"Human rights as part of active democratic citizenship: the prevention of conflicts"

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Foreword

Democracy is a pattern of common existence on the grounds of community. In democratic frames it is very important for someone to have the freedom of choosing various solutions, when questions or problems come up, as well as to have the freedom of accomplishing his choice. This perception of democracy signals the shift of the emphasis. The traditional perception of democracy as a pattern of governing and political system that is based on the rather limited role of citizens as voters was disputed by the ideas of participation and participative democracy. The adjective "democratic" lays stress on the fact that it is about citizenship, which rests on the principles and values of human rights, on the respect of human dignity, on the pluralism, on the cultural multiformity and the prevalence of law.

The promotion of a spirit of democracy and human rights means amplification of the chance of citizens to develop the collective deed of the construction of communities. This is attainable through the active agency of the citizen, which contributes to the social cohesion, the reciprocal comprehension and solidarity. In this way, the dead-end conflicts that strengthen the repressive mechanisms and bring recession on the fighting/demanding spirit of the citizens are anticipated.

Human Rights and Citizenship: Concept – Meaning – Link between the terms

On Human Rights

Human rights, irrespective of the fact that they have been disputed either on theoretical or ideological and institutional level since the French Declaration of 1789, constitute the greater moral conquest of the humanity and the value horizon of the modern liberal democracy (Audigier, 2000). The "attacks" at the human rights mainly rested on their abstract and ecumenical character, on their "not-meaning". In the modern democratic societies, however, the conformation of the "ethics of rights" came of their abstract character and relevant possibility of their appeal, mainly by those who suffered due to any kind of human rights infringement. This possibility, being identical with the catholic character of human rights, predicated, in combination with citizenship, the politicization of the rights in the western democratic societies and also contributed to the link between freedom and equality, from which the social rights that recommend form of human rights "substantiation" resulted (Balias, 2004).

First of all, we have to make clear the meaning of *universal* focusing initially on the Goodhart's pointing out that "human rights are neither relative nor universal in the familiar senses of those terms" answering to Jack Donnelly's claim that they were both (Goodhart, 2008). The first definition of "universal" in the Oxford English Dictionary (OED) is: "Extending over, comprehending, or including the whole of something". But, as Jack Donnelly argues (2007), (an apposite remark) "universal", in this sense, is "relative" to a particular class or group. For example, universal health care, universal primary education, and universal suffrage, as those terms are ordinarily used, involve making health care, primary education, and voting rights available to all citizens, nationals, or residents of a state. "Universal" also is defined in the above Dictionary as: "Of or pertaining to the universe in general or all things in it; existing or occurring everywhere or in all things."[1] What Donnelly calls ontological universality, the idea that human rights are part of the natural fabric of the moral world, involves universality in this sense. The central purpose of his position was to show that human rights, although not universal in this "occurring everywhere" sense, are in a number of important ways universal in the "across a class" sense. According to him, human rights today remain the only proven effective means to assure human dignity in societies dominated by markets and states. Although historically contingent and relative, this functional

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1. The *American Heritage Dictionary* has almost identical definitions with *Oxford English Dictionary*, although this, which is third in the *Oxford*, is first in the *American Heritage*, and the first *Oxford* definition is second in the *American Heritage*.

universality fully merits the label universal - for us, today (Donnelly, 2007:287-288). Besides, a number of other scholars operating within a variety of theoretical and political perspectives have tried to move the discussion away from the (narrow and usually misleading) binary choice of universalism (understood as a single thing) or relativism (understood as a single thing) (Penna, & Campbell, 1998).

In parallel, the use of term human rights does not regularly occur within the various texts of law and the declarations of different countries and nations. The student very often encounters the terms *fundamental rights*, *individual rights*, *individual or human freedom*, *constitutional freedom* of a person. The use of these terms is usually indistinct, as essential differences between them are non-existent; however, an experienced reader is equal to diagnose subtle conceptual differences (Dagtoglu, 1991: 5). Thus, on the strength of this observation, we may point out that the term *constitutional freedom* lays emphasis on the forms of freedom that the state offers to the citizens, while on the contrary the term *human rights* implies that the rights have not been rendered by any external factor (and particularly the state) but they are coalescent with the human nature in a way. So, they presuppose the appropriate respect, irrespective of the citizen's conformance to them (Chrisogonos, 1998: 4). In other words, the *constitutional freedom* emphasizes the *citizenship* and the *human rights* emphasize the term *individual*.

