POLITICO-ADMINISTRATIVE RELATIONS IN LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

THE CASE OF HUNGARY

Paper prepared for the NISPAcee Working Group on Politico-Administrative Relations on the meeting held in Budapest, April 13–15, 2000***

1. An Introduction

Since 1990 new democracies have been built in former communist countries. In the East-Central European region establishment of local self-government was one of the first elements of this process. It is not a surprise, that the appropriate surrounding social context was missing at the very beginning of the transformation. The discrepancy emerging from this fact became a source of some present contradictions, however a lot of institutions promoting development of civil activities have been created.

Reform of local governments is an essential part in the transformation of political systems. Generally following the first free parliamentary elections, local elections were held not so much later in order to establish new representative bodies with legitimacy throughout the countries. Local reforms also mean a condition and contribution to the economic development. Restitution of property and different forms of privatization are very important to the creation of new market institutions. On the other hand building up national and local democracy is taking over in the circumstances of economic crisis closely connected to economic restructuring process.

The reaction of main political party coalitions was different on these situation in Hungary. After the third democratic parliamentary elections all of them could get a chance to try itself in government position. At the same time they had a lot of local power in municipal and county elected bodies.
As the Table 1 shows in the first and the third term the half year later held local elections finished with the opposite result, i.e. the parliamentary opposition won in larger settlements. In villages, where the two-fifth of the population is living typically independent candidates were elected.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The winner of national elections</th>
<th>Government coalition in the election term 1</th>
<th>Local elections (cumulated results, in settlements with more than 10,000 inhabitants)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| National-Democrats (MDF)        | National-Democrats + Smallholders (FKgP) + Christian Democrats (KDNP)                    | 1. Liberal Democrats  
2. National-Democrats  
3. Right-Democrats |
| Socialists (MSZP)               | Socialists + Liberal Democrats (SZDSZ)                                               | 1. Socialists  
2. Liberal Democrats  
3. Right-Democrats |
| Right-Democrats (FIDESZ)        | Right-Democrats + Smallholders + National Democrats                                   | 1. Socialists  
2. Right-Democrats  
3. Liberal Democrats |

1\ The leading party with *italics*.|

As far as changes in voters' preference term-by-term is concerned, the effect of it is quite important in relation to civil servants as the analyzed subject of this paper. Regular changes in groups in power have an important and determining influence on personnel and their activities. The system has to face the problem of necessary changes and at the same time or not too much later on the limitation anyhow the political effects in order to maintain the necessary professional quality of the civil service. From this point of view the era described here is extraordinary because of the system transition. That is why in our analyses that is necessary to make clear distinction between the consequences of the first change of power, i.e. from dictatorship to formal democracy and later on regular changes in government position in a normal framework and game of democracy.

2. An Overview of the Administrative Structure of the State

The creation of operational framework for Hungarian self-government in 1990 had a crucial impact on the communal and political environment of settlements. This change was not a simple derivative of the political transition. The financing reform of the 80s has served as a sound basis to start, which created a new foundation for the mechanism of extending central funds to municipal organizations. The genuine breakthrough, however, was the adoption by Parliament of Law LXV on Local Governments 1990, which at the same time brought a profoundly new administrative framework for settlements and the counties. At  

1\ The exact translation of acronyms used in the table is as follows. MDF: Hungarian Democratic Forum; MSZP: Hungarian Socialist Party; FIDESZ: FIDESZ-Hungarian Civic Party; FKgP: Independent Smallholders Party; KDNP: Christian Democratic Party; SZDSZ: Alliance of Free Democrats.\n
the local polls immediately following the passage of the new legislation, quite a large part of representatives was replaced.

Consequently, towards the end of 1990 the changes to the institutional-organizational, political and financing mechanisms were collectively made. Examples for such a fortunate combination cannot be found in any of the former socialist countries (Baldersheim et al., 1996; 23–25.). This fact lent a special importance to the changes in public administration.

