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TRACK: Comparative analysis of public sector reforms

**Public Sector Modernization Trends of the Member States of European Union.
Trajectories of reforms in Italy and Romania**

Meneguzzo M., Fiorani G., Mititelu C., Matei L., Matei A., Cipolletta G.

ABSTRACT

Research on administrative reform in Europe has demonstrated a significant variation among countries in how they choose reform strategy. We know very little about what explains the variation with regard to the extent with which the countries conduct the reforms and how they effectively influenced modernization process. Since 1980s, reactions of countries have been to maintain, modernise, marketise or minimise their public sector (Pollitt, Bouckaert 2004).

The paper investigates the markedly features of reform trends, similarities and differences in design and implementation, taking into consideration the effects of Europeanization and the multi-level governance of Public Management reforms; identifies conditions for lasting success of local governments reforms and the reasons for lack of success of different trends of modernisation and proposes a new perspective on the trajectories of modernization in public sector, through a comparative analyses between one of the founder member of EU (Italy) and a new EU member country (Romania).

Therefore, the paper will :- undertake an in-depth evaluation of public management modernization trends in both countries explaining the significant variation in the objectives and 'trajectories' of reforms on the basis of historical-institutional context dependency variable, contents and scope of reforms;-perform an analysis of experiences of implementing policies and projects of modernization through programmers and common initiatives mostly carried out by the central government. The rewarding initiative "100 Projects" both in Romania and Italy sets an example of cooperation regarding the implementation of activities within the scope of the national programs for modernization and innovation of the public sector.

KEY WORDS: Modernization, public administration reforms, Italy, Romania

1. The method of focused comparison : background and research questions

Today one may find NPM reforms worldwide—although in very different shapes, degrees, and depth. However, despite the large scholarly interest in NPM, existing theories fall short in explaining cross-country variations. Roughly, general explanations of the adoption of NPM reforms search for causes of cross-country variations in the sphere of public administrative tradition. Basic literature shows that the models of reforms are not sufficiently developed and analyzed to provide a framework for evaluating country experiences. There is evidences of relevant implementation gaps for some levels as well as areas of reform, which cannot be ascribed to the NPM .

The literature on the reforms trends at international level shows that nearly all cross-national comparisons of public management reforms focus on countries with similar backgrounds, such as industrialized democracies with mature welfare states or from the same regional area. However, most of this literature concentrates on the industrialized world. This homogeneity leaves also a potentially important element of historical-institutional context in the dark. Along with our research, we hope to contribute to the effort to redress this deficiency. Four public administration traditions can be identified in Europe (Kickert, 1997:28; Pollitt and Bouckaert, 2000; Peters 2000) the Germanic countries that are characterized by a basically Weberian bureaucracy model, an administrative practice marked by an overriding legalistic philosophy (Rechtsstaat); the Anglo-Saxon as the United Kingdom, the United States, and Anglo American administrative systems- antithesis of the Germanic tradition and the state as such doesn't not exist as a legal entity; the Southern Europe like France, Italy, Portugal, Spain and Belgium, referred to as Napoleonic countries (Ongaro, 2009), legalistic states; on the other hand, the Nordic countries(Kickert , which are unitary states with a public administration citizens 'oriented and evolved from a legalistic to a pluralistic/consensual government style; and transition countries analysis that are preferring the terminology of NWS model when are talking about public administration trends of reforms (Cepiku and Mititelu, 2010).

As a result of an overview on the cross-countries comparisons analyses, we encounter lack of comparative analysis at the EU level, particularly between a founder EU and a New EU member country in terms of modernization trends. In such terms, to a certain degree, we are proposing a new trajectory of comparison that try to complete the existing gap at the level of cross national analysis in terms of modernization trends, with respect to their (Romania and Italy) distinct historical development, antecedent social circumstances, and reform coalitions available at the time the reforms implemented (Brandsen and Kim, 2010:369).

Table 1.1. Traditional Public Administrations in Europe

Public Administration tradition	Areas of development	Elaboration on cross countries analysis conclusions
	Ireland, Malta, UK	NPM (success)
Anglo-Saxon tradition		
Continental European tradition	Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Luxembourg, Netherlands	Weberianism (high impact)+NPM (high impact)
Mediterranean/South European	Cyprus, Greece, <i>Italy</i> , Portugal, Spain	Weberianism + NPM (high impact); some implications towards NWS
Scandinavian tradition	Denmark, Finland, Sweden	NPM (success)
Transition countries	Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, <i>Romania</i> , Slovakia, Slovenia	Weberianism (high impact)+ NPM (less impact)= New Weberian State

The questions addressing the topic are:

1. Why and what choices were considered by the administrative elite when planning the reform?
2. Can we observe a convergence among public administration and civil service systems across the world, or do national trajectories and administrative culture still prevail?
3. What roles might be played by some international organizations such as the EU in promoting 'best practice' for domestic reform process in public administration?

The research analyzes a range of papers, which sample the emerging themes in the field of trajectories of reforms in European Union countries. It is not exhaustive – in one issue, we could not hope to cover all the key elements in this fast-changing field. From conceptual point of view, we work with the concept of reform as the main indicator of public administration development. We consider the development failures as implicitly the results of inappropriate policy choices or the poor institutions. Our vision on 'administrative reform' is appropriate to the idea of 'induce, permanent improvement in public administration and deliberate planned change to public bureaucracy' (Turner and Hulme, 1997).

From the long range of conceptual models of public administration paradigms, we focus our attention on the last two decades conclusive on the 'NPM' paradigm' that slowly gives way, at least in the rhetoric, to the new governance concerns in the public domain. The attention of our research will be focusing on PA Reforms only in late '90s till present. Main attention will be given to structural adjustment and fiscal stabilization (administrative efficiency and downsizing). Our units of analysis are the central public administration, ministries and local administrative units. In the same order of ideas, our main studied stakeholders are DPA, MoF, International Institutions, etc.

The present study employs a "focused comparison" approach to case-study research. This method basically entails asking the same questions across a substantial number of cases in order to discern similarities among them that suggest possible generalizations. Findings generated in this way do not enjoy the level of formal verification that may be achieved via quantitative analyses of very large numbers of cases. However, the method

of focused comparison offers significant advantages, chiefly by facilitating more detailed study of the context-dependent nature of certain relationships among variables. In particular, it permits a greater degree of “process-tracing” – *i.e.* tracing the links between possible causes and observed outcomes in order to assess whether the causal relationships implied by a hypothesis are evident in the sequence of events as they unfold. Because it examines specific cases in depth, rather than simply comparing data across cases, a focused case-study approach is better able to explore the policy process, to take account of institutional and political complexities and to explore more complex causal relationships, such as path dependence or the issues that arise when, for example, a given factor may favor adoption of a form but hinder its implementation.

The two-step model of reform evaluation will examine, on the one hand the implementation of NPM related reform measures with regard to organizational, procedural, and instrumental changes taking into account the scope, contents and context of the reforms in our case study. We expect that the top down approach on the comparative analysis will help us in direct comparison between the two countries to take evidences on the convergences and divergences in the trajectories of reforms. On the other hand, the cross country analysis comparison of public management reforms can be a source of inspiration; it is crucial to keep in mind that similar reforms can have different meanings depending on the national context and thus can result in different policies, programmes, and institutions. For practitioners in public management and administration, this implies that, before importing ‘good’ practices from elsewhere, it is imperative to assess how those practices were part of broader historical developments in the country of origin and to what extent the conditions within the country of destination are different. The most important trend for the future of the public administration is the trend towards global learning process among practitioners and experts. We expect to develop analysis on the learning transfer of ‘best practices’ and main drivers of reforms coming from the international institutions (UE, World Bank, OECD) in both countries as well as analysis on the international projects jointly by Romania and Italy.

Our study is focusing mainly on qualitative methods. Collected data is extensively based on analysis of documentation, observation and secondary analysis. We exploited the available literature written in the past decade on NPM reform matters, in particular current research reports, survey results, and other empirical studies. The key sources for the case study are books, articles, reviews, international journals, online databases.

We develop direct interviews to experts and internal administrators involved in the process of PA transition towards modernization. The questionnaires, both with open and closed questions, focus on the following topics: public administration modernization; decentralizing/ centralizing/ strengthening accountability.

Undoubtedly, the specificity of the case studies as context and topic sensitive does not allow for comprehensive generalizations, though providing useful insights. In particular, the experience of these two countries could be compared with the different theoretical models. Therefore, the research aims to contribute in showing how interpretations of apparently similar reforms can differ substantially between countries. Even when reforms have the same formal appearance, they may have different significance to the political-administrative system and to the society in which they are implanted. This does not necessarily invalidate an analysis in terms of convergence and divergence, but it does point to the significance of contextualizing the analysis.

2. Public Administration modernization in EU: comparative trajectories between West and East

2.1 Overview on the competing theoretical models of reform trajectories

A considerable literature has grown up concerning general trends and trajectories of reforms, regarding the transition from bureaucratic to post-bureaucratic structures and processes. Recently we discuss mainly on understanding concepts like Weberianism and New Weberianism, the NPM and the Public Governance.

Despite the apparently global nature of public management reforms, the ways in which they have been translated into specific policies and programmes have been far from uniform. In some countries, reforms stopped merely at the level of political rhetoric. In others, they reshaped public administration structures, policy-making processes, and administrative practices. Comparative research in public management has progressed far over the last decade, but it has only begun to uncover the vast variety of practices within its scope of vision. It is by now widely acknowledged that such reforms are not converging towards a single model, as suggested in certain earlier publications on the topic (e.g. Osborne and Gaebler, 1992). Rather, different elements are selectively introduced and implemented by different countries, to the point where it has even been questioned whether there really exists a coherent paradigm (Pollitt and Bouckaert, 2004). An overview on the main characteristics on the theoretical models will help us to understand better these contexts.

