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**RATIONALITY AND DECISION
IN
PUBLIC POLICIES**

- DOCTORAL THESIS -

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SUMMARY

The study of public politics and the public political process is a step that must be observed and analyzed today, from a different perspective to arrive at a complete knowledge of the domain. Decisional models applicable to the whole policy cycle gives us an insight into policy process, but there needs to be a separation and highlighting and a corroboration with the individual space - individual actor involved in policy, collective actors, the institutional and institutionalized framework for conducting their environmental policies in which they exist. From this point of view, it must be on the one hand, an objective, characterized by rationality, processes, steps, active and enabled decisions existent within the political cycle involved in the decision-making process in public, and, on the other hand, subjective side - which is based on the actors involved, from their motivations, their degree of inclusion in the working group of the institution.

This analysis started from these considerations and proposed a merging of their public policies to

reach a clearer picture of how the public political process works. From this point of view, the first three chapters of this study propose to underline the major theoretical concepts (the two directions mentioned above: Objective - rational decision making, subjective - the actor / actors) in the world of public politics.

Chapter I of the paper is a foray into the world of decision making in general, and of rationality and, at its end, sees the following three concepts: decision, rationality and public politics overlapping. Decision, as reason and rationality are old concepts that man has always appealed in different fields, and can be correlated with the very essence of human nature. To reason basically means making a decision and these logical operations, objective, most often are made by individuals according to their nature as social beings (and not only that). The act of making a decision, most often rational, is present in all areas of the ontic from the social to the political, economic, cultural, religious, etc. Moreover, the decision process can be considered a rational process, and rationality may overlap the existing typology of identifiable decisions.

In the area of public politics, decision and rationality can be found in the political cycle from establishing an agenda, political formulation, decision making, and implementation and evaluation of endings and purposes that can determine certain reasoning. We do not support by this that all models are

models of rational decision , but that all active decision making, decisions - that produce processes - and hence types of rationality - are ways to make decisions, to reason.

The second chapter is thus a logical continuation of the first, in the way that it analyzed decision and decision models identifiable in public politics space. Rationality is activated primarily in the classical model of the rational actor, calling for the kind of rationality that is based on objective criteria and mainly economic principles: the best politic decision is the one that involves achieving the best result with the lowest cost in relation to the greatest benefit. The model of limited rationality is to place elements of uncertainty and inability to reach decision makers in decision-making opportunities that favor the best decisions for lack of information, techniques, resources or political support. The incremental model claims that the decision is not necessarily rational but satisfying: the rational and totally objective process that enables to choose the best policy isn't activated, but it is the result of negotiations and it takes into account the context of limited time, and active examples of the administrative space until then. The bureaucratic organization talks about the cold rationality of the classical bureaucrat, but argues that in the decision-making process certain groups and their hierarchies become involved, special relations are forged between chiefs and their staffs, games of

diplomacy and political background. The joint model appeals to a global overall rationality of action, environmental decision making, but does not lose sight of the need to allow judgment being made contextually, contingent features that go beyond any logic of global decision. The surcode model argues that decisions are not the result of a streamlined decision-making process, but are just decisions that policy makers make at a time based on common expectations, language use, common label without any finality. The punctuated equilibrium model contends that decision-making in public policy is the result of influences from the environment, through environment understanding especially political influences. The garbage bin model argues that the decision is not rational, but is the result of a random selection of the actors involved in the decision making of public policy projects, depending on the opportunities of the moment. The critical convergence model marks the decision making in the field as a success if the actors involved are properly identified and are involved in every stage of the design of public policy. Holistic rationality is not recognized neither in this model, but it can recognize individual rationality of actors and their subsequent involvement. The game model places the decision and the decision making process in a world of uncertainty in which missing information and insufficient resources at a time

shape decision-making in a game that may create both winners and losers or free riders.

Hence, the present study was proposed to identify a matrix of decision analysis and decision-making in public policy through operational space of three decision models: rational actor model, incremental model and the bureaucratic organization model. These were chosen for the construction of the matrix (which will result in the instruments used in the research - questionnaire), these decision models that may provide an explanation of the political cycle at all stages; those models that are sufficiently different from each other, without any sub-models of other designs, and may activate certain different types of rationality at their level.

