RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN POLITICAL POWER AND EXTRA-PARLIAMENTARY OPPOSITION IN THE CONTEXT OF DEMOCRATIC TRANSFORMATIONS

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Abstract

The approached topic evolutionary emphasizes in different historical periods the relationship created between political power, the one that governs the state and opposition, the element that keeps a balance between democracy and totalitarianism.

To identify the relationship between the government and the opposition which can take different forms, from a determined legal framework as a political parties to NGOs, we go through several historical stages to elucidate the important effect of the specific phenomenon.

Keywords:
democracy, totalitarianism, politic power political system, democratic governance.

JEL classification: K39.

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I. HISTORICAL EVOLUTION REGARDING DEMOCRACY

Ancient period analysis, allows authors Gh. Ionescu and I. Madariaga to identify just one example of an institution of political opposition, referring to the tribunes of the people from Roman political system\(^3\). The medieval period is marked in Europe, according to the same authors, by a continuous struggle for power between the ecclesiastical power center (the Catholic Church, in this case) and the nobility who claims the right to govern alone. I will not dwell on the phenomenon, reiterating just the idea that the struggle for power in the ancient and medieval periods was reduced to a small circle of political actors, and the results and mechanisms of these palace battles being insignificant for the current field situation and for the investigated object of the study.

The institutionalization of political opposition as a distinct institution of the political system, has experienced a long and arduous process. The hypothesis that launches the study of the evolution of the political opposition, as part of power relations is that - the notion of an institutionalized political opposition can be applied only in the modern period. Modernity and contemporary are societal environments where political opposition was institutionalized and took the forms known today.

It is known the fact that political opposition elements (proto opposition) existed in earlier historical periods, even more, opposition exists from the moment of political power appearance, but its manifestation was limited, depending on the specific historical period. She had no affirmation mechanisms and channels, which would have allowed the active and wide involvement, his character was extremely limited and sporadic, limited to the circle of people involved in influencing and changing the bearer of political power.

In this regard we are obliged to remind the work of the great philosophers who have approached this subject in their historical works. I would like to emphasize the contribution of authors such as J. Locke, Montesquieu, J. J Rousseau, Th. Bread, that in their literature remember about different aspects related to building opposition as a defining element in the exercise of the adversarial balance between political power and the opposition, whatever incipient form it takes at that historical moment.

Overview of the turning points in the political realities treatment by the ruling class and opposition, both with an instinct to acquire political power, allows us to conclude that in the XVIII century appears studies reflecting serious mutations in the structure and the mechanisms of political processes in companies from Europe and North America (these will be targeted in the research approach of the opposition in democratic states).

In this sense, the key-element in triggering the process of institutionalization of political opposition, was the asserting of a sociological reality, called - public opinion, with the potential to be different from the opinion of the ruling class. Public opinion is a set of opinions, judgments, and collective choices, on a particular topic, at a particular stage. From the definition given, axiological dimension and appreciative public opinion is deduced. She also has an unstable character, being subject to potential opportunities of change.

Creating of public opinion is the result of political modernization that determined "an increasingly larger group of people to get involved in politics". The literature shows that elements of public opinion have existed before modernity, but up to sec. XVIII there were no legal means of expression and formal means of influence. They were developed only with these conditions crystallization that starts the construction of collective opinion of the society, which may be different from the ruling class one that could influence its behavior. Power relations are beginning to take place in two-way, feedback occurs.

Increasing gnoseological aspects, fortifies the individual axiological capacities in the formation of opposite opinions about political leadership, about governance, about the exercise of power.

Development of media and political journalism involves a direct determinism demonstrated by the evolution of changing societies. The phenomenon is shaped by the degree of development of the media and the democratization of society. An informed citizen is a powerful citizen in terms of forming a competent and motivated individual opinion.

Transition from personal interests to the interests of the group was provided by the process of creating nations. Awareness of national interests is a major step in the construction of modern democratic societies.

