The Marriage of Political Science and History
Ervin Csizmadia’s new book on Hungarian political development

In one of his writings, the Hungarian political scientist Béla Greskovits wrote about how Hungarian political science doesn't really play a great role on an international level. The reason being, he argued, that faced with the Dutch or the Austrians, Hungarian researchers don't have much to say about themselves that would interest the world. Ervin Csizmadia's new book, *The Logic of Hungarian Political Development: Can the present be compared to the past?* aims to refute this argument.

The author would like to better understand current Hungarian politics and thinks that the categories of populism or authoritarianism are not adequate to explain the nature of Orbánism. The reasons point towards the longer trends of Hungarian political developments, or more broadly speaking, to the return of history. Csizmadia provides a complex frame of analysis rooted in history and political science. It is an important aspect of this framework that while in the post-1990 Central-Eastern European democratizations the role of history was almost nonexistent, moreover the „end of history” narrative was dominant, today the long forgotten conflicts of the Central-Eastern European past have returned.

The author shares the view of those Western European researchers who stated that Western observers were overly optimistic concerning the development perspectives of former dictatorships and did not take the historical traditions of the new democracies into due consideration. Out of these historical traditions the book highlights not just that Hungary always wanted to follow the West but that it also always wanted to shape Europe as well. The book provides new approaches for the analysis of Orbánism of which the most important is the revival of this trend shaping tradition. In the eye of the current Hungarian right, what Western observers see in Orbánism as the rejection of European trends means the firm European representation of Hungarian traditions.

Ultimately, the author of the book claims that Hungarian political development is at least as interesting as that of the Netherlands or Austria and tries to prove his point with a radically new theory on political development.