The literature on Weberian administration reveals some specific characteristics: Reaffirmation of the state as the main facilitator of solutions; reaffirmation of the role of representative democracy (central, regional, and local) as the legitimating elements within the state apparatus; Reaffirmation of the role of administrative law and preservation of the idea of public service (Pollitt and Bouckaert 2004). By emphasizing legality, standardization, and hierarchical command and control systems, Weberianism devised a model of PA which works reasonably well in the social and political context of institutional buildings, democratization and increasing public services (Pierre & Rothstein, 2008: 1-17). The bureaucratic public administration became a self-referred organizational model. The weberian bureaucratic model was a fundamental instrument for advocating and guaranteeing the functioning of the first two modern waves of democracy, in 1870 and in the wake of World War II. Since the late seventies, however, this model no longer responded to the new demands for democratizing the civil service, particularly those that emerged at local level. At the time, the public administration was guided by presumably universal rules and regulations, rather than by citizen expectations. The self-referred bureaucratic structure became more rigid and it lost the capacity to accompany the profound environmental changes observed since the onset of the Third Industrial Revolution.

From the human resource point of view, efficiency, democratization of the civil service and rendering the organization flexible are basic ingredients for modernization of the public sector, but they were not taken into consideration by the organizational paradigm of the bureaucratic public administration. Nevertheless, it should be noted that the criticism in this case focuses on the bureaucratic organizational model and not on the idea of professionalization of civil servants, which is a central notion of weberian bureaucratic model. One of the main

elements of Managerial Reform is the professionalization of the bureaucracy that holds positions in the nucleus of State central activities; this assumes a merit-based system such as is advocated by the Weberian model.

The NPM reform movement has in fact far less coherence in theory and practice than in its early days when it was more geographically concentrated and intellectually focused (Kettl, 2006). Several authors consider it a market-related model of administrative reform and have identified it with the adoption of an influential set of management techniques drawn from the private sector, a greater service and client orientation and the introduction of market mechanisms and competition in PA (Pollitt and Bouckaert, 2004; Lapsley, 2009). Most of the definitions - either from academics or from practitioners - are based on a list of the several NPM tools without paying adequate attention to the underlying philosophy or to the interdependency between them. The OECD called this approach an “instrument fixation” and called for a systemic approach to public management reforms (Matheson and Kwon, 2003: 13).

The (mostly European) literature on governance and the NPM describe two models of public service that reflect a ‘reinvented’ form of government which is better managed, and which takes its objectives not from democratic theory but from market economics (Stoker, 1998). While some use the terms interchangeably (for example, Hood, 1991), most of the research makes distinctions between the two. Essentially, governance is a political theory while NPM is an organizational theory (Peters and Pierre, 1998). As Stoker describes it, Governance refers to the development of governing styles in which boundaries between and within public and private sectors has become blurred. Governance for (some) is about the potential for contracting, franchising and new forms of regulation. In short, it is about what (some) refer to as the NPM. However, governance is more than a new set of managerial tools. It is also about more than achieving greater efficiency in the production of public services. Peters and Pierre agree, saying that governance is about process, while NPM is about outcomes. Governance is ultimately concerned with creating the conditions for ordered rule and collective action (Stoker, 1998; Peters and Pierre, 1998; Milward and Provan, 2000). As Stoker notes, the outputs of governance are not different from those of government; it is instead a matter of a difference in processes (Stoker, 1998: 17-18, 232). Governance refers to the development of governing styles in which boundaries between and within public and private sectors has become blurred.

Some authors consider public governance as a new model that enables enrichment instead of an abandonment of the NPM paradigm (Cepiku, 2005; Osborne, 2006). These authors view the governance movement as a response to a perceived absence of a sufficient attention given to the following five areas in the drive to devise and implement NPM over the past several decades (Meneguzzo, Cepiku, 2008:108-110). This includes: “1) An improved understanding of linkages between politics and administration; 2) the need for improved analysis of stakeholder positioning and preferences in formulating public policy and management execution strategy; 3) analysis to better define network relationships among stakeholders internal and external to government; 4) the necessity for addressing potential and real abridgements of public participation rights and basic principles of democracy; 5) finding remedies to address the absence of government responsiveness to citizens in policy formation and execution” (Jones et al, 2004: Xi).

On the other hand, Pollitt has ‘unpacked’ public management reforms with respect to how they are implemented, and has designed a useful typology where convergence can be applied to outcomes,

implementation of similar measures, implementation of similar-sounding measures, and finally mere rhetoric (Pollitt, 2001). Convergence can be seen to the greatest extent in public management reform rhetoric, primarily because it is espoused by major international funders such as the World Bank. However, the rhetoric does not always translate into policies and even less into practices. Furthermore, our knowledge of the actual effects of such practices remains underdeveloped.

Many of the shared problems definitions were also generated by sclerotic traditional and weberian bureaucracies. Upgrading a European Weberian model with elements of performance and participation could result in a Neo-Weberian Model. (Pollitt and Bouckaert 2004; Pollitt et al 2009). On such basis, currently most discussed 'post-NPM' model is the so-called Neo-Weberian State (NWS), a fortuous metaphor describing a model that co-opts the positive elements of NPM, but on a Weberian foundation (Pollitt and Bouckaert, 2004: 96-102). The concept of the NWS has been used in the literatures of political science, sociology, and PA since at least 1970 (Brown, 1978: 367). Following Lynn assumptions, the NWS is state-centered (arguably, by definition). Although the neo-elements refer to citizens needs, an external orientation, and consultation, these seem to be the accomplishments of administrative elites and governments (Lynn, 2008: 6).

According to Pollitt and Bouckaert, "there are continuing broad differences between different groups of countries" (2004:102) as far as governance is concerned. Their groups are the "maintainers", the "modernizers", and the "marketizers". But, as underlined, there are really only two groups of great interest in the context of reform: the core, Anglo-American NPM marketizers and the continental European modernizers. The reform model of this latter group is what Pollitt and Bouckaert classify as the NWS (Lynn, 2008:1). This Neo-Weberian perspective appears to yield the following principles (Pollitt and Bouckaert, 2004: 99–100): 1) Centrality of the State 2) Reform and Enforcement of Administrative Law; 3) Preservation of Public Service; 4) Representative Democracy; 5) External Orientation toward Citizens; 6) Supplemental Public Consultation and Direct Citizen Involvement; 7) Results Orientation; 8) Management Professionalism. (Pollitt and Bouckaert, 2004: 99–100; Drechsler 2005: 6). The Neo Weberian State is characterized by the instrumental rationality of Weberian bureaucracy, to achieve economic and financial gains through 'downsizing', tax-reduction programs and privatization programs designed to achieve new efficiencies (Dunn & Miller, 2007: 355).

However, the expectations are that this "Neo-Weberian" administration would connect the advantages of bureaucratic model to the assets of NPM have hitherto not yet come true. Quite frequently, the "old" methods of steering (legal rules and hierarchy) are being weakened before the "new" managerial ones function (economic incentives and decentralized management). Instead of a well-performing "neo- Weberian" model proclaimed by some scholars local governments are now, in the post-NPM phase, witnessing a re-emergence of the bureaucratic Weberian administration. According to Lægveid (2008), the NPM can only work when there is a strong Weberian ethos and trust relations.

Table 2.1. Characteristics of Weberianism, NPM, Neo-Weberianism & Public Governance

Weberian characteristics	NPM characteristics	Neo-Weberian characteristics	Public Governance characteristics
Dominance of rule of law, focus on rules and policy systems	Inward focus on (private sector) management techniques	External orientation towards citizens needs	Outwards focus and a systematic approach
Central role for the bureaucracy in the policy making and implementation	Input and output control	Central role of professional managers	Process and outcome control
Unitary state	Fragmented state	Unitary state & collaboration	Plural and pluralist state (networks)
Public service ethos	Competition and market place	Public service ethos	Neocorporatist
Representative democracy as the legitimating element	Client empowerment through redress and market mechanisms	Supplementation of democracy with consultation and participation	Participative decision making
Political-administration split within public organizations	Political-administration split within and between (agencification) organizations	Political-administration separation and emphasis on professionalization of the latter	Collaborative relations between politicians and managers

(Source Cepiku, Mititelu, 2010)

2.2 Main drivers and paths of the public administration modernization

The analysis on different surveys (Demmke; et al, 2006:18) shows that public modernization in Europe is strongly driven by economic and budgetary pressures. Expenditures limits such as the Maastricht criteria seems to be of higher relevance for public administration modernization. Also current reforms seems to be strongly driven by technological developments. This is also reflected in the central role of e-government on the current modernization agenda in all EU public administration. EU legislation and integration also seem to be relevant-although not a very strong-driver for reform.

The survey indicate that public administration modernization is a strongly top-down driven agenda with national parliament and legislation as key factor driving the modernization agenda. Public administration top executives and especially employees as well as staff representatives and unions play a less important role especially regarding setting the agenda and deciding the direction (with regard to implementation their role significantly increases as was noted in several answers). The media, private sector enterprises and lobbyists as well as other interest groups and supranational organizations do not seem to play a significant role in public administration modernization in Europe. The different public administration traditions seem to vary considerably regarding their assessment of the relevance of different reform drivers.

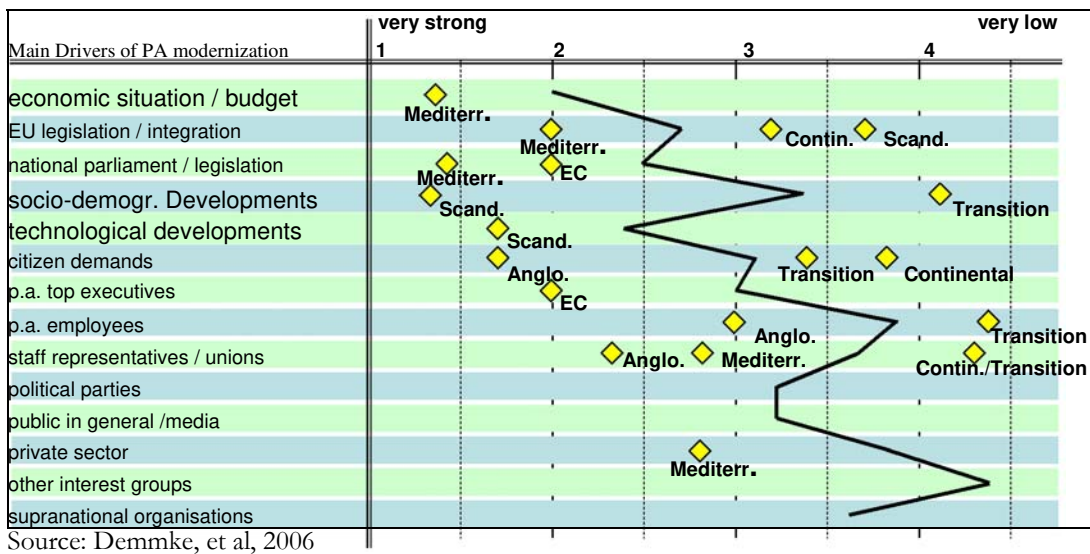
Figure 1 provides a more differentiated picture by showing variations between different drivers of reforms. The

impact of EU legislation and integration on national public administration modernization seems to be considerably higher in Mediterranean countries and – to a lesser degree – in Transition countries compared to Scandinavian and Continental European countries who regard the influence of the EU as rather low.

