



Nationalism and sport intersection in Hungary: building fences, expanding nationhood

Győző Molnár

To cite this article: Győző Molnár (2023): Nationalism and sport intersection in Hungary: building fences, expanding nationhood, *National Identities*, DOI: [10.1080/14608944.2023.2188584](https://doi.org/10.1080/14608944.2023.2188584)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/14608944.2023.2188584>



© 2023 The Author(s). Published by Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group



Published online: 21 Mar 2023.



Submit your article to this journal [↗](#)



Article views: 1095



View related articles [↗](#)



View Crossmark data [↗](#)

Nationalism and sport intersection in Hungary: building fences, expanding nationhood

Győző Molnár 

School of Sport and Exercise Science, University of Worcester, Worcester, UK

ABSTRACT

Since the coming-to-power of the Fidesz-led coalition government, right-wing populism has worked to establish an illiberal democracy and to protect national sovereignty in Hungary. Building an illiberal state has been through, in part, some of the mechanics that are associated with necropolitics. Within this context, the government has deployed strategies, including the use of sport, related infrastructure development and national sporting success, to (re)establish criteria for what they imagine Hungarian citizenship to be within and outside the current geographic borders of the state. This article examines the deployment of sport relating to intersecting narratives around right-wing populism and nationhood.

ARTICLE HISTORY

Received 2 June 2022
Revised 10 November 2022
Accepted 27 February 2023

KEYWORDS

Populist politics; national identity; sports; radical right; necropolitics

Introduction

A significant upsurge in right-wing political populism is observable in Hungary since 2010, the year which beckoned the reign of the Viktor Orbán-led Fidesz (Hungarian Civic Alliance) – KDNP (Christian Democratic People’s Party) coalition government and the deployment of sport for propaganda purpose. Although at the early stages of the history of Hungarian populist movements sport did not play a role, it generally became central to political agendas since the 1950s. In the post-1990 era, specifically, the Fidesz-led governments have capitalised on sport’s national popularity and have built it into their political strategy (Dóczi, 2012). Fidesz’s political use of and narrative building around sport is the central focus of this article, which explores how right-wing populism¹ intersects with illiberal democracy, necropolitics and sport in Hungary. To begin, an exploration of illiberalism – necropolitics intersections within a right-wing populist context is afforded, followed by a brief historical overview of the history of right-wing populist movements in Hungary, with the view to understand its current political centrality.

Illiberalism and necropolitics connections

It has been observed that right-wing populist political voices, movements and values have been on the rise (Judis, 2016). Europe has been nursing tendencies that are

CONTACT Győző Molnár  g.molnar@worc.ac.uk

© 2023 The Author(s). Published by Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group
This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited. The terms on which this article has been published allow the posting of the Accepted Manuscript in a repository by the author(s) or with their consent.

frequently associated with identity politics, ethno-nationalism, racism, sexism, anti-elitism and a general sense of 'them vs. us' attitude. In essence, political perspectives that work to polarise the public for the sake of gaining political power have been rampant (Canovan, 1999). A particular example of this political approach was articulated in Viktor Orbán's post-2014 national election speech which he delivered outside of Hungary in Băile Tuşnad, Romania. In that speech, Orbán (2014) argued that to be successful in a post-2008 economic crisis inflicted globalised world, 'we have to abandon liberal methods and principles of organizing a society, as well as the liberal way to look at the world', instead 'the new state that we are building is an *illiberal* state, a non-liberal state' (italics added). The statement to abandon principles of liberal democracy and form an illiberal state has been controversially received in the global mass media and various questions have been posed regarding the feasibility as well as legitimacy of such an approach to contemporary nation building. Nevertheless, it appears that the majority of Hungary support such backsliding of democracy as the government was re-elected in 2018 and 2022 to continue developing a nation centred around values and practices of illiberalism.

Illiberal democracies are a unique governmental arrangement in the sense that they are not fully democratic, neither are they completely authoritarian. Instead, such states may be located on a sliding scale between liberalism and autocracy (Kapidžić, 2020). Illiberal democracies normally grow out of states with liberal constitutions in the third wave of the democratisation process (Huntington, 1991) and rely extensively on populist political majority and the utilisation of emotion-based ethnic national identity. Drinóczi and Bień-Kacafa (2019, p. 1141) explain that illiberal constitutionalism is:

a state in which the political power relativizes the rule of law, democracy, and human rights in politically sensitive cases; constitutionalises populist nationalism; and takes advantage of identity politics, new patrimonialism, clientelism and state-controlled corruption.

In this sense, while the state and governmental elections, by and large, remain democratic, the opinions and views of the minority are muted, marginalised and their rights truncated or withdrawn. Instead, the focal point becomes to represent the 'will of the people', the characteristics of which is defined by the political regime in power. In essence, if one does not qualify to be in the dominant group of 'the people' or subscribe to the values of the majority then one may experience various forms and degrees of exclusion and illegitimacy. Therefore, it may be argued an illiberal state leads to the resurfacing of 'fascistic habits', as explained by Lennard (2019), which relate to behaviours formed out of desire to dominate, oppress and obliterate the different or noncomplying other.

Fascistic habits are intricately connected to the idea and manifestation of necropolitics, which, at its basic form, is being in the position to decide over life and death (Molnár & Bullingham, 2022). The power over life and death, rights or restrictions, the division of 'them vs. us' is captured in the concept of necropolitics. The term is associated with Mbembe's work (2003) in which he unfolds that by practicing necropolitics the needs of certain social strata are marginalised or completely ignored whereas the 'legitimate' population's rights and values are protected. This can lead to the manifestation of what Mbembe (2003, p. 21) referred to as 'death-in-life', which is the 'permanent wounding of individuals, rather than their direct and active killing' (Davies et al., 2017, p. 1268) as a form of social control. As such, necropolitics may manifest in withdrawing essential

services and rights, erecting fences across borders, and muting dissident voices. These are examples of political manoeuvres to protect the interest of ‘the people’ – the ‘legitimate’ population – at the expense of the political, cultural, religious, ‘racial’ and sexual other (see Molnár & Bullingham, 2022). To wit, through necropolitics certain people and groups are cultivated for life and prosperity whereas others are selected for elimination and marginalisation in the necropolis (Quinan & Thiele, 2020), which may be interpreted as the foundation of an illiberal state.

The rationale for prioritising one and marginalising the other derives from the ways in which populist politicians construct their public narratives and develop stories of ‘them vs. us’. Yilmaz & Erturk (2021, p. 1525) capture this point succinctly: populists ‘manipulate public fears, exaggerate the real or imagined threats to the nation and present a dark picture of the nation under continuous threat’. Consequently, populist political leaders often portray themselves as the saviour of the people and the nation from external and/or internal threats that they have the tendency to exaggerate. Viktor Orbán maybe viewed through such a lens as he has claimed to have been ‘battling’ both external and internal threats to Hungarianness to save the Magyars (Molnar & Whigham, 2021).

