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March 2019

"European democracy has always been playing catch-up with
popular aspirations for democratic representation."

Why European Democracies Are Struggling

Erik Jones

Everyone can see that European politics is changing. In January, the British Parliament delivered a stinging defeat to Prime Minister Theresa May's plan to take the United Kingdom out of the European Union, despite there being no obvious alternative. In France, a grassroots "yellow vest" movement is organizing sporadically violent demonstrations against President Emmanuel Macron. The German Social Democrats have lost their followers, while the Christian Democrats have lost their leaders as Angela Merkel's final term as chancellor winds down. The Dutch parliament is splintering, the Spanish and Portuguese governments lack majorities, the Italian government lacks opposition, and the Greek government keeps threatening to fall apart. Farther to the east, the situation only gets more complicated. Polarization in Poland, demonstrations in Hungary, and corruption in Romania all add to the general uncertainty. And that is just a quick survey of developments at the national level.

When you imagine this set of developments coming together in elections for the European Parliament, due to be held in May 2019, the whole of European politics appears even less familiar than the sum of its parts. Europe was the birthplace of three great political movements—Liberalism, Christian Democracy, and Social Democracy. Now these movements seem much less important. Polling suggests that the mainstream political groupings will command a majority of seats in the next European Parliament only if all three of the largest ones—the European People's Party (EPP), the So-

cialists and Democrats (S&D), and the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats—are on board. It will be the first time that the two largest groups—the EPP and S&D—have not been able to command a joint majority.

On the surface, this divides European politics into the mainstream versus "the rest." Beneath the surface, the mainstream is not so mainstream anymore. And "the rest" includes the largest political party in Belgium, the governing party in Poland, both governing parties in Italy, and what looks likely to become the largest political movement in France.

The question is how to explain this transformation. The easy answer is to point the finger at "populism." Globalization left many Europeans behind while others prospered, unrestrained migration threatened identities and livelihoods—and populist rabble-rousers took advantage of this wellspring of discontent to launch new political movements that could challenge elites and overturn the status quo.

As with most easy answers, this one has a lot of truth to it. Globalization has created losers as well as winners. People tend to fear migration, particularly when they are told that migration is unchecked. Rabble-rousers want to mobilize discontented voters against the ruling elites (particularly when those elites insist on referring to discontented voters as a rabble). And the status quo, where the same political parties and the same personalities either trade or share control over institutions from one election to the next, is untenable over the medium-to-longer term.

The problem is that all this adds up to only part of the story. Yes, there are populist parties and populist politicians. The phenomenon they represent—populism—is important. Serious schol-

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ERIK JONES is the director of European and Eurasian studies and a professor of European studies and international political economy at Johns Hopkins University's School of Advanced International Studies.

ars have invested time and effort in researching what populism is and where it comes from. But no, populism is not the reason why European politics is changing so rapidly both in general terms and, more often than not, on a case-by-case basis. Worse, by trying to use populism to explain everything, we run the risk of losing the insights that the wider community of scholars working on populism has to offer.

Populism is not a sufficient explanation; it may not be necessary either. We can explain a lot of what is happening right now without reference to populism, by considering three different causal mechanisms. They relate to the gap that tends to grow between the way democratic institutions function and how voters feel represented by those institutions; the way democratic politicians have tried to move controversial policy areas outside of the political domain; and the way democracies interact with one another in this context, and specifically how Europe has developed within a wider Atlantic community.

To be sure, these things all connect with the populism that lies at the heart of scholarly inquiry, but that connection does not tell us what is happening to European politics or why. Moreover, there is no reason to believe this argument should be limited to Europe (while there are many reasons to suspect it should not). The same forces are at work in the United States and other countries.

MIND THE GAP

The basic problem for European democracy today is that people change while institutions remain the same. This is a recurrent problem for any form of government. It is a particular challenge for Europe, insofar as European democracy has always been playing catch-up with popular aspirations for democratic representation.

To understand why this is so, you need to go back to the nineteenth century—when, in many ways, European democracy started out as an elite project. The ruling classes in different parts of Europe extended political power and voting rights only reluctantly and in order to stave off popular unrest. As they did so, they set up strong guardrails in the form of political parties, mass media, and constitutional arrangements. These were designed to channel the electorate through the political process, to make sure that "the people" did not turn into a mob and that democracy did not devolve into ochlocracy (or mob rule).

If this sounds condescending, it was—and self-consciously so. Most elite projects are. When the great Italian political theorist Gaetano Mosca set out what he believed to be the basic elements of political science toward the end of the nineteenth century, he called his treatise *Elementi di scienza politica*; the English translator retitled the work *The Ruling Class*.

Despite the guardrails, those early versions of European democracy proved unstable. Sometimes would-be political leaders organized mass movements to capture national institutions and bend them to a new design. Italian fascism is a good example. At other times, political parties lost their self-discipline and representative bodies fell into disarray. One example of this might be the Third Republic in France (1870–1940), when a progressively fragmented parliament descended into stagnation. The common denominator across both types of situations is that somehow political leaders and their followers managed to come together in sufficient numbers to exercise power without working through traditional institutions like parties and the media, or observing the norms of discourse and deliberation that discipline democratic politics.

The mainstream is not so mainstream anymore.

Whether the goal of these new actors was to capture the system or to disrupt its performance, the result was that when the guardrails came off, democratic politics broke down. Hence the challenge for European elites has been to strike the right balance between institutions that are strong enough to discipline politicians and fend off would-be revolutionaries, and institutions that are flexible enough to make sure that the people find adequate representation. Indeed, the difficulty of finding that balance was the main theme in Mosca's book. His operating assumption was that European democracy always would be a work in progress.

Europeans got better at that balancing act after World War II than they were during the interwar period. The horrific violence and destruction unleashed when democracy collapsed into dictatorship provided an unforgettable teachable moment. But better is not perfect, as the French Fourth Republic (1946–58) amply demonstrated with a string of unstable and ineffective governments.

The Fifth Republic was not perfect either (French constitutionalists are still looking for ways to improve its performance). The new leadership under President Charles de Gaulle managed to strengthen political institutions by introducing the direct election of the president and instilling parliamentary self-discipline through an electoral process that encouraged voters to choose between left and right. But it could not make those institutions adequately flexible to represent emerging interests in French society at the same time.

CYCLES OF REBELLION

De Gaulle's presidency ended with the 1968 street demonstrations, and his departure ushered in a crisis of governability that lasted more than a decade. French citizens, both young and older, refused to be bound by traditional political parties. They sought new ways to express their ideas beyond the mainstream media, showed little respect for the norms of discourse and deliberation, and represented a fundamental challenge to the constitutional order of the state.

Now many people look back on 1968 as a celebration of liberty and self-expression rather than something more sinister or subversive. They are right to do so. European democracy needed change, and that change brought important ideas like gender equality and environmental protection along with it.

Nevertheless, what happened in France that year is important for two other reasons. The first is that it started at the top of the business cycle during a period of full employment, when the main complaint was not that key groups in French society had been left behind but rather that they had been prevented from surging ahead. In other words, economic crisis is not a prerequisite for social unrest.

The second reason for focusing on 1968 is that what happened in France was happening across Europe, East as well as West, at much the same time and for much the same reason. Europeans rebelled against traditional institutions because they believed them to be too constraining and unrepresentative. This rebellion was indifferent to whether the "democracy" in question was liberal or communist. The goal in either case was to tear down the guardrails in order to be heard. Mosca referred to this kind of process as "the circulation of elites."

Of course, this time is different—but probably not in the way commentators focusing on contemporary populism would expect. The rebellion

against democracy today is much less violent and destructive, in no small measure because political leaders across Europe have learned to exercise greater self-restraint and flexibility. Moreover, there is little evidence that Europeans are tired of democracy; the evidence suggests only that they do not like the way democracy represents their interests and aspirations.

There is another difference worth noting as well. Whereas the rebellion in the 1960s and 1970s took place on the left, the rebellion that has been growing over the past two decades is more clearly established on the political right. Even so, it would be a mistake to draw too clear a distinction between the two periods. You can find right-wing voices in the earlier period and left-wing voices today.

Neither side has a monopoly on violence in its expression of discontent with democratic institutions. The images of German Green activist Joschka Fischer kicking a policeman in the 1970s are iconic. The very constructive role Fischer played as foreign minister and Green party leader in the late 1990s and early 2000s demonstrates that not all rebellions end in disaster; some may even be necessary to ensure that institutions adapt to address legitimate grievances.

European democracy did not emerge from the crisis of governability in the 1970s without scars. The political left was irreparably divided between an old-style traditional left focused on working-class interests and a new-style left more concerned with quality-of-life considerations, grassroots participation, and civil and human rights. This schism weakened left-wing political institutions, especially political parties, and tilted the balance in European politics toward the center-right.

Fast-forward to the present, and the social democrats have all but vanished in many countries. Where they remain, the divisions between traditional and new-left political groupings are still fresh. Even where the end of the Cold War bequeathed huge institutional advantages to the former communist parties, the political left has found it hard to survive. Just look at Poland and Hungary.

If the new rebellion against democratic norms and institutions is taking place on the right, that is probably because democratic politics has shifted in that direction. Nevertheless, Podemos in Spain, the Five Star Movement in Italy, Jean-Luc Mélenchon's La France Insoumise, and Jeremy Corbyn's British Labour Party show that the demand for po-

litical transformation can emerge at just about any point on the spectrum. What these parties have in common is that they want to reinvent the rules of politics and break open institutions they believe are unrepresentative. The difference between them and the more right-wing alternatives that have captured so much attention in the media is in the rhetoric they use to mobilize popular support.

Mélenchon and Corbyn appeal to class; Podemos and the Five Star Movement focus on younger, more educated voters who feel locked out of economic opportunity. The more right-wing groups tend to focus more narrowly on identity politics. Commentators are justly concerned about the possibility that such appeals to exclusive national, ethnic, or racial identities could fuel violence. But identity politics has always existed and does not cause right-wing mobilization; the political right succeeds with appeals to identity only because the more traditional democratic institutions no longer hold the allegiance of large parts of the population. This is a perennial problem for democracies.

EXTERNAL CONSTRAINT

European politicians are well aware of the problems that emerge when voters no longer perceive institutions as representative. Greater self-restraint and flexibility were a lesson born of harsh experience—but not the only lesson Europe's political leaders took from the periodic breakdown in democratic performance. Twentieth-century European elites looked at the problem of stabilizing democracy from a slightly different perspective. The experience of World War II made them recognize the fragility of their domestic political arrangements, so they sought to shore them up—from outside.

The European embrace of multilateralism is a good illustration of this. When national governments negotiate with one another, they implicitly place constraints on domestic politics. Anything that must be done to honor international commitments is no longer fair game for political contestation at home. From this standpoint, if protectionism led to conflict in the interwar period, national governments should commit to trade liberalization even though domestic interests demand protection. If access to crucial raw materials like coal and steel creates tensions, national governments should negotiate some arrangement for sharing those resources. When Europeans say their integration project was designed to harness the dangerous forces of nationalism, this is what they mean.

Of course, democratic electorates should be involved in the decision to participate in such arrangements. European elites worked hard to sell the integration project to skeptical voters in the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s. But once the bargains are struck, the role of national democracies becomes more complicated and less responsive to domestic political interests or idiosyncrasies. This is what Europeans mean when they say that their common European project has a "democratic deficit." The introduction of direct elections to the European Parliament in 1979 only shifted the focus for democratic aspirations, without making the problem of European responsiveness to national considerations go away.

The promise European leaders made to their electorates was that these concessions at the national level were necessary to improve the quality of policy making across Europe as a whole, so that everyone could benefit from the increase in efficiency for the collective and the decrease in conflict among participating countries. The late Irish political scientist Peter Mair argued that removing some areas of policy making from the national arena was also part of a deliberate attempt by European elites to strengthen and safeguard democratic politics.

As the twentieth century wore on and democratic politics became more unruly, European political leaders began to shift ever larger and more important policy-making authorities out of the domestic political arena. Sometimes they shifted these competences up to the European level through the "deepening" of European integration. Sometimes they simply fenced them off with legislation to ensure "political independence," which happened progressively with monetary policy and central banks. The goal in these situations was not to strip democratic politics of meaning or consequence; it was to prevent democratic polities from injuring themselves and each other through policy choices that might damage economic performance and fuel political instability.

The relaunching of European integration in the 1980s was the high-water mark in this process. The Single European Act and the Maastricht Treaty on European Union transferred significant amounts of regulatory, exchange-rate, monetary, and even fiscal-policy authority into negotiated frameworks that constrained the scope for domestic democratic choice. The monetary framework even included a requirement to give political independence to national central banks.

The justification in each of these cases was to improve economic policy making and performance by placing constraints on democratic politics. This was not a hidden conspiracy; on the contrary, national leaders openly celebrated the trade-off between national choice and European efficiency. Italian politicians made great efforts to explain the economic advantages of tying one's hands, embracing European integration as a *vincolo esterno* or external constraint.

European voters were not entirely thrilled with this transfer of policy authority out of the realm of domestic politics. Many saw European integration as an elite project. Some were even willing to pay an economic cost, in terms of poorer policy outcomes and macroeconomic performance, to put a brake on European unification. For many European elites, this pushback came as a surprise.

The Danish referendum on the Maastricht Treaty in June 1992 was the first sign of unrest. The Danish parliament was overwhelmingly in favor of the treaty and yet the electorate voted against it, even knowing that doing so would hurt the economy. The French referendum that followed was also controversial. President François Mitterrand called it in hopes that it would bolster support for his government through a display of national unity, only to discover that European issues split both sides of the French political spectrum: the treaty was approved with just 51 percent of the vote. These episodes did not prevent the establishment of the European Union, but they did signal a growing tension between the transfer of policy authority outside domestic politics and the stabilization or strengthening of democratic institutions.

The recent economic and financial crisis dramatically increased the tension between popular political aspirations and nondemocratic policy-making institutions. European institutions held together well during the early stages of the crisis, and politically independent central banks responded reasonably effectively to the financial instability that spread from the United States to Europe. Within a matter of months, however, the differential impact of the crisis across European countries became more important politically than any success at the European level—or within what the political scientist Juliet Johnson refers to as the "wormhole" community of central bankers who

Populism is not the reason why European politics is changing so rapidly.

are more connected to one another across Europe than they are to national politics.

As banks failed in wealthier countries, politicians blamed losses on foreign investments; when asset prices fell in poorer countries, politicians put the blame on foreign banks. The language of "lenders and borrowers" cemented the division between the two perspectives. Common European institutions found it almost impossible to generate solidarity.

The trade-off between national responsiveness and European effectiveness lost much of its luster as a consequence of the breakdown in European solidarity into a more straightforward identification of winners and losers. Paul Tucker, a former deputy governor of the Bank of England, argues in his recent book *Unelected Power* that the justification for giving political independence to domestic policy institutions like central banks lost considerable force as well.

With hindsight, it is clear that attempts by European politicians to shore up democracy by shifting key areas of policy making outside the realm of domestic political contestation—either transferring that responsibility to the European level or enshrining it in politically independent institutions—created a hostage to fortune. So long as things went well, voters were willing to go along. When things went poorly, that calculus changed.

Now European voters are turning against the whole framework for policy making. Usually this shows up in idiosyncratic challenges to specific arrangements. In 2016, the regional parliament of Wallonia in Belgium briefly blocked an EU trade agreement with Canada; in a referendum that year in the Netherlands, voters rejected a treaty meant to underpin trading relations between the EU and Ukraine; the Italians have complained bitterly about European banking regulations.

As when the Danes first vetoed the Maastricht Treaty, the shift in emphasis from European solidarity to national responsibility is palpable, even if voters recognize that such a shift could be economically costly. In the extreme case, a majority of the British electorate voted in 2016 to take their country out of the EU.

HANGING TOGETHER?

