

Civil Society as a Terrain of Struggles: Understanding Illiberal Dynamics through the Agency of Regime-Aligned Civic Organizations

Bernadett Sebály 

CEU DI: Central European University Democracy Institute, Hungary

Research Paper

Cite this article: Sebály B. (2026). Civil Society as a Terrain of Struggles: Understanding Illiberal Dynamics through the Agency of Regime-Aligned Civic Organizations. *Voluntas: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations*, 1–9
<https://doi.org/10.1017/S0957876526000318>

Received: 18 November 2025

Revised: 23 March 2026

Accepted: 24 March 2026

Keywords:

Illiberal civil society; Liberal civil society; Movement strategy; Social movement analysis

Corresponding author:

Bernadett Sebály;

Email: sebalyb@ceu.edu

Abstract

Changing civil society dynamics are often interpreted as the state's encroachment upon an autonomous sphere of democratic activity, presumed to be respected by liberal democratic regimes but violated by illiberal ones. The paper argues that such a normative autonomy/encroachment framework overlooks how illiberal civil society configurations are actively shaped by conflicts and structures carried over from liberal regimes. Through a systematic comparison of organization–state relationships across liberal and illiberal periods, using the case of a Hungarian conservative civic organization, the *National Association of Large Families*, the study uncovers underlying patterns of illiberal civil society. Adopting a longitudinal and historically informed perspective that foregrounds the agency of actors aligned with the illiberal regime, this study develops a typology of changing state–civil society interactions. The analysis demonstrates how Central and Eastern Europe's distinctive historical experience—marked by the transition from state socialism to liberal democracy, intertwined with neoliberal globalization—continues to shape the strategies of civic actors under illiberal rule, offering insights of global relevance for civil society studies and civic organizations seeking to counter illiberal regimes.

Introduction

The recent rise of illiberalism¹ has disrupted the routine civil society dynamics that underpin the liberal international order. Since the turn of the millennium, states once aligned with liberal democratic norms have adopted a variety of tools—legalistic barriers, bureaucratic procedures, harassment, or outright repression—to constrain the opportunities of Western donors and domestic civic actors (Carothers & Brechenmacher, 2014; Wolff & Poppe, 2015). This phenomenon has largely been analyzed through the liberal democratic framework, treating civil society as an autonomous sphere presumed to be respected by liberal democratic states but infringed upon by illiberal regimes (Toepler et al., 2020). While this normative autonomy/encroachment framework illuminates certain aspects of the illiberal shift—such as the neutralization or elimination of critical civic actors and the taming or co-optation of aligned ones—it overlooks the fact that illiberal civil society configurations are actively shaped by conflicts and structures carried over from liberal ones. Central and Eastern Europe offers a particularly illustrative case of this relationship, as the transition from state socialism to liberal democracy, intertwined with the pressures of neoliberal globalization, has produced enduring tensions that continue to shape how civic actors, including those aligned with the regime, navigate, or contest illiberal rule.

To capture the dynamics of civil society amid competing social visions, I draw on the Gramscian notion of civil society. Understood this way, civil society is not “an autonomous sphere of self-contained democratic activity” but “a chaotic sphere of competition” (Ehrenberg, 2017, 7); “another term for the social power relations deriving from the economy” (Cox, 1999, 10). In this framework, actors aligned with the illiberal regime are not merely facilitated, or misguided, but may possess a bargaining capacity, be capable of organizing popular consent, or have a historical role in consolidating the alliance that secured the regime's power. However, while the Gramscian lens shifts the dispute from civil society's presumed autonomy to the contest of alternative social visions within civil society, researchers using this approach have rarely compared liberal and illiberal dynamics (Gagyi et al., 2020; Gagyi & Gerőcs, 2025; Nagy, 2024). Gramsci has predominantly been applied either to illuminate state–civil society dynamics in liberal hegemony (Fonseca, 2018; Robinson, 1996), in related counter-hegemonic struggles (Dagnino, 2011; Greskovits, 2017, 2020; Jenkins & Brents, 1989), or in the illiberal regime (Bohle et al., 2024; Landau, 2008; Nagy, 2023; Ramasamy & Guan, 2004; Sivhouch, 2013; Tugal, 2024).

© The Author(s), 2026. Published by Cambridge University Press on behalf of International Society for Third-Sector Research. This is an Open Access article, distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution licence (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0>), which permits unrestricted re-use, distribution and reproduction, provided the original article is properly cited.

¹Introducing the concept of illiberalism goes beyond the scope of this paper. I use Enyedi's core definition: illiberalism is “the rejection of the underlying principles of liberal democracy” (2024:4), one of whose distinct features is the concentration of power and the rejection of constraints on executive authority.

The current paper aims to fill this gap by focusing on what has so far remained a blind spot: the systematic comparison of state–civil society interactions through the agency of those aligned with illiberal regimes, from a longitudinal, historical perspective. Therefore, my question is the following: “How did organization–state relationships unfold for actors aligned with the illiberal state before and after the illiberal turn?” Moving beyond LGBTQ+, feminist, and human rights groups widely covered in the literature, I focus on “the other side of the coin” in Hungary—a polity that has become a key reference point for analysts of illiberal and authoritarian trends. I explore my research question through a case study of a Hungarian conservative organization, the *National Association of Large Families* (Nagycsaládok Országos Egyesülete, NOE), by comparing its relationship with the liberal and illiberal states between 1990 and 2010 and between 2010 and 2024, respectively. (2024 is the last year of the examined period within the illiberal era.) To structure the empirical analysis, I develop a typology of patterns of organization–state interactions that helps answer the research question and serves as a tool with potential explanatory relevance for further research on liberal/illiberal state–civil society dynamics.

The paper begins by reviewing how the normative autonomy/encroachment framework and the Gramscian lens have been employed in the literature to interpret shifting dynamics within civil society. I accentuate the analytical advantage of the Gramscian understanding while highlighting my contribution, namely, the systematic comparison of state–civil society relationships across liberal and illiberal regimes. I then present my methodology for examining how these relationships differ before and after the illiberal turn for actors who align themselves with the illiberal regime. The next section introduces the case study, followed by an analysis combined with a typology of liberal/illiberal patterns of organization–state interactions in relation to the conflicts and structures inherited from liberal regimes. I conclude by highlighting the added value of the longitudinal comparative design to our understanding of illiberal dynamics and suggesting the relevance of my findings for civic organizations seeking to challenge illiberal regimes.