Arguably, Orbán’s success, in great part, has been due to this self-representation that he has fostered through his rhetoric in public speeches and online fora, which jointly contributed to the dominance of his political narrative. The real-life result of the above-mentioned combination has been Orbán’s party winning four consecutive governmental elections. Such continued political success has been unprecedented in post-Soviet Hungary. Furthermore, Orbán did not just win four elections, but secured them by a significant margin, which, amongst other things, allowed his government to change the Hungarian constitution without meaningful resistance from the opposition (Molnar & Doczi, 2020). Therefore, it is prudent to argue that political narratives created by populist leaders to initiate and maintain their political trajectory and success are an essential aspect of their political toolkit. Yet, as Yilmaz & Erturk (2021) note, there has been limited academic attention attributed to how prominent populist politicians construct and disseminate their political narratives. Thus, the focus of this work is to explore such political narratives via political speeches, texts and online messages that have been used to scaffold the political prominence of the Fidesz-led government in Hungary with a focus on the deployment of sport to reinforce nationalism and government (re)imagined Magyarhood.

A brief history of Magyar populism

The history of populist movements and ideas may be traced back as early as the nineteenth century in Hungary. For instance, Kim (2022) associates the emergence of populist nationalism with the roots of the 1848 Revolution that erupted as a reaction to the oppression of the Habsburg-Lothringen house. A central facet of the 1848 revolution was to achieve a higher degree of independence for the Kingdom of Hungary and to have ‘Hungarianness’ (Magyarság) recognised as a legitimate nation and identity. Although the revolution was defeated by the Austro-Russian army in 1849, the movement eventually culminated in the 1867 Compromise that led to the dual monarchy whereby the Hungarian ruling elite gained freedom to organise their domestic affairs leading to increased national sovereignty (Hanebrink, 2006). While Hungarian national unity and

sovereignty was desired and pursued, it was a challenging task to accomplish given the multitude of cultural, religious and social class divides within the Kingdom of Hungary.

A key aspect of the national unification process was the connecting of Christian values with Hungarian national identity and the declaration of Hungary as an essentially Christian nation especially after 1914. Hanebrink (2006) argues that in post-World War I Hungary religious nationalism was directly associated with an exclusionary vision of nationhood and antisemitism. The rise of post-war nationalism was also induced by perhaps the most significant damage to the collective national consciousness, i.e. Trianon Trauma (Zeidler, 2007). As a consequence of the Trianon peace negotiations, Hungary was left with one-third of its former territory and lost approx. 60% of its original population, including millions of ethnic Hungarians (Waters, 2020). Thus, right-wing populism emerged in the aftermath of the Trianon Peace Treaty that befell Hungarian national identity, leading to extensive tensions between the 'dismembered' Hungary and its surrounding countries (see Beiner, 2013; Várdy & Várdy, 1989). Losing the Great War, decimated infrastructure, the dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, Trianon and consequent irredentism jointly led to a strong wave of national populism. Bibó (2015, p. 159) argued that the post-Trianon geopolitical atmosphere promoted *territoriocentric* nationalism across Hungary. Although the Regent of post-war Kingdom of Hungary, Miklós Horthy, aimed to peacefully reverse Hungary's loss of territories, the diplomatic approach to the Trianon Treaty began to wane in 1932 when foreign military support was sought to re-establish the pre-war Kingdom of Hungary. Eventually, nationalism, irredentism and right-wing populism ushered Hungary towards another war, on the side of Nazi Germany (see Várdy & Várdy, 1989).

In the first post-WWII elections, nationalist populist and peasantry – as 'the people' – centred sentiments resurfaced, and the Independent Smallholders Party won the elections (Kim, 2022). However, the leader of the Hungarian Communist Party (MKP), Mátyás Rákosi, managed to change the dominant political narrative from peasantry (*földműves*) to workers (*dolgozók*) and from nationalism to communism. In 1948, the MKP merged with the Hungarian Social Democrats to form the Hungarian Workers Party that gained full control of the country in 1949. Arguably this was the first political system in Hungary that actively and openly used sports for propaganda purposes albeit to varying success (see Molnar, 2007). However, within the Sovietised framework of internationalism, nationalism and nationhood were not supported or, in some instances, allowed. Zeidler (2007: xi) notes that for Hungarians 'raising the nationality question, including Trianon, became a criticism of the system and was viewed by the state socialist authorities as a hostile activity'. In this sense, sports were to aggrandise Sovietised state socialism and 'universal comradeship' as opposed to serving and boosting an individual nation's identity and international standing. Nevertheless, sport, esp. football, slipped temporarily out of Sovietised control during the 1950s (see next section), arguably as a precursor to the 1956 uprising.

Growing resistance against communist ideas, paired with nationalist fervour, led to the 1956 revolution which broke out despite the Workers Party's political majority. As the revolution was thwarted by the Soviet army, the Hungarian Socialist Workers Party (MSzMP) rose to power with Soviet backing and established a more *laissez-faire* political strategy that is oft referred to as 'Goulash Communism' (see Molnar & Doczi, 2020). Whilst this system appeared successful (or at least tolerated) in Hungary and many social sectors,

including sport, enjoyed greater independence than before, socio-economic issues eventually led to instability in the political order in the 1980s. Åslund (1999) observed the significance of the failings of the Sovietised economic model in the collapse of the regime and noted that the dated and rigid economic system, that had been developed during the Kádár era, had limited capacity to keep up with the changing market and new technologies. Simultaneously, as regards politics, whilst MSzMP desperately clinged on to power through change of leadership and reforms, both political and public unrest continued to rise, culminating in an extensive civic demonstration on 15th March 1989 to demand, amongst other things, sovereignty and individual rights. Rising nationalist forces, coupled with socio-economic woes, forced the MSzMP to implement changes that paved the way to a system change (*rendszer váltás*).

After the collapse of communism, Hungary witnessed the (re)emergence of soft or banal nationalism (Billig, 1995), Christian values, and the rekindling of Hungarianness. József Antall, the first Prime Minister of the newfound democracy, clearly articulated the distinction between the politics-focused communist elite and their failed socio-economic policies and his government's alignment with democracy, pluralism, market reforms and the Hungarian people. Although sport was not explicitly mentioned as a form of separation from communist political tendencies, politicians were initially careful to manage their connections to sport in the new democracy (Molnar & Whigham, 2021).

