

# Subjective notes on four major theories of public administration from a Central-East European perspective

*György Gajduschek, PhD<sup>1</sup>*

**Abstract:** The paper provides a brief, admittedly subjective and critical overview of the four major theories on public administration as they have appeared (or not) in Central and Eastern Europe. “Bureaucracy” is discussed in greater detail. Adding to the general belief that it was the communist regime with its politicized personnel policy that prevented the formation of a full-fledged bureaucracy, the paper emphasizes that there are other, long-term impediments in the region as well. Heydays of NPM and the transition from the communist past appeared parallel in the region. The gap between the communist system and NPM ideal could hardly be wider; simplistically: the former resisting the latter preferring anything that is “private” and “market”. The gap was perhaps too large to successfully bridge. Good Governance and Neo-Weberian State is widely discussed among researchers of the region. However, one can hardly identify such solutions in practice in CEE.

**Key words:** public administration, public management, bureaucracy, New Public Management, Governance, Good Governance, Neo-Weberian State, Central and Eastern Europe, transition

## 1. Introduction

The title of this book explicitly refers to at least two major contemporary paradigms – if we may call these paradigms – namely: (Good) Governance and the Neo-Weberian state. At the same time, the title implicitly refers also to the classical public administration paradigm that, so far, has been captured best by Max Weber’s bureaucratic theory. And what is in between? That is New Public Management (NPM) a paradigm or rather the *Zeitgeist* between the early eighties and the Great Depression II. of 2008.

In brief, our book title – referring to the main theme of the 22<sup>nd</sup> Conference of NISPACEE – would evoke not less than an overview of all major contemporary administrative models, specifically in a Central-East European (CEE) perspective. Questions like feasibility of these approaches in the CEE countries and expected – or in some cases like NPM or Weberianism already experienced – value are raised by this title.

This short concluding chapter is an attempt to have a look at on all the four approaches. Bureaucracy is discussed in somewhat more detail. First an outline reconstructing the Weberian model is provided and then some sources of the flawed nature of bureaucracies in CEE are reviewed, referring the shorter run (that is the communist decades) and the longer run historical sources of these defective administrative arrangements. A brief section is devoted to the transition of the early nineties.<sup>2</sup> In the next three sections an overview of New Public Management, Good Governance and Neo-Weberian State is provided as they have occurred in the CEE region.

## 2. Bureaucracy

### 2.1. Weberian bureaucracy

Weber describes bureaucracy in a general historical context as a crucial part, or manifestation of the process of rationalization (Weber, 1958: Foreword). He describes bureaucratic organizations at two points of his seminal work (Weber, 1978):

- In Volume I, Chapter III. he briefly sums up the characteristic features of bureaucratic organization and the specific position of bureaucrat under the title: “Legal Authority With a Bureaucratic Administrative Staff”;
- In Volume II, Chapter XI, under the title “Bureaucracy”, Weber goes to greater detail in analyzing the individual features of bureaucracy, and shows how the modern form of bureaucracy differs from historically earlier forms of administrative organizations.

Four attributes seem to dominate the studies of authors who later interpreted Weber’s theory:

---

<sup>1</sup> Gy. Gajduschek is an Associate Professor at the Corvinus University, Budapest and senior researcher of the Social Sciences Research Center, Hungarian Academy of Sciences.

<sup>2</sup> The fact that these countries are frequently named as „transition countries” after a quarter century indicates that the transition may not be really successful.

1. Specialization and/or division of labor;
2. Expertise (well trained personnel with significant job experience);
3. Rules, which define structures, procedures, employment and individual responsibilities, and
4. Hierarchy.

It is generally accepted that specialization and division of labor directly lead to increased productivity. Expertise, knowledge of how to deal adequately with issues at hand, has a similar effect. Rules may describe and enforce the “one best way” of handling cases, thus, they may also greatly contribute to increased efficiency. Hierarchy, however, appears mostly not as a feature that directly contributes to efficiency. Hierarchy in this context is only a reaction to division of labor, which requires co-ordination in the organization. Above their primary function in directly increasing efficiency, rules may also serve as a tool of co-ordination (Khandalla, 1997). The “position of the bureaucrat” is basically a description of the merit based civil service system.

Weber’s theory in the Anglo-Saxon World was interpreted as a theory of the most efficient organizational form. However, it can be argued that most if not all bureaucratic features serve another crucial outcome: reduction of uncertainty. Whereas doubt have been raised in organization studies, economics and NPM about the efficiency of bureaucratic arrangement, its superiority to assure predictability and certainty has not been seriously questioned (Gajduszek, 2003; Roman, 2014).<sup>3</sup> One may argue that this is exactly the reason why bureaucracies seem to be so appropriate for some, even is not for all, administrative functions (most of all, applying laws; Radford, 1988).

