

A comparison of selected characteristics of the senior civil service of the Czech Republic and the United Kingdom: a lesson for effective management of bureaucracy

Michal Plaček & František Ochrana

To cite this article: Michal Plaček & František Ochrana (2018) A comparison of selected characteristics of the senior civil service of the Czech Republic and the United Kingdom: a lesson for effective management of bureaucracy, *Economic Research-Ekonomika Istraživanja*, 31:1, 880-898, DOI: [10.1080/1331677X.2018.1456350](https://doi.org/10.1080/1331677X.2018.1456350)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/1331677X.2018.1456350>



© 2018 The Author(s). Published by Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group



Published online: 18 Apr 2018.



Submit your article to this journal [↗](#)



Article views: 178



View Crossmark data [↗](#)

A comparison of selected characteristics of the senior civil service of the Czech Republic and the United Kingdom: a lesson for effective management of bureaucracy

Michal Plaček and František Ochrana

Center for Social and Economics Strategies, Faculty of Social Science, Charles University, Prague, Czech Republic

ABSTRACT

This research focuses on the comparison of selected characteristics of senior officials from ministries in the Czech Republic and the United Kingdom. It compares two countries with different systems of bureaucracy and with different legal backgrounds but with a common mission among officials within the civil service in the countries surveyed – to perform their duties effectively. Based on the findings, the authors have submitted recommendations for public policy as well as for streamlining of the bureaucratic apparatus.

ARTICLE HISTORY

Received 22 April 2016
Accepted 16 August 2017

KEYWORDS

Senior civil service;
comparison; public policy

JEL CLASSIFICATIONS

H 11; H 70; H 83

1. Introduction

This study examines the senior staff of ministries of the Czech Republic and the United Kingdom who deal with analytical, planning, conceptual, strategic and control activities. In the U.K., these employees belong to the category of senior civil service. In the Czech Republic, this category of public servants is not fixed at present, but this will be changed by a law that will come into effect on 1 July 2015. The law defines the group of so-called ‘state employees’ from which workers will be recruited for the positions of department deputies and state secretaries. It is supposed that, given the job descriptions and the qualifications of the acquired group of respondents, the positions will be enlisted to that match the concept of senior British civil service upon the start of the law on civil service.

The influence of the Civil Service Act (published in the Collection of Acts 01/01 2015) logically could not be included in this research. At the time when the research was conducted, it was not clear whether the law would be approved by the Parliament. (The law itself was debated very hastily partly due to being ‘under the threat of the E.U.’ The E.U. established the need for the creation of this law, as its enactment was linked to the drawing of European subsidies). Nevertheless, the authors consider it necessary (in the framework of the discussion) to present the framing of the results of our empirical investigation within the context of the recently approved law on civil service. The stated objectives of the new

CONTACT Michal Plaček  michalplacek@seznam.cz

© 2018 The Author(s). Published by Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group.

This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

civil service law are, in fact, the de-politicisation of government, its stabilisation and its professionalisation.

To this end, the following measures which were incorporated in the previously mentioned law should be adhered to: the selection and appointment of key officials in government, dismissal of these leaders, systemisation of service posts, definition of the conditions for recruitment, cataloguing the duties of civil servants, and the responsibility of civil servants within the disciplines. These factors all relate to the subject of this research.

There was a question who these ministerial employees are in terms of the activities which they perform as well as their acquired experience. In the Czech Republic (as well as in the Slovak Republic), such research has not yet been conducted. No similar investigation was carried out even in the communist era of Czechoslovakia, since the issue was kept secret from the public. The main motive of this research is based on a comparison which highlights the potential problems arising from the transition to the new system of civil service in the Czech Republic. Based on the comparison with U.K., recommendations for public policy in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe will be presented in order to streamline the management of the bureaucratic apparatus.

The comparison, from the beginning, must cope with a lack of relevant data. This problem is not only characteristic for data for the Czech Republic. Similar problems have been pointed out in research on central government officials even in developed countries such as Australia and Canada (Howlett & Walker, 2012). Meanwhile in the U.K., a report regarding the same problem from the National Audit Office in 2013 called 'Capability Building in the Senior Civil Service to Meet Today's Challenges' also demonstrates this. Data from this report were used for the examination. To some extent empirical investigations do exist which focus on local administration (see, e.g., Dragos & Neamtu, 2013), public managers (Howlett, 2011) or on broader issues related to the reform of public administration (see, e.g., Dunleavy & Hood, 1994; Nemeč, Nakrošis, Hajnal, & Tonninson, 2008; Randma-Liiv, Nakrošis, & Gyorgy, 2011). Ideological sources for the construction of the theoretical framework include studies by Dunn (2004), Dobuzinskis, Laycock and Howlett (2007), Howlett (2009), Colebatch, Hoppe and Noordegraaf (2010), Rasmussen (1999), Evans, Lum, and Shields (2011), Ciolan, Stingu, and Marin (2014), Barabashev and Prokofiev (2014). They deal with policy analysis, policy capacity, working for policy, and policy bureaucracy; a paper by Christensen, Fimreite, and Læg Reid (2006) investigates reforms in employment and welfare administration.

2. Reasons why the Czech Republic can be inspired by the United Kingdom

The authors are aware that when comparing public administration systems between the Czech Republic and the U.K., many differences can be found – these are historical and lie in the systems of public administration themselves. These differences, as well as congruences are shown in Table 1.

From the table it is evident that there are clear differences in the starting conditions between the two countries. Czech public administration has been strongly influenced by the legacy of more than 40 years of communism and the associated strong centralisation and bureaucratisation of the activities of state officials.

From a purely historical perspective, the reader should have expected a comparison of the Czech Republic with Germany and Austria, with whom the Czech Republic (before



Table 1. Basic characteristics of the systems of bureaucracy in the Czech Republic and the U.K.

Characteristics of system	Czech Republic	United Kingdom
System of bureaucracy	Position based	Position based
Central competences interconnected with politics and ideology	Exactly specified competences	Specified administrative competences
Required qualifications	There are specified qualification requirements for officials	Expertise; there are specified qualification requirements, and these are verified by audits
Separation from Politics	Official separation of bureaucracy from politics which is not always reflected in practice	Separation of bureaucracy from politics
Regulation	Absence of legal regulation, partial decentralisation (activities of state officials will be regulated based on the Civil Service Act with effect from 1 July 2015). So far, however, the legislation for implementation for the Civil Service Law is missing.	Exactly specified status of an official within the system
Performance evaluation	Formal implementation of performance management system	Exhaustion of all resources of a bureaucrat, performance management system, 360 degrees
Interaction with methods of management from private sector	Resistance still persists	Inspiration from private sector managements methods
The idea of bureaucracy	Rechtstaat	Public interest

Source: Authors.

