

POWER, KNOWLEDGE AND INTERESTS A THREE-DIMENSIONAL MODEL OF GOOD GOVERNANCE

Alfred Bulai*

*National School of Political and Administrative Studies, 6-8 Povernei St., 010648, Bucharest,
Romania*

(Received 1 May 2012)

Abstract

This article aims to examine ‘Good governance’ in terms of three defining components related to three levels of societal organization. In order to understand the proposed model, its argumentative logic and the whole analysis approach, it is necessary first to take stock of the major problems of the current political system, given its crucial role in defining a certain type of governance.

Keywords: ‘good governance’, public interest, model

1. Current situation

Romania’s population has reached a severe anomic situation determined by the malfunctioning of the value-normative register in the entire society which imposed a loss of confidence in state institutions and the political class, as well as in the large electoral and political themes, old or new, such as: market economy, capitalism, fighting corruption, lustration, anticommunism, reform, etc. These themes were an important vector for political guidance in the last ten years.

The current economic crisis brought new problems, which boosted previous processes and lowered the level of expectation from the government, from political actors in general, including the opposition, as in most civil society actors, such as trade unions, NGOs with a political mission etc. Moreover, an important part of the media overreacted, in some cases reaching paroxysm, with a scathing attitude towards the government and president, leading to saturation of this type of critical political message. In the absence of visible political effects of these critics and opposition’s actions, where the public hasn’t perceived any change, it all caused a lack of persuasion in such critical political messages.

* E-mail: alfbulai@yahoo.com

The Government survival after repeated confidence votes in Parliament in different contexts, including simple or censure motions, but also after various ineffective actions of trade unions or political actors, determined a significant decrease of the level of trust in governmental actions.

High public predictability in actions of power opponents also lead to these results, because motions, statements, withdrawal from voting, filing complaints for the Constitutional Court, announcement of political rally ended with the same type of message and were not followed by any effects in the eyes of public opinion.

The street protests from January 2012 were the only danger for government in the last decade. These were the strongest protests in the last ten years and certainly have caused more political changes than the conjoint action of opposition and trade unions during the government of Liberal Democratic Party. But even these, events, spread along several cities, had a rather cosmetic effect than significant political force.

However, they were more an exception of the recent years in the Romanian political space, and the measures adopted by the government, including changing main ministers, managed to completely annihilate this force.

Public social criticism against the government, except perhaps the events of January 2012, was and is mimetic, lacking identity. Almost the same types of accusations have been raised permanently by public actors or analysts, journalists, union leaders and politicians. Opposition political actors had the same message, and even more they proposed the same thing, usually very general and very theoretical, without the ability to reach the bulk of population. In other words, these political solutions are not backed by public trust and therefore the absence of credibility in alternative proposals.

Trust in political actors remained at a high rate for about one third of the population, generally for ideological reasons (a fraction), affective reasons (based on lasting relationship with a political actor or party, or negative reasons, also with an emotional basis, towards actors previously riddled with huge negative image, making their opponents to be accepted under any circumstances). This holds true firstly for the core of power supporters, Democratic-Liberal Party (PDL) - Basescu, who remained the major opponents of the Social Democratic Party (PSD) or (partially) National Liberal Party (PNL).

We can say that the share of active population in Romania (not just economically, but also civically and politically) has declined in recent years. First of all there was the loss of about 12-15% of the total population only in the last seven, eight years [1, 2]. Leaving the country had negative economical effects but also obvious positive ones, as the five to six billions of euros sent officially every year in Romania, probably at least 50% more in reality.

Emigration, however, led to a decrease in social activism since the share of those who left is almost 90% of young people, who on departure date were under 40 years. For this reason the share of population willing to form an institutional or spontaneous social movement is also very small.

Distrust in politicians became widespread in the past two to three years, primarily due to the speed with which political actions and messages have been cancelled by the actors who proposed them. In the 90s, for example, political forces benefited easily from waves of hope and positive expectations, like the Romanian Democratic Convention (CDR) in the mid 90s, or the Great Romania Party (PRM) in 2000, and later on the Justice and Truth Alliance (DA) in 2004. Moreover, even the European Union, as a social and political project, enjoyed years of overly positive perception based on a Romanian political cultural pattern related to the belief that social order and welfare will come to Romania only due to external pressures. This belief, it must be said, was partially confirmed during Adrian Nastase government and the first part of the Calin Tariceanu government, when the public perception was that only EU pressures have led to certain policy measures, especially concerning corruption, government regulation that aimed growth of quality of life etc. Currently, the trust in EU diminished and we are at the beginning of a period in which attitudes towards the Union tend to normalize, to be more balanced in terms of the relation favorable – unfavorable.

Post-accession experiences did not convince people's mind of the benefits of this design, neither at the economic level (furthermore, then the crisis came and weakened severely the likely positive effects), nor at the level of political and social climate where anomy reached severe rates and the idea that EU pressure would help Romania in this area is constantly diminishing due to generalized crisis that brings structural problems throughout Europe. For now, the negative attitude towards the EU is blurred only by the fact that people charges mainly their politicians for these deficiencies (related to unfulfilled expectations), and it is them who are not able to bring the 'European cornucopia'. This explanation, however, will very likely erode over the next three to four years, especially with a generalized image of EU 's impotence to ensure the unity of member states facing the crisis.

