

VARIA

The Electoral Republic of Romania. Arguments about the need for an analysis regarding the Romanian participatory culture

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Abstract. *For Romania, the 90's have been the decade of transition to a democratic political system (with everything it implies: more parties, free elections, the separation of powers, rights and political freedoms etc.). But has taking this institutional model also lead to acquiring the underlying values that support it? How far has Romania come on the road to a participative democracy, to a society that has a strong civic culture, as defined by classical authors such as Almond and Verba? How many of the traits of social capital, as defined by Putnam, can be found in the post-revolutionary public space? We knew, from research, that this democratic system was desirable (there is no need to enumerate the many research papers, in particular Euro-barometer surveys, which referred to Romanians' support for democracy, rule of law and economic freedom). But beyond the rhetoric, which was and is, in fact, the real situation? If we take the statements into account, Romanians are participative, want political pluralism and many parties and want support elements of liberal democracy – but do they take advantage of these rights? Are they active citizens, organized in a dynamic civil society? Do they engage with public decisions and policies even after the election period? Are we a society where politics matter only in election years or one in which political and civic participation is stimulated and active the rest of the time? Research helps us in this regard. In this article we present conclusions supported by surveys conducted in recent years by the InfoPolitic Center for Studies and Research (SITC), for the Multimedia Foundation for Local Democracy. The list of questions is extensive because it takes into account a huge dissonance noticed during the 90s by people in our generation – the great distance from words to actions! Romanians received rights and freedoms which, from our point of view, they have rarely used – and without impact. Political Romania has been active only in election years, which is why the profile of stimulated civic participation is extremely fragile.*

Keywords: *public communication, civic culture, civic participation, Romanian elections, Romanian history, electoral campaign.*

Introduction

In search of an explanatory paradigm about the construction of the democratic Romanian society after 1989, we want to offer an alternative explanation, different from those who usually put forth arguments related to political or economic power. The alternative vision that we propose refers to a feature of the Romanian participatory culture developed in this first post-89 democratic quarter century, respectively to the “electoralism” of the Romanian society.

Before anything else, Romania is a country dominated by an obsession with public image – it is important, because it is a decisive element in the only confrontation that can generate strong public participation - electoral participation. The post `89 history of Romania is more than a history of political and economic relationships – it is a history of the relationships generated by electoral moments. This perspective is not only a result of the explanatory view that the authors go by (which is worth more than a limited scientific approach, such as the one included in this article), but comes from the results of extensive, measurable and verifiable research through which we have tried to give a concrete

dimension to the participatory culture in Romania in recent years.

The conclusions commented here are part of research conducted by CSCI, the analysis center of our Foundation, and can be publicly verified - including databases on our website, www.infopolitic.ro. The recommendations also come from a large collective experience of a team (the Multimedia Foundation) which has been active in the political and social analysis field during the past 20 years.

Where did we start? The first steps of democratic participation...

The political class that gained access to power after the 1989 Revolution has been challenged since its appearance by a core group of protesters, minor in terms of numbers, but loud and very visible, which from the beginning assumed an anticommunist vocation reclaimed either from the historical parties reborn after decades of prohibition, or from younger generations who feel they have not been contaminated by the Soviet ideology¹.

Meanwhile, the political opposition that was then born also had its

challengers, more consistent in terms of numbers, who discovered links with the Legionary Movement, the Hungarian irredentism or the international occult, and identified its main goal as the territorial division of Romania. Legionnaires versus Communists, traitors versus traitors, fellows versus comrades - the first moments of the new Romania were marked by an imago-logical fight above all else.

The explosive development of media², consumed in huge quantities by the new "free" citizen, and right to attack your political leader were the ingredients that hampered the new rulers mission the most. The undeniable reality is that many of those who took government seats at the beginning of democracy knew how politics worked from the time of the Central Committee; they also knew what buttons to push, which reports to read and what were the uses of the different colored phones left in the offices. But none of them knew how is it to be insulted by a columnist that you can't „touch” or how it feels like to be booed by thousands of people gathered outside the ministry, knowing that there is no way to disperse the crowd.