In 1992, the writer, István Csurka, reignited populist, right-wing ethno-nationalist voices. Csurka criticised the Antall government for still acting and thinking within the dated framework of the previous regime and blamed the nomenclature, the convenience of Western-type lifestyle, the Jews, foreign financial supporters as well as some of the opposing political parties for foreign powers still having sway over Hungarian political and financial spheres. However, most of all, Csurka (1992) noted that the government should centre their policies around Hungarianness, justice and folk-centeredness (*népiesség*) and reignite connections with over-the-border ethnic Hungarians. Csurka deployed the usual right-wing populist rhetoric such as vilification of the elite and globalisation/westernisation, support for ethnic nationalism, national sovereignty and desire to represent 'the people' (see Bonikowski et al., 2018). Whilst sport was never on Csurka's radar, years later it became integrated into Fidesz's political narrative, which appears to be a carbon copy of Csurka's (1992) manifesto. In fact, Fidesz has extensively used sport, in addition to narratives around ethnic purity and Christian values, to stabilise their ideas around the Hungarian nation and illiberal democracy (Molnar & Whigham, 2021). It is also prudent to postulate that Fidesz's current political vocabulary and manoeuvres are not unprecedented, but a late-modern manifestation and continuation of the aforementioned, deep-rooted right-wing, Christian ethno-nationalist tendencies, which have been instrumental in the formation of the concept of Hungarianness in twentieth century (see Glied, 2020; Kim, 2022).

Sport and politics in Hungary

In Hungary, sport and politics has had complicated interconnections since sport's inception in the late 1800s and early 1900s. Numerous examples of sport's, specifically football's, entanglement with politics have been noted (see Handler, 1985; Hoffer & Thaly, 2000), indicating governmental influence on Hungarian sport development. None-the-

less, arguably, it was the rise of the Soviet communist regime after the second World War that began to pay extensive attention to international sporting success and developed systematic and discernible links between elite sport and party politics (see Hadas, 2000; Molnar, 2007). While the historiography of sport-politics connections is not explored here to its full extent due to the focus of this article, this section does offer a precursory insight into the intricate intersection between Hungarian sport and state politics through some illustrative examples, which are unfolded below.

As political influence on sports and elite athletes was well-known and visible in Sovietised Hungary, sport and international sporting success was more than just a matter of national pride. The nation's athletic prowess was used to underpin the communist political regime in both domestic and international settings (Hadas, 2000). The East–West sport rivalry became particularly emphasised in the zenith of the Cold War, during which international athletic performances came to be part of the ideological battle between communism and capitalism (See Riordan, 1980; Vonnard et al., 2019; Wagg & Andrews, 2007). Show (2001) observed that every aspect of social and cultural life could be deployed to influence both domestic and international views of political regimes. Mellis (2020, pp. 60–61) also explained that: 'Cold War nations on both sides of the Iron Curtain avoided military confrontation by waging political battles in the "soft" cultural spheres of music, dance, literature and, importantly, sport.' Therefore, Hoberman (1984) referred to the athletes of the Cold War era as 'proxy warriors' who fought proxy wars in international sporting arenas which were a direct expression of Cold War political tensions.

Notable examples of such proxy wars were international football matches, most of which had political undertones during communism. For instance, the Hungarian national football team of the 1950s, oft referred to as the Magic Magyars or the Golden Team (Aranycsapat), had strong connections to the country's political leadership (Hadas & Karady, 1995) and, thus, expectations towards their international accomplishments were high. The government put extensive efforts into maintaining an outstanding national team that could successfully represent Hungary internationally. Taylor and Jamrich (1998, p. 41) noted that 'under the communist regime ... the national team carried a high priority with the Party and its officials'. This strategy seemed to have initially worked to cement the communist government's political stability. In 1952, the Hungarian national team won the Olympic Games. One year later they defeated the English national side at home, which had never been accomplished by a European side before (see Fox, 2003). However, the Magic Magyars failed to meet social and political expectations and won 'only' silver at the 1954 Football World Cup. Losing the World Cup title led to the so called 'boomerang-effect (see Hadas & Karady, 1995) or football revolution (Ember, 2001), which provoked the first and largest rebellion against the communist regime since 1948 (Mellis, 2020). It may be argued that the post-1954 World Cup upheaval was a harbinger of the 1956 revolution, which provided the political backdrop to another, now legendary, sporting match at the Melbourne Olympics.

The water polo final between the Hungarian and Soviet national sides at the Melbourne Games, which took place on 6th December 1956, may be considered the fiercest and bloodiest event in the history of the modern Olympics. That match, which is dubbed as 'blood in the water', was a symbolic overlay of the actual fighting that had been taking place on the streets of Budapest, Hungary where Soviet tanks ended the 1956 revolution in a massacre (Rinehart, 1996, 2007). In light of that, the 1956

Hungarian national water polo team represented Hungarianhood and hopes for freedom in the Soviet-oppressed country. The resistance the team displayed was both real and symbolic and in the 'middle area between outright, open rebellion and under-ground, passive resistance' (Rinehart, 1996, p. 122). Winning the gold in water polo at the Olympics meant national pride and resisting both Soviet oppression and the Hungarian puppet government. The Magic Magyars and the bloody water polo match are examples of how national pride and nationalism remained part of international sporting success even in Sovietised Hungary, although such sentiments were both melded with and pitted against communist political agendas (Molnar, 2007).

As the connection between Sovietisation, politics and sport was generally well known, after the collapse of the Iron Curtain newly emerging political parties were initially cautious to publicly engage with sports (Molnar & Whigham, 2021). Consequently, in the early years of the post-Soviet system change, the relationship between politics and sport may be described as sporadic and circumspect. This could be interpreted as an attempt by politicians of the new democracy to delineate themselves from the country's communist past, as was expressed by the first democratically elected prime minister, József Antall. Despite the aforementioned symbolic demarcation from the communist past, most of the social spheres, including, sport could not achieve a Western-type autonomy and were reliant on state funding during the country's transition from Sovietisation to Westernisation (Földesi, 1993). Földesi (2009) observed that the continued expectation for state financial support curbed sport leadership's potential for economic self-sufficiency and independence. Nevertheless, sports, by and large, remained on the fringe of political discourse until the Fidesz coalition government came to power in 1998. The Fidesz government gradually began to incorporate sport into its political strategy, which emulated 'the wider trend within this period in other developed and developing nations in Europe' (Molnar & Whigham, 2021, p. 139). For instance, during this administration a professional football league was launched in the 1999–2000 season, a state-funded football grassroots development was initiated and a football Stadia Reconstruction Programme was introduced (Molnar et al., 2011). Although the Fidesz coalition government was not re-elected in 2002, sport gradually began to regain its political connections and significance in the new Hungarian democracy.

After an unprecedented landslide electoral victory, the Fidesz coalition was re-elected in 2010; a success the party repeated in 2014, 2018 and 2022, respectively. During its four terms in leading the country, the Fidesz coalition government has initiated and implemented numerous controversial policies and reforms, including changing the Hungarian constitution, commencing the centralisation of key industries, media and education, combating many of the 'excessively liberal' EU policies, refusing to let refugees enter the country, curbing the rights of LGBTQ+ communities and extending government support for over-the-border Hungarians. In these initiatives, and the political narratives surrounding them, the multiple aspects of illiberal state contoured necropolitics are visible. In the remainder of this paper, after briefly detailing the research methods, the focus will be on exploring the intricate connections between the Orbán government's nation building and sport deployment. More specifically, it will be discussed as to how an image of Hungarianhood has been (re)created, in part, with the sophisticated utilisation of sport that reflect the government's right-wing populist ideology that is both embedded and informed by an exercise in necropolitics.