This discontent with European integration should not be exaggerated. Nor should it be read

as an indictment of the European project. The EU is a remarkable achievement that has brought peace and prosperity to tens if not hundreds of millions, and political elites are not the only ones to recognize this. The base level of popular support for the EU is very high across Europe. Meanwhile, the divisions within the UK over its future relationship with the EU indicate that Europeans have not turned against their common project entirely, even where it is deeply unpopular with many.

Popular frustration with central banks should not be taken out of context either. Europe's economies perform much better now that politicians are kept away from the monetary printing press. Even economists who argue for greater national autonomy in monetary policy making do not mean to imply that central banks should become the playthings of democratic politics. As Tucker points out, there are aspects of central banking that should be publicly accountable in particular circumstances, but that is no justification for overturning the whole policy-making framework.

The problem for Europeans is that their relationships are so intertwined that any discontent with democratic institutions or undemocratic policy frameworks tends to spill across national borders in terms of both perceptions and performance. So even if we concede the great achievements of the EU and the underlying logic of central bank independence, and even if we accept that democratic electorates sometimes get frustrated with the performance of their political institutions, we need to take into consideration a new element of tension that arises from the depth and intensity of European interdependence. This point is best made through the examples of the Netherlands and Italy.

The current Dutch government has a one-seat majority in a deeply divided parliament. It faces staunch opposition from groups on the right of the political spectrum that complain about the unresponsiveness of Dutch democracy to what they argue are legitimate popular grievances about migration and economic performance. These groups also complain about the constraints implied by European institutions and other shared policy arrangements, particularly when those institutions compel the Dutch government to make financial contributions in support of other EU member countries. These are the groups that pushed the

There is little evidence that Europeans are tired of democracy.

government to hold a referendum on the ratification of the EU's relationship with Ukraine—not so much to prevent that relationship as to embarrass the government.

The current Italian government has a much larger majority than its Dutch counterpart. It comprises two political parties—the Five Star Movement and the League—that came to power on the back of a strong critique of Italian democracy. They also criticized the EU. Their arguments sound more like the Dutch opposition's than the Dutch government's.

In office since June 2018, this Italian coalition has already picked a number of fights with European institutions, particularly over the unresponsiveness of those institutions to what the coalition partners argue are legitimate concerns related to migration and economic performance. The coalition partners wanted to redistribute more resources to those they believed were hardest hit by the crisis, to lower taxes and simplify fiscal institutions, and to increase spending on infrastructure while at the same time protecting the environment. They complained that European fiscal rules prevented them from achieving these objectives, and they argued that European institutions and their unelected leaders were responsible for any turmoil in Italian sovereign debt markets.

The problem for the Italian government is that the Dutch government refuses to countenance any effort to make European institutions more responsive to Italian concerns. The Dutch are hardly alone in this position; governments across the European Union stand with them. The problem for the Dutch government and its allies is that they cannot afford to make any concessions to Italy—that would provoke even stronger criticism from their domestic political opposition. Yet by pushing back against the Italian government, the Dutch government only strengthens the arguments made by politicians in the Five Star Movement and the League that the rest of Europe is unresponsive to legitimate Italian concerns.

There is no obvious solution to this conflict. Meanwhile, reforms that would strengthen the European financial system and the euro as a single currency remain stymied because of such fundamental disagreements between EU member states.

WORKS IN PROGRESS

The Dutch-Italian illustration is only one among many. Nor are such tensions limited to Europe. Democratic structures in the United States are also under challenge. Many American voters no longer feel represented by their institutions. Many also feel uncomfortable with the way significant policy authorities have been placed beyond domestic political influence and so have become unresponsive to what they contend are legitimate expressions of grievance. New politicians like Donald Trump have emerged to represent these concerns and to challenge both democratic institutions and what they characterize as undemocratic policy arrangements.

Given the way democracies interact within the wider Atlantic community, the parallelism between developments in Europe and the United States is a profound source of anxiety and not reassurance. By challenging the Atlantic alliance and criticizing (or even working to undermine) the European project, the Trump administration is making it harder for Europeans to work together. By throwing its support behind the critics of democratic institutions within European countries, the administration is making it harder for European politicians to adapt.

This is not to say that Trump is somehow responsible for the political challenges Europeans are facing. Those challenges are homegrown, they are recurrent, they have been developing for a long time, and they would have risen in intensity no matter who occupied the White House. But the forces pushing for changes in American democracy are exacerbating an already challenging situation in Europe.

Of course populism is playing a role in Europe's current political transformation. You cannot understand the texture and tenor of the changes taking place without looking carefully at what scholars of populism have to say. Nevertheless, if the question is why European (and American) democracies are struggling at the moment, populism is not the answer. Instead, the answer is that European (and American) democracy is a work in progress. That work is complicated by the challenge of building a prosperous and stable global economy. Without detracting from the importance of populism as a political phenomenon, commentators should take note of that underlying reality. They should also focus on explaining why rising to the challenge is worth the effort—not only in Europe, but also in the United States. ∎

The EU's Eastward Enlargement and the Illiberal Turn

MILADA ANNA VACHUDOVA

The dramatic enlargement of the European Union into Central and Eastern Europe fifteen years ago has been a great success. New and old member states alike have benefited economically from the expanded internal market and geopolitically from greater stability and security. The EU can credibly argue that its enlargement process has been the most successful democracy-promotion policy ever implemented by an international actor. It has certainly been the EU's most powerful foreign policy tool.

In some cases, EU leverage reinforced an existing post-1989 liberal democratic trajectory. This was broadly the case for the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, and Slovenia, which all joined the EU in 2004. In other cases, EU leverage was critical in helping to move a state away from illiberal or authoritarian rule—as in Slovakia, which also joined in 2004, Bulgaria and Romania (2007), and Croatia (2013).

Yet describing EU enlargement as a triumph of democracy promotion seems incongruous in the context of the democratic backsliding taking place among EU members today, especially in Hungary, Poland, and the Czech Republic. The very states that were once the standard bearers of liberal democracy in postcommunist Central Europe are now at the forefront of a so-called illiberal turn across the continent. In order to understand the causes and consequences of this illiberal turn—and whether the pendulum is likely to swing back in the coming years—we need to reconsider where the project of EU enlargement stands today.

MEMBERSHIP INCENTIVES

How has EU enlargement promoted democracy?

MILADA ANNA VACHUDOVA *is an associate professor of political science at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.*

For two decades now, the basic equation underpinning the mechanism of conditionality has not changed: the substantial benefits of joining the EU and the costs of being excluded create incentives for postcommunist governments to satisfy the EU's comparatively vast entry requirements. Membership brings great economic rewards and also a very agreeable geopolitical change of fortune through the protection of EU rules that prevent stronger states from bullying weaker ones, a new status vis-à-vis neighboring states, and a voice in European institutions. These benefits continue to be substantial despite the financial crisis and the loss of confidence that troubled the EU after 2008.

Over time, in countries eligible for membership, even formerly authoritarian political parties adopted an EU-compatible agenda in order to stay competitive, as rival parties, interest groups, local civil society groups, and voters all coalesced around the goal of joining the EU. No scholars today argue for the counterfactual proposition that liberal democracy would be stronger in these countries absent the experience of joining the EU.

The EU's membership requirements have helped the democratization process by prompting improvements in legal protections for individuals and groups and in the treatment they receive from the state. They have also led to improvements in the performance of state institutions. But the process of joining the EU does not guarantee that a new member will build a deep or durable liberal democracy. The EU's *acquis communautaire*—the body of rules and laws that all new members have to adopt—is quite thin when it comes to the rule of law, the fight against corruption, and precise definitions of the components of liberal democracy. Some member states, mainly in Southern Europe, have always preferred to keep the EU out of these matters.

Over the years, many observers have changed their view as to whether the EU enlargement process is tough enough. Concern that the EU was too heavy-handed, even dictatorial in imposing its rules and institutions on postcommunist members has been almost entirely eclipsed by criticism that the EU was not sufficiently thorough, explicit, and consistent in its demands—and not vigilant enough in its enforcement. But it is ultimately domestic political leaders who make choices about the pace and quality of reform. The great variation in outcomes across the EU's eleven new postcommunist members underscores this fact. It is more accurate to attribute weak rule of law and abiding corruption to domestic politicians than to blame Brussels.

The Western Balkan countries still waiting to join the EU are Albania, Bosnia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, and Serbia. When EU leaders consider these candidates, the geopolitical benefits of enlargement serve as the main selling point, since the economic benefits for existing member countries will be quite small. Paradoxically, this has reinforced the commitment of EU leaders to enlargement: the dividends from the "democratizing effect" on new members are considered substantial, while the economic adjustments required by the accession of such small economies will be minimal. EU leaders know that they will pay a steep price for ethnic conflict, economic collapse, lawlessness, instability, and poor governance in the region if the bloc does not pursue enlargement.

But the Western Balkan states in the EU's waiting room have very challenging domestic conditions, which helps explain why the process is taking so long. In the 1990s, most were involved in wars that caused or worsened problems related to sovereignty, territory, ethnic minorities, and state capture (the term for what happens when political leaders cooperate to control and exploit state institutions, usually in concert with organized crime—and this goes on no matter who citizens elect or how much they protest). These countries face severe problems that require overhauling the state and the economy—and it is an open question whether the EU's leverage can bring about sustained reform in all of them.

In its dealings with the Western Balkan states, the EU is applying lessons learned from the earlier

> *Populist appeals built on xenophobia have resonated especially strongly in postcommunist Europe.*

rounds of enlargement. The most important ones are that leverage works well only before accession, and that a longer period for exercising conditionality is needed in certain areas. The most difficult hurdle is that the EU has had little experience or expertise in using its leverage to bolster the rule of law and the fight against corruption in candidate states, since these anchors of competent governance are addressed only indirectly by the existing *acquis communautaire*.

Nevertheless, the prospect of enlargement continues to have a democratizing effect on several Western Balkan states as they respond to the incentives of EU membership in much the same way as their postcommunist predecessors did. In some cases, political parties have fundamentally changed their agendas to make them more EU-compatible, and governments have implemented important policy changes to move forward in the pre-accession process.

Consider the recent political changes in Macedonia. The highly corrupt, authoritarian regime of Prime Minister Nikola Gruevski was ousted in 2016 after mass protests led to an EU-brokered deal for an interim government and elections for which the EU helped set a more level playing field. The new pro-European, reform-minded government has negotiated an end to a long dispute with Greece over the country's name, changing it to North Macedonia to make peace with Athens. Bullying its neighbor to distract domestic voters from other issues, Greece had vetoed Macedonia's progress toward EU and NATO membership for two decades.

Recent developments in Hungary, however, are a cause for concern. Prime Minister Viktor Orbán rejects liberal democracy and would like to bring more populist strongman regimes into the EU. The accession process, focused on building independent institutions and the rule of law, threatens the wealth and power of entrenched Balkan elites—but they can now look to Budapest for a mentor on how to combine authoritarianism with EU membership.

The impunity of such rogue EU governments undermines conditionality by giving illiberal leaders in candidate states, such as Aleksandar Vučić in Serbia and Milo Djukanović in Montenegro, an easy foil. Why should they allow an independent media, tolerate civil society, bolster institutional

checks and balances, treat opposition parties fairly, or dismantle rent-seeking networks when others are up to even worse within the EU?

INVENTING ENEMIES

Populist politicians promise to defend "the people" against establishment elites who they claim are protecting and expanding their privileges at the expense of ordinary citizens. In Latin America and Southern Europe, populism has tended to come from the left, taking on a class dimension as politicians promise to better the lot of the powerless and the poor. In Western and Central Europe, however, populism has tended to come from the right, intertwining the defense of "the people" with xenophobia and the defense of "the nation." This means convincing voters that the nation is under threat and that establishment elites are unable or unwilling to defend it.

Right-wing populists fabricate external enemies of the nation—mainly immigrants, Muslims, and the EU—who they claim threaten national security, the economy, and the survival of the national culture. They also invent internal enemies of the nation, which usually turn out to be those who advocate for liberal democracy, such as opposition parties, the media, nongovernmental organizations, and other independent voices in society. In this context, "liberal" means a democracy that allows for independent media, civil society, and counter-majoritarian institutions that guarantee the equal protection of human rights, civil rights, civil liberties, and political freedoms for all individuals.

Political appeals alone do not dismantle liberal democracy. But such appeals can be used to legitimize an illiberal assault on democratic norms and institutions. Populist leaders may claim that in order to protect the people, they need to change rules and norms to diminish or eliminate the power of institutions and organizations controlled by the "internal enemies." In this context, "illiberal" means rejecting constitutional protections for counter-majoritarian institutions, for independent groups, and for minorities. In other words, advocates of illiberalism believe the majority as represented by the government should have absolute power.

Whether populist leaders succeed in eroding liberal democracy—and how much—depends on the ability of counter-majoritarian institutions, such as constitutional courts, to consistently check their power. It also depends on the skill and cohesion of the ruling coalition and its success in maintaining popular support. Once countervailing institutions are dismantled and independent voices are silenced, it becomes easier for the ruling coalition to engineer subsequent majorities and to entrench its own power. A favorite tool is the referendum: the vote of the people—however manipulated—can justify the government in dismantling liberal democracy further in order to respect the vote.

This is the story of Hungary since 2010. Hungary had been ranked as "free" by the Washington-based think tank Freedom House since the fall of the communist regime in 1990. Freedom House categorizes countries as "free," "partly free," or "not free." In February 2019, Hungary was downgraded to "partly free," becoming the only country with this designation in the EU. But Poland and the Czech Republic have also experienced democratic backsliding in recent years. These three countries were the front-runners of democratization in the region after 1989. How did they fall so far?

The political parties that have led the illiberal turn in postcommunist Europe so far—Fidesz in Hungary and the Law and Justice Party (PiS) in Poland—started as well-established and ostensibly mainstream conservative groupings. They won big in elections by capitalizing on popular frustration with corruption, austerity, and the uneven benefits of growth. They called for a return to national grandeur and conservative social values.

Since taking office, they have gone further. They have steeped society in the narrative that the nation is under threat from enemies at the gate—and labeled as enemies domestic actors such as opposition parties, advocates for the rights of women, the LGBT community, independent media, and civil society groups that are critical of the government. Outside actors that support liberal democracy, from transnational NGOs to EU institutions, are demonized as well.

Fidesz and PiS have also benefited enormously from the recent refugee crisis and terrorist attacks in Western Europe, using their propaganda machines to spread the word that migrants and Muslims are waging a war against the values and sur-

> *The accession process threatens the wealth and power of entrenched Balkan elites.*

vival of the Hungarian and Polish nations. These ruling parties have used xenophobia to delegitimize both domestic opponents and international actors by accusing them of championing the well-being of migrants and Muslims, who do not belong to the nation, at the expense of ordinary citizens.

The Czech Republic is a fascinating case that demonstrates the immense political power of a well-calibrated populist appeal when mainstream parties have lost their luster, even if the messenger seems outlandish and the domestic conditions inauspicious. This is a country with few ethnic minorities aside from the Roma, no co-ethnics abroad, no delusions of regional grandeur, weak nationalism, very weak religiosity, low income inequality, hardly any refugees, and a strong economy. It might have been expected to resist the populist wave. And yet, in the land of Kafka, the ANO movement won power on a populist anticorruption platform, despite the fact that it is the political vehicle for Andrej Babiš, a highly corrupt Slovak businessman who made his fortune by manipulating the state and defrauding the taxpayers.

Unlike Fidesz or PiS, Babiš concentrated power in the economy, in politics, in government, in the media, and in civil society as an oligarch, with these different sources of power amplifying one another, long before he became prime minister. He is under investigation for fraud and beset by scandals, any one of which could have ended the career of a more typical politician. Yet ANO won the October 2017 elections in a landslide with nearly 30 percent of the vote—eight other parties won seats in parliament with 11 percent of the vote or less. Illiberal, racist, and anti-EU parties received a combined total of over 60 percent of the vote. In January 2018, Czech voters reelected their openly racist, xenophobic, and pro-Russian president, Miloš Zeman, who has become a supporter of Babiš's efforts to concentrate power in the hands of ANO.

