# INTRODUCTION

This book aims to contribute to our understanding of the making of right-wing hegemony in Hungary, a country situated on the European Union's eastern periphery. It seeks to do this by shedding light on a popular racist movement that took shape outside the party-political arena in the 2006–2010 period and then went on to play a key role in the unmaking of left-liberal hegemony through its connection to right-wing agendas. This movement has not altogether been neglected by scholars and analysts, but its connection to broader economic and political dynamics and its impact on party politics remain largely misunderstood. Students of racism and xenophobia have failed to recognize the novelty of political anti-Gypsyism, seeing it as an extension of prevalent racist sensibilities, prejudices, and patterns of discrimination into the political domain at a time of economic and political upheaval. This perspective misses the crucial link between the rise of anti-Gypsyism and the crisis of social reproduction suffered by particular segments of the rural population as a result of capitalist transformations connected to global economic trends and, more particularly, Hungary's accession to the EU. Those who have called attention to the rise of racism and xenophobia in Hungary have, in other words, failed to see how anti-Gypsyism evolved out of social struggles and reacted to the real and imagined projects of ruling elites. As for political scientists and analysts, they have recognized how anti-Gypsyism fueled the rise of the far-right Movement for a Better Hungary (Jobbik) but have neglected its impact on mainstream politics and its role in the reconstruction of the state in the period following the right-wing Alliance of Young Democrats's (Fidesz) ascent to power in 2010. I fill these gaps by performing two broad analytic moves: (1) situating ideas about "race" and ethnicity within everyday relations, experience, and agency, and showing how these are themselves shaped by broader political economic processes and pressures; and (2) identifying relational strategies and processes that

connected local sites of contention and allowed for the transposition of social antagonisms into regional and nationwide political struggles. These moves shift attention away from Gypsies and the far-right to historical processes unfolding over time and through space in two interconnected relational fields: everyday life and the political public sphere. The intention is to move beyond the unsurprising claim that xenophobia fosters xenophobic politics and to create analytic space for identifying the conditions of the emergence of racist movements and the processes shaping the trajectories they take.

## The Argument in Brief

The argument I present can be portrayed as an effort to extend the analysis of scholars working in the political economy tradition who have attempted to theorize the making of right-wing hegemony in Hungary. This heterogeneous group of anthropologists, sociologists, and historians has highlighted structural tensions between markets and democracy in semiperipheral countries situated outside the European currency union (see Greskovits and Bohle 2012; Scheiring 2016), emphasizing in particular how pressure from international creditors and the European Commission to decrease the budgetary deficit pushed the pro-European left-liberal Gyurcsány government's policies in a neoliberal direction: toward the championing of growth and social mobility at the expense of national solidarity (see Éber et al. 2014). The cracking of the social democratic welfare agenda should, they argue, therefore be seen as a key condition of possibility for the reenergization of right-wing nationalist politics (see Kalb and Halmai 2011).

This body of work draws inspiration directly or indirectly from Karl Polányi's (2001) analysis of the fall of liberal capitalism, in which the renowned economist argued that the commoditization of money in the form of the international gold standard proved intolerable in countries that accumulated a large trade deficit, and called forth protective movements of various kinds in the interwar period. I have myself been inspired by Polányi's conceptualization of the "double movement"—that is, the expectation that economic shocks generated within a "disembedded economy" will generate "countermovements" in the political sphere if the state fails to protect "society" from the advance of the "free market." I have found the concept of the double movement a useful heuristic device in that it highlights the need to study the ways in which social actors respond to pres-

sures created by capitalist transformations. This book will advance the argument that the decline of agricultural prices and production in connection to the process of European integration (which forced Hungary to open its doors to import products) contributed to the emergence of anti-liberal sensibilities among independent agricultural producers who bore the brunt of "Europeanization" in rural areas. It will, however, also highlight the limitations of Polányi's conceptualization by showing that his focus on markets is too narrow and arguing that in order to explain the ideological orientation and political thrust of countermovements, we need to develop a conceptual apparatus that is more sensitive to social experience and practice and that allows us to link antagonisms and rivalries that emerge in particular sites at particular moments in time to wider political and economic trends. To do this, I will draw on a recent impulse from anthropologists working in the political economy tradition who have opened new analytic vistas for studying the conjunction of global forces and local expressive universes in a way aimed at safeguarding the autonomy of everyday actors, while also avoiding the trap of privileging structure over dynamics and meaning over praxis.

My research highlights two key preconditions for the emergence of a racist countermovement in Hungary. The first was the "double crisis" of social reproduction: of the non-Romani "post-peasantry" whose social reproduction partially depended on small-scale agricultural production; and the ethnicized "surplus population" whose social reproduction partially depended on rewards distributed by post-peasant patrons and public goods allocated by local power-holders. I show that the "de-peasantization" of agriculture not only undermined livelihoods but also eroded the local hegemonies that guaranteed mainstream groups privileged access to collective goods and public services while also ensuring the subservience of the marginalized surplus population.

The second precondition I highlight is the ruling left-liberal elite's effort to emancipate the surplus population by disaggregating local mechanisms of segregation and control through the centralization of welfare and education programs. This effort generated feelings of "abandonment" among mainstream groups whose social reproduction increasingly depended on institutionalized forms of solidarity.[1] Taken together, these preconditions help explain why the countermovement emerged on the country's northeastern periphery and why it targeted both "unruly" Gypsies and "unpatriotic" elites.

Although de-peasantization and emancipation were institutionally independent of each other, both were intrinsically connected

to the process of European integration. The liberalization of trade and the emancipation of ethnic minorities formed part and parcel of Europeanization—and this was not lost on representatives of the post-peasantry who came to play a prominent role in the articulation of popular grievances in the Northeast. While the interests and aspirations of the post-peasantry gave the countermovement a particular ideological orientation, the projects pursued by left-liberal elites gave it a particular political thrust. This explains why its representatives pressured the state to reallocate discretionary powers back to the local level and why this demand was formulated in anti-liberal and racist idiom. It also explains why (although not how) the movement could later become connected to anti-egalitarian right-wing political projects that championed ethnonational solidarity at the expense of "unworthy" others. Finally, the preconditions my research highlights also help explain why anti-Gypsyism could not gain so much traction as a generalized redemptive discourse (that laid the blame for communal decline on an alliance of Roma and liberal elites) in rural regions where the double crisis was evaded thanks to the availability of economic opportunities and the efforts of local power-holders.

