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The Living Memorial movement:
Building resilience based on grief

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Abstract

The paper investigates the emotional, grief-based resilience-building of a social movement, the Living Memorial in Hungary. The movement was initiated in 2014 as the Hungarian government announced the installation of a memorial of the German occupation of 1944, which denied the responsibility of the Hungarian state in the Holocaust. The Living Memorial aimed to contradict the government's memorial by offering an inclusive remembrance through telling personal, family stories. A grounded analysis revealed three different actions were realised by the Living Memorial, which all enhanced the resilience of the group on different levels. The discussion of personal and family stories and sharing grief reinforced the collective identity of the group. The personal remembrance also helped to deconstruct the government's memorial. The political discussions and presentations raised the political consciousness of the participants and strengthened their self-image as competent political actors. It is also revealed that resilience in the case of the Living Memorial was built by a continuous process of reframing and community-building and also by the simultaneous recall and rationalisation of grief and relating emotions.

Keywords: resilience, grief activism, grounded theory, Holocaust, politics of remembrance, social movements

1 Introduction

Since the early 2010s resilience has become a frequently discussed concept in various fields, from ecology to disaster management, development policy, and psychology (Hall & Lamont, 2013; Walsh-Dilley et al., 2013). In social-ecological systems the concept refers to the 'capacity of a system to experience shocks while retaining essentially the same function, structure, feedbacks, and therefore identity' (Walker et al., 2006). Especially in the UK resilience became a guideline for policy-making in order to mitigate the risks and consequences of environmental, technological, social hazards. Nevertheless, this concept of resilience as self-sufficiency in disaster management was criticised as a neo-liberal concept, which abandons vulnerable communities (Anderson, 2015). A different literature, in turn, wished to

identify the institutional and cultural sources of so-called 'social resilience,' which means the capacity of people, who are interrelated through organisational, social, or ethnic ties to face and overcome challenges (Hall & Lamont, 2013). While social scientists have studied the struggle of rural social movements for resilience-building through government support (Walsh-Dilley et al., 2013) and the institutional and cultural sources of social resilience (Hall & Lamont, 2013), the emotional sources of resilience have not been adequately researched. This paper wishes to fill this gap by focusing on the emotional and, more precisely, the grief-based resilience-building of an urban social movement, the Living Memorial. In this endeavour the paper relies primarily on social movement scholarship.

The 'Living Memorial' was originally a flash mob organised on 23 March 2014 against a memorial in Budapest's Szabadság (Liberty) Square commemorating the German occupation of Hungary in 1944. The Hungarian government had commissioned the Memorial for Victims of the German Occupation for the 70th anniversary of the Hungarian Holocaust. However, the depiction of Hungary as the innocent Gabriel archangel attacked by a swooping Nazi eagle was interpreted by many as a falsification of history, as denial of the Hungarian state culpability for the deportation of Hungarian Jews. Even before the official memorial was erected the Living Memorial flash mob was already organised. This occurred some weeks before the 2014 general election in Hungary, when the Orbán government, which had initiated the memorial, was re-elected. The flash mob and the movement were initially based on grief and outrage.

This study investigated how emotions during the group's mobilisation and the emotion management process strengthened the resilience of the Living Memorial social movement. The research question can be formed as follows: Which factors and processes enabled the Living Memorial to build political resilience from emotional outrage and grief? To answer this question, the study applied a grounded theory approach, involving fieldwork, interviews, and content analysis. The following section presents the Living Memorial flash mob and the resultant movement. In the third section the paper reviews the literature on the role of emotions, and particularly of grief, in social movement mobilisation and protest. The aim of the review is also to identify the components of grief-based activism in the Living Memorial's resilience-building. The literature review is followed by the methods and the analysis. The article concludes with findings on the impact of emotion and grief-based actions for the resilience-building of the Living Memorial movement.

2 The Living Memorial flash mob

In the dawn hours of 20 July 2014, the controversial Memorial for Victims of the German Occupation was erected quietly on Szabadság square, located in central Budapest, three months after the general election. The 2014 election was held according to a new election law unilaterally instituted by the government and resulted in a second successive supermajority for the Fidesz party. At that time the protests against the memorial had been going on for more than a half-year.

