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Governance models of Hungarian higher education: from Humboldtian to State-controlled model

Modelli di governance dell'istruzione superiore ungherese: dal Modello Humboltiano al Modello a Controllo Statale

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Abstract. The paper focuses on the higher education evolution in Hungary from the historical perspective regarding the governance models implemented and constructed in connection with the legal provision of decision-making power within universities, between various governance mechanisms (faculty, academic committees, senates, and boards) and administrative structures. We identified four governance models during the last hundred years. In the primary stage, we track down the Humboldt model, and the German influence played a role in the institutional development. The beginning of communist era represented a reform called “de-Humboldtization” and it was the beginning of the second phase in which the Hungarian higher education reform can be identified under the socialist influence, concentrating on the formation and organisation of the Soviet higher education institutions. The subsequent stage, the neo-Humboldtian type (1993-2012), can be identified as the regaining autonomy at the higher education underneath the shifting of communism regime to democracy and market economy. However, during this era, the government continuously tried to reform university governance, which touched every time the autonomy issue. Undoubtedly, many elements of these reforms caused a slow sink of the level of autonomy. Ten years ago, started the fourth period. First, the state-controlled model (chancellor and Consistory system) and now the pseudo-private model has been introduced. These last two models are linked with intensive decreasing institutional autonomy and academic freedom at Hungarian higher education and showed that the current legislation regulates the operational and financial issues of the institutions.

Keywords: history of higher education, institutional autonomy, academic freedom, Hungary.

Riassunto. L'articolo mette a fuoco l'evoluzione dell'istruzione superior in Ungheria sotto l'aspetto storico dei modelli di governance, la loro costruzione e implementazione in relazione alle disposizioni normative del potere decisionale sulle università. Il processo decisionale attraversa diversi meccanismi di governance (facoltà, consigli e senati accademici, direzioni) e strutture amministrative. Abbiamo individuate quattro modelli di governance durante l'ultimo secolo. In primo luogo il modello humboldtiano, con

l'influenza giocata dalla Germania a livello istituzionale. L'inizio dell'era comunista rappresentò una riforma di "de-humboldtizzazione", rappresentando l'inizio della seconda fase in cui l'istruzione superiore ungherese può essere qualificata dall'influenza del modello socialista, concentrato nella costituzione di istituzioni sulla falsariga sovietica. Il successivo passaggio, il tipo neo-humboldtiano (1993-2012), può essere identificato nella recuperata autonomia dell'istruzione superiore durante la transizione dal regime comunista alla democrazia e all'economia di mercato. Tuttavia, in questo periodo, il governo ha continuamente tentato di riformare la governance universitaria, ogni volta toccando la questione dell'autonomia. Senza dubbio, molti elementi di queste riforme hanno comportato una lenta riduzione dei margini di autonomia. Dieci anni fa, inizia la quarta fase. Per prima cosa, sono stati introdotti il modello controllato dallo Stato (cancelliere e sistema collegiale) e adesso quello pseudo-privatistico. Questi due ultimi livelli sono collegati ad un'intensa riduzione dell'autonomia istituzionale e accademica nell'istruzione superiore ungherese, mostrando come la corrente legislazione regoli le opportunità operative e finanziarie delle istituzioni.

Parole chiave: storia dell'istruzione superiore, autonomia delle istituzioni, libertà accademica, Ungheria.

In Europe, the governance of higher education is related to the development of dynamic cycles and long-term regulatory models. The framework of the European Higher Education (HE) system influenced by Europe includes, for example, Humboldt's academic autonomy idea and Napoleon's practice of state control, as well as the more market-based standard Anglo-Saxon model. The internal design and decision-making of HE management involve multiple stakeholders. The interests of these stakeholders are often divergent, especially in HE, which always occurs in a triangular relation between state, society, and academia (Frost, Hattke, and Reihlen 2016). The task imposed by the state on HE today emphasizes its obligation to serve social interests and needs, which is mainly interpreted as economic interests.

From a historical perspective, the models introduced for the development of Hungary's higher education follow a pattern of socio-political changes. Likewise, it tracks changes occurring within and between two aspects of university management: institutional autonomy and academic freedom. Institutional autonomy is a key factor associated with departmental reforms and state intervention. It can increase or decrease institutional leaders in campus management decisions (Karran, Beiter, and Appiagyei-Atua 2017).