While a reworked Polányian approach can help us explain *why* popular anti-Gypsyism emerged, it does not help us account for *how* it evolved into first a regional, then a nationwide, movement that exercised a demonstrable influence on both the politics of "electoral support" and of "governmental power." Hungary stands out in the region as the only country where anti-Gypsyism became a key dimension of party political struggle as a result of popular racist mobilization. Anti-Gypsyism also emerged as a regional movement in the Czech Republic, but it did not become a salient dimension of party politics in this country (see Albert 2012). Slovakia is similar to the Czech case, with the exception of an episode when the ruling conservative liberal government sought to disaggregate opposition to its neoliberal welfare reform plan by presenting it as an effort to redistribute rewards from "Gypsy welfare-scroungers" to "hard-working citizens" (Makovicky 2013). I have drawn on the work of social movements scholars to account for the transposition of local antagonisms into a coherent national movement. In my analysis, I highlight sets of actors and relational strategies that played a central role in the politicization of "everyday racism" (Essed 1991). I argue that local politicians, right-wing intellectuals, and the mainstream media played a key role in constructing a phantasmagoric image of the "dangerous Gypsy" through strategies of "abstraction" that stripped local events from their contexts and repackaged them together with historic anti-

Romani prejudices into a generalized redemptive[2] discourse that portrayed "the Gypsy"—in the singular—as the chief obstacle to the material prosperity, social cohesion, and cultural renewal of the national community.

I then trace the process whereby "redemptive anti-Gypsyism" went from gripping local imaginaries to spawning a nationwide "moral panic" in 2009–2010. I conceptualize this period as a "critical juncture" (Collier and Collier 1991) when important processes were launched through the selection of a particular option from a range of alternatives. This channeling occurred through the narrowing of the range of possible future outcomes through a chain of temporally ordered and causally connected events that pushed public opinion and political actors to take an increasingly radical position against "Gypsies." I establish that this "reactive sequence" (Mahoney 2000: 526) began at/with local contentious episodes that polarized deprived communities along ethnoracial lines. These episodes were conditioned by de-peasantization but emerged more directly in response to the—partially real, partially imagined—breakdown of local hegemonies. I show in detail how far-right political entrepreneurs sought to take advantage of these local conflicts, highlighting how Jobbik party leaders deployed a paramilitary proxy organization called the Hungarian Guard with the intent of creating situations wherein citizens were forced to side with either "Gypsy criminals" or "victimized Magyars." This strategy of polarization contributed to the emergence of a (counter)movement dynamic wherein "single episodes of collective action are perceived as components of a longer-lasting action, rather than discrete events; and when those who are engaged in them feel linked by ties of solidarity and of ideal communion with protagonists of other analogous mobilizations" (della Porta and Diani 2006: 21). Relying on social movement scholars' insistence that this kind of crystallization takes place in the "political public sphere,"[3] I argue that mainstream media inadvertently fostered this process by providing visibility to far-right mobilization campaigns and framing these (and other) episodes in a way that fostered perceptions of social breakdown. Strategies of abstraction and polarization thereby played a key role in upward "scale shift": an increase in the number of contentious episodes and of the visibility of the "Gypsy issue" in the political public sphere. One of the main lessons to take away is that we need to pay more attention to noninstitutionalized forms of political agency, which tend to fall below the radar of political scientists but may exercise a decisive impact on political struggles. At the same time, however, I heed political scientists' insistence on studying the

interaction between radical and mainstream parties as a key element of political opportunity structures by showing how the right-wing Fidesz Party's espousal of a strategy of "adoption" (see Bale et al. 2010) played into the process of radicalization: the shift of both politicians and the electorate toward increasingly exclusionary and authoritarian demands and initiatives.

Having traced the transposition of "everyday racism" into "political racism," my analysis ends with an effort to capture key ways in which anti-Gypsyism shaped the politics of governmental power and of electoral support after Fidesz's historic victory at the parliamentary elections of 2010. I highlight the "dualization" of the Hungarian state, which progressively rescinded its obligation to combat poverty and exclusion, and redistributed resources and opportunities toward middle-class formation. This transformation already had precedents in the 1990s but emerged as a political project under Ferenc Gyurcsány's second government (2006–2009), which began to implement a new workfare program with a view to preventing the crumbling of the Socialist Party's voter base in its northeastern bastions. The transformation picked up pace after Fidesz's victory in 2010. Relying on Stuart Hall's (1983) insistence on "authoritarian populism" as a prime ideological strategy for enlisting heterogeneous popular constituencies and generating mass electoral support for right-wing political projects, I argue that Viktor Orbán harnessed the moral panic on "Gypsy criminality" to his own hegemonic project by deriding claiming behavior and embracing regional mayors' "anti-egalitarian populist" vision of the "work-based society." The Dual State (see Fraenkel 1969) emerged out of a "passive revolution" in response to the electorate's radicalization (itself a reaction to global economic pressures and the governmental record of left-liberal predecessors) and competition from a far-right rival. It is the result of a political alliance between a New Right (that has dissociated itself from the previous left-liberal consensus) and a popular movement (that has come to see itself as a victim of liberal elites and the "dangerous classes"). Although Hungary's Prime Minister portrayed the state's transformation as an effort to boost economic competitiveness in an era of heightened global competition, it primarily served as a political tool to buttress his power. Fidesz's second landslide victory at the parliamentary elections of 2014 can be attributed to a multiplicity of causes. I nevertheless argue that the ruling party's ability to maintain hold over a radicalized political center has at least partly to do with the recodification of rights and obligations, which allowed Orbán to take credit for rewarding "hard-working," and disciplining

"work-shy," citizens. In the final part of the book, I show that the transformation of the Hungarian state also helps account for the demise of political anti-Gypsyism as well as a decisive shift in Jobbik's political program and strategy in the course of the last electoral cycle.