## **2.2. CEE bureaucracy – the Communist heritage**

Was the public administration organized in a bureaucratic way in the communist countries? According to the majority of researchers: certainly not. Most importantly, administrative staff was selected, promoted or even laid-off on political basis, rather than on merit. This statement occurred in the post-transition scholarly literature (Verheijen, 1999: 4; Nunberg, 1999) and appeared in the critique and expectations of European Union in the accession process (Meyer-Sahling 2009a).<sup>4</sup> Another, typically mentioned critique is the missing capacity of assisting policy decisions (Goetz-Wollmann, 2001). This weakness, just as several others, like fragmentation, the inability to act in a coordinated way (Verheijen, 1999: 2-3; Nunberg 1999: 238-240; Meyer-Sahling, 2009) stem from the ‘division of powers’ between the administration and the party structures, most of all the central party apparatus. In this arrangement the administration was responsible solely for accurately implementing the ‘policies’ formulated by the Communist Party’s Central Committee in form of orders or in better cases as public laws. This fact may still be present in the ultimately law-enforcement oriented style (instead of service style) of administrative activities (Kovac 2013/14), as well as the preponderance of politics and the weakness of (administrative) expertise in policy making.

## **2.3. CEE bureaucracy – from a longer historical perspective**

Kulcsár (2001) analyses the problem of deviant bureaucracies in a wider perspective of modernization and semi-periphery position.<sup>5</sup> He relies on these flows of thoughts as a starting point to describe the CEE region. In this view, socialism is not so much a cause of a specific governmental-administrative arrangement (i.e. deviant bureaucracy) but both of these are consequences of a wider phenomenon: the semi-peripheral status and its consequences, among others the continuous strive to reach the center and a permanent inability to succeed.

The special circumstances are the major causes of anomalous bureaucracy. Causes include the highly limited resources available for government, which is in sharp contrast with the relatively high and highly diverse

---

<sup>3</sup> One has to keep in mind that the state bureaucracies were originally ‘designed’ most of all to execute laws. And the ultimate value of law in a civil law system is: certainty (Merryman & Pérez-Perdomo, 2007). Certainty is also the basis of equity.

<sup>4</sup> Meyer-Sahling (2009), as an excellent expert of the region, warns against oversimplification. Indeed, for instance in Hungary, the principle of political loyalty gradually gave way to expertise, followed by a gradual, but in few decades radical, change in the composition of civil service. The transition, in fact, led to a measurable drop in professional capacity (Gajduszek, 2007).

<sup>5</sup> Kulcsár (2001) uses these two theories as strongly interrelated, whereas in the literature these concepts are discussed surprisingly independently from one another. For modernization, see publications of Fred Riggs from the 60-70-ies and somewhat later LaPalombara (see an overview of Development administration in Riggs, 1971; a more updated approach in Heady, 2001). On the problem of semi-periphery, a lot has been written since Wallerstein (1974) published his seminal work on the center-periphery divide, its causes and consequences. From the point of view of CEE, Sztompka (1993), from the early years of transition, seems to be especially revealing.

expectations of the society.<sup>6</sup> Another major set of causes is the general culture, and value systems. We emphasize two major streams of deviancies by interpreting of and perhaps elaborating on Kulcsár's thought here.

First, tasks and objectives set up for the administration are clearly impossible to carry out. Most of all, these tasks are overly ambitious as they intend to bridge the enormous gap between people's and/or political leaders' expectations, on one hand, and the available resources, on the other. Kulcsár refers to the shortage and to the lower level of economic performance (i.e. GDP). In this arrangement laws – that are otherwise considered as a major (or sole) policy instrument – are ineffective (Kulcsár, 2001: 943, 950):

*The Western model necessarily leads to dysfunctional results because it does not suit these transitory societies, where the promulgated legal norms frequently hardly mean more than pious wishes ...;*<sup>7</sup>

*As the violation of legal norms also becomes a practically general feature, the administrator has a chance to identify the violation of law discretionally, more precisely for calling the 'chosen' violator to account, usually not because of the concrete violation of law, but by referring to it.*

This in turn increases the power-element of administration as administrators are not so much subordinated to the rule but generate the rules themselves: "... calculable legality is pushed behind the discretion of the official..." which in turn reinforces "... the traditional attitude that administration is an exercise of privilege rather than a matter of skill and training" (Kulcsár, 2001: 945-946). This suppressive attitude is exacerbated by the fact that the government, manifested typically in its administrators, is the key actor of development. This view is expressed and reinforced by the communist ideology.

Another stream of argument refers to the specific culture and attitude of the population in these countries. This attitude accepts the suppressive character of government as it has been a historical experience. In most countries "foreign-alien" powers provided government (e.g. the Habsburgs for Hungary, and the Hungarians for large part of the present Slovakia, Romania and Serbia; before that: Turks in most of these countries). Alienation and the lack of trust is a long-standing historical tradition, still present in these countries, as it can well be seen from European Social Survey data (Giczy-Sik, 2009). This attitude accepts the unfair, oppressive behavior of government bureaucracy but continuously searches for "personal treatment", curbing the laws, favoritism and is open to corruption if necessary (Sajó, 1985; Kurkchian, 2011).

Our main statements in brief: the administration of the pre-1990 period could not be Weberian bureaucracies due to (a) political reasons related to the socialist-communist regime but also for (b) reasons that are far more overarching in terms of time, territory and rationale than the historically short impact of the communist regime.

