

## PUBLIC POLICY AGENDA AND RESPONSIVENESS GOVERNANCE

### **Abstract**

This research highlights the two concepts: responsiveness government and policy agenda- as a result of convergence between citizens' priorities and governmental and parliamentary activity, and tries to find evidence to prove a relationship of mutual conditioning between the two concepts.

The reason for this research is justified by the need for "vision of the future", a concept devoid of academic rigor and, therefore, difficult to define, but which emphasizes, on the one hand, the force of a clear strategic intent and, on the other hand, the irreplaceable role in achieving this vision of public policy to meet the legitimate expectations of citizens .

We see responsiveness as part of democratic signal detection system that alerts policymakers to the anxieties and wishes of the public.

A policy agenda represents a common place of convergence between citizens' priorities and governmental and parliamentary activity, is a guarantee that the citizens will receive appropriate and opportune responses of their demands. In other words the convergence agendas involves the existence of responsiveness government.

**Keywords:** responsiveness government, policy agenda, dynamic capabilities, convergence of agendas.

**JEL CODES:**D78, I28, I31

## AGENDA DE POLITICI PUBLICHE ȘI GUVERNANȚA RECEPTIVĂ

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### **Rezumat**

Această cercetare aduce în prim plan două concepte: guvernarea receptivă și agenda de politici publice. Cele două concepte sunt abordate din perspectiva convergenței dintre prioritățile cetățenilor și activitatea guvernului și parlamentului, urmărindu-se găsirea acelor dovezi care să releve condiționarea reciprocă dintre cele două concepte.

Argumentele acestei cercetări sunt oferite de necesitatea, tot mai pregnantă, a unei viziuni pentru viitor, concept lipsit de rigoare academică și, tocmai de aceea dificil de definit, dar care accentuează, pe de-o parte necesitatea configurării unei intenții strategice clare și, pe de-altă parte, rolul important asumat prin politicilor publice de a satisface așteptările cetățenilor.

În termenii acestei cercetări, agenda de politici publice este locul comun spre care converg agenda publică, agenda guvernamentală și cea parlamentară și reprezintă o garanție pentru cetățeni că vor primi răspunsuri substanțiale și coerente la cerințele lor. Cu alte cuvinte, convergența agendelor este o expresie a unei guvernări receptivă.

**Cuvinte cheie:** guvernare receptivă, agenda de politici publice, capabilități dinamice, convergența agendelor



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## 1. THE CONCEPT OF RESPONSIVENESS GOVERNMENT

This research highlights the two concepts: responsiveness government and policy agenda-as a result of convergence between citizens' priorities and governmental and parliamentary activities, and tries to find evidence to prove a relationship of mutual conditioning between these two concepts.

The reason for this research is justified by the need for "vision of the future", a concept devoid of academic rigor and, therefore, difficult to define, but which emphasizes, on the one hand, the force of a clear strategic intent and, on the other hand, the irreplaceable role in achieving this vision of public policy to meet the legitimate expectations of citizens.

In the current context, turbulent and discontinuous, governments are forced to abandon the old paradigm for the adoption of strategic approaches that are able to offer them the opportunity to anticipate and respond to challenges. To win the next challenge, the government must prepare to respond to citizen's needs and expectations<sup>1</sup>. A real visionary and responsiveness government "must work today for tomorrow".

From this perspective, the policymakers must enable themselves to "decrypt future" by interpreting the signals coming from the environment.

A key characteristic of democracy is the continuing responsiveness of the government to the preferences of its citizens, as political equals (Dahl., 1972, p. 1).

We see responsiveness as part of democratic signal detection system that alerts policymakers to the anxieties and wishes of the public.

So, responsiveness is the key to the proper functioning of any democracy and an important value itself.

A good functioning of the democracy must take into account as a primary value not only representation, but also the means of solving the problems.

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<sup>1</sup> Expectations are often simply defined as individual's beliefs regarding desired outcomes. Yet the literature suggests that the definition of expectations, and more so the concept of expectations fulfillment is far from easy to define (Thompson and Sunol, 1995; Stanizzszewska, 1999). Thompson and Sunol (1995) cite four types of expectations:

- Ideal: similar to aspirations, desires or preferred outcomes;
- Predicted – realistic, practical or anticipated outcomes that result from personal experiences, reported experiences of others and sources of knowledge such as the media;
- Normative – expectations that are based on what should or ought to happen;
- Unformed – the situation that occurs when individuals are unable or unwilling for various reasons to articulate their expectations, which may either be because they do not have expectations, have difficulty expressing their expectations or do not wish to reveal their expectations due to fear, anxiety or conforming to social norms.

This involves information processing, communication, and the way through which the public's preferences are created and influenced by the governmental strategies and through collective dynamics along with establishing the policy agenda as a result of convergence agendas.

.In public services, "responsiveness" is a controversial concept. Democracy would seem to require administrators who are responsive to the popular will, at least through legislatures and elected chief executives if not directly to the people (Vigoda, 2000, p.166).