## A Reworked Polányian Approach

One person who has greatly contributed to the analysis of local struggles within wider fields of power is a scholar whose name does not usually feature in analyses of racism and radical right-wing politics. This is none other than the great Hungarian political economist, Karl Polányi, who some seventy years ago advanced a theory of the rise of interwar fascism. In *The Great Transformation*, his magnum opus dealing with the rise of free market economics, Polányi (2001: 3) argued that fascism constituted a "protective countermovement" that was set in motion when efforts to extend the scope of the market through the commoditization of land, labor, and capital threatened to annihilate "the human and natural substance of society." The book connected the rise of fascism more directly to the ravages of the "gold standard"—an institutional innovation that put the theory of self-regulating markets for the first time into practice in the domain of international trade. He offered an analysis of fascism as a pan-European movement that became allied with nationalist and counterrevolutionary tendencies but drew its vital energies from "a market society that refused to function" (Polanyi 2001: 248). While seeking to retain a materialist view of world history, Polányi (2001: 138–139) replaced Marx's focus on production and exploitation with an emphasis on the contradiction between a "disembedded market" and "society":

> [The double movement] can be personified as the action of two organizing principles in society, each of them setting itself specific institutional aims, having the support of definite social forces and using its own distinctive methods. The one was the principle of economic liberalism, aiming at the establishment of a self-regulating market, relying on the support of the trading classes, and using largely laissez-faire and free trade as its methods; the other was the principle of social protection aiming at the conservation of man and nature as well as productive organization, relying on the varying support of those most immediately affected by the deleterious action of the market—primarily, but not exclusively, the working and the landed classes—and using protective legislation, restrictive associations, and other instruments of intervention as its methods.

Polányi's conceptualization of the double movement offers a number of opportunities for explaining how societies respond to macroeconomic pressures. First, it shines light on temporality as a key dimension of social and political change. Interwar fascism emerged at the moment when the "market system" entered a phase of "general crisis"—not before. This highlights the need to study the effects of capitalist transformations through time. Second, Polányi highlights the state's central role in generating the double movement. He argues that fascism resulted from European states' failure to protect the livelihoods of workers and peasants from destructive market forces. This underscores the importance of linking the emergence of social movements to a crisis of livelihoods or "social reproduction" (suffered by particular social categories) and popular appeals to institutionalized forms of solidarity. Polányi's analysis also highlights the need for a multi-scalar perspective that offers insights into the ways in which transnational economic and political processes—mediated by regulatory agencies (such as the EU and the nation-state)—create particular kinds of pressures for particular kinds of people in their everyday lives. Finally, his concrete historical analysis accentuates the interaction between a protective countermovement and ideological currents. Polányi's (2001: 250–251) remarks on the political dimension of interwar fascism show that he regarded the "symbiosis between movements of independent origin" as a necessary precondition for countermovements' success.

To be sure, Polányi's framework suffers from a number of shortcomings. His model is weakened by the location of contradictions between market forces and society. Although he clearly recognized that the response to the advance of the free market "comes through groups, sections, and classes" (ibid., 160), he does not provide an analysis of the situated struggles out of which countermovements are born. Polányi also underestimated the possibility and relevance of regional differences. While he recognized the importance of the national scale, he underestimated the relevance of the local in a double respect. First, local hegemonies may play a key role in the emergence of countermovements through confrontation or collusion with projects formulated by actors on the regional, national, and European level. Second, it is also on the local level where social antagonisms first acquire meaning and direction, and this shapes "classification struggles" (Bourdieu 1984) in regional and national arenas. Polányi, in other words, does not have the analysis of ideological and political conjunctures as fully worked out as other theorists (see Burawoy 2003).

In what follows, I draw on recent theoretical and methodological advances in the political economy tradition in anthropology and in the field of social movement studies to complement and improve Polányi's framework.

On the one hand, I take inspiration from anthropologists who have opened new vistas for studying the conjunction of global forces and local universes in a way that aims at safeguarding the autonomy of everyday actors, while avoiding the trap of reductionism and mechanical causality (Burawoy 2000; Burawoy and Verdery 1999; Friedman 2010, 2015; Kalb 1997, 2015; Mintz 1986; Sider 1986; Sider and Smith 1997; Wolf 1990). Don Kalb and Herman Tak have labeled this strategy a "critical junctions" approach (see Kalb 2011, 2015a; Kalb and Tak 2005), which they portray as a middle-road between the postmodern vision of radical historical contingency (i.e., local communities are free to choose their trajectories from the abundant menu of global offerings in economics, politics, and cultural images) and the rigidity of the core-periphery schema of Wallerstein's version of class theory (i.e., economic, political, and cultural programs travel in fixed packages that are imposed on local actors). Although scholars who subscribe to this agenda have come up with different ways of researching and conceptualizing the systemic constraints under which local actors operate, they all agree that local action is constrained by relations of power and dependency and that these relations exercise their effects through time (see social historians' interpretations of "path dependence"[4]) and space (see Harvey's [2005] concept of "uneven geographical development"), as well as "the interstitial relations between nominally distinct domains such as economics, politics, law, the family etc." (Kalb and Tak 2005: 3), which are nowadays overdetermined by the actions of modern nation-states and supranational entities such as the European Union. I draw on this body of literature to analyze the restructuring of the agricultural sector and to trace how this process galvanized frictions between two reemergent social categories in rural areas that suffered from the decline of the agricultural sector in the aftermath of Hungary's accession to the EU: the post-peasantry and the surplus population. I do this by reconstructing the history of economic, cultural, and social relationships in two localities (see below) after the "change of regime" of 1989. This allows me to establish a causal connection between large-scale political-economic transformations and the transformation of micro-relationships in rural communities; to situate the emergence of "popular anti-Gypsyism" at a particular moment in time, and to link it

to particular frictions between representatives of the post-peasantry and the surplus population.

