

### 3.16 Why Nations Turn to Fascism

**Background:** The victorious allies thought fascism, a combination of ultra-nationalism and militarism with an authoritarian government, was defeated during World War II. Yet in the 21st century there are neo-fascist movements in a number of the western democracies that feed on popular discontent with conditions in their countries and use the electoral process to grow in influence (France, Germany, and Italy) and sometimes to take power (Brazil and Hungary).

**Instructions:** Read the articles and examine the illustrations describing political movements in Brazil and Hungary. How are these movements similar and different? In your opinion, is it fair to describe developments in Brazil and Hungary as steps toward fascism? Explain.

#### “Jair Bolsonaro Wins Brazil’s Presidency, in a Shift to the Far Right”

**Source:** <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/10/28/world/americas/jair-bolsonaro-brazil-election.html>

A. We have everything we need to become a great nation,” Mr. Bolsonaro said Sunday night shortly after the race was called in a video broadcast on his Facebook account. “Together we will change the destiny of Brazil.”

B. Mr. Bolsonaro, who will take the helm of Latin America’s biggest nation, is further to the right than any president in the region, where voters have recently embraced more conservative leaders in Argentina, Chile, Peru, Paraguay and Colombia. He joins a number of far-right politicians who have risen to power around the world.

C. Reeling from the deepest recession in the country’s history, a corruption scandal that tarnished politicians across the ideological spectrum, and a record high number of homicides last year. Brazilians picked a candidate who not only rejected the political establishment but at times also seemed to reject the most basic democratic tenets.

D. Many Brazilians see authoritarian tendencies in Mr. Bolsonaro, who plans to appoint military leaders to top posts and said he would not accept the results if he were to lose. He has threatened to stack the Supreme Court by increasing the number of judges to 21 from 11 and to deal with political foes by giving them the choice of extermination or exile.

E. Part of Mr. Bolsonaro’s appeal lay in the extreme solutions he proposed to assuage the population’s anger and fear of violence. He vowed to give the police forces in Brazil — some of the most lethal in the world — expanded authority to kill suspects, saying with trademark bluntness that a “good criminal is a dead criminal. Part of Mr. Bolsonaro’s appeal lay in the extreme solutions he proposed to assuage the population’s anger and fear of violence. He vowed to give the police forces in Brazil — some of the most lethal in the world — expanded authority to kill suspects, saying with trademark bluntness that a “good criminal is a dead criminal.” He also promised to lower the age of criminal responsibility, impose stiffer sentences for violent crimes and ease Brazil’s gun ownership restrictions so civilians could better protect themselves.



In 2015, Brazil had as many homicides as all the blue countries combined (Metrocosm).

## Prejudice and Pride in Hungary: Inside the Far Right

Source: <https://www.aljazeera.com/programmes/radicalised-youth/2018/10/prejudice-pride-hungary-181029060026570.html>



Member of the Highwaymen's Army in Hungary

A. Hungary was the first country to close its borders when around one million refugees arrived on European soil in 2015. The country's far-right Fidesz party swiftly positioned itself as the self-proclaimed defender of "Christian Europe" under the leadership of anti-immigrant nationalist leader, Prime Minister Viktor Orbán. Following a global trend, growing numbers of Hungary's youth are joining far-right wing and neo-Nazi movements, such as the Highwaymen's Army (Betyársereg), to fight for a way of life they believe is under threat.

B. The Highwaymen are affiliated with the country's far-right political movement, Force and Determination, and believe in racially-justified

violence. They went to 'help' the military forces at the country's southern borders when migrants passed through Hungary on the Balkan route in 2015. And some of their members are currently on trial for intimidating Roma. "We never prepare for a fight, we are ready for a fight," says Adam, a 27-year-old who joined the Highwaymen in 2016. "I like being a member of the Highwaymen's Army because it means togetherness ... In order to apply, you obviously have to be Hungarian, and white. Jews should avoid us. They're not only not allowed to join, but if he asked to join the Highwaymen's Army I would smack him in the face."

C. Political analyst Bulscu Hunyadi believes that "most of these youngsters do not join far-right organisations because they are obsessed with the ideology, because they are neo-Nazis per se. Most of the time they join these organisations because they want to join a community, they want to belong to a group of people. And step by step, of course, they start believing in this ideology."

D. Botond, an 18-year-old high school graduate with ambitions to forge a career in Hungary's far-right politics, is still looking for a movement to join and is determined to defend Hungary against liberalism and multiculturalism. "I feel like I have to fight, fight for my country ... There is a war against the white race. Nowadays, you can say whatever you want except if you are heterosexual, if you are white and if you are a Christian," says Botond, who goes on regular vigilante patrols in the city in search of what he calls "degenerates".

E. However, this perceived threat is a "myth ... because nobody is threatening Hungary, we don't have immigrants at all, zero immigration, but this is the one political topic everybody's discussing," explains Gaspar Tamas, a philosopher and political scientist. "If you want to learn what the world might look like very soon, regard Hungary. And Hungary's an extreme of the predicament the whole world is going through."