The memorial resembles the 'Millennium Monument' statue complex on Heroes' Square in Budapest, which was erected in 1896 to commemorate the Hungarian conquest of the Carpathian Basin. A central figure of both the Millennium Monument and the Memorial for Victims of the German Occupation is Archangel Gabriel. In the latter installation, Gabriel's

left wing is missing. An orb is slipping from the grasp of Gabriel's right hand, which resembles the orb of the Hungarian coronation regalia. An armoured eagle above and behind Gabriel is poised to catch the orb. On a ring on the eagle's right foot the date 1944, the year when German troops occupied Hungary, can be seen.

The place of the memorial, Szabadság square, is probably the most political public space in Hungary. While political rallies and demonstrations are usually organised at the Kossuth square, near the Parliament building, or at the abovementioned Heroes' Square, several contentious statues can be found at Szabadság square. Most conspicuous is the Monument of the Soviet Red Army, erected in 1946, damaged in the 2000s by radical right-wing groups. Not far from the occupation memorial, a bust of Miklós Horthy, Hungary's ruler in the interwar period, stands in the enclosure of the Calvinistic 'Church of the Return.' The church's pastor, Lóránt Hegedűs Jr., was an MP and vice-chairman of the radical right-wing party MIÉP.[1]

On the day after the installation of the Memorial for Victims of the German Occupation, Prime Minister Viktor Orbán issued a statement stating the erection of the statue was the government's 'constitutional' duty towards the contemporary victims and present-day Hungarians. As the statement put it, 'from March 19, 1944, to 1991, occupying troops were continuously stationed in Hungary. During the long decades of occupation, terrible things happened to Hungary and the citizens of the Hungarian state, that would never have happened if we had our independence and national self-determination' (TK, 2014). The timeline of the statement also groups together the Nazi and the Soviet occupations, equating them. After the installation of the memorial, no inauguration ceremony was held.

The government's decision to commission the Memorial for Victims of the German Occupation was published on 31 December 2013. The first protest, a political flash mob—that is a sudden, brief gathering—was organised on 3 January 2014 by the so-called 'Tolerance Group' (*Tolerancia Csoport*) (Bősz, 2014). The group held a protest rally on 1 February 2014 as well in which around 400 people participated and opposition politicians addressed the crowd (Botos, 2014). Meanwhile, Jewish organisations also condemned the project and ceased their cooperation with the government for the 70th anniversary of the Hungarian Holocaust (Nagy, 2014). Randolph L. Braham, distinguished Holocaust researcher, gave back his Hungarian state award; the Israeli ambassador declared that the statue killed the memory of the victims (Lengyel, 2014). Because of domestic and international protests, Prime Minister Orbán asked the Federation of Hungarian Jewish Communities (MAZSIHISZ) to consult about the memorial after Easter, which in 2014 was two weeks after the general election. The construction itself started two days after the election on 8 April 2014 without any consultation with Jewish organisations (Lengyel, 2014).

On 23 March, another flash mob took place at the construction site. The organisers, the Human Platform coalitional organisation, asked participants to bring with them—as in Jewish customs—a stone, a small cross, or a personal object which can express the personal emotions and involvement of the participants. The organisers also asked participants to tell their own or their families' stories and memories about the different conflicts of the 20th century, share them with others and with the public ('Flash mob és mozgalom', 2014):

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[1] That is, *Magyar Igazság és Élet Pártja*, or the 'Hungarian Life and Justice Party.'

Let us raise such a heavy pile of these many personal signs that it would be grossly offensive and scandalous if one day they were to be caught with machines to clean it up. At least that will stop those who want to abuse their power. We want as many of our compatriots as possible in the coming weeks to put their sacred sign – a symbol of readiness for repentance and forgiveness – on this forced tomb of our common history.

The main goal was to assemble an alternative memorial, built from personal memories and histories. The event did not end on the day of the flash mob, but it evolved into a permanent occupation of the memorial construction site. The activists also started direct action against the memorial: they removed the fence around the construction many times. However, they could not hinder the installation of the memorial, which was set up during the night at the end of July.

