

INTERACTIONS BETWEEN THE STUDY AND THE PRACTICE OF PA IN HUNGARY

György HAJNAI

Ph.D., Senior Researcher, MKI/Hungarian
Institute of Public Administration,
Hungary

1 Introduction

The paper's goal is to sketch the interconnections between the study – and, specifically, the teaching – of Public Administration¹ on the one hand, and the practice of administrative reforms, on the other. The temporal scope of the study extends to the post-communist era; geographically, the paper focuses on Hungary, although on some occasions statements and conclusions with possibly broader geographical relevance are formulated, too.

The paper attempts to achieve the above in the following logic and structure:

- (a) Firstly, an overview of the academic field of PA in Hungary is given. This is mostly done by examining academic degree programmes related to the study of PA both in a cross-sectional and in a temporal perspective.
- (b) The second section concentrates on the practice of public administration; it surveys the characteristic approaches to public administration reform. The primary means of doing so is a qualitative analysis of policy documents (specifically, Government Resolutions) on PAR adopted since the transition.
- (c) Finally, the third section tries to draw some conclusions on the basis of findings presented in the previous two sections.

2 The study of Public Administration and Public Management

The aim of this section is to overview the latest developments and the current status of the Hungarian PA higher education field. However, it is far from being trivial to delineate, with an acceptable level of conceptual validity and empirical clarity, what exactly constitutes Hungarian Public Administration/Public Management as a field of study and academic education.

*Transylvanian Review
of Administrative Sciences,
18 E/2006, pp. 49-67*

¹ Hereinafter I continue to apply the habit of using capital initials (Public Administration and Public Management) to refer to the field of study, as opposed to the respective fields of practice (Kickert-Stillmann 1999 p.39).

This difficulty is mainly rooted in two factors:

- (a) Firstly, Hungary belongs to those countries of Europe where the practical as well as the scholarly issues of government/administration have been for a long time, and to a significant extent still are, viewed through the conceptual lens of (Administrative) Law.
- (b) Secondly, the lack, or at least weakness, of the field's disciplinary identity – and the resulting disciplinary and institutional vagueness – is also remarkable.

Ad (a):

The study of the (more) practical aspects of government, howsoever it is called in various academia, languages, and historical epochs, is an omnipresent phenomenon in practically all politico-administrative systems. However the terms “Public Administration” or, possibly even more, “Public Management” are, to the contrary, deeply rooted, and can only be easily operationalised, in the professional, institutional and discursive context of present-time Anglo-Saxon and, increasingly, European ones. This difficulty is well illustrated by the fact that in a relatively recent, large-scale survey of European governance programmes (Verheijen-Connaughton 1999, Verheijen-Nemec 2000) identified no academic programmes called “Public Administration” in at least three, and no university programmes titled “Public Management” in about eight to ten (current) member countries of the EU².

This picture is, to a significant extent, characteristic for Hungary too. A statistical analysis of PA-related academic programmes in 23 European countries identified three distinct clusters of countries: one characterised by a predominantly legalistic, one by a management oriented, and a third one characterised by an interdisciplinary approach to teaching PA. This analysis put Hungary, along with a number of Central/Eastern European and Mediterranean countries, definitely into the group of countries characterised by an overwhelmingly (Public) Law based approach to public administration (Hajnal 2003).

Therefore it may be misleading to assume the problem-free transferability of such concepts as “an PA degree programme” from a North American or Western/Northern European context to the Hungarian (or, indeed, to a Southern or Eastern/Central European) one.

Ad (b):

Another common feature of this “legalist” group of countries mentioned above is that the disciplinary identity of Public Administration (let alone Public Management) is traditionally weak or even non-existent. (It may be interesting that in Hungarian – like a number of other Continental and, especially, Eastern European languages, there are only some imperfect translations for the term “public policy”, whereas there is no agreed-upon term to translate “public management”).

The subsequent subsections attempt to fulfil the task of delineating and describing the study of “Public Administration” by approaching the problem from the three more or less distinct aspects of (i) administrative practice, (ii) scholarly work, and (iii) higher education programmes.

2.1 PA/PM in the view of administrative practice

As already mentioned, throughout the past decades „mainstream” PA in Hungary maintained a dominantly legal approach, although academic and other research centres based, especially in the past two decades, their efforts on an increasingly interdisciplinary basis. The same trend could be observed in the everyday reality of public administration. Here the unquestioned dominance of law professionals as the most competent generalists of public administration – although still exists,

² These numbers are for illustrative purposes only; the conceptual and empirical problems related to translating programme titles – let alone the underlying concepts – from one language to another are too serious to allow for a precise analysis of this issue at this point.

but – exhibits a slightly decreasing tendency. The below figure gives an insight into this process by charting time series data on the educational background of territorial and local public administrators having a higher education (or similar) degree.