### **3. The challenge of transition**

Large, some would argue, unprecedented change took place in a short period of time, in the region around 1990. Claus Offe's (1997: 34) term, the "triple transition" is frequently quoted in this regard, though the meaning of this term has somewhat changed from the original. These days we typically mean the change of economic system from planned economy and the dominance of state ownership to a competitive market characterized by private ownership; from a dictatorship to a democratic political system, which was in several cases accompanied by the establishment (or reestablishment) of an independent state, setting up new government structures. In fact each of the three elements has a direct impact on the executive arrangement and the functioning of administration. As Bouckaert (2009: 96, 101) notes:

*Within the CEE countries, it seems that changes have been drastic indeed, including in public systems. Politics, policies and administrations were to change accordingly.*

*Reforming the public sector sometimes was indispensable and impossible at the same time, and therefore highly problematic. Importing NPM techniques that needed to improve Weberian bureaucracies when these were not present and simultaneously building classical checks and balances was a tough reality. Reforming in such a case sometimes was organising dysfunctions.*

Putting now particular cases of state-building aside, the new political-constitutional arrangement, with the rule of law meant, among several others, that the "Lord", the political top of the executive, has not been as stable and to

<sup>6</sup> High, as expectations are influenced by Western ideals, and diverse due to the prismatic society (Riggs & MacKean, 1964).

<sup>7</sup> This statement echoes in the contemporary literature on compliance of CEE states with EU laws (e.g. Falkner-Trieb, 2008; Sedelmeier, 2011).

a great extent certain and predictable as it was before. Elections resulted in – to use Meyer-Sahling’s concept (2009a: 84) – “frequent, wholesale government changes”, that changes between opposite sides of a highly polarized ideological spectrum, typically denying mostly everything the previous government has done, let alone laying off most of the senior civil servants serving the previous Cabinet. In brief, the political environment may provide orders but certainly not clear and stable guidance to the administration.

The relationship of the administration and the society, or individual citizens (clients) has changed just as much as the administration-politics connection. The rule of law disqualified most of the methods, techniques used and arrangements relied on by the administration earlier. When, in the communist rule, the whole society was organized in a hierarchical – one may say, somewhat bureaucratic – array, the administration may have issued directives to almost anyone, from (state owned) company CEOs, to cooperatives, associations or unions and even to individual citizens. Even if those orders were not based explicitly on laws, they were followed for fear of – official or unofficial – vengeance. The administration could collect and store information practically on anything.

The emergence of the rule of law has changed this situation as the new constitutional rules were adopted. Methods that were practiced as routines became useless (treated even as severe misconduct) and there were no others at hand. Laws may be changed in a civil law system from a day to the next, but a large organization, its practices, as we all know from organization studies, is much more difficult to change and that takes a lot of time.<sup>8</sup> In brief, within a period of one-two years the administration faced a large set of challenges, which in other countries occurred and were gradually solved throughout a century or more. Naturally the administration could not cope with these challenges.<sup>9</sup>

The transformation of the economy has just increased the burden and confusion. The below table is based on the IMF website on “General government total expenditure” data.<sup>10</sup> Data are presented in three groups with group averages.

Table 1 General government total expenditure as Percent of GDP, grouped by country type by the author

<b>CEE countries</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>West-European countries</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>“NPM countries”</b>	<b>%</b>
Bulgaria	38,1	Austria	51,9	Australia	34,7
Hungary	49,1	Finland	47,0	New Zealand	34,9
Lithuania	36,0	France	51,1	United Kingdom	34,0
Poland	41,1	Germany	45,1	United States	NA
Romania	35,0	Greece	46,7		
Slovak Republic	52,1	Ireland	30,6		
Slovenia	40,8	Italy	49,0		
Latvia	37,0	Netherlands	41,6		
Estonia	36,1	Portugal	41,6		
<b>Group average</b>	<b>39,8</b>	<b>Group average</b>	<b>45,0</b>	<b>Group average</b>	<b>34,5</b>

Looking at these data one should have in mind that the planned economy is based on the collective that is government ownership of “means of production”; even apartments were owned by the government; almost

<sup>8</sup> The statute on the protection of personal data adopted in 1992 in Hungary, designed by legal scholars, was considered more stringent in defending privacy than those of such well-established democracies as the US or UK. Government databases could not be used for most administrative activities that they previously served. This one decision jeopardized whole sectors of government for over a decade. E.g. the tax authority could not trace if one officially earning the minimum wage has luxury cars and luxurious real estates (though official registries exist on these properties at other government offices). Similarly, real estates may be sold with forged documents as the real estate registry offices could not inform the owners as they were denied access to address-registry available at another agency.

<sup>9</sup> According to statistics of Hungarian Tax Authority, 1448 tax fraud cases initiated by the authority were pending at courts in 1992, 3853 in 1995 and 23861 in 1998. It is not the number of tax frauds (which, throughout this period, might have been well over a million annually) but the capacity of the Authority has increased, as it gradually learnt more effective inspection methods in the changed legal environment (Semjén et al., 2001: 105).

