

Going NUTS? Europeanization, Legacies and the Politics of Developmentalism in Hungary

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Outline:

1. Theoretical Overview
2. Research Question
3. Case Selection
4. Puzzle
5. Hypotheses
6. Empirical Evidence
7. Conclusion

Theoretical Overview:

1. Theoretical frameworks in effect to regional development and Europeanization
2. Administrative re-structuring, regionalization, legacies and goals

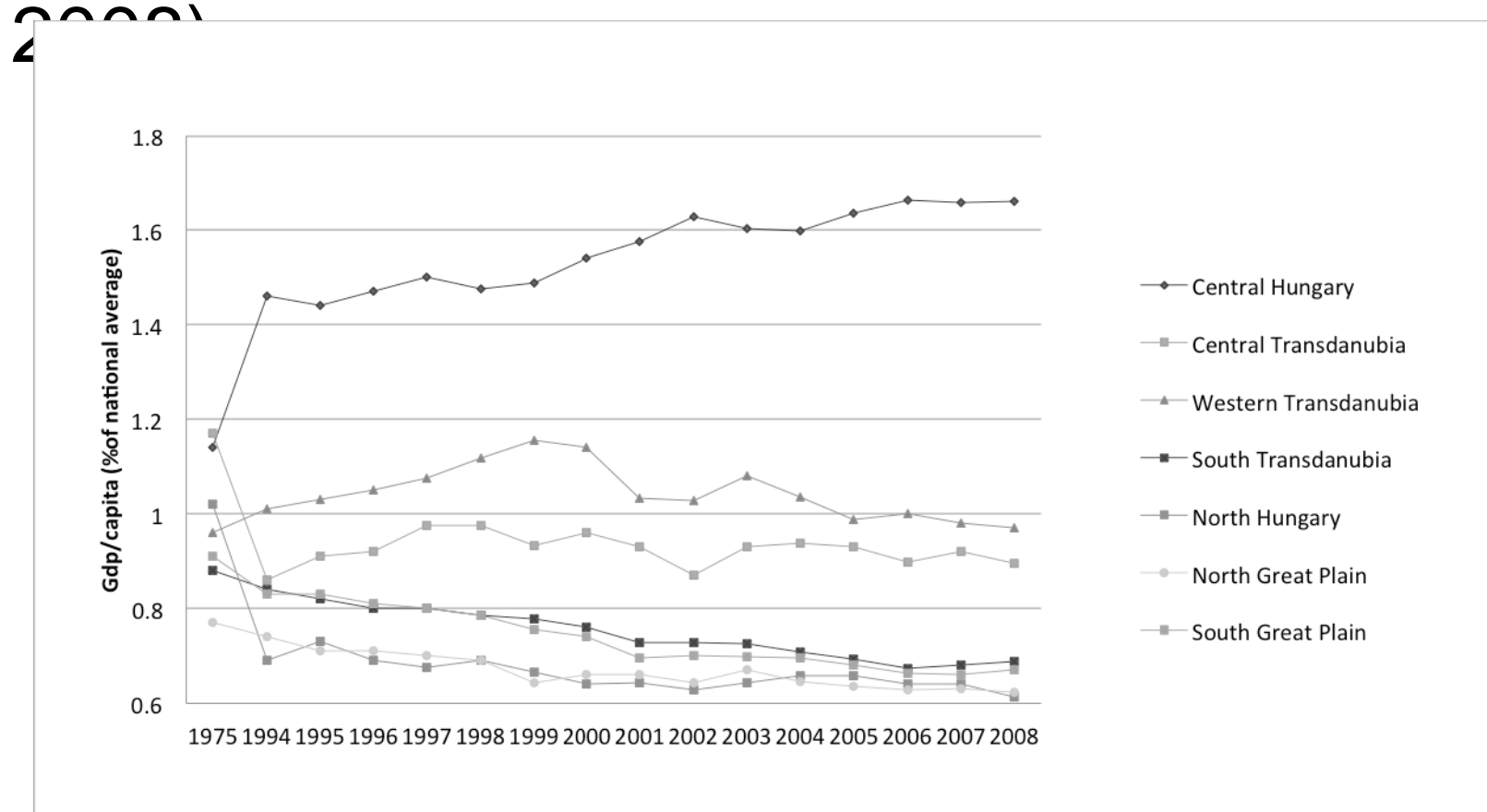
Research Question:

→ How do the domestic politics of regional development and the external impact of the European Union intersect?

Case Selection: Why Hungary?