Methods

To identify and collect relevant material for this paper, Molnar and Whigham's (2021) approach to data generation was followed, prioritising publicly accessible online sources. V. Molnár (2022, p. 222) also suggested using online and social media sources for research purposes as 'radical nationalist groups have been very adept at using' those. Therefore, to locate relevant material, online search engines such as Google and origo.hu were used imputing the following key phrases both in English and Hungarian: 'Hungarian sport and national identity', 'Hungarian sport and populist politics', 'Hungarian sport and regime change', 'Victor Orbán and sport', 'Victor Orbán political speeches' and 'Victor Orbán illiberal democracy'. This search yielded both extensive and, in some instances, duplicative results. After noting and removing duplications, a cut-off point was set, which was limiting the range of the sources to the first 30 links listed by the respective search engines. Out of the sources that were within the 30-range, only the following ones were included: (a) directly relevant to the focus of the study; (b) publicly accessible; and (c) from well-established, credible organisations (e.g. official websites, government webpages, credible investigative reporting sites) and (d) directly related to the post-2010 political era. In addition to the sources identified in the search and selection process, public messages of the Hungarian government from 2020 to 2022 were followed, which were released through social media, specifically, Facebook and Viktor Orbán's official web site (<https://primeminister.hu>). Facebook was deemed to be the most relevant social media platform as polling bodies (e.g. Eurobarometer, Media Landscapes) generally associate it with the widest following in Hungary. All in all, 34 online sources and web sites formed the empirical foundation of this work.

The selected sources were put to a narrative analysis, specifically focusing on connections between politics, sport, Hungary and national identity. Although there are multiple definitions, a narrative analysis may be interpreted to mean the creation of a story or storyline based on the evidence collected. More specifically, narrative analysis is a process through which we arrange a sequence of events into a story-frame, within which each key component, such as individuals, communities, messages and audiences, is deployed and connected to construct a meaningful story (Elliott, 2005). A meaningful story created via a narrative study aims to 'offer insights about the world and/or people's experience of it' (Hinchman & Hinchman, 1997, p. xvi). Consequently, the narrative account developed here focuses on the ways in which media texts and government messages have formed and are part of a grand narrative that a political establishment have composed to achieve their agenda. In that master narrative, numbers, figures and people are imbued with meaning which then broadcasted to the public via numerous channels, with the view to achieving pre-set political goals. The following section will focus on some of those aspects of the Orbán government's political narrative that have been applied inconsistently and/or arbitrarily to reinforce dominant right-wing populist sentiments as those relate to Hungarianness, nationalism and sport.

Narratives of Hungarianness

Border narratives of Hungarianness: borderless nation vs. border protection

From the outset, one of the key narratives of the Orbán government has been to embrace all Hungarians, regardless of their geo-political location. This goal has been explicitly

expressed by both the government's official and Viktor Orbán's personal Facebook page which are replete with messages that reinforce the importance of over-the-border Hungarians. For instance, on 23 February 2022, Orbán shared the following message: 'Hungarians abroad can also experience that not only in sunshine but in times of peril they still belong to us. We are continuing their programmes and we have built 170 new and renovated 790 kindergartens. Go Hungarians!'. Furthermore, the Orbán government have developed and launched the so called 'Köldökszínór Program' [umbilical cord programme] in 2018 (<https://csalad.hu/tamogatasok/koldokzsinor-program>) which financially rewards the birth of Hungarian children abroad (Lázár, 2018). Sports, especially football, have played a significant part in the extension of Hungarianness beyond the current geographic scope of the country. It has been widely noted that the Orbán government have financed the construction of sport venues in Slovakia, Ukraine, Romania, Serbia, Croatia and Slovenia, mainly in territories which used to belong to the Kingdom of Hungary and occupied predominantly by ethnic Hungarians (Molnar & Doczi, 2020). Molnar and Whigham (2021) argued that football, and sport more broadly, have been deployed to reconstruct a conceptualisation of a Hungarian nation – Hungarianness – which invokes ethnically rooted, 'hot' forms of nationalism and a primordial perception of the nation. Such initiatives may be interpreted as an approach to symbolically unite all Hungarians regardless of geographic location. This extension of nationhood has been supported by governmental changes to the country's constitution which included renaming the country from Hungarian Republic to Hungary. This action, in constellation with constructing and renovating sport facilities abroad, may be perceived as further evidence for revealing an inclination to create a borderless nation of ethnic Hungarians, aiming for the inclusion of Hungarian minorities living in neighbouring countries (Palonen, 2012).

Remarkably, the general and sport-related initiatives for the expansion of Hungarianness have simultaneously been taking place with rising anti-immigration sentiments, erecting fences and gravitating significant resources towards protecting the country's southern borders. Anti-migration² political narratives are brimming on various government media platforms as well as on Viktor Orbán's personal pages. For instance, in an interview with Origo (a Hungarian web-based news service) in 2016, Orbán noted the following:

There is only one solution which is good for everyone, both those of us who are not yet in trouble because we have protected ourselves, and countries such as Germany which are in trouble: we must take the migrants out of the territory of the EU.

In a similar vein, on 1st February 2022 Orbán announced on his Facebook page that: 'We don't want to be an immigrant-country. I rather cut my hand off than to include such a sentence in any government programme'. Therefore, it is prudent to observe that anti-refugee/anti-immigration sentiments have undergirded the dominant, government-manufactured political narrative.

In fact, anti-migration opinions in Hungary have been part of the government's narrative since 2015 (Glied, 2020). Orbán has specifically been vocal about stopping immigration to Hungary and to the EU. He opted to resist EU directives and called for a referendum in 2016 to have the Hungarian people decide on the future of accepting refugees in Hungary. Although the ballot was preceded by an extensive anti-EU and anti-immigration

government-funded campaign, the outcome of the referendum was controversial as it did not reach the required 50% participation limit, but those who voted (40.4%) extensively sided with the Prime Minister. Regardless of the referendum not achieving the required threshold for legitimacy, the Orbán government declared it a victory (BBC, 2016) and has deployed the result to inform their approach to border protection, immigration-related EU policy and the construction of Magyarhood. Orbán reinforced his contentious approach to migration at a 'Peace Rally' held on 15th March 2022:

Now, everyone can see the difference between the frightened women with children and hastily collected luggage escaping the fighting taking place next door, and the migrants besieging our borders coming from thousands of kilometres away. Hungary provides aid to [Ukrainian] refugees but still refuses migration!

In this rhetoric, the arbitrary distinction between 'Ukrainian refugees' and 'Syrian migrants' indicates necropolitical intentions where politicians decide people's fate.