As always in history, the system which faces a new challenge, after a usually unsuccessful try to annihilate it, ends up embracing it and using it for itself. Attacked by independent media, it will build its own media and will try to control the message of the other side as much as possible. Harassed by other

groups' propaganda, it will generate an equal and opposite propaganda. With the establishment of an alternation in government and when all parties have been both in power and in opposition, the permanent clash of public image becomes the key to the entire domestic political construct. In numerous memoirs of politicians who have taken part in Governments we can identify the obsession with the media, a sometimes excessive concern about how journalists reflect their actions³. Furthermore, the analysis of both the performance of the political actor and his opportunities ends up being, at one point, focused solely on media perception.

Citizen participation in political life is often reduced only to the consumption of media, the crystallization of a point of view based on a received message and then converting it in an electoral option expressed at first in the polls and then at the voting booth. But there are several ways to participate which must exist in order to support a genuine civic culture, one that contributes to the strengthening of democratic values and institutions. Except that, as discussed below, other types of non-electoral participation can only be observed sporadically, as exceptions. The rule in post-89 Romania is non-participation (as in the past, such features have an extremely high rate of inertia).

The emergence of Facebook and social networks (the technological

revolution of the last decade) in which the carrier of information is no longer directly the media, but the subjective media consumer (including the possibility to participate directly in the construction of the message and to interact directly), but also of other components of online communication complement the panorama of the phenomenon. The perpetual unrest in the Romanian public space generates the false impression of an important civic participation, but the study conducted by the Multimedia Foundation shows the opposite - the national profile is rather one of non-participation. Romanians are the type of people that show very little civic, community and political involvement.

8 years after the European integration, Romanian society is still a traditional one. Romanians rather have survival values, not self-fulfillment or status values. Our civic profile is one of non-participation, distinctive from the Western model. Romanian citizens are available for participation and information, the figures of intent are very high, but this intention does not translate to effective participation. We have the speech, but we don't act! That means there is a rift between the social and the political and there is a perpetual confused pattern: new generations do not get involved even though they say they want to participate, because there are no mechanisms to support this intention.

What are the four types of participation in Romania?

An important civic culture, as assessed by classic authors, is defined as an attribute of a community and implies a high level of citizen involvement in the life of the city. Such a civic culture implies several conditions:

- a consensus on the legitimacy of political institutions;
- high tolerance towards political pluralism and seeking peaceful resolutions of conflicts;
- a high sense of political competence (knowledge of the mechanisms and actors involved in policy decisions);
- and mutual trust between citizens and institutions and collaboration within the community.

These conditions are necessary, in addition to the economic development of a community. A democratic system is supported not only by a strengthening economy, but above all by an increased civic participation. For Romania, the accession to European and Euro-Atlantic institutions based on democratic values is not a sufficient condition for strengthening its civic culture – it is a prerequisite, such as another useful condition related to economic development. But for a naturalization of democratic values an increased civic participation is required.

In sociological research coordinated by the Infopoliticteam (2011-2013), we defined four

different types of participation in public life, according to two criteria - on the one hand, the distinction between political and non-political participation; on the other hand, we evaluated the intensity of participation. After applying these criteria, the result was 4 different types of participation:

- Civic participation – formal or informal collaboration within communities based on interests rather than territory (like civic, cultural, environmental, sporting, professional associations etc.). A person with a high level of civic participation trusts other people, has secondary groups to call on in case of need (friends, colleagues), is tolerant of other cultures, religions or ethnicities, appreciates NGOs and participates/ wants to participate in civic activities.

- Community participation – formal or informal collaboration between members of rather closed local, religious or employment communities (like religious, community associations, cooperatives, unions etc.). A person with a high degree of community participation trusts people, is prone to involvement in the community, is caring and helps relatives or neighbors, often discussed local projects with friends, is willing to get involved in local activities.

