

Editorial Note

The Editorial Board of the Romanian Journal of Society and Politics is pleased to announce the launch of the second issue of 2017, namely Volume 12, Number 2. The current issue contains three regular articles and three book reviews, covering topics within the fields of constitutional politics, educational policies, security studies and political theory.

The first article of the issue, titled *Hegemonic Preservation and Thailand's Constitutional Crisis*, which is co-authored by William J. Jones and Douglas Rhein, addresses questions pertaining to contemporary constitutional politics in Thailand, explored through the theoretical lens of Ran Hirschl's hegemonic preservation thesis. The article takes particular aim at the institutional framework created as a consequence of the 2007 Constitution, showing the various ways in which changes to the legislative and judiciary branch have led to political gridlocks in Thailand.

In the second article, *Trail-blazing: Arab students at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem during the Military Regime (1948-1966) in Israel*, Kussai Haj-Yehia explores the early stages of Arab citizens participation in higher education studies in Israel. The author conducts an ethnographic analysis of this phenomenon, using the results from semi-structured in-depth interviews with a number of such individuals, who studied at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem in the 1950s. The study primarily assesses the cultural shock experienced by these students when met with the liberal norms guiding campus life as well as the obstacles to integration faced by them both during the early phases of their studies as well as during the return to their villages after the completion of their studies.

The third article, *Counterbalancing EU and Russian Soft Power Practices in Georgia*, authored by Nino Gozalishvili, offers an overview of the dynamics of soft power instruments used by the European Union and the Russian Federation in Georgia. The author argues that the two actors deploy different soft power strategies, with the former focusing on economic areas and education and the latter focusing on the cultural domain. The paper also examines the impact which the use of soft power has on the public attitude of Georgian citizens, concluding that though favourable attitudes towards the EU and Russia are generally balanced, Georgian citizens exhibit a somewhat stronger (but comparatively declining) support for the EU.

Aside from the regular articles, the present issue also contains three book reviews. In the first one, Oana Ghiocea authors a review of G.A. Cohen's final work, titled *Why Not Socialism?* The author critically examines Cohen's defence of the socialist ideal as well as his objections to capitalism, taking particular issue with questions of feasibility that mark the transition from Cohen's central thought experiment developed in the book to the case of the actual, non-ideal, world. In the second one, Vlad Andrei Terteleac reviews Christopher Achen and Larry Bartels's recent book, titled *Democracy for Realists: Why Elections Do Not Produce Responsive Government*. The author emphasizes that the main virtue of this book lies in the systematic empirical analysis of democratic practices, which challenges some of our widely held views on the role, benefits and

quality of democracy. Finally, in the third one, Matteo Zanellato reviews Emanuele Severino's *Capitalism Without Future*. The author highlights the central role which the concept of 'technique' plays in the analysis of contemporary capitalism, focusing on the tension between technical and economic globalization and on the implications of technique for the tension between capitalism and democracy, while at the same time predicting the future decline of the capitalist model.

The Editorial Team