Chapter 2
The Future of Public Administration Reform in Romania

The process of Europeanizing Romania is advanced and has had positive and visible results such as the growth in GDP per capita, the presence of multinational corporations, significant progress in infrastructure, and the development of public administration. In all fairness, even if there are shortcomings and aspects that require improvement, significant progress has been made on varying fronts. This Europeanization process, as analyzed in the previous chapters, has had a significant impact on the public administration of Romania. The legal framework is in place along with the Commissions' monitoring reports verifying the progress of the nation and the adoption of the European public administrative space.

Nevertheless, the reform process is not complete and Romania still faces a low European funding absorption rate, crises in the educational and healthcare sectors, a high emigration rate and widespread administrative corruption. In addition, since 2009, the Romanian government faces the global economic crisis along with most governments in Europe, called by some authors a "government crisis" given that public budgets cannot sustain previous financial commitments. From my perspective, I would like to suggest the hypothesis that the future of Romanian public administration reforms will rest on two fundamental challenges: the curbing of corruption and the generation of economic prosperity. In this chapter, I shall outline the administrative intellectual instruments available for administration reform in Romania such as New Public Management (NPM), Neo-Weberianism, and Digital Government since I do believe that components of each will determine the national capability for producing economic prosperity. Naturally, all administrative instruments must be properly contextualized to Romania's realities as they are dynamic and highly debated reform initiatives in their own country of origin. However modern and efficient these tools may be, in my view they are still inadequate and do not encompass all societal capabilities. Before understanding them and their impact upon Romanian public administration, I will continue the analyses of corruption started in the previous chapter.

2.1   Cultural Considerations for Public Administration Reforms in Romania

History and culture determine public administration operations within any country, yet I will not attempt to use culture, history, or traditions as an excuse for the slow public administration reform and the modernization efforts of the European Union in Romania. There is, however, still the danger of those reform initiatives being implemented without cultural considerations and the necessary nuances of perceptions and local practices. Therefore, in this next section I would like to identify some general considerations and subtle nuances that must be considered and addressed in future Romanian reforms initiatives. The starting point for this discussion is the 2011 article, *Differential Legacy Effects: Three Propositions on the Impact of Administrative Traditions on Public Administration Reform in Europe East and West,* by Hinrik, Sahling, and Yesilkagit that appropriately identifies the issues that are most tension-prone. Even if this is an incomplete list, future reform initiatives must take into account the Romanian cultural particularities and, in the opinion of this author, twenty-first century public administration reforms should purposefully attempt to reform the culture itself.

As would be expected, comparative public administration studies assign significant weight to historical legacies and traditions in the process of modern administrative reforms (Painter & Peters, 2010). It is commonly accepted that traditions and historical legacies can influence, block, delay, or filter political and administrative reform proposals in any country (Christensen & Lægreid, 2001; Olsen & Peters, 1996). There are powerful, resourceful, and coercive tactics that institutions such as the European Union, the World Bank or the International Monetary Fund can apply to modernizing nations and accelerate their pace of reforms, yet both academic studies and casual observation seem to indicate that administrative tradition is more resilient than expected. This "discursive convergence" or the adoption of reform language without changing the day-to-day business of the government seems to be a common practice in newly integrated European nations. Europeanization experts place a particularly important emphasis on national administrative systems (Harmsen, 2000; Knill, 2001). Initially, it was expected that national administrative systems of newly integrated nations would radically and automatically transform themselves in response to European pressure, leading to administrative convergence between the European Union and the integrated states. Subsequent studies, however, have abandoned this hypothesis and instead suggest that significant divergence between national administrative systems and a central administration still persists (Olsen, 2008). The Europeanization process may continue for Romania and the newly integrated nations of CEE, however the details of this divergence are not very clear yet, and I would like to suggest the following considerations be taken into account:

2.1.1   Romania's Lack of Administrative Tradition

The first consideration that must be reflected upon is that unlike western Europe, Romania does not have a long and ingrained positive and democratic administrative tradition. Administrative tradition refers to ideas, institutions, and practices that have been dominant over a long period. In western Europe, administrative traditions can trace their roots back to the nineteenth century and the age of state and nation building. By contrast, the administrative tradition of Romania has changed in the past two centuries, with several regime changes along with significant transformations and reconfigurations of its public administration. If western European traditions are characterized by continuity and long-term stability, Romania lacks this kind of stability. The continuity and longevity of administrative traditions in most western nations imply a deep entrenchment of traditional patterns and a greater resistance to change. Administrative reforms in most western democracies evolved slowly, peacefully, and in a civilized manner, capable of coexisting in spite of profound differences and disagreements. For instance, United Kingdom has four different administrative traditions: the Whig, Tory, Liberal, and Socialist traditions that have coexisted peacefully for a long period of time (Rhodes, 2005).

Frequent transformation in public administration along with the instability of ideas, institutions, and practices tend to characterize the history of Romania. Due to this unstable tradition, public administrators are used to adopting new reform initiatives without careful consideration, only to discover that they have implemented a system that quickly requires additional reform. There are several causes that might explain this practice: first, the administrative system has undergone "significant disturbance" at the political regime level resulting in a radical change with the administrative paradigm being utterly replaced by a competing and opposing model (Baumgartner & Jones, 1993). Second, the Romanian regime has experienced a "critical juncture" that set the country on new pathways of development rather than intrinsic patterns of incremental changes (Bărbulescu, 2005; Thelen, 1999). Casual observation may indicate that administrative tradition in Romania is too bureaucratic and rigid in practice and ideology; however in contrast with western Europe, where a large population of civil servants exist and acts as guardians of administrative heritage, Romania lacks tradition and stability.

2.1.2   The Inconsistency Between Ideas and Practice

The second consideration necessary for public administration reform in Romania is the awareness that there is an inconsistency between practice and ideas, between formal rules and informal practices (Crăciun, 2008; Petersone, 2008a, 2008b). In contrast to Romania, western European nations draw their consistency and stability from the entrenchment of public administration and the seldom changed body of

public law resulting in stable administrative behavior. Values, norms, and practices slowly but continuously adapt to external changes but only within the existing framework of the law (Bulmer & Burch, 1998; Jordan, 2003). This is the background and mentality that Europeanization experts bring to Romania: in their view, changing the law and the governmental institutions will automatically change the values, norms, and practices of public bureaucrats.

Unfortunately, the administrative tradition of Romania is far less consistent and more familiar with ignoring rules than their western counterparts. In their 2006 book, *Governing after Communism,* Dimitrov et al. point to institutional weakness and frequent changes in formal institutions as a trademark of post-communist regimes and a source of weakness and instability. Bureaucrats who are told of one more, externally imposed administrative reform tend to dismiss it as simply another in a long series of failed reforms. Instead, informal patterns of behaviors, values, and norms persist, regardless of the formal laws and institutions, or whether those directives come from Brussels or Washington, as they use to come from Moscow or Istanbul (Jowitt, 1992; Nunberg, 1999). As a result, the general discrepancy between legislative intent and public administration practice remains one of the fundamental problems of most post-communist administration (Goetz & Wollmann, 2001). This inconsistency affects not only the speed of change but also the depth of change. Western democracies practice the slow adaption of administrative behavior followed by formal institutional change. In contrast, Romania has had frequent formal institutional changes designed to induce a transformation of administrative practice but resulted in a much lower degree of consistency between formal rules and natural practice. Ironically, what most public administrators in Romania desire is stability not transformation.

2.1.3   Unhealthy Reliance on International Pressures

The third consideration that we must be mindful of in Romanian reform initiatives is the historical tendency to overrely on external and international pressures to the detriment of domestic ones. In Romania, it may appear that domestic reform initiatives and directives are not considered as serious and significant as those imposed from outside the nation. Reform literature on public administration identifies a range of normal factors that compel a system to reform including social, economic, political pressures and scandals and/or sudden crises (Barzelay, 2001; Hood, 1995; Politt & Bouckaert, 2000; Wright, 1994). Those same factors and social pressures exist in Romanian society as well, but are not considered nearly as important as a directive coming from the European Union, World Bank, or International Monetary Fund, espoused by some so-called expert who is probably visiting the country for the first time. It seems that most reform initiatives during the past two decades have been undertaken simply to please one international body or another, lacking real conviction among the political class who only "discursively" agreed to it, and the public administrators who simulated its implementation (Comşa, 2008).

Romanian public administration was historically exposed and acceptant of international influences; during its imperial days Romania was at the periphery of the imperial center and during communism it was under the strong influence of Moscow (Brzezinski, 1967). While the mechanisms of influence have changed, public administrators in Romania are again subject to intense external influences without real domestic input. From the European perspective, Romania is a "downloader" of Europeanization (Goetz, 2005) and even if it is now expected to be a contributor, or at least responsible for its own reforms, the historical overreliance on external pressures might hinder this process (Börzel, 2005).

2.1.4   The Negative Perception Regarding a Strong State

The forth consideration important for the future of public administration reform in Romania, is the negative perception that exists among the citizens of Romania regarding a strong and well organized state. During communism, any associations with or an indication of the national state had negative connotations, since in the minds of the people the state was in essence the ruling communist party and its controlling secret service, the Securitate. The state was generally perceived to be negative, inefficient, controlling, and dictatorial, therefore requiring a revolution. The lingering and perhaps unintended consequence is anemic loyalty to the state and patriotism and a reluctant desire to its improvement. In this context, sacrificing for the state is anathema to most people who see a reduced value in the concept of Romanian citizenship.

While this may sound attractive to the opponents of big government in the West, it does create serious problems that a young democracy such as Romania cannot afford. Given the inexperience with democracy, Romania cannot afford the disloyalty and quick emigration of its citizens, disrespect and disregard for the rule of law, and the lack of intragovernmental collaboration. The past two decades, reforms borrowed from the west seemed to go directly into modern management systems without the establishment of a solid base for democratic development of the classical hierarchal structure that public administration required along with their healthy accountability system. Jenei and Szalai in their 2002 book, *Modernizing Local Governance in a Transitional Nation,* argue that in Romania, and as well as in other central and eastern European nations, public administration faces this special challenge since they have to create a stable enough political democracy at the same time as they implement the principles of efficiency and effectiveness.

2.1.5   The Necessity of Stable and Healthy Regulations

The fifth consideration is the requirement of stability and healthy regulations that are universally applied to all members of a society. In the west, public sector organizations are usually considered permanent entities and public employment as

lifetime employment; in Romania there are significant questions regarding the permanence and structure of public administration (Matei, 2010). In the west, permanency and stability are seen as the problems while in Romania their very existence may provide the solution. The very term "transition," that in many ways still describe the status of the Romanian public administration, contradicts the concept of stability and predictability. The most common obstacles for sustained development of public administration in Romania are the unstable political context, the constantly changing framework and numerous unfinished reform initiatives. The issues facing Romanian reformers are not ignoring environmental changes or stagnant ideas and approaches, but quite the opposite, not having time and stability to allow for appropriate policy-making, testing, and implementation.

