**Chapter 3:**
**Crisis, regime change, movement: comparing mobilization cycles in Hungarian and Romanian constellations of global integration after 1973 and 2008**

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## Crisis, regime change, movement: comparing mobilization cycles in Hungarian and Romanian constellations of global integration after 1973 and 2008

This chapter applies the insights of previous chapters to a comparative analysis that considers local East European mobilizations in the historical context of world-economic and geopolitical integration. The cases it highlights are the Hungarian environmental movement and Romanian workers' mobilizations in late socialism, and post-2008 mobilizations in the two countries. In regional terms, the comparison of Hungarian and Romanian examples is especially illustrative in that the two countries' integration regimes have been radically different (even seemingly contradictory) despite occupying quite similar positions in the postwar hegemonic cycle. After Stalin's death, Romania performed an early opening towards Western economic collaborations, while maintaining a neo-Stalinist political and social regime. Hungary's regime after 1956, on the other hand, acted as a pioneer of post-Stalinist liberalization. In the 1980's, the surge of foreign debt that characterized the whole region was treated in Romania with extreme austerity measures, coupled with state repression and nationalist populism. Hungary tackled the same debt problem by promoting market liberalization. After the regime change, Hungary was praised as a regional success story of liberalization (e.g. Jeffries 1993), while Romania followed a policy of protectionism with undertones of political nationalism, causing concern with international lenders. Since 2010, Hungary's nationalist government builds its political campaigns on the delegitimation of the liberal economic model of the previous decades, and follows a policy of state-aided development of national capital. Meanwhile, Romania's state structure is increasingly dominated by liberal-technocratic blocs of power promoting a regime of "extreme neoliberalism" (Ban 2014), with the country receiving a new wave of Western capital inflow after 2010. The book traces links between local forms of mobilizations, national meso-levels of different integration constellations, and broader dynamics of the global cycle.

In a broader regional comparison, such illustrative differences between Hungarian and Romanian cases fit in a broader pattern of regional developmental differences. Various authors have categorized the two countries into different typologies of regional development, based on criteria like local versions of contradictions between agrarian and industrial development, historical relations between regional powers and national independence, the scale of ethnic homogeneity, geopolitical alliances (e.g. Stokes 1986, Berend 2009, Bohle & Greskovits 2012, Shields 2014, Bottoni 2017). The differences in Hungarian and Romanian integration constellations identified in the present analysis serve to illustrate the significance of links between movements, meso-structures of integration, and global processes. They do not provide theoretical models for a regional typology integration; for that, a broader cross-regional comparison would be necessary. While the apparent spectacularity of these differences allows

me to emphasize the connection between integration constellations and movement dynamics, this does not imply that the cases of Hungary and Romania would constitute two opposite extremes of potential regional constellations. In a broader regional scope, various aspects of Hungarian or Romanian development can be placed closer to each other in a broader scale of comparison. For instance, in a recent study that compares states' capacity to roll back the effects of financial vulnerability after 2008 in the cases of Latvia, Romania and Hungary, Cornel Ban and Dorothy Bohle (2020) treat Romania as an in-between case, where an FDI-based growth model allows more maneuver space than in the case of finance-dependent Latvia, but political and institutional conditions foreclose a strong national financial agenda like in the case of Hungary.

This chapter starts the analysis of Hungarian and Romanian constellations from the global crisis of the 1970's, and follows the transformations of both constellations across the long downturn of the postwar global cycle. Obviously, local reactions to the global crisis are built on the heritage of earlier forms of integration – like Hungary and Romania occupying different levels in the long-term developmental hierarchy of the region, or like the different local histories of class differentiation based on different economic and geopolitical integration histories (Stokes 1989, Chirot 1991). While a deeper comparative perspective would need to consider the full spectrum of modern capitalist integration, this chapter will only highlight links between integration shifts caused by the 1970's crisis, related forms of post-socialist economic and political development, and local versions of post-2008 movements.

*Socialism, post-socialism, European integration: situated notions of systemic integration*

Before turning to details of local movements and integration constellations, two notions that played a central role in contemporary formulations and later analysis of post-1970's development need to be addressed: that of socialism/post-socialism, and that of European integration. Like democratization or middle-class development, these concepts have functioned as notions tied to developmental projects (and shifts within) systemic integration. In local contexts of pre-1989 or post-2008 movements, one important difference from Western contexts was that local regimes and their political contestations expressed their politics in terms of these notions, tied to ambitions of catch-up development.

Debates on socialism and post-socialist development tied references to state socialist systems to the broader horizon of long-term developmental stakes. Along these stakes, the use of the term socialism also activates left and right traditions of modern politics across local and international contexts of debates. This multi-referential character of the idea of socialism in late socialist, post-socialist and current debates is an important factor in the way local movements formulate and express their politics, and it poses a specific challenge for the comparative understanding of East European and other global movements. At the same time, catch-up ambitions and political programs related to post-socialist transition coincided with another major process that defined macrostructural, institutional and political conditions of contemporary developmental projects: European integration. This notion, also expressed long-term developmentalist ambitions in specific ways tied to struggles and alliances along contemporary constellations of dependent integration.

Contrary to Cold War or post-socialist developmentalist usages of the term, the world-systems tradition does not conceive of socialism as a system of social organization that would have been separate from capitalism (Frank 1977). Instead, state socialism is seen as one version of the import substitution industrialization efforts that characterized non-core developmentalist projects across the world. Despite political differences, and what József Böröcz (1992) characterized as the geopolitical condition of "dual

dependency" from Western capital and Soviet power, the project of socialist industrialization in Eastern Europe happened according to the conditions and limitations of the capitalist world economy, was dependent from the external dynamics of these conditions, and internalized them as its own priorities. This did not only mean that besides military competition with Western powers, socialist states engaged in external relations of commerce or finance with global markets, but also that the socialist development effort followed the priorities of global capitalist competition. Upgrading technological capacity in order to ameliorate terms of trade, and thereby achieve upward mobility in the hierarchies of the world economy, was a necessity that stood at the base of industrialization efforts in socialist countries as well as non-socialist semi-peripheries and peripheries. This development effort, with its priorities and conditions fixed in the external environment of global capitalism, came to be internalized in the form of forced industrialization and urbanization, the exploitation of agricultural resources in order to support technological imports and development, and stood at the basis of the debt spiral that led to the final crisis of socialist economies in the 1980's.

In comparison with non-socialist semi-peripheries or with the social destruction of the post-socialist era, state socialist systems were more egalitarian, and accommodated a larger volume of reproductive needs. However, even in the most successful years of socialist development, these measures were characterized by a clear hierarchy between socio-economic functions that figured among the priorities of catch-up development (urbanization, industrialization, development of expertise and technology), and socio-economic functions that served as a reproductive base. The latter (agriculture, rural labour and demography, self-supporting agriculture, self-built housing, kin and community level reproductive cooperations, etc.) were used as a "cheap" resource for development (Patel & Moore 2017). The same socialist project that created socio-economic infrastructures of high modernity simultaneously deepened these internal hierarchies.

A main aspect of internal contradictions that followed from external conditions of world-economic integration was the double pressure for high technology imports and corresponding exports that could compensate their costs. Catch-up industrialization aimed to reach higher levels of technology, in order to ameliorate the terms of external trade. This presupposed a simultaneous effort to import higher levels of technology, and maintain lower technology exports in order to be able to pay for those imports. While Stalinism bridged this contradiction through the forced centralization of resources and proletarianization of the agrarian workforce, on the longer term state socialist systems could not fulfill these simultaneous needs, and resulted to international loans to cover trade bills (Gerőcs & Pinkasz 2018).

The world economic crisis of the 1970's had several major consequences on state socialist development efforts. First, the explosion of oil prices in 1973 and 1979 had an impact on the costs of industrial production, as the Soviet Union started to withhold the export of cheap oil to satellite countries. The same step cut the possibility to cover Western trade bills by re-exporting Soviet oil. Second, global money markets swollen by petrodollars provided a temporary source for cheap credits to finance growing deficits. Third, the crisis of the 1970's signaled the crisis of the postwar hegemonic cycle, with US, West European and Japanese capacities of Fordist production reaching the limits of an overproduction crisis. This process fueled the financialization of the whole world economy (Harvey 1989, Brenner 2003). In the incipient phase of financialization, within global struggles for capital access, the fate of semi-peripheral import substitution economies going into debt in this period was defined by major moves of international financial governance, which influenced global financial markets to alleviate crisis symptoms in the US. One such major move was the Volcker shock of 1980,

when FED Chairman Paul Volcker raised the federal funds rate to a peak of 20%. This changed the direction of global financial flows towards US investments, causing an exponential growth in the debt service of non-core debtors. Resulting debt spirals of East European socialist countries were part of a global sweep of debt crises that struck non-core industrialization efforts (Walton and Seddon 1994). Meanwhile, starting from the late 1960's, the incipient overproduction crisis of core economies also brought a willingness by core actors to expand into the Socialist bloc, leading to a series of joint ventures under various socialist regimes.

While the subordination and continued dependence of socialist industrialization efforts from core economies – from technological imports under unequal terms of trade to relations of debt – is one of the manifest results of their global integration, state socialism's relationship with the Global South also needs to be emphasized. While socialist countries politically supported Third World initiatives against the unequal development of the global economy, in terms of crude economic relations, their priority remained to optimize their position within global economic hierarchies. This priority did not simply mean that they joined efforts with Third World countries for global reform with the expectation that it will also contribute to their own development. It also meant that in terms of world-economic flows, they occupied positions very similar to non-socialist semi-peripheries, where unequal relations with core economies were expected to be compensated through unequal trade with peripheral countries (Frank 1977). This tendency was intensified by the growth crisis and increasing debt problems after the 1970's, when socialist regimes increased Third World cooperation as a means of compensating their losses.

In the US, capital reacted to the crisis of Fordist production by the outsourcing and destruction of local production capacities, and a redirection towards financial investments, facilitated by a deregulation of global financial markets. This process, the results of which came to be characterized as the formation of the 1% vs. the 99% by the Occupy movement after 2008, was celebrated by elites in the 1990's as a new boom period of the US economy. Reforms of the Clinton administration facilitated a new wave of international investments fueled by financial markets. This was the late flowering of a declining hegemony that Arrighi (1994) called the phase of "belle époque". Besides the global markets opened up by structural adjustment programs forced by international lender organizations on peripheral countries, part of these investments flew to East European markets and fueled the privatization of former socialist economies. While on a systemic level, these investments were part of core capital's crisis management measures, political programs of post-socialist transformation treated them as an opportunity to overcome what was perceived as a backwardness caused by socialism, and catch up with capitalist core economies.

The process of privatization reflected the conditions and hierarchies of global crisis. Local capital institutionalized in the socialist state came to be privatized at subdued prices, through hierarchical bargains that reflected power relations between international and local capital. In many cases, foreign direct investment in privatization was used to close local capacities, in order to create export markets for home production. Capacities that were kept active were typically integrated into production chains in low positions, reflecting the priorities of outsourcing and flexibilization that served to compensate decreasing profitability in core enterprises (Gerőcs & Pinkasz 2017). Local private capital played a subordinate role to these processes, often in the role of second or third tier supplier to foreign-owned companies. Varieties of Capitalism authors referred to post-socialist East European economies' dependence on such subordinated integration into global production chains as the emergence of dependent market economies (Bohle & Greskovits 2006, Nölke & Vliegenthart 2009).

With the exhaustion of privatization, the inflow of foreign direct investment into the region halted, while profits and dividends kept leaving the countries. As a result, by the 2000's, regional economies engaged in a new cycle of debt, this time public as well as private. This wave of lending was part of the pre-2008 financial boom, in a subordinated position where regional structures of lending increasingly served to compensate the saturation of core markets by more expensive and more risky loans (Raviv 2008). During the 2000's, another main source of financing came from European transfers, as part of formal processes of European integration. These transfers contributed to keeping budget balances in order, but were tied to requirements that fixed regional economies in subordinate roles (e.g. they excluded financing productive sectors, and did not allow for acquiring competitive technologies). In global comparison, the function of these transfers have been likened to development aid given to peripheral economies that help avoid economic collapse and sustain "normal" flows of extraction (Amin 1977, Gerőcs & Pinkasz 2017).

In the second half of the 2000's, and especially after 2008, a new wave of outsourcing of productive capacities reached the region, as a result of core capital's renewed efforts for profit compensation (Lux 2015, Chivu et al. 2017). In political programs of local allied elites, this wave was represented as an opportunity to create jobs and reach higher levels of development in the midst of economic crisis (e.g. Orbán 2017, Dragnea 2017). As this wave of reindustrialization was strongly based on cheap local labor utilized in subordinated positions of the production chain, experts have recurrently emphasized that surpassing the low-cost production model that made reindustrialization possible would require the upgrade of local production to higher positions in global value chains (e.g. Adăscăliţei & Guga 2016, Szent-Iványi 2017). However, as reindustrialization is subordinate to the aim of compensating a deepening profitability crisis, such hopes remain limited (Gerőcs & Pinkasz 2017).

To address the relation between economic subordination and the political-ideological level of hopes tied to Europeanization, the systemic context of European integration needs to be emphasized. In mainstream narratives, the history of the creation of common institutional systems in Europe is told in terms of a series of agreements and regulations, led by the values of international cooperation and democracy, in a collective effort to avoid the horrors of WWII in the future (e.g. Dedman 2009). However, in the hierarchies of global accumulation reorganizing under US hegemony, European reconstruction was tied to the expansion of Fordist production dominated by US transnational companies, as well as the formation of its markets and consequent structures and norms of mass consumption (Apeldoorn 2003). In this phase, European integration was supported partly by US private capital and geopolitical interests, and partly by the interest of West European capital to build competitiveness in key economic sectors through European collaboration and common markets (Van der Pijl 1998). The gradual expansion of these collaborations was accompanied by new institutional forms of international cooperation. Contrary to mainstream narratives that represent this integration as a mainly intra-European process, the main scale of operation of integration policies was that of global competition. If the norms of sovereignty and international diplomacy established by the Westphalian system were based on colonial wars outside of Europe, from the same perspective, post-WWII European integration served to compensate the loss in global economic weight imposed by the loss of colonies, by selectively protecting European markets while deepening European capital's global expansion (Böröcz 2009). From this perspective, the birth of the EU signifies not so much the avantgarde of global political progression, but rather an effort to maintain a global position gained by colonial rule earlier.

While initially the institutionalization of the common market served to protect internal markets and promote European industry within global competition, starting with the crisis of the 1970's, the politics of European integration increasingly served European capital's crisis management (Overbeek 1993). Monetary integration, or the integration of Southern and later Eastern European economies providing cheaper labor and new markets served those purposes. By the 1990's, the deepening of the overproduction crisis led to the abolishment of previous social democratic-ordoliberal policies within European politics. The Treaty of Lisbon and the introduction of the common currency signalled a turn in European policy that abolished models of mass consumption and welfare institutions that stabilized internal markets in times of expansion, and started to charge the costs of profitability crisis directly on member states' societies, too (Drahokoupil & Horn 2008, Nousios et al. 2012). The uneven distribution of the weight of these policies has been reflected in intra-state social polarization as well as cross-European regional polarization, leading to Southern European and East European crises after 2008.

The first phase of European neoliberalisation has been described by the term "embedded neoliberalism", referring to pro-capital measures with a selective retention of social institutions and guarantees (Apeldoorn 2009). By the time of Eastern enlargement, however, this model has been abandoned for a full-fledged program of European neoliberalism (Ban 2016). At the moment, however, integration was widely understood in Eastern Europe as a beneficial opportunity of development. In maintaining this symbolic hegemony, the raw effect of power relations was complemented by the discursive activation of long-term traditions of East-West modernizational hierarchies, coupled with developmentalist understandings of Cold War differences between socialism and democracy/capitalism, and post-socialist developmentalist hopes promoted by internal-external alliances of the transition. If East European societies were not enjoying the effects of European integration, that was interpreted by dominant coalitions managing integration as the effect of these societies' backwardness.

On the side of EU institutions and discourses, this ideological aspect was strengthened by a specific characteristic in the constitution of the EU, which allowed for the maintenance of an image of moral and political goodness decoupled from economic and social effects of extraction. Böröcz and Sarkar (2005) described this effect in terms of a decoupling of policy-making power and coercive power. While the formation of the European Union continuously expanded the institutions of economic collaboration and political coordination, the function of military power was left in the hands of US-dominated NATO, and coercive functions of economic and political governance were left to be done by national governments. This outsourcing of coercive functions allowed the EU to become an international institution that, comprising about 6% of the global population, could claim more than one fourth of global GDP, without having to bear the responsibility for direct measures that established the conditions of these hierarchical relations. Keeping institutional rules of representation unclear allowed the EU to step up either as one actor, or in the form of multiple countries' representatives, providing a base for uneven representation in international institutions. This institutional structure helped maintain an ideological image of the EU as a representative of political-moral values and developmental promises, while charging the blame for the social effects of transition to local governments. As Böröcz and Sarkar put it:

"By contracting out the burden of strategic defence to NATO, the EU can maintain an elegant and convenient distance from matters of coercion without endangering its own defence. In the process of 'eastern enlargement', much of the transformative 'dirty' work in the economies on the EU's eastern and southeastern flanks is done by the state apparatuses and the political elites of those societies

themselves. EU-based multinational companies do much of the coercive work in the economic, environmental, social and legal realms worldwide, without the EU itself ever having to utilize conventional tools of state-based coercion. Surviving colonial ties, re-emerging relationships with the historically dependent parts of the German and Austrian-dominated, land-based European empires, and constantly renewed neocolonial linkages to virtually the entire 'former second' and 'third worlds' provide the EU with terms of exchange, raw materials, energy, labour, capital and services that continue to subsidize the EU's accumulation process without the EU ever having to get involved in the messy business of the social and environmental violence associated with the extraction of surplus. To a large extent precisely because of its distance from institutional locales where direct coercion happens, the EU is widely portrayed as the epitome of goodness in world politics today, reinforcing a centuries-old, Eurocentric ideology of superiority" (Böröcz & Sarkar 2005: 166-167).

