Dimensions of analysis of politico-administrative dichotomy in the core executive

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1. Introduction. Politico-administrative dichotomy as the dimension of the life of Government

The definition of the nature of politico administrative relations did not caused serious problems in case the roles of politicians and civil servants inside administration was considered. The dichotomy had two clearly separated dimensions. On the one hand it was a set of relations between of two interrelated but subordinated offices in the government, who have different source of responsibility and mechanism of accountability. The main issue was: where must pass the demarcation line in the executive hierarchy between political or politically appointed, and official executive or career civil servant to ensure the politico-administrative balance (i.e. the balance of responsibility and accountability). The other side of coin was: how these two subjects would divide the power? What is their actual weight in the allocation of values and recourses in the policy process? From this point the excessive politicisation of civil servants was the main issue, because this could restrain the mission of political executive as the architect of policy and also to hinder its political responsiveness.

These definitions are not able to conceive the dichotomy at the level of government. What is “political” in activities and structure of the Government from the point of political legitimacy? All members of government as well as most of their support staff concerned with the policy-making are politically appointed. Main proportion of government actions is decision-making on issues “who gets what, when and how”, i.e. the allocation of recourses and values. Equally difficult is to define the “administrative” component, at least through the different units of its physical structure: cabinet office, cabinet commissions etc.

In case of interrelations between politicians and civil servants we could speak about the opposite parties of the configuration, because two different subjects formed this set of relations. Político-administrative dichotomy on the level of government derive form the dual nature of the government as the relatively coherent body.

This dichotomy could be reduced to the interrelations of cabinet (or other type of body, composed by ministers) and its support structures (Cabinet or Prime minister office, government commissions etc.). It could be reduced also to the dichotomy of government and its agency. But we pointed on the dual nature of government. Dunleavy and Rhodes convincingly demonstrated the advantage of the concept “core executive” in the comparative studies. In this context the study of politico-administrative relations in government seems more feasible. This enable – as I will demonstrate – much profoundly to conceive also the role of different units of core executive in these relations.

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2. Co-ordinating roles of government as the variables that shape the politico administrative relations.

What is the nature of dualism of the government? Here I depart from the recent analysis of Blondel&Golosov. On the one hand, the government is autonomous political institutions entrusted to make decisions on behalf of society and its representative institutions. The government has to make decisions that would be supported by constituents, Parliament. Otherwise Government will lost the trust and will be forced to resign. In this role the government is partial and therefore political. It can fulfil its political role as soon as it is able to channel input (requests, interests) to appropriate decisions. I.e. if it is politically responsive. In the coalition government the political legitimacy of government decisions presume also that its decisions will be supported by all members of coalition. Here, the crucial issue of the political dimension is how to retain unity of the government or legitimacy of its decisions. Government can retain its legitimacy through political co-ordination of decision making.

On the other hand, government must arrange the life of country through the administration and decide upon the optimal ways of organisation of various sectors of society. The government must decide huge number of issues and ensure or better to say to create preconditions that these issues will be solved effectively. “Better to say”, because the core executive as entity has not capacity of administering implementation. Efficiency and effectiveness of decisions – as administrative dimension – could be achieved thanks to specific support structures at the cabinet: commissions, advisors, cabinet office etc. The capacity to do this is considered as the administrative dimensions of co-ordination of decisions. There are at least three levels of co-ordination, where politics and administration are combined in different ways and are forming various configurations. The extent and ways the government is able to balance these two aims (legitimacy and efficiency of decisions) are the basic variables of politico-administrative dichotomy.

In the one end of continuum could be imagined the highly politicised government. Over-politicisation of the Cabinet might be caused by large ideological distance between coalition partners. But is could be caused also because members of coalitions are for several reasons highly dependent on their supporters (usually on interests group, but also on social movements) and are forced to spent all energy to serve their particularist interests. For instance, Cabinets in France in the end of fourth Republic were highly dependent on the changing requests of parliamentary factions. In this situation the primarily aim of management of the Cabinet is to retain the unity/legitimacy of the cabinet. All the decisions are made from the viewpoint not to initiate conflict inside the government or not to cause dissatisfaction of

4 J. Blondel & G. Golosov Studying Decision-making in the “Centre of Government” in Eastern Europe and the CIS. - Paper, presented for the ECPR Joint Sessions of Workshops, Copenhagen, 14-19 April 2000
5 My idea to analyse the politico-administrative dichotomy through the problems and levels of coordination originated from the Guy Peters Managing Horizontal Government. The Politics of Coordination. Canadian centre for Management Development, 1998
constituencies/ institutions who may deny the right of the cabinet to make
decisions. If such decisions appeared to be impossible the Cabinet could
cease to make decisions. The paralysis of the core executive could develop.
Nevertheless, tensions between coalition partners would increase, because
the pressures from sponsors would force to make some important decisions
that would cause the conflict.

