Religion and the State in Hungary

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Abstract

This thesis presents a number of Key questions which provide insights into the strength and power of the Church in Hungary today: revealing how the relationship between the state and the Church has changed in history. Before I seek to explore those questions I need to set out the historical context of the Church and religion in Hungary. This historical review will cover the way by which Hungary has come to the present time.

A key question is whether it a good thing to be close to the state? My historical overview suggests there may be dangers and this in part motivated the Communists to cut the link – leading to a persecution of Christianity. Nevertheless, it is important to ask whether the state's links with the Church are strong and or negative as in the pre-war period. I would like to explore in this thesis the relationships with the state, but also the motivations of those who attend and work in Churches and gain insights into aspects of their work which is based on state partnership and societal interventions.

In the course of this discussion I will give an overview of the sociological literature and the role of the Church and its links with the Church. Following on from this I will give an overview of the development of the Church in recent years, in particular its links with the Fidesz Government and present a case study of a traditional Church and a more progressive one and a number of interviews with Church leaders which will focus on their views on Church state relations.
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### Contents

Introduction.................................................................................................................................1

1. Literature Review ..........................................................................................................................1

1.1 Historical Background ...............................................................................................................2

1.2 Sociologists Perspectives .........................................................................................................4

1.3 During Communism ..................................................................................................................6

1.4 Religious Revival ......................................................................................................................9

1.5 Current Situation: The policy of Government .........................................................................11

2. Methodology ..................................................................................................................................14

2.1 Ethical Issues ............................................................................................................................14

2.2 Research Methods ....................................................................................................................15

3. Discussion and Analysis ..............................................................................................................16

3.1 Interviewees ............................................................................................................................16

3.2 Organisation before Communism ............................................................................................16

3.3 Views and experiences of Communism ....................................................................................17

3.4 Transition Society ....................................................................................................................19

3.5 Visual dimensions of the Church .............................................................................................20

3.6 The State: The current government ..........................................................................................24

3.7 Comparisons to the United States ...........................................................................................28

4. Conclusion ....................................................................................................................................30

Bibliography ....................................................................................................................................33

Appendices .......................................................................................................................................36
Introduction

Since the foundation of Hungary as a Christian country, many centuries have passed. In fact it has been a Christian state for around 1000 years since the reign of King István the first who attained the crown from the Pope (Fukuda & Sato, 2013). How has the significance of religion changed in the 20th century in Hungary? What is the role of religion in the Hungarian society? In effect, I would like to verify the influence and transformative political of religion in society, explore how it has adapted and responded to societal change. In turn, I will consider what is the relevance of the emerging new religious movements.

It is no exaggeration to say that “Church” and “Religion” was one of the most important institutions of Hungary in the past. Every day’s life, norms, behaviour, and even politics were affected by religion. Religion and Society had a relationship which was inextricable, for example, “are you religious?” would have been an irrelevant question for people because the answer was automatically “Yes”. However, times have changed.

This thesis presents a number of Key questions which provide insights into the strength and power of the Church in Hungary today: revealing how the relationship between the state and the Church has changed in history. Before I seek to explore those questions I need to set out the historical context of the Church and religion in Hungary. This historical review will cover what is the way by which Hungary has come to the present time.

1. Literature Review

In the following section of the thesis I give an overview of historical, policy and sociological literature.
1.1 Historical Background

A process of secularization has had more and more influence in Europe, including Hungary. It may be the case that, secularization was part of the process of modernization in Western Europe, but the situation of Central and Eastern Europe was not exactly similar. Those had crucially different factors; one of them was the inference of the soviet system which with its avowed belief in atheism clearly meant its support for the Church was tentative at best and more often restrictive (Török, 2003). Could we say that the process of secularization in Hungary went in the same way as in case of Western Europe? Probably not, because the effect of the communist ideology and socialist system cannot be ignored and clearly accelerated for a period the decline of the power and influence of the Church.

As I mentioned earlier, before the Second World War, Hungary could be called a “religious society”, everyday life passed, and was organized concerning religious activities such as Sunday church attendance and rituals; and sometimes even secular power depended on religion (Török, 2003). The Habsburg monarchy maintained close connections with the Church, because the Habsburg Monarchy was known to be a strict Catholic family. Christianity in the form of Roman Catholicism became widespread in the area governed by the Habsburg Monarchy, which included the places which were not Catholic before (岩崎, 2013). Partnership between state and Church was a prominent feature of policy. For instance, the Education Charter in 1777 made by the Habsburg Monarchy, in which schools began to be controlled by the state not only the Church (the protestant Church rejected this autonomy)(渡辺, 1996). Since Rudolf the first became Holy Roman Emperor, the Habsburg started to tie themselves with the Roman Catholic more strongly. The Habsburg basic philosophy was to unify the world by Christianity through Roman Catholicism, and, therefore, the Habsburg did crackdown on the Protestant and argued them to be un-Catholic. Finally, the Habsburg succeeded to dominate the Catholic Church in almost the whole empire area in the beginning of the 18th century (百瀬, 1995).

Strong links between the Church and State were evident in the post Habsburg period as reflected by the pre-war “kormányzó” Miklós Horthy who defeated the Communist regime established by Béla Kun from May to August 1919, because the people who were mostly strongly religious persons did not support the communist ideology.
(However, The Red Terror of Communist rule was replaced by the White Terror during the initial months after the counter revolution in which places where the communists/Jewish people lived were subject to persecution (Kornai, 2006). In his regime Horthy maintained close links with the Church, because his support base was the conservative class. In 1944, Ferenc Szálasi became Prime Minister and Head of State of Hungary as the Nazi puppet government after Horthy had suffered a downfall by Operation Panzerfaust. During this premiership, a large number of Jewish people were killed, there were some priests, for example András Kun, who supported these actions against Jewish people as well (Walter, 2003).

Thus, it can be seen that religion had a significant role in creating general values and answering the questions about human life. Public education was also influenced by religion, thus people could not really avoid religiosity. Those factors suggested that religion appeared not only in a private sphere (in the life of families and individuals) but also in a public sphere (politics, economics, education, etc.) at the time.

In 1950, the Hungarian People’s Republic was established following the Soviet form. In that period the existing Churches in the country lost their traditional roles, and an artificially constructed “official Church” appeared instead, which incorporated the existing Churches of Hungary, however although it should have been officially independent, it was more or less regulated by the government (Tomka, 1988). Then, according to one source 15 per cent of the adult population in Hungary belonged to one or more religious associations, however it did not mean that traditional habits and patterns had vanished fundamentally. Recently the rate of religiosity is higher as is evident from Hungarian Central Statistical Office which shows that the majority of people are belonging to Roman Catholicism, but it is also true that the system built on the communist ideology could have had a huge impact on the “secularization”1 of Hungary. Communists tried to avoid everything that could be related to religion or religiosity, due to the Marxist ideology; according to Karl Marx, religion was the opium of the people (Tomka, 1988).

