Nationalism and conservative populism in the CEE bloc: a political economy and historical institutional approach

Chapter · May 2023

DOI: 10.4337/9781802209549.00006

2 authors, including:

Oldrich Krpec
Masaryk University
43 PUBLICATIONS **71** CITATIONS

SEE PROFILE

2. Nationalism and conservative populism in the CEE bloc: a political economy and historical institutional approach

Oldrich Krpec and Carol Wise

Poland does not want to remain a net recipient of EU subsidies forever. On the contrary: we want the right to develop in a fair market, and by this right, we want to one day catch up with Germany in terms of welfare and economic power. This will not take 100 years! And then many Poles who emigrated will be able to return home.
(Jarosław Kaczyński, Deputy Prime Minister of Poland (2020–22) and founder/leader of the Law and Justice Party (PiS))

What is the basic principle of democracy? In the end, it is loyalty to the nation. We Central Europeans know from historical experience that sooner or later, we will lose our freedom if we do not represent the interests of our citizens.
My lesson from history is that if there is a strong moderate centrist party which can lead the country, there is no room for extremists from the right or left.
(Viktor Orbán, Prime Minister of Hungary since 2010 and leader of the Hungarian Civic Alliance (Fidesz))

Bohemians, Moravians, and Silesians are an extremely inventive and creative nation. Although our country is not as big as Germany, Italy, or Poland, we are a great nation because of our talent to learn things and to be inventive. Even fifty years of suppression of freedom and creativity was not able to knock out the heritage of Baťa; we have the talent in our genes. Inventiveness, creativity, and extraordinary skills. And the Czech resilience. The power to get up again.
(Andrej Babiš, Prime Minister of the Czech Republic, 2017–21 and leader of Action of Dissatisfied Citizens (ANO))

The recent turn of the Central and Eastern European (CEE) countries away from Western models of liberal democracy and market-based economic policies and toward conservative populism has sparked interest across the political and economic spectrum. A shorthand explanation of this shift is that CEE politicians, policy makers, and citizens have become disillusioned by the meager returns from neoliberal economic strategies based on liberalization, privatization and deregulation (Williamson 1990; Appel and Orenstein 2018). Democratic politics, moreover, have failed to mitigate the longstanding ethnic

and religious tensions that have characterized this bloc (Connelly 2020). For a deeper understanding of this turn toward illiberal politics, economic nationalism and cultural conservatism, we deploy the analytical tools of political economy (Haggard and Kaufman 1995) and historical institutionalism (Thelen 1999; Collier and Munck 2022); our focus is on Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic (Czechia).

This chapter seeks to contribute to this discussion by interlinking the unique set of challenges faced by CEE nations in the process of modern nation-state formation since the collapse of communism in 1989. By necessity, we reach further back into the history of each CEE nation to enhance our explanation. Because definitions of the term "populism" can vary widely, depending on the particular context in which it is used, we rely here on seminal work by Cas Mudde and Cristóbal Rovira Kaltwasser (2013). In their comparative study of populism in CEE and Latin America, these authors distinguish between inclusionary and exclusionary populism and offer a multi-dimensional framework for analyzing it. Along one axis, Mudde and Cristóbal Rovira Kaltwasser (2013: 148) identify three dimensions of populism: material, symbolic and political. Along a second axis, they posit three core concepts that must be "sufficient and necessary criteria for defining populism: the pure people, the corrupt elite, and the general will" (2013: 151).

Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser (2013) argue that populist experiments in Latin America have been more inclusive of the people, the elite, and the masses, whereas the post-1989 brand that has emerged in the CEE bloc is exclusionary by nature. It is true that famous "leftist" populist episodes in 1930s' Latin America, for example, the reign of Lázaro Cárdenas in Mexico and Getulio Vargas in Brazil, were more encompassing and reflective of the general will. However, despite some hefty rhetoric, elites and minority groups were mostly marginalized from these omnibus parties and social movements. A 21st-century rendition of populism in both Hungary and Poland is one that considers all (ethnic minorities, feminists, LGBTQ groups, immigrants and foreigners) as "other" and highly undesirable. The populism espoused by Hungary's Viktor Orbán, for example, "regards the elite and the people as two separate, antagonistic and homogenous groups … the people are pure and the elite are corrupt" (Enyedi 2015: 237).

We note that this "conservative" brand of populism has now spread to Latin America. Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro, who assumed office in January 2019, took a page from Orbán's playbook during his election campaign. Bolsonaro forged "a triple B coalition, made up of cattle ranchers (*boi* in Portuguese) a tough-on-crime constituency (*bala* in Portuguese), and neo-Pentecostal evangelicals (*biblia* in Portuguese)" (Munck and Luna 2022: 249). Fortunately, democratic institutions in Brazil are more robust, preventing the kind of end-runs around the parliament and the constitution that have

occurred in Hungary and Poland. In a final section of this chapter, we relate the discriminatory treatment of the "non-pure" and the trampling of democratic institutions in Hungary and Poland to the serious infractions on rule of law and human rights abuses in both countries. Our overriding question concerning this turn of events in CEE: how is it that longstanding goals of state building and sovereignty have morphed into nationalist projects based on bitter divisions and profound disappointments?

Over the past 200 years, CEE nations have worked simultaneously to achieve political sovereignty (Hroch and Cassling 2000) and to become fully developed partners with the Western European countries. State building has been essential for the pursuit of these joint tasks. CEE leaders understood that *agency* and *autonomy* are necessary conditions for the smooth operation of a modern nation state. Agency implied becoming a relevant player in the theater of European politics; autonomy meant the freedom and capacity to create a modern economy and polity. Reflecting the experience of Western European countries, these nations have defined a modern economy as an industrialized one, with self-sufficiency in strategic sectors of industry and some level of international competitiveness. Moreover, these nations have understood a modern polity to be an urbanized society with a strong middle class committed to ameliorating sharp regional and sectoral divisions and inequalities. The collapse of communism in 1989 reinvigorated the CEE countries to secure autonomy and agency while pursuing these joint political and economic goals. For decades, these CEE countries have envisioned reaching developed country status on par with Western Europe.

The goal of acquiring independent status for each nation was first achieved after World War I. However, state sovereignty and development has been consistently challenged across this bloc by periodic traumas and protracted tensions between ethnic majorities and minorities. As for the quest to become fully developed partners on par with most of Western Europe, this goal remains elusive despite significant CEE efforts. Despite periodic national uprisings, attempts at parliamentary democracy, authoritarian and centralized regimes, Stalinist communism, socialist reforms, neoliberal shock therapy, and the rapid liberal institutional reforms implemented in the 1990s, the three countries analyzed here remain semi-peripheral economies with deeply divided societies.

After 1989, a desire for (re)integration with Western Europe was based on elite perceptions that joining NATO and acceding to the European Union (EU) was in each nation's best interests. Within all three countries, the implementation of policies to forge these ties was based on a belief that integration with the West would modernize the nation, deliver economic growth, and rapidly improve standards of living—while democratizing and integrating civil society. When the global financial crisis (GFC) of 2008–09 dashed these hopes—as the

development model was heavily based on inflows of foreign direct investment (FDI) and these quickly dried up—the limited economic convergence with the West and uneven economic development embittered these CEE countries. Understandably, the unconditional acceptance of a Western neoliberal economic model and liberal democracy post-1989 came under intense scrutiny.

Inherent in the historical process of state formation within the CEE nations has been the propensity toward economic nationalism and ethnic populism (Vachudova 2020). These historical predispositions include sensitivity to perceived threats to their sovereignty, reservations about foreign influence and capital, and significant experience with strong centralized executive rule. CEE states have had contradictory experiences with their reliance on international markets and attempts at parliamentary democracy. In spite of a number of unquestionable positives, the period after the fall of communism has been patently unsuccessful. At least this is how CEE leaders now see it.

In light of this, we find it unsurprising that there have arisen political forces in the CEE countries that accentuate what they consider the ultimate historical mission—winning control over the state to the benefit of the domestic ethnic majority. These forces have engaged those strands of civil society that correctly perceive that they have been losing ground in recent decades. These actors comprise the core forces that fought for national political emancipation and democratic freedoms much earlier on.

This contingent is culturally conservative, favors an activist state policy, and has come to rely on social transfers; it is comprised of those who have been unable or unwilling to take advantage of the opportunities created by European economic integration. What's more, this contingent has been hard hit by economic competition and will be most adversely affected by future European projects such as Industry 4.0 (European Files 2017) and the European Green Deal (European Commission 2021). These socio-political forces have little understanding or sympathy for progressive policies to protect minorities, the digitalization of European industry (Industry 4.0) and efforts to protect the environment and halt climate change (European Green Deal). In fact, they are uneasy about the success of some of their fellow citizens at adopting the lifestyle and values of Europe's secular cosmopolitan culture. For them, it is their unquestionable political right to reject these "postmodern" issues and other efforts to modernize the nation state and the polity within it.

In CEE countries, outside powers—be it Germany, Austria, or the Soviet Union—were the principal forces behind, and enforcers of, these countries' constitutions and political and legal institutions; Poles, Hungarians, and Czechs usually did not define the political system within their own nation states. In addition, with some simplification, this has also been the case since the fall of communism, when major political and economic reforms were

implemented as a condition for being accepted into the EU and other Western institutions (Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier 2005).