Yet administrators and scholars alike tend to treat responsiveness both, in the best case as a necessary evil that appears to compromise professional effectiveness, and the worst case as an indication of political expediency if not outright corruption.

Rourke' s recent assessment is illustrative: The growing demand for responsiveness in government policy-making puts the survival of a professional outlook characterized by independence of judgment and indifference to political pressures at increasing risks. American bureaucracy corridors (Rourke, 1992, p. 545).

From the systemic studies perspective, responsiveness can be defined as an outcome that can be achieved when institutions and institutional relationships are designed in such way that they are cognizant and can respond appropriately to the universally legitimate expectations of individuals.

The fundamental concern is the quality of life improvement in a society, including within that broad concept the quality of citizen-state relations.

The achievement of responsiveness in this sense is likely to re-establish the public's trust not only in the particular public policy concerned but also more broadly in the state and system of governance. According to I. Ansoff and E.J. McDonnell's (1990, p.342) perspectives, responsiveness refers to a kind of government behavior; for example, whether the organization anticipates or reacts to challenges from environment.

In these coordinate, the responsiveness approach is not only a technical measurement and implementation issue - it is also a political problem where changes are connected to government activity and, in the end, to society activity.

Responsiveness is a generic concept that applies to the relationship between a public service and the citizenry, and to the relationship between the state and civil society.

## 2. PUBLIC AGENDA

By “Public agenda” we refer to the set of policy issues that the public relates to (Jones and Baumgartner, 2005, p.250). Cobb and Elder<sup>2</sup> suggested that public agenda consists of all issues that are commonly perceived by members of the political community as meriting public attention and as involving matters within the legitimate jurisdiction of existing governmental authority (Cobb and Elder, 1972, p.85). And, so the public agenda represents a set of problems to which the public participates.

For our purpose, a public policy problem can be defined as a condition or situation that produces needs or dissatisfactions of the society for which relief or redress (from government) is sought (Anderson, 2003).

For example, conditions like polluted air, altered food, over populated prisons and cities produce situations that might create potential problems for citizens, taking into consideration that their dissatisfaction and discomfort are raising. The degree of dissatisfaction or discomfort (that also involves governmental intervention) is measured by citizens through a standard or a criterion; if these two rate a situation as being inevitable, or one for which they are directly responsible for, no governmental action will be taken, because that situation does not represent a citizen’s will, so it does not find itself on the public agenda. Objective conditions are seldom so compelling or unambiguous that they determine the policy agenda. Hence, knowing how a problem has been defined is essential to understanding the process of the policy agenda emergence. A policy idea that fails to meet the feasibility criterion is unlikely to be considered as a serious contender on the public agenda. Because the public opinion has the tendency to become vague and confused when it comes to technical problems or complex solutions, we have to mention that the public agenda does not include the public policy solutions that are granted either by the political elites or by certain public segments. We also emphasize that situations do not become problems unless they are perceived as such, expressed and brought to the attention of the authorities; this kind of action is frequently used by officials and politicians that find themselves in search of problems to be solved.

More than that, a situation becomes a problem on the public agenda if it identifies itself with an area of state intervention, for which a governmental solution is possible. Regarding this, Aron Wildavsky said that authorities will rather ignore a problem if it is not multiplied by its solution. Hurricanes and earthquakes cannot be considered problems due to the fact they are unpredictable, but the damage that they cause

<sup>2</sup>The two authors refer to the systemic/ informal agenda, but in terms of this work, systemic/informal agenda and public agenda may be considered interchangeable.

does indeed represent a public policy problem and there have been created many programs that seek to reduce the damaging effects of these natural phenomena (Wildavsky, 1975, pp.134-140).

What are those characteristics that tell a public problem from a private one? Generally, the public problems are thought to be the ones that affect the lives of a substantially large number of people, while their consequences are also felt by people who aren't directly involved in those issues. Suppose a citizen is dissatisfied by the amount that was taxed under a certain fiscal law. As long as that citizen acts in his own behalf, trying to find derogation from the fiscal institutions in his favor, then, we are talking about a personal problem. But if that citizen, along with other people directly or indirectly affected by the same problem, try to modify the legislation, then the personal problem turns into a public matter.