It could be expected that different pressures for public administration modernization also lead to different modernization agendas and paths among the countries of our case study.

The OECD in their 2005 report has outlined the following topics as main themes of public administration modernization in OECD states throughout the past 20 years: Open government; Enhancing public sector performance; Modernizing accountability and control; Reallocation and restructuring (decentralization); Use of market-type mechanism; Modernizing public employment shows that in Europe e-government currently seems to be by far the most influential topic of public administration modernization. Besides such e-government reform initiatives, efforts to strengthen accountability and customer orientation as well as reforms related to good governance currently seem to be high on the modernization agenda in E U. decentralization. On the other hand the alignment of public and private sector employment is meant to be less influential as has been described in other reports.

Figure 1: Considerable variations in reform pressures throughout Europe

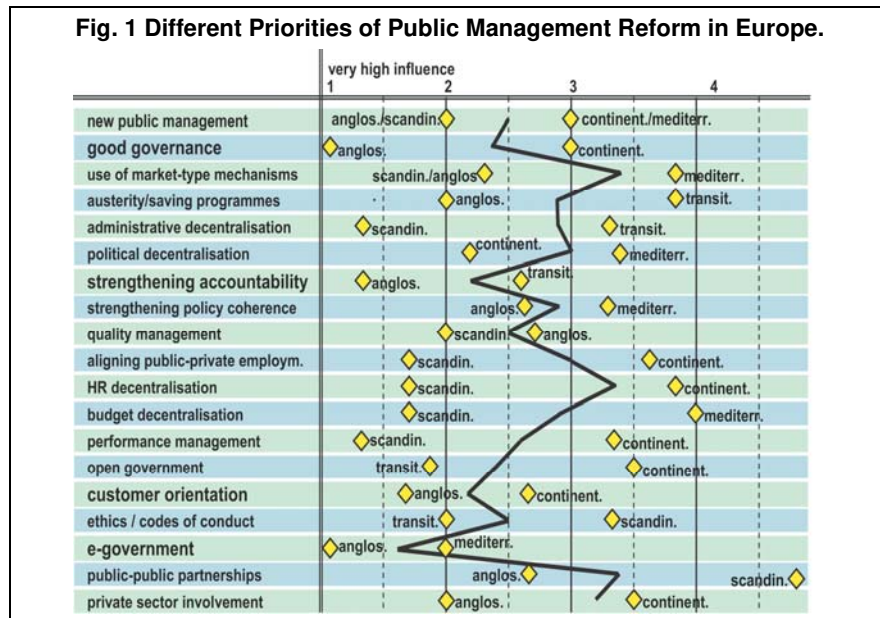


Whereas new public management elements like quality management or performance management have found a relatively broad acceptance, more market-oriented elements are less influential in core public administration. Quantitative analysis nevertheless shows a positive interrelationship between new public management, market-type reforms, indicating a close tie between these reforms. The overall picture also indicates that good governance (and related topics like open government, accountability, ethics/code of conduct) has increasingly complimented if not superseded New Public Management as most influential orientation for public administration modernization. However, the importance of the different reform topics differs widely from one PA to the next and between different clusters, making it difficult to speak of ‘universal’ or ‘common’ trends, but more of patterns or paths strongly related to public administration traditions. E-government but also accountability and customer orientation are high on the agenda in all cluster, the relevance of other reform topics

varies between countries with different public administration traditions.

Transition countries (with even lower birth-rates than countries such as Italy, Spain and Germany) have not yet recognized this issue of human resource decentralization as a main driver for reform. One explanation may be that for them other issues such as budgetary pressures and EU influences are considerably more important.

Figure 2: Different priorities of public administration modernization in Europe



Source: Demmke, et al, 2006

Various modernization issues points to some interesting differences and similarities between the different administrative traditions. As shown, apart from e-government, accountability, and customer orientation that are high on the agenda in all traditions, the relevance of the other reform topics considerably varies making it difficult to speak of EU-wide “common” trends.

Transition countries seem to be more skeptical towards modernization issues, especially towards the alignment of public and private sector employment, HR decentralization, open government, performance management, market-oriented reforms, and new public management in general. However, in these countries political decentralization seems to be of significantly higher relevance. For Mediterranean countries, good governance has a much higher relevance than in the other traditions (except the Anglo-Saxon), while, similar to Continental European countries, new public management, market-oriented reforms as well as budget decentralization are only of little relevance. For transition countries, open government related reforms are of top priority whereas decentralization, market-oriented mechanisms, and austerity/savings play a minor role compared to other countries. Position-based public administrations seem to assign a higher relevance to most public modernization topics, especially market-type mechanisms, administrative decentralization, HR decentralization, and private sector involvement. Career-based public administrations seem to be characterized by a considerably higher tendency to stick with the traditional bureaucratic-hierarchical and legal system of public administration. However, ethics/codes of conduct, public-public partnerships, and quality management are reform issues that

are of high importance here. Romania also mentioned new public management as a highly relevant topic in administrative reforms.

2.3 Role of International Organizations

However diverse the country (and intra-country) approaches to management reform, and the political, institutional and industrial relations contexts in which it is taking place, there is an increasingly convergent set of pressures for change, shaped in part and reflected in part by European integration. 'No-one expects the driving forces behind current reforms to diminish in the future. If anything, the pressures for reform will intensify,' says the OECD, adding: 'Doing more with less will continue to be a feature of the public management environment. Expenditure pressures show no signs of abating' (OECD PUMA, 1996).

Changing expectations have also helped to drive demands for greater efficiency, effectiveness and quality of service. According to the Public Management Service (PUMA) of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD): 'A focus on service quality is part of the general direction of public sector management reforms being pursued by OECD member countries, namely to improve the responsiveness of public sector institutions by requiring and encouraging a greater emphasis on performance or results. There is a general consensus that the previous orientation towards administration of rules must be replaced by an orientation towards results generally, of which the needs of the client are an important aspect.' (OECD PUMA, 1994).

By reviewing of requirements and recommendations of international organizations, one can notice that all of them are concerned with efficiency, planning and management of public expenditures and civil service system development. Efficiency for those organizations is related to rational use of resources and increase of results within limits of existing resources. In the middle of 90ties several parallel projects financed by PHARE, World Bank and SIGMA were implemented. However communication among project teams and financing organizations was on very low level, despite the fact that all projects dealt with public administration problems. need to react to changes of 80–90ties because changes raised questions on functioning of those organizations and their role in the global processes. Therefore, in order to avoid uncertain future, international organizations were forced to prove that they were able to deliver not only financial aid, but also technical assistance to administrative transformation by using latest innovations of the West. The collapse of communist regime occurred at the time when NPM was extremely popular. Thus popularity of NPM determined export of NPM to developing countries as an instrument for public administration development in the framework of technical assistance contracts. Wide spectrum of NPM ideas were interpreted by the developing countries through the perspective of local problems. In addition, wide spectrum and volume of NPM ideas allowed searching for the most appropriate solution according to local political and public administration traditions. C. Hood assumes that administrative transformation should be considered as *mimetic process*, when organizations are imitating and/or trying to use lessons from the best practice to avoid uncertainty about their own future.

In such conditions relevant is the fact on transfer of best available practice, not utility or appropriateness of best practice to the particular conditions. In addition, researchers and academics called NPM as the best theory

for policy implementation. C. Hood asserts that World Bank, International Monetary Fund, SIGMA have used imitation strategy towards developing countries advising and recommending to use Western best practice (i.e. NPM) for public administration reforms. However at the same time OECD refused to introduce NPM principles to its internal structure.

The common understanding on public administration and its principles is included in notion *European Administrative Space* (further on – EAS). The principles of EAS like professionalism, objectivity, accountability, transparency, efficiency, were included in the Progress Report during accession period. The EU recommendations having strong NPM impact in the background are related to improvements of internal audit and public administration transparency. Also the most practical feature of NPM – agencies – is in the centre of EU attention. Regarding agencies EU pointed out that agency proliferation is not controlled and agencies have neither clear accountability mechanisms nor remuneration system. We should analyze EU concerns on agencies in the context of our case study of public administration capacity to approximate *acquis*. The same reason can be applied to civil service issue in all Progress Reports. Also, the slow speed of administrative transformation might create a risk that EU Structural Funds could not be absorbed. The consequences of such risk would be seen much earlier in comparison to the risk that slow speed of administrative transformation endangers even consolidation of democracy.

The EU has provided plenty of direction to CEE countries through the technical assistance offered by the Phare programme, and through the twinning programme that started in 1999. ‘Twinning’ is aimed at helping CEE countries to allow their administrative and democratic institutions to adapt to membership requirements by assimilating from other European democracies experiences of policymaking and adapt the national legislation to the *acquis*. The most valuable feature of the programs, at least as design is concerned is that the policy transfer is done through a form of secondment the civil servants from older EU states to the accessional states. In practice, the twinning projects are implemented using extensive consultancy input and less government. For a list of PHARE projects supported by the European Commission.