Orbán further emphasised his views on immigration in another controversial speech he delivered on 23rd July 2022 in Băile Tuşnad, Romania at the Tusványos Festival.³ The migration focused aspect of his speech clarifies why he believes in the importance of distinguishing between 'Ukrainian refugees' and 'Syrian migrants'. Orbán explained that the idea of Europe already being a mix of different 'races' is a leftist ideological plot to confuse. In his view, the reality is that only European peoples have mixed and still mix with each other. Orbán (2022b) expressed his viewpoint as follows:

There is a world in which European peoples are mixed together with those arriving from outside Europe. Now that is a mixed-race world. And there is *our world*, where people from within Europe mix with one another, move around, work, and relocate. So, for example, in the Carpathian Basin *we are not mixed-race*: we are simply a mixture of peoples living in *our own European homeland*. (italics added)

While Orbán did not specify what he meant by 'European peoples', knowing his ideas around the importance of preserving Hungarian ethnic homogeneity (Orbán, 2017), Christianity (Orbán, 2022a) and traditional gender binary (Orbán, 2022b), it is safe to propose that Orbán's Europeans are: white, Christian and heterosexual. Therefore, migrants who are non-white, non-European and subscribe to a different religion are *personae-non-grata* in Orbán's definition of Magyarhood.

Narratives of necropolitical tendencies

By viewing the Hungarian government's actions through the lens of necropolitics, it is detectable how decisions have been made about who is accepted or not, who is welcome or not, who is celebrated or who is demonised based on dominant political paradigms. When populist politics overlap with necropolitics, the arbitrary application of socially constructed categories, such as 'Ukrainian refugee' but 'Syrian migrant', can be unveiled. The simultaneous use and presence of contrasting political narratives in Hungary is a key feature of populist right-wing politics which overlays onto sport. For instance, actions of sport-related expansion and opening of national boundaries (e.g. building and renovating sport stadia), but closing state borders and reimagining and narrowing the right-wing, populist definition of Hungarianness are present simultaneously. These instances offer a unique insight into the intersection of the building of nationhood,

the practice of necropolitics and the role of sport within a right-wing populist construct justifying governmental actions and narratives around decision making.

It is not unusual that governments, political parties and discrimination-based regimes apply their fundamental principles and criteria in an arbitrary fashion to match their political agendas. Through the biased interpretation and application of a regime's 'core' values the tendencies of populist politics are detectable. Sport is particularly interesting to explore as to how a populist ideology can and does embrace athletes as their own despite their ambiguous (or often lack of) national roots and primordial connections as long as those athletes honour the nation and, by extension, the political regime. Accepting athletes into the fold of the nation who don't have blood ties or extensive ancestral connections to it can be viewed as a type of civic nationalism. Civic nationalism is a form of inclusive nationalism defined as 'subject to immigration controls, anyone can become a member of a civic nation, in principle' (Bairner, 2001, p. 3). Right-wing populist political movements are generally associated with ethnic nationalism which is a rigid form of national belonging embedded in birth ties and native culture. According to Smith (1991, p. 12), ethnic nationalists perceive the nation 'as a fictive 'super-family' ... [that is] differentiated by family ties from outsiders.' Nevertheless, in practice, separation between civic and ethnic nationalism is not always clear-cut (Smith, 1995). The convolution of these two types of nationalism can often be observed in the realm of elite sport where the stakes are high and nations and their athletes' achievements can gain extensive global exposure and accolades. Consequently, it may appear sensible for populist parties, given their tendency to capitalise on both national celebrations and fears, to apply different criteria to successful athletes as they would normally to people of the same or similar (migratory) background. As right-wing populist political movements have the tendency to have an anti-immigratory and national protectionist slant, it is often revealing to what extent such movements, and leaders of such movements, are willing to deviate from their core values if they believe that a divergence will yield an increase in their popularity.

While Orbán delivers powerful rhetoric around preserving the ethnic homogeneity of the nation, Hungarian sport has numerous examples that reflect the 'loose' or self-serving interpretations of language around migrants and migration such as the fast-tracked naturalisation of elite athletes. For instance, Vladislav Baitcaev and Ismail Musukaev are both borne Russian citizens and were representing Russia in wrestling for most of their career, but won medals (silver and gold) under Hungarian colours at the European Wrestling Championships in 2022 in Budapest. Another outstanding wrestler from Iran, David Savarimanesh also had a rapid journey from refugee to full citizenship due to his sporting credentials (Womack & Simon, 2020). Simultaneously, in football, Loïc Nego, a French man, received full citizenship in February 2019 and represented Hungary as a member of the national football team since October 2020. Furthermore, it has been noted that the Hungarian national team that beat the English side on 4th June 2022, had an Italian manager and three players who did not speak the Magyar language (Mortimer, 2022). Yet, Orbán (04/06/2022) noted the following regarding the Hungarian side's performance on his Facebook profile: 'Perhaps it [national team's victory] could have been visible even from the Moon! Boys, it was beautiful!' Perhaps, the accomplishment was visible even from space, but the 'boys' performing were not all ethnic Magyars.

Examples of migrants playing central sporting roles in Hungary and their achievements being celebrated as genuine Magyar success may be located on the nationality

continuum where ethnic and civic nationalism intersect. Or, arguably, these are examples of populist political tactics in an illiberal state scaffolded by necropolitics. To further explore the intersections of populism, necropolitics and sport, here the case of Sándor Shaolin Liu and Shaoang Liu – two Chinese-Hungarian speed skaters – will be considered.

Narratives of sliding sporting nationalism

The Liu brothers were borne in Budapest, Hungary to a Chinese father and to a Hungarian mother. They were raised in a multicultural household and fluently speak both Hungarian and Chinese languages. In terms of their religious affiliation, they don't identify as Christian (Hungarian Spectrum, 2018). When beginning their training as speedskaters the brothers were taken to China at the ages of 10 and 12 by their father to participate in an 18-month training camp. After returning from China, they began to draw attention in and around Hungary by winning numerous local and regional competitions. In 2012, Lina Zhang Jing, who is a Chinese short-track speed skating coach and former skater, became the head coach of the Hungarian short-track team and have since been training the brothers along with the rest of the short-track national team. According to Castagnone (2022), Zhang has helped the Hungarian short-track team to win over 150 medals. The Liu brothers are popular both in Hungary and China. They have over one million followers on Weibo (China's version of Twitter) (Castagnone, 2022) and view China as their second home (olympics.com, 2021). It is evident that while they have been representing Hungary at international sporting events, the Liu brothers are second generation migrants with plural national identities.

The Liu brothers rose to national and international prominence when they won the first gold medal for Hungary in the history of the Winter Olympics in 2018 as part of the 5000-meter skating relay team. The sporting achievement was perceived as exceptional. Viktor Orbán noted on his Facebook page the following: 'Grateful for living to see this day! Go Hungarians!' (Hungarian Spectrum, 2018). The Hungarian Spectrum (2018) noted that Orbán had 'to face the uncomfortable truth that sons of an 'economic migrant' made up half of the Hungarian speed skating team' and were coached by a Chinese national. In other words, Orbán's civic nationalism, i.e. the celebration of the Liu brothers' skating achievement, is in direct opposition to his long-term narrative around preserving ethnic homogeneity, the dominance of western Christianity and Hungarian culture. Lázár (2018) pointed out this contradiction in Orbán's political narrative: in October 2017, Orbán asserted that 'assimilation, the adoption of other languages and mixed marriages ... [and same sex relationships] represent mortal [and moral] dangers to the Hungarian nation'. The incongruity in the Hungarian government's narrative around sport, migration and national belonging again points towards the presence of necropolitics supported by the arbitrary application of Magyarhood, its membership and fundamental components.

