

Charles University
Faculty of Arts
Department of Political Science
Political Science

THESES

Daniel Šitera, M.A.

**Europeanization and the State in Central and Eastern Europe: Political
Economy of European Structural Funds**

Europeizace a stát ve střední a východní Evropě: Politická ekonomie evropských
strukturálních fondů

Supervisor: prof. Dr. Pavel Barša, M.A., Ph.D.

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Thematic Outline

This Dissertation explores the impact of the European Union's (EU) Cohesion Policy (and its structural and investment funds) on the transnationalization and subsequent transformation of state in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE). The EU Cohesion Policy is commonly known as a redistribution framework which transfers developmental aid from the West European core to the less developed periphery of South Europe and CEE through the EU budget. I explore the impact of this core-peripheral redistribution from a critical perspective in the Comparative Capitalism (CC) scholarship. More concretely, I focus on the so-called Visegrád states – Czechia, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia – and their dependent market economies between the EU eastern enlargement in 2004 and the mid-2010s. This generates the first main contribution by bringing the EU structural funds into the CC debates on CEE which are mostly preoccupied with the impact of foreign direct investment (FDI) on the transnationalization of Visegrád states. The contribution is impossible without historicizing the role of Cohesion Policy in shaping the EU historical core-peripheral relations since the late 1980s. Such a historization facilitates the second main contribution when examining how the post-2004 CEE integration has transformed these historical core-peripheral relations in return.

The two contributions are realized through an inter-scalar comparison and conceptual discovery which approach the EU as a transnational regional order. While considering the material and institutional dimensions of the Cohesion Policy, the Dissertation inspects especially the discursive articulation its *developmental purpose*. This purpose gives ideological content to these material and institutional forms of the Cohesion Policy which I study as a *transnational regulation of peripheral development* (TRPD). Inquiring into the primary documents (i.e. reports, strategies, legal regulation), I explain the Cohesion Policy as a TRPD via an inter-scalar (incorporated) comparison of the three – EU, national and subnational – scales of European integration. Every of these three scales invites into the conceptual discovery.

On the EU scale of core-peripheral relations from the 1960s/1988 to mid-2010s, the TRPD firstly produces a *development fix* of these unstable relations. This fix supplies the peripheral states with structural aid in exchange for their consent to the development trajectories which are organized by the European Commission and skewed to the core state-capital interests. On the post-2004 Visegrád nation scale, this TRPD-based development fix transforms secondly the Visegrád states into the *dependent developmental states*. These developmental states

invest the cohesion investment from the Western core to improve the production conditions for the FDI with the West European origin as their hegemonic developmental purpose. Czechia is then foregrounded for a more concrete study. On the Visegrád subnational scale, given that the Cohesion Policy is the EU's regional and urban policy, these developmental states regulate their uneven regional development through the *rescaled dependency*. The city-region of Brno (South Moravia) is foregrounded to explain how the rescaled dependency shifts the management of Visegrád dependency downwards to the regional actors.

This inter-scalar comparison orders the structure of this Dissertation but also empirical substantiation of this theory-driven conceptual discovery. While the theoretical chapter incubates the concepts, the empirical chapters substantiate them through answering the following questions: On the EU scale, how has the Cohesion Policy as a TRPD shaped the core-peripheral relations in the EU's expanding capitalist order and vice versa? What developmental purpose has been evolving in the EU's TRPD and how have its subsequent socio-economic strategies become hegemonic in solving the question of uneven core-peripheral development in Europe? On the scale of Visegrád dependent developmental states, what sort of state transnationalization-*cum*-transformation has the TRPD enabled? Has it led to any variety of developmental arrangements and purpose inside Visegrád states and their catch-up strategies with the West European core? On the Visegrád subnational scale, if the TRPD as the EU's de facto regional and urban policy promoted multi-level governance, what has been rescaled downwards within these developmental arrangements and through such transnationally-organized catch-up strategies?

Against this thematic outline, the summary proceeds as follows. It explains how the Dissertation fills the theoretical gap from the CC perspective on the CEE integration into the EU. It clarifies then how the Dissertation methodologically operationalizes the conceptual discovery in the inter-scalar comparison. Last, it summarizes the empirical findings with respect to the aforementioned questions and the Dissertation's two main contributions.