2. Ideological limitations and lack of strategic vision

One of the most serious problems that appear in Romanian political space is given by the actions and political communication with ideological reduced content, and also by the loss of political and ideological identity for most political parties.

Shaping the ideological structure of the electoral area in Romania's public opinion has a particular history that was built originally on a dichotomous logic such as communism – anti-communism.

According to this idea, the left wing was associated with those who were close (in respect to perceptions) to or just accused of communism, and the right wing was associated with the anti-communism. Because Romanian Social Democratic Party (PDSR) was seen as the image of the former regime in the 90s and thereby took over the left position in the spectrum, its electoral profile gave rise to numerous other dichotomies of ideological orientation associated with the

left – right axis. Thus, the right was associated to a greater extent with elite, as with the large category of intellectuals (PDSR in the early 90s was an ‘anti-elite’ party) [3]. Also the right was associated with students, youth, the social dynamics, the progress or development for the same reasons. Generally speaking, most people look up to the political right, even today. The Left was associated in a great extent with the rural society, but historically this was a real connection in the 90s. The right identifies itself with all the electoral issues launched by the opponents of PDSR, even if sometimes only in name as ‘right’ wing ideas.

This picture grew more complicated, however, in the 2000’s simply because of political parties’ themes and the initial ideological issues have changed the very dynamics of the Romanian political system. The first crucial change started when the accusation of incompetence to many politicians in CDR government collided with that of the elite and the technocrats. The opportunity of CDR member parties, at that time, was that the public considered the National Peasant Party (PNT-cd) the main responsible and hence it captured all the negative capital and stuck with this image until today. On the other hand, real policies of PDSR and later on PSD hardly can be labelled strictly left policies, while the opposition, the CDR, and later the DA Alliance, also supported different types of social policy, but especially launched political messages very close to the left of the political axis.

PD-L and PNL stand at the possible poles of these problems. The former has the most confused ideological situation, both as a result of successive transitions through several value systems, and also of permanent mixture of discourses, hardly fitting a specific ideological area. On the other hand, the policies implemented by PD-L in the last two years resulted in a clearer right position in the public perception without removing entirely ideological inconsistencies. PNL has a better situation enjoying its historical heritage, although in the period of the liberal government, the party took several measures directed to maximize social protection, and now, in opposition with the PSD, is often positioned to the left.

PSD is more clearly defined in the ideology area that we call conventionally ‘the left’, but in this case also we have a sizeable confusion generated by the strong attitude of pro-capitalist and pro-business policies to support small and large market players. Both the speech (where left themes are mixed, usually chaotic, with themes of the right) and the image (where most leaders do not resemble the portrait of leftist politicians) contribute to this confusion.

For example in the IRES research (October 2010), cognitive associations of the political term ‘left’ were 16% with PSD (relatively few), but spontaneous association with PSD leaders was extremely low (1% Victor Ponta, 2% Mircea Geoana and Ion Iliescu)

Interesting is that 5% of options were given also for left by associations with PNL (*i.e.*, about 30% of associations with PSD). The most associations for ‘left’, 24% were ‘bad or useless’ compared to the most associations to right,

21%, which is instead linked to ‘something good, an advantage’. If we were to consider the right, in the same study, associations with PNL and Crin Antonescu (they were together because of the small number of direct associations) were only has 5%. It should be noted that Traian Basescu alone had 3% associations with the right, while the PD-L with Emil Boc had 9%.

It is difficult to define the strategic dimension of political actions in the absence of ideological coherence, but also because at the state level we have a decision-making and bureaucratic administration system with little formalised procedures. In other words, we have a weak state, managed on a low level of knowledge and especially on a societal model based on culture of survival. The issues raised are not the only ones, certainly. If we were to gather a range of problems Romania faces today in terms of good governance we must consider the following:

- Disclaim of real, coherent and functionally ideology adapted to the social, political and economic circumstances of Romanian society;
- Lack of transparency and absence of public nature in political decisions, including public debate on alternative solutions to different types of policies;
- Lack of transparency in respect of connections and influence of economical interest groups on political decision;
- The low level of scientific research in the public policies substantiation, in the governance and policymaking in all its forms, social research, economical, demographic, political type, organizational, etc.;
- The low level of citizens’ knowledge (including the assent of democratic political culture);
- Poor report on policy makers' structure of interests and people, in general between public and personal interest.

3. Citizen, society, state and good governance

The government and the state institutions create by means of management of public policies a defined space for individual freedom and provide a certain level of life quality and social security. However, in relation to society as a whole, the state is the one that defines a certain welfare system, a certain type of economical, legal and political infrastructure. Also, government establishes the major goals of society development and modernization, defending the interests of citizens and society as a whole in relation to internal or external threats.