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/weo/2014/02/weodata/weoselgr.aspx> No data on any CEE country are available before 1995. By 2000 most countries of the region appear in the database. It is worth mentioning that most countries of former Soviet-Union are characterized by an even lower government spending: Ukraine is exceptionally high with its 49,0%; Russia 38,0%, Kirgizstan 36,4%, Georgia 33%; Kazakhstan 22,5.

everyone received her salary from the government as companies were state-owned and private employment was exceptional.<sup>11</sup> To put it somewhat sharply, the baseline for the data in the table for CEE countries is close to 100% about a decade earlier. Within a decade, government presence in the society dropped to a level that in some countries fall below leading NPM countries. The enormous changes are highlighted by the EBRD (1994: 12): “In 1993, the private share of output rose in the countries of Eastern Europe by 10-40 percentage points”. In other words, in most transition countries more assets were privatized in 1993, one year, then presumably in most leading NPM countries in two decades. Probably never in history, including revolutions, such large-scale privatization and such large-scale change in government size, functions and methods in such a short period of time took place.

Administrative consequences of this enormous change are easy to identify. Large number of administrative instruments based on government ownership (e.g. an owner may give orders to chiefs executives) has disappeared. The majority of administrative techniques the new economy required (from controlling financial activities and securities to consumer right protection and tax collection and unemployment services<sup>12</sup>) had no antecedent in the previous system, and there was no well trained personnel to carry out these activities. There was no appropriate personnel to carry out the large-scale privatization and there was no effective, let alone accountable and transparent control mechanism that could have assured that the process takes place in an uncorrupted manner. Most countries sold their assets in bulk, roughly the same time, enormously increasing the supply. Meanwhile – due to the lack of time to generate capital – there was no endogenous demand. Due to these facts, most government owned, that is by this time: national assets were sold well below their real value.<sup>13</sup> (This is most evident in case of natural resources like oil and gas fields in post-Soviet countries.) This trajectory may have inevitably led to the spread of mafia-capitalism (the term was used first by Várese, 1994).

In brief, the transition meant the reduction of the state, most of all in terms of size of controlled areas as well as the means of control. The role of government was to be reduced largely in economy as well as in citizens’ everyday life. This was a shocking change to be managed or – more realistically – to undergo and endure.

#### **4. The NPM in CEE – deepening the crises**

The above described – crisis – situation was largely aggravated by New Public Management (NPM). The two hit transition countries jointly. NPM worsened the situation as made the target much further away, thus the incredibly wide canyon to bridge much wider. It was not, say, a Scandinavian, active welfare state the goal anymore, with its roughly 50% of government spending (state-run services, a wide range of public companies) but a country like the US. In the author’s view, this may have been a root problem with NPM in the region. Others, like the dangers of the “let managers manage” idea in the given cultural and institutional arrangement without clear accountability lines and institutions, the lack of transparency; or the involvement of freshly established, weakly (if at all) capitalized, and thus perfectly unreliable market players, into public service provision, etc. may be just the tip of an iceberg.

Local and foreign analysts called attention to the dangers of NPM in this highly different environment as early as the mid-nineties (e.g. Verheijen-Dimitrova 1996; Hesse 1998). Their voice, however, was lost in the storm of NPM, highly amplified by such international organizations as the above mentioned IMF, and WB or OECD making their financial assistance dependent on applying NPM measures to an extent not applied in any of the Western countries<sup>14</sup>, certainly not in such a short period of time.

At first glance the evaluation of NPM in the region is somewhat contradicting. Some, like Goetz (2001: 1035) argue that the core of NPM, that is, in his interpretation managerial (as opposed to legal) approach, could not become deeply rooted in the Eastern soil, so hardly had a major impact. Others – like Verheijen-Dimitrova (1996) and van der Berg et al. (2002) - warn about the negative impact of NPM in the region. Again others like

---

<sup>11</sup> According to the 1980 census data there were 138 thousand persons, about 2,7% of total employment, employed in private sector in Hungary, perhaps the most ‘liberal’ regime in the ‘Soviet block’.  
[http://konyvtar.ksh.hu/neda/a111126.htm?v=pdf&a=pdfdata&id=KSH\\_Nepszamlalas\\_1980\\_22\\_01&pg=0&lang=hun#pg=10&zooom=f&l=s](http://konyvtar.ksh.hu/neda/a111126.htm?v=pdf&a=pdfdata&id=KSH_Nepszamlalas_1980_22_01&pg=0&lang=hun#pg=10&zooom=f&l=s)

<sup>12</sup> As the unemployment rate jumped from zero to around ten percent or above in a few years period.

<sup>13</sup> Stiglitz (2003) provides an excellent analysis of this process and its depressing consequences, referring also the crucial role of neo-liberal, pro-free-market ideology and its belligerent spreading by such international organizations as IMF. Van der Berg et al. (2002) provide an intelligent comparative and critical assessment regarding the transition of public administration in this regard.

<sup>14</sup> Especially not in Continental European countries like France and Germany (Pollitt-Bouckaert 2011: 117) that has been traditionally provided model of PA for most countries of the region.

Drechsler (e.g. 2005: 101-103) strongly criticize NPM generally as well as specifically in the region, from a rather theoretical perspective providing an extensive overview of the relevant critical literature. There are a surprisingly small number of studies attempting to empirically assess the impact of NPM in the region.<sup>15</sup>

Some argue, somewhat surprisingly to the author, that foreign ‘advice’ addressed rather the reinstatement of classical Weberian bureaucracy.<sup>16</sup> Most authors, however, agree that the foreign pressure was directed towards neo-liberal values, promoting NPM in the field of government, especially throughout the first and crucial decade of transition.