Theoretical Gap

The Dissertation's theoretical contribution is the production of a political economy perspective on the Cohesion Policy when theorizing it as a TRPD. I do it by synthesizing the multiple overlapping but still disconnected literatures. These include the EU Studies scholarship, the (critical) political economy of European integration and the CC scholarship on

CEE varieties of capitalism. The synthesis both *deepens* and *broadens* the theory on the Cohesion Policy. The broadening happens by bringing the real case of Cohesion Policy into the theoretical debates on the political economy of European integration. So far, the field has disregarded it as irrelevant for and thus marginal for discussing the EU's regulation of its crisis-ridden economic diversity. The CC scholarship on CEE is meanwhile preoccupied with the FDI. By introducing the Cohesion Policy, I refine exactly their research profile on the inter-state power asymmetries and economic inequalities in the EU core-peripheral relations. The broadening leads to the theoretical deepening because it nuances the EU Studies scholarship with this critical perspective on asymmetries and inequalities. While substituting the neglect of political economy scholarship in studying the EU Cohesion Policy, the EU Studies otherwise narrow the inquiry into the problem-solving questions on the policy's institutional performance and effectiveness.

Moreover, the TRPD brings together the often separate interests in the study of the European integration (Europeanization) and peripheral integrations (transnationalization of peripheral states). Let's firstly address the *transnational regulation* (TR). Through the synthesis, we can highlight the Cohesion Policy as the EU's main instrument in regulating its crisis-ridden economic heterogeneity which the transnational regulation attempts to temporarily and unstably resolve. This crisis tendency is driven primarily by the uneven and dependent development of European core-peripheral relations. While these relations are structured primarily by the inter-state redistributive negotiations between peripheral and core governments, our perspective allows for situating them into the broader transnational power and economic relations. The analysis allows for exploring how the inter-state negotiations are powerfully shaped by the transnational actors like the European Commission but the transnational capital as well. Therefore, the Cohesion Policy can be analysed as not only an enclosed institutional policy but rather integral part of the EU's broader agenda of transnational regulation. Last, our inquiry can also show how the peripheral development becomes the problem of European heterogeneity in the development purpose of this Commission-led regulation. This purpose becomes then the hegemonic content of developmental strategies in the peripheral states as a condition of the EU structural funds.

The Cohesion Policy is thus analysed as problematizing the *peripheral development* (PD) in the core-peripheral relations, while intervening to adjust it to the imperatives of core development. This transnational regulation emerged around the relations between the *new*

South European periphery and *old* North-Western European core but has been enlarged with the *new* Eastern dimension since 2004. The main feature of capitalist periphery – both South European and CEE – is the lack of internal funds which makes it dependent on the external capital such as the FDI, trade exchange, foreign debt, and (as our theoretical framework adds) the EU funds. The TRPD framework is completed here by absorbing the CC literatures on CEE, while nuancing their research bias on the FDI dependency. During the eastern enlargement, the Europeanization of Visegrád states was organized and enforced by the Commission. This form of transnationalization established conditions for the expansion of West European transnational corporations into CEE which makes the Visegrád development dependent on the locational decisions of West European capital. Both processes transformed the Visegrád states and reoriented the developmental purpose of their economic strategies towards the FDI-based dependency. The Cohesion Policy is neglected in this analysis. Factoring it in as another source of dependency, we start to conceptualize its transformative impact on the Visegrád developmental strategies in relation to the FDI dependency.

The TRPD fills thus the theoretical gap by studying the Cohesion Policy at the intersection of EU Studies literatures as well as the political economy scholarship on the EU and CEE integrations. Without neglecting the material and institutional dimensions of the core-peripheral relations, the theorization offers the inquiry into the developmental purpose of their regulation in the Cohesion Policy. Offering to investigate the ideological content, the theorization of the Cohesion Policy as TRPD allows to investigate how it fills the Visegrád dependency with the ideological content of EU funds-based investment strategies and also normalization of the region's uneven integration into the EU's core-peripheral relations.