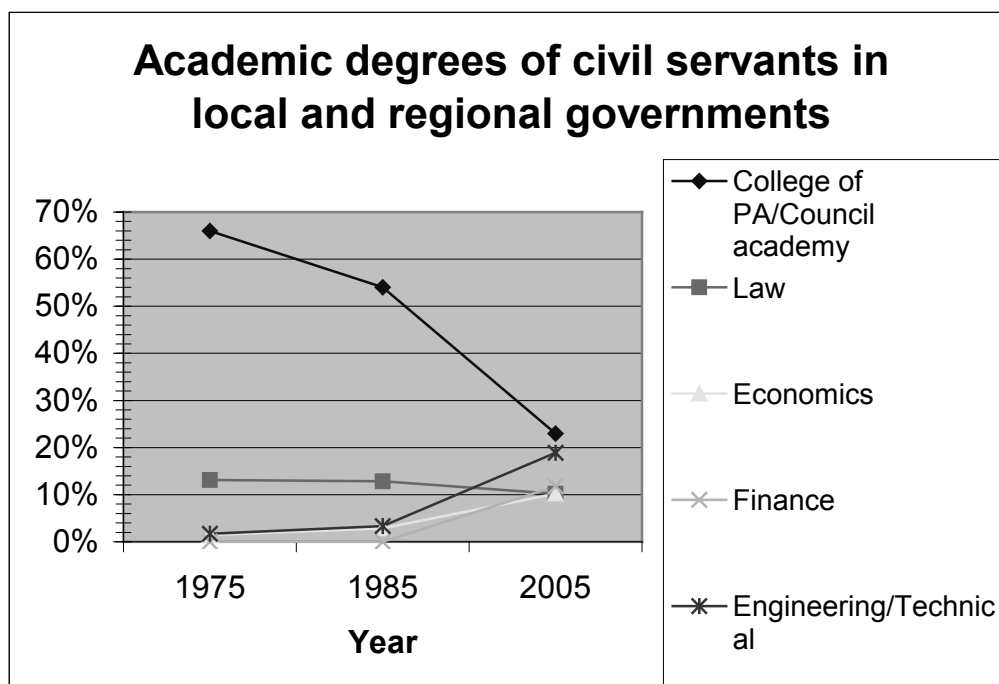


Figure 1³: The composition of civil servants in local and regional administration according their academic background, 1975-2005

There are two kinds of remarkable features of the above data. One of them is related to the dramatic changes since the seventies and the eighties: the shrinking proportion of „College of PA” and „council academy” degree holders among civil servants. It is important to note that, notwithstanding their titles and their intention to base PA education on a more interdisciplinary (as opposed to purely legal) approach, this programme remained predominantly legalist; in 1999 still about 37 percent of courses included in the programme curriculum were of a legal nature (Hajnal 2000). The other interesting feature is the remarkably stable proportion of lawyers, which remained practically constant in a period of thirty years. Although 13 percent seems to be a modest proportion, there are some circumstances that shed more light on the true importance of lawyers in the Hungarian public administration.

- Firstly, they are strongly (by about 100% in 2005) over-represented in subsets of higher importance, such as (i) among civil servants in managerial positions and (ii) in ministries. It is particularly peculiar that in the Senior Civil Service consisting of the highest ranking civil servants 57% of civil servants have a degree in Law (Gajduschek 2006 p. 605).
- Secondly, legal regulations make it clear that in the practice lawyers are definitely perceived as the most competent generalists of administration. Examples include the exemption rules

³ Source: For the 1975 and 1985 data: Gajduschek (2006) p. 604; for the 2005 data: a questionnaire survey (based on personal interviews) of a nationally representative sample of civil servants (n=1000); the research was designed by György Gajduschek and György Hajnal. Some technical remarks for the figure:

- (a) Time series data available both before and after the transition are extremely rare. Therefore the comparability of data is less than perfect (reply categories had to be “matched” to one another across the different surveys).
- (b) Percentages for any single year don’t add up to 100%. The reason for this is that only the key reply categories for included in the table, and some minor/insignificant response categories were omitted.

on the so-called “specialised examination system” of civil servants compulsory for a large majority of administrators: only lawyers are exempted from the obligations of passing this – mostly legal type – exam. The situation is similar with the General Basic Public Administration Examination scheme (Gajduschek-Hajnal 2001).

2.2 Hungarian PA/PM in the view of scholarly work

In the view of the above it may be little surprising that it is not easy to analyse Hungarian academia in the field of PA/PM.

One of the problems is that the PA/PM field in Hungary is perceived in part differently, and in part much broader than in Western/Northern Europe and North America. The Hungarian equivalent of the term “Public Administration” – and, much more so, “Public Management” – is actually rarely used in reference to the respective fields of scholarly work. Instead often a number of other concepts and corresponding terms are used, such as “State and Legal Science” or (State/Public) Administrative Law. Moreover, even in cases where the term “Administration” is used it usually refers to the legal aspects of public administration (an – admittedly only illustrative – example of this is that at the Department of “State Administration” of one of the largest Faculties of Public Administration 100% of the faculty has an academic background in Law). The situation is practically the same with the core departments of the other programmes in PA.

This broad field of study – being nowadays sometimes referred to as “PA” in Hungary – has undergone remarkable development since the transition. The most important and visible change is the increasing internationalisation of scientific practice. One aspect of this is of technical nature: the increasing presence of theories, topics, methodologies and academic standards characteristic for the international practice. In addition, the technical and organisational/financial possibilities of international scientific cooperation have dramatically improved in comparison to the previous decades, too. Another aspect of this development relates to the increasing presence of international comparative work on the research agenda. An important factor of this thematic shift may be, beside the actual importance of this type of work, the international “marketability” of comparative studies involving e.g. other countries of the post-communist region.

Turning now to our actual topic – i.e., the study of the “PA/PM field” understood in partly narrower and partly different sense usually attached to these terms in the mainstream international discourse – the situation is markedly different. The most important difference is the weakness, both in terms of quality and quantity, of scholarly work. Of course it is not an easy task to supply substantive arguments supporting such a general and – possibly – harsh statement. Although they are admittedly far from being compelling arguments, some telling indicators of this weakness of the field are as follows.

- For the time being, there is no scholarly journal of PA/PM in Hungary. Although there is a monthly journal titled *Magyar Közigazgatás* (“Hungarian Public Administration”) it doesn’t have an academic ambition.
- There is no scientific association of the field in Hungary (such as a Society of PA, PM, or Evaluation etc.).
- There are only sporadic appearance of Hungarian authors in the mainstream international literature. For example, in the period of 2001-2005 only three papers (co-)authored by Hungarian authors appeared in five prominent journals of the field (*Public Administration*, *Public Administration Review*, *Public Management Review*, *Governance* and *Journal of Administrative Research and Theory*).
- The institutional infrastructure of the field is also relatively weak. Again, it is possible only to give some rough quantitative indicators supporting this statement. One such indicator is the

lack of Departments of PA/PM: although there are a number of universities offering a degree in PA (see next sub-section) there are only a very few – about three to four – Departments of Public Administration, of Public Management; moreover as already mentioned even some of these actually conduct Administrative Law studies. Another indicator is the relative lack of other, non-university based research centres. Although there is a small number of research institutions involved to some, usually marginal, extent in PA/PM research (such as the various Centres of Regional Studies of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences), there is only one institute primarily dealing with research in PA/PM (the Hungarian Institute of Public Administration).