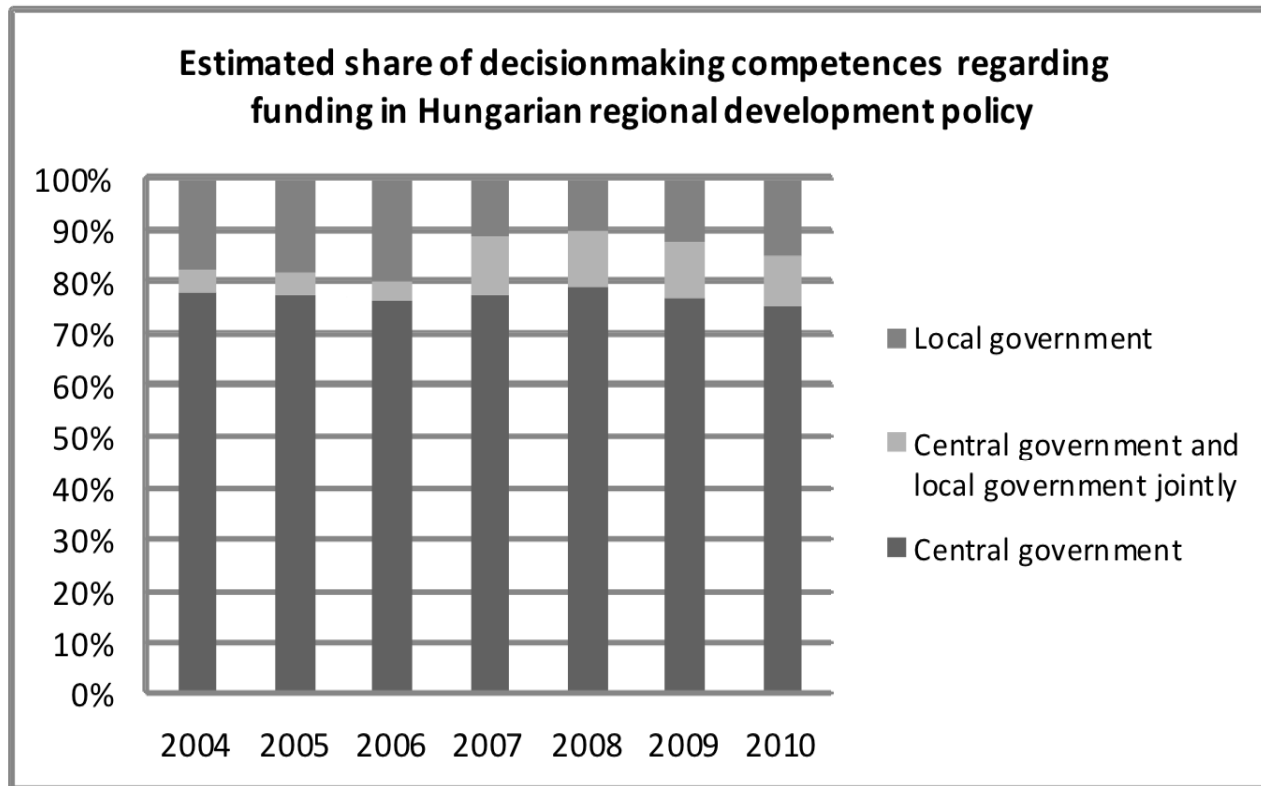
- In Hungary, developmentalism and regional development have been crucial items for both the liberal and conservative camps.
- High levels of absorption of EU Cohesion Funds but strikingly low levels of substantive change in regional cohesion levels

Development differences and Regions (1975-



Source: Own calculations based on Eurostat data and NFÜ 2007, p. 3 for the period 1975-1996

Decision-making competences



Source: Perger 2010b)

Puzzle (1):

- Europeanization literature suggests EU-driven empowerment of subnational governance levels
 - New regionalism literature suggests that for efficient uses of EU funds, the local and non-state actors should be meaningfully involved
- ➔ In the Hungarian case, both of these expectations are dashed and EU regional policy implementation has reinforced centralization.

Puzzle (2):

- The shape of politics in Hungary suggests substantial divergence in conceptualizations of the developmental role of state and the formulation of developmentalism between the left-liberal and conservative right-wing camps.
- ➔ Yet, the ideological underpinnings of the development agenda show convergence between the discourses on both sides.

Hypotheses:

- (1) Domestic political and ideational context bolster centralization amidst experimentalism of EU governance.
- (2) Considerations of political power, rather than ideological divergence, shape regional and development policy.

Empirical Evidence (1):

- ➔ Regional policy reform has been among the most hotly debated issues in Hungarian party politics.
- Experimentation with multi-level governance forms had a role in bringing about 'regionalism without regions'
- The vested interests of the different actors hindered a comprehensive reform.
- ➔ Reforms provided for a minimum of EU compatibility while the coexistence of regions and counties resulted in new anomalies and parallelisms.

Empirical Evidence (2)

- Legacies of developmentalism and the role of the state
 - Left-liberal – MSZP, SZDSZ
 - Conservative - Fidesz

Conclusion:

- Growing centralisation despite Europeanization-led changes due to the domestic political context and historical narratives of developmentalism.
- High level of ideological convergence on economic liberalization narrative.
- Considerations of political power and of contingent events, rather than ideological factors, shape regional and development policy and may explain the incremental reform process.