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Understanding Enemy Images in Central and Eastern European Politics. Towards an Interdisciplinary Approach

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Abstract

In recent years, Europe has experienced a rise in politics based on antagonism, often discussed from the perspectives of populism and the mainstreaming of the ideologies of the radical right. In this study, we argue that there is a need for an interdisciplinary, theoretically broader and more empirically focused approach that fosters understanding of these developments. To explore the causal factors, we focus on the enemy images that are constructed and diffused by politicians, and their specific historical and structural contexts. The paper thus has two main components: First, we review what political theory, research on populism and on the extreme right and social psychology say about the functions of the use and development of enemy images. Second, we highlight the contextual factors that we consider make the success of a politics based on enemy images more likely in Central and Eastern Europe.

Keywords: Enemy Images; Populism; Central and Eastern Europe; Politics.

I. Introduction

In recent years, Europe has experienced the rise of a politics based on antagonism. Right-wing populist parties have won national elections in Hungary and Poland, there has been an intense 'blame game' between Germany and Greece in relation to the debt crisis (Mylonas, 2012; Wodak and Angouri, 2014), anti-immigration discourse has been on the rise since mid-2015, Central and Eastern European immigrants have been blamed for taking British jobs (Fitzgerald and Smoczynski, 2015), and Central and Eastern Europeans tend to blame Middle Eastern refugees who are fleeing war for spreading terror (Tremlett and Messing, 2015; Győri, 2016; Klaus, 2017). Those phenomena have usually been discussed from the perspectives of populism and the mainstreaming of radical right-wing ideologies. Here we argue that there is a dire need for an interdisciplinary, theoretically broader and empirically more focused approach to understanding the recent developments, in which the key is a focus on the 'images of the enemy' constructed by political actors, and their historical and structural context.

Enemy-making has essentially always been a part of politics. For Carl Schmitt, the friend-enemy distinction is the ultimate, defining distinction of politics to which every political action and motive can be reduced' (Schmitt, 2008: 26). Through this distinction, politics defines ing- and aoutgroups, political communities and *Others*, be they a state, organization or an abstract power. Although in contemporary European politics threats of violence and their actual use are relatively rare, the enemy is invariably pictured as someone who poses an existential threat to the community. In consequence, enmification and the possibility of the actual annihilation of 'the enemy' is still an important part of politics, even when hidden or left unmentioned.

Although enemy-making is a substantial part of politics, its intensity and forms are always changing. Open antagonism has recently overtaken the political mainstream in Europe. The use of the 'enemy' narrative is now intense, regardless of electoral campaign cycles that have regulated it before. Enemies are invoked to fuel various mobilization efforts outside of elections: popular votes, pro- and anti-government protests, mobilizations pro- and against refugees, consultations, petitions, contentious activities of the left and right wing, and so on.

The discourse on enemies has become more aggressive, and the identification of enemies increasingly more explicit and open: on the one hand, hostile labelling of vulnerable social groups (the poor, immigrants, Muslims, the Roma, LGBT people) is probably more prevalent now than it has been since WWII. On the other hand, political adversaries (opposition parties, civil society organizations and movements, trade unions) are explicitly referred to as those who need to be disciplined and restricted in their activity.[1]

Why has the use of the concept of the enemy intensified lately? Why do politicians in Central and Eastern Europe target vulnerable groups as enemies, and link them to their political adversaries? We argue that answering these questions

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[1] For example, measures against NGOs that criticize the government have been taken to a new level by the Russian and Hungarian governments. NGOs that receive funding from abroad now have to register themselves as foreign agents in Russia, and label themselves as being 'supported from foreign resources' in Hungary. See: Yasmeen Serhan: Hungary's Anti-foreign NGO law. The Atlantic, 13/06/2017 .

requires an interdisciplinary approach. Such an approach should combine considerations of political theory about the functions of the concept of enemy in politics, pre-existing empirical research about the use of enemy images by political actors, and the contextual factors that provide favorable conditions for such a politics.

Naturally, one such study cannot cover all this ground; therefore, we now focus on two tasks. First, we review what political theory, research on populism and on the extreme right and social psychology say about the use and development of enemy images. Second, we highlight the contextual factors that make the success of politics based on enemy images more likely in Central and Eastern Europe.

By doing this, we intend to support our claim not only that 'the enemy' still has an important role in political theory, but that 1) this issue should be empirically examined more broadly than just in relation to populism and the extreme right, and 2) this examination should go beyond the political process approach by including more sociological, and even social psychological, aspects. This approach would clarify how structural conditions lead to group processes and to a social psychological state in which politics based on enemy-making seems more likely. Furthermore, this type of politics triggers the creation of structural conditions that encourage further radicalization.

After venturing into the problems involved with defining the enemy, we turn to political theory – namely, to Carl Schmitt and Chantal Mouffe, whose works focus on the fundamental role of enemies in politics. Political sociology is more empirically focused. The extreme right and modern populism are considered to use enemy images extensively; thus, through a short review we summarize the use of enemy images by these actors. We complete the first task with an explanation based on studies from social psychology of why the intensity of the development of enemy images might be different in various contexts.[2]

After reviewing the literature, we examine the factors that condition the political actors of Central and Eastern Europe to use enmification in their politics. Enmification is more likely when the social structure is more hierarchical, and members of society are constantly exposed to uncertainty and to relative deprivation. These historically embedded factors are strengthened by more recent developments such as a transnational, Europeanized political context, and the results of the economic crisis of 2008. Finally, we suggest that the changes in the media and the mediated public sphere play a decisive role in intensifying the use of enemies as a main platform for public discourse.

