

**ATTILA ANTAL**

## **The Re-institutionalization of Political Science in Hungary\***

### **Introduction**

This paper investigates the procedure by which political science in Hungary was institutionalized in the 1970s and 1980s. It would be an exaggeration to say that political science or other social sciences in general had important roles in the post-1989 transition. At the same time, they contributed to the atmosphere of the regime change. Political science in Hungary has been subordinated to politics since the 1980s, which is why, despite adapting to Western European standards, it has not developed any critical approaches of its own.

The institutional integration of political science in Hungary was planned into the Socialist-Communist framework from the second half of the 1970s. On the other hand, due to the weakening of the Communist regime, scientific elites from other fields among the social sciences constantly widened the boundaries of the system. This opened up opportunities for the application of the achievements of Western political science to Hungary. The speed of political processes overtook political science, and this distance increased after the regime change. However, we should not overemphasize the role of historical determinants. According to Tibor Valuch, during the regime change,

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ideological education departments of universities were replaced by institutes of social theory and/or political science, retaining the majority of their former teaching staff, which did not prove a benefit to Hungarian social science research and education.<sup>1</sup>

I am attempting to subvert the notion that the ideologically determined social science of the Kádár regime turned into professional political science only under the political transition. In my view, with many real shortcomings and many determinants, the early rise of political science had already begun in the 1970s. This paper is based on interviews with leading and founding figures of political science in Hungary from the 1980s and 1990s, among them Mihály Bihari, Attila Ágh, and József Bayer.

## **Antecedents: Early Political Science before World War II**

Political science is one of the youngest social sciences; its emergence and institutionalization began in the twentieth century. The American Political Science Association (APSA), the largest institution in the field of political science in the world, was established in 1903. Political science is tied to other disciplines: philosophy, economics, sociology, and law. This is especially true for the Hungarian situation, where the various traditions of political thinking in the nineteenth century, linked to dualism, and into the interwar period,<sup>2</sup> were the foundations for the reorganization of political science from the 1970s onward.

The political and pamphlet literature that emerged from the nineteenth century, as well as law, state philosophy, and

<sup>1</sup> Tibor Valuch, "A magyar művelődés 1948 után [Hungarian Culture after 1948]," in *Magyar művelődéstörténet* [The History of Hungarian Culture], edited by László Kósa (Budapest: Osiris Kiadó, 2006), 623.

<sup>2</sup> Ervin Csizmadia, "Beszámoló. A magyar politikatudomány tradíciói (OTKA-azonosító: 69072) keretében végzett kutatómunkáról. 2010 [Report. On Research in the Framework of Hungarian Political Science Traditions (OTKA: 69072), 2010]." Source: [http://real.mtak.hu/2695/1/69072\\_ZJ1.pdf](http://real.mtak.hu/2695/1/69072_ZJ1.pdf) (retrieved on December 20, 2019).

constitutional theory, can be regarded as precursors of political science broadly understood. Mihály Bihari emphasizes that the theoretical works of Lajos Kossuth, István Széchenyi, and especially the so-called centrists, can be characterized as early scientific approaches to politics. From this period, József Eötvös' synthesizing activity stands out, as well as the works of Zsigmond Kemény, Antal Csengery, and Ágost Trefort.<sup>3</sup>

Ervin Csizmadia has concluded that the common precursor to political science was the emergence of journalistic literature and the scholarly pursuit of politics, even though they define the two frameworks for political thinking that still exist today.<sup>4</sup> While journalistic political literature represents a mobilizing issue that focuses on catching up with the West in political and social terms, scientific thinking about politics is fundamentally different. As Csizmadia notes,

the acceptance and popularity of French-influenced publicism and German-style political science are far from equal; it weakens the position of science as a servant of foreign power, as opposed to pamphlet literature seeking to solve domestic problems. So, the roles were fixed quite early: journalism is on the side of progress (opposition), science is on the side of conservatism (government).<sup>5</sup>

It is worthwhile to mention that the study of the history of scholarly thinking in politics had been inextricably connected to the teaching of public law disciplines, especially the beginnings of administrative science (otherwise known in German-speaking lands as *Kameralismus* or *Polizei*, rendered in English as “cameralism”).<sup>6</sup> At the Faculty of Law of Eötvös Loránd

<sup>3</sup> Mihály Bihari, *Politológia. A politika és a modern állam. Pártok és ideológiák* [Political Science. Politics and the Modern State. Parties and Ideologies] (Budapest: Nemzedékek Tudása Tankönyvkiadó, 2013), 2.