If western governments struggled with their past practices and solutions, the Romanian government had to create its own healthy traditions and heritage. Looking to the past is not an option given the disconnection between its previous political and ideological systems. In Romania, "stability" is much more attractive than "flexibility." The lack of capacity to create a new political-administrative system may be a natural legacy of a totalitarian system, but its prolonged absence may lead to risky outcomes. A common mistake in political-administrative reforms over the past two decades has been that numerous reform proposals were changed before they reached their maturity, even with counter-proposals that had the opposite intent or effect. Given this fluid context of political, administrative, and economic instability, any base of stability has exponential virtues. Long-standing organizational structures, constant principles, and unvarying targets and benchmarks can help navigate through the transition and ensure stability and implement ability (Comsa, 2008; Bondar, 2007).

Consistency is also required to build administrative capacity and create organizational memory. Romania is a nation that had to rebuild its social fabric along with its political, administrative, and economic systems, numerous laws, rules, regulations, and institutions were implemented overnight to provide some sense of stability and predictability. However, in order for those rules and institutions to function, there is a need for an underlying set of commonly understood cultural principles and values, or what Alexis de Tocqueville called "the habits of the heart." Therefore, the first objectives of the rules and regulations are to teach the population what those principles are.

Guy Peters, in his 2001 book, *The Future of Governing: Four Emerging Models,* suggests that transitional nations actually require more regulation to ensure the condition of institutional building and the elimination of corruption. He notes that, for instance, discretion in personal management—a key feature of modernization efforts—may prove too risky given the underdevelopment of the law, limited managerial experience, and an unstable culture lacking adequate control mechanisms. Verheijen (1998) accurately predicted that further liberalization of public employment conditions will actually lead to increased politicization, instability, and corruption. He stresses the difficulty in introducing modern, merit-based employment to replace the patronage system. Unfortunately, due to the negative experience of a highly centralized, hyper-bureaucratic communist system, deregulation of any

kind is alluring to the Romanian public. However, we must question if deregulation of public management, with "managers that are free to manage," is suitable for the Romanian administrative system given its lack of ethics and tradition of corruption. These modern initiatives may not be viable before a set of values are in place to ensure that government operates in an accountable and uncorrupt manner. To quote Peters: "despite the attractiveness of ideas such as deregulation and flexibilities, governments attempt to build both, effective administration and a functional democracy may require much greater emphasis on formality, rules and strong ethical standards" (Peters, 2001).

2.1.6   The Absence of a Private Sector

The sixth consideration in reforming public administration in Romania is the absence of a healthy, mature, and efficient private sector ready to take on the responsibilities previously held by central government. Conventional wisdom and reform initiatives in the western world—particularly the USA and UK—claim that the antidote to a corrupt and inefficient state is an efficient and productive private sector. That may be the case in western, developed nations (although, highly debatable) but certainly not in Romania, given the immaturity of its private sector. Peters states that "the primary intellectual root of the market approach to changing the public sector is the belief in the efficiency of markets as the mechanism for allocating resources within the society" (Peters, 2001). The presence and western understanding of private companies, entrepreneurship, competition, privatization, and efficiency were central concepts taken for granted and simply assumed by reform initiatives in Romania. Yet, the Romanian private sector is only two decades old. It is very underdeveloped and for the most part it has different understandings of simple concepts such as "conflict of interests," "legal tender," "free-market economy," etc. (Văduva, 2004)

When referring to entrepreneurial or economic activity in Romania, there are several and different interpretations. The first and most common form of private economic activity is the **entrepreneur-trader**, the individual or a company that engages in small-scale commerce in a semi-professional manner. Given the long, small-trading tradition of Romania, this is the most common and accessible form of economic activity.[1] Second, there is the activity created by the **foreign multinationals** that entered Romania after it joined NATO, to take advantage of its natural resources and inexpensive labor. Third, there is the legacy of the **privatization** of state-owned resources immediately after the revolution of 1989 by their pervious communist managers.

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[1] The most common dwelling name in Romania is "târg" or market, leading us to believe that commercial activity—buying materials in one place (or foreign country such as Turkey) and selling it in the "târg" was considered advanced economic activity.

As mentioned previously, this process was chaotic, non-transparent, and bursting with accusations of corruption and cronyism. A dubious relationship developed between the new entrepreneurs and the political class responsible for the privatization. The competitive strategy of the newly privatized firms has not necessarily been modernization, efficiency, or professionalization, but instead ensuring preferential treatment on various government contracts and monopolistic positions. This strategy has ranged from lucrative government contracts all the way to monopolistic market positions ensured by contradictory laws and administrative methods. Viewed through this perspective, we begin to understand the purpose of the legislative "zig-zag" of the 1990s where the political class and its administrative apparatus responded to competing economic interests. Creating a legal framework for a new market economy in such a context was not an easy task as it required first the establishment of a basic and functional constitutional framework, property rights, evaluation of assets, and redress mechanisms. Creating stable, fair, and enforceable constitutional law is the first and very basic governmental function and it cannot be accomplished by deregulated networks of fragmented public agencies. Unfortunately, the private sector of Romania was too inexperienced and closely connected with the government to act as a counter-weight and reform alternative.

Finally, the Romanian government is not yet able to act as a "smart buyer" given the institutional settings that are too weak and cannot control and evaluate complex contract relationships. In addition to the lack of a proper legal framework, the presence of uncompetitive markets with much higher internal costs is one of the main reasons why "contracting out" fails in former communist nations in central and eastern European nations (Manning, 2001). Competitive and efficient markets are absent, instead being comprised of monopolistic or oligopolistic structures. Under these circumstances, the argument about "unit cost savings" is far more controversial than in developed nations. If the internal costs of a private provider are unknown or unstable, it is difficult to compare its performance against public entities.

2.1.7   The Fragmented and Competing Nature of Public Administration in Romania

A seventh consideration that must be accounted for is the fragmented nature of Romanian public administration. Given modernization initiatives inspired by the New Public Management (NPM) ideology and sponsored by international organizations such as the World Bank and the International Monitoring Fund, the traditional large, unified, and monopolistic government has been subject to strong fragmentation through either horizontal or vertical specialization. The result has been the establishment of quasi-independent and autonomous governmental agencies without clearly defined jurisdictions and responsibilities. The intent of this initiative was to move the production of public goods as closely as possible to the consumer in order to reduce corruption and increase efficiency, but what resulted was a

dysfunctional, contradictory network of independent territories making coordination and speedy decision-making nearly impossible. This decentralization initiative was built on the erroneous assumption that people will naturally collaborate and that there are adequate and objective monitoring and control mechanisms that can objectively assess and communicate the performance of each decentralized body.

A. J. G. Verheijen in his 2003 report, *Public Administration Reforms in Post-Communist States,* has drawn attention to the usually poor accountability and coordination system that exists in central and eastern European public sectors. This lack of coordination and actual competition among agencies was inherited from the communist regime where the Communist Party was the central dictatorial authority and local power-brokers competed among themselves for favors from the central authorities. Romania has been successful in dismantling the communist system in structure and central dictatorial control, but less effective at integrating and coordinating new systems. Little has been done to develop mechanisms for interorganizational and intraorganizational coordination. It seems that public administrators have developed a pervasive culture of extreme specialization and a "silo mentality" rather than understanding and responding to an interconnected reality. The transformation from one sector economy that existed during the communist era to a multi-sector one encouraged the new units to emphasize their individual identity to the detriment of partnerships and collaboration. Specialists are perceived to be more valuable than civil service generalists, a mentality that has further fragmented public organization.

All these transformations have taken place in a context where Romanian public administrators lacked the traditions and informal relationships that bind their western counterparts and provide a sense of loyalty and belonging within governmental agencies (vertically) and between governmental agencies (horizontally). If individual agencies and governmental units develop their own culture and work habits, the natural long-term outcome is the development of rivalry rather than unity and collaboration within the public administration. Unity and coordination is paramount to a new democracy such as Romania, which is accustomed with the efficiency and predictability of dictatorship. Continuous corruption and administrative failure, as in the case of Russia, might lead to a return of totalitarianism that may be perceived as the lesser of two evils.

2.1.8   Technocracy May Stifle Democracy

The eighth and final consideration that must be considered for future reform initiatives is that democracy can be easily stifled by technocracy. Democracy is a fragile form of government with significant shortcomings, notably its slowness and indecisiveness. In modernization efforts, there is a real danger of oppressing democratic goals such as transparency, equal opportunity, access to information, fair procedures and citizens' consultation for the technocratic values of efficiency, effectiveness, return on investment, and fast decision-making (Box, Marshall, Reed, & Reed, 2001).

In the previous century, countless dictators trampled upon democratic values under the pretense of short-term, modernization initiatives. Effectiveness and efficiency may actually bring a decrease in accountability and responsibility and the implementation of democratic values. The competition between efficiency and democracy may be especially difficult for Romania, which lacks a long tradition of a democratic culture and whose political elites see first-hand the drawbacks of an inexperienced democracy. It may prove difficult for rational public managers to understand and support the fundamental issues of a democracy such as open dialogue, competing ideologies, public procurement procedures or consultation with citizens. Since these are expensive and time-consuming propositions, Romanian government can easily fall into the trap of adopting cost concerns and efficiency connotation while sacrificing democratic values. It is alarming that the concept of accountability to the public by public administrators has often changed the definition of accountability for positive financial outcomes. Since the philosophy of marketization is utilitarian, being good might include being cost-efficient; thus it is not unimaginable that being cost-efficient alone might be perceived as the definition of good. This may lead to an overconcentration on financial efficiency at the expense of accountability and citizen participation.

This will be even more complicated in the future, as limited resources bring additional pressure on governments to financially perform and reach technocratic goals. Given the economic challenges, financial criteria will be a powerful tool in assessing public sector performance. The same can also apply to the other mantra of "client orientation" in the public sector. It may be easy to shed years of communist history by voicing popular campaigns that proclaim that the customer is king, as well as resorting to other methods emphasizing the needs and interests of various consumer groups. However, it is dangerous in a country where civic education is poor and citizens are unaware of their rights and responsibilities to limit the role of the citizens simply to the role of a client. Limiting the government's relationship with its citizens to simply a market exchange can be especially risky in new democracy since a strong and solid system of representative democracy is not functional yet. In circumstances where citizens regard business participants as more influential than government officials, constant negotiation and consumerism may seriously undermine the legitimacy of the state (Drechsler, 2005b).

The weak Romanian civil society and the autocratic decision-making practices by administrators and politicians alike deserve special scrutiny. There are special situations where radical changes require fast decisions and robust action at the cost of ignoring all voices, as in the case of some reforms over the past twenty years which have been carried out in a top-down manner. However, the fact that little time, patience, and effort were invested in educating the citizenry about the inner-workings of democracy and, more specifically, their own responsibility toward the state and each other, is of paramount concern. It seems that the current Romanian bureaucrats, continuing the tradition of the communist era, disrespect the average citizen's ability to understand democracy and the workings of a modern state, and prefers instead to make decisions on their behalf rather than educate them. This, in the opinion of the author, is the single greatest threat to the future of democracy in Romania and of the Europeanization of its administrative system.