II. The 'enemy' in politics

One would expect the term 'enemy' to have a simple and consensual definition. However, what we have found is that proper definition of this term in studies that deal with enemies in politics is lacking. Despite the ambiguities, there are three domains –

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[2] The use and development of enemy images could involve more disciplines and research areas. We are well aware that the issue of the perception of the *Other* has been well addressed by research on identity, on constructing the in-group and Otherness, on prejudices, anti-Semitism, and racism or securitization. These approaches have much to say about the topic. Here, however, we only build on the disciplines we consider address more closely the mechanisms of recent political processes.

political theory, political sociology and social psychology – where the concept of the enemy has received more attention. Thus, after elaborating the concept itself, we summarize what political theory (namely that of Schmitt and Mouffe) and students of populism and the extreme right tell us about the use of enemies. We then turn to the mechanisms of the development of enemy images, as examined by social psychology.

II.1. Concepts and definition

At first sight, understanding the 'enemy' as a concept seems simple: the enemy is someone (a group, a nation, a person) who tries to destroy 'Us.' Yet, as simple it may seem, it is hard to find a clear, well-formulated definition of 'the enemy'. Some studies lack definitions entirely, using the term as if the meaning is evident, or as used in public discourse (e.g. Fergusson et al. 2014; Holt and Silverstein, 1989; Silverstein, 1989). Others who have defined the enemy use various terms and concepts. For example, Schmitt (2008) defines an enemy as an actor who poses an existential threat to a community considered an in-group, while Oppenheimer defines an enemy only as a 'specific form of a negative stereotype', (Oppenheimer, 2006: 269). Volkan (1985) describes the enemy as the antithesis of an ally. This always involves 'attributing to [the ally] all the qualities the culture considers good: honesty, integrity, cleanliness and loyalty' (Volkan, 1985: 224).[3] Thus, the enemy must be dishonest, amoral and non-loyal. Ramet (1999) applies a similar strategy. He also describes the enemy through its attributes, and cites an enumeration of these by James Aho: '"Dregs" of the society, from its lower part, [...] it is sewage from the gutter, "trash" excreted as poison from society's affairs' (Aho, 1994 cited by Ramet, 1999: 4).

It seems that scholars generally try to express the *notion* of enmity, instead of defining it by capturing the emotional content of the concept. The important thing is that enmification always involves strong feelings: perception of hostility, anger, hatred from and towards the enemy, which points towards their dehumanization.

The role of emotions becomes more important with an increase in the vagueness of the description of the enemy. Here, making a distinction between traditional images of the enemy and enemy images used in modern politics seems crucial. Traditional enemies are associated with warfare; they are external actors that pose a physical threat, while modern, political enemies are not necessarily outsiders, the threat of physical elimination is relatively uncommon and the image itself is much less clear (Holt, 1989; Schmitt, 2008; Schwab, 1987). In the latter case, the enemy may be internal, such as 'the elite' for populists, 'the Roma', 'Muslims', 'immigrants' or 'Jews' for the extreme right, but also various hidden, invisible groups or traitors (Szabó, 2007) or simply political adversaries, parties and movements (Schmitt, 2008; Szabó 2007). While the traditional enemy is an external actor *before* it becomes an enemy, the modern enemy is externalized *because* it is an enemy. Thus, groups or actors labeled enemies are externalized by a discursive act of exclusion.

Enemies can be personal or collective. Holt (1989) differentiates between personal and public (or national) enemies, while Jung et al. (2002) distinguish between

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[3] Volkan relies on a definition suggested by Murray Edelman in a presentation at the International Society of Political Psychology (Volkan 1985:224).

individual and national perceptions in the enmification of countries. In Holt's study, American college students treated both private and public (political) enemies as threatening. Perceptions about private enemies, however, were associated with strong feelings such as hate, while students were more likely to associate public enemies with ideological and axiological differences.

Although the concept of the enemy is not as clear as one might expect, its use affects the political process. Silverstein (1989) points to cognitive studies that assume that enemy images distort information processing. Nations considered enemies are not only seen as more hostile, but information processing about them is selective. People are more likely to notice information about the enemy's aggressive actions than about their peaceful acts. Furthermore, people attribute harmful, aggressive actions to their enemies even when other actors carry them out. In line with this observation, social mediation studies found that negative articles about the U.S.'s main enemy, the Soviet Union, were more prevalent than positive ones in significant American newspapers. Fergusson et al. (2014) argue that politicians need an enemy to obtain an electoral advantage. Such actors might present the problem of the existence of enemies as a task which they are best suited for managing. Accordingly, the authors suggest, enmification is an action-legitimizing strategy. Moreover, keeping the image of the enemy alive and visible is also an important method of avoiding being perceived as superfluous.

The most important advantage of creating and maintaining enemy images is the contribution this makes to the sustainability of the imagined political community.[4] This is so because 'group identity is defined by contrast to other groups and is the result of systematic comparisons with and differentiation from other groups' (Oppenheimer, 2006: 271). In cases of international conflicts, the relevant group might be a nation, while in internal conflicts it might be *true Hungarians, Czech, Poles, true democrats,* or any other group. Pointing out the enemy may be the main method of creating a group, since the enemy should be precisely the opposite of 'Us'. By strengthening loyalty and evoking strong emotions, collective enemy images are able to strengthen the capacity for mobilization of these imagined communities. By reference to such an imagined community, we have already arrived at the terrain of political theory: The idea that the role of the enemy is its use in group formation is very much in line with the idea that the function of the enemy is the creation and maintenance of a political community, as proposed by Carl Schmitt and Chantal Mouffe.

II.2. The concept of the enemy according to Carl Schmitt

Carl Schmitt is considered the most important thinker on the role of enemies in politics. For him, the difference between 'us' and 'them', 'friends' and 'enemies' is the founding stone of politics. In *The Concept of the Political* (2008) he argues that this distinction has an existential character, suggesting that the search for enemies is part of human nature and there can be no political community without its Others (i.e.

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4 In an imagined community, members know only a small proportion of the community, since it is too large. Thus a nation is clearly an imagined community (Anderson, 2006).

without those who are not members and, what is more, who threaten the integrity of the latter). In other words, the very identity of every group depends on the existence of its opposite. He stresses the relational character of every group identity and stresses the virtual impossibility of sustaining political pluralism, as every distinction inevitably leads to conflict. Those conclusions are in line with Carl Schmitt's conservatism and his disdain for liberal democracy.