Generally, human rights could be defined as the basic rights and the fundamental freedom that connote inborn expression of being accepted by individual and without which we could never live as human beings. They include civil rights, such as the right of political participation, the freedom of thought and expression, the equality in front of the law, as well as social, cultural and economic rights and more especially the rights of food, employment and education. (The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, 2000). First declaration of human rights in history is considered the Scroll of Kyros in 539 B. C. In modern history the more important declarations are the following: Bill of Rights (England, 1689), the Declaration of Independence (USA, 1776), the Declaration of Rights of the Person and Citizen (France, 1789) and the Ecumenical Declaration of Rights of the Person (France, 1948), which influenced the contemporary constitutional legislation (Serafetinidou, 2002).

Political community and citizenship

However, the issue is that the political community is considered as the most appropriate framework, within which a life corresponding with some fundamental human rights can be developed. The fact that we bestir ourselves politically with co-citizens settling on our common fate collectively ensures us a better life while it simultaneously contributes to our self-expression as rational and moral beings. We may better recognize ourselves as

individuals that propose, converse and decide (Walzer, 1995). The above argument belongs to the ancient Greeks indeed, but it is more recognizable in its neo-classic versions, such as the argument of Rousseau, who comprehends citizenship as moral action, a conception that constitutes a main source of democratic idealism (Rieu and Duprat, 1995). The same argument has imbued with the positions of many intellectuals, so long as it has constituted the central idea of democracy seeing that it had historically played crucial part in demands of social groups that have been at a disadvantage: labourers, women, black, new immigrants, in order to lay claim to social justice (Walzer, 1995: 4).

Citizenship, therefore, is central characteristic of the decision of the persons to coexist in the organised societies and central component of the conformation of their political culture. Citizenship is the "public" aspect of the individual existence. The persons can participate in the life of their community on condition that the community gives the participants credit for titles and responsibilities. In turn, the political participation correlates with the degree of development of the constitutional government, as the latter is reflected on the extent of the civil rights and freedom (Heywood, 2006: 574).

According to Aristotle, citizens are only those who take part in the juridical functions and the committees by which the political decisions are taken, that is to say whoever legislate, judge and decide (Aristotle, Politics 1275 a 22-23). In the modern era the concept *citizen* rose out of the French Revolution. According to Habermas: "The nation–state and the democracy are twins, children of French Revolution" (Habermas, 1992: 2). The identity of the nation of citizens does not derive from common national and cultural features, but the "action" ("praxis") of citizens, who actively exercise their civil rights. The meaning of *citizen* emanated from the perception of Rousseau about the meaning of the term "self-definition". According to Rousseau and Kant the idea of "popular sovereignty" connoted the transformation of the authoritarian power into the self-legislative power. So that it is necessary the "unanimous will of everyone" for the various statutes on condition that everyone decides for all in the same way and all decide for him in the same way too (Kant).

Similar idea to Rousseau and Kant constitutes the conception of Kastoriadis regarding the "autonomous" society, a society that enacts and rules over itself. In this case, the individuals are "autonomous" as well as the society, when the individuals believe that the laws of a society have also been their own laws and they consider that they have completely espoused them. This does not essentially mean they agree with the laws. It means, however, they have really and actively participated in the modulation of the laws and institutions and certainly in their function. On the strength of the above pointing out of Kastoriadis, all decisions that concern the future of the society should derive from the whole society, citizens' totality. This presupposes: first, all citizens should have the right to participate (not only on the whole) and, second, all citizens should acquaint themselves with the needful education, so

that they could participate. Seeing that the above preconditions do not usually occur within modern states, Kastoriadis said the following: "nowadays, there is not democracy anywhere" characterizing the system of government of the states as "liberal oligarchy" (Kastoriadis, 2000: 126).

The democratic content of the term *citizen* has been also conceived by R. Gawert (1987): On the strength of citizenship each member of a nation (as active subject) participates in the plexus of activities of the state. The civil rights of the participation and communication are found in the core of the meaning of the citizenship, which, in parallel, constitutes the reference point of the problem of the social self-organization.