Unlike many discussions of the so-called problems of post-communism, we do not consider communism to be the main cause of illiberal politics, weak institutions or different understandings of democracy. Communism, in our view, is just one episode in the struggle of these countries to achieve the goals mentioned above. For us, it is not surprising that populist (ethno-centric, socially conservative) political entities are emerging and—at least for the time being—surviving in the CEE region. As well, it is of little surprise that these parties and movements are concentrating political power, modifying political systems, and enjoying relatively sustained support from broad social groups in the process. This political and economic turn is deeply rooted in the historical experience of these CEE countries, and resurfacing in the conservative populism of Jarosław Kaczyński in Poland, Viktor Orbán in Hungary, and the technocratic populism of Andrej Babiš in Czechia. We contend that these conservative populist movements are distinct from most examples of the rise of populist movements within the Western world and merit investigation on their own terms.

THE STRUGGLE FOR NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE: TRAUMAS, ETHNIC CONFLICT AND MODERNIZATION

We argue that today's conservative populism is intrinsic to the historical process of developing an independent state by the nations of Central Europe. Over time, this challenge has decisively shaped their goals to achieve agency and modernization, as well as their choice of specific tools to accomplish them. In order to understand contemporary political developments in Central Europe, it is important to grasp the historical efforts of major groups to construct a state that strengthens their position vis-à-vis other actors. The latter includes, for example, the popular classes, peasants, workers, the nationally minded intelligentsia, social progressive forces in Poland and the Czech Republic, and the Church in Poland and Hungary.

Poland was partitioned by Prussia, Russia, and Austria beginning in 1795. By the mid-19th century, Poland was still a remote, unproductive agricultural country that sat on Europe's economic periphery. The numerous reforms needed to modernize Poland were daunting: state building, design of a modern tax base, support for industry and urbanization, and the emancipation of the peasant population and cancellation of the corvée (indentured labor). Achieving these goals was likely impossible with the country divided among three imperial regimes. Poles undertook a series of revolts, the most significant one in 1863, but this was lost to pro-Russian forces after 18 months of battle.

At this point, the intelligentsia—Polish elite consisting of an educated aristocracy and bourgeoisie with high levels of human capital but limited political influence—gave up military action and instead began laying the groundwork for Polish independence. Through education and cultural dissemination, their goal was to build a strong national identity (Zarycki 2003).

While the Prussian partition developed due to state investment in industry and infrastructure and a conversion of the agricultural sector to commercial farming, the Russian and Austrian partitions saw few reforms and stagnated. The settlement of Germans on Polish territory brought the adoption of vigorous reforms that quickened the development of the Prussian partition, including the adoption of strict Germanization policies in the education system. Several cities in the Russian partition, especially Warsaw, benefited from their location on the westernmost outskirts of the Russian Empire. Large industrial enterprises in this region were the result of Russian investment in mass production for the Russian market, using cheap local labor and simple technologies. Otherwise, most of the territory under Russian control suffered under misguided Russian socio-economic policies. A more liberal Austrian regime was of little help to the Austrian partition; this region remained a remote outback of the empire.

Ethnic conflict superseded class conflict, especially in the western regions, where Polish and German agriculture, handicrafts, and industry competed against each other. Class conflict, however, lay just below the surface and erupted periodically. The Polish bourgeoisie developed in a latecomer fashion, and struggled to compete with much stronger and more sophisticated German producers. Thanks to the support of the higher classes and the church, peasants in the Russian and Austrian partitions developed a Polish identity. As most industrialists and managers in the West were Germans, the labor movement also developed a strong Polish identity (Koryś 2018: 167). The Polish Catholic Church worked actively to fortify Polish identity, and effectively spurned German attempts to bring the church under state control—as well as rebuffing a Russian campaign to extend orthodoxy to the entire empire.

One of the great European revolutions was the **Hungarian** uprising against Austria in 1848, which turned into an all-out war for independence. Austria was only able to win thanks to the intervention of powerful Russian forces. After its defeat, martial law was introduced in Hungary, and Austria then embarked on a policy of neo-absolutism, seeking the political centralization of the empire and the Germanization of Hungary. It was setbacks in Italy and Austria's defeat in the Austro–Prussian War in 1866 that created the conditions for an Austro-Hungarian settlement. Austria sought to prevent the disintegration of its empire and to forestall demands for extensive autonomy from the Slavic nations. It therefore agreed to a compromise—the creation of Austro-Hungary. As such, in 1867, the sovereignty of the Kingdom of Hungary was restored; the empire consisted of two distinct entities, united only by a common foreign

and war ministry and a head of state, Franz Joseph I, Emperor of Austria and King of Hungary (Křen 2005: 292). The Hungarian ethnic group in the territory of Hungary (Transleithania) represented less than half of the population. Nevertheless, in 1868, a law declared all the inhabitants of Hungary a single and undivided nation and instituted a policy of Hungarianization of the other ethnic groups (Kontler and Smith 1999).

In the final decades of the 19th century, Hungary experienced economic growth that led to the creation of modern enclaves, but also to a deep division of society between a liberal (and secular) cosmopolitan urban society and a traditional, rural, religiously conservative one. Beginning in this period, modernizers and most of the popular classes alike shared the hope that the country could be unified and reconnected along Western lines. At a minimum, this would have entailed the cultivation of a buoyant middle class, bolstered by a healthy rate of growth, which would allow for proper attention to rising social problems (Ágh 2013). This national Hungarian vision, yet to crystallize, still shines brightly amid decades of latecomer frustration.

The historical territory of **Bohemia** (a precursor to modern **Czechia**) was, in the 19th century, the most industrialized part of the Austrian Empire. A relatively high level of economic development in cities and rural regions helped to moderate the severity of conflicts stemming from economic and wealth disparities (Romportlová-Koukolová and Sládek 1994). But the Czech Republic has also had its share of historical traumas.

The first such trauma was the defeat of the Bohemian Protestant estates' revolt in 1621, which sparked the Thirty Years' War. After the Habsburgs' victory, as German nobility and Catholic clergy poured into the country, both privileged groups became the most important landowners. Czechia, as part of the Austrian Empire, was subjected to widespread Germanization and Catholicization. Beginning in the 18th century, German was mandated as the official language, and the Protestantism of a majority of the population was suppressed. Unlike Hungary, the position of the Czech nation was not improved by the settlement of 1867 and hopes of greater autonomy remained unfulfilled. Only a few Czech visionaries dreamed of the country achieving full independence before World War I. The strong orientation of part of the Czechoslovak elite toward the Entente Powers, especially France, and its interests in containing Germany in central Europe, led to a delimitation of the borders of the new Czechoslovak state that respected virtually all demands of Czech representatives. Czechoslovakia was therefore made a multiethnic state, with economically strong, culturally influential and geographically concentrated German and Hungarian minorities. The diplomatic victory at the Paris Peace Conference included accepting the thesis of the existence of the Czechoslovak nation, which had little support in the history of Central Europe

and which itself created another dimension of ethnic tension within the newly formed state, solved finally by the dissolution of Czechoslovakia in 1993.

NEW STATES SEEKING AGENCY AND MODERNIZATION IN INTERWAR EUROPE

Although the Polish, Hungarian and Czechoslovak ethnic groups had crafted their own sovereign state in the post-World War I period, the goals of achieving real and sustainable independence from the regional powers and modernization of the economy and society were not achieved. All of the preceding conflicts were far from resolved and this fundamentally influenced the choice of political systems and the shape of social and economic institutions in these new states. In all three states, authoritarian and/or extra-constitutional systems were established and these were a constant undertow to the tasks of state building.

During World War I, **Poland** suffered heavy damages, was largely deindustrialized, and lost a significant part of its territory and population. Socialist Party leader Józef Pilsudski, in search of support for Polish independence, sided with the Central Powers (Germany, Austro-Hungary, Bulgaria, and the Ottoman Empire) against Russia. The National Democracy movement (right-wing nationalists), whose key figure was Roman Dmowski, allied with Russia and then with the Western powers to support the cause of Polish independence at the Paris Peace Conference (1919–20). At home, Pilsudski won support from the military and most Poles, and thus had the upper hand. It fell upon him to repel the Bolshevik invasion of Poland and settle border disputes (involving limited military action) with Czechoslovakia. Disgusted with parliamentary politics, Pilsudski staged an armed coup in 1926. The political regime he established from 1926 to 1939, known as *Sanacja* (the literal translation is "healing"), was based on limited civic rights and strong executive rule (Wandycz 1990).

This regime claimed to be committed to eliminating corruption, modernizing the economy, and controlling inflation. The *Sanacja* movement enjoyed significant public support, even after Pilsudski died in 1935. While *Sanacja* explicitly prioritized national interests over the interests of groups or individuals, it was in opposition to the more radical *Endecja* (National Democrats)—an ultranationalist, right-wing conservative political force. It was Dmowski's National Democrats, in the role of an extra-parliamentary opposition, that radicalized and proposed a policy of Polonization of large and influential minorities (ethnic Poles represented only 69 percent of Poland's population). Also *Endecja* was strongly anti-Semitic and sought to exclude Jews from political and social life in Poland (Holzer 1977: 405).

Over the interwar period, Polish economic development had limited success (Koryś 2018: 245), failing to accomplish the Polonization of cities or to overcome the division of Poland between the more developed West and underdeveloped East. Poland's second republic (1918–39) faced a shortage of financial capital, had limited human resources, was rife with ethnic conflict and surrounded by hostile neighbors. The Great Depression halted industrialization and reinforced the belief that private enterprise could not achieve the modernization of Poland. Attention instead shifted to state investment in heavy industry (Ránki and Tomaszewski 1986).