The highly politicised government may lose the other policy aims and not to
rely on the other policy co-ordination devices. Cabinet government is effective
tool for democratic governance because the excessive politicisation and
neglect of other policy aims (and devices of co-ordination) results in the
resignation. But the majority-party government can gradually lose its ability to
manage country, because the government cannot co-ordinate the policy-
process on the other dimensions. This inability will result either in the
impotence in the policy implementation or in the intensive conflicts inside the
administration or between different segments of citizens. Radical shifts in the
support of parties happen first of all in systems with majority party cabinets or
with majoritarian style of decision-making in coalition government.6

Similarly, the purely administrative stance of government would cause the
incapacity to make decisions. Government that is aimed to make perfect
decisions from technical point of view as well from the perspective to meet
needs and opinions of all constituents, will enter into the endless debates and
could spend huge time with expensive expertise. Government could become
a prisoner of its expert commissions and expert-ministers, who does not have
any political responsibility.

My basic argument is that the politico-administrative balance is ensured in case the structures
and devices of management inside of government would enable more or less balanced co-
ordination of policy in all dimensions. I would propose a very tentative table to explain various
configurations. (Table 1)

| Political co-ordination | was defined as harmonisation of decisions/ actions that would ensure the legitimacy of the government. Policy (program) co-ordination is aimed to develop as complete as possible fit between different policy programs. This type of co-ordination must ensure that, form instance, too strict immigration policy could not hinder the development of demographic or labour market policy in countries with low rate of birth. The co-ordination of policy implementation must ensure that all participants who have to implement the policy will fit its activities and recourses to achieve the final aims of the policy. This is the horizontal dimension of co-ordination. In the vertical dimensions the issue of the ownership of the policy might hinder the coordinated implementation, especially on the level of street-level bureaucracy. |

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6 There are strong adversarial traits in policy-making between Estonian coalitions and oppositions. Therefore their policy style is like under majority-party government. Results of successive elections are confirming our hypothesis. Winner of elections in 1992 (Pro Patria and ENIP) got altogether 39 seats and at the next elections in 1995 resp. 8 altogether. Winner of the 1995 elections KMÜ got 41 + 1 seats and at the next elections (1999) they get 14 votes. The same trend seems continuing. Triple coalition got at the 1999 elections 53 seats (53%), but at current moment only 28% of citizens trust the government. (Open appeal of social scientists. – Postimees, 23.04.2001

7 Pollit&Bouckaert, 2000, pp. 48-51
Co-ordination of policy outcomes means, that interest of different social segments must be balanced in the government decisions not to cause social tensions. Government decisions could promote the political conflicts, because it may promote interests of one constituency as the expense of interest of other constituencies. But government decisions could be in this dimension highly political also because the active involvement of different constituencies into the decision-making. Here the difference of meaning of political become pronounced. This issue will be elaborated below.

2.1. Government commissions: four configurations of politico-administrative relations.

According to the conventional view, CC is established with the aim to lessen the workload of the cabinet. Every country has its unique set of commissions with different competence. Our empirical study revealed that the specific role of commission in defining the politico administrative dichotomy could be rather different despite its formal status.

Highly politicised government are trying to avoid commissions, because they do not like to delegate politically sensitive issues to other bodies. But they are very eager to form informal ad hoc commissions where tensions would be softened via face to face deliberations and presumably some bargains. Sometimes informal majority in the commission could force the individual minister to compel. I.e. commissions are used as the tool for the pacification of individual ministers. (This is especially important in cabinets, where ad hoc temporary personal coalition would emerge between individual members of different parties.) If commissions at this type of government are established, they tend to be commissions of ministers for very concrete job to do. They have very precisely defined tasks and working procedures and they lasted remarkably shorter that under other cabinets. The role of civil servants and experts at commissions is diminished substantially. The role of advisors to the government and prime minister in the policymaking process is decisive, especially in lobbying the consensus among the cabinet members. There are special advisors to deal with the external groups at the Government in Estonia.

Cabinets caring for the co-ordinated policy programs would prefer to rely on the conventional form of commission: commission of ministers is a way to decentralise the cabinet decisions to reduce their overload. These commissions involve largely external, non-political expertise.

Cabinets that put emphasise on the co-ordinated implementation or balance of sectoral politico-administrative interests develop inter-ministerial commission with extensive participation of civil servants. These commissions are focusing on the details and balance of interests of different sectors.