I will next turn my attention to the three major ideological public administration reform initiatives available to the reformers of Romanian public administration system. I will briefly describe them along with their historical foundations since they represent the tools for modernization and Europeanization. Many of their recommendations have already been attempted in the past two decades in various forms and with varying success. I do believe that these instruments provide limited approaches that have missing components and in Chap. 3, at the conclusion of this volume, I shall attempt to provide some possible complementary ideas.

2.2   New Public Management

Public administration, along with most forms of governance, seems to be under constant reform. That has certainly been the case over the past two decades of political freedom in Romania and it promises to continue so over some time to come. The nation seems constantly unsatisfied with their government, while the mass media and Romanian elites demand continuous reforms. One of the most hotly debated reform ideologies in Romania over the past 20 years has been New Public Management (NPM), and in this next section I will briefly outline its fundamentals and origins in the US public administration history. Some experts may consider NPM inappropriate for the Romanian and eastern European context, yet we cannot ignore it since, as previously stated, NPM seems to be the preferred governance ideology for the ultra-powerful, invisible financial markets, and international bodies in the global context (Drechsler, 2005a, 2005b; Polidano & Hulme, 1999; State-Cerkez, & Păunescu, 2008). In Romania's setting, the transition from communism to a free-market, liberal economy coincided with the zenith of neo-liberal public administration reform concepts dislodging traditional Weberian bureaucracies. Crucially, the NPM ideology was fully embraced by global organizations such as the World Bank, the IMF, and the USID who were eager to present their advanced, developed host countries as idealized models to the newly liberated communist republics. Naturally, this administrative model was well received by the new Romanian leadership who was enthusiastic to present its free-market credentials to the general public who experienced five decades of failed central planning. Mishler and Rose (1997) point out in their article, *Trust, Distrust and Skepticism: Popular Evaluations of Civil and Political Institutions in Post-Communist Societies,* that post-communist nations are in large driven by an unhealthy, juvenile, and blind admiration of western societies, willing to copy everything without much contextualization. Keeping in step with the other CEE nations, Romania began its reform and privatization efforts with little knowledge and expertise about the western nations it was seeking to emulate.

Romania's transition from communism to a free-market democracy was characterized by inexperience and impatience regarding the in-depth analysis, testing, and scenario planning required by such a monumental task. Further, the rebuilding of a crippling infrastructure would have been impossible without foreign financial aid;

but the aid was predicated upon the acceptance of New Public Management embodied in western policies and expertise. Inexperienced Romanian politicians and public administrators quickly adopted the fashionable NPM, disregarding their own circumstances, overestimating the positive outcomes, and underestimating negative ones. The focus was on pleasing western agency sponsors at the expense of objective research and assessment of real local needs (Drechsler, 2005b; Verheijen, 2003). Romania became a "marketizer" rather than a "modernizer," lacking the domestic expertise that could and would contextualize or at least anticipate the applicability of NPM to its culture and administrative traditions. In such cases of "uninformed transfers" Romania had insufficient information about the transferring policy and its implementation in the local context (Dolowitz & Marsh, 1996).

2.2.1   The Historical Basis of NPM

NPM was the premiere underling ideological basis for most of the reforms in Romania in the early 1990s and it still continues to provide general guidelines for public administration reforms the world over. Although not as powerful and popular as it was in the early transition period, NPM or some of its components are still utilized by the international community and financial markets. Even if it is a discredited reform policy with significant shortcomings in the opinion of many experts, NPM does continue to raise significant questions about traditional bureaucracy over which it holds sizeable and positive improvements. Ironically, in the view of this author, NPM is a more appropriate reform ideology in Romania today, with its more mature society and private sector then it was in the early 1990s. Regardless, I believe a brief understanding of its history and ideological underpinnings would benefit us as we aim to properly contextualize it in the case of Romania.

NPM had its origins in Public Choice Theory and the so-called *managerialism theory* that was born in the USA (Aucoin, 1990; Dunsire, 1995). The USA is probably best-suited as a reference point for this theoretical development, because of the size, complexity, and history of its administration and the diversity of its approaches. NPM developed in the late 1970s and early 1980s in the Anglo-Saxon world under the reform initiatives of Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher who campaigned on "small government" platforms. Later, the national governments of other commonwealth countries such as New Zealand and Australia joined in, and given their initial success, NPM became a reform alternative the world over. The common characteristics of this practical managerial reform were identified by academic scholars rather late and are still under discussion and debate (Dunsire, 1995). Tables 2.1 and 2.2, respectively, represent the NPM characteristics that are unequivocally accepted, and those that are often utilized although not universally accepted (Borins, 1994, 1995; Boston, Martin, Pallot, & Walsh, 1996; Gore, 1994; Hood, 1991; Stewart & Walsh, 1992).

The "official" study of public administration in the USA began at a time when public administration was in a disastrous condition. In the late nineteenth century, the US political system was dominated by political parties, who gave administrative

Table 2.1 The undisputed characteristics of the NPM (Greuning, 2001)

Budget cuts	Vouchers	Accountability for performance	Performance auditing
Privatization	Customer concept (one-stop-shops, cash management)	Decentralization	Strategic planning/ management
Separation of provision and production	Competition	Performance measurement	Changed management style
Contracting out	Freedom to manage (flexibility)	Improved accounting	Personnel management (incentives)
User charges	Separation of politics and administration	Improved financial management	More use of information technology

Table 2.2 The generally accepted characteristics of the NPM (Greuning, 2001)

Legal budget/spending constraints	Rationalization of jurisdictions	Policy analysis and evaluation
Improved regulation	Rationalization or streamlining of administrative structures	Democratization and citizens participation

positions to their members in exchange for political favors. Much like Romania and other former communist nations over the past 20 years, personnel changed after elections and the public treasury was frequently plundered. Incompetence, inefficiency, and corruption were common characteristics of the late nineteenth-century USA as well as European public administration (Schachter, 1989; Stone & Stone, 1975; Van Riper, 1987; Weber, 1968). Given these circumstances, the *Progressive* movement developed to reform politics and public administration. These Progressives pursued the separation of politics and administration, and were interested in an interventionist state administered by a neutral, competent civil servant accountable through financial management. Their major contribution was the invention of a career bureaucrat through the Pendleton Act of 1883, line item budgeting, and the rolling back of parties and corruption (Eisenach, 1994; Lee, 1995; Waldo, 1948).

The main ideologues for the Progressives came from the New York Bureau for Municipal Research, and were significantly influenced by the modern management ideas of Frederic Taylor and Scientific Management. On the issue of corruption and incompetence, the solution was to stress efficiency through techniques and studies imported from private scientific management fields. The Progressives were the first to use performance indicators to benchmark the efficiency of a public organization as a major venue to identify and curb corruption (Schachter, 1989).

By the 1920s, academics built the science of public administration on the success of the Progressive reform movement that presumed the existence of loyal bureaucrats, honest politicians, and a political/administrative dichotomy. This science was built on the theory of efficient organization functioning on the modern concept of

scientific management. Within organizational structures that followed these principles, their chief executives were asked to function according to predictable principles encapsulated in POSDCORB (Planning, Organizing, Staffing, Directing, Coordinating, Reporting and Budgeting) (Gulick, 1937). The fundamental principles were:

- The principle of division of work and specialization
- The principle of homogeneity
- The principle of unity of command
- The scalar principle respective of the principle of delegation
- The principle of accountability
- The principle of the span of control
- The staff principle (Graicunas, 1937; Gulick, 1937; Mooney, 1937; Urwick, 1937)

In the 1930s under the auspices of the "New Deal," the scope of government activity and the principles of public administration were dramatically expanded. The government became more involved in private lives, it regulated more activities, it became more social-democratic, and was perceived to be built on scientific objectivity (Egger, 1975; Waldo, 1948; Van Riper, 1987).

At the end of World War II, the principles of classic public administration were reassessed and closely examined. One of the best known and rigorous critics of progressive public administration was Herbert Simon in his dissertation *Administrative Behavior—A Study of Decision-Making and Administrative Organization,* which ushered in the *Neo-Classic Public Administration* movement. His charge was that classical public administration was not scientific enough, relying on inconsistent best practices drawn from experience and practice (Simon, 1976). He suggested building the science of public administration on the rigorous and scientific discipline in observing the facts and studying the laws of human behavior (Simon, 1976; Simon, Smithburg, & Thompson, 1962). The main practical event of this period was the invention of the PPBS (planning, programming, and budgeting system), a macroeconomic decision-making tool that was built on the belief that central planning could lead to successful optimization. Under the neoclassical public administration reform, terms such as inputs, throughputs, outputs, outcomes, programs, and alternatives to budgeting became the norm (Greenhouse, 1966; Gross, 1969; Schick, 1966, 1969). The classic progressive take on public administration was enriched with a rational and analytical emphasis on managerial studies, built on a vision of an active government with objective scientific knowledge.

2.2.2   Public Choice Theory

The first theory to rival classic public administration approaches in the late 1960s was *Public Choice Theory*. The promoters of this theory were James Buchanan and Warren Nutter who built a platform for scholars interested in a society formed around individual freedoms rather than strong state initiatives (Buchanan, 1986).

In their 1962 work, *The Calculus of Consent—Logical Foundations of Constitutional Democracy,* James Buchanan and Gordon Tullock outlined the fundamental beliefs that the individual—not the state—ought to be analyzed in order to understand the government's proper role. Social phenomena were in fact aggregated individual tendencies, which acted only in accordance with their preferences, pursuing their own aims. This was radically different from the classic perspective on rationality which was bound by a theoretical optimum; rationality according to public choice scholars was the pursuit of individual (selfish) goals according to the knowledge of a situation (Tullock, 1965). This "selfish" rationality was at the center of this theory and the satisfaction of an individual's choices was the true benchmark for any political institution (Buchanan, 1975; Buchanan & Tullock, 1962). The classic theoretical explanations of representative democracy found that a simple majority rule, without constitutional safeguards, could lead to the exploitation of minorities through "logrolling" by majorities who have an incentive to waste resources minorities pay for. This perspective was primarily aimed at the classic social-democratic approach which saw the primary role of the government as a redistribution mechanism that taxes the wealthy (minority) to pay for social services for the poor (majority). Public choice theorists called into question the very pillars of classic democracy such as public interest, common/public good, social services, and representative democracy (Downs, 1968).

William Niskanen in his 1971 book, *Bureaucracy and Representative Government,* outlined the tendencies for inefficient use of public resources enabled by traditional budgeting techniques and the tacit agreement between what he called the "iron-triad": interest groups, law-makers, and governmental bureaucrats. He pointed to the fact that bureaucratic organizations—legal monopolies not evaluated by the free-market—have a tendency to accumulate tasks and resources and provide as little public services as possible. Public choice scholars argued in favor of constitutional safeguards to protect citizens against "political exploitation" which is the case where an individual pays more in taxes then is received in public goods. Next, they proposed a "polycentric" administrative system in contrast to the "monocentric" system of classic public administrations. This polycentric administrative system would be multiple governmental agencies that would be compared and contrasted with each other, with multiple control mechanisms, and where the provision of public goods would be separated from its production. Naturally, in this competition for the delivery of public goods, private vendors would be encouraged to compete with public ones. The system the public choice scholars envisioned would function best in a highly decentralized and federalized government; it would be managed through transparent financial systems such as chargers and vouchers and would treat citizens as consumers with a public choice (Savas, 1982).