Similar representational incongruences wrapped up in necropolitics have also been observed in relation to sport women's portrayal in Hungarian magazines (Antunovic, 2019) and the strategic reconfiguration of urban space in Budapest (Fekete, 2020) to create and depict the desired Magyarhood. For instance, Antunovic (2019, p. 67) observed that 'Hungarian womanhood are also specifically tied to Hungarian nationalism'. Consequently, sports women represented in magazines must conform to traditional gender

and heteronormative sexuality values embedded in conservative Christian nationalism. Antunovic (2019, p. 6) succinctly summarises this nation - women interconnection as follows: ‘Hungarianness’ is constructed at the intersection of gender, sexuality, motherhood and national identity.’ The ‘Hungarianness’ or Magyarhood, as Antunovic (2019) explains it, frequently features in Orbán’s narratives via the concept of ‘family’ where traditional gender roles play great significance as, to Orbán, that is the foundation, the future and the distinctiveness of the Hungarian nation. Orbán has expressed this on numerous occasions and his vision is as follows: ‘the Hungarian [heteronormative] family is organised around the woman and sooner or later everyone will end up in the kitchen if one’s mother is cooking dinner’ (Juhász, 2021). In addition to carefully orchestrated media representations, Fekete (2020) reveals that nationhood and national identity are also (re)constructed through the strategic management of specific and historically significant urban spaces in Hungary. Fekete argues that by re-arranging and re-organising spaces ‘where [national] memory crystallizes’ the government has made ‘deliberate attempts to intervene in and shape the construction of Hungarian national identity’ (Fekete, 2020, p. 21). Fekete specifically focuses on how statues and monuments have been removed and/or rearranged according to dominant political narratives which led to the expression of a symbolic break from certain, politically undesirable aspects of Hungary’s past.

The political harnessing of Liu brothers’ sporting success is in line with Antunovic’s (2019) and Fekete’s (2020) accounts in terms of the Orbán government’s strategic efforts to (re)construct Magyarhood as they see fit. However, in so doing, a fundamental internal conflict is revealed. The dominant political narrative around the Liu brothers shows signs of civic approaches to envisioning nationalism, but the dominant national identity-centred narrative of the Fidesz coalition government resonates with an ethnic, primordialist approach to the concept of nationhood. Primordialist nationalism emphasises the importance of long-term historical roots linked to socio-biological factors such as ethnicity and bloodline (Van den Berghe, 1995), i.e. connecting land and blood (Lennard, 2019). This aligns with an ethnically-rooted notion of the nation that manifests itself in the ‘cultural backlash’ thesis, triggering a recurring reaction from historically dominant groups in the nation to the progressive cultural value changes prompted by the growing presence of Western liberal ideologies (Inglehart and Norris, 2016). Inglehart and Norris (2016, p. 6-7) note that ‘populist discourse typically emphasizes nativism, which assumes that the “people” are a uniform whole, and that states should exclude people from other countries and cultures.’ Primordial nationalism, thus, focuses on protecting the nation from external threats (e.g. immigration, globalisation and ideoscapes) and preserving the historic dominance of ethnic, religious and sexual majorities at the expense of minority cultural values and practices. In this sense, the Liu brothers’ victory should not have been celebrated by Orbán and his government as Hungarian as their sporting achievement is not primordially Magyar. Yet, this contradiction did not seem to trouble the political narrative broadcasted through numerous Hungarian news outlets and government funded media sites, traditionally associated with primordial nationalist tendencies, to celebrate the Liu brothers’ victory as a great Magyar sporting success. That they did so demonstrates the effective use of populist opportunism whereby decisions are made to exploit any national and international achievement to help scaffold the political stability of the government. To maintain political domination,

even people outside of the populist contours of Magyarhood, who are normally relegated to the necro-space of society, are brought into the fold and in that process, through narrative re-articulation, they transition in status from foreign invaders to great Hungarian athletes.

Conclusions

This article has focused on exploring the right-wing populism, necropolitics and sport intersection within the current political context in Hungary. It has been argued that current right-wing political sentiments rest on a long line of historical populist movements. Whilst sport was not always part of the toolkit of populist politics in Hungary, it became a key marker of national and ideological identity from 1950s onwards. Directly after the collapse of the Iron Curtain, Hungarian politicians were circumspect about their relations to/with sport to delineate themselves from political practices dominant in Sovietised Hungary. However, the Fidesz-led coalition government significantly changed this strategy and have incorporated sport into their political agenda and narrative, especially since 2010. Fidesz and its leader, Viktor Orbán, representing right-wing populist political directions, have been effectively using sport, elite athletes and the renovation of sport facilities both in and outside of Hungary to (re)define Hungarian-hood and reinforce connection with over-the-border ethnic Hungarians. However, at closer inspection, some of the key narratives of the Orbán government reveal inconsistencies in terms of how their core values are applied. In fact, it has been demonstrated that the government have built a necropolitical scaffolding to their right-wing populist approach, which has allowed them to deploy their own political interpretation around the nation, Magyarhood and sport in an arbitrary fashion to increase their popularity. In so doing, they excluded Syrian but accepted Ukrainian refugees and have continuously and effectively used sport and athletes to further stabilise their narrative around unity, Hungarian-hood and the greatness of the nation. While the southern borders of the country are tightly policed to keep migrants out, some outstanding foreign athletes receive fast-tracked Hungarian citizenship in the hope of securing national athletic kudos. In particular, Orbán embracing the Liu brothers (and other migrant athletes) as part of Magyarhood reflects a civic nationalist approach to nation building, which is not in line with the usual ethno-nationalism followed and celebrated by the Prime Minister and his right-wing party, Fidesz. Hence, it remains somewhat questionable (perhaps even ironic) when Orbán cheers for the Liu brothers with his signate statement: 'Go Hungarians!'.

Notes

1. While the political framework of this article revolves around the phenomenon of right-wing populism, it is pertinent to recognize at the outset that arguments exist that see limited to no distinction between fascism and right-wing populism and note that populism is simply a more palatable expression of racist, xenophobic and ultranationalist tendencies that are observable in many contemporary Western societies (Foster, 2017). However, at the time of writing, the Orbán-led Fidesz government, arguably, have not yet completely ventured across to the terrain of fascism and, thus, the political lens of the analysis carried out here is right-wing populism.