- Electoral participation – it is easy to understand (it refers not only to turnout, but also to participation in elections by running for office or involvement in the campaign). A

person with a high degree of electoral participation has confidence in the electoral process, is knowledgeable about candidates and programs, knows the rules of the process, has a clear political opinion and is an active participant in elections, which he considers useful to society.

- Political participation – manifests itself in a general way, with low intensity, takes the form of supporting some candidates, political party affiliation or participation in political actions. A person with high degree of political participation has political knowledge, considers politics an important area, feels comfortable engaging in discussions on the subject or actions and thinks he can influence political decisions through his involvement.

By simplifying our research results, which can be studied in more details (including access to databases of measurements taken and all research reports) at the <http://www.infopolitic.ro> site, we can observe the level of participatory culture in Romania, through aggregated scores of this culture (measured on a scale of 1-100, where 100 is a maximum / optimum participation). Thus, for each of the four types of participation, the scores are:

- Community participation–national score of 35 / 100. More common in the in NE and NW regions of Romania, with very low scores for younger generations and people without education.

- Civic participation – national score of 30/100! More frequent in the Centre, Bucharest and SE regions, less present in the South. Education influences participation, so does age (younger people are more participative).

- Electoral participation – national score of 57/100, the only category where the score is higher than average - the highest score of the measurements. Younger generations have lower scores than older ones.

- Political participation – national score of 32/100. Higher values in Bucharest and the West region. Also, younger generations have lower scores.

Lack of participation in the Romanian society

The facts measured in recent years there has been valid throughout the first 25 years of democracy. They showed the non-involvement in NGO's actions – be they for protecting the environment, human rights and animal rights – to the non-involvement in political action or protest. One of the reasons for the closure of the Romanian society derives from another conclusion of this study - the traditional, family-oriented nature of society. The Romanian citizen primarily considers himself/herself responsible for his/her family and shows a high level of trust towards it.

At the same time citizens strengthen their place within the walls of their homes and in the safety of blood ties, a total distrust anyone else develops (the figures are incredibly high - above 90% in terms of lack of trust in other people). From compatriots - known or not – to democratic institutions. Of course, there are institutions that people trust – like the Orthodox Church and the Romanian Army - but their place has come rather based on tradition and are not necessarily characterized as democratic institutions.

In the previous communist era, the individual took refuge in the family in order to withstand economically, especially from an alimentary point of view, and to be able to share information or considerations regarding the surrounding reality with someone he trusted. In the past, we have presented specific figures showing that the family has always been a substitute for social insurance for Romanians, taking into account that the government allocated and spent very little on social policy, compared to other European countries (something that also applies to the communist period, despite rhetoric that tried to define this era as one marked by social spending)⁴.

From this point of view few things seem to have changed. Otherwise, December 1989 and the following years have generated multiple shocks for Romanian society, which has coped by preserving the family

and its inevitably closed world. In Romania, there was no transition from the "family" (as a central institution, value and function) to other forms of community (state or non-state). Associativity has long remained low and the State has failed to play a role that society sees as important (in the communism era, the prevalent role of the State was accepted due totalitarian mechanisms, but this acceptance was only partly internalized). After 1989, alongside the transformation crisis the State went through and after the exposure of Romanians to Western ideologies (marked by liberal values), the alternative to the family became the „individual”, even in an aggressive manner. Unlike Western societies, where there are four distinct forms of institutions that offer solutions and perspectives for citizens (family, individualism, community, society / state), post-89 Romania saw only two of these types of institution (family and individual; community and society has not developed yet, because of the lack of a participatory culture)⁵.

The move was from a one party system to political pluralism, from a centralized economy to a market economy, from the unidirectional propaganda to open multichannel communication. The consequences of these changes are numerous and will not be developed here, but at the level of participation and interest in association the developments are very slow.

