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ABSTRACT

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Dimensiunea filosofică
a raportului dintre puterea politică
și conștiința participativă
în contemporaneitate

The Philosophical Dimension
Between Political Power and
Participative Conscience in
Nowadays

In most cases, understanding certain concepts may be problematic .This is caused by an attempt to establish and impose a certain form of those certain concepts. Some consider that the understanding of a certain concept involves learning the meanings established by the connoisseurs, the experts. Well, this manner of understanding certain concepts does not always guarantee a proper understanding of the concepts. There are instances in which a certain concept is strictly used in a scientific area, thus being strictly used by experts of a certain domain. In this case, the significance of certain concepts may follow the path mentioned earlier: learning the meaning established by the specialists. It is obvious that the discovery of these meanings by the uninitiated may lead to a conceptual reiteration of the established meaning, thus resulting in an unchanged, fixed meaning, for the sake of scientific consistency.

On the other hand, there is a series of concepts accessible to both scientific and common knowledge. The ways of acquiring these concepts will nevertheless be different according to each particular case. It may be possible that –no matter the form and properties of the scientific concept – the concept may be shifted to a different practical form as in the case of political power.

Political power exists as a concept at a theoretical level and it is also strictly connected to political philosophy; at the same time it exists at the common knowledge level as a mean of comparison between the ones that lack power (negative political power) to the ones that are in power (positive political power), in other words, a representation of the relational system of the positive/negative political power.

In order to corroborate the statements mentioned above, we are going to consider Wittgenstein's theory regarding meaning. In his youth, the philosopher was strongly convinced that words have a transcendental meaning, one that needs to be unfolded. Not until later did he reconsider his perspective upon this matter. The meaning of a word consisted of the manner in which that word was being used, an individual ability. In his *Philosophical Searches,* Wittgenstein states: "The

conclusion is that the meaning of a word is in its use. And the definition that explains (describes) its name is found again in the use of it: and this will depend, of course of the context in which it is used and the person that describes it. And the exact manner in which a word acquires its definition is obvious in the manner in which the defined word is used. Let's not imagine meaning as an occult link that our mind creates in between a word and an object, nor that this link contains all the possible uses of the word. The meaning of a phrase strictly depends on the manner in which we use it."

It is Wittgenstein that introduces the concept of *word play*, in reference to the context in which an individual encounters a certain concept. The conclusion is simple, individuals that participate and are engaged in various word play will acquire multiple and different meanings of a certain concept.

This paper's hypothesis is that the meaning of the political power concept from the perspective of political theory and philosophy is not identical with the meaning perceived by the masses, at a common sense level. I will make an attempt to show that there is a correlation in between the two. In order to prove this, I will start inventorying several acceptations of the concept of political power. I will try to focus on the differences that appear when this concept gets debated at a scientific level. Following this, I will shift focus on the manner in which the idea of political power has been debated in Romania starting with the 20th century.

This attempt will begin with making a clear distinction in between power and political power. Such a distinction is necessary because the two concepts are completely different and more so, the concept of power helps with understanding the concept of political power. The transition from one form of power to a form of political power generated a series of justifications (sometimes called myths), justifications that stand as a base for any attempt to define political power. I mentioned three of the perspectives that dominate the political thought of the 20th century and they are the following: the theological perspective, the contractual perspective and the perspective of social psychology.

From the theological perspective, the transformation of power into political power occurs as an imitation of the divine power here on Earth, and thus a copy of the model of divine power is created, along with all its implications. An important reminder is that for a long period of time, the representatives of the political

power used to identify with or they were closely connected to the representatives of the divine power. A separation of the two came later on. A good example of this is found in the Romanian titles of nobility, specifically in the particle "IO" (the equivalent of I in "I, anointed by God). For the Romanian political thinkers of the period between the two world wars , this has a great meaning, as the nature and form in which the power is conceptualized are all under the strong influence of an organized orthodoxy.