Moreover, we should not forget that, due to globalization nowadays, the settled data of the homogeneity of the societies have broken up. In consequence of this disintegration many changes have been brought on the demarcation of citizenship. Today, it is imperative necessity for all the people to coexist within the same place despite the fact that they have not coexisted since now and they have never been connected each other with bonds of blood. So, the society is being changed, is becoming multicultural leading to a new demarcation of citizenship. This presupposes the acceptance of the "other" and his recognition on the part of us as equivalent member of the society he lives (Tarrow, 1995).

Charles Taylor (1989) distinguishes the opposing aspects of citizenship, which are described as two models: The first model is focused on the individual rights and the equal treatment, as well as on the function of government, which takes into consideration the individual preferences of the citizens. The second model prescribes the participation in the self-possession as corollary of the substance of freedom, which constitutes an essential component of the citizenship. According to this model the political autonomy is end in itself, which has not been attained by solitary individuals who seek their interests, but by all together in an inter-subjective action. This presumes an aggregation of citizens familiarized with the political freedom and initiated into the acceptance of the collective outlook of the active self-definition.

Link between citizenship and rights

According to Marshall, the development of the loyalty and incorporation of the citizens in the society to which they belong absolutely keeps pace with the struggle for the conquest of rights and the following pleasure that comes of exercising the rights (Marshall, & Bottomore, 1995:.75). "Citizen is anyone who claims, contests, participates, has the pleasure through the participation and, on that score, he espouses and sticks up for what he believes that belongs to him, not only as individual but also as a part of the social wholeness." (p. 16).

In other words, Marshall refers to the citizenship that comes of the participation, which is not individual but, in reverse, public and common in all of those who are full members of a society. It is obvious that the term citizenship is unbreakably related with and straightly depends on the development of its constituent elements, which are the rights. The main reason that debates about rights and struggle for conquering them are endless is the unequal allocation of the rights during the centuries. The transition from the pre-capitalistic societies to capitalistic is very important for the development of the citizenship provided citizenship is interwoven with the development of capitalism for a big period of history, until the end of the 19th century (p. 63). This is oxymoron, seeing that capitalism is a system of inequality on the contrary the meaning of citizenship spurs on a broader measure of equality that enriches the structural elements of the social status of individuals and simultaneously increases the number of those who exploit them (p. 62).

Particularly, T. H. Marshall (1950) pointed out the following categories of rights: civil and social. He defined as civil those rights that are "necessary for the individual freedom". The civil rights are exercised in the framework of civil society; in effect we refer to "negatives" rights on condition that they restrict or check up on the exercise of the governmental power. They mainly entitle the individual to participate in the political life (right of everyone to vote, to be elected, or to labour-up to a governmental position). The anticipation of civil rights obviously presupposes the universality of voting, the political equality and the democratic government. Then, Marshall stressed citizenship presumes social rights ("positive" rights) that would ensure a minimal social prestige for the individual, recommending, in this way, the basis for the exercise of the civil rights. Marshall condensed these "positive" rights, rather vaguely, such as the right of someone to live in a civilized way according to the criteria that are valid for the society.

As long as citizenship is characteristically considered as a western device, we should not be astonished by the fact that liberal democracies have succeeded in giving a specific meaning to the term. The civil rights obviously entail the type of the constitutional and representative government that thrives in the industrialized West (Blim, 1996). However, the meaning of the social rights has caused important disagreements, because it implies ways and means of providence and redistribution of goods, which classic Liberals and New Right consider as disadvantageous to the development of the economy. The Marxists and the feminists have also criticized the given meaning to the term citizenship, provided the unequal class power and patriarchal oppression are not correspondingly included in this meaning (Kondilis, 2000).

It seems that the structures of the social inequalities – and not the right by itself, as Marshall said – are like a *Lernean Hydra* with many reproducing heads that we could not anticipate. So, new inequalities could be created within the field of amplification of the social

rights in proportion to the political choices that having been got every now and then. As is usual for the case of education, for example, the increased provision of the educational opportunities prompts to the creation of a new structure of the social inequality in connection with the inequality of the capabilities. Also, citizenship may function as a mechanism of the social stratification due to the interconnection of the education with the vocational structure (Marshall & Bottomore, 1995: 142-143).