## 5. The notion of Good Governance (GG)

The roots of Good Governance are somewhat difficult to trace back. One root is certainly that of the large stream of Governance literature. (E.g. Kooiman 1993, Klijn 1996, Pierre 2000, Salamon 2002, Sorensen-Torfining 2007, Bevir-Richards 2009, Poulsen 2009, Bevir 2011). Governance literature conceptualizes a situation, in which the government is not in a position to direct and manage society alone, but networks (policy communities) are formed, more or less spontaneously, around policy issues from various types of stakeholders possessing various resources. Another stream is the notion of Neo-Weberian State (see below). The term referred originally<sup>17</sup> to the particular way most of the Continental European countries reacted to the NPM. A third source is “Good Governance” as a term advocated by major international organizations as the appropriate way to organize government – in Non-Western World. The concept occurred first in the vocabulary of United Nations’ development activities (see: UN ESCAP), later in WB documents in 1992, and IMF in 1996. However, for long, only the UN documents emphasized the importance of participation, consultation, transparency and the rule of law on the same or higher level than administrative and service efficiency. In case of the WB and especially IMF it occurred as a somewhat modified version of NPM with the above mentioned elements being rather a democratic façade covering the harsh pro-market approach.

Only in the third stream can be interpreted as a normative approach, that is well expressed by adding the “good” to the term. Though the roots are different, by now there is a relative agreement on the basic features of this approach. Polona Kovac in the introduction of this volume sums up the major principles – in presumably the order of importance as follows: “Participation, transparency, legal certainty, responsiveness, accountability, efficiency”.

So far too short period has passed to evaluate the impact of this approach. In fact, only a few reform attempts have been made in the region that reflect to the Good Governance model. NISPAcee recently published a book titled: “On the path to Good Governance in CEE ...” (Kovač, 2014) The book is an excellent selection of young academics’ papers from V4 countries. However, most phenomena addressed in the studies refer to NPM rather than GG approach. Those that address GG do that typically in comparison to NPM (e.g. PA curricula content, or management techniques of mayors). One may identify perhaps two out of eleven contributions dealing specifically with Good Governance (Cieciora 2014, Kiss 2014). The first referring to the practices of a Polish city, the second of Slovak municipal housing (trying actually to manage a ‘wicked problem’ caused by the wholesale sale of apartments in the nineties, following NPM approach).

Indeed, it seems that Good Governance techniques occur rather sporadically in CEE in public administration (practice), even if that is widely discussed – following the international mainstream – in Public Administration (theory). In fact, political transformation of several countries of the region suggest a somewhat different angle of change than that of transparency, openness, citizen involvement, cooperation with civil society, deliberative decision-making, etc.<sup>18</sup> What has been going on in countries of former Soviet-Union and even in some Visegrad

---

<sup>15</sup> E.g. Liebert et al. (2013), while refer to the role of NPM and generally Western theories on administration in the region, they hardly provide any type of ‘outcome’ indicator as an impact of these. An exception are Nemeč et al. (2005) who attempt to systematically measure the – as it turns out, rather negative – outcome of contracting out at local level.

<sup>16</sup> Meyer-Sahling (2009a) seems to present this view, presumably as in the field of civil service the dominant explicit exogenous expectation was indeed in favor of a merit based system.

<sup>17</sup> Pollitt-Bouckaert 2004, 2nd ed.. However in the third edition (2011) the authors devised a new concept: New Public Governance, that is, as the author can decipher it, is the – governance – part of the 2004 Neo-Weberian concept with the Digital Era Governance added.

<sup>18</sup> Even though, some government documents and declarations like to refer in their terminology to Good Governance, or in Hungary Good Government. (The difference is described and emphasized by Stumpf’s paper in this volume.)

countries may remind one rather the pre-Weberian (Prussian?) system of administration than anything of network governance.

As there have been not much empirical studies, especially not in a positivist sense (measuring quantitatively outcomes) on the impact of NPM in the region, there is literally none on the impact of Good Governance. One may be somewhat skeptical about the potential success of this approach.<sup>19</sup> First, civil society, as hundreds of policy and research papers emphasize, is weak in the region. Interest of large, typically underprivileged social groups are not organized and thus cannot be effectively presented in a deliberative process.<sup>20</sup> In other words, networks may provide a quite unbalanced (unfair) presentation of the society's needs, wishes and interest. In Hungary, for instance, only those civic organizations seem to be relatively strong and well organized that are either part of a larger, international network (actually a semi-independent subsidiary of it), or fake-civil organizations presenting in fact political parties or large economic interest groups. Another important prerequisite of a successful GG approach is the consensus-oriented culture of societies. Countries that seem to successfully follow this approach, like Scandinavian countries, may be characterized as consent-oriented cultures looking for mutually satisfying agreements. Although without a clear empirical evidence, we can hardly consider countries of the CEE region as part of this cultural trait.

Kovac in the introduction of this volume enlists major deficiencies of (or impediments to) Good Governance: it requires mature societal subsystems in terms of solidarity and search for common good; it may favor the more active, that is more powerful, better organized stakeholders, and it may undermine democratic control due to delegation of power and functional interest representation. Taking all these into account, though perhaps not in line with Kovac's opinion, the author has serious doubt about the feasibility and, on the other hand, expediency of GG approach in short run in the region.