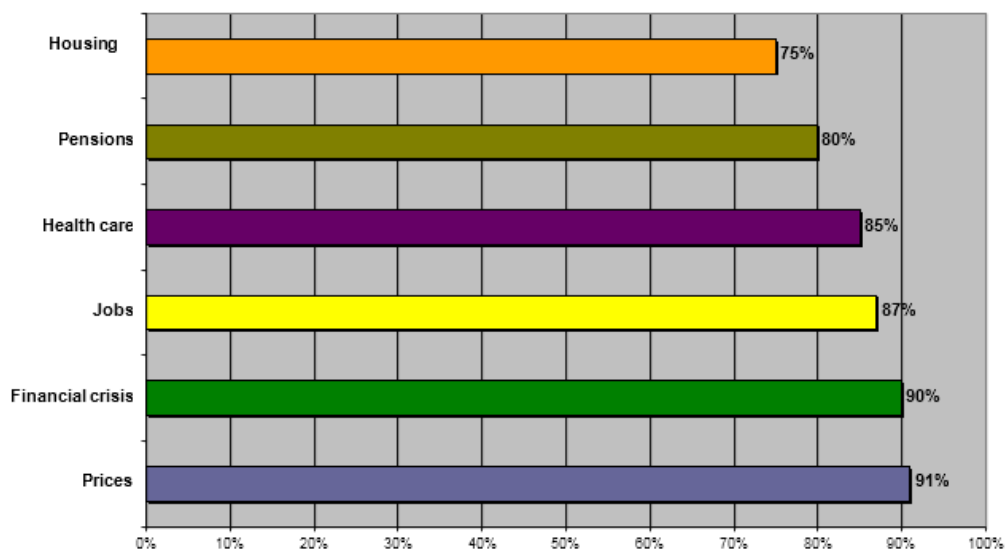
The fact that a situation or a condition is perceived as a problem doesn't mean that it depends only on its objective dimension but also, to a large degree, on how people relate to that situation. If a person has a certain social standard, it's not a real problem for him to find a job, as he is not threatened by the increasing unemployment rate, he might even consider this as a necessary step in lowering inflation. But for a worker, unemployment is a threat and he will negatively react to it. A person's perception is influenced by its own experiences, values and situations that involve him/her. There isn't a single or valid way of defining the problem, even though many people have opinions and preferences when it comes to a certain situation. There are frequent cases when various ways of describing a problem converge, to get the public's vote. We decide if a certain situation can or cannot be considered a public problem if we take a look at the terms that was used to define that problem and accept the proposed definition. More than that, the terms that were used to define it and the causes that generate it determine the emergence of certain solutions that are considered to be adequate. The research conducted in October-November 2009 was, it primarily, aimed at identifying the perceptions and opinions of the Romanian citizens regarding the main directions of government activity in 2010. When asked the question: "In which areas has the government taken the most measures in, according to you own expectations?" you can see the answers in the chart below.

The 16 themes proposed by the questionnaire are grouped into three main groups of the topics:

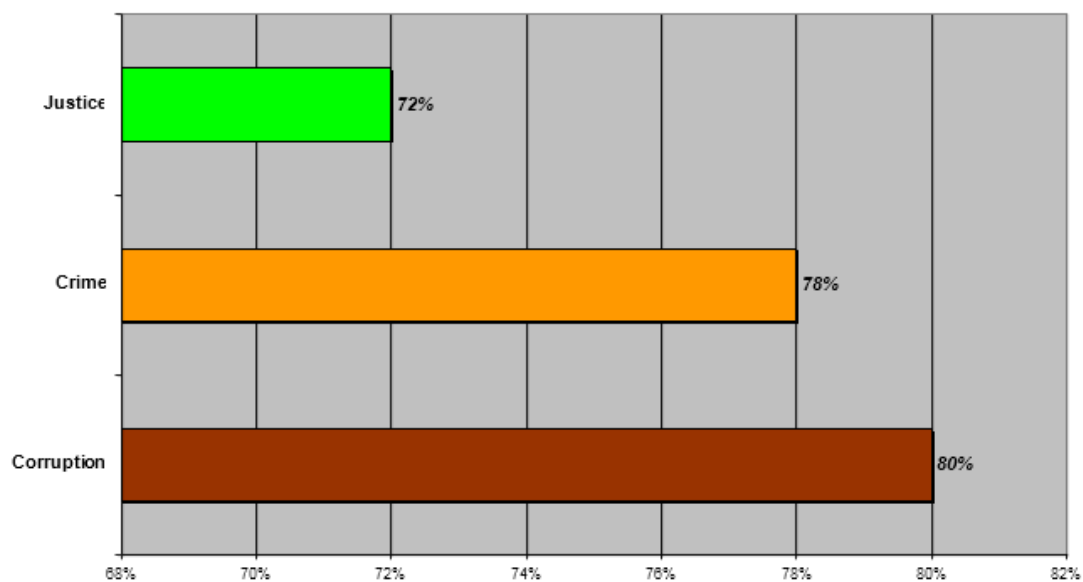
- Quality of life - issues relating to employment, housing, prices, pensions, financial crisis, and healthcare;
- Functioning of the public institutions – functioning of central and local institutions and education;
- Corruption and justice – crime, justice and corruption.

The following charts illustrate the acceptability rate of the Romanian public when it comes to the public agenda.