2.3 PA/PM in the view of higher education programmes

The development of PA higher education in Hungary in the communist era has some distinctive characteristics, which deserve some brief mentioning. From the late seventies on efforts were taken to differentiate between Administrative Law and Public Administration; these efforts were present, out of the communist bloc countries, practically only in Hungary. The new emphasis was on administration/management as a specific element in P.A. not sufficiently dealt with by the classical study of Administrative Law. Prior to this, in 1969 a new type of post-secondary education institution was launched in the field of local and regional public administration (“council administration”). In 1978 a new educational institute named the “College of Public Administration” was created. The College awarded Bachelor-level degrees to future officials of public administration, primarily (but not entirely) to those of territorial and local administration. The curricula of the College tried to strike a balance between Administrative Law, (Public) Management, and basics in social sciences such as Sociology. Importantly, the Political Science element, so general in Western curricula, continued to be completely missing from the PA curriculum as Political Science as such was almost completely unacceptable, for ideological reasons, under the communist era.

After the democratic transition in 1989-90 the entire social, economic, and constitutional-legal framework of both public administration as a set of institutions, practices and human workforce, and PA/PM as an academic field of study changed dramatically. Although – as we mentioned earlier – the essentially legalist concept of public administration hasn’t changed fundamentally, the emergence and relatively rapid development of other disciplinary approaches to PA in academic education became increasingly visible. These “new” approaches were, practically, transferred from the Anglo-Saxon and, less so, from other European countries’ academia and administrative practice.

A 1999 survey of the field (Hajnal 2000) identified the following programmes relevant in the field of public administration⁴:

⁴ To avoid the complications resulting from the complex and opaque legal and institutional framework of Hungarian higher education, programme data in this table as well as in the subsequent one is summarised so that all programmes run by the same institution and with the same programme title (name) are counted as one. This means that programmes with identical names and run by the same institution issuing the degree but run (i) in different locations, (ii) for different types of students (e.g. those already having some kind of a degree), (iii) under different financial conditions (fee-based vs. tuition-free) and in different modalities (regular and so-called distance learning programmes as well as those organised in evening classes) are, contrary to the Hungarian practice, not counted separately. Beside its practicality this decision is also justified by the fact that these programmes’ curricula are in practice identical, or almost identical.

Table 1: Composition of the PA higher education field in Hungary in 1999

Programme type	Number of programs	Number of higher education institutions
Law programs	7	7
PA/PM (i.e., non-law) programs	5	3
Total	12	10

As it can be seen two types of programmes were included in the overview. One of them was traditional MA in Law programmes. Their inclusion was justified by the circumstance partially overviewed on the previous pages; that is, by the fact that the daily reality, the legal regulations as well as the ruling culture of public administration as a field of practice identified, at that time (and to a large extent still today) Lawyers as *par excellence* public administration professionals. Importantly, Law programmes were (and still are) taught at “Faculties of State and Legal Sciences”, which reflects the still prevailing ambition of the legal discipline to cover issues of administering/governing the governmental sector.

The other type of programmes was PA in – or at least closer to – the international/Western sense of the word. (Note that the proportions apparently implied by the data are somewhat misleading since enrolment to Law programmes was by about one order of magnitude higher than enrolment to PA/PM programmes.)

In the last five to seven years the situation has changed in some important respects. These changes include

- (a) the restructuring of the Hungarian higher education system, and
- (b) the growth of the size and number of “real” PA programmes.

Ad (a):

There were two significant events in the period since 1999. The first one was the amalgamation process of higher education institutions. This was initiated by the government for reasons of “realising economies of scale”. However, the true mover of the process was the World Bank providing a large-scale restructuring loan conditional on a definite amalgamation and a corresponding decrease in the fragmentation of the higher education system. It is not possible to evaluate this reform here; therefore it is noted only briefly that to many observers inside and outside the academia it seems that the main result is only the changes in the “institutional banners” and some further growth in the complexity, opacity and irrationality of the system.

The other reform was the introduction of the Bologna system in higher education programmes. This came as a fundamentally new element entirely alien from the ruling culture and the logic of the Hungarian system (which actually very strongly resembles the classic Germanic university system). It is not our intention either to reflect on these changes here. The technical problem of the co-existence of programmes that are about to cease within a few years and of those just started had to be solved however. The solution chosen here is that only new programmes – i.e. those being conform with the Bologna system – are included in the overview.

Ad (b):

As of 2006, university programmes related to at least some segments or aspects of public administration are listed in the following table (programmes resembling, more or less, to PA/PM programmes in the Western sense are set in bold; from all subsequent analyses by PA/PM programmes we refer only to these ones).

Table 2.: Summary data on Hungarian civilian undergraduate programmes related to Public Administration or Public Management starting in 2006

Title	Number of programmes	Total enrolment ⁵
Administration and informatisation of agriculture	3	524
Administration of international affairs	2	250
Administration of labour affairs and social security	3	595
Administration of justice	3	1100
Cadastral administration	1	60
Health manager	5	670
International studies	12	2122
MA in Law	8	5062
Public Administration	3	1468
Public service	7	1429
Total	(44⁶)	13280

Source: On the basis of OFIK(2006)

The list in the above table might, at the first glance, suggest that PA has by now sufficiently been embedded in the Hungarian higher education system. Let's narrow down our analysis to the "real" PA programmes (i.e., "Public Administration" and "Public Service"). These "real" PA/PM programmes are in general characterised by a relative heterogeneity of relevant disciplines such as (public) management, political and applied political sciences, administrative law, public policy studies, etc. However the so-called Public Administration programmes have a legal character unusually strong in the Western/Northern European context: about 35 to 42 percent of compulsory courses taught at these programmes definitely belong to the legal discipline⁷. Another illustrative point is the composition of faculty teaching core courses. One example already cited was the State/Public Administration Department at one of the largest PA programmes, where close to 100% of faculty have a background in Law, and the situation is similar with the other two programmes.