WHAT'S THE APPEAL?

Scholars explain the rise in support for right-wing populist and illiberal parties in all of Europe in two broad ways. The first explanation focuses on how the attitudes of voters have shifted as a result of changes in their daily lives. These include increasing immigration, which is blamed for lower wages, higher unemployment, and the expansion of insecure and poorly paid part-time work. At the same time, as the power of EU institutions grew, they were often seen as elitist and out of touch—

and blamed for immigration, unemployment, and income inequality.

Mainstream political parties, especially social democrats, have failed to respond to these changes; they have been unable to effectively communicate with and represent their voters. As a result, this argument goes, disgruntled voters have abandoned them in search of parties that seem to care about their situation. This is the preferred explanation of most political scientists, since public opinion polls provide ample data showing that popular attitudes have shifted over time, with voters abandoning loyalty to established mainstream parties and more of them holding nativist views.

The second explanation accepts that popular attitudes have changed, but attributes those changes not just to the grievances of citizens and the failure of mainstream parties to respond to them. Scholars also emphasize how populist politicians have manipulated voters by creating an exaggerated sense of threat, spreading xenophobia, and lying about the so-called enemies of the nation. We can see evidence of this in the news every day. The lies about the alleged misdeeds of the EU and of immigrants have been especially egregious.

No, George Soros does not have a plan to destroy Europe by resettling millions of Muslims in the EU and particularly in Hungary—but this was the centerpiece of Orbán's 2018 reelection campaign, officially titled "Stop Soros." No, Muslim refugees are not likely to destroy the culture and well-being of the Czech Republic—but after years of relentless propaganda by politicians and online bots, one survey found that Czechs had the second-most anti-Muslim attitudes in the whole of Europe, after Armenia. According to the Pew Research Center, only 12 percent of Czechs would accept a Muslim into their family.

And populist voter manipulation is certainly not confined to the East. Just consider the claims of Brexiteers about a pending invasion of immigrants sent by the EU, and about how prosperous Britain would be outside the EU.

To look at it in another way, these politicians are not playing "fair"—their lies are so outrageous, the online misinformation that feeds their support is so incendiary, and the demonization of their domestic opponents is so extreme that it is hard for mainstream parties to respond. There is no doubt that mainstream parties have made mistakes that have contributed to the drift of working-class and other voters toward populist parties. But it would be wrong to lay all of the blame on their doorstep.

SUSCEPTIBLE CITIZENS

It is fair to argue that in most areas, the post-communist or "new" EU members are hardly different from the "old" EU members. The new members are indeed poorer, but they have not formed a unified bloc within the EU. In most if not all EU policy areas, they have had differing interests. Even the financial crisis that started in 2008 affected the new members to different degrees: some suffered sudden economic hardships but others fared relatively well, especially Poland, which was the only country in the EU to avoid a recession entirely. In other words, there are more differences than similarities among the new members.

Many have argued that there is no East-West divide in the EU. Yet it appears that the illiberal turn in Europe has so far had greater political traction in the East. While populist appeals have been successful across the continent, those built on xenophobia have resonated especially strongly in postcommunist Europe. Why?

Most of the postcommunist EU members and candidates are small countries with small media markets. Western European media companies responded to the 2008 financial crisis by pulling out of those markets, leaving newspapers and television networks to be snapped up by domestic oligarchs. That made it easier to flood a country with populist, nationalist, and illiberal appeals while shutting out independent voices.

Racist and illiberal attitudes were preserved and exacerbated by communism in countries that were homogenized by the genocide and expulsions of World War II and then locked behind the Iron Curtain. The experiences of war, communism, and transition helped convince majorities that they are the victims in today's Europe. This makes them more likely to accept rollbacks of rights for minorities. The fact that most citizens of the EU's postcommunist member countries have no firsthand experience with refugees, Muslims, or indeed any people of color helps to spread misconceptions and lies about them. And many people in the region, though much wealthier than they were two decades ago, are still dramatically less well off than their Western European counterparts.

For many observers, an East-West divide first appeared during Europe's refugee crisis in 2015. The Syrian civil war drove the crisis: fleeing both Bashar al-Assad's regime and the Islamic State, Syrian refugees created routes to the EU that were traveled by over a million refugees from various countries in that year alone. Across the continent, right-wing and extreme-right politicians capitalized on the specter of millions of outsiders flooding in. They used the new media environment to steep their societies in falsehoods and fears of cultural evisceration and terrorism. The British campaign to leave the EU certainly exploited these fears.

But no one was readier to exploit the situation than Orbán, who was already at work dismantling liberal democracy in Hungary. His response to refugees trying to pass through en route to Western Europe included dehumanizing repression, a militarized border fence, and criminalization of Hungarian citizens who sought to provide aid. Under his leadership, a postcommunist bloc emerged—one that refused to accept an EU plan to share the burden of providing safe harbor for refugees.

The process of joining the EU does not guarantee that a new member will build a deep or durable liberal democracy.

FRIENDS OF PUTIN

One of the striking features of the illiberal wave is that right-wing populists—not just in the East but across Europe—seem to be using a remarkably similar playbook to win and hold power. Orbán and his tactics for dismantling liberal democracy were publicly admired by the leaders of Poland's PiS and the Czech Republic's ANO before they took over. Orbán styles himself as a leader of this new bloc in the EU—and boasts that he is winning the argument, swaying more EU governments against migration and in favor of a kind of white Christian nationalism. In his camp in 2019 are Poland, the Czech Republic, Austria, and Italy. Arguably, the British and Greek ruling parties, and even members of the German government, are also on his side.

All the while, Russia has been lending a hand to the illiberal populists. For nearly two decades, Vladimir Putin has attempted to divide EU allies and destabilize the bloc with lucrative energy deals and huge bags of cash for unprincipled leaders. This strategy has been nicknamed "Schröderization," after the transformation of the former German chancellor and leader of the center-left Social Democratic Party, Gerhard Schröder, into Putin's lapdog via chairmanships of Russian oil and gas interests.

But the EU has successfully diversified its energy supply over the past decade, making member countries less dependent on Russia. What turns out to have been more effective in advancing Russian interests is directly funding European populist and far-right parties, and supporting their chauvinist appeals by spreading disinformation. Populist leaders in Hungary, the Czech Republic, Austria, and Italy treat Putin as a friend and try to undermine EU policies designed to ostracize and sanction his regime.

Russian funding has targeted the west of the EU just as much as the east, backing far-right parties in France, Italy, Germany, Sweden, and elsewhere. The "Leave" campaign in the UK's 2016 Brexit referendum apparently benefited from Russian money in addition to disinformation spread by Russian bots. The vote for Brexit was a triumph for Putin: the fact that the Conservative and Labour parties are both controlled by strongly anti-EU forces bringing Britain to the brink of chaos must be beyond his wildest dreams.

This is perhaps even more shocking than seeing countries that were forced to install communist regimes by Stalin's armies after World War II, and kept locked behind the Iron Curtain until 1989, now cozying up to Putin and denigrating the European project. After all, they are doing so in step with the US president and the Republican Party. The reasons, as far as anyone can tell, are the same: Putin's regime stands ready to lend a helping hand to any political tricksters and would-be despots willing to help divide and destabilize the West.

THE SWINGING PENDULUM

What keeps European states committed to the EU project has not changed: it is economically much better to be inside the bloc than outside. This has been tested profoundly by the financial crisis and by the long years of austerity endured over the past decade by many EU members, but it still holds. The enlargement process, by setting conditions for the benefits of EU membership, continues to coax political and economic change in the Western Balkan states that remain in the membership queue.

The illiberal turn and Brexit are in part the products of decades when even mainstream politicians were quick to take credit for everything that went well at home while blaming everything that

voters did not like on the EU. The EU has always had a very difficult time making a case for itself to European citizens. In this respect, Brexit has had a salutary impact: political leaders and, more importantly, citizens of other member states can see much more clearly the risks and follies of leaving the EU to "take back control."

The EU now faces fundamental decisions about whether and how much to sanction member states that are moving away from liberal democracy. The consensus is that Brussels made a grave mistake by turning a blind eye to the dismantling of democratic institutions in Hungary since Orbán's return to power in 2010. By the time it tried to act, it was too late—and now the EU faces the choice of either suspending Hungary's membership or having an authoritarian regime within the fold. But a suspension would require a unanimous vote, and Hungary has enough friends for now to block one. Among them is the European People's Party, a group in the European Parliament that includes Germany's Christian Democrats.

If Hungary seems lost to authoritarian rule for many more years, Poland's prospects are more hopeful. There is strong political and popular resistance to the incumbent illiberal regime, and elections are coming in the autumn of 2019. The party in power in Warsaw is trying hard to crush them, but independent domestic institutions are still fighting back. For its part, the EU is criticizing the Polish government much more vigorously—which makes sense given opinion polls showing that up to 90 percent of the Polish population supports staying in the EU.

While the illiberal turn has empowered political leaders in Poland, the Czech Republic, Austria, and Italy that are far right, populist, and illiberal, democratic institutions are holding on and there is still hope that the pendulum will swing back in future elections. Hungary and the United Kingdom, one in the East and the other in the West, stand out today as the most enduring casualties of the illiberal turn in Europe. Unless a political miracle occurs, the degradation and immiseration of Hungary under Orbán and of Britain at the hands of the Brexiteers may not be reversed in our lifetimes. But the EU itself has endured innumerable crises and will survive the illiberal turn as governments and citizens remember the benefits of membership—which are understood most keenly by those who find themselves excluded from the club. ∎

Social Policy and the New Middle Class in Central and Eastern Europe

TOMASZ INGLOT

The countries of Central and Eastern Europe, especially Poland and Hungary, have recently returned to international news headlines as leading examples of a worldwide trend of rising populism and reviving authoritarianism. Unlike the early 1990s, when memories of communist collapse and democratic breakthrough were still fresh, and popular mobilization ignited hopes for a full embrace of Western liberal values, today it seems increasingly difficult to credibly sketch an optimistic scenario for the future of this region. Yet on closer examination a much more complex picture emerges—one that defies easy stereotypes and generalizations. Disturbing accounts of democratic backsliding often obscure a more upbeat reality of growing economic prosperity based on the emergence of middle-class societies that are supported by reliable welfare protections.

Social Mobility Today

Seventh in a series

Concentrating on the former communist countries that have been members of the European Union since the mid-2000s, we can identify the historical legacies and contemporary determinants of social mobility and social policy that have produced this unusual situation, where democracy has weakened in the context of improving standards of living. Paradoxically, the better their incomes and economic status become, the more newly ascended middle-class citizens and their families fear the future and long for even greater stability—relying on government-provided safety nets that have been challenged by more than two decades of market-driven economic policies since the early 1990s. This attitude is more common among older and middle-aged generations, whereas younger people, especially younger men, display much less trust in the state and often opt for migration in search of better prospects. Yet many old habits—and also, to a large degree, institutional legacies of the welfare state that survived the early postcommunist period and subsequent economic downturns surprisingly well across the region—are likely to endure into the next generation.

The historic process of simultaneous transitions to democracy and free-market capitalism inevitably prompted predictions of social unrest, state collapse, long-lasting joblessness, and extreme poverty. This scenario proved accurate in much of the former Soviet Union but less so in Central and Eastern Europe. By the end of the 1990s, after a period of painful adjustment and severe social dislocation that affected thousands of people, especially industrial and agricultural workers, Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Slovenia, Hungary, and the Baltic states had emerged as the leaders in the process of consolidating democratic rule and building viable market-based economies. The remaining countries, such as Romania, Bulgaria, and Croatia, were still lagging far behind but began to slowly catch up during the next decade.

Today, thirty years after 1989, all the societies of Central and Eastern Europe have been profoundly transformed, much beyond what many experts anticipated during the turbulent years of the early systemic transition. To many observers at that time, the region still appeared relatively uniform and the distance between East and West exceptionally wide and difficult to bridge due to the legacies of communist rule. Many of these legacies persist. But as the speed of societal change increases, we can see new and unexpected diverging trends within the

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TOMASZ INGLOT *is a professor of political science at Minnesota State University, Mankato.*

region that uneasily coexist with rapidly emerging patterns of even more significant convergence with the rest of Europe, for better or worse.

The economies of the newer EU member states are growing faster than the average rate in the developed west and north of the continent. Poland, Hungary, and Romania have posted robust annual gross domestic product increases of four to seven percent in recent years. Both average and minimum wages, adjusted for purchasing power, are rapidly catching up to EU levels and even surpass those of Southern European countries such as Portugal and Greece. Much of Eastern and Southern Europe was especially hard hit by the Great Recession of 2008–10, but the former communist countries recovered relatively fast and now are poised to attract new investment and create jobs in the tech-heavy service sector.

WIDESPREAD GAINS

During the 1990s, the region's economic winners mainly included emerging business owners, many with deep roots in the former communist establishment, and well-educated professionals. Now, because mass unemployment has practically disappeared and many employers face chronic labor shortages, the gains are much more widely distributed across social strata. Hungary and the Czech Republic recently saw wage increases of 10 percent and more, compared with a respectable 5 to 7 percent in Poland.

Foreign remittances play a large role in raising standards of living for families back home.

Practically all the former Soviet bloc countries have completed a huge structural transformation of employment from unskilled routine work to a mostly skilled routine and managerial workforce. A precise definition of "middle class" remains elusive, but if we consider the term to mean an individual or a family earning average wages or above, the growth of this group in all of Central and Eastern Europe has been quite impressive. The United Nations estimates that this segment of society expanded by one-third across the region from 2001 to 2013.

The labor force in Central and Eastern Europe now consists overwhelmingly of people who were either children or youths under communist rule, or were born and educated after its collapse, and entered a totally transformed labor market as adults. The greatest change occurred in the agricultural and manufacturing sectors. Countries

such as Poland, Romania, and Bulgaria experienced accelerated urbanization and restructuring of employment toward service-based economies. Slovenia, the Czech Republic, and to some extent also Hungary had an early advantage in this area that was further augmented by steady inflows of foreign investment, which in turn helped fuel the growth of the new middle class during the 1990s.

Throughout the region, earlier patterns of limited mobility continued: few mid-career, lower-skilled workers moved away from their home communities. But the disappearance of local industrial employment and falling agricultural income drove many younger people away in pursuit of new opportunities in their own countries and abroad.

In contrast to the 1990s, when disruption in the labor markets produced widespread unemployment and poverty, many of the new member states since the EU's enlargement to the east have seen substantial employment growth in branches of manufacturing where integration with Western markets, especially Germany, plays a fundamental role. New industrial assembly plants around Warsaw, Lodz, Wroclaw, Budapest, Gyor, Bratislava, Prague, Bucharest, Gdansk, and other urban centers across the region have contributed to rapid urban expansion. Many cities and suburbs now resemble their Western counterparts in terms of income and amenities. The restructured industries are smaller but nimbler, with better-paid workers—more integrated with the multinational corporations in Western Europe, but not yet automated enough to threaten employment.

OPPORTUNITY AND UNCERTAINTY

When it comes to social mobility, common trends within Central and Eastern Europe are largely determined by a generational divide, urban versus rural location, gender, and education. All European societies, including those in the post-communist region, are rapidly aging; in the East, many retirees depend on secure but low pensions as their sole income. However, a substantial number of them have become property owners, due largely to generous government policies that reprivatized communal and state housing during the 1990s. As property values appreciated rapidly in many areas, elderly people found themselves holding valuable assets, which are often passed on to

the next generation in ways that were not possible during communist times.

This type of family support provided a necessary cushion to many younger workers, especially in Hungary, Romania, and Bulgaria, who lost jobs and income during the post-2008 recession. These countries (but not Poland) were especially hard hit by the global financial crisis. Social mobility suffered as a result, but not so much as to arrest the overall upward trajectory of long-term wage and income growth, even for the lower-earning strata.

