

PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION TASKS AND REFORMS IN HUNGARY: RESPONSES TO CHALLENGES OF THE INFORMATION SOCIETY

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ABSTRACT: *The study starts from the tasks of public administration, and then takes turns with the challenges of the information society and the implemented public administration reforms in developed countries. It states that in the last thirty years or so, reforms have been implemented according to three theoretical models: from the point of view of the technical approach, the value and participation-based approach, and the regulatory approach. Accordingly, we have witnessed the realization of three reform trends in recent decades: New Public Management, Good Governance, New Weberism. Before 2010, the Hungarian public administration basically implemented the characteristics of New Public Management, and after 2010, New Weberism and is currently implementing them. Regarding the future, according to the author's point of view, three concepts should be at the center of public administration reforms: partnership, self-sufficiency and security.*

KEYWORDS:

public administration tasks; public administration reforms; Hungarian answers; information society.

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1. INTRODUCTION

According to the classical (traditional) European understanding, *administrative law is the law of the executive power*, the general task of which is to organize the practical implementation of the state's will expressed in the legislature, with a professional apparatus, towards the society as a whole. The *tasks of public administration* in the past millennia and centuries - not only in European countries - *have continuously changed and are changing*, because the circumstances that determined and still determine the tasks of public administration have also changed continuously. Which are these circumstances? In our opinion, the followings, just to list: the development of the social division of labour, the development of economic and political conditions, the intentions and methods of the party(ies) winning the elections, and the development of administrative technique and technology.¹

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¹ See András TORMA (ed.) *Public Administration Law 1. Hungarian Public Administration Law General Part I.* University of Miskolc Press Miskolc, 2021. Chapter 2 of the university note.

2. THE TASKS OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION IN HUNGARY

In the last two hundred years or so, literature has developed many ways to systematize the ever-increasing administrative tasks. Even an outline of these would exceed the framework available to us, so we will refrain from it. Here and now, we are only recording our position. According to this, *nowadays, in Hungary* (and in Europe), *public administration tasks* can be divided into six tasks, and six task groups within them, as follows:

1.) External defence tasks

The earliest and most important task of every state is to preserve its territorial integrity and population, so it is clear that this is also at the forefront of public administration tasks. The performance of external defence tasks ensures the invulnerability of the state's territory against external armed attacks. This task is to be performed by the national defence organizational system.² One element of this is the organizations specifically performing public administration tasks (organizations managing the national defence: the President of the Republic, the Government and the Ministry of National Defence), and the other element is the national defence organization itself, the Hungarian National Defence and its organs.³

2.) Performance of police and internal protection tasks

In addition to external protection, the oldest and most important task of states is policing and internal protection, i.e., creating and maintaining peace and security within the country.⁴

a.) The police task group includes the tasks of creating public order and public safety, as well as disaster prevention. In the case of both types of tasks, the public administration bodies - the Ministry of the Interior, the Police, and the Disaster Management - directly perform these tasks themselves, i.e. maintaining internal order, crime prevention and law enforcement, as well as fire prevention and actual firefighting tasks. However, we can meet, in both areas, the helpful contribution of members of society and self-active groups, in which the strong public interest nature of the task stands out. Examples include the operation of the Civil Guard and the Volunteer Fire Department in the towns.

b.) The internal defence task group includes the protection of the country's borders and the protection of the state's security. These tasks are carried out by independent, separate organizational systems operating under the control of the Ministry of the Interior - the Border Hunter Regiment of the Standby Police and partly by civilian secret services - which perform actual protection and, to a lesser extent, crime prevention, law enforcement and official law enforcement tasks.

² See Pál KÁDÁR: Timely legal and administrative problems of the management and leadership of the Hungarian Armed Forces. (Doctoral thesis). Miklós Zrínyi National Defence University, Budapest, 2016.

³ The external defence tasks of the Hungarian public administration and its provision, see, for example, Julia HORNYACSEK (Ed.): Practical experiences of the operation of the defence administration in the light of today's challenges. Dialóg Campus Publishing, Budapest, 2019.