We can distinguish the four management models that we have discovered while exploring the Hungarian and global academic literature.

Therefore, we have identified four governance models for the past 100 years.

HUNGARIAN HIGHER EDUCATION: ANTECEDENTS

Although the first continuously operating university was founded in 1635 (see later), we can detect other initiatives for establishing higher education institutions. Therefore, higher education in Hungary dates all the

way back to 1367, when the first university was founded in the Southern region of Hungary, Pope Urban V approved the charter for the establishment of a university at Pécs, Hungary. The University of Pécs was still in existence in the early 15th century, but due to a lack of royal sponsorship, it was converted into an episcopal college. The institution apparently lasted until the Ottoman takeover in the early 16th century. Around 30 years after the founding of the first university, during the reign of King Sigismund, it was seen the quickly rising the Hungarian capital Buda witnessed the establishment of its first university. In 1395, Pope Boniface IX granted the first founding charter of Buda (Old Buda) university. Around 1409, this university ceased to exist. On July 20, 1467, after another seventy years, Pope Paul II granted King Matthias permission to build a university in Pozsony (today's Bratislava), which lasted until the 1480s (Kozma, Polónyi, and Pusztai 2017). We can mention many other efforts that lead to different HEIs. For instance, the so-called Kolozsvár University, in terms of which there is no agreement among scholars if it was a traditional university (Molnár and Siptár 2011). This institution was founded by István (Stephen) Báthory, Prince of Transylvania and King of Poland, in 1581 in Kolozsvár, which is now located in Cluj-Napoca, Romania. His first effort was to build a Jesuit university when he gave the Jesuit order control (Szögi et al. 2010). This institution also existed only for decades. We can mention the Lutheran College in Eperjes (today in Slovakia) as another effort. It was founded by the city in 1666 (while the current King definitely banned this action). Its type was Lyceum, which is also questionable if we can consider it a university or even a higher education institution (Durovics 2016).

In the first decades of the 17th century, we arrived at the founding of the first continuously operating university. Cardinal Péter Pázmány signed the founding charter of the Jesuit university of Nagyszombat (after Royal

Hungarian University and today Eötvös Lorand University) on May 12, 1635, after establishing various colleges and attempting to create universities. Nagyszombat was the site of the university until 1777 when it was moved to Buda. Cardinal Pázmány built the predecessor institution, which was eventually evolved into other Budapest universities. (Kelemen 2009; Kozma, Polónyi, and Pusztai 2017).

Until 1769, it was governed by the church, after that Maria Theresa Queen (1740-80) took control. As a governmental university, the Royal Court exerted a significant influence on the institution. For the first time, the Empire developed a consolidated administrative organization under the queen and her son, Joseph II (1780-90). Despite Joseph's attempts to suppress it, Hungary maintained its constitutional independence and privileges. The established institutions were nationalized by the Queen (Mason 2014).

In 1777, the first Hungarian Education Act was adopted. As a whole, the education system was controlled by the *Ratio Educationis*, from elementary school to college. Teachers and students had equal rights and responsibilities under the regulations, which governed how schools were run and who was in charge. Although the *Ratio Educationis* was a model at the time, it established legal institutions that still exist today, such as how the rector and the senate are assigned administrative functions, and how faculties are organized. The *Ratio Educationis*, on the other hand, declared the dual system of personal leadership and ensured the Court's direct control with the support of the president (Rónay 2019b; Garai and Németh 2018).

The continuous scholarly endeavor was still not possible throughout the last ten years of the eighteenth century. The substantial changes that were taking place both domestically and internationally significantly affected the university, which is conveniently positioned.

The higher institution, known today as Budapest University of Technology and Economics, or BME, has a long history; founded in 1782. BME was the first university in Hungary to educate engineers, and the Faculty of Mechanical Engineering was founded in 1871. After five years of study, Royal Joseph University is granted complete independence and the authority to provide engineering degrees. It was one of the earliest organizations in Europe to offer university-level engineering training (Ugry 2019).

From the beginning of the ruin of Queen Marie Therese, the so-called absolutism era started. It brought both reform (clear legal frameworks, see: *Ratio Educationis*) and strong state control by the Court. These tendencies broke only at the times of the revolutions and

freedom fight (1848-49). However, the reforms could not result in long-term changes. Only after the Compromise (1867) started the processes which reinterpreted the role of this university, which was called those time Budapest University.