Trade-union membership declined precipitously throughout Central and Eastern Europe after the fall of communism. However, public-sector employment began to expand again in recent years. Labor protections remained strong within this sector, accompanied by better wages and benefits, often as a result of strikes and public protests.

The growing upper and lower middle classes, including doctors, lawyers, businesspeople, and other professionals, successfully adapted to new market realities during the 1990s and continue to thrive with increased salaries and improved overall standards of living, including easier access to credit. But the younger generation faces more uncertainty with less employment stability in a transformed labor market where temporary and part-time contracts are now common. This contrasts starkly with expanding opportunities for social and economic mobility in new career fields that did not exist before, such as Internet sales, privatized health-care, legal, and educational services, and high-tech employment outsourced from more developed countries, such as computer programming and video game design.

For the most part, this younger group falls into three broad categories: those whose parents belong to the already privileged upper or middle classes; entry-level employees who are forced to accept short-term labor contracts with uncertain prospects and no benefits; and highly mobile migrants who choose to leave their countries for better wages and opportunities in Western Europe.

MOBILITY PATTERNS

Mass migration arguably has been the leading factor driving social mobility in all Central and Eastern European countries since the mid-2000s, when EU enlargement opened up Western Euro-

pean labor markets to workers from the new member states. Migration is also where many new converging and diverging trends become visible upon closer scrutiny.

While the overall number of Eastern European immigrants residing in the West stabilized in 2018 at around seven million, the dynamics of the process have changed dramatically. Romania and Bulgaria replaced Poland as the largest emigrant countries. As many as 14 percent of Romanians, 10 percent of Bulgarians, and almost 7 percent of Poles were residing abroad. A majority of the Polish migrants live in the United Kingdom, while Italy is the top destination for Romanians, and Hungarians favor Germany and Austria.

Increasingly, foreign remittances play a large role in raising standards of living of families back home, especially in the areas of consumption and housing construction, not unlike what was observed during the 1950s and 1960s in Southern Europe. Emigration from the Baltic states, Slovakia, and Hungary also has become very large-scale, with severe demographic consequences. It is less pronounced in the Czech Republic and Slovenia, but the circular nature of short-term migration among young people from these two countries, in search of both work and educational opportunities in Western Europe, has become a major factor behind increased social mobility.

Many cities and suburbs now resemble their Western counterparts.

Yet Western business analysts have pointed out the beginning of a different trend: Eastern European wages and job offers are becoming much more attractive. In combination with stagnant wages and rising living costs (especially unaffordable housing) in Western countries, this may induce many migrants to return home. Some are already doing so, though not yet in numbers that would indicate a wider trend. We can clearly distinguish mass migration countries from those that are more stable in this regard, but none of the new member states has yet experienced a reverse trend of citizens returning home en masse.

Instead, many lower-skilled service jobs in countries such as the Czech Republic and Poland are now filled by Ukrainian and Belarusian migrants, who often lack formal work permits. This trend is especially significant in the context of the recent European crisis over migration from outside the continent and the continuing refusal of many Eastern European governments to accept

refugees and asylum seekers from the Middle East and Africa. It indicates a turn toward a culturally restrictive immigration policy that encourages people from neighboring Eastern European countries to fill vacant jobs, based on the anticipation that these newcomers will be more quickly assimilated and accepted by the native populations.

Mobility patterns among the native labor force are much more varied than ever before and often include increased population movements within the country. This is usually concentrated within a particular region: most of those who decide to relocate either join others from the same town or village in a specific foreign destination, or else move to the closest urban center rather than more remote locations within the same country.

I recently visited two of the poorest rural communities in central Poland's Mazowsze province. Average per capita GDP levels are relatively high in the area due to its proximity to Warsaw, but deep intraregional inequalities persist. One of these communities was an industrial hub under communist rule but suffered economic collapse, long-term unemployment, and deep poverty in the 1990s. It revived slowly during the next decade, largely thanks to mass migration to Warsaw, about two hours away by train. A neighboring community, previously reliant on subsistence agriculture, experienced two successive phases of employment transition, the first fueled by commercial vegetable farming and the second, which followed a plunge in agricultural prices, spurred by the migration of many residents to the UK.

Similarly complex patterns of movement and inequality can be found across Poland and other countries in the region. Impoverished and stagnant northeastern Hungary contrasts with prosperous and more socially and spatially mobile Budapest and western Hungarian provinces; Transylvania and greater Bucharest stand out for their relative prosperity and economic growth compared with other, more impoverished regions of Romania. In the Baltic states, internal inequalities cut along ethnic lines: the more mobile ethnic Latvians and Estonians are better positioned to take advantage of new opportunities than Russian minorities in those countries. The latter often lack the native language proficiency, educational credentials, and even formal citizenship status needed to match the prosperity of the majority ethnic groups.

Across the region, younger people in the 20–49 age bracket, both men and women, have become more mobile, prepared to adapt to new job mar-

ket realities and eventually join the rising middle class, if they have not emigrated already. Many studies have found that young women across the region are better adjusted to the changing economy and readier to embrace educational and career-changing opportunities than men. This has been the case not only in the better-developed Eastern European societies such as Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, and now also Romania, but in many Western countries such as Germany. In Poland, large numbers of women opened new businesses during the 1990s; since then, the share of female university graduates has surpassed 60 percent.

Due to the improvement of the labor market across the board, higher education is no longer the most desirable path to better wages or living standards, but postcommunist societies still benefit from a rapid expansion of university enrollment initiated during the 1990s. This has been most visible in larger, previously much less upwardly mobile societies such as Poland, where higher-education enrollment peaked at around nine million, compared with under one million at the beginning of the transition. The latest cohort of new job seekers in the services and manufacturing sectors is often employed, at least on a temporary basis, while still attending university. Graduation may no longer be a necessary condition for remaining on the job when trained employees are harder to find.

This is part of another converging trend across Europe: enrollments are stabilizing and many universities are restructuring their course offerings to better reflect the needs of the labor market. Some of the more popular majors now include management, administration, human resources, and marketing.

REFORM AND INEQUALITY

The trends described so far suggest a positive story of increasing social mobility in Eastern European countries, with rapidly growing middle classes and an expanding consumer society, augmented by better wages and remittances from emigrants working in Western Europe. On the negative side, however, these changes have simultaneously contributed to growing inequalities. The standard measure of inequality—the Gini coefficient—has increased in most countries in the region, but more so in Poland, Romania, and Bulgaria than in Hungary, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, and Slovenia.

In many instances, governments' social policies have contributed to this trend by expanding existing programs and adding new ones to benefit growing middle-income groups, especially young working families with children. A closer look at these policies makes it easier to understand the recent upswing of public support for populism and nationalism in the context of the most comfortable living standards the region has ever experienced.

This increased prosperity rests for the most part on dramatic changes in the labor market. The region has seen a radical shift from widespread unemployment to labor shortages, a historic expansion in higher-education opportunities, and unprecedented mass migration to the West. Nonetheless, given a rather uneven cyclical pattern of growth and slowdown or recession in many of these countries since the early 1990s, citizens might remain deeply skeptical about the future in the absence of a reliable social safety net. In this part of Europe, welfare states have never offered generous benefits and remain heavily based on traditional Bismarckian social insurance, financed largely by payroll taxes on employers and employees.

In the past, the communist safety net also included universal entitlements such as free health care and education, child-care services, housing subsidies, and various in-kind benefits supplied by employers. Another influential legacy comprises the reforms implemented during the first decade of the postcommunist transition. These changes focused mainly on three areas: unemployment protection, more restrictive targeting of welfare assistance for the poor, and, most importantly, pension reform. Other service-based programs were dismantled or stagnated due to inadequate funding.

As many scholars pointed out at the time, Central and Eastern European welfare states came under pressure from two different directions. They faced domestic political pressure to protect state budgets in an era of economic crisis, while the international financial institutions, primarily the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, and assorted other Western advisers urged them to undertake a fundamental transformation of their allegedly overextended safety nets to conform with the neoliberal agenda of promoting free markets and private property. The most representative reform ideas of this period were partial pension privatization, based on new mandatory and voluntary investment funds alongside state-funded basic benefits, and the restructuring of antipoverty programs with new work incentives and conditional assistance for the needy.

The combination of the two legacies—the evolution of the communist version of Bismarckian welfare states and the decade-long transitional reforms that incorporated neoliberal ideas—laid the foundation for the latest wave of changes. These have included providing increased income stability via cash benefits and tax credits to many households, especially those with dependent children. Such policies have helped generate political support for the ruling populist and/or nationalist parties in countries such as Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, and Romania.

This latest stage of social policy reforms began in the early 2000s and has been closely linked to EU membership, in terms of both ideas and practice. First, EU accession entailed the extension of the European social agenda into Central and Eastern Europe. This took the form of recommendations rather than directives, since social policies generally remain within the exclusive jurisdiction of member states, in areas such as youth employment, gender equality, social inclusion of marginalized groups (like the Roma minority in Hungary, Romania, and Slovakia), and early childhood education. Drafted before the Great Recession, many of these proposals aimed at better coordination and adaptation of the existing welfare states to rapidly changing economic conditions in the era of neoliberalism and globalization, marked by slow growth among the leading developed economies and unprecedented disruption of traditional employment.

Second, the new EU member states, regardless of whether they were governed by the parties of the ex-communist left as in Poland and Hungary, or center-right ones as in Romania or Slovakia, had already adopted free-market economic policies by the early 2000s. They gladly embraced European social-policy recommendations as long as these came with generous funding assistance that relieved pressure on domestic budgets, especially in the areas of infrastructure and administration of social programs. This phase of welfare reforms was notable for its emphasis on previously neglected areas such as family policy and

Mass migration arguably has been the leading factor driving social mobility in Central and Eastern Europe.

related programs for younger people and women, rather than just the elderly and the unemployed. They also came with expectations for more gradual implementation that appealed to subsequent austerity-minded governments.

The recession of 2008–10 altered this policy landscape in a fundamental way, leading many countries to reverse or revise the signature changes of the neoliberal era, such as partial pension privatization. But they did so without rejecting EU recommendations in other spheres, despite the fact that many imported reform ideas were marked by the dominant ideological consensus that has become deeply unpopular since the Great Recession. These policies included benefits and services for working women, children, and parents more generally, with a special focus on generous maternity protection, extended parental leave and payments, nurseries, kindergartens, care and education programs for the elderly, and low-income housing. Many of these policies were driven by fiscal considerations, but political factors also played a role—such as fear of an electoral backlash following a brief but painful period of economic austerity.

Even though the average level and generosity of these initiatives still fall short of the standards in more developed European countries, the unprecedented transfer of ideas, expertise, and funding assistance helped modernize and stabilize the postcommunist welfare states. In addition, the EU emphasis on subsidiarity—bringing essential government services and administration closer to the people—in combination with previous local government reforms led to the construction of yet another layer of social services at the municipal and commune level, especially in Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovenia, and Slovakia.

Today, social policy implementation depends on working partnerships with civil society and citizens' groups, which also receive EU support. Only a handful of larger NGOs with international backing are able to provide social services on their own, but many organizations participate in planning, personnel training, and various promotional activities that help connect government with the people.

DIVERGENCE AND DIVISION

These developments are further evidence that convergence in the latest social policy initiatives within the region and Europe as a whole continues to coexist with lasting patterns of divergence,

most visible in the imprint of historical legacies and the pace of change. Several populist and nationalist governments in the East favor a restructured welfare state with traditional benefits, such as state pensions, and improved programs for the younger generation. However, the nationalist politicians who gained power in Budapest and Warsaw have shifted the emphasis of the latter, often in coordination with like-minded lobbies at the EU level, from gender equality to family assistance, especially for large families with children.

In line with another divergent trend, only a few countries feel compelled to accelerate reforms, innovate, and introduce costly new programs and services, some of which may be recommended by the EU. Most instead concentrate on reversing older reforms such as pension age increases. The Hungarian, Czech, Slovak, and Slovenian governments inherited well-developed family policy programs, combining parental benefits and child services, in place since the 1980s and 1990s. Defending the conservative status quo has been their top priority.

The Law and Justice party's government in Poland recently introduced a generous new family assistance program, the so-called 500+ child upbringing allowance. It provides 500 zlotys (120 euros) per month for the second and each subsequent child, or starting with the first child in families below a certain income threshold. The ruling party has turned this benefit into a potent symbol of its social agenda and the ultimate fulfillment of its 2015 campaign promises. To its credit, in the first year since its 2016 implementation, the poverty rate among children declined by approximately 20 percent—although inequality continues to grow, since the bulk of beneficiaries still consists of middle-class families with steady jobs. In total, almost 2.5 million families now receive this benefit at a cost equivalent to 1 percent of GDP.

Prime Minister Viktor Orbán of Hungary can draw much more heavily on preexisting welfare institutions to expand his government's popular appeal, while selectively adopting different kinds of EU-provided assistance to modernize social policy at the local level, especially in the area of social inclusion of the Roma minority. The appeal of the ruling Fidesz party depends to a large extent on the cultivation, rather than expansion, of an established middle-class support base that continues to rely on a stable social safety net. Since Hungarian society is aging rapidly, younger people are more

likely to suffer economic insecurity, largely due to the lack of concern for their needs.

As a recent conflict over a pro-business law allowing excessive overtime with no additional compensation shows, the government ignores the plight of younger generations with little fear of political backlash. In March 2010, I attended three electoral rallies in Budapest held by competing parties on the national holiday. Only the Fidesz rally that featured Orbán drew a predominantly middle-aged crowd of families with children.

Orbán's latest population policy measures, announced in mid-February 2019, seem to be an attempt to expand domestic support for the inward-looking, nationalist, and anti-immigrant agenda of Fidesz. However, an income-tax exemption for mothers of four or more children fits into the traditional pattern of catering to the middle-class base, which is well represented by organizations focused on the interests of large families. The additional promise of 21,000 new child-care facilities targets a different group of young working families. But the shortage of such establishments is most apparent in the countryside, so the most likely beneficiaries will probably be conservative Fidesz voters. Other parts of the program such as new housing subsidies and car payment relief, if implemented with sufficient funding, could be more significant for the younger generation. All this ultimately depends on the continuing expansion of the economy, which is endangered by the country's demographic crisis.

In other countries, such as Poland, Romania, Bulgaria, and Slovakia, the middle class has been much more sharply divided between liberals and nationalists. Opposition parties can compete more seriously, if not always successfully, with the ruling nationalists, often using similar social policy appeals to middle-class families with children and stable employment.

News headlines that focus on rising nationalism and threats to liberal democracy in Central and Eastern Europe often obscure a more complex reality of rapidly transforming societies that in many ways enjoy historically unprecedented levels of prosperity and opportunity for social advancement. The main contributing factors have been a radical transformation of the labor market, increased mobility of young people, many of whom are now much better trained and educated, and a transformed and modernized social safety net. However, as is also true in many Western societies today, such as Britain, Germany, parts of Scandinavia, and the United States, improved economies, near-full employment, and higher wages coexist with growing inequality and cultural anxiety, especially concerning migration from other continents.

Now that their economies are growing faster and their societies are beginning to resemble the rest of developed Europe, Central and Eastern Europeans have a lot to gain, at least as long as EU funding continues for a couple of years. They also have the most to lose if the world economy slows down and European policies become less generous. The current populist governments are well aware of this. In the absence of yet another global crisis or a radical change in EU policies and institutions, they are likely to continue to exploit the political potential of this new golden age of socio-economic opportunity for as long as they can. ∎

> "What do consumer rights actually mean in a context in which citizens are unsure whether there is even a functioning judicial system . . . ?"

Consumers Demand More in Postsocialist Bulgaria

YUSON JUNG

It is hard to believe that three decades have already passed since the fall of the Berlin Wall. Growing up in West Germany and South Korea, two frontiers of the Cold War, I remember how the news of the dramatic social changes in Eastern Europe shocked me. I never expected to witness such a historical moment in my lifetime.