Civil society as a *terrain of struggles*

Since the turn of the millennium, the rise of illiberalism has disrupted the routine operation of civil society. The pushback on Western foreign aid, combined with changes in domestic legal and funding environments, had quickly become an authoritarian tool to neutralize, weaken, or eliminate critical domestic voices (Carothers & Brechenmacher, 2014; Mendelson, 2015; Toepler et al., 2020; Wolff & Poppe, 2015). These changing civil society dynamics, which threaten the liberal international order, have predominantly been analyzed within the liberal political-economic framework, where civil society is viewed as an autonomous democratic sphere presumed to be respected by liberal democratic states but infringed upon by illiberal regimes.

This widely discussed and influential normative autonomy/encroachment framework describes changing civil society conditions in illiberal regimes as either “shrinking” or “contested” spaces. In the first stream of the literature, the emphasis is on the closing of the space: the changing legal, funding, and media environments to harass, marginalize, or annul critical voices, the subduing of civic actors through co-optation, or the facilitation of government-established or government-sponsored organizations (gongorization) (Brechenmacher, 2017; Gerő & Kerényi, 2020; Hodenfield & Pegus, 2013; Kuti & Marschall, 2020; Nagy, 2017; Nagy et al., 2025). The

second stream of the literature acknowledges that it is a contested rather than a shrinking space for civil society. The space is expanding for “loyal” actors, can be beneficial for apolitical ones, and may continue to allow some pushback from claim makers (Gerő et al., 2023; Krizsán & Roggeband, 2019; Mikecz, 2023; Negri, 2020; Toepler et al., 2020). Research using the closing or contested space frameworks assigns agency predominantly to critical actors while ignoring those aligned with illiberal regimes or depicting them as merely passive, facilitated, or misguided (see Fábrián & Korolczuk, 2017; Fejős & Neményi, 2020; Szikra & Vajda, 2020 as examples of exceptions).

While this normative autonomy/encroachment framework illuminates certain aspects of the illiberal shift—such as the neutralization or elimination of critical civic actors and the taming or co-optation of aligned ones—it overlooks the fact that illiberal civil society configurations are actively shaped by conflicts and structures carried over from liberal ones. In contrast to this framework, a stream of literature that revives a Gramscian perspective suggests that we view illiberal and liberal civil society dynamics as variations within the sphere of struggle for domination rather than as normatively opposed domains (Gagyi et al., 2020, 161). Understood this way, civil society is not “an autonomous sphere of self-contained democratic activity” (Ehrenberg, 2017, 7) but “simultaneously an object of conquest, a battlefield among different social and political groups, and the outcome of a given configuration of opposing forces” (Brighenti, 2016, 4). In this *terrain of struggles*, the state promotes a particular way of life—through schools, churches, civic associations, newspapers, intellectual circles, etc.—in response to which new social and political alliances emerge and strive for dominance (Cox, 1999, 16; Hoare & Smith, 1999, 495–503; Taylor, 2021). The turf war between liberal and illiberal values is one such clash.

In this Gramscian stream of the literature, the conditions for civil society promoted by liberal democracies—whether domestically or internationally—are viewed less as genuine expressions of pluralism and more as mechanisms for generating consent and securing the domination of the neoliberal political-economic order (Fonseca, 2018; Robinson, 1996). Governments promoting global capitalism and governments integrating their countries into global markets need reliable local organizations that take responsibility for responding to the harms of the economic transition through service provision or focus their advocacy on civil and political, rather than economic and social, rights (Dagnino, 2011; Gagyi & Ivancheva, 2019; Lomax, 1997). The reconfiguration of civil society through the “accelerated growth and expanded role of NGOs” and “the transfer of the state’s social responsibilities” to these actors is seen as an essential building block of the development of global capitalism (Dagnino, 2011, 128).

Researchers interpreting the illiberal dynamics apply the Gramscian lens in many distinct ways. One stream of this literature focuses on the changing modes of the economy. For example, Gagyi et al. (2020) and Gagyi and Gerőcs (2025) derive the changing position of struggling constituencies in Hungary from neoliberal hegemony and the subsequent illiberal economic conditions. Another stream of the literature examines the state’s relational approach to civil society. Within this stream, Greskovits (2017, 2020) explains the “Gramscian” political organizing strategy of the Viktor Orbán-led Hungarian Fidesz party before the illiberal turn. Similarly, Bohle et al. (2024) analyze the “counter-hegemonic strategies” of the Fidesz-KDNP-led Hungarian governments and the Law and Justice-led Polish governments to advance a nationalist, right-wing Christian agenda both domestically and within the EU. In addition, Nagy (2023) applies the conditions of the integral

state to explain the remaking of the Hungarian art funding scene after the illiberal shift. However, none of this literature conducts a systematic comparison of state/civil society relationships across liberal and illiberal regimes.

My research aims to fill this gap by undertaking a longitudinal study of changing state–civil society relationships through the agency of those aligned with the illiberal regime. In contrast to the normative framework that explains these changing relationships—co-optation, gongo-ization, coercion, etc.—as the direct outcome of illiberal governance (Gerő et al., 2023; Nagy et al., 2025; Toepler et al., 2020), I show how the contours of illiberal civil society are shaped by actors operating within conflicts and structures carried over from liberal regimes. Central and Eastern Europe serves as a key site for observing this relationship as the transition from state socialism to liberal democracy, intertwined with neoliberal globalization, has produced enduring tensions that continue to shape how civic actors, including those aligned with the regime, navigate, or contest illiberal rule.

In line with the Gramscian approach, I consider both liberal and illiberal civil societies to be integral parts of the hegemonic state (Fonseca, 2018; Gagyí et al., 2020); two *terrains of struggles* where social and political groups adjoin to reconfigure established power relations and advance their model of society. Therefore, I highlight the distinctions between the liberal and illiberal dynamics along the *character* of integration between civil society and the state. In both liberal and illiberal civil societies, civic organizations vis-à-vis the state and political parties engage in *conflict* over values and policies, *cooperate* through the intentional or incidental alignment of resources, or *incorporate* each other’s structures by sharing people or resources—albeit in different ways across regimes. I demonstrate how these conflictual, cooperative, and incorporative state–civil society relationships unfold before and after the illiberal turn. The story of actors aligned with the illiberal regime—their agency, and how their struggles predate the regime—also has important implications for the strategies civic organizations choose to confront and seek to replace illiberal rule.