The essence of the new framework is the recognition of the basic rights of local governments by the Constitution. Accordingly, elected representative bodies are independent to decide in matters delegated to their competence by law; they have powers to decide in matters related to local regulations, allocate resources, they are eligible for central government funding, empowered to levy taxes locally, and are free to develop their own organizations and elect their officials.

Two forms of local government are as municipal and county (capital city) governments. Legal status on the settlement level is equal in every respect – to the extent that, for example, the large village status is purely a title. The city title can be considered largely identical.

In Hungary, there is a local government authority in every settlement with independent public administration. The board of representatives, elected by the public, exercises the rights laid down in the law, provides for the way local tasks are to be discharged. There are 3,131 municipal governments in 1999.

It is the county centers and towns with population over 50,000 that have county city rights. Here the cities enjoy some more privileges, as the local governments are allowed to discharge on their own territory tasks pertaining to the counties. In the sense of public administration, therefore, they are equal to the counties (as well), and do not belong to other forms of county organization. Apart from this, the county cities enjoy the same rights as settlement governments.

At the second level of the territorial public administrative structure counties are working. County governments have also directly elected assembly and budget of their own. They have functions spreading on the whole or the major part of the county. Their scopes and duties are relatively limited comparing municipalities. There is no supervisory rights over municipal governments. All-in all the power and influence on crucial territorial decisions are quite restricted at this level, because the main emphasis from this point of view is on the settlement level.

From the aspect of discharging tasks, the law provides a general definition of the obligations of municipal authorities. The range of statutory tasks is defined equally. Every settlement authority has to provide for the following in the framework of infrastructural service: the provision of healthy drinking water; public lighting; the maintenance of local roads and the cemetery. In the framework of human services they provide the following services: supplying kindergarten services, primary education, basic health care, and the enforcement of the rights of national and ethnic minorities.

Beyond the discharge of these tasks and some other obligations stipulated by law, authorities with extra capacities fulfill tasks undertaken on a voluntary basis. Examples of these are secondary education or hospital care, which, in lack of an authority to maintain them on the settlement level, are ensured by the county government.

The legal solution of discharging public tasks ensures the equality of settlements. The allocation of responsibilities reflecting the scattered pattern of settlements, on the other hand, ensures the legitimate nature of the authorization. Budget instruments follow the sharing of responsibilities stemming from the discharge of tasks.

Local governments are also responsible for fulfillment of state administrative tasks apart from their functions with specific local discretion. That state administrative powers are delegated to the mayor’s office which need to be done practically closely to inhabitants. From this respect local governments are responsible for local matters with relative autonomy in decision and state administrative tasks, as addressee of delegated power from national government administration.
Most of the other state administrative scopes and duties, in which specific professional knowledge is needed or rarely arising, are in competencies of special purpose offices subordinated to ministries. There are more than 20 types of special purpose offices are working in the country, typically organized at the county level. There is one type of territorial state administrative offices with general competence as well. County administrative offices are responsible for different state administrative functions for which maintaining separate bureaucracy would be useless. Their other group of function is connected to local governments, because they control self-governing operation from the point of view of legacy. In the case of distortion of the law the head of county administrative offices initiate legal process before the court.

3. Traditional Position of Civil Service, vis-à-vis Politics

Three main different periods should be distinguished in the Hungarian history of civil service at the local level. In advance it is necessary to emphasize that these local regimes were basis of the development of the whole civil service in very much extent.

The first period in the modern state began in 1870, when the new system of territorial public administration and local government was established by an act. With different stages this system was working until the end of the World War 2nd. The next phase was the communist regime, while Soviet type councils were created and built in the total hierarchy of the state. The present third phase began in 1990, when the new democratic Local Government Act was passed by the freely elected Parliament.

