

## Incremental Subnational Transformation and Democratic Backsliding in Eastern Europe

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### Abstract

Fidesz-KDNP has presided over a two-thirds majority in the Hungarian Parliament since 2010, solidifying long-term control through major institutional changes. Although their national-level reforms are well publicized, Fidesz has also subverted subnational institutions to help recentralize authority. Using concepts from the literature on the historical development of social policy, we examine how Fidesz has used institutional transformation as a means of reducing the effectiveness of some local institutions while undermining the capacity for contestation in others. We demonstrate that, in the aggregate, these subnational tweaks undermine trust in local institutions by rendering them less effective and structurally weakening opposition parties.

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