Methods

The goal of the research is to identify how patterns of interactions between the state and actors who eventually align with the illiberal state evolve before and after the illiberal turn. The research is designed as a longitudinal case study across liberal and illiberal regimes. I examine a Hungarian conservative organization, the *National Association of Large Families* (Nagycsaládok Országos Egyesülete, NOE), by comparing its relationship with the liberal and illiberal states between 1990 and 2010 and between 2010 and 2024, respectively. The specific geographic and temporal horizon (Hungary, 1990–2024) enables me to trace patterns of organization–state interactions across extended liberal and illiberal periods (noted as critical by Toepler et al., 2020, 659) and generate new insights into illiberal and authoritarian trends.

Given the character of organization–state relations and the longevity of the organization, NOE constitutes a crucial case (Eckstein, 1975; Gerring, 2007) for probing or refining the normative autonomy/encroachment claim about illiberal state–civil society dynamics. Before the illiberal turn of 2010, NOE advocated its conservative worldview by confronting and negotiating with governments across the political spectrum. After the illiberal turn, when it became one of the main beneficiaries of the new regime, its critical tone subsided. The normative autonomy/encroachment framework explains this shift in organizational behavior by co-optation (Nagy et al., 2025, 16–17) or gongo-ization (Gerő et al., 2023, 22, 24). However, seen

Table 1. Primary data sources

Media sources		Organizational documents	
Format	No. of articles	Format	No. of documents
Printed articles <i>(Arcanum Digitheca Database, 1987–2015)</i>	667	Newsletters (2007–2013, 2019–2023)	17
Online articles (2005–2024)	52	Publications (1991, 1996, 1998, 2017)	4
		Policy proposals, personal reflections, minutes (publicly available or received upon request)	21
Total: 719		Total: 42	

through the Gramscian lens, the case of NOE suggests a more complex phenomenon of underlying patterns of relationships between the organization and the state. To structure the empirical analysis, I develop a typology that distinguishes liberal/illiberal patterns of organization–state interactions in relation to the conflicts and structures inherited from liberal regimes. The typology also constitutes a tool with potential explanatory relevance for further research.

Table 1 shows that my primary data sources for observing relationship patterns between NOE and the state have been 719 media articles and 42 organizational documents. I have systematically organized content from these primary sources in a document, grouping data by how the organization related to parties and the state under subsequent governments around different policy issues. I have segmented my search for media data in the *Arcanum Digitheca Database* by governing cycles and used keywords such as the organization’s name or a combination of the organization’s name and other expressions (such as a party’s name or a policy issue). I have juxtaposed articles to lessen data validity issues. I have used newsreel footage (nava.hu), minutes of parliamentary meetings (parlament.k-monitor.hu), and the election database (valasztas.hu) to further triangulate data. After processing these written and visual sources, I have conducted two semi-structured interviews (one with two NOE leaders and one with a social policy expert) to verify preliminary conclusions and further triangulate data. By using media articles and organizational documents as primary sources rather than interviews, I have overcome the limits of memory and reduced distortion from retrospective reconstruction or reinterpretation of organizational motivations. The case study provides an original narrative of NOE’s story, and a selection of primary data sources is added as in-text citations.

Case study: Large families in the terrain of struggles from 1990 to 2024

Background and summary of the argument

The *National Association of Large Families* (Nagycsaládok Országos Egyesülete, NOE) is a Hungarian family organization advocating conservative family values (marital status, having three or more children, no abortion or divorce), universal benefits for all large families, and incentives for childbearing to support the demographic survival of the nation. Established in 1987 at the end of state

socialism (1949–1989), NOE has operated for an extended period in two characteristically different, liberal (1990–2010) and illiberal (2010 to present), periods on behalf of a membership that never dropped below 10,000 families. During this time, NOE's self-perception has been that the organization has consistently represented its principles to all governments and followed an escalatory strategy of negotiation and confrontation (Fejős & Neményi, 2020, 86; Varga, 2017, 5).

The fact is that after Fidesz, NOE's conservative political ally, won a landslide victory in 2010, NOE's critical tone gradually dissipated. This change correlated with lavish state funding (Kapitány, 2019), influential roles in ministries (Inglot et al., 2022, 277, 286), and a (renewed) strategic partnership between NOE and the Fidesz-KDNP government (Inglot et al., 2022, 280). The normative autonomy/encroachment framework would interpret these dynamics as an example of co-optation or gongo-ization (Gerő et al., 2023, 22, 24; Nagy et al., 2025, 16–17). On the contrary, I argue that the organization–state relationships have changed because the counter-hegemonic triumph over a liberal vision in 2010 was a shared outcome of NOE and Fidesz. The two organizations were the core social and political pillars of the struggle to advance conservative-nationalist family values in civil society and the state before 2010. After 2010, this vision was amplified by the centralized state to the point that both these values and NOE became tools for consolidating power. However, NOE did not legitimize Fidesz's illiberal state-building because it was misguided, tamed, or facilitated; the illiberal model was collateral to the victory of a government that has delivered on several core items of the organization's agenda.

The circumstances of NOE's foundation at the end of state socialism (1987–1989)

In the late 1980s, reform communists and system-critical yet tolerated conservative intellectuals found common ground in supporting population policy and a robust social policy amid concerns over the nation's demographic survival (Szécsi, 2021, 76–77). NOE was brought to life in the summer of 1987 as the popular vehicle for these efforts (Kardosné Gyurkó, 2017, 15–16). State supervision came with infrastructure and lobbying power, and the budding NOE was able to achieve that family tax credits for large families were incorporated into the new personal income tax legislation in 1988 (Inglot et al., 2022). Like all organizations at that time, NOE was officially established under state supervision; members also included the emerging conservative and left-liberal political opposition (Kardosné Gyurkó, 2017, 42–43). Soon, more than 100 members set out to recruit large families across Hungary and organize them into local chapters (G. Nagy, 1988, 5; Szécsi, 2021, 78). Organizers drew on the infrastructure of the church (congregations, the Bokor base community), workplaces, and neighborhoods. Between 1987 and 1989, the membership grew from 500 to 5,000 families. As we can see, the dynamics between civil society and the emerging liberal state were already more convoluted than what the autonomy/encroachment framework suggests.

The relationship between NOE and the state in the liberal hegemonic period (1990–2010)

From the outset of the liberal period, NOE had a strong presence in both civil society and the state. In 1990, it had a mass base of 6,000 large families nationwide (approximately 3 percent of the constituency), and its vice-president and deputy president became ministers in the Christian conservative government (MDF-KDNP-FKgP).