Another perspective is the contractual one. The ideas of Hobbs and Locke have been followed throughout this paper; there are several differences in between these ideas, differences used to exemplify various ways of manifestation of the political power. The type of contract that the individuals sign, the rights they give up and where power stands in these contracts, they all justify both types of monarchies: absolutist and constitutional. Locke's ideas, which are closer to liberalism, place power in a position in which it can be sanctioned if it does not fulfill its objectives. We can thus anticipate by the means of these ideas the initial stage of Madison's principle of checks and balances.

In order for us to get a clear idea of the means of understanding the emergence and existence of political power, we can't exclude the perspective of social psychology. Collective memory and patricide stand as a base for the political power. The son, formerly a subject, becomes a father, a leader, a possessor of power. This perspective is not only important from the perspective of the algorithm by which one of the sons (willing and worthy of being in power) needs to respect, but also from the perspective of the numerous meanings of this myth. The fear, and at the same time the love of the father allude to the contradicting feelings regarding the power or the representative of the power in the contemporary regimes. The father's image can be compared to the personal power of the nondemocratic regimes. The economical aspect of the institutionalization of power is also present in this explanatory myth. The father (in a similar manner to the one of the political power) is the one that administers the resources and regulates the access of the individuals to them.

I am not stating that these three perspectives are meant to clarify the issue of the emergence of political power, nor that any of these myths are completely true, but I am not stating that they don't either.

The means by which the political power is manifested are various, so an inventory of the various types of political regimes that express the political power is necessary. To start off, I made a dichotomist classification of the regimes into democratic and nondemocratic regimes. The nondemocratic regimes have the most ways of manifesting themselves and have numerous names such as tyranny, despotism, autocracy, absolutism, dictatorship, authoritarianism and totalitarianism. Further on, I will demonstrate the differences among these.

Following an inventory of the nondemocratic manifestations of political power, I tried to mention the main ways of the manifestations of power for the 20th century. Starting with the meaning that H. Arendt attributed to this ideology, I tried to demonstrate how it was possible for the totalitarianism to emerge. Totalitarianism is seen by Aaron Raymond as having five distinctive features, with the first one being the most important and the rest of them complimenting it. Thus, a political party is monopolizing the political activities. This is armed with an ideology that becomes the only way to assess the truth. In order to impose this ideology, the state and the one political party monopolize and popularize this ideology, as well as the means of communication, the means of constraining and persuading the people. The state controls the whole economic activity as well. Finally, the errors become ideology and are attributed to individuals who, as a result of this, are placing themselves under an ideological terror.

The three currents that are of interest to us, from the perspective of political power in the 20th century are the following: Marxism-Leninism, Nazism and Fascism. The Marxism theory is based on the class difference. The state is viewed as an institution in which a social class can dominate another. The classes are changing and the power is switched for one class to another, starting with the slave era all the way to paid labor. Marx is heading towards a form of government in which the power of the state is omnipresent and it regulates society. More so, the class differences seem to fade. The theory that circulated at those times, imply that by getting rid of the social classes the state will disappear too. This is a flaw in the body of a rational and unitary theory. The theory of the disappearance of the state is transforming. The state will become a representative of the despotic governance of the masses. The individual must be served in order for the freedom of the masses to be achieved.

The ideas presented by the Nazism are not new. The Europeans are used to lectures about eliminating the people suffering from incurable illnesses, the disabled people, the people suffering with alcoholism, the Jewish people or the slaves. Hitler offers the possibility to put this idea into practice. This ideology is manifested by the means of national-socialism, which is used as a tool by the ones in power. The ideology is simple: a Manichaeism that generates hate on one side and grandeur on the other. The German-loving ideas were organized and put into action by eugenics.

Fascism and Nazism have numerous common features. Both of them appear to be in the realm of liberal and democratic mediocrity but they both emphasize an overdevelopment of the state, they are both menacing democracy, and historically there is a sort of complicity among Hitler and Mussolini. Mussolini's regime does not develop on its own; it grows in the midst and along with other similar regimes. The general and social background of this regime is one of economical, political and social discontent due to the inability to adapt to the democratic regimes or due to the intellectual corruption of these regimes and the weakening of the religious and moral values throughout Europe. In this context, an authoritarian power rises, with its own set of values that allows it to fight against democracy and liberalism and it offers its own ideal form of government, based on its own moral principles.