In his late book, *The Theory of the Partisan* (2007), Schmitt expands his theory by describing three distinct types of enemies: limited, real, and absolute. Antagonism with the first is limited by norms or rules (such as international law), thus such foes are not to be annihilated, but rather defeated or dislodged from one's territory. The latter types are more dangerous, as their aim is always to overthrow the political order, to destroy the very essence of their opponents. Yet while the 'real' enemy acts to defend their land or identity from intruders, the 'absolute' enemy wants to further their revolutionary cause. The partisan, or shall we say, terrorist, hides among civilians, does not follow any rules, and constantly plots the overthrow of the existing order. War with an 'absolute' enemy can be only absolute, using every possible means.

Schmitt's argument was recently revived by Chantal Mouffe (2005) as a counter to the liberal utopia of post-political democracy cherished by thinkers such as John Rawls, Jürgen Habermas and, especially, Francis Fukuyama in his hotly debated *The End of History?* (1989). For Mouffe, the presupposed erasure of antagonism from contemporary liberal politics creates a symbolic space for populist politicians who are liberated to use the basic drive behind group identity and mobilize their supporters through name-calling. The author argues for the political recognition of the need for distinctions, yet in a 'limited' (to use Schmitt's term) version. Democratic politics should be fueled with 'agonism' (Mouffe, 2005: 20), which means struggle that does not infringe one's right to exist, as struggle itself is rooted in shared culture, institutions, language, symbolic space, etcetera. In her vision, conflict is contained by law and regulations, and opponents are rather adversaries than enemies. This is, of course, a normative vision, as in reality the processes of enemy-making breaches institutional barriers.

II.3. Populism, and the enemies of the people

Despite the generalistic nature of 'the enemy's' function, as proposed by political theory, in political sociology the use of enemies is attributed mainly to populist and extreme-right parties and movements. Populists divide the world into 'us' and 'them', and consider society to be inalienably separated into two homogeneous and antagonistic groups of 'good people' and 'corrupt elite'. For populism, 'the centrepiece of identity politics is the construction of 'the people' or the in-group'. (Woods, 2014: 12) The populist argues that politics should be an expression of the general will of the people (Mudde, 2007; Taggart, 2004), and always 'justifies its actions by appealing to and identifying with the people' (Jagers and Walgrave, 2007: 322). Populism generally politicizes identity, and claims to represent those who are true and honest. Populists consider 'the people' as a monolithic group without internal differences; however, some specific categories of individuals are subject to exclusion. While idealizing and worshipping the people, populists degrade and blame elites,

accusing them of being alienated from the people, self-centered, arrogant, incompetent, and of having no idea what ordinary people need (Barr, 2009; Rooduijn et al., 2012).

In extreme-right discourse, one can clearly distinguish this populist attempt to delineate who 'the people' are, and who does and should not be part of the people (Betz and Johnson, 2004). However, while for the populists the central subject is the construction of the people, for the extreme right the central focus is the enemy. Moreover, while in the populist vision the world is divided between 'pure people' and 'corrupted elites', the extreme right interprets the world through 'black and white' or 'good and bad' categories (Eatwell, 2000). The world, according to such a vision, is separated between friends, who support the extreme right's causes, and enemies, who oppose them (Caiani and Parenti, 2013). Especially in times of political and social changes, the extreme right identifies and mobilizes against scapegoats that are held responsible for anything that goes wrong (Minkenberg, 2011). Specifying the Other is crucial for the identity-building of the extreme right, since the movement largely defines itself through constructing itself as a mirror image of the out-group (Mudde, 2007; Woods, 2014). According to Ramet, 'the Other lies at the heart of radical right politics, and for the radical right, [...] the Other is translated into "Enemy"' (Ramet, 1999: 4).

While the defining features of the in-group in politics often remain rather vague, descriptions of the out-groups tend to be very clear. For populists, 'them' consist mostly of elites, defined in strict opposition to the people, and usually referred to as corrupt. Extreme-right parties go further in their appeals in comparison to populists, turning the category of 'them' into the excluding category of 'enemies', and going beyond blaming just political elites. In the discourse of the extreme right, enemies are usually demonized and often dehumanized (Mudde, 2007). Dehumanization operates at the level of victimization – the object is stripped of any identity and humanity, reified into an enemy who is selected not by reason of their personal characteristics, but on the basis of their group belonging. According to Heitmeyer (2003), dehumanization, along with promoting the superiority of one's own group and the inferiority and depersonalization of the Other, is a major part of a more general belief in inequality and values attached to the demonstration of power. The extreme right projects a 'group-focused enmity', which is directed:

'not only against those who are ethnically/culturally or religiously different but even against those who are 'the same' but are defined as 'deviant' from the standpoint of the right-wing extremist ideology of inequality' (Heitmeyer, 2003: 401).

Enemies are targeted through symbolic and/or physical violence, and depicted as human decision-makers, rather than impersonal forces such as industrialization or the market (Caiani et al., 2012; Gamson, 1992; Polletta and Kai Ho, 2006).

While populism is a very important part of extreme right-wing ideology, there is more to it. Most authors define the extreme right movement as nationalist, xenophobic and supportive of antidemocratic authoritarianism. Wimmer (2002) and Koopmans et al. (2006) stress that the movement combines attachment to a strong, sovereign nation-state with an exclusive, ethnocultural idea of citizenship. Eatwell (1996) argues that all movements that belong to that category share a commitment to an ideology that reflects a belief in the intrinsic inequality of humans, and the

acceptance of violence as a legitimate means of political expression. This means that the world of the extreme right is divided into inseparable communities that cannot be reconciled.