2.2.3   *Policy Analysis and Public Management*

The second influencer of modern-day NPM that has a major relevancy for Romania in its public administration reform initiative is policy analysis and public management. In the early 1970s, political scientists in the USA who were interested in finding

the failure causes of the grandiose social policies of the 1960s wanted to find ways to improve the policy studies and the policy analysis (Parsons, 1995). Policy analysis referred to the evaluation and explanation of current policy (Anderson, 1975) and the proposing of future policies in an attempt to find solutions for current social and political problems (Nagel, 1980). The evaluation of public policy became prominent and intense analytical work was performed to provide accurate and objective information to policy makers. The fundamental idea was that only an informed legislator could propose optimal and rational policies. However, the rational politician did not only require information about optimal policy needs, but also implementation and evaluation instruments (Parsons, 1995).

Policy analysis and evaluation were wonderful initiatives, but the need for them was quite limited: when schools of public policy began to train students for executive positions, they soon realized the pragmatic reality that the opportunities to create optimal policies were extremely rare. As a result, most students of public administration took a turn toward pragmatic public management (Bozeman, 1991; Moore, 1995). Their work was similar to the work of private managers in US corporations. The managerial developments from the private world were transplanted into the public sector to the point that the mere term "public" in public management was highly questioned (Murray, 1975). These principles had deep roots in the generic findings of neoclassical management studies and can be divided up into *rational/mechanical* management techniques and *humanistic/organic* managerial techniques.

The rational/mechanical management studies produced:

1. *Zero Base Budgeting* (Lerner & Wanat, 1992)
2. *Management by Objectives* (Drucker, 1962; Sherwood & Page, 1976)
3. *Techniques for Performance Measurement and Accounting* (Henry, 1990)
4. *Public Sector Marketing* (Kotler, 1978) and
5. *Rational Strategic Management* (Wechsler & Backoff, 1986).

What these rational approaches had in common was a bias for gathering and analyzing objective, mathematical information to find optimal answers. From this perspective, it became paramount to measure and objectively reward the results you wanted to stimulate.

The humanistic/organic management style was best represented by the 1982 book, *In Search for Excellence,* by Tom Peters and Robert Waterman that completely changed the public and private American management conception. The book shows that the best and most successful American corporations were not rationally managed, but rather organic in their structure structured, with a humanistic management style and a thick culture that inspire and lead their employees. This provoked intense public discussions on how to best achieve excellence and contributed to the turning of the tides toward humanistic or organic management, a movement that eventually spread to public management as well. Scholars asked whether it may be possible to make public organizations excellent and accommodate the

principles of Peters and Waterman in the public arena. The most important organic/humanistic examples were:

1. *Organizational Development* (Golembiewski, 1969)
2. *Total Quality Management* (Milakovich, 1991; Swiss, 1992) and
3. *A culture oriented on strategic management*, where mission statements were used for leadership purposes (Moore, 1995).

2.2.4 The Shortcomings of NPM

The initial reference to NPM was made by Christopher Hood in 1991 in his article, *A New Public Management for All Seasons,* and the economic pressure, along with the demands placed upon the administrators from an informed citizenry, contributes to its adoption. Modern NPM is an administrative reform ideology built on Public Choice ideological theory. It incorporates the doctrines of organizational design under the heavy influence of private management theories. It is a new paradigm removed from the traditional public administration concept where a public servant is simply expected to provide elected officials with their services, and objective policy opinion in return for job security and lifetime employment. In stark contrast, NPM is silent about job guarantees; quite the contrary, it expects fewer public jobs through efficiency measures and the introduction of information technology. NPM's fundamental ideology is that more market orientation and competition in the public sector will generate greater cost efficiencies and healthy performance pressures. NPM is oriented toward outcomes and efficiencies through the better management of public budgets. NPM addresses beneficiaries of public services much like customers, and conversely, citizens as shareholders. Michael Barzelay in his 2002 *The New Public Management: Current Trends and Future Prospects* summarizes the perspective NPM has regarding the purpose of government. It ought to:

1. Provide high-quality services that citizens value.
2. Demand, measure, and reward improved organizational and individual performance.
3. Advocate managerial autonomy by reducing central agency controls.
4. Provide the human and technological resources managers need and maintain receptiveness to competition and open-mindedness about which purposes ought to be performed by the state, the private, or the NGO sector.

Beyond a doubt, NPM had a major impact on the reform initiatives of Romania and the other CEE nations over the last 20 years. The forced privatization of state-owned resources, the speedily and sometimes artificial creation of a private market, along with decentralization initiatives within the Romanian public administration, were all undertaken at the behest of NPM ideology. The government was viewed inherently as bloated, inefficient, and corrupt, therefore the best reform solution was

its reduction and fragmentation. Some scholars have discredited it as a viable alternative for Romania (Drechsler, 2005b; Polidano & Hulme, 1999; Randma-Liiv, 2008; State-Cerkez & Păunescu, 2008) and although I partially agree with them, NPM is a reality that will be continually promoted by the international community in Romania and it does have some intrinsic value. Although partially discredited, it does contain certain valuable ideologies; therefore a careful analysis of its short-comings must be undertaken before adequate contextualization can take place.

In his 2005 article, *The Rise and Demise of New Public Management,* Wolfgang Drechsler talks about the fact that when first analyzing and contrasting the public and the private sectors, the first and most startling fact is their differences not similarities. The state was primarily erected for its monopoly on power and force, as well as its ability to impose its will upon the people; the benevolent attitude toward the public good or the common wealth has been second place. In contrast, the private sector is a perfect competition, made up of multiple participants who compete via their influence with each other so they can maximize their profits. According to Drechsler, NPM perceives little difference between public and private interests and utilizes business techniques in the public sector that leads to the confusion of the most basic ideas underlying the state: democracy and legitimacy. A state, especially in a democracy, is best known for its regularity, transparency, and due process—much more so than low costs and speed of providing public goods to its citizens. The low costs and the speed imperative, which are fundamental to NPM, are inevitably too narrow of a definition for the identity of the state. Efficiency is a relative concept based on context and appropriateness; it is efficient to achieve an outcome with minimum expenditure but in the case of governments there are additional issues that must be taken into consideration. A traditional anti-privatization argument is that most activities performed by the state are done so exactly since no realistic profit can be made from them. If cost-saving becomes the only concerns of a society, it may neglect the general context or even the actual goals of government. Public administration reform should actually concern itself with effectiveness before focusing on efficiency. This refers not only to doing something as inexpensively as possible, but actually accomplishing what is appropriate for the society.

Even by the standards of business efficiency, NPM cannot claim to be as successful as most of its proponents would like it to be. There is limited empirical evidence that NPM reforms have led to any productivity increases or any wealth maximization: "several years of attempts and experiences of public management reforms in western Europe and other OECD countries give evidence of relative failure rather than success." The concept of the citizen as merely a customer risks transforming the citizen into a selfish customer, or "hollowing out the state" and eliminating the participatory duty of individual citizens, who have the dual roles of customer but more importantly civic participant. The abolishment of career civil servants, another proposition of NPM, may lead to administrative capacity erosion and depoliticizing may lead to de-democratization with the "risk of the return of the imperial bureaucrat disguised in a modern twenty-first century entrepreneurial bureaucrat: same power less responsibility and accountability" (Drechsler, 2005a, 2005b). It would be difficult to argue today against the insight that humans maximize their own

profits and benefits. However, humans do not act the same everywhere; while they are selfish and pursue their own benefits they are at the same time altruistic and quite generous. NPM "represent assumptions that one style of managing—whether in the public or the private sector—is best, and indeed is the only acceptable way" (Peters, 2001, p. 164).

Perhaps the strongest criticisms and most visible shortcomings of NPM has come from its implementation in developing newly democratic nations such as Romania. NPM is predicated upon the preexistence of an objective Weberian bureaucracy, which is not the case in most developing nations. A number of studies have shown that it will not properly function in developing or transitional countries (Bately, 1999; Manning, 2001; McCourt, 2007; Nickson, 1999; Peters, 2001; Polidano & Hulme, 1999; Schick, 1998). According to these studies, in countries that lack an established Weberian ethic, "privatization became a popular source of income for corruption and patronage distribution" (Samaratunge, Quamrul, & Julian, 2008). The results of this research undertaken in the past decade is that NPM cannot be an alternative to classic and objective Weberian bureaucracy in developing nations like Romania. Instead, the research indicates that NPM initiatives only work if they heavily rely on the type of institutions and social trust that already exist in classic Weberian democracies. As Nick Manning pointed out the necessity for a Weberian foundation, "NPM proponents did not see the need to spell out how these good things had come about—but clearly relied on them to continue as foundations for their reforms" (Manning, 2001).

NPM is also dependent on professional managers and skillful politicians much more than the traditional Weberian model of administration. Weber's bureaucracy emerged as a model of public administration in a social context that was characterized by limited legality and questionable professionalism in public service. The solution was to make legality the backbone of public administration and ensure the individual bureaucrat had minimum discretion in applying the law. It offered a model of public administration which resolved the major obstacle of modernization at that time. Weberianism emphasized legality, standardization, and a hierarchal commanding control system and devised a model of public administration that worked reasonably well in the social and political context of institutional building, democratization, and increasing public services. Weberianism was an excellent solution to the lack of trust in public officials and public administration as a whole. This seems to be the fundamental problem of Romania and other former communist nations in CEE. There is certainly a problem of low levels of trust in the public servant and the government. A NPM-style empowerment of frontline bureaucrats in Romania can prove to be disastrous since they do not enjoy the same level of trust from their clients and colleagues as in western democracies. The client, or the "customer–citizen," does yet not trust the integrity of the civil servant and may be tempted to offer a side-payment to ensure positive treatment.

The US public administration tradition certainly has valuable lessons for developing nations like Romania. As outlined in the first chapter, some authors argue that globalization is an American construct that in the long-term can and will benefit Romania and the European Union. However, the timing of NPM implementation in

Romania has been most unfortunate. First, the cultural considerations outlined at the beginning of this chapter were not taken into consideration resulting in the international community making many unintended mistakes. Second, it seems that the realities and the context of Romania were not sufficiently analyzed and understood before reform initiatives were undertaken. In spite of all the errors of the past, NPM still presents a viable reform initiative for the future of public administration reform in Romania.