1918) was connected by the common history of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Instead, the authors opted for a comparison with the U.K. The U.K. became an inspiration to modernise public administration in the Czech Republic after 1989 and remains so until now. After the fall of the communist regime, officials of the ministries of the Czech Republic studied the U.K. experience and the use of internships and consultations to gain experience on how to streamline the working of public administration. These and the reasons mentioned below ultimately led to the decision to opt for a comparison with the U.K. In Germany and Austria some clear differences in the concept of senior civil service may be found when compared to the Czech Republic. For example, the concept of senior civil service in Germany and Austria can be characterised as being career-based (Kuperus & Rode, 2008). The career-based civil service system aims at building a coherent civil service with top executives who share the same culture, which makes working together as well as communication between government organisations easier and also favours internal mobility (Kuperus & Rode, 2008, p. 16). In the Czech Republic, however, this system is characterised as being position-based, similar to the system set up in the U.K. (Kuperus & Rode, 2008). The position-based civil service system aims to provide a wider choice of candidates, including those with specialist skills, in order to promote competition, cultural renewal, and adaptation in the civil service. This system enables decentralisation, making it easier to adapt recruitment to specific competence needs in different activities, to differentiate pay and other employment conditions in accordance with the market situation, and to achieve strong performance orientation (Kuperus & Rode, 2008, p. 16). There are arguments that call for a possible comparison of selected aspects of both systems with the U.K. These reasons are as follows:

- (1) The U.K. has one of the most effective systems of public administration.
- (2) The Czech Republic, to a greater or lesser extent, has been inspired for the entire duration of reforms in public administration by this system.
- (3) Evaluation of the reforms of New Public Management (N.P.M.) have shown that to a limited extent, it is possible to reproduce individual performance improvement tools from greatly differing systems for proper implementation as well.

2.1. The U.K. has one of the most effective systems of public administration

This assessment was prepared by the World Bank (2015) in the form of worldwide governance indicators and the Hertie School of Governance, which compiles reports on governance. Reports on Governance from 2014 focused on the contribution of bureaucracies or public administration to governance readiness. Such administrative systems matter as they are central to the design and provision of goods and services that real people consume. They are the backbone of any governance regime (Hertie School of Governance, 2014).

As is evident, there are obvious differences between the U.K. and the Czech Republic. These differences are also reflected in indicators of governance, as shown in Table 2.

Indicator values range from -2.5 to 2.5 . The percentile rank indicates rank of country among all countries in the world. 0 corresponds to the lowest rank and 100 corresponds to the highest rank.

The following Figure 1 shows an evaluation of the level of administration in different countries according to Governance Report of 2014, the evaluation focuses on the self-coordination index and the analytical capacity index.

Table 2. Comparison of governance indicators.

Indicator	Czech Republic		United Kingdom	
	Indicator value	Percentile rank	Indicator value	Percentile rank
Government effectiveness	0.88	75.12	1.47	89.95
Regulatory Quality	1.09	81.82	1.77	96.17
Rule of Law	1.00	82.46	1.67	92.89
Voice and Accountability	0.96	76.78	1.32	92.42
Control of corruption	0.19	62.68	1.68	93.30

Source: World Bank (2013).

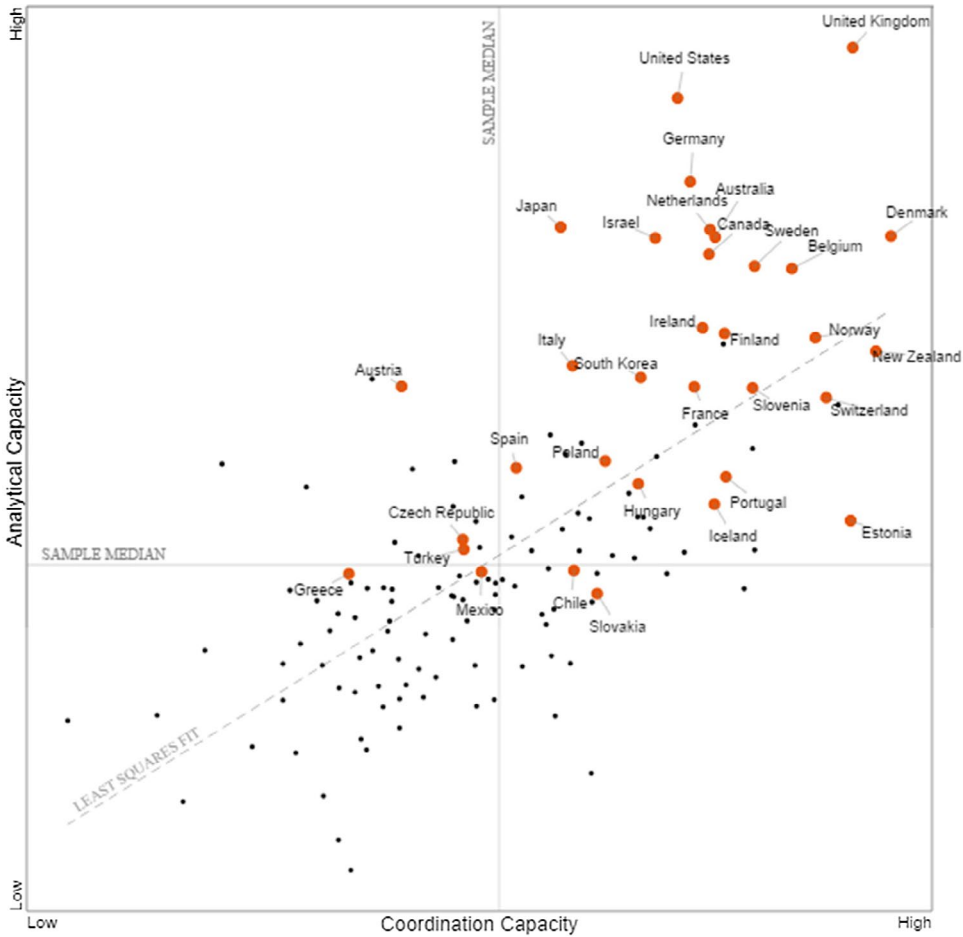


Figure 1. Evaluation of the Czech Republic and U.K. governance according to reports in 2014 regarding the characteristics of the analytical capacity index and self-coordination index. Source: Hertie School of Governance (2014).