These crucial changes are closely connected to social transformation in every phase. In 1867 began building of the modern civic system of the state in the framework of Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. In 1949 communists came to power and introduced their dictatorship. They established the council system just next year (1950). Finally, one of the first decision of the new Parliament of transition after collapse of communism was creation of system of autonomous local governments. The consequences of these changes in the history of the public administration had a great effect on the sense of political-administrative relations.

a) From the second half of the 19th century, until the Word War 2nd the traditional comitat, i.e. counties were the basis of the whole public administration in the country. The civil servants working here were really the elite of the politico-administrative relations throughout the country. The national political and civil servants' carriers led through the comitat assemblies and offices.

There were two separated groups of officials in the comitat. One is officials in the self-government of the comitat. The other group represented the central state also as employees. They were both members of the staff and, depending on their functions, members of the assembly as well. It was possible, because a part of comitat assembly consisted of nominated or official members, and only other representatives were elected by the public. In the election census was on general use in the whole period, rating of voters according to property qualification and their amount of paid taxes.

The leader of the self-governments in the comitat, as the prime of self-governance was the vicecomes (deputy leader of the comitat). He was elected by the assembly of the comitat, and he was the chief officer of the self-governing profile of the comitat. What is extraordinary, that inspire of the name of the position, his powers and rights were guaranteed directly for his position by the law, so he was independent from many respect from his formal 'boss'.

This formal boss was the supremus comes (chief leader of the comitat). He was nominated in every comitat by the national governmental level. Practically he was the representative of the central power, but in the same person he was the formal leader of the whole public administration, involving self-government and
state administration in the comitat. He was directly the chief of all of the nominated administrative officials notwithstanding their official affiliation.

The traditional Hungarian system emphasized in this way the unification of public administration, in which self-government and state administration cannot be separated severely. These two sides of the bureaucracy have to work together in a specific legally regulated environment.

b) In the communist era local governments did not exist at all. There was no local or civil servants' independence. Just the opposite, the main principle declared by the communist party was the unification of the power. It means a very symbiotic linkage between party nomenclature and leaders, officials of the soviet-type councils.

Although formal elections were held regularly, real choices were not at all. In Hungary, notwithstanding the final council elections in 1985, voters could vote typically only for one candidate in each electoral district. The leaders of the councils were elected by the council bodies, but the preceding designation depended from the party committees working in the same or upper levels. The first secretary of local party committee was regularly a member of executive committee of the council. By the way, all of the issues negotiated by the council and executive committee were discussed in advance by the executive committee of the particular party committee (Horváth, 1988).

The secretary of the executive committee was the chief administrator, who was subordinated politically and in the office to the leader of the council. He/she was the leading professional in the local staff. There were not legislation on civil service. This position, although its professional character had, depended very much on the political support.

The close connection between the nomenclature of the communist party and the leading officers is shown by the Table 2. Even in the end of the regime party members’ representation was almost absolute. Exemptions, i.e. non-party members were almost out of the upper level positions. However, 'exemptions' were given also contributions by the party committees. In this system any independence of professions were impossible at all.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Leaders* of councils</th>
<th>Deputy leaders* of councils</th>
<th>Secretaries of executive committees</th>
<th>Total leading officers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>County councils</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>95.0</td>
<td>99.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City councils</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>97.5</td>
<td>89.9</td>
<td>95.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Larger village councils</td>
<td>97.0</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>82.6</td>
<td>90.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Village councils</td>
<td>91.5</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>67.1</td>
<td>79.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* in main job
The leading role of the communist party was focused very much the personnel. This influence was totalitarian and very hierarchical. There is not sense to speak about any formal independence of civil service and of course, legal background was missing almost at all.

c) After the late 80s the Hungarian scenario of transformation as far as local governments are concerned was very coherent. The transition was logic, and because of the fortune it was quite well-prepared. What were the main elements of the process?