Even before the final erection of the memorial, a series of discussions were initiated with the same goal as the flash-mob: to elaborate, sustain, and reveal an alternative 'memorial' made of personal anecdotes and memories. After the installation of the memorial, these discussions became more important for the Living Memorial's community. However, at these events not only personal histories were presented; academics, politicians and political analysts discussed current political events, policy issues, art, and aesthetics. Meanwhile, another series of events were organised, the so-called 'Liberty Stage' (*Szabadságszínpad*), which started one hour earlier at the same spot. Normally the stage was a platform near the construction site, used to collect signatures during political campaigns. A white banner with the red script 'Szabadságszínpad' hung from the platform. During major performances a wooden stage was installed on the spot. The antecedent of the Liberty Stage was the Clear Conscience (*Tiszta Emlékezet*) group, which had organised gatherings at the construction site since the beginning of 2014. On the Liberty Stage people read poems, performed acts, and held concerts. As part of these events, the participants sang together the Chorus of the Hebrew Slaves from Verdi's Nabucco under the lead of the famous Hungarian conductor, Ádám Fisher. Unlike the discussions of the Living Memorial, the Liberty Stage gave space for emotions, pleasure, and subjectivity. According to one of the main proponents of the Living Memorial, András Rényi, an art historian, it was a great success of the movement that the memorial was not formally inaugurated, which is also a sign that the Hungarian government could not further associate with it. In his interpretation, the Living Memorial could transform the site of the memorial into an open 'agora,' where all personal historical narratives and grievances could be told (Teczár, 2014).

Since the memorial was already installed and there was little chance of removing it, the movement could not have a direct instrumental goal. In this situation, the main aim could be to 'sustain a certain mental state' of the participants and activists, as one of the discussants put it during one session of the Living Memorial. The discussions of the Living Memorial and art performances of the Liberty Stage continued well after 2014. As Erőss (2016) noted, the counter memorial was in constant motion; everyone could contribute to it with their own photos and memorabilia or by participating at the discussions. Even during the COVID-19 pandemic discussions were held online and the Facebook groups remained active as well. Activists of the Living Memorial later founded the Living Gyál group as well, which was a local advocacy community in Gyál, a district of the Budapest metropolitan area.

3 Grief and activism

The concept of social resilience emphasises the relevance of collective capacity, interrelatedness of individuals, external challenges, and an identified well-being of the group (Hall & Lamont, 2013). To understand how the Living Memorial could build grief-based on resilience, the paper relies on the literature of social movements, which operates with similar concepts, namely informal networks, solidarity, and conflictual issues (Diani, 1992). From this perspective the actions performed by a social movement aim to raise capacity to pursue well-being, hence building resilience. The role of emotions in the mobilisation of social movements became a research program after the new millennium (Aminzade & McAdam, 2002; Goodwin et al., 2001; Flam & King, 2004). Generally during social movement mobilisation, and particularly at the Living Memorial, emotions play a role throughout the whole process. Emotions can trigger spontaneous protest and can motivate supporters. Mass participation in collective action can generate and induce emotions. Emotions can also affect mobilisation goals. Social movement leaders can use emotions as means of mobilisation—but it could be also a goal to reach a certain emotional status. Emotions can have a serious impact on success, failure, and the actual strategy (Jasper, 2011). Political scandals can provoke and outrage, leading to spontaneous political protests and later to the emergence of a social movement. Grief, induced by tragic events, can also cause a similar process. Pride, fear, and happiness are all emotions, which could motivate participants of collective actions. In the case of the Living Memorial outrage and sorrow were the main emotional motivations to organise the flash mob. Telling personal stories and presenting keepsakes allowed participants to express their grief.