However, the most telling sign of the vague identity of PA is the official location of PA university programmes in the system of disciplines. The Hungarian Accreditation Committee – the public entity responsible for the accreditation of university programmes – created a classification system of programmes. Each programme submitted for accreditation has to fit into one of the programme categories such as, for example, "Public Administration" and "Public Service". These programme categories are then classified into higher-level "academic branches" reflecting the disciplinary status of the given programme. A review of this classification results in some peculiar findings:

- The programme in Public Administration is classified into "Academic Branch of Legal and Administrative Studies", together with e.g. MA in Law; while
- The programme in Public Service is classified into the "Academic Branch of Economics", along with such programmes as Economic Analysis (Econometrics) and Applied Economics.
- At the same time, in the "Academic Branch of Social Sciences" where such programmes are located as Sociology, Political Sciences, and Social and International Studies no PA/PM related programmes can be found.

⁵ Enrolment figures are based not on actual but planned numbers. Real enrolment is probable to be somewhat smaller than the planned.

⁶ The dimension of this figure is, of course, university × programme (i.e., not "university")

⁷ This finding is based on a survey of compulsory courses. The source of course lists are the web pages of the respective programmes: http://www.bkae.hu/akar/download/aifk_kotelezotantargyak.xls, http://www.law.klte.hu/jati/oktatas/download/mintatanterv_bsc_06_07_1.pdf, and <http://www.geo.info.hu/dokumentumok/mintatanterv/MTIGSZN06.doc>, downloaded 25 September 2006

This weird institutional structure has a twofold significance. On the one hand, it reflects the pre-existing institutional structure of higher education, having been formed in part by the legalist historical traditions of PA education referred to earlier, and in part by chance events and contingencies related to the inter- and intra-organisational micropolitics of influential players of the field. On the other hand, however, it exerts a significant impact on how PA as a field of study is perceived and taught. Clearly, the fact that PA programmes are primarily affiliated to Faculties of State and Legal Sciences or Faculties of Economics is likely to have a decisive, lasting and probably damaging effect on the institutional, epistemological and professional identity and status of the field.

3. The practice of administration and administrative reform⁸

3.1 The method

The aim of this section is to analyse developments in the practice of Hungarian PAR in order to detect and evaluate possible interconnections between PAR and the study of PA overviewed in the previous section.

Much of what happened in the Hungarian public sector under the banner of PMR has been the result of disperse, uncoordinated/"spontaneous" or decentralised ways not packed neatly in any „reform packages". Since the primary focus of this report is the central government level this difficulty is, to some extent, eased by the fact that a number public management modernisation/reform initiatives of the government have been, throughout the entire period, announced in specific Government Resolutions on "Modernisation/Reform of Public Administration". In order to give a comprehensive and well-documented view of the reform packages adopted during the post-transition period a computer aided qualitative analysis of these Government Resolutions was carried out. Some rough and tentative results of this analysis are briefly summarised below.

One may ask why it is that, for the purpose of analysing the interconnections between the study and the practice of administration, not the actual practice of administration, but „reform packages" compiled by the various Cabinets are used⁹. The answer to this question is multiple.

- Conceptually, one may expect a much more direct and visible relationship between the study of PA and ideas/policies on PAR, than between PA and everyday administrative practice. This is so for two reasons. Firstly the actual effects of PA theory on administrative practice are influenced by a number of external factors (intervening or confounding variables) such as institutional and cultural characteristics of administration and the broader political and financial/economic constraints of administrative reforms. Secondly, the same as true the other way around, i.e. when it comes to the effect exerted by administrative practice on PA theory: it is more reasonable to expect such a "fertilising effect" from new initiatives and genuine practices than from age-old routine practices of administration.
- There are also some more practical reasons for using PAR decisions to locate the interconnections between the study and the practice of public administration. Firstly, it is difficult to conceptually identify and to empirically grasp such an extremely versatile phenomenon as "public administration reform"; it is especially so with doing this in a way allowing for possible comparisons across space and/or time. This leads us to a second argument: by analysing such similar, periodically occurring phenomena as government resolutions on PAR a dynamic aspect could be introduced into the analysis; that is, trends of the past fifteen years could to some extent be identified.

⁸ An earlier version of this analysis was presented at the 2006 NISPAcee conference (Hajnal 2006)

⁹ The Government Resolutions analysed were the following: 1026/1992, 1100/1996, 1052/1999, 1057/2001, 1113/2003, and 1052/2005 (the first number always referring to the number of the Resolution while the second one referring to the year in which it was adopted).

Turning now back to the issue of methodology an important detail is that the analysed legal acts all have standard format; namely, they contain a list of individual reform/modernisation measures, or decisions; each one of these measures contain (i) a more or less specified task description, (ii) a deadline, and (iii) a governmental body (usually a ministry) responsible for the implementation of the measure at hand. These reform measures formed the primary unit of analysis.

The analysis was carried out by using computer-aided qualitative analysis software. The purpose of the analysis was to identify important, re-occurring patterns in PAR decisions. This was done by (i) elaborating a relatively detailed coding scheme – containing codes referring to various key aspects of reform measures –, (ii) applying this code scheme to the body of legal texts, and (iii) analyzing the results by grouping/re-grouping of coded reform measures so that a meaningful and interpretable pattern emerges. The analytic process was of course not such a linear process as the one described here, but had an iterative, evolving nature. That is, the coding scheme on which the analyses are based hadn't been elaborated before the coding actually started. Instead, in line with the methodological and conceptual approach of qualitative research/analysis it emerged in the process of a detailed review of the government resolutions (for some further methodological details see the Annex).