Public Agenda in the area of Quality of life



Public Agenda in the sphere of Justice and Corruption



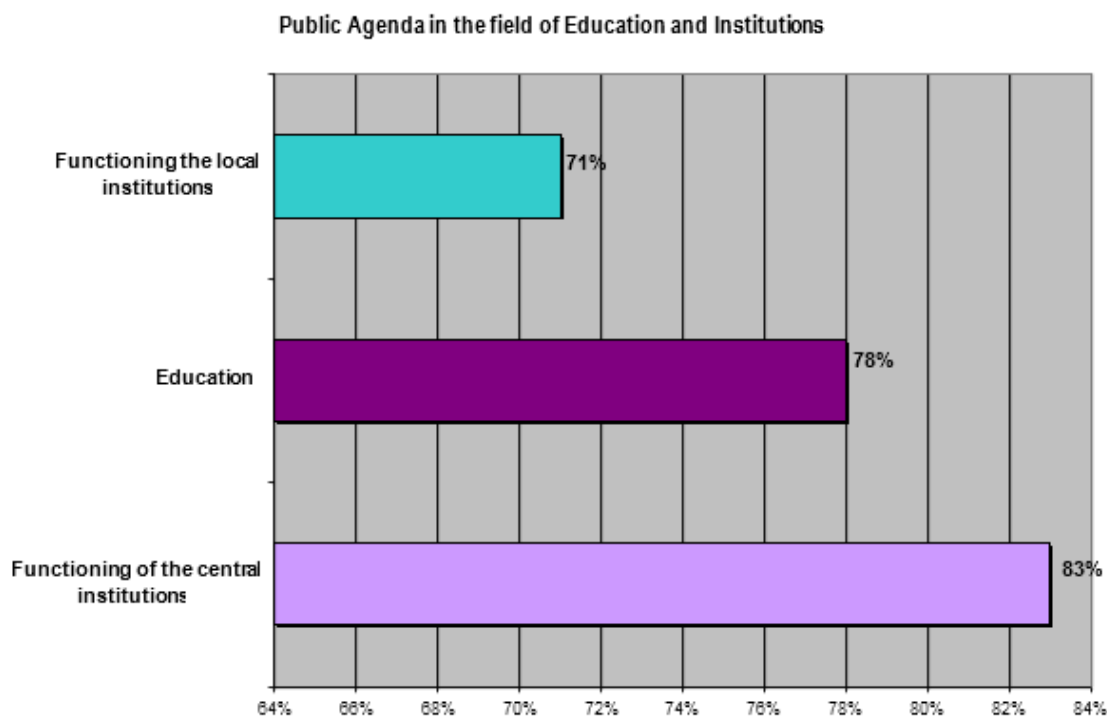


FIGURE1.PUBLIC AGENDA IN VARIOUS FIELDS

Suorce: National Council for Combating Discrimination, 2010.

Way of interviewing: face to face interviews at the respondents house, or by telephone, using the same questionnaire. The questions remained the same despite the interviewing manner.

Representative volume: 1154 people, + 18 years old.

Representative type: probabilistic group, stratified, multi-staged one. Dual frame of representation: houses with telephones connected to the main market telephone operator (representative in 761 houses) and the adult population of Romania (400 representative houses selected through the random method). Both representations have been projected according to the territorial distribution of the Romanian adult population. The assignment of the representative sample was proportional to the group size.

Stratification criteria: 8 historical regions and the urbanism degree (8 different types of regions).

Units of selection: In the representative case of the face to face interviews, the primary units of selection were the regions. The selection of the houses in this case was made through the random method, and people were selected through the "last birthday" method. In the case of the representation sample for the telephone interview, the primary unit of selection was the house itself, and people were also selected through the "last birthday" method.



**Moderation:** In order to fix the unequal selection probabilities and adjust the different types of non-answers, the final representative segment was moderated through the RAKING method and the moderation variables were: region, urbanism degree, sex, age, race, occupation, level of education and having a telephone subscription. The moderation algorithm used as references official statistic data especially from the last demographic survey.

**Representativeness:** the final moderated segment is representative for the adult population of Romania, with a  $\pm 2.9\%$  error percentage, with a 95% trust level. Besides segmentation errors, the way questions were asked and the practical difficulties when writing down field data or telephone data can also cause other errors that might alter the results of the survey.

**The Date of the collected information:** October 2009

According to main the results of this research the public agenda is defined by issues related to living standards, corruption and the functioning of institutions,

When analyzing the previous survey and also comparing it to similar surveys in past periods, we can notice a quite slow dynamic of the public agenda when it comes to Romania (there is a powerful domination of the problems that refer to the increasing of incomes and employment rate; on the other hand, the problems that were generated by the important global challenges - such as terrorism, pollution, energy crisis, organized crime - are almost completely left aside).

And this happens in spite of the fact that also in the situation in which various problems continue to stay in the public's attention, the way in which they are defined changes along with the variation of the values and conditions that generated them. More than that, when mentality evolves as a result of the changes and transformations that took place at a societal level, situations that were considered to be normal at a given time can turn into a problem. For example, domestic violence, which has been considered throughout ages a personal problem, is now treated as a felony.

There are many explanations to this; starting with the fact that their only preoccupation is the struggle for day to day living and not taking into consideration the civic responsibility. The same explanations can be used when talking about the lack of interest when mentioning the important global challenges (human rights, energy, terrorism, security, delinquency) among the priorities of the public or governmental agenda.