Budapest University has become a true intellectual center of the country. Trefort as a rector and later minister, concentrated on advancing medical and natural sciences within the university, maintaining the same organizational structure. Several independent departments and even laboratories were established within the Faculty of Humanities to support the instruction of new independent fields of science, which still included the natural science departments. The same thing happened in the classical humanities (linguistics, history, etc.), which became increasingly differentiated during this period. The Faculty of Medicine saw especially spectacular and dynamic growth, with the construction and opening of new university clinics, which still serve Hungarian public health care today, in the 1870s and 1880s, in addition to various new university departments (Szögi et al. 2010; Ugry 2019). It is interesting to understand the Hungarian higher education system diversification in the twentieth century. New universities were established, and many colleges were created, with some older ones gaining HE status.

HUMBOLDT MODEL

In the initial stage, we traced the Humboldt model, and the German system influenced its development. The philosophical and ideological point of view behind the Humboldtian model can be traced to the reforms when universities were in crisis. In this case, some universities were closed, mainly because they did not adapt to the modern science of knowledge production.

In 1810, the German model brought about a policy of modernization and revival of the university. The Minister of Prussia, Wilhelm von Humboldt, persuaded the King to propose a new idea of a university. The acknowledgment of the possibility of *Bildung* at the institutional level, just as related drives at nation-building, were significant elements for the foundation of the University of Berlin in 1810 (Rüegg 2010).

This new German model was concise and clear. It was a system of university organization and management philosophy. It considers the need for cooperation between professors and students; the integrity of knowledge – the new humanism; the unity between research work and instructing; complementation of essential education with HE; freedom of scientific research; and the

close but autonomous relationship between the state and the university (Horlacher 2016).

Modern university philosophy attempted to address the issue of the division of university teaching and academic research. It defended both economic and academic freedom. The freedom of lecturing and learning was the foundation of German universities. It managed the field to meet the huge challenge of the reconciliation of internal requirements of science with the needs of the country and nation (Horlacher 2016; Thom and Weining 2014; Östling 2018).

Like all academic discourse, it provides a philosophy that inspires and mobilizes thoughts, legends, and goals. Under these circumstances, the essence of the discourse of the emergence of the new university is composed of classic ideas about the integration of the university into the ethical and spiritual realm of the emerging nation state and the idea of such a state as the instructor of the elites and high-level bureaucracy.

The Humboldt model sheds on light «the unity of research and teaching also in education instead of a pure knowledge transfer; the connection of technical education and general human education; finally, the community of scholars with equal rights» (von Bruch 1999, 34–35 *apud* Frambach 2015). However, the educational institutions at that time were based on different aspirations and goals. Humboldt's model aimed to establish an intellectual ability from a holistic perspective, not for professional training, but for a broader perspective.

Humboldt believed that the state's obligations to colleges were limited to two: preserving their freedom and appointing teachers. Seminars and labs that introduce students to the scientific investigation have already begun. By the turn of the century, Europe, the United States, and Japan had adopted the German model of the contemporary university. Universities in continental Europe were progressively governed by governmental bureaucracy over the 19th century. Ministries of education were then established, modeled after the French and Prussian patterns. The ministerial management provided higher education institutions with contemporary structures and laboratories while simultaneously controlling admission requirements, courses, and exams. The professionalization of this process was its most significant result (Scott and Pasqualoni 2016).

Only a few elements of this university model were applied and tailored to the unique characteristics of Hungarian society and economy due to the late emergence of Hungarian society. Additionally, the German-inspired institutional framework for teacher preparation was enlarged by building a French-inspired institute. Adjusting to national particularities only partially

explains the development of the national reception. A “need for reflection” evolved due to building a custom national model of a teacher preparation program using components of existing European models (Németh and Pukánszky 2021).

The Humboldtian University might be viewed as a complex compromise between government interests and scientific inquiry. After all, the state funds the higher education institutions and selects the selection of the university professors, with the selection being based on (at least theoretically) scientific accomplishments (e.g., habilitation). It's also important to note that if self-governance in higher education institutions was the norm, the autonomy of universities was not ‘limitless’ since it was subject to various legal and unwritten regulations (Garai and Németh 2018).

