Abstracts

Ecology, Environmental Vallás and Present Society

Bulcsu Bognár: Possibilities and Limitations of Ecological Communication in Modern Society

Abstract: The study explores the social-theoretical aspects of ecological communication from a functionalist point of view. The analysis interprets the reaction of the subsystems of modern society. It examines how the main segments of society (economy, politics, education, etc.) respond to environmental challenges and to the communication of the movements that represent it. The analysis thus examines the impact and potential of ecological communication. The paper focuses on the reasons why large sections of society may be relatively uninterested in environmental protection or responding only with difficulty and slowly to environmental challenges. On the other hand, the study analyzes how environmental aspects can play a greater role in social communication. The analysis explores what partial results the ecological communication has achieved and which are the structural changes in society that offer greater scope for environmental protection. The final unit of the paper interprets the relationship of the ecological communication and the social milieus in Hungary, involving the recent value researches.
Keywords: social theory, system theory, ecological communication, value studies, social milieu

Márk Áron Éber: The System is Hurting the Planet. Ecological Problems and their Communication from Two Systems Theory Perspectives

Abstract: This paper is a contribution to the introductory paper by Bulcsu Bognár entitled "Possibilities and Limitations of Ecological Communication in Modernity: Theoretical Remarks on the Topic of Environmental Protection". While the original paper analyses the reasons for the relative failure of ecological communication and green movements, this paper seeks to answer the additional question of what non-communicative mechanisms create ecological problems. In search of an answer to this question, in addition to Luhmann's theory of social systems built from communication, this contribution presents an interpreta-

tion that derives the emergence of ecological problems from the systematic processes of the reproduction of human life. Namely, from the processes of producing cheap nature (food, energy, raw materials and labour-power). By comparing the two conceptions of the system, two complementary explanations can be obtained. In addition, the paper examines in detail Niklas Luhmann's theory of social systems and offers an answer to the question of why he was opposed to the "new social movements" of his age. The main reason for this opposition is that the construction of Luhmann's theory is incapable of interpreting human labour and capital formation, and consequently cannot interpret the contexts that lead to ecological problems as a result of man's nature-transforming activity. However, the ecological communication of green movements seeks to draw attention to precisely these relations.

Ferenc Tallár: Wandering Between the Logic of Social Systems and the Search for Meaning

Abstract: As Luhmann, Bognár leaves no doubt that he sees the ecological crisis not simply as a social crisis, but as a crisis arising at the boundaries of the social system and its natural environment – that is as a disturbance in adaptation. The question is whether the description of these "disturbances" based on Luhmann is valid. Bulcsu Bognár's paper convinced me that the chosen theoretical framework (the description of society based on Luhmann's system theory) is rooted in the confidence that emerged in the West after World War II and is unsuitable for describing the events of the 21st century full of crises. Basically, I sought answers to three questions: (1) Whether the robust social systems that flourished after the Keynesian Revolution, at the time of the social democratic consensus and the welfare state, are still so robust and functional? (2) How long can modern societies endure the loss of meaning due to systems disconnected from people's experiences and personal interaction? (3) How does a fundamental system change happen?

László Gergely Szücs: Ecopolitical Movements and the Political System. Remarks on Bulcsu Bognár's Paper on „Ecological Communication"

Abstract: My article shows that Bulcsu Bognár creates a complex „efficiency criticism" of contemporary ecological movements in his paper about the possibility of ecological communication. Nevertheless, I argue that the correlation of the movements and the political system could have been presented in a more complex way, if the author had supplemented his Luhmannian analysis with another point of view, from which the normative motivations of the social movements could be better analyzed and criticized. I argue that we can find the authors who were influenced by Luhmann and discussed the problem of normative basis of social movements were part of the circle of Habermas and his followers or discussion partners.