### 3. THE GOVERNMENTAL AGENDA

Shifting problems from the public agenda to the governmental one is the result of a political process that also determines the adequate solutions. Is the fact that people with disabilities should have the right to



proper means of transportation an issue regarding the public transport field or an issue that is rather connected to human rights? Special means of transportation for the disabled people is a solution to the transportation issue. The human rights perspective involves equal rights for the transportation of the disabled people and also the existence of proper devices that can allow disabled people to equally use the public means of transportation.

The ideal solution would be for us to consider the connection between the public agenda and the governmental one. But we must say that, if we use the results of the previous survey as a temporal method of the governmental agenda, the process of establishing a connection between the two types of agendas is altered by the existence of possible threats caused by the irregular types of questions, by the number of respondents etc. (Jones and Baumgartner, 2005, p.226).

Causality is an important aspect of a public policy problem. A situation can turn into a problem but what are the causes that generate the situation? Many problems – delinquency, poverty, inflation and pollution – have multiple causes. Inflation is characterized by a generalized growth of prices, measured by the index of commodity prices and it represents a political public problem with multiple roots: an under-production of goods and services, excessive demand of goods and services, a surplus of currency, the result of a psychological inflation (people expecting prices to rise) etc.

In order to solve a problem, we should pay attention to the causes, not only to the manifestations (symptoms) but, in many situations, it's not easy to identify or detect the main causes. Identifying the roots of a problem and negotiating a compromise regarding them is not an easy task for the policy makers because defining the problem turns into a problem itself.

The difficulty of the governmental agenda setting is also determined by the fact that the nature and purpose of many public political problems are hard to express because of their dispersed or "invisible" nature. And because determining the size of the problem is often inadequate, those who elaborate public politics don't always correctly evaluate the given situation and it becomes impossible for them to offer adequate solutions or even undertake governmental actions in order to solve the problem. Next to these inaccuracies we can also mention the inadequate understanding of the causes of the phenomena.

Another aspect connected to the governmental agenda refers to its capacity of being easy to control/manipulate, as some of the problems involve a higher level of behavioral changes than others. McKelvey (1976) and Schofield (1976) showed that in absence of a majority-rule, equilibrium implies that virtually any policy outcome is possible. Hence, those who control the agenda can engage in all sorts of manipulations. A monopoly agenda setter can achieve almost any outcome they wish, providing the

appropriate order of paired options considered by the voting group operating under majority rules (Schofield, 1976).

Limited resources naturally determine a space limitation as well as the governmental agenda. In the context of scarce resources, many other forces, other than the public opinion, appear and try to get their own space on the agenda, because it necessary defines the priorities within the agenda. It's not enough for a proposal to be included in the agenda but also to occupy a high position on the agenda.

From our point of view, we cannot discuss in terms of responsiveness government without taking into account the congruence between public and government agendas.

More than that, responsiveness can lack even if such a correspondence does exist, due to the blocking of public policy actions, either by the political system (its level of complexity can generate various blockings) or by the leaders whose opinions are different from the public's.

We must raise questions of political interdependence among the nations and make some remarks on how these interdependences affect the substance and procedures of national policy making, including the agenda setting. For example, in the Romanian case, European integration has brought up on the governmental agenda many substantial issues other than those already contained by the public agenda. How must the government react? Which are the government's alternatives? In our opinion, a responsiveness government must act so to produce a favorable society climate, followed by a later stage when the European requests become real issues on the public agenda. In fact, the demand for more transparency in public decision making, the search for new forms of accountability, and the growing reliance on persuasion rather than traditional forms of governmental coercion can be shown to be related, at least in part, to economic growth and political interdependence (World Bank, 1997). In other words, in the absence of that convergence between agendas we can not speak about responsiveness and much less about democratic policies that are able to satisfy the demands of the citizens.

#### 4. THE PARLIAMENTARY AGENDA

The activity referring to the parliamentary debates is one of the main components of the public politics process.

According to an idealized legislative committee system model developed by Weingast and Marshall (1988) (quote by Majone, 2008, pp. 230-231), each congressional committee has jurisdiction over a specific subset of policy issues.

Within their jurisdiction, the committees possess the monopoly authority to bring the alternatives to the status quo up for a vote before the legislature; the committee proposal must command a majority of votes against the status quo to become a public policy.

The agenda power held by committee members implies that the success of the legislative initiative is influenced / supported by the members of the relevant committees. Without these members, the bill will not reach the floor for to be vote plenary. . Thus committee veto power means that from the set of policies that command a majority against the status quo, only those that make the committee better off are possible. The authority to veto the proposals of others is a powerful tool used by committees to influence policy in their jurisdiction. Institutionalizing control over the congressional agenda – over the design and selection of proposals that arise for a vote – provides durability and enforceability of bargains in a legislative setting (Majone, 2008).

For the Romanian case we can briefly present a research conducted in 2010 concerning the activity of the Romanian Parliament.<sup>3</sup> First at all, the study captures the quantitative dimension of the Parliament activities. In the first legislative session of 2010 (February 1 to June 30) were submitted 322 regulatory projects and legislative initiatives at the Chamber of Deputies and another 422 at the Senate.

The relation between the percentage values of the projects submitted by the members of Parliament and the Government are presented below.

