ABSTRACTS

Gabriella Ilonszki
INSTITUTIONAL CHANGES AND THE NEW TASKS OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

The present writing is the edited version of the talk given at the time when the author received the Bibó Prize. It attempts to interpret the institutional transformations of the recent years with the set of tools of social choice. The institutions bargained about during the process of the system change had included some problems of efficiency and competition right from the outset which have become more dominant with changes in the power relations and hence preferences of the main parties. The actor, however, wording institutional transformation has over-valued the necessary extent and depth of transformation and has transformed the necessary institutional reforms into a moment of constitution-making in the background of which there had been the over-assessment of uncertainty in the system and a drive towards absolute certainty. The writing does not only see a political mistake in the assumption of this objective but also the exclusive assertion of power rationality on the side of the main actor. The political and social consequences of transformation, including the weakening of the set of democratic institutions as well as the distortion of the system of social norms warn that the achievements of political science as a discipline for understanding the political world should be enlarged by a critical eye to enable it to reflect upon current and important issues.

Keywords: Moment of constitution-making, uncertainty and balance, political mistake, power rationality.

Miklós Sebők

The article concerns the entry barriers in Hungarian political markets since the regime change of 1990. First, it delineates the markets corresponding to the different levels of the “political pyramid”, namely the markets for participation, parties and government. Following the cue from industrial organization theory it continues with an analysis of entry barriers, hard and soft, along
with their operationalization for empirical research. Two hypotheses are examined in this context. On the one hand, it is assumed that electoral reforms involving higher entry barriers induce lower participation in the market for parties and vice versa. According to the empirical section this assumption holds for the period in question as the only major upheaval in the electoral system in the 2010–2014 governing cycle duly led to dramatic changes in the number of party lists. On the other hand, the proposition is made that for the incumbent on the market for government electoral reform serves the purpose of electoral success by manipulating entry barriers. This hypothesis was also confirmed as the ruling Fidesz party ushered in strategically motivated modifications to the electoral system. Based on this analysis, the ideal types of incumbent and contender strategies are formulated with respect to electoral reform in particular, and entry barriers in general.

**Keywords:** Electoral reform, political market, entry barriers, Hungarian party system.

Attila Ágh

EU INTEGRATION AND MEMBER STATE’S COMPETITIVENESS: POOLED SOVEREIGNTY IN THE AGE OF RUNNING GLOBALIZATION

The point of departure in this paper is that the optimal goal system for the member states’ competitiveness is pooled sovereignty versus confrontation with the EU. Under the pressure of global crisis the EU has turned definitely to the systemic architecture and it expects its member states to follow this systemic accommodation as well. Therefore the theory of differentiated integration has come to the fore in the European Studies that has demonstrated the process by which some member states have turned from the mainstream in the Union to the negative and regressive way of differentiation. This paper tries to argue that the negative and regressive way of differentiation simultaneously endangers the global competitiveness of the member states.

**Keywords:** Full sovereignty and/or shared/pooled sovereignty, systemic features in the Union, global competitiveness, differentiated integration/membership.

Zsolt Boda, Gabriella Szabó, Attila Bartha, Gergő Medve-Bálint and Zsuzsanna Vidra

GUIDED BY POLITICS. DISCOURSES ON PENAL POPULISM IN HUNGARIAN POLITICS AND MEDIA.

Penal populism, which advocates severe punishment of criminals, has greatly influenced justice policy measures in Central and Eastern Europe over the last
decade. International research has found that radical and populist right-wing political parties and the tabloid media have taken a leading role in legitimizing the discourse of penal populism. This paper investigates the Hungarian discourse of penal populism revolving around the recent criminal policy reform known as the ‘three strikes’ measures. We explore the interpretive frames of the main populist and the anti-populist actors through content and frame analysis of the political communication and the media. Our results show that penal populism was dominant in the Hungarian political discourse of the criminal justice policy reform. The role of the media, including the tabloid press, however, has been rather controversial: explicit penal populism has been present only in a tiny minority of the analyzed media sources. Yet, by the frequent and expressive portraying of crime in a descriptive manner without offering any social explanations, the Hungarian media might have potentially contributed to an atmosphere legitimizing penal populism. The results thus partly contradict previous findings and offer a more nuanced view on how penal populism is being constructed and promoted in Hungary.

**Keywords:** Penal populism, three strikes principle, media, political discourse.

György Gajduschek

**WHAT IS THE CONTENT OF GOVERNMENTAL PERFORMANCE AND CAN IT BE MEASURED?**

The paper addresses the question whether government performance is measurable. What are the opportunities and limits in this regard? The main argument is that at first the researcher needs to specify the type of “performance” that is to be measured. Most importantly political (ultimately: winning elections) and policy (measured on social impact) performance should be differentiated. Further differentiations are also suggested, based mostly on international literature. The paper argues – to some degree against the mainstream beliefs and practice in Hungary – that the performance is measurable and is / would be necessary to be measured.

**Keywords:** Public policy, policy analysis, performance, effectiveness and efficiency of the government.