

MTA-DE PUBLIC SERVICE RESEARCH GROUP

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I. Summary of the five-year research program and main activities in 2016

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 centralized solutions of regulation, governance or administration.

On the basis of the above underlying aims, concept papers of the research were already elaborated in previous years. We also completed our international comparative analysis in the main public service sectors and the empirical phase of the project based on field research in a Hungarian middle-sized town. The results have been published in thematically focused academic volumes and several journal articles. From 2012 to the end of 2016, based on research in the project, four PhD theses were completed, four books released and 95 papers (abstracts are also available in [English](#)) have been published in academic journals or as a chapter of academic volumes. These are already cited more than a total of 300 times in other works.

For the year of 2016 the following activities have been scheduled: completing and publishing the 'encyclopaedia' (the comprehensive volume of the 5 year project's results); further development of the research group's interactive profiles in order to keep under discussion burning issues scrutinized by the project; as well as strengthening and extending the international relations and other professional networks in order to improve the opportunities for dissemination of project results.

II. Remarkable research and other results in 2016

II/a. Remarkable research and other results

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

A) The research group completed and published the volume exploring a typology and management theory of public services in a comprehensive manner. The whole volume is based on basic academic comparative research, providing a novelty in the systematisation and theoretical approach to the subject-matter. The chapters of the book deal with twelve public services sectors respectively covering public utility services, human and social services, as well as other public service duties in a broader sense such as regional and urban development. The aim of the authors is to explore the origins and cross-sector characteristics of recent trends in the development of sector policies at issue. Each chapter contains short case-studies, explanatory tables, charts and relevant data in order to help understanding the content and message of the book. The volume may be interesting and useful to researchers, sector policy experts or other stakeholders. The theory underpinning the work, the structure and the style of

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editing also provide several opportunities for course usage in different schools and universities of the higher education.

B) Beyond this comprehensive volume, there are 12 academic journal articles and book chapters (in English and Hungarian) [published this year](#) in the framework of the project.

C) 2016 has been an effective year from an academic progress perspective, as well. Based on their research work in this project, two doctoral candidates successfully defended their PhD thesis under the supervision of the head of the research group. Four other students begun their PhD program this year under the supervision of the head and another member of the research group. (Each of their research topics is focused on one of the main public services sectors.) Based on an active involvement of seven undergraduate students in the work of the project, a university students' research college have been established at the Faculty of Political and Legal Studies, University of Debrecen.

II/b. Science and society

A) Apart from paper-based results, our interactive profiles, established in 2015, have been further developed this year in order to widen professional up-dated communication between the group and the wider professional audience. Both the Hungarian kozjavak.hu and independently the (not simply translated) English language version (publicgoods.eu) 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. On the average an article was read by almost 900 visitors, the most interesting texts were read by more than ten thousand people, and the readers often return to an article well after its actual publication. The year 2016 was especially fruitful in the development (as regards content and functions) of the English language site.

B) A more traditional website directly about the activities of the research group is also working. Most of the descriptive information is available in English here: <http://jog.unideb.hu/kutatasaink/mta-de-research-group>. There is also an involvement in the academia.eu network. Our [electronic database](#), developed in 2014 as a part of our empirical research, is constantly being updated as long as the comprehensive project runs. Academic reviews about our volumes were published in high ranking journals this year as well. In the professional periodical journal of "Jegyző és közigazgatás" [Municipal Chief Administrative Officers and Public Administration], disseminated among chief administrative officers of the Hungarian municipalities, our papers are regularly published.

C) The research group has also launched the web based and open access [Közjavak](#) semi-annual journal (ISSN 2498-7190) and [Public Goods & Governance](#) quarterly journal (ISSN 2498-6453) with a content similar to the interactive profiles. Both *Közjavak* and *PG&G* include articles, shorter notes and commentaries based on theoretically and empirically grounded research and experiences on public goods, public service delivery and other public functions in a wide range of sectors, especially focused on contemporary challenges of governmental roles and new governance models in market economies.

III. Domestic and international relations in 2016

A) The research group is involved in the COST Action IS 1207 'Local Public Sector Reforms: *An International Comparison* (LocRef)' international project of the EU. The research resulted in a volume released this year and in another one being in the process of publication. Both are

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(will be) published by the Palgrave Macmillan and contain one chapter respectively by the head of the research group on recent changing trends of local public service delivery and governmental roles in Hungary, viewed in an international context. Besides, presentation titled 'A Re-Intervening Government. Evaluation of public utility services in the context of marginal reforms' was held in the workshop of the COST Action in Zagreb (27–28 June).

B) The head of the group held another presentation titled *Change of the public administration from 'consolidation' till today* in the conference *'Mission impossible – Courage as Virtue in the Politics'* jointly organized by the Hungarian Cultural Institute in Sofia and the Hungarian Embassy in Sofia, Bulgaria (7th November, Sofia).

C) The project of the Visegrad Fund (in which the research group is also involved) focusing on recent changes in tax administration has been completed this year. The cooperation resulted in a comprehensive volume of the research containing chapters written by the head of the research group and other collaborators.

IV. Other domestic and international projects in 2016

The research group has been involved in two other academic project this year. One of them sponsored by the Hungarian Ministry of Justice is focused on transparency issues in the management of public resources, the other one financed by the Public Administration and Development Operational Programme examines the challenges and recent trends in governance resource management.

V. Most relevant publications in 2016

(For the original title of items No. 4–9, see the Hungarian version of the research report)

1. Horváth, T. M.: From municipalisation to centralism: Changes to local public service delivery in Hungary. In: Wollmann, H. et al (eds.) *Public and Social Services in Europe*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016. pp. 185–199. <http://real.mtak.hu/48315/>
2. Bartha, I.: The External Side of Parliamentary Democracy. *HUNGARIAN YEARBOOK OF INTERNATIONAL LAW AND EUROPEAN LAW* 2016 pp. 449–473. (forthcoming) <http://real.mtak.hu/49103/>
3. Horváth, T. M.: Taxes as intergovernmental revenues. In: *Tax authorities in the Visegrad Group countries: Common experience after accession...* Lublin: Katolicki Uniwersytet Lubelski Jana Pawla II, 2016. pp. 139–152. <http://real.mtak.hu/48466/>
4. Horváth, T. M. and Bartha, I. (eds.): *The Organization and Sectors of Public Service Delivery*. Budapest: Dialóg Campus, 2016. 936 o. <http://real.mtak.hu/48836/>
5. Bordás, P.: Budgetary expenditure of local governments between 1993–2010 and after *PRO FUTURO* 6:(1) 2016. pp. 79–197. <http://real.mtak.hu/48479/>
6. Horváth, T. M.: The Beauty and the Beast. Public administration and company *ÁLLAM ÉS JOGTUDOMÁNY* 57:(1) 2016. pp. 24–39. <http://real.mtak.hu/48674/>
7. Zoványi, N.: The private law costume of the state. What is behind? *MAGYAR JOG* 63:(6) 2016 pp. 359–365. <http://real.mtak.hu/48468/>
8. Horváth, T. M.: Cutting utility prizes in Hungary as an integral element of the government's resource allocation policy. *POLITIKATUDOMÁNYI SZEMLE* 25:(3) 2016. pp. 135–146. <http://real.mtak.hu/48317/>
9. Bartha I.: In the name of the 'rule of law'. Administrative justice in Hungary today *JOGTUDOMÁNYI KÖZLÖNY* 71:(11) 2016. pp. 575–581. <http://real.mtak.hu/48321/>