In the process of popularization of HE, the professional essence is reforming the role of teaching and keeping a distance from what the Humboldt model suggests. This new academic environment poses a challenge to teachers who have been using the old *Bildung* methods.

At present, having this historical perspective that transcends the determinants of modern knowledge production methods makes us understand that modern universities must adapt to modern culture and knowledge production, be less rational and more comprehensive, and humane. Simultaneously, this brings an academic dilemma between manual labor and scientific training in the context of globalization.

In the period of neo-autocratic, the Austrian Empire, elements of the Humboldt model were adopted. To be precise, during the first period of repression after the 1848 revolution, the neo-autocratic government carried out some reorganization to restructure the Hungarian higher education system. As a result of these reforms, the framework influenced by the German model was presented, the academic study was extended to 3 years, and the philosophy department became independent. An important aspect was that professors could arrange courses based on their research methodology for their own classes. However, it posed different challenges in the courses of philosophy departments because teacher training has always required an organized training structure (Garai 2019).

For as long as this arrangement remained in place, universities were managed by the government directly. After the Austro-Hungarian Compromise of 1867, the single management system was established and remained in place for more than a century. The *Ratio Educationis* remained in effect until the outbreak of World War I but solely applied to the Royal Hungarian University (today Eötvös Lorand University). How-

ever, these legislative rules provided the only basis for newly established institutions, which were granted their own Act. Ministerial decrees outlined the specifics of how each institution should be managed, including how classes and how exams should be organized and administered (Rónay 2019b).

From this historical perspective, the Hungarian higher education system was obviously also inspired by other models such as French and in the later decades as USSR. More significant is to understand the inter-relationships between the development of the nation-state and political changes, educational reforms, and the transformations in the higher education system. In this situation, certain components of this university model were executed and balanced to particularities of the Hungarian society and economy (Németh and Garai 2018). The last decades of the century brought the development of the HEI system and the operation of the institutions. However, although in the common remembrance Humboldt model lives like the so-called golden era of institutional autonomy indeed, in accordance with the original idea of Humboldt, the universities were hardly autonomous (Rónay 2019b). However, the academic freedom was large ensuring fairly great moving space in the content and methods of teaching and research for the individual members of academia. This didn't change until World War II. Right before and during World War II, both autonomy and academic freedom were even more restricted.

The government was unable to implement its various initiatives due to university resistance because the universities, the rectors, and the senate still enjoyed such quite esteem before World War II's outbreak. A unified structure was established during the communist era by partially imitating the Soviet Union. The new structure allowed for a method of operation that ensured the Party's desire could be realized without obstacles (Rónay 2019b).

While Hungary, as one of the so-called Soviet bloc countries, had to face the communist dictatorship and its consequences in terms of higher education (i.e., the lack of autonomy and academic freedom), universities in the Western World had explored new dimensions of economic and social development. The sciences kept moving into previously uncharted territory, and there were brand-new academic fields to investigate. These changes prompted requests for new kinds of institutions to adapt to the new circumstances in the Western world. Outside forces also played a part. The relationship between governments, institutions, and citizens has changed significantly due to the decline in public trust in government and public institutions. Citizens are now far more mobile than they formerly were, thanks to globalization

on the one hand and the European (political) Union on the other. Previously uncommon, mobility has become a significant policy concern (in Europe, at least), the growing significance of universities as knowledge producers in the modern economy.

After these changes, higher education is becoming more globalized, which has led to the entry of new players into the market, most notably the US Ivy League universities, which have taken the position of renowned national universities as the benchmark for success. Higher education systems that were formerly safe behind the borders of the nation-state are now exposed directly to new, strong, and quickly mutating factors (Scott and Pasqualoni 2016).

Considering the global HE system, it is important to recognize some of the forces of what is known as "isomorphism" in neo-institutionalist literature: the propensity for organizations and institutions to adopt the role model of the most influential actor in their sector (Garcia 2020; Backhaus 2015; Frambach 2015).

New Public Management (NPM) has been the preferred tool for governments looking to tackle these problems with their domestic higher education systems, once more in keeping with global trends. In the case of Germany, the *Länder* have implemented, albeit slowly, measures that are closely associated with the NPM – or, if you prefer, neoliberal – framework: transferring authority from the federal states to the academic institutions; creating external boards of governors (selected from local stakeholders, including the business community); enacting new reporting processes and formula-based financial support and performance-based state grant distribution; and instituting tuition fees (although modest by US and UK requirements) (Backhaus 2015; Scott and Pasqualoni 2016).

