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Exploring Change in Romania: To be or not to be 'Joined-up Government'?

Diana – Camelia Iancu¹

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Abstract

Addressing the case of Romania, a country with recent New Public Management history and ongoing decentralization reform, otherwise excluded from the target countries of joined-up government relevant literature, this paper aims at identifying institutional evidence of vertical and horizontal coordination (Pollitt 2003: 37). To this end, the article has two parts: 1) the conceptual explorative part, and 2) the analysis part, which uses the empirical data gathered from strategic documents of the Romanian decentralization reform and interviews with high representatives of the Romanian local and central governments involved in the reform process, in order to identify a possible indicator for “joining-up” practices (Pollitt 2003:44).

Keywords: joined-up government, decentralisation, coordination, governance

Introduction

The New Public Management agenda, as commented by scholars of the past couple of decades (Hood, 1991; Osborne and Gaebler 1992; Rhodes, 1996; Peters and Pierre, 1998; Pollitt and Bouckaert, 2000; Lane, 2000), as well as the public discourse focusing on re-organizing, re-modelling and re-forming the government, had genuinely meant to the author foretelling the death of hierarchical control and centralism for the sake of loosen coordination and decentralization. Slowly and (generally) silently, government died and governance was set in place. Practicing the latter led however to discovering, *inter alia*, the fragmentation of the public sector and public services and accordingly embracing the “getting better” promises offered by an increase of integration, coordination, and capacity (Christensen and Laegreid 2007:1060).

¹ PhD. Diana – Camelia Iancu is assistant professor at National School of Political Studies and Public Administration, Faculty of Public Administration, dciancu@snsps.ro

Seen as an 'end state in which public policies and programmes are characterized by minimal redundancy, incoherence and lacunae' (Perri 6, Raab and Bellamy 1998:111), coordination will directly concern this paper, as part of a "joined-up government" argument. Closely connected to the concept of coordination, the latter was defined as 'the aspiration to achieve horizontally and vertically coordinated thinking and action' (Pollitt 2003:35).

Addressing the case of Romania, a country with recent New Public Management history and ongoing decentralization reform, otherwise excluded from the target countries of joined-up government relevant literature, this paper aims at identifying institutional evidence of vertical and horizontal coordination (Pollitt 2003: 37). To this end, the article has two parts: 1) the conceptual explorative part, necessary to the refinement of the ideas of government and coordination inside the decentralizing Romania (following, to some extent, the line of argument used by Christensen and Laegreid 2007); and 2) the analysis part, which uses the empirical data gathered from strategic documents of the Romanian decentralization reform and interviews with high representatives of the Romanian local and central governments involved in the reform process, in order to identify a possible indicator for "joining-up" practices (Pollitt 2003:44).

The expected results suggest that in the Romanian decentralization reform one can talk of "early joined-up government" institutional practices; the paper will be offering also a potential starting point in the researching of similar practices inside Central and Eastern European countries with administrative and political profiles similar to those of Romania.

"On the road to Governance": Changing the framework

Read in English, "Government" usually refers to both policy making (parliamentary) bodies and executive / administrative structures, and as of the 19th century is employed when referring to central as well as to local authorities. For most of the continental Europe however, "Government" (*Regierung* in German, *Gouvernement* in French or *Guvern* in Romanian) equates with the exercise of sovereign power, seen to be wielded solely at the central level, and has rather profound

administrative and hierarchical nuances (Wollmann, 2006:1420-1421). Be it as it is, Europe comes in agreement when considering the similar challenges set before its different governments in the past few decades: The emergence of the so called wicked problems (Rittel and Weber, 1973), which fail to be resolved with traditional analytical approaches due to difficulty in definition, multiple causality and a lack of well described potential solutions (Humpage, 2005:50; Johnson, 2005:19-20) next to (amongst others) the (new) market logic, placing the knowledge, procedures and institutional memory of bureaucracies in the dark corner (Hess, 2003:3) led into considering that Government died, and Governance was set in place (Osborne and Gaebler, 1992; Rhodes, 1996).

Focusing upon the wider processes through which public policy is shaped at central and local level, governance embraces the democratic management of a community² and generically refers to the development and implementation of public policy through a broader range of public and private agencies than those traditionally associated with the governmental organization (Wilson, 2000:44). J. Rosenau (1992:4) notes in this regard that while the classical governmental activities implied the existence of a formal authority, governance focuses on mutually shared objectives and activities not necessarily derived from the legally prescribed responsibilities, nor based on coercive power when being implemented. World Bank acknowledges also that accountability, political instability and violence, governmental efficacy, quality of regulations, and the rule of law and corruption control are basic indicators for assessing the practice of governance (Kaufmann, Kraay and Mastruzzi 2005:4). At its turn, but again rather normative, the European Union defines governance as a set of regulations, processes and attitudes which influences the exercise of power at European level, especially in what concerns the openness, participation, accountability, efficacy and coherence [COM 2001 (428)].

It may be therefore argued that four key principles - accountability, participation, predictability, and transparency ground the Governance

² Where in a "democratic management" context, different stakeholders are recognized with the right to freely formulate and express their preferences, and receive an official and non-discriminatory answer to them. Further on the issue of "democratic management" in the "governance" debate context, in Iancu and Klimovsky (2008).

structures. The former would have been required for a sound management of public resources, an enabling environment for the private sector and a productive partnership between the public and private sectors which did not degrade into closed circles of influence and privilege. These variables and several others, represent in fact significant parts of the New Public Management (NPM) argument, one closely connected to the topic of Governance.

