

András Körösényi – Gábor Illés: Selective responsiveness and niche policy-making: Orbán's executive leadership in a comparative perspective

There has been a growing concern among political scientists on the emerging authoritarian tendencies in Hungary and in other CEE countries (Lengyel and Ilonszki 2012; Enyedi 2016; Herman 2016). The literature focuses on the weakening of liberal constitutional elements of these polities and the restriction of political rights and the undermining of the conditions of fair democratic political competition. This paper aims to focus on the public policy making of PM Viktor Orbán, that has been relatively neglected in the relevant literature. It starts from the assumption that executive leadership and power wielding always have authoritarian character to some extent, even in liberal democracies, although different factors (the level of centralization of public administration, the type of governance and the involvement of interest groups and other stakeholders) produce a wide variety of public-policy making in terms of “authoritarian” and “democratic” elements. The defining feature of democratic government and its public policy making is, according to the literature, a high level of responsiveness, while “niche policy-making”, i.e. enacting significant policies in issues where the citizens do not have strong preferences, or preferences at all is regarded as non-democratic or authoritarian by nature (Pelinka 1999). Our research uses the concepts of responsiveness and niche policy-making to build an analytical frame to study and evaluate public policy-making of PM Orbán. The paper claims, that Orbán's post-2010 policy-making can be characterized, first, by selective responsiveness, and second, by a robust niche policy-making. The research aims to analyse Orbán's policy-making in comparative perspective: it provides three small case studies about the Hungarian, German and Austrian migration policy in the post-2015 period. The latter two cases can serve as useful objects of comparison to shed light on the distinctiveness of Orbán's leadership and policymaking style. The paper aims to contribute to the question whether responsiveness with its democratic and niche policy-making with its authoritarian character might be useful criteria of revealing authoritarianism in public-policy making.

Rudolf Metz – Dániel Oross: Strong personalities' impact on Hungarian party politics. Comparing Viktor Orbán's and Gábor Vona's leadership through party transformation

The events of our days have highlighted yet again the trend towards the straightening role of leaders in parties has often been labelled as the process of ‘personalization’, ‘presidentialisation’ and rising populism and as a shift towards ‘leader democracy’ (Pakulski 2013; Pakulski and Körösényi 2012), in which the leaders have parties and not the parties have leaders. The flourishing discourse of literature (Lobo 2014; Musella 2018) has raised the question: how political leaders could influence and shape their parties? In the frame of a comparative research project focusing on Eastern Europe, our paper analyses the relationship between party leaders' personality traits, behaviors and general consequences for their parties and politics in Hungary. We will compare and contrast the leadership of Orbán Viktor and Gábor Vona in and six personality and character dimensions: consistency, competence, integrity, need for power, communicative performance and responsiveness (measured as policy experience and cognitive complexity). The research will approach the leaders and their actions from a (social) psychological perspective by conducting a qualitative analysis based on speeches, documents, gestures.

Ameni Mehrez: Understanding European Foreign Policy and Political Behavior: Angela Merkel and Viktor Orbán

Understanding political leaders' ideologies and behaviors has always been a challenge for political scientists and psychologists. The purpose of this research paper is to shed light on the social, cognitive, and environmental factors that shape leaders' political ideologies and behavior. Two contemporary leaders are used as a case study: Angela Merkel and Viktor Orbán.

Both leaders' ideologies and behaviors are analyzed in relation to their past childhood events. Studying the interplay of social, cognitive, and environmental factors in light of Albert Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) and agentic perspective produced interesting results. Both leaders reacted differently to the same crisis: While Merkel's political behavior is attributed to her 'moral' agency, Orbán's is rather attributed to his 'realist' agency. This case study creates a new set of lenses that bring more focus on the complex study of foreign policies.

Réka Várnagy: Using parliamentary resources for party building – the role of PPG leaders

There is a growing literature connecting parties to parliamentary resources and activities claiming that parties' interest drive the use of parliamentary tools such as non-legislative activities (Green-Pedersen, 2009), written parliamentary questions (Otjes-Louwerse, 2017) while the parliamentary structure of opportunities also influence intraparty dynamics such as leadership replacement especially in the case of opposition parties (So, 2016). Within the framework of an ongoing research focusing on opposition parties, this paper analysis how opposition parties used the parliamentary arena in the parliamentary cycles 2010-14 and 2014-18 for party building purposes. The analysis will focus on the institutional framework assessing the parliamentary opportunity structure, on the legislative process with special attention to cooperation between opposition parties on the floor. Finally, the paper will focus on how PPG leaders and party leaders capitalized on parliamentary resources.