The class distribution of incomes and wealth, the social and economic conditions, the payment of wages, the character and aim of the social services, the quality of the environment, the conditions for leisure development (Miliband, 1969), the health, the residence (which are interrelated and different aspects of the living standard) simultaneously constitute primary field of the social rights and the development of citizenship consequently. The poverty however worsens increasingly, while unprivileged citizens become responsible for their poverty, as it is implied by the moral connotations of the term "underclass" (class of lame ducks) that it is used in USA and Britain in order to include a big category of very poor citizens (Marshall & Bottomore, 1995: 153-155). The poverty entails limitation of the social and individual rights, as long as the possibility of the poor citizens to exercise the above rights is objectively trivial. In turn, their civil rights are carried along with the social rights and poor citizens are marginalized even politically due to the loss of their civil rights.

In parallel, those who consider citizenship as a criterion of effectiveness they confront a major dilemma: the need of balance between the rights and duties and consequently the allocation of the terms of reference within a community. For the three last decades this question was brought forward repeatedly in the context of the intensifying conflict between liberalism and community ideals. Communitarian theorists, as Alasdair MacIntyre (1981) and Michael Sandel (1982), rejected the idea that there would be an independent self, standing up for the "politics of the common good", which should replace the "politics of the rights". According to that position, liberalism constitutes a suicidal ideology. As it communicates rights and privileges to the individuals, actually it cultivates the individualism and alienation undermining the community bonds that contribute to the social cohesion.

The liberal democracy, though it is "baptized" as democracy in the modern world, is a limited and indirect form of democracy. Substantially it functions as an "institutional settlement for the decision-making on political issues and the individuals acquire the power of decision through their struggle for the popular vote" (Schumpeter, 1942: 269). That "institutional settlement" has been criticised by radical democrats whereas it degrades the popular participation in a ritualistic process, barren of meaning in effect: for few years someone votes politicians that he could remove only if he might replace them by others. In other words, the people of a country have never ruled over and the extending gap between

government and citizens is reflected on the amplification of the inactivity, apathy and dissolution of the community.

We would say the key-resolution occurs within the dynamics that flows from the active democratic citizenship, which can bridge the gaps and smooth the contradictions. Within a democratic regime each citizen is considered as a "governor" by dint of the democratic character of the government system. This means that the citizen ought to judge neither by virtue of his own private criteria (personal preferences, material interests), nor legal and moral criteria (such as the respect of the human rights or the honesty of the government). In that case, citizen is called to judge (despite the fact that the other criteria are not excluded) from a governor's perspective, as he would be going to decide by himself (Canivez, 1995:.120, 167). This, however, presupposes high level of the education of the citizen and active participation in the democratic processes.

Active democratic citizenship as a settling factor of conflicts

Responsibility and solidarity as part of the democratic practice

We should speculate in point of how *active citizen* could be demarcated today, in an era that is characterized as post-modern, multicultural and globalized. On the strength of the specific circumstances the citizen of the 21st century will be supposed to have adopted the principles of the social justice, social cohesion and collaboration, seeing that the society should be characterized by cultural variety, critical, creative, autonomous and systematic way of thinking. Thus, a modern citizen should be governed by cooperative spirit, possibility of flexibility, autonomous way of thinking, judgement and action (Cogan and Derricott 2001).

Through active democratic citizenship individuals learn how to learn by their own experiences. They examine, judge, turn to advantage the received information daily and acquaint themselves with the way of composing and creating according to the information they elaborated. They get into a culture of the human rights, which ensures respect for the particularity and understanding of the duties that are consequent on these rights. Active citizen realises that farther objective should be the world consolidation of the equality, freedom, justice, social cohesion, fellow feeling and solidarity in the context of his democratic participation in the society. That means each citizen also acquires a "democratic quality". Democracy is a norm of living in common in the frame of a community (Carey & Forrester 2000). Democratic communities need independent-minded citizens, willing to stand up for what they believe, able to challenge any incipient emergence of authoritarianism, and quick to act on the infringements of the rights of themselves or others (White, 1996: 26).

