

UPPSALA UNIVERSITET

Public Perception of Corruption and Democratic Backsliding:

A qualitative case comparison of Czech Republic and Hungary

Rasmus Ahl

Bachelor Thesis, January 2022

Department of Peace and Conflict Studies, Uppsala University

Supervisor: Gudlaug Olafsdottir

Word Count: 9,839 words

Table of Contents:

1. Introduction.....	3
2. Theoretical Framework.....	4
2.1 Key Concepts.....	4
2.2 Previous Literature.....	6
2.3 Research Gap.....	10
2.4 Theoretical Argument.....	11
3. Research Design.....	13
3.1 Case Selection.....	13
3.2 Method of Analysis.....	15
3.3 Operationalization.....	16
4. Results and Analysis.....	17
4.1 Background.....	17
4.1.1 Hungary.....	17
4.1.2 Czech Republic.....	17
4.2 Results.....	18
4.2.1 Independent Variable.....	18
4.2.2 Control Variables.....	20
4.2.3 Dependent Variable.....	20
4.3 Discussion.....	22
5. Conclusion.....	24
6. Bibliography.....	26

List of Figures and Tables

Figure 1: The Causal Mechanisms.....	12
Figure 2: The Results of the Eurobarometer's Survey Statements.....	19
Figure 3: Summary of Results.....	22

1. Introduction

Through a western perspective, democracy has long been the norm. Following the aftermath of the second world war and later on the end of the cold war, democracies seem to have thrived. However, recent events might prove otherwise. The United States Capitol attack in 2021 could be viewed as a colorful symbol of how fragile democracy really is - even in “the greatest democracy of the world”.

Populistic winds appear to blow in western societies at the moment, not at least indicated by several voting results suggesting the rise of power to these parties. However, there is an important distinction to make between the increased support in populist parties and election results that entrusts a populist party with power over government. Such is a distinction between the two cases picked for this structured focused case comparison, namely Czech Republic and Hungary. While Czech Republic is not without political influence from populist parties (Císař, 2017, p.7), Hungary's populist party “Fidesz” - with the leader Viktor Orbán - won a landslide election in 2010 with over 50% of the votes which left them to solely control Hungary, leading the nation into a democratic backslide in the last decade (Beachamp, 2018; Than & Szakacs, 2010).

The hopeful contribution of this paper is an alternative explanation and/or a factor that affects the trajectory of democratization and autocratization (or otherwise known as democratic backsliding). Populist parties tend to be more authoritarian than non-populistic parties, so why are some democratic populations eager to support such parties? The answer might lie in the perception and grievances regarding the *corruption* in their country (Navot & Beerli, 2017, p. 201). These preliminary assumptions regarding populism and perceived corruption resulted in the following research question: How does the public’s perception of corruption affect the democratic backsliding of a state?

As the result and analysis of this paper suggests, there are correlations between perceived corruption and democratic backsliding, as the Hungarian population, in relation to the Czechian population, to a larger extent viewed corruption as a problem in their nation. The results also indicated that the Hungarian population viewed corruption as a phenomenon which is “unavoidable”, to a larger extent than the Czechian population did (Eurobarometer, 2021a; 2021b). As Hungary is deemed to be a hybrid regime that has transcends away from democracy, while Czech Republic stands democratic - although relatively flawed - this connection seems valid (Freedom House 2021a; 2021b). However, there is not enough proof

to suggest this as an absolute causality, as different attitudes of the people regarding democratic values, for example, could have been affecting the outcome of the last elections of the respective country. Furthermore, tactics and rhetoric of the populist parties perhaps should not be underestimated as Fidesz promised to end corruption, but in hindsight, it actually increased its presence in Hungary (Rohac et al., 2017, p.393).

The hopeful contribution of this paper aims to be in the field of peace and conflict. Although many of the concepts of this paper - populism as an example - are perhaps more commonly linked with political science, I would argue that all these concepts that will be discussed in this thesis highly relate to peace and conflict studies. If the democratic peace theory (the notion that democratic countries never go to war against each other) would be considered to be true, the link between populism and autocratization could be problematic for a future reality of peace in Europe.

2. Theoretical Framework

This part of the thesis will present previous literature regarding the key concepts of this thesis, including democratization, autocratization/democratic backslide, corruption and populism. The section will include definitions and literature reviews of the concepts in question, as well as the research gap and the theoretical argument of this thesis.

2.1 Key concepts

Democratization and Autocratization

The ideas of Samuel P. Huntington appear essential to include in an in-depth review of democratization and autocratization. He argues that the world as a whole is constantly shifting between waves of democratization - where the overall trend of the world is democratization - and waves of autocratization (also known as reversed waves) - where the overall trend of the world is autocratization. Starting at the beginning of the 19th century, Huntington argues that there have been three waves of democratization, while in between them there have been two reversed waves, spanning as far as to the year of 1991 (Huntington, 1991, p.579). Michael McFaul argued that the fourth wave of democratization took place in precisely that year, 1991. As the Soviet Union was in the midst of collapsing, a number of these newly independent European states took the pathway of democratization including, the two cases of

this thesis, Hungary and Czech Republic. However, McFaul also suggested that a reverse wave occurred at the same time, as some other nations that gained independence from the Soviet Union rejected democratization and more or less turned into authoritarian regimes instead. McFaul raised concerns regarding how democratization and autocratization should be defined and studied. He argued that a general theory of the subjects would be impossible due to the individuality of every case. Since the historical facts regarding each case would differ, no general theory would be to prefer over a specific analysis over each case (McFaul, 2002, p.212,244)

In later years, there has been an alarming rise in autocratic tendencies across Europe - especially in the Central and Eastern regions. Hungary and Poland stand as the most obvious examples while scholars, through multiple different factors have tried to reasoned why this is happening. Cianetti, Dawson & Hanley suggest that economic grievances after the great recession, the lack of liberal values and the lack of EU sanctions against undemocratic actions could all be argued for as reasons which explains why these particular nations have turned into democratic backslides (Cianetti et al, 2018, p.244-5).

Corruption

Corruption is primarily understood as individuals taking advantage of organizational resources for their own gain. Corruption is perhaps more commonly mentioned in the political spectrum, however, corruption can be found at every level in a society, from the highest positions in government to private businesses and even private persons (Gillespie et al, 2019, p.579-80).

Michael Johnston explains that the syndromes of corruption can present itself in different forms, but usually corruption is more prominent in a state with weak institutions. However, as the presence of corruption in authoritarian states is quite obvious, the relationship it has to states that have gone through liberalization appears to be more complex. As country's have become democratic, freedom has increased and with that, economic freedom has increased as well in the form of more open economic markets. However, as the government of these open economies has surrendered some of the power it otherwise would have had in an authoritarian state, corruption has not disappeared but rather changed actors. Corruption, as mentioned, is not just found within' government but also in businesses. This economic side of corruption is especially a problem in developing states - or states without a long tradition of democracy - that has not yet come that far in the democratization process (Johnston, 2005, p.2,16-7).