As a result, this tradition's approach contradicts the neoliberal movement that has engulfed the world in the past few decades.

Since Anglo-American (AA) organizations now enter the international landscape despite lacking the "scholarly cachet" of Humboldtian institutions, academic institutions trying to emulate the Humboldt model are faced with a number of paradoxes. The main one is central control by neoliberal governments. Another is the status of being highly competitive with AA institutions, and the problems of the system is currently facing in light of higher education being a global system under, for the time being, AA predominance.

Returning to the historical context, the post-socialist nations had to adjust to the new world without organic development following the fall of the Soviet Union and the communist bloc.

DE-HUMBOLDTIZATION

The initial years of communist governments represented a kind of reform called “de-Humboldtization”. It was the initiative for the second stage. In this stage, the reform of higher education in Hungary can be regarded as being influenced by communism and concentrated on the HE institutions of the USSR. The de-Humboldtization meant a total elimination of self-governance where the Party organizations appointed the rectors and deans and served as the true decision-making centers.

During and following World War II, the situation dramatically changed. During the communist period, a consistent structure was developed in part by following the Soviet Union’s lead. Such a style of operating was made feasible by the new structure, which ensured that the Party’s will was realized without any obstacles. There was no freedom, even if the regulations were relaxed in the late 1960s and early 1970s.

From 1945 until 1990, the USSR model was instituted in the Hungarian HE, which created a break between the unity of teaching and research preconized by the past model – the German academic model. Mainly, this model focused on technical and vocational training in which vocational institutions were established, and the function of HE institutions was to offer courses only on specific subjects under the control of the economy and the state (Rozsnyai 2003). The year 1945 is viewed as nil or zero in European history. Another period started under Stalin’s administration, with changes in the economy, schooling, and society, because World War II ended.

All Hungarian Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) were restructured in accordance with communist demands following World War II while such individual institutions were established like the University of Economics in 1948, the Technical University of Miskolc in 1949, and the University of Transport in 1951 (Vasilache, Temesi, and Dima 2012) to topics which embodied the ideal of the Soviet-type industrialization of Hungary.

Developments in Hungarian higher education displayed a few differences among Eastern-Central European nations. The most noteworthy component of the Hungarian case was its drawn-out speed of the change on agenda. Since the popularity-based period after the conflict went on until 1949, the Sovietisation of the higher education and the Academy of Sciences had started and sped up after the socialists prevailed in their work to measure the force. New regulations were enacted that impacted the governance of universities and offered equal openness for all people to access higher education. As a result of this implementation, the percentage

of admitted students was more than double the number of students in the previous years.

The Ministerial Council’s directive 260/1949 divided the training of humanities and natural sciences into two faculties at all institutions. It also disbanded teacher training institutions that organized secondary teacher candidates’ theoretical training. Practicing secondary schools, where secondary teacher candidates might spend their one-year training after completing the theoretical part of their degrees, were likewise abolished. Faculty members were given responsibility for organizing scientific and teacher training for all pupils (Garai and Németh 2017).

Following the release of this directive, modifications were implemented. Every half-year, the Secretariat of the Hungarian Workers’ Party (HWP) proclaimed disciplinary adjustments in science education in Hungary during the Stalinist control over universities and the Scientific Academy. The Party only informed the public about certain significant improvements in the field of higher education. Communist leaders emphasized that more students were permitted to attend academies and universities than previously, and that financial assistance for these institutions was boosted in ways that had not been anticipated. On the level of higher education policy, the party reformed the scientific sector as the Ministry of Religion and Public Education’s controlling and approving function altered dramatically. Parallel to its critique of each Ministry department, the party removed a few regions from it and established new institutes to approve these split sections (Garai and Németh 2018).

The characteristics of the Soviet-style university model grew even more prominent by curtailing the autonomy of senior academics at universities and in the Scientific Academy. The *no-menklatura* system is an institutionalized version of this behavior. Members of the *nomenklatura* were people who had been appointed to positions of authority by the Party at various levels. Instead of investigating natural and social phenomena using traditional and highly controlled scientific procedures, the socialist-communist scholarly elite became an ideology-producing elite. The most significant role they had was to serve the increasing political field’s interests (Garai and Németh 2017; Rónay 2019b).