Hungarian patriots perceive the Treaty of Trianon, ending World War I, to be a great historical injustice. In their view, Hungary—the historic protector and savior of Christian Europe from the Ottomans and an indomitable nation that stood up to imperial bullying—lost much of its historic territory. After World War I, over 3 million Hungarians remained in the territories of neighboring states (Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Ukraine, and Romania), whose populations and cultures were deemed inferior by Hungarians. This sense of exceptionality is one of the lasting influences on Hungarian domestic and foreign policy today.

With the failure of a short-lived communist rump state following World War I, Hungary's nationalist aristocracy resumed power (Völgyes 1971: 88). However, the main dividing line within interwar Hungary was not along a right–left socio-economic axis, but instead between national conservatism and (nationalist) liberalism. From 1920 to 1944, Admiral Miklós Horthy led the country, basing support for his authoritarian regime in rural Hungary with strong nationalistic impulses and loyalty to the Catholic Church. Opposition to this conservative-nationalist centrist regime came from urban groups that sought modernization, more involvement of Hungary in the international community, and active solutions to pressing social problems (Hynčica et al. 2016: 66–68).

During World War II, Hungary initially attempted to remain neutral, but later agreed to enter the war on Germany's side (thereby regaining territories it had lost after World War I). Following the German defeat at Stalingrad, Hungary pushed to negotiate a separate peace with the Allies, but Germany invaded in 1944 and occupied Hungary until the war ended. Horthy was deposed, a new pro-German government was established and most of the Hungarian army fought to the very end of World War II to keep the Soviets out. At the war's end, Hungary lost all territories it had acquired between 1938 and 1941. Many Germans living in Hungary were expelled and most of Hungary's Jews were murdered following the German occupation. In 1945, the Soviets allowed a free election in Hungary, which was won by a center-right agrarian party. Communists led by Mátyás Rákosi lost another election in 1947. Only

the forced merger with Social Democrats—creating the Hungarian Working People's Party—allowed the communists to prevail (Kertesz 1950).

Post-World War I **Czechoslovakia** was an ethnically heterogeneous state with significant German and Hungarian ethnic minorities. Moreover, the three million Germans living in the 15-million-strong Czechoslovakia constituted an economic as well as a cultural elite. A successful political revolution resulted in the establishment of a parliamentary republic of Czechoslovaks for Czechoslovaks. Solid economic advancement followed in the 1920s (Kárník 2003: 205). But the relatively high level of development of Czechoslovak industry was not enough to ensure its competitiveness outside the protected market of the old monarchy, nor did this lead to self-sufficiency in the strategically important sectors of heavy industry or electrical engineering (Olšovský and Průcha 1968: 71). The development of heavy industry, a matter of key strategic interest, was built and financed by Czech capital and then protected by high tariffs. The fact that Czechoslovakia could make many complex industrial products (albeit at internationally uncompetitive prices) became a matter of national pride (Kubů and Pátek 2000).

There was significant class conflict between, first, the national conservative right belonging to the National Democrats and a powerful agrarian party; and second, the Social Democrats and Socialists. However, for most of the interwar years, this political cleavage in Czechoslovakia was less significant than the omnipresent ethnic conflict. The key organs of political power during the First Czechoslovak Republic (1918–38) were the extra-constitutional councils, comprising the leaders of Czechoslovak political parties across the left–right spectrum. The political system suffered from the absence of a loyal constructive opposition, the impossibility of removing the government by democratic procedure, and the erratic division of ministerial portfolios between the main parties (Balík 2003).

Throughout most of the First Republic, key state leaders were clearly dissatisfied with the limited effectiveness of parliamentary government and repeatedly expressed doubts as to whether such an arrangement could realize the key national goals of the state. President Tomáš G. Masaryk, in particular, was highly critical of parliamentary party politics, and in one instance threatened to push for presidential authoritarian rule (Klimek 2000: 549). The strongest political force in the entire interwar period in Czechoslovakia was the social democratic, communist, and socialist left. President Masaryk and Foreign Minister and Second President Edvard Beneš were left-leaning. Both spoke of the need to socialize the economy, and there was widespread support for land reform at the expense of large landowners—often the German economic elite and the Catholic Church. Other important political forces were agrarians and the Christian Peoples' Party, both representing the rural population. Alongside these Czechoslovak parties, there was a full gamut of German political parties.

Despite the fact that most of civil society, the strongest parties, and influential politicians were leaning left and supporting the socialization of the economy, it was representatives of Czech capital and right-wing economic nationalists who became the most influential actors in the Czechoslovak economy. This group, with its large stake in Živnobanka, controlled the economic policy of the country and linked the banking system to politics through the nationalist-conservative National Democracy party. This party rested on economic clout, as it actually had a narrow base of political support (Lacina 1990: 192, Kárník 2003: 240). On this point, we note that skepticism about the functioning of political parties, the resulting preference for rule by experts, and sensitivity regarding foreign influence in the national economy are important parts of the historical experience of the interwar Czechoslovak First Republic.

Political crisis leading to World War II represents another historical trauma for Czechs: the Allies' "betrayal" of the republic through the Munich Agreement, which allowed the cession of the Czechoslovak borderlands to Germany in 1938. It remains a sensitive question as to how much the post-war recognition of Czechoslovakia and its borders that date back to 1918 took the sting out of the earlier betrayal. The subsequent policy of promoting the interests of Czechs and Slovaks at the expense of minorities contributed to the resolution of the crisis. The ethnic conflict (and the conflict of the ethnic majority with the "foreign" elite) was "solved" in post-1945 Czechoslovakia by the expulsion of Czechoslovak Germans from the country.

COMMUNISMS: YET ANOTHER PUSH FOR MODERNIZATION

One of the effects of the World War II on Poland and Czechoslovakia was the resolution of internal ethnic conflict through the deportation and partial liquidation of influential ethnic minorities. Of course, the Hungarian trauma of losing territory and population—Trianon—was not to be dealt with (Vardy 1997). The new dramatic challenge was domination by the Soviet Union and, under its pressure, the subordination of foreign policy of all three countries to its leadership. Whereas in the interwar period collectivism and state intervention in the economy and society had been nationally motivated, the establishment of communist political and economic regimes was exogenous and represented a fundamental break. While economic conditions for large parts of these (now) ethnically homogeneous societies improved through dramatic economic and social change, and in many ways the communist period can be seen as a force for modernization, the loss of independence led to fundamental tensions and occasionally open conflict.

During World War II, **Poland** lost 22 percent of its population, the highest percentage of any nation. Human capital was eroded, as both Germany and the

Soviet Union attempted to eliminate the Polish elite; many qualified professionals were Jewish and/or German minorities who perished in the Holocaust or were expelled after the war. Because of the war, the borders moved west and Poland "recovered" territory from Germany. Because of the war and the relocation of the population, the state became ethnically homogenous and this helped to mitigate longstanding ethnic tensions. Economic policy shifted toward a socialist model, even before the communist regime was established. This included the expropriation of German property and the nationalization of large- and medium-scale industries that started already in the 1930s. Popular opinion in Poland now perceived communism as yet another route toward modernization, while the overriding goal continued to be that of catch-up with the West.

Beginning in 1950, the Six-Year Plan included full-scale centralization, forced industrialization, and militarization of the economy. The aim was to eliminate backward economic sectors and to transform social structures. Gentry, private shopkeepers, entrepreneurs, and "Western spies" were perceived as enemies of the people who blocked the path toward progress. Intensive urbanization, mass migration to the cities and the repopulation of recovered territories prompted significant social advancement of the Polish lower classes into positions previously held by Germans, Jews, and the old Polish elite. This led to rapid upward mobility for large groups in society, created the most egalitarian society in Polish history, and delivered public services of reasonable quality to those occupying the lower social strata (Koryś 2018: 289).

This development began to falter as early as the 1960s. Growing social tensions led to alternating repression and concessions made by the ruling establishment. Gradually, a revisionist version of socialism took hold, as did an emphasis on the growth of consumption (Kornai 1997). This entailed an opening to the West, including imported technology (financed by loans) and the strengthening of the welfare state. When coal prices (Poland's principal export) fell in the late 1970s, these policies proved unsustainable. High levels of debt and rising prices led to another wave of protests and the founding of Solidarity, a progressive mass movement seeking to force political change. Despite the introduction of martial law by Wojciech Jaruzelski in 1981, there was a total disintegration of the system, leading to a negotiated transfer of power in 1989. As a result of the ailing socialist economy in the 1970s and 1980s, in spite of all efforts, the gap between Poland and the West in 1989 remained similar to that of the 1950s.

Communist **Hungary** applied the Soviet model of a command economy with a focus on heavy industry. This strategy produced limited growth and minimal improvement in the country's standard of living. A great degree of turmoil and discontent stemmed from purges against nationalist and

non-communist groups and the intelligentsia, as well as a crackdown on the Hungarian Church. The loss of political sovereignty and the Sovietization of the education system led to student protests in 1956, which grew into a national revolution against Soviet communism. The communists were overthrown and Hungary announced its withdrawal from the Warsaw Pact and declared free elections. However, the Soviet army eventually suppressed the revolution, killing thousands.

In order to maintain political stability, the new communist regime of János Kádár reformulated the goals of economic policy toward increased consumption and living standards (Berend and Ránki 1983: 179). Central planning was relaxed and trade relations with the West were established (Balassa 1983). As in Poland, there was some growth in living standards, but the economy depended on imports of goods from the West and foreign loans to finance them (Kornai 1986). Social transfers to compensate for the effects of necessary macroeconomic reforms in the 1980s then led to unsustainable public spending (Kornai 1992).

With the exception of a brief revival in 1968, the **Czechoslovak** Socialist Republic presented little significant opposition to its incorporation into the Soviet communist bloc. Until the very end of 1989, it was a model state-planned economy, capitalizing on an already relatively solid level of industrialization and development.