Populism

The definition of populism is not a particularly complex concept, although it has multiple different signs of identification. The main function of populism appears to compose around dissatisfaction against the political establishment. Populism can be found at the ends of both the left and right political spectrum and parties of these natures often claim to be operating in order to “champion the people”. Although populism is not incompatible with democracy, populist parties most often take the form of more authoritarian nature (Munro, 2020). The notion that opponents are being regarded and spoken of as enemies is, arguably, one factor that indicates that authoritarian nature. Furthermore, Benjamin Ask Poop-Madsen suggests that populism is closely linked to democratic backsliding because many examples of leaders of populist parties usually act in ways that undermine the democratic system, their political opponents and the press within the nation. They are furthermore, not refraining from using violence as a tool to achieve their will (Poop-Madsen, 2019, p.164).

For further information added regarding the subject, Mudde & Kaltwasser explains that populism historically has been linked to certain ideologies, not least with socialistic or “Marxists” ideologies. However, Mudde & Kaltwasser adds that it is perhaps today mostly linked with ring-wing parties. With that being stated though, populism should be viewed as a separate phenomenon, as it could be combined with different types of ideologies. As mentioned, populism aims to appeal to the people and the method it uses is usually a creation of division between the people and the claimed corrupt established elite of the nations. The core of populism is therefore polarizing as it creates conflicts whereas people feel obligated to pick a side (Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2012, p.3-8).

2.2 Previous Literature

The literature on democracy and the factors that determine the level of it is vast. Certain authors put emphasis on different factors as being more essential than others. The modernization theory, in particular, is often used to explain how economic development determines the level of democracy, with GDP per capita as the measurement. The paper “The determinants of democracy: a sensitivity analysis” (2019), written by Hegre, Knutsen & Rød, suggested that the determinants of democracy includes up to 18 different factors, stretching from these previously mentioned economic factors to demographic factors (region,

population and culture) and political factors (political system, political (in)stability, aftermath of war). When the result of this paper was analyzed, the authors highlighted some specific factors that hinders democratization while some factors makes democratization more likely. Islam, controlling for natural resources (specifically oil) and low education deemed hindering for democratization while high levels of activism in the population and a democratic surrounding aid democratization. Additionally, drawing from the modernization theory, economic development has, perhaps unsurprisingly, a positive relationship with democracy (Hegre et al, 2019, p.87-91). Since it is established that economic growth is positively correlated with democratization, it would perhaps be reasonable to think that the consequences of the great recession in the late 2000's should have caused democratic backslides, or at least halted democratization. In fact, according to Cas Mudde's paper "Populism in Europe: An Illiberal Democratic Response to Undemocratic Liberalism" (2019), when it comes to support for the populist parties - in particular the radical right - the increased support they got was significantly small as a result of the Great Recession. Approximately as many populist parties gained support that lost support during this period (Mudde, 2019, p.582). This perhaps indicates that populist parties perhaps not always know how to play on a crisis to gain support.

As already mentioned, theories regarding how to democratize can not be universally one-dimensional. Each country is its own, and there are multiple reasons that affect whether or not democratization will succeed or fail. The historical factor especially, seems to have been ignored when analyzing the democratization process that has been ongoing in Eastern Europe post the collapse of the Soviet Union. One of the main points taken from the paper "Rethinking "democratic backsliding" in Central and Eastern Europe – looking beyond Hungary and Poland" (2018), written by Cianetti, Dawson & Hanley, was that countries such as Poland and Hungary - that looked on the verge of becoming stable democracies - now have turned into democratic backsliding. There appears to have been a wrong assumption (in a Western perspective) that the countries were headed to democratization (Cianetti et al., 2018, p.252). An explanation of democratization - or the lack of democratization - that is perhaps more close to reality is the explanation that competitive authoritarianism ruled in post-cold war Europe. Levitsky & Way explained in "Competitive Authoritarianism : Hybrid Regimes after the Cold War" (2010) that competitive authoritarian regimes are not democratic, however the party in power uses democratic institutions in its favor - usually to suppress the opposition with tactics such as, for example, electoral manipulation and other forms of harassment against both opposition parties and regular citizens of the state. As the

post-communism states who eventually joined the European Union, there were multiple “benchmarks” these nations were forced to comply with in order to be able to join and/or stay in the union. These procedures of the EU aimed to uphold democratic values as well as making it more difficult for authoritarian regimes to stay authoritarian (Levitsky & Way, 2010, p.4-5,89-90).

Some countries that used to be generally viewed as democratic or on the verge to democratize have, during the 2010’s onwards, instead turned into democratic backsliding. The tendencies where democratic backsliding occurs in these countries has been deemed to have capitalist tendencies. This conclusion made by Attila Antal in “The Rise of Hungarian Populism: State Autocracy and the Orbán Regime” (2019) originates from the autocratic tendencies we are now able to see in relatively economically liberalized countries. Antal exemplifies the country of Hungary as a good example of this. In places where this economic liberalization has occurred, where there is a lack of established democratic institutions in place, there is a stronger likelihood of the nation turning to democratic backsliding by electing a populist party. Modern cases of democratic backsliding thereby are linked with populism when the nation in question has a record of previously undemocratic tendencies (Antal, 2019, p.2-3).

It is in some instances hard to distinguish between corruption being a trait of one actor or the trait of a whole political and/or financial system of a country. In the latter example, corruption appears to breed corruption. From the book “The Quality of Government: Corruption, Social Trust, and Inequality in International Perspective” (2011) written by Bo Rothstein, the notion of that downward spiral is presented to have been evident in a lot of corrupt societies as there exist incentives of the actors to maintain that same corrupt environment. A nation or society with high levels of corruption will not change if one actor abandons their corrupt behavior as the corrupt structure of the state would still remain intact. If corruption is the norm, it is more useful for you as an individual to participate by being corrupt yourself, rather than suddenly becoming an “honest” actor (Rothstein, 2011, p.99-100).

Apart from the presence of corruption itself, the public’s perception of the corruption within its country is an important distinction to have. Benjamin Olken argues in “Corruption perceptions vs. corruption reality” (2009) that one of the reasons corruption is persistent is the citizens unaware of its wide spread around the nation. This may explain the fact that corruption typically appears in developing countries, where the general public are less educated, less informative which creates a situation where they lack the opportunities to

monitor the actors in charge. In a more developed state, however, corruption can still prevail even though the public is well educated and has media institutions at place to cover the politics of the nation. The conceptualization and prioritization is at center here, as some general opinions of a nation could be that a “corrupt-free” state is not as important as other traits. For example, some publics generally value ethnic belonging as of higher importance (Olken, 2009, p.950-1,963).