In democratic regimes, the issue of political power is not simple either. Although there is no unanimous opinion regarding the true meaning of democracy, we shall consider its minimal meaning, that of an existence of a state in which a limitation and control of the power is attempted. In order for this to be possible, the democratic universe developed a series of principles and institutions that are in permanently interacting. That's what generates our stating that in order to understand the political power in a democratic regime, one needs to understand and consider the correlative concepts that follow it. I attempted in this manner to explain the concept of democracy, state, sovereignty, authority, legitimacy, voting, majority, minority, tolerance and consensus with an emphasis on the last two, as they can resume the efforts of political thought regarding democracy. Tolerance (acceptance, is the one that allows different individuals to coexist, while differences are not regarded as a problem, but as something normal. After crossing this obstacle, the consensus is in search of mechanisms by which these differences and the needs they generate, are

being satisfied to the highest degree and for as many people as possible. I attempted to approach democracy from several perspectives that were generated by the political thinking of this century.

Regarding the political power on the Romanian territory, my approach considers the practices used before and after the communist regime. The period before the communist regime is characterized by a plethora of political ideas. Not being able to avoid the historical realities of the century, Romania had to find forms of political power to allow it to progress. The political endeavors are one of the main concerns of the Romanian intellectuals. We considered the political ideas of C.R. Motru, Nicolae Steinhardt, Emil Cioran, Nae Ionescu, Petre Tutea, along with the legionnaire movement doctrine. The problem that most arises is the one of the representative of power, which is different from the dominant line of thought of the political thinkers from before the communist regime. The answers provided by the authors mentioned earlier are tightly connected to their vision of the Romanian people. Christian Orthodoxism and the organic vision of society strongly influences the ideas of the Romanian philosophers, as well as their affinity for the king's institution. Although democracy is thoroughly critiqued, the ideas remain liberal; the lack of democracy is not regarded as a valid option. Out of all these thinkers, Cioran is an exception. In his perspective, the power should manifest itself in its entire splendor, "a world without tyrants would be as boring as a zoo without hyenas." Towards the end of his life, his ideas become more temperate, due to his lack of bodily vigor, as the author himself states. Democracy is not critiqued (by the authors we mentioned above) in its essence; the critique is mostly stressing the idea of the clash between democracy and Romanian spirit. Specifically, they criticize the masses that are considered unprepared for the democratic regime, a regime in which the mysticism that the Romanian people is so fond of disappears. The tyranny of the majority, the power of democracy to decide the way the things work, the universal vote, capitalism, are other ideas connected to the political power before the communist regime. It seems like the directions these thinkers suggest could not be followed because of the historical context and the events that followed World War II.

The post communist period is viewed by the political power as a conceptualization and an implementation problem. Unlike what the political philosophy before 1989 stated, the only direction Romania should head in is the one

of western democracy. I used the term problem because, according to H. Arendt, due to this ideology, imagination and reality seem to be perceived in a different manner. What I would li8ke to pint out is that, during the communist times, it is possible that the meaning of certain concepts were different. The task of political philosophy becomes more difficult as a conceptual reconsideration is required.

The ideas that rise in Romania after 1989 are aligned with the ideas that circulate worldwide. I attempted to inventory these ideas starting with the power discourse and continuing with the economical theories that propose an institutionalization of the political power. The theories regarding the political power are varied, but not contradictory; they work as a whole and develop a wide image of the power. Differences among these ideas appear when it comes to describing the ways in which political power becomes concrete. Although, as I stated above, democracy is viewed as a main way of manifestation, there are different and debatable aspects of it. It is possible that these influences are generated since the beginning of the 20th century ideology. The criticism of the democracy is mostly tied to the nature of its principles. The fact that the leaders are corruptible and the fact that these leaders are lacking political competence are the main issued of this debate. The lack of politicians' competence should be replaced with the leadership of proficient and knowledgeable people. This is a starting point of yet another debate regarding technocracy. Controlling the resources is another thing that ties the political and economical powers. The most interesting distinction is, in my opinion, the manner in which democracy is regarded. If we see it as a principle, then it is liable to criticism due to its imperfections. The majority gets to decide what the truth is, no matter the correctness of this attempt (this is one of the things that Steinhardt criticizes). The other perspective does not wish to consider democracy as a universal law. Democracy should be regarded in its functionality. Political power can be reduced, divided and controlled. Then, the purpose of democracy is not uncovering the truth but finding the point in which diversity can be manifested. Thus, we can make a distinction between democracy as a mean and democracy as an end.