Reference point in the world's public management reform, NPM advocates³ in favor of restructuring the Government following private sector patterns. The focus on: efficiency; output and performance assessment; private ownership and alternative forms of delivering the public services; management decentralization; and enhanced mechanisms for reporting and monitoring, become pillars of the theoretical argument developed by the NPM literature (Kaboolian, 1998; Gaster, 1999:36; Hope, 2001:120; Gruening, 2001). As commented by T. Bovaird (2003:38-39), adherents of the NPM school of thought tend to include belief in: the supremacy of market-based procurement approaches to traditional in-house provision; and the "business methods" for organizing services; and wish for: redesigning ("re-engineering") organizational processes around the needs of service users and other stakeholders; while being concerned with the inefficiencies produced by political interference in managerial decisions.

The "shopping basket for those who wish to modernize the public sectors of Western industrial societies" (Pollitt, 1995:133), the NPM agenda generated different national experiences with subsequent different consequences. And as generous as NPM reforms might have been in terms of determining the public sector into generating clearer visions and goals, more professional autonomy, more easily measurable performance and results and clearer accountability, the vertical specialization or devolution and horizontal differentiation, they also led researchers into believing that they were partly responsible for the fragmentation of public apparatus in many countries (including the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia and New Zealand, NPM trail-

³ *Inter alia*, Hood (1991); Osborne and Gaebler (1992); Pollitt (1993); Rhodes (1996); Peters and Pierre (1998); Cope and Goodship (1999); Pollitt and Bouckaert (2000); Denhardt and Denhardt (2000:549); Kettl (2000); Lane (2000); Hope (2001:120).

blazers) (Christensen and Lægreid, 2001; Pollitt and Bouckaert, 2004; Perry 6, 2005; Christensen and Lægreid, 2007).

And as NPM proved its slight inadequacy and “Governance” met the wicked issues of today, requiring: a holistic, not partial or linear thinking; a capacity to think outside and work across organizational boundaries; ways of involving the public in developing responses; embracing a willingness to think and work in completely new ways, entertaining the unconventional and pursue the radical; a new style of governing for a learning society (Clarke and Stewart, 1997:3, in Ling, 2002:622), the issue of coordination was raised (Eggars and Goldsmith 2004:8).

Governance by “Joined-up Government”

If coordination is to be considered the end state in which policies and programmes of the government are characterized by minimal redundancy, incoherence and lacunae (Peters, 1998:296), and “joined-up government” is a phrase which denotes the aspiration to achieve horizontally and vertically co-ordinated thinking and action (Pollitt, 2003:35), then “Joined-up government” is being practiced before it was so named (Richards and Kavanagh, 2000; Ling, 2002:639; Pollitt, 2003:36-37; Humpage, 2005:49; Christensen et al. 2007:390).

Exploring the joined-up government’s “business card” is what follows: What does the concept stand for; What are its advantages once experienced in practice; and How can one identify a joined-up arrangement - are the key questions to be addressed in the short section that follows.

As an umbrella term describing various ways of aligning formally distinct organizations in pursuit of the objectives of the government of the day (Ling, 2002:616), joined-up government implies working across organizational boundaries (be it between portfolios or departments within a tier of government, different tiers of government, government and other sectors or the community etc.) without removing the boundaries themselves. This *modus operandi* is said to:

- help strengthening the overall accountability of the public sector, by achieving the democratic legitimacy through shared

responsibility and building a consensus around policies (McGhee, 2003:348; Johnson, 2005:6);

- make better use of scarce resources (Pollitt, 2003:35); and,
- promote innovation, by bringing together different people, backgrounds and organizations (SSA, 2007:4).

Prudence is surely necessary, as joint working should not be considered a panacea to the public sector's problems (Barton and Quinn, 2001:51). However, if reducing the scale to local government and considering the apparent increasing local institutional complexity given by the shift from local government towards more loosely structured local governance (Darlow et al., 2007:118), it may be argued that joined-up government brings an interesting addition to the debate on the subsidiarity principle as defined by the European Charter of Local Self-Government⁴.

Both a promoter of decentralization (for it stimulates the exercise of power as closely as possible to the citizens) and a supporter for centralization (since the responsibilities are likely to be transferred from the local level to the centre, if considered to be "better achieved" by the national authorities), the principle of subsidiarity answers to the coordination problem assuming that the elements of the governmental system are neither submitted to an hierarchical input, nor left to decide whether to join a coalition or to abandon it. The system's parts chose the coordination (because surviving outside the system is harder), yet not the subordination (since they are aware of the fact that the system cannot manage without them) (Balducci, 1996:48). Joined-up government may be viewed as such as a possible practical expression of implementing subsidiarity.

Arguments in favor of this view are possible to encounter once reading strategic documents aimed at reforming local government in the United Kingdom and Australia⁵. According to them, "joined-up government" is a

⁴ Article 4.3: "Public responsibilities shall generally be exercised, in preference, by those authorities which are closest to the citizen. Allocation of responsibility to another authority should weigh up the extent and nature of the task and requirements of efficiency and economy".

⁵ For the British case the reference is directed towards: DETR (1998a) and DETR (1998b). In the case of Australia, the document referred to here is SSA (2007). Comments on these documents are to be found, *inter alia*, at: Richards and Kavanagh

model of decision making, which allows active bringing of the government closer to the people (DETR, 1998b: paragraphs 3.49, 3.59, 4.3; DETR, 1998a: paragraph 1.7, corroborated to paragraphs 1.9 and 1.14); while limiting (to an extent) the failures in achieving best value or acceptable standards of service (DETR, 1998b: paragraph 7.48; SSA, 2007:4)⁶.

Practicing joined-up government is not an easy task, however. "It is vital that we lose the skills of battle and find the skills of organization and partnership...." (H. Armstrong, 1997 in Wilson, 2000:52); the organizational cultures, skills, capabilities, and management systems and structures that support collaborative and integrated ways of working become as such critical:

[...] One of the principal barriers to successful joined-up service delivery is the assumption that better use of traditional government systems and processes will result in joined-up solutions. Traditional systems and processes are designed to deliver government services from centrally controlled, vertically organized agencies. These systems and processes become increasingly inappropriate as government agencies move away from traditionally organized service delivery towards more customer-centric joined-up approaches". (Johnson, 2005:4).