At the chamber of Deputies, 63% of the projects were submitted by MP's and 37% of projects by The Government; At the Senate, 82% of the legislative initiatives were submitted by the PM's and only 18% by the Government. The situation is reversed when we evaluate the relation between adopted and rejected projects. The percentage values are presented below.

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<sup>3</sup>Romania's Constitution states that Parliament is the supreme representative of the Romanian people and the sole legislative authority of the country. It consists of the Chamber of Deputies and Senate. The current Romanian Parliament consists of 137 senators and 334 deputies who are elected for a term of four years. For this term, the mandate of parliament began on December 15, 2008, with valid elections and sworn, and will end on 14 December 2012. The mandate of such representative, in exercising its deputies and senators are serving the people. The Constitution also states (Article 69, paragraph 2) that any imperative mandate is null. The two Houses of Parliament shall meet in two ordinary sessions per year (February to June, September to December) but can also meet in extraordinary session. During a legislative session, the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate can pass laws, resolutions and motions, the majority presence. The Chamber of Deputies and Senate operate the Parliament Palace in Bucharest and known as the People's House, lawmakers also operates in the territory (district / college) in the parliamentary offices established for citizens

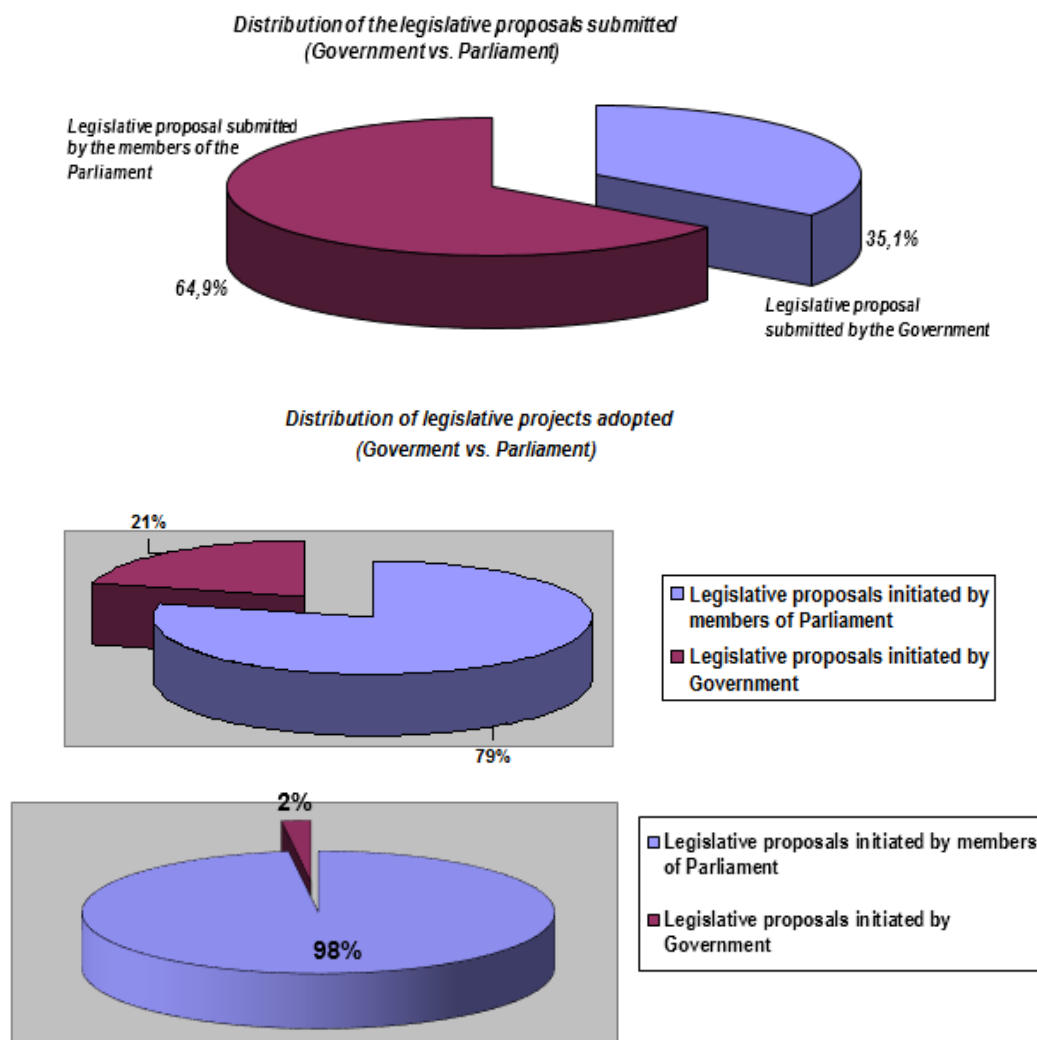


FIGURE 2. DISTRIBUTION OF THE LEGISLATIVE PROPOSALS

Source: Public Policy Institute, Monitoring Report, 2011

The research conducted by The Public Policy Institute on priorities of legislative process has brought to attention the existence of a net difference between the agendas of both Chambers of Parliament. We report these results below.