<sup>4</sup> Csizmadia, op. cit., 20.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> *A jogászképzés múltja, jelene és jövője – Ünnepi tanulmányok, konferencia-előadások, kerekasztal beszélgetések* [The Past, Present and the Future of Legal Education—Festive Studies, Conference Presentations, Roundtable Discussions]. Source: [https://www.ajk.elte.hu/Jogaszkepzes\\_konfkotet](https://www.ajk.elte.hu/Jogaszkepzes_konfkotet) (Retrieved on December 20, 2019).

University, and its predecessors, political science education began with the establishment of the Department of Politico-Cameralism in 1777 and continued under various names until 1948.<sup>7</sup> For this reason, it is worth highlighting that the textbooks of the university, in conjunction with state law, emphasized the scientific analysis of politics: in 1862, Gyula Kautz's work and, in 1894, Győző Concha's *Politics* were published. Both sought to outline the specific field and methodology of political science and drew a sharp line between science and journalism. In this vein, we should also highlight the works of Ignác Kuncz, Ágost Pulszky, Gyula Pikler, Gyula Kornis, Oszkár Jászi, Bódog Somló, and Ervin Szabó.

Csizmadia draws attention to a very important feature of organizing scientific-political thinking. According to him, Western-type political science was fundamentally different from the Hungarian. He argues that Western European political thinking, before the emergence of political science, had always showed its inherited traditions. "Compared to this," Csizmadia states, "the organization and foundation strategy of Hungarian political science is quite different:

First, there is less philosophy in it, even less political philosophy. Even if it has a philosophical background, it is a German-oriented value philosophy that seeks to distinguish social science from natural science [...] rather than a political philosophical foundation for thinking and acting. But it also lacks empirical orientation. The basic works of the Hungarian political science tradition are state-, law-, and constitution-based. If it is curious about the movements of society, it describes society very mechanically as a phenomenon of state life. In most respects, it is almost the opposite of Western European mainstream political philosophy and political science.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Az ELTE Állam- és Jogtudományi Kar Politikatudományi Intézetének rövid története [The Short History of the ELTE Faculty of Law Institute of Political Science]. Source: [https://www.ajk.elte.hu/file/TSZ\\_PTI\\_tortenet.pdf](https://www.ajk.elte.hu/file/TSZ_PTI_tortenet.pdf) (Retrieved on December 20, 2019)

<sup>8</sup> Csizmadia, op. cit., 23.

From this point of view, it is very important that the reorganization of political science in the second half of the twentieth century can be characterized by a kind of “path dependence” from other well-established social sciences. There is nothing more needed to prove this than the fact that political science education is tied to law and law education by a thousand threads.

In the interwar period, the institutionalization of political science continued, not only at the already existent faculties, but also in the organization of sciences. The Hungarian Ethnographic Society and its journal, *Social Science (Társadalomtudomány)*, declared its intention to unite those engaged in political science. At the same time, these institutional frameworks, like other social sciences, stalled during the Horthy era. The works of Zoltán Magyary, Imre Csécsy, István Bibó, Ferenc Erdei, Gyula Kautz, and Győző Concha are worth mentioning between the two world wars.<sup>9</sup> After 1945, scientific education and the research of politics became ideologically more and more determined by the communist system. Political science was discredited as a bourgeois science, and the teaching of historical materialism and scientific socialism became the focus of higher education. According to Mihály Bihari,