Additionally, 11 NOE members were elected across the political spectrum. In this political constellation, NOE anticipated the construction of a generous welfare state in which every large family would receive concessions regardless of their financial status. However, instead, the conservative government (1990–1994) executed the first phase of neoliberal restructuring, which the next left-liberal MSZP-SZDSZ government (1994–1998) completed. Between 1990 and 1998, NOE confronted both the conservative and left-liberal governments, albeit in different ways.

As the conservative government remained open to negotiations, kept the large family cause in its rhetoric, and did not touch core family benefits, NOE did not go beyond heavy criticism in the media. In contrast, the left-liberal government introduced a series of austerity measures in 1995, including the abolition of family tax credits, reductions in child care benefits, the means-testing of family allowances (without an increase in their value), and the elimination of free higher education, all without meaningful social consultation (Wells, 2000). In response, on May 14, 1995, NOE organized a demonstration in front of the Parliament, submitted a petition signed by 43,000 people, and NOE's president, Ágota Benkő, gave a speech criticizing the neoliberal elites: “Does the country have a Minister of Finance, or does the Minister of Finance have a country? Do not you read newspapers, Hungarian sociologists' analyses? Have not you been to Káposztásmegyer or Ózd? Do you only watch the reports of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund?” (élő, 1995, 5; translation mine).

This differentiated use of conflict traced the contours of the solidifying conservative and left-liberal blocs. However, the two conservative parties, MDF and KDNP, were losing influence due to internal disputes, and an ambitious political party, the Viktor Orbán-led Fidesz, was taking advantage of the vacuum. Fidesz shifted from the left to the right, aiming for a dominant position in the center right (Wéber, 2010). Between 1996 and 1998, Fidesz gradually gained trust among conservative political elites, intellectuals, and civic organizations, including NOE. Being the oldest player in the conservative movement (older than MDF, KDNP, or Fidesz), and backed by a membership of 22,000 families and 289 chapters in 1996, NOE became authoritative and essential for the party.

During this period, from 1990 to 2002, NOE ensured direct access to the state by running candidates in municipal elections nationwide. To indicate the scale: in 1994, out of the 305 people associated with NOE who ran for office, 92 became elected representatives, 6 became mayors, 8 became county delegates, and 176 became external committee members (Kardosné Gyurkó, 2017, 24). Members typically ran on a single NOE ticket, while occasionally, they ran in alliance with conservative parties or explicitly on a conservative party ticket. This was a massive power demonstration comparable to a political party. NOE organized training for the candidates and supported the work of the elected members. Additionally, during the first parliamentary cycles, the organization monitored the work of elected representatives and evaluated party performance before the elections.

In 1998, NOE's membership comprised 22,000 families, but it had achieved little during the conservative and left-liberal governments. Amid this disappointment of an important constituency, Fidesz won the national elections in 1998. The new Fidesz-FKgP-MDF government, led by Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, was eager to adopt a pro-family agenda and give voice to concerns about the nation's demographic survival. Within 2 years of governing, it restored childcare benefits, universal family benefits, and family tax credits (which had been abolished or reduced by the previous administration). For the conservative movement, including NOE,

Fidesz's measures countered the former left-liberal government's aggressive neoliberal restructuring and supposedly anti-family values. In return, NOE gave the Orbán government recognition many times publicly for being family-friendly and caring about demographic decline (Benkő, 1998, 10; Nagycsaládosoké a Ház, 1998, 2). While NOE demanded and gained concessions for lower-middle-class families during a government that otherwise predominantly targeted the middle class with subsidies, NOE's equity claims were presented in a language that was fundamentally appreciative of the government's achievements (Sebály, 2025, 91–92).

When Fidesz-KDNP lost the elections after a tight race in 2002, NOE's membership base of 20,000 families constituted 9 percent of the large family constituency. Considering NOE's readiness to bargain in favor of the middle class, Fidesz had proved to be a reliable political ally: it had embraced most of NOE's values and policies in government (A nagycsaládosok egyesülete, 2000, 3). Nevertheless, NOE pursued a pragmatic approach toward the subsequent left-liberal governments: it maintained a seat at the negotiating table with the coming MSZP-SZDSZ administrations. At the same time, it remained aligned with Fidesz, which was engaging civil society with full steam and diligently organizing its conservative voter base after its 2002 electoral defeat (Greskovits, 2017, 2020).

When the left-liberal MSZP-SZDSZ government introduced a series of austerity measures in 2006, including hospital and tuition fees, and took steps toward integrating private insurance companies into the health care system, NOE became one of the catalysts of resistance. It organized two demonstrations in 2006 and 2007, criticizing the government for the devastating state of health care and education (the 2007 protest mobilized 10,000 people). The organization also complemented Fidesz's mobilization (2007–2008) for a referendum. Spearheaded by the then NOE president, Endre Szabó, a doctor, the organization launched a petition against the privatization of health care in May 2007 and established a platform with two alter-globalist organizations. They later merged with a similar initiative of trade unions, farmers, health workers, and green organizations, which collected 500,000 signatures. NOE's actions were part of a nationwide protest movement, contributing to the moral and political annihilation of the left-liberal MSZP-SZDSZ governments and the landslide victory of Orbán's party in 2010.

All in all, out of the 20 years of the liberal democratic regime, there were only 4 years (2002–2005) when NOE built a trustworthy relationship with a left-liberal government. The organization organized demonstrations three times and endorsed about a dozen additional demonstrations by joining them. All these demonstrations, including the ones endorsed (1995–1996, 2006–2010), occurred under the left-liberal MSZP-SZDSZ governments. The other 16 years were spent collaborating with conservative parties, which, from NOE's perspective, either delivered in government or fought alongside NOE to advance the organization's values and policies. The return of Fidesz in 2010 with a two-thirds parliamentary majority held immense opportunities for the conservative bloc, including NOE.