The state through all its institutions enables good governance, but this must be ensured by the cabinet according to specific features of the political system, to state institutions and cultural model of society. A detailed and critical perspective on the concept of ‘good governance’ belongs to Grindle [4].

The three dimensions according to which we will analyze the state, citizens and society in order to understand the consequences of various models of governance are: *power, knowledge and interests*.

- Power refers to the capacity to generate social action at an institutional or individual level, also to the capacity to decide and exercise social control. In other words it's the ability to fulfil certain objectives with the aid of social forces.
- Knowledge refers to information resources, education, expertise and cultural acquisitions, including political and civic acquisitions available for the state, citizens and society as a whole.
- Interests define the goals that guide social action, interests which may be public, personal or group interests, as we also may consider them as legitimate or not.

The ultimate goal of our approach is to provide an analytical model of political mechanism that can ensure good governance of society, its constituent bases and sets of strategic solutions to public policy intervention. We will examine each of these dimensions.

4. Power and knowledge. Citizen and State

The relation between State and the citizen, in terms of power ratio, domination, and autonomy provides a particular ideological profile, being implicitly a constituent of society. If we start with the general idea that we can associate the two actors with a certain power level, then we resort to a simple analysis where we will consider that any of the two actors may have only two possible levels of power, conventionally called weak and strong. Thus we can construct matrix no.1 (Figure 1)

		Citizen	
		Strong power	Weak power
State	Strong Power	1. Democratic regime	2. Authoritarian regime
	Weak Power	3. False-liberal regime	4. anarchic Regime

Figure 1. Matrix of power relationship between state and citizen.

Matrix cells have labels that are illustrative and not ideological. The 'authoritarian' regime is any arrangement in which the state invades the individual's power, limiting it *de jure* or *de facto*. In this case the state is strong and sometimes effective only on the basis that it can exploit the individual, economically, symbolically and politically by default. The 'false-liberal' regime is one in which the individual is strong, but due to the fact that in the mutual relation the state is weak, unable to manage its institutions. I say false-liberal (or false-democrat) because this system can not provide individual freedoms, his power being defined in a relative manner, by comparison with the state. Its weakness allows social anomy, deviance, especially inefficient state

administration systems: justice, infrastructure, administration etc, but it can promote social initiative and entrepreneurship, usually for private and not public interest. It can be effective in short-term course and contextually. Romania passed in the 90s from type 2 to type 3 of regime.

The 'anarchic' regime is based on a weak state, which tries to increase its strength by weakening or maintaining a low power of citizens. The result is an anomic society, deviant, less efficient, with a limited index of democracy, directly orientated against individual freedoms.

The 'democratic' regime is that which defines separately and not by comparison the power of citizen and of state. In other words, a regime in which the citizen is powerful, but also a regime in which state institutions are strong, efficient and stable. It can be considered an ideal model. In this case, power is not designed as a comparative ratio, the two powers, the citizen's and the state's are not competitive, but reinforce each other.

Obviously, we cannot speak of a strong state and strong citizen only by referring to domination or to mutual independence. The State's goal should be to serve the citizen and the more powerful it is, the better it will serve, potentially, his/her interests. Similarly, the citizen contributes to state power and thus contributes to the development of society and therefore the weaker it is, the lower his role as an essential factor of social development is.

Communism is strong evidence that strong states, without strong individuals, can reach a high level of development for a certain period, but in time they become less efficient or powerful. Rights and freedoms of individuals can not exist outside the state, they must be guaranteed by its well functioning, in other words through what is called 'good governance' they can be translated into reality [4, 5].

It shouldn't be believed that only communism imposed the idea of a strong state in respect to a weak citizen. Most developed countries today tend to reduce the strength of individuals. Moreover, even under communism there were used messages that considered the citizens' power as maximal. In Romania the multilateral developed human being thesis derived from such a vision.

State power means, beyond the relationship with citizens, the ability to administer a society, according to agreed objectives defined as public interest. Power is measured in terms of how social control is exercised, functionality of the state bureaucracy, exercising public interest related to the functioning of institutions [6].

The citizen's power is given by the ability to freely decide on themselves and on their privacy (in terms of individual liberties), to have access to knowledge, to have equality of opportunity like any other citizen, to be involved in management of public interests, to be able to freely express in public critical opinions against any power, to possess and manage private property.

The power of the citizen is provided by the State through the system of rights which are granted and guaranteed for the citizens, but it works along with the knowledge (s)he possesses or not, according to which these freedoms are taken and put into practice. The citizen can be powerful in terms of enshrined

rights by social normativity, but without a high level of knowledge, of culture and education, including political, he/she will only minimally enjoy freedoms possessed. We are therefore talking about an objective power, defined by a legal framework which guarantees certain rights and about subjective power, the one really assumed by an individual, based on a high level of knowledge, which involves knowledge of the system of rights and, more generally, involves existence of a civic activism cultural model. There is no real power of citizens without a minimum level of knowledge. In other words, it is useless to have a cage with an open door, if the canary does not know this, does not understand, but, above all, he learned that it is not good to leave the cage. Therefore, knowledge of citizens is influenced by the level of education, by its level of social, cultural, civic and political competence. This means inclusively competence in knowing and exercising the rights conferred by the power it holds and which may legally pursue.