We define the evaluation factors as follows:

Coordination capacity consists of an ability to bring dispersed constituencies together to solve shared problems. This capacity relies on boundary spanners that can moderate highly contested negotiating processes between policy specialists and generalists over dispersed networks of actors.

Analytical capacity addresses demands on forecasting and intelligence that inform policy-making under conditions of uncertainty.

It is clear from the figure that, regarding these parameters, the U.K. achieves much better results. It is possible to look for the causes, firstly, in the starting condition and secondly, in the characteristics and motivations of the officials of central authorities.

2.2. The Czech Republic, to a greater or lesser extent has been inspired by this system for the entire duration of reforms in public administration

After the fall of the communist regime in Czechoslovakia, there was a search for a way to reform public administration. New Czech governments (especially of the right-wing) sought inspiration in the British concept of N.P.M. The U.K. can be seen as one of the so-called pure new public management countries. In these countries, characteristics of public administration reform are based on the idea of a lean state, and the implementation of pseudo-market principles in the public sector. In the Czech Republic, however, the British public administration reform achievements could not be effectively emulated. Public administration reform in the Czech Republic took place incrementally, moreover, as the result of often contradictory political clashes between the right-wing Civic Democratic Party (O.D.S.) and the left-wing Czech Social Democratic Party (C.S.S.D.). Both political parties alternated having power and being leaders of ruling coalitions after the breakup of Czechoslovakia and the emergence of the Czech Republic (1993).

If politicians of Civil Democratic Party shared the enthusiasm of the British reforms, the leftist government were very reluctant to N.P.M. ideas and expressed opposition to 'pseudo-market N.P.M. principles' as well as other liberal ideas. Therefore, the N.P.M. concept was not accepted by the left-wing governments as a paradigm for a public administration reform in the Czech Republic. The Czech Social Democratic Party found a path in the idea of the welfare state, social justice, solidarity, redistribution and broad provision of public services. The performance of the welfare state should promote 'reform of public administration', in which the key roles are played by educated officials fulfilling the obligations imposed on them by the law. Yet even in the concept of a public administration reform with the Social Democrats, N.P.M. influences appear. It was decided at the level of Deputy Public Administration Reform (Ministry of Interior) at the beginning of the twenty-first century that state officials should undertake to support analytical and decision-making activities by using management methods. Procedures were developed as well as guidelines for ministry officials as to how to use them. In reality, however, this plan could not be implemented. One of the reasons was the weak political will of the ruling elites to push through such changes. Another inhibitor of reform changes was the resistance of ministry officials to a change, since this would require learning new things. Although the right-wing government saw a model in the U.K. of how to implement reforms in public administration, they were faced with problems of how to effectively implement N.P.M. in terms of the Czech Republic. These were the previously mentioned resistance of ministry officials to dramatic changes and, more importantly, the phenomenon of 'median voter' in the Czech Republic, who formally professes liberal ideas, but, in practice, requires state paternalism.

To investigate the role of ministerial staff, the most important document is ‘Effective Public Administration and Friendly Public Services in the Czech Republic (Smart Administration Strategy in 2007–2015)’. This document was adopted for the right-wing government of Prime Minister Topolánek. The model for his vision were the U.K. reforms based on N.P.M. ideology. It was an established vision and goal to streamline the function of public administration as a service to citizens. The document states that the effective functioning of public administration as a service to citizens depends on legislation, organisation, technology and sufficient funding, including for the officials. These factors (in the document entitled ‘Hexagon of Public Administration’) can be viewed from the position of N.P.M. The legislation is a regulatory instrument, to determine effective ‘essential rules of the game’ for the functioning of public administration. These rules do not cause an unnecessary administrative burden. Public administration should be organised so as to achieve maximum performance, so that ‘their customers were satisfied’. Organisations (public administration units) thus have to resemble a ‘production system’ where you can measure inputs, outputs and determine performance. The implementation of e-government principally consists of using technology. The citizen is the client of public administration, which has to satisfy ‘customers’. As it is evident, the terminology used here also recalls the ideas of N.P.M.

To be able to accomplish the objective of ‘effectively functioning public administration’ and to achieve ‘customer satisfaction’ (citizens) it is undoubtedly necessary to have educated and motivated officers who will provide service to the citizens as well as fulfil their expectations. When studying the document, however, it was found that the clerk’s role in the entire 88-page document was only mentioned in a few sentences: ‘In contrast, the clerk is the keystone of public administration. And it is not important whether a ministry official or official performing state administration in delegated powers in the region or municipality. The officials should be treated equally everywhere, a high quality of performance and continuing education must be requested of them. Particularly great emphasis should be placed on the quality of governance at all levels’ (p. 57 of the cited document). Such a definition of the role of bureaucracy in public administration reform is clearly insufficient. It is also one of the reasons that today (in 2015), it can be stated that the objective has not been met. The entire reform of public administration has gradually been reduced to e-government and the drawing of resources from E.U. funds for the computerisation and implementation of quality methods (for more on e-government in the Czech Republic, see Špaček & Špalek, 2007; Špaček, 2012).

2.3. Evaluation of the reforms of N.P.M. have shown that to a limited extent it is possible to reproduce individual performance improvement tools from greatly differing systems for proper implementation as well

This section follows the articles of Dan (2015) and Dan and Pollitt (2015), which mapped the empirical studies of the results of reforms in the spirit of N.P.M. in Central and Eastern Europe. The authors argued that N.P.M. in Central and Eastern Europe has failed (e.g., Drechsler, 2009; Drechsler & Kattel, 2008). The conclusions that comprehensive and long-term reforms in the spirit of the ideology of N.P.M. have failed are important to this study. The primary reasons are mainly linked to underdeveloped democracy, rule of law, corruption and territorial fragmentation (Dan & Pollitt, 2015). These are the reasons why this study

is not focused on a comparison of public administration systems throughout the U.K. and the Czech Republic, but only on selected aspects which influence employee satisfaction.