The formation of public opinion is only one of the conditions that laid the foundation for the development of the political opposition. This process is complemented by institutionalizing national representative forums in political systems, which are in constant evolution. Parliamentary evolution allowed the transfer of the opposition from social environment to the political governmental one.

Conceptual analysis and the review of the phenomenon of political opposition, includes two types of political opposition: parliamentary and extra-parliamentary. The parliamentary one includes minority opposition but exercises the power, in a limit, the majority domination of her, and the extra-parliamentary opposition is pressing against the work of government through various type

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groups and NGOs, representing the national consciousness of the people. Both forms of opposition only works within a framework of democratic governance.

The transition from Communism to democracy, characterized by structural and axiological democratic transformation, is called democratization. In this sense we can outline a review of the literature that contour the concept of democratization from the perspective of the approach and conceptualization of the term.\(^7\)

### II. DEMOCRACY, DIALOGUE BETWEEN POLITICAL POWER AND PUBLIC OPINION

Democratization has been conceptualized as a speech, petition, set of institutional changes, form of the domination of elites, political system, as an exercise of politic power and global solidarity demand. Plurality of acceptations is caused, mainly by the diversity of approaches: law, political theory, comparative politics, international relations, sociology, political economy, etc.

In the opinion of J. Grugel "in terms of political studies, democratization was understood as a continuum, starting from a minimalist position to a maximalist one, most commentators positioning on different points of the range\(^8\), the idea that we agree to. Minimalist definition treats the notion of democratization by institutionalizing (perpetuation) electoral procedures, which must be free and according to generally accepted rules of a liberal democracy, as well to be organized at a strictly determined time interval.

A broader definition involves "the introduction of liberal individual rights (freedom of association, freedom of religion, freedom of press, freedom to run for public office, etc.)" which justifies the constitutional democracy.

The particular case of democratization of post-communist companies, in which example Romania fits. Numerous studies in the field, have a critical approach to these phenomena and processes related to political and social modernization delay.

R. Dahl, in his scientific work deduce some minimum conditions for a country to have the status of a democratic state\(^9\):

- elected officials. Jurisdiction over government decisions regarding policies, as Constitution states, to the officials that were elected by citizens, having their capacity as representatives;

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- free elections, fair ones, according to a constitutional framework. Voted officials vote shall be chosen by free elections;
- freedom of expression. Citizens have the right to express, without the threat of sanctions, opinions on policy issues, including criticism of known issues related to state government;
- alternative sources of information and publicity. Citizens have the right to seek alternative sources of information and independent media, press, etc. Institutionalized organizations of legislative and executive, must inform civil society about government measures in the exercise of power, etc. ;
- associational autonomy. In order to perform various duties, including those necessary for the effective functioning of democratic political institutions, citizens have the right to form associations and organizations, even political ones;
- comprehensive citizenship. No adult with permanent residence in the country and subject to its laws cannot be denied its rights that are accessible to the majority.

Although we have emphasized the minimum conditions necessary to develop state democracy, the above named author does not develop, according to him, the topic that covers the outlining of the opposition.

Free speech underpinning democratic public opinion, opinion which may be followed by NGOs' activities it is different from exploiting the idea of opinion from a governmental perspective. The right of citizens to form political or apolitical associations, to seize governmental errors, through his work demonstrates the development of civil society and the awareness of its available power.

According to A. Lijphart, the majority model of democracy (considered the classic model) means "government by the majority and in accordance with the wishes of the majority"\(^{10}\).

If you were to corroborate previous opinion with the one of G. Sartori, we can conclude that "majority-minority relationship has three categories of meaning"\(^{11}\), namely: constitutional, electoral and social.

Returning to the study of A. Lijphart, we join the opinion of this researcher, which highlights in his work the essential elements in developing democracy.

