

The Dynamics of Social and Political Conflict in Eastern Europe: A New Era of Mobilization?

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I. Overview

The politics of the “Refugee Crisis” drew attention to Euroskeptical, right-wing mobilization in Eastern Europe. Particularly in the Visegrád countries, scholars and observers document the rise of „illiberal democracy” and populism. However, it is unclear to what extent these developments follow a long-term trend and represent societal lines of conflict in Eastern European societies.

The seminar critically examines the social and political structure of mobilization in Eastern Europe. The first two sessions present a theoretical overview on cleavage formation, the development of programmatic party competition, and the extent to which one observes recurring patterns of conflict amidst high electoral volatility. The third and fourth sessions consider recent developments and examine electoral and protest mobilization since the EU accession and the Great Recession. In these two sessions, we analyze the causes as well as the consequences of populist mobilization and counter-mobilization in the electoral and protest arena.

II. Requirements

The course is exclusively taught in English. The course assumes some knowledge of comparative politics regarding key concepts of the literature on parties and party systems. These concepts are introduced in the course, but we do not read the general comparative politics literature. Students are expected to read the required readings. The supplementary readings and online resources are optional but going through them helps follow the discussion and acquire ideas for the presentation/response paper/final paper.

III. Assessment

(1) In case you are taking the course to obtain a Certificate of Participation (Beteiligungsnachweis, BN):

You are expected to be present in the class, read the required readings, participate in the discussion, and give either (1) **a presentation (10-15 mins)** on one of the parties or protest movements in the region **or** (2) **write one response paper of 800 words** on the readings for the session.

In case of a presentation, you are free to choose during which session to present as long as the presentations are equally distributed throughout the course. The topic of the presentation is agreed individually, either in email (endre.borbath@eui.eu) or in person. Presentations are expected to relate to the readings and the discussions during the course. Some of the guiding questions for the presentations are: where does the respective movement or party come from? What cleavage in society it represents or claims to represent? How does it fit into the general lines of conflict either in the party system or in the ‘streets’ in the respective society? How does it relate to similar organizations in the region or in North-Western and Southern Europe?

In case of a response paper, you are expected to critically discuss the readings for that session. Therefore, the summary of the readings should not be longer than one third of the paper, and the rest of the response paper should be spent to develop a critical perspective on the readings. You can decide to address one or more readings assigned for that session. These response papers are embedded in the discussion during the course. Some of the guiding questions are: how does the author’s argument relate to the other readings? to what extent does the reading help to make sense of patterns in Eastern European politics we currently observe? To what extent is the theoretical argument convincing? To what extent is the theoretical framework backed up by empirical evidence? To what extent are the paper’s conclusions generalizable in the Eastern European region? Do these conclusions apply outside of Eastern Europe and if so, with what caveats?

(2) In case you plan to take a Final Examination (Abschlussprüfung, AB):

You are expected to comply with the requirements for BN and write an additional final paper (4500-6000 words) on a theoretical topic covered by the course or with a more empirical analysis on party competition or protest mobilization in one of the eleven post-communist countries of the EU (plus the former GDR). The topic of the paper should be individually agreed, but it might for instance, build on the presentations. If it is a theoretical paper which builds on parts of the course, you are expected to read the additional literature (at least what is listed in the syllabus) and provide a more in-depth discussion of the topic. If it is an empirical paper, it should present an overview of the cleavage structure in the respective society, situate the main line of conflicts relative to the regional pattern, discuss mainstream and challenger parties/movements as well as how (or whether?) EU accession or the Great Recession changed the general lines of conflict. It is also possible to extend the scope of the paper to a comparative, cross-national analysis.

The deadline for the paper is September 30, 2018. Please e-mail me if you have questions and send me the final product to: andre.borbath@eui.eu. You need to submit a hardcopy of the paper to Mrs. Britta Trost.

IV. Learning outcomes

- (1) Students will learn the underlying concepts, familiarize themselves with the major theoretical and methodological approaches in the study of Eastern European party systems and protests.
- (2) Students will acquire the ability to apply the concepts used to describe and explain party system change and protest mobilization in Eastern Europe in their own research. The course provides a solid background should any of the students decide to write his/her BA thesis on Eastern European politics.
- (3) Ability to relate the dynamic of political mobilization in Eastern Europe to politics in other European regions.

