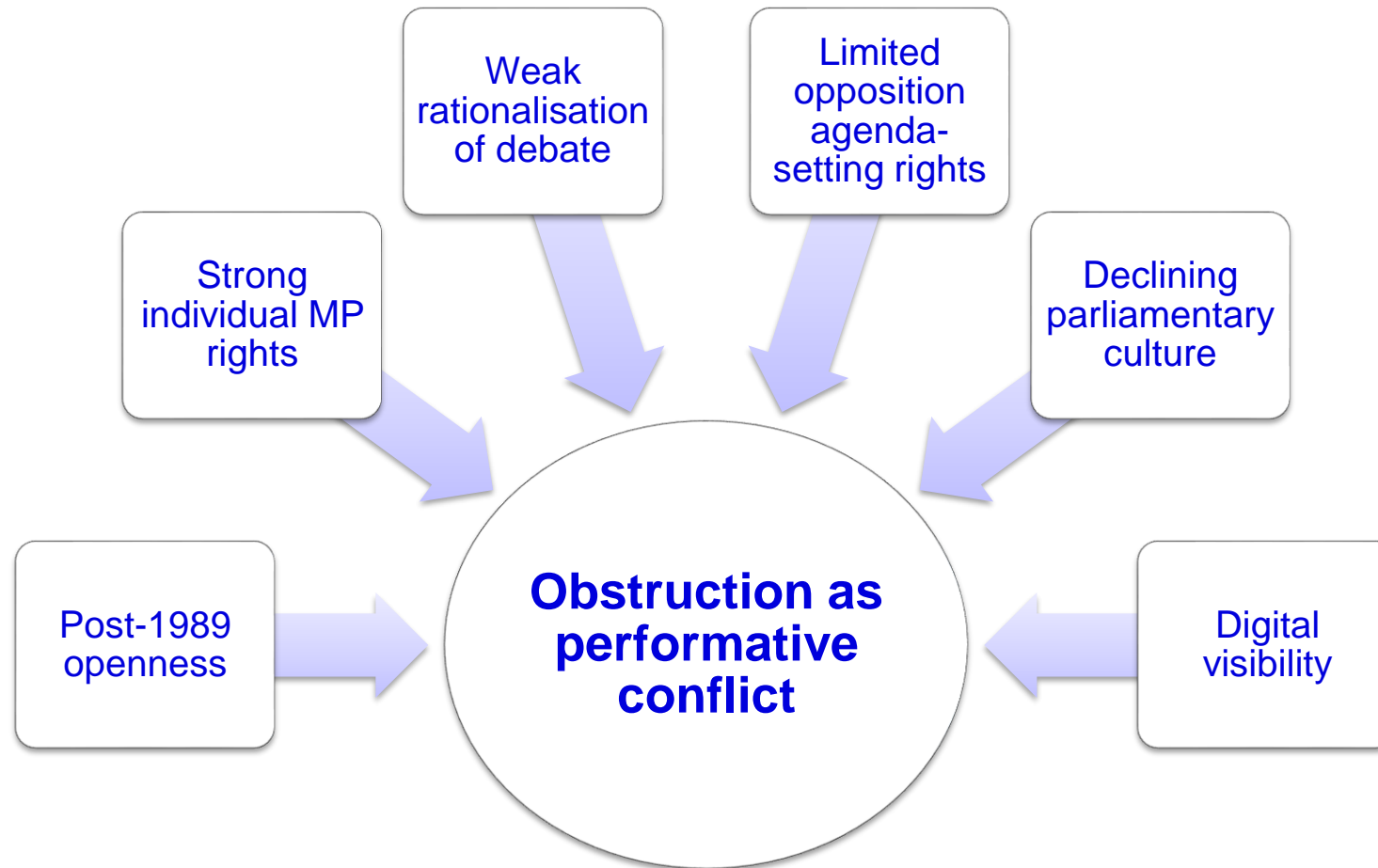


From Minority Protection to Performative Conflict?

