

THE DOMINATION AND THE COERCIVE FUNCTION OF THE POLITICAL POWER

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ABSTRACT: *THE ARTICLE IS AN ORIGINAL INTERPRETATION OF THE POWER RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DOMINATION AND SUBMISSION. IN AN UNDEMOCRATIC POWER SYSTEM, BASED ON UNEQUAL SOCIAL RELATIONS, THE POLITICAL LEADERSHIP OF THE STATE IS TRANSFORMED INTO DOMINATION. IT IS THE CASE OF THE TOTALITARIAN REGIMES IN WHICH THE TOTAL DOMINATION OF THE WHOLE SOCIETY IS ESTABLISHED. THE POLITICAL DOMINATION, AS RECOGNITION ELEMENT, RESULTS FROM THE HIGHLIGHTING OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LEGITIMACY AND AUTHORITY IN THE EXERCISE OF STATE POWER. THE EXACERBATED DOMINATION PUSHES THE SOCIAL SYSTEM TO DICTATORSHIP. THE DOMINATION LEADS TO SERVITUDE WHICH MANIFESTS ITSELF DIFFERENTLY DEPENDING ON THE INTENSITY AND THE ORIENTATION OF THE DOMINATING VECTOR. THE AUTHOR INSISTS ON THE IDEA THAT THE USE OF THE COERCIVE MEANS SHOULD NOT BE GENERALIZED AND PRONOUNCES HIMSELF FOR THE REALIZATION OF VOLUNTARY SERVITUDE BY MEANS OF PERSUASION. THUS, THE COERCIVE FUNCTION OF THE POLITICAL POWER MUST NOT BE STIMULATED BUT DIMINISHED UP TO THE MINIMUM NECESSARY AND ONLY IN CASES WHERE IT IS JUSTIFIED BY THE LAW.*

KEY WORDS: *STATE, POWER, DOMINATION, COERCION, LEGITIMACY, AUTHORITY, SERVITUDE.*

1. THE DOMINATION IN THE POWER EQUATION LEGITIMACY - AUTHORITY

Research studies in the fields of political science and political sociology emphasize that *sovereignty* is one of the essential features of political power. The political power is, thus, "the supreme court in society and there is no a higher authority which might contest its decisions." [1] Thus, "the political power exercised by political parties governs the society through decisions, without being obliged to obey any of the other powers belonging to the society." [2] Under the constitutional aspect, this power is subject to control civic and democratic rules but, in sovereign action, the political power in state often gets rid of the vigilance of real holder of power, which is the people. To become legitimate and gain the recognition of the authority, the political power must be situated up to the social expectations. Otherwise, over time, it will manifest a crisis of authority, which can be transformed into the power crisis, decisive for the any political regime fall.

The power is exercised within the social of the relationship of power *domination - submission*. In the absence of such relationship, through the failure to exercise it, the power doesn't exist. Suggestive, in this respect, *Jean-William Lapierre* show in his "*Essay on the foundation of political power*" that, among those exercising power and the other members of the group, it is established a specific relationship, which consists of the communication and enforcement of decisions. The power means and the capacity to make yourself listened. "To communicate a decision for execution is to lead. To answer this communication, performing the actions required by the judgment, means to obey." [3]

In a power system in crisis, undemocratic, based on unequal social relations, the political leadership of the state is transformed into *domination*. That the latter is usually done by means of violent force (coercion, physical and psychological violence, freedom of conscience vacuuming etc.) If any state requires a report of domination, in the case of totalitarian state we are dealing the attempt and even the success to establish the total domination on the whole society. Some authors consider that this trend of state to intervene in more and more areas of social life, characterizes all contemporary states and is determined by the increasing complexity of social life, by the growing demands that citizens have towards the *minimal state*. The political domination, appreciates *Max Weber*, is a combination of two elements: on the one hand, *the legitimacy*, which ensures the stability, on the other hand, *the authority* which confers a distinctive form. Every company, regardless of regime, imposes its own leadership "formula" (domination) starting from norms, values and own social ideals. Under extreme conditions, the exacerbated domination pushes the social system to dictatorship. The dictatorial regime occurs in abnormal circumstances or following a state coup, a revolution, or by legal consecration, in a serious crisis situation. It is a variety of political regimes, resulting from confusion of powers. The political regime is more than authoritative, instituted and maintained by coercion. Such a system has as the characteristic the excessive hypertrophy, this time, of the executives to the detriment of the legislative power. The power is acutely personalized, the head of state becoming and the head of executive, slipping towards the establishment of a *totalitarian regime*. In such a political regime, the citizenship rights and freedoms are limited to liquidation. *Montesquieu* appreciated that such a regime is "made for animals of burden, not for men."