This led to a peculiar scientific “memory loss,” which made political science and its cultivation seem ... a new fashion, or at best a new discipline. “Loss of memory” was more like a “memory erasure,” because the large figures and works of Hungarian political thought could not appear in writings on the state, politics, and education for about three decades.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Mihály Bihari, op. cit., 3.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

## The Reorganization of Political Science in the 1970s

*The representatives of Hungarian political science—primarily because of the credibility and international recognition of our country and Hungarian politics—have a reputation in international science, their message provokes interest. ... The active participation of Hungarian science in the World Congress and in international forums is encouraged by our socialist partners.<sup>11</sup>*

As a result of the establishment of Communist power in the late 1940s, the history of political science was interrupted, and it was only relaunched in the 1970s.<sup>12</sup> According to István Balogh, “it was the time when the first political theory publications and empirical studies were published on the possibilities, basic concepts of political science, and the development of public opinion.”<sup>13</sup> It is worth starting from the fact that the traditional dual source of political science (i.e., journalistic literature and the scholarly pursuit of politics) gradually lost its pillars in the transition to the post-World War Communist system: journalism based on free expression and the analysis of political processes died and the transcription of science along Marxist-Leninist ideological principles took its place. Political science began to emerge in the scientific frameworks in the 1970s with the contribution of *samizdat* literature of the 1980s, which represented the rehabilitation of the genre of political journalism. In this study, I focus primarily on the frameworks

<sup>11</sup> MSZMP KB Tudományos, Közoktatási és Kulturális Osztály: *Javaslat a Politikai Bizottság számára a Magyar Politikatudományi Társaság megalakítására* [Hungarian Socialist Workers Party, Central Committee, Department of Science, Public Education and Culture: Proposal to the Political Committee for the Establishment of the Hungarian Political Science Society], January 19, 1982, Hungarian National Archives – National Archives, MNL OL M–KS 288. f. 5/845. ó. e. Hereafter referred to as: Hungarian Socialist Workers Party’s Proposal 1982.

<sup>12</sup> István Balogh, “A politikatudomány Magyarországon az 1990-es években [Political Science in Hungary in the 1990s],” *Politikatudományi Szemle* 2 (1999): 131–142.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 131.

of the latter of the two traditional sources of political science, that is, the scholarly investigation of politics.

In the following, I shall analyse the reorganization and institutionalization of political science along three nodes: first, the scientific (i.e., educational, research) and political spheres in which political science unfolded; second, the opening of Moscow toward political science and the relationship between the Hungarian Socialist Workers Party (MSzMP) and social sciences; and third, the main steps toward institutionalization.

### **The educational and scientific environment before the institutionalization of political science**

The Hungarian Workers Party abolished the multisectoral education system at the end of the 1940s; the basic tasks of the new primary and secondary education system were to educate the young generations in a materialist-atheist spirit, about the exchange of the elite, and the raising up of oppressed classes.<sup>14</sup> The state of the social sciences adjusted to that situation, and from 1948 onward, the ruling party started to reshape the system of higher education according to the “needs of the people’s democracy.” In 1950, the first Marxism-Leninism department was established at the University of Budapest, which had been named after Eötvös Loránd. This step indicated that self-contained, bourgeois political science would not be able to develop for a long time. Social scientific work was isolated by the early 1950s in Hungary; the teaching of and research into sociological and psychological subjects had been terminated.

Scientific institutions, and above all the Hungarian Academy of Sciences (HAS), lost their scientific and financial autonomy. Scientific research unfolded in the institutions of HAS from the 1950s.<sup>15</sup> In 1948, all the scientific organization and management powers of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences were transferred to the Hungarian Scientific Council, which organized a new research network. The newly established institutions were strictly separated from each other. Several

<sup>14</sup> Valuch, *op. cit.*, 618–619.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 625.

research institutions were created: from 1948, law; from 1950, the philosophy and economics research institutions. In HAS, the Psychology Committee was established in 1958, and the Sociological Committee in 1961. In 1963, the Independent Sociological Research Group was created. This shows that the re-institutionalization of previously repressed fields within the social sciences had already begun. Furthermore, these processes began in conjunction with the re-appearance of political science as a distinct discipline. It is very interesting that political science was in a difficult situation and it was very hard to legitimize its disciplinary independence before and after the change of regime as well. In other words, political science was institutionalized in an *interdisciplinary* framework, in cooperation and competition with other social sciences. That is, political science was able to institutionalize among, and at some time against its counterpart social sciences.