Concepts and Method

Methodologically, the Dissertation is based on an incorporated comparison which is practiced in the CC research. The incorporated comparison embeds the inter-scalar comparison between the three – EU, national and subnational – scales of European integration. It promotes a *substantivist* operationalization in contrast to the *formalism* of the positivist one. The inter-scalar comparison is thus not searching for the identification of common or contrasting patterns of variation among and within these scales as separate units of analysis. Rather, it traces how these scales are historically connected and mutually conditioning each other so that they are compared in relation to one another and in relation

to the whole formed through their interrelationship. We can subsequently understand the TRPD as an interlinking variable which takes different, yet interrelated scalar articulations as (i) *development fix* on the EU scale, (ii) *dependent developmental states* on the Visegrád state scale, and (iii) *rescaled dependency* on the Visegrád subnational scale. These concepts are thus discovered in their interrelationship.

For this, I use a mix of qualitative and quantitative approaches. They are concerned with the reading of the primary documents (i.e. reports, strategies, legal regulation) produced in the domain of Cohesion Policy and the interpretation of economic data on the redistributive character of Cohesion Policy from the 1960s/1988 up to the mid-2010s. For the qualitative content analysis, I am using the interpretative reading of these documents at all the three scales. The analysis focuses on how the socio-economic inequalities and power hierarchies in the EU core-peripheral relations are regulated through this inter-scalar textual network, as well as which socioeconomic purpose is prioritized therein for the Visegrád developmental strategies. The quantitative use of economic data is a supportive means to illustrate the material context of the TRPD's institutional form and ideological content.

Thus, the *development fix* departs theoretically from the concept of spatio-temporal fix as it is conceptualized by David Harvey and Bob Jessop. In such regional orders as the EU, the spatio-temporal fix is established by the core states-capital complexes to guarantee the political legitimacy of their economic power over the peripheral state-society complexes. Such orders built simultaneously such fixes to replace their crisis-ridden socioeconomic heterogeneity in a search of structured coherence. I document how the Cohesion Policy guarantees this strive for political legitimacy, economic control, and structured coherence exactly by establishing a development fix in the EU's core-peripheral relations. The policy guarantees it materially by transferring the developmental aid from its North-Western core to its South and Eastern peripheries. By conditioning these material transfers with an asymmetric system of control and command, it guarantees this strive also ideologically because it both enables and enforces peripheral states to follow the strategies of development organized by primarily by the Commission and the decision-making in the Council.

Second, the *dependent developmental state* is a concept which explains how the EU's development fix translates in the Visegrád scale of dependent market economies/dependent embedded neoliberalism as they are conceptualized by Andreas Nölke & Arjan Vliementhart and Dorothee Bohle & Béla Greskovits. Moreover, it reflexes the transnationalization of

Visegrád states as conceptualized by Jan Drahokoupil. All these concepts strive to make sense of the Visegrád contradictory dependence on the FDI which has arrived mostly from Western Europe into the region's industrial and financial sectors. Foregrounding the Visegrád dependency on the EU structural funding, I complement these readings to conceptualize how the Visegrád FDI-based capitalist model becomes politically legitimate and socio-economically sustainable only in the productive complementarity between the FDI and the EU funds. This resulting concept allows moreover for inquiring into how this entanglement of FDI and EU funding is inscribed into the Visegrád developmental strategies as their major priority.

Finally, the *rescaled dependency* extends the state transnationalization as conceptualized by Drahokoupil but borrows also from Neil Brenner's state-space approach. It reminds that the Cohesion Policy is the EU's regional policy and is institutionalized in the Visegrád states as such. Although the Cohesion Policy promises to empower the European peripheral regions to self-govern their own development, the TRPD rather shifts the developmental responsibilities for the management of Visegrád dependency downwards to the city-regional actors. In result, the regional actors are mobilized to compete among each other not only for the attracting FDI but also the EU funding, while still being governed from the upper state and EU scales.

Empirical Outcomes

In this final part, the research findings are summarized with respect to the questions and two contributions mentioned in the thematic overview. I address the question of how the post-2004 integrations have changed the development fixing of the EU's historical core-peripheral relations through the Cohesion Policy. Then, I deal with the impact of the Cohesion Policy on the Visegrád states by transforming them into the dependent developmental states.

