

Transformations in Central Europe between 1989 and 2012: Geopolitical, Cultural, and Socioeconomic S

The Deconsolidation of Democracy in East-Central Europe: The New World Order and the EU's Geopolitical Crisis

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Abstract: In recent decades, the most remarkable feature of East-Central European (ECE) states has been their engagement in a deconsolidation process that necessitates the reconceptualising of European Studies and the theory of democracy. In the early '90s, during the "revolution of high expectations," consolidation was the key term in the conceptual framework of the transitology paradigm, but this approach was questioned increasingly in the 2000s and rejected in the 2010s. In its place, deconsolidation was introduced as one of a wide array of similar terms referring to the decline, backsliding or regression of democracy and later as one of a whole "other" family of opposite terms like (semi-)authoritarian system and competitive/elected autocracy. Indeed, rather than a transition to democracy, a tendency to transition to authoritarian rule has been observed in the ECE states in general and in Poland and Hungary in particular. In the last quarter century, the twin terms of Europeanisation and democratisation, which denote normative approaches, have been the main conceptual pillars of analyses of the ECE states. It turns out, however, that the opposite processes of de-Europeanisation and de-democratisation can now also be observed in these countries.

Key words: democracy, deconsolidation, East-Central Europe, geopolitical crisis, EU

In fact, the systemic change in East-Central Europe took place during the Old World Order (OWO) between 1989 and 2014. In contrast, the New World Order (NWO) since 2015 has introduced new global rules and created a new international environment for ECE domestic developments. This article therefore

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