Although the strength of the state party’s influence was not evenly strong, easing has always reduced direct party control only to a lesser extent, and it has often been followed by newer tightening. Only in 1985, the first reform legislation of education was that, which signified that major changes were imminent. In spite of keeping the communist party’s representation in the

HEIs, it adopted new policies that gave the institutions greater room and increased their freedom.

NEO-HUMBOLDTIAN TYPE

After the emergence of political and market reforms in 1989, the modernization of education and higher education system began to encounter difficulties and challenges after the collapse of the USSR, which has a history related to the transition towards democracy, decentralization, and capitalist economy. This “social transformation” empowered reforms in educational development in accordance with these new democratic ideals.

Later, the new Humboldt type (1993-2012) can be said to be the restoration of HE autonomy under the transition from socialism to democracy and market capitalism. However, in this era, the state was constantly trying to reform university management, involving all autonomy issues.

In the same vein, Halász (2003, 56) advocates «in Hungary has been a relatively strong commitment to modernization, as exemplified by the fact that when the conservatives came to power in the late 1990s, they retained most elements of the education modernization policies initiated by the liberals». When reforms in the republic and the constitution focused on academic freedom and autonomy, the situation in Hungary changed. The establishment of a parliament, democratic elections, and the example of this new commitment, was the enactment of a new law, which marked the first legal document to mention the self-governance of higher education institutions in Hungary (Rónay 2019a).

This document was used to define the new higher education framework. The 1993 Higher Education Law LXXX launched a new vision, and universities focused on mobile participation between professors and students, focusing on the relationship between research and teaching. It considered returning to the German academic model, which had also developed scientific and academic principles as the basis of this teaching method. Academic liberty and self-governance are also the cornerstones of the Humboldt model, which implies that the disciplines, teaching, and research seek unconditional practice. It became essential for the students to engage in research work for 15 hours a week, which gave direction on research in science and its applications in secondary education (Östling 2018). As Halász (2003) stated, the guidelines of the Hungarian higher education system began to return to the Humboldt-style university model to “catch up” with Western Europe.

The other hand is that the Humboldt model was already outworn these times. It is understandable because of the lack of democracy during the communist era. On the other hand, it is necessary to remember the fact that the picture of Hungarian Humboldt model universities was false, it ensured less freedom and autonomy as it lives in common remembrance.

In those times, the modern HE systems realized the importance of effective governance, while in Hungary, academic rectors without management competencies tried to avoid bankruptcy. Therefore, the government tried to implement effective management models into the Hungarian reality. As it is typical in the history of Hungarian sectoral reforms, the implementation was distorted, and in the government’s perception, effectiveness mingled with less autonomy and more control.

The Hungarian Parliament substantially reworked the Act in 1996. The most significant of the new laws was the legislative standard that outlined the obligations of the rector. This resulted in a greater degree of government control, although not to a substantial degree. As a result of the enhanced definition of management responsibility, however, higher education was not given much additional money.

Both parties were unsatisfied, there was no acknowledgment of what happened by the government. As a result, the institutions and their heads were faced with a larger degree of accountability in many circumstances. Regulations were unaltered for over a decade despite the absence of dramatic effects. However, fewer changes were made throughout that time period.

In 2005, the situation of the HE framework in Hungary changed with the ‘modernization agenda’. After one year, the new law introduced the institutional structure for the implementation of undergraduate and graduate disciplines to be followed in higher education institutions at the EU community level (see the so-called Bologna system).

In 2005, the Higher Education Act was introduced bringing new legal institutions. Initially, the Bologna Process was introduced. This sparked a firestorm of debate and fierce opposition. However, the failure of the Bologna process has had a substantial influence on academics’ evaluations of it. Secondly, the government introduced the governing body to overhaul university management. The original goal was to push state HEIs further away from the state, creating a new board. However, the final result became a body, which seemed to be the extended arm of the government. It has had a significant impact on the work of universities since it was made up of both internal and external (and partly by the ministry delegated) members. As a result of this gov-

ernance body's capabilities, many university heads and members of parliament (the present governing party) believe that the institutions are no longer autonomous. This legal institution was abolished by the Constitutional Court after the President of the Republic brought the subject to it. A new council, the Financial Council, was established by the government as a replacement for the old one. Prior approval is granted to the Financial Council, although its primary responsibility is as an advisor (Rónay 2019b). Although the Financial Council had less power than the previous body, the resistance of the academia was strengthened.