An element of power, that has often been the focus of this paper is legitimacy regarded from two different perspectives. The first one regards legitimacy as a concept with all its implications but the conceptualization of this term does not suffice. Virgil Magureanu states that "there should always be a concordance among

the values initially proclaimed and the ulterior achievements. The legitimacy of a certain historical authority type is generated by the nature of the political values that took over the power and that are promoted, and also the extent to which these values serve the historical progress of that certain society." Starting with this statement, we will try to regard legitimacy as the use of power, the attempt to endow the actions of the political power in such a way that is accepted by the majority. Thus we get to an indestructible connection between justifications and political power.

In order to test the hypothesis mentioned earlier we should be able to identify an element of comparison to the concept of political power. The political culture offers this element, and that is the view of political power in the common knowledge. Why is political culture important in the context of political power? The answer is given by the "civic culture." The statement of the authors mentioned earlier, our starting point, is the following "a democratic form of the participative political system involves a political culture in accordance to the system." In contemporary Romania, democracy implies a form of civic culture. If this type of culture is present in Romanian democracy then our hypothesis is invalid. If the type of political culture is of a participative kind then there is a discordance among the type of political system and the type of political culture, a discordance that confirms the hypothesis of an existing report between the way in which political power is conceptualized and the manner in which it is used (the way in which it is perceived by the masses and the way people that are in power make use of it).

I started with a classification of the political culture that is found in "*Civic Culture*," and I also showed that this classification is limited, a fact acknowledged by the authors of this text. I considered the scheme submission/participation and rational justification/affective justification. I also mentioned the trends that emerge when we consider the political democratic culture from two different perspectives: one of the democratic values (out of which the most important is freedom) and the other one of the economic well being. It is evident that these two perspectives are relevant, as they are supportive of democracy. Actually, they are nothing but ways of legitimizing the system. Democracy cannot be justified only because it is good in its essence. It is easier to justify it due to the fact that it produces a plus of freedom (positive value) or a plus of well being.

In Romania the issue of political culture is a delicate matter. Although the democratic values are universal, 4% of the Romanian citizens view democracy through the prism of the processes that this implies. 15% see democracy in terms of social well-being and economic prosperity, while 34% cannot give a definition of democracy. 45% see democracy as a means of manifesting the rights and liberties. A similar study conducted in Romania seven years later shows the same values regarding the citizens' view of the democratic ideal. Some values changed once people started living in democracy. The percent of the people that were not able to define democracy decreased considerably, while the percentage of the people that understand the concept of democracy and make it possible, doubled. This is a positive thing because a better understanding of the democratic mechanism by the people can lead to a higher involvement of the citizens into politics and implicitly into the civic culture. Democratic support is rising along with the economic well being, while the value support is decreasing or remaining constant.

This makes us spot the next issue: if there is no political culture that is heading in the direction of choosing the lesser of two evils (in this case democracy), and this support is oriented only towards the system's output, then is it possible that the individuals will give up democracy just because it does not work temporarily, and focus their support towards a nondemocratic regime that promises economic comfort?

Anyway, the manner in which we can test this hypothesis does not only consist of the identification of the type of political culture, but also the manner in which power is legitimized at the common sense level. For this, I used a paremiological approach. Is this the right action? Is it relevant to state that for a people political power and it is legitimized through the paremiological fund that exists at a certain date? Breger and Luckman talk about the political laws existing at a certain point in time in a society, in various forms and stages of development. One of these ways, as some authors claim is paremiology, although it can't provide an extensive justification, but it is indeed a method of legitimizing power. Some authors state that these constructions are capable of including cognitive and affective elements used in political justification. The paremiological constructions fulfill the human need to distill the life experiences into phrases (idioms) of wisdom that would serve as pre-established answers regarding issues of social interaction.