"The totalitarian and authoritarian regimes represent specific modalities for regulating of power relations between state and citizen, between state and society. The socio-political and historical analyzes lead to two aspects related to the undemocratic regimes:

- The totalitarian regimes are fragile and precarious regimes, even though, apparently, represent stable constructions, strong and oppressive;
- It is possible that the same political system "to pass – *Pasquino* presents - through a frequent succession of authoritarian regimes, even with some democratic interludes" [4]

It is noteworthy the aspect that the majority of political analysts understand the political regime that the regime of exercising political power. The politics was identified with the concept of *power*, raised to the rank of system (*David Easton*) or confused with the *domination* (to some extent "*the legitimate domination*", about which *Max Weber* speaks: "The power represents the capacity of individuals or groups to impose their own interests and concerns, even when the others oppose it."

Concerns relating to the classification domain existed starting with the philosophy of *Plato* and *Aristotle*. These took into account two criteria: the *number of government* and the *good criterion* but, all the classifications were normative and descriptive. The ancient philosophy, however, distinguished between a republic and a tyranny, even if the submission in the Athenian polis was a common fact that belonged more of the Greek community traditions. The understanding of the psychological and social connections that lead to *servitude*, respectively the submission or subordination to those in power, has had until today a special importance in the knowledge of nature of political power. To listen blindly, to execute unconditionally means in this case, of the totalitarian regimes, to become the object of the relationship of oppression, inequality and domination. The social relations in which the dominate takes part are not only force relations initiated by ruler but, more often, to the great mass of social individuals is present the *voluntary servitude*.

Appeared with better four centuries ago, *The Treaty on Voluntary Servitude* by *Etienne de la Boetie* remains the main sociological landmark and of crowd psychology in what it represents the voluntary slavery, from the ancient times to modern times, in its various forms of manifestation.

The people, says *La Boetie*, often lose their freedom through deception but by this they are not seduced by the other, how deceived by themselves. Alone, the freedom is that on which people do not want it at all, for no other reason, it seems, than if they wanted it they would have it, as if they refused to make this beautiful acquisition only because it is very at hand. "This is especially occurred when the tyrant, who receives from the people the kingdom, forgets about people and got drunk by grandeur he decides to stay there for life and to transmit to his children the power that the people has entrusted to him. The way of governance is almost always the same: the elected ones treat their subjects as some bulls of yoke; the winners make their prey from them, even if there are different ways by which they come to power. There are three kinds of tyrants: some have their kingdom through the will of the people, others by force of arms, others through the family succession." [5]

Although the crowds are aware of their state of slavery, they are influenced, suggestible, as well captures *Gustave Le Bon* in his work "*The Psychology of The Masses*". How may seem neutral, a mass of people is, most often, in a state of expectation proper to suggestion. The masses are a flock which could not miss the master, says *Le Bon*. In his work "*The French Revolution and The Psychology of Revolutions*", the same author makes a strong critique of revolutionary act of 1789 from the perspective of gain obtained to the price of so many ruins and which could later be achieved effortlessly, by simply course of civilization. This fact signals it earlier *Alexis de Tocqueville* which presents the revolution as doing no more than just remove what was on the verge of fall. This is also the case of Romanian Revolution of 1989, which was done after exactly two hundred years, having some undeniable similarities. Our revolution was accomplished, in extremis, just when a change seemed inevitable through a "natural" solution. *Le Bon* makes the psychological portrait of revolutionary crowds, showing that the man who is part of a crowd differs greatly from the same isolated man. "His conscious individuality disappears into unconscious personality of the crowd. The crowd can be made to accept anything. Nothing is impossible in its eyes. The mental contagion may comprise instantaneously a whole people. In this way the Reform in France has spread." [6]

"As soon as there are together, the crowds are instinctively placed under the authority of a leader. The thirst for obedience makes them to obey to the one who declares their master." [7]

How well *Max Weber* captures, in the work "*Economy and Society*", the domination is actually directly related to the chance of finding available and influential persons, ready to unconditionally obey to an order, even if this provision violates the elementary norms of constitutional law or citizenship rights and freedoms.