There is no doubt that many factors of these reforms have led to the slow collapse of the degree of autonomy. Ten years ago, the fourth period began. The first step was the introduction of the state control model, and then the pseudo-private model emerged.

THE STATE-CONTROLLED MODEL AND THE PSEUDO-PRIVATE MODEL

In Hungary, things have changed radically. In 2011, the passage of the National Higher Education Law played down the reforms in the context of higher education in Hungary. Kováts, (2015, 31) explained this angle in his research: «The autonomy of institutions has been narrowed down [...] In the area of education and research, admission quotas for each institution and educational areas were centrally set and the number of state-funded places of the most popular 16 programs has been drastically cut». On the contrary, Rónay (2018, 179) argues that «In this instance, the universities do not have safeguards against a potential delimitation of organizational autonomy. As we will see, the governing majority embraced the opportunity to violate their freedom». We can conclude that there is a gap between the past legislative discourse principles and the actual situation in the context of higher education, which shows the absence of institutional freedom to manage their program implementation and resources, which is reflected in the limited liberty of teachers due to strict state control in their teaching methods.

The 2011 state Act has enacted legislation to strengthen the government's leadership role while limiting the organizations' autonomy. In addition to the ongoing decline in financing and the state's growing involvement, university officials were becoming more unable to successfully manage their organizations. As a result, the universities' accomplishments have significantly degraded. In terms of education, research, and the economy, this is accurate. It didn't solve the problems at

hand; instead, it strengthened government involvement while limiting university autonomy. As a result, the legal institutions listed below were established:

After the Constitutional Court overturned the governing board's legal institution, which so never took effect, the new government (which was one of the engines of the resistance against the governing board) amended the constitution (the Fundamental Law of Hungary) and ensured the strong state control's possibility.

Taking the opportunity, the state introduced the chancellor system, which established a dual management structure for public higher education institutions, which was enacted in the summer of 2014. By seeking to separate the concepts and processes of operation and management, the former became the responsibility and competence of the rector, while the latter became the responsibility and competence of the chancellor, with all the drawbacks of dual management. Until 2019, there was no requirement for the university to be involved in the nomination of the chancellor (although the rector currently participates in the committee, its content is not regulated and thus has no guarantee). Despite the fact that the chancellor is an employee of the university, the minister has the authority to order her/him. Their authority extends to the administrative side of management (including educational administration). And, because he/she has the right to approve acts with economic consequences, such as teaching and research activities, he/she can limit the autonomy. Even while the institutions' senates have recovered the authority to elect the rector, this is scarcely an adequate counterweight to the chancellor of the university (Berács et al. 2017).

The next point is the Consistory, which in 2015 brought further changes for public institutions, with negative consequences for autonomy. The establishment of the legal institute of the Consistory was in line with the new governmental strategy documents on higher education. It was explicitly based on the idea that although there is a need for a senate, which is self-governing and essentially represents the internal "balance of power" of the institution, it needs to separate the strategic academic and economic decisions from each other. And it was also needed to ensure the governance of functions that do not fall within the scope of autonomy, and the role of the maintainer in intervening in strategic-economic matters, for which the chancellor's right of consent is not effective enough. The Consistory works in addition to the rector and the chancellor, who is controlled by the government with three ministerial delegates, whose selection is based on criteria that are not transparent and whose legal status is unclear. However, this body now has a right of consent not only for eco-

conomic decisions but also for the adoption of the institutional development plan and, as part of this, the research and development innovation strategy (Berács *et al.* 2017; Rónay 2019b).

It is clear that Hungarian higher education has faced major challenges for a long time, to which the government has responded in largely ineffective ways that have resulted in a constant flux of the institutional and legal environment. After 2010, as the government strengthened its attempts to curtail universities' autonomy, the long-term trend shifted dramatically. From 2012 to 2013, one notable policy element was that the legislator always kept within the framework of autonomy, although attempting to loosen it on occasion. However, the Fourth Amendment to Hungary's Fundamental Law, as well as Act no. CCIV on National Higher Education, which has been revised multiple times, has begun a new chapter, drastically reducing and eventually eliminating higher education institutions' autonomy. The chancery and the Consistory have altered higher education institutions that operate within the scope of current legislation (Rónay 2019a).