The created analytical matrix proposed the shaping of the following dimensions: actors, processes and mechanisms of decision-making and types, types of rationality and ways of reasoning and values and principles in terms of three decision models: rational actor model, incremental model and bureaucratic organization model.

The common elements and their differences being established thus building the analytical matrix, **Chapter III** places the decision making process in the subjective space and the subjectivity of the actors involved in the public policy process in general environmental sphere, trying to determine how psychological, social and political elements may influence decision-making

in the universe beyond policy decision models. Beyond the objective rationality of processes, mechanisms, and individual personality - an actor can influence how decisions are made in the area of public administration. The personality of the decision maker, which includes skills, temperament and character, all can influence this process which runs permanently in the public eye, but may have influenced the private space of the individual. Individual skills can determine its involvement in the process of communication in public space; can lead to decisions with more ease or difficulty, or on the contrary. Temperament can enable a greater flow and less energy that the decision-maker to put it at the service of deliberations in administrative space. On the other hand, relational character is thus a sub-value and self-adjustment of the personality that is expressed by a set of attitudes, values and attitude towards himself: humility, pride, dignity, sense of inferiority, guilt, attitude to others, to society: humanism, patriotism, political attitudes and attitude to work. All these values enabled or not by the decision makers can create some type of motivation in the decision making process. This motivational activation or rather lack of it, affects the safe decision to carry out a draft of public policy.

In the same way a specific quartet of values is activated - freedom, equality, justice, solidarity - values that can be so subjective to the outcome of a particular individual foundation, but also the

result of a particular kind of culture and political socialization - especially if we're talking about targeting the ideologies of the right or left wings of the individuals. From these beliefs to adopting public policies with the same character may be only take a step. The fact is that all these dimensions must be taken into account when you want to investigate this area of the decision and the decision-making process in public politics. Establishing the theoretical framework of the research, the following chapters - **Chapters IV and V** – refer to the implementation of the dimensions of our research designed to answer the following problem: What are the characteristics of the decision and the decision-making process in the area of public politics? Which factors should be taken into account when analyzing the decision making process? What is the decision-making model alongside of related factors may explain in the highest degree of completeness decision making in relationship to the whole politic cycle?

Based upon this we conducted a field survey questionnaire which was developed on the matrix previously created and described in the historical Moldavia counties - Botosani, Suceava, Piatra Neamt, Iasi, Vaslui, Bacau, Galati, Focsani - the municipalities cities mentioned (making a description of the methodology in **Chapter IV**). Analysis met both internal validity criteria - Cronbach alpha index is 0.7016, and the external validity - calling for a nationally representative

sample of 648 respondents, employed in municipalities, with a margin of error of about 5%).

The results are presented in the our analysis in **Chapter V**: first we identified the decisional model in the general model in order to outline a general decision at the administrative level (the analysis is partially built on each dimension), then identified the role that psycho-socio-political elements have at the level of the decision-making process in political space, and, finally, I tried to outline comparisons between the general model of decision making and identifying particular models - in relation to each administrative center. Identifying the characteristics of an administrative decision model generally involves valuing the rational actor model in what is essentially a series of specifics in the other two models. So we can talk about a decision model adapted identifiably in Romanian administration (which we called here "the general model ") is a rational actor model underline.

General features of the model are summarized, as follows:

1. The base unit is the individual;
2. Actors are clearly established and defined, they are not completely independent;
3. The motivations of the subjects are recognized, but are subjected to the community's interest;

4. Decision makers try to eliminate dissension, strife, errors, and the actors are under superior control

5. The decision-making process involves the following steps: identify the problem – the goals are measured - identifying all the alternatives - choosing the best solution – applying it – reaching the goal;

6. In the decision making process, it is necessary to discuss all issues related to making a decision;

7. Assessing all the alternatives and then all the consequences of the decisions;

8. Decision making is a coherent act, strategically planned, clear purpose from the beginning;

9. Decision-making is seen as an institutionalized process that seeks a clear purpose;

10. In decision-making, majority overrules minorities;

11. It is important that correct information and the skills of those involved in the process of decision making are appealed to from the start

