

MTA-DE PUBLIC SERVICE RESEARCH GROUP

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I. Summary of the five-year research program and main duties of the research group in 2015

The comprehensive project (2012–2016), Regulatory Tools for Local Public Services of the MTA-DE Public Service Research Group sets out a wide range of public services delivered at local and regional level, and those public functions which have implications for public service provision in a subnational context. In doing so, we are focusing among others on public utilities, social services, administrative services and education issues. Viewed from an East-Central-European angle, our underlying conception is that the content and territorial management frameworks for public functions have been gradually transformed since the beginning of the new millennium in the developed countries, according to the main trends in the European integration process. There is a tendency of moving from former local autonomy to solutions of regulation, government or administration.

On the basis of the above underlying aims, concept papers of the research were elaborated in details. This conceptualisation stage resulted in the volume Horváth, T. M. (ed.) (2013) "*Kilengések. Közzszolgáltatási változások*" [Swings. Changes in Public Service Delivery]. Budapest: Dialóg Campus. The research group continued the exploration with international comparative research in order to identify the basic patterns for different fields of local public services.

The book Horváth, T. M. (ed.) (2014) "*Külön utak*" [Diverse ways. Delivery of public services] Budapest: Dialóg Campus, provides international comparative studies in the main public service sectors, explores the relevant EU sector-policy fields, and also presents a few recent examples of Hungarian public service management models (for a summary see: <http://jog.unideb.hu/kutatasaink/diverse-ways>).

The empirical phase of the project resulted in the volume Horváth, T. M. and Bartha, I. (eds.) (2014) "*Gyűrűk és sugarak*" [Rings and Avenues. How are services supplied by an average settlement in Hungary?] Budapest: Dialóg Campus, as an in-depth case study prepared on the town Hajdúböszörmény. The collection of factual overviews focuses on the recent changing role and latitude of the municipal government and other local social bodies. The perspective of our work reaches beyond the "Böszörmény-case" and also indicates typical problems and characteristics in Hungarian urban settlements. (As a summary see: <http://jog.unideb.hu/kutatasaink/rings-and-avenues>).

From 2012 to the end of 2015, based on research in the project, two PhD theses were completed, three books and 77 papers (already cited more than a total of 120 times in other works) have been published in academic journals or as a chapter of academic volumes. Including abstracts of these papers they are available at: http://jog.unideb.hu/documents/mta_kutatocsoport/summary.pdf.

For the year of 2015 within the whole project period the following activities have been scheduled: preparation of the "encyclopaedia" (the summary of the of the comprehensive 5 year project); analysis of public undertakings; as well as development of an interactive profile of the research group in order to keep under discussion burning issues scrutinized by the project while dissemination of results is going on this way continuously.

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II. Remarkable research and other results in 2015

II/a. Remarkable research and other results

The outcomes according to the above annual plan are the following:

a) The research group continued to prepare the volume exploring a typology and management theory of public services in a comprehensive manner and which is intended to be published in 2016. As a part of the work, sector studies have been finished (in 12 fields). There are quite a few chapters have been published in journals as articles. The whole volume is based on basic academic comparative research. However, different stakeholders are going to be supported by editors. For instance, there is an opportunity for course usage by visual selection in editorial work and other techniques in different schools and universities of the higher education.

b) Analysis of public undertakings working in local public service delivery have been finished by the project. This research based on empirical evidence based survey results in a representative sample and direct participatory investigation. The other thematic issue in the focus was the recent change of managing public education. There are 15 papers and book chapters published in 2015 as a result of the research work carried out in the project.

II/b. Science and society

Apart from paper-based results, interactive profiles have been developed in a very intensive way. First of all, profiles are established in order to widen professional up-dated communication between the group and the wider professional audience. Both the Hungarian and independently the (not simply translated) English language versions of the website www.kozjavak.hu are devoted to brake the information failures and monopolies concerning government functions of recent economic and social environment in this country and the wider Europe. The subject is public functions in contemporary market economy, i. e. recent changes in governing public goods and services.