The responsibilities in the democratic field are related with the practice of democracy, which extends beyond the voting right. It concerns the participation of a citizen in the democratic process in any case, such as the consultation, the struggle for the bias elimination, the contestation of inequalities and the action for the development of communities. The responsibility, as democratic practice, concerns our ability to recognize the others as well as our volition and dexterities that are required in order to face co-citizens as individuals with rights. This kind of responsibility inevitably leads to the commitment that the settlement of any dispute should not be violent, provided the individuals exercise themselves on facing the social problems in a constructive way avoiding conflicts (Council of Europe, 2001). Besides, some agreement is necessary on the substantive rights and duties we must honour in dealings with each other. A constitutional consensus accomplishes this. A shared, minimal list of political rights and acceptance of democratic procedures for resolving conflict give a core of common content to the sense of justice that citizens can endorse together (Callan, 1997: 47).

It is fact that democracy based on difference and, on the other hand, solidarity (as notion grounded on the celebration of difference) is more inclusive and sustainable than democracy based on consensus. We daily confront forms of race, socioeconomic class, and gender differences that threaten to shred the fabric of democracy. Usually, we do not identify power and how it works. Given the plethora of differences that fragment us, how can a citizen develop a sense of solidarity, around which a new form of democracy can be developed? (Hursh & Wayne Ross, 2000: 124). It is obvious it could be accomplished through a democratic action and the experiences that come from this action. The type of democratic logic emerging from a heterogeneous community often empowers citizens to criticize more thoughtfully the injustice and exclusionary practices that afflict a social system. Criticism and reform of cultural pathology often come from recognition of difference – from interaction with individuals who do not suffer from the same injustices or who have dealt with them in different ways. In this point it is worth mentioning the Rorty's (2000: 279) observation: "Solidarity is rather considered as the capacity to evaluate increasingly the traditional differences (of community, race, religion, colour, ethics) as insignificant in comparison with the resemblances concerning the pain and humiliation: in other words, the capacity to accept that persons completely different from us are included in the spectrum we". Thus, active democratic citizens are exposed to more and more diverse voices and such exposures facilitate the expansion of their social and political imagination, their solidarity and vision of what could be in order to prevent conflicts concerning the exercise of human rights. In such a process, democratic citizens are also liberated from the limiting dualism of dominant expressions of liberalism and conservatism (Welch, 1991).

Active participation: civic spirit and problem - solving

       Active democratic citizenship, as it presupposes political participation and active agency of each citizen within the community he lives, prevents the conflicts on condition that the loyalty to common good of the community prevails. We should point out that each theory of democracy describes the active political participation of a citizen in a different way [2]: "Theory of the participative democracy" (Pateman 1970, Bachrach, 1970, Botwieniek 1992), "expansive democracy" (Warren, 1992), "unitary democracy" (Hirst, 1994), "dialogic democracy" (Giddens, 1997) or "inter-contemplative democracy" (Habermas, 1992) are titles that have often been used (Schmidt, 2000). Particular, however, interest from all the theories about active participation of the citizens presents Macpherson's theoretical angle respecting the participative democracy, which has had educational character according to him, whereas the active democratic citizens have got into such political culture, which could prevent conflicts and build a harmonious coexistence.

       Macpherson (1973) based his theoretical model about the participative democracy on the classic theories of democracy, as Rousseau's theory and partly Mill's. In other words, he brought back the meaning of specific values and the democracy as modus vivendi. In the core of the classic theories for the democracy the notion of self-development occurs. Both Mill and Rousseau considered that, on one hand, a bidirectional relation could exist between the power structures of institutions and the psychological attitudes of individuals (Pateman, 1970) and, on the other, the participation in the political processes could have educational character.

       The perception for the political participation is removed by the neo-liberal theories of democracy in a dual way: On one hand, the participation did not have the meaning of the periodical election of representatives emanated from the predominating elite, as the defenders of the competitive democracy wished for (Joseph Schumpeter). On the other hand, participation did not mean a mechanism of protection from the power arbitrariness. On the contrary, it should mean the possibility of configuration of such political culture for the citizens, which could function taking into consideration not the individual interest, but the common good. In this way, the democracy creates the autonomous citizens politically, in a community of free and equal individuals (Habermas, 1996). In other words, the active participation of the citizen is expressed within a value frame of moral and political autonomy. According to Jürgen Habermas (2003: 14), the individuals develop their unabridged potential no only as beings that are self-defined economically but also as citizens that are self-legislated politically. Substantially, the civic spirit is developed between the citizens: namely, the cast

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2. The below terms/titles of Democracy (that are being mentioned) are included in the book of Manfred G. Schmidt (2000) *Theories of Democracy* (Trans. E. Dekavalla) Athens: Savallas.

of mind of the person who is democratically reliable, social and ecological sensitive and culturally tolerant of the otherness (Habermas, 2007:257). Thus, the emphasis on the legal rights turns off and it is now orientated to the meaning of the social process in which individuals and social groups are actively involved in order to demand and amplify their rights via the active participation (Isin, 2000: 5).