Success may also be determined by: working towards shared goals that are clearly defined and mutually agreed; measuring and evaluating progress towards the goals; having sufficient and appropriate resources available; having strong leadership, directing the team and initiative towards the goal; and working well together with a sense of shared responsibility (Ling, 2002; National Audit Office, 2001; Pollitt, 2003:44; Humpage, 2005:49-50; SSA, 2007:5).

Contrary to what it may be thought (in the light of so many critical success factors), joined-up arrangements aren't rare; they often (as the

(2000); Kavanagh and Richards (2001); Martin (2002); Signoretta and Craglia (2002); Downe and Martin (2003) or Christiansen and Laegreid (2005).

⁶ It is true however that in the case of British joining-up practices, the government plays a central, hierarchical role; this aspect has been taken into consideration when deciding which paragraphs of the quoted documents are relevant.

literature shows) nurture in the fertile ground of post NPM governance structures and take the form of:

1. Whole of Government Integration – characterized by a top down whole of government policy framework based on what government seeks to achieve followed by practical strategies to achieve whole of government integration (Johnson, 2005:16-18);

1. Service Delivery Integration (integration around partnership agreements) - the main feature of this sort of joined up arrangement is the collection together of information and services about a shared customer or common issue. These strategies seek to enhance the use of traditional centralized systems and processes to deliver increased efficiencies and improved services. They are well suited to the role of government as a coordinator rather than a provider of services (Johnson, 2005:19); or:

2. Integration around Programs – which involve ongoing cooperation and collaboration by a community of problem solvers. Membership of the community may be voluntary; while this type of joined up arrangement may be ad-hoc.

So far, describing the joined-up government approach meant speaking, with a rather heavy British accent⁷, of governance and new styles of decision making. The section that follows uses this information and attempts to identify joining-up arrangements in Romania.

To this end, the following is to be considered:

1. Joined-up arrangements refer to a model of decision-making, which allows active bringing of the government closer to the people, by means of collaborative partnerships, integrated service delivery and shared responsibilities between portfolios or departments within a tier of government, different tiers of government, government and other sectors or the community;

2. Previous NPM experience in reforming the government is a possible factor for facilitating the emergence of joined-up arrangements;

⁷ A paraphrase of Denters and Rose (2005:7).

3. There are at least three types of joined-up arrangements possible to identify in public sector practice, namely: whole of government integration, service delivery integration and integration around programs.

And the next argued:

1. The strategic context of administrative reforms in post-communist Romania suggests an NPM approach, consistent with that shown by the references so far quoted;

2. There is a Romanian practice of joined-up arrangements in the form of Service Delivery Integration and Integration around Programs.

In doing so, there will be used:

1. Documentary analysis⁸ of the:

a. The Strategic Documents of the Romanian Administrative Reform, namely:

- i. The Government's Strategy concerning the Acceleration of Public Administration Reform (2001);
- ii. The Government's Strategy concerning the National Action Plan E-administration (2001);
- iii. The Government's Action Plan for the Governing Programme 2001-2004;
- iv. Updated strategy for acceleration of public administration reform 2004-2006;
- v. Updated strategy for the institutional reform of the Ministry of Interior and Administrative Reform⁹ 2005-2006;
- vi. Objectives of the current Government Programme, 2005 - 2008, Chapter 11;
- vii. Operational Programme "Administrative Capacity Development", 2007-2013.

b. The European Commission's Regular and Monitoring Reports on Romania's Progress towards accession (1998-2004; 2005-2006);

⁸ Due to the fact that many of the Romanian legal and strategic documents analyzed for the purpose of this paper do not have an official English translation, the author takes full responsibility for the eventual errors in their English interpretation.

⁹ This is the current name under which the former Minister of Interior and Administration is being known (as provided for by the Governmental Emergency Ordinance no.30/25.04.2007 on the organization and functioning of the Ministry of Interior and Administrative Reform, as amended (Official Journal of Romania no.309/09.05.2007).

- c. The framework laws on local public administration in Romania, namely:
 - i. Law no.215/2001 on local public administration¹⁰;
 - ii. Framework Law no.195/2006 on decentralization¹¹;
 - iii. Law no.199/1997 concerning the ratification of the European Charter of Local Self-Government¹²;
 - iv. Government Ordinance no.53/2002 on the Framework Statute of administrative-territorial units¹³;
 - v. Law no.67/2004 on the election of local public authorities¹⁴;
 - vi. Law no.340/2004 on the prefect and the prefectural office¹⁵;
 - vii. Law no.51/2006 on community services of public utility¹⁶;
 - viii. Law no.273/2006 on local finance law¹⁷.
 - d. Partnership agreements and Protocols of the Romanian Public Administration (with close view on the joint initiatives of the Romanian Police with central and local public authorities).
2. Data analysis of the data resulted from 18 interviews of: active public managers (4 persons); active civil servants in management positions (6 persons); active civil servants in executive positions (3 persons); active police officers in management positions (3 persons); and contractual personnel (2 persons). Access to the interviewees was facilitated by the Faculty of Public Administration (of the National School of Political Studies and Public Administration) through the civil service dedicated training programs and the General Inspectorate of the Romanian Police (Human Resource Directorate). The interview guide comprised questions regarding: the description of the priorities of the administrative reform between 1998-2008; the identification of leading principles for organization and functioning of public administration in Romania (mainly, principles of: decentralization and local self-government, openness and transparency, partnership and cooperation, accountability and

¹⁰ Official Gazette of Romania no. 204/23.04.2001 (as amended and republished in the Official Gazette of Romania no.123/20.02.2007).