12. The traits of the decision are : motivation for efficient use of resources, to achieve the greatest gain possible , teleological, well established and respected from the beginning;

13. Criteria by which it takes shape are mainly economic: costs, benefits, common good;

14. Values and enabled principles, are especially economic : the most important is

efficiency, then: utility, stability, clarity, objectivity, experience, brevity;

15. In addition, individual actors, in general, participate in decision-making institution as a whole or its representatives at management level;

16. Decision makers are clearly delimited by departments, groups, structures, at group level, there is a clear structure, and strict hierarchies to recognize loyalty and develop relationships;

17. Decision makers may sometimes err in their decisions;

18. In designing the process cooperation between members, between groups matters most

19. Partnerships are recognized, but they must obey the general rules of the process;

20. The decision-making process may be reinitiated if it shows a fault along the way;

21. Decisions may be new but can be modeled after the old ones;

22. Decisions have a strategic and planned character (from a political perspective and negotiation guidance);

23. Decision authority can be challenged, but it is rare when that happens;

24. Communicating at the decision level can be from decision maker to the citizen, and vice versa.

The 24 traits identified in this general model provide a decision-making model unit, insisting that this unit is guided by two broad guidelines: the rational actor model features (traits 1-13 outlined here) and the nuanced and

individualized features of this general model (traits 14-24). Analysis approach is continued in Chapter V of how psycho-socio-political factors influence decision making.

The first conclusive question links to the role that **personality** plays in the process of making these decisions. This way I've outlined and quantified two theories: one developed by Bruno Stefan (theoretic type and religious type) and Stephen P. Robbins (conscientious type). In relation to the theoretic and religious type, in general the rational actor model is enabled regardless of personality type discussed, but its items are modified, on the one hand, the frequencies are different, and, more than that the other two decision models are enabled differently compared to what we have previously identified as features of the general model. Regarding Robbins's theory, differences between the general model and the results obtained are much smaller regarding the conscientious type than in the other case. The conclusions that can be drawn are therefore identical as in the theory and operations taken from Bruno Stefan.

Relationship between **temperament** and scope of decision makers resulted in typologies and temperaments: melancholic, choleric, phlegmatic, and sanguine. It can be said that, at the macro level, the rational actor model is the most valued. However, there are differences which arise from one another with regard to temperaments and the features of the model. The

closer to the general pattern are phlegmatic. Otherwise, all typologies have nuances of the general model, choleric being the most nuanced.

Regarding the **respondents' satisfaction** with the work place and daily activities is one of general satisfaction (63.9%), work is comfortable, but also involves elements of coercion, stress, boredom, liability sustained lack of appreciation or lack of financial motivation. As with personality, the degree of satisfaction in the building of the general model generally occurs at a particular level by adapting it to the macro level, but the differences are not very large.

To identify **the needs** of the decision makers Maslow's theory was enabled to determine the pyramid of their needs. It has the following configuration: the first is psychological needs, and self-development, followed by needs of appreciation, social needs and, ultimately, safety needs. Regarding the motivational factors that may influence the degree of motivation of the decision makers, Herzberg, they can be of two types: extrinsic or hygiene factors - pertaining to the conduct of work, relationships with others - and motivators or intrinsic - related to responsibility, recognition, satisfaction at work.

As our level of analysis concluded is that the overall direction is mainly to extrinsic factors and then to intrinsic factors. The ratio of people oriented towards extrinsic factors and intrinsic factors is still quite balanced, but extrinsic factors

change frequencies a lot less than intrinsic factors. Both factors create new nuances of the general model (any size is not totally identical with that of the overall model).

Moreover, our analysis to outline the relationship between extrinsic factors and respondents' motivation a theory by Stephen P. Robbins was deployed.