The operationalization of a set of crucial concepts of the *acquis* and the clarification of their meaning represented a major step within the dynamic of the transfer of norms and values. This period represented for the Romanian part not only the socialization within the EU institutional framework but has also lead to the demythization of the Western “requests” and expertise. For the Western experts the very same period has brought a change in the role they played, from the “civilizing missionary” to coach, with the expressed intention of becoming a partner for discussion. Perhaps the most important gain for the process was given by the understanding, from both parts, of the need to use a flexible approach and to adapt the solutions to the local specific. The relative lack of experience concerning such a large scale reform of administrative institutions has lead to the take-over of pre-packaged solutions.

This understanding of the need to adapt to the local specific represented for both parts an important point during the process of cultural transfer. After the technocratic period of the beginning, administrative reform required attention both at strategic as well as at implementation level. During the first half of the 2000 decade, refocusing on administrative reform and administrative culture became a basis component of integration efforts.

It should be taken into account that the administrative reform process took place in a period where EU institutions were reforming themselves. In other words, the process had to insure that the public administration not only had to move from a government to governance (at macro European level) but also to internalize the Weberian norms of professionalization in the same time with those of the new public management.

Box. No. 1

Romania Public Administration under EU Mileau:

The Romanian transition period from a communist state to one marked by democratic institutions, by liberalization, by protecting the rights and freedoms of citizens and their inclusion in the government was sufficiently long and marked by a considerable development with the establishment of contacts between Romania and the European Union. In 1997 Romania becomes a candidate and, therefore, undergoes a process of Europeanization. The main challenge is to fulfil all the criteria imposed by the EU, including the one about strengthening the administrative capacity.

It should be noted that the period after 1989 is marked, at administrative level, by an excessive politicization, something noted in specialized papers(Alexandru I., 2002). This is characterized by the fact that civil servants receive a position based on political criteria, and the Parliament does not properly exercise its legislative and parliamentary control function. Thus, the administration is based on centralization and hierarchy.

First contact with the European Union dates from 1990 when a trade agreement was concluded with the CEE and CEEA. ¹ In 1993, Romania's intentions to become a member of the Communities become official by signing the Association Agreement ². The agreement mentions the need to create appropriate institutions to enable the gradual integration of Romania into the Union.

The next step is the year of 1997 when the Commission agrees to issue regular reports on Romania's situation, reports to be submitted to the Council. It is recognized that Romania fulfilled at that time the political criteria but failed to respect the other three, namely that of having a functional market economy, that of the acquis communautaire implementation and that of strengthening the administrative capacity. Romania's monitoring period by the Commission was to begin in the late 1998 ³.

Pre-Accession Strategy called for more leverage in order to implement the mandatory criteria. Thus, we can mention the Accession Partnerships, documents that unilaterally impose conditions for the candidate state, conditions that serve Community interests and policies(Idu, 2001) twinning programs of national administrations that ensure the personnel and resources exchange between Member States and candidate countries, an effective mean of taking the best practices and pre-accession funds: PHARE, SAPARD and ISPA. European Council in Helsinki in 1999 decided to start accession negotiations with Romania⁴. Since 2000, Romania takes position by adopting the necessary documents for each chapter of the acquis communautaire. These documents are intended to present the position of Romania to EU about the acquis communautaire in a particular field, the country's legal status at the time in question, the existing administrative institutions necessary for implementation and the reasons for any requested exceptions.

Negotiating chapters were open on in the following years. The chapters closed in 2004 and 2005 when is being signed the Accession Treaty of Romania at the European Union. The Treaty will enter into force in 2007, at 1st of January, when following ratification by Member States, Romania, alongside Bulgaria become member of the Community.

However, it should be noted, that administrative convergence process has deeper roots than those required when Romania submitted application to the Union. Romania took steps towards democratization and thus to strengthen administrative structures even after the fall of the old regime. The contact with the Community was an effective mean of accelerating the acquisition of standards and reaching a quality level within a short period of time.

The complex process of standardizing the rules, the structures and the internal practices with those in European Union countries occurs before the pre-accession period. Romania joined the modernizing line by changing legislative conditions. A new regime needed a new legislation. Constitution, with subsequent amendments and

¹ Luxemburg Agreement in 22.10.1990, published in the Official Bulletin no.51/15.03.1991.

² Ratified by Law no. 20/1993 and published in the Official Bulletin no.73/12.04.1993. The Association Agreement enters into force partly since 1993 and totally in 1995.

³ As settled within the Luxemburg European Council in 1997.

⁴ Conclusions of European Council Presidency from Helsinki, point I-10.

the whole set of laws that came to govern the post-1989 democratic regime are the key elements to our standardization process under observation.

Facts: By the end of 2001, Romania had benefited from 66 projects (9 per cent of the overall projects) 12 of which were in the JHA field. Romania's most popular choice regarding the selection of the partners, was France with 23 projects, followed by Germany (15 projects), Italy and the UK (11 projects each) and the Netherlands (9 projects). By the end of 2001 only 15 out of the 66 twinning projects launched in Romania since 1998 had been completed (Papadimitriou et al. 2004:626)

3 Public administration reform in EU member states: Italy & Romania

3.1 Public administration reform and modernization in Italy : recent trends

Public management research in Italy is a recent development, concurrent with the administrative reforms and to the devolution process in place since the early nineties. The distinctive national characteristics of the study of public management in Italy are explained in this chapter by considering three main issues:

- The historical evolution of public administration in Italy, including an analysis of characteristics preceding and following the political and administrative unification in 1861;
- The recent influence of the Anglo-American managerial approach, New Public Management ideas, and the Italian managerial theory *economia aziendale*.
- The consistency of the scope, contents and context of the reforms in PA modernization process

The study of public management in Italy is strongly influenced by early administrative history and the coexistence of several disciplinary approaches including administrative, political and managerial sciences, sociology, law, and public economics.

The 1970s brought three important reforms: the reform of the healthcare system, the reform of the fiscal system and the creation of regional governments. The decentralisation process continued in 1977 and in 1998. Administrative reform launched in 1979-80 (Giannini 1979) and remained idle until 1990.

The main lines of this administrative reform included the adoption of scientific management ideas, the creation in each administration of a unit dedicated to the implementation of managerial techniques, the privatization of the public employment, with the exception of the higher civil service.

In 1990, the law on ***simplification and administrative transparency*** was approved and some of the most important administrative independent authorities were set up. A new agency was introduced in 1992 with the mission to coordinate the contractual bargaining process between the State and public employees unions. This was followed by the re-organisation of several ministries. However, two decades after the reforms of the 1970s innovations in administrative transparency remained unsatisfactory, as highlighted in an evaluation by the Agnelli Foundation. Less than 50 percent of government offices had implemented governmental guidelines. This failure is even more pronounced in the areas of citizen relations and process management.

We can track the failures of transparency reform to several important factors, the most influential including: fiscal and budgetary pressures; loss of citizens' trust; an ageing society; changes in the electoral system; and, political vision and leadership.

Initially, **budgetary pressures** were the driving force for reform. A calamitous combination of relatively low level of taxation, huge government debt, and poor quality and cost-transparency of public services was magnified during European integration. This resulted in higher taxation and direct costs to citizens for certain public services.

A second driver is concerned with the **low levels of citizens' trust in** public institutions. While it was an overall trend, the low level of citizens trust is often exemplified by the massive popular protest against the widespread corruption in the early 90s, the so-called *tangentopoli* (the state of bribery), which led to many reforms aimed at improving the government-citizens relationship. Several referenda during these years highlighted a positive attitude of citizens towards the abolishment of some ministries. The media in turn have placed enormous emphasis on the technical nature of managerial expertise as a sort of moral antidote to the degeneration of politics (Panozzo 2000).

Demographic changes, in terms of ageing of the society and growth of the immigration, have led to many problems in the social, health and pension systems.

Important changes to the electoral system introduced the direct election of mayors (1993), presidents of provinces (1993), presidents / governors of regions (2000), with the aim of strengthening the stability of local governments and public accountability mechanisms.

Influences from abroad were mainly visible in the greater focus on new management practices such as the performance orientation of budgeting and human resources management in what has been coined the 'Italian wave' of new public management.

Political vision and leadership were relevantly changed. It was only in the early 1990s, with the governments of Amato and Ciampi, that the modernization of the public sector became a central element with the public finances recovery programmes. More recently, regulatory reform became an area of focus for the Italian government. Policies of simple streamlining of individual practices and the introduction of the one-stop shops for businesses were followed by codified policies for specific areas and subjects.

Integrity and ethics in public service have also been addressed by initiatives aimed at fighting corruption and managing conflict of interest situations. Law No. 3 of 2003 has instituted the 'High Commissioner for preventing and fighting corruption' in conformity with the provisions of the International Convention against Corruption recently adopted by the United Nations. Another important area of reform focuses on implementing a shift from a procedures-based administration to a results-based administration, mainly through the evolution and modernisation of preventative legitimacy control systems to managerial controls focused on ex post evaluation of economic impacts, social impacts, efficiency and effectiveness. A **performance-oriented approach** in the public sector has been introduced mainly through strategic planning initiatives both at the central and at the local and regional levels of government.

A key area of reform still underway is the devolution of powers from the central administration to the territorial administrations (i.e. Regions, Provinces and Municipalities). Future challenges in this area will be

Table 3.2 lists the main categories of reforms ascribed to New Public Management reforms in Italy. Market-type mechanisms and managerial techniques in use in the private sector, particularly planning and control systems, are the areas receiving greater attention and higher visibility.

In Italy, public sector reform concerned almost all components of public organizations and the table shows genuinely the great effort and the steps evolution performed by the Italian government in the downsizing approach-redesigning the government structure, the devolution of powers-tasks and functions for local authorities; the reform of budget and accounting regulations; accountability, transparency and simplification-ultimately aimed at improving government-citizens and government-business; the completion of the civil service reform and the review of the performance management system.

To summarize the recent developments, Italy started a governmental reform in late eighties, the main reasons being the need to cut the budget deficit by rationalising the expenditures on the public administration. The struggle for meeting the Maastricht standards widely increased the investment in Public Administration. Since 1990 major innovations have been adopted in Italy (Bassanini, Meneguzzo, Rebori).