First of all, at the end of the former regime in 1986 a local financial reform was passed. Grant system based on block normative grants were introduced that time instead of the former individual distributive system. These grants were supplemented with special grants on the basis of decisions made by the Parliament. In a less extent system of own revenues had been reformed as well also before the transition. Finally, a unified system of Personal Income Tax made possible to leave a part of produced income in site.

This creation of fiscal basis was followed by the political transition at the end of 80s. The new Local Government Act was one of the first decision made by the newly elected Parliament, together with the new system of local elections. It means, when the elections took place, a really new system could start its operation based on a special and not on the inherited financial mechanism.

New regulations on personnel based on the Local Governments Act including main rules on the position of mayors and chief executives and their relationships to the elected representative body and the office (called as mayor's office). The next grade on the personnel was the general act on public servants passed by the Parliament in 1992. By the support of this law the formal division of political and administrative professional roles in offices were implemented. The whole process was quite logic and appropriate to build up an absolutely new system at least from a legal point of view.

However, the politico-sociological aspect of the whole process has to be split from this formal description. The radical structural and institutional transition was not followed by adequate changes in the personnel. It was absolutely understandable because of the character of the transition process which is clearly distinguished from, let us say, a revolution. That is why the continuity was not broken as far as personnel was concerned. This statement was true on the leaders at the first phase of transition, as well.

According to representative surveys (Farkas–Vajda, 1991; Bocz, 1995; Horváth, 1996) councilors', mayors' and chief executive's background is based in quite a relevant extent on their former role in council bodies and offices. The Table 3 shows data after the first free local elections comparing with the last communist councils.

Table 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>cities (more than 10,000 inhabitants)</th>
<th>Mayors who were members of former councils</th>
<th>Mayors who were the leaders of former councils</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>18</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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This source is quoted by Kornai, 1992:410 as an English language publication.
Mainly in the villages persons of new mayors were politicians of former councils in quite a high proportion. Seeing the fact, that the number of local units increased to twice high after the new local government act (abolishing the former amalgamation of small villages), most of the former leaders of councils became elected mayors in free elections. This proportion is appr. 70%. This fact is relevant from the point of view of this analyses, because former leaders of the council were typically professional officers. They would belong to 'civil servants' in the contemporary meaning of the term, but without this status that time, and influenced by political power described above.

After the second free local elections the ratio of the former leaders' involvement decreased, but remained significant. It means, that after 1994 appr. one-fifth (21 %, Bocz, 1995) of mayors had leading past, as the leader of the council in the former councils of the communist era.

Naturally, the continuity is higher in the position of chief executives. Typically they remained in their position. Although conflicts were arising quite often between them and their representative body at the beginning of the operation.

In the larger settlements (cities) the change in the officers seemed to be more significant after the first years of practical work. Here the new democratic parties were more involved in power. On the other hand independent position in small villages might cover former deeply involvement in pre-transition council work, and eventually closer linkage to the communist party.

The importance of this distinction decreased at the time of the third term, however as historical factors on continuity of officers, it is an interesting focus point from the point of view of our further analyses.

4. Formal Relations between Elected Politicians and Appointed Officials

The mayor is elected directly by voters at the same time when the local representatives are elected. If deputy mayor or deputy mayors are working, they are elected by the representative body on its first meeting held after the general local elections. The chief administrative officer (CAO), according to the Hungarian terms, the notary, is nominated by the representative body for an indefinite period as a civil servant.

The office, called as the mayor's office is dealing with preparation of the decisions of the body and committees and responsible for the implementation of decisions. Its task is to fulfill state administrative matters delegated by the law. The head of the office is the CAO. However, the mayor directs the whole office including the CAO. Details of this relation are based on division of partial rights between the two leading officers.

1 (The mayor) The mayor fulfills, first of all, municipal tasks, but he/she has state administrative duties as well prescribed by laws. For instance, the mayor is the head of the local civil defense, that is a state administrative function.