LIBERAL ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL REFORMS—AGENCY AND MODERNIZATION AT LAST?

During the 1980s it was undeniable that in the economic and social areas the Central European countries had failed to overcome their (semi)peripheral position in the European economy. As a result of the collapse of the communist bloc, the countries seized the opportunity of an economic and political reorientation toward the West. The application of profound economic, political and social reforms prescribed by Western institutions was seen as the solution to longstanding bottlenecks and development gaps. Market reforms were touted as the way to gain agency in Europe and overcome the semi-peripheral position of CEE countries. Neoliberalism became a new bullet train for modernizing the state, the economy and the polity.

In the 1990s, **Poland** made another attempt to realize the goals of modernization and secure national independence. All political forces agreed on the imperative to release Poland from Soviet influence. Foreign policy now focused on joining Western structures, and reforming the economy to bridge the gap between Poland and Western Europe. Regarding the economic transformation, Solidarity (political party based on the anti-communist trade union movement) supported the decentralization of the planned economy

and a social order based on communitarian values. But Leszek Balzerowicz, Poland's first non-communist minister of finance since the 1950s, was influenced by monetarist economic reforms in the U.S., UK, and Germany. He led the implementation of an IMF-style shock therapy plan in the early 1990s, which sought a radical transformation toward a market-based economy. The speed of change was meant to prevent the undermining of market reforms by those who would be most adversely affected.

At the time, the urgency of addressing these vitally important economic issues overcame traditional political cleavages. This was clearly demonstrated when, despite the victory of the post-communist left in the 1993 elections, market reforms and neoliberal economic policy continued without significant change (Appel and Orenstein 2018). Radical economic transformation went hand-in-hand with deep social change. Industrial workers and peasants—two classes whose emancipation fueled social change in the 19th and 20th centuries (Koryś 2018)—lost importance. The intelligentsia was transformed into a capitalist middle and upper class, segments of the population that had acquired sophisticated human capital skills and had strong prospects for upward mobility. This skilled contingent included members of the pre-existing political class, who were able to adapt to the realities of the market economy (taking advantage of their leadership positions in government and the country's state-owned enterprises). Managers of foreign firms investing in Poland, as well as managers of domestic firms with foreign participation also benefited from economic liberalism.

The majority of Poles accepted a model of economic development based on massive inflows of foreign capital, given an economy and workforce that had traditionally lacked capital, technology, and managerial skills (Farkas 2011). Joining the European Union became synonymous with modernization and prosperity; most demands for institutional and economic reforms by Western institutions were readily met (Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier 2005). Any negative consequences of this radical transformation of whole sectors of the economy, regions, and social groups were regarded as temporary. Politicians and technocratic policy makers ignored the rapidly growing differences between those who were ready and able to take advantage of new opportunities in the international economy and those who were rapidly losing ground in terms of their social and economic position in society.

After the fall of communism in **Hungary**, any attempt to reduce state spending was met with protests that signaled limited social support for anything resembling radical economic transformation (Benczes 2016). While social transfers prevented a sharp drop in the living standards of the vulnerable part of the population in the early 1990s, there was a continuous decline in economic activity. Millions of jobs disappeared as a result of the transition; those for low-skilled workers were gone forever. In the mid-1990s, Hungary

had deficits in public finances and trade balance and high government debt, inflation, and unemployment. This forced the Socialist (liberal left) government to implement a series of harsh economic reforms. Along with the rapid integration into the European market and the influx of foreign investment, the situation in the national economy was improving, but the rapid changes in the economic structure had significant effects on large sections of the population. The collapse of socialist industry and agriculture and the rapid shift to an economy with most jobs in services created islands of poverty in both urban and rural areas and multigenerational unemployment—in total, a third of the population found themselves out of the economy (Ágh 2013).

This first led to a crisis of political participation as the dissatisfied populace held off on mobilizing, thanks to social transfers and social consensus on the EU accession project. Even so, Viktor Orbán's first Fidesz cabinet (1998) questioned the necessity of neoliberal economic reforms and revised them. Also, Socialists found it difficult to defend the austerity measures before the 2002 elections. It was Socialists who brought Hungary into the EU in 2004. Full integration into the common market brought a massive inflow of foreign capital, but also increased competitive pressures. The socialist–liberal coalition won another term in the 2006 elections with a program of economic reform without austerity. But Hungary was bound by the EU rules of the Stability and Growth Pact, limiting budget deficits and public debt.

Access to EU structural funds, on the other hand, proved to be crucial for Hungary. Following an internal crisis in the Socialist Party, protests erupted in 2006. Therefore, when the GFC hit, there was only minimal room for a standard anti-crisis economic policy response, as public finances were not in order and citizens were in debt and were losing patience with political representation. In 2008, Hungary had to negotiate a bailout package with the IMF. The caretaker Gordon Bajnai's cabinet introduced austerity policies that led to a decline in living standards for broad sections of the population and a drop in the quality of public services, including the education and health systems. The popularity of the far-right xenophobic Jobbik movement soared, with young supporters engaging in street clashes with the police since the 2006 riots. In 2009, only 6 percent of the population was satisfied with the political and economic situation in Hungary and 72 percent said it was better under communism (Pew Research Center 2010).

After the Velvet Revolution of 1989, the Federal Republic of **Czechoslovakia**—comprised of the Czech Republic and Slovakia—was united over the pursuit of a radical transition to a market economy and the launching of major institutional reforms along Western lines. Yet, the harsh feedback effects of market reforms were manifested in the 1992 elections, where winning political parties represented vastly different views on how to move forward with political economic reforms. The Movement for a Democratic

Slovakia, which won a plurality among Slovaks, called for a loosening of ties with the Czechs and a slowing of economic reforms. The more prosperous Czechs, who had been inclined to preserve the union, declared their intentions to prepare for a split soon after the Slovaks did (Engelberg 1992: A8). The Slovak National Party succeeded in its push for dissolution, and on December 31, 1992, the Czech Republic and Slovakia parted ways.

By 1991, the Czech Republic's GDP was 20 percent larger than that of Slovakia and until 1991, transfer payments from the Czech budget to Slovakia had been the norm. The country's comparatively high level of development within CEE and its relatively higher standard of living under communism led to the belief that the Czech Republic's economic and political transformation would be notably more successful among the CEE countries. Yet, rapid convergence to Western Europe's much higher level of development only occurred during a few years around the time of the country's 2004 EU accession. In the period after the 2008–09 GFC—during which the Czech Republic applied exemplary neoliberal policies—any noticeable economic convergence toward the West had completely stalled.

REVISION OF THE LIBERAL MODEL: NATIONALISM, POPULISM AND THE CONTINUED STRUGGLE FOR AGENCY AND MODERNITY

During the GFC, it became painfully clear that a model based disproportionately on massive inflows of foreign capital was simply not sustainable, that such a model has limitations in terms of economic policy autonomy, and convergence to the economic level of Western Europe was by no means guaranteed (Galgóczi 2017; Myant 2007). At this same time, throughout Central Europe, the losers in this game of liberal economics and politics began to claim influence over the future direction of these countries.

With **Poland's** accession to the European Union (EU) in 2004, both sides—Polish leaders and EU officials—claimed to have lost influence over internal politics and economic policies in Poland (Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier 2004). Moreover, the division of Poland into Poland A (the capitol and western "Prussian" Poland) and Poland B (eastern "Russian" Poland) was still not resolved even in the context of European integration. The post-communist left has defined itself as a modern social democratic party and has attracted secular voters from the big cities. Voters from the lagging rural areas of eastern Poland, practicing Catholics, logically sought an alternative. Since the beginning of the 21st century, both groups came to be represented by political subjects emerging from the anti-communist Solidarity movement. These have been Donald Tusk's liberal-conservative pro-EU Civic Platform (PO) and the Kaczyński brothers' national-conservative Law and Justice Party (PiS).

Lech and Jarosław Kaczyński's party won the 2005 elections and it was widely expected to form a coalition with PO. However, a sustained contest for the presidency between Tusk and Lech Kaczyński led to the formation of a coalition of PiS and two ultra-conservative, religious parties (Jasiewicz 2008). This was short-lived, and PiS called new elections, which it surprisingly lost in 2007. During the pro-European, liberal PO government, PiS shifted from the political center to the conservative right, with a greater emphasis on the church, state intervention in politics, active social policy, and increasing pessimism about further integration with Europe (Dabrowska 2018). It wooed conservative and disaffected voters of its former coalition partners and won the 2015 elections and subsequently the presidency.

From the beginning, Lech and Jarosław Kaczyński criticized Poland's negotiated transition to democracy and power-sharing with the former communists, calling it a mistake that only burdened Polish society. The PiS program of the so-called Fourth Republic sought a strict decommunization of the state and the removal of former communists, including within the education and judicial systems (Folvarčný and Kopeček 2020). It sought to strengthen the executive and the office of the president. This changed after the death of President Lech Kaczyński in 2010. His brother, Jarosław Kaczyński did not win the presidency in the consequent elections and decided not to seek public office himself. However, as leader of PiS, he is a key political figure who plays a strong hand in deciding on the prime minister and presidential candidates. Since 2015, PiS has held the government and the presidency, posts that it successfully defended again in 2019 and 2020.

