its understanding as the theoretical concept of familism presented by Hernández and Bámaca-Colbert (2016), - suggest that the unity of the family is more precious and valuable than the individuals that are forming it, moreover, it is presented as the main important pillar of the Hungarian society – it is constructed as the exact opposite of gender and the so-called “gender-ideology”. The “traditional family” is presented as pure, as eternal, and as something that has always been the only way of living together, and the so-called gender - as how I presented in in earlier chapters (Graff 2022 pp.1-14, Kováts 2018, Vida & Bellè 2022) - is presented as evil, as the unknown new, that deconstructs the sanctuary of the “traditional family”.

Through the interviews, it turned out that several “enemies” could be identified against the “traditional family”, that are embedded into the ongoing gender discourse in Hungary (ch.3.3). These enemies were, “gender”, LGBTQ propagandists and “illegal” immigrants. All of these above-mentioned enemies are framed as destructive to the “traditional family”, and also these are always framed as “others”. The same arguments could be detected and identified through the data over and over again. Within “gender” as one of the “enemies”, includes trans questions, non-heteronormative families, abortion supporters, etc. LGBTQ “propagandists” could be understood as people and also as national and international actors, which are presented as a threat to Hungarian children and as a result of the so-called gender ideology. Immigration or immigrants as opposers to “traditional family” is framed as a threat to

security, women and also to “gender equality”, which in this case means the traditional roles and norms for men and women and ways of living, which serves the maintenance Fraser’s (1994) male breadwinner family model where the females experiencing economic insecurity, dependency, and subordination.

At the same time, immigration is intertwined with “gender-ideology” and is used for stigmatizing immigrants in the name of protecting the “traditional family (Lennon & Alsop, 2020 pp.122-15). Moreover, both are presented as Western pressure and are forced into Hungarian society against Hungarians’ will. Immigrants are presented as strong men, who do not respect women, who are aggressive and mean a threat to everyone, especially to women.

I used familism and intersectionality as two key theoretical concepts of this research. The notion of familism introduced by Esping-Andersen (1999), assisted me to identify Orbán’s understanding on the so-called “traditional family”. When he refers to “traditional family” or the ideal family model that should exist in Hungary, he adds Christian conservative values and traditional norms, roles, beliefs and attitudes. The framework of familism also enabled me to point out how the pro-family or conservative understanding of families goes hand in hand with family policies tackled by Grzebalska and Pető (2018), and putting the “traditional family” in a pedestal as higher and valuable institution than any others and forming as the main pillar of the society (Dupcsik & Tóth, 2015). Through the analyzed discourse I was able to identify the connection between the “traditional family” and the strengthening conservative family policies created by the Orbán governments.

Crenshaw’s (1989) notion of intersectionality and Walby’s (2009) approach toward it, namely analyzing these “complex inequalities” in a way of forming a critique and point out the false overgeneralization toward these, it assisted me to identify the multiple forms of inequalities through the analyzed interviews. Moreover, Walby’s approach helped to point out and reflect on overgeneralization, regarding to disadvantaged groups through the discourse, such as women, immigrants, LGBTQ people, and so on.

8.2 “Us” – “Them” dichotomy

8.2.1. The meaning of “us”

In order to get a clear picture of the meaning and the supporting aspect of the “traditional family” in the discourse, first I have analyzed which are the aspects that support the identity against which define themselves.

The analyzed data demonstrate how right-wing populist politics works by creating a very polarized audience. As how also Wodak (2015) pointed out, their main tool of creating scapegoats, framing themes in order to create fear among the people, always defining themselves as the pure people who are against the evil elite. According to findings, the key perspectives on how the “us” was defined are as protectors of women, families, and borders, as protectors of national superiority, and sovereignty and also as protectors of Christianity. In all three cases, the “traditional family” as a central actor was presented, by referring to Hungary as a unique and sovereign country. One of the main aspects that was pointed out was the unique “Hungarian model” that tends to promote competitiveness, building a workforce economy, strong family policy and at the same time strengthening the national identity. By creating the so-called competitiveness, the maximum unemployment time-period could be 90 days and the state provides 60% of the previously earned money for that time period. By “promoting” competitiveness, namely in terms of “traditional family” both men and women have to take part in the labor market to make a living, and at the same time women also have to “fulfill” their roles at home, and keeping up Fraser’s (1994) male bread-winning family model.

In terms of protecting the families, Orbán argues that the unique Hungarian family policy presented by Linnamäki (2011), is the key to that. The policy is protecting middle- and upper-class women and families, and it is built on inequalities and exclusion. There is no place for inclusion, equality, and intersectionality. It excludes working-class women and families, and also non-heterosexual couples since it is written in the Hungarian constitution, that a family could be defined as the father being a man and the mother being a woman, any other ways of living together it could not be considered as family in the eye of the law.