A second stage started in '90s when the NPM model was adopted in many reform laws, therefore gaining greater legitimacy among civil servants. In 1993 a Decree grounded the status of civil servants by the concept of the separation between policy-making and administration, and ensured the basis for introducing private management approaches and techniques in the bureaucratic system, particularly at the level of human resource management. (Cepiku, et al, 2008:19). Bassanini reform in 1997, was a crucial point in 'reverse subsidiarity', distributing powers at different levels-regions, provinces, municipalities,-empowering them with autonomy in service delivery, policy making and administrative functions by default, while on the other had is settled the law related to the function that the central government has to entertain with European Union, National Policy objectives and others.

A third stage is related to several reforms mainly ascribed to the public governance theoretical model. In debate was entering the relationships between public and private sector, and the devolution process gained ground and simplification and regulatory quality policies were carried out. (Cepiku et al, 2008:69). The features of NPM and PG in Italian public administration modernization are quite evident.

Table 3.2 Scope and contents of PA reform in Italy

Areas of PA modernization	PA reform in Italy
Public employment	Reforms on civil service status-career paths, systems of evaluation and economic incentives; autonomy to local administrations to develop personnel policies; professionalization, reward merits; important area of reform focused on leadership management; a ‘career- based’ civil service system as opposed to a ‘position-based’ one(OECD, 2003).
Open government, transparency and accountability	Law enacted in 1990 and reviewed in 2005 to ensure greater transparency and accountability to administrative procedures; a mechanism aimed at improving service quality and the citizens government relationships is the service charter, creation of URP; increasing the transparency and integrity in public administration; (L.241/90; L.15/2005)
The use of market-type mechanisms	Privatization, contracting -out, contracting- in, vouchers, Public Private Partnerships increased from 1990 with the introduction of NPM principles. Involvement in public service delivery from ’90, Financial Law of 2002 (law 448/2001) and by the draft financial bill for 2007. (L.142/90; L.131/03)
Reforming organizational structure	Restructuring central government, creation of agencies(agencyfication)(downsizing from middle of ’90s); new executive agencies and independent authorities to reduce the fragmentation (D.lgs. 29&39/93, D.lgs 300/99).
Public expenditure and budgeting	The budget reform (started in 1997) system is input-oriented; performance oriented (healthcare organization); reorganized the treasury account system and restructured central government accounting; (L.142/90; L.311/2004)
Enhancing public sector performance	Addition to the previous attention to input and processes, the orientation to results; aims in improving efficiency of public administrations; strengthening civil servants ‘accountability and ensuring policy effectiveness,
Control systems	Managerial control appear as a useful tool in legislation from 1980s; a necessary tool to increase the responsibility and accountability(L.142/90; D.lgs.286/99)
Use of ICTs and E-government	From 2000 the Italian Government adopted the e-government Action Plan.

3.2 Public administration reform and modernization in Romania : Highlights on history of state and public administration

Public management research in Romania is also a recent development, concurrent with the administrative reforms and to the devolution process in place since the early nineties. PA development was marked in Romania by the “obsession of the new beginning” of the one hand and the “Return to Europe” on the other hand the debates of the 90s referred to the “Model” that was supposed to be followed. Interesting to note was that the “model” remained defined in relatively abstract terms, and referred usually to political institutions. A brief analysis of the tradition of Romanian public administration reveals a mixed record of influences, due to the distinct historical background of the different regions; thus, French and German influences have been coexisting in the Romanian space, leaving specific traces on the administrative culture. Notwithstanding the relevance of this historical path, close attention needs to give to the heritage of the communist public administration model, since it deeply marked the developments during the transition period. Although present in different versions throughout the Central and Eastern European block, this model was structured on the same main pillars in all countries (Mihai A., 2010).

The basic feature that characterizes the communist approach is the permeability (up to the point of disappearance) of the boundaries between politics and administration. The connections between the Communist party and public apparatus were extremely strong, transforming the latter into a mere mechanism used in order to implement the dominant party's will. Moreover, due to this obvious subordination relation, there was no clear separation of competences between the legislative and the administrative organs. The "nomenclature" system, as well as the "cadre policy", stands as a proof for the high degree of politicization in the public administration. For almost half a century, these structures had a deep influence on public life and, at the same time, on the mindset of the entire society. Therefore, not surprisingly, once the communist regime fell apart, one of the most difficult reforms to be achieved was in the field of administration. The huge challenge was that of a total overhaul, from principles to practice. A brand new legislation and institutional structure had to be introduced, doubled by a transparent Human Resources policy (Lippert, et al, 2005:71-73).

Romania has started to build public administration based on the principles of Weberian bureaucracy. Under the pressure of international organization and as a result of policy transfer, ideas of the new public management theory were introduced in public administration. The traditional bureaucratic and the NPM exists and it is hard to identify the dominant one. Approval of the fundamental laws for public administration especially Law on public administration structure and Law on administrative procedure testifies that the balance could fall in favor of the traditional bureaucratic model. Development of Romanian public administration was determined mainly by external pressure, less by internally changing view on role of public administration in the modern state.

Regarding the *scope* of PA reforms, what distinguishes transition from reforms in other countries is the scale and intensity of the systemic change involved. 'Reform must penetrate to the fundamental rules of the game that shape behaviour and guide organizations' (World Bank, 2000b: 97).

As far as *contents* of reform are concerned, in much of the literature reviewed, the basic assumption is that strategic planning and coordination across PA, stable financial and budgetary management and human resources management are three central areas of PA reform. Another area of assessment is the extent to which some of the major NPM-style reforms fit the context conditions in transition countries, and this leads us to the issue of reform *sequencing*.

Like other countries in Central and Eastern Europe, Romania faced the democratization process with fall of the communist regime in 1989. The 1991 Romanian Constitution, revised in 2003, institutes the three fundamental principles on which the PA is grounded: decentralization, local autonomy, and the deconcentration of public services "Art. 120" (Profiroiu, 2006). In Romania, territorial administrative decentralization is based on a community of 'public interests 'of the citizens belonging to a territorial-administrative unit, 'recognising the local community and the right to solve its problems' and technical and financial decentralisation of the public services, namely transferring the services from the 'center' to local communities, aimed to meet social needs (Matei, 2009: 13).

Implementation of the NPM concepts in Romania can be summed at different levels. At the state level, NPM with new concepts of public management and public marketing introduces 1) Analysis and forecast- within the NPM, the information is obtained by information technology systems and addresses the demand (market

surveys), competition, resources and innovations. 2) Planning- will be intensively decentralised and focussed; therefore the state will merely design the institutional framework than play a leading part. 3) Implementation- in order to improve performance, focus on the organizational behaviour and human resources management are needed. 4) control- as an advantage in the NPM terms represents good score in accountability, feed-back and adaption (Cepiku & Mititelu, 2010).

Table 3.3: The scope and contents of PA reform in Romania

Areas of PA modernization	PA reform in Romania
Public employment	Professionalization of the civil service, adhering to formal regulations on the civil service (Law No. 188/1999, 2000 and 2004 versions) and initiation of more specialised training programmes for civil servants (European Commission, 2006). Establishment of the Civil Service Commission.
Open government, transparency and accountability	Effective anticorruption strategies; increasing the transparency and integrity in public administration (Law no.69/1991), (anticorruption instruments from UE, UN, CoE and OECD, 2005-2007); the ethics of the public administrators were applicable to the state central administration but are less applicable to the regional and local administration.
The use of market-type mechanisms	Privatization at faster rate, role of private enterprises, vouchers, Public Private Partnerships increased during accession process.
Reforming organizational structure	Administrative capacity in reforming organizational structure and the competencies of local authorities is improving.
Public expenditure and budgeting	With the Law on Local Taxes and Charges (1994), fiscal decentralization in Romania was initiated and the own sources revenues of LGU were defined. Introduction of the MTEF gave stability, predictability and transparency in public spending to a certain extent.
Enhancing public sector performance	Introduction of evaluative process in the sectoral and Local Governments performance.
Control systems	Controlling is still through legislative procedures, although there has been signs of institutional controlling at local levels.
Use of ICTs and E-government	The new National Strategy for Informatisation and fast implementation of the Information Society (1998) was enacted as a necessary Government decision. In the last few years there are notable progresses in the ICT field and also in implementing e-governance although it is in nascent stage. Public administration through internet is negligible.

(Source: Cepiku & Mititelu, 2010)

Fundamental for the development of the public administration is to mention the principles of local autonomy and decentralization within the Constitution⁵. Their application has led to better management of local interests and represents a step towards administrative convergence. In addition to decentralization there are established the principles of openness and transparency through the Law no.69/1991. This law speaks also about certain aspects of the organization and functioning of local public administration such as the eligibility of local public authorities, the fact that the prefect is the representative of the government in the territory, the responsibility of mayors, of county council's presidents, of advisers and civil servants for acts committed during their service. This law also underlines essential principles of administrative reform such as effectiveness and efficiency of public services: "good functioning" of communal services, local transportation and utility network.

⁵ Article 1.1 and 1.2 from Constitution.

In addition, the Law also contains other principles such as partnership and cooperation, non-discrimination, rule of law, guarantees of citizens' rights, standards for the proper functioning of public administration. Visible progress is noted in particular the period after 1997, when Romania becomes official an EU candidate state. Certainly, the most important legal norm for the administrative system in this period is the Law on Civil Servants Statute, originally published in Official Bulletin no.600/08.12.1999, amended, completed and republished in the Official Bulletin no. 251/22.03.2001 and no.365/29.05.2007. These emphasize the civil servants delineation of responsibilities and their improvement. In addition, we mention the Law 215/2001 of local government, the Law 161/2003 on measures to ensure transparency in the exercise of public dignities, public positions and in business, to prevent and punish corruption, the Law 339/2004, a framework law on decentralization, the Law 7 / 2004 on the Code of Conduct for Civil Servants, the Law 477 / 2004 concerning the Code of Conduct for contractual staff of public authorities and institutions. Providing the necessary legal context for the reform it is indeed important for the proper conduct of administrative reform. But it is only one of the conditions necessary to achieve the final objectives.