Attila Antal: The Universal Binary Code of the Climate and Ecological Crisis

Abstract: It is proposed in this article that the climate and ecological crisis is fundamentally reshaping the logic of how sub-systems of society operate. With the global challenge of our age, the dilemma of humanity's survival or extinction has become a universal binary code. This paper contains some critical reflections on Bognár Bulcsu's study. The main question discussed here is how the economic, political, and legal subsystems relate to the climate crisis after the collapse of classical environmental paradigms; what should be the of role of moral politics and the climate emergency in the era of global disasters.
Keywords: climate and ecological crisis, ecological communication, binary code, climate emergency, social sub-systems

András Takács-Sánta: Ecological Radicalism or Collapse

Abstract: This article is a reaction to the study of Bulcsu Bognár. I explain that while the diagnosis of Bognár regarding our societies' inability to give proper answers to the ecological crisis is convincing (though partial), he does not get to the therapy deriving from this diagnosis apparently because of his reluctance to accept radical solutions. The article of Bognár misses an important aspect: there is a basic tension between the cultural paradigm of modernity and the ecological way of thinking. This is also a reason why the social institutions of modernity are unable to incorporate the demands of ecological movements based on rather different values and worldviews. Consequently, we will be able to avoid ecological collapse only if we build a new system of social institutions based on the ecological way of thinking.
Keywords: modernity, system of social institutions, ecological way of thinking, environmental sustainability.

András Lányi: Environmentalists Exist – How Is it Possible?

Abstract: The concept of 'ecological communication' for Niklas Luhmann was something that characterizes the system/environment relations in general, and it has very little to do with the way ecology movements communicate their messages to the audience in general. Bulcsu Bognár, in his article adopts Luhmann's description of the ignorant green activists moralizing their case and being uncapable to consider the characteristics of the rational communication that takes place in the social subsystems of modernity. I argue that Bognár failed to reconstruct the original context of Luhmann's sharp criticism, namely his dispute with Jurgen Habermas about the social consequences of rationalized communication, where environmentalists took position on the 'wrong' side, at least for Luhmann. On the grounds of his paper about the issue, Luhmann himself did not actually seem to be either informed about or even interested in the green movements and their ideology. If he did, he would have recognized the common roots of his systems theory and ecophilosophy in Umberto Maturana's views about the communicative nature of living systems.
Keywords: communication, living systems, ecophilosophy, Luhmann, Habermas

Péter Ákos Bod: Nature, Economy, Technology, and Society – Reflections on Bulcsu Bognár's Analysis

Abstract: The warmest winter in history and the truly global pandemics in 2020 may prove to be a turning point in our thinking about economy and nature. Aspects of sustainability have been internalized gradually into mainstream economics. Digitalization opens up new avenues for applying resource-saving and green technologies. Yet, market competition and innovation may impact positively the case of environment under particular legal, institutional, and political conditions only. The author reviews the evolution of the Hungarian environmental movements, comments on some critical aspects of the interface between the green movements and the state and society with reference to the particular conditions of the European semi-periphery. The recent de-globalization tendencies and related risks are touched upon.
Keywords: economic theory, digitalization, creative destruction, Hungarian political situation, path dependence, globalization and de-globalization, economic nationalism

Dávid Kollár: Environmental Protection and the Spirit of Postmaterialism

Abstract: In my paper, I firstly argue that the issue of environment and climate change in 2019 has received an importance that has never been seen before. I try to corroborate this claim by using data from several databases. On the one hand by using multi-variable statistical procedures, and on the other hand, on a theoretical basis, I will examine the factors that have contributed to the appreciation of the importance of the environmentalism. According to my results, the stable economic environment has allowed the development of post-material values – autonomy, tolerance, and the need for authenticity – which have a strong elective affinity (Weber) with the "issue" of environmental protection. These movements were further strengthened by the fact that the issue of environmental protection can be easily linked to the dominant political ideologies.
Keywords: environment, climate change, growth, post-materialization, values, elective affinity

Eszter Bogáromi, Olivér Hortay and Péter Pillók: The Role of Climate Change in the Attitude of Fear of the Future in Hungarian Population

Abstract: This article compares how the role of climate change has altered in attitudes towards the future in Hungary between 2017 and 2020. The results show that in both years, those whose lower needs were met were more afraid of the effects of climate change. Over the period, people's anxieties of the future have diminished significantly, which, among other factors that cause uncertainty, has also been reflected in worries about climate change. The extent of alteration varied by social group: the decline in fear was significantly smaller for the highly educated, urban, younger, and female residents. One of the conclusions that can be drawn from the results is that people's climate attitudes in Hungary can be segmented according to demographic factors similar to international literature. The other conclusion is that the impact of communication, based on the adverse effects of climate change in recent years, has been more robust in the above groups.
Keywords: fear of the future, public attitude, climate change