Dan (2015) argues that N.P.M. can work in the right place, with adequate conditions and implementation; the examples of some reforms are shown in Hungary, Estonia, Lithuania and other countries (e.g., contracting out, decentralisation, etc.). For the study, it is important to verify the functionality of the position-based career system, performance-related pay, and performance management (Dan, 2015) under the conditions of the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. In the Czech Republic the situation is somewhat unique. Numerous studies, especially Nemeč (2010), Nemeč, Merickova, and Vitek (2005), Nemeč, Merickova, and Ochrana (2008), Plaček, Půček, and Jetmar (2014) and Plaček, Ochrana, and Půček (2015), chart the experience with tools such as contracting, benchmarking and the economic impacts of decentralisation. Personnel management within the central institutions, has been dealt with in very few studies. In our opinion, the main reason lies in the fact that for this kind of reform, the Czech Republic lags behind other countries (Bouckaert et al., 2008). For this reason, it was considered beneficial to complete this study.

3. Research background and data collection methodology

Data for the Czech Republic are from the authors' own empirical research undertaken at the ministries of the Czech Republic over the period April–July 2013. The research was preceded by interviews with a group of about twenty employees from several ministries. The interviews were conducted in the autumn of 2012. The research was conducted within the research project of the Grant Agency of the Czech Republic P 404/12/0725.

In the Czech Republic, the status of staff of the Czech ministries is provided by Act No. 2/1969 Coll., on the establishment of ministries and other central government bodies of public administration, as amended (the so-called Competence Act).

The base for a choice of respondents was a list of potential respondents (so-called sampling frame) received from the individual ministries. The choice and addressing of respondents was conducted in many ways at the individual ministries – depending on what lists of contacts details of employees were available. The respondents were chosen randomly. With a series of random choices all or nearly all units included in the database of the individual ministries were thus eventually addressed.

The questioning took place using the following forms: for eight ministries via personal interviews (F.2F, face-to-face) using a questionnaire with precisely specified questions which were either paper-based (the so-called C.A.P.I.) or assisted by a laptop (the so-called P.A.P.I.). For two ministries, interviews were conducted by filling in an online questionnaire (the so-called C.A.W.I.) without participation of the interviewer, as the so-called 'emergency' form for cases when it was not possible to utilise the F.2F form. In one case, a combination of both methods (F.2F and C.A.W.I.) was adopted. In total, 1,351 respondents were interviewed. Most questionnaires were filled out using the P.A.P.I. method (992 questionnaires), 124 questionnaires were answered using the C.A.P.I. form and 235 questionnaires were completed using the C.A.W.I. method. The research was conducted over the period April–June 2013. The number of addressed officials is informative also from the point of view of the total number of officials of the central ministries. According to last research (Bouchal

& Jánský, 2014) there are about 19,141 clerks working at ministries. The sample of 1,351 respondents is thus statistically significant as at the level of significance 5%, it shows statistical error of 2.57%, meaning that the real proportion can be found in the population in the following interval: the respondent's answer $\pm 5.14\%$. At the level of significance 1%, it shows statistical error of 3.38%, indicating that the real proportion can be found in population in the following interval: the respondent's answer $\pm 6.76\%$. To reach statistical significance, a sample of 377 respondents would be enough.

For analysing the situation in the U.K., we used secondary data from the National Audit Office report 'Building Capability in the Senior Civil Service to Meet Today's Challenges', Government evidence regarding senior salaries, a review body on the pay of the senior civil service (Cabinet Office, 2014), and data from the Institute for Government concerning the civil service workforce, which is available at <http://www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/>.

In the report 'Building Capability in the Senior Civil Service to Meet Today's Challenges', the national auditor focused on the following topics: (1) the capability profile of the Senior Civil Service (S.C.S.), the challenges it faces, and the government response to these, (2) how strategic approaches to meeting the skills requirements of the S.C.S. should be developed, (3) how far arrangements are in place to support the implementation of this strategic approach (National Audit Office, 2013, p. 48). The main objective of the study was to evaluate the results of the ongoing government strategy 'Civil Service Reform and Capabilities' plan. Data for this study were collected from January to April 2013. The data were collected through semi-structured interviews with senior HR officials and non-executive directors from the following departments: the Department of Business, Innovation and Skills, the Department for Communities and Local Government, the Department for Transport, the Department for Work and Pensions, and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. Statistical data on the senior civilian staff were obtained from the Office for National Statistics, which collects these data regularly on an annual basis. Individual government departments were invited to subsequently supplement this with data involving details regarding their senior officers.

Additional data were obtained from the portal 'Civil Service Workforce' that publishes the following data about officials: the number of officials in the civil service, diversity, evolution of salaries in the civil service, age composition, gender composition, education and territorial localisation of officials, fluctuations in the Civil Service, officer functions, and staff engagement scores. The data contain information about 3,616 senior civil service officials.

Within the framework of correctness of the present comparison, the authors point to different titles of positions in both bureaucratic systems. The Czech Republic does not use the term 'senior civil servants', which would be described as a specific group of employees within the ministries. This is mainly due to the fact that in the Czech Republic (until 1/7/2015) there was not an effective civil service law. In terms of real power of operations, it is possible to make a comparison with the U.K. by comparing the workload of senior civil servants (U.K.) and staff of the ministries of the Czech Republic. In the Czech Republic, the authors included in this category workers who are in charge of matters relating to public policy creation, analysis, creation of government policies, creation of key documents for government policies, and the management of public policies. These are positions which, from the perspective of the adopted Civil Service Law and the implementation of regulations that are

forthcoming, should be incorporated into the category of ‘state employees’, which would be included in the category of senior civil servants. In the case of the U.K., the National Audit Office points out that within the civil service they have distinguished more than 20 internal professions which have not yet registered relevant data about the professional background of senior civil servants. Incomplete data from the questionnaires show that most of them work on developing policies and operational delivery.

3.1. Used statistics for comparison of results

For comparison of proportions between the individual files, two-proportion test is used, based on which the following hypotheses are tested:

$$H_0: p_1 = p_2 \text{ versus } H_A: p_1 \neq p_2 \quad (1)$$

The p -value is computed based on the z -value for the respective comparison:

$$|z| = \sqrt{[(N_1 * N_2) / (N_1 + N_2)] * |p_1 - p_2| / \sqrt{(p * q)}} \quad (2)$$

where

$$p = (p_1 * N_1 + p_2 * N_2) / (N_1 + N_2) \quad (3)$$

$$q = 1 - p. \quad (4)$$

This test is used for results shown in Tables 4, 7 and 8.

Another used method is chi-square test of good conformity. Its basic motivation is as follows:

$$T(\underline{X}) = G = \sum_{i=1}^k \frac{(n_i - n * \pi_{0,i})^2}{n * \pi_{0,i}} \rightarrow X_{k-h-1}^2 \quad (5)$$

This test is used in Tables 3 and 5.