However, if we are to believe statistics on Church attendance in Europe, many have beaten the drug. This fact leads to the question of whether the Church is important today. However, a number of European political leaders and parties still find value in

1 This word in this sentence means religious rate has changed before and after the socialism
proclaiming the influence of their faith or links with the Church. What is more, the current Hungarian Government is trying to be close to the Church, and Christianity (Tomka, 1993). For instance, the new Constitution which was drafted in 2011 reflects this relationship. I will explore more deeply this relationship in the section of the thesis titled: Current Situation: The policy of Government.

Is it a good thing to be close to the state? My historical overview suggests there may dangers and this in part motivated the Communists to cut the link leading at times to a persecution of Christianity. Nevertheless, it is important to ask whether the state's links with the Church are strong and or negative as in the pre-war period. I would like to explore in this thesis the relationships with the state, but also the motivations of those who attended and work in Churches and gain insights into aspects of their work which is based on state partnership and societal interventions.

In the course of this discussion I will give an overview of the sociological literature and the role of the Church and its links with the Church. Following on from this I will give an overview of the development of the Church in recent years, in particular its links with the Fidesz Government and present a case study of a traditional Church and a more progressive one and a number of interviews with Church goers which will focus on their views on Church state relations.

1.2 Sociologists Perspectives

In terms of Religion, a lot of sociologists have tried to understand the meaning of religion in society. I would like to confirm first what religion represents for some famous sociologists.

According to Emile Durkheim, society divides into two categories which are “the sacred” and “the profane”. He thinks that religion itself is also based on those two categories. People in the society have been tied to those beliefs which show what is related to sacred and profane. Beliefs and, religion, shape collective action for people in the society and develop a collective conscience and shared values and norms of society (Haralambos & Holborn, 1990). Although all things in the society, such as mysterious phenomenon, would not be explained by religion, it could be said that everything was related to/could be found in religious belief, because, when we consider where the “norm”, “values”, “rules” and even “law” came from, religion cannot be avoided as
Durkheim mentioned. I would say that those things which Durkheim found can be applied to all societies in the world.

According to Karl Marx, religion is the sign of an oppressed people, the sentiment of a heartless world and the reflection of soulless conditions. “It is the opium of the people” (Haralambos & Holborn, 1990, p.652). Even nowadays, this statement has given an impact to the people in the world. When we are considering this sense, who could say this is wrong? At least one aspect is definitely true, and lots of people favoured his argument in the twentieth century. In evidence, the people who mostly came from oppressed classes raised new religious movements against the ruling class and the form of religion they endorsed. The origin of Christianity was also raised by oppressed class people in ancient Rome. The logic is that the oppressed looked to a new religion which was Christianity which offered “salvation” and escape in the form of going to heaven after death, and, in order to get salvation, oppressed people could stand their life in the real world. This is the reason why the Church was a form of “opium” as Marx said, because suffering vanished or was numbed through the promise of salvation. On the other hand, religion is also an instrument of oppression especially for the state. Because, to put it simply, it is easy to control the people and the society under the name of God, and it keeps people in their place. Religion has been justifying the social stratification in the society and the stratification is justified by religion. From a Marxist perspective, ruling classes adopt religious beliefs to justify their position, and therefore, it is natural to maintain the connection between the Church and the state. Both of them, the state and the Church, would become strong with such interaction and alliance, and oppressed classes would remain in their subservient position (Haralambos & Holborn, 1990).

However, Marx did not completely reject religion itself. He explained that the evil is not religion, but society which has no hopes for people who must rely on such “opium”. He argued that the people should not count on religion for an afterlife, and should gain something in the real life. It should be noted that even Marx’s followers could not remove religious things in the society perfectly, including Hungary (Giddens, 1992). In fact, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics law restricted religious worship to designated Churches and other places of prayer, and there were 50,000 Russian Orthodox Churches before the 1917 revolution, but only about 4,000 remained by 1939. On the surface those finding suggests that religion had declined, but that decrease was
due to the ideology of the ruling class rather than the majority of the people in the population. In evidence, the number of baptized Orthodox Christians in the period 1947 till 1957 was 90 million, which is almost the same as in 1914. Since the end of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics period, in 1991, it can be said that the Church has attained an important role in state affairs and society (Haralambos & Holborn, 1990). As I mentioned before, Marxist ideology was unable to eradicate the influence of the Church and a kind of religion revivalism occurred in the wake of soviet collapse.

Max Weber, stated that religion is not always supported by conservative forces, rather, the opposite, religiously inspired movements have often produced dramatic social transformation. In his book of The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism, he tried to find the Capitalist worldview in Christianity, because most of the early entrepreneurs were Calvinists. As a result of entrepreneurial action economic development was stimulated, but their basic desire was to serve God. Material successes to them was the proof of God’s blessing. As Weber explained capitalists’ actions stemmed from the protestant perspective, he considered that religion had the possibility to affect the cultural life, social life, economic life and so on in the every societies (Giddens, 1992).

To understand religion and its role in society, these three sociologists can be helpful. To recap Durkheim said religion can be worked as functional tool in society. Marx argued that religion has ideology and this ideology could be the justification for exploitation. Weber thought, religion has a possibility to change society. Although the Churches supported slavery system at first, the Churches played an important role in the abolition struggle (Giddens, 1992). This demonstrates the multiple positive and negative roles the Church can have. I would like to use these theories to understand Hungarian religiosity. To assist this task the thesis explores in greater detail more recent history, exploring in depth the position of the Church in Communism and transition society.

### 1.3 During Communism

The dissolution of religion in society took place on two levels. First of all it was through the separation of the Church and the State. As I have already mentioned before, almost everything - including political power - had depended on religious and religion institutions (Church), but at the time of the socialist system, politics tried to
separate any form of religious power from the State. As a result, traditions and religious communities collapsed. It was a direct outcome of a centrally planned reorganization of the socio-economic structure of society. Secondly, the establishment of the Marxist ideology, which became the official state ideology, reconstructed the main social institutions as education, culture, etc. As a result of this process, religious teaching in school was abolished, newspapers regarding religion and religious books were hard to publish. The Hungarian State promoted Marxism and atheism (Tomka, 1988).

Hungary had no written constitution before the Second World War, and neither was there a civil code. Freedom of religion was guaranteed by Act XLIII issued in 1895, however, pre-war Hungarian “staatskirchenrecht” which means Canon Law had no power (Schanda, 2003). After the second war period fundamental changes appeared in the legal system. As the communists took power, a written constitution was promulgated in 1949. This constitution has been amended several times since. The original version provided the separation of Church and state and (from 1972 to 1989) also provided a leading role of the Marxist-Leninist party. As this party was based on non-religious and materialistic ideology, aristocracies - usually including strongly religious persons based on their high position in the non-secular social structure- had to lose their previous social status. Although religious freedom was mentioned in the Constitution as being guaranteed by the state, in reality open persecution in the 1950s gave way to harassment and administrative discrimination in the later periods of the regime. As a result, the religious rate of observance decreased dramatically (Schanda, 2003). What is more, consequently, the Churches including every denominations and sects against each other and could be the same power, which meant the bigger Churches such as the Roman Catholic, Reformed etc. lost power and the smaller Churches achieved higher levels of power than before, than hitherto (Tomka, 1993). People however considered themselves religious could not say “I am religious” publicly, because of political situation, so the validity of the statistics is highly questionable. People could have been religious in their minds confidentially (and in their private sphere) (Tomka, 1993).