Furthermore Navot & Beerli explains in “Conceptualization of Political Corruption, Perceptions of Corruption, and Political Participation in Democracies” (2017) that the public’s understanding of the concept of corruption is going to form their perception of how big of a problem corruption in the nation is or is not. If the overall public is dissatisfied with the levels of corruption within the nation, that will in turn lead to the public being more politically involved. This political involvement could take the form of voting or engaging in groups that work for different types of reforms in the nation, as a few examples (Navot & Beerli, 2017, p.200-2).

Since the beginning of the new millenium, it appears that populist opinions have increased and become louder, not in the least in Europe. There could be many possible explanations for this. According to Matthijs Rooduijn in “Why is populism suddenly all the rage?” (2018), democracy largely has been the norm in Europe for several decades, many democratic parties have arguably converged to the middle, which somewhat makes the lines where the parties separate from one another somewhat hard to distinguish. Populist parties often offer a clear alternative, as they usually take radical stands - either to the left or right of the political spectrum. Additionally, populist parties often take advantage of national crises - such as a financial or immigration crisis (although with Mudde's (2019:582) already mentioned statements in mind, perhaps populist parties did not generally capitalize well on the Great Depression). Rooduijn argues that populist parties then tend to blame the establishment for crises of different kinds and usually then gain support on the notion that these types of crises would not be allowed with them in charge of the nation. Furthermore, and most relevant to this thesis, populist parties are likely to gain support in nations with a corrupt political environment. The populist parties’ usual strategies are also here to blame the established parties in power, as they will gain support while offering to end corruption by tending to the will of the people (Rooduijn, 2018). Voogd & Dassonneville adds in “Are the Supporters of Populist Parties Loyal Voters? Dissatisfaction and Stable Voters for Populist Parties” (2018) that populist parties usually benefit from the dissatisfaction felt by the public towards the

political establishment. Whatever the reason for this, political dissatisfaction usually appears in two different forms regarding voting; either the politically dissatisfied change their votes constantly, election after election, or they tend to start supporting a populist party (Voogd & Dassonneville, 2018, p.350).

Olga Lavrinenko argues in “Socio-economic and Socio-political Origins of Technocratic Populism in the Czech Republic and Hungary” (2020) that both Czech Republic and Hungary are populist today, although they take different forms, as she argues that Czech Republic's populism is technocratic while claiming that Hungary's populist transition was fueled by nativism. Of these two cases, Hungary's nativist populism was deemed the most problematic for democracy. While both sides have gone into some form of democratic backsliding, Czech Republic's path is mentioned as more of a swerve, compared to Hungary's definite “illiberal turn”. Both sides in populist manner created scapegoats to blame for the grievances of the people. In Czech Republic, there has developed scapegoats out of institutions, like the EU, while Fidesz in Hungary focus has turned towards individuals and groups of different kinds - in particular, ethnical groups that are not Hungarians (Lavrinenko, 2020, p.257-8, 263-4).

It is apparent that right-wing populism is linked to corruption, while left-wing populist parties are not sharing that tendency to the same degree. According to Rohac, Kumar & Johansson Heinö in “The wisdom of demagogues: institutions, corruption and support for authoritarian populists” (2017) it is the right-wing populist parties, that are especially authoritarian in their nature to have proven to capitalize on the voters' distrust against their nation's political structures. In Hungary, it is believed that one of the reasons Fidesz came to power was because the people believed in their anti-corruption rhetorics. In hindsight, the election of Fidesz led to the opposite, as the party has expanded the corrupt practices of the government. Meanwhile it is clear that a democratic backslide has occurred in the nation (Rohac et al., 2017, p.383,393-4).

2.3 Research Gap:

The arguments previously stated by Cianetti et al. suggest that there is a need to reconstruct the general perspective on democratization in Eastern Europe. As countries such as Poland and Hungary over a decade ago were claimed to be outstanding new democracies, they have both descended into democratic backsliding since then. Here, once more, the conceptualization of democratization seems to be problematic, as scholars tend to have a western perspective on how democratization should work (Cianetti et al., 2018, p.252). As the

recent history of East European states are quite different from West European states, alternative explanations and methods regarding the East European states might be sufficient for a more complete picture of the issues at hand.

Building on this, the already mentioned article by Navot & Beeri argues that the public's understanding of corruption and perceived levels of corruption in the nation leads to political participation. This political participation could take the form of voting (Navot & Beeri, 2017, p.202). Furthermore, as previously mentioned by Voogd & Dassonneville, the political dissatisfaction a public feels towards their government could result in increased support for a populist party (Voogd & Dassonneville, 2018, p.350). Lastly, as already established by Antal, populist parties in general are strongly linked with democratic backsliding (Antal, 2019, p.3).

The links between populism and democratic backsliding have already widely been established. However, the reasons for electing populist party have mostly been explained to be economic or nationalistic. Arguably, as Voogd & Dassonneville pointed out, when the public perceives that corruption is a widespread problem in the state, they will be more likely to vote populist rather than on the, already in power, "political establishment" (Voogd & Dassonneville, 2018, p.350). If we should explore the reasons of democratization/democratic backsliding and evaluate the factors that causes/hinders its progress, perhaps one of these factors that causes democratic backsliding is a public's perceived corruption and how that leads to the election of a populist party.

This thesis argues that; as populist parties usually capitalize on the disappointment of the people, they tend to get support in elections by votes based on the public's political dissatisfactions. This thesis would like to explore the relationship between perceived corruption and the political dissatisfaction that favors populist parties with autocratic tendencies.

2.4 Theoretical Argument

This thesis aims to answer the following research question: How does the public's perception of corruption affect the democratic backsliding of a state?

This thesis argues that conceived corruption by the public leads it to a greater sense of despair and hopelessness over the political system of the country. Based on the arguments of

Rohac’s previously mentioned work, this will culminate in a tendency to vote for a more populist party, somewhat motivated by the peoples’ grievance over the corrupt state of the nation, to achieve radical changes in the perceived flawed political system. The populist party will likely capitalize on the grievances of the people, as an example by appealing to the false notion that the party is promoting anti-corruption, when in reality they are likely even more corrupt than the political establishment themselves (Rohac et al, 2017, p.393-4).

The expected relationship could therefore be described as; the more people perceive that there is corruption in their nation, the more likely that the people, feeling politically dissatisfied, will vote for a populstic party that eventually will cause a democratic backslide of the state in question.

The independent variable is as follows; public perception of corruption in the nation. The dependent variable is as follows; democratic backslide in the state. The mediating variable that indicates the causal mechanism between the independent and dependent variables is deemed to be political dissatisfaction (CM1) that makes it more likely that the public votes for a populist party (CM2) . This relationship leads to the following hypothesis to be tested:

H1: The more the public perceive corruption to be a problem in their country, the more likely the state is to fall into a democratic backslide.