The two dimensions are the frames of reference for an optimal individual and citizen activity. Moreover, we should say, as a principle, that anything that is good for the state, is also good for the citizen and that the objectives of power and knowledge enlargement, in state administration as for the citizens, are the pillars of any government.

5. Public interest and good governance

The State only works by rule of a political structure or political status. In fact, ensuring a high degree of knowledge, at the state level, is achieved by how society is governed. State knowledge is a simple resource, which may or may not be used. Governance is effective when governments are based on a strong state that has the ability to generate social change, but in conditions where they make optimum use of knowledge resources. Power and knowledge lead to efficiency, including the case of citizens, where the strength of his/her freedoms, together with the knowledge that certifies certain abilities, lead to his/her social productivity.

Good governance is based not only on the two dimensions, but it requires a system of interests that motivates decision makers, interests that may be considered as compliant or not with public interest. Government interests, however, can be personal or group-type, they can be independent or even opposed to public interest.

Good governance is the one that ensures efficiency in public affairs and in management of the whole society based on high levels of citizen and state power, also ensures the high levels of competence and knowledge of citizen and state, based on legitimate interests in the undertaken policies in society based on a cultural model which establishes the core value of the public interest.

Good governance therefore implies a high level of citizen and state power, a high level of knowledge for the sake of the citizen and the state, and a legitimate interest for decision-makers. The state is not strong when it is subordinated to decision makers. When their interests are personal and not

public, the State operating outside the formal framework defined by laws and regulations has always been a weak state. The State centred on the public interest is a function of its power, in other words is a weak state which is first and foremost unable to impose a formal organization with the underlying supposition that the law is more important than the people with decision power. To understand this relationship we will be using a chart (Figure 2).

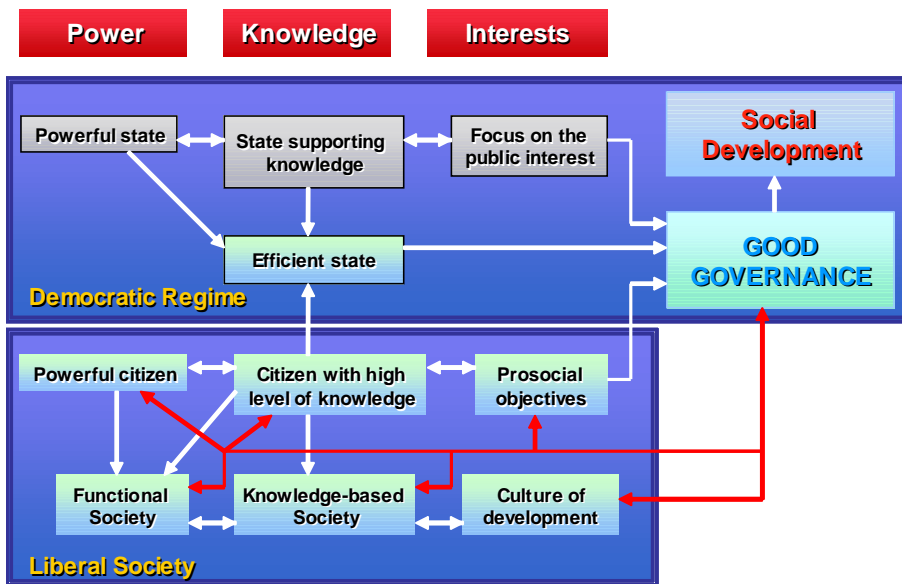


Figure 2. Good governance based on power, knowledge and public interest.

A state's malfunctioning does only not refer to policy makers, but to any members of the state bureaucratic structure that personalizes relationships within public bureaucracy at the expense of the legal framework of organization. Rulers can be part of this process, but this is more general when the state is weak. The existence of a special relationship, personalized, which transcends the formal framework of organization, is a major indicator of a weak power state.

A state can work on defining and pursuing the public interest, or based on informal social network, which transcends the formal framework of organization, the only one within political grip and also the only guarantor of rights. It results that the state based on a formal weak framework is one that jeopardizes the rights and freedoms, one that is inefficient in management of public affairs and public interest, but one that can be effective for some governors or staff level decision makers, as well as for any social structure or institution that uses informal shadowy networks [7].

The power exercised in society is not just the state's. We can speak of power for any social structure that influences political administration at central, regional or community level. Along with the power of state institutions in

modern society, cumulative capital has a great influence in designing the decision. The pluralistic dimension of the society ensures a balance in forces exerted by various structures.

Theoretically, pluralism is a solution to limit the various economic or state external institutions power of influence [8]. As far as the economic pluralism is concerned, an interesting approach in terms of social economy was proposed by Borzaga, Depedri and Tortia [9]. This point of view is more of a defined ideological goal. Practically the monopoly of economic power structures and others is possible as a result of common interests that they might have.

