

Mihai Varga (2020)

The return of economic nationalism to East Central Europe: Right-wing intellectual milieus and anti-liberal resentment

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This article emphasises the non-economic goals of economic nationalism and in particular its often overlooked political goals. Drawing parallels between economic nationalisms in Central Europe and East Asia, it focuses on Poland and Hungary and asks why did these countries turn to economic nationalism. The article traces this turn to ideational foundations developed by right-wing intellectuals over the last two decades, arguing that right-wing intellectuals believed that liberalism has failed what they conceived of its most important (political) purpose, the need of a radical break with the communist past. Based on a study of the writings and careers of leading Polish and Hungarian right-wing intellectuals, the article draws attention to the nature of the perceived threat to the nation. It contributes to the sociology of nationalism an analysis of how such a threat emerges and translates into a guiding idea of illiberal economic policies.

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