⁴ On the interpretation of the concept of policing, see, for example, DR. Géza FINSZTER: Theory of policing. National University of Public Service, Budapest, 2014, and Zoltán BALLA: The evolution of the concept and content of law enforcement. the study. <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/356664385.pdf> (Downloaded: 5 September 2022)

3.) Foreign policy and foreign economic tasks

a.) **The foreign policy** task group primarily includes the development of interstate relations, participation in international organizations and the protection of Hungarian citizens residing abroad. These tasks are carried out jointly by the highest bodies of the public administration (the Government and the Ministry of Foreign Trade and Foreign Affairs), as well as the foreign representation bodies.

b.) **In the foreign trade** task group, the task of the public administration is to organize international economic cooperation, participate in the work of international economic organizations, furthermore support and promote the development of foreign trade with economic (material) and official means (through legislation and law enforcement). These tasks are also carried out jointly by the highest bodies of the public administration (the Government and the Ministry of Foreign Trade and Foreign Affairs), as well as by foreign representation bodies.

4.) Organisation of the economy

In addition to maintaining the external and internal security, the management and organization of economic life is an extremely important public administrative task, as this ensures the material conditions of state and social existence. The state and the public administration do this in a *dual capacity*: as an exerciser of public power and as an owner.⁵

a.) Within the framework of the *public economic management* task group, the public administrative bodies define the management environment, the limits of economic activity, the prices of products and services, and the limits of the economic organization tasks of the public administrative bodies within the framework of the law, through *legislation* (decree). The other part of the scope of public authority duties is made up of the duties of the law enforcers of the public administration bodies, especially the law enforcers of the authorities. In the course of official law enforcement, public administration bodies directly influence economic activity: for example, by authorizing, limiting or terminating the given economic activity.

b.) The group of tasks for the organisation of the economy of *ownership* is an administrative task, depending on the size of public ownership. This task is carried out by public authorities with the aim of exploiting public property in the public interest, which is manifested by the *creation, operation, and termination of state-owned or state-participated, profit-oriented business entities* (business companies).

The establishment and maintenance of basically non-profit-oriented economic organizations performing *technical (material) public services* can be highlighted as a special administrative task.⁶ There are *two types* of these. It is *one of the public utility service bodies* that provide energy supply, public drinking water and sewerage services, transport and communications, as well as postal services. *Another is the communal service bodies*, which primarily take care of the maintenance of public cemeteries, the collection

⁵ See Miklós IMRE (Ed.): Public administration and economy. HVG – ORAC Publishing House, Budapest, 2007.

⁶ The characteristics of public services are as follows: every citizen is entitled to them as a subject, they are indispensable for the quality of life, their use is usually so-called it can be done through exclusive service organizations, the possibilities of its use are fixed by law, it does not involve the exercise of public power, it assumes community organization, regulation or control to some extent, and it is supported by the state (municipal) budget. See more about this in András LAPSÁNSZKY: The monograph entitled Public administration scientific foundations of public services. Dialóg Campus Publishing, Budapest, 2019.

and management of municipal waste, the cleaning of public areas, the provision of district heating, the maintenance of social rental apartments and chimney sweeping.

5.) Management or supervision of educational and cultural institutions, as well as social and health institutions

The name "institute" means a type of organization in Hungary, in which the purpose of the activity is not the accumulation of wealth within the framework of management (as in the case of the company), but the so-called provision of non-material, *human public services* (education, cultural public services, social and health services). To this end, the public administration bodies *establish the state* educational, research, cultural, artistic, social and health institutes, provide them with financial means, and manage their activities. In the case of *non-state* (i.e., church- or privately-owned) institutes that carry out such activities, instead of the management role of the public administration, "only" *supervision* is carried out.⁷

6.) Internal management, supervision, control and administration tasks

The public administration has not only the external tasks mentioned in points 1 – 5, i.e. towards society, but also towards *the public administration organizational system*, the so-called internal tasks as well. In summary, these internal management, supervision, control and administrative tasks can be designated, which *ensure the unity of the public administration*: its uniform organization and operation, as well as the availability of public administrative documents.

