

PROFESSIONALIZATION OF THE PUBLIC (POLITICAL) DECISION

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Professionalization of the public decision involves, of course, two distinct semantic aspects: a) turning the politician - the public decision-maker into a professional; b) ensuring the professional character of the public decision making process.

The first requires that the person making public decisions (in general, the politician¹) become an expert in public decision-making. This is possible and even desirable, but here the term expert must be given a particular meaning. Typically, we call the expert a person who can formulate explanations (based, of course, on theories), that is, they can establish effective causality. In this sense, the politician cannot become an expert, because there would be a contradiction in terms. Therefore, according to the first significance of the professionalization of the public decision, the politician must become a professional not in the theoretical foundation of the public decision, but in the ethical foundation of it. The professional's expertise in public decision-making will therefore consist in his ability to capture the common (or majority) interest of the community, to translate this interest into a political target, to co-ordinate social action towards achieving this goal (the content of the leadership concept). The „profession" of a politician therefore presupposes a specific competence, namely to build visions, to formulate (in interpersonal language) the objectives associated with those visions, to implement social mechanisms and procedures to achieve the objectives and to ensure the ethics of the distribution of public goods generated by achieving the objectives (i.e. the social justice). As we can see, the professionalism of the politician is not about designing means but designing goals. As goals do not imply an effective causality, but, as has been shown above, a teleological one, it results that the politician, the political decision-maker or the public decider, cannot be both an expert in the instrumental sense of the term.

Thus, according to the first concept of professionalization of public decision, the public decision-maker can at most aspire to become a professional in setting goals. The implementation of the social mechanisms through which these goals are achieved presupposes, however, the design of these mechanisms (more generally, means²). Designing means requires effective causality checking, that is, the expert asks. We will return to this result below.

The *second* aspect implies that the person making public decisions should be aware of, besides the purposes, the means to reach them. As I have already mentioned, the implementation of mechanisms and procedures for achieving goals is at the discretion of the politician, but their design is not. Designing means involves knowing the effective causality, which is within the expert's reach (this time, the term has its usual denotation). As the substantiation of a political decision means, at the same time, the setting of goals and the choice of means, it results that, in fact, the quality of public decision-making cannot be ensured without experts. Therefore, the expert is the obligatory companion of the public decision-maker.

The maximum level of expertise is represented by scientific expertise, which is based on theory. And theory is the result of research. Therefore, from a means perspective, the quality of public decision making is ensured by scientific research, primarily by fundamental research and, in the alternative, by applied or empirical one. Therefore, scientific research is not concerned with social purposes (although scientific research on ways of identifying and formulating goals can also be pursued), but with the means of achieving goals. In this sense, in principle, scientific research aims at obtaining

¹ By politician, in this context, we understand a person who formally takes public decisions. Making decisions formally means making decisions in a normative framework (for example, having the competence - as a right, not as a performance - to make the decisions in question, to be entitled to make those decisions).

² Here the term means has abstract signification in praxeology.

the classes of means (i.e. general praxiological resources), as well as the general ways of aggregating/combining them for generic purposes. When scientific research obtains and provides the society with „portfolios" of means classes there is a risk of a reversal of determinism, namely the risk that politicians get experts or experts get politicians. Here is a great danger - materialized most often by the excessive role played by the forecasts, elaborated more or less carefully, in ... the selection of goals - namely, the goals to be determined by means and not vice versa. This is a major risk in all cases where the professionalism of the politician is confused with the professionalism of the expert. So, in order to avoid this risk, the solution is for the politician to choose the goals according to his political model of society, then to transfer these goals to the experts who have to develop the optimal means of achieving the goals. Later, the means will be integrated by politicians into social drive mechanisms - the essence of politics, in fact - to achieve those goals. This triadic model of substantiating the quality of public decision can be expressed as follows: goal formulation - choice of means - implementation of the means. Since within this triadic model, decision makers is involved both as a starter (who proposes the goals) and the finisher (who implements the means), we are dealing with a triadic closed model where the expert represents the middle term (who designs the means).

It can be said that the binomial „public decision-maker – expert" is logically necessary and ethically useful. In this respect, ensuring quality public decision, scientific research (both fundamental, to elaborate theories, and applicative, to develop practicable solutions) is an ingredient that has as alternate the amateurism, improvisation and ultimately failure of the intellectual projects of the society.

The above view is intended to draw attention to a serious gap created between a politician's baroque of public purposes and an ivory tower of scientific research (especially fundamental, academic). The creation, the maintenance and, unfortunately, the deepening of this gap are guilty of both actors: on the one hand, the politicians, who have failed to capture the culture of the expert³ and, as a result, to call the expert whenever he needs means to achieve a goal, and on the other hand, researchers who, according to their nature, have studied, have developed theories, but have not done enough to show their usefulness in assuring the quality of the grounding of the public decision.

The Romanian Academy, the members of the Romanian Academy, the academic research institutes and centres show openness and readiness to public consultation and debate on what needs to be done to overcome difficult situations (not only economically but also socially, moral, political, national or cultural) in which Romania is in this period. Researchers in all academic fields can make a decisive contribution to designing the means appropriate to the goals that the political class sets for the next years for Romanian society. It is desirable that the dialogue between the political class and experts/researchers should resume and become a mandatory *modus operandi*. Using purely economic terminology, one can say that the politician and the expert are not substitutable but complementary. This means that neither party can reach its optimum without the other's input: the politician would set goals for which he has no means, the expert would imagine means that will not serve any purpose. A *tacit sui generis* co-operation pact between the public decision-maker and the expert is therefore necessary, a pact that will be operationalized starting from both directions, from

³ See the lack of accountability with which a large number of high-ranking dignitaries, the so-called political clientele, is imposed. But from a conceptual point of view, it must be considered that the political clientele is populated by impostors, not by political friends. The mass media, which has probably abdicated considerably from the noble role of guard dog of democracy, deliberately and often interest-based confuses the political clientele with political friends. If political friends were, at the same time, experts, we could not, of course, talk about political clientele. As is clear from what has been shown so far, experts are not only particularly useful in assuring the quality of public decision-making, but they are necessary in a logical sense (i.e. mandatory).

the political class and from the researchers. For the common wellbeing - which is the moral ideal of the social activity - we hope that this pact will be one of the crucial emerging processes in the Romanian society in the immediate future.