During the second period of the socialist system (from the middle/end of the 1960s) the approach to religion changed, mainly due to the agreement between the State and the Church, because it became clear that religion could not be destroyed so easily not from institutional nor from an individual level, the State was not able to wipe out the
effects of religion even from the State itself (Tomka, 1988). As I wrote above, the Christian way of thinking did not vanish; people created and gathered in small religious communities or groups, more individual level of religiosity also appeared, such as the religious education of the children in inside the families, in a private sphere. Indeed, in 1978 the religious rate of observance was about 44%, especially among young people from the 60s to the 80s. It could be said that the cause was a direct political strategy as the State “surveillance” became softer than the first period of the system. The policy of the State could allow greater religiosity, but it could also be said that the State could not remove religion from people’s mind (Tomka, 1988).

However, also at the same time, economic factors appeared. There was an economic boom in Hungary in the 70s and then many new ideas arrived, new forms of policies appeared such as modernization, rationalization, those that could have negative effect on the level of support for religious institutions. But, an economic crisis occurred in the 80s, the hopes of modernization and wealth were decreased, people turned back to religion, better say religious institutions as “religious networks” and institutions could provide not only mental but material help. As a result, religious rates became higher. It was one of a case of secularization and then de-secularization (Andorka, 1995). But, if religious rates of observance became higher, it did not mean that people sought just “salvation” (Haralambos & Holborn, 1990).

When the Communist system ended, according to the results of Tomka, people should have expected from the Church to help in the realization of democracy, take part in the education as well as give a hand for the society in social problems and moral questions (Tomka, 1995). However, on the contrary, people’s expectation had changed, they did not expect the Church to fulfill the same roles as before. It would have suggested that Churches had more power again, but they would not come back to the similar position (Tomka, 1995). During the socialist system, Churches were similarly treated, somehow independent from their size or importance before, and after the transition they could not go back to their same position. Also, religion itself has a lot of varieties nowadays, such as, occultism, esoteric, Zen meditation and so on. They have become a more private concern and are highly individualistic, chosen by the individual, not given by religious institutions (Pollack, 2003).
1.4 Religious Revival

After the first democratic election in 1990, the state could have played an active role in establishing an institutional legal framework and providing funds to Churches in order to ensure the free exercise of religious practice, but the state should not enter into institutional entanglement with any organization that is based on a religion or ideology. Freedom of religion and freedom from religion are equally protected. The state and the Churches must not interfere with each other. However, the state is expected to help Churches even by using public funds if necessary (Schanda, 2003).

According to the Hungarian laws, the Church must have been founded by 100 private individuals, has to have a charter, and must present elected organs of administration and representation. (According to current the regulation, at least 0.1 per cent of the national population of individuals can establish a Church). However, some individual members of Parliament drafted motions to change the law in 1993 and 1998, hoping to raise the necessary minimum number of founders to 10,000 or to require that the given faith has been established in the country for at least 100 years. A feasible compromise on the amendment would be to exclude the possibility of registering groups of non-religious character as “Churches”. It has changed a bit nowadays in that it should require at least 0.1 per cent of the national population signature to start the registration process (Schanda, 2003, 水島&佐藤, 2013).

From an educational perspective, education of religion is not obligatory in public schools, but is expected to provide objective information about moral/ethical and philosophical knowledge. On the contrary, Churches have a right to provide religious education freely on the content of the religion classes, the Church and the leadership of the religious schools has to decide on the curricula they teach to students. Churches are then free to express their belief during the religion classes; they do not have to provide neutral education. Religious education is not an intended part of the public school’s task, but it is a form of introduction into the life and belief of a given religious community (Schanda, 2003). In addition, the education nowadays in elementary school has an elective course which the parents of the student can decide "Religion lesson" or "Ethics/non-religious". It would appear that there is a 50/50 (approximate) divide
between those who choose the religious option and the non-religious one. The Church can give this lesson (水島&佐藤, 2013).

Churches are free to perform any public activity that has not been expressly reserved to the state, so Churches can provide freely any kind of action within the law, it can even give education in the public schools. Therefore the Catholic Church might have a great influence even today. The denomination that was able to strongly resist political and ideological pressure during communism was the Catholic Church. By contrast, the Lutheran Churches were more negatively affected by the political pressure (Tomka, 1995).

Compared with Western Europe, there are some highly secularized countries in Eastern Europe in terms of traditional indicators of religion: Church membership, Church attendance, belief in God. The Czech Republic, East Germany, Estonia, and Russia belong to these highly secularized countries. Without doubt the high percentage of non-religious people can be attributed, to a considerable extent, to the political repressive measures taken against Churches and believers by the socialist regimes in the period before 1989. In all the countries mentioned above, the number of people belonging to a Church and regularly attending Sunday service was considerably higher in the beginning of the communist era than in the end of this era. However, sure enough, religiosity itself is low by European standards nowadays. According to Representative Survey, 70% of the Hungarian population declared itself to be Catholic. As I wrote, it is lower than Italy, Spain etc. and most children are baptized, but only about 30% of primary-school-aged children receive religious education (Pollack, 2003).

The rate of Hungarian religiosity is lower than in some Western European countries such as Italy, but higher than some highly industrialized countries such as France. We might be able to say that France went through the process of secularization and modernization by themselves, but Hungary via “Communism”. It was a huge difference, because Hungary was basically a really religious country like Italy. However, it must have been eliminated quite suddenly. People including Churches tried a revival, but as I wrote, it had already changed. People still value the Churches, but also seek a life style, or sense of well-being, etc. outside of the Churches.

I would say again, in general, religiosity in Hungary is lower than in most countries of Western Europe. However, there is a kind of religious revival in Hungary like in
most post-communist countries that dates back to before when communism collapsed. During communism, religion was not forbidden, but only significant institutions were able to survive in communism. Although religiosity is statistically lower, but the personal identity for more than 95% of the population (Kocsis, 2006). In evidence, there was not under the 50% of Christian in the population statistically even in the communism period (Pollack, 2003). During the socialist system, people had to leave “religion”, because of political ideology, but it did not mean people lost belief in their minds, therefore, from the second period of the system, people more readily accepted the “softer” political approach to religion and tried to conduct religious activities privately. In the case of Hungary, Catholicism still has an important role and religion was not eliminated. Because religion itself is deeply rooted in the history of the country, this fact cannot be ignored. The Church has lost a great deal of power through the communist system and could not rebuild its earlier role after the transitions, but it still has a strong influence, and, it is counting on the state which wants to be closer to the Church.