¹¹ Official Gazette of Romania no.453/25.05.2006.

¹² Official Gazette of Romania no.331/26.11.1997.

¹³ Official Gazette of Romania no.633/27.08.2002, as amended.

¹⁴ Official Gazette of Romania no.271/29.03.2004 (as amended and republished in the Official Gazette of Romania no.333/17.05.2007).

¹⁵ Official Gazette of Romania no.658/21.07.2004 (as amended and republished in the Official Gazette of Romania no. 225/24.03.2008

¹⁶ Official Gazette of Romania no.254/21.03.2006 (as amended).

¹⁷ Official Gazette of Romania no.618/18.07.2006 (as amended).

efficiency and efficacy); the expression of views on the implementation of such principles in the practice of the Romanian reform. The research was conducted in July 2008, after a pre-test run in February 2008.

From “Government” to “Governance” in Decentralizing Romania

After the fall of the communist regime in December 1989, Romania needed to identify alternatives for its development in a short time and under unexpected circumstances (Rose et al. [1998] 2003:61). The choice made then (as indicated by the laws and regulations enacted since December 1989) was towards democratization. Adopting a Constitution proclaiming the democratic state (1991), and a Law governing an autonomous local public administration (1991) consolidated this choice and offered the necessary institutional beginning for a public sector reform.

Of course, when compared to the cases of the United Kingdom or Australia (briefly presented in the Sections above), Romania’s reforming efforts strike as clearly distinctive: not necessarily in mission and objectives (although designing a democratic system is genuinely different than consolidating it), but in scope and available resources. This gap is actually what makes the research on Romania, from a joined-up government perspective, rather innovatory. To this assertion one may add the specificity of the external environment contributing to (by facilitating or blocking) domestic changes within the Romanian public sector. In this regard, European Union is one of the most visible actors generating a great deal of pressure upon the consolidation of democracy in Central and Eastern Europe through its enlargement process (SIGMA, 1998; SIGMA, 1999; Verheijen, 2000; Stone Sweet et al., 2001; Radaelli, 2005; Vachudova, 2005; Sedelmeier, 2006). Since 1993, Romania was in fact one of the countries in the region starting the accession to the European Union.

It is due to these considerations that in addressing the issue of public sector reform in Romania the author considered relevant not only the national strategies of administrative reform, but also the European Union’s official reports summarizing the progress towards accession to

the European Union¹⁸. The relevant time frame for the analysis was set to the period 1998 – 2007 (the major factor in considering 1998 as the starting point being that since then the European Union acknowledged Romania as a viable democracy, and started writing its Progress Reports).

The results of the documentary analysis show that at its beginning, the Romanian administration reform basically aimed at:

- separating political and administrative functions;
- creating and consolidating a professional and politically neutral body of civil servants;
- clearly defining the role, responsibilities and the relationship between institutions;
- enshrining the subsidiarity principle so that decisions to be taken by and in the citizen's interest;
- recognizing the principle of decision-making autonomy;
- simplifying administrative procedures and normative acts;
- increasing transparency of the administrative and governmental actions;
- channeling the focus on results in terms of efficiency, efficacy and the quality of services.

Later investigations led into classifying the Romanian public administration reform objectives between 1998-2007 into five categories: A. Decentralization and local self-government; B. Openness and transparency of the public administration; C. Partnership and cooperation; D. Accountability; E. Efficiency and Efficacy.

¹⁸ The accession to the European Union was, as of 1993 and the European Council in Copenhagen, conditioned by the compliance of candidates with three criteria: 1) stability of institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights and respect for and protection of minorities; 2) a functioning market economy as well as the capacity to cope with competitive pressure and market forces within the Union; and 3) the ability to take on the obligations of membership including adherence to the aims of political, economic and monetary union. In 1995, at the European Council in Madrid, the European Union added the fourth criterion: the consolidated administration. In this regard, the European Commission's Regular and Monitoring Reports prove to be excellent instruments in assessing the degree in which Romania complied with the European expectations in terms of administrative reform.

A. Decentralization and local self-government

In this regard, accelerating the public services decentralization process while undertaking administrative and financing activities, transferring the activities and the adequate financial resources from the state budget to the local public authorities in order to finance public services earmarked for local communities within specific areas¹⁹, or setting new, equitable local taxes were considered as necessary steps to be taken for achieving the administrative reform's objectives. In fact, in relation to the local public administration, the 1998 Commission's Report didn't contain explicit references on the principles of self-government and decentralization as concrete European expectations for Romanian administrative reforms; In 1999 however, the Commission considered that in the context of economic difficulties, the restructuring and transfer of responsibilities towards local authorities as accomplished one year ago had generated visible deterioration of the child care protection system (RR 1999:11, 63; RR 2000:20). In 2003, the Commission resumed its interest in the decentralization process (RR 2003:17), while in 2004 it argued that "the Romanian authorities have made considerable efforts to develop a strategy for managing the process of decentralization in a transparent and stable manner" (RR 2004:18).

B. Openness and transparency

According to RR 1998, the Romanian administrative system was characterized by administrative weakness, secret of public information and deterioration of equitable application of law (RR 1998:9). Things generally changed after the adoption of the National Strategy for Informatisation and fast implementation of the information society²⁰ (in February 1998), of the regulations on e-administration²¹, and the Law no. 188/1999²² on civil service.

¹⁹ Such as: health, culture, community police, fire fighters or civil defense.

²⁰ Adopted by Decision no.58/1998 on approval of the National Strategy, and published in the Official Gazette of Romania, no.93/27.02.1998.

²¹ Government Decision no.1006/2001, as published by the Official Gazette of Romania no. 660/19.10.2001.