2.3   Neo-Weberianism and the Revival of Classical Bureaucracy

New Public Management and the political theory of Public Choice are certainly public administration philosophies worth considering in the context of Romanian reform, but they ought not to be considered exclusively. As pointed previously, one of the fundamental assumptions of NPM is that the administration it is replacing is a classical public administration bureaucracy, also commonly referred to as a "Weberian Bureaucracy" named after Max Weber, its originator. Particularly in continental Europe and in some other parts of the Francophone world, Neo-Weberianism is seen as a viable alternative to the Anglo-Saxon New Public Management (Cepiku & Mititelu, 2010; Seabrooke, 2002). Neo-Weberianism is a variation on the classic public administration theory of western Europe and the Progressive movement in the USA during the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century. Weberianism, as it came to be known, was built on an objective, impersonal bureaucracy that had the following characteristics:

1. fixed division of labor
2. hierarchy of offices
3. rational-legal authority
4. creation of rules to govern performance
5. the separation of personnel from official property and rights
6. selection based upon objective, predetermined qualifications
7. clear career paths (Weber, 1947)

Several authors have proposed a Neo-Weberianism reform initiative as a viable alternative to NPM, especially applicable to the newly integrated nations of the former communist block (Cepiku & Mititelu, 2010; Pierre and Rothstein, 2008; Seabrooke, 2002). They recommend a careful consideration and understanding of the public administration context before the adoption of NPM. Allan Schick in his 1998 article, *Why Most Developing Countries Should Not Try New Zealand's Reforms* highlights some of the important preconditions that transitional nations should consider in designing their modernizing strategies and the essential prerequisites such as a working free-market sector, contract enforcement possibilities, formalized civil service, a budget system, and a low level of corruption. From

Schick's perspective, "performance is to government what self-actualization is in Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Only when basic requirements have been met is the state ripe to manage for results."

In Romania, development was pursued in the early 1990s mainly through downsizing measures aiming to privatize the public sector and achieve national budgetary stability. These radical measures benefited from the full support of the international community and were not necessarily concerned with administrative efficiency and civil service reform. In those days, reform became synonymous with privatization and the general anti-Ceausescu sentiment seemed to imply that all that was built in the previous half century must be eradicated while new institutions and social structures would automatically build themselves. For instance, the Romanian agriculture system and its productivity was severely undermined by the fragmentation that followed the privatization initiatives of the early 1990s. Unfortunately, no parallel efforts were made to strengthen and modernize public administrative capacity even if corruption and inefficiency were acknowledged to impede economic growth and deter foreign investors and local entrepreneurs. Little was done to create the traditional, objective and law-abiding bureaucracy that could give government legitimacy and create social trust among the people. Even if most institutions were reformed on the surface, there was little concern or effort for "reform [that] must penetrate to the fundamental rules of the game that shape behavior and guide organizations" (World Bank, 2000). In much of the macro-reform initiatives of the early 1990s, the assumption was that there was a strategic plan with adequate coordination, a stable financial situation, and the necessary and suitable human resources capacity to transition from communism to free-market capitalism. In reality, that was seldom the case as synergy among various plans was rarely achieved and the necessary budgets and expertise were limited at best. Considering those somber realities, along with the shortcomings of New Public Management, Neo-Weberianism began to emerge as a viable public administration reform initiative.

Romania was not alone in rediscovering the importance of traditional Weberianism and its modern incarnation, Neo-Weberianism. The progress and importance of global economic development and the reduction of transactional cost—two important sub-fields of political and administrative studies—is giving traditional Weberian bureaucracy an edge over New Public Management. In Romania as in other parts of the non-western world, practitioners and theoreticians alike are discovered that the main goal of government is economic development not the efficient redistribution of already existent resources. In this context, corruption, which in economic terms is considered as additional and unnecessary *transaction costs,* is the principal barrier that has to be overcome. Although flawed and in some areas discredited, Weberian bureaucracy may still be a better administrative philosophy for Romania than New Public Management.

For instance, in the economic development area, there is a dramatic shift in the types of problems and issues public administration reforms address. The focus is increasingly on the development of institutional capacity, or "good governance," as once again, corruption is perceived to be the fundamental obstacle for economic and social development (Acemoglu & Robinson, 2008; Rodrik, 2007). Corruption and

its related problems were the first and primary concern of traditional Weberianist bureaucracy, and the main rational for the creation of an impersonal, objective bureaucracy (Weber, 1947). The reintroduction of curbing corruption in the economic development debate represents a fundamental paradigm shift in public administration reforms, considering that not too long ago most economists and political scientists considered corruption a minor and insignificant issue (Henderson, Hulme, Hossein, & Phillips, 2007). New research has shown its negative impact on economic development and government illegitimacy and that in developing nations like Romania, traditional Weberian bureaucracy has to be built first and foremost (Evans & Rauch, 2000; Kaufmann, 2004; Mauro, 1995). Only through the restoration of trust in public institutions such as courts, government, and the police will society be positively affected and lead to economic and social development (Kumlin & Rothstein, 2005). Historically, economic development was predicated upon the reduction of government corruption, a position that may be best achieved through traditional Weberian bureaucracy. In 2008, Olsen observes that

> the enthusiasm for a universal de-bureaucratization cure and the pressure for global administrative convergence have diminished since the early 1990s perhaps giving way to a Neo-Weberian public administration ideology.

Gerring and Thacker in their 2005 article, *Do Neo-liberal Policies Deter Political Corruption?* challenge the prominent NPM neo-liberal idea that the size of government is the fundamental problem that generates corruption. They show that it is not so much the magnitude of government, but its quality, that is the truest indicator of corruption. They state that "we find no consistent relationship between the aggregate size of the public sector and political corruption." La Porta, Lopez-de-Silanes, Shleifer, & Vishny (1999) similarly proved that high-quality government carries with it higher public spending and that automatically "identifying big government with bad government can be highly misleading." These and other Neo-Weberian authors seem to indicate that the quality of the government—not its absence—may lead to economic and societal development and the reduction of poverty. Several international institutions engaged in international development have positioned anticorruption at the top of their agendas and are increasingly recommending variations of classic Weberian bureaucracy with its precise and unambiguous rules, merit-based recruitment, personnel that clearly distinguish between their public and private interests, a salary system that is sufficiently generous to make the official less susceptible to bribery, and a transparent system of responsibility (Fjeldstad & Isaksen, 2008).

On the issue of transactional cost reduction, Neo-Weberianism ideology seems to have been encapsulated in the theory of "Institutionalism" a modern, transdisciplinarian development in economics and political science spurred on by the work of Douglass North. Institutionalism and neo-institutionalism considers the classic Weberian bureaucracy, with its predictable "rule of law" institutions, as instrumental in securing property rights and enforcing legal private contracts that guard private societal participants against subjective bureaucrats. George Tsebelis in his 1990 book, *Nested Games: Rational Choice in a Comparative Perspective,* states

that only such institutions can truly be labeled "efficient" since they are perceived by the public as legitimate and are not established for public resource redistribution from one group to another. Unlike "redistributive" institutions that are generators of corruption and illegitimacy, the objective and predictable Weberian institution exists to serve the collective interests of all participants alike, thereby significantly lowering transactional costs for society as a whole. The natural effect of such an environment is that societal agents can trust each other and the contracts they engage in thus stimulating increased economic activity. In the inevitable case of a misunderstanding, anyone can turn to an impartial court or another type within a Weberian bureaucracy for a predictable, objective legal remedy. Society further has the assurance that taxes and government regulations are implemented and enforced in an objective manner, without giving improper advantage to some because of their personal contacts or their ability to pay a bribe.

Danny Rodrick in his 2008 article, *Second Best Institutions,* points out that "the encounter between neoclassical economics and developing societies served to reveal the institutional underpinnings of market economies" often taken for granted by NPM theorists. Developed, western nations have historically developed a system of property rights, effective regulations that prevent monopolies, uncorrupted government, the rule of law, and a social welfare that can accommodate risk. Rodrick further points out the importance of informal societal institutions such as families, religious organizations, and voluntary associations that contribute to social cohesion, social trust, and citizen cooperation in developed nations. Neoclassical economics take the presence and significance of such institutions for granted, but "there are social arrangements that economists usually take for granted, but which are conspicuous by their absence in poor countries" (Rodrik, 2008). This nuance is perhaps most overlooked in the reform efforts of the European Union, the IMF and the World Bank in Romania. I will argue that the civil society generating a universalist culture in western nations is actually even deeper than Weberianism itself. From a purely chronological perspective, before western public administration reformers "discovered" the benefits of an impersonal bureaucracy they were working with a universalist culture and enjoyed an educated and demanding middle-class, schooled, and tried in micro- and macro-democratic activity. Unfortunately for Romania both the civil society and the middle-class are only now forming and democracy does not have a long heritage in the Romanian psyche. Ironically, as western public administration scholars busily and accurately point to the shortcomings of traditional Weberian bureaucracy, a diametrically opposed perspective is taking root in institutional theory and development studies. The classic Weberian bureaucracy and its Neo-Weberian incarnations are viable public administration reform alternatives for Romania so they can bring stability, legality, and continuity. In that sense, all developing countries with "soft" institutions, limited education for their public servants, and/or low levels of institutional trust might consider Neo-Weberianism as a building block before adopting NPM.

Finally, the Weberian alternative is not limited to creating economic growth and/or lowering transactional costs, but more importantly it is vital to safe-guarding Romanian democracy. The relation between a healthy public administration

bureaucracy and democracy is best captured by the *National Endowment for Democracy* a US-based think-tank and one of its founders Larry Diamond, one of the most prominent scholars in the field of democracy studies, who stated: "there is a specter haunting democracy in the world today. It is bad governance… Governance that is drenched in corruption, patronage, favoritism, and abuse of power" (Diamond, 2008). He seems to suggest that pathological bad governments cannot be cured with more democracy assistance given the deep level of endemic corruption; but instead, he suggests that what is required is a "revolution in institutional development" which coincidently was Weber's recommendation for the bad governance of his day. Even as classic Weberian bureaucracy is losing its luster in the developed world, it is becoming paramount in the understanding of reforming developing economies. Weberian democracy is a reform model of public administration in a political and social setting where trust in institutions and public officials is low. With its focus on legality, hierarchy, and impartiality, Weberian essentially allows the citizens to engage the state without the need to trust its officials, since those officials have minimum latitude and discretion as to the administration of state matters. To sum up, Neo-Weberianism is:

- A shift from an internal orientation of bureaucratic rules, toward an external orientation in meeting citizens' needs and wishes. The primary method to accomplishing this is not by employing market mechanisms, but by creating a professional culture of quality and service within the government.
- The supplementation of the role of representative democracies by a range of devices for consultation with the direct representation of the citizens; in the management of resources within the government, a modernization of the relevant law to encourage a greater orientation on the achievement of results rather than the correct followup of a procedure. This is expressed partly in a shift to the balanced from expert control, but not the complete abandon of the former.
- The modernization of public services, so that the bureaucrat becomes not simply an expert in the laws relevant to their sphere of activity, but a professional manager oriented to meeting the needs of the citizens.

2.4 Digital Government (e-Government)

Having outlined the two major public administration ideologies that future Romanian reformers will have to contend with, at this point I would like to turn to the issues of technology, particularly information technology, as it applies to public administration. "Digital government" or "e-government" refers to the business of public administration as it is affected by modern communication and information technology. In my previous work, I outlined some of the technological advancements that ushered in the current era of globalization with its turbo changes and unpredictability. Inevitably, the same communication and information technologies that transform major economies and connect new countries such as Brazil, Russia,

India, China, and South Africa (BRICS) to the world economy have a profound effect upon public administration and its future. Most authors argue that digital government is not a separate public administration ideology, but rather a complementary or a support system that can be utilized by both NPM and Neo-Weberianism (Khalil, Lanvin, & Chaudhry; 2002; Norris, & Lloyd, 2006; West, 2004). Given that the technological revolution of the past two decades changed the "rules-of-the-game" in most areas of life, it is my belief that e-government requires a special even if brief section in my research.