The mayor directs the office in accordance with the decisions of the body of representatives, and within his own municipal competence. The mayor's direct power consists of different special rights. He/she defines the duties of the office in organizing the work of the local government, also in the preparation and implementation of the decisions, taking into account the proposals of the CAO.
The mayor decides in state administration matters referred to his jurisdiction by law, in matters requiring official power. He/she may transfer the exercise of certain of his jurisdictions.

Upon the recommendation of the CAO, he/she submits a proposal to the body of representatives for the determination of the internal organizational division, of the work schedule, including the office hours of the office. In matters belonging to his/her jurisdiction, it regulates the issuing of (office) copies of decisions.

The mayor exercises so-called 'other employer's rights' (i.e. which are not delegated to the representative body by the law) in respect of the deputy mayor, the notary, and the heads of municipal institutions.

A limited control is guaranteed for him/her over the decisions of the body. If the mayor considers the decision of the body of representatives to be injurious to the interests of the local government, he may - in the same matter - initiate a second discussion of the decision, once only. He may submit the initiative within three days following the session, and the body of representatives shall decide within fifteen days of submission.

Conflicts can arise from the situation that mayors are elected by voters directly, because their party affiliation can be different than the representatives' majority in the body. In these circumstances the work is more difficult, but according to practical experiences it is not impossible at all. They are stimulated to find compromises with different party groups. In the majority of cases they manage to do this way.

In a village with less than three thousand inhabitants, the office of mayor may also be filled as a voluntary mandate. The mayor shall be a full time mayor, if he has been elected as a full-time mayor. From this respect the form of fulfillment is based on the voters' will. The way of filling the office of mayor may be changed by the body of representatives within the duration of the mandate one time, with the consent of the mayor.

A full-time deputy mayor may be elected in municipalities with more than three thousand inhabitants.

2 (The CAO) On the basis of a competition, the body of representatives appoints the CAO who meets the requirements of qualification established by law. Practically he/she graduated from university of law or school of public administration, in some cases from university of economics. The appointment shall be for an indefinite period of time.

The CAO heads the office of the body of representatives (mayor's office). He takes care of the carrying out of the tasks connected with the functioning of the local government; in the matters within his competence he regulates the issuance of (office) copies of decisions. He exercises the employer's rights in respect of the civil servants of the office of the body of representatives. In certain areas, defined by the mayor, the mayor's consent is required for the nomination, for an executive appointment or dismissal, for the recall of the executive appointment, and for issuing rewards.

He prepares for decision the state administration affairs within the mayor's jurisdiction; decides in official matters transferred (to him) by the mayor.

The CAO participates with a voice but no vote at the sessions of the body of representatives and of the committee of the body of representatives. His task is to guarantee the legality of the decision-making. He must notify the body of representatives, the committee and the mayor, if he perceives any infringement of legal provisions in their decisions. If the body does not take into consideration his notification he can draw attention of the county administrative office to the distort of the law.

The CAO is responsible for administrative functions, which matters referred to his jurisdiction. These are practically state administrative authoritative matters, for instance giving building and any other permits, decisions on majority of petty offenses. Overwhelming majority of state administrative powers addressed by the law to the municipality are delegated to the CAO’s jurisdiction.
3 (The staff) The body of representatives shall set up a unified office – under the name of mayor's office – for carrying out the tasks connected with the functioning of the local government, and with the preparation of state administration matters for decision, and with their implementation.

Unification of the office means that addressee of tasks and duties is the mayor or the CAO and they can delegate inside the office their power to one of the division of the office. However the leading officials are responsible for the decision made. In respect to the state administrative authoritative matters, the CAO is responsible.

Inside structure of the office is based on the decision of the representative body. Practically there are divisions in the office which support mainly the mayor's tasks. These are subordinated directly to the mayor, eventually through deputy mayors. There are also divisions in the office closely connected to the CAO's functions. They are subordinated directly to the CAO. This way professional administrative matters are supplied under the CAO's direction, functions connected to the self-governing tasks are influenced by the mayor.