Cabinets that focus on the co-ordination of policy outcomes or social balances create commissions with extensive involvement of interests groups and other constituencies of policy. The combination of the second and fourth type of
policy orientations vs. commissions was analysed in my report on forestry policy.\(^8\)

**Table 1. Types of policy co-ordination as variables shaping the politico-administrative configurations.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of co-ordination</th>
<th>Focus of activity</th>
<th>Style of decision making</th>
<th>Basic support structures</th>
<th>Type of decisions</th>
<th>The aim of coordination</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Political</td>
<td>Gaining political support, justifying actions</td>
<td>Bargain, logrolling</td>
<td>Advisors to the government as brokers, <em>ad hoc</em> commissions</td>
<td>Politically sensitive, conflictual</td>
<td>To retain in power through retaining the legitimacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy</td>
<td>Conceptual fit of policy programs</td>
<td>Rational technical</td>
<td>Government support structures, expert commissions</td>
<td>Political priority, consultations</td>
<td>To ensure the consistent policy strategy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy implementation</td>
<td>Smooth interaction of different parts of administration</td>
<td>Calculated advantages/disadvantages</td>
<td><em>Inerministerial</em> commissions, working groups</td>
<td>Politically and administratively feasible (instrumental)</td>
<td>To avoid conflicts inside administration, to ensure the feeling ownership for civil servants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy outcomes</td>
<td>Balancing interests of recipients of policy outcomes</td>
<td>Compromising</td>
<td>Commissions with intensive involvement of constituents</td>
<td>Participative and deliberative</td>
<td>To avoid tensions and conflicts inside society, to ground legitimacy of democratic governance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The role and configuration of advisors to the government is also rather different. In Estonia, for instance, the structure of advisors at the cabinet responsible for the co-ordination of policy implementation mirrored before 1992 the structure of the departments. Cabinet that focused on the political co-ordination formed the advisor’s staff who concentrated on the contacts with external groups and on the analysis of political feasibility of proposals that cabinet have worked out.

In sum, this dimension and classification could enable quite sophisticated analysis of politico-administrative relations at the core executive. But ideas presented in this table need substantial further elaboration.

3. What is political in the cabinet politics?

Already in the previous chapter was found that there are two different meanings of “political” in the life of cabinet. On the one hand, “political” are decisions that are made after the intensive discussion and even conflict inside the government. Here the political denotes the competition of partisan interests in the decision-making. Criteria for the making decision is [political] will or macht, i.e. possibility to impose decisions to the opposite side. Decisions themselves could be very piecemeal, such as ad hoc distribution of recourses or assignments (appointments).

The opposite dimension of decisions (i.e. administrative aspect) to this meaning of political could be the technical fine-tuning of some programme. The dichotomy means that the “politically sensitive” decisions are let for the discretion of cabinet. Issues that could not cause the controversies, are delegated to the real solution to individual minister and ministerial civil service. The latter decisions are ratified at the cabinet session usually without discussions. There is also other important specific of configuration of politico-administration dichotomy with such content of the political in the work of cabinet. Discussions and conflicts are not solved (i.e. the real politics is not done) in the framework of the official and open institutions, but during the regular informal cabinet meetings. I.e. this politics is conducive to the closeness of the Cabinet policy making. I.e. cabinet adapts its structures in a way to make clear difference between sensitive-non-sensitive decisions.

On the other hand, the politics is the art of setting priorities, the art to differ between conceptually and ideologically important and feasible decisions. In this sense the political is the "purposive and deliberate aspect of government in actions"\(^9\), i.e. the ability of the cabinet to carry out some policy. Here the government is focusing on issues of general importance and felt itself responsible to form a coherent policy line in the array of numerous more or less urgent issues. Government as political authority is a strategy-maker and the role of government support structures is to operationalise the policy. Government is political because it is able to formulate independently political

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\(^9\) This antinomy has been analysed in rather different contexts as the difference between instrumental and substantive politics (J. Elster The Market and the Forum: Three Varieties of Political Theory. – In J. Bohman & W. Reghb (Ed.) Deliberative democracy. The MIT press), between aggregative and integrative political processes (D. March, J. Olsen Rediscovering Institutions: The Organisational Basis of Politics. The Free Press, 1989.) Quite similar is the difference between the distributive versus collective power developed by M. Mann in the analysis of the development of governance systems. (M. Mann Sources of Social Power, v. I-II.)


The general political purpose is the increase of the overall legitimacy of the Government coalition.

Politico-administrative dichotomy emerge here because the government would like to avoid the overload with work through the delegation of other type of decisions and other type (than the political) and also less perspective and sort term issues to the other levels of core executive. For this aim the government establish commissions and other support structures.