V. Time and Rooms

	Time	Rooms
Session 1	April 20, 2018, 10:00 – 17:00	2522.U1.52
Session 2	April 21, 2018, 10:00 – 17:00	2332.01.65
Session 3	April 27, 2018, 10:00 – 17:00	2522.U1.52
Session 4	April 28, 2018, 10:00 – 17:00	2332.01.65

VI. Lecture Plan

1. Session 1: Introduction and the legacy of the transition

The first session starts with introducing the course. The structure of the syllabus is discussed, with an overview of the key concepts to be covered during the four sessions. The session introduces the debate on how the 1989 regime change is seen from the perspective of party competition ('tabula rasa' vs. 'post-communist continuity'). The session links the discussion to cleavage formation, the development of programmatic, clientelistic, charismatic linkages and the consolidation of democracy.

a) Required Readings

- Kitschelt, H. (2001). Divergent Paths of Post-Communist Democracies. *Political Parties and Democracy*, 299–324.
- Deegan-Krause, K., 2013. Full and partial cleavages, in: Berglund, S., Ekman, J., Knutsen, T. (Eds.), *The Handbook of Political Change in Eastern Europe*, Elgar Original Reference. Edward Elgar Pub. Ltd, Cheltenham.

b) Supplementary Readings

- Mair, P., 1997. What is different about post-communist party systems?, in: *Party System Change: Approaches and Interpretations*. Oxford University Press, pp. 175–198.
- Offe, C., 1991. Capitalism by Democratic Design? Democratic Theory Facing the Triple Transformation in East Central Europe. *Social Research* 58, 865–92.
- Enyedi, Zs., 2005. The role of agency in cleavage formation. *European Journal of Political Research* 44, 697–720. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-6765.2005.00244.x>
- Beissinger, M.R., 2002. *Nationalist mobilization and the collapse of the Soviet State*. Cambridge University Press. (Chapters 2-3: pp. 47-146)

c) Online Resources:

- Bugarič, Bojan, , Berend, I.T. Academics should be careful not to exaggerate the progress made in Central and Eastern Europe since the fall of the Berlin Wall. EUROPP. 2014 December 11th - <http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/europpblog/2014/12/11/academics-should-be-careful-not-to-exaggerate-the-progress-made-in-central-and-eastern-europe-since-the-fall-of-the-berlin-wall/>
- Mikanowski, J., Goodbye, Eastern Europe! Los Angeles Review of Books. January 27, 2017, <https://lareviewofbooks.org/article/goodbye-eastern-europe/>
- Pew Research Center, 2009. End of Communism Cheered but Now with More Reservations. Global Attitudes Project. - <http://www.pewglobal.org/2009/11/02/end-of-communism-cheered-but-now-with-more-reservations/>

2. Session 2: Party system institutionalization and programmatic party competition

The second session develops on the discussion of Eastern European cleavages. The session introduces the debate on the extent to which party systems are institutionalized and reflect social structures or high and unstructured electoral volatility define Eastern European politics. The session considers the programmatic dimension of Eastern European party competition (in terms of economic and cultural conflicts) and its differential understanding relative to North-Western Europe.

a) Required Readings:

- Haughton, T., Deegan-Krause, K., 2015. Hurricane Season Systems of Instability in Central and East European Party Politics. *East European Politics and Societies* 29, 61–80. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0888325414566072>
- Rovny, J., 2014. Communism, Federalism, and Ethnic Minorities: Explaining Party Competition Patterns in Eastern Europe. *World Politics* 66, 669–708. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0043887114000227>

b) Supplementary Readings:

- Fagan, A., Kopecký, P., 2017. *Routledge handbook of East European politics*. Routledge. (chapters 7, 12; pp. 100-112, 169-183)
- Casal Bértoa, F., 2013. Post-Communist Politics: On the Divergence (and/or Convergence) of East and West. *Government and Opposition* 48, 398–433. <https://doi.org/10.1017/gov.2013.9>
- Powell, E.N., Tucker, J.A., 2013. Revisiting Electoral Volatility in Post-Communist Countries: New Data, New Results and New Approaches. *British Journal of Political Science* 44, 123–147. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0007123412000531>
- Rovny, J., Polk, J., 2017. Stepping in the same river twice: Stability amidst change in Eastern European party competition. *European Journal of Political Research* 56, 188–198. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1475-6765.12163>

c) Online Resources:

Discussion between Kevin Deegan-Krause, Wayne State University; Tim Haughton, University of Birmingham; Ján Rovny, Sciences Po; Stephen Whitefield, Oxford University; full text: <http://www.pozorblog.com/blog/2015/02/political-parties-in-eastern-europe-a-discussion-about-the-state-of-our-art/>

3. *Eastern Europe in Crises?*

The third session maps party competition since EU accession and the 2009 Great Recession. These developments are considered as part of the long-term evolution of the political structure. The session presents the debate on ‘illiberal democracy’, the rise of centrist populism and the consequences of populists in government. The session provides the first opportunity for student presentations, should students choose to present on one of the parties in the region (see above).

a) Required Readings:

- Pop-Eleches, G., 2010. Throwing out the Bums: Protest Voting and Unorthodox Parties after Communism. *World Politics* 62, 221–260. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0043887110000043>
- Stanley, B. (2017). Populism in Central and Eastern Europe. In C. R. Kaltwasser, P. Taggart, P. O. Espejo, & P. Ostiguy (Eds.), *The Oxford handbook of populism* (pp. 140–161). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

b) Supplementary Readings:

- Bánkuti, M., Halmai, G., Scheppele, K.L., 2012. Disabling the Constitution. *Journal of Democracy* 23, 138–146.
- Kriesi, H., 2016. The Politicization of European Integration. *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies* 54, 32–47. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jcms.12406>

- Innes, A., 2014. The Political Economy of State Capture in Central Europe. *J Common Mark Stud* 52, 88–104. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jcms.12079>
- Tavits, M., Letki, N., 2009. When Left Is Right: Party Ideology and Policy in Post-Communist Europe. *The American Political Science Review* 103, 555–569. <https://doi.org/10.2307/27798525>
- Hutter, S., Kriesi, H. (Eds.), manuscript. Restructuring European Party Politics in Times of Crises. (chapters 1, 8, 9, 10, 11) – PLEASE DO NOT DISTRIBUTE, CITE

c) Online Resources:

- Ash, T.G., 2017. Is Europe Disintegrating? *The New York Review of Books*. January 19, 2017, <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/2017/01/19/is-europe-disintegrating/>
- Bohle Dorothee - Capitalism and Democracy in East Central Europe: a Sequence of Crises <https://youtu.be/xFtofqc8OdM>

4. *New era of protest mobilization?*

The fourth session continues the discussion on contemporary political developments but moves from the electoral to the protest arena. The session places the rise of anti-government as well as pro-government (e.g. peace marches in Hungary) protests in a long-term perspective of protest mobilization in Eastern Europe. The session considers the extent to which resistance on the ‘streets’ and other forms of non-electoral mobilization (e.g. social media) provide an alternative to parties. The session provides the second opportunity for student presentation, should students choose to present on one of the movements in the region.

a) Required Readings:

- Ost, D., 2005. The defeat of solidarity: anger and politics in postcommunist Europe. Cornell University Press. (pp. 13-93)
- Greskovits, B., 2017. Rebuilding the Hungarian right through civil organization and contention: the civic circles movement (Working Paper).

b) Supplementary Readings:

- Fagan, A., Kopecký, P., 2017. Routledge handbook of East European politics. Routledge. (chapter 13, 14; pp. 184-209)
- Beissinger, M.R., Sasse, G., Straif, K., 2014. End to “Patience”?: The Great Recession and Economic Protest in Eastern Europe, in: Bartels, L., Bermeo, N. (Eds.), *Mass Politics in Tough Times: Opinions, Votes and Protest in the Great Recession*. Oxford University Press, pp. 334–370.
- Krasztev, P., Til, J.V., n.d. *The Hungarian Patient. Social Opposition to an Illiberal Democracy*. CEU Press, Budapest – NY. (pp. 167-180)

c) Online Resources:

- Bayer, L., 2016. Why Central Europe’s youth roll right. *Politico.eu*. <https://www.politico.eu/article/why-central-europes-youth-roll-right-voting-politics-visegard/>
- Krastev Ivan: The Movie That Explains Central Europe’s Protesters, April 26, 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/04/26/opinion/the-movie-that-explains-central-europes-protesters.html?nytmobile=0>