Organizational culture was measured at the institutional level, with the following possibilities: open, which in decision makers take risks, human-oriented team, for development that supports its employees, culture is one of the closed-structured, goal-oriented, individualistic, stability-oriented, and tense. Regarding decision orientation towards a particular type of organizational culture existing in the institution, the majority of respondents adhering to a closed organizational culture. It should be noted that the more open culture is closer to the general pattern. The more the culture is closed the more it strays from the frequencies obtained in the matrix.

Regarding elements named as **being political** in the study the answer to the question whether the **political orientation of the actor-decider ideologically influences** decision-making models was answered. In the analysis we calculated the political orientation of the decision maker. Scores on the degree of political orientation makers are extremely close to those obtained in the general model, but it should be noted that - unlike the above factors (psychological or social), there is a

much stronger denunciation model. It seems that political orientation towards politics in general, changes behavior becoming more involved in making decisions in the administrative space. Placing respondents ideologically from right to left, as in the other values considered here enables the rational actor model and, moreover, the percentages are closer to the results of what we have called the general pattern. However the left oriented are loyal in relationship to the general pattern. On the other hand, respondents also identify the right oriented model this decision stating that averages each analytical matrix size is larger than the rational actor model (MR) more achieved overall and once again additionally, higher than respondents oriented left side ideologically.

Moreover, in an attempt to validate this general model (adapted by compiling three active models: rational actor, incremental, bureaucratic organization), I submitted at the end of Chapter V of a comparative approach in cities: Iasi (IS), Vaslui (VS), Piatra Neamt (NT), Bacau (BC), Suceava (SV), Botosani (BT), Focsani (FC) and Galati (GL). In relation to the rational actor model and general model (as we called), all the administrative centers fall in general, from each dimension in part, in the same decision model - the general model, claiming yet the percentages obtained by each administrative center are different from those of the general model and nuances occur by activating other models in

particular. At the macro level, however, the same active model is retained.

On the other hand, however, every administrative center approached more or less to the general model (and this was seen by calculating the average of the frequencies on each dimension separately).

Hence, we can draw some conclusions on this aspect of our comparative analysis:

- Every city enables the rational actor model as a model in public politics decision-making (in all the dimensions of the analytical matrix) rather than incremental model or bureaucratic organization model;

- Only when speaking of actors in the Focsani, the bureaucratic organization model gets a higher frequency than the rational actor model;

- Bacau city is the one where most percentages are totaling zero, and regarding the size of the processes and mechanisms it obtains percentages equal to zero for the incremental model (does not activate it at all);

- Bacau city gets a percentage of 100% for the rational actor model size processes and mechanisms on one item of the questionnaire;

- The null frequencies (0%) are identified at the level of the other models and other cities, but are more heterogeneous;

- The rational actor model assumes different forms in relation to the frequency percentages for each dimension separately and in relation to the arithmetic average of the percentages obtained

either on each dimension separately or collectively, or the difference between the average values crossing the rational actor model took as reference and identified overall and those that are below this average-reference;

- Piatra Neamt and Iasi are cities that are closest to the formula of the referential model identified overall and the least approaching one is Focsani;

- Piatra Neamt and Suceava cities seem to be closest to the formula of the general rational actor model identified overall, noting that for Suceava, the model is much less active against Piatra Neamt;

- The model identified in Suceava is much less active against the identified model of Iasi, but the formula identified in Suceava is closer to the referential formula.

- The model identified in the city of Iasi, means through the positive values of the second item of the formula, a stronger activation pattern in relation to what we have identified and named in the general pattern of this analysis identified overall and adapted while in relation to the classical rational actor model (or pure), and in relation to incremental model and bureaucratic organization model.

Analysis of the decision models, and decision-making policy decisions in the area enables, as we have shown conclusively to date, a nuanced decision-making model.

This model has been called here the general model, being a combination of the rational actor model mostly but with influences of the bureaucratic organization model and incremental model, as operationalized in the matrix analytical models.

The overall model is generally activated regardless of psycho-socio-political elements introduced in the analysis, regardless of the administrative center that you take into account. At the level of cumulative frequencies, intensities, the model is enabled. Thus, we can finally provide answers to the questions our analysis.

1. What model / decisional models are applied in the decision-making process in the administrative area of public politics?