On the other hand the power of economic structures is large enough to be compared with the power of state institutions, and in conditions of weak states, interference in the political decision of economic institutions can be very high. A first thesis is derived from these features. The economic strength of a state should be lower than the state's political power. In other words the power of economic institutions (national or international) must be lower than the power of state institutions. Of course this is a type of relationship that resembles a force with a certain direction, as the whole idea is that power of different actors shouldn't cumulate.

The economic power managed especially by the cumulative capital is one that can limit not only the power of the state, but also the one of the citizen. Limiting its power can be based on state disability to ensure the system of rights and freedoms. We are not only talking about a decrease of objective power, but mostly of the subjective one, as a consequence of decreased level of citizens' knowledge.

Citizens' decreased level of knowledge is thus a legitimate target for those seeking political power or economical growth on limiting the power of citizens. This kind of pressure is not a transparent process, it is a complicated mechanism. First, it must be said that the economical institutions that produce various goods and services require a minimum level of knowledge for the individuals in order to expand their markets. This can be translated in a weak knowledge that allows maximizing the consumption. On the other hand, a certain level of knowledge is necessary for those working in these institutions, in order to have an acceptable productivity. It must be said however in this context that the bureaucratic system allows through separation, simplification and partition of activities a minimum qualification level for most economic activities, contrary to what common sense may say. Much of the working skills are learned in the workplace by most employees, regardless of the field. For these reasons we can say that both political systems and especially economical ones are seeking to limit citizens to access this knowledge. Acquisition of knowledge by citizens is thus defined as public interest and only strong states can ensure the public interest by promoting the enforcement of those goals [5].

As a result, a major objective of good governance in Romania today is to build the state, more exactly to ensure impersonal rules and to eliminate those social networks which manage the state power outside its formal organization. There are several central government objectives. Essentially these are:

- Increasing citizen power based on a high level of knowledge. According to it, citizens will be able to turn objective power in a subjective one, that means a real exertion that determines its political activism, and overall effectiveness of its activities
- Increasing state power by rebuilding and redefining its base, in other words on the basis of impersonal rules and discharge of the power social networks, that manage the state outside its rules of organization.
- Increasing knowledge on how to handle state activities when governing. By increasing competition in the administration, the general level of training and education, by using bureaucracy and with institutional reference to knowledge resources.
- Change of objectives for the political class by moving them towards public interest as opposed to personal or group interest.
- Guiding citizens and society as a whole to a cultural model of development
- Power limitations of economic institutions through economic pluralism. This does not refer to competition, but to an economic system where players have similar powers, but different orientation.

In connection with the last sentence it must be said that the contemporary model of economic activities regulation focuses on market, that means on the idea of competition among actors that are equivalent as offer (otherwise they would not compete). They are not, in fact, equivalent to in terms of economical power. The first problem occurs here because the market does not provide accurate reports as long as the power that ensures the offer is very different. It stimulates competition to some extent and sometimes offers attractiveness, but largely this is more likely just cosmetic. In fact, we have a competition that aims to increase the economical power of economical institutions on market, in order to deceive the theoretical principle of supply and demand. This is because offers of very different size actors do not work in equilibrium on the market. In fact, the market does not provide low prices through competition between offers, but between economic institutions as such. The strong ones impose prices that in time increase rather than decrease. The illusion of lower prices which is everywhere associated with inflation is given by a marketing mechanism unrelated to supply and demand. The economic system as a whole imposed the constraints of moral depreciation as a cultural model of goods, allowing a mechanism of overrating prices of products during their entering the market as a new model and then reducing it in a limited time period. This sale mechanism permanently strengthens the idea that there is a slump in prices due to market competition, when in fact the price system always increases globally. The essence of this mechanism is rooted precisely in the limited knowledge of the consumer, who does not know neither the real value of production costs nor the sophisticated marketing mechanisms that keep him/her trapped in some consuming patterns. Also the consumer is incapable of selecting a real independent offer.

The competition among actors may, of course, have positive influences for consumers, but is not the market that offers these advantages, but the struggle for hegemony of economic institutions. Their tendency to be growing through mergers, acquisitions, elimination of competitors is a constant of the current system. From our point of view the solution is not market or antitrust law system. The idea is not to have at least two or three or n producers in the market, but to have opposing interests of producers. Today, in most cases, there are common interests, namely sales of goods, and competition only appears within a similar offer. And here too there are relative issues; the big companies are dividing markets and over-specialising their offers. It has come today to the point that the production is of hundreds of thousands of billions, but a certain type of product exists in reality provided by a very limited number of international manufacturers.

Economical pluralism refers not to a competition among market players offering the same products, but also among actors with equal economical power. In other words, offering a stimulus to economical activism without merging economical power capable of influencing the political and legal system of rights and freedoms. The economic crisis is caused mainly by growth of the economic power, pressuring the political system in sense that interference in the political system does bring benefits not to stimulate production or supply on the market, but to increase the economical power of these institutions. Marx spoke of the pursuit of profit, but the need to increase earnings is an universal cultural pattern for our age, and belongs not only to those working in the economic sector. The essence of the current economical mechanism is given by the pursuit of power and not of profit, power that can bring income in total or partial independence of production.