## 6. The notion of the Neoweberian State

Neoweberian state (NWS) may be the fourth term whose content should be briefly analyzed in a CEE context. As much as it can be traced back, the term popped up in the second edition of the seminal work of Pollitt & Bouckaert in 2004 (p. 100) first and further elaborated in the third edition of the book (Pollitt & Bouckaert: 2011: 118-119). In the original, 2004 version and mostly in the 2011 book too, NWS seems to be an alternative reform trajectory followed mainly by Continental European countries not subscribing for the hardcore NPM ideology and practice. The new (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.) interpretation of NWS is somewhat more specific, seemingly leaving out governance arrangement from this concept. It seems to be a variant somewhere between Weber and NPM, embracing mostly the managerial (as opposed the market-competition) elements of NPM.

NWS gained interest among scholars of government, however much less has been said about that so far, as about NPM. A simple search on Google Scholar yields 3,400 hits on 'Neo-Weberian State', whereas 659,000 on 'New Public Management' in the comparable 2004-2013 period. However, if we stick to this rather primitive statistics and look for articles containing the term 'NWS' and 'Central and Eastern Europe' together we find that 42% (!) of the papers addressing NWS refers in some way to the region as well. The same proportion is only 2.6% in case of NPM.

Pollitt & Bouckaert (2011: 120) call the attention to the fact that "*the precision of NWS model – or the NPM for that matter – must not be exaggerated*". Indeed reading the double list of "Weberian" and "Neo" features seems to be a good theoretical frame to identify characteristics of existing administrative systems of Europe. However, as a vision inducing PA reform in practice seems feeble and vague. This may be the reason that in several countries of the region, such as in Hungary, NWS became a central tenet of government ideology requiring "strong state", centralization as opposed to autonomy and liberal arrangements.<sup>21</sup>

In other words, while NPM seemed to function relatively well both as a descriptive theory of existing endeavors/trajectories as well as a prescriptive-normative scheme to set up general objectives (like less state, more business and competition) and methods to reach them (as contracting out, voucher system, PPP etc.) NWS does not seem to work well in the latter regard. Even such excellent proponents as Drechsler (e.g. 2005) fail to

---

<sup>19</sup> From the above mentioned two papers (Cieciora) was rather optimistic, based mostly on impressions on a new initiation (2014: 94). The other (Kiss 2014) draws a rather pessimistic conclusion based on a study of much wider scope.

<sup>20</sup> Bouckaert (2009: 97) notes that governance-type modernization "in some cases requires civil society to be (re)built".

<sup>21</sup> See various publications of G. Fodor (in English, 2009), the leading expert of the Hungarian government financed think tank (Századvég). An overview of this ideology is provided by Buzogány & Korkut, 2013; Hajnal & Csengödi, 2014. Pollitt-Bouckaert in the third edition (2011: 119) also refer to interest of CEE scholars on the concept and warn about potential misinterpretation.

provide us with much practical advice on how NWS in reality would look like. While GG does not really occur in practice in CEE, NWS is theoretically difficult to imagine as it appears in practice.

## 7. Conclusions

The paper provided a subjective, overly critical, perhaps even skeptical overview of major theories (?), models (?), or paradigms (?) of public administration from the past half a century as we learnt about them in international (i.e. English-language, typically US origin) literature. The paper also attempted to capture some specificities of these theories and the related practice in the post-communist countries or in the CEE region. Deficiencies or ambiguities regarding functioning of these models among these particular circumstances were also addressed.

Emphasis was on the negative role of major international organizations, most of all the IMF. These organizations offered to or rather forced the NPM on CEE countries, in a form of shock therapy for a patient in shock already. However, since DiMaggio & Powell (1983; 2012) published their seminal works in the mid-eighties on isomorphism we are aware of the fact that organizations like to be similar, to follow the mainstream, the fashionable. No doubt this is the case for public administration and this is specifically the case for CEE countries where the West has always meant a certain ideal, an objective to reach. This endogenous factor could be as much a driving force as it was the exogenous pressure.<sup>22</sup>

It seems that CEE countries at collapse of communism with their completely disqualified government model were especially vulnerable to foreign models conveyed by powerful organizations; dominantly coming from Anglo-American environment and spreading solutions – as ‘international best practice’ – applied almost exclusively in Anglo-Saxon institutional environment. Countries of the CEE region may have been luckier and by now better off if the advice came from countries like Germany, France, Scandinavian countries that have traditionally been closer to CEE not only in physical distance but in all institutional elements of government. These countries formed originally also the ideal for CEE countries.

The ship has gone, but the smoke remained after that.

Most methods enlisted in this paper have no roots in CEE, they may be alien from the social-cultural reality, may lack the necessary economic background and cannot fit properly to the way of government functioning. This, in turn, inevitably leads to anomalies (Bouckaert, 2009: 101). Foreign advice also increased the confusion in governments bombarded by the parallel, frequently contradicting models. Civil servants inevitably faced uncertainty caused by the change of political system (where their moral integrity and further employment was also questioned), caused by the ultimate uncertainty about government’s size and role and way of functioning. In brief, the whole “constructed World” (Berger-Luckmann 1991) of government officials collapsed and no new, clear and stable model was provided to adopt and to adapt to.