The staff consists of civil servants. They are employed by the CAO, but in the main questions in the agreement with the mayor. In sum the mayor is the strongest position in power, because of its political legitimacy. He is also the leader No. 1 of the official work. The CAO, although his professional advantage, is dependent on the elected members in much extent. Hungarian regime is based on the 'strong mayor system' where the mayor's position and will is determinant.

The CAO's position is defended from the Civil Service Act (1992) by its status of civil servants, quality requirements, etc. However, his position is not dependent on any upper level approval.

The only exemption, in which CAO's position can be stronger, is the case of office of district-notaries. Here, a common office is working typically for smaller municipalities depending on their own decision. In the office of district-notary, the district-notary (district CAO) appoints, dismisses and rewards the employees of the office, and exercises the employer's rights with the consent of the mayors. Because of more mayors here, the practical direction concentrates in district-notaries' hands.

The mayors may agree on who should exercise the right of consent. If they cannot agree, then the joint session of the bodies of representatives shall appoint the mayor exercising the right of consent.

5. Political Culture and Attitudes

The attitude to the civil servants and the local government as a total is measured by public opinion surveys. Our data are from a longitudinal survey, 1995–99 in different Hungarian towns on a representative sample of inhabitants made by Jelenkutató Intézet (Research Institute of Contemporary History).3

The level of satisfaction (Kabai and Kiss, 1998: 3) of the public with executive officers seems to be quite equalized measured in a scale of 100 in 1997. In details:

- absolutely satisfied – 30 %
- generally satisfied – 17%
- medium level satisfaction –12 %

3 Led by József Kiss and Imre Kabai. The sample consisted of 20 towns of Hungary. On the basis of the commission of the Jelenkutató Intézet interviews were made by professional research institutes of public opinion as Medián, Budapest and Marketing Centrum, Budapest. The total number of interviewed inhabitants is more than 30 thousand. The selection of samples are representative according to the population of particular settlements.
• moderately satisfied – 6 %
• dissatisfied – 36 %

Behind these average figures there are significant differences among towns and cities. People were more critical in one part of investigated towns, but relatively more satisfied in the others. It means that territorial differences exist, i.e. the state of local offices depend on specific variables.

The research question is here if the public make difference between its opinion on civil servants and, on the other hand, local government as a whole or let us say local representatives' political performance. Do they differentiate between politicians and professionals, between administering matters and policy formulation? On the basis of the cited survey it is possible to compare answers on two questions, like the former 'How are you satisfied with the executive officers in the mayor's office?' and 'How do you trust in the representative body of your town?'. These questions were made in 15 towns in different years. We compare the data on 1997 in the Table 2 on the basis of researches of Jelenkutató Intézet, according to their partially published findings.

Table 4

Public satisfaction and trust on different local actors in Hungarian towns in 1997
(average in scale of 100)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Selected towns from the sample</th>
<th>Trust in the representative body</th>
<th>Trust in the mayor</th>
<th>Satisfaction with executive officers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ajka</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Békéscsaba</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dunaújváros</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jászberény</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kalocsa</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kecskemét</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nyíregyháza</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pécs</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Százhalombatta</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tatabánya</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veszprém</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Székesfehérvár</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orosháza</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Siófok</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Debrecen</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The sample as a whole</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Kabai and Kiss, 1999

Data show differences between appreciation of local politicians and civil servants. It seems to be that respect of the civil servants is better than the body of elected representatives and the mayor as the leader of the self-government. Mayors are accepted better than the body but less than the staff.

It is necessary to add that the public must have more information about the mayor and more personal impression on executive officers than work of local representatives even representatives of their own. Secondly, worse results are neglected here from some cities, like Budapest, Szombathely because of missing elements to this comparison. Consequently, relations are worth to analyze here, instead of absolute levels.