In the 2005 article, *New Public Management Is Dead—Long Live Digital-Era Governance,* Dunleavy, Margetts, Bastow, and Tinkler rightfully assert that the fundamental development in current public administration reform is the system's managerial and cultural transformation as a response to new technology and society's expectation of its utilization. Naturally, Dunleavy et al. state that innovation in information technology and its impact on public administration is not a recent phenomenon. Starting with the 1960s, the first wave of automation with mainframe computers and photocopy machines abolished thousands of bureaucratic positions, with following technological waves producing additional savings and transformations to the business of public administration. However, the information and communication innovations that occurred before 1989 had a limited impact upon public administration organizations and ideology. Automation equipment was simply adapted by public administrators on preexisting organizational cultures and structures without significant adaptation or transformation. Routine functions were automated and/or mechanized; therefore organizations tended to downgrade their importance for managerial performance. Even though governmental agencies became highly dependent on their IT infrastructures such as mainframe databases, telephones, faxes, microfilms, etc., those technologies did not shape the organization (Bertot & Jaeger, 2006; Moon & Norris, 2005).

The fundamental transformation that took place in the 1990s, at the time that Romania was transitioning to a free-market economy, was the growth of the internet, e-mail, websites, e-commerce, e-informing, blogging, wireless hand-held devices, etc., that enabled individuals and organizations to be constantly informed and connected. Those technological advances profoundly affected both the internal processes of public administration, but most significantly it transformed its interaction with the public, mass media, and special interest groups. In effect, the 1990s "digital revolution" significantly and irrevocably transformed the scope and shape of traditional governance and political life (Franda, 2002). Digital government refers to the digitalization, storing, and transferring of all information to a virtual space, a capacity that was not possible with past technologies. Current technological capabilities enable government to transition from traditional paper and plastic, confined by geographical space and operating hours, to a fully digital operating system that is interconnected and can be accessed from anywhere in the world at any time. These technological innovations are now the omnipresent and structurally distinctive influences on governments. The information age that has engulfed society and business has produced "digital-government" and triggered numerous systemic transformations such as a large-scale switchover to e-mail for most communication; reliance

on websites and intranets; electronic services and e-informing; electronic procurement and payment systems and a transition from paper to electronic record-keeping (Jaeger, 2003; Layne & Lee, 2001).

According to Morgeson & Mithas's, 2009 article, *Does e-government measure up to e-business?* many of the influences and creations of digital government have been incorporated from private sector industries like banking, insurance, travel, media, and electronic merchandise, which have been radically transformed in the past two decades by the advent of the new technologies. As consumers and corporations in the private sector change, there are direct demands placed upon governments to respond accordingly; the delay is considerable, but the transformation is inevitable. According to the 2008 The Economist special report, "The Electronic Bureaucrat," nothing has impacted governments quite as significantly as the transformation that information technology has brought to what used to be called "the 4th branch of government": mass media. On one side, traditional reporting is in a steady decline given the change in people's new habit of reading the news online, on the other hand there is the appearance of powerful and influential micro-corporations such as Google, Facebook, and Wiki-leaks who compete with governments for legitimacy and influence. In the future creation of digital government, public administration reformers ought to aim at their governments to have three distinct characteristics: to be properly integrated, simplified/transparent, and fully digitalized (Dunleavy, Margetts, Bastow, & Tinkler, 2005; Kolsaker, 2007; Moon & Norris, 2005; Tolbert & Mossberger, 2006).

The first aim of digital government is adequate integration of the essential elements of governments that are separated into distinct corporate hierarchies or offloaded to various private sectors. This has mainly to do with the internal inter-working of public administration and is best-suited for governments in developed nations that have undergone significant NPM transformations. Reintegration is not a simple return to the old centralized and sometimes inefficient government: rather, it seems to attempt achieving cost efficiency without privatization and fragmentations. It outlines the activities that can now be performed better and cheaper by public administrators due to the new technology available to them. According to Dunleavy et al. (2005) there are eight main integration components to integration:

1. *Joined-Up Governance (JUG)* is essential in the reintegration efforts of fragmented and sometimes competing government agencies, and is focused on the creation of one major infrastructure that can be utilized by multiple governmental agencies. It refers to the digital centralization and proper coordination of multiple, related agencies (Kiu, Yuen, & Tsui, 2010).
2. *Re-Governmentalization* involves the re-absorption into the public sector of activities that have been previously outsourced to the private sector.
3. *The establishment of central processes* since agencies as susceptible to "bureau-maximizing" agencies and/or private contractor risk of duplicating someone else's efforts. New information and communication technology allows for easy and accurate monitoring among similar contractors and/or government agencies.

4. *Squeezing process costs* is an essential component of government reform throughout the western world given the fact that most governments are experiencing significant budget crisis. Most of the changes involving squeezing processing costs through cutting back-office staffing and replacing them with automated systems and shifting the human resources to frontline staffing.
5. *Reengineering* back-office functions with the aim of realizing productivity gains offered by new technology. Consolidating outdated technology, such as mainframes, that were introduced separately.
6. *Business process systematization* may be undertaken by the agency or outsourced on its behalf. It is possible to either have a single IT contract with a single system integrator, or with a cooperative multi-team effort.
7. *Procurement concentration and specialization* where all public auctions and government procurement contracts must be made public, online with the exact specifications.
8. *Network simplification* to reduce the tendency of various bureaucratic agencies and/or departments within a public administration system to build and maintain duplication of efforts and an unhealthy interdepartmental competition.

The second aim of digital government is to transform, expedite, and improve the interaction among various governmental agencies and its citizens. In the case of Romania and other developing nations grappling with corruption and particularistic tendencies, transparency in government also has controlling and verification utilization. For instance, public officials are supposed to publish their wealth and income statements, all public jobs are auctioned publicly and results of one department can be easily compared with those of another, similar department. Beynon-Davies in his 2005 article *Constructing electronic government,* states that the creation of a transparent yet more efficient government requires end-to-end reengineering, the elimination of unnecessary tasks, steps, checks, forms, and most importantly costs. Transparency and the intentional comparison will in turn pressure public administrators to become more entrepreneurial, agile and respond speedily and flexibly to the challenges of globalization. The starting point of this new form of public administration is not the traditional capability or what can be done, given our limited resources, but rather what needs to be done as expected by our citizen. Ideally, if the initiative of making the government more transparent with the aid of modern communication technology is achieved, a delicate balance can be created between the "citizen as a customer" and "the citizen as a contributor." These seemingly opposite perspectives held by NPM and Neo-Weberianism could be reconciled. The needs and responsibilities of the citizens—which now can be easily, accurately, and inexpensively tracked—will become the guiding principles for the design and functionality of a genuinely citizen-based, services-based, and needs-based government (Bertot & Jaeger, 2006; Rawajbeh & Haboush, 2011).

This "citizen–client" realignment that a transparent public administration would generate, entails reevaluation and perhaps reorganization of both the internal organizational structure as well as motivational mechanisms for traditional government bureaucrats. In the view of some authors, it is quite inevitable given the technological

tools available to the general public and their level of expectation since "history suggests that substantial improvements in public services stem from broader forces in society—from political movements and community action" (Hambleton, 2004). The following is a list that Dunleavy et al. (2005) outline as necessary to achieve government transparency in the era of digital government:

1. *Citizen–client-based reorganization.* Unlike traditional government in both Weberian bureaucracy or NPM where the government services were built around a specific bureaucratic function, like passport services for example, a citizen–client-oriented service is built around a single citizen type such as students or pensioners.
2. *One-stop shop.* If the public administration will no longer be built around a process but rather around a single citizen–client group, the purpose would be for that citizen to interact with as few entities and individuals as possible who would be qualified to service his/her specific and personalized needs. This may be a cluster of offices located in geographical proximity or an online website.
3. *Single information provider.* Similar to the one-stop shop, under the single information provider all the information of one particular citizen–customer would be located in one location, preferably in a digital format. This is predicated upon the government commitment to share the citizen–client information and ensure security.
4. *Data warehousing and mining.* This initiative refers to the utilization of historical citizen–client data so that patterns can be noticed and preventative action be taken. This has the potential of significantly increasing satisfaction of citizens' interaction with their governments, while drastically reducing the costs of services. Using feasible research algorithms, agencies can match their services to meet the citizens' needs and influence them toward the optimal use of governmental resources (Teo, Srivastava, & Jiang, 2008). Data-mining may sound simple and inexpensive but in reality it is difficult since most agencies store information in different and incompatible information systems making search and matching difficult and expensive.
5. *Integral service reengineering.* This initiative toward government transparency stresses the necessity for a holistic and integral process design that reduces the artificial barriers that may exist among the various layers of government and the various agencies.
6. *Agile government processes.* These focus on achieving speed, flexibility, and responsiveness that allow government resolutions to compete with best practices in the business sector (Dunleavy, Yared, & Bastow, 2003). The demand for agility comes from the private sector where *agile management* has already been adopted. Agile government is a public management and/or a decision-making system that is capable of quickly reconfiguring to changing needs and responding to a volatile and turbulent external environment (Carter & Bélanger, 2005; Polsby, 1984).

Information technology offers significant productivity gains but most importantly, it requires significant organizational changes to take place. Digital government cannot be seen as an appendix or an after-thought to public administration reform;

instead it must become essential, moving away from traditional bureaucracy toward where "the agency is becoming its website" (Moon & Norris, 2005; United Nations, 2010). This third major component required by the digital government era is related to the impact of the internet with its websites and web-services, emails, social media, and the plethora of hand-held devices that citizens can utilize to access information captured under the label *e-government*. The major risk of digitalization is to over-hype technological improvements, with surprising levels of credibility given to governmental CIO's (chief information officers), IT corporations, or industry interest groups (Atkinson & Leigh, 2003; Carter & Weerakkody, 2008). In fact, the major impact of digitalization is not achieved through technology acquisition but rather by internal cultural changes and a significant behavior shift by society as a whole (Margetts & Dunleavy, 2002). There are the following components required by complete digitalization as outlined by Dunleavy et al. (2005):

1. *Electronic services delivery (ESD).* Refers to the complete conversion of paper-processes to digital ones. Government has adopted ambitious programs and targets but the main constrain has been the slow adoption by their citizens of e-services. Household internet access is increasing so we can safely expect ESD to grow as well.

2. *Zero touch technologies (ZTT).* Are forms of automatic processes utilized in the private sector where no human intervention is needed in sales or service offering. Naturally, there are huge areas of potential application in a well-designed and user-friendly system in governmental agencies for ZTT.

3. *Disintermediation.* Refers to the potential to eliminate the traditional governmental gatekeeper. Naturally, a web-based automatic system needs substantial back-up and help-desk systems, but the most innovative quality of this intermediation change is that societal participants who know and understand their own situation are able to automatically shift and select among governmental sites. This disintermediation process will only be accomplished when citizens will change their behavior in line with the shifts made by governmental agencies. There are two main ways to accomplish this: stimulate people to switch by providing e-services at lower costs and greatly improve functionality thus compelling people to change.