There has always been a major tension in the CEE region between the somewhat Eastern realities and ‘Western’ aspirations; a tension expressed in the term modernization. The main, somewhat pessimistic message of this paper that, regarding public administration but perhaps even in a wider perspective, the past quarter a century surely has not been an absolute success. The future success may depend on the ability to apply efficient Western solutions that are still in accordance with national identity. Probably it is not an exaggeration to state that the papers in this book, besides their specific topic address this wider challenge as well.

## REFERENCES

- Berger, P. L., & Luckmann, T. 1991. *The social construction of reality: A treatise in the sociology of knowledge* (No. 10). Penguin UK.
- van den Berg, F., Jenei, G., & Lance T. Leloup (eds) 2002. *East-West co-operation in public sector reform. Cases and results in Central and Eastern Europe*, Amsterdam: IOS Press.
- Bevir, M. (ed.). 2011. *Handbook of Governance*. Los Angeles: Sage.
- Bevir, Mark – Richards, David 2009. Decentering Policy Networks: A Theoretical Agenda. In: *Public Administration* 87/1 pp. 3-14
- Bouckaert, G. 2009. "Public Sector Reform in Central and Eastern Europe", *Halduskultuur*, 10, 94-104.

---

<sup>22</sup> Horváth (2007), on the field of local governments, provides an excellent overview of this ‘pattern matching’ attempt. Not surprisingly it is frequently only the form (the structure; sometimes only the wording) not the content (the function-ing) that is adopted.



- Buzogány, A., & Korkut, U. 2013. Administrative Reform and Regional Development Discourses in Hungary. Europeanisation Going NUTS?. *Europe-Asia Studies*, 65(8), 1555-1577.
- Cieciora, M. 2014. Participatory Policies of Local Authorities: The Example of the Municipality of Lublin City (Poland) In Kovač (ed. 2014) pp. 91-96
- DiMaggio, J., & Powell, W.W. 1983. "The Iron Cage Revisited: Institutional Isomorphism and Collective Rationality in Organizational Fields." *American Sociological Review* 48:147-160
- DiMaggio, P. J. and Powell, W. W., (Eds.). 2012. *The new institutionalism in organizational analysis*. University of Chicago Press.
- Drechsler, W. 2005. The Re-Emergence of "Weberian" Public Administration after the Fall of New Public Management: The Central and Eastern European Perspective. *Administrative Culture*, (06), 94-108.
- Drechsler, W. 2005a. The rise and demise of the new public management. *Post-autistic economics review*, 33(14), 17-28.
- EBRD (European Bank for Reconstruction and Development) 1994. *Transition Report 1994 October*. London: EBRD
- Falkner, Gerda and Oliver Treib (2008): Three Worlds of Compliance or Four? The EU-15 Compared to New Member States, *Journal of Common Market Studies* 46:2 pp. 293-313
- Fodor, G. G. 2009. The 'Strong State' Paradigm: Good Government and the State in Central and Eastern Europe—Why Do We Need a Stronger State?. In *Reforming Europe* (pp. 153-172). Springer Berlin Heidelberg.
- Gajduscek György 2007. Socialist and Post-Socialist Civil Service in Hungary. In: Jakab András, Takács Péter, Tatham Allan F (eds.): *The transformation of the Hungarian legal order 1985-2005 : transition to the rule of law and accession to the European Union* . pp. 123-126.
- Gajduscek György 2003. Bureaucracy: Is it efficient? Is it not? Is that the question?, *Administration and Society* 34:6 pp. 700-722
- Giczi, J., & Sik, E. 2009. *Trust and social capital in contemporary Europe*. Tárki European Social Report, 63-81.
- Goetz, K. H. 2001. Making sense of post-communist central administration: modernization, Europeanization or Latinization?. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 8(6), 1032-1051.
- Goetz, K. H., & Wollmann, H. 2001. Governmentalizing central executives in post-communist Europe: a four-country comparison. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 8(6), 864-887.
- Hajnal, G., & Csengödi, S. 2014. When Crisis Hits Superman: Change and Stability of Political Control and Politicization in Hungary. *Administrative Culture*, (15\_1), 39-57.
- Heady, Ferrel 2001. *Public administration. A comparative perspective* (6th ed.), New York, NY: Marcel Dekker
- Hesse, J.J. 1998. 'Rebuilding the State: Administrative Reform in Central and Eastern Europe', in SIGMA (ed.) *Preparing Public Administration for the European Administrative Space*, pp. 168–79. Paris: SIGMA Paper No. 23.
- Horváth M., Tamás 2007. 'Humpty Dumpty': Problems of Globalization Issues Illustrated by Local Self-Government Development. *International Journal of Public Administration in Central and Eastern Europe*, No. 2007/2, pp. 2–19.
- Khandwalla, P. N. 1977. *The design of organizations* (Vol. 260). New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.
- Kiss, Igor 2014. Governance and Social Housing in Slovakia: Can Good Governance Be Bad Practice? In Kovač (ed. 2014) pp. 63-74.
- Klijn, Erik-Hans 1996. Analyzing and Managing Policy Processes in Complex Networks. *Administration & Society* 28/1 May 1996 pp. 90-119
- Kooiman, Jan 1993: Social-Political Governance: Introduction. pp. 1-8 In. Kooiman, Jan (ed.): *Modern Governance. New Government-Society Interactions*. London: Sage
- Kovač, P. (ed.) 2014. *On the Path to Good Governance in CEE by Supporting V4 Young Academicians. Reflections on Good Governance in Visegrad and beyond*, 17. Bratislava: NISPAcee
- Kovač, P. 2013/2014. "The public administration discipline in Slovenia: between legal and administrative sciences. *The NISPAcee Journal of Public Administration and Policy*, 6(2), 33–52.
- Kulcsár, Kálmán 2001. Deviant Bureaucracies. Public Administration in Eastern Europe and in the Developing Countries, In: Farazmand, Ali (ed.) 2001. *Handbook of Comparative and Development Public Administration*, New York, NY: Marcel Dekker
- Kurkchiyan, M. 2011. Perceptions of law and social order: a cross-national comparison of collective legal consciousness. *Wis. Int'l LJ*, 29, 366.
- Liebert, S., Condrey, S. E., & Goncharov, D. (Eds.). 2013. *Public Administration in Post-Communist Countries: Former Soviet Union, Central and Eastern Europe, and Mongolia* (Vol. 169). CRC Press.
- Merryman, J. H., & Pérez-Perdomo, R. 2007. *The civil law tradition: an introduction to the legal systems of Europe and Latin America*. Stanford University Press.