Actually, these are not different concepts of political but different ends of continuum of governance. In this continuum we might develop the typology of cabinets where different configuration of politics and administration would emerge. Theoretically this difference was first developed into coherent set of explanations in the framework concept of the minimal winning – minimal connected winning coalitions. I cannot develop here the sophisticated analysis of that theoretical perspective. Through the prism of these concepts the analysis of differences in the policymaking agendas of cabinets could be done.

The minimal winning coalition is established with the aim to get into office and to stay in the office as long as possible. The indicator of these coalitions is large ideological distance between coalition parties. Close politico-ideological considerations, i.e. the realisation of coherent policy strategy are not primary ends of the formation of coalitions. Partners are trying to get from coalition as much as possible political advantages for its own party: offices, support money for next elections, fulfilling former promises of sponsors etc. I.e. they have quite instrumental aims. Single members of the coalition may have consistent policy purposes. But the coalition agreement (if it exists at all) contain issues that might be ad hoc compatible with each other, i.e. that obviously will not contradict to the other realisation of other issues set forward by the other member of coalition. Because the coalition agreement is composed during the honeymoon between elections and inauguration into the office, it inevitably contain contradictory preferences. For this reason the implementation of agreement resume permanent bargaining and logrolling. Politics at these cabinets is often the art of scoring at the expense of coalition partners.

Minimal connected winning coalitions could not be less conflictual. But they are focusing to the priority issues in the coherent government agenda and are delegating other issues deriving from key decisions to the other structures of government. The unity of the government in not valued as the priority. The legitimacy of the decisions might be achieved via extensive and open discussions, participation, consensus. Etc. Hence the location of government cabinet (as well as specific to it configuration of politico-administrative

12 Goetz is correct when stated that in CEE countries the political capability of the government is insufficient because the former cannot rely on the coordinating and expert capacity of their party administration. See: K. Goetz, H.Margetts The Solitary center: the core executive in Central and Eastern Europe. – In: Governance, vol.12, 1999, N.4, p. 427
dichotomy) in the continuum with opposite meaning of the "political" depends substantially on the political and institutional context of the cabinet formation.

Table 2. Different meaning of “political” dependent on the logic of coalition-making

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension of political</th>
<th>Minimal winning</th>
<th>Minimal connected winning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Type of issues in the cabinet agenda</td>
<td>Sensitive to conflict</td>
<td>Policy priority, key to other solutions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Source of legitimacy, sponsors of the cabinet</td>
<td>Interest group proxy</td>
<td>Societal interest of different segments of population</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Source of legitimacy, sponsors of the cabinet</td>
<td>Party-proxy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How issues get to the political agenda</td>
<td>Ad hoc agreement</td>
<td>Program or strategy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Style of decision-making</td>
<td>Logrolling</td>
<td>Consensus, rational ends</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. Policy types and policy instruments as variable of the emergence of different politico-administrative configurations

There are numerous approaches in interpreting the connection of politics and policy instruments. The need to involve the analysis of policy instruments to develop a more complete understanding of the nature of contemporary policy making was emphasised recently by Guy Peters. Especially fruitful could be to analyse how various dimensions of policy instruments are revealed in different types of policymaking.

One example of this kind of analysis and typology are proposed by B. Rothstein. His relatively simple and clear idea could be used for the introduction to the problem and for the demonstration of methodological resources of such approach.

According to his conception different government prefer the policy that presume different types of policy instruments applied. On the one end of continuum is located a static regulatory policy. The role of government is to issue the act and to enforce it legally. The realisation of act is almost automatic, as for instance the enabling public law (marriage) or its is the redistributive regulation that could change indirectly the behaviour of the individual. The role of government as well as the nature of decisions

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16 Ibid
18 The regulatory in the vocabulary of Rothstein meant substantially different thing that in the typology of T. Lowi that will be analysed below. Regulatory here meant the policy that could be implemented using purely legal policy instruments.
(realllocation, regulation) is almost purely political in sense that it does not contain administrative dimension.

On the other end is located the interventionist policy aimed to ensure the policy outcome for the narrow target group, who independently is not able of receive benefits proposed. Or to solve complex problems when means and targets of the solution are indefinite. For this reasons the key of the policy in the implementation. The government policy is highly administrative. Policy aims as well as outcomes could be formulated in a very general and vague manner. The role of street-level bureaucracy in interpretation of policy targets is extremely important.