1.5 Current Situation: The policy of Government

As I wrote before, Marx stated that religion itself is a kind of ideology and if this thing is applying the relationship between the state and the Church, this relation is necessarily and more natural. Because, the people who have the same idea/ideology can build the state, religion thus binds and unifies. The state itself has usually no ideology, rather the state is built by the people, and, therefore, it is natural that the state has relations with the Church, also, it is natural that the state under communism tried to eliminate the relations with the Church, because the communist ideology is against religion. Today though, it seems that the current government is closer to the Church than previous governments. I would like to investigate and seek to identify the reasons why the current government often uses religion in its policy approaches and rhetoric.

The present Fidesz Government was established after the election in 2010 and reelected in 2014. (the Fidesz had been the governing party from 1998 till 2002 as well) One economist, János Kornai stated “Hungary is not controlled by democracy, but autocracy” (水島&佐藤, 2013). I will not evaluate the political activities in this thesis. However, Fidesz formed a coalition government with the KDNP, and, received a total
of 263 seats from 368 seats in the parliament. Because of this quite big victory, the Prime Minister Orbán could implement his policies quickly and easily. One of the radical changes was the Constitution of Hungary in April of 2011. The Fidesz, current government, revised the Constitution issued in 1989, which is conflicting with democracy according to Gábor Halmai, because it is a violation of the basic democracy of the European Union (水島&佐藤, 2013). It is unusual, however, the immediate cause of why Fidesz won with a huge victory was the policy failure by the previous Socialist Party Government. In addition, the Socialist Party’s corruptions were revealed very publicly before the election (水島&佐藤, 2013). In any case, the Prime Minister Orbán, has taken a position against socialism and capitalism as well. He criticized the Banks and the urban areas, has praised the agriculture and rural areas. The philosophy of the government appeared to revere Hungarian identity and tradition. What have the consequences been for religion?

I would like to focus on the Fidesz Government policy concerning religion. In the new Constitution, which is strongly tied with Christianity, it at least three times mentions God/Christianity. It is absolutely strange for me, because this is totally illegal in my Country², Japan and indeed was a shock to sections of Hungarian society (水島&佐藤, 2013). The Constitution itself touched on religion is clear evidence of the fact that the state has a strong connection with the Church/Religion/Christianity. Especially Article 7(Act VII) stated that the Nation cooperates with the Churches. The nation of “Churches” is to be accepted by the parliament. The parliament accepted only 32 associations as Churches at the 29th of February 2012. The others need to re-register and it suggests there are no natural Churches in the Constitution. The first comment refers to Christianity and marriage, which does not recognise the same gender couple. The Constitution limits the rights of marriage and pregnant women in the name of Christianity (水島&佐藤, 2013). I wonder that every or almost all Hungarians are accepted of those points, or, whether they know in detail of the Constitution or not. However, in any case, it can be said that the relationship between the state and Church became closer after the new Constitution is established.

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² 日本国憲法第 20 条: Article XIX. Freedom of religion is guaranteed to all. No religious organization shall receive special privileges from the State, nor exercise political authority. No person shall be compelled to take part in any religious acts, celebrations, rites or practices. The State and its organs shall refrain from religious education or any other religious activity.
The Fidesz Government tried to symbolize Hungary as the “Millennial kingdom” like the King István the first. As evidence, Viktor Orbán himself as a believer in Protestant (Calvinist), accepted all Christian Churches. However, he knows that most Hungarians are Catholic and farmers who live in rural areas and are mostly strict Catholic Christians historically. Their votes are attractive to Orbán and the government, and therefore, Fidesz made the Coalition government with KDNP (家田, 2004). This is a good demonstration to the people who believe in Christianity. The Christians thus, might choose to vote Fidesz in elections. This is, I think, is one of the reasons why the current government has secured a huge victory and is trying to keep close to the Churches. It might be the reason behind of the state re-building. The state re-building has always been a problem to post-communist countries. For example, there was often bloodshed and specific power struggles between nation and nation like in the Balkans.

The basic way to Democratization is “who are you” which means which country are you belonging to. It is essential, especially for Hungary, since many of the Hungarian nationality live outside the country of Hungary. József Antall who became the Prime Minister in 1990, said that his government was an avowal for 1500000 Hungarian people. This suggested the number of the Hungarian population including the Hungarian minorities of other countries. However, an important point to consider is the question of citizenship/identity indeed whether it is of real importance in a global society?

When the Fidesz formed the government in 1998, this policy of state rebuilding which in Hungarian is nemzetpolitika or magyar nemzet, was important (家田, 2004). In my opinion, one ideology which is religion in this case for the people and the government is the most important things to be gained by this policy. Because, when the people think “who am I” or “where I am belonging to”, a strong slogan, a kind of nationalism, would come into mind. When thinking along these lines, it might explain the meaning of the new Constitution.

In the interview section of the thesis, I analyse data derived from interviews with Priests/Pastors to learn what has changed with the government policy from communism up to now.
2. Methodology

In order to write my thesis, I used some sociologists’ theories, for example, Karl Marx, Emile Durkheim, and Max Weber for analyzing my research question. Concerning Hungarian religious background, I considered Historical steps of Hungary and referred to the articles which were written by the professor Tomka, and other Hungarian authors and several Japanese professors who are specialists on Hungary and East Europe.

2.1 Ethical Issues

I considered the ethical rules whilst I was writing this thesis which is based on the International Sociological Association’s Code of Ethics3, for instance, I obtained the agreement of the interviewees in advance and I fully explained what my thesis aim is. What is more, I asked interviewees for permission to put their names in the thesis with the option to anonymise them, I got the agreement from all of them to refer to them by name. See Appendix 1 for consent/information letter.

To summarise the aims of this thesis as set out in the introduction, I wish to investigate the popularity of religion in Hungary and factors which may determine that popularity. My thesis might touch sensitive problems for individuals because of religion being a deeply held set of beliefs for some people. However, more public people, such as, politicians, priests, maybe do not mind if I write their name or they want to show rather. I must ask about and consider. (from 2.3. Data gathering, 2.3.2.) And, my interviewees actually agreed that I write their names. Therefore, I must careful what exactly interviewees said to avoid misunderstanding. But, I must not be influenced and pander to their opinions, public policies. (from 2.1.) I must clarify where I quote the ideas, sentences etc. I must ensure the research is conducted through informed consent when I take an interview. I send the document to the interviewee and I take the response from them, then I could do. It is evident that my research conforms to the ethical code set out by the International Sociology Association.

3 http://www.isa-sociology.org/about/isa_code_of_ethics.htm
2.2 Research Methods

I used multiple methods to analyse from multilateral direction, which means that the methods are mixed: interpretative, reflexivity, positivism, visual anthropology, and at the centre of the research will be the case study approach by exploring in depth the work of Churches.