This discussion of history clearly demonstrates that the historic goals of the Polish national modernization movement were not fulfilled. The post-communist economic and social transformation was a limited success, which fits organically into the political, economic, and social history of modern Poland. It remains a peripheral economy in Europe despite Poland's integration into Western European markets through FDI, including foreign control of the financial sector and a large part of the manufacturing industry. While educated professionals in the cities and those participating in Poland's integration into the European economy have realized a substantial increase in living standards both in absolute and relative terms, large parts of Poland are hurt by the resurgence of inequality between regions, sectors, and socio-economic groups.

Secular liberal professionals have leaned toward the values and lifestyles of Western Europe and distanced themselves from those fellow citizens who rightly feel left behind. The Kaczyńskis' party thus follows, programmatically and ideologically, a strong tradition in Polish politics. Pragmatically, it seeks to achieve economic development that will make it possible to guarantee Poland's independence and corresponding position in European politics. At

the same time, the party attempts to strengthen national consciousness and identity. The national-conservative political movement relies on a coalition of workers and peasants, the Catholic Church, and the nationally oriented part of the former intelligentsia—that is, the same forces that have struggled for independence and modernization since the first partition of Poland. This coalition has (with the exception of 40 years of domination by Soviet communists) always been confronted by the interests of foreign capital and businesses pursuing their opportunities in the international economy. The only revision to this script is that this time around it is liberal pro-European Poles (and not members of other ethnic groups) who, according to the narrative of national conservatives, threaten the achievement of the historic goal of a proud, independent, and strong Poland.

Jarosław Kaczyński's PiS explicitly subscribes to the tradition of Pilsudski's *Sanacja* (and not its rival, the radically nationalistic, xenophobic, and anti-Semitic *Endecja*). It is no coincidence that PiS is creating an extra-constitutional power structure that supposedly increases the efficiency of government. Most importantly, PiS policies attempt to strengthen the executive at the expense of other branches of power. Under the decommunization policy, it has tried to remove former communists and other national actors deemed unpatriotic from the public sphere. In order to achieve these goals, the PiS is "reforming" the courts and the Constitutional Court, reducing the number of MPs and senators, and intensifying control of the public media. Court vacancies are filled with appointees mainly loyal to the party. PiS is addressing socio-economic disparities and helping to maintain strong voter bases by doling out social transfers. It is working in close relationship with the Catholic Church, the mainstay of Polish national identity in both partitioned and Communist Poland. The movement around Kaczyński's PiS naturally rejects postmaterialism and postmodernism.

In the area of environmental policy, PiS opposes changes that would disproportionately regulate heavy industry and mining, sectors that have been the hardest hit by the market transformation. It does not believe contemporary Poland should address the issue of protection for ethnic, religious, and sexual minorities. For PiS, these issues are of little importance compared to the enormous challenges the country faces. Moreover, it is an agenda brought in from outside, in a context where it is alien and can further destabilize a severely tested civil society. Kaczyński has strong reservations about accepting non-European immigrants into Europe. Instead, the agenda PiS seeks is to restore national Polish identity based on pride, as opposed to fostering shame or guilt (Kazlauskaitė and Salmela 2022). Through education and cultural work, PiS is propagating a reinterpretation of Polish history as that of a victim nation (by German, Russian, and Soviet oppressors) and/or a hero nation (through armed struggle against these oppressors and protection of the weak).

Such tropes are flexibly voiced, depending on which setting is best suited for these simplistic claims.

In the 2010 elections in **Hungary**, Orbán's conservative populist Fidesz alliance won a landslide victory. Still struggling from the GFC shocks, Orbán requested that the EU loosen the rules of the Stability and Growth Pact for Hungary, which Brussels promptly refused. In response, Orbán announced Hungary's *Freedom Fight* against the EU, the IMF, and foreign capital. To meet the EU's requirements on budget deficits, he nationalized private pension funds and imposed levies on foreign banks (Escritt 2010; Appel and Orenstein 2018: 157). These same banks were forced to offer Hungarian households a favorable conversion of their debts held in foreign currencies into steeply depreciated Hungarian Forints (Johnson and Barnes 2015).

According to Orbán, the resolution of the crisis and restoration of economic growth required that foreign capital share profits and costs fairly with Hungarian citizens. Originally a political liberal and supporter of the market economy, in his second administration Orbán reframed his political narrative as that of the Hungarian people's struggle against external and internal enemies (Buzogány and Varga 2018). He branded former Socialist and Liberal governments incompetent and corrupt and continued to cast the EU and the IMF as external enemies; he declared the domination of Hungary by foreign capital to be unacceptable. Fidesz points a finger at the post-1989 neoliberal economic model, and claims that these policies left Hungary at the mercy of a coalition of Western institutions and businesses in conjunction with domestic entrepreneurs and urban professionals who favor liberal politics and a cosmopolitan lifestyle. Moreover, Orbán has accused these elites of colluding with foreign-funded NGOs.

A new Fidesz-inspired Hungrian constitution of 2012 aimed to reshape the nation by explicit reference to its history, ethnicity, and traditional Christian family values. This was accompanied by reforms that regulated the powers of the Constitutional Court and changed electoral laws. As the government's popularity declined somewhat in 2014 and 2015 due to internal disputes, the European immigration crisis of 2015 exploded. The government came out strongly against accepting refugees and immigrants, which coincided with a tough stance against domestic minorities, typically the Roma population.

Orbán's ethnic nationalist ideology is built around the idea of a "work-based society" (Köllö 2019). He has reoriented the social system in favor of working middle-class and lower-middle-class Hungarians. Experts also note the negotiation of strategic agreements with the largest foreign investors, securing their support for the Hungarian regime (Ágh 2019). Thus, the mainstay of the regime is not only the rural regions with traditionally conservative populations, but also an urban working class hit hard by market reforms, the chaotic run-up to the 2006 government crisis, and the 2008–09 GFC. This explains

the emergence of a broad coalition that provides Orbán with strong support and has delivered Fidesz clear electoral victories since 2010. The opposition's position has been further weakened by the extensive appointment of Fidesz officials in the government and their ability to raise barriers to entry into political office, public service, and the courts. The very negative experience of most Hungarians during the post-1989 reform period has left the populace embittered toward the left and liberals, NGOs and especially neoliberal policy makers, and perceived subjugation of Hungary by the EU and dictates of the international financial institutions.

In **Czechia**, during the economic problems in the years following the GFC, for the first time there was broad disillusionment and public doubt about the sustainability and suitability of a model based on the control of the national economy by foreign capital. These doubts were fueled by the swifter economic improvement of Poland and Slovakia, both of which rebounded more quickly from the GFC by relying on counter-cyclical fiscal policies (Wise et al. 2015). The small but widening differences between the pace of development of different regions within Czechia and the failure to address the problems of those groups and areas most damaged by the market shock transition led to the rise of political parties and movements that criticized these negative conditions and the policies that gave rise to them. Typically, these parties attacked politicians and parties for pursuing their own narrow interests at the expense of citizens and lashed out at the EU's knack for fixating on seemingly trivial problems and offering self-defeating solutions. As in Poland and Hungary, the educated and well-to-do inhabitants of large cities were drawn to Western values and lifestyles and showed little empathy for their less fortunate fellow citizens. The resentments of the latter were then exploited by political actors who had once been pro-democracy, but chose to benefit from the lower levels of trust in liberal economics, public institutions and the efficacy of constitutional democracy.

A large segment of Czech society does not view Western goals of multiculturalism, the protection of various minorities, or radical solutions to climate change as national priorities. Many citizens are concerned that their representatives cannot successfully defend the country's interests in ongoing debates and negotiations over the future of Europe. It was this broad popular stratum that comprised the political forces that won national independence and made relative gains in mitigating ethnic and class conflict after World War II and during the communist era. They feel themselves to be the legitimate arbiters of the state and resent new post-communist domestic elites and foreign capital that threaten their position. It is these segments of the population that were negatively affected by the market reforms of the 1990s, and who have borne the brunt of market adjustments and new transformations (e.g., through digitalization, automation, competitive services and the green revolution).

Classical populist protest parties have existed in the Czech system for decades but have enjoyed limited support. Yet, this changed with the electoral success of the ANO movement (in the elections of 2013 and 2017). ANO defines itself as against politics and politicians and explicitly advocates a technocratic style of governance (Havlík 2019), but also greases the electoral wheels with some concessions and populist rhetoric around inclusiveness. Despite the narrow electoral defeat of ANO by a broad coalition of opposition parties in 2021, it is still the strongest political entity in the country and its leader Andrej Babiš continues to enjoy considerable popularity, with ANO clearly leading in the 2022 polls.

HUMAN RIGHTS AND RULE OF LAW CHALLENGES IN CEE

Conservative populism in Poland and Hungary has resulted in a number of violations with regard to human rights and the rule of law. Although this is much less the case in Czechia, it suffers from conflicts of interest and corruption on the part of public officials, most notably in the cabinet of former Prime Minister Andrej Babiš and his ANO movement. Czechia has also yet to resolve the persistent problem of discrimination against the Roma population. Hungary and Poland, unlike Czechia, are frequently called out for infractions related to human rights and rule of law by EU officials, as we discuss below. Especially since the 2015 EU immigration crisis, leaders in Hungary and Poland have regarded concerns about the protection of human rights as postmodern irritations. Illiberal leaders in both countries, with their sizable bases of support, have readily swept human rights concerns under the carpet—at least for the time being.