The government explained that autonomy guaranteeing freedom of research and education can only emerge within a framework of professional public funds and institutional management, without which – as evidenced by the previous nearly quarter-negative century's experiences stemming from its pro-autonomy approach – grave anomalies and inefficiency could be addressed by a chancellor acting as a professional manager. Despite the fact that newer solutions lowered autonomy, the universities' economic effectiveness did not improve, and many institutions continued to face financial difficulties. And the declining student numbers (partly due to demographic reasons and partly to inequalities in public education) exacerbated the situation, especially for smaller rural institutions.

The actual last step towards the elimination of academic freedom is the so-called model changing, which is still ongoing. In 2019, the government announced that one of the HEIs would try a new maintenance and governance model. After the first pioneer institution, it was called the Corvinus model. Since Corvinus University, Budapest was a reputable and recognized university of economics, it seemed logical to try how this worked under pure market circumstances. The government promised this would be a pilot project, and according to its experiences, the model could be revised, and after fine-tuning, it would be reachable for other HEIs.

Nevertheless, the new model was introduced at the university without transparent debate, the senate's decision, and especially its consent. The point of the

new model is that the state transfers the maintainer's rights to a foundation, which is governed by the board of trustees. This foundation got shareholdings in the form of a parcel of shares in large state-owned enterprises. Whether privatization was indeed the intention became increasingly questionable as warning signs multiplied. First, most members of the board of trustees were appointed by the people close to the government party. Second, after the announcement of the Corvinus model, the next HEI was mentioned, which followed the pioneer. However, that university did not get parcels of shares, and it was obvious that it needed to be financed by the government. Third, the HEI Act's amendment made it possible for the foundation's board of trustees to take crucial right away from the university senate, like the right of rector's election, the right of appointment the departments and institutions heads, the right of the inside regulation, including the regulation of academic matters. «With this amendment, that type of university lost its autonomy and the AF (academic freedom – the authors)» (Rónay and Niemczyk 2021, 14). Last but not least, after a year, almost all state universities followed these two. Finally, only six state HEIs remained the almost twenty chose the new model. These processes were not public, but the news reported on some of them, so people could be informed that these universities hardly had the option to refuse the government's offer, which seemed rather a requirement. Although the government asserted that with the new model, maintaining HEIs went farther from the state, which meant greater autonomy, it seems not right.

On the one hand, these HEIs depend on state financing, even though an Act and a contract warrant it because the government can modify the parameters of the latter one. On the other hand, the fact that the foundations boards of trustees can eliminate the rights of the senate means that the academic community lost the rest of the self-governance and self-regulation. These tendencies lead to a severe – sometimes existential – uncertainty. Most boards of trustees are full of people who belong to the government (there are active ministers and secretaries of state among them) or the government party's interest. With the help of the board of trustees and financial matters, the government can influence the entire academic activity. Therefore, lecturers and researchers consider what they want to teach, research and publish. Although there is hardly evidence of the direct intervention to academic freedom, the possibility of it is enough for self-censorship (Ziegler 2019; Rónay and Niemczyk 2020).

CONCLUSIONS

The focus of this work was to study the evolution of higher education in Hungary from the historical point of view in terms of the models used and designed in light of the current socio-political changes.

These last two models are connected with serious declining institutional self-governance and academic liberties freedom of higher education in Hungary and indicate that the new law controls the management the finance of universities. The final stage clarifies part of the difficulties and challenges of the analyzed phenomenon. Given that all the reforms in the past two decades have been explained by current tendencies in HE management theory, this studies demonstrate efforts based on policy translation theory.

The HE system in Hungary is controlled and monitored by the government. This direct state authority shows a limited institutional self-governance of universities to manage academic disciplines and resources and also restricts liberty freedom in the activities of professors, students, and researchers.

Centralized authority reduces the quality affirmation and autonomy, because it is controlled by a strong state bureaucracy that influences and impact the responsibilities of university management leaders (for example, university presidents or rectors, etc.).

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