Emotions can be categorised according to the duration and the generality or particularity of the objective. Longer emotions with a specific objective, like love or hate, are presupposing a constant social relation, while shorter emotions are reactions to certain unexpected events. A mood is a general emotion without a specific object and can also endure longer, like disillusionment, pride, and optimism; or it can be shorter, like happiness or depression (Goodwin et al., 2001). All four types of emotions have significance in conventional and contentious politics. In the case of social movements, emotions can be sorted into a matrix where one dimension is the duration of the emotion, namely whether it is an ongoing disposition or a more immediate emotional response to an event. The other dimension is the place where the emotion developed, namely inside or outside the social movement (Jasper, 1998). Social bonds to home or family, fear of external threats (like an ecological disaster), prejudices, and trust or distrust in politicians and political institutions are emotions outside of the social movement. External, reactive emotions are typically those which are induced by powerful events (i.e., triggering events). Political scandals, outrageous decisions, disasters are all examples. Inside movements, long-lasting loyalty, sympathy, or antipathy with other activists, movement leaders, and allies can develop. Shorter emotions within movements are reactions to government actions and responses from other actors and the media. The outrage that the participants of the Living Memorial flash mob felt is a short emotion, developed outside of the movement. Grief is an emotion with a longer duration, which also developed outside of the movement.

Grief is not just long-lasting, but can be very intense and accompanied by anger, which stir impulses to vengeance. Grief is also a widely respected emotion; hence, repressive systems can acknowledge it to a certain degree, like in the case of anti-war women's move-

ments. Mothers and wives frequently became anti-war activists based on grief, through the process of mourning or searching for their sons and husbands. Such movements include the Israeli Women in Black, the Russian Committee of Soldiers' Mothers, and the Argentinian Las Madres de Plaza de Mayo (Flam, 2013). The acknowledgment of grief and, in some cases, revenge makes grief an emotion that enables social action. Even if revenge does not occur, social movement leaders can call attention to past losses. The social acceptance of grief, the empathy towards mourners can even create an opportunity to challenge even authoritarian regimes.

For the Living Memorial, beyond social acceptance, the long duration of grief helped consolidate their group, forging a movement of political activism, distinct from more brief protest forms. A core source of protest power stems from their disruptive nature. However, if a protest action becomes the norm, it no longer disrupts everyday life. Grief, on the other hand, can become part of an everyday experience, as embodied by survivors. The 'permanent scar' on the body can continuously signal the loss and injury of the individual (Pendleton, 2009). Mourning can create an opportunity for dissent, but it can also establish a space for democratic discussion. McIvor interprets mourning based on Melanie Klein's approach as a process of facing the limits of the self (2012). Grief can make people reflect on their norms, beliefs as they compare their own and others' losses, which inevitably leads to the possibility to refigure the frames of memorialising. This latter aspect was an explicit goal of the Living Memorial, however their aim to reconfigure dominant narratives appears in the case of other grief-based activism as well. Grief activists have similarly commemorated migrants and refugees who lost their lives on the way to Europe. Such initiatives aimed to challenge the rigorous distinction between Europeans and migrants by creating settings that bring closer the living and the dead (Stierl, 2016). Hence, grief activism concerning deceased migrants is the realisation of McIvor's concept of reconfiguration of reigning frames. Also, as Holst-Warhaft noted, while contemporary societies abandoned the mourning process, smaller and often marginalised communities, like anti-war groups and gay communities, express their political interests through grief (Holst-Warhaft, 2000). In the latter case, AIDS memorials successfully challenged the stigma of HIV-infected people by publicly commemorating the victims of HIV/AIDS (Power, 2009).

The Living Memorial can also be categorised according to the three types of politicisation of grief by Granek (2014). In the first category belongs the pathologisation of grief, which ultimately serves the needs of capitalism, as it incorporates the notion of continuous progress, which demands overcoming sorrow. The second category is the nationalisation of grief, where the main goal is to mobilise compatriots for revenge military actions. The third type of politicised grief according to Granek aims not to fuel conflicts, but to ease them, to forward a social justice agenda. The Living Memorial, like most of the above-mentioned cases of politicised grief, belongs to this category. Also, the activism during the Living Memorial project by children, grandchildren, and other relatives of Holocaust survivors can be understood not just as grief activism but also as victim activism. Psychological studies confirmed that the generation that followed Holocaust victims was also traumatised (Barocas & Barocas, 1979; Yehuda et al., 1998). Victim activists are individuals who became advocates of a given issue after being the victim of a certain phenomena, like domestic violence, crime, or sexual abuse. The reason for victim activism is to prevent secondary victimisation and empower victims (McCaffrey, 1998; O'Leary & Green, 2020).