According to the Open University an interpretative approach is characterised as follows “Interpretivists argue that we cannot understand why people do what they do, why particular institutions exist and operate in characteristic ways, without grasping how people interpret and make sense of their world – in other words, the distinctive nature of their beliefs and attitudes. Interpretivists argue that we cannot understand why people do what they do, why particular institutions exist and operate in characteristic ways, without grasping how people interpret and make sense of their world – in other words, the distinctive nature of their beliefs and attitudes” (The Open University website, 2014). Reflexivity means to circular relationships between cause and effect, I did this by making some comparison of the situation in Hungary to my own experiences in Japan. Visual anthropology is to find in which visual representations are connected to the culture, society etc., I did this by taking photographs of Churches and looking and the visual meanings of Church buildings. Case studies are qualitative approach which refers to the emphasis on an actual situation, I did this by focusing on certain Churches visiting them and interviewing and observing.

The beginning of my thesis was a literature review which is regarding my research topic and summarizes what is the common and critical points. After that, I have put in my interview results where I aimed to obtain the “actual voices” of the persons who are working in the Church. My interviews were individual interviews and I prepared the questions list including sub-questions before the interview. I was keeping in my mind what earlier research looked at, what are some issues in the literature, what sociological concepts the earlier research utilized, whilst I was making the questions. During the interview, I kept in my mind that I do not show my opinions, I should avoid leading questions; questions should be worded as neutral as possible, also the style and wording of the questions should fit to the situation, to the word usage of the interviewee. I should try do not use words which may have a double meaning or can be misinterpreted, I do not ask many things at the same time and try to keep good atmosphere. See Appendix 2 for interview questions.
3. Discussion and Analysis

As I noted in the methodology section I interviewed seven Priests/Pastors/Preachers to analyse my topic. I used their Surname without any honorific title except "Mr". In order to make clear, I only used "Priest" for those who are belonging to the Roman Catholic Church and "Pastor" for those who are belonging to the Protestant Church including any denomination, such as Baptist, Reformed and so on.

I have asked them about historical issues related to changes in the Church from before Communism until nowadays.

3.1 Interviewees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Role/Job</th>
<th>Type of Church</th>
<th>Additional</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Nemeshegyi</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>Priest</td>
<td>Roman Catholic</td>
<td>Lived in Japan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Takács</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>Preacher</td>
<td>Reformed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Ákos</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>Priest</td>
<td>Roman Catholic</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Levente</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>Priest</td>
<td>Roman Catholic</td>
<td>Was born in Romania</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Thoma</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>Pastor</td>
<td>Reformed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Kovács</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>Pastor</td>
<td>Baptist</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Hegedűs</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>Priest</td>
<td>Anglican</td>
<td>American</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.2 Organisation before Communism

I would like to be clear about how the Church existed before Communism. In order to know about this, I asked a series of questions.

Mr. Ákos told me: “Before the Second World War, the Church owned many large buildings and ground and so on. Therefore they got less money from the government, because they had revenue from having their property. (Mr. Levente said this too) Also, those who were the rich people in each area, for example, the aristocracy gave money to the Church, and then the Church did not need the support from the state. It was close to the state, because, people such as the aristocracy were members of the Parliament, also bishops were. (Mr. Nemeshegyi said too)” Mr. Thoma noted:
“Before communism, the Hungarian reformed church was very close to the state and it was very traditional. To be religious was good for citizenship.” Before Communism, it seems that Churches had sufficient capital which could make enough money, and, they were also involved in the political situation. Their relationship was tied in a social structure strongly and naturally. However, after Communism, that relationship was not how it had been back before.

As far as I am concerned the communistic system itself became something like "religion" along the lines of what Marx argued about religion. He thought religion was the opium for people, however, his ideas also became an opium for people unfortunately. It is not important "religion" or "communism" or other ideas, the important point is that any kind of strong and dogmatic idea can become dangerous. It could be argued that elements of the pre-war relationship between the Church and the state were produced in the communist period as will be demonstrated in the next section, basically too close a connection between the Church and state and or the Church being controlled by the state. Because, fascism and other strong ideas have a high affinity as history proves. And, usually politicians know these things, and use it to control the people. For example, Jobbik often uses the name of "Horthy". It is not real Horthy, but the "Idol" to unify the people to lead the way for Jobbik. Also, the politicians know what the most effective way to be elected is and thus often resort to populism and demagogic behaviour. It may be the case, as indicated in this thesis that history may repeat itself in the sense of the Church getting to close to the state or being controlled by the state.

3.3 Views and experiences of Communism

Most of the interviewees said that the Communist regime took the Church's property. Mr. Takács explained with some cynicism: "They were so helpful to destroy." Especially in the beginning, Communism tried to suppress them strongly. However, that “suppression" was especially directed to the historical and traditional Churches, such as the Roman Catholic, Reformed and so on. Mr. Kovács stated that the: “Baptist Church was not attacked by communism in the beginning but was 10 years later, because in the post war period it was small. In the 1960s, communism started to hit us." As the Church grew in size. Also, Mr. Nemeshegyi said: “Some religious communities were allowed,
some were not. Communism really hated the Society of Jesus. At the time, the Vatican said us to go out from Hungary.” Thus, he went to Japan until 1993.

After 1970, it seems that communism became softer, coinciding no doubt with the “Goulash Socialism” of the Kadar are. For example, Mr. Ákos said: “Many priests were put into the prison, or even were killed. Part of the Church was not allowed to work. But, after the 70s, it became softer, priests were not sent to the prison, it was much easier to teach to children.” Mr. Levente described a little bit other perspectives: “At least, the, Communist regime, tried to keep the business in Church, everything needed to be kept within the limits of the Church. It was easy for the spy/agent they came in to the Church and they made some reports to the state. If priests were active, it would be dangerous for them.”, “Some religious orders, who weren’t allowed to have any activity, for instance, the Society of Jesus completely couldn't do anything, they, included Mr. Nemeshegyi, who had to leave the country from 1948, because there were more radical Christians who were more critical of the communists. After the 70s, there was some agreement between the state and the Church, because the state realized they couldn’t destroy this institution and saw other western countries how they kept a balance between the state and Church. The agreement meant some priests or bishops vowed they would do their jobs and wouldn't disturb the political status quo. And yet, those priests/bishops sometimes wrote reports for the state.” That is a very delicate issue and has not been resolved yet, he added.

Mr. Thoma had not been born in the early communist period, and, therefore, perhaps he gives a unique view; he is a young pastor who gives us insights into the views of a younger generation of Christians: “As I know, Communism, they wanted to lead many traditional Churches, and a lot of Church leaders were built by the communist. It did not mean the leaders were communist, but they collaborated with the state, and cooperated with them. It means that you were not free as a pastor, and every time was observing and monitoring them. Everything was very controlled by the state. It depended on the leadership whether things got worse or not. I wouldn’t say everything was going bad, but mostly it was.”