The former preference is justified for several reasons. Firstly, this enable to reduce the dependence of government on the administrative support structures in the elaboration as well as implementation of the policy. I.e. the ideology of minimal state could well fit with the approach. Secondly, the policy cycle is relatively short and results could be achieved during the period in office. Third, decisions could be bargained that enable to get for all parties in coalition some acceptable decisions to increase the support of electorate. This is because there is no need to co-ordinate decisions on other levels; bargains could be ad hoc between absolutely incompatible or/and non-related issues. And fourth, the government could hold the control over final results without a fear that support structures or administration could reverse the policy aims. The implementation of regulative policy is almost automatic. Hence, this type of policy enable the domination of competitive-political component in the politico administrative relations.

The reverse is true in case of the interventionist policy. The approach of Rothstein does not yet enable to rely on the clear set of indicators for empirical analysis. Therefore I have restricted myself with the abstract deliberation on methodological opportunities of the analysis.

The more promising is typology, proposed by T. Lowi and developed further by Ripley and Champney. Some authors deny the possibility to apply his typology in effective studies of public policy. Lowi aimed to elaborate this typology to understand, how policy determine politics. I.e. his aim was exactly to conceive the role and nature of politics various types of policy.

According to T. Lowi there are four basic types of policy: distributive (patronage), regulative, re-distributive and constituent (or institutional) policy. Distributive and institutional policy have indirect and enabling, re-distributive and regulatory policy have direct impact on citizens and is compelling or

21 T. Lowi Four Systems of Policy, Politics, and Choice. – Public Administration review, 1972, July/August, p. 299
22 “We hypothesised that each of these categories of public policy have its own set of political characteristics, and that these characteristics would be sufficiently distinct that we could develop a theory of power for each of the four categories.”, Lowi&Ginsberg (1990) p. 652
The analysis of these types and appropriate to them policy instruments does enable to get further in the explanation of politico-administrative dichotomy in the life of Cabinet. By the way, namely T. Lowi demonstrates convincingly that the same instruments could be applied in the framework of different types of policy.

On the one end of continuum is the distributive or patronage policy. The initial sense of the policy was, when Parliament or its committees make “spot contracts” with strongest segments of society to retain legitimacy or to react on the emerging tensions in ad hoc manner. This policy demonstrates high dependence of politicians on external groups and pressures, and results in the competition between different political actors on the right of who can give whom and what. The use of logrolling indicates that the Parliament or Government are not able to promote systemic and pro-active policy or/and has not enough capacity to implement policy. It also indicates that the institutionalisation of governing elite is not high: they must demonstrate their “inevitability” for different segments of audience. Patronage policy is possible in case some segments are dominating at the expense of the others. This is an indicator that the level of political institutionalisation of the initial forms of distributive policy is low.

Hence the politico-administrative dichotomy could indicate itself also as a dichotomy. Either the unbalanced hybrid of configuration would develop with extensive focus on the controversial (conducive to conflict) distributive issues that neglect efficiency dimension of policy except in the sense of effective legitimation of government. Or the configuration is developing into the adversarial opposition, when political dimensions is restraining the administrative dimension (of policy co-ordination), or administrative dimensions (low level of co-ordination) would led the political dimension of decisions to the dead-end.

Distributive policy is political in sense that it could cause an angry competition between parties in defining the target group. It has low political potential for two reasons. On the one hand, this policy cannot produce enduring balance between different segments, that could be achieved already in case of regulatory policy. Because the absence of that balance, the government cannot promote pro-active policy. On the other hand, this policy is less strategic, less systemic and therefore less consistent from the ideological point of view.

Table 3. Policy type as the variable shaping politico-administrative configurations

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23 The analysis of these dimensions of policy instruments see: B. Hogwood From Crisis to Complacency? Shaping Public Policy in Britain. Oxford University Press, ch 7.
24 The analysis of Lowi (1972, pp. 304-305) demonstrates that when distributive policy is characterised by logrolling, the regulative policy is done through the bargaining. In case of re-distributive policy participants at the decision-making locus are relying first of all on ideological considerations. His example confirmed our thesis about the change of the meaning of “political” dependent on the politco-administrative configuration.
25 A good example was the final stage of budgeting process in Estonia in fall 1998, when the Parliament changed into the auction of investments to the school roofs and road ditch that enormously exceeds the deficit of the draft budget. According to the Lowi&Ginsberg (p.646) the budget policy as the form of institutional policy started to develop in the US as late as 1921.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose of policy</th>
<th>Meaning of &quot;political&quot;</th>
<th>Politico-administrative balance</th>
<th>The role of government</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Patronage</td>
<td>To achieve legitimacy, ad hoc response tensions or requests</td>
<td>Unsystematic reaction to sensitive issues that could cause conflicts</td>
<td>Purely political coordination, conflict between sides; unbalanced hybrid(^{26}) or adversarial relations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regulative</td>
<td>Legal framework for competition, to balance pressures from below</td>
<td>To balance various interests, neutral role of government</td>
<td>Highly political with direct access of IG, but balancing policy outcomes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Re-distributive</td>
<td>Macroeconomic regulation of structures, improving socio-economic system</td>
<td>To balance various sectors and social segments</td>
<td>Policy fit and consensus of political elites over the strategic aims, emerging balance with administrative dimension</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constituental</td>
<td>Changes in institutional architecture</td>
<td>To develop sustainable and effective institutional system, administrative policy</td>
<td>balanced hybrid in strategy formation and emphasize on the operationalisation of policy (coordination of implementation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On the other extreme we have constituent policy. The concept could be developed as institutional policy. This policy is the most political in sense that it focuses on the most systemic issues. Although this was at the earlier stage also policy of redesign of political balances (electoral constituencies, rules of party financing etc.) or creation of various agencies, it presume a very high