The entanglements of long-term developmental hierarchies with short-term post-socialist politics have been analyzed widely. Researchers have looked at forms of cultural internalization of dependent relations within European integration (Melegh 2006, Thornton et al. 2012, Dzenowska 2018, Buchowski 2006, Kideckel 2002, Böröcz 2006, Kuus 2004, Klumbyte 2009, Zarycki 2009 or Arfire 2011), demonstrated correlations between perceptions of national development levels and world-economic hierarchies (Thornton et al. 2012), analyzed economic, political and cultural relations of domination within European integration in terms of empire and imperialism (Wolff 1994; Bakić-Hayden 1995; Petrović 2008; Todorova 2009; Böröcz & Sarkar 2005; Böröcz 2006; Böröcz and Kovács 2001; Zielonka 2006; Behr & Stivachtis 2015), identified constructs of symbolic hierarchies as results of intra-regional competition within the hierarchical space of integration (Bakić-Hayden 1995, Petrović 2008), and examined the ideological role of Euripean values in the process of integration – something Böröcz (2006) described in terms of the "moral geopolitics" of integration, and Arfire (2011) defined as "the moral regulation of the second Europe". Analysis that looked at more small-scale differentiations of ideological attitudes towards integration in terms of actors' positions within the hierarchical space of integration (Zarycki 2000, Zarycki and Nowak 2000, Szalai 2005, Gagyi 2016, Scheiring 2020).

In Western and Southern Europe, pro-capital measures of crisis management after 2008 exploded the tensions built out during the decades of neoliberal crisis management. Within EU politics, the crisis of Southern economies, and the authoritarian nature of European responses – with the outstanding example of the Syriza government (Lapavitsas 2018) – exposed and deepened the delegitimation of European institutions. The European Union has become the target of criticism by left and right movements and political parties. Right-wing political forces, combining strategies of protectionist politics with new tactics of populist political communication, increased their power in several member states. In the eyes of many, the Brexit referendum of 2016 sealed the end of the idea of a unilinear process of European integration. While some fractions of European left movements argued for the abolishment of the EU, a broader trend targeted the reform of European integration towards a more social Europe.

After the failure of the left program of Syriza, the party's minister of finance Yanis Varoufakis initiated a political movement to democratize European institutions (DiEM25). Several left parties and party fractions after 2008 conceived of their own politics as a way to reform European politics from within (e.g. Razem 2016), or building out new channels of political representation through which these institutions can be held in check – like in the case of municipalism. Meanwhile, following the alterglobalist direct action model of summit hopping, the Blockupy movement organized

demonstrations at core locations of European capitalist power like the headquarters of the European Central Bank. Left-wing arguments for a social reform of the European Union have intensively relied on the rhetoric of European goodness, and claimed a return to the original values of European integration. For instance, DiEM25 defined itself in the language of the EU's ideological founding narrative, evoking a democratic collaboration against the threat of xenophobia and nationalism exemplified by the 1930's, and refers to the dismantling of the EU as a fatal threat:

"DiEM25 is a pan-European, cross-border movement of democrats. We believe that the European Union is disintegrating. Europeans are losing their faith in the possibility of European solutions to European problems. At the same time as faith in the EU is waning, we see a rise of misanthropy, xenophobia and toxic nationalism. If this development is not stopped, we fear a return to the 1930s. That is why we have come together despite our diverse political traditions - Green, radical left, liberal - in order to repair the EU. The EU needs to become a realm of shared prosperity, peace and solidarity for all Europeans. We must act quickly, before the EU disintegrates." (DiEM25 2016)

Similarly, Another Europe is Possible, a group of the British Left that campaigned for the Remain position in 2016, refers to the reform of neoliberal European institutions as "rebuilding hope":

"Brexit is a national disaster for Britain, but it is not a "British problem". All over Europe faith in the project of unity has eroded. Free-market thinking has dominated EU institutions for too long. Many people no longer have faith in the capacity of European democracies to deliver social justice by working together for the common good. To rebuild this hope, the EU requires radical and far-reaching reform, breaking with austerity economics and pioneering a radically new development strategy. That's why we are actively working together with international partners, such as European Alternatives, to campaign for political change across the continent." (Another Europe is Possible 2016)

Such gestures of rekindling the ideological promises of European integration have been opposed by other fractions of the post-2008 left, from Eurocritical positions like that of Spanish Podemos (Gago 2017) to expressions of a new Euroscepticism. The latter position includes proposals to exit from the European Union as a way to increase left movements' and governments' maneuver space. As Thomas Fazi and William Mitchell (2018) put it in the case of Brexit: a left-wing pro-Brexit argument could provide "a once-in-a-lifetime window of opportunity to show that a radical break with neoliberalism, and with the institutions that support it, is possible". Conflicts over Euroscepticism became a strong factor of internal tensions and external alliance strategies in post-2008 left politics, especially in a situation where debates between a declining liberal hegemony and the new right feeding on post-crisis dissatisfaction make an intense ideological use of the question - with UK Labour losing 2019 general elections in the context high intensity Brexit debates standing out as an exemplary case.

Attac Austria (2018), gathering contributions by long-time activists and analysts of European neoliberalism in a collection entitled *The European Illusion: Why we need new strategies towards the EU and beyond,* declared the European institutional system to be beyond any possibility for reform. It called the European left to think beyond the unproductive dilemma of exit or remain, towards internationalist strategies to change the balance of forces at various levels simultaneously in order to achieve change. Relying on decades of previous analysis, the collection describes European integration as a capitalist project, and argues that European ideology hinders meaningful debate on the political significance of the EU. Still, the realization that the European institutional system is designed to block control from below is pictured in the book as a new occurrence – illustrated by the subchapter title

*Hopes shattered.* A 2019 manifesto authored by the activist alliance ReCommonsEurope similarly argued that European institutions serve to block popular influence on pro-capital policies, yet it also defined the debate within the limits of "activists and citizens of Europe" addressing the crisis of Europe (ReCommons 2019: 2).

From the point of view of a systemic analysis of European integration, most new critical arguments still rely the ideological narrative of the European project and core European states' welfare experience. Left reform stances, like that represented by DiEM25, propose to bring back the promise of universal welfare and democracy through the mere force of more democratic representation of welfare claims, neglecting the conditions of postwar welfare capitalism in global expansion and the actual context of global crisis and hegemonic shift. Left exist stances hope to realize the same promise through eliberating national policy from the control of European institutions. These latter arguments tend to neglect the force of world-economic dependencies and respective internal interests ingrained in national economies that bind non-member nation states into the same structures of capitalist coercion. In Attac Austria or ReCommonsEurope's critical assessments, the idea of an awakening to a recent crisis risks to obscure the problems inherent in the non-crisis phase. The fact that the promise of European welfare as such is an ideological expression of postwar capitalist expansion, that the Western experience of capitalist welfare states relied on global hierarchical accumulation, and that its crisis organically followed from the former process of expansion, and not from a mere ideological turn in policy, tends to remain hidden in all three types of analysis.

In this book, I conceive of these stances as variations of what the first chapter called the narrative of the crisis of "democratic capitalism". What is important in such stances in terms of the politicization of the crisis is that after announcing the "crisis" of a previous ideological model of welfare development, together with actors' own disillusionment with its promises, the same models are brought back in the form of new projects. This survival of postwar Western political models is an important aspect in analyzing relations between movements in different global positions. In the case of East European movements, this characteristic of Western post-2008 progressive stances connects with dynamics of East European disillusionments with the promises of post-socialist transition, and new claims to mend that process. While this creates the impression of consensus and mutual support on the surface, this connection obstructs movements' capacity to understand of the structural process they are part of, and identify the possibilities and limitations of cross-regional and cross-class collaborations.

*Late socialist regimes of global integration – Hungary and Romania after 1973*

Although typical tensions and contradictions of socialist industrialization efforts were characteristic to both Hungary and Romania, the two countries saw different regimes of world-economic and geopolitical integration, and followed relatively different tracks during the socialist period. In Hungary, After Stalin's death, between 1953 and 1956, the pressure of external debt that resurfaced after the first years of Stalinist centralization, the contradictions of technology development and export pressure, and internal tensions of resource centralization, crystallized in a political conflict between party leader Mátyás Rákosi and his challenger Imre Nagy. Rákosi promoted the Stalinist program of resource centralization and industrialization, supported by the industrial lobby, while Nagy proposed the relaxation of centralized industrialization, and a greater reliance on lower-technology, export-capable sectors – a model more favorable to agriculture and to population segments most struck by forced resource centralization (Rainer, 1996: 525-537). From 1954 on, reform economists allied with Nagy

began to develop the idea of the ‘economic mechanism’ as an objective, autonomous economic model that substituted direct administration with a system of economic incentives.

While Nagy was executed after the Soviet invasion of Hungary that suppressed the 1956 revolution, the reform direction he prepared was integrated in the politics of the post-1956 regime. János Kádár, put in office by Soviet leadership, engaged in a politics of compromise, reducing political pressure on citizens, and substituting the aggressive centralization of resources with a politics favoring living standards. From 1962 on, previous ‘hardliner’ and ‘softliner’ economists worked together under the leadership of finance minister and central committee member Rezső Nyers to prepare the economic reform. The reform’s economic politics were marked by the revolution as well as a new compromise between agricultural and industrial lobbies through marketization, made possible broader geopolitical processes: the scheduling of Soviet economic reform 1961, and the incipient overproduction problems of Western economies, which prompted Western companies to to look for markets in Eastern Europe (Feitl 2016, Gerőcs & Pinkasz 2018). Meeting the technology need of socialist economies, this turn brought a wave of joint ventures and increased East-West commerce (Kozma, 1996). The tendency toward market reform was also aided by East-West knowledge exchange. Starting in 1956, the US National Security Council supported educational exchange with socialist countries, with the aim of strengthening internal critique based on Western professional knowledge. In Hungary, the Ford Foundation worked closely together with the State Department, focusing on reform economists who would have the most impact on the new mechanism (Bockman, 2000: 259-264). By the 1960’s, Hungary occupied a bridge position between Comecon and Western markets: it imported Western technology which it integrated into technological products exported to Comecon markets, and compensated the costs of technology imports by exporting cheap Soviet oil and raw materials to the West (Vigvári 1990, Gerőcs & Pinkasz 2017).

A major reorganization of the institutional settings of economic governance in line with this direction was prepared implemented in 1968 under the name New Economic Mechanism (NEM). The NEM emphasized supply and demand over planning, and substituted direct administrative tools with a system of incentives favoring profitability. This system aimed to favor Western export capacities (generators of convertible currency), and disfavor lower technology industry which could only export to Comecon countries. The NEM also institutionalized a transformation of the field of power. It reduced the significance of the classic loci and actors of direct planning like the ministries for particular economic branches or the National Planning Office, and transferred power to units associated with reform functions like the Economic Policy Division or the Ministry of Finance (Bockman, 2000: 301). In terms of professional personnel, controllers, engineers and technicians working on the concrete details of fulfilling the plan lost position and decision power to economists and accountants dealing with decisions based on financial concerns. More economists were trained and employed in the apparatus, new research institutions were created, while the general numbers of state personnel were reduced (Bockman, 2000: 296-298).

Research on state socialist systems traditionally emphasizes the role of intellectuals as actors who acquire especially significant roles due to the ideological nature of the regime – both as supporters and as critiques of the system (Konrád & Szelényi 1979, Verdery 1991). Due to this ideological exposure, forms of expert and intellectual knowledge, and their support or criticism of the regime, are treated as important elements of socialist politics. Besides this ideological factor, two other aspects need to be mentioned in terms of intellectuals’ roles. The first is that in the context of the Cold War, any expressions of opposition or critique towards the regime was treated as particularly significant by the

political communication of Western powers. In this process, educated, explicit and detailed forms of criticism were prioritized versus implicit, hidden or politically less explicit forms of opposition or critique, more characteristic to dominated groups. The second aspect is the institutional and political weight of positions occupied within the state apparatus.

The Hungarian model of post-Stalinist socialist development effort was characterized by a decrease of the ideological control over experts and intellectuals, and their broad and favorable integration into state positions (Szalai 1995, Szelényi et al. 1998) – a process read by Konrád and Szelényi (1979) as the intellectuals' road to class power. This process, of course, did not imply that programs proposed by experts and intellectuals in such positions were automatically carried through, or that experts and intellectuals did not formulate strong forms of criticism against the system. On the contrary: the highly developed nature of Hungarian criticisms of the regime was equally conditioned by frustrations due to a halt of the economic expansion that conditioned middle class growth, a relatively large space to express criticism due to decreased ideological control, the fact that many experts themselves were employed in positions where they were supposed to work on various aspects of the market reform, and the fact that the growing influence of international lenders lent a stronger voice to internal critiques (Gagyi 2015).

In the early 1970's, reforms were halted by an orthodox political turn, induced by and anti-reform turn in Moscow (Tőkés 1996: 103), as well as the crisis of expansive growth that reached all socialist economies once the cheap demographic resource of agrarian labor was exhausted, and by the oil crisis of the 1973 which had a detrimental effect on Hungary's external integration model. From 1973 on, the boom in oil and raw material prices required new efforts to restore the balance of payments (Berend, 1990: 234). Based on the supply of cheap credits from petrodollars, the leadership resorted to Western loans, with the aim of using them for technological development in industry, which could generate Western exports and therefore, hard currency for debt repayment. The orthodox turn brought a reinforcement of big industry and central planning, a weakening of reform institutions, and a wave of repression against dissident critique. This repression turned intellectuals against the regime. Throughout the 1970's, the type of critique that aimed to reform socialism based on socialist values gradually gave space to critiques aligned with the liberal criticism of socialism. In lack of broader social connections, dissidents relied on samizdat publications circulating among intellectual readerships, the amplification effect of the Hungarian program of BBC and Radio Free Europe, and connections with other Eastern dissident movements.

The conditions of the orthodox turn were soon exhausted: the new industrialization effort did not produce competitive products that could meet Western demand, and the Volcker shock caused Hungary's debt to increase exponentially (Vigvári, 1990). Unable to service its debt, Hungary resulted to an IMF loan, and after Romania, became the second country in the socialist bloc to become its member in 1982. These conditions re-prioritized export-led specialization as the main point of economic policy, and after initial efforts to maintain it, dissolved import substitution efforts (Comisso and Marer 1986). This reinforced the positions of actors and institutions allied with the reform process, who used the situation to struggle for a new wave of reform. (Gagyi 2015). One major ally of reform economists became the IMF (Bockman, 2000: 329), whose influence increased with further debt shocks. Locally, two further expert groups allied with economists in the reform struggle: sociologists and dissident intellectuals. Within this system of alliances, a consensual form of the criticism of socialism developed into an intellectual common sense in the years leading up to the regime change. In this consensus, the analysis of world economic requirements, social inequalities and democratic deficits

all seemed to point in the same direction: the necessity of marketization and the rolling back of party state power (Gagyi 2015, Sebők 2019, Fabry 2019).

The the politics of liberalization contributed to a growth of consumer prices, while increasing costs of debt service resulted in cuts in welfare policies. By 1982, the growth of life standards halted. Labor was made increasingly flexible, and under the surface of the official ideology of full employment, unemployment started to spread (Pittaway 2012). To compensate for the political effects of this turn, in 1982 the regime legalized the second economy, a sphere of semi-illegal activities through which households strove to complement their formal incomes by working non-paid second shifts in small businesses, self-supporting agriculture or self-built housing (Galasi & Kertesi 1985). For many households, combining incomes from double jobs in state and second economy activities, and complementing them with free reproductive labor and mutual self-help, meant a significant potential for accumulation. For instance, for the first time in the history of socialist modernization, the hierarchy of urban and rural home construction was overturned: after state home building programs were halted due to debt repayment, in the 1980's, the largest growth in home building was provided by rural constructions based on self-build financed from state loans (Szelényi 1988). Contemporary dissident commentators tended to describe the second economy as an incipient version of bottom-up marketization that simultaneously serves social welfare, economic equality, and a form of emancipation that could be the base of a new, democratic, market-based society – a potential route to embourgeoisement (Galasi & Sik 1988, Szelényi 1988, Róna-Tas 1990). However, in systemic terms, the second economy rather played the role of an economic and political puffer for the socialist austerity of the 1980's, channeling workers' discontent into new investments into systemic integration (Vigvári & Gerőcs 2017). Contrary to dissident commentators' expectations, the second economy did not wither away or turn into market successes after 1990, but continued to form a puffer made up by extra reproductive work, that absorbed much of the contradictions of capitalist polarization (Gagyi & Vigvári 2018).

When the Plaza Accord in 1985 depreciated the dollar in relation to the Japanese yen, Hungary's debt – in a large part denominated in yen – peaked again, giving a final blow to anti-reform stances. From 1986 on, market reforms were issued with an unprecedented pace. Experts and managers who gained state positions during the marketization reforms became core actors of first "spontaneous", then formal privatization (Gagyi 2015, Stark 1990). Former intellectual dissident groups, gathered around two party initiatives of liberal and conservative fractions, mobilized to carry out the process of political transition and gain positions within it.

Discussing the effects of the 1970's global crisis on the politics of socialist and non-socialist semi-peripheries, Wallerstein (1976) attributed a specific importance to the role of technocratic strata developed on the base of favorable redistribution within catch-up development efforts. He expected that the halt of economic expansion might instigate technocracies of both socialist and non-socialist semi-peripheral systems to step up as a political force that demands an ideological alignment with the politics of the capitalist core, and promotes economic and political opening to the influence of core actors. In this situation, Wallerstein saw the political dilemma in whether socialist governments would build alliances with workers to maintain their power, or lean towards reform alliances and fully engage with the process of and liberalization. Hungary and Romania's politics of the 1970's crisis seem to follow the two different paths of this dilemma. Yet instead of a dilemma between systemic and antisystemic politics, what they demonstrate are two ways towards similarly subordinated modes of post-socialist integration.