4 Method

Grounded theory can be perceived as a reflective research process whereby the theory takes form during the data collection and the data is being collected on basis of the theory being elaborated. Central ideas in grounded theory are the sensitising concepts, which are the starting point and guidelines of research. In grounded theory, no hypotheses are tested, but the sensitising concepts help to initiate the reciprocal reflection process between theory and data (Bowen 2006). While grounded theory has rarely been applied in social movement research (Mattoni, 2014), it has been more frequently used in the last decade (Peters, 2014; Snow & Moss 2014; Castells, 2015; Reinecke, 2018).

The sensitising concepts of this research were grief-based activism and the act of reconfiguration of the original memorial of the German occupation. Both concepts stemmed from preliminary knowledge of the field that originated from media news. Based on the sensitising concepts, the fieldwork started in September 2014 and lasted until December 2014. The insights of the fieldwork were the guidelines of the content analysis of the Living Memorial's program between June 2014 and December 2014. Here, the research was interested in the interplay between emotions and resilience-building. For this purpose, the weekly programme of the Living Memorial discussions was downloaded from the group's Facebook page. The categories were not predefined but established during the coding process; the discussions were coded according to the topic. Six categories of the 106 programmes could be distinguished: (1) Holocaust, history, remembrance; (2) politics, policies; (3) art, performance; (4) strategies of opposition; (5) democracy; and (6) self-reflection of the group. In the third phase, during the structured interviews in December 2020 the participants' interpretations about the reason and impact of the Living Memorial's discussions were analysed. The anonymised, structured interviews were made with ten participants of the Living Memorial discussion, who were recruited through the group's Facebook page. The literature review in this approach helped to elaborate the sensitising concepts and the data into conclusions on the general attributes of grief-based activism and resilience.

5 Managing emotions

This section assesses the emotion management process of the Living Memorial movement, which strengthened the resilience of the group. For this purpose the techniques of emotional management at the site of the memorial are overviewed, the topics of the themes of the Living Memorial's discussions analysed, and finally the interviews evaluated. Before the analysis, the concept of emotion management is presented briefly.

It is a general expectation that individuals behave according to social norms, which are secured by social and political institutions. Furthermore, institutions not only regulate behaviour but also direct the way people should act in different situations (Hochshild, 2012). In other words, institutions contribute to emotion management, which is also true in the case of less formal entities, like social movements. Performative protest forms are particularly suitable means for movement leaders to influence and manage the emotions of supporters and the wider public. The point of social movement mobilisation is, from a certain perspective, the successful management of emotions. The movement strategist has to manoeuvre

wisely between emotionally overheated and calmed moments. It is also important that the emotions of the mobilised supporters align with and further the aims of the movement. Outrage, sorrow, and anger brought from the outside of the movement should be channelled toward movement goals. Symbols with strong emotional content, playing on people's heartstrings can be effective instruments to recruit supporters, deepening and sustaining engagement. In some cases, vilification of adversaries, exploiting fear, can motivate. Other performative protest forms have the opposite effect: paper mache puppets, for instance, make politicians ridiculous, vincible.

In some cases, it is necessary to calm an overheated atmosphere. Intensifying emotions can mobilise supporters, activists, but for the wider public hot-headed politics can be repulsive. For the success of the movement, for the sake of long-term planning, and to elaborate a positive image for the public and deepen the engagement of activists, it is necessary to deal with emotions. Managing emotions does not necessarily involve the manipulation of movement activists; neither are activists, supporters easily manipulable targets. Consequently, managing emotions does not involve the exploitation of activists, but emotion management occurs in many cases with their consent. For instance, transforming shame, guilt, or fear into pride could be an effective strategy in the case of those movements where the aim is self-expression and the recognition of their collective identity by other societal groups. A good example is the LGBTQ pride movement—displaying worthiness is a common feature of contentious politics (Tilly, 2004).

However, social movement leaders and organisers of other political events are not omnipotent in the management of emotions. Their capacity to impact whether true emotional identification with the speakers and other participants develops is limited (Kiss & Szabó, 2015). Furthermore, protest participation can also be a source of fun and cheerful experiences, especially in the case of spectacular, performative action forms. Just like at carnivals, protesters can march at demonstrations in colourful costumes, often as boisterous music plays. Not only protests are becoming more like music festivals, but many festivals have acquired a distinctly political character. Hence, in the case of such protests, the participation itself satisfies the individual; participation is the source of pleasure.