The trust or acceptance of the local officers will be tested in the next chapter. Here we can draw a conclusion on the difference between appreciation of policy formulation and public administration as a
service to the public. People do not feel that local policy-making is oriented on their own matters so much extent, than the official work of the professional staff. It may be pleasant for civil servants, but it may be a symptom of underdevelopment of civic democracy as far as public involvement is concerned.

It is clear that the mayor is appreciated mainly as a representative of the elected body more than a leader of the office. Otherwise in his/her respect there are significant differences. The most extreme example is the case of Tatabánya, county seat of a Trans-Danubian county, quite successful in re-organization so far. Here the respect of the mayor is over than either body of representatives and the staff.

On the other hand the level of satisfaction is higher than the average in wealthier local governments, like Jászberény, Százhalombatta, etc. with huge quite well-working industries in relatively small towns. In these cities much more sources were invested in public services and welfare than in general.

The public were more critical against local governments in regional sub-centers, like Debrecen (East-Hungary), Pécs (South-Transdanubian Part) and Kecskemét (Middle of the Hungarian Plain). Logical connection must be found between the size of cities and the respect of their local governments. The smaller the settlements the public have the more information on local matters.

In general the citizens can make a distinction between civil servants i.e. the every day work of the municipality and the local government as a whole. It seems to be also some correlation between average performance of the government and the citizens' satisfaction. Otherwise it is clear that the better performance depends on different factors, and better civil servants' work must be only one of the components, as in the case of wealthy towns in Hungary.

6. The Policy Process in Practice

In this section the influence on the policy process is going to be introduced by two ways. One is oriented on division of influence between local actors, i.e. politicians, leading officers and the body of representative. This phenomenon is called as inside influence on decision-making (a). Secondly, the possibilities of outside, basically illegal influence will be measured as it is possible at all (b).

a) Inside influence among local actors

More important decisions are made by the board of representatives according to the law. It is also true in the practice, however politicians, leaders, leading officials have different role in a decision-making process. The public opinion shows the division of power and existing differences in Hungarian towns. From the answers we can conclude to the role of civil servants and their relationship to the politicians in a particular political situation.

Table 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In changes in town, how much role does/do</th>
<th>the representative body have?</th>
<th>the mayor have?</th>
<th>the officers have?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ajka</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Békéscsaba</td>
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<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>83</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jászberény</td>
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<td>71</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kalocsa</td>
<td>82</td>
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<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kecskemét</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In general the citizens can make a distinction between civil servants i.e. the every day work of the municipality and the local government as a whole. It seems to be also some correlation between average performance of the government and the citizens' satisfaction. Otherwise it is clear that the better performance depends on different factors, and better civil servants' work must be only one of the components, as in the case of wealthy towns in Hungary.

6. The Policy Process in Practice

In this section the influence on the policy process is going to be introduced by two ways. One is oriented on division of influence between local actors, i.e. politicians, leading officers and the body of representative. This phenomenon is called as inside influence on decision-making (a). Secondly, the possibilities of outside, basically illegal influence will be measured as it is possible at all (b).

a) Inside influence among local actors

More important decisions are made by the board of representatives according to the law. It is also true in the practice, however politicians, leaders, leading officials have different role in a decision-making process. The public opinion shows the division of power and existing differences in Hungarian towns. From the answers we can conclude to the role of civil servants and their relationship to the politicians in a particular political situation.

Table 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In changes in town, how much role does/do</th>
<th>the representative body have?</th>
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<th>the officers have?</th>
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</tbody>
</table>
In general mayors have the most influence in the political matters of the town according to the public opinion. This position comparing with the body as a whole can be explained with their relatively strong formal role, which is based on direct election by voters and guaranteed leading rank above the office. On the other hand their possibilities to be a subject of interest in local and depending their other public tasks in national media are very important from the point of you of influencing decisions and public opinion.