4. Results of empirical research

4.1. Age distribution

The age distribution of the group studied is presented in Table 3.

From the table, it is possible to notice considerable differences between the two countries. A large proportion of 29-year-old workers as well as a high proportion of employees older than 60 in the Czech Republic can be explained by the fact that public administration in

Table 3. Age distribution of the surveyed group of officials.

Age	the Czech Republic	United Kingdom	Chi-square tests results		
			Test criterion	P-value	Result
18–29	16	0.20	16,993.81721	0.0000	Different
30–59	71	92.6			
60 and up	13	7.2			

Source: Own elaboration, Government Cabinet Office (2014).

the Czech Republic is characterised by university-educated workers having lower salaries/wages than the same category of employees in the private sector. For this reason, working for the public administration is not attractive for those at the peak of their career, but rather for graduates who need to gain work experience and then move into the private sector. In contrast, career plans are used in the U.K., and the majority of employees in the surveyed positions come from within the public sector (for more details, this issue is described in Section 4.4). This also highlights the rigidity of the Czech system regarding the possibility of promotion, which is explained by the large share of workers over 60.

4.2. Gender composition

The proportion of women from the surveyed group of officials is described in Table 4.

Both countries have established strategies for achieving equal opportunities for men and women. The two countries have also established specific goals in this area. In the U.K., the proportion of women in senior civil service is lower than the proportion of women in the entire civil service, which is 53% (Government Cabinet Office, 2014). Both countries are characterised by having a low proportion of women working in the Ministry of Defence, which may explain the focus of the ministry. An almost perfectly balanced ratio of men and women in the Czech Republic is the result of a surprisingly positive effect of communism, when positions within the ministries were mostly occupied by women who had previously been on maternity leave, as part of an informal government's strategy for achieving full employment.

4.3. Jobs performed by senior ministry officials

Within the National Audit Office report, the following professions performed by senior civil servants in the U.K. were identified: communication and marketing, internal audit, planning, inspection of schools, corporate finance, knowledge and information management, policy, science and engineering, economics, legal, procurement, social research, finance, medical, project delivery, statistics, human resources, operational delivery, property asset management, taxes, information technology, operational research, psychology, veterinarian.

The list of professions is very similar to the results for the Czech Republic. The only significant difference arising from the differences in bureaucratic systems lay in the fact that in the Czech poll the respondents describe themselves as officials, without giving any further forms of specialisation regarding their profession, and also that the profession of policy worker did not appear among the responses in the Czech Republic (Table 5).

Table 4. Proportion of women in the studied group of officials.

	Czech Republic	United Kingdom	Results of two proportion test		
			Test criterion	P-value	Result
% women	50	38	7.644310098	0.0000	Different

Source: Own elaboration, Government Cabinet Office (2014).

Table 5. The proportion of individual professions among respondents in the Czech Republic and United Kingdom.

Profession	Czech Republic	United Kingdom	Chi-square test results		
			Test criterion	P-value	Result
Clerk	43	NA	611.7446112	0.0000	Different
Lawyer	13	9			
Economist	5	11			
Manager	15	10			
Policy worker	NA	29			
Analyst	8	2			
Other	16	39			

Source: Own elaboration, National Audit Office (2013).

4.4. Previous work experience

This part of the research sought answers as to the previous work experience of employees within the ministries. The results are shown in Table 6.

The sum of the responses, which is over 100%, represents the fact that some respondents reported experience from more than one sector. Considerable differences arise between the two countries in the table. In the Czech Republic, almost four-tenths of officials from ministries have some experience from the private sector, which is approximately double the amount in the U.K. The causes of this condition may be varied. One explanation may be that, in the Czech Republic, new ministers have brought professional workers with them to government offices. This practice should end due to a new civil service law coming into effect. When looking at experience in the public sector, the U.K. dominates. Almost seven out of ten ministerial staff have had previous experience in the public sector, which is by about a third more than in the Czech Republic. This difference can be explained by the effects of the merit system of civil service in the U.K., and by simply mobility between positions.

In the Czech Republic, when compared to the U.K., the situation is dominated by professionals who have had experience working in non-governmental organisations and academia. It amounts to half of the respondents, while in the U.K. the number is about three times smaller. This difference can be explained by different sets of terms and conditions within the civil service. While in the Czech Republic it was possible (until the enactment of the Civil Service) to interrupt one's career as a university teacher in order to become an employee of a ministry (or to simultaneously perform both jobs at once), in the U.K., such practice is not possible. This practice, however, after the adoption of the Civil Service Law (assuming that the given ministry staff would be assigned to the category of civil servants) will not be possible.

4.5. Satisfaction of ministerial employees with selected aspects of work

Table 7 compares the percentage of agreement with the individual statements among employees of ministries of both countries.

It is possible to observe rather interesting differences between the two countries in the interest in their work and personal job satisfaction, which is higher in the U.K. In the authors' opinion, this is caused by the relatively low prestige that state officials have in the Czech society as a profession.

Table 6. Proportion of previous employment (%).

Previous Experience	Czech Republic	United Kingdom	Chi-square test results		
			Test criterion	P-value	Result
Private Sector	38	17	740.3088195	0.0000	Different
Public Sector	40	68			
Other (Non-profit Organisations, Academic Sphere)	49	15			

Source: Own elaboration, National Audit Office (2013).

Table 7. Comparison of the percentage of agreement with the various aspects of satisfaction.

Claim	Czech Republic	United Kingdom	Two proportion test results		
			Test criterion	P-value	Result
I am interested in my work	87	97	-13.5048	0.0000	Different
I feel personal accomplishment from my work	70	92	-19.8936	0.0000	Different
I have enough skills to do my work effectively	84	95	-12.7218	0.0000	Different
I am satisfied with my workload	67	58	5.772475	0.0000	Different
I have confidence in decisions made by senior managers	85	39	28.86564	0.0000	Different
I am satisfied with the total benefit package	44	36	5.164296	0.0000	Different
I feel that my pay adequately reflects my performance	45	34	7.145553	0.0000	Different
I am able to access the right learning and development resources when I need to	54	75	-14.2768	0.0000	Different
There are opportunities for me to develop my career in the organisation	30	58	-17.5629	0.0000	Different

Source: Own elaboration, National Audit Office (2013)

From the respondents' answers it is apparent that a greater degree of satisfaction regarding the workload was reported by respondents from the Czech Republic, as can be attributed to the use of different models of performance management. In the Czech Republic, these tools are still at an early stage of implementation, meaning that within Czech ministries the pressure to perform is not of the same extent as in the U.K., where the government has already implemented performance measurement and performance management models as a standard tool for management in the public sector.