Unlike in Hungary, the Romanian elite of the Stalinist period managed to hold power after de-Stalinization. The government of Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej made the already marginalized Muscovite fraction of the party carry the blame for the crimes of Stalinism, and continued the program of centralized import substitution industrialization (Crowther 1988). With references to connections with the Hungarian "counterrevolution", the regime carried out retaliations that equaled the level of those in Hungary. These served to subdue the resistance of peasants and the urban petty middle class, and prepared a nationalist political turn against ethnic minorities (Bottoni 2017). This model of de-Stalinization combined the maintenance of the Stalinist model of industrial development with a strong discourse on the national interest.

The emphasis on nationalism was supported by several factors. First, it served to discredit Muscovites, as many fraction leaders belonged to ethnic minorities. Second, it maintained a continuity with interwar right-wing programs for import substitution industrialization, which grew out from opposing Romania's subordinated role in world trade tied to agricultural exports. Third, this tradition was re-actualized in Dej's opposition to Moscow's economic politics of intra-Comecon labor distribution, which relegated Romania to the role of agricultural producer. The industrial development project of the Dej government followed the tradition of interwar protectionist industrialism when it contradicted Khrushchev's plan for Comecon economic coordination, and in turn opted to break from Soviet dependence (Ban 2014). When Soviet troops were withdrawn from Romania in 1958 as part of a larger international move, Dej represented this development as a success of his own politics of independence. In 1964, the Romanian Workers' Party demanded equal rights for every communist party, going into explicit ideological conflict with Moscow. During the Cuban missile crisis, Romania openly confronted the Soviet stance. After the Sino-Soviet split, Romania did not halt its Chinese relations, and China in exchange supported Romania's claims for national independence. Romania was also the first socialist country that officially acknowledged West Germany. During the Six-Day War, it was the only socialist country that did not break its diplomatic ties to Israel. Due to these gestures of independence, Romania became a significant partner for Western powers as a potential ally within the Soviet bloc. After Romania condemned the occupation of Chechoslovakia in 1968, Nixon traveled to Bucharest, making Romania the first socialist country where a US president made an official visit.

Due to these conditions, the industrialization wave of the late 1950's was not based on Soviet energy and raw materials, but instead on economic cooperations with Western and, increasingly, Third World countries. After 1958, the share of Soviet trade in the Romanian economy decreased, while Western technology imports, and corresponding raw material and agrarian exports to Western markets started to grow (Lavigne 1991). In the 1960's and 1970's, Romania strongly participated in the incipient wave of joint ventures with Western companies, accompanied by agreements of technological and economic cooperation. It became a member of IMF in 1972, and a member of GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade) in 1971. In 1975, Romania was listed by the US among the countries benefiting from the largest trade benefits. The effects of this industrialization model were spectacular: 1955 and 1965, industrial capacities grew threefold (Crowther 1988: 68).

In order to exceed the economic and political limitations of extensive industrialization that started to become explicit by the 1960s, after the 1965 Soviet economic reform, all socialist regimes of the region started to experiment with reforms. Hungary and Romania followed different routes in the process: while Hungary's New Economic Mechanism had the strongest market character in the region, Romania reinforced the model of centrally planned forced industrialization. Aspects of geopolitical and internal

power relations played an important role in the Romanian regime's preference for centralized industrialization. Crowther (1988) emphasizes that the withdrawal of Soviet troops left the Romanian party in a situation where it needed to build out a strong control over the state apparatus and the military. The withdrawal of Soviet troops meant that unlike other satellite regimes, lcoal leadership could not rely on Soviet military help in the face of popular discontent and competing elite fractions. At the same time, the withdrawal of troops also turned the Soviet Union into the number one military threat against the regime. After 1964, Soviet control over the Romanian security service was disbanded. The military became a main reference of the ideology of national independence – and a main tool of control over the population (Bottoni 2017) – in support of the centralized industrialization model.

Nicolae Ceauşescu, who succeeded Dej in power in 1965, continued the program of centrally planned forced industrialization. Turning the heritage of power centralization to his own use, Ceauşescu reorganized the system of regional governance, and built out a strongly hierarchical and center-dependent structure of cadres. This politics of centralization involved another specific element of the post-Stalinist Romanian model: unlike most other socialist regimes, the Ceauşescu regime did not forge an alliance with the educated middle class, but instead strove to build out power structures that made it capable to govern directly, circumventing intellectuals and experts of the apparatus. Directly after coming to power, in order to dominate Dej's former entourage and to attain legitimacy, Ceauşescu made concessions to the second line of bureaucracy and intellectuals, opening temporary professional and administrative career routes (Tismăneanu, 2005). The acceleration of industrialization also contributed to the multiplication of expert jobs (Petrovici 2006). But intellectuals and technocrats were not allowed to grow into a strata that participates in power. Ceauşescu's 1967 reform program entailed a shift from extensive to intensive industrialization, supported by managers and technocrats, which would have provided a stronger influence of experts on economic processes. But by 1969, the implementation of the reform returned to a neostalinist program of centrally planned forced industrialization. Politically, it became a tool of attack against economic and administrative elites and middle managers. Contrary to the case of Hungary, where the New Economic Mechanism promoted the power of the technocracy, by reinforcing the model of centrally planned industrialization, the Romanian regime reduced the function of experts to executives, and regularly used them in this role as scapegoats for the political treatment of internal tensions (Paşti 1995).

Crowther (1988) interprets the marginalization of technocrats as an internal condition of Romania's centralized industrialization effort after Soviet independence. Here, too, expertise produced by socialist development became a significant social and political factor by the 1960's: like elsewhere, technocrats became a privileged group that was able to promote its own demands within the state administration. Yet the program of shifting from extensive to intensive industrial development, supported by managers, posed a danger to central power which strove to remain in control without Soviet support. Next to that, limitations of the growth projection of the five year plan for the second half of the 1960's prioritized industrial acceleration in the politics of the regime. While the plan initially foresaw equal growth in industry, agriculture and consumption, its implementation saw a decline in agricultural output and consumption, while industrial growth surpassed planned numbers. In other words, when industrial growth met the limits of extensive growth, the regime chose to maintain its power by accelerating centralized industrialization and abolishing reform plans together with technocratic power ambitions. This model, expanded and deepened throughout the next decades under worsening conditions of external trade – and later: indebtedness –, implied an ever increasing centralization of power, shrinking life standards for the larger part of the population, an extreme exploitation of rural resources which by

the end of the 1970's led to a general lack of male workforce in rural regions (Crowther 1988: 66-78), and increasing repression of experts' power. Compared to Hungarian reform struggles, the Romanian case shows a victory of centralist alliances in the competition for managing late socialist contradictions of external integration.

While the Romanian regime refused to cater to the needs of all the larger new social strata it created (collectivized peasants, industrial workers and educated middle classes), the marginalization and alienation of expert and intellectual cadres played a special role in its techniques to control social discontent. Attacks against the members of the middle-level apparatus in 1969 were followed by the "small cultural revolution" of the early 1970's, (Chirot 1978: 485), a campaign which represented cultural and technocratic cadres as the obstacles of socialist development, or even a direct threat to it. Thousands have been moved from administrative positions to production lines, cultural institutions were brought under extremely strict ideological control, and intellectuals and their supporters were demoted within the party (Crowther 1988: 98). The marginalization of intellectuals and high levels of ideological control did not allow for the development of complex political critiques of the regime as in Hungary or Poland (Verdery 1991). The experience of relative deprivation in educated strata under these conditions is well illustrated by the fact that by the turn of the 1980's, the levels of satisfaction with income, career progress, everyday work environment, life standard, future possibilities, and social integration were lower among their rows than among manual workers in the lowest positions (Chelcea 1979: 97, Zamfir 1984: 158-79).

Parallel to its condemnation of experts and intellectuals in mediating positions, the regime set up symbolic institutions of direct popular inclusion to emphasize its legitimacy through a direct connection with the people. These included the Workers' Councils, a system modeled after the example of Yugoslavian self-management but without any real decision-making capacity, the Great National Assembly as the formal legislature of Romania, collaboration with the Orthodox Church, and a series of official mass events and symbolic moments of the people's direct contact with Ceaușescu and his family. In the late period of the regime, under the conditions of increasing pressure by economic decline, external debt and internal tensions, these political tools were complemented by the rhetorics of siege, the discourse of national martyrdom, and attacks against the Hungarian minority (Gabanyi 2000, Novák 2015).

Although Romania's socialist development effort started from a lower level of industrialization, and therefore could build on a larger reservoir of agricultural hinterland, by the second half of the 1970's the exhaustion of rural resources of agrarian labor and the subsequent labor shortage reached the levels that more industrialized neighbors experienced in the 1960's. The countermeasures that aimed to keep up the growth of industrial production through new legislation and reorganizations met an increasing dissatisfaction of workers. Shortages in capital goods combined with labor shortage and workers' dissatisfaction contributed to a decrease of industrial productivity. While domestic oil production played a large role in shielding the direct effects of the 1973 oil crisis, internal production capacities peaked in 1977. The effect was felt both by internal industrial production, and in the decline of external terms of trade. One main tool for compensation that the Romanian regime employed was increasing the trade with Third World countries. Replicating hierarchies of uneven exchange by exporting industrial products and importing agrarian products and raw materials, Romania could capture some trade surplus in hard currency, and use it to compensate for the deficits of trade with Western partners. This broadening of trade relations with Third World countries was accompanied by a shift in foreign policy.

In 1972, Ceaușescu declared Romania a socialist developing country, and started to step up in various international organizations as a representative of this position (Barnett 1992).

These compensation strategies managed to delay economic crisis until the early 1980's. Yet by 1981, external deficit was exacerbated by continued investment into energy-intensive industry under the conditions of raising prices of oil import and the halting of oil barters with Iran and Iraq due to the war, as well as by the growth of debt service rates from earlier loans. The regime resulted to an IMF loan. The conditions of the loan included decreasing the pace of industrialization, and increasing investment in agriculture. In a few months, the IMF stopped the lending process, as Romania did not succumb to these conditions. In order to avoid pressure for economic reforms like in Poland under similar conditions, Ceaușescu proposed an extreme austerity package to service the loan, which was accepted by the IMF. This package prescribed the increase of exports (to gain hard currency for debt service), and radical cuts in internal consumption. Industrialization efforts were maintained, despite the fact that severe shortages and lack of technology led to low quality and uncompetitive products (Ban 2012). At the end of 1982, Ceaușescu announced a program to pay back all existing loans using the same method, with the aim to eliminate lenders' influence on economic and political governance. This answer to the debt crisis of the 1980's followed a path contradictory to the Hungarian one: while in Hungary external debt contributed to increasing liberalization, the 1980's in Romania were characterized by extreme forms of austerity, deepening centralization, the maintenance of forced industrialization, and efforts to eliminated dependence from international lenders. By 1987, Ceaușescu halted the communication of economic data (which was among the conditions of the IMF loan), with the argument that Romania does not need Western financing any more.

Interpretations of the Ceaușescu regime tend to attribute a decisive role to the dictators' personal character and ambitions. This kind of explanation seems to be supported by the politics of personal cult. Besides personal aspects, Ban (2014) attributes the seemingly illogical maintenance of forced industrialization under the conditions of extreme austerity as an effect of the regime's specific neostalinist ideology. However, Crowther (1988) argues that the politics of the Romanian regime in the 1980's correspond to the objective possibilities to maintaining power within the external circumstances of the country's world-economic integration at the time, and in this sense, are not only bound to personal psychology or ideology.

In the 1980's, the politics of extreme austerity went hand in hand with the deepening of authoritarian suppression. While workers' discontent was also suppressed, the control of experts and intellectuals constituted a special focus for security forces (Poenaru 2013). In the perception of these strata, regular persecution, together with institutional and political marginalization, came to be connected with the increasing national populist rhetoric the regime used to legitimate its centralization of power. Even though manual workers lived and worked under more severe conditions, participated in rebellions that were violently suppressed, and were part of the 1989 December revolution, the perception of an anti-intellectual alliance between communist dictatorship and popular strata remained a significant element of post-socialist middle class politics.

## The Hungarian environmental movement and Romanian workers' mobilizations in late socialism

In Hungary, the largest movement that later came to be acknowledged as a mover of the regime change was the environmental movement (Fleischer 1993). The two main issues that the movement targeted were both connected to the specificities of world economic integration, and the internal pressures they produced. The first was the plan of the Gabčíkovo–Nagymaros barrage and hydroelectric power plant, which was initially forged by industrial planning in the 1950's to service the future growth in energy consumption, and became actualized by the repercussions of the 1973 oil crisis. As cheap Soviet oil became inaccessible, energy procured central priority in economic policy. Energy import to sustain the industry required hard currency, a cumbersome weight on an economy entangled between the needs of technology imports and the incapacity to sustain those imports by exports to hard currency markets. In the narrative of the anti-waterworks movement, the Gabčíkovo– Nagymaros plan was criticized as an expression of an outdated, aggressive and megalomaniac project, which serves no other aim than reinforcing the logic of central planning, and ruins the intricate living tissue of natural and human habitats (Vargha 1981, Bossányi 1989, Pajkossy 2006, Szabó 1994). Environmentalist arguments about intricately balanced ecological systems threatened by the barrage were formulated as a metaphor of the contrast between the artificial, rigid and coercive nature of planning, and more spontaneous and democratic forms of social organization. In line with dissident narratives, planning was thought of as irrational, its irrationality following from the logic of a system built on the maximization of bureaucratic power.

The second main issue of environmental activism in late socialist Hungary was toxic chemical waste, produced in increasing quantities by chemical plants and stored in unprotected sites that held dangers for nearby settlements. In the narrative of the environmental movement and its international communication, this unsafe treatment of toxic waste followed from the repressive and irresponsible character of the socialist system towards its citizens and nature. From the perspective of world economic integration, the increased production of chemical waste was linked to two main factors: the general lack of investment capacity to improve waste management due to the conditions of debt repayment to improve waste management, and the pressure towards exports that are able to generate hard currency. Hard currency pressure pushed industrial policy towards solutions that have a relative low level of investment, but can still generate export capacity. Toxic chemical technologies were particularly suitable for that purpose. An illustrative example is a case conveyed by Zsuzsa Gille's (2007) research on waste regimes in socialist Hungary. The chemical company Budapest Chemical Works, one of the biggest firms in the sector, produced TCB for export to Austria. TCB was a component so toxic that it was also used for the herbicide Agent Orange, a substance applied by the US military in the Vietnam War. It was precisely the toxicity of TCB why Hungary could capture much needed export capacities from its production, due to the stronger environmental regulations in Austria that made its local production impossible. This kind of cheaper and more risky production of chemicals for external trade was a tool that was also used by other non-core economies maneuvering under similar conditions. As a Hungarian article put it in 1977, explaining why the costs of environmental protection cannot be included in chemical production:

"It is impossible to realize these costs in our export prices. Industrial capacities founded on the oil and gas fields of Arabic countries present a strong competition in industrial markets, as they do not undertake ecological costs, and can work with consequently low prices. This is also one of the factors why we are not able to realize costs of ecological measures in our exports" (Breitner 1977: 3).

The environmental movement played an important role in the internal criticism of the regime, and became an important actor of the demonstrations of the regime change (Szirmai 1999, Romsics 2003).

In this process, the issue of environmental protection came to be linked with demands to employ more developed and environment-friendly Western technologies, and a corresponding critique of the backwardness of socialist technology that causes environmental harm. Like in other fields, the abolishment of socialism was conceived in the environmental debate as implying a promise that would make it possible for Hungary to catch up with Western environmental norms. On the structural level, however, the relation of economic subordination that governed both the plan of the Gabčíkovo–Nagymaros barrage and the problem of toxic chemical waste, continued to define environmental policies after 1989.

In the process of the regime change, the issue of environmental measures came to be entangled with questions of new technology imports, and the parallel elimination of local, lower technology products from local markets. Examples include cases like the NEFCO venture capital trust funded by Scandinavian countries to foster ecological-technological investments in Eastern Europe administered by the Nordic Investment Bank, or the Kemira-Trabant-Wartburg catalizator joint company, whose sales were subsidized by the state and boosted by a ban on two-stroke engines (Gagyi 2015). In the period of privatization-led foreign direct investment, the issue of toxic chemical waste dumps transformed into the issue of new waste incinerators built by Western companies in Hungarian locations, which also burnt waste exported to Hungary from Western countries. In debates around the location and building of these incinerators, investors pointed at the toxicity of existing waste dumps, and argued that their investments would provide higher level, Western technology to eliminate their risks. However, incinerators also produced toxic effects, which started new conflicts locally (Gille 2007). This process came to be criticized by environmental activists in terms of “wild capitalism” and “ecocolonialism” (Harper 2006).

In 1989, an investigative article tracing a case of soil pollution presents a snapshot of the changing social landscape in the Hungarian countryside, providing short summary of internal-external relations of environmental harm from late socialism to post-socialist transition. Starting from the socialist chemical company dumping toxic waste due to lack of investment capacity, the story continues with the incineration of toxic waste by new Western companies, and zooms in on the appearance of local middlemen who buy the barrels emptied from toxic waste for making brandy. This results in a series of toxic poisoning in the rows of day laborers to whom the brandy is sold. The story is particularly telling in terms of the new post-socialist social hierarchy where locals produce half-illegal income from the waste of the new, environmentally friendly incineration, and the toxic effect this produces on the lowest local social strata remains outside of the jurisdiction of institutional concern:

„the surface of toxic soil has been collected and dumped in concrete containers. Yet the plastic barrels which have been emptied from toxic waste before the incineration were sold at a cheap price to locals, who used them for making brandy. (...) An alcohologist physician from Szekszárd was surprised to see how fast alcoholics in Kiskőrös degraded. It is not easy to monitor toxic brandy, since it is consumed by the new stratum of day laborers employed by wine farmers.” (Tanács 1989)

In Romania, the most significant mobilizations against the regime in the late period of socialism were those of heavy industry workers and miners. The largest strike was that of the Jiu Valley miners in 1977, resulting in severe repercussions (Deletant 1995, Rus 2007). Three years later, the Free Trade Union of the Working People of Romania was formed with twenty founding members. After their founding document was read in Radio Free Europe, their numbers grew to 2400. The union aimed to represent demands against worsening working and life conditions, and the repression of workers’

rights. The regime reacted with fast and violent measures – hundreds of people were arrested, followed by persecution, physical violence, psychiatric confinement, deportation or prison sentence (Karatnycky et al. 1980: 80). In 1986-87, another series of smaller conflicts broke out in factories around the country. The series peaked in the strike of industrial workers in Braşov, followed by similar retaliations.