3. CHALLENGES OF THE INFORMATION SOCIETY AND PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION RESPONSES IN GENERAL: PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION REFORMS

The last two decades of the 20th century and the first two decades of the 21st century were the period of the formation and development of the information society. In this era of human development, *innovation technology*:

- focuses no longer on the (steam) machine, but on the computer,
- has a basic function not to replace and supplement physical labour, but to replace and supplement intellectual labour,
- has an informational productive power, the aim of which is to increase the capacity for optimal action and choice, instead of a productive power which is not even a material productive power, the aim of which is to increase output per capita.⁸

⁷ Control is a power (legal) relationship between two bodies in which the controller can enforce his will in relation to the controlled body. For this, the legislation provides the management authorizations. Typically, the followings: the right to regulate, the right to instruct, the right to review acts, the right to decide on specific and individual cases, and the right to control. On the other hand, supervision - even though it is also a power (law) relationship between two bodies - means a significantly smaller possibility of influence than management, because it is usually precisely the strongest management powers - the right to regulate, the right to give instructions and the right to decide in individual cases - they are missing from it. For more information on this, see Chapters 1 and 10 of the literature referred to in footnote 1, as well as András TORMA: The relationship system between public administrations, with particular regard to management and supervision. Hungarian Public Administration LIV. year Issue 8 (2004)

⁸ MASUDA, Yoneji: The Information Society. OMIKK, Budapest, 1988. p. 124. We note that Masuda used twenty indicators to compare the industrial and information societies, of which we have highlighted only three here.

Taking this into account, in the age of the information society, the question is no longer whether there are or will be pieces of information (i.e. useful, new knowledge), but where it can be found, from what source can it be known as quickly as possible.

In the information society, *administrative tasks are changing and increasing significantly*.⁹ Basically, because society's expectations of the state and public administration are increasing. There are, of course, different reasons for this in each country, but globalization and the rapid spread of modern information and communication technologies can be demonstrated in all countries.¹⁰ All of these facts and circumstances stimulated public administration reforms in the past decades, but they are still stimulating today.

The literature traditionally divides the *causes of the administrative reforms* implemented in modern states into internal and external causes.¹¹ The *internal causes* include causes within the given country, while the external causes include modernization efforts induced by facts and circumstances outside the given country. An internal cause can be a change in the social order that imagines state (public administration) tasks and their distribution in a radically new way. As an example, the situation in Hungary after World War II can be mentioned, when Act XX of 1949 on the Socialist Constitution law stated the principle of the unity of state power based on the exclusivity of state property and stated that the state organization - and as part of it the state administration (public administration) - must be built based on the principle of democratic centralism. The Constitution also stipulated that the territorial and local bodies of state power will be the councils, instead of the municipalities. Internal reasons include the system change in years 1989/1990, which, as a negation of the previous (socialist-communist) system based on state property, proclaimed the sanctity of private property and asserted the principle of the division of powers, democratically built the Hungarian state organization and transformed the Hungarian public administration as part of it. An *external cause* could be globalization, the penetration of modern information and communication techniques and technologies into public administration, but it could also be the economic crisis of 2008/2009, the uncontrolled migration started in 2015, the Covid-19 pandemic of 2020, or joining an international organization, and the list could be continued.¹²

⁹ According to Zoltán Magyary, the transformation and growth of public administration tasks can be seen from the 1830s onwards. Magyary wrote about this in 1931: "The tasks of public administration have changed a lot in the last 100 years, both quantitatively and qualitatively. While for a long time the tasks of the state were only considered to be the maintenance of internal order, the administration of justice and the prevention of external enemies, in the last 100 years, positive tasks have been added to these negative tasks: cultural, economic and social tasks, which already exceed the size of the former tasks many times over..." Zoltán MAGYARY: Ensuring the efficiency and effectiveness of the Hungarian public administration. Athenaeum Irodalmi és Nyomdaipari RT., Budapest, 1931. in: The development and organization of public administration (ed.: CSUTH Sándor és Mátyás GÁSPÁR) MTA Allamtudományi Programiroda Budapest, 1988. p. 38.