On the other hand, I take inspiration from social movement scholars to explain how anti-Gypsyism evolved from an ideology that explained certain contradictions and problems emerging on the horizon of everyday lifeworlds into a political movement that decisively reshaped the priorities of decision-makers as well as the program of political parties. These scholars (see, for instance, della Porta and Diani 2006; McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly 2001; Tilly 2008) have offered a robust critique of the structuralist and rational choice approaches that dominate political science and have exhorted researchers to see politics as an ensemble of contentious processes. McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly (2001) have greatly advanced this agenda by highlighting how key processes such as political mobilization are driven by "relational mechanisms," which "alter connections among people, groups, and interpersonal networks" (26). Following their cue, I explain the emergence and impact of political anti-Gypsyism and its role in the rightward—anti-egalitarian and authoritarian—drift of Hungarian politics by focusing on a chain of causally interconnected contentious episodes that unfolded on the local, regional, and national level[5] and created space for the constitution of new political visions, identities, actors and alliances; the polarization of political groups; and a scale shift in political contention from local arenas to the national political arena. More specifically, I highlight a strategy of abstraction whereby regional mayors and right-wing intellectuals extricated local episodes from their contexts and reworked them—with the help of mainstream media outlets—into a generalized discourse that explained the failures of the left-liberal modernization project and simultaneously offered a model for redemptive action against "Gypsies." I then extend this analysis in time, focusing on the racist mobilization campaigns that were organized by the far-right Jobbik Party and its paramilitary allies. I argue that the main intention of far-right activists was to force "previously uncommitted or moderate actors [to gravitate] toward one, the other, or both extremes" (McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly 2001: 322). Finally, I show how the dominant right-wing party took advantage of this process of polarization to derail left-liberal policy initiatives and disaggregate the ruling coalition.

What this amounts to is a move toward a relational and process-oriented framework that combines a focus on regional process and the social reproduction of "class" with an analysis of struggles within the political public sphere. The approach I develop can thus also be portrayed as an effort to renew one of the three dominant approaches

(see Omi and Winant 2015) to racism:[6] the "class paradigm," which provides a useful correction to both of the depoliticized sociological interpretations forged within the "ethnicity"[7] and "nation-based"[8] approaches. This is especially important in light of the fact that the reemergence of political racism in Eastern Europe has often been interpreted in the context of historical legacies.[9] I follow class analysts in contesting approaches that portray anti-Gypsyism and/or the Jobbik Party as manifestations of lingering prejudices and authoritarian legacies by linking mobilizations around ethnicity and "race" to contemporary social antagonisms and interpreting "ethno/race-talk" as a proto-political speech-act that intervenes in the reproduction of social hierarchies and the distribution of symbolic and material rewards and opportunities (see Miles 1982; Miles and Brown 2003; Wimmer 1997, 2002). Like them, I also use "class" as a theoretical vista to highlight the intertwined development of racism and nationalism and to show how this creates favorable conditions for excluding non-national others from citizenship-based rights and resources (Balibar 1991). However, I seek to do this without reifying the notion of class.[10]

While I distance myself from authors who emphasize the centrality of prejudices and legacies, I do this without questioning the relevance of either sequentiality or historically sedimented cultural tropes for the analysis of political racism and far-right politics. These phenomena, I argue, are, however, best studied in relation to the formation of "class," "race," and politics in relational and embedded ways, rather than as instances of cultural overdetermination. In this I follow in the footsteps of anthropologists who have claimed partial autonomy for local actors by drawing on the by now well-established critique of culture as a shared and coherent system of meanings (see Kuper 1999) and by recasting the domain of culture as a cognitive and emotional field of interactions wherein actors engage in meaningful and materially consequential ways the impositions of (dis)order from above and without (see Kalb 1997; Sider 1986; Wolf 1990). I build on Eric Wolf's concept of the "engram"[11] and the example set by students of modern anti-Semitism[12] to construct a vantage point that allows for the identification of the specific circumstances under which ideas about "race" and ethnicity come to serve particular purposes and acquire specific meanings in particular places and moments in time. My key analytic strategy is to show how these ideas are embedded in comprehensive, temporally and spatially situated social relationships through the method of "retrospective micro-historical reconstruction" (Handelman 2005). Then I proceed to show how popular (everyday)

racism can be converted into political racism—instrumental struggles to transform the polity—by becoming disconnected from local lifeworlds, embedded in ideological struggles, and by acquiring a particular political thrust aimed to deal with the contradictions generated in everyday life. I contend that this approach answers racism scholars' somewhat frustrated call to move beyond accounts that derive contemporary forms of racism from public political discourse(s) and then use these as evidence to generalize about broader trends within society (see Back and Solomos 2000: 24). It achieves this by situating racism within particular settings before moving toward a more general account of its wider significance.

## The Project: Design and Methods

My initial idea was to frame the project as a comparative analysis of the far-right's capacity to mobilize popular constituencies in two localities that I wanted to portray as exemplary of their wider regions: Northeastern Hungary and Transdanubia (Western Hungary). Although in chapters 3, 4, 5, and 6 I will offer a detailed description of both of my field sites, it may be useful to offer readers a brief overview already at this point.

Gyöngyöspata is a village[13] in the foothills of the Mátra Mountains, approximately an hour's drive east of Budapest. Although it is situated in Northeastern Hungary—a region which has been particularly badly hit by postsocialist deindustrialization and by the decline of the agricultural sector after European accession—it does not figure among the country's most deprived microregions. This is thanks to the preservation of industrial capacities in and around the neighboring town of Gyöngyös where many locals work. Grape-growing and wine-making have played a major role in the local economy since the late Middle Ages, with output reaching its peak in the period of export-oriented socialist viticulture. However, the economic transition of 1989 brought about the collapse of export markets, and the sector underwent a severe crisis. The state-owned cooperative was privatized and properties were handed back to the families who had owned them before collectivization. Today, there are about ten active medium-sized family businesses in the sector and a higher number of self-sustaining agricultural producers. While the former are relatively secure, the latter had to combine small-scale agricultural production with low-paid industrial employment to sustain their livelihoods. These post-peasants have forged narratives that make

sense of the failure to realize dreams of autonomy and upward mobility by laying the blame on local Roma, whose "thievishness" and "scrounging" stand opposed to their "hard work." These families welcomed the Hungarian Guard, a paramilitary organization whose uniformed members conducted patrols in the village in March 2011 with a view to intimidating "Gypsy criminals." While this important episode—which made national and international headlines—reassured post-peasants and allowed Jobbik to take control of the village, in the long run the local economy, which relies heavily on tourism, suffered from the far-right intervention. This, along with other events, allowed Fidesz to take back control of the village in 2014.