The relationship between NOE and the state in the illiberal hegemonic period (2010–2024)

In 2010, Fidesz won the general elections with a landslide victory. From the outset, the Fidesz-KDNP government utilized its two-thirds majority to dismantle the liberal system by centralizing the state and media and recapitalizing the economy. Although the party

stranded various constituencies from its former winning coalition, such as small farmers and workers (Scheiring, 2020), large families have retained their central position in the new illiberal historical bloc. In 2010, NOE's membership consisted of 15,000 families and managed an extensive network of ethnic Hungarian families—31 organizations in Vojvodina (*Vajdaság*) in Serbia, 3 in Upper Hungary (*Felvidék*) in Slovakia, 8 in Transylvania (*Erdély*) in Romania, and 1 in Subcarpathia (*Kárpátalja*) in Ukraine. Based on the performance of the first Orbán administration (1998–2002), NOE advanced the political credit to Fidesz-KDNP immediately after the 2010 elections and appeared on the same platform with the party on various issues, from confronting the International Monetary Fund to supporting Sunday store closures.

Soon, Fidesz-KDNP delivered on many fronts. Within less than 2 years of governing, the party restored (again) what the previous left-liberal governments had abolished or limited: family tax credits, social policy allowance, and gas price compensation. Moreover, it restructured debtor conditions in the aftermath of the global financial crisis and, as demanded by NOE, bailed out the worst-off families by purchasing their properties and granting them a tenant status at low rents (Tisztelt Miniszterelnök, 2011). Although most of these policy measures were not socially targeted (Czifrusz & Jelinek, 2022; Inglot et al., 2022), this did not contradict NOE's core principles. NOE's commitment to equity has always been agency-driven (contingent on the president, board members, and chapter leaders) and tended to compromise in favor of the middle class. By default, the organization has advocated universal subsidies for all large families (because they bear the brunt of social reproduction) (Benkő, 1996; Sebály, 2025).

The new regime also ensured access to the state: NOE received influential positions from the beginning of the illiberal period. Zsuzsa Kormosné Debreceni, NOE's lead expert and board member from 1996 to 2000, became the head of the *Unit for Women's Policies* (Nőpolitikai Osztály) within the Ministry of National Resources (later the Ministry of Human Resources) in 2011. In line with NOE's longstanding advocacy for promoting the traditional large family structure at the European level, Kormosné became a fierce lobbyist for “family mainstreaming” under the 2011 Hungarian EU presidency (Inglot et al., 2022, 286). Complementing these political efforts, a civic alliance of various pro-family and population policy experts and organizations, known as the *Demographic Roundtable* (Népesedési Kerekasztal), was founded in 2009. For a few years, coordinated by Ágota Benkő, former NOE president from 1992 to 2000, the Roundtable nurtured partnerships with high-level decision-makers (Inglot et al., 2022, 279).

From its second term after returning to power (2014–2018), Fidesz-KDNP changed gears. In 2016, the government increased the social policy allowance—a longtime housing grant that incentivizes childbearing—by a factor of two for large families and introduced a variety of subsidized loans, also incentivizing childbearing. These policies, which addressed NOE's concerns about the low level of the allowance (Vass-Gabay, 2013, 2), have been wrapped up in a government rhetoric advancing social reproduction at a previously unseen scale (Sebály, 2025). The subsidies had no income cap, and conditions often restricted eligibility to better-off households (Elek & Szikra, 2018; Pósfai & Sokol, 2024). The government also switched gears in funding civil society. Overall, state funding for organizations engaged in population policy increased with a giant leap between 2016 and 2017 (from 280 million to 738 million HUF), and NOE received 40 percent of the budget item in 2017, 300 million HUF (about 965,000 EUR) (Kapitány, 2019, 67; Varga, 2017, 5). Finally, since 2020, NOE has coordinated holiday charity programs with Lőrinc

Mészáros, a businessman closely associated with Prime Minister Orbán (Egyszülős, 2020), and the then-resigned NOE president, Katalin Kardosné Gyurkó, ran for office in the 2024 municipal elections on a joint platform with Fidesz-KDNP.

Clearly, the illiberal regime worked closely with NOE, but it was a continuation of past relationships. In 2016, NOE became the government's strategic partner, as it had been under the first Orbán administration (Fissza, 2000, 10; Varga, 2017, 5), and it saw a responsive government. For instance, NOE was a key proponent of government policies such as generous family tax credits, lifelong tax exemption for mothers of four or more children, and women's retirement after 40 years of employment (Inglot et al., 2022, 280). Although overall, many of the family policies benefited predominantly middle- and upper-middle-class families, they were embedded in a vehemently family-friendly government rhetoric (Ámon, 2024) and delivered by an administration in which several women who are mothers of three or more children held key positions (Inglot et al., 2022, 277). This all constituted an unprecedented symbolic recognition for large families.

At the same time, the government also abandoned policies important for NOE. For example, it doubled down on securing homeownership rather than resuscitating public housing provision and systematically deteriorated public education and health care. Although the protection of education and health care had previously motivated NOE to organize and endorse a series of protests under left-liberal governments, the organization avoided even the slightest sign of conflict in these areas during the illiberal period. Moreover, in the field of housing, NOE was a tough negotiator under the first Orbán administration (1998–2002) when a form of the social policy allowance (féltszocpol), predominantly benefiting lower-middle-class and low-income families living in prefabricated housing blocks, was at stake (Sebály, 2025, 90–91).

Indeed, while the illiberal project has drawn considerable legitimacy from NOE's moral and public support, the organization has refrained from using this leverage to press its demands more assertively or challenge the government over social inequality and the quality of public services. Instead, NOE has gradually shifted from public criticism through the media (Vass-Gabay, 2013, 2) to bargaining behind closed doors (Jobbágyi, 2016, 4; Varga, 2017, 5), and after 2010, it has not escalated tensions into open confrontation. However, from NOE's perspective, Fidesz has been a proven ally: it has been responsive to NOE's demands and advanced the conservative family agenda both in opposition and in government (A nagycsaládok egyesülete, 2000, 3; Fejős & Neményi, 2020, 86; Hajnal, 1999, 5; Inglot et al., 2022, 280; Varga, 2017, 5). Consequently, in a political economy with no ideologically aligned

alternative, NOE has implemented its program within the dominant bloc, which prioritizes at least part of its agenda.

Findings and discussion: A typology of state–civil society interactions in liberal and illiberal regimes

My longitudinal, historical perspective has illuminated patterns of illiberal state–civil society interactions in the context of long-term power struggles, rather than as instant outcomes of an illiberal political economy. The case study of NOE has shown that organizational behavior in the illiberal period is embedded in the consequences of the struggles in the liberal period. Using the Gramscian lens, I have considered both liberal and illiberal civil societies to be an integral part of the hegemonic state. They are two configurations of the *terrain of struggles* in which civic organizations engage with the state, albeit differently. Table 2 summarizes these distinctive patterns of state–civil society interactions along the dimensions of (1) approaches to the state and (2) civil society configurations. This multidimensional typology structures the empirics of the case study on NOE during the liberal and illiberal periods while also constituting a tool with potential explanatory relevance for further research. The typology refines the understanding of the alignment of “loyal” actors with the illiberal state, which the popular normative autonomy/encroachment framework often explains by co-optation or gongo-ization.