According to John Burton (1979: 55-92) – whose theoretical viewpoints coincided with the above critical positions of Habermas, despite the fact that Burton adopted the liberal/internationalistic philosophical tradition of Kant on International Relations (Hoffman, 1987: 236) – the higher needs and values of the persons and populations do not call material (e.g. the profit, the property, the means of production), but not material, as the participation, the development, the feeling of belonging in common, the justice, the cultural identity, the sense of dignity, the freedom. Due to these higher needs and values the persons and populations are willing to sacrifice. The common human nature and needs will finally dominate over the cultural differences.

Consequently, the probable conflict between two opponents that prevents the effectuation of the "not material needs and values" should be faced as a problem that concerns the two parts. The two parts redefine the conflict as common problem, which should be solved in common on the strength of the deeper needs of the two parts (*problem – solving*). In other words, the two parts lead up to solution through the observation of the difference in depth (*de profundis*) as "common problem" (Banks, 1984/ Fisher, et al., 1994). In that case, active participation in democratic procedures strengthens the civic spirit and citizen's aptitude for negotiation that result in the capability of him to proceed (step by step) to the problem solving more effectively. Particularly, the active citizen attains the authentic communication with the conflicting part, and contributes to the creation of a confidence frame, as he turns out crucial psychological barriers (fears, mistrust, misapprehension, erroneous perceptions, and binary stereotypes concerning the opponent). Then, he categorizes the objectives and the values hierarchically: first, he seeks the actual values that are not material or quantitative and also cause the conflict and, second, he rationally analyzes the detriment of the conflict in combination with the values that constitute the quality objective. Through the re-consideration of the conflict, the impending strife is not presented as "zero sum" (Azar & Burton, 1986 / Burton, & Dukes, 1990).

Participation in collective action: beyond conflict and convention
On the other hand, the state could function as instructor of the citizens, so that conflicts would be avoided. For example, Macpherson and pluralists consider that the state

cannot evade the maintenance and reproduction of the inequalities of the daily life, deforming the decisions in this way and being in favour of specific interests. Accordingly, the base of its legalization is disputed (Held, 1991). Particularly, the government owned power cannot be the first that could change the political culture and active participation of the citizen. On no account the state would imperil the class interests that constitute the prime mover of its entity, as it would create intensities and competitions.

How could the participative democracy and active democratic citizenship function, as long as nobody could effectively edge in the frames of the existing political culture? (Psimitis, 2006). I consider that the political expression through social movements and groups of new type is unbreakably related with the active democratic citizenship. In this way, a convergence could be built within the diversity as well as contingent conflicts would be avoided via the promotion of positive alternative proposals toward the neo-liberal globalization (Munck, 2007). The social movements should be faced as multiform and complicated "realities", within which citizens of different social features, ideology and practices join forces with each other (Seferiadis, 2006: 7-8).

Beyond the political parties, trade unions and groups of interests, the active citizen can participate in the social movements that constitute a type of not conventional political action. This political action does not correspond to the form-party, as well as it does not simulate to the forms of organization that drive at the objective of specific advantages of a specific social group (McAdam et al., 1988).

Through the social movements the discourse of various social groups is uttered on those human rights that remained in the margin or under obscurity for many decades and caused considerable adversenesses and conflicts. Gender issues, racial discriminations, war and peace, environmental conditions, the future of undeveloped countries, rights of immigrants, and rights of homosexuals have come to light and stimulated the public opinion (McAdam, & Snow, 1997).

Indeed, this does not mean that, today, the social movements (with partial focus and reforming character) play the principal role exclusively. We can however claim that we have entered in a period that is distinguished for the rapid development and amplification of civil society toward the state, a period that is also characterized by the increase of endangerment and intensity due to the processes of individualization. On the grounds of this contingency we can interpret the plethora of the social movements in the frames of the given economic situation (Inglehart, 2003).