In the case of the 1977 Jiu Valley strike, the immediate cause that sparked coal miners' protest was the extension of workdays to aid the reconstructions following the 1977 earthquake, and a transformation of the pension system that forbid those on disability pension to continue to work and raised the general retirement age. These acute grievances only constituted the peak of discontent that has been building up due to low wages and poor living conditions, and the fact that workers were expected to exceed planned production targets despite these conditions, and were punished by paycheck cuts if they remained below them (Rus 2007). This extreme pressure on coal miners reflected the regime's efforts to maintain the pace of forced industrialization despite the pressure of growing energy prices and internal labor shortage. Coal mining as a source of internal energy production became important in alleviating the pressure for oil imports, and thereby slowing the pace of indebtedness. This pressure was handled rather by the means of coercion than that of rewards, while life standards were nationally reduced in order to maximize industrial investment.

On 1 August 1977, 35.000 miners put down work in the Jiu Valley mines. They claimed that they would only accept to speak to Ceauşescu in person about their demands. The next day, two high-level members of the Politburo visited the scene, one of whom came from a miner background himself. Strikers held both of them captive, and demanded a direct meeting with Ceauşescu. On 3 August, Ceauşescu traveled to the valley's central city of Lupeni from his Black Sea vacation. He was greeted by the slogan "Ceauşescu and the people",a line produced within the regime's official direct populist ideological communication, and "Lupeni 29!", referring to the 1929 Jiu Valley strike which was also used as an element of the party's official historical narrative. These references to the regime's own legitimation ideology served to optimalize miners' bargaining position; but the bargain also included elements of threat. Worrying for his physical safety amidst the angry crowd, Ceauşescu made promises to radically ameliorate miners' situation, and avoid retailations (Deletant 1995: 243-5, Gosu 2007). He blamed middle management for the mistakes causing miners' plight. This move, also fitting into the regime's general legitimation strategy, resonated with workers' discontent with strong workplace hierarchy that stood in sharp contrast with the slogans of workers' power. This grievance was expressed in the antibureaucratic slogan "down with the communist bourgeoisie!" (Cesereanu 2004).

The appearance of an alliance between Ceauşescu and the miners, that could solve miners' problems by eliminating middle management's mistakes along the lines of the regime's ideological narrative of direct populism, did not last long. As soon as Ceauşescu left the valley, thousands of soldiers marched in. The presence of the secret service was scaled up, and retaliations started with violent interrogations. Main organizers of the strike were declared missing in a few weeks. Many participants were taken to the hospital or psychiatry. Others were sent to prison and to work camps. On the whole, up to 4000 miners lost their jobs, and hundreds of families were deported to other regions of the country (Cesereanu 2004, Rus 2007, Varga 2011, 2013). Once the threat of workers' self-organization was successfully subdued, concessions regarding working conditions and food supply were canceled.

The industrial strike series of 1986-1987 also reacted to growing workplace pressure linked to maintaining forced industrialization, coupled with the drastic austerity measures introduced as a

condition of external debt repayment. As part of the debt repayment program started in 1982, most of agricultural production was reoriented to export, leading to a severe food shortage. In 1987, strikers in Cluj and Turda justified work stoppage by claiming that they needed time to stand in line for bread (Gabanyi 1987). These strikes were also handled by a combination of temporary concessions and violent retaliations. After the Braşov strike, food supply was temporarily increased in large industrial centers; meanwhile, a hundred were arrested, tortured and deported. Some went missing without a trace (Oprea & Olar 2003).

Based on the above, the conditions of the Hungarian environmental and Romanian workers' mobilizations in late socialism were connected not only to the generic traits of the socialist regime (such as central planning or lack of political freedom), or to local variations of it, but also to the specific constellations of how the two national economies integrated into world economic processes following 1973. Looking at specific constellations of world economic integration may explain why the plan of a megaproject for a hydroelectric plant, toxic chemical waste, the unbearable workload in coal mining and industry, or the lack of basic foodstuffs emerged as conditions for local protests rooted in transnational processes. Of course, like any condition of movement formation, these do not explain the exact buildup of the movements, but they do cast some light the particular kind of agencies activated in these mobilizations.

In Romania, what made coal miners and industrial workers likely subjects of protest was not only the fact that the industrial effort put a strong burden on their shoulders, but also because these were the sectors crucial to sustaining that effort. This was expressed by work requirements as well as by symbolic statements about the importance of their work, embedded in a discourse of work heroism that granted some selective privileges in wage and living allowances (which came to be eroded after 1973). Ceaușescu's political strategy to marginalize the technocratic power of intellectuals and emphasize a political alliance with the working masses on the symbolic level was institutionalized in various forms of workers' "autonomy" and "consultation," which, even if not able to influence real decision-making, could provide the illusion of a symbolic resource in bargaining. Istvan Hosszu, one of the Jiu Valley strike organizers, remembered his own reliance on this rhetoric during his interrogations in the following way:

"He looked at me as if I were an idiot for confessing such outrageous charges.
- Comrade Hosszu, what kind of explanation can you give, how can you account for your deeds?
- Very simply – I said. - I only need to quote the words of the general secretary on the IX. Congress. (…) the general secretary encouraged everyone to be outspoken, and explore all problems in an honest way. This is what he said; but I think that in order for his message to become reality, and not merely a turn of speech, we need to prove his point by our action" (Csalog 1989).

That workers' mobilizations utilized the regime's ideology as a resource for bargaining was not only based on the Ceaușescu regime's specific anti-technocracy and direct populist strategy, but also on a longer tradition of direct bargaining with high-rank communist leaders. Since the 1950's, in cases of workers' discontent in main industrial units that bore a strong structural significance, but also had a stronger tradition of workers' organization, the party sent high-rank communist leaders with backgrounds in the local plant to bargain with workers. These functionaries stepped up as personal mediators between workers and the party, often promising special proceedings and privileges. This technique of pacification was typically complemented by combinations of concessions and repressive measures. Strikers' strategies also relied on the technique of personal bargaining with a high-rank

leader who had local roots, and even initiated such moments of mediation. In the Jiu Valley, besides the 1977 strike, this pattern of bargaining was applied also in 1972, 1980, and 1981. Previously, Dej also personally acted as such a mediator in 1952 or 1957 in face of striking railway workers, using his legitimacy as a party member who started his political career from organizing the 1933 strike at the Griviţa plant of the Romanian Railways (Gagyi 2015). In 1957, when Griviţa workers protested cuts in the base wage that were announced in punishment for not fulfilling the production plan, the informant of Radio Free Europe reported the following conversation. Dej claimed that problems were due to management, and exempted workers

„ordering that they must be excused of things that are really the fault of bad organization (...) Source asked the official accompanying him why something is not done to avoid this discontentment, that is why the collective work contract is not changed. Smiling, the Rumanian official replied: 'Then Gheorghiu-Dej could not be the 'father of the railroads' any longer, and would lose forever the popularity he enjoys now in the shops'" (HU OSA 300-60-1, 424).

The quote is illustrative of the way tactics of personal contact were tied to both leaders' and workers' positions and their maneuver space within the same structure of power. This pattern of conflict management has been described by studies of workers' mobilizations after the regime change, too (Rus 2007, Varga 2011, 2013).

In the case of the 1977 Jiu Valley strike, the contrast between the use of the slogan "Ceauşescu and the people!" and the harshness of retaliations also illustrate the difference from forms of protest where intellectuals formulate highly developed, coherent and abstract expressions of political criticism. The latter forms of critique, embodied in text documents, could be easily represented, disseminated and amplified in Western media. Romanian workers' mobilizations produced few such documents, and the process of their struggle was less suitable to be represented in the form of abstract political criticism of the socialist system. As a parallel case, Bottoni (2017) mentions that spontaneous protest by ethnic minorities was easier to suppress and cover up, as they rarely reached the threshold of international media attention. Formulated within the power logic of direct personal bargaining, and addressed against structural conditions of overtime work and food shortage, the expressions of Romanian workers' struggles were not suited to become abstract models of political critique. From among the thousands of workers who became the victims of retaliations, very few rose to positions similar to dissident intellectuals whose name became symbols of political struggle after 1989.

In Hungary, the anti-socialist critique of the environmental movement was formulated by the movement's intellectual members in a highly detailed, abstract form, compatible with Western criticism (Bossányi 1989, Dobos et al. 1988). Actors directly affected by environmental problems, like inhabitants of villages threatened by dam construction, or people living close to toxic chemical waste dumps, participated in mobilizations only intermittently. More significant protests took place in the capital, and addressed not only environmental issues, but expressed a more general critique of the system. Due to the fact that environmentalism was a cause supported by the system (Gille 2007), and to the broader space allowed for intellectual politics, environmentalism could became a preliminary ground for oppositional politics (Pickvance 1998). Oppositional arguments formulated in the terms of environmentalism would later become part of transition narratives, as many of the prominent members of the movement became important actors and voices of the regime change (Gagyi and Ivancheva 2017). Growing control by Western lenders also meant that appeals to Western audiences by local opposition forces could function as a political resource and protection. The capacities of intellectual

critique were also increased by overlaps with and support from reformer segments within the party apparatus (Bockman 2000, Gagyi 2015). Finally, East-West movement dialogues enhanced the intelligibility of local movement narratives in Western circles. In contrast, in Romania, workers' mobilizations themselves did not speak the language of abstract political critique, and the marginalization and suppression of intellectual critique and the lack of significant contacts between intellectual dissidents and workers' mobilizations reduced the possibility for intellectual critique to mediate and translate between workers' demands and Western audiences. Meanwhile, the regime's central effort to reduce Western influence through debt repayment limited the effect of Western communication.

## From post-socialist development to middle class mobilizations after 2008

Late socialist constellations of integration set different conditions for post-socialist politics in the two countries. In Romania, the maintenance of the program of forced industrialization, the strong centralization of power, and the marginalization of experts and intellectuals foreclosed the formation of reform fractions supporting liberal reforms within the party. Unlike in most late socialist regimes, in Romania there was no internal debate between "orthodox" and "liberal" fractions within the party. Internal opposition strove to gain power through coups rather than reform. Indeed, the December revolution of 1989, the only bloody revolution in the series of regime changes in the region, was used in the manner of palace coups to put the second line of party leaders in power. Based on this continuity with the previous party line, early post-socialist policies aimed to maintain a model of national development tied to industrialization supported by protectionism. The Postolache commission that laid down the program of marketization prescribed a gradual transformation towards a mixed economy with a strong state sector, similar to the French indicative planning of the postwar years (Ban 2017). This new version of national development policies carried strong continuities with the principles of industrial development promoted by interwar right-wing regimes as well as with socialist neostalinist industrialization. In terms of class aspects, in the context of privatization this new version can be described as a project to create and promote state-supported domestic capital (Ban 2014). Liberalization that actually opened domestic economy for foreign investment, like the process that started in Hungary after 1986 did, only started in Romania with the reforms carried out by the Romanian Democratic Convention government between 1996-2000, and reached its full verve with the process of NATO and EU integration during the 2000's.

In contrast to Hungary, Czechoslovakia or Poland (Eyal 2003, Szelényi et al. 1996), in Romania dissident intellectuals did not become dominant actors of the regime change. The National Salvation Front, the political organization formed from bureaucrats, technocrats and dissident intellectuals which stepped up as the organizational representative of the revolution, soon became the terrain of competing bureaucratic and technocratic fractions. Humanistic intellectuals soon withdrew from the coalition, and joined other political initiatives – mostly the re-establishment of historical parties, or liberal NGOs (Petrovici 2006). This fraction of intellectuals, which has also been the most marginalized during late socialism, felt that it was losing the power struggle of the transition, and started to interpret the coalition of bureaucrats and technocrats as the survival of communism, and joining re-established historical parties (the National Liberal Party and the National Peasants' Party) in an effort to reinforce its political opposition.

After January 1990, these parties, both supporting liberal reforms, started to organize demonstrations in Bucharest demanding that previous members of the communist party be forbidden to participate in democratic elections. Despite the demonstrations, the National Salvation Front, led by Ion Iliescu, a high level former party cadre, won a secure victory on the first free elections, thanks to the broad mobilization machine inherited from the communist party. When the liberal opposition continued to demonstrate after the election results came out, claiming the nullification of the results, Iliescu declared the situation as a threat to the stability of post-revolutionary democracy. Relying the former party apparatus' penetration of miners' organizations, Iliescu called Jiu Valley miners to Bucharest to defend the results of the December revolution. In June 1990, miners directed by the Securitate were transported to Bucharest, and attacked demonstrators and other citizens, targeting individuals with intellectual appearance (e.g. people wearing glasses, Rus 2007). In the eyes of educated strata across the country, the horrible pictures of the 1990 "mineriad" sealed the symbolic opposition between "communism" as the alliance of ex-communists and popular strata, and "democracy" as the program of Western integration represented by educated people. University Square, the location of the liberal opposition's demonstration, became a geographical symbol of this symbolic conflict, which came to be recurrently reactualized in later mobilizations. In post-socialist public discussions dominated by intellectuals, the image of miners with sticks attacking urban intellectuals under the direction of Securitate officials in 1990 permanently overwrote memories of former worker mobilizations and workers' participation in the revolution, and invisibilized the anti-government politics of later mineriads. Anthropologist David Kideckel (2008) noted that in the 1990's, the image of physical workers suffering under the economic repercussions of the transition crisis was associated with the memory of communism, and the sentiments of anti-communism contributed to their exclusion from political debates.

In 1992, the National Salvation Front broke into two platforms – a group of bureaucrats and financial experts led by prime minister Petre Roman, which proposed further liberalization, and a group dominated by technocrats and industrial managers led by Ion Iliescu, which strove to maintain the previous direction of industrial policy, and a politics of slow privatization (Paşti 1995, Petrovici 2006). After the break, Iliescu's fraction was formalized under the name Democratic National Salvation Front (the later Socialist Party). After winning the 1992 elections, this party promoted the politics of protectionism and limited privatization, in line with industrial managers' interests to maintain domestic industrial structures. Politically, these policies were legitimated by references to the priority to maintain jobs and protect domestic industrial sectors that are of key importance to national security (Paşti 1995, 2006, Ban 2014).

In terms of protecting workplaces, the slowdown of privatization did not only follow from the economic and political priorities of former technocratic party elites. After the revolution, industrial workers reorganizing into independent unions outside the former socialist union alliance constituted a significant pressure on the government, which was already struggling in terms of governance capacity due to the erosion of former bureaucracy. Varga (2011, 2013) demonstrates that in regional comparison, Romanian unions manifested the strongest protest capacity after 1989. Strikes, factory occupations and street blockades, often leading to violent clashes with the police, made unions a strong actor of struggles around economic policy in the 1990s. These struggles peaked by the end of the decade. The heat and scope of conflict is well illustrated by a strike in Braşov, 1999, where workers held the minister of finance captive, applying the same model of personal bargaining that Jiu Valley miners used in 1977. This protest capacity of post-socialist unions was only dismantled in the 2000's. Within the EU accession process, the rewriting of the labor code was supported by the escalation of

police repression (reaching the level of protracted battles with police and gendarmerie), a communication smear campaign that stigmatized unions as the hotbed of corruption, as well as informal actions by foreign parties interested in privatization. In the case of TEPRO Iaşi, the latter included the murder of a union leader (Varga 2013). In Varga' assessment, this violent top-down action against unions in the early 2000's resulted in Romanian unions achieving relatively little lasting concessions despite their regionally outstanding protest capacity.

From the perspective of Iliescu's party, the alliance with workers – represented ideologically in terms of job protection, industrial development and national security – was a tactic induced by workers' pressure as well as by industrial technocracy's interest to hold internal and external promoters of liberalization in check. In carrying out a subdued privatization that favored domestic capital formation, symbolic alliances with workers helped show political strength, and references to workers' resistance could help sustain their standpoints in face of the IMF, World Bank, EU accession conditions, and local actors like the Bank of Development, opposition parties, and liberal NGOs. Meanwhile, under the facade of the same symbolic alliance, unions could pressurize Iliescu's party to support the slowing of industrial closures and concessions of social policies. The symbolic communication of this alliance reinforced the idea of a political connection between workers and the socialist party, reverberated equally in the political communication of socialist and oppositional politics. Contradictions between workers' struggles and socialist politics were obscured by this representation.

After the 1996 elections, the Democratic Party established by the liberal fraction of the National Salvation Front formed a common government with the Front's liberal opposition. Their program for a shock therapy was prepared under the instructions of Leszek Balcerowicz, assessed by the *Economist* as the most radical reform package of the region (Ban 2014: 160). This coming to power of a liberal coalition also shifted the position of human intellectuals. From marginal oppositional positions in liberal NGOs, many entered positions of expertise and consultancy within the process of economic reform and the preparation of EU accession. The regime's shift towards liberalization – also perceived by liberal oppositional politics and their Western allies as welcome opening towards proper democratization – implied a shift in funding channels for these experts' work, too, moving from NGO communication to applied expertise within governance structures (Ban 2017: 169-179).

The social effects of shock therapy soon destroyed the political legitimacy of the liberal coalition, and brought a new electoral victory of the socialists in 2000. However, by now, the stage of structural adjustment and privatization, together with the unbroken popularity of the idea of European accession (which required approval by the IMF) only made possible a moderation of neoliberalization, despite this elite group's interests colliding with the process. In 2004, Traian Băsescu, representing the liberal fraction of the Front, became president, and held on to that position until 2014. Consecutive governments during the Băsescu presidency promoted a neoliberal model of integration, focused on attracting foreign direct investment through lowering wages, cutting labor rights, and state subsidies directed at investors, in line with the requirements of EU accession.

