

# Introduction: Fascism in Interwar East Central and Southeastern Europe: Toward a New Transnational Research Agenda.

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## Introduction: Fascism in Interwar East Central and Southeastern Europe: Toward a New Transnational Research Agenda



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This introductory essay provides a first, much needed comprehensive overview of the recent scholarship on fascism in East Central and Southeastern Europe in local and international historiography. Its aim is to identify a new research agenda, working comparatively, potentially contributing to the fine-tuning or substantial modification of the existing explanatory p

comparative research on fascism and the radical right in these regions should be set on new theoretical and methodological efforts toward greater interaction and convergence between scholarly research traditions in Eastern and Western Europe, on the assumption that the study of fascist movements and regimes in East Central and Southeastern Europe is essential to a scholarly effort to understand radical politics in interwar Europe; without it, comparative research results remain fragmentary. Analytical effort does not simply mean an extension of the existing theoretical framework of generic fascism to particular regional explorations of fascism might function as a laboratory for further methodological innovation and as a field for the interaction of scholars from various disciplines and national historiographic traditions. They can potentially lead to new studies by renewing their thematic scope and by redirecting research from the prevailing Weberian ideal-type method to an “ideological minimum” to new comparative-historical analyses focusing on the triad ideology-movements-regimes. This prompts scholars to rethink their units of analysis, and to renounce teleological comparative perspectives still prevalent in scholarship which takes Western Europe as a measuring stick and normatively evaluates other historical case studies in regional comparisons (e.g.: what was missing, or what “went wrong” in non-Western regions). Instead of treating fascist movements in non-Western regions as carbon copies of their more “genuine” Western counterparts, scholars should rather explore multiple laboratories for the development of fascist ideology in interwar politics and the transfer of illiberal political ideas and practices over spatial or temporal boundaries. This is a political experiment in East and West alike.



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