An important point about the Communist regime concerning the Church was that they tried to limit and control Churches. Although the original ideology of communism was based on what Marx said basically that religion is the opium of people, they
recognized though that they could not destroy the whole institution and needed to tolerate.

3.4 Transition Society

I wanted to know how the Church situation had changed after 1989. In order to interpret this, I asked each interviewee questions on this matter.

Mr. Takács said: “The Church was full when Communism collapsed. People were happy to have a new life, because being Christian or going Church was very disadvantageous to people, there were implications for things such as, having a job.” Mr. Thoma also said similar things, however, he stated: “people were really curious to go to Church, but after 4 or 5 years later, it changed, attendance was going down.” It is almost the same as Mr. Levent argued: “I think in the first year it was increasing, but after that it went down.” Mr. Levente also tried to interpret this phenomenon: “It is as same phenomenon as in Western countries, it is a process which is called secularization. I think general lifestyle I saw in Germany and the UK, where I lived, was very secular.”

All the interviewees are not sure for the reason about the phenomenon of religious attendance which was increasing after 1989, but has been decreasing some years later. The Church lost great power through the communist regime and could not rebuild its earlier role after the transitions, but it still has a strong influence, for instance, in the field of education. Because, the government, especially the present one, helped them in the name of "school" actively. As I draw what Durkheim argued, education makes a collective action and shared values and norms of society. It means that if the government helps Christian churches school/kindergarten, the government would like to promote the basic values of the bible. This is exactly the same as what the new Constitution shows. On one hand, it is understandable and necessary, because basic norms for people are needed. However, the discussion point is that it important to be based on the "bible?” According to the new constitution, Hungary is/should be Christian country. But, is it a valid argument? Especially since "Österreichisch-Ungarischer Ausgleich", history of Hungary is the conflict between the two ways which is: Hungary is for Magyar, therefore, other minority races in Hungary must be assimilated to Magyar, or, respect each other and exist peacefully together. As Mr. Kovács said the numbers of
those people, non-Christian, are very limited. It is true, but, it suggests the truth that Hungary is not a completely Christian country practically. What is more, the Hungarian term Magyar had existed before the King István the first, and Magyar wasn't Christian at the time. Has the new constitution rejected that History? For example, the first Emperor of my country, Japan, became the Emperor in 660 B.C. according to several Japanese mythologies (there is evidence as "Emperor" was from the Emperor the 40th which is strongest theory nowadays). However, Japan and Japanese never think this is the start point of our History.

The way of secularization is different in each European country. Hungary had a special experience due to the socialist system. It is not hardly possible to define all of the reasons of secularization as it is still questionable what “secularization” exactly is. During the socialist system, people had to leave “religion”, because of political ideology, but it did not mean people lost belief in those minds, therefore, from the second period of the system, people better accepted the “softer” political approach to religion and tried to do religious activities privately. This fact did not prove that it is a reason of “secularization”, but could be one factor. However, decreasing of the religion attendance is one of general tendencies in Europe including Hungary. It can be described that new “religious” movements and fads occurred which means, for instance, reification as Marx wrote (廣松, 1996). If the people made the norm in the society, people who belong to society would follow that norm, and this norm could be like a religion in the sense that this belief directed and orientated their behaviour. This assumption suggests that religion was supplanted in other religions such as consumerism, new technology and so on. In other words there are people who worship materialism and or live for and through technological devices like Facebook and mobile phones.

3.5 Visual dimensions of the Church

I conducted visual observations of the Church in order to get insights into how the Church viewed itself in the past and present and to gain insights into the visual propaganda of the Church; I would like to use some pictures of Churches and see what I would be able to see.
- Comparison to the traditional reformed Church and the modern reformed Church
- (Figure 1.1, Figure 1.2)
- Comparison to the Mass in Roman Chaotic Church and Baptist Church
- (Figure 2.1, Figure 2.2)
Figure 1.1: The traditional reformed Church

Figure 1.2: The modern reformed Church
Figure 2.1: The Mass in Roman Chaotic Church

Figure 2.2: The Mass in Baptist Church
In the Comparison to the traditional reformed Church and the modern reformed Church (Figure 1.1, Figure 1.2), that traditional reformed Church is a very typical one, there is less ornamentation there fewer statues, no pictures and so on. However, it now seems "unapproachable" in the twenty first century. On the other hand, the modern reformed Church, Mr. Thoma belongs to, is the most contemporary in its appearance, the view was not like a traditional church. It was modern and functional and welcoming to the congregation. The building has several rooms which are for new born children, aged 1-3, aged 4-5, etc. like kindergarten. Also there is a room to join the Mass which is separated from the main room, but from it services can be seen and heard. It is useful for mothers/fathers/others when a child starts to cry. Mr. Thoma introduced me to the room which will be the cafe for everyone. It means that people can have conversations without religion. It is inside of building, but separated from the Church. He thinks the conversation is most important, but religion itself. He described that everyone, any religious believer, can take a seat in the cafe and rest there. I could not see what kind of strategy is behind, but it could be easy to go for everyone at least.

In comparison to the Mass in the Roman Catholic Church and Baptist Church (Figure 2.1, Figure 2.2) it should be noted that almost all Priests/Pastors/Preachers explained that the method of Mass in Roman Catholic is the strictest, because they have duty to follow what the Vatican says about how to do. In evidence, I visited several Roman Catholic Churches including very traditional ones and modern ones, but Mass seems not so different. On the other hand, with services in Baptist Churches there is huge difference from Roman Catholic ones. A Pastor doesn't have any certain kind of clothes and describing the bible is much more modernized and inclusive in terms of the sermons given. There are also many young generation of participants.

There is a big visual difference between the traditional one and the modern one even though they are the same denomination. I think the modern one is easy to go inside. However, I also think it is important that the traditional one must keep the traditional building from the point of historical value.

However, if the Church wants people to participate frequently, this is better solution to be modernized.
3.6 The State: The current government

As I wrote before, there was a natural connection between the state and the Church before communism. The Church had their own property, the aristocratic gave money to the Church. The Church building were gorgeous and sumptuous, this was the evidence that the aristocratic was rich enough. Mr. Takács said: “The connection between the state and the Church melted into everything in society naturally and interconnected each other. Therefore, the communist regime could not cut down that connection completely, however, at least, the communist regime could limit the Church, and the Church was at times tamed and controlled.

I would like to focus on the connection between the recent government and the Church, and how the Church feels nowadays about the connection. First of all, how does the state help the Church? Is this help enough for? The, Priests/Pastors/Preachers, have similar opinions. Mr. Ákos explained the system: “The state helps and assists to higher organization/Roman Catholic Church itself, the state doesn't help to every and each Church. However, if they need, each Church must write the application for what they want, and if successful, they can receive from the state. Higher organization Churches divide the money to each Church. It is not the state’s decision.”, “There were big changes within the last 25 years. One thing is that Hungarians can give 1% of Tax to the Church and can decide which Church.” Mr. Kovács said: “The Church gives to kindergartens and the state gives the income to teacher.” Mr. Takács argued: “We do not have enough support from the state. The state supports something to Church school. We have 1% of Tax from the state.” Almost all them told me this 1% Tax system, however, on the other hand, Mr. Thoma described to me a slightly different point of view: “Every Hungarian can give 1% of Tax to the Church (and the state gives this 1% to Church), but a lot of Churches are not included.” This probably refers to the small Churches and Cults that are too small to register for money.