- concentration of executive power in Monochrome majority offices, against executive power shared in multiparty large coalitions;
- legislative-executive relations in which legislature is dominated against the balance of power between the executive and the legislature;
- two-party system against multiparty system;

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\(^{10}\) Арон Р., Демократия и тоталитаризм. Москва: Текст, 1993, p. 25.

• majority electoral system and disproportionately against proportional representation;
• pluralist system of interest groups, open competition to all, against coordinated and "corporate" system, which aims to compromise and coordination\textsuperscript{12}.

A feature of consensual democracy would be the work of executive power under large coalition cabinets formed in the basis of several parties. Also, the existence of a balance between the legislative and executive under broad support from parliament. Pluralist party system with conditioned format and an electoral system of proportional representation. Finally, this system is characterized by interest groups corporatism, on the example of cooperation between trade unions, employers, NGOs specialized in rights and liberties, political parties and government.

Relations between the power and the opposition in a democratic system are different, the studies analyzed so far, demonstrated that the parliamentary opposition may merge with extra-parliamentary opposition in certain situations, when the purpose of the action is the same. But in addition to this variety of manifestation, lately the analysis of specific relations, reveals a number of challenges that both parts have to face, the leading political power and the political opposition, in the process of involvement in the act of exercising political power\textsuperscript{13}.

One detected challenge relates to the mutations detected within the opposition. Both democratization and modernization of democratic societies, causes transfers of power centers within power relations. With reference to the political opposition, there is a tendency to strengthen the social and extra-parliamentary opposition. With such power centers, here is envisaged media and NGOs' decision-making position, first of all, which by virtue of the informational development of society, gain more and more influence. There are also a number of groups targeted by national and transnational economic interests, which have the potential to become involved in politics. All these examples are samples of modernization processes that affect the system of power relations within society. Postmodern Era involves and qualitative mutations in government-opposition relations\textsuperscript{14}.

In conclusion, the democratic transformation is a complex and multidimensional process that will penetrate not only the political system but also other social schemes. Democratic consolidation involves not only the modernization of democratic institutions and procedures.

\textsuperscript{13} Hermet G., \textit{People against democracy}. Iaşi: institutul European, 2000.
In a democratic society, the power-opposition relationship profile is influenced and shaped by the following structures:

- political regime. In the parliamentary political regimes, we see that the power-opposition relationship takes place on the institutional segment between such kinds of public authorities, Parliament and Government.
- party system. Pluralist systems require a system of alliances between power and opposition.
- the electoral system. Proportional representation ballot promotes political and governance pluralism by alliance. Uninominal majority ballot with one round.
- strengthen the party system and make "useful vote" rule to work.
- civil society and interest groups structure. The mode and intensity of involvement of civil society is a very important factor for political class accountability.

Hypothetically, the political system relates to consensualist European model, but de facto situation is going to be deducted from democratic state fundamental position, which maintains the balance between power and opposition.

If you had to separate the two forms of opposition, to which democratic state is confronting, we would find that the parliamentary one - is a product of the selection process of the political class, through universal suffrage, which makes it have a real chance to accede to power, and the extra-parliamentary one - is certainty and competition in civil society political life, proclaimed by NGOs forums, trade unions, employers who tend towards development of political decision to optimize governance.

The issue of decisional democratization, returns at the forefront of contemporary research and analysis of the phenomena of pressure and political influence, so that the view of many researchers including J. Meynaud, according to which political decision can have an open or closed character, from the point of view of the number of participants in the drafting, and of its origin and provenance, from the outside or from the inside of the decision-making institution. The same idea is developed and supported in technocratic theory by K. Deutsch and HDLasswell, who said that decisional democratization is a matter of improving political communication and technical optimization of decisional space.

Implementation of a political decision in extra-parliamentary opposition’s case, comes from the need for interest achievement, which is a key activity of the political nature, of any actor in the political arena and is, in essence, the interactions between different groups that need to be self-identified in the socio-

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politic area. The idea on achieving political interest and therefore political influence as fundamental motivation and political essence, starts from the early twentieth century, with the advent in 1908 of A. F. Bentley work: "The Process of Government: A Study of Social Pressures"\textsuperscript{16}.

