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### **Postsocialist Liberalism in Slovakia: The Victim of its Own Success?**

Liberal ideas are in crisis thirty years after socialism because they have been successfully implemented into postsocialist societies. The idea of an open liberal society was an important characteristic of Slovakia's development as an independent nation-state following the autocratic rule of Vladimír Mečiar (1994-1998). The struggle against populism caused Slovakia's postsocialist path to differ from that of Visegrád neighbours and contributed to pro-European attitudes in mainstream politics and among the wider population (expressed notably in signing up for the Eurozone).

The list of reasons for the decline of postsocialist liberalism in recent years is long. It includes factors pertaining to geopolitics, religion, the qualities of individual leaders and the configuration of elites in general, the totalitarian inheritance, and on-going crises of the European project. This paper proposes that the populism we observe in recent years is the consequence of liberalism's success in introducing a democratic constitution, a private property regime, and market penetration of everyday life. But it also owes much to resilient agrarian features of socialist and pre-socialist modernity. Focusing on the success of the People's Party Our Slovakia, representative of what I call 'village fascism,' the paper shows that the current counter-movement needs to be analyzed in a wider historical and cultural framework that goes far beyond the ephemeral phase of neoliberal capitalism.