¹⁰ See for example Róbert PINTÉR (Ed.): The information society. From theory to political practice. Thought - New Mandate Publisher, Budapest, 2007.

¹¹ See, for example, Márton GELLÉN: The future of public administration in the next decade. in: The long-term impact of the epidemic on Hungarian public administration (Editor: Ádám RIXER) Károli Gáspár Református University Faculty of State and Law, Budapest, 2021. p. 27.

¹² According to Professor Attila ÁGH, institutional convergence has taken place (is taking place) in the European Public Administration Area, which strongly points in the direction of homogenization in three basic dimensions. 1. Unification of territorial levels in the NUTS system and decentralization. 2. The loosening of internal borders and the strengthening of external borders. 3. The formation of the "unified legal area". See more about this: Attila

By the 1980s, in the developed countries of the world it became clear that *the state and public administration based on classical (Weberian) foundations could no longer adequately respond* to the challenges of globalization and modern information and communication techniques and technologies.¹³ Exactly to the most important question. How can the contradiction be resolved between society's (citizens') growing demand for state responsibility, on the one hand, and - in parallel - the demand for tax reductions on the other hand?¹⁴ It was clear that there was only one way: by changing *the perception of the current state and public administration*. In order to change, *state and public administration reforms* must be implemented. The developed countries of the world saw (see) this as feasible according to *three theoretical models*:

- the technical approach-,
- the value- and participation-based approach, and
- through the regulatory approach.¹⁵

a.) The technical approach

The **essence** of this is the recognition that public administration is also administration, and consequently there is no fundamental difference between private administration and public administration. That is why private administration methods and solutions can and should be used in public administration as well: for example, outsourcing of tasks, competition for task performance, validation of efficiency aspects, etc. The *danger* of the solutions and methods used by supporters of this trend is that public administration is only considered as a technical problem, so the social consequences of public administration are not taken into account, as phrased by Zoltán Magyary: "public administration is for the people."¹⁶ The name of the reform direction: *New Public Management* (hereinafter: NPM).

Since the trend - based on its name - is "new", firstly that shall be examine what this novelty is compared to. The answer is obviously that compared to the public administration based on the (classical) Weberian bureaucratic model operating in modern democratic states. Let's examine what *characterizes the Weberian model*. The followings:

➤ public affairs covering the whole of social life are managed by qualified and competent civil servants who carry out their duties as a profession,

ÁGH: The foundations of the Hungarian public administration reform. in: New perspectives of public administration reform (Editor: Attila ÁGH – István SOMOGYVÁRI) Új Mandátum Könyvkiadó, Budapest, 2006. 7 – p. 28.

¹³ See for example NOAM, Eli M. - WOLFSON Alex, J. (eds.): Globalism and Localism in Telecommunications. Amsterdam, Elsevir Science B.V. 1997.

¹⁴ There is only one figure to illustrate this: in the OECD member states, welfare expenditures accounted for 33% of the total budget expenditure GDP in 1970, in contrast to 44% a quarter of a century later, in 1995! Source: <https://adoc.pub/xii-new-public-management.html> (accessed on October 5, 2021)

¹⁵ György GAJDUSCHEK: Modern public management. in: Competitive examination medium-level teaching and training aid material. Government Personnel Service and Public Administration Training Center, Budapest, 2009. 158-161. page It should be emphasized that in practical life these are "only" main types, i.e. they are not mutually exclusive modes! What's more: in practice, they usually apply side by side. For more information, see András TORMA: Additions to the theoretical background and main trends of public management reforms. in: Publicationes Universitatis Miskolcensis. Sectio Juridica et Politica. Tomus XXVIII. Miskolc University Press. Miskolc, 2010, and OSBORNE David - GAEBLER, Ted: New paths in public administration. Kossuth Publishing House, Budapest, 1994.

¹⁶ Zoltán MAGYARY: Hungarian public administration. Hungarian Government Administration, Royal Hungarian University Printing House, Budapest, 1942.