Secondly, a more traditional website directly about the activity of the research group is also working. Most of the descriptive information is readable also in English here: <http://jog.unideb.hu/kutatasaink/mta-de-research-group>. There is also an involvement in an academic network as <https://unideb.academia.edu/KozszolgaltatasiKutatocsoportMTADE>

Thirdly, as a part of our empirical research, an electronic database (<http://jog.unideb.hu/kutatasaink/hajduboszormeny-varos-kozzszolgaltatasi-adatbankja>) was developed in 2014 during our field-work. It contains information on the investigated middle size town, as well as the analysed data and documents in a structured manner. Our virtual library is constantly being updated as long as the comprehensive project runs. The content is open for the interested researchers and practitioners for the purpose of secondary processing, too.

There are 7 scientific reviews about our volumes which were published in high ranking journals last year. In addition, there is a professional periodical journal i.e. "*Jegyző és közigazgatás*" [Municipal Chief Administrative Officers and Public Administration], disseminated among chief administrative officers of the Hungarian municipalities in which our papers are published regularly also for practitioners.

The research group presented again its recent publications in the framework of two professional discussions (almost one hour long respectively) broadcasted by the Radio Orient (http://radioorient.hu/adasok/2015-03-12_horvathmtamas; http://radioorient.hu/adasok/2015-06-18_horvath_m_tamas).

III. Domestic and international relations in 2015

The research group is involved in the COST Action IS 1207 “Local Public Sector Reforms (LocRef)” international project of the EU. The head of the group held presentations in the workshop of COST "Local Public Sector Reforms: An International Comparison", Paris (14–16 January, 2015), title "From Municipalisation to Centralism", in Dubrovnik, Croatia (5–6 May), title „Changes in the Hungarian Local Public Service Delivery” and in Istanbul, Turkey (22–23 October) title „A Re-Intervening Government”. There is also a publication under preparation by the Palgrave Macmillan in the framework of the COST Action.

The group is involved in a project of the Visegrad Fund focusing on recent changes in tax administration. The research highlights the issue of *'Tax Authorities in the V4 countries. Common Experiences after EU Accession.'* Apart from members of Visegrad group other East-Central-European countries are also represented by different universities.

Based on an agreement concluded last year by the Faculty of Political and Legal Studies, University of Debrecen (the host institution of the project), the research group continued its cooperation with the local government of Hajdúböszörmény in the matter of our empirical research in the town.

V. Most relevant publications in 2015

(For the original title of items No. 2–8, see the Hungarian version of the research report)

1. Horváth, Tamás M.: Effects of Western Governance Models in Eastern Europe After the Transition, Enlargement and Crises. In: Polonca Kovac, Gyorgy Gajduscek (eds.) *Contemporary Governance Models and Practices in Central and Eastern Europe*. Bratislava: NISPACEE, 2015. pp. 53–71. Full text: <http://real.mtak.hu/33335/>
2. Bartha, Ildikó: On the scale: Reforms of Lisbon in the international activity of the EU. *EURÓPAI JOG* 15:(3.) pp. 1–10. (2015) Full text: <http://real.mtak.hu/33333/>
3. Horváth, Tamás M.: Urban governance in Hungary and abroad. *TÉR ÉS TÁRSADALOM* 29:(2) pp. 43-66. (2015) Full text: <http://real.mtak.hu/24483/>
4. Bordás, Péter: Recent issues of local taxes. *PRO PUBLICO BONO* 3:(3) pp. 4-12. (2015) Full text: <http://real.mtak.hu/33284/>
5. Bartha, Ildikó: New rules in international investment agreements. In: Bartha, I: *Nemzetközi szerződések mozgásában* [International agreements in development] Budapest: Dialóg Campus, 2015. pp. 191–206. Full text: <http://real.mtak.hu/33337/>
6. Bordás, Péter: Revenue system in action: Analysis of fiscal decentralization by settlement clusters. *MISKOLCI JOGI SZEMLE* X.:(2015/1) pp. 129–147. (2015) Full text: <http://real.mtak.hu/33314/>
7. Bartha, Ildikó: Tasks and powers in the air transport. In: Bartha, I: *Nemzetközi szerződések mozgásában* [International agreements in development] Budapest: Dialóg Campus, 2015. pp. 207–236. Full text: <http://real.mtak.hu/33338/>
8. Horváth, Tamás M.: Silent changes in Europe. In: Horváth, T.M.: *Magasfeszültség. Városi szolgáltatások*. [High tension. Urban services] Budapest: Dialóg Campus, 2015. pp. 191–207. Full text: <http://real.mtak.hu/33339/>