Despite growing social polarization, the symbolic and economic effects of NATO and EU accession helped maintain the legitimacy of this direction for a relatively long period. Besides high hopes associated with entering these Western clubs, these included the possibility of labor migration to the EU, which soon grew to millions in numbers, a partial reindustrialization based on foreign investments, and increasing debt-based consumption. In major cities, the inflow of foreign investments resulted in the formation of a new, post-socialist middle class, and the proliferation in Western forms of

consumption and services in which they could engage (Petrovici 2007, Petrovici és Poenaru 2017a). The political power base of the socialist party and its broader network of state-dependent domestic capital and bureaucracy was significantly eroded (Poenaru 2017a, 69-78). As this political bloc could hardly provide any benefits to its constituency beyond narrowing patron-client relations, its political discourse increasingly shifted towards nationalist slogans and conspiracy theories. (Poenaru 2017a: 79-89). Meanwhile, the National Anticorruption Directorate, an organization funded by an emergency decree in 2002 with the support of international partners like the US State Department, acquired ever expanding capacities. Interlacing with secret services, throughout the years it became a parallel pole of power next to the system of governance based on electoral representation (Bottoni 2017).

In Băsescu's politics, the support for neoliberal integration and the struggle against socialists' power was complemented on the symbolic level with a sort of top-down populism or "neo-populist elitism" (Shafir 2008). This promoted a symbolic opposition between corrupt political elites and forward-looking citizens who support the project of Western integration. The political narrative built on this opposition questioned the legitimacy of elected governments and parliamentary parties by claiming that the process of elections is distorted by corrupted alliances between socialists (ex-communists) and uneducated lower classes. Against this coalition, progress needs to be sustained by the efforts of the presidential office, anti-corruption organizations, and their Western and international allies. During the process of EU accession, Băsescu solidified this narrative by a symbolic alliance with anticommunist humanist intellectuals. In 2006, he created a presidential committee to analyze the communist dictatorship, with the participation of historians and anticommunist intellectuals. The committee's task was to prepare a report (Tismăneanu et al. 2006), based on which Băsescu could officially condemn the crimes of communism. This gesture rose anticommunist human intellectuals' image of communism to the mainstream of liberal politics, reinforcing the symbolic opposition between educated, Westernized middle classes, and the alliance between ex-communist political elites and their uneducated clientele, which hinders the progression of catch-up development (Buier 2007, Poenaru 2013).

In Romania, too, the 2008 crisis brought a debt crisis. The budget deficit also deepened by the political decision to delay crisis measures for the campaign period of 2008 parliamentary and 2009 presidential elections, and instead raise wages and pensions. Crisis measures started from 2009, in a context where the financial sector was dominated by foreign banks and relevant policies were dependent on lenders' control (Mereuța and Căpraru 2012), and the real economy depended on an export sector dominated by multinational investors, who also stepped up as main actors defining crisis management (Ban 2017: 218-219). Ban argues that even within this extremely narrow maneuver space, Romanian austerity measures surpassed expectations by the Troika (Ban 2017: 230). He explains this by a lack of up to date, deeper knowledge of international expert debates on the side of Romanian neoliberals, and by the fact that in internal political struggles, even measures acknowledged in the international mainstream like progressive taxation were stigmatized as communist heritage that holds progress back. In political discourses on crisis management, Băsescu attributed the negative effects of the crisis to lower strata still carrying the communist heritage of low work ethics and state dependence, and therefore supporting the postcommunist politics of free gifts. It is this vicious circle, he claimed, why the wealth produced by the middle classes cannot be used to promote progress (Băsescu 2011). Within this logic, anticorruption campaigns against politicians and austerity measures were expected to cut the ties between political corruption and low-income strata expecting state gifts, and thereby create the possibility of progression:

“Reality created a chance for Romania by unveiling our weak points. What we need now is dedication and determination to get rid of them. (…) If examined well, we see that in Romania the main problem is not poverty, but laziness and abuse of the welfare system” (Băsescu 2010).

Austerity measures were soon followed by demonstrations. Protests by unions culminated in a general strike in October 2009 (Trif 2014). In response, in 2011, modifications of the labor code practically abolished the right to national collective bargaining (Stoiciu 2016). In the winter of 2011, a wave of street demonstrations was sparked by the plan to partially privatize the emergency rescue service, an exceptionally efficient and popular system. When deputy health minister Raed Arafat, the founder and coordinator of the service since its inception in the 1990’s, criticized the move, he was forced by Băsescu to resign, a move that caused widespread resentment. As a result of 2011 winter protests, the liberal government failed, and from 2012, socialist Victor Ponta took the position of prime minister. The next years were characterized by a growing conflict between socialists relying on their still significant political networks, and liberal-technocratic groups using external economic and geopolitical dependence to erode socialist power. In the context of economic crisis, austerity measures and series of political scandals, waves of street demonstrations followed each other.

After the case of the emergency rescue service, immediate causes of new demonstration waves included environmentally harmful investments supported by corruption in the case of the Roşia Montană goldmine plan and Chevron’s investment into shale gas fracking at Pungeşti; limitations of voting opportunities for the liberally inclined diaspora at the 2014 presidential elections; a fire at the Bucharest night club Colectiv that killed over 60, and continued in a scandal of a Romanian pharmaceutical company supplying over 350 hospitals with heavily diluted disinfectants that contributed to the death of further Colectiv victims due to bacterial infections; and a socialist plan for an emergency ordinance in 2017 that would have made possible for leading politicians – including socialist party leader Liviu Dragnea under criminal investigation at that point – to be dismissed from corruption charges. In 2018, the mobilization series was continued by the “Diaspora at Home” protests, where Romanians working abroad protested against the modification of the penal code, the dismissal of the head of the National Anticorruption Directorate, the gaffes of the socialist prime minister Viorica Dancila seen as a symbol of incompetent socialist leadership, and the fact that Dragnea still headed the Chamber of Deputies despite having been sentenced to prison. Since the violent repression of union protests in the late 1990’s and early 2000’s, and the force applied against local resistance in Pungeşti to open the way for Chevron’s investment, the 2018 diaspora protests were the first instance of violent clashes with the police (and the first where such measures were applied against middle class protesters, Reuters 2018a). Meanwhile, counter-protests organized by socialists also reached the volume of hundred thousand by 2018 (Reuters 2018b).

Throughout the years, political conflict between competing elites became an integral part of protest dynamics. While in the early years, anti-austerity claims did not exclude social demands, and small groups of new left activists made efforts to thematize protests in lines similar to Western anti-austerity social demands, protest frameworks later came to be closely aligned with the political narratives of the liberal fraction of political struggles. On the one hand, instances of protests were often followed by resignations and changes of government, and electoral victories by political competitors – in 2012, the failure of Emil Boc’s liberal government; in 2014, the election of president Klaus Iohannis despite the higher mobilization capacity of his socialist opponent; in 2016, the establishment of a technocratic government in place of Victor Ponta’s socialist government that resigned at the pressure of the Colective protests; in 2017, the withdrawal of the original bill for themodification of the penal code,

etc. On the other hand, while protesters often expressed discontent in face of the whole political class, throughout the years the political effects and frames of the protests were successfully channeled on the side of liberal-technocratic elites, and utilized to support their struggle to destroy the power of socialist political networks, and increase the parallel power of technocratic anticorruption institutions independent from electoral politics, symbolically expressed in the narrative of anticommunist anticorruption (Tamás 2016, Poenaru 2017b, Bottoni 2017).

For instance, the liberal presidential election campaign of 2014 opposed the image of Klaus Iohannis as a person of Saxon origin, representing Western protestant progression and efficiency, to socialist Victor Ponta who had been charged by corruption and plagiarism at the time, and whose steps to compensate political marginalization by populist methods were characterized by the international press as akin to Putin's or Orban's (e.g. Traynor 2013). In this context, demonstrations were sparked by the charge that Ponta's government does not provide sufficient conditions for the liberally-inclined diaspora to cast their votes. Protests reinforced the opposition between modern, educated, Westernized strata vs. corrupt socialist elites and incompetent lower strata (Gherasim-Proca 2016). This opposition, shared across protesters and liberal political campaigns, was illustrated by social media memes like one contrasting a picture of Ponta standing among a group of old peasant women to a Iohannis campaign photo where the presidential candidate is pictured in a group of middle class youth on bikes, on a bike lane in the first district of Bucharest.

In 2015, slogans of the first demonstrations reacting to the Colectiv accident addressed the responsibility of post-socialist political elites as a whole for the failure of the transition project (Creţan & O'Brien 2019). However, the communication of Iohannis' presidential office soon helped to impose the slogan "corruption kills" as the dominant interpretation of the events. The resignation of the Ponta government and the setup of a technocratic government was represented as moves to set the country on the road of progress as demanded by demonstrators. Despite this success in channeling protest energies into political support, the 2016 parliamentary elections brought a socialist victory. While the 2017-2018 protest wave was immediately directed at the corruption aspects of the socialists' emergency ordinance plan, on a more general level it also expressed protesters' frustration with what they perceived as a political victory going against the will of the people. At this point, demonstrators' claims to hold ex-communist political elites accountable for the failure of the regime change already fit the symbolic frameworks of socialists' liberal competitors. "Red plague" became a wide-spread slogan of the protests, comprising the full scope of the anticommunist liberal narrative on socialism, transition, and the limits of post-socialist development. By 2019, Iohannis' successful reelection campaign, framed along the same lines, was widely represented as the political expression of the discontent that has been building up throughout the protests (Rogozanu 2019).

At the same time, new center-right and neonationalist party initiatives that built on the political energy of the demonstrations (Save Romania Union, USR, and the Alliance for the Union of Romanians, AUR) also became successful, and grew into the third and fourth strongest parties by 2020. USR, founded in 2016 after a successful local electoral campaign in Bucharest, promoted an anti-corruption and pro-business agenda, defining its political line as closest to Emmanuel Macron's La République En Marche! (Gotev 2018). With a growing support that allowed it to enter a coalition government after the 2020 parliamentary elections, the electoral geography of Save Romania Union reflects the positions of young and educated urban middle class voters concentrated in major cities.

AUR, getting into parliament in 2020 with almost 10% of the votes despite only being founded in 2019, promoted nationalist slogans such as anti-Hungarian sentiments and the unification with Moldova, next to claims similar to other new right parties like anti-LGBTQ and anti-abortion campaigns and opposition to Covid-19-related restrictions or vaccines (Clark 2020). Like USR, AUR also built on a younger voter base, but had similar levels of rural and urban support, with a slight majority of men with mid-level education (Protv.ro). The large diaspora of Romanian migrant workers, who played a central part in the anti-corruption protests of 2017-2019, and has previously voted with pro-European center-right parties like the Liberals (PNL) and USR, also played a significant role in AUR's success. Raul Castorcea, an expert on Romanian interwar fascism, to which AUR's politics bears strong and explicit resemblances, emphasized that the neonationalist turn in diaspora votes was linked to diaspora workers' dire experiences during the Covid-19 crisis, where the usual hierarchies of intra-European labor migration turned into an outright treatment of East European migrants as expendables (Castorcea 2021, Boatcă 2020).

While AUR's direct references to the interwar legionary movement (including external symbols like representatives wearing folk costumes in Parliament) stand in sharp contrast with USR's self-portrayal as the representative of European civilization, the differences in their political background are not water tight. From as early as the environmentalist protests, both center-right and neonationalist currents have been present in demonstrations. When in 2017, the Coalition for the Family, an organization tied to AUR, initiated a referendum against gay marriage, not all USR members committed to the party's majority liberal stance, and the party's leader Dan Barna declared the issue not to be a priority (Gotev 2018). AUR took votes from USR both in the diaspora and at home, and in the 2020 electoral campaign of AUR, several USR representatives, including one of its founding members, joined AUR (adevarul.ro). Initially, left and left-leaning activists joined USR too, in the hope to channel the the left potential of protests towards political institutionalization. These standpoints did not succeed in informing the party's political line – illustratively, in 2019, USR promoted an initiative that any use of communist symbols be punished by jail. An alternative left party initiative, Demos, founded by highly educated activists, attempted to merge anti-austerity protest with redistributive agendas, but did not succeed in gathering enough signatures either in 2019 or 2020. While commentators often portrayed post-2019 mobilizations as a political incubator where the disillusionment with the post-socialist political system breeds new forms of democratic politics, the new forms of political institutionalization supported by the protests were characterized by the strengthening of incumbent neoliberal forces as well as the rise of neoliberal center-right and neonationalist extreme right parties.

Since 2011, street protests were dominated by middle class actors – not only in terms of symbolic frameworks and media representation, but also in terms of organization (through NGOs and social media), and in terms of sheer numbers. Research showed that participants were dominantly urban middle class, male, with university diplomas, politically conservative, and took part in subsequent waves of protest (SNSPA 2016, CeSIP 2017). While demonstrators and commentators of the protests often represented new mobilizations as an awakening from political passivity after the 1989 revolution, Varga (2015) notes that the specificity of the demonstration series starting in 2011 was rather that it is the first mobilization wave of large volume that had not been organized by unions. Although unions continued to protest against the continuous rolling out of austerity measures, with railway workers, healthcare practitioners and teachers protesting cuts in various state sectors, social topics represented by unions did not become a lasting part of street protests' agenda. This was partly due to different modes of organization and different frames of protest, as unions largely contested reforms of the pension system and taxation, while middle class demonstrations focused on political corruption

(Margarit & Rammelt 2020). As the symbolic contradiction between educated middle classes and liberal-technocratic elites vs. corrupt ex-communist politicians and uneducated lower classes looking for state assistance became the major framework of protest narratives, contemporary forms of unions' protests and demands were increasingly erased from protest narratives in line with the anticommunist narrative of the regime change. As one analysis of post-2008 mobilizations in line with this narrative put it, union mobilizations (including the 2009 general strike) "were splintered, represented narrow interests and did not lead to unified political pressure" (Olteanu & Beyerle 2018: 805). Instead, street protests were considered as bringing about a true "civic awakening" after the long pause of political participation after 1989, with citizens "reclaiming the state and democracy" (Olteanu & Beyerle 2018: 819).

The fact that middle class mobilizations could be channeled into elite political struggles to the benefit of liberal-technocratic groups was also backed by overlaps between crisis effects felt by new urban middle classes and constellations of political crises. Petrovici and Poenaru (2017) analyzed the social context of the post-2008 demonstrations in terms of how the wave of foreign direct investment starting by the mid-2000's conditioned transformations of local class relations together with the opportunities of political actors. This wave of foreign investments, occurring relatively late in regional comparison, was due to the dismantling of the protectionist national capitalist program of ex-socialist elites upheld throughout the 1990's, and to a pre-crisis wave of Western capitalist outsourcing. In consequence, while the 1990's were characterized by a protracted process of deindustrialization, unemployment, repeasantization, and a surge in labor migration to the West, the 2000's wave of foreign investment brought a reorganization in the constitution of both urban and rural workforce. Multinational companies moving to Romania started to employ educated middle class experts in big urban centers. While on the side of companies, this process was motivated by lower wages, compared with earlier local conditions, it was experienced by local middle classes as an opportunity to enter Western-style workplaces, make proper professional careers, and enjoy Western-style service sectors developing around new urban middle class consumption capacity. This type of urban development acted towards the further marginalization of urban workers and the poor. Struck by previous waves of unemployment, these strata were increasingly driven out from urban public spaces turned into middle class consumption grounds.

In 2008, the inflow of foreign investment temporarily halted, and the first wave of austerity measures, involving basic state services like healthcare and education, were also felt by urban middle classes. As Petrovici and Poenaru (2017) point out, the first waves of middle class protest stepped up against the austerity aspects of the same tendency of liberalization that created the ground for the formation of new urban middle class lifestyles. While new left groups at the time hoped that this factor would make it possible for politicized middle classes to ally with social groups suffering from the transformations of the 2000's, this window of opportunity was soon closed. By 2011, foreign investments started to flow in again. The growth of IT and services sectors, as well as of new management functions tied to a new wave of reindustrialization through outsourcing to former socialist industrial areas provided a new sense of optimism for the new urban middle class careers.

As a relocation wave following from Western parent companies' crisis management, these investments were also built on low costs of local labor, and rarely created career paths or forms of workplace security characteristic to former Fordist Western regimes. Instead, new urban expert employees were encouraged to invest in the competitiveness of their individual portfolios. Paired with personal experiences of upward mobility in a period of expanding opportunities, this situation solidified a moral

norm of individual competition and meritocracy. Contrasted to the models of individual success based in this structural context of educated middle class employment and its related moral norms, the “lack of success” manifested in the situation of blue collar workers working under unfavorable conditions in manufacturing positions created by the same investment wave, or in new rural unemployment created by land concentration following agrarian investments, were depicted in new middle class discourses as a consequence of communist, state-dependent, incompetitive mentality (Simionca 2012, Simionca & Gog 2016). In these discourses, Western neoliberal criticism of the rigid and bureaucratic character of Fordist organization was identified with a local criticism of socialist production. In contrast, the work conditions of new middle class experts were held up as a model of competitive meritocracy that provides the conditions of progress.

Petrovici and Poenaru (2017) argue that this competitive individualist image of middle class development gained a political expression after 2013, when street protests became part of anti-socialist political campaigns, and demonstrators started to identify the cause of economic crisis and transition failure in the corrupt political alliance between socialists and the poor. The electoral success of the socialists after 2014 overlapped with the restabilization of new urban middle class positions shaken after 2008. Petrovici and Poenaru interpret the political edge of the 2016 and 2017 protests as the reaction of the new urban middle class to the political power of socialists representing alliances with social strata different from their own position and elite alliances: domestic capital fractions, smaller entrepreneurs and rural bureaucrats, and the rural and urban poor, whose interests have partially been considered in the redistribution politics of socialists. Competition for state support, as well as issues of worldview and taste set new urban middle classes in sharp contrast with petty middle classes of smaller municipalities. Besides images of the uneducated poor, the image of party-dependent backward petty middle classes has been a frequent element of protest discourse.