5.1 Techniques of emotional management at the site of the memorial

Two main techniques were in use during the mobilisation of the Living Memorial, namely the deconstruction of the official memorial with the exhibition of family photos, relics, stones and the group discussions on various cultural, social, and political issues. The role of these techniques was not the simple regulation of certain emotional expressions, but to channel these to support the movement itself. Even the goal of the movement itself could not be easily defined since it was hardly imaginable that the government would dismantle the Memorial for Victims of the German Occupation. However, as the activists noted at their meetings, the movement was successful in reinterpreting the memorial as political indoctrination, as faking Hungarian history. As the Living Memorial was initiated, it was an action with strong emotional content. At the flash mob, activists tried to deconstruct the memorial installed by the government, with their family memories, photos, stones, candles, personal objects, and banners. The various objects, placed on the ground and hung at hip, level distorted the front view of the official memorial, hence it disturbed the composition and the

political message. Through the 'counter memorial'—as the initiators called it—resilience was realised in the physical space and symbolically at the same time. This technique of deconstruction was rooted in a previous Facebook campaign, where children and grandchildren of Holocaust survivors shared their own stories on the social media site. Grief, sorrow, remembrance were used here to counterbalance the message of the government about the innocence of Hungarian state during the Holocaust. The counter memorial has been maintained since the 2014 conflict. Nevertheless, it was damaged in 2019, which triggered protest by the Living Memorial and other groups.

The emotion management on the spot involved the discussions on different issues, where people, activists of the movement were sitting in a circle, listened to the guests and later they could also ask questions. It was very important that the gatherings were held on the spot of construction and, later, of the memorial. This allowed deconstructing the official memorial with the collectivity, the bodies of Living Memorial activists. A main feature of the discussions was inclusiveness. This was realised inside and outside of the group. During the discussions the participants had to stick to rules that ensured equal opportunities to speak. Activists also distributed flyers for tourists in English language and invited Hungarians to join the discussion, thus aiming to include others from the outside. The remembrance was not just about telling the activists' stories, but initiating discussions with others. It was the movement's goal to promote a common basis for historical remembrance. It was also a widely contested act when a young radical right-wing man was invited to participate after he insulted the activists of the Living Memorial. Some members thought that it is not necessary to sit down for a talk with everyone; there are clear limits, while others argued that the Living Memorial is about both listening and being listened to. For many activists the self-disclosure of András Rényi was an important moment, where one of the main initiators of the Living Memorial spoke about his father, who was a high-rank cadre of the communist system in pre-1989 Hungary. Inclusiveness inside and outside raised the cohesion of the movement's community and so contributed to the group's resilience.

5.2 Discussion themes of the Living Memorial

The gatherings had different topics, which were crucial for emotion management. The content analysis of the discussions identified 106 programme topics. Seven overarching categories could be distinguished, as represented in Table 1. Events of the first category dealt mostly with inclusive remembrance politics in Hungary or with historical events and personal stories. Participants recalled stories of surviving or history of the ghetto in Budapest, like the so-called yellow-star houses, which were the designated residences of Jews during the German occupation. Not only Jewish history was discussed, but also the connection between Hungarian traumas, like the Holocaust, the Treaty of Trianon at the end of World War I, and the Pharrajimos, the Roma genocide during World War II. At one meeting the topic was the role of Jews during the 1956 Hungarian uprising.

In many cases, the activists invited well-known public intellectuals to discuss policy issues or current political events. The Living Memorial organised talks about, inter alia, unconditional basic income, Hungarian monetary politics, rule of law, the future of European integration, the election system. Political scientists and analysts were also invited to discuss the current political situation.