Did the proverbs have a role in justifying politics in history? The answer is yes, obviously! I identified three great personalities of this century who, in order to justify their actions of political power, have used paremiologic constructions: Roosevelt, Churchill, and Hitler. The first two, searched for people's support and understanding by using proverbs (as they are considered the language of the people); while Hitler used proverbs as an element of his propaganda. For him, the paremiological constructions were a tool used to create an image of a guilty and degraded Jew. The proverbs were modified and sometimes even stripped of their metaphoric meaning, and they were taken literally. The obvious example here is to "add salt to the wound," proverb that was taken literally by the Nazi officers.

The supporting evidence that have been presented so far make allow us to switch to the Romanian paremiological study, and we will show the connection mentioned earlier by revealing the type of culture and the image of power in Romanian paremiology. In order to show this, I chose those constructions that have explicit political value, and the ones that have in their structure at least one element that refers to the political power, the people that exercise the political power, submission, participation, consensus, tolerance, public and private life, type of political regime, political practices, political adversaries and legal practices. There are some proverbs that have a contextual political content and those were not considered relevant to our attempt so we resumed to the constructions with explicit political content.

The second step is constructing a scheme through which we can create a liaison between paremiology and political culture. The first direction is the one of minus civic culture. Here, we shall frame the constructs that hint at the isolation from the public and orienting towards the domestic sector and submission. The manner in which the political is perceived is a given, and it is taken as is, with no opposition nor support. The other direction is the one of plus civic culture, in which the individual is considered a part of the political domain, a domain that depends on the individual actions and attitudes. The individual is a part of the political power and all its domains.

I mentioned above a category of explicit constructs, constructs of explanatory value, a category set in neutrality. This neutral zone is only temporary, as

the explanations of these concepts will be either of affective nature or rational nature (cognitive). The constructs of the neutral zone that are based on affect will head towards the minus civic culture zone, while the cognitive ones will migrate towards the plus civic culture zone. I will try, as much as I can to stay away from the neutral constructs as they can both be used in any context, and that would lead to a logical inconsistency. In this sort of classification, we rely on the ideas of Almod and Verba, as well as on Weber's classification of the type of charismatic traditional and legal-rational legitimacy of the political power. The constructs based on the affect will justify, charismatic and traditional and will direct towards a political culture of submission, so they will be categorized in the minus civic culture zone. The constructs based on the cognitive aspect will point towards a plus civic culture zone. It should also be mentioned that when referring to submission in the minus civic culture zone, we don't refer to submission as law abiding, rationally legitimized.

The most notable conclusions drawn following this research are the following:

The hypothesis, the existence of a rapport between the image of political power in the political theory and the image of power in the collective knowledge is confirmed.

The number of constructs with explicit political character are very few and insufficient. If a proverb collection book contains four to six thousand constructs, we managed to gather out of several books only about 100, which represent 2.5% of the common wisdom that is preoccupied with the political sphere. In a democratic political system, in which the democratic performance is not just a noticeable indicator, but an indicator of our direct involvement, 2.5% is a minute amount.

The political culture elements are in a huge proportion in the minus civism zone, 34% of the studied proverbs suggesting a civic-participative behavior and attitude, while the other 66% express more of a submissive type of behavior, a minus civic culture attitude, parochial dependent, while only 2% serve the political initiation, in a system in which we are anchored in politics and we can't deny an inadvertence between the political culture demanded by the democracy (i.e.civic culture) and the political culture that the Romanians belong in the present, i.e. the minus civic culture.

We cannot exclude the existence of a conclusion beneficial to the democracy. I noticed that the collective mentality is prepared for democracy, as there are paremiologic constructs that support, motivate and justify democracy in a cognitive/rational manner, as Almond and Verba would argue. The constructs that are minus civic culture-oriented that have been inventoried throughout this paper have more of an affective construct, which, by the laws of psychology, need to be practiced in order to persist over time.

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