

## **Abstract**

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 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. The dissertation explores the impact of this core-peripheral redistribution from a critical perspective in the Comparative Capitalism (CC) scholarship. More concretely, it focuses 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 transforms these core-peripheral relations in return. Without neglecting their material and institutional effects, the dissertation inspects especially the developmental *purpose* of such transformations, while theoretically conceptualizing the Cohesion Policy as a *transnational regulation of peripheral development* (TRPD). Through the study of primary documents, it proceeds via an inter-scalar (incorporated) comparison of the three – EU supranational, Visegrád national, Visegrád subnational – scales of European integration. Thanks to it, the TRPD is not only conceptualized theoretically but substantiated empirically as well.