During the liberal period (1990–2010), the relationship between NOE and the state was characterized by a mix of confrontational, complementary, and interpenetrative dynamics, embedded in a hegemonic struggle within a capitalist system over a conservative and liberal vision for Hungary. In this context, NOE confronted governments across the political spectrum, but it employed a differentiated approach to conflict toward conservative and left-liberal parties. Moreover, although NOE remained engaged in dialogue with all governments, it consistently upheld its ideological alignment and readily exercised power in ways that complemented its political allies. In addition, to ensure direct access to the state, NOE ran candidates in municipal elections nationwide, and some of its members occupied important parliamentary positions. As a result of this approach to state power, combined with mass base building, NOE soon occupied an authoritative position in the emerging historical bloc, which eventually prevailed over liberal hegemony in 2010.

During the illiberal period (2010–2024), the relationship between NOE and the state has been characterized by a mix of

Table 2. Patterns of interactions between the state and NOE before and after the illiberal turn

		Civil society configurations	
		Liberal civil society with a pluralist state	Illiberal civil society with a centralized state
Approaches to the state	Conflict	Confrontational • Readiness to escalate tension into open confrontation	Bargaining • Tendency to conciliate views without the escalation of conflict
	Cooperation	Complementary • Readiness to exercise power in ways that reinforces political allies aspiring for state power	Coordinating • Tendency to coordinate organizational resources with the political ally on power and its cronies
	Incorporation	Interpenetrative • Readiness to run candidates for office to create strongholds in the state	Integrating • Tendency to accept positions in ministries, or run for office on a joint platform with the governing party

bargaining, coordination, and integration, embedded in a new hegemony that emerged from a social and political struggle challenging the pillars of liberal hegemony. Both NOE and Fidesz, NOE's longtime political ally, were an integral part of this struggle. In the new illiberal political economy, Fidesz, while dismantling the liberal system and recapitalizing the economy, occupied the entire conservative (and ultraconservative and far-right) political spectrum, making conservative family values and population policy its signature policy framework. (This changed in 2025 when a new political party, Tisza, reoccupied the liberal-conservative spectrum of politics.) In this context, NOE adapted its approach to state power to the new political circumstances. It ensured direct access to the state through a position in a ministry offered to one of its lead experts and a renewed strategic partnership with the government. In a political economy in which the governing party has ultimate power, NOE has taken advantage of the government's willingness to work closely, enjoyed its readiness to deliver much of NOE's core agenda, kept criticism behind closed doors, and coordinated organizational resources with the state and its cronies.

My longitudinal, historical perspective has demonstrated that illiberal civil society configurations are inherently shaped by the conflicts and structures inherited from liberal ones. The comparison of the liberal and illiberal periods suggests that "loyal" organizations may have a complex relationship with the illiberal state, one that is embedded in the consequences of hegemonic struggles during the liberal period. What seems to be misguided or co-opted in the first place may be a social and political alignment in which the civic actor has some bargaining capacity, a potential to demonstrate popular consent, and an authoritative position due to its historical role in consolidating the alliance that secured the regime's power. In this power configuration, for NOE, the illiberal character of the regime has so far remained incidental to the advancement of population and family policies and has largely escaped the organization's critique.

Conclusion

This paper has examined the underlying patterns of illiberal civil society through the case of a Hungarian conservative family organization, the *National Association of Large Families*. I have conducted a systematic comparison of the relationship between the state and the organization across liberal and illiberal regimes, a perspective that is largely absent from studies of illiberal dynamics. By adopting this longitudinal and historically informed approach, I can foreground the agency of actors aligned with the illiberal regime and highlight how their choices are shaped by conflicts and structures carried over from liberal regimes. The findings demonstrate how Central and Eastern Europe's distinctive historical experience—marked by the transition from state socialism to liberal democracy, intertwined with the pressures of neoliberal globalization—continues to shape the strategies of civic actors under illiberal rule, offering insights of global relevance for civil society studies.

The systematic comparison of state–civil society dynamics across liberal and illiberal regimes opens up new avenues for identifying distinctions between liberal and illiberal civil society configurations. In my case study, the actor's relationship with the liberal and illiberal states shifted from a readiness to escalate tension to a tendency to conciliate views (confrontational $\Rightarrow$ bargaining); from a readiness to reinforce political allies aspiring for state power to a tendency to coordinate organizational resources with the political ally on power (complementary $\Rightarrow$ coordinating); and from a readiness to create strongholds through elections to a tendency to

accept positions in ministries or run for office primarily with the governing party (interpenetrative $\Rightarrow$ integrating) (see Table 2). These are case-specific findings with potential generalizability that require further validation through research.

Finally, the research also offers lessons for confronting today's illiberal turn. A longitudinal, comparative perspective enhances our understanding of the illiberal dynamics by demonstrating the agency of civic actors aligned with the illiberal regimes. In contrast, the dominant normative approach often reduces these illiberal dynamics to mere state interference, overlooking the broader struggles that shape them. By drawing on the Gramscian notion that considers civil society a *terrain of struggles* among actors advancing competing social and political visions, the struggles of Hungarian large families during the liberal period reinforce the idea that a meaningful counteraction to the illiberal challenge lies in building broad-based political and social alliances capable of advancing a renewed democratic imaginary.

Acknowledgments. I would like to thank the Special Issue guest editors for their valuable feedback, particularly Ágnes Gagyí for her profound comments on multiple drafts. The author also greatly benefitted from the three anonymous reviewers' constructive guidance. Special thanks to Mary N. Taylor, Béla Greskovits, and Violetta Zentai for the insightful discussions that enriched this article.

Funding statement. This research draws in part on data collected within the author's doctoral research project "Why Some Housing Struggles Succeed: A Comparative Case Study of Movement Strategies in Hungary between 1987 and 2024," completed at the Central European University.

Competing interests. The author declares no competing interests.

Ethical standard. This research has been conducted in accordance with the Central European University's Ethical Research Policy and Guidelines. Ethical oversight has been managed through institutional procedures.