"Any veritable relation of domination behaves an inside or outside interest, to which you must be obeyed." [8]

Julien Freund reveals that the motivation of obedience is extremely variable, given its historical character, dependence on specificity of the different historical epochs and the influences coming from the social plans, psychological, moral, etc.. Thus, "the submission may result from different causes which provides a multiple basis of power such as the coercion, the fear, the manipulation, the care for existence, protection, utility, the respect for tradition, legality, the culture, the ideology, the habit of obedience to power, belief in its sovereignty, the identification with the will of charismatic person, the confidence of the subjects that the power serves the common good and others." [9]

The obedience, on which it involves the submission, not to be necessarily understood as effect of the concrete force, as total servitude but, especially, as respecting of a necessary discipline for without which it would be inexistent the community cohesion. The power cumulates all three secure properties: the force, the legitimacy that results from its sovereign character and the belief in the common good achieved by power, which justifies the submission. It is revealed that, in the reactionary and decadent, undemocratic regimes, the submission by the subject of the object of political power, achieved through non-violent methods, is replaced by the subordination obtained exclusively by violent means. This function has as role the constraint of individuals by various means and methods, to enable them to comply with and act according to certain rules and laws, to which do not manifest receptiveness, or, where appropriate, the repression of opposition of those who oppose the system.

Coming closer to our days, *Fredrich Hayek*, in his book "*The Road to Serfdom*", emphasizes on the phenomenon of servitude, that does not stop at the individual or masses but it may comprise, even in modern times, governments and states. The well-known dissident has shown that the socialism, in all its forms, is an ideology contrary to the freedom but he warned, at the same time, that it is developed a new form of despotism adopted on behalf of some illusory freedom. This quotes, in his turn, from *Hilaire Belloc*, which in a socialism-liberalism dispute, in his paper "*The Servile State*", claims that "the effect of socialist doctrine on the capitalist society is that of produce a third thing, different from both creators, namely the *servile state*." [10]

The hegemonic tendency, on the one hand, and the manifestation of some parallel cosmopolitan orientations, on the other hand, lead to the modern servitude of the masses through the "voluntarily" enslavement of sovereign states who lose their independence and sovereignty, as the main attributes of their existence, into a heterogeneous and dominant globalist system. "I think that the recent political innovation, says *Ortega y Gasset*, means nothing more than the political domination of the masses." [11]

The author of the book "*The Revolt of the Masses*" signals much earlier, with a special sense of the premonition, that European nations will enter a stage of great difficulty

and the national state will perish. That which remains of state will be responsible only for the ensuring of the stability of the area, by excessive growth of the forces of maintaining of the *status quo*, in order to annihilate any attempt to preserve "the freedom of individual and the community" in order "to have so completely drain the future". After to the states and nations, hegemonic subjected, were given the opportunity to choose between justice without freedom (half of the socialist and communist world) and freedom without justice (the other half of liberal and democratic world), there is no third variant or not wanting it to exist, the majority have opted for freedom without recognizing that "to choose freedom means to yearn the whole life after chains." [12]

The state, as long as it remains from it, becomes an intermediary between the society which supervises and those who endorse the existence and dictates the political action. The result of this tendency will be total. "Pseudo-contemporary state becomes the most visible and most harmful product of civilization, a formidable machine that works fantastic, with an amazing efficiency, not for those dominated but the dominant background." [13]