²² Law on Civil Servant Statute initially published in the Official Gazette of Romania no. 600/08.12.1999. This text was severely and continuously amended, and in May 2007 republished (Official Gazette of Romania no. 365/29.05.2007. Since then, just one

C. Partnership and cooperation

In 1999, RR mentioned the absence of formal provisions on institutional cooperation between central and local governments in the field of consumer protection (RR 1999:74). RR 2000 reaffirmed the issue when asking for the strengthening of the central – local institutional cooperation (RR 2000:39). Keeping the same line of argument, the Commission also advocated for the strengthening of the regional managerial capacity through encouraging an efficient and partnership based process (RR 2000:70; RR 2001:80; RR 2002:102; RR 2003:94; RR 2004:115). In 2001 and then again in 2002 and 2004, the need for consultation (RR 2001:18,28,65,73,76) and social dialogue in policy making (RR 2002:35,83; RR 2003:29; RR 2004:92, 144, 149) was reinforced. In addition, RR 2002 called for actions in enhancing the inter-institutional cooperation between the Ombudsman and, *inter alia*, the local public administration institutions (p.29). Finally, RR 2003 reiterated the problem of cooperation and sanctioned the trend of consulting local authorities in formulating legislative drafts relevant to local communities (p.17).

D. Accountability

RR 1999 (p. 56) discussed of the need of regulating accountability, impartiality and legality of civil service. One year later, positive notes were being made once the Civil Service Statute was enacted (RR 2000:16). However, the lack of specific regulations allowing the access to public information continued to create problems to the overall real accountability of the administrative authorities (RR 2001:22). In contrast, the creation of the Ombudsman and its activity to hold accountable all administrative authorities that might have infringed preference-holders rights and liberties was seen as a good indicator for enhancing the public administration's capacity to adequately answer to the received inputs (RR 1998:9; RR 1999:17; RR 2000:22; RR 2001:23; RR 2002:29; RR 2003:22-23; RR 2004:24). In addition, RR 2004 recognized that: "free access to public information, proved to be an important mechanism

promoting public accountability” (p. 26) and called for an institution to hold the explicit responsibility in effectively implement the law on free access to public information.

E. Efficiency and efficacy

The two principles are a constant presence in all the documents relevant to this research, being closely related to the objectives set for the administrative reforms aimed at consolidating the national institutional capacity (RP 1998, p.10, 20; RP 1999, p.61,71; RP 2000, p.41,69; RP 2001, p.30,50; RP 2002, p.52,74,85; RP 2003, p.34,47; RP 2004, p.18). Thus, the Commission draw attention towards the need to increase the efficiency of national efforts in managing the resources targeted to waste management (RP 1999, p.53) and implementing the institutional changes at the level of justice and home affairs (RP 1999, p.54,56). In 2000, the same European institution reaffirmed the objective of efficient administration, paying attention this time to the need for increasing the efficiency of the coordination process of public policies (RP 2000, p.15), while accusing the current local, administrative authorities of lack of efficiency while managing their own resources (RP 2000, p.16). In this sense, pre-conditions for the efficient local financial management, were set the principles of transparency, objectivity and stability (RP 2000, p.16). Efficacy in turn, was sustained by an opinion from 2000 according to which the former is linked to the consolidation of an adequate legislative institutional practice (RP 2000, p.18, on non-discrimination) a strategic practice (RP 2000, p.48, on implementing the veterinary acquis).

In addition, the Priority Axes of the Operational Program “Administrative Capacity Development” were at their turn designed to: address horizontal management problems at all public administration levels (central and local) with a focus on key attributes that strengthen the reliability of the administration, in particular decision making, better regulation, accountability and organizational effectiveness, and specifically target improvements to the decentralization of service delivery in certain prioritized sectors (Health, Education, Social Assistance) and improve the quality and efficiency of service delivery.

An overall conclusion of the analysis of the guidelines of the Romanian public administration reform shows governance and NPM related principles as genuinely present (and, in some cases, require consolidation). Of course, their actual implementation in the field of day-to-day administration might be questioned, but the self-imposed limits of the present paper cannot (at this time) but rise and not validate such a hypothesis. The section that follows however is far more concrete as it focuses on the public order and safety service and investigates two cases of joined-up arrangements. The examples are, in author's view interesting as they present real data for the actual practice of decentralization and self-government, openness and transparency, partnership and cooperation, accountability and efficiency and efficacy in the Romanian public administration.

Romanian Governance by “Joined-up government”: The case of public order and safety service

As the Romanian public administration is organized according to NPM values and acknowledges decentralization, while recognizing the need for applying the subsidiarity principle, searching for joined-up arrangements as previously described wasn't as hard as predicted before making the documentary analysis. In fact, there were several cases possible to describe here, but just two recent ones connected to the argument of this paper, being relevant in comparative perspective²³: the public order and safety service. Also, it was the solution to horizontal and vertical coordination present in the case of this service that triggered the author's attention: the existence of a consultative body, mainly responsible for generating cooperation and collaboration: The Public Order Territorial Authority. Details follow²⁴.

²³ Tackling crime and public order were seen by DETR (1998a: paragraph 1.15 and 6.6; and 1998b: paragraph 8.2) as key challenges at the end of the twentieth century, in need for concerted action at central and local level.

²⁴ For a better understanding of the Romanian administrative system, please see Box 1 (Annex).

Public Order and Safety Service: a brief presentation

The service of public order and safety is one regulated and delivered by the Romanian Police²⁵. Part of the Ministry of Interior and Administrative Reform, the latter cooperates in achieving its duties with state institutions and collaborates with non-governmental associations and organizations, as well as with individuals and legal persons, within the boundaries of the law²⁶. In terms of organization, the Romanian Police is to be found in each of the administrative units of the country, and is formed out of:

1. The General Inspectorate of the Romanian Police;
2. territorial units subordinated to the General Inspectorate of the Romanian Police, the General Directorate of the Bucharest Municipality Police and the County Police Inspectorates;
3. academic institutions and institutions focused on continuous training the Police personnel;
4. other units necessary to achieve the Police specific duties, within the framework of the law.