Just like in any other country, where right-wing populists are in power, the female body is an essential part of their discourse, in a direct or a hidden way. When Orbán opens up about the issue of

demography in Hungary also stating that immigration is not an option for them in case of resolving the above-mentioned issues, he unravels the importance of the female body (Mostov, 2021). The Fundamental Law of Hungary states that law protects the fundamental right of life from the moment of conception, in other words, the fetus has the same rights as the woman who is carrying it. This law is a straight way to the strictness of abortion and full control over the female body. Although the current Fidesz government is not considering to propose any change in the current form of the rights to abortion, or not straightly, but the “favorable” family policies that reward women who raised more than three children with tax and house benefits, the protection of the fetus and being the flagbearer of Christianity shows a straight way to it. The strong self-determination as Christians which in this case refers to Hungarians, helps to build a strong antipathy against immigration and serves as another reason for Orbán to be the protector of the Hungarians. At first, they created the image of the immigrant as a threat and after they offered help and protection, from something that in most cases is not really a threat. Protection is needed also in the case of Christianity; all kinds of inclusion and discrimination are justified by it.

8.2.2. The meaning of “them”

In order to build successful right-wing neoliberal populist politics, the creation of scapegoats as one of the main tools of right-wing politics presented by Wodak (2015) is inevitable. My research data suggest that the Hungarian Prime Minister, Viktor Orbán situated the “traditional family” into the center of the discourse (as the opposer of gender), and also attached to it values by which they also define themselves (unique nation, superior, protectors of families, Christians etc.). The enemies that serve as opposers of the “traditional family” in this given discourse are “gender”, LGBTQ, and immigration. These three main “actors” were defined as “them” through the analyzed data.

In terms of gender as “them”, Orbán does not refer to gender as the social construction of men and women, but he broadens the meaning and uses it as a floating signifier (Graff 2022 pp.15-37), fulfilling it with a different meaning, that contains all kinds of approaches and issues, such as trans-related questions, people or groups of people labeled as anti-family, pro-gay, anti-life, etc. Orbán’s interpretation of the so-called “gender-ideology” fits the global understanding of it by the right-wing conservatives tackled by Pető and Kováts (2017), namely opposing gender equality, abortion, sexual education, LGBTQ rights, alternative family models, and the adoption for non-heterosexual couples.

“Them” as LGBTQ people and communities in the analyzed data was mainly built on the anti-LGBTQ referendum that was held in Hungary in 2022. The referendum’s official name was the child protection referendum against the EU’s LGBTQ issues and pressure on the Hungarian government. One of the main criticisms of it was that it conflates homosexuality and pedophilia, but besides banning the “gay propaganda” it also limits the sex-education in schools, only registered NGOs with the approval of the government could go to schools to discuss the topic of sex and sexuality. The Hungarian government gave full access to the parents to decide if they want or do not want to teach their children this topic, and since the government decides who can and cannot teach the children, homosexuality as a topic is totally excluded from the school curriculum. The law that was supposed to protect the children from the unhealthy and dangerous LGBTQ propaganda, pushed them into a greater danger, specifically into the lack of knowledge about sex and sexuality. Teenage childbearing in Hungary is higher than the EU average, although worth mentioning that this is firstly a class issue. Altogether with the above-mentioned issues, teenage children's understanding of violence, sexuality, and abortion would remain unexplained and causing further disadvantages through life.

The issue of immigration and “illegal” immigrants is framed and presented as the third “them” through the discourse of the Prime Minister, Viktor Orbán (see.ch. 7.2.3.). It is communicated as a security issue that threatens the Hungarian women and children. All the immigrants are identified with negative qualities, such as terrorism, aggression and violence, moreover, also as a threat to Hungarian “*gender equality*”. Not once was it contextualized from “their” (immigrants) point of view or as a human rights issue. By being presented as aggressive and violent it alienated the Hungarian society or part of it from being empathetic toward these people. This above-mentioned portrayal was used in 2015’s so-called migration crisis, as opposed to this in 2022 when the Ukraine – Russian war was renewed the discourse about Ukrainian immigrants has changed. The Ukrainian refugees were the good ones who needed care and help, not like the non-European refugees who were endowed with negative attributes.

In both the “us” and “them” parts a local Hungarian and a global, mostly Western approach or reflection could be identified. In terms of “us”, the local approach describes the purity and superiority of the in-group people, and the global, Western approach describes how these values and norms that built the “us” identity are opposed by the West. In terms of “them”, the local approach discusses the local “enemies” and also how the ruling government is opposing them. The global or Western approach discusses the “them” as the imported phenomenon that was forced into Hungary.

8.3. The “traditional family” and the gendered enemies

All through the discourse of the Hungarian Prime Minister, Viktor Orbán the so-called “traditional family” is put into the center of discussion, and with it, as the data suggests, the discourse is framed in a gendered way. While the so-called gender and “gender ideology” is the primary enemy of the “traditional family” in Hungary, immigration, LGBTQ communities and people are framed in such a way as well (see. Graff, 2022 pp. 38-67, Băluță & Tufiş 2023). Moreover, the self-definition of “us” also reflects and involves “traditional” gender differences and stereotypical norms and roles presented and tackled by Fraser (1994). When Orbán talks about gender equality he refers to these gender roles and norms that men and women have to fulfill and in addition in the name of equality, women have the “chance” and right to participate in the labor market as well.