All of them told me about the 1% Tax system, however, as Mr. Thoma said it doesn't mean that every kind of Church can receive that Tax. However, what is the "Church" for? As I wrote in section of “Current situation: The policy of Government”, the constitution including religious law has changed four years ago. Some Priests/Pastors/Preachers explained concerning the new religious law: “Before new Church law established, there was over 300 Churches in Hungary, but now only 20 or
30 are accepted.”, Mr. Thoma said. “The small church doesn't allow/have any support from the state after law/constitution have changed.”, Mr. Kovács said.

To summarize, only 20 - 30 Churches exist "officially" and these official Churches can be supported by the state. It is still discussed where it is good or not: several Priests/Pastors/Preachers take into account negative aspects. For example, “It has some contradiction, the European Union dislikes this situation in which the state decides “You're the Church”. Everyone should have a right to do anything they want to. However, law/rule is needed.”, Mr. Kovács said. “I think it is not so democratic. But it was not good neither that everyone could have a Church. So, one hand it is good, on the other hand is not.”, Mr. Thoma said. It means that they think about small Church which is really strict one, but cannot receive any support. On the other hand, it exists the Church which is not real one which means that the Church is just tool to collect money, they call it "fake", or "business" Church. The law can force out such Churches, however, it is difficult to confirm which is a real one and which is a false one. Mr. Kovács had different opinions: “I think a big Church like the Catholic one very much wants to limit other Churches, they never tell you, but they say this to the politicians. So, the decisions of politics are influenced by what powerful Church leaders have said.” He thinks that it was not only the government decisions.

However, about the constitution, most of them have a positive feeling. A key line states that Hungary is a Christian county. Especially Mr. Nemeshegyi is glad to have the new constitution: “It is a beautiful sentence which the new constitution has in the beginning, other Europe countries do not have this.” He also said: “It is one of most important things. I think there is agreement between the state and the Vatican.” Mr. Levente seems he feels some contradiction in his mind, but he described me why it is important for Hungary: “How secular should we keep it, is the main issue in the Constitution, some said they shouldn't mention any God in the Constitution. Maybe, the European Commission said Hungary shouldn't put this reference in. But, if goes back to history, Hungary Christianized in the 10th century, everything is related to Christianity. It is important for Hungarian how Hungary became the "state" as a "nation". Hungary is existing as the state, it is suddenly related to religion. I think it is OK, and it wouldn't be discrimination to those who don't believe in any God.” It is not only the opinion of Mr. Levente, some of them said the same thing. Also, some of them said that it is true about
history, but Hungary is not completely Christian country practically. Mr. Thoma thought: “I think it is true that Hungary was founded as Christian country which is our roots and heritage. It is good. But, I do not think Hungary nowadays is a Christian country. Hungary is more Multi-Cultural. In my opinion now, it’s not good for the real situation. It is important to know what we were coming from as identity.” However, Mr. Kovács gave the almost opposite opinion, he said he liked what the government did, especially the new constitution, because lots of good things in Bible can be built up and upon. Then, I asked about other religious people, however: “The numbers of those people are very limited. I don’t know any bad relations between Christian and other religious, but they are limited.”, he said, because in fact in Hungary Islam, Buddhism and other faiths are very small.

It seems that they are happy to have the Constitution from a Christian perspective. Concerning other things in the Constitution such as the statement that marriage is between a man and women. Mr. Nemeshegyi explained: “The marriage is the vow between one man and one woman, it is the only way to have a child. This is very important. Thus the new constitution put emphasis on this sentence about marriage.” It is as same as Mr. Kovács said that lots of things were built up from the bible.

The Prime Minister, Viktor Orbán, has tried to be close to the Church when he was the Prime Minister in 1998-2002 (Török, 2003). This policy became stronger in the present term of the government. And he says nowadays is: “We do not want a multicultural society” (website of the Hungarian Government, 2015). However as I wrote, Hungary has not been “monoculture” since Hungary was established or even before they existed as a nation-state. Orbán might try to unify the nation as a Christian Country, which the King István the first did. However, we are living in the twenty first century and if Hungary totally rejected a multicultural, Hungary would be isolated from the world like once Japan did “sakoku (locked country)” in the past4.

There is a reason why the government and the Church especially the traditional one would be closer than before is simply each value is close. The political aim and the Church aim have a high affinity. For instance Russia nowadays is similar to this,

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4 The foreign relations policy of Japan under which no foreigner could enter nor could any Japanese leave the country. The policy was enacted by the Tokugawa shogunate under Tokugawa Iemitsu through a number of edicts and policies from 1633–39 and remained in effect until 1853 with the arrival of the Black Ships of Commodore Matthew Perry and the forcible opening of Japan to Western trade.
because Putin is very close to Russian Orthodox Church. He returned the Orthodox Church property which the Soviets took away from the Orthodox Church and the Orthodox Church became like a plutocrat. And many of the Orthodox Church started to see Putin as a “saint” (中村, 2013). The aim of Putin can be said that he wishes to achieve a “Cult of personality” like Stalin and “going back to tradition” to obtain and keep his power. For this fact, there is criticism to the Orthodox Church that they should believe in God, not Putin (BBC News, 2014). Is Hungary going the same way as Russia? As almost all interviewees mentioned, I think the Church should keep a distance from the state and observe what the state does.

3.7 Comparisons to the United States

I had an interview to Mr. Hegedüs who is from the United State, and he described what is the different from the United States: “In the USA, there is no relationship between the state and a Church, though most people are obviously Christian. Most Americans like the Church, but the Church receives nothing from the state. Here in Europe it is different.”, “All the politicians always talk about God. The president maybe not so much. Most typical politicians, when they want to be elected, they all go to Church and make sure the people see and they give speeches. The government of the USA cannot give money to the Church because of the constitution. But politicians can personally give money if they like. The government has to maintain the separation, but the politicians love to talk about God and how Christian they are. Here it is almost the opposite. Here, the Church can receive money from the state and the people, but in the United States they can receive money only from the people.” It is what Mr. Nemeshegyi wants to do: “in The USA there is strong separation between the state and Church, but the nation is very religious. It’s somehow a model case of what we want to be.” He recognized that the Church cannot get back the power as they had before communism, but he doesn’t want to go back to the past, because it was a good idea that the Church and the state keep distance to be more free.