András Jung: Spatiotemporal Patterns and GDP in Ecological Communication

Abstract: My agricultural background has significantly shaped my experiences and professional impressions of ecological communication and environmental protection. Industrial performance is frequently characterized by economic power. International and domestic time series have shown that agricultural GDP is continuously decreasing. In developed and industry-leading countries, agriculture belongs to the one(or less)-digit sector. Generally, reduced social interest is associated with agriculture and related topics. This work focused on two themes. On the one hand, non-sociological scientific metrics were considered to provide statistical evidence for trends in environmental protection. On the other hand, the importance of spatial and temporal patterns was emphasized, which are indirectly able to characterize thematic relevance, actuality and communication success.
Keywords: spacetime, GDP, agriculture

Bulcsu Bognár: Enviromental Protection, Critique of Ideology and the Blind Spots of Cognition

Abstract: The study replies to responses to my initial discussion paper. After analyzing the comments, it argues that critical analysts have primarily given a critique of ideology rather than giving an analysis of my research on the ecological communication of today's society. The present analysis concludes that the reason for this is that most of the criticisms were made without deep knowledge of Luhmann's social theory. On the other hand, the study analyzes how the debate between critical and functionalist social theory can be made fruitful in order to better interpret modern society. The last unit of the writing responds to the results of sociological value research and looks for reasons of the lack of enviromentally conscious action.
Keywords: social theory, system theory, ecological communication, value studies, social milieu

The International as Governmentality

Iver B. Neumann and Ole Jacob Sending: The International as Governmentality

Abstract: In traditional power analysis, 'the international' is a characteristic of the states system – an anarchic realm, qualitatively different from the domestic. To traditional norms analysis, the international is increasingly a realm of shared value allocation, akin to other political realms. Given this bifurcation in the literature, privileging power incurs the cost of not being able to study systemic change of the international, whereas privileging norms incurs the cost of not being able to study power. We argue that extant conceptualizations of the international hail from Weber via Morgenthau, for whom international politics was an ideal type applied to the realm between states. Building on Mike Williams's work, we perform a new reading of these two scholars. We find that Morgenthau's identification of the political as an ideal-typical sphere has room for social theoretical insights as found in constructivist theory. Indeed, by his own Weberian lights, Morgenthau's specific ideal type

of international politics is in need of updating. We try to rise to the challenge by drawing on Michel Foucault's work in order to forge an understanding of the international as governmentality. The result is a conceptualization of the international as a socially embedded realm of governmentality. It is a structure (defined by relations of power) that generates different and changing practices of political rule (defined as governmental rationality) and agencies (for example, polities).

Replies to Ágoston Faber's Study on Autotelic relationships

Melinda Kovai: The „Autotelic" Sociology and the Psychology as a Meta-project. Notes on Ágoston Faber's Paper

Abstract: These comments represent a reply to Ágoston Faber's paper, and they draw attention to two points of view. One of them refers to sociological interpretations of social facts which are mostly psychological issues recently, such as intimacy, romantic love, or the self itself. These comments highlight why analyses of social causes and social results of these phenomena are fruitful. The other point of view is the opportunity of analysing psychology and psychotherapy according to the perspective of social sciences. The paper also outlines to what extent psychotherapy can be considered as a social fact, and provide some ideas about how it can inform us about society and how we can approach psychology from the perspective of critical social sciences in a constructive way.

Dóra Máriási: Marriage the Neoliberal Way. A Reply to Ágoston Fáber

Abstract: In my reply, I evaluate Fáber's paper by comparing (critical) psychological theories and practices. The paper, by analyzing the neoliberal social context shaping relationships, is worth considering and provides us some valuable insights regarding the roles psychological discourses play in these processes. However, I would like to complement and to argue with Fáber's statements in three points: (1) He describes the autotelic relationship as a pervasive relational model in late modernity. This model seems to be overgeneralized, hence unable to explain the variability stemming from the social position and the changes in relationships over time. (2) I complement the nature of emotions and psychology's relationship-management methods. (3) I find the definition of intimacy, its relationship to inequality, and the role of psychological discourse in masking inequality incomplete.