4. *Government coproduction.* This entails a shift from "agency-centered" to "citizen-centered," where citizens run or coproduce their interaction with government. "Isocracy" is self-government beyond simple disintermediation; it reflects the importance of volunteering and self-compliance with governments. Coproduction involves citizens partly producing outputs with the government using electronic processing and leaving agencies to provide only facilitating frameworks (Akman, Yazici, Mishra, & Arifoglu, 2005).

5. *Open-book government* refers to a radical shift from "closed-file government" employed by traditional bureaucracies toward allowing citizens to actively manage their own accounts. Creating data protection and freedom of information is critical in pursuing public opinion to accept and utilize such changes.

The 2010 UN e-government survey report, *Leveraging e-government at a time of financial and economic crises,* encourages governments worldwide to consider the financial benefits of e-government. In the case of Romania, the digitalization of government has had a profound impact and is a central part of the Europeanization process. The incorporation of "information and communication technologies" (ICT) in all aspects of public administration has been a crucial element in the modernization and corruption curbing efforts of Romania (Colesca & Dobrica, 2008; Nita, 2011). The European initiative that describes the digitalization of public administration is known as "transformational government," a label borrowed from the 2003 British initiative, "Transformational Government Enabled by Technology." As stated in previous chapters, the European Administration space is committed to continuous improvement, efficiency, effectiveness, and citizen-centered. Transformational government is the European e-government reform initiative that enables public administration standard verification and reporting, the minimization of bureaucratic burdens on citizens and businesses, and which utilizes the opportunities offered by ICT. Internally, it promotes the transition toward a learning organization, innovation, and modernization and aims at increasing value-added delivery (Brown, Massey, Montoya-Weiss, & Burkman, 2002; Archmann, 2010).

According to Hefley, Murphy, Meyer, Vogel, and Mehandjiev in their 2012 article, *An End-User Friendly Service Delivery Platform for the Public Sector in Case Studies in Service Innovation,* technology is the key enabler for the modernization of public administration in the European Union. Although much progress has been made in the past two decades, proper digitalization of government services is still not complete. In the case of Romania, proactive attitudes and leadership are the main factors required both for internal governmental transformation and for an increase in the citizenry's use of digital government (Nita, 2011). Conventional wisdom among e-government enthusiasts states that the digitalization of government services will accomplish:

1. A severe reduction in the overall public administration budget;
2. A significant increase in the quality of services and interagency collaboration; and
3. An increase in citizens' overall satisfaction with their European and national governments (Mithas, Morgeson, & Van Amburg, 2011).

For these and other reasons many public administration reformers see the future of governance in the digital area and the European Union is actively stimulating "e-inclusion" and "e-skills" (Hsieh, Rai, & Keil, 2008).

2.5   The Limitations of Current Reform Initiatives

New Public Management (NPM) and Neo-Weberianism, along with the modern tools made available through e-government are viable and laudable public administration reform instruments, and Romania along with European students, practitioners, and pundits of public administration ought to excel in the understanding of

their nuances and implementations. However, as valuable as these instruments may be, they are intrinsically limited. First, the current public administration system was designed in a different era and for a different purpose. The late nineteenth/early twentieth century when the classic Weberian bureaucracy was born, was a significantly different world, with vastly different challenges than the twenty-first century we reside in today. The inertia of the Industrial Revolution along with the advances in medicine gave western Europe and the USA a significant economic and demographic advantage over the rest of the world (Kennedy, 1987). As an enhancement to the growth of their economies, the West was still enjoying the economical fruits of a colonial era. To most classic public administrators—theoreticians and practitioners alike—redistribution and social justice were the main concerns, not economic growth. During that time, there was limited transparency of information, without 24 h news cycle, wiki-leaks and Facebook to start revolutions and coordinate government protest. There were no rating agencies and international bond markets to dictate national budgets and the movement of the people was quite limited. Over the past century most development in public administration thought and practice has been toward making the state a better social-democracy. Each nation added their own particular flavors ranging from the extreme cases of communism in the Soviet Union and China, to the more individualistic models of the Anglo-Saxon world. NPM, the invention of the English-speaking world is a variation on the classical bureaucracy that attempts to introduce competition and private initiative into the equation, but does not veer very much from the classic character of government which is essentially a redistribution mechanism.

As I stated earlier and will develop in my subsequent arguments, the twenty-first century differs significantly from the late nineteen/early twentieth century. With a certain degree of caution, it can be stated that western Europe and the USA have accomplished their goals and are enjoying somewhat successful social-democracies, but the new mantra of government is no longer to redistribute already existent wealth, but rather to create it. This is an antagonistic environment where most western governments have high-debt burdens, declining populations, and non-western competition. The same can be said about Romania, who is perhaps in an even more disagreeable situation, not having the traditions and the institutions of its western counterparts. It is for this reason that any and all public administration reforms ought to be carefully considered and all details and nuances taken into account. After two decades of somewhat externally imposed NPM reforms, it would be a lamentable mistake to simply adopt Neo-Weberianism and the underlying e-government without adequate contextualization.

2.5.1   Bureaucratic Efficiency that May Suffocate Democracy

The first significant limitation of public administration reforms that I would like to highlight is the intrinsic tendency of efficiency in public administration to stifle democracy. If democracy may be imperil in western societies given the citizens

apathy and their low participation, in the case of Romania there are added concerns given the lack of historical democratic traditions and the limited role and implication of the civil society. I would point that simply making Romanian public administration more efficient, regardless of the instruments, would be a wasted historical opportunity if the democratic spirit and individual responsibility would not develop along with it. My hypothesis is not simply theoretical or utopian, but rather quite pragmatic. Unless democracy and individual responsibility will increase, there is a danger that whatever public administration reform Romania would undertake will be short-lived and only on the surface.

Goerdel, Nabatchi, and Peffer point out in their 2011 article, *Public administration in dark times: some questions for the future of the field,* that even in developed nations with long democratic traditions, modern public administration has embraced the bureaucratic philosophy at the expense of the democratic one. There has always been tension between a "democratic ethos and a bureaucratic one" with bureaucracy naturally suiting public administrators and their political masters (deLeon & deLeon, 2002; Pugh, 1991; Woller, 1998). Bureaucracy entails predictable and controllable values such as hierarchy, efficiency, expertise, and loyalty in contrast the messy and slow process of democracy. As previously mentioned, the European Union was birthed and enlarged in a partially bureaucratic manner with limited democratic participation. Romania has both a non-democratic history and a communist experience where the elites perceived the general public as unqualified and ill-equipped for major democratic decisions. The past two decades of muddled democracy and disqualified politicians risks reinforcing this tendency both in the European Union and the Romanian public administrators at the expense of a democratic society. My observation is that, regardless of how efficient or European the Romanian public administration system will become, if it is not built on a democratic and participatory society, it will not be sustainable in the long-run and will not be fit to respond to the future challenges of the twenty-first century.

The building of a democratic ethos in public administration is a significantly older ideology, but substantially more difficult to articulate and research than modern bureaucracies. A feeble attempt was made in the 1960s at the Minnowbrook conference, by the Public Choice scholars who adequately and accurately pointed to the short-coming of traditional Weberianism. Gary Woller in his 1998 "Towards a Reconciliation of the Bureaucratic and Democratic Ethos" rightfully states that the "democratic ethos remains more eclectic and less clearly defined than its bureaucratic counterpart." He points out that:

> the democratic ideology in public administration is an outgrowth of many public administration scholars' dissatisfaction with the narrow normative prescription of the bureaucratic ethos (Woller, 1998, p. 114)

The intrinsic limitation of the bureaucratic ideology is that public administration can be "inhumane, unresponsive, and democratically unaccountable" (Warren, 1993) and it would not include "claims of transcendent purposes and moral commitment to community building, or of enhancement of freedom and dignity and the

improvement of the quality of citizens' lives" (Wamsley et al., 1990, p. 4). The keen observation of democracy ideology scholars was that:

> public administrators cannot be value neutral servants of the public will … and that administrative behavior should be grounded principally on … higher order moral principles embedded in the notion of democratic government (Woller, 1998, p. 86).

The democratic ideology in public administration is built on a different set of norms and values, like "constitutionalism" and "regime values" (Rohr, 1976); "citizenship" and "public interest" (Lippmann, 1955); "social equity" and "justice" (Rawls, 1971; Frederickson, 1989), etc. Not being instrumental (based on consequences, but rather on principle) this public administration framework guarantees its continuity through deductive reasoning grounded in political philosophy and history (Pugh, 1991). The democratic ethos is predicated upon careful and vigilant attention to the values of the structures and administrative processes, specifically as they pertain to public dialogue, social inequities, access to the political process, and justice. It forces the public administrator to "be open and honest about the relevant value trade-offs and why they chose as they did, so that the public may express its approval or disapproval through accepted democratic channels" (Woller, 1998, p. 100).

Most importantly for modern public administration reform in Romania, the democratic ethos requires public administrators to promote and maintain civic education and democracy cultivation among the citizenry. The democratic ethos scholars believe that public administrators have a responsibility "to educate, that is to say to inform, to impart knowledge, to increase citizen comprehension of (and appreciation for) the humanistic imperatives of democracy" (Gawthrop, 1998). Denhardt in her 1991 article, *Unearthing the moral foundations of public administration,* claims that true public administration reform is:

> an alternative style of management aimed not at control but rather at assisting individuals (members or clients [of public organizations]) in discovering and pursuing their own developmental needs, even recognizing that these may sometimes be at odds with those of the dominant values of the bureaucracy (Denhardt, 1991).

Unfortunately, this is not a common job description for Romanian public administrators and the civic educational initiatives in Romania for the public administrators and the citizenry are conspicuous by their absence. Prominent philosophers ranging from Aristotle to Thomas Jefferson emphasized both the importance of civic education and the government's responsibility to provide it. Twentieth-century public administration scholars in the West such as Marshall Dimock, John Gaus, Wallace Sayre, Frederick Mosher, Paul Appleby, and Dwight Waldo stressed the necessity of integrating classic democratic values into modern bureaucratic practices. Many public administration scholars such as Bozeman (2007), Denhardt and Denhardt (2007), Gawthrop (1998), March and Olsen (1995), Ventriss (1998) stress the importance of democratic values and individual responsibility, though the sheer magnitude of the bureaucratic impetus and its tradition is overwhelming. Unfortunately, the political system—from all political parties and all over the world—continues to thrust public administrators into the

bureaucratic realm at the same time ruthlessly condemning it of being bureaucratic, slow, big, expensive, wasteful, etc. (Pugh, 1991; Sulieman, 2003).

Unfortunately, most modern public administration reforms are grounded in neoclassical economics and form an insufficient business formula as applied to the public sector. Although the objectives of making government more productive, less corrupt, more entrepreneurial, and customer/citizen focus are commendable, "zero-based budgeting," "management by objectives," "program planning budgeting systems," and "the reinvention of government" mechanisms by themselves will not be sufficient (Bozeman, 2007). The business-like instruments of public administration must be complemented by democratic values of the heart, where both public administrators and the public at large understand and practice the core values of democracy and citizen responsibility.