Devecser is a small town that lies on the Transdanubian Plain at the foot of the Somló Hill, a former volcano that offers ideal conditions for viticulture. Although wine made by peasants from the local Juhfark variety had for centuries attracted merchants from Budapest and Vienna, the small size of the area suited for grape-growing prevented viticulture from acquiring the role it played in the Mátra region. Large-scale cereal and meat production, on the other hand, played an important role in the local economy until the dismantlement of the Blooming Cooperative after the change of regime. Thanks to the entrepreneurial flair of the cooperative's former president and local Roma entrepreneurs, Devecser managed to safeguard most of its productive capacities *and* to convert itself into a regional market for second-hand household items. The "cushioned transition" partially explains why in Devecser the postcommunists managed to evade the kind of wipe-out they had suffered in many other rural areas, including Gyöngyöspata. Although the Socialist Party performed poorly at the parliamentary elections of 1990, it recovered lost ground in the subsequent years, arriving in first place in 1994, 1998, and then in 2006. This, however, was followed by a decline in the party's fortunes, partly as a result of the decline of both the local and national economy. In October 2010, the town suffered a major industrial disaster that led to the departure of hundreds of families and strained social relations in the locality. In 2012, Jobbik conducted its last high-profile anti-Gypsy mobilization campaign in Devecser. While the effort to polarize the local community along ethnoracial lines was successful in Gyöngyöspata, it failed in Devecser, prompting Jobbik to revise its political strategy and program.

Drawing inspiration from Kalb's (1976) comparison of working-class reproduction and politics in the central Brabant and the Eindhoven regions and Tilly's (1976) comparison of two regions in Western France—the Val-Saumurois, which supported the revolution

of 1789, and the Mauges, which supported the counterrevolution known as the Vendée revolt—my initial idea was to rely on statistics published by the Central Statistical Office to highlight key sociogeographic differences between the two localities in order to explain the divergent outcomes of the two local mobilizations, which took place in March 2011 and August 2012 respectively.

Poring over the notes that I produced during the two successive periods of fieldwork (between March 2011 and March 2012 in Gyöngyöspata, and between January 2013 and December 2014 in Devecser), I reached the conclusion that the theoretical assumptions that underpinned this rudimentary comparative framework were flawed. The first lesson I drew was that the structuralism pervading my thinking hindered the explanation of the political outcomes I initially sought to explain. Jobbik did not "succeed" in Gyöngyöspata and "fail" in Devecser simply because of the ready-made co-presence of deprived "peasants" and marginalized "Gypsies" in the former and the lack of class-cum-ethnic polarization in the latter. The outcomes of the two mobilization campaigns had more directly to do with ordinary citizens' perception of their own predicament, of Roma, and of the intentions of local and national elites. A deeper engagement with my field notes also suggested that these perceptions emerged out of first-hand experiences with the negotiation of social relationships, events unfolding in nearby localities, and the initiatives of elites. This realization shifted my attention from structures to experiences and struggles and highlighted the importance of elucidating micro-macro linkages between the domains of "everyday life" and the "political public sphere."

Shifting my attention to classification struggles waged by actors operating on different scales led to another realization. It dawned on me that my initial comparative framework was weakened by an important "event" that influenced the outcome of the Devecser blitz campaign. Although the two cases of racist mobilization I initially became interested in were separated by only seventeen months, it was in this critical period that the new right-wing government introduced a number of key reforms with the intention of defusing tensions around the "Gypsy issue," which the far-right Jobbik Party had instrumentalized to mount a powerful offensive in the national political arena. Fieldwork in Devecser—as well as information trickling in from informants in Gyöngyöspata—highlighted the relevance of these reforms for understanding the outcomes of the Devecser campaign and the waning of the moral panic on "Gypsy criminality,"

which had been at the center of public attention and political contention in the 2006–2010 period.

The shift from structure to experience and to multi-scalar struggles that both shaped and captured experiences made me realize that there were more interesting questions to be asked than why Jobbik succeeded in Gyöngyöspata and failed in Devecser. It led me to re-envision my project as an attempt to study different manifestations of racism and trace its transposition from a set of sensibilities into an ideology, then into a (political) movement, and then back into a looser current. To achieve this, I combined the "extended study" (Burawoy 1998) of two local cases with an analysis of contentious episodes that took place on the regional and national scale. This kind of analysis started out from locales and relationships that a "critical junctions" agenda reveals as sites and objects of contention. I then worked my way "up and outward" by following the actors who made an effort to symbolize locally significant episodes with a view to creating political effects. The advantage of this approach is that it allowed me to simultaneously unearth the microfoundations of political racism, capture how large-scale transformations pushed the political process in a particular direction, and show how this shift led to the structural transformation of party politics and the state.

The final draft of the manuscript reflects this shift from a synchronic toward a diachronic perspective. I rely on my fieldwork in Gyöngyöspata to explain the emergence of popular anti-Gypsyism in the Northeast in the 2006–2010 period, and use material collected in Devecser to show how a local community responded to racist mobilization after the dissipation of the moral panic on "Gypsy criminality." This differential treatment of my two cases ("exemplary" in the case of Gyöngyöspata, "exploratory" in the case of Devecser) also requires a different methodological toolkit: I rely primarily on "retrospective micro-historical reconstruction" (Handelman 2005) in the former case and on "political ethnography"[14] (Baiocchi and Connor 2008) in the latter.