Power can bring profit opportunities by simple speculation of society conditions, circumstances or resources of citizens or state, including national and international economic institutions. The real thesis of contemporary capitalism is the pursuit of power. The pursuit of power is allowed by the current system because it provides the free market myth governing the whole system which is not only an illusion given by the idea that there are many bidders on the market, but always based on ignorance on the real value cost of products offered. Economical pluralism is the state's solution to limit and control the economical power. The state should not limit administratively the economic power, but should build the framework for promoting pluralism of opposing interests. Control and balance of power in different structures of society require that the economical pluralism must be seen as a precondition of power control on huge economic structures that affects citizens' and States' power.

Good governance therefore involves strengthening state's, individual citizens' and economic actors' power, on controlling the excess of power for any of them. Of course, maximizing the power of economical actors is potentially a far greater danger than that embodied by citizens.

If we investigate good governance from the perspective of all these factors mentioned above, then they could briefly be expressed as:

- Defining key concepts of governance, which constitute the principles of political action. These are: knowledge and education, freedom and rights of citizens, labor and responsibility, rule of law as maximal type of power, knowledge society, traditions and national symbols, multiculturalism and diversity, strategic vision, privacy and property, elite.
- Focusing governance on citizens, as the sole actor of development, on his/her level of education and competence, including political and civic life.
- Defining the public interest as a frame of reference in social life, in society management and in governance, regardless of its central or local level.
- Focusing governance on knowledge resources in managing the society.
- Assistance for work, competition and meritocracy.
- Subordinating decision makers to the bureaucratic system they belong.
- Promoting economical pluralism.
- Promoting cultural models of development.

6. Knowledge and power in decision-making

In the Romanian public space we got used to face up with the idea that scientific research is necessary, as in the technical and practical field, where such interventions are obviously required, but research in society administration is also needed. However, rather seldom in the past twenty years and even less in recent years governments have used scientific research as a tool to guide public policy, not even those that spoke on system reforms.

Efficiency of political intervention in the economic, political or social system, aimed to solve problems or structural changes, as was shown, relates to the two key variables: knowledge and power. Knowledge and power are mutually assumed, but they work separately as well. Governments may not have expertise, but may have and exercise a great power in the system, or have low power to influence the system, but have high expertise. Power does not automatically assume efficiency and therefore, for example, a strong state is not necessarily effective. Efficiency implies an optimal level of power, but also requires a high level of knowledge on systems, of expertise and competence to act effectively in relation to objectives. Good governance concerns the public nature of interests pursued, at the expense of their personal interests or other pressure groups in society acting illegitimately.

To show more clearly the relation between knowledge, power and interests for decision makers we will use a chart that highlights the complex mechanism of state effective activity of in the case of good governance (Figure 3) [10].

As illustrated above any positioning of the three axes of the governed is possible. This three-dimensional system of governance is based on the idea that the three variables are independent. That means we can have governance with power which is primarily concerned with the public interest, but have no

expertise, and as we may have weak power governance with high expertise. Obviously, public or non public interest is a crucial variable in this process, where a high expertise coupled with high power do not represent good governance. This picture works at all levels, not only the central, or governmental.

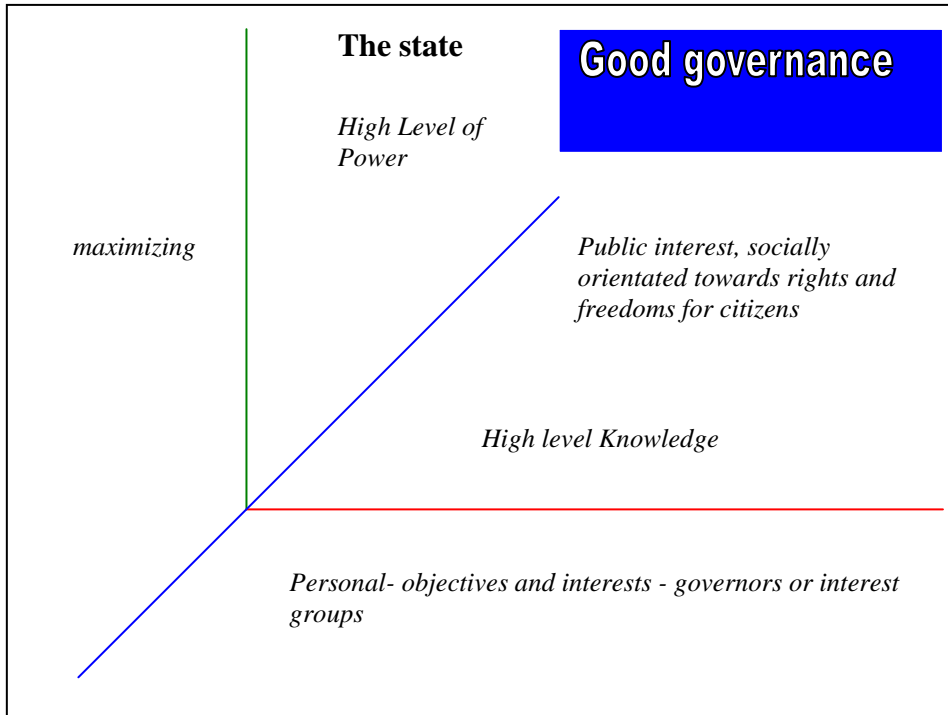


Figure 3. The relation between knowledge, power and interests for decision makers.