In conjunction with this later development, it is also important to note that universities were deprived of the ability to award academic titles. Rather, the entire system of awarding scientific qualifications was reorganized, and the Soviet model was introduced.<sup>16</sup>

The temporary easing after the Revolution of 1956 was a short-lived concession; it was soon replaced by ideological discipline, and consequently the development of political sciences was delayed by the decision of the Hungarian Socialist Workers Party's (MSzMP) Political Committee on Cultural Political Principles adopted in 1958. The resolution proclaimed that the most important task of education and culture was to spread Marxist-Leninist ideas. That is to say that no one without an ideological commitment could obtain a scientific degree. However, in 1958 the possibility of obtaining a doctoral title at universities (the so-called small doctorate) was restored.<sup>17</sup> The rehabilitation of the scientific profession on political issues was also made difficult by the establishment of the institutional system of the Marxist-Leninist University, which was the

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 620.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 620–621.

backbone of cadre education, moreover from 1968 MSzMP's Party College received university rank and was renamed as the College of Politics. Yet, at the same time, the fact that Hungarian scholarship opportunities opened to Eastern and Western European institutions in the 1960s greatly contributed to the process of scientific and cultural opening.<sup>18</sup>

### **The beginning of relief: the opening of Moscow and the relationship between MSzMP and political science**

In the case of political science, which was perhaps one of the most sensitive “bourgeois” disciplines, the era of general political easing brought fundamental changes. Direct political control and centralization gradually weakened from the 1970s and ideological relief was almost inevitable. Nevertheless, after the oppression of the Prague Spring, several research groups, research directions, and individual scholars were restricted and removed (for instance: Iván Szelényi, philosophers attached to György Lukács, István Kemény, among others), but these restrictions indirectly accelerated the development of critical thinking in some academic circles.<sup>19</sup> At the same time, it is worthwhile to say that during Khrushchev's process of de-Stalinization, it was emphasized that the centre of the international struggle in the bipolar world order was shifting to economic and ideological areas and away from direct military

<sup>18</sup> In this sense, among Western scholarship funds, Ford Foundation scholarships should be emphasized. Katalin Somlai points out that social science scholarships had become increasingly prominent after the ideological lightening. Katalin Somlai, “Ösztöndíjjal Nyugatra a hatvanas években. Az Országos Ösztöndíj Tanács felállítása [With Scholarship to the West in the Sixties. Establishment of the National Scholarship Council],” in *Kádárizmus – Mélyfúrások. Évkönyv XVI.* [Kádárism – Deep Drilling. Yearbook XVI], edited by János Tischler (Budapest: 1956-os Intézet, 2009), 288–293. In the field of widely held social science fellowships, it is worth mentioning that, in 1964, András Bródy, from the Hungarian Academy of Sciences (HAS) Institute of Economics, joined the Boston-Cambridge–Harvard Research Project; Iván Szelényi received a grant from the HAS Sociology Research Group to go to the Department of Sociology at Columbia University; and László Viski from the HAS Institute of State and Law took part in the work of the University School of Law in New York. MNL OL XIX-J-1s 1965 USA Box 7.

<sup>19</sup> Valuch, op. cit., 628.

confrontation. In the 1970s, it became clear that détente did not automatically mean the abandonment of the ideological struggle: the coordination within the Soviet bloc intensified and from 1973 onward meetings of party secretaries responsible for ideological and foreign affairs become regular, and the majority of elaborated issues focused on propaganda and anti-propaganda. Within the framework of this closer cooperation, the Soviets sought to bring together social science research, and the Communist parties of the bloc were assigned a few areas of research: the topics of social democracy and socialist democracy were assigned to the MSzMP.