My cases are clearly not representative. They resemble each other in that they both emerged as sites of "unsolicited interventions." While the inhabitants of Gyöngyöspata saw themselves as either the victims of the far-right or the media (which, in their view, had soiled the town's reputation), the inhabitants of Devecser were united by the experience of suffering an unprecedented industrial disaster. Hence, far-right mobilization in Devecser did not leave such a powerful mark on the local community of memory. While these two interventions

radically differed, they transformed the two localities into symbols of the "suffering countryside," making their inhabitants witnesses of this suffering. This, I contend, makes them prime sites for social scientific investigation, first because the experience of victimhood made the issues that interested me more amenable to scrutiny. The people I encountered in my field sites were uncommonly willing to let a researcher peek into their lives and talked openly about their views on ethnicity/"race" and politics—issues that are notoriously difficult to research in normal settings. Second, because the radical and unprecedented nature of these interventions caught local actors off guard, forcing them to come up with innovative responses. In the core of my analysis, I will take pains to highlight the innovative character of the strategies that far-right activists and politicians elaborated and show how this contributed to the success of their initiatives. Both fieldwork experiences felt very much like being part of social experiments. Although the volatility of the social situation rendered the construction of interpretations more difficult, I could not have asked for a better opportunity to study how people respond to the unfolding of the historical process in unexpected directions (such as when the police allowed paramilitaries to control Gyöngyöspata for two weeks or when the government allowed inhabitants of the Dankó settlement to move into the center of Devecser).

While the uncertainty of the social situation and certain developments made these localities nonrepresentative in the classic sociological sense, this does not detract from the value of my findings or undermine my effort to formulate wider claims. Based on a close reading of secondary sources and my previous work in rural environments, I claim that the agencies and strategies I encountered and the mechanisms and processes I unearthed were not unique to my two field sites but reflected wider trends (and were "representative" in this sense). My ethnographic locales, as advocates of the extended case method convincingly argued, can therefore be studied as simultaneously shaped by and shaping an external field of forces, which operates with its own principles of coordination and its own dynamics (Burawoy 1998; Handelman 2005; Kalb 1997, 2005). Finally, I would also like to highlight that the symbolic (and political) value attached to these rural localities was fortunate in that it attracted the attention of actors who operated on the national level. This facilitated the analysis of the ways in which the state is implicated in processes unfolding on the local level and the ways in which local events can be elevated into the national arena—linkages that occupy a central place in my research design.

The decision to pursue multisited fieldwork in two regions that greatly differ from each other made me reflect on the interaction between slow-moving structural forces, more dynamic cultural practices, and quick-paced political maneuvers throughout the study. This volume constitutes an attempt to combine these two—comparativist and diachronic—lines of inquiry. I do not claim to have fully succeeded in combining insights gleaned from comparison and those gleaned from the study of the political process within my research design. The limitations of this approach will become most clear in my analysis of the Devecser blitz campaign. Nevertheless, I hope to show that researchers should take into consideration the ways in which cultural and political agencies play out unevenly across salient territorial divides.

This book will therefore probe the relevance and potential of a multi-scalar relational approach to racism. I hope to show that a focus on contentious relations in everyday lifeworlds and the political public sphere (and their intended and unintended consequences) can help us

- explain the emergence of popular racist sensibilities in the Northeast in the 2006–2010 period;
- account for the transposition of popular anti-Gypsyism into political anti-Gypsyism and the latter's impact on the politics of electoral support in the 2006–2010 period;
- highlight the impact of political anti-Gypsyism on the politics of governmental power (in the 2010–2014 period); and
- identify some of the ways in which the latter reconfigured social antagonisms on the local level and shaped the politics of electoral support in the 2010–2014 period.

These four lines of inquiry will be pursued through divergent methods and rely on the following types of evidence.

I rely on ethnographic fieldwork conducted together with Margit Feischmidt in the village of Gyöngyöspata between March 2011 and March 2012 to pursue the first line of inquiry. The argument I present relies on semi-structured interviews (conducted with members of the local elite), oral history interviews (conducted with "commoners"), and the analysis of archival resources and field notes taken during the eighteen field visits (that lasted between two and twelve days) in the above-mentioned period. Building on secondary sources and statistical analysis, I will seek to present this locality as an "exemplary" case that allows us to shed light on wider regional trends on the country's northeastern periphery.

I use semistructured interviews (conducted with members of the local elite) in Gyöngyöspata, secondary sources focusing on the representation of Roma and "ethnic conflicts" in the 2006–2010 period, and archival resources (news items published in the main online news portals in the same period) to analyze the politicization of popular racism.

I conduct a critical analysis of the transcripts of the speeches of Prime Minister Viktor Orbán and of the secondary literature dealing with the second Orbán government's (2010–2014) social policy reforms to highlight the impact of political racism on the politics of governmental power pursued by the New Right.

I rely on ethnographic fieldwork conducted in Devecser between January 2013 and December 2014 (fifteen field visits that lasted between two and twenty-two days), as well as evidence provided by key informants in Gyöngyöspata, to assess the impact of the new politics of governmental power on local social and political struggle (and the role that ideas about ethnicity/"race" played within these). I treat Devecser more as an "exploratory" case to analyze the failure of the last important racist mobilization campaign that Jobbik organized in August 2012. In other words, while I use my research in Gyöngyöspata to study the phase of emergence and diffusion of what I see as a racist "mobilization cycle" (2006–2012), my work in Devecser will serve to explore the consummation of that cycle.

## The Structure of the Book

The role I attribute to sequentiality and my emphasis on racialization/ethnicization necessitate an effort of historical contextualization. In the first chapter I will therefore focus on the secondary literature to show how the "Gypsy/Magyar" dichotomy emerged as the dominant framework for signifying tensions and rivalries between people who occupy different positions in social space, are bound by particular social relationships, and have historically entertained different types of relations with the nation-state. I will focus my sights on the 1980s and 1990s, which I consider of key importance. I emphasize economic and political processes ("de-peasantization," welfare reform, decentralization) that explain the divergence of trajectories taken by the post-peasantry and the surplus population, and the rise of antagonisms between these emergent groups; important changes in social relationships after regime change; the asymmetric character of the process of identity and group-formation ("racialization"); and the

influence of both the liberal state ("codification") and local hegemonies on this process. This historic analysis allows me to elucidate how regime change influenced the self-understandings, emotional economy, cultural outlooks, and practices of ordinary citizens who—liberated from the yoke of official discourses that categorized them as belonging to a putatively unitary working class—found themselves both inwardly compelled and outwardly incentivized to highlight their differences and formulate their particular claims in the idiom of "race"/ethnicity.