7. Survival culture and development culture

If we were to consider two possible characteristics of individuals, their level of knowledge and information translated also in a certain type of political culture, on the one hand, and guidance for their public or personal actions, then we can get a matrix on the types of citizens in terms of their strategy to define in the relation with state institutions. Society's political culture involves certain types of strategies and actions, in respect with state authority and thus to society as such. We can distinguish two polar forms of these models: survival culture and development culture.

Unlike many of the developed western countries, Romania had historically settled, for a long period of time, a cultural model of survival. This model gives priority to cultural adaptability and avoidance from regulation, supports a high anomical regime and defines a regime of considerable obedience to authority. Activism, if any, is more of a private one, usually directed against State authority and again for group or public interests. Survival culture is based

on personal bureaucratic relations, it emphasizes the individual interests against the public interest, encourages inconsistent reporting (as duplicitous) of citizens and institutions to public and private space.

Survival culture does not encourage public activism, but only the private sphere one, which is beyond social control and usually tends to be illegitimate. The proposed obedience to the state and its authorities, a pattern of passivity, of alignment, not interested on solving public problems of the society. He offers personal solutions to the problems of public nature. Usually, the culture of survival, at its political component, encourages an undemocratic model. This model ensures survival in economic, political and social worrying conditions. This factor and its flexibility are the main advantages. The main problem of this model is that it heavily restricts development opportunities across society. This is because it proposes to solve current priority issues (or only them), because is oriented towards consumption and not investment, towards contextual solutions for solving problems rather than solving structural or global system problems

One of Romania's major problems is precisely that most governments, owing inspiration to a political culture dependent on survival model, proposed solutions and short or medium term interventions, without vision and without a strategic dimension. Survival is never about the idea of continuity, which is why it excludes medium and long temporal dimension from government plans. Not incidentally, the last 20 years Romania had only two major projects for large time scale, both had this impact because they were imposed from outside. The two were the NATO project, but especially the EU accession.

We therefore, on the one hand, have two types of political culture of development (which is based most often on a democratic system) and of survival (which is usually explained as a result of lacking democratic regime for longer periods). On the other hand, we have two levels but also polar subjective power level of individuals (which includes knowledge): high and low. The result is a typology of social actors according to their power and their knowledge and according to a cultural model in which they act. We reiterate that the terminology used is not ideological, and it does not refer to certain types of political parties.

		Social cultural model	
		Development	Survival
Citizen's level of power and knowledge	High level	1. True democrat	2. skilful (or weak Democrat)
	Subjective power Low level	3. Obedient	4. Survivor

Figure 4. The matrix that includes types of citizens in terms of cultural and power model.

The four categories resulted from the above matrix (Figure 4) are simple labels for four types of relationship in relation with state authority and individual definition of social activism. It's noticeable that activism is conditioned by the presence of a society cultural model of development if it is to be effective within a democratic vision based on citizen with high level of power and knowledge. In other words, although an individual can have power and knowledge it is possible that from a strategic political orientation point of view, to have a weak liberal model, in terms of its active orientation towards accomplishing individual purposes. This means that the individual tries to speculate or to evade authorities rather than to face them affirming his/her rights. This individual often invoke democratic values, his rights and freedoms, but he solves his problems more by using his relationships in a shadowy manner.

Conversely to the *skilful* type is the *obedient* (3), who works in a cultural context of development, but has low power and / or knowledge. This is because neither has real power, since this is a system that limits the rights of individuals, or has a limited level of political culture in taking real democratic values. Usually high power of states and economic institutions in these societies produce a weak model of citizen publicly committed to the extent that it has no objective power, and especially no subjective one.

Type (4) is the *survivor*, who has a cultural model of survival and has a low level of power and knowledge. The social environment promotes social evasion and informal problem solving. Usually, this type does not have a critical attitude in public, as it manifests exclusively in the private sphere and usually in a reduced form. An important part of Romania's citizens are in areas 3 and 4. In a democratic model to which individuals should aspire is democratic type (1). For Romania, a transition version could be case (2).

8. What is the current situation in Romania?

In this article I suggested a rather intuitive picture of a contemporary Romanian model from the viewpoint of the variables imposed by three-dimensional state functioning model. It is obvious that we now have a huge government deficit of trust, especially on the basis that they did not serve the public interest, where media and even justice revealed numerous examples.

On the other hand the competence deficit is important both in ruling and at a social level. Competence level decreased dramatically in Romania in general, including the departure of 10-15% of skilled labor, a higher percentage on highly qualified workforce. In other words, the knowledge has a tendency to decrease both for citizens and society in general, as well as in governance policy making.