Emotionalised Obstruction and Social-Media Incentives in the Czech Chamber of Deputies

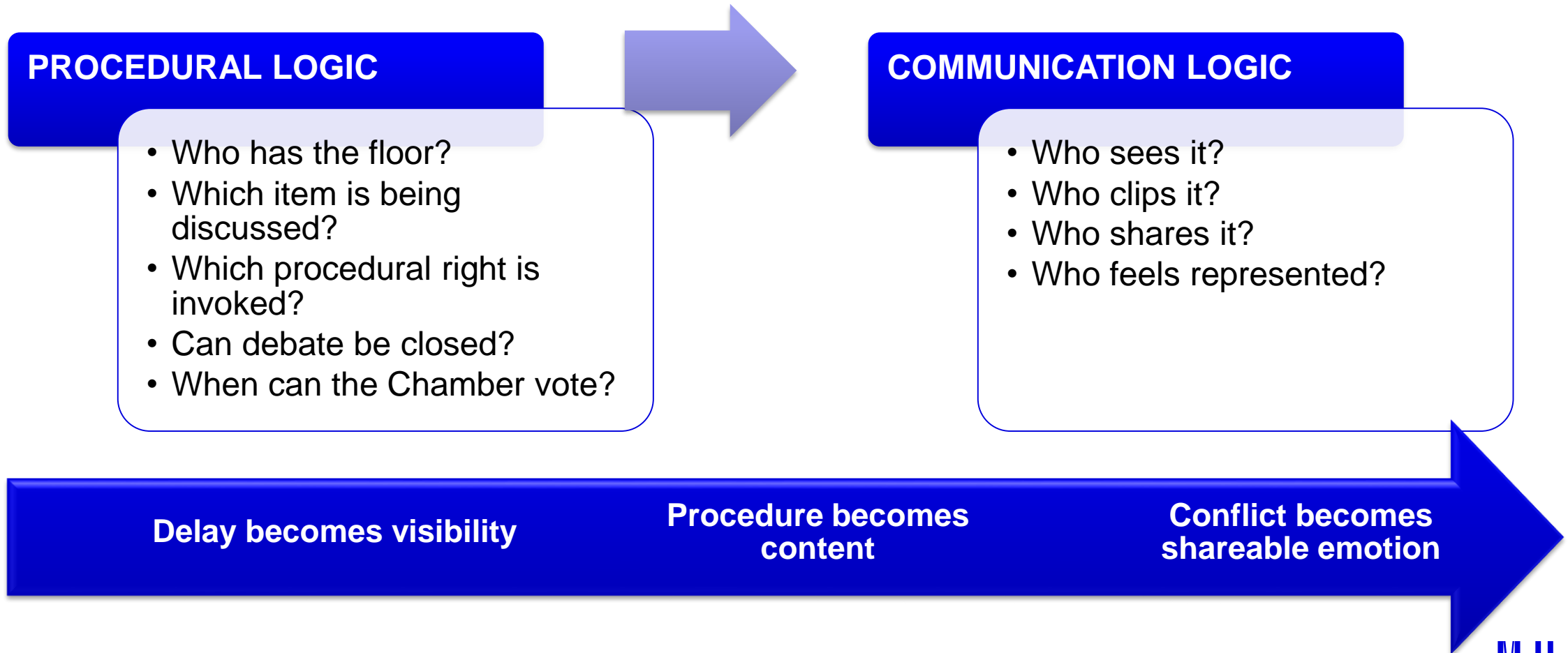
Standing Orders of the Czech Chamber of Deputies