References

- A nagycsaládosok egyesülete a kormány családpolitikájáról (2000, October 13). *Komárom-Esztergom Megyei Hírlap*, 3.
- Ámon, K. (2024). *The mortgage debtor, the neighbor, the homeless citizen, and the family: Understanding citizenship and housing through citizen imaginaries* [Doctoral dissertation]. Central European University. https://www.etd.ceu.edu/2025/amon_katalin.pdf
- Benkő, Á. (Ed.). (1996). *Családbarát társadalom*. Nagycsaládosok Országos Egyesülete.
- Benkő, Á. (1998). A nagycsaládosok helyesbítene! *Népszava*, 10.
- Bohle, D., Greskovits, B., & Naczyk, M. (2024). The Gramscian politics of Europe's rule of law crisis. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 31(7), 1775–1798.
- Brechenmacher, S. (2017). *How state restrictions are reshaping civic space around the world*. *carnegieendowment.org*. <https://carnegieendowment.org/posts/2017/05/how-state-restrictions-are-reshaping-civic-space-around-the-world?lang=en>
- Brighenti, A. M. (2016). Antonio Gramsci's theory of the civil society. In S. Moebius, F. Nungesser, & K. Scherke (Eds.), *Handbuch Kulturosoziologie*. Springer Fachmedien Wiesbaden.
- Carothers, T., & Brechenmacher, S. (2014). *Closing space. Democracy and human rights support under fire*. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.
- Cox, R. W. (1999). Civil society at the turn of the millenium: Prospects for an alternative world order. *Review of International Studies*, 25(1), 3–28.
- Czifrusz, M., & Jelinek, C. (2022). Housing policies and housing affordability in Hungary after 1990. In L. Vankó (Ed.), *Annual report on housing poverty* (pp. 78–132). Habitat for Humanity Hungary.
- Dagnino, E. (2011). Civil Society in Latin America. In M. Edwards (Ed.), *The Oxford handbook of civil society* (pp. 122–133). Oxford University Press.