In this volatile fermenting environment, it had a tremendous impact on similar tendencies emerging in Moscow, which at the same time acted as a kind of confirmation force and kept the processes rolling. According to Attila Ágh, it was extremely important that in 1979 the International Political Science Association (IPSA) held its World Congress in Moscow. It was the eleventh World Congress of the organization and the first organized in a non-Western country. However, at previous conferences there were presenters also from the Eastern Bloc. József Bayer is convinced that the IPSA's conference in Moscow is to be interpreted in the context of mutual opening and thus had a huge impact on the development of the social sciences within the bloc. Thus, the people interested in political science wanted to formalize and legitimize the framework of the early operations of political science.<sup>20</sup> Kálmán Kulcsár wrote in 1979 about the event in the following way:

However, the World Congress of Political Science had, in several respects, an extraordinary significance. On the one hand, because the processes currently under way in the world presented a “challenge” to politics, and thus to political science, which necessarily made this field

<sup>20</sup> József Bayer, “Beszéd a Magyar Politikatudományi Társaság ünnepi közgyűlésén a Társaság 35 éves fennállásának alkalmából [Speech at the Solemn Assembly of the Hungarian Political Science Association on the Occasion of the 35th Anniversary of the Association],” *Politikatudományi Szemle* 1 (2018): 7.

of science more workable and, of course, enhanced its significance. On the other hand, the fact that this world congress was held in Moscow and thus Soviet political science had demonstrated the importance of political science..., this revealed of the importance of this science in socialist societies.<sup>21</sup>

These opening processes were launched within MSzMP. The decisive turning point was the decision of MSzMP's Central Committee on the state of political science research on June 20, 1978, prior to the IPSA's conference. The decision focused on the subject of political science research and ensured the opportunity for the HAS to establish a Political Science Committee in 1980.<sup>22</sup> The gradual and continuous rehabilitation of the scholarly pursuit of politics had started, and even more so at the official levels of MSzMP, where several actors relied on this science. During the first half of the 1980s, the concept of party management of the social sciences was still a general concept, and the Coordination Committee for Social Science was responsible for this task. The party coordinated social science research at both state- and party-affiliated institutions, especially at the Institute of Social Sciences of the Central Committee of MSzMP, and gave orders for scientific institutions and researchers. The party's Central Committee was aware of the need for significant changes in social science research and the fact that strict ideological determination seriously undermined the effectiveness of both political and scientific life.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>21</sup> Kálmán Kulcsár, "Korszakváltás a társadalomtudományban [A Change of Era in Social Science]," *Magyar Nemzet*, September 9, 1979.

<sup>22</sup> Attila Ágh, "A magyar politikatudomány helyzete. Az MTA IX. Osztály Politikatudományi Bizottságának jelentése [The State of Hungarian Political Science. The Report of IX. Class Departmental Political Science Committee]," *Politikatudományi Szemle* 1 (1996): 144.

<sup>23</sup> See "Az MSZMP KB Agitációs- és Propaganda Bizottságának állásfoglalása a XI. Kongresszust követően ajánlott társadalomtudományi témák kutatásának tapasztalatairól (1980. június 3.) [Resolution of the MSZMP Central Committee Agitation and Propaganda Committee on the Recommendations on Experience in Social Science Research after the XI. Congress, June 3, 1980]," in *A Magyar Szocialista Munkáspárt határozatai és dokumentumai, 1980–1985*

The need for free political science can be investigated in the light of the criticism of Marxism-Leninism, which served as a “political science supplement.” From 1982 onward, the party revealed that there had been enormous professional problems with Marxist-Leninist education.<sup>24</sup> Social sciences, especially political science approaches, started to exert significant influence not only in the scientific sphere but also in politics. This led to the acceptance of critical considerations:

Students rightly demand that education pay more attention to presenting and criticizing contemporary “bourgeois” theories. This is also due to cultivation, which has recently seen the effects of various bourgeois theories in the name of modernity on some students. A significant proportion of these trends are merely fashion trends, and do not have a lasting impact on students, but can influence their positions on important political and economic issues.<sup>25</sup>

The Central Committee of the MSzMP acknowledged that the approach taken so far—that is, vulgarizing non-Marxist political and economic approaches and emphasizing its anti-Marxist approach—was essentially unsustainable and, while it intended to modernize Marxist-Leninist training and research, it had actually contributed to the emergence of institutionalized political science. In 1985, the Central Committee openly explained that ideological wastage, theoretical uncertainty, and the intensifying influence of bourgeois systems of thought were due to “delays in the Marxist-Leninist analysis of some new phenomena and problems.”<sup>26</sup> Social scientific and especially

[Resolutions and Documents of the Hungarian Socialist Workers’ Party, 1980–1985], edited by Henrik Vass (Budapest: Kossuth Kiadó, 1988), 25–29.

<sup>24</sup> “Az MSZMP KB Agitációs- és Propaganda Bizottságának állásfoglalása a marxizmus-leninizmus oktatás helyzetéről és korszerűsítésének feladatairól az állami felsőoktatásban [Resolution of the MSzMP Central Committee Agitation and Propaganda Committee on the State of Marxist-Leninist Education and its Modernization Tasks in Public Higher Education],” in *ibid.*, 384–400.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 389–390.

<sup>26</sup> “Az MSZMP KB Politikai Bizottságának határozata a tudománypolitikai irányelvek érvényesülésének helyzetéről (1985. január 29.) [Resolution

political scientific approaches started to have a significant impact not only in the scientific sphere but also in politics: “Political leadership uses the input of certain researchers, scientists and expert bodies in its decision-making, and regularly consults the scientific bodies on economics and social sciences.”<sup>27</sup>

### The main directions of the institutionalization of political science

The most important institutionalization tendencies of political science emerged in the political frameworks examined in the previous section. The establishment of the Political Science Committee was a breakthrough. Political science began to institutionalize as a branch of social science in the academic sphere, which neither had a background in higher education nor a professional organization system. The situation was further complicated by the fact that the research background was provided by the MSzMP Central Committee’s Institute for Social Sciences.<sup>28</sup> Accordingly, the further process started in two main directions in the 1980s: firstly, the professional and academic network of political science was established, and then political science began to institutionalize in higher education.

The proposal made by the Department of Science, Public Education and Culture of the MSzMP’s Central Committee in 1982 was about the establishment of the Hungarian Political Science Association (*Magyar Politikatudományi Társaság*,

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of the MSzMP Central Committee Political Committee on the Status of the Implementation of Science Policy Directives. January 29, 1985],” in *ibid.*, 821.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.* 821.

<sup>28</sup> Attila Ágh analysed the emerging, unbalanced political science in the following way: “In the spring of 1982, the Hungarian Political Science Association was founded. This late institutionalization was well illustrated by the fact that, at the end of the ‘80s, there was in fact only one true political science department [at the ELTE Faculty of Law], while the others were only halfway between the socialist sciences and political theory. Although the Institute of Social Sciences had assembled a significant research team of political scientists and a library of political science, this institute, which was mainly specialized in sociology, was only a small political science island in Hungarian social sciences.” Ágh, *op. cit.*, 144.