Another significant difference can be found in the opportunities for career development. 58% of the respondents in the U.K. replied positively to the question concerning whether there were enough opportunities for their career development, while in the Czech Republic, the number was only 30% of respondents. The cause of the differences can be found in the rigidity of bureaucracies in the Czech Republic. Due to the low focus on performance, officials are somewhat stuck in their positions.

4.6. The length of stay at current position and proposed turnover

The previous findings can be supplemented by comparing the periods of time workers plan to remain at their current position. In the U.K., the median stay in the current position is 2.6 years, from which more than 30% of respondents have been in the position for less than two years. In the Czech Republic, the median stay in the current position is between 3 and 5 years and almost 30% of respondents have been in their position for 6 or more years. The following table compares the respondents' intention to keep their position (Table 8).

In a very short period perspective it seems the Czech system is more stable. If a period longer than three years of differences between the two systems is taken into account, this will significantly decrease. A very interesting view would be to compare the actual turnover. However, only data for the U.K. were available. In the period 2012/2013 fluctuations in the senior civil services amounted to 14.6% (Cabinet Office, 2014). In the authors' view, this condition is caused by dissatisfaction with the senior civil service pay. According to the Cabinet office, these workers' wages grow at a slower pace than wages in the private sector. The situation is very similar in the Czech Republic. According to a study by Bouchal and Jánský (2014), the average salaries for this group of employees are higher than the salaries of other groups of civil servants, but they are smaller than the average salary of university-educated employees in the private sector. To compensate for these differences, performance-related pay is used in the Czech Republic. According to Jacko (2014) and Staroňová (2015), there are significant differences between the two countries in performance-related pay systems. In the U.K., the conditions for the grant of performance-related pays are fixed, while in the Czech Republic, these conditions are vaguely defined. Therefore, it is possible to say that performance-related pays in the Czech Republic are not used so much to motivate performance, but for adjusting differences in wages for key positions in the private and public sectors. In the Czech Republic there have been a few cases where bonuses of officials were several times greater than their basic salary with no apparent accountability to senior staff who were unable to explain the reasons for such rewards.

Another factor that influences the situation is the location of these groups. Regarding officials in the U.K., 69% are located in London and the South East. In contrast, in the Czech Republic, the vast majority of these officials are located in Prague, where wages are highest.

5. Discussions and recommendations for public policy

Despite some bias, which is caused by the limited data and the comparison of two different systems of civil service, a number of matters arising from the mutual differences were

Table 8. The respondents' intention to keep their position (%).

Claim	Czech Republic	United Kingdom	Two proportion test results		
			Test criterion	P-value	Result
I plan to leave my organisation within the next 12 months	6	20	-11.9187	0.0000	
I plan to work for my organisation for at least the next 3 years	50	46	2.51.3174	0.0000	Different

Source: Own elaboration, Government Cabinet Office (2014).

identified. They can have a significant impact on the future effectiveness of civil service in the Czech Republic.

The starting conditions of both countries remain crucial. The conditions are explained in Chapter 2. Other causes can be seen in the actual management of civil service. In the U.K. there are strategies for the development of key competencies of public sector workers, called the 'Civil Service Talent Action Plan', which sets out the objectives of diversity, leadership, open culture, capability and engagement of the civil service. To achieve them, tools from the private sector are employed, e.g., performance audits, performance evaluation, career plans, fast track hiring, and mentoring. These tools are associated with the ideology of N.P.M. This fact is reflected positively in the overall evaluation of performance, and the opportunities for key employees to develop their careers. On the other hand, most of the senior civil service are dissatisfied with salaries, they do not feel adequately remunerated. They mistrust superiors, and this is characterised by short-term fluctuations.

Conversely, the system in the Czech Republic has lower performance, but the senior staff of the Ministries have higher satisfaction than their British counterparts and remain in their positions for longer time. Additionally, like in the U.K., they are more dissatisfied with the remuneration for their work. As discussed in the section describing the system of bureaucracy in the Czech Republic, there are no relevant strategies aimed at improving performance of the public sector, and management tools from the private sector are used in a very decentralised way. This situation will not be improved by the new civil service law, which should come into effect on 1 July 2015, and which should establish a group of employees that can be classified as senior civil service (Table 9).

The largest part of discussions is focused on the new Service Act instead of on defining target characteristics of the modern administration's motive of 'the de-politicisation of public administration'. Ironically, this pressure for the de-politicisation brought about the opposite results in reality; in less than a year of the new law being in effect, previous political nominees were transferred to the place/position of professional deputies. There were also discussions about which workers, who are employees of ministries, will be categorised as 'state employees' and who will be excluded from this. Although the civil service law formally takes effect from 1 July 2015, clear (detailed) rules on career progression have yet to be established. The Civil Service Act still misses a decree of implementation. It is not yet clear exactly how the performance will be evaluated by state officials. The law also sets limits for possible performance pay, which can reach a maximum of 25% of annual wage

Table 9. Aims and tools defined by the law on civil service.

Aim	Tool
De-politicisation of civil service	Separation of political and service positions, restriction of influence of politicians on personnel matters of offices managed by them
Improvement of effectivity and performance of civil service	Setting of obligation to realise service evaluation on an annual basis, connection between remuneration of service additional pay and the result of annual evaluation
Increase of transparency	Realisation of obligatory selection procedures, legally binding requirements for the course of selection procedures
Professionalisation of civil service	Obligation to pass an exam for servants
Increase of stability of the civil service	Processing of binding systematisation

Source: Pokorná (2016, p. 32).

for employees, This implies a risk that a suitable employee for positions requiring a high level of qualifications will be difficult to find because their remuneration is significantly less competitive when compared to similar positions in the private sector. According to official statements of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, a change of the law is already being prepared. This change will enable increased salaries for lacking specialists in state service. Another problem with implementation seems to be the recruitment process itself. The recruitment of employees is bound with administrative procedure, which results in necessity to obey very formalised rules of recruitment, e.g., all contact with the applicants is done in writing, unsuccessful applicants may appeal, applicants may be asked only preset questions, applicants must submit exactly set documents even before the interview takes place. Another negative aspect is the length of the probationary period which has been prolonged to 6 months. This bureaucracy results in a paralysis of recruitment of new employees.