A historization is needed for explaining the post-2004 impact of eastern enlargement. The development fix had origins in the 1960s but became fully institutionalized only by the Cohesion Policy reform in 1988. Under the Commission's transnational leadership, the reform institutionalized a core-peripheral consensus between the Southern and North-Western states. In this cohesion consensus, the core states approved the increase in the EU funds for the peripheral states under the heading of core *solidarity*. In exchange, this solidarity conditioned the EU's transformation into a globalizing market-making order, while giving the Commission higher command and control powers over the *effective* EU funds investment in

peripheral states. Moreover, the TRPD-based cohesion consensus is incubated a new developmental purpose for regulating the core-peripheral relations: neoliberal developmentalism. The neoliberal developmentalism highlights the developmental need of economic and social *cohesion* to solve the EU's capitalist heterogeneity but prioritizes the neoliberal imperative of global *competitiveness* as the means to achieve it. Since the late 1990s by the mid-2010s, the cohesion consensus has been moreover eroding. The core solidarity for more cohesion continually declined, while the Commission's control and command over the effective investment of peripheral states for more competitiveness become more disciplinary. Although not causing it, the eastern enlargement was an integral part of this erosion towards a more austerity-based, effectiveness- and competitiveness-oriented transformation.

How have the post-2004 integrations influenced then this shift from core solidarity for European cohesion to the peripheral effectiveness for global competitiveness? Under the globalist visions of the EU as a competitive market-making regional order, its expansion to the East as a new periphery opened space for neoliberal forces in the Commission and the core states to restructure the 1988 consensus. Hardly fixing the Southern peripheral question, the core-peripheral regulation reoriented from South-Northern to the East-Western relations. Already during their pre-accession integration, the CEE states and their economies were a testing terrain for neoliberal restructuralization. After their accession, they have become a terrain for reshaping the neoliberal developmentalism especially after the 2006 reform. The first result was a more comprehensive system of control and commanded led by the Commission. The second result was a competitiveness-oriented investment in the increasingly financially austere peripheral integration. Following the global and Eurozone crises of the late 2000s and early 2010s, the third result was the consolidation of the EU as a regional order consisting of one North-Western core and the two peripheries: the debt-riven South and the FDI-based East.

Against this historical background, can we observe now how the Cohesion Policy transformed the Visegrád states into dependent developmental states? Despite of the lowering core solidarity and the increasing orientation on effectiveness and competitiveness, the Cohesion Policy has still supplied these states with a robust developmental assistance. The assistance provides further evidence on why the Visegrád dependent market economies remain rather resilient after the global and Eurozone crisis, while retaining relatively

sustainable socio-economic development. Even in the post-crisis turn to a more economic nationalism especially in Poland and Hungary, these Visegrád state projects remain still oriented at providing physical and human infrastructures for the West European capital. These states however suffer from two contradictory tendencies. First, the EU funds are either invested under the Commission's disciplinary supervision into the enhancement of FDI-based competitiveness or captured by the political and economic elites of Visegrád states through grand corruption schemes. Second, with respect to the rescaled dependency, the neoliberal developmentalism translates into competitive city-regionalism. The competitive purpose of the EU funds fuels the increasing inter-local polarization between the leading city-regions, which win the dual competition over the FDI and EU funds, and the lagging city-regions losing such a competition. Therefore, the promise of developmental catch-up with the Western core is likely to remain intra-nationally unequal and internationally within the confines of sustainable and productive, yet peripheral integration into the EU.

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Author's Publication and Academic Activity

Academic Employment

- 5.2018-** Head of the Centre for Global Political Economy, Institute of International Relations (IIR) Prague
- 2.2018-** Junior Researcher, IIR Prague
- 2017** Associate Researcher, IIR Prague

Research stays

- 12.2017-1.2018** University of Wroclaw
Visiting Researchers, Willy Brandt Centre for German and European Studies
- 10.2016** University of Manchester
Visiting Researcher, Manchester Jean Monnet Centre of Excellence
- 2009-2010** University College London
Affiliate Student, School of Slavonic and East European Studies