Protest participation and its media representations also became an element of new urban middle class identification and lifestyle. Gubernat & Rammelt (2020a, 2020b) described the lifestyle element as a specific form of protest organization, where forms of alternative cultural consumption and non-committal/non-ideological participation at protests generate a type of liminal cohesion, which spurs protest politics, but also hinders the development of more direct debates on political agendas. In terms of the connection between middle class ambitions and developmental claims, what stands out is that systistic aspect simultaneously expresses a sense of tragedy due to the collapse of transition expectations despite middle class efforts and merits, and a rebirth of hope and entitlement in the collective action of protest. Protests were depicted as the reenaction and historical fulfillment of the martyrdom of the 1989 revolution and earlier historical efforts, expressed in slogans like “Our grandparents in the war, our parents in the revolution, now it is our turn!”. In this vision of historical change, imagined as an effort to correct the historical failure of transition due to backtracking by the corruption of ex-communist politics, representations of middle classness as a proof of merit and capacity for progress gained a central function. This capacity of middle class becoming was linked to a narrative of successive generations, where parents’ unsuccessful martyrdom, represented by symbolic locations like University square, or by singing chants from 1990 oppositional demonstrations, is fulfilled by a new generation who finally becomes the actor of progress parents could not be. The generational aspect of achieving middle class standards was emphasized by the adjectives “young and free beautiful people” in descriptions and self-descriptions of protesters (Crăciun & Lipan 2017). Protesters simultaneously claimed to be “the true representatives” of Romania (as opposed to corrupt politicians), and of a “well-mannered European society” - in other words: the embodiment of Romania’s long-awaited attainment of Western progress (Gubernat & Rammelt 2020: 258, 260).

Similar to Pepsi's 2011 advertisement inspired by Occupy protests, a 2017 advertisement of Ciuc Beer made use of this narrative, representing drinking Ciuc Beer and going to protests as the fulfillment of middle class lifestyle. More than just a class position and consumption environment, the advertisement represents the new generation of politicized middle class as the fulfillment of the country's hopes for becoming a properly developed actor of its own future. The story of the advertisement runs from this generation's socialist childhood, represented by a pioneers' song about a golden future to be reached by 2000, to the post-socialist realization of that future in scenes where stylish youngsters reuse factory spaces for leisure, skate and dance through the city, raise a drone above a socialist mega-sculpture, protest and kiss amongst the protest. In a well-placed advertising gesture, the arrival of Ciuc Beer to the party – a brand owned by Heineken but belonging to the group of post-socialist brands that were maintained to reap sentiments of nostalgia and longing for continuity across historical rupture – is immediately preceded by an 1989 reference, with a young man's and woman's faces transforming into their parents' sad and tired faces amongst the protesting crowd.

In the Ciuc advertisement, the words of the pioneer song about the golden future are applied to the expression of middle class fulfillment, creating a victorious narrative bridge between parents' hardships and youngsters' consumption of the "Beer from the new world", as the final slogan puts it. However, in the actual protests, attempts at the same narrative of fulfillment carried shades of grave and tragic sentiments, as the victory of developmental achievement was always understood to be under vital threat. This contradiction in the stakes of middle class mobility was often expressed in terms of historical derailment and personal death, especially after the Colectiv incident produced a real example to it. In this context, bringing about change through protest appeared as a life-and-death stake of both personal and historical rebirth, a question of the possibility of the future in general. The lines of the Romanian metalcore band Goodbye to Gravity, played in the Colectiv club before the fire broke out, became a slogan of the Colectiv protests in this sense: "We're not numbers / we are so alive, / 'cause the day we give in / is the day we die". In the protests' usage, these lines simultaneously referred to the tragedy of those who died in the fire and in hospitals by inadequate treatment due to instances of corruption, and to the fate of what protests referred to as a generation, whose chances are hindered due to corrupt politics that backtrack the country's development into the past. In social media memes, images depicting Colectiv victims were transformed in into symbolic images of potesters as victims who come back to take their revenge on the system. The slogan "corruption kills" was associated with a generational martyrdom, like in memes representing a youngster whose eyes and mouth are covered by tape, with the inscription "Corruption kills your future!".

Ozarow (2019: 207) notes that after delinking from social claims and alliances, middle class politicization in Argentina increasingly turned towards abstract and moral concepts like death or the moral opposition between corruption and uprightness. Crăciun and Lipan (2020) conclude from anthropological studies of post-socialist East European middle class identifications that the interchangeability of the notions of middle class and good life as a consensual field of aspirations contributed to perceiving these aspirations as inherently ethical and apolitical. In a critique of protest discourses, formulated from a left perspective, Cirjan (2016) emphasized the sharp contradictions of structural politics hidden under the image of an ethical and universally collective revolution of the generation of beautiful youngsters:

"This vision of politics as an altruist solution-search has begotten a well-rooted ideal of a pure protest of anonymous dissatisfaction which somehow surpasses class interests and political affiliations

here is a stubborn reluctance to accept what for a lot of women, Roma and workers are actually very strong daily realities: that class interests don't match, that they lead to powerful conflicts and that, somehow, those who lose keep on being the same over the years. There is no democratic chorus of citizens, no "Facebook generation", no beautiful youngsters who would magically find the perfect solution under the conductor's baton of technocracy or civic unity. Such political imageries are the result of violent political exclusions, they rely on the enforced silence of millions for Romanians who are excluded from the political process, whose voices are hardly heard and whose poverty seldom becomes a matter of concern."

While Crăciun and Lipan do not speak of protesters per se, I agree with their point that the formulation of the idea of middle-class development as an unproblematic and apolitical notion of good, proper and normal life should be read as an ideological element that sustains the continued idealization of middle classness in face of recurrent frustrations and disillusionments. In the vocabulary of this book, this kind of moral politicization may be described as a political condition of reproducing middle class identifications as a form of developmentalist illusion in the context of the crisis. In this reading, the fact that middle class ideologies express political discontent in universalizing moral terms does not exclude their political edge. Indeed, in later moments of the protest wave, conflicts with other strata whom new urban middle classes perceived as competitors dragging back the state policies they would favor expressed the structural politics of the protests in sharper terms, while still maintaining the ideological level of moral and taste-based reflection. Depictions of the uneducated and uncivilized poor, or class-based discrediting of socialist politicians as uneducated or looking below middle class standards, like caricaturing Socialist prime minister Dragnea for having bad teeth, belong to this category.

The local constellations of post-socialist development that set the conditions of post-2008 demonstrations in Hungary differed from those of Romania to a significant extent. Here, it was the internal-external alliances supporting liberalization that won the struggle over managing late socialist crisis. Already in the second half of the 1980's, alliances between reform fractions of the party, managerial-technocratic elites involved in incipient privatization, international lenders and Western capital managed to carry out significant reforms for economic opening. Dissident intellectuals, although temporarily marginalized in the early 1970's, grew into internationally recognized voices of political transition. Organizing in two competing camps – liberal and national-conservative –, they mobilized to achieve political power. In the process of the Round Table Talks, new parties and the socialist party (reorganized as a democratic party) set the foundation of a constitutional democracy. As Szalai (1994) or Bruszt (1995) pointed out, these talks were a negotiation among Hungary's future political elite. Their main stakes revolved around political institutional power. Stakes of economic power were implicitly involved through political groups' different economic alliances in the already ongoing privatization process.

In the process of the regime change, new parties joined forces in the collective condemnation of socialist centralization and in the struggle for political democratization, as a means to broaden their own space of maneuver. At the same time, in the competition between future political elites, a lasting conflict between liberal and protectionist visions of post-socialist development crystallized. Liberal fractions, including the Alliance of Free Democrats and Fidesz (Federation of Young Democrats) favored a model of world-economic integration through liberalization and foreign direct investments. The conservative-nationalist Hungarian Democratic Forum promoted more protectionist policies favoring domestic embourgeoisment. While new parties wrought severe battles over questions of political influence (like media control and cultural politics), or symbolic issues representing national or

Western-led development (like the choice of the coat of arms), their differences implied a strong consensus over the need to overcome popular resistance to marketization, as both liberal and national-capitalist models of post-socialist integration involved processes of privatization, unemployment and further welfare cuts that harmed workers' interests.

The Hungarian Democratic Forum was formed by the fraction of dissident intellectuals who had been criticizing socialist modernization by reviving poporanist traditions. In the interwar era, poporanist writers and the peasant party criticized capitalist modernization for destroying peasant livelihoods. After 1945, the movement was forced to integrate with the communist party, with one of its main representatives, Ferenc Erdei, becoming a prominent actor of collectivization. Starting from the 1970's, dissidents revived poporanist discourses. This revival carried further a tradition of sociography infused by nationalist sentiments, but omitted the perspective of economic conditions. Instead, the representation of the people was imagined as a work of representing national cultural identity (Papp 2012). As a party, the Hungarian Democratic Forum relied on this tradition, welding it to expressions of grievances by former middle classes harmed by socialist redistribution. The party's actual constituency was broader than the descendants of interwar bourgeoisie, involving socialist middle classes and lower middle classes, mainly in rural and municipal environments, who saw their interests harmed by the privatization process dominated by alliances between socialist managers and liberal politics (Körösényi 1999). While struggling to create space for the formation of national capital within conditions dominated by its Western competitors (Szalai 1994: 478), the Hungarian Democratic Forum reactualized poporanist slogans in gestures that portrayed its efforts as saving national wealth for the nation as a whole. Beyond symbolic expressions, such gestures included measures like creating farmers' markets where small producers could sell their products, or an ambivalent support provided to workers' struggles for workers' share of property in the privatization process.

While workers' politics during the privatization process was largely characterized by technical coalitions with industrial interests that temporarily opposed or strove to delay privatization, there have been incipient attempts to promote workers' share of property as an element of privatization, and form workers' councils that could promote this cause. These instances came to be supported by an antibureaucratic marxist group, Left Alternative, as a possible way of decreasing the social damage and improving workers' position within the privatization process. Left Alternative represented this claim at the Round Table Talks, but the inclusion of workers' share of property as a legitimate element of privatization was consensually rejected by liberal, ex-socialist and conservative sides. A pact between the two major new political parties, Hungarian Democratic Forum and the Alliance of Free democrats, signed after the first democratic elections, included the point that the principle of workers' self-management and workers' property will be excluded from the new constitution (Szalai 1994, Thoma 1998). On the level of the movement, left alliances were soon superseded by alliance offers from the side of the Hungarian Democratic Forum, from whom workers hoped to gain direct help after their electoral victory. The Forum was motivated to support the movement as a tactic to gain positions against industrial management allied to socialists and liberals; however, it was not interested in promoting results that benefited workers. After a long delay, the Forum government government legalized the possibility of workers' property share as an intermediary stage of privatization, at a point where the main struggles of privatization were already over (Szalai 1994). The Alliance of Hungarian Workers' Councils gave up its demands for workers' property share in 1992, and continued to exist as a Christian union, in a dependent relationship to right-wing politics.

The other main party of the regime change, the Alliance of Free Democrats followed the tendency of the liberal wing of the dissident tradition, and linked the causes of democracy and human rights to the promotion of market liberalization. If before 1989, this link has been promoted by dissident intellectuals as a means to alleviate problems of poverty and workers' repression, in the politics of the regime change liberals ceased to refer to workers' interests, and the issue of poverty came to be restricted to the area of philanthropy and social policies targeted at most disenfranchised groups. Like all new political initiatives, the liberal fraction of the democratic opposition also created a new union in 1988, when the opportunity to fund new unions was opened before the possibility to create new parties. This union (LIGA) was to fullfill the role of aiding political work and to decrease the infrastructural power of the former national union tied to socialist party structures. In line with this mission, LIGA suspended the representation of workers' interests for the time of the Round Table Talks, defining its aim as supporting the process of political democratization (Thoma 1998).

The Forum government's efforts to increase its maneuver space within conditions dominated by external-internal alliances promoting liberalization were severely attacked by the liberal opposition as attempts to re-centralize political power. In the symbolic frameworks of political struggle, this conflict was represented as a duality of Western-led democratic development versus national embourgeoisment. In these debates, the conflict between liberals and ex-socialists, after constituting a main legitimation framework of liberal politics in 1989, gradually shifted to second place. The main rift of post-socialist politics became that between nationalist development and liberalization, the latter coming to be represented by an increasingly explicit alliance between liberals and socialists. This rapprochment was accelerated by a political scandal where a Forum MP, István Csurka (1992) argued in an article that the failure of the Forum government's economic program is caused by the power of ex-Kádárist networks allied with external lenders. This power, he argued, is so strong that it can govern the economic process outside of the frameworks of parliamentary politics. He interpreted the seemingly contradictory alliance between ex-socialist managers, Western capital and liberal dissidents as a result of Jewish conspiracy. As a response to this argument, evoking dark memories of interwar right-wing discourses, the Alliance of Free Democrats and the socialists created a common front, stepping up in the name of democracy against nationalism and antisemitism. After the 1994 elections, these two parties formed a coalition government. As Erzsébet Szalai (1995) pointed out, this solidification of the political field muted social critiques of liberalization: in the liberals' discourse, any argument against liberalization was marked as allied with nationalism and potentially antisemitism, while on the conservative side, social critiques were merged with, and expressed in the vocabulary of, national capital's interests.

On the level of capitalist alliances, liberal and conservative parties' politics represented the two main political-economic elite blocks that crystallized in the first years after the regime change, and continued to define the politics of the next decades (Szalai 1995, Böröcz & Róna-Tas 1995, Szelényi et al. 1996, Kolosi & Sági 1996, Stark & Vedres 2012). The alliance of liberal and reform socialist politics had strong connections to the managers of earlier state companies, and to various international organizations. Due to the significance of earlier company managers in privatization, and the essential role of lack of capital and pressing debt, this block had the upper hand country's FDI and credit-led development. The second block, promoting the interests of an aspiring national bourgeoisie, continued to rely ideologically on the symbolic nationalism of anticommunist interwar bourgeoisie, but struggled to forge a powerful alliance from its constituency scattered across conservative elites, rural middle classes and entrepreneurs or farmers struggling under the dominance of liberal alliances. In terms of political parties, in the first period of the transition this block was largely represented by the Hungarian Democratic Forum; from 1998 on, Fidesz took over this role, changing its program from liberal

anticommunism to that of national embourgeoisment. While political efforts to promote domestic capital were long suppressed by the dominance of liberal internal-external alliances, from 1998, Fidesz engaged in developing allied domestic capital as an economic hinterland (Szelényi 2016).

In their strategies of political communication, the political representation of each block developed symbolic bridging techniques to paper over the contradiction between the foreign or domestic capitalist interests they promoted, and the interests of local workers. Conservatives referred to the need to defend national wealth from Western capital and its allied interests which work for the survival of socialist power. This definition of national wealth obscured interest conflicts between domestic capital and labor by merging them into the idea of an organic national community. In turn, liberals and socialists defined themselves as a democratic front against antisemitic nationalism. They promoted liberalization as the sole guarantee of catching up with Western standards of democracy, and condemned any expression of economic discontent as allied with nationalism. This formal, normative, ascetic notion of democracy represented by the socialist-liberal coalition was solidified by the austerity package they implemented after their election victory in 1994. In portraying expressions of economic grievances as threats against democracy, they could always refer to conservatives' symbolic gesture that blurred the difference between "national wealth" and labor's interests. This mutually reinforcing framework of political bridging techniques I described earlier as an interplay between liberal's "democratic antipopulism" and conservatives' "antidemocratic populism" (Gagyi 2016: 357).

In the above dynamics, the notions of political left and right came to signify different positions in the case of Hungary than in Romania. While in Romania, the political left was identified with socialists' efforts to continue the main lines of socialist industrializing policies, keep strategic industries and channel them into domestic hands, in Hungary the political left came to be constituted by reform fractions of the state party that had been already carrying out liberalizing reforms in the 1980's, and their liberal allies. This version of the "left" promoted the type of foreign investment-led neoliberal politics that in the same years in Romania were represented by the liberal opposition (dominated, at the time, by socialists). In Hungary, the protectionist line that favored domestic capital formation, such as the one represented by Romanian socialists, was promoted by the conservative opposition of dominant "left" coalitions.

While competing elite blocks' mutually reinforcing bridging techniques successfully obscured expressions of class tensions in political debates, these tensions have been nevertheless accumulating in the years following the regime change. Hungary's reintegration into global markets happened under the unfavorable conditions of high levels of public debt, the loss of Comecon export markets, and a severe need for capital (Éber et al. 2014). Throughout a privatization process carried out from that unfavorable bargaining position, international capital entered the country to create export enclaves producing tradable goods, and to capture strategic positions in banking, utilities, retail, telecom and energy (Böröcz 1992, 2000; Drahokoupil 2009; Nölke & Vliegenthart 2009). The downsizing of local production transformed large segments of the previously full-employed population into a reserve army, a condition for the cheap labor offered to investors. After the issue of labor was sidelined in favor of political bargaining between parties in the process of the regime change (Thoma 1998, Bruszt 1995, Szalai 1995), it was successfully kept from transforming into a political force on its own. Besides gestures of symbolic bridging and the narrowing unions' maneuver space, pacification through social benefits also played a part in the subduing of labor's voice. Unemployment, together with a new system of state subsidies divided between multiple types of pensions and unemployment benefits, set affected groups in competition against each other, resulting in a strategy Pieter Vanhuysse described as "divide

and pacify" (2006). Literature on the lack of politicization of post-socialist unemployment in Hungary has also emphasized the individualization of systemic risks (Bartha 2011), patience induced by catching-up expectations (Beissinger and Sasse 2014), and the capacity of newly installed infrastructures of political democracy to channel dissent into protest votes (Bohle & Greskovits 2012).