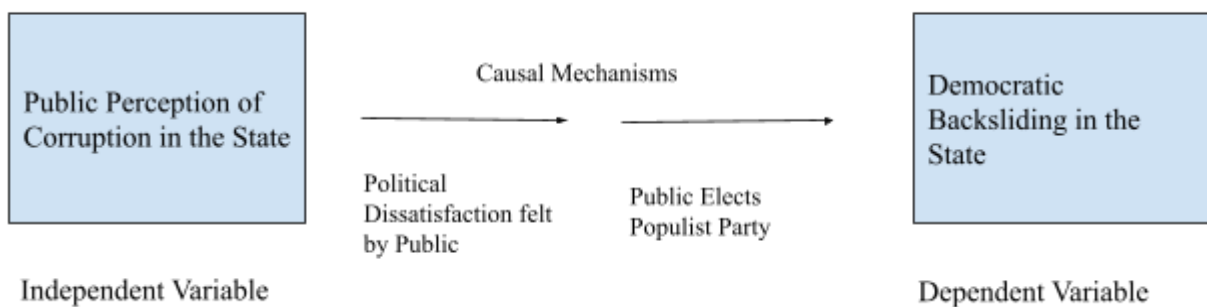


Figure 1: The Causal Mechanisms

3. Research Design

This section includes presentation and motivations for chosen research methods and cases. With a proposed time-frame and an expected relationship between the relationship of the variables, the section finishes with the operationalization of the variables while additionally presenting which sources that have been used for data collection.

3.1 Case selection

As this paper is a qualitative two case-comparison, this thesis will use the method of structured focus comparison. More precisely, Mill's method of difference will be used to measure data surrounding these two cases' variables separately. Both independent variable and dependent variable will be measured and is expected to differ in outcome between these specific cases (Brancati, 2018, p.200). This thesis is structured as the same questions are asked and answered in both cases and it is focused as it only takes variables into account which are deemed to possibly have an effect on the dependent variable. The benefit of the method of structured focused comparison is the results of the multiple variables that can be showcased in both of these cases and this method allows future cases to be added following the same comparative technique of the variables (Bennet & George, 2004, p.67). This arguably leads to a more nuanced analysis where it is possible to more convincingly identify a correlation between the independent and the dependent variables.

However, a possible downside with this method could be the fact that it becomes too specific in a manner which is not generalizable. There is a possibility that the analysis becomes too narrow when choosing two specific cases. If both cases in question are too deviant, the thesis will likely not produce results that are especially useful from a deterministic viewpoint (Brancati, 2018, p.201). However, where structured focused comparison lacks complexity, there is a possibility to widen the setup for analysis, as this thesis has aspired to do by including reports from news organizations and research papers, to fill out potential holes that a strict structured focused comparison can leave.

The cases chosen for analysis in this thesis are the cases of Czech Republic and Hungary. The reasoning behind these specific picks of cases is that they are deemed “most similar” in many areas, creating the method to be a “controlled comparison” (Bennet & George, 2004, p.81).

Both nations share a geographical location in Central-Eastern Europe. This location has led to that both nations, in recent history, have been controlled by the Soviet Union, with each nation having their own uprising against Soviet control - in 1956 (Hungary) and 1968 (Czechoslovakia) respectively. Both nations released themselves from Soviet control amidst its collapse in 1991, allowing them to hold democratic elections, and both nations joined the EU in the year of 2004 (BBC, 2018; BBC, 2019).

Additionally, the fact that both countries are European and part of the EU played into the decision of picking these cases. European states, and the EU especially, are usually more rich in data compared to other regions - with the plenty of surveys the Eurobarometer exemplifies.

Furthermore, the EU has previously been quite tough on monitoring its potential member nations on the quality of their democratic institutions. This was especially true for post-communism states (Levitsky & Way, 2010, p.89-90) which perhaps has caused these two nations to rush their democratic development for appearance in order to become a member of the EU, with its socioeconomic benefits.

To increase the validity of this research design, some relevant control variables will be added. GDP per capita (growth) will be looked at to review if the economic well-being of the nations were different amongst themselves following the great recession. The impact of the great recession on the cases is what is most relevant here, since populist parties usually take advantage of crises similar to this (Rooduijn, 2018). GDP per capita (growth) will be looked at in the years before 2010 - when Fidesz took power over the government - to review if the economic well-being of the nations were different amongst themselves following the great recession. Vastly different results may indicate an alternative explanation for the values in the dependent variable. However, the expected relationship is that both cases will not vastly differ in GDP per capita. GDP per capita will measure the economic well being of both Hungary and Czech Republic. As the impact of the great recession on the cases is what is being most relevant here, since populist parties usually take advantage of crises similar to this (Rooduijn, 2018), however perhaps not always succeeds (Mudde, 2019, p.582), the focus lies at the years between 2007 - the start of the great recession - and 2010 - the year in which Fidesz won the Hungarian election.

3.2 Method of analysis

The time frame of this thesis is the year of 2007 to the moment of writing - January, 2022.

The reasons for this are multiple. Primarily the effects of the great recession are most relevant from the years 2007 to 2010. Furthermore, as Fidesz in Hungary gained power after the Hungarian election in 2010 (Than & Szakacs, 2010), the independent variable - the public's perceived corruption - needs to be tested in the period leading up to that decision by the people, as that election is at the core in the expected variation of the dependent variable. After 2010, the focus is primarily on the dependent variable - the democratic backsliding of the nation - which is a process that has potential for new developments every day.

This comparative study would be considered a spatial comparison - meaning that there are two cases measured in the same time frame. Additionally, there are no - in a preliminary overlook - visible confounding variables that deems to affect the difference between the independent and dependent variables. Influenced by George & Bennet's explanation of structured focus comparisons, the picked cases for this thesis have been deemed to be the most similar ones apart from these key variables it is more likely that the variation in the independent and dependent variable are causal, as no control variable is expected to differ in values, and therefore affect the outcome values of the dependent variable.

The two chosen cases for this thesis are expected to differ in the independent variable. While Hungarians public perception about corruption - and the damages that potentially creates - are expected to be higher than Czech Republic's public perception of corruption (IV), that will explain why the Hungarian people elected a populist party with incentives of achieving democratic backsliding, and why the people of Czech Republic did not (DV).

Concerning disclaimers regarding this thesis, some of the related concepts will be specified in regards to how they are analyzed. Regarding corruption, the data presented will focus on *perceived* corruption. Even though the estimated levels of corruption within a state could prove relevant in this research objective, it is the relationship between a public's perceived corruption and the election of populist parties with autocratic tendencies that is the primary focus of this thesis.

Furthermore, populist parties will not be categorized from a wide spectrum of traits. For example, right-wing or left-wing populism is of no interest to be held separate or analyzed differently. Populist parties are, as far as this thesis is concerned, ultimately a dichotomous variable - either a party is populist or it is not.

3.3 Operationalization

The independent variable of this thesis - public's perceived corruption - will be measured by surveys designed by the "Eurobarometer". As the year 2009 will be the year in which the independent variable is being analyzed, surveys answered by both cases' population from that period will be the main source of data for this variable. The surveys from the "Eurobarometer" is titled "Attitudes of Europeans towards Corruption" and the same statements of the survey are presented to all European Union public's - including this thesis two cases - where the survey population answered if they agreed or not with the statements regarding corruption that was presented (Eurobarometer, 2009a; 2009b).