III. NGOS ESSENTIAL ELEMENT IN DIALOGUE WITH POLITICAL POWER

The process of influencing political decision by pressure groups can be analyzed from different perspectives and approaches that have evolved and have developed consecutively, based on the disadvantages of the previous model\textsuperscript{17}.

Thus, the classical trend of analysis of the relationship between pressure groups and authorities, as decision makers on which actions and efforts of influence are concentrated and focused is the perspective approach to political pressure phenomena symbolically called "linear" one.

So, the exemplified authorities of Government and Parliament are designed and understood as invested and various power resources and political power equipped factors or structures as with many opportunities and options for action and manifestation and that have no other solution than to yield or to resist pressure action and active pressure groups\textsuperscript{18} claim, their aim, through their activities, being correction of government errors in a democratic state or in some cases destabilization of exercise of power.

Based on the above, it appears necessary, before proceeding to articulation step and objectives promoting, that the pressure group management, the political pressure factor in general, specifically, should use first the more precisely identification of slope value of the target system (a hierarchy of values according to their importance) and then to its goals compatibility with its supreme values, axiological system of the company or institution that is under pressure.

In conclusion, in my own opinion, the pressure groups and in particular groups composed of NGOs are independent formations through which popularization procedures, particularly media, institutions of public authority picketing, besides the fact that they are guided by public opinion, plays an


\textsuperscript{18} S. Şpringean, \textit{The issue of socio-political pressure exerted on state power}. // Scientific and technical progress, bioethics and medicine: problems of human existence. – Chișinău, USMF, 2001, pp. 118-123.
important role in governance process which is useful in handling civil society in order to induce a pre-determined by government policy actors result.

Civil society NGOs play a vital role in creating an European model of democracy within which citizens through these structures, actively express their agreement and commitment to economic, social and life of their community.

By their actions, these organizations contribute to development of a participatory model of civil society in the design and implementation of policies, strengthening democratic structures outside the parliamentary sphere, increase confidence in the democratic system. In this sense we can exemplify electoral situation in Romania since 2004, the civil society organizations in Romania have initiated the action "Coalition for a Clean Parliament", which aimed the elimination from the elections party lists of persons who did not meet the moral requires and not only to become senators and deputies. This initiative has not had the desired effect. Basically, no party has taken into account the published list of civil society. This attitude indicates both the ineffectiveness of civic organizations in the country and their modest capacity to mobilize public opinion or influence the state institutions and the political class.

Relations between civil society organizations and governmental sphere is characterized by the following aspects: public administration is not involved enough "in collaboration with civil society" and tolerate the existence of fictive NGOs, those that commit illegal actions and those that "hunt projects" in its own interest; NGO cooperation with government (central and local) and with political parties on an ad-hoc, being largely determined by personal contacts; disagreement regarding the place and role of civil society in society. Thus, civil society representatives state that Romanian society will be truly democratic when it will be allowed to have the possibility of taking over responsibilities of government sphere, while its representatives resist such ideas.

Therefore, NGOs have practically useful but social activity. "In principle, NGOs are designed to take problems and needs at community level in order to transpose them into the media and government agenda, and of course, for certain types of problems NGOs even propose their solution."

Analysis of civil society in Romania highlights several features on which we can say that democracy is the prospect of positive developments.

IV CONCLUSIONS

To conclude, civil society include such social bodies collectives that enjoy autonomy from the state (are not a part of the state or of its creation) and have one of the most important objectives influencing states through their actions.

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The dialogue between different groups representing civil society and political power, governments that impose rules is essential, because these, although not legally liable, are sensors that implement these rules, justify them to the citizen, to the people.

Democracy is the balance of both political power and the opposition forces which may be parliamentary or extra-parliamentary.

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