



‘Home-ness – Strangeness’ (*Otthonlét – idegenség*)

Political Science Conference and Institutional Network Building

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In 2006, the teaching staff of the Institute of Political Sciences at ELTE Law in Budapest invited the staff of the Hungarian Political Science Department of Babeş–Bolyai University for a joint conference, where the members of the two departments could present their research, and professional research ideas could develop. A similar conference took place in 2011 in Budapest, where, as many of the political scientists present at the first conference had joined another institution, the political scientists from the Department of International Relations and European Studies at Sapientia University were invited as well. At the conference entitled *Challenges and Dilemmas in Central and Eastern Europe*, 16 political scientists participated, eight from the inviting institution from Budapest and eight from Cluj. From the two younger Transylvanian institutions, all generations of political scientist participated at the conference.

The *Otthonlét – idegenség* conference organized in the period of 22–24 June 2017 is the third round of meetings between the three institutions. After 6 years of omission, at the initiative of the Department of International Relations and European Studies at Sapientia University, a third conference was organized, where 18 political scientist were invited, 9 from the Institute of Political Sciences at ELTE Law in Budapest and 9 from the two local institutions. Similarly to the tradition of other years, all presenters connected the title of the conference to their own research interest. In the light of recent developments in migration, security policy, and minority politics, the title was very actual as the dilemmas related to foreignness and integration are present in each and every society. A novelty of this conference was the fact that beyond the two university departments political scientists from the Romanian Institute for Research on National Minorities were invited, too, for the first time.

The presentations were organized in five thematic blocs, where, as far as possible, members of all institutions were included. In the first thematic session, entitled *Dual Citizenship and the Hungarians outside the Borders of Hungary*, the speakers – Levente Salat (Political Science Department, Babeş–Bolyai University), Ágoston Mráz (Institute of Political Sciences at ELTE Law), Tamás Kiss (Romanian Institute for Research on National Minorities), and Gábor Sugatagi (Institute of Political Sciences at ELTE Law) – presented well-documented cases on how the dual citizenship law of Hungary affects Hungarian and Romanian home affairs and what the challenges in political theory are when describing these issues.

In the second thematic session, entitled *Political History and the History of Political Thinking*, three researchers from the Department of International Relations and European Studies at Sapientia University presented their researches. Barna Bodó presented ongoing research on interwar agrarian politics and the work of József Venczel, a Transylvanian Hungarian interwar social scientist. János Kristóf Murádin talked about the activity of the Transylvanian Party, a party that represented Transylvanian Hungarians in the Hungarian Parliament between 1940 and 1944, after the second Vienna Award. Last but not least, Dezső Szenkovics analysed the political theory of Mahatma Gandhi, focusing on his criticism towards the West.

The third thematic session, entitled *Discursive Political Science and Collective Memory*, gathered presentation from discursive political scientists such as Balázs Kiss (Institute of Political Sciences at ELTE Law), Miklós Bakk (Department of International Relations and European Studies at Sapientia University), András Karácsony (Institute of Political Sciences at ELTE Law), and Gábor Illés (Institute of Political Sciences at ELTE Law). The presenters tackled a wide area of issues: boundary construction of political communities, social memory, post-truth politics, and territorial autonomy; however, from a common paradigm and methodological stance: discourse analysis and symbolic politics.

The fourth session, entitled *Foreign Policy and Advocacy in Central and Eastern Europe*, focused mostly on ethnopolitics as three of the presenters, Tamás Szabó (Political Science Department, Babeş–Bolyai University), Tibor Toró (Department of International Relations and European Studies at Sapientia University), and István Gergő Székely (Romanian Institute for Research on National Minorities) talked about different issues related to Hungarians in Transylvania, while Sándor Pesti (Institute of Political Sciences at ELTE Law) presented a thorough analysis of the foreign policy of the Hungarian Government and the Orbán cabinet.

The last session, entitled *Ethnicity, Migration, Minorities in Western Europe*, gathered presentations from three young researchers of the Institute of Political Sciences at ELTE Law on current issues in ethnicity and migration policy. Gergely Ablaka presented an interesting case study on the Iranian community in the United States, a community with several internal cleavages and lower lobby

potential than other similar ethnic communities. Eszter Petronella Soós talked about the changing aspects of the French nation and how ethnic and religious minorities are integrated by the French State. Last but not least, drawing on a Foucaultian paradigm, Attila Antal presented some biopolitical aspects of the migration crisis.

All in all, the conference was a success both professionally and from an institutional perspective as well. It has strengthened the relationship between the political science workshops in Budapest and Cluj, and it presented well the developments within the research interest of the involved institutions. While most researchers from Cluj focused on different aspects of ethnopolitics, researchers of the Institute of Political Sciences at ELTE Law in Budapest had a wide area of interest ranging from home affairs to foreign policy.