

Lectori Salutem!

In recent years, an important task for the scientific community of the CEE countries has been to attempt a multifaceted analysis of the history of the 30 years following the change of their political regimes. It was thus our pleasure to launch a thematic issue on how and why the concepts of nation, state, public governance, politics and society in Central and Eastern Europe have changed in the last 30 years. The authors who have been invited to contribute are personalities who have shaped the Central and Eastern Europe of the last thirty years as public figures, politicians or scientists, or sometimes in more than one of these roles. The studies review the history, causes and consequences of a change that is important to them as a subject of scholarly enquiry, while also seeking new, common concepts and answers to the changes of the present, based on past experience.

Tibor Navracscics, a professor and researcher, former minister and EU Commissioner, aims to map some of the characteristics of the institutional changes that occurred due to EU membership through the example of Hungary. He overviews institutional changes related to the accession process and the membership itself as well as other changes which he finds were mainly a matter of personal political aspirations or restructuring. He claims that while the European Union's impact on the development of the institutional system is undeniable, this drive has not led to uniform patterns in institutional development. His conclusion is that when the inter-institutional equilibrium is taken into consideration, there is an unambiguous tendency towards reinforcing the position of the executive at the expense of the legislature.

Balázs Orbán, a deputy-minister and researcher, investigates changes to the concept of sovereignty in post-1989 Hungary. In his study, the concept of sovereignty is treated as a discourse element encompassing many disciplines, and is also a subject of public debate. In order to better understand the processes of Hungarian public life, his study examines the changes in the content of discourse concerning the concept of sovereignty in Hungary between 1990 and 2021 in two fields of law, international law (and with it the theory of international relations) and constitutional law. While professional and public dialogue in the 1990s and 2000s was characterised by a discourse which followed Western patterns in seeking to transcend traditional notions of sovereignty, the early 2020s have so far been characterised by a return to the classical concept of sovereignty of nation states, and a diversification of positions can likewise be observed in academic discourse on sovereignty in Hungary.

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Ervin Csizmadia offers an adaptation of Norbert Elias's transition theory – presented in his book *The Civilizing Process* – to Hungarian politics, specifically to the period between 1989–1990, following the regime change. In the first part of the essay the author summarises what figurational sociology meant for Norbert Elias and explains how his analysis is based on these two terms. In the second part, he shows the limits of the “condition”-centred political science of the period following 1990 and comes to the conclusion that there is a strong relationship between the mainstream teleological approach to democracy and “condition”-centred political science. In the third part, the author introduces the concept of an open-ended transition as the key element of post-regime change figurational political science and outlines a figurational approach to political science. The essay ends with a short summary which concludes that following the post-transitology era new approaches need to be used when describing Hungarian politics.

Professor Csaba Lentner's two-part study presents the three-decade-long market economy transition that has replaced the socialist planned economy. He begins by examining the harsh, neoliberal methodology of the transition, and contrasts it with current Hungarian fiscal practice, built on the application of non-conventional instruments of active government regulation and fundamentally based on the Fundamental Law adopted in 2011 and its chapter on Public Finances and its cardinal laws pertaining to public finances in particular. The study is a journey in time, encompassing three decades, but the Achilles heel of economic policy during this period was its dependence on the base conditions of the socialist planned economic system, which still exert an effect today. Finally, it outlines the taxonomical elements of three, significantly different yet interrelated economic eras taking place in a Central European country in the space of less than a century, and draws a macro-economic conclusion.

Professor Boglárka Koller contributes to the discussion by reviewing a recently published book, *The European Polis* by George Schöpflin. George Schöpflin's latest monograph provides a unique understanding of the politics of contemporary Europe in two ‘interconnected essays’. The first part focuses on a comprehensive interpretation of the EU's political

community, the European polis. The author argues that political innovation has slowed considerably in the last decade, particularly after the Lisbon Treaty entered into force and the EU was gradually transformed into a punitive polis. The second part of the book focuses on the relationship between Central Europe and the European Union. Central Europe is European, but differently European. The shortcomings of the eastern enlargement, Central Europe's misadventure in the European Union and the unseen and unintended consequences of the 2004–2007–2011 enlargement waves all contributed to develop a troubled relationship with the new members. Koller's conclusion is that the volume combines theoretical and practical aspects, therefore it is a relevant contribution to European Studies literature.

In the *outlook* section, a study on the emergence of artificial intelligence (AI) analyses two facets of its impact on employment: how AI is creating jobs and how it is eliminating them. Its conclusion is that in order for AI to maximise humanity's prosperity and well-being, moral considerations must be included in its employment, and legislation must be enacted to ensure that human commitment to intelligently deploying AI in commercial operations is compatible with its philosophical goal.

The second study discusses the relocation of creative people from capitals and metropolises to small cities due to the Covid-19 and the implications of this trend for city marketing. This empirical study from Ukraine argues that the reasons for relocation include the switch to remote working, the lower cost of living in smaller cities (reduced real estate prices and cheaper commodity bundle), closeness to nature, lower density of population and a safer environment. Its conclusion is that the public administration of small cities should consider the relocation trend an opportunity for attracting new inhabitants to their settlement, especially if their budget had previously depended on tourist revenue.

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