- Eckstein, H. (1975). Case studies and theory in political science. In F. I. Greenstein & N. W. Polsby (Eds.), *Handbook of political science. Political science: Scope and theory* (pp. 94–137). Addison-Wesley.
- Egyszülős és nagycsaládokat nyaraltat ingyen a Mészáros Csoport. (2020). *infostart.hu*. <https://infostart.hu/belfold/2020/07/16/egyszulos-es-nagycsaladokat-nyaraltat-ingyen-a-meszaros-csoport>
- Ehrenberg, J. (2017). *Civil society. The critical history of an idea*. New York University Press.
- Elek, Zs. & Szikra, D. (2018, April 3). *Fordított újraelosztás a lakáspolitikában: a CSOK versengő céljai*. *ujegyenloseg.hu*. <https://ujegyenloseg.hu/forditott-ujraelosztas-a-lakaspolitikaban-a-csok-versengo-celjai/>
- élő. (1995). Tüntetés a gyermekeket érintőmegszorítások miatt. *Magyar Nemzet*, 5.
- Enyedi, Z. (2024). Concept and varieties of illiberalism. *Politics and Governance*, 12, 1–15.
- Fábián, K., & Korolczuk, E. (2017). Regional and theoretical lessons: New perspectives on civil societies and ambiguities toward the state, the west, and gender equality. In K. Fábián & E. Korolczuk (Eds.), *Rebellious parents. Parental movements in Central-Eastern Europe and Russia*. Indiana University Press.
- Fejős, A., & Neményi, M. (2020). Család, munka és a női test. Nőkkel és családokkal foglalkozó civil szervezetek egy változó társadalmi-politikai környezetben. In A. Fejős & D. Szikra (Eds.), *Támogatás és támadás. Női civil szervezetek az illiberális demokráciában* (pp. 77–106). Társadalomtudományi Kutatóközpont.
- Fissza (2000). Fiatalságunk jellemzője a passzivitás. *Nógrád Megyei Hírlap*, 10.
- Fonseca, M. (2018). *Gramsci's critique of civil society. Towards a new concept of hegemony*. Routledge.
- Gagyí, Á., & Gerőcs, T. (2025). The politics of foreign-currency housing debt in Hungary's authoritarian capitalist reconfiguration after 2010. *Focaal—Journal of Global and Historical Anthropology*, 2025(101), 67–81.
- Gagyí, Á., & Ivancheva, M. (2019). The reinvention of “civil society”: Transnational conceptions of development in East-Central Europe. In N. McCrea & F. Finnegan (Eds.), *Funding, power and community development* (pp. 55–69). Bristol University Press.
- Gagyí, Á., Szarvas, M., & Vígvári, A. (2020). Civic organization beyond the “open society” battle: Cases from Hungary. *Politologický Časopis—Czech Journal of Political Science*, 27(2), 158–177.
- Gerő, M., Fejős, A., Kerényi, S., & Szikra, D. (2023). From exclusion to co-optation: Political opportunity structures and civil society responses in democratising Hungary. *Politics and Governance*, 11(1), 16–27.
- Gerő, M., & Kerényi, S. (2020). A civil társadalom változó szerepei és a társadalmi integráció. In I. Kovách (Ed.), *Integrációs mechanizmusok a magyar társadalomban* (pp. 195–230). Társadalomtudományi Kutatóközpont, Argumentum.
- Gerring, J. (2007). Is there a (viable) crucial-case method? *Comparative Political Studies*, 40(3), 231–253.
- Greskovits, B. (2017). Rebuilding the Hungarian right through civil organization and contention. In *The civic circles movement (Working Paper RSCAS 2017/37; Issue RSCAS 2017/37)*. European University Institute, Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies.
- Greskovits, B. (2020). Rebuilding the Hungarian right through conquering civil society: The Civic Circles Movement. *East European Politics*, 36(2), 247–266.
- Hajnal. (1999). A társadalom nem gyerekbarát. *Fejér Megyei Hírlap*, 5.
- Hoare, Q., & Smith, G. N. (Eds.) (1999). *Selections from the prison notebooks of Antonio Gramsci*. ElecBook.
- Hodenfield, T., & Pegus, C.-M. (2013). *Global trends on civil society restrictions. Mounting restrictions on civil society: The gap between rhetoric and reality*. CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation. <https://www.civicus.org/images/GlobalTrendsonCivilSocietyRestrictions2013.pdf>
- Inglot, T., Szikra, D., & Rat, C. (2022). *Mothers, families or children? Family policy in Poland, Hungary, and Romania, 1945–2020*. University of Pittsburgh Press.
- Jenkins, J. C., & Brents, B. G. (1989). Social protest, hegemonic competition, and social reform: A political struggle interpretation of the origins of the American welfare state. *American Sociological Review*, 54(6), 891–909.
- Kapitány, B. (2019). Egy civil alszektör “államosítása”. Népesedési, népesedéspolitikai célokkal foglalkozó civil szervezetek Magyarországon 2011–2018. *Civil Szemle*, 16(4), 61–79.
- Kardosné Gyurkó, K. (Ed.). (2017). *Nagycsaládban élni jó! 30 éves a Nagycsaládosok Országos Egyesülete, 1987–2010*. Nagycsaládosok Országos Egyesülete.
- Krizsán, A., & Roggeband, C. (2019). Introduction: Mapping the gendered implications of democratic backsliding in the countries of the CEE region. In A. Krizsán & C. Roggeband (Eds.), *Gendering democratic backsliding in central and Eastern Europe. A comparative agenda* (pp. 4–30). Center for Policy Studies, Central European University. <https://cps.ceu.edu/sites/cps.ceu.edu/files/attachment/publication/3169/cps-book-gendering-democratic-backsliding-2019.pdf#page=87>
- Kuti, É., & Marschall, M. (2020). A “birodalom” visszavág? Defenzívában a globális “harmadik szektor”. *Civil Szemle*, 17(1), 37–47.
- Landau, I. (2008). Law and civil society in Cambodia and Vietnam: A Gramscian perspective. *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, 38(2), 244–258.
- Lomax, B. (1997). The strange death of ‘civil society’ in post-communist Hungary. *The Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics*, 13(1), 41–63.
- Mendelson, S. E. (2015). *Why governments target civil society and what can be done in response*. CSIS Human Rights Initiative.
- Mikecz, D. (2023). *Civil movements in an illiberal regime: Political activism in Hungary*. Central European University Press.
- Nagy, Á. (2017). The taming of civil society. In B. Magyar & J. Várhelyi (Eds.), *Twenty-five sides of a post-communist mafia state*. Central European University Press.
- Nagy, Á., Béres-Áfra, Z., & Szalóki, V. (2025). The domestication of the civil sphere—The Hungarian example. *Civil Szemle*, 22(2), 9–24.
- Nagy, G. (1988). Nagycsaládi körben. *Reformátusok Lapja*, 6.
- Nagy, K. (2023). Remaking civil society under authoritarian capitalism: The case of the Orbán regime's Hungarian Academy of Arts. *Intersections. EEJSP*, 9(4), 80–100.
- Nagy, K. (2024). Hegemony in action: Crafting new common sense at Orbán's Hungarian Academy of Arts (2011–2023). *Partecipazione E Conflitto*, 17(2), 577–592.
- Nagycsaládosoké a T. Ház (1998, December 21). *Dunajúvárosi Hírlap*, 2.
- Negri, G. (2020, March 12). *How European Civil Society is pushing back against democratic erosion*. carnegieendowment.org/research/2020/03/how-european-civil-society-is-pushing-back-against-democratic-erosion?lang=en
- Posfai, Z., & Sokol, M. (2024). Housing financialisation as a tool of managing dependent integration—The case of Hungary between 2008 and 2024. *European Journal of Spatial Development*, 21(5), 86–110.
- Ramasamy, P., & Guan, L. H. (2004). Civil Society in Malaysia: An arena of contestations? In L. H. Guan (Ed.), *Civil Society in Southeast Asia* (pp. 198–216). Institute for Southeast Asian Studies.
- Robinson, W. I. (1996). *Promoting polyarchy*. Cambridge University Press.
- Scheiring, G. (2020). *The retreat of Liberal democracy: Authoritarian capitalism and the accumulative state in Hungary*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Sebály, B. (2025). *Why some housing struggles succeed: A comparative case study of movement strategies in Hungary between 1987 and 2024* [Doctoral dissertation]. Central European University, https://libsearch.ceu.edu/discovery/fulldisplay?context=L&vid=43CEU_INST:VU1&search_scope=MyInstitution&tab=LibraryCatalog&docid=alma991003766178308861
- Sivhuoch, O. (2013). Sub-National Civil Society in Cambodia: A Gramscian perspective (Working Paper 84). *CDRI*. https://cdri.org.kh/storage/pdf/wp84e_1617793397.pdf
- Szécsi, Á. (2021). Egy kereszténydemokrata a rendszerváltásban. *Rendszerváltó Szemle*, 6(1), 75–81.
- Szikra, D., & Vajda, R. (2020). Női civil stratégiák az illiberális kormányzás tükrében. In A. Fejős & D. Szikra (Eds.), *Támogatás és támadás. Női civil szervezetek az illiberális demokráciában* (pp. 106–130). Társadalomtudományi Kutatóközpont.
- Taylor, M. N. (2021). *Movement of the people. Hungarian folk dance, populism, and citizenship*. Indiana University Press.
- Tisztelt Miniszterelnök Úr! (2011). Letter of the National Association of Large Families to Prime Minister Viktor Orbán.
- Toepler, S., Zimmer, A., Fröhlich, C., & Obuch, K. (2020). The changing space for NGOs. *Voluntas: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations*, 31(4), 649–662.

- Tuğal, C. (2024). Democratic autocracy: A populist update to fascism under neoliberal conditions. *Historical Materialism*, 32(1), 1–38.
- Varga, A. (2017). Jó dolog ma nagycsaládosnak lenni. *Magyar Idők*, 5.
- Vass-Gabay, D. (2013). A nagycsaládosok visszahoznák a félszocpolt. *Magyar Nemzet*, 2.
- Wéber, A. (2010). *Metamorfózisok. A magyar jobboldal két évtizede*. Napvilág Kiadó.
- Wells, N. (2000). *Beyond the Washington consensus: The political and moral agenda of neoliberalism. The Bokros package in comparative perspective*. Central European University.
- Wolff, J., & Poppe, A. E. (2015). *From closing space to contested spaces. Re-assessing current conflicts over International civil society support* (PRIF Report No. 137). Peace Research Institute Frankfurt.
- Zs Jobbágyi. (2016). Tájékoztató kampány indul a csokról. *magyarhirlap.hu*. https://www.magyarhirlap.hu/belfold/Tajekoztato_kampany_indul_a_csokrol