John Downes (2015) analyses European national election results and concludes that the radical right-wing parties succeeded by employing a policy of antagonism; however, the author does not use this specific term. What is interesting is that successful radical right movements did not refer to economic problems that emerged during the recent crisis. Downes argues that: 'it does not make rational sense for extreme right-wing parties to play the economic card and emphasize economic policies as they are not trusted by the majority of the electorate on this policy area' (Downes, 2015: 10). The crisis rewarded, he claims, a 'clarity of issues' in politics. In other words, the right successfully constructed 'the enemy' using the 'immigration crisis' as a trigger and means of delineating clear-cut borders between 'us' and 'them' at a time of turmoil. Studies of the extreme right have confirmed the observation that immigration and cultural differences have been used as ideological fuel for centuries (Koopmans and Olzak, 2004). The issue of immigration, clearly linked to antagonism, has become, in Kitschelt's words, an electoral 'winning formula' (Kitschelt and McGann, 1997), and even moderate right-wing parties thus 'rationally' decided to employ it. Downes' research suggests that there exists a process of dissemination of enmification in the public sphere that can be grounded in electoral arena choices and their consequences.

II.4. The development of collective enemy images

Political theory and political sociology explain the function of enemy images in politics and how they are used by political actors. However, they are less inclined to explain why the intensity of enmification varies spatially or chronologically. To understand the changes in the intensity of enmification, we turn to examining the processes that condition the development of enemy images.

Social psychologists have examined the issue of the development of enemy images on both the individual and the group level. Most argue that this is a natural process at the individual level (Jung et al., 2002; Murray and Meyers, 1999; Oppenheimer, 2006; Volkan, 1985). Therefore group-level processes should explain why the intensity of enmification is different in various groups and periods. However, to understand group processes, we must first summarize intra-psychic processes as well.

The most important intra-psychic process that leads to the development of enemy images is the projection of internal anxieties and stress. Volkan (1985) suggests that when a child is not able to integrate all their feelings towards an object (such as negative feelings towards parents) s/he will project some 'unintegrated aspects of him[her]self and perceived others onto suitable targets [of externalization]' (Volkan, 1985: 234). These targets could be objects such as medals or images of enemies. Objects associated with enemies generate negative feelings and aggression. Silverstein argues that this process can also happen in adulthood (1989: 905): 'people who are unable to deal on a conscious level with their anxieties and hostilities may project or displace them onto a socially accepted source of hostility and fear such as an enemy

nation'. Jung et al. (2002) argue that this stress projected and turned into animosity may be evoked by an actor or event perceived as hostile or threatening.

People might turn to this coping mechanism because of their specific personality traits. This argument suggests that people who tend to handle their anxieties and insecurity by developing enemy images will do it independently of the broader social context. Such an argument was first developed by Rokeach (1960). Rokeach and Restle (1960) distinguish between open and closed systems as ideal-typical models of cognitive structures. While the open mind sees the world as a friendly place, the closed mind perceives it as threatening. Thus, supported by its other characteristics,[5] the closed mind is more likely to accept enemy images as a cause of problems. Naturally, in their empirical findings the acceptance of others and the closed/openness of the mind appeared as a continuum rather than a dichotomous categorization (Rokeach, 1960).

People with an authoritarian personality are more likely to experience threats and dangers around them (Altemeyer 1981, 1996; Cohrs 2013). Murray and Meyers (1999) found that opinion leaders of the United States who saw the Soviet Union as an enemy in 1988 maintained their opinion towards Russia after the end of the Cold War as well. However, the authors were unable to confirm that these feelings could be transferred to different, new enemies when the old enemies disappeared.

Aside from personality traits, group processes and structural characteristics can also cause stressful situations that might be turned into animosity. As we argued earlier, the perception of a common enemy is one of the most effective tools for forming groups or enhancing their coherence, since contrast and comparison both contribute to group identity (Oppenheimer 2006). Groups are defined by enemy images too, because group formation serves as a defense mechanism during conflicts. When people perceive threats, they are more likely to engage with groups they consider their own. This is a regressive defense mechanism, since the need for group cohesion 'switches off' certain functions of the mind that are responsible for critical thinking and the sustaining of individual autonomy (Volkan, 1985). When a group is faced with a crisis and the breakdown of its institutionalized task-structure, unconscious expectations towards the group leader can arise. One of these is to expect the leader to fight the crisis (in the form of the enemy) that threatens the group (Volkan 1985).

Besides group crisis and external threats, group structures cause internal stress and contribute to the development of enemy images. Kurt Lewin's classic research (Lewin et al., 1939) shows that the intensity of scapegoating and hostile behavior towards other groups is significantly influenced by the level of authoritarianism of group leadership.

Authoritarian group leadership creates a high level of frustration, which leads either to aggressive behavior, or to apathy.[6] Frustration is caused by pressure, and the

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[5] As reliance on authority, mixing up the *content* of information with the intentions of the source of this information (e.g. what the source wants the recipient to believe) rejecting disbelief, and evaluating people based on their agreement with one's own beliefs, it is likely that the source of information about out-groups (and groups that are perceived as threats) is indirect (Rokeach and Restle 1960:55.56).

[6] Or both: In Lewin's experiments, when autocratic leaders left a room the level of aggression among group members grew rapidly (Lewin et al. 1939).

inflexibility of group structure (Lewin et al., 1939). Frustration is also increased by relative deprivation (Pettigrew, 2016) as groups might be faced with an unwinnable race when comparing their in-group to other groups. One response to these constant failures is raising one's own status against the odds by finding a scapegoat, an enemy to whom blame can be allocated (Pataki, 1993).

Even the earliest studies acknowledge that historical embeddedness and the value structure and lifestyles prevalent in a given society are important factors that influence individual and group-level processes (Adorno et al., 1950; Lewin et al., 1939; Rokeach, 1960). Inglehart and his colleagues (Inglehart and Welzel, 2005; Inglehart, 2008) measure the openness and closeness of a society using an index of self-expressive values. They argue that the value structure of a cohort is explained by the affluence of resources experienced during its formative years. Thus, put in a simplistic way, scarcity or affluence of resources influences in the long run how open or closed societies are. The value structure shapes political institutions: open societies are more likely to develop stable democratic institutions.