Table 1: Content analysis of the Living Memorial discussions, June–December 2014

Month	Holocaust, history, remem- brance	Politics, policies	Art, per- formance	Strategies of opposi- tion	Democ- racy	Self- reflection of the group	total
June 2014	6	0	4	0	3	0	13
July 2014	6	1	2	0	2	10	21
August 2014	5	0	2	1	8	4	20
September 2014	0	10	6	2	2	2	22
October 2014	7	4	3	2	3	1	16
November 2014	1	3	1	2	0	1	7
December 2014	0	0	0	2	0	0	2
total	25	18	18	9	18	18	106

Art and various performances were also integral parts of the events at the Living Memorial. Organisers were closely connected to the Budapest art scene; many were themselves artists or curators. A central theme at such events was the German occupation memorial itself, other politically sensitive statues in Liberty Square, and the ownership of urban spaces. Inter- active, political sightseeing was organised at the square. The autonomy of art, particularly of film art from politics was also a recurring topic. Nevertheless, not only 'serious' events were organised, but once also a stand-up workshop with comedians.

'Strategies of opposition' were events when the chances of social movements and suc- cessful political protest were discussed. It is not surprising that the organisers of the Living Memorial and the participants of the events were interested in the possible outcomes of ac- tivism. They invited social movement leaders to discuss if it is possible to achieve positive outcomes with social movement activism. At these events, the activists of the 2012–2013 stu- dent protests and the 2014 'internet tax protests' were invited.

Democracy issues refer to those events when activists discuss illiberal democracy, the freedom of the press, the state of democratic institutions, or the representation of marginal- ised groups. A central issue of the Living Memorial movement was to elaborate an inclusive remembrance politics. This claim presupposes an inclusive democracy as well. The activists discussed the above-mentioned different features of democracy. A distinct topic was the speech of Viktor Orbán at a summer festival, where he admitted that his government aimed to build an illiberal state, hence the high number of democracy-related discussions in August 2014.

In many cases, the group held gatherings where people could reflect on the purpose of the group, on ideal internal communication. The participants had here opportunities to evaluate the individual and collective impact of the discussions and the Living Memorial initiative, but also do-it-yourself sessions were organised. The activists held debate training as well, which is understandable since one aim of the movement was to promote an inclusive culture of dialogue.

The various topics contributed to the capacity and resilience-building of the Living Memorial in different areas. The most frequent topic, the Holocaust, history, and remembrance, and also art and performance, directly supported the reconfiguration of the official memorial's narrative. But it also strengthened the group's inner cohesion and maintained the grief-based collective identity in a similar way to the discussions about self-reflection. The topics related to politics, policy, democracy, and the strategies of the opposition encouraged resilience-building by enhancing the group's knowledge in political issues and self-image as a competent subject.

5.3 Activists' evaluation of the Living Memorial

In 2020, ten structured, anonymised interviews were made with activists and participants of the Living Memorial movement. The respondents were recruited through the movement's closed Facebook group. Since there was no information on the population of all Living Memorial activists and participants, the aim of the structured interviews was not to have a representative sample but to get information on the subjective evaluation of the outcomes of the movement. Among the respondents, seven were present at more than 20 gatherings, one individual between 11 and 20 times, one between six and ten times, while one between one and five times. Two, R4 and R6, were the initial organisers; the others were engaged through the media or during protest events. R6 spoke at almost every event; four others, in most cases, while the remaining five spoke sometimes when they were at one of the meetings. The respondents were all very active citizens. Three of them worked in more than three different civil organisations prior to the COVID-19 lockdown; seven of them in two to three organisations. Only R7 did not attend one of the major demonstrations after the 2018 elections; only two did not sign petitions; and three did not boycott certain products. The respondents had high levels of education, were mostly Budapest residents and their median age was 68 (Table 2).

Table 2: Respondents of the semi-structured interviews

Respondent	Gender	Age	Highest level of education	Residence	Employment
R1	male	73	PhD	Budapest	retired
R2	female	48	high school diploma	other city	self-employed
R3	female	67	BA, BSc	Budapest	retired
R4	female	69	PhD	Budapest	part-time worker
R5	male	78	PhD	Budapest	retired
R6	female	69	PhD	Budapest	part-time worker
R7	male	64	PhD	Budapest	full-time worker
R8	female	53	higher vocational education	county seat	full-time worker
R9	female	64	MA, MSc	village	retired
R10	male	84	PhD	Budapest	retired

The respondents were asked about their feelings concerning the Living Memorial (Table 3). According to the data they were rather angry and worried, but afraid. Growing illiberal tendencies in the government made them concerned but not necessarily about their personal safety. While the memorial was not dismantled, the respondents were still not hopeless. It can be assumed that similar to András Rényi, they interpreted the cancelled inauguration and the mere existence of the Living Memorial as successes.