The dependent variable of this thesis - democratic backsliding in the state - will be measured by the index created by the "Freedom House" to measure the level of democracy. This variable's data will be extracted from the index and will work as the operationalization of the dependent variable, as an index of this kind clearly showcases if a democratic backsliding has occurred or not. Here, it is necessary to include scores from previous years, to visualize a potential decrease in the level of democracy (Freedom House, 2021a; 2021b).

Additionally, sources collected from the "Freedom House" will be collected where democracy is being evaluated based on political rights and civil liberties within each state. Basically, the unbounded organization of "Freedom House" evaluated democracy from the perspective of the citizens and their rights (Freedom House, 2021c; 2021d).

The control variable that overlooks the effects of the great recession is more extensive. GDP per capita growth appears to be the best measurement for determining a nation's financial prosperity (or lack thereof). A valuable source of data is found in "The World Bank", which has a rich overall data collection of different countries GDP per capita growth, where it is possible to see increases and decreases of the GDP per capita over different periods in time (The World Bank, 2021a; 2021b).

The controlling of the cases' similarities regarding history and geography have been done by using new agencies such as BBC and Reuters. Furthermore, news sites such as Euronews, The Atlantic and Vox have contributed to the analysis with its reports as well as Politico has with polls of Hungarians support for Fidesz.

4. Results and Analysis

The following section will present background information regarding the two cases, followed by results of the independent variable, dependent variable and control variable. Lastly, the analysis of the result follows and potential discussions regarding these results are being presented.

4.1 Background

4.1.1 Hungary

In the year of 2004, Hungary became one of the ten new members of the European Union. However, the year prior to this, only 46 % of the citizens in Hungary supported that decision based on a referendum (BBC, 2018). A few years later, the populist party of Fidesz won the Hungarian election in 2010 and as it gained more than 50% of the votes, it gave the party possibilities to rule the country without other party influences (Than & Szakacs, 2010). Before the Fidesz, with Viktor Orbán in charge, took power over the government in Hungary, the country had previous problems with corruption. Despite this, Hungary was largely considered to be a stable democracy in the post-communism era. However, the mentioned corruptive nature of the parties in power might have correlated in the people of Hungary's distaste for the establishment and were therefore analyzed to be more eager to embrace the populist alternative in Fidesz (Beauchamp, 2018). Part of Fidesz campaign tactics leading up to the 2010 election, circled around to enlighten the public of the corruption in Hungary, and then the party presented itself as a cure for the corruption in the nation (Rohac et al., 2017, p.393).

4.1.2 Czech Republic

Post-communistic rule it did not take long for Czechoslovakia to separate into two nations: Czech Republic and Slovakia. Czech Republic aimed to emulate West Europe in economic policies and eventually, just like Hungary, became one of the new members of the EU in 2004 (BBC, 2019). Now, as a country with one of the most open economies of the world, Czech Republic has evidently left its communistic past. However, there are multiple populist parties existing in the country that people support for different reasons - among the reasons a disdain

for democracy or a disdain for cultural globalization. USVIT (a right-wing populist party) has recently had a powerful influence in the debate concerning migration in the midst of the European refugee crisis. In the election of 2016, corruption in the political system was a subject of debates between the parties (Císař, 2017, p.4-9). The right-wing party of ANO, lost the majority in parliament in the election of 2021, and got overtaken by the center-right coalition - SPOLU (Hutt, 2021).

4.2 Results

4.2.1 Independent Variable

In the year of 2009, according to the Corruption Perception Index, Hungary were on a shared 46th position with Cape Verde and Bahrain, with a score of 5,1, while Czech Republic overall were deemed slightly more corrupt than Hungary, as the nation was on a shared 52nd position with Lithuania, with a score of 4,9 (Corruption Perception Index, 2009). While there were similarities in levels of corruption between both cases according to indexes like these, the perception of that corruption was not the same amongst the cases' respective populations. By surveys made by the European Union, all states that were members of the Union were participating where the populations of each country answered whether or not they agreed about statements regarding corruption. Some of the more relevant statements were formed as follows: "Corruption is a major problem (OUR COUNTRY)" and "Corruption is unavoidable, it has always existed" (Eurobarometer, 2009a; 2009b).

Regarding the survey's first question chosen to be highlighted in this thesis (Corruption is a major problem (OUR COUNTRY)) the results were quite similar. Hungary's survey population "totally agreed" by 96% (with 3% "totally disagreed" with the statement while 1% did not know what to answer) (Eurobarometer, 2009b) while Czech Republic's survey population "totally agreed" by 88% (with 11% "totally disagreed" while 1% did not know what to answer. Both cases' survey populations' "totally agreed" to a larger extent compared to the average of all EU states, where the average "totally agreed" by 77% (Eurobarometer, 2009a).

Regarding the survey's second question chosen to be highlighted in this thesis (Corruption is unavoidable, it has always existed) the results differed more between the cases. Hungary's survey population "totally agreed" by 77% (with 21% "totally disagreed" while 2% did not

know what to answer) (Eurobarometer, 2009b) while Czech Republic's survey population "totally agreed" by 51% (with 47% "totally disagreed" while 2% did not know what to answer). In this question, the average of all EU states "totally agreed" by 69%, placing the average of the EU's survey population between the thesis cases in agreement over this survey statement (Eurobarometer, 2009a).

The public of Czech Republic stayed disappointed towards their own government three year later, 2012, as demonstrations and a platform named "Stop the Government" were formed. The election the following year saw the traditionally biggest right wing party, ODS, with then Prime minister Nečas in power, lose a lot of support. This was deemed to be a product of the many accusations of corruption and power abuse that the party had received leading up to that election (Císař, 2017, p.6).

Furthermore, numerous corruption scandals by the politicians in Hungary has been deemed to have been a major reason for the people's support for the party of Fidesz in the 2010 election (Beauchamp, 2018).

