

***Why people do not join political parties?
Analysing the attitudes of Lithuanians
towards party membership***

Ainė Ramonaitė

In the article, the attitudes of Lithuanians towards party membership are analyzed to answer the question if and why people are not keen to join political parties. Using a mixed method research strategy, the article analyses the image of political parties in Lithuania, determines the potential of party membership and investigates the dominant reasons of avoiding partisan activity. The evidence demonstrates that a fair number of Lithuanian inhabitants would like to join a political party, but have not received an invitation. Analysis shows that dominant reasons of not becoming a partisan are low interest in politics, low subjective competence and a will to stay independent. The results of the research suggest that low party membership in Lithuania can be explained by weak recruitment attempts of political parties rather than by communist legacy of society as it is widely believed.

Politics and mysticism

Alyudas Jokubaitis

The article is based on an idea that there are four different modes of understanding reality – practice, science, art and mysticism. Political liberalism demands separation of public and private beliefs. However, mystical understanding of reality is not a system of propositions and beliefs. This is why

one can speak of a conflict between liberalism and mystical understanding of reality. Political liberalism imposes a certain understanding of reality on believers. Liberals propose to remove religious convictions from public life and not to treat them as a basis of politics. Mystics find God before words, concepts and discourses. Liberals reduce religion to convictions and demand from mystics to comprehend that, which in their opinion is not comprehensible. There is a tension between liberalism and people who have mystical experiences. Liberals narrow down religious experience to convictions. However, mystical experience is a much broader subject. Behind it stands an understanding of world that has its own standards of reality.

***Voting of the European Parliament members:
why they remain loyal to national states?***

Dorota Skusevičienė

The article discusses factors, determining loyalty of the European Parliament members, which is marginalized in most of researches on the European Parliament. The initial assumption holds that as given the rates of loyalty to the national states are high it is groundless to assess it as a neutral variable. The first section of this article presents and analyses main insights of the influence of national parties and political groups on the voting behavior of the European Parliament members. The second section is devoted to the research of links between voting of European Parliament members and their national states, more specifically – to the analysis of European Parliament members' loyalty to their national states. Lithuania is chosen as a case study. The fact that loyalty to the national states during 2004–2009 and 2009–2014 terms of the European Parliament is over 85 % indicates that this variable should not be seen as accidental or insignificant. It is concluded that loyalty of the European Parliament members to national states can significantly contribute to the studies of European Parliament's internal relations and power contribution.

Corruption in contemporary Japanese politics (2001–2009)

Andrius Geležauskas

Political corruption in Japan is a very important issue. The purpose of this research is to examine political corruption phenomena in contemporary Japanese politics. Research questions are what are the structure, scale, and causes of political corruption in Japan during 2001–2009.

Article overviews previous political corruption studies in Japan from the time of Second World War to the recent times, including the report of the Transparency International National Integrity System. In third chapter of article the scale, the varieties and the main practitioners of political corruption in Japan are to be analyzed. It reveals the biggest political corruption scandals in Japanese politics in given time-period. The *Asahi Shimbun* front page content analysis indicates that 2002 and 2007 are special years in the context of corruption studies because in those years published the largest number of political corruption articles and the biggest number of the new themes on the political corruption issue revealed. Last chapter focuses on the explanation of political corruption mechanism in Japan and in particular relationship with clientelism practises.

Analytical potential of concepts ‘Political system’ and ‘Political regime’

Vaidutis Laurėnas, Kęstutis Šerpėtis

The article is dedicated to the discussion about the notions of the ‘political system’ and ‘political regime’ in the fields of its meanings as autonomous analytical constructions. The main arguments are that the ‘political system’ describes a stable and normal political process and determinate interrelations between power structures and civil society institutions as a complex sociopolitical unity. On the other hand, concept of ‘political regime’ stresses dynamic aspects of the government activity as a realization of the basic political functions. Pointing to the fact that a political system explains events and relations in the modern democratic context and a regime – its peculiarities in the process of decision-making, the authors share attention to specific negative aspects of the separate interpretation and recognition of the various forms in the national politics spheres.