Typically officers of the local government are in the third place in influence according to the public. Officers involve the staff of the mayor's office. These civil servants have less role in decision-making and their activity as a whole is determining the implementation of decisions in the practice. It means that the policy formulation is weighted towards local politicians.

At the first sight the result is acceptable from a legal point of view, because the Local Government Act is describing this model of politicians' and civil servants' relationship. The model chosen, as 'strong mayor system' is also shows this type of institutional preference. Differences are clear between the scrutinized groups, but they are not overwhelming in any cases at all. In the changes in local community all the groups have their own role which is fitted to each other in an optimal situation.

However, the question is, if the politicians' influence or outside influences from the citizens remain in the framework of legality every time or civil servants are simply instruments in execution of specific wills. This question is necessary to investigate, because it is clear from another summary of answers, that the public describe their own role and influence on the changes in towns with quite a full with apathy. It proves that inspire of the general elections and formal legal regulation, they do not think to have key role in determining of their community fate.

The control question of the survey referred on the illegal influence of the staff, raised the question, how much extent citizens have patience, good personal connections and bribe to manage their matters in the office. The data are summarized in the Table 6.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nyíregyháza</th>
<th>Pécs</th>
<th>Százhalombatta</th>
<th>Tatahánya</th>
<th>Szombathely</th>
<th>Veszprém</th>
<th>Székesfehérvár</th>
<th>Orosháza</th>
<th>Siófok</th>
<th>Debrecen</th>
<th>The sample as a whole</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>85</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>87</td>
<td>80</td>
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<td>71</td>
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<td>67</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** Kabai and Kiss, 1999

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Managerial work of the mayor's office (1997)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How much extent do you need patience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. not at all</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. a little bit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. it is needed at an average level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. it is needed very much</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. in a scale of 100*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This table shows a little discrepancy comparing with the former one (Table 5). Influencing activity of the politicians and the public is not being realized in formal channels, like meeting of bodies, public fora, etc. Of course, from Dahl, 1963 it would be irrelevant to suppose that decisions are made really by formal institutions. Because of this suppose, informal ways are necessary to scrutinize. From the point of view of the public patience is needed very much to reach some result in the office and connections are also necessary at an average level. Bribes are typically disclosed as it seems to be as unpleasant exemptions.

According to the Hungarian data mayors' have quite good position in influencing arena and generally policy-makers and participants in policy-formulation are involved very much in change of local profiles and route of development. On the other hand it seems to be that existing democratic channels are not controlled by the public in their every stages. It means, when one reaches the final outcome of the local public administration, i.e. managing matters of the community and citizens, the distance between professionals and citizens is becoming higher. This higher level is unacceptable in much extent, although generally it is not over the border-line of crimes.

If the necessity of informal pressure is true in officers' practice, neither politicians' (leaders and members) influence can be clearly political one. Because if the relationship was regulated on the basis of democratic consensus or guarantees and implementation of legal rules, one would not be a chance to make influence typically on the border of legality.

Consequently, connections between local politicians and civil service must be moved too many times in the democratically uncontrolled sphere of decision-making. There are effects from this situation on the status of civil service in local governments. Namely, although their position is regulated and guaranteed by the Civil Service Act, it cannot be interpret as a politically neutral status. They must be dependent too much on politicians' will. Missing of the necessary professional autonomy might not be the mistake of this legislation. The legislator might commit fault, when it neglected the specification of civil service system in connection with the Hungarian system of local governments built-in after transition.

As it was mentioned, the system of local governments follow the South model of West-European countries (Page and Goldsmith, 1987), consisting of many small basic units. That is why the optimal capacity of administrative work is not followed by the real size of offices. Among them there are some where only few civil servants are employed. However, the control and guarantees of the official work have not been built in so rigid way, than in the classical Napoleon model. The gap between small and employed by elected people staff and its missing satisfactory state administrative control and defense is leading clearly to unpleasant dependency, which can be impressed heavily by the public.
REFERENCES