Teaching Experience

- Evropská integrace [European Integration], Charles University, B.A. Level: 2018, 2019, 2020.
- Capitalism and Democracy in East-Central Europe, Charles University, B.A. Level: 2019
- Politická ekonomie globálního kapitalismu [PE of Global Capitalism], Charles University, B.A. Level: 2017

Other Activities and Memberships

- Co-Organizer of the Critical Studies Seminar, IIR Prague, 2018-
- Member of Central and East European International Studies Association (CEEISA), 2018-
- Member of European International Studies Association (EISA), 2018-

Publications

Book chapters

- (*in preparation*): Developmentalist Illusion: EU Cohesion Agenda in East-Central Europe, in: Uwe Müller and Yaman Kouli (eds.): *Transforming the Transformation: Economic and Social Development in Central and Eastern Europe*, New York, NY: Berghahn Books.
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Peer-Reviewed Articles

- (*after review – in print*): Exploring Neoliberal Resilience: The Transnational Politics of Austerity in Czechia, *Journal of International Relations and Development*, pp. 1-30.
- (2017): Varieties in Comparative Capitalisms Research: A Critical Juncture. *New Perspectives* 25:1, pp. 141-156.
- (2015): On New Travels in Space-Time: Theoretical Rediscoveries after the Crisis in (Comparative) Capitalism(s). *New Perspectives* 23:2, pp. 77-92.
- (2014): The Polanyian Perspective Meets the Varieties of Capitalism: Inspecting the Consequences of Institutional Changes in South Korea since 1997. *Perspectives* 22:1, pp. 77-102.

Other Publications (Policy Reports, Book Reviews, etc.)

- (2020): Greening the European Industry in the post-COVID-19 World, *Prague European Summit Micro-Studies*, Prague: PES, pp. 5-7 (together with C. Kvorning Lassen).
- (2019): Muddling through the Reform? The Future of the Euro (Yet Again), *Prague European Summit Micro-Studies*, Prague: PES, pp. 10-12.
- (2019): Finding a Visegrad Added Value in the New Cohesion Policy, *ThinkVisegrad Policy Brief 01/2019*, pp. 1-7.
- (2018): Joining the Eurozone: Lessons from Slovakia, Considerations from Poland, Czechia and Hungary, Warsaw: PISM (together with S. Płóciennik et al.).
- (2018): Transatlantický obchodní konflikt a jeho dopady na Evropskou unii, *IIR Policy Paper 07/2018*, pp. 8.
- (2018) Transition State(s) and (New) Capitalists in Czechia: A Bittersweet Experience, In: P. Wagner (ed.): *Consolidating Democracy and Market*, Budapest: IFAT, pp. 29-34.
- (2016): Recenze: How Germany Unified and the EU Enlarged: Negotiating the Accession through Transplantation and Adaptation, *Mezinárodní vztahy* 51:4, pp. 73-77.
- (2015): Book Review: Tranzitivní ekonomiky: Politická ekonomie Ruska, východní Evropy a střední Asie, *H-SOZ-KULT*.
- (2014): Book Review: Poland and the Netherlands. Case Study of European Relations, *Neerlandica Wratislaviensia* XVIII, pp. 123-6 (together with P. Matusz-Protasiewicz).
- (2013): Transnationalization of Railways in the Czech Republic: An Institutional Travel from Formal to Informal Oligopoly? *CEE Journal of Management and Economics* 1:1, pp. 69-92.
- (2013): Netransparentní železnice? Negativní dopady klientelismu na správu a řízení slovenského železničního sektoru. Bratislava: Slovak Governance Institute, pp. 1-19.

Conference Papers and Invited or Organized Talks

- Od klimatické ke koronavirové krizi a zase zpět: Křest knihy *Za hranice kapitalismu*, 4.6.2020, IIR, Prague.

11th Symposium "Czech Foreign Policy", Re-Making the World Trade Order (panel), IIR, Prague, 23.-24.9.2019.

Co očekávat od voleb do Evropského parlamentu? (panel), Eurocentrum Praha, 18.04.2019, Prague.

Nerovnost v Evropě, nerovnost ve světě: české a slovenské rozvojové politiky na rozcestí (panel), IIR, 15.4.2019, Prague.

Hnutí žlutých vest: dopad na francouzskou domácí a zahraniční politiku (panel), IIR, 15.1.2019, Prague.