Oppenheimer (2006) argues similarly, but suggests that the chain of causation is reversed. Collective enemy images are easily developed in societies with a hierarchical social structure and a non-democratic political system, and where the authoritarian parenting style is more prevalent. Culture and national identity affect the categorization processes and inculcate certain types of racist beliefs in even young children. What is more important is that political ideologies and structure play an important role in the types of attribution awarded any given event, person or group.

One can also argue that different political ideologies use different attribution processes on the level of nation-states. In parallel with the assumption that totalitarian political systems stimulate hostility and antagonism to a greater degree than democratic political systems (Barnet, 1985), totalitarian systems may make greater use of external attribution than democratic systems, which more commonly use the tactic of internal attribution (Oppenheimer, 2006: 279).

The literature discussed above highlights many aspects important for understanding the recent situation. However, it also has shortcomings. First, although many studies have investigated the populist turn and mainstreaming of the extreme right, they tend to be descriptive about the recent phenomena. Studies of populism and the extreme right have been successful at exploring how enemies are pictured, the discursive strategies of political actors, and changes in public discourse. On the other hand, they are less inclined to incorporate an analysis of the structural conditions that foster the dynamics under study. Social psychology, on the other hand, focuses on the structural patterns, but in a generalized way. Since it is embedded in the psychological literature, it focuses more on the general mechanisms of group behavior instead of explaining how certain structures develop in any given context. Thus, in the third section of this paper we focus on the actors which play a role in contextualizing the discursive and group patterns we perceive in the politics of enemy making.

III. Why are Central and Eastern European societies responsive to the politics of enmification?

In this section we provide an outline of the factors considered grounds for enmification in the region. While our list here cannot be complete, we describe the most important processes and regional characteristics that have led to the hollowing out of politics (III.1) and, later on, to bringing political conflict back through various – including extreme – means (III.2-III.4). These processes may be classified according to the functions and mechanisms proposed above.

First, we enumerate the political culture and economic processes which, embedded in their historical and social context, have led to the maintenance of a structure favoring enmification. The fall of the Soviet Bloc led to an increase in hope for the blooming of a multitude of possible social, economic and political logics in the region (Krapfl and Hrebíček, 2009; Shields, 2012). It seems, however, that the historical legacy of Central and Eastern Europe, combined with its geopolitical context and its historical path dependency, led to the establishment of a specific political and economic model whose societies might be described as 'hypercapitalist' or 'privatized' (Elster et al. 1998; Jacobsson, 2015; Stark, 1994) and also to the neutralization of politics through the pacification of protest, the economization of society, and the transnationalization of politics.

Second, specific factors contribute to the need for enemies in politics: Multilevel governance, joining the European Union, and the strengthened system of international governance have led to increased uncertainty and less controllable political opportunities in the region.

Third, the economic crisis appeared as a threat to local and national communities and might have activated the regressive defense mechanisms Volkan (1985) refers to. The crisis has led to disappointment with the elites, the destabilization of political systems and enforced austerity measures. Political actors sought out discursive tools to explain these measures in a way that preserved or even increased the loyalty of voters. Fourth, the changes in public discourse are connected to changes in the mass media involving processes that provide space to actors that employ hostile language.

III.1 Demobilization of society

Pacification of protest

The processes of the demobilization of CEE societies during and just after the transition to the liberal regime were meant to curtail any opportunities for the radicalization of citizens that would disrupt the transformation, and to restore the presumed 'normal', rational and standardized working of political and economic institutions (Krapfl and Hrebíček, 2009). More general accounts of the pacification of political conflict in CEE countries have been provided by students of political culture. According to these, the general political passivity in the region is a result of historical cultural patterns which were further reinforced during the authoritarian rule of socialist states and triumphed after the time when its champions – the pre-1989

dissident elite – became part of the new political elite. Sometimes labels such as 'non-political politics' or 'anti-politics' are used to describe the widespread ethos of maintaining a distance from institutionalized politics, political parties and policymaking in general. CEE dissidents – most notably Václav Havel and György Konrád – and their conception of civil society and politics supported a non-political, ethical and anti-authoritarian politics (Celichowski, 2004; Rupnik, 2007; Smolar, 1996). This, together with anti-communist resentment, has constituted an obstacle to the politicization of social problems in CEE societies and has a long-term pathological impact on democratic politics through the negative assessment of processes of interest representation (Linz and Stepan, 1996; Renwick, 2006; Tucker et al., 2000).

Sociologists of social movements have proposed several explanations for the strange absence of mass mobilizations during the processes of economic transformation in post-socialist countries in the 1990s (Ekiert and Kubik, 1998; Greskovits, 1998; Vanhuysse, 2006). First, it was the legal framework and fragmentation of trade unions that ultimately led to the pacification of large conflicts – even if the trade unions were one of the most important actors in the regime change before 1989 (Ekiert and Kubik, 1998). Second, a more complex explanation builds on a comparison between Latin America in the late 1970s and Central and Eastern Europe in the 1990s – two regions undergoing a processes of radical socio-economic transition –, finding that the absence of significant mobilizations was a consequence of the relative lack of economic inequality, a lower level of urbanization and the absence of a tradition of violent struggles and preexisting forms of social protection (Greskovits, 1998: 85). Third, the relative absence of mobilizations after the fall of socialism was also explained as the outcome of the strategies of policymakers who succeeded in dealing with the situation of the most 'dangerous' social groups by providing them with selective incentives (in the form of social policies) that dissuaded them from protesting, such as early retirement schemes for miners, pro-employment policies for youngsters, etc. (Vanhuysse, 2006).