Designed for autonomy, exposed to performance



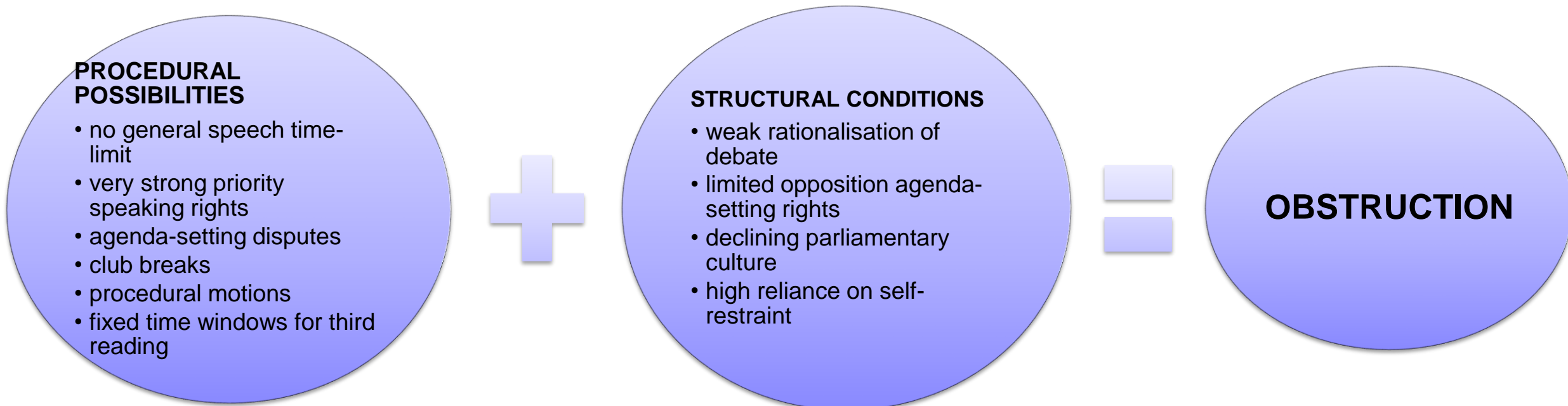
From procedural resistance to public performance

The same procedural act – a different audience, visibility and reward structure



Why the Czech Chamber is especially vulnerable to obstruction

Procedural openness and weak structuring make obstruction one of the most effective opposition tools



When obstruction becomes the message

Turning procedural power into public visibility

ANNOUNCED

• **“Alenka asked me to obstruct, to obstruct, so I will speak for a long, long time. And why are we obstructing? [...] Why are we obstructing? Simply put, we want to prevent pensioners from being robbed again, because this is not a reform.”**

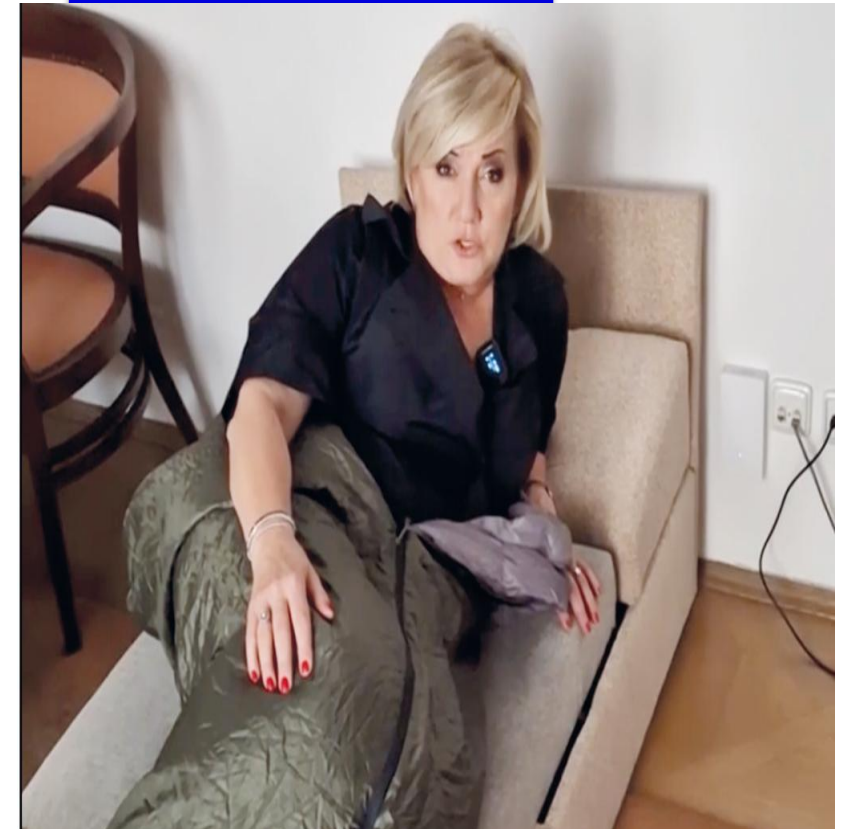
• Andrej Babiš,
2 Oct 2024 on the
proposed law regarding
the pension reform
(official protocol of the
Chamber meeting)