Procent of survey population answering "totally agree"

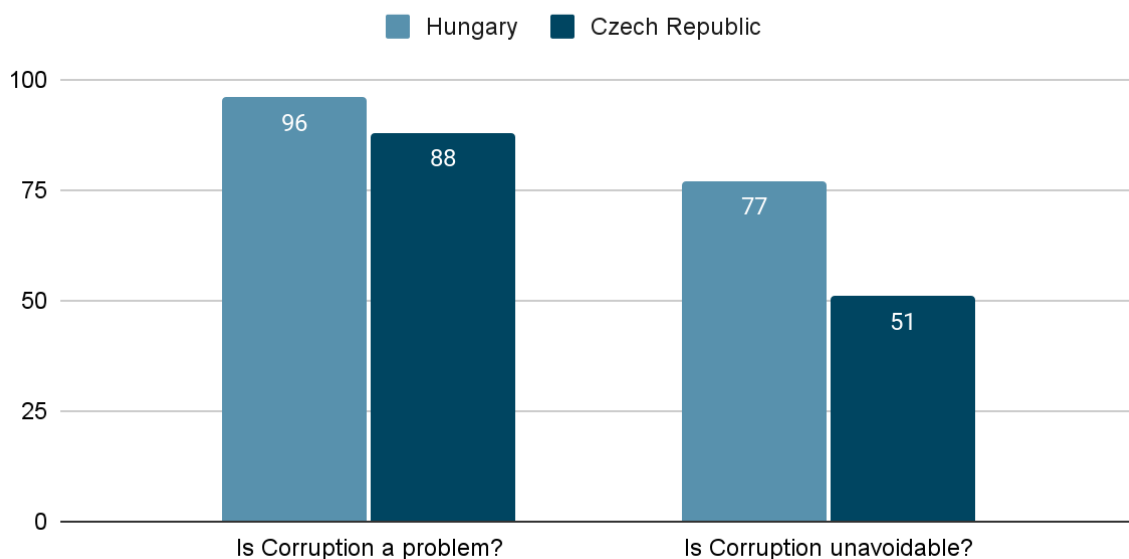


Figure 2: The Results of the Eurobarometer's Survey Statements

4.2.2 Control Variables

Already mentioned, the similarities between these cases are why they were picked. Both countries are considered Eastern European, both countries have a history of being subordinated to the Soviet Union during the Cold War-period and both countries' public's have had their respective uprisings against that Soviet power in the 1950's and 1960's (BBC, 2018; BBC, 2019). These last examples of the case's historic uprisings, although distant in time, could be indicating some similarities in attitudes and/or resilience between Czech- and Hungarian citizens.

When overviewing how both Hungary and Czech Republic got affected by the great recession between the years 2007-2010, the results are quite similar, with some minor differences in advantage for Czech Republic.

Hungary's growth in GDP per capita had been steadily increasing for a long while. Both the year of 2007 (0.398%) and 2008 (1.235%) showed some percentage increases. However, as the market crashed in 2009, the GDP per capita decreased significantly by -6.555%. By 2010, its GDP per capita had increased again, but only by 1.351% (The World Bank, 2021a).

Meanwhile, Czech Republic's growth in GDP per capita shares a similar pattern to Hungary's trajectory between 2007-2010. Although slightly heavier increases in 2007 (4.956%) and 2008 (1.835%), the year of 2009 proved hefty for Czech Republic too, as its GDP per capita decreased by -5.199%. In 2010, the growth from 2009 had been 2.137% (The World Bank, 2021b).

4.2.3 Dependent Variable

Czech Republic's election in the autumn of 2021 is generally believed to have been a victory for liberal democracy in the nation. As the center-right coalition SPOLU gained a majority in seats of the Czechian parliament, the sitting Primeminister Babis and his party, ANO, lost power over the government. As ANO has been portrayed as a quite illiberal and undemocratic party, this chain of events is expected to have a positive effect on democracy in the nation (Hutt, 2021).

In the other case, as Fidesz took power over the country in 2010, Hungary has reportedly been on a steady decline from democracy. Indicators of this is that it is now forbidden to criticize the Hungarian government as well as the notion that Orbán seems to have made way

for himself to essentially operate as a dictator. The Covid-19 pandemic seems to have allowed Orbán to further his powerhold over the state as he appears to overrule both the parliament and the judiciary system with his policy changes and actions taken against opponents. For example, the state itself can deal out jail sentences to anyone which they deem to be spreading misinformation (Serhan, 2020). When it comes to the support of the Hungarian people the party of Fidesz has, according to polls, held a majority most times in the last five years. In the last recorded poll, on the 15th of December, Fidesz had 48 % of the Hungarian's support, while a united opposition reached 46 % (Politico, 2021).

Czech Republic's democracy score is 76 points out of 100, which translates to "Consolidated Democracy". Corruption is deemed to be the biggest problem for the country. Although quite stable in its democracy score, there has been a slight decline since the year of 2015, where the country had a score of 80 out of 100 (Freedom House, 2021a).

Hungary's democracy score is 45 points out of 100, which translates to "Transitional or Hybrid Regime". Many of the democratic principles are deemed to be malfunctioning in the nation, such as the electoral process, political corruption and freedom of press. Hungary, apart from Czech Republic, had a more rapid decline in the level of democracy, as the nation had 64 points out of 100 in the same index in the year of 2015. During all this time, the populist party of Fidesz has been the party in power of Hungary (Freedom House, 2021b).

When looking at freedom for the nations' citizens, Czech Republic's freedom score in the year of 2021 amounted to 91 points out of 100 - translating to that the country is "Free". More in depth, 36 out of 40 points in Political Rights, were some of the main concerns deemed to be lack of equality given to ethnic minorities and LGBTQ groups, as well as some concerns regarding political corruption. In Civil Liberties the points were 55 out of 60, where some concerns were question marks over how independent and free the media outlets actually are, how equal and consistent laws and policies were towards the nation's different citizens, and how independent the judiciary system in the nation actually were (Freedom House, 2021c). Hungary's freedom score in the year of 2021 amounted to 69 points out of 100 - translating to that the country is "Partly Free". In Political Rights, the score was 26 points out of 40, where the lack of safeguard against corruption and lack of transparency from the government were presented to be the most problematic issues. In terms of Civil Liberties - 43 points out of 60 - the biggest problems deemed to be the lack of an independent judiciary system, the lack of power by non-governmental organizations specified in human rights within the state, and the

non-equal treatment amongst different Hungarian citizens in the terms of laws and policies (Freedom House, 2021d).

	Hungary	Czech Republic
Region	Eastern Europe	Eastern Europe
Post-Communistic State	Yes	Yes
EU Member	Yes (since 2004)	Yes (since 2004)
Perceived Corruption as a Problem (“totally agreed” %)	96 %	88 %
Perceived Corruption as Unavoidable (“totally agreed” %)	77 %	51 %
GDP per capita Growth, 2009 (%)	- 6.555%	- 5.199%
Democratic Score	Transitional or Hybrid Regime	Consolidated Democracy
Freedom Score	Partly Free	Free

Figure 3: Summary of Results

4.3 Discussion

As expected, the values of the independent variable were higher in the case of Hungary, with 96 % of the population deemed corruption to be a problem within their nation. The public of Czech Republic also had issues with corruption as a problem within their nation, to an extent of 88 %. However, it is the notion of whether or not corruption is perceived to be unavoidable, where these two cases start to dramatically differ in values. 77 % of the Hungarian population deemed that corruption is unavoidable, meanwhile a bare majority - 51 % - of the Czechians agreed to that notion. Is that 26 percentage points margin large enough to explain the cases’ different outcomes in the dependent variables? Also fascinating is the fact that the average of the EU’s survey populations’ “totally agree” to 69 % in that same question, splitting both cases on separate sides of the spectrum. Perhaps the sense of

hopelessness Hungarians felt towards corruption as a phenomena itself is the biggest difference that separates these cases from each other?