As noted above, the national scores of community participation, civic participation or political participation are somewhat equal, between 30% and 35%, with one exception, namely the national average of electoral participation - up to 57%. Electoral participation is therefore one of the major changes that the Romanian public has gone through since 1989. And this is all the more interesting because, once again, the national score for political participation is only 32%. We can consider that the citizen is more interested in the electoral system than in the political system, is more informed about candidates in elections than political actors within specific organizations and better knows electoral bids than ideological offers and positions. Simply put, the Romanian citizen who is more interested in who reaches an office than what he later does in that position! The citizen takes part in the voting process, but not in politics. And, besides these moments of effective participation, the interaction with social life is done by „simulating participation”, achieved through media channels (especially TV for 20 years and the internet during the last 5 years).

Moreover, there is limited knowledge of the institutional mechanisms of democracy. For example, only 40% of the population (with a minimum of 35% in the Central region) knows that the County Council President is elected directly and not through the vote of county

councilors. And only 44% of the population (with a minimum of 37% in the West Region) knows that Parliament is the main legislative institution in Romania. Regarding the definition and understanding of a democratic system, for a significant majority - 54% at the national level - the cornerstone is freedom of expression, while political pluralism is at 6%, the freedom to choose a representative and to be elected is at 15%, the right to criticize and protest at 9% and so on.

Why is the citizen more interested in voting than in capitalizing on the vote results?

An explanation comes from the fact that 45% of the population thinks that the election results do not change anything, while 23% believe that elections are more or less rigged. Then why do they even vote? 66% believe voting is a required duty. Although the majority believes that nothing will change, although 85% of citizens believe that authorities disregard the popular point of view and although 75% think they have no means to influence decisions taken at national level - during the last 25 years the vote has carried a multitude of meanings, so no matter how disappointed the Romanian population is in the democratic process, it does not abandon this ritual. But this is not by chance ... obsessed by image

and consumed by a constant electoral struggle, parties and their leaders have aggressively instilled the need of rallying to the vote.

The failure of the trade union movement, the apparent isolation of the "intelligentsia" (which has not found an active role - neither during communism, nor in the post-communist era⁶) and of civil society structures, the lack of debate outside elections have both led to a permanent polarization of society and to an increasing simplification of the message put forth during public debate. It is a known fact that the electoral message must be easy to communicate in order to be catchy. Therefore, it is mandatory to be so designed as to be understood and picked up by a larger number of citizens. It should not be neither comprehensive, nor scientifically exact. An election message should mobilize and stimulate the intention to vote, not solve the problems of an area of activity or, even worse, of a nation (the government is - or should be - the one that offers effective solutions for a country's problems, not the campaign!). Normally the campaign occurs every four years and in the meantime society and its actors have enough time and space required to develop concepts and complex theories encompassing the more subtle forms of reality - and then to achieve the consensus required for decisions through which the solutions are implemented. But if the election campaign never stops, then

everything that comes from the political class is inevitably lacking depth! We have talks, but no action - precisely because public discourse is better suited to a society where the only thing that works is electoral participation. Action should work in a society with functioning mechanisms that generate solutions and the consensus needed to implement these decisions.

The public debate on almost any subject in Romania is biased and superficial; more so, advocacy groups from classical media or the online environment amplify the aggressiveness of the camps, so that the citizen spends every moment of his/her life in another chapter of the electoral campaign. It is an endless battle that assumes that the opponent can never be right and that every moment is a good one to defeat him/her along with his/her supporters. This perpetual battle generates social tension that inevitably will be discharged at the voting booth.

The election campaign does not reflect a continuation of discussions and of modernization and development projects, but marks a endless repetition of the same themes and the same stereotypes that plague communication. Therefore, every time there are election we see that the teams who govern are generally not assessed for what they have specifically done during their mandate - the evaluation and comparison is based on themes related to communication and media

agenda, in a very limited extent correlated with the real agenda of the citizens.

