

Wellbeing and environmental performance of the Visegrad countries at the beginning of the 21st century

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Measuring social and environmental performance of the countries beyond the conventional economic indicators came to the forefront of academic interest in the social sciences over the last couple of decades. Yet, academic and policy interest about the broader social and ecological aspects of development in the so-called transitional post-socialist Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) is relatively modest compared to the Western World. Nevertheless, there are signs of growing research interest in this region too. Further filling the gap, the presenter analyzes the economic, social and environmental performance of four CEE countries, namely the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia, that are the Visegrad countries (or V4), since the middle of the 2000s until the early 2020s, compared to each other and Western Europe. The results of the analysis, based on descriptive statistics and regression modelling, imply that the V4 achieved a level of formal economic development where social improvement can be decoupled from the direct environmental impact although, these countries still relied on the traditional developmental state policies instead of shifting to more environmental protection over the examined period.

Dr. Csaba Lakócai is a research fellow at the Centre for Economic and Regional Studies, Institute of World Economics in Budapest with experience in quantitative social science methodologies. His main research interest focuses on the controversies of development, sustainability, and social wellbeing, including economic, sociological, environmental, cultural, geographic, and historical implications. He stays in Ostrava in the frame of the Visegrad Fellowship Program provided by the International Visegrad Fund.

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