The year 2001 was the one in which public administration reform has taken a strong outline through a series of measures designed to accelerate its implementation (Ministry of Interior and Administrative Reform, 2007). Among these we mention that it was adoption the Governmental Decision 1006/2001, the Strategy for accelerating public administration reform. The main objective of this strategy is to create a new legislative framework for the provision of services by public administration and new institutional structures, to increase the efficiency of civil servants, to modify the organizational mentality and behaviour. And last but not least to create an administration citizen oriented. In September 2001 it was established the Government Council for Monitoring Public Administration Reform and it was composed by eight ministers from the representative Ministries and was headed by the Prime Minister. This body has the task of overseeing the whole process of reform in public administration from the political level. Following the reorganization of central government authorities⁶, this body was reorganized⁷ itself in order to increase the coherence of its action, the efficiency and flexibility.

In 2001 it was also created the National Institute of Administration (NIA) as specialized institution in training civil servants and elected representatives. National Agency of Civil Servants (ANFP) is responsible for the management of public positions and for the development of normative acts on public positions. ANFP works in close cooperation with INA.

In May 2002 it was established within the Ministry of Interior and Administrative Reform (known at that time as the Ministry of Public Administration), the Central Unit for Public Administration Reform (UCRAP), in order to ensure the implementation of decisions of the Government Council.

During 2004-2006, according to the 2004-2006 revised strategy to accelerate public administration reform and then the 2005-2008 Government Program, the decentralization process has been considered a priority for public administration reform. The Government's commitment is well reflected in the legislative package adopted in 2006 package that includes: decentralization framework law 195/2006, Law on Local Public Finance 273/2006,

⁶ According to the Parliament's Decision 16/18.06.2003 and to Emergency Governmental Ordinance 64/29.06.2003.

⁷ Through the Government's Decision 925/2003.

Law 286/2006 amending and supplementing the Law no local government. 215/2001, Law 251/2006 amending and supplementing the Law on the Statute of civil servants 188/1999 and Government Emergency Ordinance 179/2005 on the prefect institution.

Under the recently adopted legal framework, ministries consider more decentralized competences, as reflected in their projects for sector strategy. The major objectives of decentralization strategies aimed at new skills and at improving the quality of public services already decentralized. To achieve these goals, the strategies have within the action plans the appropriate procedures and implementation mechanisms for both central and for the local government (Ministry of Interior and Administrative Reform, 2007).

In the 1999 report, the Commission mentions the necessity of *financial decentralization* and the need to establish a clear mean transferring from central to local authorities. The subject is repeated in subsequent years and the Commission suggests the need to establish the legal context for decentralization. Thus, the Law from 2001 of public administration local government fulfils this need. It defines the local authorities' competences and outlines the relationship between central and local government and promotes the principle of local autonomy. Developing the law was not, however, sufficient to solve the problem of decentralization. This was repeated in 2003 and 2004 when the Commission's attention was directed to the lack of transparency of financial transfers from county to local level and on the transfer of responsibilities from central to local level, without a proper financial transfers' support⁸

As far as the *openness* is concerned, adopting in 1998 the National Strategy for Computerization and Rapid Implementation of the Information Society is appreciated by the Commission, but Romania is still confronted with problems of proper dissemination of information, problems of citizens' involvement in decision making, particularly of Roma community. The 2001 Law on free access to information improves the situation ⁹.

Transparency, however, is considered almost nonexistent. In 2001, developing the legislation on e-government¹⁰ was a noteworthy step for the principle of transparency at the administrative system level. However, a law in this respect was lacking, this lack being constantly mentioned by the Commission reports in 2000, 2001 and 2002. The year 2003 is the year when Romania adopted the Law 52/2003 on decisional transparency, a measure welcomed by the European Commission report for that year.

Citizen involvement in the decision making process together with parties directly concerned and the economic and social actors is regulated by the Economic and Social Committee development. Citizens' rights are also highly considered by the Ombudsman institution, the institution which excoriates the administrative authorities when citizens' rights are violated. Its activity reveals thus the principle of *responsibility* at the public administration level.

As previously mentioned, we speak about administrative reform when we aim to apply two specific principles of public management: *efficiency* and *effectiveness*. The Commission repeatedly underlines the need to apply these principles when speaking about the justice and foreign affairs reform, about the management of certain services, about the strengthening the effectiveness of the Ministry of Finance, about the coordination of public

⁸ The 2003 Country Report, p.17 and the 2004 Country Report, p. 18.

⁹ Law 544/2001, published in Official Bulletin 663/23.10.2001, subsequently modified and completed.

¹⁰ Government's Decision 1006/2001, published in Official Bulletin 660/19.10.2001.

policies or about the way local authorities manage their own resources. These principles relate mainly to public services and the principle of subsidiary. Its enforcement implicitly leads to increased efficiency and effectiveness. Another aspect considered by the Commission was that of ***delimitation between legislative and executive power*** (an emphasis on *rule of law*, which, despite the political dimension, has in this case a particular relevance by reporting to the executive power). Essentially, it was concerned the legislative activity of the Government that had to be lowered (high number of ordinances led to inefficiency, the slow legislative process to difficulties in implementation and in obtaining the act's results).

Other issues related to administrative reform can be found at procedural level, the decisions taken without following the internal procedures, without proper consultation, without a sufficient assessment of their impact is an example in this sense. The result is the existence of legislative proposals insufficiently developed. There are difficulties in performing the duties of the National Agency of ***Civil Servants*** due to the lack of legal instruments of authority and resources. As for the human resources there are highlighted the problems related to limited training, to high turnover among public officials and to the minor progress made in areas such as: salary, career tracking and development of public responsibility. In addition, we can mention: insufficient financial resources for professional development of civil servants, the lack of coherent training policies, the high degree of fluctuation, the lack of a unitary payment system for civil servants, the lack of coherent policies on programs aligning public services to the requirements of the *acquis communautaire*, the lack of a secured electronic communication system that streamlines the movement of documents/information, insufficient or unsubstantiated allocated human resources.

Thus, through the obligation to meet the accession criteria, Romania is subject to a process of administrative reform, like other candidate states, in the general trend prevailing in Central and Eastern Europe. To resume, the most important measures taken during the pre-accession led to:

- implementation of priority programs in the field;
- creation of structures compatible with the EU ones in areas pertaining to: individual records, developing specific legislation, introducing electronic identity card and also its operation;
- creating and developing the framework for staff training;
- implementation of electronic projects, to bring administration closer to citizens, reducing bureaucracy, for example – ‘e-Administration’;
- beginning the civil service reform process

Box No. 2

EU Pre Accession benefits: An example

An innovative program, funded by the European Union was the Youth Officials Program, the Young Professionals Scheme (YPS), which is preparing new generations of public officials both locally and nationally in line with European values and principles of public management¹¹. The post-accession period is also characterized by an attempt to reform. The European Union is a dynamic organization, subject to many factors of influence. Romania now must face a context based on the interdependence characteristic to Member States, on an integration process based on a deeper Europeanization, on practices acquisition and Community standards implementation. Romania's strategic objective for 2007-2013 is the convergence with EU member states in terms of welfare, general attributes of society and citizens. This, of course, includes the administrative convergence at the level of positions, services and public activities. Deepening at national level the integration process aims to: strengthen the capacity of central and local government; to complete the reforms in justice with sustainable and tangible results in fighting corruption; to strengthen the reforms of internal affairs; to enhance the national information campaign on European values and the integration benefits and costs for the Romanian society. Public administration reform strategy developed in 2001 was supposed to be updated before accession and its key points were¹²:

- developing the capacity of public authorities and institutions to formulate and implement national and local policies, consistent with community ones and to work at the performance standards of the national administrations of other EU Member States;
- clearly define the role of each structure within the administrative system in order to determine a coherent institutional mechanism and to have an efficient decision making and implementation process of European norms.

The priority action directions to implement the strategy are:

- The proper application of the *acquis communautaire*, in parallel with the development of national and local public policies, consistent with the Community ones;
- Increased attention to areas covered by the negotiated transition periods and training institutions responsible for full implementation of the *acquis communautaire*, after transitional periods expires;
- Continue to implement the general principles of European administrative space on the legality, legal competence, predictability, openness and transparency, responsibility and accountability, efficiency and effectiveness in order to increase the quality of administrative act;
- Develop action training for civil servants in European affairs;
- Institutionalization of a regular dialogue between the central government with local and regional ones for the transfer of best practice in implementing EU policies;

¹¹ Central Unit for Public Administration Reform (CUPAR), Answers to the Questionnaire for the Recording of the Existing Situation on the field of the Institutional Renewal in BSEC Member States, Romania, 2006.

¹² Post-accession Strategy 2007-2013, 13.12.2006, available on Romanian Government Official Website, <http://www.gov.ro/upload/articles/100071/strategie-post-aderare2a.pdf>, on 13.02.2010.

Prizes for innovation in the public sector

The rewarding initiative “100 de proiecte pentru Romania” (“100 Projects for Romania”) is an example of cooperation between Italy and Romania regarding the implementation of activities within the scope of the national programs for modernization and innovation of the public sector. The Twinning PHARE Project code RO 01/IB/O’T/01 was implemented in 2002-2004¹³ and provided an unique opportunity to translate the Italian model of “Cento Progetti al Servizio dei Cittadini” (“One hundred projects serving the citizens”) into the Romanian context. There were both similarities and differences between the two initiatives that were aimed to reward quality and innovation in the public sector. Both initiatives were intended to identify excellent projects on the basis of criteria which, although declined differently in the two countries, were guided by the following common values: 1) integration and cooperation between the public administrations, 2) building partnerships with public and private subjects, 3) listening the clients and enhancing stakeholders participation, 4) encouraging assessment and performance evaluation, 4) promoting transparency. One more element that has united the Italian and Romanian experience is that both initiatives have had a dual general purpose: 1) to recognize and to promote good practices so that they could set an example and a learning opportunity for other public administrations, 2) to contribute to build consensus around the public sector reforms.