At the Chambers of Deputies, the Justice represents the main area of initiative (25% of the legislative initiatives have been made in these field), and the last position, with the fewest initiatives submitted, is IT and equal opportunities.

At the Senate, the main regulatory areas of legislative initiatives submitted were agriculture /forestry and the last position is represented by fields such as human rights and equal opportunities.

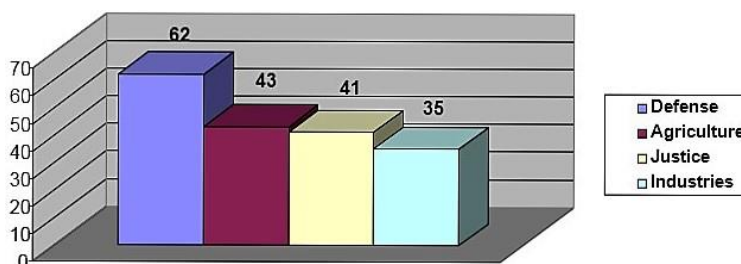


FIGURE 3. PRIORITIES OF THE SENATE AGENDA

Source: The Public Policy Institute, Monitoring Report, 2011

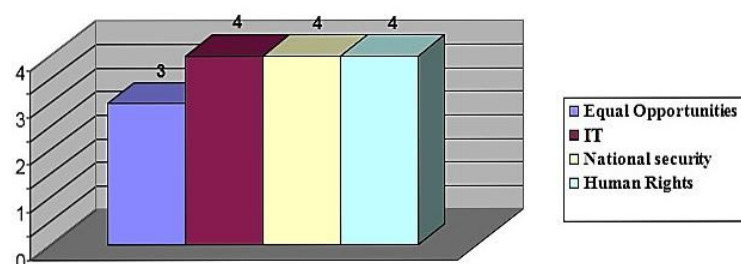


FIGURE 4. LAST POSITIONS IN THE HIERARCHY OF THE PRIORITIES ON THE SENATE AGENDA

Source: The Public Policy Institute, Monitoring Report, 2011

The study has revealed that there are now over 200 bills that are on the Parliament's vote queue for over a year.

The celerity of the legislative process is a very important indicator for the efficiency and effectiveness of the Parliamentary work. According to our Constitution, any legislative proposal initiated by the deputies, senators or the Government shall undergo legislation in Parliament within 90 days after registration, or 120 days for codes and laws of astonishing natural complexity. According to regulations in force, the two Chambers of Parliament can decide on the proposals and/or recorded bills.

In the absence of plenary debates of a large number of projects, these have been adopted through the tacit adoption procedure. The distribution of these bills, both for the Deputy Chamber and the Senate are:

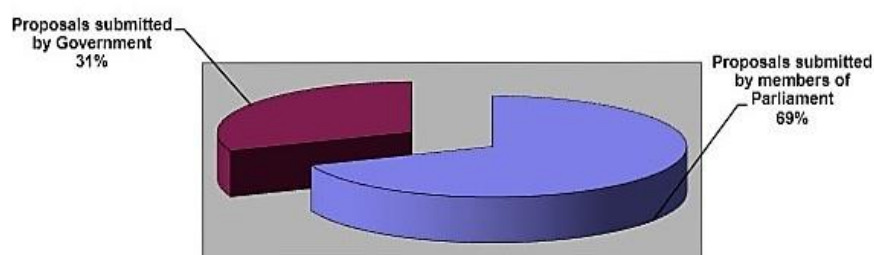


FIGURE 5. DISTRIBUTION OF LEGISLATIVE PROPOSAL ADOPTED BY TACIT PROCEDURE (PARLIAMENT VS. GOVERNMENT)

Source: The Public Policy Institute, Monitoring Report, 2011

The fact that the most of the tacit adopted legislative proposals have been submitted by the Parliament members that can lead us to conclude that, after the deposition of the initiatives, the MP's are less motivated in the supporting their own initiatives.

Analyzing, in turn, the dimensions of parliamentary activity, we can draw some general conclusions regarding the defined issues in the monitored session.

The draft legislation submitted by members of Parliament continues the unsuccessful legislative inflation phenomenon - in other words, some lawmakers initiate legislative proposals or co-sign in order to claim it as activity; there was no real and consistent concerns about the purpose of the legislative process regarding this initiatives.

MP's belonging to the governing political parties should be consistent in cooperation with fellow parties in the executive to avoid situations when their legislative proposals are in conflict with the agreed political principles.

In terms of priorities, the less important areas for the current Parliament – as they appear depending on the purpose of regulation initiatives submitted - are equal opportunities and human rights.