2. It is worth nothing that while the Hungarian language differentiates between migrant (migráns) and refugee (menekült), in right-wing populist narratives such distinction is often informed by political agendas and not actual migratory status. For instance, Syrian refugees have been continuously referred to as 'migránsok'.
3. Both the 2014 'Illiberal Democracy' and the 2022 'Mixed Race' speeches were delivered at the same location, which has become a pertinent political venue for Orbán to express his political views and visions.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Professor Alan Bairner for the kind invitation to be part of this excellent and much needed collection and for his insightful suggestions regarding the initial development of the argument. I would also like to express my thanks to the reviewers for their perceptive comments and suggestions.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

Notes on contributor

Győző Molnár is Professor of Sociology of Sport at the University of Worcester. Győző's research revolves around politics, nationalism, gender, sport and physical activity.

ORCID

Győző Molnár  <http://orcid.org/0000-0003-1732-5672>

References

- Antunovic, D. (2019). "Turned into the women's journal": Representation of sports women in Hungary's sport magazine. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, 54(1), 63–85. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1012690217698674>
- Åslund, A. (1999). Post-communist economic transformations. In A. Braun, & Z. Barany (Eds.), *Dilemmas of transition: The Hungarian experience* (pp. 69–88). Rowman & Littlefield.
- Bairner, A. (2001). *Sport, nationalism and globalization: European and North American perspectives*. State University of New York Press.
- BBC. (2016). *Hungary PM claims EU migrant quota referendum victory*. Retrieved February 16, 2022, from <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-37528325>.
- Beiner, G. (2013). 'No, nay, never' (once more): The resurrection of Hungarian irredentism. *History Ireland*, 21(3), 40–43. <https://www.historyireland.com/no-nay-never-once-more-the-resurrection-of-hungarian-irredentism/>
- Bibó, I. (2015). The miseries of East European small states. In I. Z. Dénes (Ed.), *The art of peacemaking: Political essays by István Bibó* (pp. 130–180). Yale University Press.
- Billig, M. (1995). *Banal nationalism*. SAGE.
- Bonikowski, B., Halikiopoulou, D., Kaufmann, E., & Rooduijn, M. (2018). Populism and nationalism in a comparative perspective: A scholarly exchange. *Nations and Nationalism*, 25(1), 58–81. <https://doi.org/10.1111/nana.12480>
- Canovan, M. (1999). Trust the people! Populism and the two faces of democracy. *Political Studies*, 47(1), 1–16. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9248.00184>

- Castagnone, M. (2022). *Winter Olympics: Hungary's Liu brothers Shaolin and Shaoang strengthen bonds with China after success on Beijing ice*. Retrieved February 20, 2022, from <https://www.scmp.com/sport/china/article/3167070/winter-olympics-hungarys-liu-brothers-shaolin-and-shaoang-strengthen>.
- Csurka, I. (1992). *Néhány gondolat a rendszerváltás két esztendeje és az MDF új programja kapcsán*. Retrieved February 8, 2022, from https://mandiner.hu/cikk/20120204_csurka_nehany_gondolat_rendszervaltozas_MDF.
- Davies, T., Isakjee, A., & Dhese, S. (2017). Violent inaction: The necropolitical experience of refugees in Europe. *Antipode*, 49(5), 1263–1284. <https://doi.org/10.1111/anti.12325>
- Dóczi, T. (2012). Gold fever(?) Sport and national identity – The Hungarian case. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, 47(2), 163–180. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/1012690210393828>
- Drinóczi, T., & Bień-Kacała, A. (2019). Illiberal constitutionalism: The case of Hungary and Poland. *German Law Journal*, 20(8), 1140–1166. <https://doi.org/10.1017/glj.2019.83>
- Elliott, J. (2005). *Using narrative in social research*. Sage.
- Ember, M. (2001). *A kis Magyar "focista" forradalom*. Retrieved November 2, 2022, from <https://www.esolap.hu/archive/11/231.html>.
- Fekete, I. (2020). Unburied bodies – Hungarian National Identity 1989–2020. *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, 66(3), 415–431. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ajph.12695>
- Foster, J. B. (2017). This is not populism. *Monthly Review*, 69(2), Retrieved October 25, 2022, from <https://monthlyreview.org/2017/06/01/this-is-not-populism/>. https://doi.org/10.14452/MR-069-02-2017-06_1
- Fox, N. (2003). *Prophet or traitor? The Jimmy Hogan story*. The Parrs Wood Press.
- Földesi, G. S. (1993). The transformation of sport in Eastern Europe: The Hungarian case. *Journal of Comparative Physical Education and Sport*, 15, 5–21.
- Földesi, G. S. (2009). Post-transformational trends in Hungarian sport. *Physical Culture and Sport Studies and Research*, 46(1), 137–146. <https://doi.org/10.2478/v10141-009-0012-2>
- Glied, V. (2020). The populist phenomena and the reason for their success in Hungary. *Politics in Central Europe*, 16(1), 23–45. <https://doi.org/10.2478/pce-2020-0002>
- Hadas, M. (2000). Football and social identity: The case of Hungary in the twentieth century. *Sport in History*, 20(2), 43–66. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17460260009443368>
- Hadas, M., & Karady, V. (1995). Futball és társadalmi identitás: Adalékok a magyar futball társadalmi jelentéstartalmainak történelmi vizsgálatához. *Replika*, 17-18(1), 88–120. <https://www.replika.hu/replika/17-05>
- Handler, A. (1985). *From the Ghetto to the games: Jewish athletes in Hungary*. East European Monographs.
- Hanebrink, P. A. (2006). *In defense of Christian Hungary: Religion, nationalism and antisemitism, 1890–1944*. Cornell University Press.
- Hinchman, L. P., & Hinchman, S. P. (Eds.) (1997). *Memory, identity, community: The idea of narrative in human sciences*. State University of New York Press.
- Hoberman, J. M. (1984). *Sport and political ideology*. University of Texas Press.
- Hoffer, J., & Thaly, Z. (2000). A Magyar Labdarúgó Szövetség története. In Z. Thaly (Ed.), *100 éves a Magyar Labdarúgó Szövetség* (pp. 1901–2000). Folpress Kft.
- Hungarian Spectrum. (2018). *Amid Anti-immigrant Propaganda, The Sons of a Chinese Immigrant Win Gold for Hungary*. Retrieved February 21, 2022, from <https://hungarianspectrum.org/2018/02/24/amid-anti-immigrant-propaganda-the-sons-of-a-chinese-immigrant-win-gold-for-hungary>.
- Huntington, P. S. (1991). Democracy's third wave. *Journal of Democracy*, 2(2), 12–34. <https://doi.org/10.1353/jod.1991.0016>
- Inglehart, R. and Norris, P. (2016) *Trump, Brexit, and the rise of populism: Economic have-nots and cultural backlash*. HKS Working Paper No. RWP-16026. Available at: <http://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2818659>
- Judis, J. B. (2016). *The populist explosion: How the great recession transformed American and European politics*. Columbia Global Reports.
- Juhász, V. (2021). Orbán: A magyar család az asszony köré rendeződik. Retrieved March 1, 2022, from <https://merce.hu/2021/09/24/orban-a-magyar-csalad-az-asszony-kore-rendezodik/>.