When Orbán talks about Hungarian women in general, in fact, he does not include lower- and working-class women, and any kind of ethnic or sexual minority women. When he refers to Hungarian families and the family policy (see .ch.3.4.) that aims to help these families, based on the policy and the Hungarian law he refers only to the middle-class “traditional families” who serve the right-wing conservative political and economic system.

The current form of the capitalist economic and social structure serves the principles of neoliberalism and neopatriarchy in terms of “traditional family” as well. Without changing the structure of the system and demolishing capitalism and with it the neoliberal and neo patriarchal structures, on what “traditional family” is built, a significant change cannot occur.

8.4. Conclusion

The aspiration of this thesis was to understand and highlight the role of the “traditional family” in Viktor Orbán’s gender discourse in the collected interviews between 2016 and 2022, given by the state owed Kossuth Radio. Moreover, I was interested in other enemies that were created in these interviews as opposers and enemies of the “traditional family”. I was also focusing on how these enemies are framed and gendered, in order to fit into the so-called gender ideology and make a part of the gender discourse in Hungary framed by the Prime Minister, Viktor Orbán. I have analyzed 53 interviews in the selected time period, focusing on how the determined keywords such as “gender”, “LGBTQ”, “immigration”,

“family”, “protection”, “Christianity”, “motherhood”, “Westernness-Brusselism” and “nation-superiority” are intertwining and framed with various kind of rhetoric tools in the discourse of gender and “traditional family”.

As a conceptual framework, I used familism and intersectionality. The notion of familism reveals the profound meaning and the superior understanding of the “traditional family” in the given discourse framed by right-wing conservative politics. Moreover, intersectionality reflects the multiple forms of inequalities in such discourse, regarding gender, class, race, sexuality, nationality, ethnicity, etc.

To analyze the interviews, I applied Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis. By applying it, I was able to focus on unpack the power structures in the discourse, the language structures and the features that were used in it. Moreover, to point out the sociological and ideological reasons, the motivation behind it, place it into a broader societal context, take into consideration the cultural norms and values and nonetheless with all of it draw a picture of the gender discourses as the enemy of the “traditional family” in the Prime minister’s, Viktor Orbán’s interviews. This current research brought the reader closer to understanding the current gender discourses in Hungary in the light of the “traditional family” as the center of it.

As the result suggests, in anti-gender discourses the “traditional family” is used to squeeze out and to exclude all and any kind of intersectionality, in cases of immigration, LGBT people and communities, marginalized social groups, any class differences, ethnicity etc. As an answer to that, the “traditional family” is used as sectional, separational, factional and local. The role of the “traditional family” in anti-gender discourses are very diverse. It is used as a superior institution compared to any other social institution, also the value of the family as a unit is highlighted. To keep this superior position, it is in order to its policies, traditional and cultural values, the feeling of inhesion in contrast to other social groups and people. In terms of the unity level, it is used to keep women oppressed, by selling as tradition, extend and re-build the patriarchal structure of the family, where women are the subordinated ones. Since all of the of the countries where anti-gender discourses are aloud (see. Alonso & Espinosa-Fajardo 2021, Stambolis-Ruhstorfer & Josselin 2017, Garbagnoli, 2017, Graff & Korolczuk, 2022, Pető & Kováts, 2017))and the governmental power is rightwing populist, which also means that are led by neoliberal economic ideas, the presence of the women in labour market is essential, the notion of the “traditional family” and its arrangement has been reinterpreted and formed into a neoliberal neo-patriarchal structure, in terms of which the exploitation of the women is restrengthened in labour market

as well not just in a domesticated way (Campbell, 2015). Another role of the “traditional family” is to keep the “us” and “them” division, in terms of questions of immigration, LGBT communities, and also other marginalized or ethnicized people and communities. “Traditional family” and its interpretation creates the possibility to maintain the heteronormative family, patriarchal and anti-gender discourses.

As I have mentioned before my research has a spacial, timeframe, and also discourse limitations, I only have analyzed the Hungarian prime minister, Viktor Orbán’s gender discourse in a very determined time frame and within the Hungarian border. This could open the door for further research such as broadening all of my limitations, analyzing the pro-government media discourses about gender and “traditional family” which are not limited within the border of Hungary, and also a tighter time-frame would give interesting results about the theme.

Another research opportunity could be comparative research, with the Critical Frame Analysis (CFA) which has been developed as a feminist research method, that analyzes discursive power dynamics in policy making. Of its complexity, which includes communication research, social movement theory, and critical policy studies the aim is to reveal various representations that socio-political actors offer about policy problems and solutions in policy documents. CFA, besides conducting qualitative and quantitative discursive research, also works as a comparative method by looking into three main aspects: diagnosis, prognosis and, call for action, and through to the power and voice of the political actors.

9. References

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10. Appendix

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