3.2 Findings

The below table reports on the number of individual reform measures falling under various sub-categories of NPM.

Table 3: Number of various types of NPM reform measures in subsequent Government Resolutions on PMR

Government resolution	Agencialisat	Decision oriented technique	Downsize	HRM/Incentive mechanisms	Improve/change culture	Introduce alternative/non-bureaucratic coord. mechanisms	Performance measurement	Quality/citizen satisfaction	Regulatory reform/Improve quality of laws	Total: NPM related*	Total no. of measures*
1026/1992	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	3	4	40
1100/1996	0	0	0	2	1	2	0	1	0	5	34
1052/1999	1	4	1	1	1	0	0	3	0	11	34
1057/2001	1	3	1	2	0	0	0	1	4	12	52
1113/2003	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	6	22
1052/2005	0	0	2	0	0	0	1	3	1	7	12
Total:	3	7	4	5	3	2	1	13	8	45	194

* Note that codes are neither mutually exclusive nor jointly exhaustive. (thus e.g. a measure can be coded as 'downsizing' and 'HRM' at the same time). Therefore row totals might not add up to, say, the total number of NPM related measures.

The above data allows for a number of tentative conclusions:

- (a) The overall level of "PMR activity" as measured by the number of reform measures has been constant and high throughout the nineties. After 2001 this level decreased to less than 50% of previous levels.
- (b) The share of NPM-type measures within the overall set of reform measures has been constantly a significantly rising.

- (c) The composition of NPM-type measures has been changing throughout. In the nineties the emphasis was on improving the quality of law-making and, more generally, of governmental decisions by employing various techniques of ex ante policy assessment. In the past few years, however, an increasing emphasis is put on issues of quality and citizen satisfaction and, more recently, to downsizing.

The next table presents the counts of another set of reform measures. These measures are, for one reason or another, more characteristic for the CEE region. Since the nature of some classification codes applied here is far less straightforward it might be useful give some additional explanation on them, in addition to the code descriptions presented in the Annex.

- Legal retrenchment/fine-tuning: This category consists of two sub-categories. Firstly, these measures might have the purpose of the measure is to “fine-tune” or re-shuffle, from a purely legal aspect, the existing body of legal norms governing a given subsystem of the public administration. A typical example of this type of measure is the following: “The bodies created by the Cabinet shall be evaluated from the point of view of their legal status [...] [P]roposals regarding the unification of their legal status should be elaborated” (1026/1992). The second sub-category is when the objective set is merely the creation of a new law affecting broad policy areas, but without setting any specific policy goal. A typical example of this sub-category is “A new, overall scope draft Law on Public Administration Procedures shall be elaborated” (1057/2001).
- Meta-level initiative: These measures assign decision making or policy making responsibilities in broad policy fields without making any reference to the desired content of the policy/decision. E.g. “A Plan on Law Making shall be prepared outlining the important law making tasks for the 1997-1998 period” (1100/1996). Note that “meta-level initiatives” overlap with the category “legal retrenchment/fine-tuning”.
- Organisational retrenchment: These measures aim at re-shuffling existing organisations by changing (i) their organisational structure, (ii) supervisory relationships, or (iii) task structure/policy portfolios. In most of the cases not even the purpose of such re-shuffling is stated (e.g. “The task and competency structure, organisation, [...] and operation of territorial administration bodies shall be reviewed. On the basis of this revision an action plan outlining the necessary changes should be elaborated” (1052/1999). In a smaller number of cases some broad objectives of reshuffling may be given (such as “increasing efficiency”).
- Terminological errors in text: There are some cases where the text of the policy documents suggests that its creators were not aware of the exact meaning of some of the key concepts they use. These concepts usually refer to such – fancy but, in the Hungarian context, largely unknown/alien – issues as cost-benefit analysis or performance assessment. One example is the following. “The [...] preconditions of creating an overarching database system necessary for the conduct of cost-benefit analyses in the entire public sector [involving both administrative bodies and schools, hospitals, etc – G.H.] shall be identified and the first steps towards creating such a database system shall be made” (1057/2001).

The below table illustrates the presence of conventional, “CEE-specific” PMR measures.

Table 4: Number of various types of CEE-specific reform measures

Government resolution	EU conformity	Improve bureaucratic workflow	Legal retrenchment/fine-tuning	Meta-level initiative	Organisational retrenchment	Strengthen bureaucratic control	Technical assistance	Terminological errors in text	Total no. of CEE-specific measures*	Total no. of measures*
1026/1992	0	2	13	7	9	3	1	0	27	40
1100/1996	0	2	9	5	10	1	1	0	19	34
1052/1999	0	1	5	6	7	4	0	2	19	34
1057/2001	4	3	15	5	11	5	0	2	34	52
1113/2003	2	3	3	1	3	0	0	0	12	22
1052/2005	1	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	3	12
Total	7	11	45	26	40	13	2	4	114	194

* Note that codes are neither mutually exclusive nor jointly exhaustive. (thus e.g. a measure can be coded as ‘downsizing’ and ‘HRM’ at the same time). Therefore row totals might not add up to, say, the total number of NPM related measures.

As the table shows a majority of reform measures remained to be “CEE-specific” throughout the examined time period, with a slightly decreasing tendency. It is only the last year (2005) when a significant change in this trend appears, showing an abrupt decrease of this type of measures to about 25%.

Most “CEE-specific” measures fall in one of the three most peculiar categories; namely, legal retrenchment/fine-tuning, organisational retrenchment, and meta-level initiative. It is interesting to note that only a very modest number of reform measures are justified by EU compatibility, although one should keep in mind that coding of the legal texts was based entirely on the explicit content, as opposed to the possible latent motifs of the policy makers.