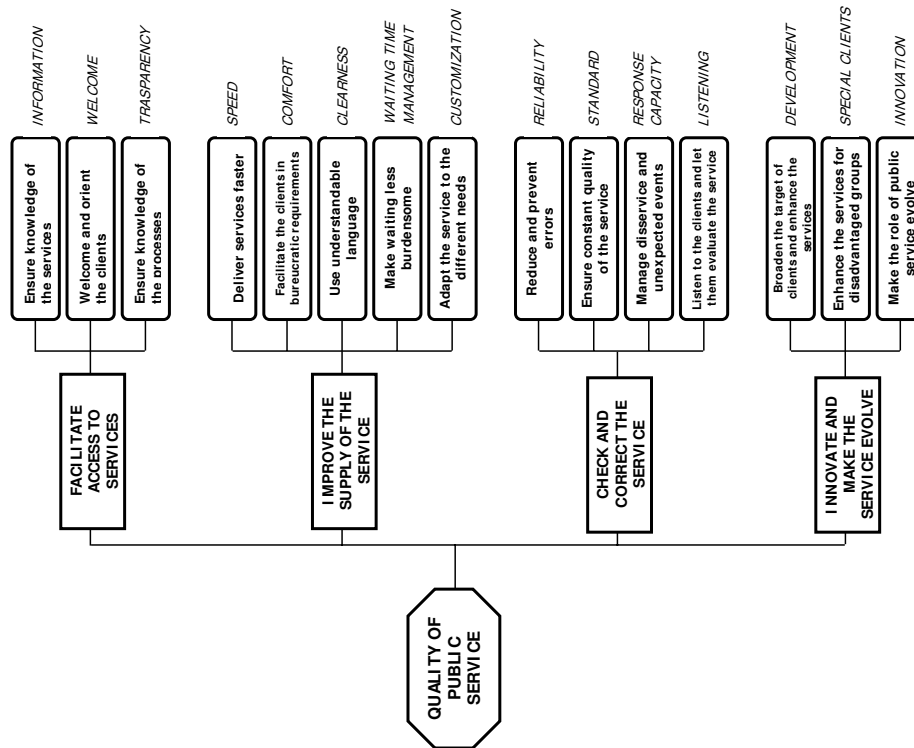
"Cento Progetti al Servizio dei Cittadini" took place in Italy from 1994 to 2004, in a period in which the country was characterized by a strong impulse to the introduction of institutional and administrative reforms. In all, there were five editions of the prize. Each of them, even maintaining a common perspective, has sought to support in different ways the ongoing reforms capturing and representing the complexity and richness of the innovations taking place in the Italian administrative system.

The first edition of “Cento Progetti al Servizio dei Cittadini”, held in 1994, was a big success. The applications received were more than 1,800 and, in addition to the quantity and quality of the projects, a very important result achieved was that the rewarding initiative created a mobilization effect of the public administration staff. With the award, the Italian Dipartimento della Funzione Pubblica (Department of Public Administration) intended to demonstrate that improvement, based on capacity and initiative of those who work directly with the clients, is possible. In particular, the first edition of the prize, entitled "How to improve public offices", set out to achieve the following objectives: 1) to acquire knowledge - at the central level - of the improvement initiatives and projects carried out by the offices of public administration operating at direct contact with the clients; 2) to identify case studies to be proposed as a reference model for other offices and personnel; 3) to promote civil servants and citizen awareness of such cases.

Particular emphasis was given both to the concept of quality of public services and to the spread of the solutions adopted in the projects implemented by the award-winning organizations. The "tree-model" of public service quality drawn up for the prize aroused the interest of several national and international training and research centers, to the point that, in 1996, this model was used in the framework of the 27th Conference of Directors General of Public Administration as a tool to compare and evaluate the initiatives to improve the quality of public services carried out in different EU countries.

¹³ Partners of the project were Romania, Italy and France.

Figure 3.1 - The "tree-model" of public service quality¹⁴



The second edition of “Cento Progetti al Servizio dei Cittadini”, entitled “To promote innovation in public administration” was held in 1997 and, while retaining the spirit of the first edition, it better stated its objectives, giving more emphasis to the dissemination of good practices and to the exchange of experiences among different public administrations.

Unlike the first edition, in which even project ideas for service improvement were admitted to the awarding competition, at the second edition have been admitted only projects already completed or nearing completion. This choice has led to a reduction of the applications which gradually decreased in the later editions of the prize. Compared to the first edition, the selection process was improved. From the second edition of “Cento Progetti al Servizio dei Cittadini” onwards, the prize tried to avoid the risk of a self-referential approach. In fact, the applications of the first edition had been evaluated without a close link with the clients (citizens and enterprises) and other stakeholders. Therefore, from the second edition onwards, the evaluation of the applications has been conducted by the Dipartimento della Funzione Pubblica not only with the cooperation of government associations that have sponsored the award, but also with the help of third part experts not belonging to the world of the public administration.

The second edition of the prize represents a major step forward compared to the first one, because the selection criteria were defined more precisely and were sorted by priority, with the aim to award those projects that were starting by ascertainable situations, that were relevant to the clients (citizens and enterprises) and that were easily replicable in other contexts. The basic idea was that initiatives representing innovative and effective solutions and which could be a stimulus to other administrations should be rewarded. Compared to the first edition of the award, a more mature idea of how disseminate good practices takes place. The diffusion of an innovation, in fact, does not simply mean to replicate it in another context. It means, instead, that the new solutions carried out elsewhere should be reinterpreted and translated in the “language” of the organization that adopts them, identifying the essential prerequisites and conditions for their effective implementation. This new logic led the agents of innovation dissemination (in the case of Italy, the Dipartimento della Funzione Pubblica and the research and training institutions related to it) to play a more complex role, which was no longer limited to support with marketing the good practices to be disseminated, but expanded in the direction of the accompaniment and support of the innovation processes of the public administrations.

¹⁴ Source: *Cento progetti al servizio dei cittadini*, 1^a edizione, 1995.

From the third edition of the prize on, the results achievement is considered as an essential component of a project that could be recognized as good practice. Thus, the nature itself of the prize awarded to the winners changed. The small economic contribution for project completion, given to the winner in the first and second edition, disappeared giving way to the mere attribution of a certificate of award and to the opportunity to use the logo “Cento Progetti al Servizio dei Cittadini Winner” for public and institutional communication purposes. The third edition of the award, whose subtitle was “Innovation in support of reforms”, took place between 1999 and 2000. The stated objectives and criteria of selection placed emphasis on three major themes of the ongoing reform: 1) administrative decentralization; 2) administrative simplification; 3) improved governance. Thus were rewarded not only projects directly targeted to the end customer of public services, but also projects aimed to the organizational development.

The fourth edition took place in 2002 and was entitled “For a widespread and sustainable innovation” and was intended to pursue objectives consistent with the five priorities identified by the “Cantieri” program¹⁵, namely: 1) improving the relationship with citizens and enterprises, 2) increasing capacity to develop, implement and evaluate effective public policies, 3) strengthening the management strategic capacity; 4) developing the framework conditions that promote change by creating a network of relations with public and private partners; 5) improving the organizational climate and internal relationships in the public offices.

Also the fifth and last edition of “Cento Progetti al Servizio dei Cittadini” was carried out in 2003-2004, within the framework of the “Cantieri” program, from which goals and basic assumptions were assumed. Entitled “For an innovation that creates value”, the fifth edition has been designed: 1) to identify and develop projects that create value for citizens; 2) to interact positively with the environment by promoting participation, cooperation and partnerships; 3) to contribute to more effectively meet the needs of collective interest. Among the evaluation criteria this edition of the prize introduced an important innovation, which is a prelude to the subsequent evolution of the reward initiatives in Italy: to be considered good practice, candidate projects must be fully integrated within the public administration activity both by the functional and organizational viewpoint.

As had already happened in Italy, also in Romania the decision to carry out the rewarding initiative called “100 de proiecte pentru Romania” was born both from the will to make visible the complex and laborious ongoing process of reform and from the need to mobilize the public administration professional resources orienting them towards innovation and continuous improvement. The Romanian Ministry of Administration and Interior (MAI) launched the competition on 23 April 2003 as part of a Twinning Program between Romania, Italy and France. The completion of the project under the Twinning Program allowed not only to give an international cut to the initiative increasing its prestige, but also to capitalize on the lessons learned during the previous ten years in Italy. However, the Romanian experience was not reduced to a mere imitation of the Italian award, but both the process of implementation of the initiative and the reference criteria for the awards have been refined in the logic to fully respond to the objectives of the ongoing reforms in that country. Thus, the competition became part of the reform agenda of the Romanian public administration, with the aim of: 1) promoting local initiative, 2) developing of new ideas, 3) partnerships and dissemination of good practices. The organization of the competition, as well as the establishment of procedures for project selection and evaluation, have been treated by a working group set up ad hoc by UCRAP - Unitatea Centrala pentru Reforma Administratiei Publice¹⁶ (Central Unit for the Reform of Public Administration) with the support of Italian experts, who provided assistance in all phases of the project.

The stated objectives of the award were: 1) improving the effectiveness of local authorities to promote modernization initiatives and to improve the quality of the services delivered to the clients (citizens and enterprises), 2) developing partnerships to improve relations between the local authorities, the citizens and the economic environment, 3) disseminating good practices and successful models through a special promotion program.

The main focus of the premium was related to the attention paid by local governments to improve the quality of services provided to citizens and enterprises. Therefore, the local administrations could candidate both projects that were in the phase of final design and projects that were at the earliest stages of implementation.

The competition aroused considerable interest. In total the local administrations submitted 322 projects, 55% of those were presented by municipalities, 12% by Judet Councils and 33% by Prefectures.

¹⁵ “Cantieri” is a program of actions to support public administrations in the reform process, initiated by the Dipartimento della Funzione Pubblica in 2002 and carried out in partnership with national institutions that offer services for public administration innovation.

¹⁶ UCRAP is a specialized structure of the Ministry of Administration and Interior in charge of the implementation of initiatives to support reform and modernization of the Romanian public administration.