## 5. THE CONVERGENCE AGENDAS AND THE RESPONSIVENESS GOVERNMENT

Congruence between the public and governmental agendas is an unavoidable precondition without which responsiveness cannot occur. Public agenda is measured by the answer to a question about “the most important problems” the nation is facing. The measures from the parliamentary agenda are based on hearings activity. By analyzing the activity of the Permanent Commission of the Chamber of Deputies may be noted that there is a significant difference between the number of hearings and the degree of access to information on the outcome of the discussion in Commissions. Thus, there is no available information for 31 from a total of 65 hearings of the Human Right Commission. The Public Administration Commission also has not enough available documents (only for 4 of the 25 hearings of this session). Other similar examples are the Economic Policy Committee and the Commission to investigate abuses, corruption and complaints. For the February-June 2010 parliamentary session, there is no available information for 20 hearings of these Commissions.

Unfortunately, at the Senate, information from the hearings of Permanent Commissions is not available. The presence of information, available only for 4 Permanent Commission –Foreign Policy Commission, Public Administration Commission Environment Commission, Commission for Labor, Family and Social



Protection and the Commission for Privatization and Administration of the State assets - is rather an exception.

The presented research clearly reveals that parliamentary activity shows, at least for the analyzed period, the nature of dysfunctions that compromise policy agenda, both in terms of its correspondence with the priorities of the other two agendas and in terms of haste in which they are debated in Parliament

According Jones and Baumgartner (2005), hearing activity is "the front end" component of the public policy process. Meaning that it responds more easily to changing information flow than accomplish the later policymaking process stages.

As a consequence, it is reasonable to expect a realistic response to the concerns of the citizens in the hearings activity, noting that this response should be offered in the same year. If hearings are scheduled a year after an increase in public attention to a topic, our approach, will not count it (Jones and Baumgartner, 2005, p.255).

With this consideration, we appreciate that the concept of responsiveness government is viable only if the policy agenda is a result of the convergence, in real time (approx. 1 year), of the three agendas of others: public, governmental and parliamentary. Adopted standard for assessing the quality convergence of agendas is quite strict; the parliament must take into consideration the priorities of the public agenda in real time, but not later than one year.

Furthermore, between the two concepts is a mutual conditioning. In this sense, the existence of a policy agenda, defined such by the result of convergence between the three agendas, provides a strong support for responsiveness government to work.

In addition, achieving the policy agenda in this way represents a guarantee for democracy; issues raised by different interest groups, must be, first, put on the public agenda and only then put on the governmental and parliamentary agendas.

A special case is represented by the international organizations and public issues that these organizations try to directly promote on the governmental or parliamentary agenda. While solving other problems than the society requires it seems to be a threat to democracy and the political analysts believe that the future capabilities of states to act will depend on their ability to auto-connect to the international context (Beck, 2004, p.46).

From our point of view and in terms of previous statements, it is necessary that the states should be concerned on development of the dynamic capabilities. Dynamic capabilities refer to the particular



capacity of the government possess to shape, reshape, configure, and reconfigure assets to be able to respond to a frequently changing environment<sup>4</sup>.

As with previous considerations results that the concept of responsiveness government is defined by dynamic capabilities that give the government the necessary support to anticipate both the requirements of the international organizations as well as the global challenges. In other words, the prerequisites are for, at least, the reduction of what Dahl (2002, p.136) called the dark side of democracy<sup>5</sup>. In conclusion, the responsiveness approach is a political problem where changes are connected to government and society activity. But this connection is not possible without the convergence between agendas and without compliance with the standard required for assessing the quality of convergence

## CONCLUSIONS

This research reveals that the importance attributed to responsiveness government and policy agenda defined as a commune place of convergence citizen's priorities and governmental and parliamentary activity is justified, primarily, by their involving in defining a space where public policies work. Throughout this study we tried to configure the dimension of the agenda's convergence and to reveal that congruence agenda is a vehicle that leads to responsiveness. Consequently, the two concepts are inextricably linked and reinforce each other and at the same time they make public policy work.

Secondly, put these two concepts into practice is likely to contribute to increase citizen's trust in the representative national institutions: government and parliament. Responsiveness is a generic concept that applies to the relationship between a public service and the citizenry and to the relationship between the state and civil society.

The fundamental concern is the improvement of the quality of life in society, included within that broad concept of quality of citizen-state relations. The achievement of responsiveness in this sense is likely to re-establish the public's trust not only in the particularly concerned public services but also more broadly in the system and state of governance.

<sup>4</sup> This definition is an extension in the governmental sphere of corporate dynamic capabilities definition formulated by J.D.Teece in *Dynamic Capabilities and Strategic Management*, Oxford University Press 2009, p.89.

<sup>5</sup> In the current international context, the governments act in accordance with the charges of supranational structure on which the citizens have no control.

It is already a known fact that in the last decade's citizen's trust in these institutions is in a dramatic decline. This deep lack of trust shown by citizens is an expression of their refusal to accept public policies formulated behind closed doors, a practice where decisions are made without consulting the public.

From the perspective of focusing on Romania case, the study brought to attention the existence of major and dramatic discrepancies between the preferences of citizens and governmental parliamentary agendas. Hence, the premises of building a policy agenda as a result of convergent agendas are being undermined; responsiveness government is also compromise. Moreover, the public space where public policy works can not be defined. In such circumstance, it was expected that, including, Romanian citizen's trust in government and parliament to register a negative grow.

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