- civil servants carry out their activities within the powers and responsibilities defined by legislation, in official organizations, in compliance with the official route, and in a hierarchically structured institutional system,
- the public administration as a whole is subordinate to the laws, works within the legal framework, and can only do what it is legally authorized to do,
- thanks to the above, the public administration operates in a predictable, professional and open manner that can be followed by its customers,
- overall, the public administration far surpasses the public administration of previous eras in all respects, just as large-scale industrial plants surpassed medieval manufactories.

A prerequisite for the application of the Weberian model is the conscious and consistent separation of public and private affairs, as well as the placing of public affairs above private affairs. As this was not or only partially done in the Anglo-Saxon countries due to historical reasons, it was considered necessary to implement corrections in this group of countries. As a consequence of the corrections, the development of different principles of public and private administration, or even the separation of public and private law, did not become necessary. "Along with this, the public administration literature accepted the public administration of all modern democratic states - up to and including the 1980s - as basically Weberian, with the characteristics outlined above."¹⁷

Therefore, *what characterizes the "new" public administration*, compared to Weber's "old" public administration?¹⁸ The following four circumstances:

- **Changing the terminology**, the name. The term "Public administration" was replaced by the term "Public management", and in order to make the novelty even more obvious, it was added with the adjective "new". This is how the term New Public Management was born. However, with the change in terminology, they also tried to express a change in content, as the name now also referred to the adoption of the principles and methods of private administration (business management). All of this was followed by the insertion of a whole series of concepts used in business life into the public administration vocabulary. For example, consumer instead of customer, service instead of administration, governance instead of government, etc.

- **Changes made regarding the organizational structure**. This primarily affected the central public administration, namely in two directions. On the one hand, administrative tasks were outsourced to the newly established so-called "quasi-administrative bodies", for the agencies, and on the other hand, they deconcentrated - i.e. handed over to the regional state administrative bodies - a part of the tasks and powers of the central public administration.

- **They made the operation open**, in two ways. On the one hand, the confidentiality of data, information, and records were lifted and the records were made accessible, and on the other hand, the population was increasingly involved in the management of public affairs. Furthermore, enforcement of the requirement of efficiency resulted in a change in the field of operation, primarily through the introduction of the performance principle.

¹⁷ Lajos LŐRINCZ: Administrative reforms: myths and reality. *Közigazgatási Szemle* 2007/2. no. 4, p. 4.

¹⁸ There is a library of literature on the differences between the "old" and the "new" administration. See for example LYNN, Laurence: *Public Management: old and new*. Routledge, New York - London, 2006.

- In terms of personnel policy, the *opening up of public service systems* was a fundamental change. The goal was to create public service systems that resemble the business (competition) sector in terms of their nature: there are no special prerequisites for employment, career advancement and remuneration does not depend on time spent rather on performance, civil servants can be easily dismissed, etc.

If we want to summarize the principles of NPM, we can say that its tenets can be derived from only two premises: minimize and market. *Minimization* does not apply to the state or the public administration as a whole, but only to the economic role of the state. The basic assumption is that if the economy is freed from state bonds, its development will accelerate, and this will create the precondition for increasing social welfare. And **marketization** means that the power role of the public administration must be reduced, and its toolbox must be supplemented with the tools of the business (private) sector, and competition must also be introduced in the public administration, eliminating monopolies.¹⁹

b.) The value- and participation-based approach

This trend is based on the fact that state (administrative) decision-making is not the prerogative of the bureaucracy, therefore *the stakeholders and those affected must be involved in decision-making*. We need an open, transparent and accountable state (public administration) based on partnership - that is, based on the coordination of the state (the public administration) and the citizen. The *danger* of enforcing this position is that it can only be implemented in states with a strong middle class. The reform direction is called: *Good Governance* (hereinafter: GG).