When I started my research in Bulgaria a decade later, in 1999, I was intrigued by how Bulgarians, after living under state socialism, engaged with new consumer experiences and often linked them with a sense of global belonging. The world was becoming more intensely interconnected through commodities and technology in the era of globalization. There was a lot of excitement around consumption as global brands such as McDonald's and Samsung started to dot the postsocialist landscape, global cuisines like Chinese food and sushi became available, and Western-style malls and self-service supermarkets (as opposed to the socialist era's over-the-counter grocery stores) catered to ordinary people in Eastern Europe.

At the same time, the consumer experience in these postsocialist states also generated many grievances. What the majority of ordinary consumers could afford was not always reliable in terms of quality, safety, and authenticity.

Consumerism is often conceptualized as a matter of individual choice, fulfilling one's desires, and expressing one's identity and aspirations. In the so-called developing nations, consumption trends are also intimately bound up with a rising middle class, as people with increasing discretionary income start to engage with "Western-style" consumerism. It

may be tempting to conclude that the social changes Eastern European consumers underwent in the past three decades were part of a common development phase, as these former socialist countries transitioned from a production-oriented, centralized planned economy to a consumption-oriented capitalist market economy.

The socialist economic system, however, had created distinctive sets of social relations and consumer expectations. These influenced the ways in which people experienced the new consumer environment after state socialism. For consumption is not simply a relatively autonomous domain of individualistic practices satisfying needs, wants, and aspirations. It also involves issues of rights, responsibilities, and accountability. In this sense, it raises broader questions about civic engagement in a consumerist world of goods.

After the experience of state socialism, consumers often felt that the new material abundance had not been equally distributed and shared. They felt as though they were now in a paradoxical state of being deprived or cheated amidst abundance and seemingly endless choices. These Eastern European experiences show how consumption needs to be understood in more nuanced and contextualized ways. That requires taking the measure of peoples' expectations of the state and the accountability they demand from it in the domain of everyday life.

Consumer experiences are not universal; they are informed by culture and shaped by history. Ultimately, the lived experience of consumers in Eastern Europe throughout the Cold War and its aftermath was part of a continuing process of cultivating social trust in the promises of the state and other institutions. Relations between citizens and the state underwent a radical transformation after 1989. Trust had to be renegotiated as the role

YUSON JUNG *is an associate professor of anthropology at Wayne State University and the author of* Balkan Blues: Consumer Politics After State Socialism *(Indiana University Press, 2019), from which parts of this essay have been adapted.*

of the state under market capitalism and democracy changed.

Under socialism, the state's promises included universal access to basic necessities: food, clothes, and housing. Prices of staple foods were kept low so everybody could afford them. In Bulgaria, these items included bread, yogurt, milk, cheese, vegetables, and fruits (except "exotic" imported ones such as bananas and oranges), and they were rarely in short supply. Meat was more expensive but still within reach for average citizens, though not always available. Housing shortages were endemic in the larger cities; availability rather than affordability was the problem.

Although state socialism can hardly be characterized as a consumer-oriented system, it did consider the normative ideal of providing a "good life" for everybody as critically important to its political legitimacy. While my illustrative examples in this essay are primarily drawn from my long-term research in Bulgaria, the lived experience of Bulgarian consumers would be familiar to their counterparts in other Eastern European countries.

RED LANTERNS

In economies afflicted by chronic shortages under state socialism, consumption was often associated with queuing and hoarding practices. Stories of people joining a line whenever they saw one, without knowing what people were waiting for, or buying shelf-stable goods for the pantry whenever they came across any, even though they already had plenty at home, were common in Bulgaria and other Eastern European countries. The shortages were caused not only by a lack of goods but also by their irregular distribution.

The sudden abundance of commodities in the aftermath of socialism was a visual confirmation of unfolding social transformations. Witnessing these changes was often exciting for postsocialist consumers. Much as the "golden arches" of McDonald's became a symbol of modernization and globalization in various parts of the world including Eastern Europe, the red lanterns outside a Chinese eatery, or the increasing availability of other "ethnic foods," were an affirmation that the isolation behind the Iron Curtain had ended and people were finally able to get connected to the world through the consumption of global products.

Bulgarians' experience with Chinese food during the transitional years leading up to the country's accession to the European Union in 2007 was especially fraught with symbolism. In the larger cities such as Sofia, Plovdiv, and Varna, Chinese restaurants were increasingly popular. The exoticism and novelty of an unfamiliar cuisine that had not been accessible during the socialist period surely played a role in its initial appeal.

But having access to Chinese food was also explained and experienced as something that gave ordinary people a sense that life was finally returning to "normal," as in "Western countries." My Bulgarian interlocutors repeatedly told me that Hollywood films (some of which were available to Bulgarians before 1989) showed them that eating takeout Chinese food was a "normal" thing to do. In other words, they associated Chinese food more with a "Western lifestyle" than with a desire to experience "Far Eastern" or Chinese culture.

As the novelty started to fade and Chinese food became normalized in everyday life, authenticity emerged as an important element of its appeal for Bulgarian consumers. They perceived that the degree of access to "authentic" Chinese food was indicative of Bulgaria's political-economic status in the world, a marker of its transformation into a more advanced Western-style consumer society. For many postsocialist citizens, new commodities and consumer experiences were not only exciting as part of a diversified and individualized menu of consumer choice. They also raised questions about the links between everyday consumption and the more general state of affairs in the country.

Postsocialist states in Eastern Europe have had a particularly uneasy experience with modern consumer politics. Socialist states, like their counterparts on the other side of the Iron Curtain, pursued the goal of raising living standards. In Eastern Europe, though, this produced conditions of guaranteed access and limited choice for everyday consumption. A prevailing sentiment that my interlocutors often brought up was that nobody went hungry (despite the shortages) during socialism, in comparison with its aftermath, when many ordinary people worried about basic provisioning. Consumption was more than a matter of individual choice in the realm of the market. It cultivated particular expectations of the state that were often expressed as consumer grievances.

FEAR OF FAKES

The postsocialist experience is an acute example of how consumers increasingly encounter risks, vulnerabilities, and even exclusion in the midst of seemingly abundant choices. Popular dis-

cussions of contemporary consumer society often privilege individual choice with its implication of greater freedom and material abundance. But a certain level of affluence must be presumed to enable this "free" choice. The historian Matthew Hilton argues that "choice" in this context actually means "preference."

What many postsocialist consumers have faced is a different kind of "choice," one that is not about preference but concerned with avoiding deception—where buying something that is not the "real" thing can expose them to potential danger. After the initial enthusiasm for flashy foreign goods flooding into the Eastern European markets, people soon became dismayed by what they referred to as the "garbage products" offered to poor, ordinary postsocialist consumers. They realized these goods were often knockoffs, shoddily made, or even unsafe. Postsocialist consumption posed risks to vulnerable shoppers because of unequal access and unreliable choices.

Meanwhile, a small number of people amassed wealth from often murky privatization deals following the decollectivization process in the 1990s. This created a group of so-called nouveaux riches, which added to consumer grievances as inequality was experienced visibly and often intensively by ordinary citizens.

As part of my research in Bulgaria, I often accompanied my interlocutors on their shopping trips. In the summer of 2002, after joining a female informant for an entire afternoon on a trek across downtown Sofia to look at a pair of sandals, I asked her why she went to these shops even though she had already made up her mind to buy the sandals from her neighborhood store. She responded that she had trust in her local shop, but just needed to reconfirm that she was not wasting her paycheck on *mente* (fake goods) since there was no working system in place that protected her as a consumer from the abuses of the market. Smiling, she said, "They [the state] don't do their work of controlling bad stuff in the market, you know? I need to be certain."

The sandals she chose were an Italian brand, but she did not believe that all the stores carrying this brand were offering the "real," genuine article. She ended up buying them from the neighborhood store rather than one in a fancy mall. She explained that the local store could be trusted more because

it relied on the neighbors for its business, whereas the one in the mall did not have such close social relationships.

Other Bulgarian interlocutors pointed out that once the authenticity of a Western brand was proven, its authority could substitute for that of the state as an assurance of quality control. Proving authenticity, however, requires savvy that is often based on one's own experiences of developing self-reliance in the perceived absence of a state that could protect consumers from the abuses of the market. The sense of being cheated in mundane consumption practices has played a central role in citizens' relations to and expectations of the state in the postsocialist period.

The Bulgarian preoccupation with *mente* (accent on the second syllable) has deep roots in the region's recent history. It highlights two central postsocialist consumer questions: first, how to explain the limited availability of reliable choices despite the relative abundance of goods compared with socialist times; and, second, how to understand the role of the state in relation to new regimes of power such as the market, nongovernmental organizations, and the European Union.

Bulgarian consumer controversies over *mente* illuminate moments of civic engagement regarding these questions of access, choice, and power. Following the collapse of state socialism in 1989, many ordinary Bulgarians perceived their stores and markets as plagued by questionable goods that were of inferior quality and possibly unsafe. For instance, there were news reports about imported bed linens and toys, warning consumers of safety hazards due to poor-quality paint or dye, or faulty manufacturing. There was no guarantee that higher-priced items would not be *mente* either. Even today, after nearly three decades of the "market economy," as Bulgarians commonly refer to it, fear of *mente* continues to haunt everyday practices.

Mente was (and still is) often a shorthand for everything that was not right in the aftermath of socialism, from shoddy consumer goods to corrupt politicians, greedy businessmen, and broken legal systems. It was not only the questionable goods that distressed postsocialist consumers. Their anxiety and discontent was also stirred by sudden cost increases as public utilities shifted to market pricing and by deteriorating infrastruc-

> *Consumer experiences are not universal; they are informed by culture and shaped by history.*

ture—most notably for heating, electricity, education, and health. Many also experienced problems with newly available commercial services such as cellular phone networks, banking and consumer credit, and real estate transactions.

Detecting and avoiding *mente* was a common concern for Bulgarian consumers making their way in the new market economy. These experiences fostered a sense of civic engagement as they demanded accountability and a degree of protection from market abuses. Dealing with *mente* led people to view consumption as one of the domains in which the state's carelessness or absence was to be expected.

Indeed, these experiences with consumer products and services have been central to the ways in which citizen-consumers conceptualized "the state" in the postsocialist era. In other words, they were developing critical views of the role of the state under neoliberal conditions that privilege the free individual and unconstrained market competition.

THE REAL THING?

To what extent is this *mente* problem, widely experienced by Bulgarian consumers as a routine annoyance, a matter of individual choice as opposed to a matter of access? This goes to the heart of the question of responsibility in consumption practices. How can consumers who feel cheated defend themselves without support from the government?

In 1999–2000, consumers' concerns with *mente* products gave rise to the publication of a specialized magazine, *Mente i Originali* (Fake and Original). The magazine guided consumers through different kinds of fraudulent products, comparing them with the "authentic" originals, and provided advice on how to shop sensibly and avoid falling for fakes. In some cases, it also clarified how global brand-name products such as Coca-Cola could in fact be "the real thing" manufactured by the same company but still seem different in Bulgaria than elsewhere because companies used "different recipes" for various markets.

One article compared a Coke bought in Greece with one bought in Bulgaria, noting that the Greek version had higher sugar content and the Bulgarian one had a less concentrated flavor. While the Bulgarian Coke was nonetheless verified as an authentic product, the author suggested that Bulgar-

Consumption was more than a matter of individual choice.

ian consumers might still perceive it to be *mente* because it was not the same as the Greek one. In this particular case, *mente* referred to something that was simply not the same as in "other" (usually "Western") markets. This perceived difference mattered to consumers. They directed their frustration at the weak state that allowed such travesties to occur in the Bulgarian market.

More recently, in 2013, consumers' frustration with "imitation" cheese (containing non-dairy vegetable fat) generated a surge of new *mente* stories. This product was essentially a processed cheese (think Kraft American cheese) that was perfectly legal but nevertheless still considered *mente* because it was not made according to the "real" and "authentic" method. In this case, *mente* did not indicate a counterfeit item but something that was "chemically processed" and thus of lesser quality, which the producers had tried to pass off as traditional cheese.

The state eventually did take action in this particular controversy to differentiate the "real" cheese from the "fake" by announcing that the processed variety must be strictly labeled as "imitation cheese" and displayed in a separate section from the "real" cheeses. But the fact that the state tolerated *mente*, and allowed it to be circulated legally, only reconfirmed consumers' discontent with the postsocialist state. The accumulation of such daily frustrations has intensified their demands for an accountable government to assert control over the marketplace.

These public sentiments, however, have collided with the agenda of Western-influenced consumer advocacy in the era of neoliberal globalization. The consumer regimes in the advanced capitalist economies of Europe and North America emphasize that consumers are responsible for monitoring and reporting potential frauds. Armed with better information, consumers can protect themselves and rely less on the regulatory state. Consumer rights experts in postsocialist Bulgaria have urged the same approach. But how could this be achieved in a country with a less developed culture of consumer advocacy and consumer protection infrastructure than those in the West?

As part of the EU accession requirements, Bulgaria had to enact a consumer law and adopt the bloc's consumer protection standards. This top-down approach failed to take Bulgaria's historical

experience into consideration, and ongoing political corruption hampered enforcement of the new standards. But the larger problem was that state agencies could not possibly control every product in Bulgarian marketplaces—they could only respond to consumers' reports of questionable and faulty products. This stood in stark contrast with the socialist state (at least as consumers perceived it), which had centrally controlled the production and distribution of goods. This left citizens with the perception that the state was neglecting its job, leading to further deterioration of trust.

TRUST DEFICIT

The deregulatory neoliberal ideology, and policies inspired by it, have exerted global influence on consumer issues. These issues came to be perceived and framed as a matter of individual responsibility and choice within market relations. Consumers' rights were no longer something to be advocated for; they were something to be claimed by individual and sovereign consumers making better-informed choices.

As a result, global consumer movements focused on disseminating objective, reliable information to individual consumers—through independent comparative testing, for example—rather than mobilizing collective actions. Even the idea of "consumer protection" that we see in EU laws and regulations and elsewhere is premised on the idea of giving individual consumers better access to reliable information.

But if consumers are skeptical of the information provided by activists and continue to feel vulnerable to deceptive marketing—for which they blame not only the producers, but also the state that fails to shield them from the abuses of the market—how, and from whom, can they demand their rights and protection? What do consumer rights actually mean in a context in which citizens are unsure whether there is even a functioning judicial system that can enforce the law and ensure the protection of rights? Owing to chronic corruption, Bulgaria and Romania were unable to join the first wave of EU accession in 2004, when other Eastern European countries such as Poland and

Hungary became member states—they had to wait three more years. To date, Bulgaria ranks lowest in the EU on Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index.

In postsocialist Bulgaria, consumers demand that the state be held accountable for fulfilling its social contract—its promises to the citizens. They want the state to ensure basic rights to both access and choice in the realm of everyday consumption. They expect the state to be morally committed to providing a system that guarantees the basic necessities of food and shelter as well as the ability to choose goods and services. This would restore ordinary people's civic confidence and trust in the state, and allow them to have the "normal" and "less anxious" life that they long for. This sentiment is shared by many other Eastern European consumers.

Essentially, what postsocialist citizens have been hoping for is a state that can ensure a level of fairness and a degree of transparency sufficient to address their consumer grievances and restore social trust. Postsocialist consumers expect the state to be a kind of moral agent. Consumers' discontent over their experiences of risk and vulnerability in the marketplace may be considered a moral failure of the state, and not just a failure on the part of individuals to fulfill their responsibilities to protect themselves as consumers.