The results are summarised in the below figure.

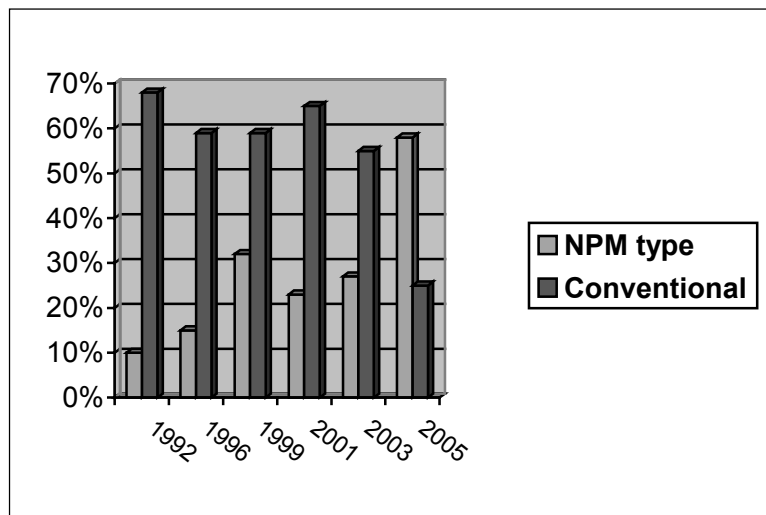


Figure 2: Presence of different types of reform measures in Government Resolutions on PAR, 1992-2005

The figure shows a relatively easy-to-recognise tendency, whereby the presence of NPM-type reform measures grows, more or less at a constant and modest rate, between 1992 and 2003, and the suddenly jumps to an unprecedented high proportion of almost 60 percent. Although it is emphasised that the evaluation or even the mere description of PAR practice is outside the scope of this analysis, it would be misleading not to mention an important circumstance related to the actual implementation of these measures. Behind the façade of “trendy” reform measures there is a huge implementation gap: actual reforms related to the broad realm of NPM are incomparably more modest in number and especially in significance (Hajnal 2005). It is a telling phenomenon that a number of reform measures re-appear in subsequent Government Resolutions without having been implemented at all, while a number of others disappear from the PAR agenda without having ever been seriously implemented.

4. Conclusions

The above findings – often avoiding the discussion of fine details and underlying factors – are, clearly, insufficient for drawing well-grounded and overarching conclusions. However it seems possible to formulate some impressionistic conclusions regarding the nature of changes having taken place in the study and the practice of public administration in Hungary since the transition.

One such impression is that new approaches are increasingly striking roots in both fields (i.e., both the education and the practice). Defining elements of these new approaches include

- a marked difference from the traditional approach of public administration issues, in which the problems and their solutions were primarily seen in terms of (Administrative) Law;
- an increasingly multi-faceted, multidisciplinary understanding of governance issues taking into account the organisational/management, political, economic, financial etc. complexities; and
- a convergence – often catalysed by a more or less direct transfer of ideas, practices and theories – towards the mainstream Western thinking on issues of administration and policy.

This process seems to have an increasing tendency both in the case of the study of PA and in the case of PAR.

This would suggest a causal relationship between PAR and PA education either PAR practice inducing a change in PA thinking and education, or vice versa, new PA theories and graduates increasingly penetrating the administrative system and the reform process itself. However, a more careful examination of findings leads to a different, second impression: it seems that both adjustment process are primarily driven by external factors; more specifically, by an overly emphasis on a formal compliance with the (perceived) expectations of “the West” (and, specifically and increasingly, of the EU).

This impression is supported by several arguments:

- In the case of PA education we have seen that there are an increasing number of increasingly Western-like academic programmes. But the institutional frameworks and often the substantive, content-related features of these programmes are determined much more by opaque micro-political factors related to the actors of the higher education system than by meaningful and rational policy considerations.
- In the case of PAR the situation is similar. Such “fancy” issues as those of quality management and citizen satisfaction – howsoever important issues in administrative systems with decades of experience in liberal democratic politics and in PAR – were dominating the PAR agenda throughout the past few years. At the same time, sometimes even the mere understanding of those ideas and practices are missing from reform decisions, let alone a clear specification of their goals and means or a real consideration of difficulties involved in their implementation.

5. References

1. Gajduschek, György (2006): A közszołgálat harminc éve ["Civil Service in Hungary. Trends in the Past Thirty Years"]. MKI/Hungarian Institute of Public Administration: Research Report
2. Gajduschek, György and György Hajnal (2000): Evaluation of the Hungarian General Civil Service Training Program, LGI Discussion Papers No. 16
3. Hajnal, György (2006): Public management reforms in Hungary, NISPAcee 14th Annual Conference, Ljubljana, Slovenia, 11-13 May 2006
4. Hajnal, György (2005): The spirit of management reforms: Towards building an explanatory model of NPM, Public Management Review 7:4 pp. 495-513
5. Hajnal, György (2003): Diversity and convergence: A quantitative analysis of European Public Administration education programs, Journal of Public Affairs Education 9:4 pp. 245-258
6. Hajnal, György (2000): Public Administration education in Hungary, In: Verheijen-Nemec (2000) pp. 135-152
7. OFIK (2006): Országos Felvételi Információs Központ [National Centre for University Admissions] www.felvi.hu (downloaded on 20 September 2006)
8. Verheijen, Tony and Juraj Nemec (2000) (ed.): Building higher education programmes in Public Administration in CEE countries, Bratislava: NISPAcee
9. Verheijen, Tony and Bernadette Connaughton (1999) (ed.): Higher education programmes in Public Administration: Ready for the challenge of Europeanisation? Limerick: Centre for European Studies, University of Limerick

6. Annex: The coding scheme used for analysing Government Resolutions on PAR

The coding scheme on which the analyses are based hadn't been elaborated before the coding actually started. Instead, in line with the methodological and conceptual approach of qualitative research/analysis it emerged in the process of a detailed review of the government resolutions.