The trend of "Good Governance" approaches public administration and the solution of public tasks based on values and participation. It believes that social problems shall be primarily solved by citizens and their organizations created on a voluntary basis with the involvement of so-called non-governmental organizations (NGOs), therefore they must be encouraged to play a greater role (participate⁹ in making public policy decisions. It is clear from this that the *trend places citizens and civil organizations at the centre of community decision-making*, as opposed to the previously discussed NPM, which focuses on the market and market mechanisms. The *proposals* of the GG trend can be summarized as follows:

- The mediating role of the state (public administration) must be increased. You should strive to make your decisions preferably not in a power (public authority) role, but rather to mediate between social groups representing different interests. In this way, compromises can be reached that serve the common good, i.e. which are "good for everyone".
- Community decisions must be formed during serious debates and search for compromises, and instead of (in addition to) the content of the decisions, the process of making the decisions must become a value.
- The state must support, help and encourage the involvement of citizens and civil organizations in governance by various means.
- The ultimate control of public sector decisions is transparency and publicity. The public is operated by masses of properly informed and informed citizens.²⁰

¹⁹ Lajos LŐRINCZ: i. m. p. 6

²⁰ György GAJDUSCHEK: i. m. p. 158 - 160.

Two important problems can be mentioned in connection with the trend strongly supported by the UN. *One* is that in order to achieve the desired goals, a developed society is needed where the population is not burdened with the problems of everyday living and is also sufficiently informed and self-aware. He wants and wants to take advantage of the opportunities for input provided by the state (the public administration). *The other* thing is that - although the democratic values of the trend are indisputable - the effectiveness of the democratic decision-making process and the adequacy of its quality in the era of the information society is a big question. It is clear that truly democratic decision-making is often difficult, slow and expensive, while modern information and communication technologies already enable quick and cheap decision-making.

c.) The regulatory approach

At the heart of this trend - in contrast to the previous ones - is the idea that problems arising in society must be solved by (state) regulation, which means not only *stronger legislation*, but also *effective law enforcement and control*. Of course, the application of this trend also has its dangers: regulation can become an end in itself, tying citizens and the economy in a bind. The name of the reform trend: New Weberism (hereinafter: NW).²¹

The basic principles of the trend were formulated as a response to the distortions of New Public Management around the turn of the millennium. At a time when reservations against the NPM trend were already growing stronger. The *essence of the statement* expressed by NW is precisely that social and public sector problems cannot be effectively solved by the minimization and marketization promoted by NPM, that is, by applying the tools and methods of the private sector and market conditions in the public sector. In fact, on the contrary! The state and *the public administration as part of it should not be weakened, but strengthened!* A strong state can offset the harmful consequences of market processes and their impact, balance market distortions, and do all this democratically and by enforcing the principle of partnership, in the interest of the majority, in the service of the public good. His *proposals* for this are as follows:

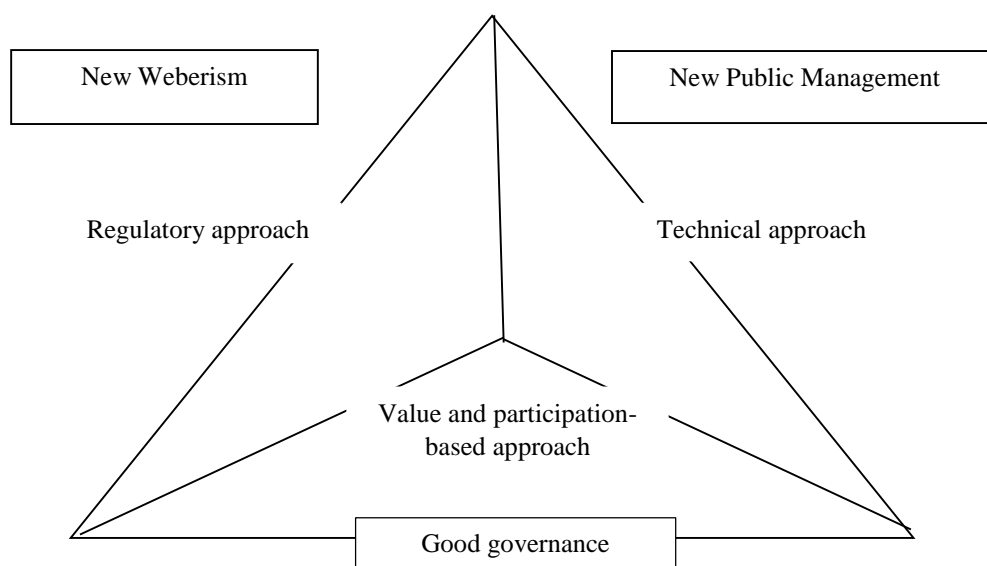
- As a "result" of the effects of NPM, the weakened state and public administration must be strengthened, primarily through public authority intervention (i.e. legislation and law enforcement) and the restoration of moral values.
- The status of legality and high professional standards in public life and public administration must be restored.
- Citizen- and customer-friendly public administration must be operated. One that treats citizens as partners and not subordinates, while maintaining legality, high professional standards, and the rank and authority of the public administration.
- In the performance of community tasks, the principle of openness must be enforced, and on the other hand, the principle of efficiency must be enforced as a priority when using material resources.