This demand perhaps is not exclusive to postsocialist consumers at a time when the moral failures of politics and economics are being scrutinized around the world. But consumer politics after socialism highlights in a particularly acute form a problem of global relevance: how to define and shape a vision for the future that can provide both access to basic necessities for everyone and choice that protects even consumers with low purchasing power from the abuses of the market. Although neoliberal capitalism often undermines state power in favor of corporate power, consumers' experiences in Eastern Europe remind us to reexamine our assumptions about the role of the state in the realm of consumption, where everyday needs and personal desires intersect with politics and global economic forces. ∎

Germany's Post-2015 Immigration Dilemmas

TRIADAFILOS TRIADAFILOPOULOS

Debates over immigration, integration, citizenship, and multiculturalism have dominated headlines of late, spurred by increases in flows of asylum seekers and the rise of extreme right-wing populist parties and movements. Among the industrialized liberal democracies of the Atlantic world, Germany stands at the center of this trend. In 2015 and 2016, Germany received over 1.17 million applications for asylum; by the end of 2017, 970,364 people recognized as refugees under the 1951 Geneva Convention were living in Germany (compared with 121,837 in Britain and 337,143 in France). An additional 222,683 claims for formal asylum were filed in 2017, and 185,853 more in 2018. Despite the decline from the 2016 peak, this still marked a significant increase over previous years; from 2004 to 2010, Germany recorded fewer than 50,000 applications for asylum per year.

The surge in asylum applications in 2015–16 played a key role in spurring the success of the far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD) party in regional elections in 2016 and the 2017 federal election. The AfD won 91 seats in the Bundestag, marking the first time an extreme right-wing party secured such representation in the Federal Republic, and giving it the most seats of any opposition party. This raised alarms among observers in and outside Germany, causing many to question whether the government's efforts to foster a "welcoming culture" for immigrants and religious and ethnic minorities had ground to a halt in the face of a mounting populist backlash.

These fears are not altogether misplaced. The years since 2015 undoubtedly have seen a strengthening of anti-immigrant sentiment among segments of the German population and the po-

litical class. This shift in the public mood has led to some important changes. Policies introduced to reassert control over migration flows have sharply reduced annual admissions of asylum seekers.

Yet this tightening of control has not led to a reversal of liberalizing trends in other areas. Reforms to immigration, integration, and citizenship policies introduced since the late 1990s have withstood the backlash of the past three years. Although public opinion is not as favorable as it was before or during the 2015 refugee crisis, a majority of younger Germans and residents of large cities and towns remain committed to diversity. Most tellingly, the steady liberalization of immigration policy continues, driven by employers' demand for skilled workers. A return to a time in which national leaders could claim that Germany is not an immigration country is highly unlikely. On the contrary, the reassertion of control over asylum flows has allowed Germany to continue to build a policy designed to facilitate selective immigration.

The past few years have been marked by a sharpening of discourse around issues of national identity, and particularly the place of Islam in Germany. Despite this, the country is still dedicated to the successful integration of immigrants and refugees. This is clear from the maintenance and expansion of existing policies as well as continuing efforts, especially at the local level, to promote a welcoming society.

The German case suggests that the development of a multicultural society, or a welcoming culture, requires carefully regulated migration flows. Once the state loses control of its borders, even for a short period, the consequences can percolate through the democratic system quickly, imperiling the project. What constitutes a migration crisis is determined politically—there is no objective tipping point. Calls for open borders by political theorists and pro-migration activists are

TRIADAFILOS TRIADAFILOPOULOS *is an associate professor of political science at the University of Toronto.*

bound to founder on the shoals of democratic politics. The best that can be hoped for, in Germany and elsewhere, may be tightly regulated migration that serves the interests of the receiving society by meeting labor-market needs.

THE GUEST WORKER PERIOD

After Germany's defeat in World War II, some 12 million ethnic Germans were expelled from Czechoslovakia, Poland, and other Eastern and Central European countries. The lion's share of these expellees eventually settled in West Germany, creating an integration challenge of epic proportions. But Marshall Plan aid helped to rekindle the economy and, over time, the threat of mass unemployment among the newcomers gave way to labor shortages.

Germany entered into its first postwar bilateral labor agreement, with Italy, in December 1955. Italian workers selected by German and Italian officials were granted permission to work legally in Germany for a limited time, mostly as seasonal laborers in agriculture. The expectation was that they would return to Italy at the conclusion of their contracts. By 1959, 85,000 guest workers (known in German as *Gastarbeiter*) had been admitted. This system of foreign labor procurement expanded rapidly as West Germany entered into bilateral agreements with Greece in 1960, Turkey in 1961, Portugal in 1964, and Yugoslavia in 1968. By 1964, the total number of foreign workers in West Germany topped one million.

The growth of what was initially envisioned as a modest means of meeting labor market needs was based on the booming West German economy and the failure of the state to ensure a rotation of guest workers. This failure was a result of employers' preference for holding on to workers who had been trained and were performing well—rotating them out of their jobs would add an unwanted expense. Moreover, West German officials were determined to build a new, progressive identity for their country and did not want to risk undermining this project by forcing foreign workers to leave against their will. Thus the mechanism needed for any temporary foreign-worker scheme to work—rotation—was short-circuited.

This led to a steady increase in the settlement of guest workers. In many cases, they had put down roots and were being joined by their spouses and children. By 1973, West Germany was host to some 2.6 million foreigners.

German officials shuttered their foreign labor recruitment system in November 1973, ostensibly in response to the spike in the price of oil that year. While many guest workers did return to their home countries, millions opted to remain in West Germany, and family reunification continued apace. When the government challenged their right to stay, the courts intervened, buttressing migrants' permanent residency rights. By the election year of 1983, the total number of foreigners in the country (a term that also referred to the German-born children of foreign workers) had risen to 4.5 million, or 7.4 percent of the total population of West Germany.

POST–COLD WAR ARRIVALS

Two factors related to the end of the Cold War led to an increase in migration to Germany in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Claims for asylum, which had been quite modest until the 1980s, increased substantially as the bipolar world order ended, Germany reunified in 1990, and states like the former Yugoslavia splintered. The violence unleashed by the collapse of the Soviet bloc, particularly the 1992–95 Bosnian War, created thousands of refugees. Many of these refugees were attracted to Germany, since it was nearby and had the most generous refugee policy in Europe. Article 16(2) of the German Basic Law granted asylum seekers "persecuted on political grounds" the right to make a refugee claim. The Federal Republic received 1,434,360 applications for asylum between 1988 and 1993. Meanwhile, hundreds of thousands of ethnic German repatriates (*Spätaussiedler*) from the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe were granted constitutionally guaranteed access to the Federal Republic, automatic citizenship, and settlement assistance.

By the mid-1990s, Germany's foreign population had reached 6.9 million, or 8.5 percent of the population. Yet the government had no integration policy to speak of. While former guest workers had rights to welfare benefits and other forms of social assistance, access to services was mediated by nongovernmental welfare organizations run by the Catholic and Protestant churches and the trade union movement. Migrant children could at-

The comfortable consensus that marked the years between 2005 and 2015 is over.

tend public schools, but little effort was put into reforming the system to meet their needs. Language training, when provided, was ad hoc with little governmental oversight or support.

The 1990 Foreigners Act was only a modest improvement over its predecessor, reducing requirements for the naturalization of younger immigrants. Passage of the law was preceded by bitter political debates. Whereas the period of aggressive foreign-worker recruitment had been based on a solid cross-party political consensus, agreement between the Christian Democrats and the Social Democratic Party (SPD) had broken down by the early 1980s. This made it extremely difficult to devise polices to deal with migration flows and facilitate the integration of former guest workers and their children. Christian Democratic leader Helmut Kohl exploited the SPD's apparent inability to deal effectively with migration to win a no-confidence vote in 1982; this ended Helmut Schmidt's SPD-led coalition government and was the beginning of Kohl's 16 years as chancellor.

The Christian Democrats wanted to limit family reunification, amend the constitution to reduce the flow of asylum seekers, and maintain the prevailing citizenship regime, which was based exclusively on the principle of family descent (*jus sanguinis*) and rejected dual citizenship. The SPD and the Greens (who entered the Bundestag for the first time in 1983) argued for maintaining the constitutionally protected right to asylum, restricting access for ethnic German repatriates, and liberalizing citizenship policy by introducing elements of birthright citizenship (through the principle *of jus soli*) and tolerating dual citizenship as a way of encouraging naturalization.

These debates came to a head in late 1992, as attacks against asylum seekers in the former East Germany intensified and a Turkish family in the western city of Mölln was murdered in a firebombing by right-wing extremists. In December 1992, the SPD and the coalition government led by the Christian Democrats reached a compromise whereby a constitutional amendment would enable the government to restrict access for asylum seekers coming from safe third countries. In exchange, rules for the naturalization of young immigrants were further liberalized and annual quotas were placed on ethnic German repatriates.

TURNING POINT

The election of 1998 was an important turning point, bringing an SPD-Green coalition to power under the leadership of Chancellor Gerhard Schröder. The new government acknowledged that Germany had been transformed by immigration and made the liberalization of the citizenship law one of its first priorities. A bill that included elements of *jus soli* was introduced in 1999. But the opposition forced an amendment requiring children of immigrants born in Germany, and thereby granted citizenship under the new law, to choose either German citizenship or that of their parents, between the ages of 18 and 23.

The so-called Red-Green coalition also introduced an immigration bill in 2001, in an effort to move Germany toward a managed system favoring skilled workers. Although the Christian Democrats fought the proposal tenaciously, the measure was passed in July 2004 and took effect in January 2005. The Act to Control and Restrict Immigration and Regulate the Residence and Integration of EU Citizens and Foreigners, rebranded the Residence Act upon its implementation, aimed to effectively regulate migration, simplify residency policies, and institute a more coherent approach to integration.

Under Section 43 of the Residence Act, the federal government was required to support the integration of legally resident foreigners. The law also called for the introduction of "integration courses" to impart "adequate knowledge of the [German] language" and of Germany's "legal system, culture and history." The integration courses would be coordinated by the new Federal Office for Migration and Refugees in conjunction with civil society organizations and state and local governments.

A sense of urgency to advance a more systematic approach to integration policy was heightened by a series of violent events including the September 2001 terrorist attacks in the United States, bombings in Madrid in March 2004 and London in July 2005, and riots in the suburbs of Paris and other French cities in October and November 2005. These incidents raised concerns about the potential for alienated immigrant youth to fall under the sway of Islamist extremists or other violent movements.

Germany's poor results in the 2000 and 2003 rounds of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development's Program for International Student Assessment, along with persistently high unemployment rates among second-generation youth, also spurred agreement on the need for action. So did the 2006 Micro Census's revelation that close to half the residents of Germany's large cities

had a "migration background" (*Migrationshinter-grund*). At the EU level, a series of policy plans emphasized the importance of integration measures.

OPENING UP

The 2005 election saw the Red-Green coalition replaced by a "grand coalition" joining the two largest parties: new Chancellor Angela Merkel's Christian Democrats and the SPD. Among this government's first steps was holding a National Integration Summit, organized by the Federal Commissioner for Migration, Refugees, and Integration, Maria Böhmer, and hosted by the chancellor. A government statement presented at the opening of the conference noted that integration was among the most important challenges facing Germany. Successful integration would require the efforts of all three levels of government, along with civil society actors and migrants themselves. The key to moving forward with this project lay in devising "a common understanding of integration that establishes mutual duties and rights: for migrants as well as the native population." This would be pursued "at all levels of state and society" through a National Integration Plan "with clear goals, concrete measures, and self-enforced obligations."

The plan was introduced at a second summit, held in 2007. Integration courses formed the core of the new approach. Under the 2005 Residence Act, third-country nationals (immigrants from non-EU states) would be required to take integration courses if they were unable to communicate in spoken German on a simple level, if the migration authorities demanded that they do so as a condition for receiving unemployment benefits (regardless of how long they had lived in Germany), or if authorities deemed that they had a "special need for integration." Refusal to comply with a demand to take an integration course could result in the denial of applications for the extension of residency permits and cuts to unemployment benefits.

Initially, integration courses were made up of 600 hours of language instruction and 30 hours of civics lessons focusing on Germany's legal framework, history, and culture. They concluded with an examination testing language proficiency and civics knowledge. Passing the test qualified immigrants for certain benefits, including a permanent residency permit and a reduction in the residency period required for naturalization. Presently, integration courses require 600 hours of language training and 100 hours of civics lessons.

In 2006, the Interior Ministry hosted the first of a series of recurring "German Islam Conferences," convening federal, state, and municipal officials, representatives of Germany's Muslim faith communities, and "secular Muslims" including feminists and others critical of traditional religious practices. Through plenary sessions held every six months and the ongoing efforts of working groups, the participants aimed to resolve a number of practical challenges, including how to fund Muslim religious instruction, train imams, and steer German Islam in a direction compatible with the country's political institutions. The government hoped to dampen rising anti-Islam sentiment while building stronger ties between Muslims and the state.

In the 2009 federal election, the Christian Democrats won enough seats to abandon the grand coalition and form a new government with the smaller, centrist Free Democratic Party, but it continued with the same approach on immigration. Although Merkel flatly rejected multiculturalism in 2010, claiming that it had "utterly failed," public officials were already beginning to use the term *Willkommenskultur* (welcoming culture) to signal that the Federal Republic was open to and thankful for the contributions of immigrants. The difference between multiculturalism and *Willkommenskultur* lay in the role of the state: whereas Merkel and other German politicians understood multiculturalism as an unguided free-for-all, a *Willkommenskultur* was a tangible public policy objective that depended on immigrants doing their part in accepting the terms of integration laid down by governments.

Highly skilled immigrants were granted easier access to the German labor market in 2012 through a reform of the Residence Act and the introduction of new rules for international students who graduated from German universities and colleges. This opening up to immigration was possible because of three factors. First, German governments had demonstrated that they could effectively regulate migration. Asylum flows were modest and there was evidence that the state took integration seriously. Second, favorable public opinion helped develop a renewed cross-party political consen-

> *Liberal democratic states cannot open their borders without expecting a sharp backlash.*

sus. Third, Germany's economy was moving into high gear, creating labor shortages. Employers demanded that the government do something to help them meet their need for workers.

By the time the 2013 election brought a return to a Christian Democrat–SPD grand coalition under Merkel, Germany had developed a coordinated approach to immigration and integration. The new government continued in the liberalizing direction of its predecessor by doing away with the provisions in the 2000 Citizenship Act that compelled children granted citizenship through *jus soli* to choose between their German nationality and that of their parents.

LOSING CONTROL?

The number of asylum applications in Germany had remained low since the late 1990s. This began to change in 2012, as refugee flows increased, driven by wars in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Syria. In 2013, Germany received 127,023 applications for asylum. Meanwhile, an economic crisis in southern Europe also led to increases in intra-EU migration. Still, public opinion was favorable toward immigration and a cross-party consensus was maintained.

The massive increase in asylum claims in 2015 and 2016 changed things drastically. Merkel opted to keep Germany's borders open in late August 2015 as other countries in the region were closing theirs, declaring, "We can do this" (*Wir schaffen das*). Over one million asylum seekers entered Germany in 2015, leading to 476,649 applications for asylum that year and another 745,545 in 2016. Public opinion remained remarkably positive through the fall of 2015 as individuals, civil society organizations, and all levels of governments mobilized to provide shelter and other basic necessities for asylum seekers.

While this deliberate loss of control was initially understood by many as a morally necessary decision dictated by events, it did not take long for demands for reversing course to grow. Fears that the Islamic State might be using the refugee crisis to smuggle terrorists into Europe were heightened following a November 2015 attack in Paris that killed 130 people. News that 18 asylum seekers were among the suspects in assaults against hundreds of women during New Year's Eve celebrations in Cologne further darkened the public mood.

The steady liberalization of immigration policy continues.

The AfD benefited from this emerging discontent, performing well in several regional elections in the spring of 2016. An anti-immigrant social movement called Patriotic Europeans against the Islamization of the West (PEGIDA), which had been holding regular rallies in Dresden since 2015, also drew increasing support for its positions. Worries over links between immigration and terrorism intensified even more after an attack on a Berlin Christmas market in December 2016 that left 12 people dead. It was carried out with a truck by a failed Tunisian asylum seeker who had not been deported after his application was rejected.