Another reason for having an important electoral participation, although there is clearly a sense of disappointment and disengagement from the political phenomenon and also from other participative phenomenon of a modern society, could be based on the intense communication that the Romanian society has developed in this direction during the last 23-25 years. There has not been even one electoral moment when one of the main themes of communication for all actors, directly or indirectly involved in the process, did not need the argument of turnout as a corollary of the existence of a democratic state and as a testimony to the civic responsibility of the individual.

The vote itself, in public communication, acquired:

- Judicial traits (Let's make them pay through our vote),
- Punitive traits (Let them hurt as we have),
- National traits (Let's show them how Romanians, Hungarians etc. vote),
- Constructive economic traits (Let's vote for the continuation of ...),
- Messianic traits (Vote to save yourself),
- Mercantile traits (Vote to have a better life),
- Traits of resistance against lawlessness (They can't steal as much as you can vote),

- Responsibility traits (Vote to show that you care),
- Family traits (Vote if you care about your children's future *or* vote for the safety of your parents and grandparents),
- Strategic and continental traits (Vote so that Europe will see our numbers),
- Restrictive traits (If you don't vote you should stop crying),
- Insidious traits (If you do not vote it means that you enjoy how you live now)...

The examples could go on. We should recall that prizes have been repeatedly awarded to those who have voted, by accepting people on the basis of their stamped voting bulletin at parties, concerts and raffles. Also, but this time outside the law, there have been different types of „prizes” awarded that have created certain electoral practices characterized by vote buying either with money or with certain types of products.

In Romania there has been almost an obsession of convincing people who have never voted and generally stay away from the booths to take part in the process. Many electoral strategies have been based on percentages plucked from non-participants, as a miraculous solution for overthrowing election predictions. Last but not least, the party propaganda has tried to downplay the importance of unfavorable polls, always referring the mass of citizens who did not express their choices and whom, if they were to

vote, would alter the existing balance. However, this obsession to mobilize non-voters has never actually materialized.

Turnout and the vote itself have been considered the centerpiece of the new democratic process on whose behalf Romanians died in 1989 – and also for the above mentioned freedom of expression. All components of the public space have sent messages about the importance of voting. But unfortunately for the current situation, they stopped there, in the sense that there was very limited communication regarding the need to also follow the consequences of the vote. Very little was invested to educate citizens about how to exercise their fundamental rights, other than free speech and the right to vote.

There was no communication campaign dedicated to civic or political association that has ever come close in intensity to those that encourage people to vote. And, most certainly, there has been no similar effort to explain the functioning of the institutions that are populated through votes or to clarify the real relationship between citizenship rights and these institutions.

An explanation of this distinction has to do with the source of these types of participation – electoral participation is encouraged (and required) by political parties, while the other three types we defined should be desired by civil society! Or, here we see the major failure of civil society. Parties are interested in

electoral participation to legitimize their existence and to gain power (the essential function of their existence), and are willing to do anything (including actions that are borderline illegal or beyond) to be effective. And they are!

The parties cannot be interested in increasing political participation, because it would create unnecessary competition and would transform parties from exclusive structures to inclusive structures – or, this is what citizens and the civil society want and it is not a goal for parties (nor for their leaderships). Similarly, civic participation (essential for the life of civil society) or community participation (essential for the cohesion of local communities) should be functions and purposes for civil society, not for parties.

So, if we see that only electoral participation works and the other do not, it means that we see a performance evaluation for institutions that support different types of participation – as cynical as it may seem, these indicators shows the performance of the political parties in a society without civil society .

The assault of the anti-corruption battle in recent years, which also leads to a revolution of the mechanisms of electoral participation (limiting the mechanisms used in recent years), will not lead to a replacement of voter participation based on corruption or uncompetitive actions with a natural and dynamic civic participation (which had been blocked until now by the

parties). However, it will most likely lead to a lower level of electoral participation, down at the real level of civic participation in Romania - leading to a further discrediting of democratic political institutions.