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²¹ It might be justified, but it would certainly be fascinating to know and analyse the detailed characteristics of these trends and the concrete cases of their realisation, but unfortunately the narrow framework available to us does not allow this.

The three models (approaches) discussed above and their interconnections are summarized in the following diagram ²²:

**The relationship between the state (public administration) and society
at the turn of the millennium**



4. NEW CHALLENGES OF THE 21st CENTURY AND HUNGARIAN RESPONSES: CONCLUSIONS

It is well known that, as a result of the collapse of the Soviet Union, regime change took place in 1989/1990 in Hungary as well as in other countries, so it is advisable to "step back from the table" and trace back the implemented state and public administration reforms to 1990.

Regarding *territorial reforms of the Hungarian public administration*, it is reasonable to divide the last thirty years into three stages, as follows. ²³

The *first era* took place between 1990 and 1994. Its starting point was the creation of the first self-government law in 1990, which essentially meant a system change in Hungarian territorial management (public administration). The *second era, between 1990 and 2010*, was an essentially unsuccessful era of reform concepts aimed at correcting the self-government system created in the first. The *third era* is related to the activities of the

²² Source: GAJDUSCHEK György: i. m. p. 166. The figure has been slightly reworked to make it easier to understand, but without changing the essence.

²³ Ilona PÁLNÉ KOVÁCS: The main stages of the Hungarian territorial administrative reforms. in: Ilona PÁLNÉ KOVÁCS, Pál Václav Václav Regional Planning and Regional Administration in Hungary. Dialóg Campus Kiadó, 2016. p. 73 - 85.

new parliament elected in 2010, which is connected to the central public administration placed on new foundations, the Basic Law of 2011 and the new self-government law, other profound reforms (for example new procedural law - in Hungarian the so-called Ákr.), and in the context of the implementation of a new regional management and governance model.

If we *interpret the administrative reform* after the regime change in *its entirety* and go beyond the territorial reforms discussed above, then the individual Hungarian reform eras, as milestones and their main characteristics, are as follows:²⁴

1.) The period between 1990 and 1998

What characterized this era? Downsizing of state property (privatization) and private property becoming dominant. The principle of the unity of state power was replaced by the division of power, the establishment of a multi-party system, the creation of a democratic institutional and legal system: among them the establishment of the Constitutional Court and the State Audit Office, the establishment of the local self-government system. Hungary became a member of the Council of Europe.

2.) The period between 1998 and 2004

What characterized this era? Hungary started EU accession negotiations in 1998 and became a member of NATO in 1999. The accession negotiations were completed in 2002 and Hungary became a member of the EU in 2004. The state and, as a part of it, the public administration institutional system, and the national economy were prepared for EU accession. The era was characterized by the dominance of top-down and outside-in reforms. Serious political and professional debates about the tasks and organizational system of the public administration, since the country became a member of a Community that has an institutional and legal system above the member states, through the partial transfer of the sovereignty of the member states.