While foreign direct investment sustained Hungary's solvency during the 1990s, its benefits were hardly felt by workers, who struggled to find new employment under conditions of steep depreciation and new investments that created low positions in manufacturing chains. As privatization exhausted by the end of the decade, investments slowed, but profits and dividends continued to leave the country. Under these conditions, regional competition for foreign investments sharpened, further weakening and depreciating local labor. While the shock therapy of the 1995 austerity package stood out as a symbolic moment of anti-labor policies, successive left and right governments continued to weaken workers' rights, suppress unions, and further flexibilize labor, to keep in line with regional competition. Despite these measures, by the early 2000's, the slowdown of foreign investment led to a new increase of deficit and external debt. After the full convertibility of the Forint was introduced in 2001, and the country joined the EU in 2004, foreign banks owning 70% of the local market started to push foreign exchange loans. In a few years, private companies, households, the state and local governments all became indebted in foreign currencies (Éber et al. 2019). If the swift process of Hungarian privatization was a model case of property shift in the service of core capital's crisis management, the debt wave of the 2000's incadrated in a move where the exhaustion of Western and Southern European loan markets were compensated by more risky and more profitable constructs directed at East European markets (Raviv 2008). This second, debt-led phase of the neoliberal regime of accumulation and world-economic integration already showed signs of crisis by the mid-2000's. Problems in the public budget attracted inspection by international lenders, while the cumulative effects of liberalization and austerity policies led to public discontent. Another source of delegitimation was that under conditions of trade deficit and growing public and private debt, state policies became fully dependent on European transfers, which fixed state action within the frameworks of European policies characterized by several researchers as a phase of authoritarian neoliberalism (Bohle & Greskovits 2012, Medve-Bálint & Šćepanović 2019). Despite the efforts of the socialist-liberal government to alleviate the political effects of this situation by private Keynesian policies promoting debt-led consumption, by the mid-2000's not only unions, but also national capitalist fractions based in former alliances between socialist managers and liberal politics were alienated from the coalition - the latter regrouping around contender nationalist politics of Fidesz.

Meanwhile, right-wing contender politics developed under the domination of the neoliberal integration model successfully created a broader political subculture of right-wing antineoliberalism, and channeled popular discontent into the organizational structures of right-wing politics through various means. As several studies showed, the extreme right movement Jobbik, which turned into a party in 2003, and Fidesz' strategy to create a nation-wide network of citizens' circles as an alternative institutional system of political mobilization after losing the 2002 elections, successfully established the idea of national resistance as the answer to grievances suffered by former industrial and agricultural workers during the decades of neoliberal integration (Bartha 2011, Halmai 2011, Varga 2014, Greskovits 2017, Szombati 2018). The stiff resistance of socialist-liberal politics and related expert and cultural publicity to give any space to expressions of economic grievances supported this process. As an activist of the alterglobalisation movement put it, in terms of any left critique, the liberal-dominated public sphere of the 2000's worked as a "vacuum press" : "you had to be extremely cautious with every

word, because the smallest expression of social critique could mark you forever as an antisemite" (Gagyi 2011, 184.).

In 2006, following a leaked speech by socialist prime minister Ferenc Gyurcsány in which he admitted to have lied about the public budget, a series of violent protests broke out in Budapest. While right-wing groups dominated the front lines, the protests were largely spontaneous, and demonstrators came from various backgrounds. However, the government's reaction which reached the level of police abuse helped to channel discontent towards vocabularies already prepared by previous constellations of the political sphere. While Fidesz initially delimited itself from the politics of the streets, it soon came to position itself on the side of suppressed protesters (for instance by a media event where Fidesz leaders destroyed the cordon that had been set up to keep demonstrators away from the Parliament). Next year, Fidesz initiated a national referendum against a new system of personal payments that the Gyurcsány government planned to introduce in public healthcare and education as a first step towards marketization. The success of this referendum fortified Fidesz as the representative of anti-neoliberal struggle. When in response to the referendum, Gyurcsány dismissed the healthcare minister delegated by the Alliance of Free Democrats, the latter withdrew its delegates from the government, and broke the coalition. The 2009 European and 2010 parliamentary elections institutionalized the change in political power: Jobbik became a parliamentary party, the classic parties of the regime change (Hungarian Democratic Forum and the Alliance of Free Democrats) were disbanded, and Fidesz, winning a landslide victory that allowed itself to govern with a supermajority, embarked on transforming external-internal structures of Hungary's integration to the benefit of its own alliances. Politics Can Be Different, a party established on the base of the alterglobalist version of 2000's anti-neoliberalism also got into parliament.

The new Fidesz government declared the program of "central power space" in internal politics (HVG 2010), and the program of "economic freedom fight" in external politics (Wiedermann 2014). What these slogans expressed on the symbolic level was an endeavor to reconfigure internal-external relations of systemic integration in a way that could re-boost growth, allow the regime to stabilize its power (including support by external capitalist alliances), and carve out a broader maneuver space to benefit state-supported domestic capital (Éber et al. 2019). This program relied on the conditions of strong centralization of administrative power. The government repeatedly rewrote the constitution, changed the electoral law, increased media control, narrowed the autonomy of the judiciary, centralized the decision-making power of local governments, reorganized institutions of science, culture and education, and disbanded remaining forms of public consultation (Magyar & Vásárhelyi 2017, Kovács & Trencsényi 2019).

Relying on the centralization of administrative power, the regime started to realign internal-external class relations along a complex portfolio where dependent modes of external integration were combined with alleys of internal accumulation. Research by the Working Group for Public Sociology "Helyzet" (Jelinek & Pinkasz 2014, Barna et al. 2019) linked the regimes' policy types to different aspects of that portfolio. The first aspect is macrostability: policies aiming to reduce deficit and external debt served to simultaneously increase investment appetite into the Hungarian economy, and reduce direct dependence on lenders in order to gain policy autonomy for measures that serve domestic capital. In external financing, a related aspect was the shift from exclusive dependence on Western lenders to other – dominantly: Russian and Chinese – capital, in the hope to create more autonomy vis-a-vis Western lenders.

The second aspect of the regime's integration portfolio is the encouragement of foreign direct investment into export manufacturing. As Hungarian companies do not have the capacities to compete on external markets, keeping up export in order to maintain the balance of trade, create trade surplus, and produce foreign currency reserves was a key condition of macroeconomic stability and policy autonomy (Éber et al. 2014, Becker et al. 2015). Benefiting from a new wave of industrial outsourcing that started after 2008, the regime invested heavily into attracting export industrial capacities. Besides providing the most generous subsidies for industrial relocations within regional competition (Gerőcs & Pinkasz 2019), it amended labor regulation to fit investors' needs, reorganized education to channel labor into cheap semi-skilled positions, and introduced a corporate tax level that is the lowest among EU states. Some of these industrial policies were co-drafted with German lobby organizations, such as the German - Hungarian Chamber of Industry and Commerce (Dull 2018). Further amended at later points to follow investors' needs, these policies created a cheap and flexible labor source for investors, reduced trade union activity, and for a while, provided a source of symbolic legitimation based the idea of technological development creating new jobs. At the same time, the same policies created a strong exposure to the global crisis of manufacturing – and within it, dominantly: the long crisis of the German automotive industry –, specializing in a position where the production of elements declining in their product life-cycle were outsourced in order to maintain their profitability temporarily through increasing standardization and cheap labor (Gerőcs & Pinkasz 2019).

In the sphere of domestic service industries, where the state has a larger capacity to shape market conditions, economic policy served to broaden domestic capital accumulation. In branches like retail, media, telecommunication, transport, energy, or construction, policies favored domestic actors, and discriminated against foreign capital. In banking, a less conflictual but similar shift took place. The government bought insolvent assets of foreign banks hit by the financial crisis in a relatively high price. This move allowed the regime to reestablish domestic financial capital and start building protected circuits of domestic capital across financial and domestic service industries sectors (Mihályi 2015, Pósfai et al. 2017, Gagyi et al. 2019). Together with tax policies and redistribution favoring the capitalization of a new upper middle class, whose savings are channeled into domestic consumption, new circuits of state-supported housing mortgages directed into new construction, as well as Forint state bonds, these measures constitute a third aspect of policies, which aims the broadening and protection of domestic capital.

Finally, the regulation and control of labor and the unemployed is a fourth aspect of the regime that has been increasingly imposed throughout the years. Besides the reconfiguration of labor regulation and education, an important element of these policies has been the introduction of the workfare model (first proposed by the Socialists after 2008). This scheme substituted universal unemployment benefits, and tied participation in the program to "invitations" laid out by local governments. The high discretionary power of local governments made the workfare program a successful tool of political control over the most disadvantaged groups – illustrated by regions with the highest unemployment reaching highest shares of pro-government votes in subsequent elections (Jandó 2018). This shift expanded and radicalized the trend that continuously decreased the universality of social policies and distorted redistribution to the benefit of middle classes since the 1970's (Szalai 2007, Ferge 2017). However, due to the immense pressure put on labor by the double extraction stream the regime's model rested upon, by the mid-2010's a strong wave of work migration started, and both foreign and domestic capital faced an increasing problem of labor shortage. In these conditions, rural unemployment started to serve as a source of internal work migration, and the strategic significance of the workfare program shrunk (Czirfusz et al. 2019). Measures of control of the poor also included more direct and coercive steps,

like anti-homeless legislation (Udvarhelyi 2014). Related ideological campaigns linked the idea of job creation through reindustrialization and the introduction of workfare to the idea of transcending the "welfare state" towards a "work-based state". As Viktor Orbán put it:

"every state needs to carry out the correction of the welfare state. This is harder to do in the West, because there you have broad structures of welfare state, in Eastern Europe it's easier, because we don't have them. We are stumbling across the ruins and half-built new constructs of post-socialist economic systems, but have no welfare state. Our program is that instead of the uncompetitive model of Western welfare states, we create a work-based society" (Napi.hu 2012).

Ideological gestures of inclusion and exclusion were strongly employed by the government to complement and compensate for effects of new policies. The middle class, a key topic of Fidesz' politics since its first cycle between 1998-2002, remained central government communication. While actual policies increased the polarization of the middle class, enriching a narrower circle of new middle class and letting others – teachers, doctors, or the largest part of professionals squeezed into increasingly precarious market jobs – suffer the effects of downward mobility, government communication continued to address the middle class as the universal subject of the nation. Reorganizations of social policy or housing support that increased social polarization were expressed in the general language of "families" (Scharle & Szikra 2015), translated on billboards and loan advertisements into images of middle class family life. The ideological use of the idea of the family was completed by a communication campaign that promoted traditional female roles as a symbolic cover for increasing the burden of care work on women while denying the fact that it is work (Kováts 2018, Csányi 2019). Blue collar workers, while being channeled into structures of reindustrialization that were made possible by freezing their potential for advocacy, were included into ideological discourses by emphasizing decent work versus the state dependence of the undeserving poor. The workfare model also functioned as a public dramatization of this ideology, representing the idea that the regime puts the unemployed – defined with ethnic undertones alluding to the Roma – to work. Next to punitive measures such as anti-homeless legislation, the a main tool of symbolic delimitations that served to include groups otherwise disfavored by the regime's policies into the circle of deserving citizens was the against migration that started in 2015. Reacting to a problem of declining popularity after the elections of 2014, this campaign forged a successful ideological tool that was able to portray the regime as beneficial to all Hungarians, despite its strongly exploitative character.

In its first cycle after 2010, the Fidesz government included some selective measures of economic inclusion into its policies, in line with the social lines of its anti-neoliberal discourse practiced in the election campaign. These icluded measures like distributing nationalized tobacco shop licenses to politically loyal families or providing state subsidies to energy bills (practically subsidizing providers with growing domestic shares). In the following cycles, however, tensions generated by aggressive wealth concentration were rather tackled by stepping up ideological campaigns, around a narrative that charged Western powers' ("Brussels") and internal opposition with a conspiracy that aimed to replace Hungarians by migration (kormany.hu 2017). After years of political campaigns, by 2017 Hungarians who never came in touch with migrants mentioned migration the number one threat to their security (Pew 2017). NGOs were targeted as an element of that alliance, with references to George Soros's support for main liberal NGOs (Gagyi 2017). Conflicts with European politics over issues of de-democratization (Staudenmaier 2018), were made use in government communication as a proof of international attacks against Hungary, strenghtening the position of the government as the nation's defender.

Meanwhile, local opposition's alliance with Western critiques of de-democratization was largely associated with the delegitimation of previous socialist-liberal politics (Sebők 2016, Scheiring 2016, Böcskei 2016). The significance of local "left" politics was arguably upheld rather by government communication's image of a mighty enemy, than its actual influence. The stronger political contender was Jobbik, which grew into the largest oppositional party. Jobbik applied the same national rhetoric as the government without carrying the responsibility for economic extraction, and started to criticize the regime from a right populist stance. By 2018, Jobbik was also defeated: taking over its ideological statements, and pushing it to reframe its politics as a more mainstream one, the Fidesz managed to divide and then break the party. Fidesz won a third supermajority on the 2018 parliamentary elections, with the strong application of all tools of political control and electoral machinery built out in previous years. However, the 2019 local elections brought a series of victories by oppositional coalitions. This was due to oppositional negotiations reaching an agreement on a joint electoral strategy, as well as to local electoral coalitions that expressed the discontent of local elites and middle classes affected by the regime's extreme accumulation measures. While oppositional governments are struggling with a narrow maneuver space due to Fidesz' centralization of power, their organizational and political base might play an important in the 2022 elections, the first parliamentary elections that Fidesz meets under the conditions of a new economic crisis instead of post-2008 recovery.

In the above context, in Hungary, the mobilizations that could be considered as part of the post-2008 global wave appeared along specific splits. The burst of discontent and disillusionment with the neoliberal project of development that happened in 2006 was dominantly thematized in the frameworks of right-wing antineoliberalism, developed by dominated conservative post-socialist elites and new right movements of the 2000's. The fact that Fidesz successfully channeled this discontent into electoral struggle against the Socialist-Liberal coalition, and then used it to legitimate its own accumulation regime, defined the political space in which discontent with post-crisis policies came to be expressed after 2010.

During the time of liberal hegemony, right-wing oppositional politics formed networks that connected party structures to grassroots mobilizations (Halmai 2011, Szombati 2018), with constituencies ranging from conservative elites to lower middle class and workers' participation in new right political subcultures. For these networks, the Fidesz government brought an increasing fragmentation. Jobbik was pushed to reformulate its political lines and finally broke along tensions between hardliners and those seeking more populist directions. The broader hinterland of right-wing movements came to be simultaneously nurtured by Fidesz communication and fragmented by its practical politics of centralized control. One important example of the political and class aspects of pre-2010 anti-austerity movements is that of the forex debtors' movement. This kind of mobilization rose in the wake of a sweeping debt crisis affecting families who took mortgages in foreign currencies (Dancsik 2015). Initially, Fidesz' communication incorporated debtors' problems, promising to punish banks and save debtors in line with its "economic freedom fight". But its actual measures to tackle the debt crisis served the restabilization of the banking sector and property shifts benefiting domestic financial (Gagyi et al. 2019). While debtors in better positions were helped to reintegrate in domestic circuits of lending, families who took mortgages out of necessity rather than as an investment remained without help.

Disillusioned by earlier promises, by 2013 the debtors' movement turned against the Fidesz government, but struggled to make its voice heard. The government's sweeping communication campaign which stated that the problem of forex debt had been solved,  as well as its steps to make

debtors' contestations legally impossible (Kiss 2018) effectively silenced the debtors' movement. The "left" opposition's distancing from the debtors' movement contributed to this effect. In contrast with European and North American cases where housing debt became a leading issue of anti-austerity pro-democracy politics after 2008, in Hungary the issue of forex debt was not included into oppositional agendas – both because former professional elites of the neoliberal regime did not acknowledge their claims as legitimate, and because left fractions of oppositional politics felt alienated by their use of right-wing antineoliberal frameworks of the pre-2010 oppositional culture.

Like elsewhere, major demonstration waves after 2010 were defined by middle class constituencies. While the Fidesz government's economic policies actually favored (upper) middle classes, and were most detrimental to the poor (Kolosi & Fábián 2016), its dismantling of political and cultural institutional systems of the former liberal hegemony (from media centralization or the reorganization of research and higher education to a full transformation of cultural financing and the attacks against NGOs) put a strong pressure on experts and intellectuals previously integrated in those structures. The dismantling of these structures and Fidesz' attacks on cosmopolitan liberal values were also rejected by younger generations aspiring to future professional careers. After 2010, demonstration waves regularly erupted in response to specific measures or at the occasion of historical anniversaries of 1848 or 1956 revolutions. Most demonstrations thematized problems that these groups found most important: the rewriting of the constitution, the centralization of the media, the reorganization of higher education, a plan to tax internet traffic as part of an austerity package in 2014, the closure of the Central European University, and the abolishment of the independent status of the Hungarian Academy. Demonstrations were organized ad hoc, based on networks and skills brought from previous civil society or professional connections, or gathered throughout protest events (Krasztev & Til 2015, Szabó & Mikecz 2015). The preparation of demonstrations happened along informal networks, most often by invitation. Unlike Romanian or other post-2008 movements that rejected central organization and public speeches, and only used speakers and human mic, in Hungary demonstrations were organized in a more traditional manner, with stages, sound systems, selected speakers, and pre-written speeches. This was largely due to the existence of previous liberal civic networks which got activated as one of the main organizational channels of the protests (Rammelt 2018).

Unions responding to anti-union legislation (like in the case of police or firefighters' unions in 2011), or to reorganizations of respective branches – most emphatically: teachers and healthcare workers – also took part in these demonstrations, and organized their own protests as well. Next to to other issues like students' protests, advocacy groups' protests against anti-homeless legislation, anti-Roma discrimination, women's rights, anti-migration campaigns, or mobilizations responding to specific local decisions like that of the reconstruction of the Városliget park, unions' issues were often included in big demonstrations' agendas in the form of invited speakers, including their claims among demonstrators' demands, and providing organizational or communication support to their own initiatives. However, they remained in a status of illustrations to main political narratives that attributed all grievances to the anti-liberal and anti-Western stance of the Orbán regime, and demanded a return to the path of Western-type modernization and democracy. Geopolitical metaphors expressing this division permeated demonstrations from speeches or slogans to European flags and red flags featuring Putin and Orban's portraits. Attempts to put the European flag on the Parliament or other public institution, sometimes with the aid of oppositional politicians, became a recurrent element of demonstrations.

Due to the strong delegitimation of Socialist-Liberal coalitions that represented this idea, and their close association with the idea of corruption, demands to return to the path of European democracy risked to run into a contradiction when translated into the language of party politics. Protesters made recurrent efforts to keep themselves at a distance from illegitimate political actors of the "left" - who, on their own side, did everything to portray protests as expressions of popular support for their politics. Coming close to the 2014 parliamentary elections, informal leadership formed within the networks that organized demonstrations, together with architects of political maneuvering from oppositional parties tried to channel demonstrations' energy to support a new party (Together), established around the figure of entrepreneur and economist Gordon Bajnai, former neoliberal minister of economy and then prime minister of the Gyurcsány government.