Rule of Law and Human Rights Violations in Hungary

Since 2010, Orbán has spun a national narrative about the urgency of protecting Hungarian identity, traditions, and way of life. Fidesz and its coalition partners has instilled skepticism about EU cosmopolitanism and cast aspersions on Western elites and their individualistic and secular ways of life (Krpec and Wise 2020). Simultaneously, this ruling coalition has attacked judicial independence and weakened the separation of powers. With Fidesz at the helm, the constitution was amended 12 times in 12 months and finally replaced altogether in 2012 "in a manner that eliminated nearly all opportunities for oversight" (Enyedi 2015: 235). While conservative populism has been an effective mobilization strategy in de-democratized Hungary, it requires continuous mobilization to sustain this mode of governance. The ruling coalition must identify new enemies of "pure Hungarians" on a rolling basis. Since Orbán's

second administration (2014–18), this "new" constitution proved to be a highly effective tool for doing just this.

Even before the overhaul of the constitution, a new media law enacted in 2011 placed restrictions on media coverage and punishments through fines or regulatory powers wielded by government-appointed bodies. Most of these provisions remained despite EU pressures to amend them. The government has fined or obstructed independent or opposition media outlets (such as Klubradio and ATV). Moreover, editorial boards and/or publishers have occasionally dismissed journalists and editors due to their critical comments about the government (Human Rights Watch 2012, 2014, 2017, 2020).

Since 2017, Freedom House has classified the Hungarian media as only "partly free" (Freedom House 2017). A punitive advertising tax that primarily affects RTL Klub, the only remaining large independent TV channel in Hungary, drew international criticism (Human Rights Watch 2015). Also, the Hungarian Supreme Court ruled that a new media law is now responsible for monitoring the content of blogs and readers' corresponding comments; the media law makes it a crime to spread "fake news" (which is up to the government to define) or engage in fear-mongering. In relation to the pandemic, the government launched over 100 investigations into allegations over the spreading of false rumors and fake news. The main regulatory body, the Media Council, revoked the license of independent Klubradio due to its alleged violations of the media law, which were upheld by the Constitutional Court. In the last few years, most media outlets came directly or indirectly under control of the government and its cronies (Human Rights Watch 2021). Pro-government media intensely targeted the political opposition, civil society organizations, and academics critical of the government.

After Orbán declared his wish to end liberal democracy in Hungary in 2014, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) came under considerable pressure. The government conducted an audit of those NGOs that receive foreign donations, branded them as unpatriotic and left-leaning, investigated dozens of them, suggested they had misappropriated assets, and even initiated criminal proceedings against some NGOs (Human Rights Watch 2015). During and after the 2015 European immigration crisis, the government manipulated public media in an attempt to discredit civil society and claimed the crisis was inspired by the expatriate Jewish Hungarian billionaire George Soros and other foreign-paid traitors. Beginning in 2017, every organization receiving at least 20,000 euros of foreign funding had to register as foreign funded and declare all materials acquired with foreign funds. The Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) struck down this mandate in 2021. Orbán was more successful, unfortunately, in expelling the Central European University (CEU), a prestigious academic institution founded by George Soros and run by the Soros foundation, eventually forcing the CEU to relocate in Vienna. The government also

created a "new" public trust fund, led by appointees loyal to the government, which took control of managing public finances for universities and research institutions (Human Rights Watch 2021).

Hungary is well-known for its rigid anti-immigrant stance. Even before the outbreak of the 2015 crisis, it deported refugee-seekers entering through Ukraine, even when there was evidence of ill treatment in their home country and legitimate grounds for requesting asylum (Human Rights Watch 2012). Its policy of detaining asylum seekers on broad grounds continued as the crisis led to increasing numbers of incoming migrants. In 2015, Hungary erected a fence on the border with Serbia and Croatia and introduced a new legal regimen that criminalized entry of the undocumented and designated Serbia as a safe third country to permit the quick return of asylum seekers. These procedures accelerated to the point that due process was impossible. The Hungarian police and military used force against asylum seekers on a number of occasions.

A massive government campaign linked migration to terrorism and organized a referendum on the EU's immigrant reallocation plan (Human Rights Watch 2015). As a result, the number of asylum applications dropped significantly in 2016 and 2017 (Human Rights Watch 2016, 2017). A 2017 law allowed automatic detention in transit zones on the Serbian border and capped daily entries to 20 applicants. Violent pushback against refugees has continued. In 2018, another constitutional amendment criminalized services, advice, and support for undocumented immigrants and asylum seekers (Human Rights Watch 2019), and a special tax was levied on domestic organizations that provide support and services for undocumented immigrants. Members of the independent media were also denied access to refugee reception centers. In 2019, a constitutional amendment banned settlement of foreign populations in Hungary; in 2020, a law abolished the right to seek asylum on Hungarian territory, requiring asylum to be claimed at embassies in non-EU countries. Several of these practices were the subject of rulings against Hungary by the CJEU and European Court of Human Rights (Human Rights Watch 2019, 2020, 2021).

The overhaul of the Hungarian constitution of 2012, which stressed traditional cultural and religious values, contains new provisions that discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation, religious minorities, and persons with disabilities (Halmai 2019). The Roma minority, in particular, face discrimination, racism, and are occasionally victims of violence by vigilante groups (Human Rights Watch 2014). The Hungarian police fine and frequently jail Roma for petty offenses (Human Rights Watch 2016), and Roma children have been forced to enroll in separate schools. International organizations have criticized another new constitutional provision that restricts persons under legal guardianship from voting. Another questionable law enables local governments to criminalize homelessness (Human Rights Watch 2014, 2015, 2017). Hungary signed the Istanbul Convention that condemns violence against women, but

has not done enough to enforce it or to prevent discrimination based on gender. The Istanbul Convention is described by government and pro-government media as an unnecessary instrument promoting postmodern gender ideologies and undocumented immigration.

A 2020 law makes it impossible to change one's gender legally. According to a constitutional amendment, children must be raised in accordance with values based on the homeland's constitutional identity and Christian culture. Only married heterosexual couples may adopt children in Hungary. Hungarian law also prohibits promoting sexual and gender diversity (Human Rights Watch 2020, 2021).

The government relied on the ongoing pandemic to issue a sweeping state of emergency, which allowed the executive to rule by decree without parliamentary oversight (Human Rights Watch 2020). Many of these executive decrees were unrelated to health issues, for instance, the stripping of funds from municipalities governed by the political opposition. In 2020, Orbán circumvented EU regulations/oversight and secured an opaque $1.8 billion Belt and Road loan from China's Export–Import Bank for construction of a Budapest–Belgrade rail link. In contrast with Western infrastructure loans, there was no competitive bidding on this project and Beijing lent to Hungary with zero conditionality or strings attached. Orbán's state of emergency included extraordinary legislative powers that enabled him to classify all documents related to this mega-loan project. Remarkably, EU cohesion funds could have partially financed the Budapest–Belgrade rail link, but the Orbán administration was anxious to avoid the kind of Western-style scrutiny that this would have required (Krpec and Wise 2021: 7).

Rule of Law and Human Rights Issues in Poland

The most pressing human rights issues in Poland are the government's stance on sexual minorities, reproductive rights, and support for the death penalty by a sizable segment of the political elite. Homophobic rhetoric from government officials was common during the presidency of Lech Kaczyński (2005–10), LGBT groups were associated with pedophiles and the narcotics trade, and LGBT activists were physically attacked on a regular basis. The PiS government's education policy forbade promotion of rights for sexual minorities (Human Rights Watch 2007, 2009). Reproductive rights are extremely limited and abortion has been criminalized. There is also a lack of sex education and limited access to contraceptives. Until it was found unconstitutional in 2016, Polish medical personnel had the right to refuse to perform an abortion even when one was medically indicated (Human Rights Watch 2008, 2015). There was considerable pressure to ban abortion completely in Poland, an effort that succeeded in 2020. The Constitutional Tribunal upheld the ban of legal

abortion. In 2017, Parliament adopted a law restricting access to emergency contraception. Access to genetic and prenatal testing continues to be insufficient (ECHR 2010, 2014).

Poland is reluctant to implement EU directives on gender discrimination, and its anti-discriminatory laws are weak (Human Rights Watch 2010). In 2015, Poland ratified the Istanbul Convention, but violence against women remained problematic and is seriously underreported. Now, the Istanbul Convention is often referred to as harmful, and there are even attempts to criminalize basic sex education. The government has requested a review of the Istanbul Convention as a thinly veiled attempt to rule it incompatible with the Polish Constitution (Human Rights Watch 2020, 2021).

Since 2015, the situation of LGBT individuals and groups has further deteriorated in conservative Poland. The Parliament rejected civil partnerships for same-sex couples and denied legal recognition of transgender people (Human Rights Watch 2015, 2016). The government has spewed hostile and pejorative rhetoric against "gender ideology," and declared the display of gay pride rainbow symbols as blasphemous. While campaigning for president, Andrzej Duda (PiS) issued homophobic statements and called LGBT an ideology worse than communism. Many municipalities in Poland declare themselves "LGBT free zones." The EU Commission recently announced that it would withhold development funds to these municipalities (Human Rights Watch 2020, 2021).

Many civil society organizations have come under intense pressure in Poland. In 2017, the parliament passed a law establishing a government-controlled body to oversee the distribution of funds to NGOs. Those working on women's rights, LGBT issues, asylum, and migration reported difficulties accessing state funds. Organizations planning to protest against the country's negative stance on UN climate talks in 2018 were subject to government surveillance (Human Rights Watch 2018, 2019).

Poland strongly opposed relocation quotas for undocumented immigrants and asylum seekers during the 2015 immigration crisis. The situation came to a head on the Poland–Belarus border, as asylum seekers were routinely denied access to asylum procedures and returned to Belarus. After Belarus escalated the situation on the border by luring Middle East immigrants to Belarus and assisting them to cross the border illegally, Poland declared a state of emergency, built a fence on the border, and mandated heavy pushback by the national police and military. Related to the issue of human rights in Poland, an investigation into a secret detention center, linked with the CIA but situated on Polish territory, dragged on for years and has further sullied the Polish government's record on human rights (Human Rights Watch 2012, 2014, 2015, 2016).