The code structure used – which is actually a semantic network of related concepts interconnected in a multiplicity of ways – is a simple one; it includes one type of relationships, namely, '(Code X is a *sub-category of* (Code Y)' or, conversely, "(Code X) is *higher-order category encompassing* (Code Y)".

Note that these codes are, in general, neither mutually exclusive nor jointly exhaustive. That is, several codes can be assigned to any one reform measure.

The codes and their relationships are as follows.

1.) Code name: Acquire/disseminate know-how or analyse policy options

Code description: Promote or conduct R&D type activities/capacities

> There are no higher level codes of this code

> There are no special sub-codes of this code

2.) Code name: Affects central government

Code description: Measure primarily affects central government

> There are no higher level codes of this code

> Special sub-codes of this code are: agencialisatıon, regulatory reform/improve quality of laws, and strengthen strategic/political steering

3.) Code name: Affects local governments

Code description: Measure primarily affects local governments

> There are no higher level codes of this code

> Special sub-codes of this code are: group: lg restructuring, lg: amalgamate, lg: decentralise, and lg: resturct./other

4.) Code name: Affects NGOs

Code description: Measure primarily affects NGOs

- > There are no higher level codes of this code
- > There are no special sub-codes of this code

5.) Code name: Affects the broader public

Code description: Primarily affects broader/undefined segments of the public (e.g. building public support or creating public awareness)

- > There are no higher level codes of this code
- > There are no special sub-codes of this code

6.) Code name: Agencialisation

Code description: Split ministerial organisations according to policy vs. implementation tasks

- > Higher level codes of this code are: affects central government and group: npm related
- > There are no special sub-codes of this code

7.) Code name: CEE-specific

Code description: Measure is more specific to the CEE region, as opposed to pure NPM measures

- > There are no higher level codes of this code
- > Special sub-codes of this code are: eu conformity, improve bureaucratic workflow, legal retrenchment/fine-tuning, meta-level initiative, organisational retrenchment, strengthen bureaucratic control, technical assistance, and terminological errors in text

8.) Code name: Citizen rights

Code description: Promote citizen rights

- > There are no higher level codes of this code
- > There are no special sub-codes of this code

9.) Code name: decision oriented technique

Code description: Increase the capacity of using policy analysis and evaluation techniques

- > Higher level codes of this code are: group: npm related
- > There are no special sub-codes of this code

10.) Code name: Downsize

Code description: Decrease the personnel/budget of administrative/public sector organisations

- > Higher level codes of this code are: group: npm related
- > There are no special sub-codes of this code

11.) Code name: E-government

Code description: Promote e-government capabilities

- > There are no higher level codes of this code
- > There are no special sub-codes of this code

12.) Code name: EU conformity

Code description: Ensure conformity with EU administrative requirements (restricted to cases where EU is explicitly referred to in the text)

- > Higher level codes of this code are: cee-specific
- > There are no special sub-codes of this code

13.) Code name: Evaluate existing organisations/functions/policies

No code description

- > There are no higher level codes of this code
- > There are no special sub-codes of this code

14.) Code name: Group: LG Restructuring

Code description: A set of lower-level codes aiming at the modification of LG structures and/or functions

- > Higher level codes of this code are: affects local governments
- > Special sub-codes of this code are: lg: amalgamate, lg: decentralise, and lg: restrurt./other

15.) Code name: Group: NPM related

Code description: A group of lower-level codes belonging to the "NPM-universe"

- > There are no higher level codes of this code
- > Special sub-codes of this code are: agencialisation, decision oriented technique, downsize, hrm/incentive mechanisms, improve/change culture, introduce alternative/non-bureaucratic coord. mechanisms, performance measurement, quality/citizen satisfaction, and regulatory reform/improve quality of laws

16.) Code name: HRM/CSS

Code description: Development of HRM practices and/or institutions (only non-incentives-related measures, such as training)

- > There are no higher level codes of this code
- > There are no special sub-codes of this code

17.) Code name: HRM/Incentive mechanisms

Code description: Development of HRM practices and/or institutions (only incentives related measures)

- > Higher level codes of this code are: group: npm related
- > There are no special sub-codes of this code

18.) Code name: improve bureaucratic workflow

Code description: Measure promoting the daily operation of classic, Weberian bureaucracies

- > Higher level codes of this code are: cee-specific
- > There are no special sub-codes of this code

19.) Code name: Improve ICT infrastructure

No code description

- > There are no higher level codes of this code
- > There are no special sub-codes of this code

20.) Code name: Improve/change culture

Code description: Promoting a "better" culture in public administration organisations

- > Higher level codes of this code are: group: npm related
- > There are no special sub-codes of this code

21.) Code name: Introduce alternative/non-bureaucratic coord. mechanisms

Code description: Promoting non-hierarchical coordination mechanisms between administrative organisations (such as contract-type relationships or information provision)

- > Higher level codes of this code are: group: npm related
- > There are no special sub-codes of this code

22.) Code name: legal retrenchment/fine-tuning

Code description: Does not involve the case when law drafting is only a means of implementing already elaborated policies. Rather, it refers to cases where the actual purpose is (i) legal fine-tuning or (ii) legal (re-)definition/clarification etc. w/o clear policy targets referred to

- > Higher level codes of this code are: cee-specific
- > There are no special sub-codes of this code

23.) Code name: LG: Amalgamate

Code description: Decreasing the number of LGs

- > Higher level codes of this code are: group: lg restructuring and affects local governments
- > There are no special sub-codes of this code

24.) Code name: LG: Decentralise

Code description: Increasing the autonomy and/or the importance of existing LGs

- > Higher level codes of this code are: group: lg restructuring and affects local governments
- > There are no special sub-codes of this code