The grand coalition government responded to these developments by moving to reestablish control over Germany's frontiers, reforming asylum policy, and redoubling efforts to process a massive backlog of asylum applications and speed the integration of those granted protected status. Thousands of asylum seekers whose applications were rejected were sent back to their countries of origin. Germany spearheaded a 2016 EU deal with Turkey aimed at stopping the flow of refugees to Europe. The Turkish government pledged to better control its coastlines and accept rejected asylum seekers in exchange for 6 billion euros (to help it meet the needs of the 3.5 million Syrian refugees it was sheltering) and the possibility of visa-free travel for Turks in the EU. These measures sharply reduced the number of asylum applications in 2017 and 2018.

Nevertheless, the refugee crisis catalyzed a resumption of debates over immigration, integration, and German identity. Questions persist over whether and to what degree Islam "belongs" to Germany—in March 2018, Merkel insisted that it did, contradicting her interior minister, Horst Seehofer. As with the debate in the 1990s over whether Germany was an immigration country, resistance to publicly acknowledging the place of Islam in the Federal Republic reflects a normative divide. No one disputes that Islam is the second-largest religion in Germany, after Christianity. The differences lie in whether and how this fact ought to be recognized publicly. Long-standing demands that refugees and immigrants assimilate into a German "leading culture" (*Leitkultur*), initially raised in 2000 by Friedrich Merz, a leading Christian Democrat, and echoed by then–Interior Minister Thomas de Mazière in 2017, have gotten louder.

STILL WELCOME

The success of the AfD in the 2017 Bundestag election, in which it won 12.6 percent of the popular vote and 13 percent of the chamber's seats, signaled to many that Germany had entered a new, troubling stage in its handling of immigration and diversity. The success of the AfD and far-right populist movements such as PEGIDA is undeniable, and the comfortable consensus that marked the years between 2005 and 2015 is over. Differences over matters of migration and integration between Merkel's Christian Democratic Union and See-hofer's Bavaria-based Christian Social Union—the so-called "sister parties"—have weakened Merkel's latest governing coalition since it was formed in March 2018.

Yet a closer look reveals that the policy trajectory since 2005 has continued, and in some ways even deepened. Economic immigration, especially for highly skilled foreigners, remains a top priority. All indications point to the imminent passage of a new immigration law that would ease the criteria for entry, enabling a broader range of workers from outside the EU to pursue career opportunities in Germany. New policies, most notably the Integration Act of 2016, have been introduced to assist in the labor-market integration of refugees—an unheralded move that aims at both harnessing the influx of refugees for economic purposes and avoiding the mistakes of the past by making economic and social integration public-policy priorities. Clearly some of the lessons from Germany's handling of guest workers in the past have been taken into consideration.

Public opinion among younger Germans and urban residents remains positive regarding the benefits of living in a diverse society. There is no new push to walk back reforms in the area of citizenship policy. Local efforts aimed at addressing in-tegration concerns by building networks of stakeholders spanning the public service, civil society, and migrant groups have expanded to help refugees. These initiatives seek to draw on the insights of target groups—immigrants, ethnic and religious minorities, refugees—to aid in the development of more effective policy interventions. While the place of Islam in Germany is hotly debated, the institutions set up to facilitate these discussions work to channel them in a more productive direction. The goal of building a *Willkommenskultur* remains a priority at all levels of government in virtually every part of the country.

Events in Germany since 2015 do suggest that there are important political limits to migration. Liberal democratic states cannot open their borders without expecting a sharp backlash. What constitutes too much migration in a democracy is a political question; there is no objective tipping point. Countries such as Turkey and Lebanon have accepted many more refugees and have not foundered. There is no reason to believe that Germany and other prosperous European countries could not shoulder a greater load. The fact that they do not speaks to politics rather than capacity.

At the same time, the German experience shows that liberal democracies are able to develop effective policies and maintain the support of voters when they demonstrate that immigration is in the public interest and can be well managed. This has been the case despite the success of the AfD and movements such as PEGIDA. The project of building a *Willkommenskultur* is no easy feat, particularly given Germany's past experiences and current circumstances, but it is still within reach. Paradoxically, however, building a society that welcomes migrants makes it unlikely that the unprecedented hospitality shown to asylum seekers in 2015 will be repeated. ∎

1989 and After: Morality and Truth in Postcommunist Societies

VLADIMIR TISMANEANU

Almost 30 years ago, the independent, self-governed Polish trade union Solidarity was legalized after a long campaign of strikes, and allowed to compete in parliamentary elections that it won by an overwhelming margin. What followed was a chain of breathtaking, radical changes, now designated as the revolutions of 1989. The collapse of communist regimes across Eastern Europe stirred huge hopes and widespread euphoria. Many of us—historians, political scientists, economists, sociologists, philosophers, and journalists—indulged in wishful thinking and overlooked how complicated and frustrating the divorce from the dictatorial past would be. Things have been far from simple in the three decades since then. Transitions do not follow a teleological libretto.

Some politicians remained faithful to the ideals of 1989. One was the pro-Western liberal Pawel Adamowicz, the mayor of Gdansk—the home of Solidarity—for 20 years. He was murdered in January, as I was writing this essay. Another politician chose to betray those ideals and has become the apostle of the antiliberal counterrevolution: Viktor Orbán, Hungary's prime minister, a former anticommunist maverick turned right-wing populist. Such metamorphoses reflect the psychological and social components of the postcommunist imbroglio. But things were not simple in Poland and Hungary in 1956, in Czechoslovakia in 1968—or for that matter, in 1989, either. On the contrary, they were maddeningly contradictory, nonlinear, and often discombobulating.

Communism and fascism still have followers and continue to exert an uncanny seductive power. Can critical intellectuals still make a difference? Can liberal values resist ethnocentric attacks? We need clearheadedness, moral intelligence, and political lucidity. Maybe these are all "lyrical illu-

sions," to borrow the title of a chapter in André Malraux's Spanish Civil War novel *Man's Hope*. But without lyrical illusions we would succumb to non-lyrical demagoguery, xenophobic populism, and other unsavory forms of bigotry.

At first, in the early 1990s, critical intellectuals were lionized as truth-tellers indispensable for Eastern Europe's transformation. Václav Havel, the dissident playwright, became the president of Czechoslovakia; then, after the "velvet divorce," he remained president of the Czech Republic. Solidarity's legendary leader, Lech Walesa, was elected president of democratic Poland. Morality and politics were regarded as mutually compatible. Civil society represented a widespread aspiration to a non-Machiavellian new form of politics.

Coming to terms with the past was a matter of moral and political urgency, at least during the first postcommunist years. But to accomplish this reckoning with history, which the Germans ponderously call *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*, is a very complex, thorny, and more often than not vexing process. To right the wrongs of the past requires engaging in a historically grounded undertaking that is meant to offer traumatized societies a chance for closure. To accomplish this task, political leaders need both moral imagination and civil courage.

Unfortunately, these virtues are in short supply in Eastern Europe's new dark times. Instead, scapegoating fantasies and fundamentalisms of all sorts abound and pollute the public sphere. An example of this is Orbán's obsessive besmirching and vilification of the billionaire investor and philanthropist George Soros, portrayed by state propaganda campaigns as a rapacious destroyer of Hungarian (and European) identity. This harassment recently forced Central European University, which was founded by Soros, to announce that it will move most of its operations from Budapest to Vienna.

ROMANIA'S DELAYED CATHARSIS

One country where a break with the totalitarian past was initially dismissed as unnecessary, even

VLADIMIR TISMANEANU *is a professor of politics at the University of Maryland. His latest book, coauthored with Marius Stan, is* Romania Confronts Its Communist Past: Democracy, Memory, and Moral Justice (*Cambridge University Press, 2018*).

deleterious, was Romania. The country's December 1989 revolution was the only violent one in the region. Nicolai Ceaușescu's regime, the most absurd even by Leninist standards—a "sultanism" of sorts, as the political scientist Alfred Stepan called it—was a dynastic communist experiment. It came to an end as a result of a spontaneous revolt from below, combined with an intraparty coup.

The first post-dictatorial leader, Ion Iliescu, was a Moscow-trained former ideological apparatchik who had been mildly critical of Ceaușescu's excesses. For Iliescu and his partisans, liberal democracy was a bourgeois concoction. From the beginning, their party, the successor to the Romanian Communist Party, advocated what Iliescu called "original democracy," which would feature state control over the media, repression of civil society, and distrust, even hostility for the free market and private property. We might say that post-1989 Romania was the first experiment in what Orbán would later champion as "illiberal democracy."

One of the premises for such a regime is historical amnesia. Battles about the meanings of the past are in fact confrontations about the present and the future.

In 1996, Romanians elected Emil Constantinescu, a former rector of the University of Bucharest and civic activist, as president. Many people pinned their hopes on him to initiate a long-delayed national catharsis. Yet there were two or three missing elements.

First, the pressure from society for such a coming to terms with the past was not very strong in the mid-1990s in Romania, or in East-Central Europe as a whole. Second, Constantinescu made an unfortunate statement that his very election as president fulfilled a key point of the March 1990 Timișoara Proclamation, since he had never been a paid Communist Party activist. The proclamation, issued by a group of participants in the December revolution, demanded the lustration, or banning from public life for a period of five years, of a whole class of people: the party and secret police apparatchiks. It was not really about Emil Constantinescu becoming president (or King Michael, or whomever else). But the hour of decommunization had not yet arrived.

Sometimes distance in time can help. That's one of the lessons I've learned. It's never too late. The Dominican Republic only a few years ago opened

Battles about the meanings of the past are in fact confrontations about the present and the future.

a museum devoted to the dictatorship of Rafael Trujillo, who ruled from 1930 to 1961. The same thing happened in Brazil and Guatemala decades after the breakdown of military dictatorships.

People sometimes forget that in 1996 there were very few, if any, young Romanian historians or political scientists with a Western background who would have been able to do what the Commission for the Analysis of the Communist Dictatorship in Romania finally accomplished a decade later. The average age of the commission's experts was around 30. Ten years earlier, under Constantinescu, these people were still students.

I was appointed head of the commission in March 2006. One of its main achievements was the democratization of access to the National State Archives. We reviewed many previously classified documents. The Final Report, which condemned the communist dictatorship as illegitimate and criminal, was handed to then-President Traian Băsescu in early December. On December 16, Băsescu summarized the report and its main proposals before a joint session of both chambers of the Romanian Parliament.

Our analysis led us to a number of far-reaching conclusions. First, the nature and strength of the Romanian struggle with communism emerged much more clearly. The country had a real armed resistance. Contrary to the legend (promoted both by the far right and the far left) that the resistance consisted only of remnants of the Iron Guard—the fascist movement that had been a force in Romanian politics during the 1930s—it was in fact made up of former military officers, teachers, and members of democratic parties, including some social democrats and even a few disenchanted Communists. This broad cross-section of society had joined the resistance brigades and units in the mountains. The far left and far right were united in their displeasure with our findings.

Our second conclusion was that there had been continuity between the first and second stages of Romanian communism, shattering the historiographical consensus that the Ceaușescu regime (he took over in 1965) was fully nationalist compared with the first stage, which was more deferential to Moscow. That provoked an outraged reaction from the "old historians"—ex-Communists—who argued that Ceaușescu had broken with Moscow by condemning the 1968 Soviet invasion of Czecho-

slovakia. But our position was that there had been continuity with variations in what were essentially Stalinist regimes.

A third conclusion addressed the level of individual and collective dissent under communism. We found quite a lot of evidence showing that there was indeed a significant amount of protest and opposition. The archives revealed that protests in the Jiu Valley in 1977 and in Brasov in 1987 shook the top leadership with the force of an earthquake. For the first time, we had access to documents showing that Ceaușescu personally gave orders for the arrest, interrogation, and torture of the 1987 rebellion's leaders.

Through the work of this commission, I began to question the "totalitarian thesis," at least as it pertained to Romania. According to the classical model, totalitarianism made any form of protest and resistance impossible. This static image was contradicted by the events that followed Stalin's death in March 1953.

Hannah Arendt once said that the only perfect totalitarian universe is the concentration camp. Romania could not have been described as a concentration camp, definitely not after 1956 brought Nikita Khrushchev's secret speech condemning Stalin, followed later that year by the Hungarian Revolution. Maybe at the height of Stalinist repression between 1949 and 1953 it could have been characterized in such a way, but even then there were cafes and restaurants. And it's now clear that there was much more resistance and opposition than I used to think was the case.

DEMOCRACY AND MEMORY

Why was the report so controversial? We clarified the values of the commission from the beginning. I said that our unambiguous anticommunist ideals were not rooted in another extremism. Our position was based on civic, liberal anticommunism, which is morally synonymous with civic, liberal antifascism. We were explicitly antitotalitarian—that is, both anticommunist and antifascist. In a country that experienced both forms of totalitarianism, it's important to emphasize that.

You can imagine the reactions. Former party propaganda hacks closed ranks with xenophobic demagogues in slandering us and denying the very legitimacy of such a conclusion. Some of the strongest attacks came from prominent historians associated with the communist era who later turned out to have been informers for the secret police, the Securitate.

To his credit, in spite of all the criticisms, Băsescu stood by the report. He would have liked his speech in December 2006 to be a moment of closure. But Corneliu Vadim Tudor, the head of the ultranationalist Greater Romania Party, turned it into the opposite by clowning and booing, creating a circus in the parliament.

Iliescu got very angry because he was mentioned in the report. The former president was not singled out unfairly, but cited for obvious reasons. He had been a secretary of the Central Committee and Minister of Youth under Ceaușescu. Later, hoping to learn more about the man and to find out if he had changed at all, I collaborated on a book with him, a series of interviews that was published in 2004. Later, he dismissed me as a mere scribbler. "I'm very flattered, you wrote a book with a scribbler!" was my reply. Ultimately, I realized that he had not evolved much. In December 2018, Romanian prosecutors indicted Iliescu for crimes against humanity, for taking actions that contributed to violence in December 1989.

The conclusion I have drawn from my extraordinary experience with the commission and Romania's debate over historical justice is that democracy and memory are inseparable. The Polish philosopher Leszek Kolakowski once said that a "lie is the immortal soul of communism." A robust and vital liberal order cannot be erected upon a pile of lies. In a country that has emerged from a period of dictatorship, truth commissions such as the one I chaired are essential for the credibility and legitimacy of a functional democracy. Thirty years after those exhilarating moments that we refer to as the revolutions of 1989, coming to terms with the traumatic legacies of the past remains politically urgent and morally indispensable. ∎

The Trouble With Overcoming the Ancien Régime

HOLLY CASE

The "best way to understand modern European political history," Sheri Berman argues in her new book, "is as a struggle to eliminate the vestiges of the old regime and build a consensus about the type of regime that should replace it." Her opening epigraph in *Democracy and Dictatorship in Europe* quotes the popular astronomer Carl Sagan: "You have to know the past to understand the present." This is true. And it is also why the present is so difficult to understand.

For those of us who believe in the value of liberal democracy, understanding the present takes on special urgency. Berman wonders how we got from the "optimism of 1989" to Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán's 2018 declaration: "The era of liberal democracy is over."

Starting with the seventeenth century and working her way up to the present, Berman, a political scientist at Barnard College, has made a good-faith effort to do what not many historians would attempt today. In this respect the book is commendable. It also says something about the times, perhaps, that some scholars seem to find the confines of their own disciplines too narrow for the purposes of explaining the apparent crisis of faith in liberal democracy. Just as Berman has written something like a history, the historian Timothy Snyder has written something more akin to political theory in his recent book *The Road to Unfreedom.*

The "myth" that Berman wishes to correct is the notion that "a gradual, liberal, nonviolent path to democracy exists." Not so, she argues: if you look to history, the road to liberal democracy has regularly been beset by perils, setbacks, even apparent reversals. In fact, she insists, liberal democracy is "a rare and recent phenomenon," and "countries

Democracy and Dictatorship in Europe: From the Ancien Régime to the Present Day
by Sheri Berman
Oxford University Press, 2019

that stumble along the way to democracy are the norm rather than the exception."