Today we find that the citizen is involved in electoral processes that generate the political phenomenon, but does not understand the rules and does not foresee any utility for his personal agenda. The Romanian citizen chose democracy 25 years ago in response to communism and, for the sake of democracy, he/her chose to participate in the vote as a major and basically unique form of involvement. It can be considered that for many Romanians the democratic essence of the phenomenon is given only by the vote expressed in various elections.

Although there have been heated discussions about democracy during these years, there has been no consolidated action to explain its mechanisms and rules. Democracy has been promoted as a form of struggle against communism, the antithesis of it – and that's it! Just as the first right-wing parties in Romania united around anticommunism, (targeting the FSN as a continuation of the Communist Party) without generating its own ideology and its own vision of the future. The message was eventually very simple and efficient: *FSN (and all the other names it took) is communism, we are anti-FSN, democrats. If you do not want a return of communism, vote for us!*

This has been the ideology used successfully by the Democratic Convention in the 90s against the Iliescu regime (much more easily perceived as a continuation of communism due to its origins). But we must not forget that both Traian Băsescu in 2009 and Klaus Johannis in 2014 used the same communicational construct in their campaigns. Being born from denial and ultimately becoming the faceless antithesis of a hateful regime, democracy has become a form without substance, just like other concepts recently placed in the public space. It has become a shell in which a skillful communicator is able to place anything: a call to battle, an apology, an explanation ... and eventually just a slogan. Each political party has used it, every presidential candidate, local councilor and mayor has acted on behalf of democracy and called on Romanians to vote for it.

Simplifying communication is a logical step in election campaigns – it is in fact fundamental to their success. However, presenting reality in stereotypes and simplifications between campaigns generates a problem - the Manichaeian style of communication is maintained and dialogue is inhibited. And without dialogue there is no real participation. Discourse is not transformed into action and those who could give substance to the speech and subsequent actions either do not perceive the situation or explicitly choose not to get involved.

Daniel Barbu shows that such an obsession with putting "speech" before "action" has existed in Romania even since the interwar period (if not sooner), when the elites saw modernization as having „power over words”⁷. The theory of forms without substance is well known in Romania - it refers, in our case, to the acquisition of democratic institutions without them having a support in the realities of Romanian society, while hoping that in time the shapes will create the substance. From this perspective, the Romanian modernization process has always been one in which the forms prefaced the basis (whether economic, social or cultural). Barbu describes the lack of Western values in Romanian society and hence the lack of a personal vision on the modernization of Romanian. Without having a clear basis of support, modernization becomes only an element of discourse. And those most able to sustain this discourse are those who dictate in society. “Modernity is not lived as a culture of experience, founded on the dynamics of economy and on social foresight, but as a culture of discourse in which the present is based on historical values and is subjected to irradiation from the European democratic model”. Modernization is a form of conversion of the prerogatives of power, exercised through political discourse. Politics therefore does not reflect decision making space about a vision of development, but a place

where, through discourse, Romanians discover their modernity based on what they know (the past, for example). Modernity in interwar Romania was not debated in order to be adapted to reality, but was disputed by those who claimed power or legitimacy either from the Western model (that hat to be applied automatically, without adjustments) or from traditionalist, historical, national, or modern roots (which led to the creation of the Romanian nationalist discourse). There was no dialogue or consensus regarding a vision of modernization and a strengthening of institutions and social values. Does this sound familiar? Does it resemble post-89 Romania? Of course, as long as the mechanisms are the same - we have discourse (sometimes excessively), but speech is not transformed into action.

Conclusions

Over time, trust in political parties has steadily declined, at about the same pace as confidence in Parliament. As expected, the fundamental institution of democracy has paid the price of the citizen misunderstanding its rules and real stakes. Protected by electoral competition and the routine of participation in elections, parties have managed to gather followers convinced that only political opponents are bad and dangerous. In a society where politics is just about elections, the

parties and their candidates are fundamental parts without which the entire scaffolding would collapse. A political debate can take place without any candidate being present, even without having politicians even present (in the case of contemporary news television). An electoral debate would be devoid of substance without candidates and parties. So, although the institution that gathers all elected representatives under the same roof collapses every year in terms of confidence and although the party structures are also collapsing, each has managed to keep turnout score at over 50% until now, through mechanisms of electoral communication and by organizing to ensure voter participation.