The responsibility of public administrators becomes further complicated, especially in bureaucratic structures like the European Union, where policy conflicts tend to be transferred to administrative agencies causing bureaucrats to solve complex and divisive political issues. By definition, bureaucrats are bound by administrative efficiency and the applicability of utilitarian, economic tools and are not equipped to address complex policy debates that entail democratic deliberation, public compromise, and creative problem-solving. Ironically, whenever policies fail, politicians blame the bureaucracy's inflexibility and inefficiency and vow to make it more business-like. These vicious circles have perpetuated for the past few decades in a young and inexperienced democracy like Romania where bureaucrats are expected to be both business-like efficient and solve complex political, historical and democratic issues. Neither NPM nor Weberianism is designed and equipped to encourage the democratic spirit and civic participation in Romania and public administrators cannot make collective choices, encourage citizen political initiative, and create the grass-root civic infrastructure. Furthermore, some experts claim that the bureaucratic tools of modern public administration are perceived by the general public as inherently undemocratic, generating democracy deficits and legitimacy issues (Durant, 1995; Meier, 1997; Nabatchi, 2009, 2010). It is safe to conclude that one of the major limitations of NPM, Neo-Weberianism, and e-government is that they are all essentially bureaucratic public administration reform ideologies. In the words of Ventriss (1998), "they are not sufficient (and never can be) to sustain any substantive credibility or purpose to the role of public administration in shaping societal affairs." Therefore, complementary solutions must be identified for the reinvigoration of the democratic ethos in governance since that will lead in the long-run to both efficiency and democracy.

2.5.2   The Objectionable Connection Between Politics and Bureaucracy

The second limitation of modern public administration reform is the unhealthy relationship that tends to exist between the elected class (politicians) and the appointed class (public administrators). This is especially true in Romania's case where, as

previously mentioned, this is one of the causes of corruption and loss of legitimacy in the eyes of the citizenry. This phenomenon is not limited to Romania and it can create a vicious circle where found. Elected officials tend to appoint their cronies to administrative jobs to reward them for political support and to ensure favorable governance. Public administrators, especially those who manage to entrench themselves in a particularly influential post, play a very active political role with dynamic decision-making responsibilities. Some authors argue that in modern democracies the public administrator has become the "de facto" arbiter of political conflict, undertaking responsibilities that were never intended for unelected officials, while lacking the appropriate political instruments and training (Goerdel, Nabatchi, & Peffer, 2011). In observing elected officials and their political parties whose responsibilities are to mitigate societal conflict, Meier (1997) laments that:

> the fundamental problem of governance that has generated the continual state of crisis in political/bureaucratic relationships is that the electoral branches of government have failed as deliberative institutions; they have not resolved conflict in a reasoned manner.

Given this failure, public administrators have assumed the duty of solving policy and political conflicts, a responsibility they were not designed nor equipped to perform satisfactorily and democratically. This unfortunate political involvement has grown in complexity and size, creating significant controversy around the exact role, influence and responsibility of public administrators (Ingraham, 2006; Lowi, 1979; Meier, O'Toole, & Lawrence, 2006). In the case of Romania's young and inexperienced democracy with its many changes and alteration, the situation is even more complex with a large number of people switching jobs frequently between the legislative (parliament) and the executive (ministerial) branches.

In a democracy, elected officials and political parties are supposed to represent the will of the people, aggregate collective interest, and peacefully negotiate a mutually beneficial compromise that can then be transformed into clear public goals and policy decisions. However, given the polarization of political parties and the political process, the deliberative functions of most legislative bodies is deteriorating and giving way to hostility and gridlock (Lowi, 1979; Theriault, 2008). In most instances, public administrators have no choice but to intervene in the policy-setting process, often applying their own ideology to public problem-solving. The motives and the drivers of political polarizations have been outlined by the Public Choice scholars, who observed that elected officials have little incentive to invest in issues their core constituents will not reward or spend political capital on initiatives with limited payoffs. This state of affairs limits a viable political compromise and the assumption of responsibility among "risk-averse, resource-dependent, and media-conscious" politicians, conscious of the next election cycle (Durant, 1995). The natural result is unresolved political conflict, ambiguous and contradictory legislation, and uninformed selfish goals.

The public administration entrusted to implement the murky political decisions, often has to make major decisions on important policy matters. In its essence and tradition, bureaucracy was created as a scientific, objective, goal-oriented organizations evaluated on accomplishment and efficiency, not to be deliberative institutions (Meier, 1997; Seidman, 1970). In the case of Romanian bureaucracy, over the years

public administrators have developed informal mechanisms of coping with contradictory goals, vague policy demands, and inconsistent mandates from multiple sources, foreign and domestic. Naturally, significant reform must take place in the Romanian and European political sphere, yet given the limited scope of my volume, I shall not belabor this point extensively. However, a brief discussion regarding the political situation in Romania would aid our understanding regarding the fundamental limitation of public administration reforms.

As noted earlier, corruption has been identified as one of the major drawbacks in the Europeanization of Romania in general, and of its government in particular. According to Daniel Buti in his 2011 article, *What are political parties?* Romanian and eastern European political parties differ from western understanding and traditions of what a political party is, how it operates and how does it finance itself. In theory, a political party is a grass-roots organization that voluntarily galvanizes the will of the people around a specific political doctrine and then democratically and civically engages political opponents in debate and healthy compromise in order to win elections. Under this traditional understanding, a political party is a voluntary, "altruistic and generous organization established for the greater good of its constituency" (Buti, 2011). Once in power, the objective is to successfully negotiate with the political opponents and/or collation partners those political doctrines and turn them into concrete policies that neutral public administrators can easily and efficiently implement. The Romanian political landscape is quite distant from this idealized version of party politics that in all fairness has perhaps never truly been put into practice even in western democracies. Romanian political activity of the past two decades exemplify Anthony Downs's (1957) theory which states that political parties are established for the subjective and selfish motives of their founders and members.

> The will to obtain and exercise political power is based upon the private interest of party members. Starting from this point, the existence and the activity of [Romanian] political parties as well as their interaction with society has a different significance. If individual interest is the prism through which we view the actions and decisions of party members, the political party is a group of individuals whose purpose is the obtainment of political power for pleasure, gain, prestige and influence. Therefore the classic social function of establishing and implementing public policy becomes an afterthought, taking second place to the private incentive for which they were established in the first place (Buti, 2011).

James Toole, in his 2003 article, *Straddling the East–west Divide: Party Organization and Communist Legacies in East Central Europe,* observed the same phenomenon in most former communist nations where "the institutions built by political parties in central and eastern Europe in the years following the communist demise seem to fulfill the personal needs of the political elites rather than the voters interest." In 1995, Peter Kopecky raised the question about what type of political parties were likely emerge in the region and concluded that party membership was volatile and insignificant, with the fundamental, decisive role belonging to the party leader. He pointed that the political parties growing in the former communist states were not necessarily democratic, grass-roots parties lead by a specific political ideology, but instead driven by personalities and opportunistic circumstances.

As it did happen in Romania, he predicted quite a number of fragmentations and atypical coalitions along with significant transits of party members among various parties. They mainly lack the ability to forge sentimental and ideological ties with the electorate, instead they must rely on the interest of their members. Buti (2011) identifies the significant difference between Romanian political parties and their western counterparts:

1. The democratization of post-communist societies is different. The general context of eastern and central Europe in the 1990s was different than western Europe at the beginning of the twentieth century.
2. The electorate is significantly different. In traditional democracies, the electorate is consistent and relatively predictable, with slow mutations in political ideologies. In new democracies, the electorate is open, volatile, and unpredictable lacking strong ideological opinions and causing political parties to behave differently.
3. The political competition is different where the institutional environment is unstable and conflicted. Having weak ties with their electorate, the behavior of political parties does not have to reflect the will of the people, allowing subjective and chaotic behavior. The political competition tends to be conflict-based and adversarial, not pragmatic and beneficial.

According to Buti (2011), the Romanian political parties may fit into Katz and Mair (1995) concept of "cartel-party" since a new political entity was developed that does not concern itself with connecting the will of the people, bringing it into the public arena and transferring it into the political-administrative space. A few possible outcomes of this lack of political enthusiasm are represented by the fact that over the last two decades, a large percentage of the Romanian population has chosen to emigrate. Naturally, emigration is a complex issue with multiple causes that are beyond the scope of my volume or the political-administrative dysfunctionality discussion, yet it is an issue that might have been influenced by dysfunctional political parties. The other issues may be the steady decline in voters' participation[2] and the alarmingly high numbers of executive ordinances and government resolutions that seem to elude normal parliamentary democratic debate.

Finally, and in the view of this author most ruinously, the financing of political parties and political campaigns is what distorts and clouds the political—administrative relation and prevents it from a neutral status. The financing of political activity and competition, along with the fact that many party élites rely on their political activity as the basis for their personal income, is perhaps the single, most significant factor that hinders the reform of public administration in Romania. The Romanian political parties' structure and operations are moving away from voluntary participants and financing and toward paid professionals and government financing via public administration posts and unreasonable government contracts. Regardless of stated political doctrine, the Romanian political parties along with

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[2] Voter participation in parliamentary election is as follows: in 1990—86.19 %; in 1992—76.29 %; in 1996—76.01 %; in 2000—65.31 %; in 2004—58.51 %; in 2008—39.20 % (Buti, 2011).

their European counterparts finance themselves through the government and the appointed public administrators are their willing accomplices.

According to Doug Perkins (1998), politicians normally coagulate around financial resources and perhaps this has been the true motivator behind political party formations. In a sense, Romanian political parties function as lobby groups whose purpose is accessing government resources for their members. These resources can range from simple government jobs all the way to elaborate public–private schemes where loyal firms receive lucrative government contracts, or where party elites receive appointments in state-owned companies that can incur debts which will be later transferred to the national budget. Perkins concludes:

> political parties are increasingly dependent upon government resources, moving away from their voluntary, electorate base. This poses significant alternations to the traditional political concept, where the loyalty and accountability of the politicians is shifting away from their voters and onto their financers. (Perkins, 1998, p. 147)

Given this overarching desire for obtaining financial resources from the government, we cannot expect Romanian political parties—regardless of their name, tradition, or supposed orientation—to be concerned with objective, efficient non-corrupt public administration, nor with the education of the general public on issues pertaining to democratic behavior. Perhaps, as some authors suggest, we may not even call them "political parties" in the traditional sense of the word. Instead they seem to be:

> Organizations that showcase and follow individual interests, utilizing various instruments and strategies to accomplish their goals with minimal costs. In an economic, social, cultural, and political context, they may group themselves in "parties" for the sole purpose of accomplishing their interest. Absent a separate civil society to counterbalance these instincts, the dissatisfaction between the governed and those governing is likely to grow. The reality is that we must begin to deeply reflect about either changing the traditional definition of a political party, or establishing a viable, socially-acceptable alternative (Buti, 2011).

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