2. Beyond the decisional models that are subjective factors – do individuals influence decision making?

3. Can external factors shape the decision-making process – the outlined administrative decision model?

The first question outlines its response to the general model as a nuanced model of the rational actor model aside the bureaucratic organization model and the incremental model. The answer to the second question of the study addresses the needs and satisfaction of the decision maker, its motivations, personality, temperament, all these factors create nuances of

the general model, especially the temperament of the decision maker.

External factors nuance the general model, here we can identify the general direction of actor-decider towards political behavior and political and his ideological orientation to the left or right. It is noted here that politics produces the most spectacular changes, but it is worth noting the degree of closure of the right organizational culture or orientation of the individual. The overall goal of this analysis is therefore achieved, we outlined an administrative decision model, and the identified hypothesis is not invalidated: the decisions identified at the level of public politics are customized according to what I called, in general, environmental changes. From this point of view, in **Chapter VI**, we considered that, based on the factors to be taken into account to draw the features of the decisional model at the administrative level, the idea of the environment in general and the psycho-social novelty items. political line passing strict administration and public politics field, it is necessary to look at public politics through a trans disciplinary analysis and based upon a theoretical and practical vision.

From this point of view, we concluded that the analysis of the decision-making process in the sphere of public policy and administration must face these new challenges, challenges that need to be taken into account and should always subsume

to a paradigmatic vision that does not lose them from focus.

The proposed solution was to take into account, that **paradigm of organizational behavior** as a paradigm that enables all the criteria that we have introduced in our theoretical and empirical analysis level, such as individual, group, processes, mechanisms, values, motivations, skills, temperament, personality, political, organizational culture, decisions, reasons, and needs. Moreover, this paradigm is achieved through the three very important analytical levels which must be taken into account in public policy in the area of decision-making: the individual level (taken as a separate subject, but present in the decision-making process), the group (taken as a whole institution) and the organizational system (where administrative units are present).

Moreover, placement under this paradigmatic umbrella must be placed at the administrative level. Our solution was that of **collaborative governance** which can provide policy and decision-making at this level, an integrative framework, which includes: intersectional and administrative collaboration, planning of cooperation, collaboration and decision-making process, network management composed of actors and decision makers, collaborative public management, environmental governance and conflict management. To this integrative framework model we can add: different political

arenas, administrative traditions, sectoral scales, geographical, sectoral processes and flexible mechanisms. Moreover, this framework implies general context (that is: elements of legal, political, socio-economic factors, environment, all of which influence the processes and mechanisms in the collaborative governance) factors connected with the idea of driving (elements of leadership, management models, interdependencies, uncertainties and information) and collaborative dynamic elements (collaborative actions, impacts, adaptation, patterns of collaboration, decision-making, motivation shared amongst actors and decision makers and their ability to adhere to the established action determined at organizational level, community action).

As can be seen both paradigms identified above are a mix between the sphere of the individual (behavior, collaborative) and the scope of the organization, institutional (organizational governance). It is largely a subjective report between the subjective sphere and objective sphere, or, why not, between private and public space. This, we believe that it must be taken into account when we consider the decision and decision making within public politics, administrative and the general decision model identified in our empirical analysis certifies the presence of these dimensions, and the duality of the two previous presented areas.

In conclusion, public politics (here assuming the decision-making process) and current public politics analysis (which means the methodologies and tools applied and applicable) must adapt to new visions, paradigms, such as organizational behavior and collaborative governance. This adjustment can not be made except by a transdisciplinary approach that enhances areas such as public administration, public policy, psychology, sociology, economics and political science in general (given: comparative analysis of the systems and the study of ideologies), elements of administrative law and beyond, etc.. Public politics and public administration in addition to the studying of decisions and the decision-making process is therefore placed in a metaconstruct streamlined, but with the most diverse influences in the directly administrative line and the subjective individual line - the decision makers and general human behavior. Enabling support towards the more powerful subjective line, particular within government and public policy and providing proper importance, while, of the two main directions we consider it to be the direction in which politics, decision-making and administrative space evolve. This current development therefore means, the placement of behavioral paradigms and collaborative governance in the sphere of politics.

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