Lately, state institutions have begun to investigate the ways in which political structures generate turnout. Starting with the „Quality Trophy” case and arriving at the (currently not final) conviction in the „Referendum” case, numerous court actions have been related to electoral campaigns and the methods used by parties and politicians. It remains to be seen in 2016, during the next elections, to what extent the electoral participation score remains constant, taking into account the circumstances in which, predictably, party members will engage much less in the actual campaign, but also in boosting the presence of citizens at the voting booths.

Meanwhile, we are left with the reality that, of the many teachings that the new political leadership of

Romanian has to disseminate to a population that has a background of 42 years of communist totalitarianism, the only one that can be considered useful was the electoral participation. The rest -

political participation and especially civic participation - remain at a very, very low level. Romania therefore remains an Electoral Republic above all else...

Notes

- ¹ Several authors have defined this first rift (essential for understanding the post '89 Romanian political dynamics) as the communism-anticommunism divide. For example, Cristian Pîrvulescu, Vladimir Pasti, Cristian Preda etc. This phenomenon has also been theorized by analysts who have tried to reflect how social rifts (initially defined by Rokkan, in the first half of the 20th century) have adapted to the realities of the fall of communism, post 1989, in Central and Eastern Europe. For example: De Waele, Jean-Michel (2003) "Democratic consolidation, parties and cleavages in Central and Eastern Europe", in De Waele, Jean-Michel (ed.) *Political parties and democracy in Central and Eastern Europe*, Bucharest: Humanitas
- ² In particular, the explosive development of print media, built as an alternative to the formal channel of communication – the Public Television. Subsequently, the advent of private TV stations (mid-90s), then of private news TV stations (2000s) and, finally, the technological revolution brought by the Internet and social networks (during the last 5 years) - all are steps that led to a democratization of communication.
- ³ Political leaders express this state in autobiographical works - *Ion Iliescu in talks with Vladimir Tismaneanu (The grand shock at the end of a short century)*. Publisher: Enciclopedica, Bucharest, 2004); Ion Diaconescu in the volume *After the Revolution*, Nemira, 2003; Adrian Nastase in talks with Alin Teodorescu (*From Karl Marx to Coca-Cola*, Nemira, 2004). The list is long - such concerns have been also expressed by Emil Constantinescu or Petre Roman.
- ⁴ In "*12.XII: The Orange Revolution in Romania*", Bucharest, Pro Institute, 2006, we have public spending averages based on Eurostat data showing that Romania uses only half of the proportion of GDP that other EU states use. This subject is also extensively analysed by Catalin Zamfir in his work (ie – "*Social Policies in Romania from 1990 to 1998*", Bucharest, Expert, 1999)
- ⁵ The volume coordinated by Adrian Neculau, "*Everyday life under communism*", Polirom, Iași, 2004 - presents examples of practices used to adapt to life under a totalitarian regime, which excluded participation and community values.
- ⁶ Vladimir Pasti theorizes this relatively dramatic conclusion for

Romanian intellectuals in works such as *"The New Romanian capitalism"*, Polirom, Iasi, 2006. Similar problems are also highlighted by Easter, Miroiu, Codita in *„Romania –Starea de fapt”*, Volume 1, Nemira Bucharest, 1997. Dragos Sdrobis talks about the same crisis of

"meritocracy", but in the period between WW1 and WW2, in *"Meritocracy limits in an agrarian society"*, Polirom, Iasi, 2015.

⁷ Daniel Barbu, *Byzantium against Byzantium. Exploring the Romanian political culture*, Bucharest, Nemira, 2001 (p 264).

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