The Public Order Territorial Authority on the other hand is organized and functions in Bucharest Municipality and in each of the Romanian counties. It is a consultative body and aims at achieving its functions in the community's interest.

The Public Order Territorial Authority brings together: the Chief of the General Directorate of the Bucharest Municipality Police or of the County Police Inspectorate, a representative of the National Body of the Police Officers, the sub-prefect, six local councilors assigned by the General Council of Bucharest Municipality or by the County Council, the Chief of the Bucharest or other Municipality Community Police²⁷, three representatives of the community as nominated by the Mayor of the Bucharest Municipality or by the President of the County Council (article

²⁵ Articles 1 and 2 of the Law no.218/23.04.2002 on the organization and functioning of the Romanian Police, Official Gazette of Romania no 305/09.05.2002, as amended by Law no.281/24.06.2003, Official Gazette of Romania no. 468/01.07.2003.

²⁶ Article 2, Law no.218/2002.

²⁷ Law no.371/20.09.2004 on the establishment, organization and functioning of the Community Police, Official Gazette of Romania, no.878/27.09.2004 (as amended in 2005).

17, L218/2002). Its competencies, amongst others, relate to the possibility to: contribute to the elaboration of the Activity Plan and to the setting up of the objectives and minimal performance indicators designated to protect the community's interests; organize consultations with the local community members and with the non-governmental organizations in order to identify the priorities in safeguarding the persons and assuring the public order; assess the overall efficiency of the police units activity in a public evaluation report (article 18, L218/2002).

The budget necessary to the Authority's activity is supported by the Bucharest Municipality budget or that of the County (article 20, L218/2002).

The Police units cooperate with prefects, local public administration authorities, judicial authorities, decentralized services of the Ministries and other central organs, as well as with representatives of the communities (article 22.1, L218/2002). Upon justified special events, police units may decide to create cooperation protocols with authorities of the local public administration as to efficiently achieve the public order police competencies (article 25.1, L218/2002). If the Police unit doesn't fulfill its commitments within the agreed protocol, the public administration may complain to the superior police body (article 25.2, L218/2002).

Service Delivery Integration: the case of protecting homeless persons

As argued by the literature on joined-up arrangements, service delivery integration is a possible type of joined-up government, consisting in integration around a partnership agreement. Usually there is a shared customer and different authorities joining in delivering improved and more efficient services.

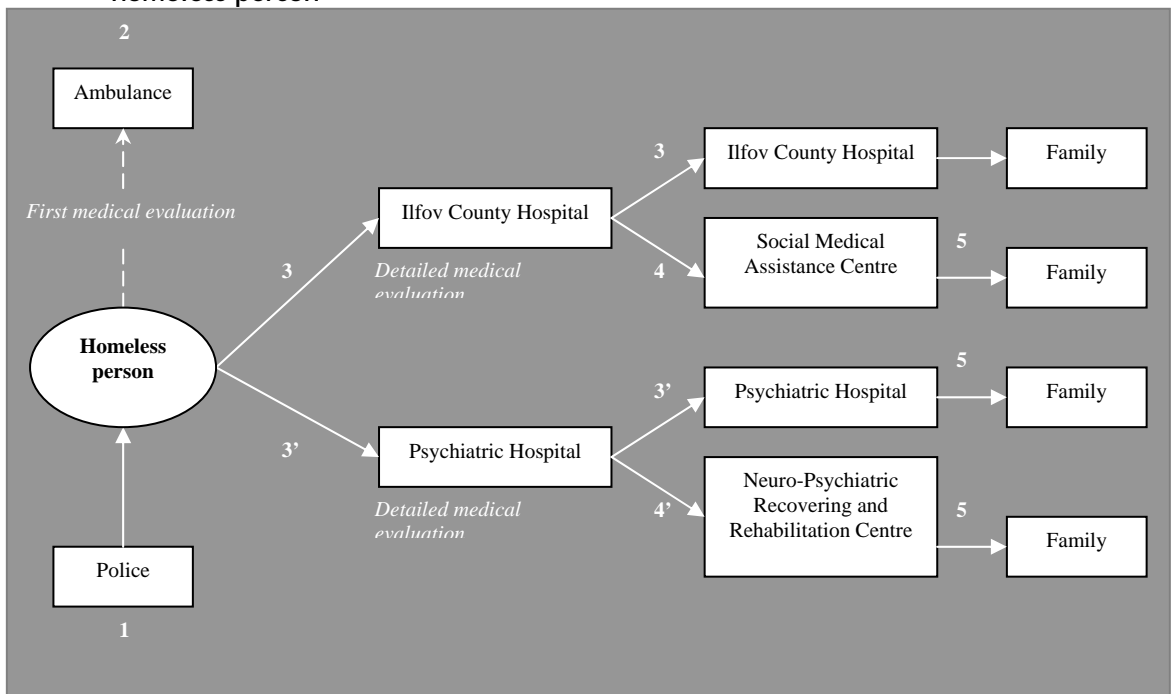
The case brought in attention deals with homeless persons as the customers (be it: elders, mentally disabled persons, children or persons with unknown identity) and: Ilfov County Police Inspectorate, Ilfov Public Health Authority, Ilfov County Council, and Ilfov General Directorate for

Social Assistance and Child Protection, as partner authorities²⁸. The joined-up arrangement was established in October 2007²⁹ on unlimited period, at the initiative of the Ilfov County Police, under shared accountability of the parties in delivering the expected outcome.

The scope of joining action was the collaboration in exchanging data and offering mutual support in efficiently managing the cases of persons with high risk in becoming homeless.