Table 3: Emotional reactions to the topic of Living Memorial, means of a 5 point Likert scale

Emotion	Mean (5 points Likert scale)
angry	3.5
worried	3.7
fearful	2.1
frustrated	2.7
hopeless	2.2

During the structured interviews, open questions were asked about the aim of the Living Memorial movement and the effects of the discussions on the respondent and the whole collective. Respondents R1, R3, R5, R8, and R9 stressed the relevance of dialogue, getting new information, and discussing different issues. According to R1, the aim of the Living Memorial was 'organising dialogue initially due to politics of memory anomalies, later on other social policy issues, contributing to the organisation of resistance.' For R2, R7, and R10 the main goals were to organise a community and maintain protest and 'normality.' R2 included 'community building, expressing opinions, creating a common space of thought and thus putting pressure, building relationships, protesting, dialogue and many more.' R4 and R6 considered awareness-raising particularly important. As R6 put it: 'To discuss social problems in public, to listen to the stories of others, to sensitise people to the sufferings and traumas of others, to develop and strengthen the rules of public debate.'

When it came to the Living Memorial discussions' effect on the self, the majority of respondents were satisfied. R2 reported that her social activism started during the Living Memorial movement. For others (R4, R8, R9, and R10) the discussions became routinised in their life and stabilised their political, social values. According to R1, R5, R6, and R10 the discussions were eye-openers, broadening their horizon. From the perspective of the whole Living Memorial community, R1 noted that after the polarisation the extremes dropped out: 'It's pretty much this: polarisation, extremes lagging behind, dropping out, not only right-wing "provocateurs," but also those who think strongly in Judaism, this applies to all resistance groups at the Liberty Square.' For R6, R7, R8, R9, and R10, the discussions created a real community, which enabled dialogue and maintained the Living Memorial itself. As R6 put it: 'For many, these conversations are important. Societies and friendships developed. Many people say that their opinions on one issue have been influenced by the opinions and comments of others.' Nevertheless, R2 was critical on this point and R3 felt some disappointment during the discussions since the composition and size of the participants changed from event to

event. To sum up, the participants' evaluation reinforced the results of the content analysis of the discussion topics. The gatherings strengthened the cohesion of the group, albeit at the expense of drop-outs.

6 Conclusions

The study investigated the grief-based activism and emotional management of the Living Memorial movement. The Living Memorial grew out of a flash mob, which protested against the one-sided historical interpretation of the Memorial for Victims of the German Occupation erected by the Orbán government in Budapest after the 2014 general election. The Living Memorial aimed to contradict the government's memorial by offering an inclusive remembrance through telling personal, family stories. On the site of the memorial various discussions were held by the activists, which continued in an online format during the COVID-19 pandemic as well. According to the results, three different actions were realised by the Living Memorial, which all enhanced the group's resilience on different levels. The discussion of personal and family stories, sharing grief, reinforced the collective identity of the group. The personal remembrance also helped to deconstruct the government's official memorial. The political discussions and presentations raised the political consciousness of the participants and strengthened their self-image as rational political actors. The grief-based activism outlined in the literature influenced the Living Memorial from various aspects compared to the modular forms of protest against the illiberal regime in Hungary. Like in other cases, the activists aimed to reframe the government's interpretation of loss and mourning. It also involved the deliberate easing of social conflicts by endorsing different historical grievances and traditions of remembrance. At the same time, the participants wished to become agents rather than passive victims by protesting against the denial of the Hungarian state's responsibility during the Holocaust. The grief, the personal commitment helped to maintain the group since 2014; visiting the Living Memorial discussions became an everyday activity for the participants – without losing its political character. Thus, the resilience in the case of the Living Memorial was built upon grief and was realised by a continuous process of reframing, community building, and by strengthening the competencies, that is political knowledge, debate culture, and self-esteem of the group.

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