Economization of society

Another dimension of the neutralization of protest was the economization of CEE societies after 1989, by which we mean 'the assembly and qualification of actions, devices and analytical/practical descriptions as 'economic' by social scientists and market actors' (Çalışkan and Callon, 2009). This directly refers to Schmitt's critique of liberalism as an economic and thus non-political type of argumentation. Processes that were earlier observed in Western societies and have been conceptualized in various ways started to rage in Eastern Europe: namely, the 'increasing influence of economic factors and values on the political agenda and other areas of society' (Blumler and Kavanagh, 1999: 210), the 'economic turn' (Smart, 2003), the fetishization of the economy (Foucault, 2008) and the 'economization of every sphere of existence' (Kane, 2010:81). In short, these processes could be traced in CEE because the political transition was perceived and described in dominantly economic terms, and the notion of the market economy was as important as the notion of democracy (while the two were made interchangeable). A large part of the new political elite was recruited from a pool of academic economists or people

dealing with finances and management, and key principles and models of neoclassical economics started to be professed publicly as 'natural framework for politics and society' – with the aim of endless liberalization and privatization. New public management became the new Marxism-Leninism of both public administration and academic economists, revealing the naïve idea of the straightforwardness of the transformation from one system to another.

Generally, the problem was the marginalization of other functions and areas of society, and most importantly, suppression of the political dimension of societal coordination. The processes of economization are linked to the prominence awarded the neoliberal perspective in economy and politics, which – in contrast to classical liberalism which sought to protect the economy (market) from the state and politics – attempted to actively 'construct the necessary conditions for markets and non-market institutions to function, primarily to govern the social by restructuring the state according to a competitive logic through a generalization of the logic of economic incentives throughout the state apparatus and beyond the economic domain' (Madra and Adaman, 2013: 22). And it was precisely this perspective that prevailed among CEE elites in the 1990s. Key reformists in CEE countries (such as Balcerowicz in Poland and Klaus in the Czech Republic) utilized and popularized purely economic perspectives on politics and society which, together with the vanishing or dramatic transformation of political institutions, democratic political culture in the making, and the quest for broader legitimizing narratives for new societal order, led to the dominance of economic concerns over politics and culture. This evolution is nicely illustrated by a comment that was often used in the late 1990s in the Czech Republic when the first broadly negative reflections on post-1989 economic and political development arose: 'the economists simply overhauled the lawyers'.

Transnationalization of politics

Finally, the period of transformation was also accompanied by the restructuring, even collapse, of a number of national economies (Christensen, 1998) and also by the integration of national states into larger supra-national structures, most importantly, the EU. The process of political integration into the EU and the pressures of membership led to similar outcomes as did the adoption of support for neoliberal hegemony in the sphere of the economy: it significantly contributed to the shift in the important functions of economic management and functions vital to the state management of the economy, from national political institutions to supposedly neutral objective institutions, technocrats, and juridical frameworks (Shields, 2012). This led to gradual changes in national policy fields as it transformed the relation between citizens, national politicians, and 'real' policy-makers and norm-makers. The ties between citizens and their national representatives slowly started to hollow out: reversals or reforms of policies implemented at the EU level became highly unlikely and out of the control of national policy-makers, which further neutralized national policy discourses and decreased political conflict – at least within the mainstream 'pro-EU camp' of national politics which clearly dominated throughout the 1990s and 2000s. Often, national political representatives used the membership of their country in the EU to legitimize their unwillingness to deal with new problems, while after

animosity towards the EU started to increase, many politicians started to blame the EU for both everyday and large-scale problems. However, the perceived distance of 'Brussels bureaucrats' only seldom led to contentious action or the re-politicization of domestic conflicts. The consequent resignation of citizens and some part of the elite resulting from the localization of politics and the transnationalization of governance further de-politicized the national arena, which became a part of a 'normative and strategic environment that they have as yet only partially mastered' (Mény et al., 1996: 8). Furthermore, this process was interlinked with the increasing importance awarded the neoliberal paradigm in politics and economy which further negatively affected the vitality and importance of domestic politics vis-à-vis the rising power of international governance and economy structures (Grabbe, 2003).

III.2. The role of Europeanization

The effects of Europeanization and multilevel governance

The above-mentioned transnationalization of politics and the transnational means of handling the economic crisis, together with other mechanisms that strengthened supra-national institutions, led to an increase in the multi-level characteristics of governance whereby national institutions started to operate on the meso-level. Moreover, the former processes also contributed to the vilification of supra- and transnational institutions, opened a discursive space for the mutual blame-game throughout Europe, and changed the relations inherent in political and discursive opportunity structures.

Social movement studies – and, increasingly, mainstream political science – often analyse the behavior of political actors in the context of various political or discursive opportunity structures. Political opportunity structure basically refers to the characteristics of a political system: i.e. with what ease social movements, NGOs or other non-governmental actors can influence decisions. Influence is had through different 'access points' such as processes of social dialogue, elections or internal allies of non-governmental actors. When a political system is open, it has many access points; when it is closed, it has none, or at least the government tries to control these. Discursive opportunity structures, on the other hand, refer to a characteristic of the social environment in terms of to what extent the environment resonates with the aims and values the movement (or any actor) represents (Kriesi, 2004). The configuration of political and discursive opportunities defines the relation among the dominant actors and their challengers: When opportunity structures are closed, the challenger will not be able to gain support, nor will they be able to influence decisions. Open discursive opportunities and closed political opportunities mean that dominant actors will consider and respond to demands, while the reverse situation will lead to the co-optation of the challenger. The openness of both opportunity structures creates the ground for the inclusion of the challenger and the representation of their demands as well (Koopmans and Statham, 1999; Kriesi, 2004).

