

IS IT REALLY A DRAW? – THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HUNGARIAN ACADEMIC ECONOMICS AND THE GOVERNMENT (1949-1989)

Ádám Török

Most Hungarian researchers in economics have ties to the Hungarian Academy of Sciences through their institutional affiliation or their PhD. Some of them were major players in the post-1956 reform process. To be successful in this field, they had to develop appropriate patterns of strategic behaviour vis-à-vis the government. Several generations were involved in this strategic game, helping along the opening of Hungarian academic economics to the West as well. Ultimately, the game was abandoned by the players at the time of the change of system (1989-1990), without being formally concluded as a draw. (The article has been written at the request of the editor of this journal, commemorating the bi-centenary of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences.)

THE POLITICS OF OWNERSHIP: STATE ASSET REALLOCATIONS AND REGIME CHANGE IN HUNGARY (2010-2025)

Éva Voszka

Over the past fifteen years, nationalization and privatization have affected nearly half of all state-owned assets in Hungary, making these ownership transformations key instruments in the formation of a new political-economic order. Nationalization has increasingly been accompanied by and intertwined with the transfer of assets into private hands, giving rise to a new form of wasteful privatization and a hybrid type of ownership at the boundary between the state and the private sector, referred to here as political ownership. The organizations involved are not merely recipients of public funding. Instead, their establishment, expansion, contraction, or dissolution are determined by discretionary political decisions. While the scale of these developments remains contested, there is clear evidence that ownership changes, together with related regulatory and administrative measures, have established monopolistic and oligopolistic market structures in the basic household consumption sectors, with spillover effects across broader segments of the economy. Accordingly, the nationalization and privatization measures of the past decade and a half may be conceptualized as regime-transforming ownership changes, a process that, despite its significant differences, shows conceptual similarities with the system-changing privatization of the 1990s.

TERRITORIAL DISPARITIES OF INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTIVITY IN HUNGARY

György Kocziszky, Áron Kincses, Ákos Jakobi and Szergej Vinogradov

The examination of the territorial causes, extent, trends, and possible reduction of social and economic disparities has been a central topic of regional economic research for several decades. As analyses have shown, contrary to the assumptions of neoclassical economics, the improvement and catching-up of disadvantaged regions generally proceed more slowly than expected. In our study, we analyse one of the reasons behind this phenomenon in Hungary – namely, the county-level differences in the declining economic weight and productivity of industry – and the related trends. Our approach is based on the consideration that higher productivity enhances competitiveness, which materializes in higher added value, resulting in greater income and more favourable living conditions. Our analyses confirm that industrial labour productivity in Hungary increased between 2000 and 2022, but to differing degrees across counties, due to variations in industrial concentration, structure, added value, and available resources. In the future, the only industrial development policy that can be effective is one that simultaneously supports the growth of domestic added value, productivity, and the competitiveness of the sector. As our analysis also demonstrates, the expansion of employment is not accompanied by a meaningful increase in productivity. Therefore, greater attention should be devoted to targeted and well-considered state interventions that enhance productivity, as well as to the development of key industries.

HUNGARIAN ADMINISTRATIVE EMPLOYER-EMPLOYEE DATA:

THE ADMIN4 DATABASE IN NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

István Boza, Rita Pető and Melinda Tir

Administrative employer–employee databases (LEED/LEE data) are among the most important data innovations of recent decades, as they make it possible to study individuals and their employers over the long term. Our study reviews the development of the Hungarian data sources, then presents in detail the most recent Hungarian linked employer–employee database, the Linked Administrative Panel Dataset (better known as Admin4), with particular attention to the complementary modules and supplementary information. Finally, we provide an international outlook in which we assess the specific features, advantages, and limitations of the Hungarian data from an international comparative perspective.

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C O N T E N T S

ANNIVERSARY – THE HUNGARIAN ACADEMY OF SCIENCES: 200 YEARS

Ádám Török: Is it really a draw? – The relationship between Hungarian academic economics and the government (1949-1989) 1037

ACADEMY INAUGURAL LECTURE

Éva Voszka: The Politics of ownership: State asset reallocations and regime change in Hungary (2010-2025) 1057

ARTICLE

György Kocziszky–Áron Kincses–Ákos Jakobi–Szergej Vinogradov: Territorial disparities of industrial productivity in Hungary 1082

REVIEW

István Boza–Rita Pető–Melinda Tir: Hungarian administrative employer-employee data: The Admin4 database in national and international perspective 1109

ACADEMIC BULLETIN

Report on the forum of macroeconomic analysts. 63rd Annual Conference of Hungarian Economists, Veszprém, September 5–6, 2025 (*Tihámér Laczkó*) 1123

BOOK REVIEW

Lighthouse: Critical reflections on economics in light of the latest comprehensive Friedman biography Jennifer Burns: Milton Friedman – The Last Conservative (*László Csaba*) 1139

English abstracts of the articles 1152

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