The responsibilities set under the partnership agreements were as follows (figure 1 and 2):

Figure 1: Joint administrative actions to be taken in the case of an adult homeless person

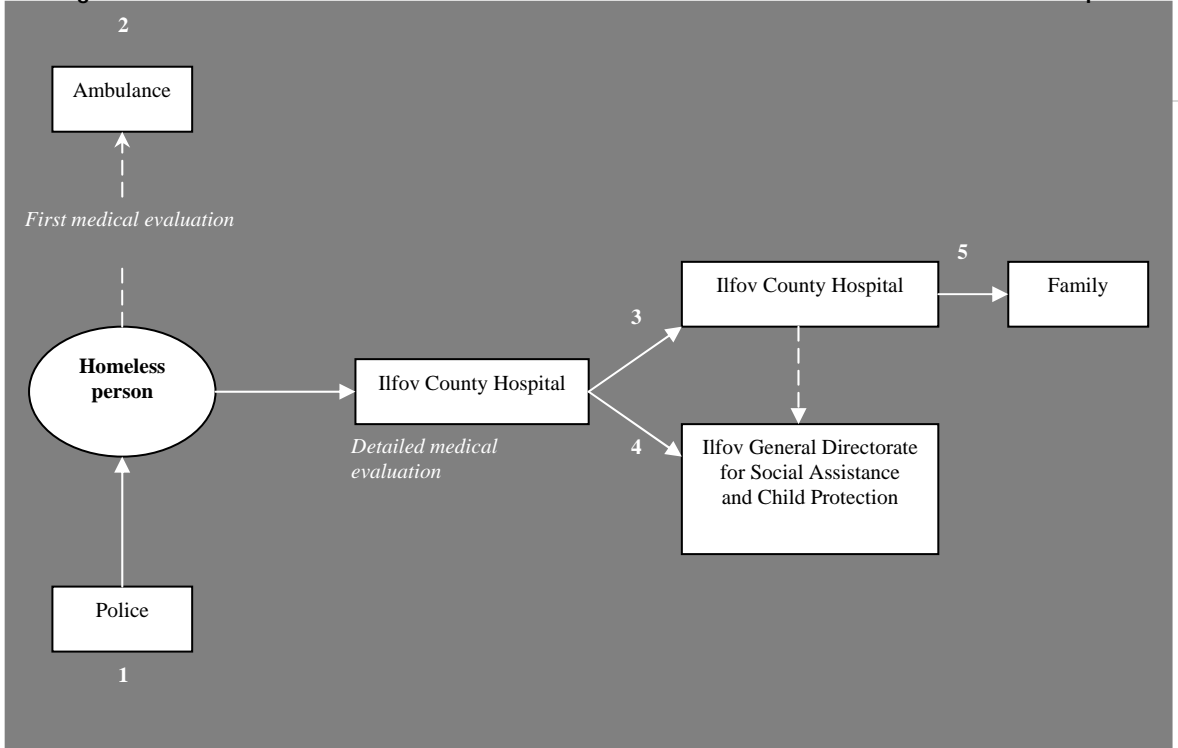


²⁸ Ilfov County is a county situated in the nearby of Bucharest Municipality. With 8 towns and 32 communes and approximate 300 000 inhabitants, Ilfov County has no capital, as most of the county's public authorities are located in Bucharest.

²⁹ Registration numbers: Ilfov County Council: no.11461/23.10.2007; Public Health Authority – Ilfov: no.4721/05.10.2007; Ilfov County Police Inspectorate: no.1034566/03.10.2007; General Directorate for Social Assistance and Child protection – Ilfov: no.16871/16.10.2007).

³⁰ According to the present Protocol (article 3), “to institutionalize” is to be understood as “to hospitalize”.

Figure 2: Joint administrative actions to be taken in the case of a minor homeless person



- After being informed by the Police and establishing the first status report of the homeless person, the Ambulance personnel will decide as follows:

a. in case of an adult:

- I. if no mental disabilities are found, the person will be transported to Ilfov County Hospital for a detailed medical investigation. Based on the latter's discoveries, the person may be given in the custody of his/her family or transferred to Ilfov Social-Medical Assistance Centre for Chronic patients (if no medical treatment is required), or treated and then given in custody of the family (if any) or transferred to Ilfov Social Medical Assistance Centre for Chronic patients;
- II. if mental disabilities are found, the person will be transported to "Domnița Bălașa" Psychiatric Hospital for a detailed investigation. Should chronic trauma are discovered, the person is to be institutionalized within "Cernica" Neuro-Psychiatric Recovering and Rehabilitation

Centre; if acute trauma is present, the person is to be treated inside the Psychiatric Hospital.

- b. In case of a minor: after being transported to Ilfov County Hospital and given a general medical investigation, he/she is to be committed inside Ilfov County Hospital or institutionalized, on the basis of Ilfov General Directorate for Social Assistance and Child Protection, inside one of the Centres subordinated to the Directorate.

After delivering the treatment to the patient, the Social Medical Assistance Centre for Chronic patients, the Neuro-Psychiatric Recovering and Rehabilitation Centre or the County Hospital where he/she was committed / institutionalized will take the appropriate measures as to give the person in the custody of the family or inform Ilfov General Directorate for Assistance and Social Protection / General Directorate for Social Assistance and Child Protection.

Looking at this case of joined-up arrangement, it may be possible to see that the partner institutions involved in delivering the service belong to both central and local administration, both horizontal and vertical coordination being at stake here.