25.) Code name: LG: Restruct./Other

Code description: Measure (i) aimed at changing the existing structure/functions of LGs but (ii) not specifically promoting either LG amalgamation or further decentralisation

- > Higher level codes of this code are: group: lg restructuring and affects local governments
- > There are no special sub-codes of this code

26.) Code name: Limit mushrooming of organisations and functions

Code description: Control the growth of administrative organisations and/or units

> There are no higher level codes of this code

> There are no special sub-codes of this code

27.) Code name: meta-level initiative

Code description: Decision/policy making in broad policy fields as assigned without any specific reference to the desired content of the policy

> Higher level codes of this code are: cee-specific

> There are no special sub-codes of this code

28.) Code name: organisational retrenchment

Code description: Changing the (i) structure, (ii) supervisory relationship or (iii) task portfolio of existing administrative organisations or a set of them

> Higher level codes of this code are: cee-specific

> There are no special sub-codes of this code

29.) Code name: Performance measurement

Code description: Promote capacities of measuring organisation level performance

> Higher level codes of this code are: group: npm related

> There are no special sub-codes of this code

30.) Code name: Quality/citizen satisfaction

Code description: Promote the application of quality management techniques oriented to improving citizen/client satisfaction

> Higher level codes of this code are: group: npm related

> There are no special sub-codes of this code

31.) Code name: Regulatory reform/Improve quality of laws

Code description: (i) Promote the application of techniques aimed at increasing the quality of regulation (Regulatory Impact Analysis) or (ii) decrease the regulatory burden resulting from existing regulations

> Higher level codes of this code are: affects central government and group: npm related

> There are no special sub-codes of this code

32.) Code name: Separate politics and administration

Code description: Elaborate and/or apply solutions for increasing the political neutrality and stability of government administration

> There are no higher level codes of this code

> There are no special sub-codes of this code

33.) Code name: strengthen bureaucratic control

Code description: Promote the application of techniques of traditional Weberian bureaucratic control

> Higher level codes of this code are: cee-specific

> There are no special sub-codes of this code

34.) Code name: Strengthen strategic/political steering

Code description: Strengthen the strategic coherence of (usually central government) organisations and activities as opposed to the co-existence of almost independent sectoral/ministeria/organisational policies and interests

> Higher level codes of this code are: affects central government

> There are no special sub-codes of this code

35.) Code name: Technical assistance

Code description: International technical assistance is mentioned in the text

> Higher level codes of this code are: cee-specific

> There are no special sub-codes of this code

36.) Code name: Terminological errors in text

Code description: Public Management terms are used in a way suggesting a lack of awareness regarding the actual meaning of the term(s)

> Higher level codes of this code are: cee-specific

> There are no special sub-codes of this code

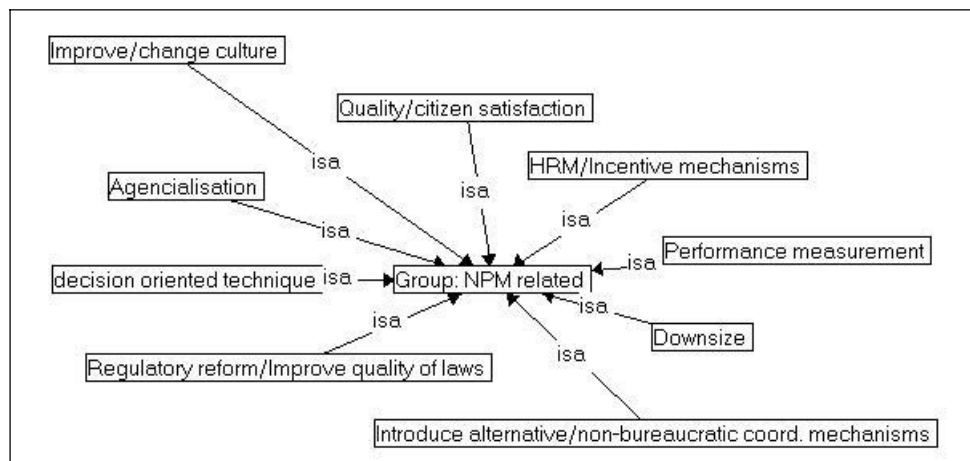


Figure 3: NPM-related codes

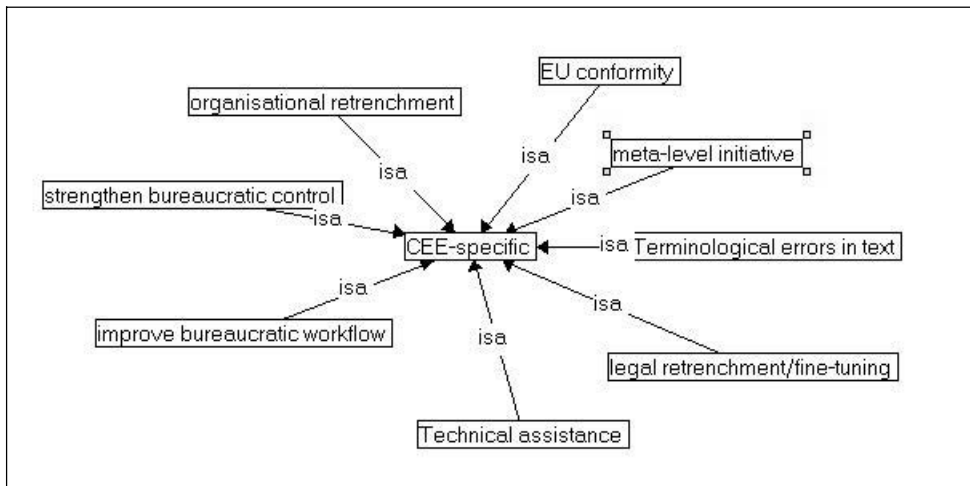


Figure 4: CEE-specific codes