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level of political balances to be legitimate in the eyes of other institutions and constituents. But this policy has, in combination with other types, more and more focused on the intentional creation institutional balances, include in the relations of governance and administration. As the initiator of the policy is politico-administrative elite and the government tried to play here the first role, we can state that this policy has also the strongest administrative component. I.e. the balance would be very stable.

His typology enable to introduce also historical-institutional dimension into the analysis. Because these policy types are also stages of successive institutionalisation of policymaking roles of the government, include the politico-administrative dichotomy. Lowi demonstrated how an abstract politico - administrative dichotomy with mutually exclusive dimensions of decisions and roles of decision-makers have developed into the balanced configuration of politico administrative dichotomy with mutually converged dimensions and roles. Besides his approach would enable to look at politico-administrative dichotomy in the core executive in connection with the check and balances of power in the triangle Parliament – Government - Administration. Both these aspects are especially important in the analysis of policy process in transition countries.

But he does not overestimate the historical dimension. He insisted in the simultaneous application of all types to develop a balanced politico-administrative relations. Full elaboration of policy tools in the framework of distributive policy is precondition for the effective and successful use of policy tools in the framework, say, re-distributive policy. (This was demonstrated by Lowi in the analysis Roosvelt's New Deal.) The excessive emphasis on the re-distributive or regulatory policy would lead to the inefficiency in their application and in the need to rely on the simplest, less sophisticated tools in the re-distributive policy. This is the explanation why the overemphasis on the monetarist policy led to the decrease of the policy capacity of the government and even the more drastic decrease of the legitimacy of democratic institutions in CEE countries, at least in Estonia. Whereas the application of monetarist policy, balanced with the other types and tools in developed democracies, achieved much balanced outcomes.

The sequential introduction of policy types does not mean that one policy and its instruments are per se inferior. Lowi gave an example how partonage policy was used during the initiation of the New Deal (as an example first of all re-distributive policy) to get legitimation to the New Deal. Besides, initial emphasise of the distributive policy as purely “state sponsorship” has evolved towards the participative partnership, that changes the devices of legitimation of government institutions. (Note, the legitimation was the main aim of the policy co-ordination.)

I cannot here to elaborate fully the configurations of politico-administrative dichotomy, because of lack of space. Also because the detailed description of politico-administrative configurations could be better developed in the course of case studies.

5. Dual role of the minister: four configurations of politico administrative relations.
In spring 2000 we studied cabinet decision-making in Estonia. Through the interviews of key participants at core executive and the analysis of public statements we intended to find different styles of behaviour of governments ministers. This typology was not easy to come, because initially we tried to found the reverse: how the different types of cabinet setting would influence the behaviour of individual minister. Therefore the first proto-types of ministers roles were highly personified.

Despite differences in the cabinet decision-making styles and also individual peculiarities, there appeared to be two continuum where the behaviour of ministers could be differentiated most considerably. (Table 2.)

Table 4. Reflections of politico-administrative dichotomy in the structure of activities of the individual minister

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(II) Main focus of activity</th>
<th>(I) Define its personal role as:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cabinet centred</td>
<td>Politico-representative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Policy-professional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ministry centred</td>
<td>1. Political combiner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Political programmist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Gatherer of political capital</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. Minister-specialist</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The first of them is vocabulary distinction between the ministers, who are more cabinet centred and those who are more focused more on the interests of the ministry. Even in those cabinets that used to be collegial this controversy appeared to be a serious problem. 27

The second differentiate between politicians who saw their mission in enabling smooth political input to government decisions and those who focus on the policy aims. (Once more we returned to different meaning of “political”.)