Despite liberal democracy's relative novelty and apparent fragility, we should not lose hope. The recent turn to right-wing neo-authoritarianism in the countries of East-Central Europe may simply be a temporary setback on the way to truly "consolidated liberal democracy." This latter concept Berman defines broadly as states that possess "national sovereignty," wherein "citizens get to choose their leaders and governments," but must also "accept liberal values and norms, including limitations on political power, minority and individual rights, the rule of law, the political equality of all citizens, rights to free speech, press, religion, and so forth."

"[L]iberal democracy," Berman asserts, "usually emerges only at the end of long, often violent, struggle, with many twists, turns, false starts, and detours from the high road." Yet she cannot seem to decide whether these setbacks are necessary phases on the way to liberal democracy, or dangerous deviations.

The stakes are especially clear in her treatment of World War II. Berman notes that the Nazis succeeded in "transforming Germany's state, society, and economy and the rest of Europe to an unimaginable and appalling degree." She points out the irony that "some of these transformations would help 'clear the way' for the rebirth of liberal democracy in Germany and Europe at the end of the Second World War."

In a chapter on postwar Europe, Berman further observes:

> In addition to discrediting the radical right, eliminating critical socioeconomic vestiges of the old order and hindrances to democracy, and creating more homogenous nation-states, another critical consequence of the war and its aftermath was the occupation and eventual 'rehabilitation' of Europe's most problematic country: Germany.

HOLLY CASE *is an associate professor of history at Brown University. Her latest book is* The Age of Questions (*Princeton University Press, 2018).*

This in turn made it possible for the United States to undertake Germany's "democratization." As Berman argues, "It was only after the most destructive war [in] history that Western Europe was finally able to put an end to the long-standing political and national struggles that it had suffered through since 1789."

Her argument seems to suggest that ethnic homogenization is a component of "national sovereignty" and "agreement on the nature and boundaries of the national community," two sine qua nons, in Berman's view, for consolidated liberal democracy. This is an old argument, a variation on which was quite common during the Wars of Yugoslav Succession: that many nationalities existing within one state is a problem, and either the rehashing of borders or the reshuffling of peoples was the necessary prerequisite to functioning democracy. This view was the latest incarnation of what historian Eric Weitz has called the "population politics" of "the Paris system," in reference to the post–World War I treaties' codification of both minority rights and forced population exchanges. Berman does not address the 1990s wars in the Balkans, where such "population politics" took the form of World War II–style violent ethnic cleansing, requiring liberal democratic observers to take a stand on whether this mode of thinking was viable.

The recent turn to right-wing neo-authoritarianism in East-Central Europe may be a temporary setback.

At the end of her book, Berman writes, "Throughout European history it has often taken tragedies like democratic collapse, violent dictatorships, and war to force elites and publics to recognize the value of liberal democracy and what it takes to actually make it work." She clearly hopes that with history as our guide, we can avoid retracing this path. But she does not seem to fully grasp the implications of assuming that nation-building, national unification, and the consolidation of boundaries around relatively ethnically homogeneous populations are the necessary prerequisites to the consolidation of liberal democracy.

"Whoever does it first gets to decide how it has to be done" has long been the unofficial motto of European politics. If the French had to turn "peasants into Frenchmen," and the Germans and Italians had to achieve national unification in order to consolidate their liberal democracies, then everyone else should have to follow suit, Berman's argument implies. Many historians of East-Central and Southeastern Europe have been questioning that model since at least the 1990s. Berman does not cite them, referencing instead the older works of historians whose projects most resemble her own (like Hugh Seton-Watson, Joseph Rothschild, and Norman Davies), covering long time spans and with an emphasis on nation-building. Her method is understandable, given the scope of the project, but unfortunately reproduces many of the overgeneralizations that made historians turn away from writing such histories in the first place.

OUT WITH THE OLD

Berman's intriguing thesis about the difficulties of overcoming the "ancien régime" deserves especially close attention. Given that she dedicates the book "To those who have struggled to get rid of the ancien régime," it is clearly a matter of utmost importance to her. But by the end of the book I was not sure I knew what she meant.

Should we take her word choice—"ancien régime" appears in the title as well as dozens of times throughout the book—to mean that there was some Ur-regime that was dominant in the seventeenth century and then became the target of the French and British revolutions, and of the revolutions of 1848? A force that has reinvented itself, assuming various guises up to the present day? (Discussing the Dreyfus Affair, Berman cites the historian Robert Gildea's view that its factions "represented divisions in French society that reached 'back to the French Revolution and forward to the Holocaust.'") In this expansive interpretation, the "ancien régime" can be any regime—absolutist, fascist, communist—that stands in the path of liberal democracy and its consolidation, implying that liberal democracy is the one true path forward, if not the "end of history."

Yet it is precisely this emphasis on overcoming the old order that the neo-authoritarians are currently wielding *against* liberal democracy. In 2016, Orbán used the occasion of Donald Trump's election victory to cast liberal democracy as the "ancien régime" that needed to be overcome. "The world has always benefited whenever it has managed to release itself from the captivity of currently dominant ideological trends," Orbán told reporters. He said Trump's election "gives the rest of the Western world the chance to free itself from the

captivity of ideologies, of political correctness, and of modes of thought and expression which are remote from reality: the chance to come back down to earth and see the world as it really is."

Orbán has argued that his own brand of "illiberal democracy" is what happens "when the liberals don't win." In his year-end speech for 2016, he noted with relish that all those who thought "the liberal world order was unchangeable," that "nations are doomed and can go along with their devotees to the museum," had been proved wrong. History did not end after 1989 with the perpetual rule of liberal ideals, he concluded. Instead, with the groundswell of illiberalism, "It took a sharp turn, broke through the carefully constructed barriers, and stepped out of the course designated for it."

Orbán's strategy shows the difficulty of using a historical approach to derive a once-and-for-all formula—like thinking in terms of overcoming the "ancien régime"—for pressing the cause of liberal democracy. As Berman herself notes, whereas during the first part of the nineteenth century nationalism acted largely as a promoter of liberal democratic ideals and values, by the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries precisely the opposite was often the case. One could say the same about nationalism under communism—when it was often seen as a dissident and therefore more "liberal" and "democratic" alternative—and after communism's collapse, when nationalism became the bête noire of scholars watching the violent disintegration of Yugoslavia during the first half of the 1990s.

Berman writes that the "countries of [East-Central Europe] had little experience with democracy and even less with liberalism and also, of course, inherited myriad problems and antidemocratic and antiliberal legacies from previous communist dictatorships . . ." Yet arguably more than one "ancien régime" has functioned not unlike nationalism, sometimes planting the seeds of "liberal values" (ethno-religious tolerance in the Habsburg Empire, for example, or equal rights for women in the socialist countries), and at other times thwarting them. If liberal democracy is always about overcoming the "ancien régime," some perfectly good babies will regularly find themselves thrown out with the bathwater.

Furthermore, the question of which "ancien régime" is the target of overcoming is important.

One could argue that the "ancien régime" of the nineteenth century, as far as liberal democracy was concerned, was absolutism of the sort confronted in the French Revolution, but that the "ancien régime" of the twentieth was Austria-Hungary, given that many of the most influential figures of that century—from Hitler to Herzl to Hayek—were arguably shadow-boxing with its legacy. If the twentieth century was about overcoming Austria-Hungary, the twenty-first might be said to be about overcoming communism. Berman hints that she views matters in such terms when she writes of the legacies of "communism and colonialism" in East-Central Europe.

As such, "overcoming" means not simply "leaving behind," but salvaging the elements of the "ancien régime" that the current opponents of liberal democracy are demonizing and fear-mongering around for the purposes of consolidating their own power. Often, Berman notes, especially in reference to Western European countries, liberal democracy did not have to "start from scratch," but could rather pick up where it left off before the last dictatorship. History also shows, however, that neither do antiliberal regimes need to "start from scratch."

Just as social scientists had to refine and expand their definition of liberal democracy by insisting on a "consolidated" form wherein its values are internalized by members of the polity, the forces that oppose liberal democracy have shape-shifted to avoid setting off alarms with visible similarities to absolutism, Nazism, and communism. They hold elections, they do not resort to violent forms of persecution, they acknowledge the rights of indigenous minorities, and so forth.

The issue most new authoritarians have chosen to focus on, immigration, is pointedly not mentioned on the list of "liberal values" Berman offers, perhaps because "liberal democracy" has not taken a fixed position on that issue historically. Furthermore, if consolidating liberal democracy in Europe requires a relatively homogeneous national polity, as Berman's narrative implies, then liberal attitudes toward migration will not differ significantly from Orbán's. So perhaps now is the time to do what liberal democrats have done for more than two centuries: elaborate further the definition of "liberal democratic values" to meet the political challenges of the present and the future. ∎

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INTERNATIONAL

US-China Relations

Jan. 28—The US Justice Department announces criminal charges against the leading Chinese telecommunications company, Huawei Technologies, and its chief financial officer, Meng Wanzhou. One indictment accuses the company of stealing technological trade secrets from US-based competitor T-Mobile. The other accuses Meng and Huawei of violating US sanctions against Iran and related obstruction of justice and fraud. US officials say they will seek to extradite Meng from Canada, where she was detained in December 2018 at the request of the US.

BRAZIL

Jan. 1—Jair Bolsonaro is sworn in as president and immediately begins implementing the far-right agenda he campaigned on. His 1st actions include eliminating the Labor Ministry, downgrading protection of LGBT rights and indigenous lands, and a decree making it easier to purchase guns.

COLOMBIA

Jan. 17—In Bogotá's worst attack in years, a car bombing kills at least 20 people at a police academy. The suicide bomber is linked with the National Liberation Army, a small guerrilla group that was not party to a 2016 peace agreement between the government and the far larger Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC).

CONGO, DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF

Jan. 10—The Independent National Election Commission releases the delayed results of the Dec. 30 presidential contest and declares Felix Tshisekedi the winner. Independent observers including the Catholic Church had asserted that another opposition candidate, Martin Fayulu, won by a large margin. Fayulu alleges that Tshisekedi struck a secret agreement with outgoing President Joseph Kabila, who held office since 2001 and delayed the election long after his final term expired in 2016. Tshisekedi is sworn in Jan. 24.

GUATEMALA

Jan. 7—President Jimmy Morales says he is shutting down the UN-backed International Commission Against Impunity in Guatemala (CICIG) and expelling its foreign staff from the country. CICIG had pushed to prosecute Morales for campaign finance violations and charged his son and brother with fraud.

Jan. 9—The Constitutional Court, the nation's top tribunal, blocks Morales's order, but CICIG's foreign staff leave the country after the government says it can no longer guarantee their protection. Thousands of Guatemalans take to the streets Jan. 12 in protest.

HUNGARY

Jan. 5—In some of the most widespread demonstrations against right-wing Prime Minister Viktor Orbán since his Fidesz party secured a parliamentary majority in 2010, 1,000s of protesters organized by opposition parties and trade unions march against a labor reform dubbed the "slave law." It allows companies to compel employees to work up to 400 hours of overtime each year and delay paying wages for up to 3 years. Demonstrations against the law have continued since it was signed Dec. 12. Protesters have also called for restoring independent courts and media.

MACEDONIA

Jan. 25—The Greek parliament narrowly votes to ratify an agreement for the former Yugoslav republic to its north to adopt the name North Macedonia. The vote was preceded by months of protests in Greece. Opponents warn that recognizing Macedonia will embolden it to make territorial claims to Greece's north-central region of the same name. The accord makes it possible for the smaller country to join NATO and the EU, moves previously blocked by Greece.

PHILIPPINES

Jan. 21—In a referendum in Mindanao, 85% of voters back a plan to create a new autonomous region in the mostly Muslim south, which has endured secessionist violence and terrorist attacks for decades. The vote ratifies an agreement under which the main rebel group, the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, will drop its demand for an independent state and demobilize its fighters in exchange for a role in government.

Jan. 27—Two bomb explosions at a cathedral on southern Jolo island kill 22 people. The bombings are linked to Abu Sayyaf, a group that was excluded from the Mindanao peace process.

POLAND

Jan. 14—Pawel Adamowicz, the liberal mayor of Gdansk, dies a day after he is stabbed at a charity event by an assailant who blames him for a criminal conviction. Adamowicz, a vocal supporter of rights for immigrants and other minorities, was a prominent opponent of the ruling right-wing populist Law and Justice party. Thousands of Poles join protests across the country against violence and hate speech.

SUDAN

Jan. 29—The government says it will release 100s of protesters detained by security forces over the past month in nationwide demonstrations sparked by a deepening economic crisis and opposition to President Omar al-Bashir, an autocrat in power since 1989. At least 29 protesters have been killed since the demonstrations began in December when the government moved to triple the price of bread.

TAIWAN

Jan. 2—Chinese President Xi Jinping calls for Taiwan's unification with the mainland and warns that China could use military force to prevent any move toward formal independence. Taiwanese President Tsai Ing-wen Jan. 5 rejects Xi's remarks and calls for international support for the island's democratic self-rule.

UNITED KINGDOM

Jan. 15—The House of Commons rejects Prime Minister Theresa May's deal for withdrawing from the EU in a 432–202 vote, as 118 members of May's Conservative Party break ranks to vote against her. May says she will seek to revise the deal, though she had previously insisted the EU would accept no changes.

VENEZUELA

Jan. 23—At a massive protest in Caracas, Juan Guaidó, the head of the opposition-controlled National Assembly, declares himself "interim president." His claim is promptly recognized by the US and other nations in the region. President Nicolás Maduro, who was sworn in for a 2nd term 2 weeks earlier despite alleged election fraud and a severe economic crisis, cuts diplomatic ties with the US.

Jan. 28—The US announces sanctions against the Venezuelan state oil company, whose exports to the US have been the Maduro government's top revenue source. ∎

EUROPE

- National capitals
- Other cities

0 100 200 300 Miles

ARCTIC OCEAN

Greenland Sea

ICELAND
Reykjavik

Arctic Circle

Norwegian Sea

ATLANTIC

OCEAN

Faroe Is. (Den.)

Shetland Is. (Br.)

Hebrides

Orkney Is. (Br.)

SWEDEN

NORWAY

FINLAND

Åland Is.

Helsinki

Oslo

Stockholm

Tallinn
ESTONIA

St. Petersburg

RUSSIA

Gulf of Bothnia

Gulf of Finland

Gotland

Öland

Baltic Sea

Gulf of Riga

Riga LATVIA

Moscow

DENMARK

North Sea

Copenhagen

Bornholm (Den)

LITHUANIA
Vilnius

RUSSIA

Minsk

BELARUS

Dublin

Isle of Man

UNITED

KINGDOM

NETHERLANDS

BELGIUM

Amsterdam

Berlin

Elbe R.

Vistula

Warsaw

Kiev

IRELAND

London

Brussels

LUX.

GERMANY

Prague

Oder R.

POLAND

UKRAINE

English Channel

Seine R.

Paris

Rhine R.

CZECH REP.

Danube R.

SLOVAKIA

Vienna

Bratislava
Budapest

Dniester R.

MOLDOVA

Chisinau

ROMANIA

Bucharest

Black Sea

Loire R.

SWITZ. LIECH.

AUSTRIA

HUNGARY

Bern

SLOVENIA

Zagreb

Ljubljana

FRANCE

Saône R.

Po R.

CROATIA

Rhône R.

SAN MARINO

MONACO

BOSNIA AND
HERZEGOVINA

Sarajevo

Belgrade

Danube R.

SERBIA

BULGARIA

Sofia

PORTUGAL

ANDORRA

Corsica

ITALY

VATICAN
CITY

Rome

MONTENEGRO

KOSOVO

Podgorica

Tiranë

MACEDONIA

Skopje

Istanbul

Ankara

Madrid

Tajo R.

SPAIN

Sardinia

Tyrrhenian Sea

ALBANIA

GREECE

TURKEY

Lisbon

Balearic Is.

Ionian Sea

Aegean Sea

Gibraltar (U.K.)

Mediterranean   Sea

Sicily

Athens

Nicosia

CYPRUS

Strait of Gibraltar

Crete

MALTA Valletta

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