This model is proposed mainly for national (or smaller) settings, where it is supposed that major political actors, such as governing parties, are able to control political opportunities, thus a closed opportunity structure is possible. However, the

actual European system of governance is more complex, trans- and international, and provides various opportunity structures for civil society organizations to intervene and influence decision-making processes (Holzhacker, 2006). These processes not only make it possible to influence decision-making processes on the supra-national level, but – through the supra-national level – the national level as well. Basically, this means that a perfectly closed system of political opportunities on the national level is not possible. This fact increases the importance of the other dimension of opportunities: to prevent the effective intrusion of challengers at the supra-national level, dominant actors have to 'close' discursive opportunities by questioning the legitimacy of challenging actors and limiting their right to speak within the political community.[7]

Strengthening of Euroscepticism

EU membership and European integration have provided political actors with a powerful issue about which to compete, as the former may be the catalysts of political dissent (Almeida, 2010), creating favorable conditions for building upon nationalistic appeals and anti-European frames (Bustikova, 2009). Euroscepticism is no longer necessarily a fundamental predisposition of peripheral parties (Pirro and van Kessel, 2013), yet the Eurosceptic and extreme right groups in the region are usually the biggest opponents of EU integration. Though most of the extreme right parties in CEE (accession) countries were at the beginning of the 1990s initially pro-European as a result of a general embrace of a 'return to Europe' (Kopecký and Mudde, 2002) and the fear of being kept 'outside' after the fall of communism (Riishøj, 2007), they soon became increasingly negative about the drive towards EU membership. By being linked in many cases to the anti-communist struggle or the US as an alleged model of integration (Mudde, 2007), the ER has located itself on the side of the defense of positions of national demarcation through economic and cultural protectionism (Kriesi, 2008). Often accepting the historical and cultural roots of Europe, the ER in CEE opposes the political dimension of the EU by claiming that EU membership creates a negative comparative disadvantage in terms of the national sovereignty of nation states, and a loss of recently regained independence (Pirro, 2014). Culturally, it rejects the diffusion of Western or liberal attitudes (Neumayer, 2008) and the liberal agenda of the European Union, such as the protection of ethnic and sexual minorities and the promotion of gender equality (Bustikova, 2009). As the focus of attention moved from 'accession' to 'integration' in CEE countries, anti-European frames have become more prevalent (Pirro and van Kessel, 2013), and the financial and refugee crises of recent years have led to the politicization of the issue, making the EU, as an enemy, more salient in the political discourse of extreme right-wing parties.

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[7] This might explain the recent upsurge in regulations affecting NGOs capable of taking cases to the European Court of Human Rights, lobbying on the European level, or which are embedded in international networks. Both Russia and Hungary have recently passed laws stigmatizing organizations that accept funds from foreign donors. For more information, see for example: Independent Civil Society Under attack in Hungary: http://www.helsinki.hu/en/antingo/ . Accessed 10/09/2014 .

III.3 Economic crisis and economic voting

The 'Great Recession' that started with the 2008 global financial crash (Balakrishnan, 2009; Reinhart and Rogoff, 2009; Rodrik, 2011) was mainly dealt with using austerity measures and a new package of neoliberal policies. These policies were opposed in the streets by the mounting of large protests or/and in the ballot box with the destabilization of political systems. Especially in Europe, the banking crisis was soon transformed into a sovereign debt crisis affecting most EU-peripheral member states (Lapavitsas, 2012; Patomäki, 2013). Countries like Greece, Ireland, Portugal, Spain (all Eurozone members), and Hungary, Romania and Latvia in fact went bankrupt, and a special bailout mechanism had to be crafted at the transnational level to 'rescue' them. This mechanism included not only EU institutions like the European Commission and the European Central Bank, but also the IMF, which guaranteed the strict implementation and technical surveillance of the rescue programs. In short, the three institutions offered bailout loans to countries that could not borrow money from the international markets in exchange for austerity measures and structural adjustment programs.

Everywhere in Europe, politics became more contentious, political actors intensified the blame game, and most European governments were ousted. Kriesi (2014) found that in European countries one of the first signs of popular discontent was a drastic shift in voting patterns (Beissinger et al., 2014; Bermeo and Bartels, 2013; Kanellopoulos and Kousis, forthcoming). Extending the literature on economic voting, he argues that, depending on the party system, disaffected voters turned to established opposition parties or, in the face of austerity cuts and job losses, opted to 'exit' by 1) rejecting all mainstream parties, the established political elites, or the 'political class', 2) opting for new challengers in the party system who typically adopted populist appeals – i.e. the new populist right in Western Europe, or 3) turning against all political parties; i.e., abstaining from voting.

In Central and Eastern European- as well as Western European countries there were protests against austerity policies and electoral outcomes were affected. In Western countries the economic crisis triggered protest and most governments were ousted. In CEE countries the same happened, but protests were already in full swing when the crisis intervened due to corruption scandals and the malfunctioning of party systems. In spite of the pressure from the public, austerity measures across Europe have not (at least yet) been significantly modified. Protest, however, has gradually subsided and political participation has fallen. And 'not because the discontented population starts to trust the government, but because it has lost faith in the effectiveness of protest and/or because it is forced to acknowledge the constraints imposed on the government. Given the constraints of the situation, resigned acceptance of the inevitable may replace contention' (Kriesi, 2014: 304-305).

Regarding the rise of nationalistic sentiments, the electoral advance of far-right parties and growing significance of populism, we argue that the politics of protest were replaced and/or continued by the politics of enemy-making. Since no real adjustment to neoliberal policies has occurred, social inequalities have become deeper and economic disparity endures: a plausible solution for the stabilization of the political systems across Europe is thus appearing in the construction of 'enemies'. Depending

on the specific political and historical context of each country, these 'enemies' can be found among the national minorities, establishment political parties, newly arrived refugees from the Middle East, EU bureaucracy, etc. More specifically, it has been shown recently that the dynamics of economic protest in Visegrad countries (for example) are not directly related to the economic grievances suffered by the population, but rather to the (perception) of austerity policies, and that their magnitude relates rather to the structure of national political fields. In other words, even traditional forms of contention such as economic protests are determined by the strategy of elites of framing particular grievances or problems, and their capacity/willingness to represent these in the sphere of institutional politics (Císař and Navrátil, 2015). Consequently, our exploration of the use of enemies in politics in CEE aims also at the analysis of strategies of political and cultural elites, the media, and their interaction with extra-institutional mobilizations.