The most important issue regarding democracy in Poland is the erosion of rule of law as a result of government interference in the judicial system. After

2015, under the PiS government, Parliament canceled the appointment of all five Constitutional Tribunal judges elected under the previous administration. In 2017, a new law on judicial reform affected the country's courts operating at all levels and undermined the Constitutional Tribunal's functioning. When this was ruled unconstitutional, the government refused to publish the ruling or change the law (Human Rights Watch 2017). The government aimed to remove noncompliant judges and accomplished this by reducing the retirement age for Supreme Court judges, forcing 27 judges to retire. The CJEU ordered Poland to suspend application of the law in 2018 (Human Rights Watch 2019).

Other provisions of the law gave the Minister of Justice control over judicial appointees in common courts, which has sparked international criticism. The problems with government interference with the judiciary further increased with judges and prosecutors being subjects of disciplinary proceedings for upholding the rule of law or criticizing judicial reforms. In 2017, a law permitted the firing of judges who carry out rulings that are perceived as running counter to government policies (Human Rights Watch 2020). The politically compromised Constitutional Tribunal ruled in 2021 that interim measures ordered by CJEU to protect the independence of the Polish judiciary were contrary to the Polish Constitution. Later that year, the tribunal rejected the supremacy of EU law.

Freedom of the media in Poland is also on the decline. According to Reporters without Borders, freedom of the media in Poland declined from 8th to 64th place in world rankings since PiS came to power in 2015. State-owned media intervened in the most recent presidential campaign and strongly supported President Duda's reelection. In recent years, there have been a number of dismissals of professionals from state-owned media without cause. A 2021 law prevents non-EU shareholders from owning a majority stake in Polish media—a measure directed against the U.S.-owned TVN station. TVN's license was suspended that same year (Human Rights Watch 2020, 2021).

CONCLUSIONS

With our reliance on the analytical tools of political economy and historical institutionalism (Collier and Munck 2022), we have highlighted the similarities and differences that have underpinned the emergence of these CEE nation states. Our ultimate goal has been to enhance our understanding of their embrace of illiberal politics and policies in the 21st century. In so doing, we have traced their evolution since the struggle for independence in the 19th century and tracked their performance under three different political economic regimes. These include interwar nationalism, post-1945 communism with central planning and heavy industrialization; post-1989 (neo) liberal democratic capitalism; and, the post-2008 era of rising populism. We provide

critical reflections on the results of nearly two decades of adhering closely to Western models of politics and economics. This current juncture has taken some Western analysts by surprise (Lendvai 2012). We note that while this latest scenario is certainly not unique to the CEE bloc (Krpec and Wise 2020), the robustness of CEE conservative populism in the 21st century arguably merits special attention.

The contemporary similarities are striking. In all three CEE countries considered here, populist parties have won elections since the GFC and in Hungary and Poland readily translated their illiberal agendas into political practice. In all three cases, these parties garnered substantial and continuous popular support. In Hungary and to some extent in Poland they modified constitutional systems and institutions, and made political competition more difficult for their opponents. The content and emphases of these populist platforms may be different and specific to each of the three nations, but we discern a pattern of path dependence that resonates across these countries. While we cannot credit any of the aforementioned historical periods for the apparent convergence toward today's conservative populism with heavy authoritarian overtones, these outcomes are cumulative. They stem from unfulfilled goals for the betterment of each nation, in a context of a tradition of unresolved class and ethnic tensions (Connelly 2020), and intense pressures from a rapid market opening under external conditions of hyper-competitive globalization.

There is of course significant variation in the evolution of these three CEE countries, which is evident in our earlier narrative: one country torn between great powers (Poland), another with a strong aristocratic tradition and a sense of historical exceptionalism (Hungary), and the third enjoying a relatively higher degree of economic development and political stability, but still lagging significantly behind the West (Czechia). As we see it, a patriotically minded section of the political elite and civil society in each country has taken it as their historical mission to win an independent state for their nation and then develop it to the level of the Western countries. When the very magnitude of this task became evident during the second half of the 19th century, the primary objective of leaders in each was to overcome their country's subordinate position in the international division of labor. However, true unification—the organic integration of the nation—as well as full economic convergence with the West, has remained elusive (Connelly 2020).

These CEE countries are learning the hard way that state sovereignty is a process, not a given, with no guarantees that national prosperity will follow (Mazzuca 2021). Some observers have been quick to credit communism as a key cause of CEE's political economic backsliding in the 21st century. This is far too simplistic. After all, the ongoing quest of all CEE leaders to break out of their countries' peripheral position in the greater European economic bloc has been thwarted under state-command communism *and* during post-1989

efforts at market transformation. Communism, then, was yet another attempt to solve the insurmountable problems of achieving the goals embedded in the respective national project of each country. In other words, the regression into illiberalism in political and economic terms is a consequence of longer-term characteristics of these nations and their stated missions (Collier and Munck 2022).

Integration into Western structures is still seen by a large part of these societies as a way of gaining and securing independence, agency and sovereignty. The challenge for these latecomers, as well as a main source of ire for the likes of Jarosław Kaczyński and Viktor Orbán, is that EU accession has seemingly left them with less influence and agency than hoped for and envisioned. At the end of the day, all three countries remain dependent on foreign capital, imported technology, and the corporate strategies of foreign firms for their economic growth. Significant parts of civil society have quickly adapted to and exploited new opportunities related to the economic opening. Yet this is still a minority, as entire regions, sectors, and social classes have been left behind. These societies are thus deeply divided according to living standards and job prospects, but also in terms of values and lifestyles. This phenomenon is even more sensitive because it contrasts sharply with the elevated status of the broad popular classes and the industrialization of entire economies (including rural development) under communism.

Hence, we see the nostalgia for times past reflected in post-1989 electoral returns, despite the ultimate inefficacy of centralized state planning and heavy industrialization during the Communist era. Conservative populist CEE political parties and their leaders have masterfully exploited today's popular dissatisfaction and disenfranchisement and deftly used propaganda to rally the masses and splinter the opposition. On the one hand, there has emerged a small Western-oriented New Left that has shifted its focus from class conflict to a postmodern agenda based on protecting minority rights, the environment, and advancing cultural relativism. On the other hand, a loosely defined New Right has also emerged, which rejects the social and cultural strictures of the conservative populists as well as the postmaterial causes championed by the New Left. This New Right favors the time-worn tenets of economic neoliberalism and technocratic solutions. Unsurprisingly, neither faction holds much appeal for the broader CEE electorate nor do the causes championed by the greater Western flank of the EU—issues like Industry 4.0 and the Green New Deal.

For the CEE majority, all three positions of the New Left, the New Right, or the average Western EU citizen are seen as a betrayal—because they ignore and/or exacerbate the plight of those who are decidedly worse off in socio-economic terms. While perhaps repugnant to many in the West, at this historical juncture the conservative populist platforms of Orbán and Kaczyński

have become a political default option. The great irony is that their support base is comprised of the same contingent that fought long and hard for national and political emancipation, powerful movements that eventually led to the collapse of a long list of oppressive regimes in the region.

REFERENCES

Ágh, Attila. "The 'backsliding' of Hungarian democracy after twenty years." *Romanian Journal of Political Science (PolSci)* 13, no. 1 (2013): 25–51.

Ágh, Attila. "The neoliberal hybrid in East-Central Europe. The 'treason of intellectuals' and its current re-assessment." *Politics in Central Europe* 15, no. 3 (2019): 355–381.

Appel, Hilary and Mitchell A. Orenstein. *From Triumph to Crisis: Neoliberal Economic Reform in Postcommunist Countries*. Cambridge University Press, 2018.

Balassa, Bela. "Reforming the new economic mechanism in Hungary." *Journal of Comparative Economics* 7, no. 3 (1983): 253–276.

Balík, Stanislav. *Politický systém českých zemí 1848–1989*. Masarykova univerzita Brno, Mezinárodní politologický ústav, 2003.

Benczes, István. "From goulash communism to goulash populism: The unwanted legacy of Hungarian reform socialism." *Post-Communist Economies* 28, no. 2 (2016): 146–166.

Berend, Iván and György Ránki. *Economic Development in East-Central Europe in the 19th and 20th Centuries*. Columbia University Press, 1983.

Buzogány, Aron and Mihai Varga. "The ideational foundations of the illiberal backlash in Central and Eastern Europe: The case of Hungary." *Review of International Political Economy* 25, no. 6 (2018): 811–828.

Collier, David and Gerardo Munck (Eds.). *Critical Juncture and Historical Legacies*. Rowman & Littlefield, 2022.

Connelly, John. *From Peoples into Nations: A History of Eastern Europe*. Princeton University Press, 2020.

Dabrowska, Ewa. "New conservatism in Poland: The discourse coalition around Law and Justice." In *New Conservatives in Russia and East Central Europe*, Bluhm, K. and Varga, M. (Eds.). Routledge, 2018: 92–112.

ECHR 2010 (https://hudoc.echr.coe.int/fre-press#{%22itemid%22:[%22003-3372071-3778873%22]})

ECHR 2014 (https://hudoc.echr.coe.int/eng#{%22itemid%22:[%22001-156027%22]})

Engelberg, Stephen. "Vaclav Havel: Still Puckish, still a politician, no longer president." *New York Times*, July 20, 1992, A8. https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1992/07/21/223892.html?pageNumber=8

Enyedi, Zsolt. "Plebeians, citizens, and aristocrats or where is the bottom of bottom-up? The case of Hungary." In European Populism in the Shadow of the Great Recession, Kriesi, Hanspeter and Pappas, Takis S. (Eds.). European Consortium for Political Research, 2015: 229–244.