Survival culture is consistent with the existence of a weak state, where formalization is extremely low, where private interests and networks outside the formal framework of state decision prevail. The state power is still higher than that of knowledge and expertise, given that people have very little political and economical power right now. On the other hand the state does not currently enter

into disputes with major economic players, which have high power, they rather offer support, which makes their power to rise and the state to be relatively larger in this context.

This level of state power is low with all aspects previously stressed, because it is based on a comparison with citizens of extremely low power. Chances of good governance are therefore very small. This is because the fundamental element, where knowledge should start, is almost insignificantly in view of the current government, and partially of the political system as a whole. In the current crisis context when there is a favourable climate for anti-democratic models, of limited power for citizens, there is a sort of feeble power created in the last 20 years which is greatly reduced, including low levels of knowledge, namely a process that strengthens the social order, but reduces the genuine functionality of the state..

Finally the second major flaw, referring to the prevalence of personal networks and distortions of the public interest, leads to the existing state power be used in rather non-public interests, which triggers other serious difficulties.

The central element from which we must start is that of knowledge. Here, as I said, we can introduce the issue a democratic values acquisition of cultural models, in other words an internalisation of values and freedoms that are the basis for subjective power to be assumed by individuals. That is why Romania's chance can not be linked, as usually suggested with economic investment, or the economic recovery of strong or weak stability of the financial system etc. Opportunity is given exclusively by the structural changes in the government. These structural changes cover three priority areas:

- Knowledge
- Asserting the public interest
- Formalizing state

Knowledge refers both to the objective of increasing the citizens awareness and to its direct use in ruling. Asserting the public interest means a redefinition of the political model by radical solutions that promote public values and exert pressures in changing the cultural patterns. Finally, formalizing state actually refers to limiting the power of personal decision-making networks.

This objective, which seems less ambitious than previous ones, is not so easy to accomplish too. On the contrary, now the idea proposed is the cementing of the legality of informal structures. Let's just think of the knowledge sector, where legal formalism is outside the normative system. For example the new methodology for admission to doctoral PhD states that only the PhD supervisor can decide one's admission to a doctoral program, based on a strict personal assessment, eliminating the idea of institutional structure to implement and monitor compliance with certain criteria.

Many of the public affairs are settled in Romania strictly at a personal level, making the public interest to be constantly threatened, and by default the state is weak, at least in relation to Romania's development needs. For this reason Romania's chance to develop is very thin because the potential for change is not only low, but decreases over time. The current crisis can only worsen

things, partially because some say the country is not directly connected to economic and banking mechanism, so is less affected. Moreover, the survival culture and citizen with low power make absence of exogenous factors leading to no major changes. We wouldn't want to be understood that that there is no discontent in large parts of the population for the present situation. On the contrary, there are frustrations and tensions. They don't automatically turn into factors that promote social change. These changes may occur only under a new ideological model, able to structure complaints and to gather citizens' and social and institutional structures' power, other than the state's.

In other words, building an array of power to summarize the strength of individuals can be the force that generates governance fundamental changes. The present lack of trust in the political class, including the one in classical ideologies, as perceived by the general public, determine voters to fall for any ideological proposals, even when this ideologies are not able to structure the power field of the society, but simple goals or theses meeting certain expectations. Dissatisfaction with the policies and traditional ideologies is specific to any crisis. This is because, usually, classical ideologies in such situations more or less accuse each other, in the benefit for new ideologies, or appearing to be new as they become more visible.

In Romania's present situation in which the credibility of the political class as a whole is low, amidst major economical trouble, the opposition representatives still haven't got a confidence level over 50%, a new ideology is needed. For the moment we have witnessed only creation of new parties and political movements, that don't seem to propose anything new in terms of ideology.

References

- [1] S. Dumitru, *Lumile sociale ale migrației românești în străinătate*, Polirom, Iași, 2010, 37.
- [2] R.-E. Cucuruzan, *Migrația și mobilitatea forței de muncă din România în contextul integrării europene*, Fundația pentru Studii Europene, Cluj Napoca, 2009, 18.
- [3] A. Bulai, *Mecanismele electorale ale societății românești*, Paideia, București, 1999, 137.
- [4] M.S. Grindle, *An International Journal of Policy, Administration, and Institutions*, 17 (2004) 525.
- [5] M.S. Grindle, HKS Faculty Research Working Paper Series, **RWP10-023** (2010) 1.
- [6] A. Țăranu and Ș. Stănciugelu, *Resursele Puterii. Statul neopatrimonial în România*, Bastion, Timișoara, 2009.
- [7] A. Bulai, *Politizare versus birocratizare*, in *Reconstrucție instituțională și birocrație publică în România*, Fundația Societatea Reală, București, 2009, 202.
- [8] J. Bohman, *Public Deliberation, Pluralism, Complexity and Democracy*, MIT Press, Massachusetts, 2000.
- [9] C. Borzaga, S. Depedri and E. Tortia, *Journal of Co-operative Studies*, 44 (2011) 19.
- [10] G. Muligan, *Arta Strategiei Publice*, CA Publishing, București, 2010, 108.