MPT).<sup>29</sup> Planned research in political science was launched in several institutes and departments, and the HAS set up the Political Science Committee in its IX. Department in 1980 to coordinate these projects. The idea of creating a political science association was formulated at the end of the 1970s (the main impetus was the 1979 IPSA World Congress in Moscow and the general process of ideological easing). In 1979, the Bureau of the HAS established an Administrative Committee, and until the MPT was founded in 1982 it represented Hungary in the International Political Science Association. Thus, József Bayer's statement can be interpreted within this framework: "The idea behind the establishment of the Hungarian Political Science Association was, as it is well known, the desire to think more about the political system and the necessary reforms in the 'peace camp' and IPSA international congresses and discuss their views with Western scholars."<sup>30</sup> The Central Committee of MSzMP therefore considered it a kind of scientific-diplomatic necessity to institutionalize political science in Hungary, and somewhat surprisingly began to refer to political science as an integral part of Hungarian social sciences. Among other things, the scientific organizational activity of the emerging MPT, which was coordinated by HAS, was one of the important factors in which political science reached its institutionalized status by the 1980s, which is also confirmed by the fact that major reform politicians (among others, Imre Pozsgay, János Berecz, and Mátyás Szűrös) became involved in MPT.<sup>31</sup> The Association had become the place of scientific collaboration among integrated professionals with diverse social science backgrounds and interests in political science,<sup>32</sup> and also an important permanent forum for scientific and public debate during the regime change. In addition, by organizing meetings

<sup>29</sup> Hungarian Socialist Workers Party's Proposal, 1982.

<sup>30</sup> Bayer, *op. cit.*, 7.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

<sup>32</sup> Mihály Bihari pointed out this in his interview, explaining that it was not about calling themselves "political scientists" of organized political science, but of examining power relations with scientific sophistication and a theoretical framework.

and publishing the most important political science series (the Yearbook of the MPT, which began publication in 1988), the association became a key player in the institutionalization of political science in contemporary Hungarian academic life.

The emergent political science also became an independent discipline in terms of scientific qualification due to the establishment of the Political Science Committee within the Scientific Qualification Committee. In the 1980s, the number of candidates for political science or related fields (very similar to a PhD) steadily increased. According to the Political Committee, it was in 1979 when the first political science vacancies were announced.<sup>33</sup> During the 1980s, the number of candidates for the degree in political science increased steadily, from 174 in the military and political sciences in 1986, 197 in 1987, 220 in 1989, 237 in 1989, and 254 in 1990. These tendencies are also important because, in these years, the cohorts of political science scholars were created and these actors would dominate the political science scene after the regime change.

There was an imbalance in the institutionalization of political science in Hungary from the end of the 1970s. Institution building had been continuous at the academic level and from the perspective of the establishment of scientific organizations, but teaching political science lagged behind. This had slightly changed in the 1980s, it was crucial that the Department Group of Political Science was established in 1984 under the leadership of Mihály Bihari at the ELTE Faculty of Law. The Group did not serve as a department, nevertheless this was a very significant step in terms of the university subject structure (and of course within the university). As Bihari explained, political science subjects were introduced in addition to Marxist-Leninist major subjects. In 1989, the Group was officially transformed into a Department, headed by Bihari. In his interview, he highlighted the fact that in 1981 he had been the head of the university and college department of the Ministry of Culture, and this proved very important in the first phase of the institutionalization

<sup>33</sup> Hungarian Socialist Workers Party's Proposal, 1982.

of political science. Using this experience, he started the institution-building process and chaired a committee, which, as part of the higher education reform, formulated concepts for preparing the education of political science and the organization of the department.<sup>34</sup> Embedded in these curricula and concepts, political science education at the ELTE Faculty of Law was established and further developed.

The history of the MSzMP Central Committee Institute of Social Sciences (called in a short Hungarian form: *Társtud*) and the journal *Social Science Publications (Társadalomtudományi Közlemények)*,<sup>35</sup> which had been operating since 1966, represented a complex and independent history of the institutionalization of political science. The journal itself published studies on the widest possible spectrum of social sciences, including history, political science, sociology, social policy, philosophy, economics, and political economy. The primary task of the Central Committee's scientific institutes was to help the party leadership with scientific research and results to answer the most important social and political problems raised by the party congresses. The institutionalization of political science cannot be separated from the staff and research areas of these institutions, given the fact that these people became involved in the institutionalization procedure. Articles in the *Social Science Publications* were established from the second half of the 1970s as the spectrum of political science in Hungary.