Escritt, Thomas. '"Nightmare" in Hungary as government nationalises pension funds.' *IPE Magazine*, November 26, 2010. https://www.ipe.com/nightmare-in-hungary-as-government-nationalises-pension-funds/38105.article.

European Commission. "Delivering the European Green Deal." July 14, 2021. https://ec.europa.eu/info/publications/delivering-european-green-deal_en.

European Files. "Industry 4.0: The new industrial revolution for Europe." January 2017, No. 45. https://www.europeanfiles.eu/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/The-European-Files-Industry-4.0-Issue-45-january-2017.pdf.
Farkas, Beáta. "The Central and Eastern European model of capitalism." *Post-Communist Economies* 23, no. 1 (2011): 15–34.
Folvarčný, Adam and Lubomír Kopeček. "Which conservatism? The identity of the Polish Law and Justice party." *Politics in Central Europe* 16, no. 1 (2020): 159–188.
Freedom House. "Freedom in the World 2017–Hungary" (2017).
Galgóczi, Béla. "Why Central and Eastern Europe needs a pay rise." *ETUI Research Paper* (2017).
Haggard, Stephan and Robert Kaufman. *The Political Economy of Democratic Transition*s. Princeton University Press, 1995.
Halmai, Gábor. "The role of religion in the illiberal Hungarian constitutional system." *Brave New Hungary: Mapping the System of National Cooperation* (2019): 95–110.
Havlík, Vlastimil. "Technocratic populism and political illiberalism in central Europe." *Problems of Post-Communism* 66, no. 6 (2019): 369–384.
Holzer, Jerzy. "The political Right in Poland, 1918–39." *Journal of Contemporary History* 12, no. 3 (1977): 395–412.
Hroch, Miroslav and Robin Cassling. *In the National Interest: Demands and Goals of European National Movements of the Nineteenth Century: A Comparative Perspective*. Faculty of Arts, Charles University, 2000.
Human Rights Watch. *Human Rights Watch World Report, 2007*. Human Rights Watch, 2007.
Human Rights Watch. *Human Rights Watch World Report, 2008*. Human Rights Watch, 2008.
Human Rights Watch. *Human Rights Watch World Report, 2009*. Human Rights Watch, 2009.
Human Rights Watch. *Human Rights Watch World Report, 2010*. Human Rights Watch, 2010.
Human Rights Watch. *Human Rights Watch World Report, 2012*. Human Rights Watch, 2012.
Human Rights Watch. *Human Rights Watch World Report, 2014*. Human Rights Watch, 2014.
Human Rights Watch. *Human Rights Watch World Report, 2015*. Human Rights Watch, 2015.
Human Rights Watch. *Human Rights Watch World Report, 2016*. Human Rights Watch, 2016.
Human Rights Watch. *Human Rights Watch World Report, 2017*. Human Rights Watch, 2017.
Human Rights Watch. *Human Rights Watch World Report, 2018*. Human Rights Watch, 2018.
Human Rights Watch. *Human Rights Watch World Report, 2019*. Human Rights Watch, 2019.
Human Rights Watch. *Human Rights Watch World Report, 2020*. Human Rights Watch, 2020.
Human Rights Watch. *Human Rights Watch World Report, 2021*. Human Rights Watch, 2021.
Hynčica, Pavel, Pavel Maškarinec, and Lukáš Novotný. *Euroskepticismus ve střední Evropě*. Academia, 2016.

Jasiewicz, Krzysztof. "The new populism in Poland: The usual suspects?" *Problems of Post-communism* 55, no. 3 (2008): 7–25.
Johnson, Juliet and Andrew Barnes. "Financial nationalism and its international enablers: The Hungarian experience." *Review of International Political Economy* 22, no. 3 (2015): 535–569.
Kárník, Zdeněk. *České země v éře První republiky, 1918–1938*. Libri, 2003.
Kazlauskaitė, Rūta and Mikko Salmela. "Mediated emotions: Shame and pride in Polish right-wing media coverage of the 2019 European Parliament elections." *Innovation: The European Journal of Social Science Research* 35, no. 1 (2022): 130–149.
Kertesz, Stephen D. "The methods of communist conquest: Hungary 1944–1947." *World Politics* 3, no. 1 (1950): 20–54.
Klimek, Antonín. *Velké dějiny zemí Koruny české: 1918–1929. Svazek 13*. Paseka, 2000.
Köllö, János. "Toward a work-based society?" *Brave New Hungary: Mapping the System of National Cooperation* (2019): 95–110.
Kontler, László and Stefan Halikowski Smith. *Millennium in Central Europe: A History of Hungary*. Atlantisz Publishing House, 1999.
Kornai, Janos. "The Hungarian reform process: Visions, hopes, and reality." *Journal of Economic Literature* 24, no. 4 (1986): 1687–1737.
Kornai, Janos. "The postsocialist transition and the state: Reflections in the light of Hungarian fiscal problems." *The American Economic Review* 82, no. 2 (1992): 1–21.
Kornai, János. "The reform of the welfare state and public opinion." *The American Economic Review* 87, no. 2 (1997): 339–343.
Koryś, Piotr. *Poland from Partitions to EU Accession: A Modern Economic History, 1772–2004*. Springer, 2018.
Křen, Jan. *Dvě století střední Evropy*. Argo, 2005.
Krpec, Oldrich and Carol Wise. "Grand development strategy or simply grandiose? China's diffusion of its Belt and Road Initiative into Central Europe." *New Political Economy*, September 2021, DOI: 10.1080/13563467.2021.1961218.
Krpec, Oldrich and Carol Wise. "Transnational lineages of global authoritarianism: Hungary and beyond." *Global-E*, 13 (28), 2020. https://www.21global.ucsb.edu/global-e/may-2020/transnational-lineages-authoritarianism-hungaryand-beyond.
Kubů, Eduard and Jaroslav Pátek. *Mýtus a realita hospodářské vyspělosti Československa mezi světovými válkami*. Karolinum, 2000.
Lacina, Vlastislav. *Formování československé ekonomiky 1918–1923*. Academia, 1990.
Lendvai, Paul. *Hungary: Between Democracy and Authoritarianism*. Columbia University Press, 2012.
Mazzuca, Sebastián. *Latecomer State Formation*. Yale University Press, 2021.
Mudde, Cas and Cristóbal Rovira Kaltwasser. "Exclusionary vs. inclusionary populism: Comparing contemporary Europe and Latin America." *Government and Opposition* 2, no. 2 (2013): 147–174.
Munck, Gerardo and Juan Pablo Luna. *Latin American Politics and Society*. Cambridge University Press, 2022.
Myant, Martin. "The Czech Republic: From 'Czech' capitalism to 'European' capitalism." In *Varieties of Capitalism in Post-communist Countries*, Lane, David and Myany, Martin (Eds.), Palgrave Macmillan, 2007: 105–123.
Olšovský, Rudolf and Václv Průcha. *Přehled hospodářského vývoje Československa v letech 1918–1945*. Praha, 1968.

Pew Research Center: Hungary dissatisfied with democracy, but not its ideals, 2010. https://www.pewresearch.org/global/2010/04/07/hungary-dissatisfied-with-democracy-but-not-its-ideals/

Ránki, György and Jerzy Tomaszewski. "The role of the state in industry, banking and trade." In *The Economic History of Eastern Europe*, Kaser, C.M. and Radice, E.A. (Eds.), Oxford University Press, 1986: 3–48.

Romportlová-Koukolová, Marta and Zdeněk Sládek. *Hospodářský a sociální vývoj ve střední a jihovýchodní Evropě 1918–1938*. Masarykova univerzita, 1994.

Schimmelfennig, Frank and Ulrich Sedelmeier. "Conclusions: The impact of the EU on the accession countries." *The Europeanization of Central and Eastern Europe* (2005): 210–228.

Schimmelfennig, Frank and Ulrich Sedelmeier. "Governance by conditionality: EU rule transfer to the candidate countries of Central and Eastern Europe." *Journal of European Public Policy* 11, no. 4 (2004): 661–679.

Thelen, Kathleen. "Historical institutionalism in comparative politics." *Annual Review of Political Science* 2, no. 1 (1999): 369–404. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.polisci.2.1.369

Vachudova, Anna. "Ethnopopulism and democratic backsliding in Central Europe." *East European Politics* 36, no. 3 (2020): 318–340.

Vardy, Stephen Bela. "The Trianon syndrome in today's Hungary." *Hungarian Studies Review* 24, no. 1–2 (1997): 73–79.

Völgyes, Iván (Ed.). *Hungary in Revolution, 1918–19: Nine Essays*. UMI, 1971.

Wandycz, Piotr S. "Poland's place in Europe in the concepts of Pitsudski and Dmowski." *East European Politics and Societies* 4, no. 3 (1990): 451–468.

Williamson, John. "What Washington means by policy reform." In *Latin American Adjustment: How Much Has Happened?* Williamson, John (Ed.), Institute for International Economics, 1990.

Wise, Carol, Leslie Armijo, and Saori Katada (Eds.). *Unexpected Outcomes: How Emerging Economies Survived the Global Financial Crisis*. Brookings Institution, 2015.

Zarycki, T. "Cultural capital and the political role of the intelligentsia in Poland." *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics* 19, no. 4 (2003): 91–108.