In the first end of continuum there are ministers who focus its activities on the enchancing the political support and legitimacy. They try to show themselves as representative of interests of party, special constituency or even society in general. The content of policy is of secondary importance. Important is to convince somebody that exactly these actions of Cabinet are corresponding to the interests of those could impact the power positions of the cabinet or minister. In one box (ministry centered) there are ministers who use their ministerial post as the tool for the increase of their personal popularity either in party or among potential voters. They spent huge amount of time in participating in various rituals or communicating with press. Although their behaviour could be defined as highly political, from the viewpoint of politico-administrative dichotomy at the cabinet they cause political paralysis of the cabinet in certain sector and dominance of civil servants in the policy process.

On the other box we found minister who tried to became as the centre of coalition building, usually working in co-operation with prime minister. Sometimes these are masters of intrigue, sometimes masters of compromise. The first type of minister could increase the overall legitimacy of cabinet, at least in the perspective of next elections. The other type is not visible and they are focusing on the unity of the cabinet, or on the increase of the role of his party in the coalition. Both of them are used as input to promote particularist interest.

In the other continuum we could find policy-oriented minister who see his role in professional contribution to the policy decisions of the Cabinet. Cabinet centred minister is actually the architect of Cabinet policy; his/her advice or opinion has quite strong impact on the positions of other members of the cabinet. I.e. they are ideological leaders of the cabinet. Usually policy programmist is also strong in developing also its sectoral area. There have been very few ministers in Estonia who could fall into this category.

Ministers specialist is the most bureaucratic centered, because they are completely restricted with the issues of the management of a Ministry. Their advantageous is the skill to manage the implementation process. These ministers are most eager to defend the substantial interests of the area that might cause conflict in the Cabinet. Equally he/she is the most consistent promoter of strategic consideration at the cabinet.

There have been intensive discussions in Estonia on issue, whether the minister should have background of professional politician or professional specialists in certain area. In the latter case the minister is originated for outside of party hierarchy or even has been non-partisan minister. Surely, professional politicians would more often identify with the politico-representative role, and professional specialists would identify with policy-making roles. But, the more the career politicians are taking ministerial posts, the more evenly they are distributing between these four types. Ministers-specialists are not always so neutral and technical as they might try to demonstrate. Equally, they might be representatives of some sponsor group and hence could fall into the box (3).

But, these have been my observations. But we need empirical evidence for this typology to judge the orientations of ministers could contribute to the formation of in politico-administrative configurations. Equally we need evidence about changing of their roles in case the cabinet is developing towards the other type (for instance collegial cabinet is splintering) and especially dependent on the political business cycle. Obviously ministers who fall into other categories would take a stance of category 3. before elections.

5. Cabinet structure as the variable of politico-administrative configuration

There are huge number of typologies of cabinets, that differentiate various structural configurations. Every of them have its own explanatory purpose and limits. Our purpose is to find the one where the politico-administrative configurations could be better analysed.

Here I would get back to the discussion on the “political”. On the one hand, the political as competitive bargaining must be countervailed with the political as the capacity for the strategic choices and formation of coherent policy agenda in the policy process. Departing from this opposition, the variations in the structure of the core executive could be defined in the following continuum. On the one end of continuum the structure of the government ensure its ability to make pro-active strategic policy and guarantee its implementation, relying on own support structures. These are configurations of structure, where political dimension of decisions is well balanced with the administrative one. For instance, consensus over the strategic issues enable to delegate the operationalisation of it to the lower levels (commissions, ministry) without the danger of loss of legitimacy and unity. Also the division between sectoral and integrative issues is clear to assign the solution of both to appropriate level.

On the other end of continuum we find politically splintered conglomerate able to ratify policies worked out and implemented by the autonomous ministry. In that case the cabinet is not able to promote the coherent policy-direction and even not to give solutions to the integrative (versus sectoral) policy issues. Formal unity is retained because for the decision of politically sensitive issues mainly informal arrangements are used or the cabinet could develop towards the forum without almost any decision-making capacity. In our analysis the unbalanced politico-administrative dichotomy in government decision-making would produce this type. These are either the over-politicised cabinet composed by the ideologically distant counterparts; or cabinets that overemphasis the external consensus and cabinets that care

too much on the co-ordination of implementation. In any case they develop into the politically 
impotent governments.

What are variables that could move our core executive into the intermediate 
position between extremes? I am not yet ready to present a sophisticated 
description of structural configurations, but set of variables.