On account of the fact that the social movements do not dispose institutional resources and constant accesses to the political system, they eventually modulate and come into sight their assertions out of the official channels (McAdam/Snow 1997: 327). Thus, the movements manifestations tend to become *actions of protest*, which aim at the hampering of

the regular function of the political system: "Protest is mobilization… through not conventional forms of action aiming at the exercise of pressure upon the authority" (Della Porta & Diani, 1999: 167). The demonstration, the refusal of payment of taxes and rents, the taking of public spaces, and the blocking of highways are types of action that intercept the routine of governing. Neither in the past nor today the above action nuances were entirely considered as legalized, however they have ceased to be characterized as infringing since the decades of 1960-70. All the same, the issue is that the violent conflict is likely to be skated over so that, in this way, there is a great danger for all of us to be led to a relative conventionality, which consists of a critical intermediate zone: *disruption* or *hindrance* (Tarrow, 1998).

The violence, despite the fact that it constitutes the easier type of the collective action (additionally, its organizational cost is quite low), is considered ineffectual, dangerous and, consequently, unpleasant within the modern societies. The reason is simple: though the *threat of violence use* is precious "weapon" at claimants' disposal, the real violence produces conditions of binary juxtaposition via the repressive mechanisms. On that account many social movements prefer the *hindrance* – a type of action that could be demarcated as "threat of violence use". The hindrance is the more powerful weapon of the social movements whereas it engenders the uncertainty and the builds up the initiative to those who are objectively powerless toward the more powerful opponents (Tarrow 1998:.98). The hindrance, as a type of collective action (via the involvement of the citizen in this type of political action), engenders, if it is creative, effects that all the social movements seek: hindrance of the function of the political system, stimulation of the interest of the public opinion, disclosure of "the shortages of the daily routine" beyond conflicts. The experience seems to confirm the effectiveness of the *fighting hindrance*, action that is neither violent nor conventional. William Gamson (1990), as he had studied no less than 53 cases of movements, alleged that the fighting groups stand a good chance of managing to their objectives (also: Taylor & Van Dyke, 2004). Recent outcomes, as the victory on the "Contract of First Employment" in France, lend credit to the above pointing out.

Finally, the aftermath on the participant in collective actions is indeed crucial for the study of the consequences of the movements. The movements do not only change the society but also the participants in them. Although studies that were presented concerning this sector lead to conflicting conclusions, the fact that those who were involved in collective action are citizens with intense conscience and strong intention of participation remains (Tarrow, 1998: 167-168).

William Gamson (1990), attempting to find out the consequences of the movements, studied the phenomenon on the strength of its two constituent dimensions: a) the

acknowledgement that the claimants manage to and b) the effectuation of their demands. On this base he expounded a conceptual schema concerning the consequences: from the unabridged acceptance to the clear rejection. However, the political institutions constitute a negligible part of the contingent influences. Additionally, we can include in the consequences of the movements the following: the emergence of the collective identities and demanding networks (Della Porta & Diani, 1999), the changes within the cultural field (Earl, 2004), the new ontological narratives (McAdam, 1999), the changes within the political correlations.

We could say, between the lines, that the more important consequences of the participation in collective action, according to the bibliography, are the following: a) the possibilities of hindrance that led to the conquest of rights via the exercise of pressure upon the elite v) the synapse of successful alliances with institutions that have access to the political system (in that case, however, we should elucidate that it is not about opportunism, but political activation) and c) the mobilization of the organizational, demanding and symbolic ways and means.

Conclusion

Unfortunately, nowadays, we realize in many cases that the democratic participation has been transformed into a non-political "social dialogue" under the eloquent title: "deliberation", as the elite of technocrats undertook the primacy of ruling of the political directions in a society. Certainly, the technocrats have never come under the social control of the citizens. However, any hindrance of the essential participation of the citizens in the political choices engenders despotism within which the intensities, conflicts and infringements of rights predominate, despite the fact that the social consent and peace seem to be ensured – in a peremptory way, of course.

Thus, it is necessary a different model of democratic organization of the collective life, such as the public accounting for and the social and democratic control and planning, which should be ensured by the entire restructuring of the democratic institutions. Only in this way the active participation of the citizens could be encouraged. Only in this way we could produce a more meritocratic and fair political life redefining, in parallel, citizenship in the context of the social justice and collective welfare.

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