In chapter 2, I reconstruct the process whereby these emergent groups came into friction in the course of the last decade in connection to broader economic and political processes of "neoliberalization" and "Europeanization." I do this through a retrospective microhistory of Gyöngyöspata, where popular anti-Gypsyism emerged relatively early. This analysis highlights the double crisis of social reproduction as a key source of frictions. The latter emerged in the domain of culture and eroded the regime of "hegemonic Hungarianness" from "below," thereby encouraging the search for alternatives. In a second move, I show that this assimilationist regime was—metaphorically speaking—also eroded from "above." The key claim is that post-peasants' growing intolerance of the surplus population was enhanced by local authorities' unwillingness to clamp down on petty forms of criminality and the left-liberal government's effort to emancipate Roma (qua ethnic group) under the banner of its "integration politics." The crux of the argument is that abandonment in relation to elites deepens fears of social breakdown and fosters the appetite to tame "unruly" social elements. Through an effort of extension I will argue that out of these two conditions of possibility of the emergence of popular racist sensibilities—double crisis and abandonment—the first was absent outside zones of deprivation, and this offers a partial explanation for the emergence of popular anti-Gypsyism in the Northeast.

In chapter 3, I highlight the actors and strategies that played a key role in upward scale shift: the transposition of local ethnic frictions (microhistories) into a nationwide movement to contain the "Gypsy menace" (macrohistory) in the 2006–2010 period. I argue that two relational strategies—"abstraction" and "polarization"—played a key role in the emergence of political racism: the public formulation of demands to clamp down on Roma and inscribe the principle of ethnic preference into law and policy. These strategies were elaborated and implemented by a heterogeneous set of politically oriented actors who shared an interest in increasing the visibility of the "Gypsy

issue" in the political public sphere. Together, their actions led to the emergence of a moral panic on "Gypsy criminality" in the run-up to the European and national parliamentary elections of 2009 and 2010.

In chapter 4, I analyze the impact of the moral panic on the "politics of governmental power" and argue that it played a key role in the liberal state's transformation in an authoritarian direction under the new Fidesz government in the 2010–2014 period. I show that the leader of the main right-wing opposition party sought to incorporate elements of the new racist common sense into his own hegemonic project by espousing an anti-egalitarian vision of the "work-based society" that had been promoted by mayors in the Northeast. Once in government, the Fidesz Party went on to implement this vision by separating the "Normative State" (which holds jurisdiction over "homogenous society") from the "Prerogative State" (which is provided special means to discipline "heterogeneous groups") under the banner of the System of National Cooperation (henceforth SNC).[15] In this chapter I also address one of the prevalent shortcomings of studies dealing with political racism by seeking to account for "downward scale shift." Taking inspiration from the debate around "authoritarian populism," I argue that the dualization of state functions decreased both the possibility of and demand for racist mobilization and thus helped the ruling party retain its hold over a radicalized political center.

In chapter 5, I move back from the national to the local level to highlight differences in the reconstruction of social collectivities in a region where the double crisis was evaded. In an effort to build my material into a contrastive case, I argue that an organic racist countermovement failed to emerge in the critical 2006–2010 period in an environment where access to Western commodity and labor markets allowed some "Gypsies" and "Magyars" to shield themselves from the negative impacts of economic restructuring in the period of European accession. My material also highlights mainstream groups' positive reaction to the local mayor's effort to mitigate feelings of abandonment through a combination of compensatory and repressive measures that followed the logic of anti-egalitarian populism and relied on the dualization of state functions after 2010. These two factors—the absence of the double crisis and the new politics of governmental power—helped local actors prevent Jobbik from embedding its racist-extremist agenda in Transdanubia.

In chapter 6, I turn to political ethnography to provide a window onto the consummation of the racist mobilization cycle in the 2012–

2014 period. Relying on material collected in Devecser, I show how the local Fidesz chapter progressively lost its credibility in the eyes of local citizens and how Jobbik took advantage of this to mount a challenge with the help of a revised political strategy. I identify two key conditions of possibility for Jobbik's transformation into an ultranationalist party: the delegitimation of Fidesz and the collapse of left-wing political-economic networks on the local level. I then go on to highlight the ideological, programmatic, and stylistic innovations that allowed Jobbik to project the image of the "true nationalist force" and successfully woe orphaned left-wing and disillusioned right-wing constituencies. I focus more particularly on ideological innovation by highlighting the way in which a supremacist form of redemption offered an alternative to "Gypsy-talk" in a relatively deprived environment where Roma could not be straightforwardly blamed for the plight of the "hard-working majority." It appears that while "Gypsy-talk" expresses discontentment with the unjust redistribution of material and symbolic rewards in a liberal polity, "Trianon-talk" can be used to highlight the ways in which the new right-wing elite ravages the local (and, by extension, national) community. This allowed Jobbik to unite disaffected voters of all colors and stripes in a former left-wing bastion. The party then successfully replicated this strategy in another Transdanubian town as well as other localities. Jobbik, however, has so far failed to mount a serious challenge to the ruling Fidesz Party in the national political arena. This key development falls outside the scope of my analysis, but I will nevertheless attempt to address it in the book's epilogue.

## Notes

1. Bustikova (2014) develops a similar line of reasoning by noting that support for radical right-wing parties originates in opposition to policy changes in the status quo of ethnic relations. My analysis differs from hers in that I situate "abandonment" on the level of everyday life and argue that it did not foster the rise of the radical right on its own.

2. Friedländer (1997) maintained that Nazi anti-Semitism was distinctive for being "redemptive anti-semitism," namely a form of anti-Semitism that could explain all in the world and offer a form of redemption for the anti-Semitic. Writing about Bulgaria, Efremova (2012) recently argued that redemption is also a key feature of contemporary anti-Gypsyism in this country.

3. The concept was developed by Habermas (1974: 49): "We speak of the political public sphere in contrast, for instance, to the literary one, when public discussion deals with objects connected to the activity of the state. Although state authority is so to speak

the executor of the political public sphere, it is not a part of it. To be sure, state authority is usually considered 'public' authority, but it derives its task of caring for the well-being of all citizens primarily from this aspect of the public sphere. Only when the exercise of political control is effectively subordinated to the democratic demand that information be accessible to the public, does the political public sphere win an institutionalized influence over the government through the instrument of law-making bodies." In what follows I will rely on Habermas's loose definition, which allows for the joint treatment of formal and informal discussions related to the state and the public good.