III.4. The role of the media

In explaining public attitudes and beliefs towards minority groups (or 'Others'), the media are said to have great significance. As they focus on particular issues, perhaps framing them in a negative and stereotypical way, and provide public space for actors who intentionally use enemy images in their agendas, the media intentionally or unintentionally provide an environment in which such politics becomes the norm. This can happen in several ways: by granting exposure to actors who engage in a hostile propaganda, or by highlighting and/or negatively framing the issues which are on their agendas (such as immigration in Western Europe, or the Roma in Central and Eastern Europe). The tendency of the media is to personalize issues and focus on the scandalous features of society and politics that contribute to anti-establishment and anti-minority sentiments. For instance, studies that have examined the media coverage of Roma generally conclude that this minority is presented in a negative and prejudiced way, and that media rarely offer a positive, though often also stereotypical, alternative image. Roma communities tend to be generalized and silenced in news coverage and are usually referred to in collective terms and in connection with criminality and violence, with an emphasis on ethnicity (Cangár, 2008; Messing and Bernáth, 2013; Kroon et al., 2016). Media also present Roma as a cause of social unrest (Zagibová and Kluknavská, 2013). These sentiments not only affect the public opinion of minority groups, but can benefit parties and movements such as the extreme right, which engage in anti-minority and xenophobic discourse (Kluknavská, 2014). In other words, the media can create favorable discursive opportunity structures that affect public opinion, and where the radical agenda that creates the 'us-them' divide is given space to thrive (Koopmans and Olzak, 2004) and be legitimized (Bos et al., 2011).

IV. Summary

In the last few years, there has been an increase in the use of 'enemy images' in Central and Eastern European politics. In this paper we have put forward an answer to the question 'what stands behind these developments?' We argued that, to understand this process of enmification, we need to use an interdisciplinary approach and explore the contextual factors that create the favorable conditions for such a politics.

The existing research is both too narrow and too broad: While the concept of 'the enemy' has been widely recognized in political theory for decades, its empirical application is rare. Empirical research studies of populists and the extreme right movement elaborate how those two types of actors use the concept of the enemy in their politics, but it is rare to find empirical studies that refer to other actors (e.g. social movements) that also employ this notion.[8]

In social psychology and research into values, however, we find useful mechanisms for explaining why the intensity of enmification is changing at the group and the national level. It seems that the general process of projecting internal anxieties is strengthened by hierarchical structures, demobilized societies, authoritarian leadership, and events perceived as threats. It is tempting to compare those factors with the political culture and historical development of Central and Eastern Europe, or to the recent crises.

Thus, in the second part of this study we highlighted factors connected to the mechanisms elaborated in the literature review of the concept and general mechanisms of enemy-making. The legacy of the elite-led transition to democracy left societies politically demobilized, without institutions that could allow them to legitimately represent their interests. This, combined with the economization of politics and its transnationalization led to the hollowing out of the political sphere in CEE. Subsequent processes then led to the return of politics, often via radical means.

The strengthening of multi-level governance has encouraged the use of enemy images in politics because supra-national institutions become part of domestic fights and provide an external faction to blame. When politicians portray European institutions as enemies, Western-oriented adversaries who see European institutions as a means of enforcing 'more rational' policies on governments are easily painted as traitors. This suggests that, despite the transnationalization of politics, the main interests of the elites are still connected to national-level politics.

The economic crisis (or other phenomena perceived of as crises) provide an opportunity for politicians to trigger the regressive defense mechanisms of forming cohesive groups loyal to their leaders, and exploiting discursive opportunities that a tabloidized media already provide, such as access to an audience sensitive to threats and stereotypical images.

Economic and political processes are interlinked with historically embedded political culture. Haerpfer and Kizilova (2014) found that support for democratic institutions and democratic political culture is strongly correlated to the success of

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[8] There is plenty of research that deals with the perceptions of minorities and out-groups. We highlight that this is not connected to the concept we employ in this study.

Central and Eastern European transitions and institutional performance. In this regard, most Central European countries show important deficits.

Based on this review, we suspect that these factors contribute to the structural conditions that enhance the prevalence of a social psychological status that favors enmification as a copying strategy. The actual mechanism of how these conditions, elites and people interact is not entirely clear. Most empirical and theoretical research until now has dealt with the political use of enemies to small groups, or at the level of the individual psyche. Recent phenomena and empirical research suggest that imagined communities might react to threats in a similar way to that of small groups (Pettigrew, 2016). One of these reactions is the regressive defense mechanism of strengthening group cohesion, identifying with the group leader, and projecting stress onto an external object, usually an out-group. (Pataki, 1993) The out-group is not necessarily – and in the region in question, increasingly not – a foreign nation, but rather takes the form of a hidden, internal enemy, vague social groups, and international institutions.

The rise of authoritarian populism in Central and Eastern Europe illustrates the troublesome consequences of contemporary politics. This type of community building undermines the possibility of re-negotiating problems and of creating discursive reactions to newly emerging issues, and leads to the translation of social and economic problems into antagonistic conflicts. In this paper, we argue that the recent developments of European politics must be interpreted and explored from different perspectives to allow us to understand both the general and contextual dimensions of the uses of enemies in politics. For this, we need more empirical research that shows these processes 'from below', considering their specific historical and economic circumstances, and, moreover, the psychological conditions inherent in the functioning of the friend-enemy distinction.

In such research we need to combine different levels of analysis. Discursive approaches and research on media and organizations may capture the dynamics of political systems, while research on participation and citizens' reactions to the discourses might tell us why they are working. This multilevel analysis should be supported by an analysis of the historically embedded dynamics and transformations of the social and economic structure. Existing, unidisciplinary research is clearly limited in its attempt to describe the multi-dimensional processes that are taking place on the ground in Central and Eastern Europe.

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