- Meyer-Sahling, J. H. 2009. Varieties of legacies: a critical review of legacy explanations of public administration reform in East Central Europe. *International Review of Administrative Sciences*, 75(3), 509-528.
- Meyer-Sahling, Jan-Hinrik 2009a.. *Sustainability of civil service reforms in Central and Eastern Europe five years after EU accession*. No. 44. OECD Publishing, 2009.
- Nemec, J., Merickova, B., & Vitek, L. 2005. Contracting-out at local government level: Theory and selected evidence from the Czech and Slovak republics *Public Management Review*, 7(4), 637-647.
- Nunberg, Barbara 1999. *The State after Communism. Administrative Transitions in Central and Eastern Europe*. Washington D.C.: World Bank Regional and Sectoral Studies
- Offe, C. 1997. *Varieties of transition: the East European and East German experience*. MIT Press.
- Pierre, Jon ed. 2000. *Debating Governance*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Pollitt, C. - Bouckaert, G. 2011. *Public Management Reform. A Comparative Analysis: New Public Management, Governance and the Neo-Weberian State*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Pollitt, C. - Bouckaert, G. 2004. *Public Management Reform. A Comparative Analysis* Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Poulsen, Brigitte 2009: Competing Traditions of Governance and Dilemmas of Administrative Accountability: The case of Denmark. In: *Public Administration* 87/1 pp.117-131
- Radford, K. J. 1988. *Strategic and tactical decisions*. Springer-Verlag.
- Riggs, Fred W. (ed) 1971. *Frontiers of Development Administration*, Durnham, NC. US.: Duke University Press
- Riggs, F. W., & MacKean, D. D. 1964. *Administration in developing countries: The theory of prismatic society* (p. 227). Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
- Roman, A. V. 2014. Counterbalancing Perspectives on the Current Administrative Telos of American Bureaucracies. *Administration & Society*, 46 (7) pp. 825-852
- Sajó, A. 1985. Compliance with the Law: Some Conceptual Problems. ARSP: *Archiv für Rechts-und Sozialphilosophie/Archives for Philosophy of Law and Social Philosophy*, 183-198.
- Salamon, Lester M. (ed.) 2002. *The Tools of Government. A Guide to the New Governance*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Sedelmeier, Ulrich 2011. Europeanisation in new member and candidate states. *Living Rev. Euro. Gov.* 6, (2011), 1 (downloaded: 2013-12-09: <http://www.livingreviews.org/lreg-2011-1>)
- Semjén A.–Szántó Z.–Tóth I. J 2001. *Adócsalás és adóigazgatás*. [Tax administration and tax fraud] Budapest: TÁRKI. <http://www.tarki.hu/adatbank-h/kutjel/pdf/a578.pdf>
- Sorensen, Eva – Torfing, Jacob 2007. *Theories of Democratic Network Governance*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan pp.
- Stiglitz, J. E. 2003. *Globalization and its Discontents*. WW Norton & Company.
- Sztompka, P. 1993. Civilizational incompetence: The trap of post-communist societies. *Zeitschrift für Soziologie*, 22(2), 85-95.
- Varese, F. 1994. Is Sicily the future of Russia? Private protection and the rise of the Russian Mafia. *European Journal of Sociology*, 35(02), 224-258.
- Verheijen, Tony 1999. *Civil Service systems in Central and Eastern Europe* Edward Elgar
- Verheijen, Tony and Antonova Dimitrova 1996. Private interest and public administration: the Central and East European Experience, *International Review of Administrative Sciences* June
- Wallerstein, Immanuel 1974. *The Modern World-system: Capitalist Agriculture and the Origins of the European World-economy in the Sixteenth Centenary*. Academic Press.
- Weber, M. (1958). *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. (T. Parsons, Trans.). New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.
- Weber, Max (1978): *Economy and Society* Berkeley: University of California Press
- UN ESCAP: *What Is Good Governance?* (<http://www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/good-governance.pdf>)