In terms of the level of democracy, there is no question about it - there is a variation between the cases. Czech Republic is viewed to be a consolidated democracy, which is not a perfect democracy but is still considered to be a democracy. Hungary has instead turned into a hybrid regime. Hungary's democratic backslide has thus led the nation to stop being considered as a democracy, and it is now more correct to view the nation as an autocracy.

It is also clear that the lack of democracy in Hungary not only has affected parliamentary matters, but also has started to visibly permeate the freedom of the people of the nation. Hungarian citizens are now considered to be "partly free", compared to Czechian citizens that are considered to be "free". It is plausible to assume that these facts would (or in fact are) creating headaches for the "democratization-pushing" EU, that one of their member states, in fact, is not a democracy.

Examining the hypothesis of this thesis once more (*H': The more the public perceive corruption to be a problem in their country, the more likely the state is to fall into a democratic backslide*), there are questions to raise regarding it. Although it, with the presented results, is strictly speaking correct, the margin between the corruption being perceived as a problem was not that big amongst the cases populations. The perception of corruption as an inevitability and that attitude's effect on democratic backsliding might have, in hindsight, resulted in a better foundation for a hypothesis.

Although there are some variations in each case GDP per capita growth, and Czech Republic evidently fared a bit better, both countries felt the hit of the great recession. For Poland, as an example of another nation in the region, the recession barely had an effect on its economy. A reason for that could be that Poland, unlike Czech Republic, had favored a more internal economic market, more free from international influence, despite being an EU member state (Kutzleb, 2015, p.66,77). Perhaps Poland had been a better case to compare to Czech Republic, as that is a country that, similar to Hungary, has turned into a democratic backslide, despite their great handling of the great recession, unlike Hungary.

The somewhat unexpected results also raises questions about how the perception of corruption as unavoidable connects to the election of Fidesz. As already mentioned, Fidesz used anti-corruption tactics in their campaigning for the 2010 Hungarian election. If 77 % of

the Hungarian public had truly surrendered to the fact that corruption is unavoidable, why would Fidesz use that anti-corruption rhetoric and how did Fidesz win the majority of the votes? Perhaps Fidesz changed people's minds about the endurance of corruption or perhaps the people decided to prioritize Fidesz over the already corrupt parties in power in Hungary. According to recently mentioned polls, Fidesz has still been going strong as the party usually has around 50 % of the support of the Hungarian population, almost completely consistent in recent years. It may indicate that most Hungarians that voted for Fidesz did not get fooled by their anti-corruption rhetoric but that they knew what they voted for.

Evidently, the populist parties of Czech Republic and Hungary are not the same. As they have different priorities and different relationships to democracy, it created some question marks regarding how that perhaps affected the difference in democratic backsliding between the cases. Though I would argue that the expected relationship would be that general European citizens would be more reluctant to elect a populist party that aims to dismantle democracy than one that would not. It is a risk, that the difference between these populist parties is an afterhand construction, since one can not expect that every Hungarian citizens that voted for Fidesz knew and/or hoped that an abolishment of democratic principles would be to follow.

5. Conclusion

In terms of political dissatisfaction, a certain component of that is the public's perception of corruption. If anything, this paper concluded that the repeated fact that populist parties usually play on the public's grievances towards the politicians in power, with a new angle. However, to determine that a public's perception of corruption is solely the reason behind electing a populist party with autocratic tendencies might be an exaggeration. By the data presented in this thesis it is sufficient to say that it is a factor, perhaps greater than previously expected. There are other potential factors for leaning towards electing populist parties though. Perhaps Czech Republic shares a lot of these factors with Hungary, but it is a mere coincidence that these countries differ in the level of democracy. A nation as Sweden, for example, has a historically longer democratic background which creates a democratic environment where democratic are more probable. Sweden therefore are more likely to prevent a democratic backslide from occurring in the nation than the cases of this thesis, which has not the same historic democratic tendencies. The one suspected reason that separates these two cases was simply perceived corruption, but there is a possibility that a more unpredictable factor had a

larger impact on the outcome. Hungary had a party like Fidesz, with convincing campaigning tactics that convinced a majority of Hungarians to vote for them, while none of Czech Republic's populist parties had that campaigning success - or perhaps Czech Republic has too many populist parties that split the votes among them?

Perhaps Fidesz works in Hungary but would not work in Czech Republic because of some differences in general attitudes, opinions and personalities between citizens of both nations? Further research might have been interesting to widen the perspective of the election of populist parties based on the public's typical behavior and parties rhetorical tactics.

As already mentioned, Poland could be a great case to study in a case comparison with the Czech Republic, using the same theoretical argument of this thesis. The reason for that being that Poland dodged the negative effects of the great recession, that would eradicate the possible significance of the great control variable of this thesis - handling of the great recession. Perhaps, in that case, a control variable regarding the European refugee crisis would be implemented as that has been a heavily debated topic in the last years, not in the least initiated by right-wing populists.

Furthermore, perhaps the distinction made by Lavrinenko (2020, p.257-8) regarding different categories of populism - technocracy and nativism - is worth a closer look. Populism as a concept tends to be one-dimensional, including this thesis' research design which was designed to not analyze the difference between different populist parties. Perhaps that was a mistake?

Through a western-democratic perspective, it was unthinkable that part of Europe would fall into a democratic backslide a couple of years ago, but here we are. The questions are plenty: what does the future hold for the region? Is the decade of the 2020's the bringer of a new democratization wave, or are the recent democratic backsliding trends just the beginning of more to come? Is there a third alternative, somewhere there in the middle?

6. Bibliography

Antal, Attila, 2019, “The Rise of Hungarian Populism: State Autocracy and the Orbán Regime”, Emerald Publishing Limited, 1st ed., pp. 1-169

BBC, 2018, “Hungary profile - timeline”, *BBC News*, (online) 5 March, available at: <<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-17383522>> [Accessed 29 November 2021]

BBC, 2019, “Czech Republic country profile”, *BBC News*, (online) 24 June, available at: <<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-17220018>> [Accessed 29 November 2021]

Beauchamp, Zack, 2018, “It happened there: how democracy died in Hungary”, *Vox*, (online) 13 September, available at: <<https://www.vox.com/policy-and-politics/2018/9/13/17823488/hungary-democracy-authoritarianism-trump>> [Accessed 9 November 2021]

Bennet, Andrew & George, Alexander L., 2004, “Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences”, MIT Press, (online), available at: <<https://www.alnap.org/system/files/content/resource/files/main/george-and-bennett-how-to-do-case-studies.pdf>> [Accessed 20 November 2021]

Brancati, Dawn, 2018, “Social Scientific Research”, London, Sage.