- Kapidžić, D. (2020). The rise of illiberal politics in Southeast Europe. *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, 20(1), 1–17. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14683857.2020.1709701>
- Kim, S. (2022). *Discourse, hegemony, and populism in the Visegrád four*. Routledge.
- Lázár, G. (2018). *Ethnic homogeneity and the Liu brothers*. Retrieved February 21, 2022, from <https://hungarianfreepress.com/2018/02/24/ethnic-homogeneity-and-the-liu-brothers/>.
- Lennard, N. (2019). *Being numerous: Essays on non-fascist life*. Verso.
- Mbembe, A. (2003). Necropolitics. *Public Culture*, 15(1), 11–40. <https://doi.org/10.1215/08992363-15-1-11>
- Mellis, J. (2020). From defectors to cooperators: The impact of 1956 on athletes, sport leaders and sport policy in socialist Hungary. *Contemporary European History*, 29(1), 60–76. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960777319000183>
- Molnar, G. (2007). Hungarian football: A socio-historical perspective. *Sport in History*, 27(2), 293–318. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17460260701437110>
- Molnar, G., & Doczi, T. (2020). A transitology of Hungarian football. In E. Rojo-Labaien, Á Rodríguez-Díaz, & J. Rookwood (Eds.), *Sport, statehood and transition in Europe: Comparative perspectives from post-soviet and post-socialist societies* (pp. 11–26). Routledge.
- Molnar, G., Doczi, T., & Gal, A. (2011). A socio-structural overview of Hungarian football. In H. Gammelsater, & B. Senaux (Eds.), *The organisation and governance of top football across Europe: An institutional perspective* (pp. 253–267). Routledge.
- Molnar, G., & Whigham, S. (2021). Radical right populist politics in Hungary: Reinventing the Magyars through sport. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, 56(1), 133–148. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1012690219891656>
- Molnár, G., & Bullingham, R. (2022). *Routledge handbook of politics of gender in sport and physical activity*. Oxon: Routledge.
- Molnár, V. (2022). Civil society and the right-win radicalisation of the public sphere in Hungary. In M. Feischmidt, & B. Majtényi (Eds.), *The rise of populist nationalism: Social resentments and the anti-constitutionalist turn in Hungary* (pp. 209–245). CEU Press.
- Mortimer, T. (2022). *Hungary's nationalist politics belies its sporting multiculturalism*. Retrieved October 31, 2022, from <https://balkaninsight.com/2022/06/22/hungarys-nationalist-politics-belies-its-sporting-multiculturalism/>.
- olympics.com. (2021). *Exclusive: Short track stars, Shaolin and Shaoang Liu, talk about growth, brotherhood and Olympic dreams*. Retrieved February 20, 2022, from <https://olympics.com/en/news/short-track-stars-shaolin-and-shaoang-liu-interview>.
- Orbán, V. (2014). *Speech at the XXV. Bálványos Free Summer University and Youth Camp*. Retrieved February 10, 2022, from <https://budapestbeacon.com/full-text-of-viktor-orbans-speech-at-baile-tusnad-tusnadfurdo-of-26-july-2014/>.
- Orbán, V. (2017). *Prime Minister, Viktor Orbán's speech at the Hungarian Chamber of Commers and Industry's ceremony to mark the start of the 2017 business year*. Retrieved October 24, 2022, from <https://miniszterelnok.hu/prime-minister-viktor-orbans-speech-at-the-hungarian-chamber-of-commerce-and-industrys-ceremony-to-mark-the-start-of-the-2017-business-year/>.
- Orbán, V. (2022a). *Hungary's PM Viktor Orbán's full Opening Speech at the 2022 CPAC Conference in Dallas, Texas*. Retrieved October 24, 2022, from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IANho_dp_Bl.
- Orbán, V. (2022b). *The speech of Hungary's Prime Minister, Viktor Orbán at the 31st Tuszványos camp, 2022*. Retrieved October 24, 2022, from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QyNVFlo23Bg>.
- Palonen, E. (2012). Transition to crisis in Hungary: Whistle-blowing on the naked emperor. *Politics & Policy*, 40(5), 930–957. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1747-1346.2012.00389.x>
- Quinan, C., & Thiele, K. (2020). Biopolitics, necropolitics, cosmopolitics – Feminist and queer interventions: An introduction. *Journal of Gender Studies*, 29(1), 1–8. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09589236.2020.1693173>
- Rinehart, R. E. (1996). “Fists flew and blood flowed”: symbolic resistance and international response in Hungarian water polo at the Melbourne Olympics, 1956. *Journal of Sport History*, 23(2), 120–139. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/43609988>.

- Rinehart, R. E. (2007). Cold War expatriot sport: Symbolic resistance and international response in Hungarian water polo at the Melbourne Olympics, 1956. In S. Wagg, & D. L. Andrews (Eds.), *East plays West: sport and the Cold War* (pp. 45–63). Routledge.
- Riordan, J. (1980). *Soviet sport: Background to the Olympics*. New York University Press.
- Show, T. (2001). The politics of cold war culture. *Journal of Cold War Studies*, 3(3), 59–76. <https://doi.org/10.1162/152039701750419510>
- Smith, A. D. (1991). *National identity*. University of Nevada Press.
- Smith, A. D. (1995). *Nations and nationalism in a global era*. Polity press.
- Taylor, R., & Jamrich, K. (1998). *Puskas on Puskas: The life and times of a footballing legend*. Robson Books Ltd.
- Van Den Berghe, P. L. (1995). Does Race Matter?. *Nations and Nationalism*, 1, 357–368. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1354-5078.1995.00357.x>
- Várdy, S. B., & Várdy, H. A. (Eds.). (1989). *The Austro-Hungarian mind: At home and abroad*. Columbia University Press.
- Yilmaz, I. & Erturk, O. F. (2021). Populism, violence and authoritarian stability: necropolitics in Turkey. *Third World Quarterly*, 42(7), 1524–1543. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2021.1896965>
- Vonnard, P., Sbeti, N., & Quin, G. (Eds.). (2019). *Beyond boycotts: Sport during the Cold War in Europe*. Walter de Gruyter GmbH.
- Wagg, S., & Andrews, D. L. (Eds.). (2007). *East plays West: Sport and the Cold War*. Routledge.
- Waters, L. (2020). *Borders on the move: Territorial change and ethnic cleansing in the Hungarian-Slovak Borderlands, 1938-1948*. Rochester University Press.
- Womack, H., & Simon, E. (2020). *Smart moves lead to Hungarian Citizenship for Iranian Wrestler*. Retrieved October 24, 2022, from <https://www.unhcr.org/ceu/13185-smart-moves-lead-to-hungarian-citizenship-for-iranian-wrestler.html>.
- Zeidler, M. (2007). *Ideas on territorial revision in Hungary 1920-1945*. Columbia University Press.