2000 slov dnes (panel), Czech Academy of Sciences, 31.10.2018, Prague.

V4 and Eurozone. Lessons from the EMU-membership of Slovakia (panel), Polish Institute of International Relations, 10.10.2018, Warsaw.

10th Symposium "Czech Foreign Policy", Playground or Player: What Role for the Czech Republic in the Global Economic Reordering, IIR, 19.-20.9.2018, Prague.

12th EISA Pan-European Conference, Historicizing Dependency: A Critical IPE of the European Union Cohesion Agenda, 12-15.9.2018, Prague.

12th EISA Pan-European Conference, Organic or Resilient Intellectuals? On the Engineers of Economic Transition(s) in Czechia's State-Expert Nexus, 12-15.9.2018, Prague.

Přístup EU a ČR k rostoucímu globálnímu protekcionismu (panel), Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic, 30.8.2018, Prague.

KREAS Workshop: Coloniality of Power in CEE, Theorizing the EU Cohesion Agenda in Central and Eastern Europe, Charles University, 17.-18.6.2018, Prague.

Prague European Summit (PES), Multiannual Financial Framework beyond 2020, 19.06.2018, Prague.

Fit for Purpose? Ekonomická diplomacie a nové výzvy českého hospodářského modelu + Otevření Centra globální politické ekonomie (panel). IIR, 10.5.2018, Prague.

New Capitalists: Their Role and Impact on Transition (panel). Institute for Foreign Affairs and Trade, 8.11.2017, Budapest.

Politický potlač: Setkání a letní škola nad koncepty a metodami pro kritický výzkum politiky; Komparovat kapitalismy v teorii a praxi, Charles University-University of West Bohemia-Silesian University in Opava, 08.-10.09.2017, Prague.

7th Flying University of Transnational Humanities: Making and Changing Spaces of Action under Global Condition; European Union's Cohesion Policy and the Developmental Fix on Europe's (East-Central) Periphery, University of Leipzig, 09.-13.06.2017, Leipzig.

A Great Transformation? Global Perspectives on Contemporary Capitalisms; Embedded Neoliberalism(s) in the EU's Cohesion Agenda: Bringing the Peripheral Development in (European) Order, Johannes Kepler University in Linz-University of Vienna, 09-13.01.2017, Linz.

MJMCE Regular Seminar Series; Is the EU Cohesion Policy Failing East-Central European Countries? (invited lecture), University of Manchester, 19.10.2016, Manchester.

BISA IPEG Annual Conference; EU Cohesion Agenda and the East-Central European State: Fixing the Capitalist Development on Europe's Periphery, Leeds Beckett University, 15.-16.10.2016, Leeds.

ISA's 57th Annual Convention: Exploring Peace; Rescaling the State in Central and Eastern Europe: Political Economy of European Structural Funds, International Studies Association, 16.-19.3.2016, Atlanta.

Role of State in Varieties of Capitalism (SVOC2015): Achievements and Challenges for Central and Eastern Europe and the Emerging Markets; Bringing 'the European State' into Varieties of Capitalism in East-Central Europe, Central European University, 27.-28.11.2015, Budapest.

5th EUGEO Congress - Convergence and Divergence of Geography in Europe; Europeanization as Urban Entrepreneurialism: South Moravian Region and the Politics of European Structural Funds, Hungarian Academy of Sciences, 30.08-02.09.2015, Budapest.

13th International Summer School "Repositioning in a Globalizing World"; Membership with Conditionality: EU Cohesion Policy, Central and Eastern Europe, and the Development-to-Competitiveness, University of Leipzig, 08.-11.06.2015, Leipzig.

2st International Conference SUSTAINABLE TSL - Transport, Forwarding, Logistics, Slovak Republic, Crony Railways?: Clientelism in the Corporate Governance of the Slovak Railway Sector; Wroclaw School of Banking, 25.4.2014, Wroclaw.

13th International Conference on Current Issues of Sustainable Development - Multilevel Governance and Strategic Approaches, Greening the South Korean Capitalism: Green Economy as a Solution to Socio-Economic Crisis?; University of Opole, 20-22.6.2013, Opole.