**Strong leader** with effective co-ordinating powers over the policy 
implementation might produce the cabinet at the first end of continuum. 
The best example of monocratic government among parliamentary regimes is 
German chancellor democracy with its Kanzlerprinzip. The authority of the 
head of executive relies largely on his personal support staff that mirror the 
structure of departments. But this structural isomorphism is not sufficient. 
Besides, Ministers have formal accountability for the following general policy 
lines of the Chancellor but are directly co-ordinated by the head of 
Chancellor! Despite of this, ministers have enough freedom in the 
administration of policy. There is even an automatic device of ratification of 
decisions, harmonised by ministers, by the cabinet. Sometimes monocratic 
government are emerging not because the specific of the party structure of 
the cabinet, but because the strong personality supported by the party 
structures. (Some authors distinguish in these cases a specific type of 
government: party government.)

Obviously the presidential executive has all 
structural precondition to form that type of politico-administrative balance, 
except in case the cohabitation in France. despite the strong leadership, even 
the authority of the president of the US could be weakened because of the 
excessive splintering of the core executive. Hence, I could conclude that less 
hierarchical cabinets have more balanced configuration of politico-
administrative relations with strong capacity of both dimensions.

**Inner Cabinets** is specific structure at the government. In presidential system 
it is in some way institutionalised. Inner cabinet is specific for the large 
collegial cabinets that become hierarchic. The cabinet itself retains as the 
unified subject in focusing strategic political decisions. One of the indicators 
of that political unity is the role of general policy discussions in the 
government agenda. In case of the coalition government, for instance, in 
Estonia the inner cabinet emerged as an attempt of the PM to intervene into 
the sectoral policy relying on the support of important external sponsors. I.e. it 
could also cause the deformation of collegial cabinet and could be as the 
intermediate stage towards the splintered government.

I have not more enough space to develop further this list of variables, that 
would form different configurations of politico administrative relations. Let 
me only draft the most important variables.

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29 M. Laver&K. Shepsle (eds.) Cabinet Ministers and Parliamentary Government. Cambridge University Press, 
1994

30 See: Already referred Goetz&Margetts, Blondel&Golosov. J. Blondel & F. Müller Rommel Cabinets in 
Western Europe. Macmillan, 1989. Introduction. Soon the Cabinets in Eastern Europe will be published under 
edition of these authors. This Estonian contribution is presented by me and F. Müller-Rommel.

31 The analysis of Estonian context see: Sootla, G. Kasemets, K. and Velthut, A. (2000) "Balancing policy-
making in the 'centre of government': the Estonian example", paper presented at ECPR 28th Joint session of 
Workshops, Copenhagen, 14-19 April, 2000
- Prime Minister is able to rely heavily on its own support structure to direct integrative policies, for instance, PA reforms, EL enlargement, Regional policy, Information policy etc. The dual configurations of politico-administrative relations might emerge.

- Ministers, usually co-ordinating ministries, with power to veto the policy proposal at the stage of its adoption or implementation (through the budgeting).  

- Cabinet committees created with the aim to reduce the overload of the Cabinet decision-making. These bodies are developing towards the structural units that start to work out government policy proposals that will be ratified by the cabinet. Hierarchization of cabinets through the multiple support structures, alongside with the increase of the role of prime minister, is the main trend in the evolution of modern cabinets, emphasised by the Blondel&Müller-Rommel

- The issue whether the support structures of PM and government are amalgamated or organisationally different units could have controversial impact on the policymaking capacity of the cabinet.  

- Further delegation of policymaking down to the commissions that are highly deliberative, involving large number of external experts and constituencies. This spirit of deliberation became to shape also the style and capacity of cabinet decision-making.

- The development of sectionalism through participation of ministers at commissions. Internal alliances are necessary to achieve the adoption of policy proposal at the cabinet by the individual minister minister.

- etc.

There are numerous other concrete structural devices that contribute to the shaping of the politico-administrative balances.

**In conclusion**

The tools of analysis presented in this paper need further operationalisation. The direction of operationalisation is dependent on the further strategy of deliberation. If the aim is to develop comparative description of governments in CEE countries from the point of view of politico-administrative relations, the operationalisation can retain on the level of generality, where individual indicators will be applied (similar to the framework, proposed by Goetz and Blondel).

As I mentioned, our work is focused on the qualitative and quantitative analysis of government decisions and their institutional contexts, to work out clear indicators of decision-making capacity of government. Practically this is quite important to do in the context of preparation to the membership of CEE countries in the European Union. Here a more complex and sophisticated tools must be elaborated. This article is the first step in working out such methodology. Therefore inevitable weakness of approach and argumentation could not surprise the reader. Hence, every comment is warmly welcome and appreciated.

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32 R. Weaver & B. Rockman Assessing the Effects of Institutions. – In: Does Institutions Matter, pp. 5-20