As Csaba Gombár reports very emphatically, the *Társtud* had a very productive, lively intellectual-scientific life, and at the same time adequate intellectual autonomy, so that “it is a false popular belief that *Társtud* ... was an integral part of the party leadership.”<sup>36</sup> In addition to the Institute of Social Sciences, the Hungarian Institute of Public Opinion, formerly known as

<sup>34</sup> Other members included István Schlett, Zsolt Papp, Csaba Gombár, and János Széll, among others.

<sup>35</sup> Available at: <https://adtpus.arcanum.hu/hu/collection/TARSTUDKOZL/> (Retrieved on December 20, 2019).

<sup>36</sup> József Marelyn Kiss, “Volt egyszer egy intézet – beszélgetés Gombár Csabával. [There Was Once an Institution – A Talk with Csaba Gombár],” 2000 10 (2012): 3–14.

the Centre for Mass Communication, was one of the largest social science research institutes of the era.<sup>37</sup> The institution was established in 1963 as the Public Research Department of Hungarian Radio and Television. In 1968, the Political Committee of MSzMP declared the need for public opinion polling by scientific means, therefore in 1969 the Hungarian Radio and Television Mass Communication Research Centre was opened. Its direct political oversight was exercised by the Agitations and Propaganda Department of MSzMP, while its state supervision was exercised by the Council of Ministers.<sup>38</sup> The Institute had tremendous impact on empirical sociology and political science, including one of its most important common areas, research in the field of political socialization.<sup>39</sup> Finally, it is important to note that the foundations of financing science and culture, such as the Gábor Bethlen Foundation and the HAS-Soros Foundation (later Soros Foundation) played an important role in institutionalizing political science after 1984.<sup>40</sup>

## Conclusions, Directions for Further Research

One of the most important findings of my research so far is that political science began to institutionalize under quite diffuse circumstances in the 1970s and 1980s: on the one hand, it was a kind of “forced product” of political relief processes, and on the other hand it lagged behind the advanced institutionalization of other fields of social science. Political science in Hungary was institutionalized between strong political constraints

<sup>37</sup> Róbert Takács, “A sztálini modell átalakítása a magyar tömegkommunikációban [The Reconstruction of the Stalinist Model of Mass Communication],” *Múltunk* 1 (2017): 68–103.

<sup>38</sup> The institution was established by decision 1056/1988 (VII.12.) of the Council of Ministers.

<sup>39</sup> Mihály Csákó, “A magyar politikaiszocializáció-kutatás történetének vázlatja [Draft of the History of Hungarian Political Socialization Research],” *Magyar Tudomány* 9 (2017): 1065–1071.

<sup>40</sup> Béla Növér, *A magyar Soros Alapítvány első tíz éve 1984–1994-ig*, [The First Ten Years of the Soros Foundation, 1984–1994] (Budapest: Balassi Kiadó, 1999).

and political/hegemonic power determinations. Although the emergent political science has not become the “science of democracy”—in the sense that it would provide a suitable analytical framework in all respects for understanding political processes and articulating them to society—undoubtedly it achieved significant results together with other social sciences. At the same time, from the thirty years after the transition and fifty years after the beginning of the institutionalization of political science, it can be argued that it is high time to investigate the detrimental effects of the political dependence of political science.

As far as further investigations and debates are concerned, it is to say that political science has dealt too much with the institutional and procedural foundations of democracy and, unfortunately, too little with the social basis of democracy. For these reasons, I consider it essential to make further research on the institutionalization of Hungarian political science. The traditions of political science must be re-discovered. A thorough exploration of the history of political science in the framework of Hungarian Academy of Sciences, the Hungarian Political Science Association, and the Institute of Social Science need to be done. Finally, in addition to a quantitative analysis of the institutionalization of political science, it would be extremely important to study qualitatively the research that had been carried out in the aforementioned institutions and organizations.