While democracy was the main slogan of demonstrations, and protest organizers made gestures to reinforce this message by symbolic gestures of inclusion – e.g. by distributing symbolic press cards at demonstrations, symbolizing the message that when media becomes dominated by the government, everyone becomes a journalist – the fact that organizations representing demonstrations' energy are joining Bajnai's party was decided in closed informal circles, and brought a surprise not only to protest participants, but even to many organizers. This relation between democratic claims and informal power practices was reminiscent of dissidents' democratic claims and practice in 1989. Lacking a deeper embeddedness and carrying the stigma of socialist-liberal delegitimation, Together failed at the elections. Meanwhile, Politics Can Be Different went through a party split over the issue of alliance with Together. In a conflict resembling post-socialist political debates, one fraction of the initially anti-neoliberal party rejected the alliance with former neoliberal socialists, yet another claimed that this alliance is the only way to block the spread of the extreme right, and interpreted internal opposition to the alliance as coming from internal right-wing tendencies. Politics can be Different made it through the parliamentary threshold, but some of its members continued to represent not the party but the formation that split from it (Dialogue for Hungary). This, in turn, gave space for government critiques portraying Dialogue for Hungary as the opposition that nobody voted for.

After the elections, protests renewed, once again delinking from the political infrastructures of the earlier "left". Based on representative surveys with protesters demonstrating against the issue of internet tax in autumn 2014, Szabó & Mikecz (2015) defined protesters as voters without a party, meaning that while their political preferences match the ideological profile of the former "left", this preference does not result in a party choice in present conditions. Szabó and Mikecz conclude that due to this identification with the ideological position of the former political "left", post-2010 demonstrations cannot be regarded as a spontaneous outbreak of general civic activity, or the embodiment of a more general critique represented by Occupy-type movements, but rather a protest movement of former "left" voters who were left without a legitimate political choice. Once again, liberal civil society networks became an important base for protest politics both in terms of organization and of conceptual frameworks. As one organizer of the new group "We won't be silenced!", formed from 2014 internet tax demonstrations, put it:

"We are indignant and angry with the political elite that had 25 years at its disposal to put the country in order but didn't do it. We are not here to protest for a specific issue, like the internet tax, we want a new regime change. Not only the resignation of the Orbán government: our aim is that new communities are formed, that there be a paradigm change in politics. We need a bottom-up, civic initiative that can form the base on which we can build in the future." (Dalbóczy 2014)

Such general programs of re-democratization based on civic participation were similar to those of Occupy-type movements. However, in their claims to recreate and reactualize the regime change as a chance of catch-up development, as well as in their contradictory relation to democratic participation, they were more similar to dissidents' civil society programs. Just like in the case of pre-2014 pro-democracy mobilizations, post-2014 protests continued to be organized by informal networks and did not build broader organizations of democratic representation and control.

The organization that followed Occupy's idea of horizontal participatory democracy the closest was the Students' Network. Founded by a left student group in 2011, the organization consciously avoided to define its political line and hoped to coalesce it through participative deliberation. The Network organized protests and occupations against the reorganization of higher education, and joined general anti-regime protests. Despite its broad practices of participative deliberation, the Network also shifted towards the Together coalition in 2014, by a combined effect of informal meetings and government communication which lumped it together with the "Bajnai guard" (MTI 2013). On the side of protest participants, the lack of broader organizational structures was reflected in spontaneous moves at protests, like rallies that attempted to take symbolic buildings like the national television headquarters or the Parliament, which broke off from previously organized and coordinated protest agendas, with organizers struggling to take responsibility for their consequences (Dalbóczy 2014).

Throughout post-2014 demonstrations, networks of mobilization groups skilled in protest organization and communication were reinforced. New left and independent media initiatives (like Mérce, Új Egyenlőség, or Slejm – later: Partizán) started to play an increasing role in the representation and interpretation of protests, in parallel with the government's narrowing of former liberal media space. Still, the main symbolic opposition between national and Western-led development, established by post-socialist political divisions, continued to dominate the discourse and public interpretation of protest events. These interpretations were strongly supported by Western political and media commentary, and its domestic use by protesters, political opposition, and the government. Western political and media commentary dominantly interpreted the Orbán regime's illiberal turn by reactualizations of Cold War East-West geopolitical differentiations, supported by references to new geopolitical tensions with Russia, China or Turkey. In these frameworks, anti-government protests that demanded a return to Europeanization and democracy were portrayed in ways very similar to Cold War portrayals of local dissidents.

If Romanian protests were represented as a political "awakening" (LA Times 2017), reactualizing the framework of post-socialist development as a long-dragging but finally fulfilling process, where civic organization finally becomes able to "nurture a fragile democracy" (MacGoy 2019), Hungarian protests were portrayed as elements of a historical drama centered around the dismantling of earlier achievements of democratization. Here, it was the destruction of Western-oriented development and the turn towards Eastern models of despotism that constituted the main narrative, understood as a dark warning sign regarding populist threats against Western democracies themselves (e.g. Krugman 2012, Traynor 2014). If media pictures of Romanian protesters casting light from their smartphones could be associated with the idea of a final victory of democratization, reinforcing transitional narratives, similar pictures of Hungarian protests were interpreted in a more melodramatic tone, portraying protesters – especially after Trump's electoral victory – as the last representatives of the true direction of historical development amidst a world-histforical decay exemplified by the Orbán regime (Gagyi 2014). As one protest banner described the historical implosion of the democratization project as an incomprehensible failure in the logic of history: Hungary was downloading democracy, but ran into a "fatal error".

This perception was not limited to the streets, but shared widely across various levels of protest slogans and commentaries. Historians János Mátyás Kovács and Balázs Trencsényi, as editors of the scholarly volume *Brave new Hungary,* described the Orbán regime as an anti-modern power that is "rolling back time" (Kovács & Trencsényi 2019: 381). If Romanian protests were recurrently represented as the first and largest mobilization event after decades of passivity, the final culmination of the transition story, and obscured previous mobilizations, the idea of a historical failure in Hungary's case was so strong that, even in the eighth year of anti-government protests developing along relatively similar scenarios, protests could be described as a "rare display of dissent" in Orban's Hungary (Kingsley 2018).

A major metaphor around which this alignment of internal and external voices coalesced in Hungary was the government's attack on NGOs and the Central European University, as an element of its campaign for the 2018 parliamentary elections (Gagyi 2017). The government's narrative linked both liberal NGO activity and the CEU to the person of George Soros, Hungarian-American billionaire and philantrophist. While this campaign followed lines set by international political advisors who applied similar strategies around the vilification of Soros's figure worldwide (Grassegger 2019), in Hungary similar references to Soros were present on the political right since the early 1990's (Bátorfy & Tremmel 2019), and in the eyes of many, were supported by Soros's strong role in funding the institutions that prepared liberal hegemony from arts to business education, as well as his speculative action against the Forint in 2009. CEU, funded by Soros, was attacked by the government as a representative of Soros's unwelcome interference with Hungarian politics. On the side of Hungarian anti-government protesters, it was seen as a last bastion of links to superior Western standards. In a context where Hungarian institutions of higher education and the academy were already going through reorganizations, solidarity actions and protests against attacks on CEU expressed last hopes in the strength of Western links – as the saying went among protesters: "If they can do it to CEU, they can do it to everyone". Meanwhile, Western commentaries treated attacks against CEU as a symbol of attacks against the historical project of liberal democracy (e.g. Mudde 2017).

Such links between local and Western reactualizations of transitional narratives effectively obscured the contradictions of post-socialist uneven development, including the connections between limited democratization, the social effects of neoliberal politics, and East-West hierarchies of economic and political "Europeanization", which ultimately prepared the ground for the shift in the balance of forces towards a right-wing local hegemony. Mutual support among Western and local oppositional commentaries reinforced a reactualization of normative transitional frameworks, colored by a grief over the historical defeat of superior values. If in Romania, demonstrations' emotional charge was defined by middle class self-pity over the loss of mobility possibilities (despite superior merits), in Hungary a very similar emotional charge was expressed in terms of feelings of melancholy over the victory of political evil over political good, and the uplifting effect of collective experience in demonstrations was often formulated as the experience that people with the right ideals and political character still exist.

In post-2010 Hungarian politics, social and liberal streams of critique were pushed in the same corner of oppositional politics. Demonstrations did not reject social issues, but rather embraced them as further arguments towards their own cause, similar to pre-1989 dissidents. After the failure of Together at the 2014 elections, politicians and experts of the former socialist-liberal bloc turned from blaming people's lack of political culture towards standpoints of left populism, emphasizing the importance to react to people's needs and reach out to them with political messages that they find relevant. The

socialists started their 2018 election campaign with the slogan “Let the rich pay!”, in close competition with Jobbik’s “You work. They steal.” While the main political framework of anti-government politics continued to be defined by the reactualization of transition ideals and claims return to the European path of development, and a new, explicitly centrist liberal party, Momentum, grew out from protest waves, the general oppositional direction came to be colored by a social sensitivity and an association of European models with that of broadening the welfare state. This posed another contrast to the Romanian case, where middle class demonstrators’ reclaiming of the transitional program implied explicit anti-poor stances.

## Conclusion

The chapter followed transformations of systemic integration in the case of Hungary and Romania after the crisis of the 1970’s, and pointed out linkages between global cyclical shifts, local regimes and their contestations after 1973 and 2008. The aim of the analysis was to show how movements reacting to the same global crisis develop within different local constellations of global integration, and express effects of long-term processes through alliances and vocabularies shaped by the conditions of those constellations. The ideas of socialism/post-socialism and Europeanization were interpreted within these contexts as symbols of developmentalist illusion activated in particular contexts of internal-external alliances. The chapter maintained that socialist state economies have always been integrated in the capitalist world economy, their import substitution industrialization efforts internalized its priorities, and the crisis of late socialist economies was organically tied to global dynamics of the 1970’s crisis. Late socialist crisis measures, and increasingly, post-socialist transition and Europeanization, constituted an integration of these economies into the process of core capital’s crisis management in a subordinated position. Despite this structural background, ideas of post-socialist transition and Europeanization were strongly associated with promises of catch-up development. In post-2008 movements, expressions of disillusionment over failed promises reactualized these symbols along contemporary socio-political alliances. The chapter argued that similarities between European left narratives of the crisis of “democratic capitalism” and East European claims to resurrect and fulfill the promises of transition provided a ground for symbolic connections, yet these connections in fact obscure a closer understanding of mutual positions within the same crisis process.

The reaction of Hungarian and Romanian regimes to the challenges posed by the 1970’s global crisis differed significantly, based on conditions set by different paths of de-Stalinization. In Hungary, consolidation after the 1956 revolution gave space to socialist market reforms, which strengthened reform fractions within the party, weakened the power of centralist alliances favoring forced industrialization, and built out a strong expert strata within reform institutions. In the context of surging external debt after 1973, these alliances, supported by the influence of international lender institutions, ultimately won the struggle over managing the crisis. The alliance between lender institutions favoring marketization, reform socialists and socialist managers benefiting from privatization, and dissident intellectuals mobilizing for political positions came to dominate Hungary’s integration model from the years of privatization throughout the debt-led development of the 2000’s. The exhaustion of capitalist growth based on Western capital inflow, together with the political delegitimation of the liberal coalition that represented it, opened space for a shift of power relations that allowed previously dominated contender elites to take control of the state, and engage in the reorganization of integration in favor of state-supported domestic capital.

In Romania, former party elites managed to retain their power during de-Stalinization, and continued the program of forced industrialization. This included a larger autonomy from the Soviet Union and the Comecon international labor distribution, stepping up power centralization and military control in lack of Soviet support, and the reorientation of external trade towards Western and Third World collaborations. In this context, Ceauşescu's initial opening towards experts' reform ideas by the end of the 1960's gave space to the reinforcement of forced industrialization under central control, the marginalization and scapegoating of experts and intellectuals, and a form of populism that symbolically emphasized direct contacts between the leader and the people. This regime reacted to the crisis of the 1970's by increased efforts to maintain control and continue industrialization. To avoid the influence of external lenders on policy, in the 1980's the Ceauşescu regime engaged in a program of extreme austerity to pay back debt. While social tensions accumulated within the regime led to the only bloody revolution in the region in 1989, in the lack of a strong reform fraction within the party and broader alliances with intellectuals and movements favoring liberalization, the political elite that came to power after 1989 was dominated by ex-socialist cadres who continued the program of protectionism and industrialization, in a version that favored the protected development of domestic capital. This political line remained dominant throughout the 1990's, despite contestation by anti-communist dissidents and international institutions. It was only broken in the 2000's, as contender internal-external alliances gained ground with NATO and EU accession. The 2000's brought a relatively late wave of foreign direct investment and loans, which reinforced liberal positions. After the crisis of 2008, the struggle between still powerful ex-socialist networks and liberal-technocratic elite blocs intensified, working towards a power shift to the benefit of the latter.

In terms of party politics, Hungary's political spectrum came to be polarized between two competing elite blocs, which supported competing models of capitalist integration favoring Western vs. domestic capital. Supporters of the former model, represented politically by the coalition between liberals and socialists, portrayed their politics of transition as that of democratization and marketization following Western models in order to catch up with Western standards. Contender elites built out a nationalist-conservative critique of liberalization, which contrasted the program to save national wealth to what they portrayed as the exploitation of the nation by Western capital and its internal allies. With left critiques successfully subdued, popular discontent with the liberal model by the mid-2000's came to be expressed in the frameworks of nationalist antineoliberalism formulated by conservative contender elites, and contributed to the landslide victory of Fidesz in 2010. Making use of a parliamentary supermajority, Viktor Orbán's government engaged in a process of power centralization, and used the state to reorganize internal-external capital alliances in a way that combined providing favorable conditions to industrial foreign direct investment, carving out new space of maneuver for building domestic capital, and a geopolitical diversification of financial dependence.

The chapter looked at post-1973 and post-2008 protests in the two countries in terms of their embeddedness in local integration constellations. In the case of late socialist mobilizations, it showed that while both Hungarian environmental and Romanian workers' movements reacted to similar pressures of world-economic integration, the agency, alliances and symbolic memory of the movements differed significantly in the two contexts of integration constellations. In Hungary the environmental movement was organized and represented by dissident intellectuals who used intellectual arguments to produce an abstract political criticism of the system. Due to stronger Western connections, to the influence of Western publicity due to lenders' influence, and to organizers' participation in the politics of the regime change, narratives of the regime change included the environmental movement as an organic part of the process that led from socialism to democratization. In Romania, on the contrary, workers' mobilizations focused on material claims and operated within a personal bargaining framework set by the regime. They were less in the position to produce abstract expressions of political critique that could resonate well in Western publicity, and lacked alliances

with dissident intellectuals who could mediate such critiques. They had weaker Western connections, and the regime's enmity towards Western influence did not allow for using Western publicity as a resource. The regime's double strategy that repressed intellectuals and symbolically emphasized direct connections to workers came to be internalized by intellectuals' resentment against the regime as an idea of an actual coalition between communism and uneducated workers. This framework was reinforced by the ex-socialist party's use of miners to suppress anti-government demonstrations in 1990. Due to these conditions, workers' struggle under late socialism did not become an organic part of intellectual narratives of the regime change, and the idea of an unholy alliance between ex-communist politics and the uneducated masses remained a lasting element of intellectual politics.

After 2008, both countries saw a protracted series of large demonstrations, dominated by middle class constituencies of major cities. The politics of these demonstrations were strongly marked by the different contexts of post-socialist integration. In Hungary, Fidesz channeled the energy of antineoliberal demonstrations in 2006 towards its own electoral success in 2010. After 2010, it was elements of educated middle classes who lost positions or career hopes within former institutions of liberal hegemony that politically dominated the protests, organizing around issues like changes of the constitution, media centralization, or higher education reform. This particularly politicized segment of the Hungarian middle class defined the direction of demonstrations in the terms of the formerly dominant liberal bloc's transitional program. In these frameworks, reverberated across Western commentaries, Orbán's politics was interpreted as a fatal error in the normal process of Western-oriented development. In Romania, the first instances of middle class protests after 2008 included reactions to austerity politics that were potentially open to alliances with workers and the poor. By 2013, however, the recovery of crisis-driven foreign direct investment and respective possibilities of competitive mobility for new urban middle classes resulted in a new combination with the intensification of intra-elite struggles, which channeled protest energies into the political support of liberal-technocratic blocs against the socialists. Within the framework set by this alliance, protests expressed the disillusionment with the promises of the regime change as the problem of corruption, sustained by the alliance of ex-communist politics and the uneducated poor. Tensions of middle class mobility were expressed in political narratives that represented protests as a new chance to embark on the road of Western-led catch-up development. In spite of their anti-poor stances, protests were widely represented in Western publicity as a "political awakening" of Romanians that finally can bring the hopes of democratic transition to fulfillment.

In both countries, the effects if the 2008 crisis intensified the contradictions of post-socialist integration, and facilitated power shifts along external-internal coalitions that mobilized to optimize integration functions within narrowing possibilities of world economic crisis. Post-2008 protest waves selectively politicized the effects of these changes, linking middle class ambitions to reactualizations of transitional developmentalist programs. While they did this from positions that drove towards opposite poles of the local political palette, both reactualizations of transitional narratives obscured the social tensions implied in the transition process – including workers' mobilizations within the post-2008 wave. Research on these movements, including Henry Rammelt's (2018) comparative study of Hungarian and Romanian mobilizations after 2008, have described them as a new wave of civic democratization that might make up for the inadequacies of post-socialist transition. In contrast to such approaches, this chapter argued that when new Hungarian and Romanian movements emphasize the ideas of democracy and development as universally beneficial claims, these notions play the role of an ideological element in a selective struggle, where middle class fractions mobilize along specific internal-external alliances for developmental projects within a narrowing space of global capitalist competition.

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