4. For a useful discussion of a diverse set of interpretations, see Mahoney and Schensul 2006.

5. Berezin (2009) studies right-wing populism in France and Italy through contingent events that pushed the political process in a certain direction. While my analysis also takes account of events that "emotionally engaged the national collectivity" (ibid., 11), I primarily focus on local and regional episodes to account for the transposition of "everyday racism" into "political racism" (on which more below).

6. I follow Robert Miles, who defined racism as combining (1) the signification of some biological and/or somatic characteristics as the criterion by which populations are identified (and the attendant representation of these populations as having a natural, unchanging origin and status, and therefore as being inherently different from others); and (2) the attribution of one or more of the groups so identified with additional (negatively evaluated) characteristics and/or their representation as inducing negative consequences for (an)other group(s). See Miles and Brown 2003: 103–104.

7. Omi and Winant (2015: 22) argue that in "ethnicity-based approaches, the race-concept is . . . reduced to something like a preference, something variable and chosen, in the way one's religion or language is chosen." Racism, too, is seen as a matter of attitudes and beliefs, involving such issues as prejudice, beliefs about others, and individual practices. Such "culturology" (see Wolf 1999: 61) obfuscates the "ocular" and ascribed character of "race," divorcing its analysis from questions of power and inequality. By lodging "race" and racism in the individual psyche, it also divorces explanations of identity and identification from social interaction and practice. Despite these shortcomings, the approach remains influential in sociology and has informed studies of racism and right-wing politics in Hungary, so much so that one of the dominant explanations that has been proposed for the rise of radical right-wing politics in Hungary is an increase in the level of ethnic prejudice in society (see Csepeli 2012; Krekó, Juhász, and Molnár 2011).

8. The nation-based paradigm originates in seizures of territory by modern empires. Nation-based theories treat race as a manifestation of the presumptively deeper concept of the nation, and project "internal colonial" relations of domination and resistance forward into the present (see Omi and Winant 2015: 12). While such an approach may be useful for analyzing the predicament of racialized minorities in territories once dominated by "settler colonialism," it is problematic for analyzing constructions of "race" and ethnicity in societies that lack a history of racial despotism and where the state has actively promoted the assimilation of ethnic (i.e., non-racialized) minorities. In such environments, racism and related phenomena—such as discrimination and ethnic violence—cannot be straightforwardly treated as the expressions of durable ethnic supremacy. While supremacist tropes may in fact be present in society, they may—as I will indeed show—also serve as rivals to racism.

9. See the *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* journal's special issue on "Legacies and the Radical Right in Post-1989 Central and Eastern Europe" (vol. 42, no. 4, December

2009). Guest editor Michael Minkenberg (2009: 450) formulated the claim that "in contrast to its Western European counterpart, whether it is catching up or not, the Central and Eastern European radical right is particularly conditioned by the force of history . . . [T]he histories of state socialism and of pre-socialist (non-democratic) experiences can be seen as major forces in shaping both the contents and the opportunities of the radical right in these new or emerging democracies."

10. While linking ethnoracial identity and identification to the most material human question ("How do we sustain and reproduce ourselves practically?") is welcome, class analysis has been hindered by structural Marxist influences. This is true for political scientists who attempted to find a "sustainable class aspect" in far-right voting behavior in Eastern Europe (see Minkenberg and Pytlas 2013) and for sociologists who have sought to compare the positions of "minorities" and "natives" in different economic spheres: in markets, in systems of distribution, and in the production process.

11. Wolf (1969) developed the concept to contrast two approaches to culture: a "culture-as-template" approach, which some social historians (e.g., Sewell 2005) have relied on to account for self-reproducing historical sequences; and his preferred approach, which relativizes the explanatory power of "moments of origin" and "cultural foundations" and looks instead at how "foundational moments are . . . manipulated by elites and contenders through time" (Kalb and Tak 2005: 11). Rebel deployed Wolf's concept in his investigation of Holocaust-forms in Austria to argue that the historical reproduction of "inheritance and dispossession figures" in everyday lifeworlds pointed toward organized forms of terminal exclusion and organized disposal (see Rebel 2010: 115). I will draw on his conceptualization of "engrams" as articulate and institutionalized memories "stored" within a "community of memory" to argue that representatives of the post-peasantry relied on "old" ideas about "Gypsyness" (including the use of exclusionary practices) to elaborate a novel redemptive discourse that spoke to the experiences and aspirations of wide segments of rural society and successfully dislodged an old assimilationist discourse, which constituted the ideological bedrock of local hegemonies (see chapter 1).

12. An approach pioneered by "realist strain theorists"—which emerged out of a polemic involving German scholars who sought to make sense of the obstinacy of anti-Jewish sensibilities in European publics—has gone some way in outlining the contours of an approach to racism that avoids the twin traps of culturalism and structuralism. Led by historians and sociologists, this group of scholars contested the claim that anti-Semitic sentiment was rooted in the cultural memory of the historic antagonism that pitted the Christian against the Jewish faith (see Langmuir 1990; Smith 1996) based on the observation that anti-Semitism had historically waxed and waned and had also exhibited a remarkable geographic variability. These scholars, without contesting the power of cultural stereotypes, highlighted the salience of tensions, conflicts, and rivalry between "Jews" and "natives"; argued that in a period of deep social crisis, anti-Semitism could be forged into an ideology that explained the failures of the prevalent sociopolitical system; and offered a model for redemptive social action (see Kovács 1999; Rürup 1987; Volkov 1978; Wistrich 1990). The main advantage of this approach, as I see it, is that it seeks to historically contextualize the emergence of modern anti-Semitism by linking it to antagonisms generated by capitalist transformations while also taking pains to show how popular representations were combined with elements of scientific racism to forge a doctrine that promised to resolve these antagonisms through political action.

13. In 2013, Gyöngyöspata was officially recognized as a town, but in what follows I will continue to refer to it as a village.

14. The kind of political ethnography I conducted combined two of the three approaches identified by Baiocchi and Connor (2008: 140): the "ethnography of political actors and institutions" and the "lived experience of the political."
15. The concepts of the "Normative State" and the "Prerogative State" are derived from Fraenkel (1969).