

## **GOVERNANCE: AN OVERVIEW AND A NECESSARY ANALYSIS**

(Anne Mette Kjær, *Governanța*, translated by Natalia Cugleşan, Cluj Napoca, CA Publishing, 2010, ISBN 978-606-92680-4-9, 251p.)

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In Romania, among the specialized publishing houses, CA Publishing manages to add a significant value to the general sector of international and political relations and security studies. Anne Mette Kjær's volume, the first governance manual published in Romania, falls naturally in the field for which the publisher is most renowned for.

The first edition was published in 2004 by Polity Press and, due to its success, it was republished in 2005, 2006, 2007 and 2008.

The edition in Romanian is prefaced by Adrian Ivan, professor at Babes-Bolyai University of Cluj-Napoca. He is one of the leading specialists in this field and the first to have coordinated a Governance course in Romania, in 2002.

The issues discussed in this volume as well as the series of courses held by the author of the preface, entitled "The Governance of the European Union and the Challenges of its Expansion", are of paramount importance, especially now, given the current state of shock the European Union is in, due to the results of the referendum held in the United Kingdom and the imminent BREXIT.

Anne Mette Kjær structured her analytic and synthetic endeavor in chapters and subchapters that converge from general perspectives into specific cases of precisely defined conceptual areas. The ideational content is structured in 8 such units, which, for the obvious benefit of the reader – that is more or less informed – ends with some very welcome conclusions, meant to efficiently point out the guidelines of the chapter they are closing.

In order to have a good picture of the subject and object of her work, the author addresses, in the *Introduction*, the concept of "governance", its meanings, its possible definitions, key concepts used by theorists in this area etc. Starting with the etymology of the term, since it is both logical and pertinent, the author cites several referential definitions, as a circumscribing example of this polymorph concept, to later note that "governance means managing the rules of the game in order to increase the legitimacy of the public space. Legitimacy derives both from democracy as well as from efficiency, but the ever-growing literature, focused on democratic accountability, should not be ignored either." (Kjær, 2010, p.15)

The second chapter showcases the public governance, public policies and the reforms in the management of the public institutions. This chapter presents us with the situation where governance is supposed to be the network's management and the governance situation as a management process of the public policy rules.

The third subdivision of the volume puts the spotlight on the international governance, referring to the neo-realist model or “the billiard balls states model”, focusing on their national security interests, some forcing others (into war), resulting in a new order, a new balance of power. Liberalism is presented as being on the exact opposite side; it criticizes the excessive capitalization of the importance of the states as actors on the scene of international relations, opening up the discussion between international organizations, multinational companies and even individuals in an increasingly dynamic movement.

Our attention is drawn by another burning topic, which is directly linked to the theme of this book: *The result: globalization and the need for a governance*. Summarizing the views of idealistic globalists, skeptics and transformists, Anne Mette Kjær discusses the society’s reaction possibilities when faced with an all-inclusive globalization, analyzing both the role of the state as an autonomous entity, with a seemingly declining authority, as well as the global governance and the political implications thereof.

The difference between governance, when it comes to security, society, culture, environment on the one hand, and governance when discussing the economic aspect (in the latter case, the governance being more realistic) on the other hand, is also originally presented here.

The fourth chapter, *European Governance: between International Relations and Public Policies*, discusses the overcoming of the intergovernmental decision-making process, towards the supranational level, namely the European Commission or the European Parliament and the European Court of Justice. Elaborating the single market legislation, the environmental policy or the labor market policy is among the main challenges.

The author’s approach on policy development and governance in the European Union, namely the multi-level or European governance is interesting because each of the aforementioned is the star subject of a different chapter.

In chapters 5 and 6, *Compared policies governance*, two disjoint perspectives are addressed: the neo-liberal position, which militates for a market-led development, the state having no say in dictating the economic trajectory, and the structuralist position, which views the state as the one who should be in charge. The comparison between the states with subsistence economies and developed states also constitutes a point of interest in this volume, by actually transposing, in a practical sense, the author’s well theoretically systematized conceptions, in the previous chapters.

One can notice the lack of an ideal economic governance model, which guarantees success, wealth and economic growth.

The author notes that a great number of states and non-state actors are involved in the economic governance; however, it is the state that retains its important role.

The sixth chapter is centered on the democratization theories, on the role of various structures and actors involved in this process. However, the author notes that “the concept of governance is relevant to a wider range of political regimes,

not just for democracy, because it redirects attention from a predefined set of ideal institutions towards the examination of the possibilities through which legitimacy is affected in public.” (Kjær, 2010, p.155)

The chapter entitled *Governance and the World Bank* identifies and explains the direct link between those elements. The World Bank, by giving aid to the poor countries, was interested in finding an ideal model of economic governance. The author notes that “the World Bank has significantly contributed to the emanation of the concept of governance in the 90s” (Kjær, 2010, p.179), denouncing in its reports the flawed policies, corruption and nepotism, which hindered the development; it demanded transparency, efficiency and responsibility from the countries it granted loans to. Obviously, there were immediate reactions on how the World Bank itself is subject to the rules imposed on the loan recipient governments.

The eighth chapter, the last one, is intended for conclusions. The researcher suggests a brief but efficient overview of the major concepts used throughout the volume, as well as of the theories enunciated, thereby enhancing the clarity where she intuited comprehensive issues.

The volume is complemented by a comprehensive, qualitative bibliography. The index made by the author is also a useful tool for any researcher willing to unravel the various paths to follow in analyzing governance. Obviously, being unable to narrow down a concept of this magnitude, within the boundaries of a synthetic definition, Anne Mette Kjær provides the reader with various interpretations of the governance, through theoretical presentations and also through empirical examples, throughout the eight chapters. As stated in the preface, the volume is an indispensable tool, both for students and specialists in the academic fields of political sciences, international relations, compared policies and European studies.