This concept of civil service returns to the synthesis of the Neo-Weberian bureaucracy model and Good Governance (Kovac, 2014; Stumpf, 2014), but without the emphasis on innovation and efficiency, which are characteristic of this model. Among other things, it seeks to eliminate the negative consequences of the implementation of reforms in the spirit of NPM (Hajnal, 2014; Randma-Liiv, 2008; Dan, 2015). It can therefore be assumed that this approach entails a sacrifice of efficiency in order to create a stable environment that would eliminate the problems faced by countries which still suffer as a result of the communist legacy, e.g., accountability shortage, corruption, and the politicisation of the public sector. This approach may exacerbate the negatives of the Czech system, which have already been identified. Meanwhile, the strong rigidity of the system may lead to dissatisfaction with salaries and poor career prospects for employees and, in comparison with the U.K., the cementing of a large proportion of workers in the position of clerk/official, while in the U.K. there exists within the senior civil service a number of positions which are of a truly creative nature (see Section 4.3).

To improve the situation in this area, the authors recommend implementing Evidence Based Policy as well as methods of strategic planning. The public sector in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe do not have accurate records of who key staff are. It follows that the management changes in this area do not have precisely determined goals as to what the future senior civil service will look like and how it should be effective. For comparison, data for the U.K. were collected directly by the government, whereas for the Czech Republic, these data are not available and the university had to collect the data. The lack of evidence in this area, for example, has an impact on a range of courses for public administration, as also shown by Nemeč, Špaček, Suwaj, and Modrzejewski (2012) analysing the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Poland.

6. Conclusions

The comparison of ministerial staff in the Czech Republic and the U.K. brought up some rather interesting insights. Between the U.K. and the Czech Republic, there is a substantial difference in the starting conditions. The Czech Republic is a country that for over four decades belonged to the Soviet sphere of influence. The state administration was heavily ideologised and centralised. The legacy of this influence is, twenty-five years after the anti-communist coup, apparently disappearing. The state administration employs only one age group of officials (aged over 50) who have direct experience of working within the

ministries during the communist regime. In comparison, the U.K. is a country with a long democratic tradition, which did not experience the effects of a similar discontinuity in the development of democracy. In the Czech Republic, officials of ministries have strictly defined powers set up by legislation, which rather limit their creativity. State officials in the Czech Republic are mainly the executors of government decisions.

Significant differences were also found in the area of skills and careers of civil servants. Requirements for career progression and the qualifications of ministry officials will be regulated by the newly adopted Act on Civil Service. The Czech Republic took over the course of the public servant's career path model. So far, however, legislation is not available that would regulate the input, process and output of a career of civil servants.

Also, the comparison of implementation of N.P.M. in the compared countries and examination of its impact on the Effective Management of Bureaucracy leads to an interesting conclusion. Unlike in the U.K. (despite the later criticism of N.P.M. – see Pollitt and Bouckaert (2011), where the idea of N.P.M. from the very beginning became the 'engine' of effective reforms in the public service, it did not happen that way in the Czech Republic. There was a 'freeze of the reform of public service'. This is due to many factors, or differences. First significant difference lies in the genesis of the idea of N.P.M., in time duration and continuity of reforms in the spirit of N.P.M.

The idea of N.P.M. had a long history in the U.K. (unlike in the Czech Republic). The starting point of reform in the spirit of N.P.M. in the U.K. was Fulton's report in 1968. This report brought attention to the fact that qualified managers were lacking in the public service. Fulton's report defined many recommendations as to how to create management skills of civil servants. In the following decades, the ideas of N.P.M. were effectively realised. The basis of the reforms were projects 'Financial Management Initiative' (Margaret Thatcher, 1982) and 'Next Steps' (John Major, 1988). These projects set one of the goals (reform pre-requisite at the same time) to be an effective manager. At the same time that the mentioned reforms were being realised in the U.K., Czechoslovakia was ruled by the communist regime with a centralised and politicalised civil service. It required the civil servant to be first of all, a political support of the regime. The possibility to apply the N.P.M. idea during the reform of public service appeared only after the fall of the communist regime (November 1989). This opportunity, however, was put aside by other reform task, privatisation, which (due to its length) 'absorbed' the whole decade after the fall of the communist regime. The real request to apply ideas of N.P.M. for the reform of public service then happened only after 2000, i.e., in the time where the idea of N.P.M. in Western countries was already being replaced by other concepts (see Rouban et al., 1999). There was a case in the Czech Republic which is mentioned by Kettl (2000) – N.P.M. reform may be successful only if politically supported. If there is no such support, the reform will fail. The Czech Republic (unlike the U.K.) did not have any charismatic leader who would support system use of N.P.M. Even though in the Czech Republic a government document inspired by the N.P.M. idea ('Smart Administration Strategy for years 2007–2015') was accepted, it did not get political support. The reform of civil service in the Czech Republic is still frozen. If there are any changes, then these are only changes of incremental character. These changes usually concern legislation.

In conclusion of the analysis of the problem concerning the N.P.M. idea and its impact on the reform of civil service and senior civil service it can be stated that in the Czech Republic (unlike in the U.K.) the potential of N.P.M. for the reform of senior civil service remained unexploited. The appropriate 'mature' stable political and administrative environment that

would enable to realise the reform of civil service effectively is missing. Simply said, the Czech Republic from the very beginning missed needed background (prerequisites) on which the N.P.M. reform was built in the U.K. (and other countries of Western Europe).