JUSTIFIED

• **“First of all, it must be said that obstruction is a standard part of democratic parliamentary debate. [...] It is an extraordinary instrument, used in extraordinary cases, but it is not really anything exceptional. [...] And our strategy is clear: to protect hardworking, active people from what the Sobotka and Babiš government, this governing coalition, is preparing for them.”**

• Petr Fiala, 10 Jan 2016 in
Otázky Václava Moravce,
on obstruction during the
Electronic Sales
Registration Act debate

SPECTACULARISED



The Constitutional Court draws a line

Obstruction may be tolerated as political contestation – but not protected as a constitutional right to paralyse the Chamber

MINORITY RIGHTS:

- space to speak
- space to object
- space to contest
- space to make conflict visible

CONSTITUTIONAL BALANCE

- minority protection
- deliberation
- decision-making capacity

•INSTITUTIONAL LIMITS:

- no right to paralysis
- majority may restore functionality
- procedure must remain fair
- opposition cannot be silenced completely

The reform response on the table

The current reform proposal responds to obstruction mainly through time limits and stronger sequencing

WHAT IT TARGETS

- agenda disputes
- priority speaking rights
- factual remarks
- procedural motions
- third-reading bottlenecks

HOW IT RESPONDS

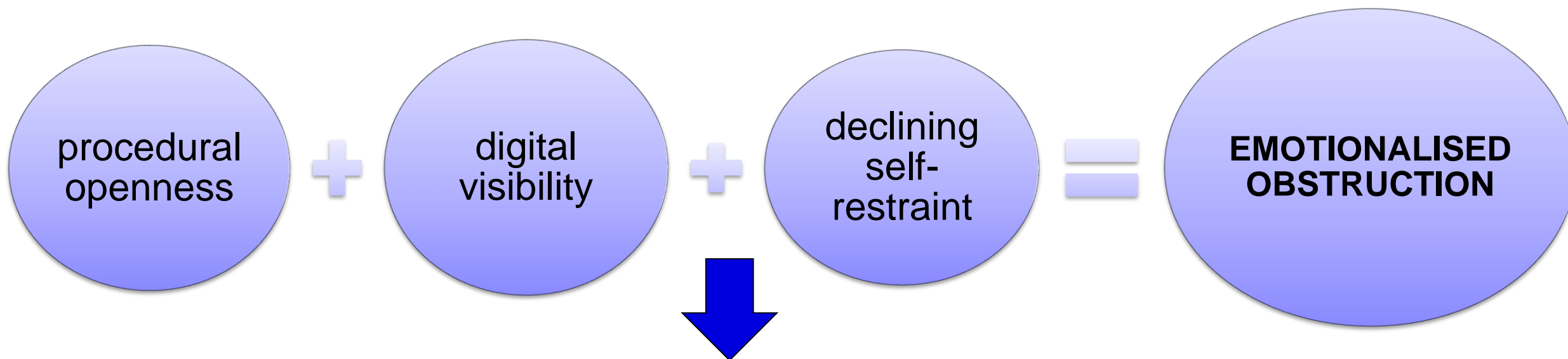
- shortens speaking time
- restricts repeat interventions
- sets fixed voting times
- extends third-reading windows

WHAT REMAINS OPEN

- meaningful opposition agenda-setting
- scrutiny without obstruction
- fair allocation of speaking time
- deliberative quality
- risk of a silencing narrative

The broader lesson

Old procedural rules are exposed to new affective incentives



Parliamentary rules must structure conflict before obstruction becomes the only visible form of opposition.

Thank you for your attention!

JUDr. Marie Zámečnicková, Ph.D.

marie.zamecnikova@law.muni.cz

Masaryk University | Faculty of Law

Department of Constitutional Law and Political Science

Veveří 70 | 611 80 Brno

T: +420 777 715 695