In the United State, there is a separation between the state and the Church, however, people there in the United State are religious, and, therefore, the Church has power. It is logical, because any people including politicians/ministers/president can give money as much as they want, and they can give a speech in the Church. It means that practically,
definitely, the Church has been influenced the people and the State. “When Bush was the president, the Evangelical Church had more power. It is true, that people who were evangelical were chosen by the government in any situation. Now, or any government could do the same way.” , Mr. Hegedűs said. It cannot be avoided those who are as the same believer as the government would have some advantages. However, on the other hand, it contains risk at the same time for politicians: “Obama had a Church in Chicago and his Pastor became famous, because of Obama. However, that Pastor gave a bad speech, it made a negative impact to Obama. So, it can be said that if the state is too close to Church, it could be danger, but on the other hand, this relationship would not work well to the State as well, like that case.” , Mr. Hegedűs described. He thinks the current situation is better than before in the United States, because there is no war at least less violence than before. What is more, the United States was closer to the evangelical Church before. It does not mean if the relationship between the state and the Church would be closer it is worse, but Mr. Hegedűs said it would be better that the state and the Church keep distance.

Mr. Thoma described the current situation: “The traditional Church is close to the state, because of that the value is also close to each other.” As an evidence of what Mr. Thoma said is that Mr. Ákos said: “It is very important that certain values, such as saving the life became part of the constitution which is very good change.” It should be noted that the Constitution says life begins at conception, some interpret this as an anti-abortion message. As I quoted before, it is as almost the same as Mr. Nemeshegyi said. It is more natural that those who have similar opinions are easy to be integrated. This thing is as similar as the situation in the United State, because of that “Republicans are very strong in south side, Texas for example, in the countryside and the small cities. Democrats are very strong in the very large cities, New York, San Francisco and so on. Republicans are Evangelical, but because they are from the countryside, which is Evangelical.” Mr. Hegedűs said.

It can be observed that the relationship between the state and the Church in the United States is separated by the constitution. Here in Hungary the relationship between the state and the "official" Churches is more involved, and its relation is ambiguous. Everything is not clear, but it only appears that the state can help to the Church which has two ways, first is the 1 % of Tax which the Church can receive the money from the
state, second is that the state can give money for the Church which has schools or kindergartens. Thus, those Churches which have a lot of believers have a huge possibility to get money through the 1 % Tax, and those Churches which have a school/kindergarten have a chance to get money. As far as I am concerned those kinds of Churches should be close to the government, because of money. At least, the relationship wouldn't be worse. In addition, this is true one of the ministers, Zoltán Balogh, is a Pastor. However, every Priests/Pastors/Preachers do not care about it, rather they feel positive feeling to the fact that a minister is a man of religion.

To summarize, both countries are tied strongly between the Church and the state. What is more, it seems that the United States politicians are more involved in religious activities. It has a contradiction, but they have a right and that is an individual decision they should be religious or not, because of the Constitution and the law. For example, as Mr. Hegedűs mentioned that Obama is not religious and this is his decision.

However, in the case of Hungary it is not clear, because of also the Constitution and the law. I would not say which is better, but I think the Constitution and the law should be separated from any religion. If the number of Christians was larger, this would be better to help Christians to be elected, like in the United States.

4. Conclusion

As the data shows the new constitution and the new Church law cannot be said to be totally neutral. As evidence, even well-known Churches such as Magyarországi Evangéliumi Testvérközösség are not acknowledged by the state as official Churches though they fulfill the criteria which would classify them to be recognised as official. Also, the state decided the law under the value of Christianity, for example rights of the fetus, which would be a violation of the women's right. And, would be a violation of the sexual minority's right as well, because the new Constitution doesn't say anything about Sexual Orientation in the provision of discrimination. This has some connection with the literature review which demonstrates as Marx mentioned, it is easy to control the people under the name of God for the state, and the people especially poor ones have a tendency to believe in God deeply to escape the suffering in the real world. As far as I
am concerned this what Marx argued shows overlapping with the current situation in Hungary. It can be dangerous, because if the state and the Church are too close and exclude any other faith, it would be like Russia or a return to the conditions which existed under the Szádasi government in the past.

On the other hand, as Durkheim mentioned, religion can promote the norms of society and the people share the collective action based on religious values. To unify the country, the basic norms are necessary as common sense. However, this is a right for the people who can believe any religion as they like. This is an individual choice, and it should not be a political decision. The politicians should not lead to the past ghastly to people and the Church as well. Hungarians, including the government, should acknowledge that Hungary has been/is a multicultural country. The King István the first was given the Crown from the Pope Sylvester the second in 1000 and Hungary started as a Roman Catholic country, however, it was occupied during the Ottoman Empire. Although the Ottoman Empire was tolerant about religion, cannot be denied that some influence of Islam remained. This fact suggests that Hungary is not a monocultural country. The growing national and racial diversity also defies conceptions of monoculturalism.

As was revealed in the interviews almost all Priests/Pastor/Preachers feel pleasure to have the new Constitution. This is understandable, because they all believe in Christianity. This can be connected to the literature review because as Durkheim said that even “law” came from religion. However, some younger Priests/Pastor/Preachers take into account the gap between the practical situation and the ideal of what the state wants to be. In my opinion this shows that it would be better that inside of the Church does not have only one opinion which is similar to the state.

The interviews also demonstrated that with the decreasing of the attendance of religious activities there is a connection to the literature review which illustrated secularization in modern society. The Church tries to give religious education in the Church and school to make connection with communities. And, the state supports religious education in school. It would be also dangerous, because of the people would be religious, the government which is close to the Church would be elected by the people easily. The United States uses this kind of strategy for elections, but there is a difference that the United States has the separation between the state and the Church
clearly in the Constitution. I would not say the United States is correct, but the Constitution should not touch any God.

Hungary must find a way to have pride in being Hungarian and have respect for other people at the same time and the government should not use religion for power retention. Religion can be the opium of the people, but can be helpful and necessary for the people.
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Appendices

Appendix 1

Information/consent form

I am Aki Iida and I am carrying out research as part of a BA thesis at the Corvinus University Budapest. The research pertains to Hungarian religion and a central topic of discussion is: How religion in Hungarian society has changed since Communism, especially the relationship between the state and the Churches.

As part of this research I would like to interview you. I would ideally like to record the interview and cite your name. However, if you wish I will not write your name and record the interview.

If you have any question, please do not hesitate to ask me. My email address is; aki.iida45@gmail.com

Best Wishes

xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

Signed consent

The objectives and conditions of the research have been explained to me

I……………………………………………………….agree to be interviewed

I do / do not give my consent to be recorded

I do / do not give my consent for my name to be cited
Appendix 2

Interview questions

- Could you please describe your denomination?
- What are the key features and how do you connect to community?
- Does your Church have enough help from the state?
- What do you think about the relationship between the state and your Church?
- Is this relation different from the relationship among the state and other Churches?
- I would like to know about the history, could you explain a little bit the relationship between the Churches before the communist, please?
- And, during communism as well.
- After communism, how has been changed?
- How about current situation?
- Do you think some church groups are too close to the government?
- What do you think of recent government reforms of religions?