3.) The period between 2004 and 2010

What characterized this era? The first years of Hungarian EU membership: debates on the reorganization and reform of public administration continue in the spirit of regionalism, as do efforts to create a "minimal state": privatization, outsourcing of public administration tasks, strong state support for PPP projects, etc., etc. In summary: the *victory of the NPM trend* was implemented in the spirit of the "Technical approach" seen earlier. As a result, these liberal reforms resulted in a situation close to financial bankruptcy for Hungary. As indicated by a document written in 2017 written by the European Commission: "The member states that joined the EU in 2004 carried out significant public administration reforms in the spirit of preparation... Years after accession, however, the momentum of reforms in several of them broke down. The Administrative change proved to be volatile and fragmented... Strategic planning and coordination in Greece, Cyprus and Hungary are the worst... The overall governance index showed a worsening trend in fourteen member states, including Hungary."²⁵

4.) The period between 2010 and 2021

What characterized this era? In the spirit of enforcing the principles of *the New Weberism trend*, the weakened state and public administration in the previous era were

²⁴ Márton GELLÉN: p. 27- 46.

²⁵ EUROPEAN COMMISSION: The standard of public administration. European Semester - Thematic information. https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/file_import/european-semester_thematic-factsheet_quality-public-administration_hu.pdf (downloaded: 02.12.2022)

replaced by a strong state and public administration. In this context, resources were concentrated and reforms aimed at the control of resources by the Government were implemented: at the central, regional and local levels. The Parliament and the Government were strengthened, legislative work was accelerated, and *the entire legal system was rethought*: Basic Law, new Civil Code, new Civil Code, new procedural laws, new self-government law, etc.

5.) Period after 2021

What characterizes this era? The principles of the New Weberism movement continue to live and prevail, and the external, negative and harmful effects of the previous era on Hungary are increasing: the Covid-19 pandemic, uncontrolled and increasingly aggressive migration, the EU's attacks on the rule of law, the consequences of the Russian-Ukrainian war, energy crisis, etc. It has become clear that, just as *Hungary* is not the only country in the world, it *is not adequately prepared* for all of this, for an external attack affecting the whole of the given public administration subsystem (for example, health care, the police, national defence, or the national economy)!

We consider that it is justified to reorganize the entire state organization and, as a part of it, the entire Hungarian public administration, on the basis of two previously known but not applied concepts. These two concepts are *self-sufficiency and safety*! Self-sufficiency and safety must be a priority everywhere and in every sense in Hungary after 2021! The task is therefore to be prepared - in terms of financial, organizational and human resources - for *unexpected, yet predictably occurring situations* affecting the country and the public administration as a whole. A few examples may help you understand what we mean. We have to prepare:

- in the field of the national economy: to deal with external inflationary pressure, to develop one's own (national) military industry,
- in the field of healthcare: for the treatment of global epidemics,
- in the area of energy: to increase the share of renewable energy and reduce energy dependence,
- in the field of agriculture: to deal with the consequences of climate change (drought, the fall of a large amount of precipitation in a short period of time, the appearance of new plant and animal species, etc.),
- in the field of state border protection and aliens policing: to deal with uncontrolled migration and to settle the situation of tens of thousands fleeing due to the Russian-Ukrainian war,
- in the field of national defence and state security: to speed up the modernization of the Hungarian Armed Forces (for example, the acquisition and production of technical equipment, increasing material resources, increasing the number of military personnel, etc.) to prevent hacker attacks that threaten state security, the Hungarian cyberspace is appropriate for protection.

5. AFTERWORD

Open, efficient and service-oriented public administration based on partnership should finally come to the fore as opposed to the transformational public administration, which is based on public power (commanding). Not only in words, but also in actions. In order to do this, the entire system of government and civil servant training must be changed! In

addition to generalists, Hungarian public administration also needs an increasing number of specialists: doctors, agricultural engineers, police officers, teachers, lawyers, programming mathematicians, chemists, traffic engineers, etc. And then we didn't even talk about the modernization or reform of the other components of the public administration - the organizational system and the operation - or the need for it. However, we will give an account of this later in a new study!

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