Cianetti, Licia., Dawson, James. & Hanley, Seán, 2018, “Rethinking “democratic backsliding” in Central and Eastern Europe – looking beyond Hungary and Poland”, *East European Politics*, 34:3, pp. 243-256

Císař, Ondřej, 2017, “Czech Republic: From Post-Communist Idealism to Economic Populism”, *Freidrich Ebert Stiftung, Dept. for Central and Eastern Europe*, January, pp. 1-14

Corruption Perceptions Index, 2009, *Transparency International*, available at: <<https://www.transparency.org/en/cpi/2009>> [Accessed 27 November 2021]

Eurobarometer, 2009a, “Attitudes of Europeans towards Corruption - Factsheets Czechia - EN”, *European Commission*, December, available at <https://europa.eu/eurobarometer/surveys/detail/814> [Accessed 2 December 2021]

Eurobarometer, 2009b, “Attitudes of Europeans towards Corruption - Factsheets Hungary - EN”, *European Commission*, December, available at <https://europa.eu/eurobarometer/surveys/detail/814> [Accessed 2 December 2021]

Freedom House 2021a, “Czech Republic: Nations in Transit 2021 Country Report”, (online), available at: <https://freedomhouse.org/country/czech-republic/nations-transit/2021> [Accessed 3 January 2022]

Freedom House, 2021b, “Hungary: Nations in Transit 2021 Country Report”, (online), available at: <https://freedomhouse.org/country/hungary/nations-transit/2021> [Accessed 3 January 2022]

Freedom House, 2021c, “Czech Republic: Freedom in the World 2021 Country Report”, (online), available at: <https://freedomhouse.org/country/czech-republic/freedom-world/2021#PR> [Accessed 3 January 2022]

Freedom House, 2021d, “Hungary: Freedom in the World 2021 Country Report”, (online), available at: <https://freedomhouse.org/country/hungary/freedom-world/2021> [Accessed 3 January 2022]

Gillespie, John., Van Nguyen, Thang., Vu Nguyen, Hung., & Quang Lee, Chang, 2019, “Exploring a Public Interest Definition of Corruption: Public Private Partnerships in Socialist Asia”, *Journal of Business Ethics* (2020:165), pp. 579–594

Hegre, Håvard., Knutsen, Carl Henrik. & Rød, Espen, G., 2019, “The determinants of democracy: a sensitivity analysis”, *Public Choice* (2020) 185, pp. 87–111

Huntington, Samuel P., 1991, “How Countries Democratize”, *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 106, No. 4 (Winter 1991-1992), pp. 579-616

Hutt, David, 2021, “Six takeaways from the Czech Republic's historic election”, *Euronews*, (online) 13 October, available at: <https://www.euronews.com/2021/10/10/six-takeaways-from-the-czech-republic-s-historic-election> [Accessed 6 January 2022]

Johnston, Michael, 2005, “Syndromes of Corruption: Wealth, Power, and Democracy”, Cambridge University Press, pp. 1-267

Kutzleb, Dana, 2015, “Czech Republic v. Poland and the Economic Recession: Most Similar Systems Design”, *Political Analysis*, Vol. 16, Article 5, pp. 65-77

Lavrinenko, Olga, 2020, “Socio-economic and Socio-political Origins of Technocratic Populism in the Czech Republic and Hungary”, in *Populism*, Ed. Crothers, Lane, Brill, pp. 257-287

Levitsky, Steven., & Way, Lucan, A., 2010, “Competitive Authoritarianism : Hybrid Regimes after the Cold War”, Cambridge University Press, pp. 1-517

McFaul, Michael, 2002, “The Fourth Wave of Democracy and Dictatorship: Noncooperative Transitions in the Postcommunist World”, Cambridge University Press, *World Politics*, Vol. 54, No. 2, pp. 212-244

Mudde, Cas., & Kaltwasser, Cristóbal Rovira, 2012, “Populism in Europe and the Americas : Threat or Corrective for Democracy?”, Cambridge University Press, pp. 1-258

Mudde, Cas, 2019, “Populism in Europe: An Illiberal Democratic Response to Undemocratic Liberalism”, *The Government and Opposition*, Leonard Schapiro Lecture, Cambridge University Press, Vol. 56, pp. 577-597

Munro, André, 2020, "populism". *Encyclopedia Britannica*, (online) 29 May, available at: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/populism> [Accessed 25 November 2021]

Navot, Doron & Beerli, Itai, 2017, “Conceptualization of Political Corruption, Perceptions of Corruption, and Political Participation in Democracies”, *Lex Locals*, American Psychological Association, 6th Ed., 15:2, pp. 199-219

Politico, 2021, “Hungarian polls, trends and election news for Hungary”, *POLITICO*, (online), available at: <https://www.politico.eu/europe-poll-of-polls/hungary/> [Accessed 6 January 2022]

Poop-Madsen, Benjamin Ask, 2019, “Should we be afraid? Liberal democracy, democratic backsliding, and contemporary populism”, *Contemporary Political Theory* (19:2020), pp. 161-168

Olken, Benjamin, A., 2009, “Corruption perceptions vs. corruption reality”, *Journal of Public Economics*, (93:2009), pp. 950-964

Rohac, Dalibor., Kumar, Sahana., & Johansson Heinö, Andreas, 2017, “The wisdom of demagogues: institutions, corruption and support for authoritarian populists”, in *Economic Affairs* vol 37:3, John Wiley & Sons, Ltd, pp. 382-396

Rooduijn, Matthijs, 2018, “Why is populism suddenly all the rage?”, *The Guardian*, (online) 20 November, available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/political-science/2018/nov/20/why-is-populism-suddenly-so-sexy-the-reasons-are-many> [Accessed 4 December 2021]

Rothstein, Bo, 2011, “The Quality of Government: Corruption, Social Trust, and Inequality in International Perspective”, University of Chicago Press, pp.1-286

Serhan, Yaseen, 2020, “The EU Watches as Hungary Kills Democracy”, *The Atlantic*, (online) 2 April, available at: <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2020/04/europe-hungary-viktor-orban-coronavirus-covid19-democracy/609313/> [Accessed 9 November 2021]

Than, Krisztina, & Szakacs, Gergely, 2010, “Fidesz wins Hungary election with strong mandate”, *Reuters*, (online) 12 April, available at:

<<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-hungary-election-idUSTRE63A1GE20100412>>

[Accessed 5 December 2021]

Voogd, Remko, & Dassonneville, Ruth, 2018, “Are the Supporters of Populist Parties Loyal Voters? Dissatisfaction and Stable Voters for Populist Parties”, Cambridge University Press, pp. 349-370

The World Bank, 2021a, “GDP per capita growth (annual %) - Hungary”, (online) available at:

<<https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.PCAP.KD.ZG?end=2020&locations=HU&start=1992&view=chart>> [Accessed 6 December 2021]

The World Bank, 2021b, “GDP per capita growth (annual %) - Czech Republic”, (online) available at: <<https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.PCAP.KD.ZG?locations=CZ>>

[Accessed 6 December 2021]