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

References

- Barabashev, A. G., & Prokofiev, V. N. (2014). Russian civil service management: How civil servants are recruited and promoted. *The NISPAcee Journal of Public Administration and Policy*, 7(1), 9–28.
- Bouchal, P., & Jánský, P. (2014). *Státní úředníci: Kolik jich vlastně je, kde a za jaké platy pracují?* Praha: Idea Cerge Ei.
- Cabinet Office. (2014). *Government evidence to the senior salaries review body on the pay of the senior civil service*. London: Author.
- Christensen, T., Fimreite, A. L., & Læg Reid, P. (2006). Reform of the employment and welfare administration – the challenges of co-coordinating diverse public organizations. *International Review of Administrative Sciences*, 73(3), 389–408.
- Ciolan, L., Stîngu, M., & Marin, E. (2014). The human factor: Training and professional development as a policy tool. *Transylvanian Review of Administrative Sciences*, 43E(2014), 48–67.
- Colebatch, H. K., Hoppe, R., & Noordeggraaf, M. (Eds.). (2010). *Working for policy*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.
- Dan, S. (2015). The New Public Management is not that bad after all: Evidence from Estonia, Hungary and Romania. *Transylvanian Review of Administrative Sciences*, 44E(2015), 57–73.
- Dan, S., & Pollitt, C. (2015). NPM can work: An optimistic review of the impact of New Public Management reforms in Central and Eastern Europe. *Public Management Review*, 15(9), 1305–1332.
- Dobuzinskis, L., Laycock, D., & Howlett, M. (2007). *Policy analysis in Canada: The state of the art*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Dragos, D. C., & Neamptu, B. (2013). Effectiveness of administrative appeals – empirical evidence from Romanian local administration. *Lex localis*, 11(1), 71–85.
- Drechsler, W. (2009). The rise and demise of the New Public Management: Lessons and opportunities for South East Europe. *Uprava*, VII(3), 7–27.
- Drechsler, W., & Kattel, R. (2008). Towards the neo-Weberian State? Perhaps, but certainly adieu NPM! *NISPAcee Journal of Public Administration and Policy*, 1(2), 95–99.
- Dunleavy, P., & Hood, Ch (1994). From old public administration to New Public Management. *Public Money & Management*, 14(3), 9–16.
- Dunn, W. N. (2004). *Public policy analysis: An introduction* (3rd ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Evans, B., Lum, J., & Shields, J. (2011). *The state of policy capacity in Canada: Assessments from Senior Public Servants*. Paper delivered at the 83rd annual meeting of the Canadian Political Science Association, Wilfrid Laurier University, Waterloo, 16–18.
- Hajnal, G. (2014). *Unorthodoxy at work: An assesment of Hungary's post – 2010 governance reforms*, Paper presented at the 22th NISPAcee Conference (Government vs Governance in Central and Eastern Europe). Ohrid: NISPAcee.
- Hertie School of Governance. (2014). *The governance report 2014*. Retrieved from <http://www.governancereport.org/home/the-2014-report/>
- Howlett, M. (2009). Policy analytical capacity and evidence-based policy-making: Lessons from Canada. *Canadian Public Administration*, 52(2), 153–173.
- Howlett, M. (2011). Public managers as the missing variable in policy studies: An empirical investigation using Canadian data. *Review of Policy Research*, 28(3), 247–263.
- Howlett, M., & Walker, M. R. (2012). Public managers in the policy process: More evidence on the missing variable? *Policy Studies Journal*, 40(2), 211–233.

- Jacko, T. (2014). Performance related pays in Slovak and English local government. In D. Špalková, L. Matějová (Eds.), *Proceedings of the international conference current trends in public sector research* (pp. 147–154). Šlapanice.
- Kettl, D. F. (2000). *The global public management revolution (A report on the transformation of governance)*. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press.
- Kovac, P. (2014). The public administration discipline in Slovenia: Between legal and administrative sciences. *The NISPAcee journal of public administration policy*, 6(2), 33–52.
- Kuperus, H., & Rode, A. (2008). *Top public managers in Europe: Management working conditions of the senior civil servants in European Union public states*. Hague: European Institute of Public Management.
- National Audit Office. (2013). *Building capability in Senior Civil Service to meet today challenges*. Report by the Comptroller and Auditor general. London.
- Nemec, J. (2010). New public management and its implementation in CEE: What do we know and where do we go? *NISPAcee Journal of Public Administration and Policy*, 3(1), 31–52.
- Nemec, J., Merickova, B., & Ochрана, F. (2008). Introducing benchmarking in the Czech Republic and Slovakia: Processes, problems and lessons. *Public Management Review*, 10(5), 673–684.
- Nemec, J., Merickova, B., & Vitek, L. (2005). Contracting-out at local government level: Theory and selected evidence from the Czech and Slovak Republics. *Public Management Review*, 7(4), 637–647.
- Nemec, J., Nakrošis, V., Hajnal, G., & Tonninson, K. (Eds.). (2008). *Public Management Reforms in Central and Eastern Europe*. Bratislava: NISPAcee.
- Nemec, J., Špaček, D., Suwaj, A., & Modrzejewski, P. (2012). Public management as a university discipline in new European Union member states. *Public Management Review*, 18(4), 1–22.
- Plaček, M., Ochрана, F., & Půček, M. (2015). Benchmarking in Czech higher education: The case of schools of economics. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management*, 37(4), 374–384.
- Plaček, M., Půček, M., & Jetmar, M. (2014). Collaborative benchmarking of municipalities in the Czech Republic: Present experience. *The NISPAcee Journal of Public Administration and Policy*, 7(1), 63–81.
- Pokorná, K. (2016). Dopady zavedení služebního zákona na konkrétní úřad (The impact of implementation of a new civil service law on specific public authority. Master thesis. Faculty of business and administration. Brno). *Diplomová práce*. Masarykova universita, Ekonomicko správní fakulta.
- Pollitt, C. H., & Bouckaert, G. (2011). *Public management reform*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Randma – Liiv, T. (2008, 31 January–1 February). *New Public Management versus neo-Weberian State in Central and Eastern Europe* (Trans-European Dialogue1, Towards the Neo-Weberian State? Europe and Beyond). Tallin.
- Randma-Liiv, T., Nakrošis, V., & Gyorgy, H. (2011). Public sector organization in Central and Eastern Europe: From agencification to de-agencification. *Transylvanian Review of Administrative Sciences*, 35, 160–165.
- Rasmussen, K. (1999). Policy capacity in Saskatchewan: Strengthening the equilibrium. *Canadian Public Administration*, 42(3), 331–348.
- Ruban, L. (Ed.). (1999). *Citizens and the new governance – beyond New Public Management*. Amsterdam: IOS Press.
- Špaček, D. (2012). *E-government: Goals, trends and approaches to their evaluation*. Praha: C.H.Beck.
- Špaček, D., & Špalek, J. (2007). Communication and electronic public administration: Some issues in the context of the Czech system of public administration. *Lessons and recommendations for improvement: Central and Eastern European Public Administration and Public Policy* (pp. 217–238). Bratislava: NISPAcee.
- Staroňová, K. (2015). Civil service in Slovakia. In D. Špalková, L. Matějová (Eds.), *Proceedings of the International Conference Current Trends in Public Sector Research* (pp. 68–78). Šlapanice.
- Stumpf, I. (2014). *Why we need a strong but constitutionally limited state? Paradigm of good government*, Paper presented at the 22th NISPAcee conference (Government vs Governance in Central and Eastern Europe). Ohrid: NISPAcee.
- World Bank. (2015). Worldwide governance indicators. Retrieved from <http://info.worldbank.org/governance/wgi/index.aspx#home/>