Integration around Programs: the case of Crime Prevention in Ilfov County

Quoting the relevant literature, this type of joined-up arrangement involves ongoing cooperation and collaboration by a community of problem solvers and may have an ad-hoc character. The case of the Partnership Agreement on Crime Prevention in Ilfov County³¹ involves institutions of the central and local administration, media and local community, as the coordinators of the project are the Public Order Territorial Authority and General Inspectorate of Ilfov Police and partners: Ilfov Local Authorities – City Halls; local media (Buftea TV, Semnal, Diamant TV, NB TV, “Săptămâna”, „Chitila Azi”, „Buletin de Mogoșoaia”); Ilfov County School Inspectorate; Ilfov Chamber of

³¹ Registration numbers: Ilfov Public Order Authority: no.3341/26.03.2007; Ilfov County Police Inspectorate: no.1033903 /14.03.2007.

Notaries; Environmental Guard; Ilfov Community Police and the Community police stations from Chiajna, Mogoșoaia and Voluntari; National Company for Highways and National Roads; and County Inspectorate of Gendarmerie.

The scope of the joined-up arrangement was to reduce the escalating number of crimes against patrimony and car accidents. This trend raised questions of worry from the part of the county police which encouraged not only a firm reactive response to crime, but also a proactive joint reaction with the representatives of the civil society. The percentage of violent thefts decreased with 17.5% in 2006 (reference data in 2005), but at the time of the drafting of the partnership agreement was still a considerable threat that required appropriate measures. The number of car accidents inside Ilfov County decreased in 2006, but the 2007 number of deaths and seriously injured persons continued to worry the administration. Giving this context, the Partnership in Crime Prevention was set up to last between 01.04 – 30.06.2007, under shared responsibility of the members of the partnership agreement. Monthly, the Public Order Territorial Authority was asked to analyze the status of the implementations made under the agreement.

The objectives set within the framework of the Crime Prevention joint action were:

1. Increasing the citizens' awareness on the dangers generated by crimes:
 - a. [activity] Press Campaign: national newspapers and local TV stations; [responsible actors]: Ilfov Public Order Territorial Authority and Ilfov County Police Inspectorate; [deadline]: during the entire campaign; [budget]: no budgetary recommendations made.
 - b. [activity] Each City hall in cooperation with the local police will elaborate "The list of persons and areas with high danger rate" – elders, pupils, distant inhabitants and isolated areas, persons with disabilities; [responsible actor]: one representative from the City hall and the Local Police force; [deadline]: 15.04.2007; [budget]: no budgetary recommendations made.

c. [activity] Anti-crime training in regard to the danger of illegal real estate transactions; [responsible actor]: Local Police officer and Notary; [deadline]: during the entire partnership agreement; [budget]: budget provided by the Public Order Territorial Authority (for leaflets).

2. "Crime Prevention Week" in Ilfov County:

a. [activity]: Press Conference; [responsible actor]: President of Ilfov Public Order Territorial Authority; Chief Executive General Inspectorate of Ilfov Police; [deadline]: 16.04.2007; [budget]: no budgetary recommendations made.

b. [activity]: Anti-crime training in schools; [responsible actor]: Ilfov Proximity police officers [deadline]: no direct time reference made; [budget]: no budgetary recommendations made.

c. [activity]: "Safe road passing" Campaign; [responsible actor]: Transport Police; Community Police; School Inspectorate; Media; [deadline]: no direct time reference made; [budget]: budget provided by the Public Order Territorial Authority (for leaflets).

d. [activity]: Safe roads – traffic and road signs; [responsible actor]: Public Order Territorial Authority; National Company for Highways and National Roads; Local Authorities; Transport Police; [deadline]: during the entire partnership; [budget]: budget provided by the National Company for Highways and National Roads and Local Authorities (for re-making of traffic and road signs).

3. Decreasing the crime number:

a. [activity]: proactive police activities: relocation of the public order disposition; organization of specific actions; [responsible actor]: General Inspectorate of Ilfov Police; [deadline]: during the entire partnership; [budget]: no budgetary recommendations made.

b. [activity]: electronic surveillance systems – the direct way to safety; [responsible actor]: General Inspectorate of Ilfov

Police; Community Police; [deadline]: during the entire partnership; [budget]: no budgetary recommendations made.

4. Stopping the ascendant trend of car accidents caused by undisciplined pedestrians:

a. [activity]: increasing the road visibility – safer roads; [responsible actor]: Transport Police; Rural police; [deadline]: during the entire partnership; [budget]: no budgetary recommendations made.

b. [activity]: modernizing the roads – the way to a safer traffic; [responsible actor]: National Company for Highways and National Roads and Local Authorities; Local authorities; [deadline]: during the entire partnership; [budget]: National Company for Highways and National Roads and Local Authorities.

The Partnership agreement ended in 2007, yet at the time of writing this paper (July 2008), a full report containing the results of this particular joined-up arrangement was not available to the public.

As an overall conclusion of the two cases presented, one may comment solely that despite the lack of a dedicated whole of government strategy for delivering services and of specific documents regulating the “joined-up government” practices, Romania does exhibit instances of integrated service delivery and partnership agreements. This allows the author to assume that joined-up government is practiced in Romania before its being named as such.

Conclusions

This paper tried to fill in the envelope of “joined-up government” with the Romanian perspective. In doing so, after briefly describing the concepts of “government” and “governance” in the context of NPM agenda, it explored the Romanian case as to identify the guiding principles of the administrative reforms and instances of joined-up government practices. As joined-up government is said to develop in a partnership-friendly environment, where efficiency and efficacy in service delivery ground the

public action, the first aim of the documentary analysis was to classify the directions of change in the Romanian administrative system. In doing so, it has pointed towards five strategic principles which guide the Romanian reforms, namely: decentralization and self-government, openness and transparency, partnership and cooperation, accountability and efficiency and efficacy. Using then the case of public order and safety service provided by the Romanian Police, the image of two types of joined-up arrangements was sketched. The conclusions reached indicated that Romania does have at least in formal document a clear orientation toward the NPM values and although not explicitly formulated in the form of “joined-up government” strategy, clear evidence of partnership institutional practice, foretelling the birth of the “joined-up government”.

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