The 100 winning projects were grouped into seven categories: 1) Relation between local authorities, citizens and the economic environment; 2) Simplification of administrative procedures; 3) Collection and management of financial resources; 4) Access to public services, consultation and involvement of citizens in government activities; 5) Human resource management; 6) Communication; 7) Internal organization.

The prize awarded was a “Degree of Excellence” and the right for the winner administrations to use the logo “100 Proiecte Winner” in all their communications. The managers of the top ten ranked projects also were allowed to participate in a study tour of a week to visit some of the winner administrations of the homonymous Italian competition. As with the Italian prize, the winning projects were presented in a catalog. The winning projects were not awarded with financial rewards, but their inclusion in the database of the experiences of modernization guaranteed them a faster track to access to national and EU funding.

The classification of projects and their selection were carried out in three steps: 1) Verify of the eligibility of the candidate projects; 2) Technical assessment and ranking of the first 150 projects, 3) Final selection and appointment of the winning projects.

The verification of eligibility was made by a team of specialists belonging to the Ministry of Administration and Interior. The selection of the winning projects, however, was entrusted to a committee composed of representatives of central government and associations of local authorities.

The “Cento Progetti al Servizio dei Cittadini” season in Italy lasted a decade. In Romania, instead, the award was made in a single edition between 2003 and 2004 and was the first comprehensive initiative aimed at rewarding modernization in public administration sector.

In those years, both in Italy and in Romania, as it was happening in many European countries, the basic objectives, the selection criteria and procedures for the dissemination of the initiatives of the reward initiatives to support the processes of modernization of Public Administration, were focused on the cornerstones of the NPM¹⁷. The following table, based on the analysis of the objectives and selection criteria and procedures for the dissemination of good practices, provides a summary overview of the influence of some relevant issues of the NPM on the rewarding initiative “100 Projects” in Italy and Romania.

Table 3.4. - Influence of some relevant issues of the NPM on the rewarding initiative "100 Projects" in Italy and Romania

	1st-2nd ed. Italy	3rd-4th-5th ed. Italy	1st ed. Romania
Downsizing and organizational streamlining	Low	Low	Low
Creation of autonomous units	Low	Mid	Low
Outsourcing	Low	Low	Low
Separation between guidance/control/management	Low	Mid	Low
New systems of planning and control	Low	Mid	Mid
New monitoring and reporting systems	Low	Mid	Mid
Personnel management systems focused on results	Low	High	Mid
Organizational design based on processes	Low	Mid	Low
Streamlining and simplification of procedures	High	High	High
Diffusion of technological innovation	Low	Mid	Mid
Access and communication	High	Mid	High

In 2004, the “Cento Progetti” season is over both in Italy and Romania. The reward initiatives that have been carried out in subsequent years have not awarded innovation and quality of individual projects carried out by public managers, but intended to assess the capacity of the entire administration as a whole to pursue continuous improvement of processes, results and outcomes. In Italy, therefore, the Dipartimento della Funzione Pubblica launched the prizes “Qualità PPAA” and “Premiamo i risultati”, which are based on evaluation criteria derived by the Common Assessment Framework (CAF)¹⁸ model. In Romania, instead, the awarding initiative “Premiile de excelente Administrative.ro” is based on the rating by the clients (citizens and enterprises) for the results achieved by the public administrations.

¹⁷ E. Borgonovi, *Principi e sistemi aziendali per le amministrazioni pubbliche*, Egea, 2004, pag. 96; M. Meneguzzo, *Ripensare la modernizzazione amministrativa e il New Public Management. L'esperienza italiana: innovazione dal basso e sviluppo della governance locale*, in Azienda Pubblica, n. 6, 1997.

¹⁸ The CAF is a free total quality management (TQM) tool to assist public-sector organisations across Europe in using quality management techniques to improve their performance.

4 Conclusion : a comparative overview on Italy and Romania Trends of Reform

Both countries (Italy and Romania) experienced rapid spread of reform movements inspired by the so-called ‘New Public Management’ (NPM) paradigm. In rhetoric and practice, these countries have adopted measures inspired by its philosophy. Just as in many other countries, Italy and Romania have chosen mixed strategies of public sector reform, and these choices have changed over time. However , it seems that the span of reform has been rather broader than narrow.

The table below gives a comparative picture between both countries across different PA elements.

Table 4.1 Reforms priorities between Italy & Romania:

Trends	Mediterranean countries (Italy)	Transition Countries (Romania)
Topics with highest influence	e government; good governance; customer orientation; austerity; open government; accountability;	e-government; open government; ethics/codes of conduct; customer orientation, new public management; quality management;
Topics with lowest influence	Budgetary decentralization; market type-reforms; political decentralization; policy coherence; human resources decentralization; private sector involvement;	Austerity/savings; market-type reforms; administrative decentralization; private sector involvement; Alignment; public-private employment

Source: Elaboration on the Study of Demmke, et al, 2006

Italy which started relatively late compared to many other countries, but took advantage of the lessons already learned by others in creating an ambitious reform programmes in recent years. Empirical evidence on the content and strategies of reform is provided and Italian specificities are highlighted. In Italy, the wide-ranging agenda of reforms has suffered an ‘implementation gap’, characterizing legalistic countries. A particularly strong dynamism and vivacity of innovation has been registered in local services, healthcare and social assistance, education and cultural heritage management (Cepiku et al., 2008). In Italy, reform political agendas were clearly inspired by the NPM model introducing some of its key features such as market-type mechanisms and performance management. The modernization rate of central government, local governments, national and local public enterprises, executive agencies, etc. has been quite dissimilar. The administrative and institutional dualism and the different North-South speed in the modernization processes, the relationship between institutional performance and civil society, the specificities of PA in the South (Mezzogiorno) in terms of political-administrative relationships and the spread of free-riding behaviours have influenced the adoption of different modernization tools and the implementation of reforms (Cepiku, Meneguzzo, 2009).

For countries in transition like Romania, one of the enormous task of the 1990s was to build a new public administration based on a whole new set of value . For the post communist countries affected by serious trust crisis along with Maastricht criteria imposing precise debt and deficit ceilings, the task also meant adopting the ‘Acquis Communautaire’ as well as adapting structures and process to fit the EU decision –making process. On the other hand , this process allowed countries to pick up and choose from the experiences of EU and OECD

countries in reforming public administration (Wolf, 2000: 690). International institutions such as the World Bank were the main advocates of the NPM in developing and transition countries (Manning, 2001). Each government in Romania after the 1989 revolution has approved its own agenda for reforming the PA system. As in other European states, the Romanian public administration reform was conceived on some core pillars: decentralization, civil service and public policy-making (Matei 2009a, 2009b). Though the concept of public management has not always intertwined with the reform of public administration, positive outcomes were nonetheless generated. On the contrary, the new managerial ideas were simulated primarily by the European Union as part of the adhesion process. The pressure was exercised both through the European experts working with the government in Bucharest and through specific requirements underlying programs financed by the EU and concerning themselves with the reform of public administration (Hintea, 2006: 8). We find a general agreement that decentralization in Romania – and especially decentralization of HR responsibilities and tasks – has positive effects such as performance and productivity improvements, increased service speed, quality and value, empowerment of management, increased motivation and also allows HRM functions to be better adapted to local needs. In addition, decentralization is an important prerequisite or driver that triggers other reforms such as increased performance management and accountability.

Most of the transitional countries experienced a PA system based on a hierarchical organisation, known as the “Weberian administration model”. To this, we add “the asymmetric models”, and new “models” and institutional “experiments” for PA in Central and Eastern European countries, like Romania, undergoing reforms since 1990s. (Matei, 2009: 32). As a retrospect the aspects of both the Weberian and NPM principles have infused PA reform in post-communist countries, though Weberian standards have greater prominence in the EU accession reform agenda in Romania (Numberg, 1999; Goetz, 2001: 1034-1035). In conclusion, PA reform in transition countries entails a very broad agenda neither prioritised nor clearly defined in terms of effective implementation, though referring to high-level intentions (Jacobs, 2004).

Table 4.2. Summary overview of PA reforms in Romania and Italy: A Comparative Perspective

Components/ Countries	ITALY	ROMANIA
Organizational Changes:	i) Reorganization & merger of ministries. ii) New institutional arrangements (executive agencies, independent authorities, public enterprises, etc.)	i) Redefining the mission of central and local public administration and introducing the "territorial administration" ii) Setting up new public institutions. iii) Reorganization of governmental structure and amending the status of civil servants and public employees.
Critical Aspect	Downsizing goals not achieved.	The executive agencies were supra-sized or excessively centralized.
Market-type Mechanism:	access to citizens restricted; back-office reorganizations did not occur.	i) Privatization of some public services. ii) Contracting In/Out; Public Private partnerships.
Critical Aspect	Perverse effects; long term perspectives not realised.	Lack of strategic visions on promoting the market-type mechanisms.
Performance Management:	i) introduction of accrual and cost accounting with managerial controls. ii) a new budget structure organized around state missions and programs. iii) measurement of administrative burdens (standard cost model).	i) performance based remunerations. ii) assessing the administrative capacity and setting-up of minimal operational standards for local government authorities. iii) measures for reducing the administrative burden.
Critical Aspect	significant differences among different administrations; most of the instruments were only formally adopted.	significant differences between various public entities; implementation gap especially at local authority level.
Service & citizen orientation:	i) creation of administrations' offices for relations with citizens (URP) ii) transparency freedom of information iii) creation of ombudsman at regional level; iv) quality initiatives (CAF/EFQM, customer satisfaction surveys, etc.)	i) introduction of Citizen Information Centers (CIC) ii) transparency and freedom of information; iii) creation of Ombudsman at national and regional level; iv) quality initiatives (CAF/ EFQM, quality awards, etc.)
Critical Aspect	pursued mainly through a greater professionalization instead of market-type mechanisms.	citizens informations structures not generalized at local levels; lack of citizen participation; fragmented initiatives
e- governance:	several e-government plans implemented.	measures and promotion of e-administration were conceived and approved in 2001.
Critical Aspect	access to citizens restricted; back-office reorganizations did not occur.	financial resources necessary to support the strategy were not adequately evaluated.

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