Accordingly, the trumpeted epoch of masses bearing of revolutions and facade support of state coups approaches to the sunset. The revolt of the masses disappears because the object of action disappears, that is the state. Every time the germ of the revolt occurs and the crowd rises to change the masters, a new group of servitude, of the same orientation, is ready to take its place. Never the crowds face the true masters who remain enveloped in anonymity. The modern societies and regimes alternate between "the supremacy" of the masses or the individual, between socialism and liberalism, even though it currently is recognized a victory for democracy on many fronts. The energy of masses or social groups is channeled, downstream or upstream, towards liberalism or socialism. *Serge Moscovici*, the reputed unconventional psycho-sociologist, born in Romania, the recognized founder of the social psychology in Europe, draws attention to the evolution of new democracies which "smooth the path of a tyrant, ask a Caesar "liberator" and prepare the oppression as a freedom. The paradox would be: the freedom appeals to tyranny. The reason is the punishment of politics and the politics is the grave of reason." [14]

2. THE COERCIVE FUNCTION OF POLITICAL POWER

Max Weber is the first theorist who noticed the relational aspect of power. The power for him means "any chance of making to triumph within the social relation its own will, even against the resistances." [15]

The exercise of political power, by coercive means, is inextricably linked to its legitimacy, because only the legitimate political power can create authorities to impose justified sanctions for those who deviate from the law and the accepted social rules. The exercise of power occurs, most often, with the limitation of individual freedom. In this context, the issue of consent of those which power is exercised over, becomes of most importance. The threshold between coercion and consent is not always clearly defined. The social individual may consent to behave in a certain way in response to a suggestion, influence coming from that or those who hold power, for fear, interest, ignorance or accurate unawareness of real situation or, most often, as a result of the propaganda of those who hold the power. The social and psychological context of consent must be established and known to determine from sociological point of view the kind of power relationship and the effective means used. A power relationship can be presented as a commandment to the

extent that, upon whom it is exercised, it is subject to the order of the strongest, or risk to be sanctioned and in more serious cases, sentenced. The junction in the relationship between the dominant and dominated allows to the subordinated two attitudes: to consent to the act of the will of the strongest, adopting a servile and voluntarily behavior, most often in the social relations of power prescribed on the basis of some obligatory rules, or to expose to punitive action or of exclusion from the power. The latter may pursue its depriving, of the object of power, authoritatively from an advantage, the production of a material injury or deprivation of liberty. The disobedience result in damage to personal and social condition of the subordinate. In the case of a relationship of power which is exercised by a non-coercive manner and which is known as the name of influence, this relationship excludes the constraint and is based on seduction and persuasion. Such a political attitude of power is uncertain and unstable and, unfortunately, such a relationship, which implies the conviction, is applied late, the power appealing unpredictable and on the first moment to the means of coercion. This practice is because the political and state power are constantly challenged and the power finds at hand this form of imposing of political will in order to protect its authority by the price of losing of legitimacy.

Max Weber specifies in the work "*Economy and Society*", quite rightly, that only the territory is not enough to identify a political group. There is need for application of its regulations to be "continuously guaranteed" of the threat of a "physical restraint coming from the (its) administrative management" or even using it. "Not applicable to see in the physical restraint the only instrument of the politics or even its normal means, but, rather, to reveal the double function on which this one performs in relation to the power: that of last recourse and of the specific guarantee of the installed power." [16]

In the same context, *François Chazelle* believes that it is important to recognize that "the political power has at its disposal a whole series of sanctions, punitive means that it uses when needed. This, the more so, with as a political unit, generally, should face to other units of the same nature which may threaten the security, just as it can threaten theirs. The political power can cause the imposition, sanctioning or, where appropriate, the restriction through laws, rules, norms, of some values that dominate, at a time, the political life." [17] It is significant that the political power can use the various means of persuasion (the convincing force) and of coercion over the social factors in order to take and ensure the fulfillment of fundamental decisions in society. This characteristic distinguishes the political power from the other types of power. Although the power relationships in society are based, not rarely, on the capacity of a social actor to coerce another, the coercion should not be generalized. "At the social level, the power can manifest in the form of the sanction and by other means than the coercion, sometimes more efficient than this: the marginalization, the mockery, the exclusion from community, the non-conformism, the refusal of enshrined «truths», the contradiction, the affirmation of superiority etc.." [18]

A legitimate power is recognized by its level of support, but also by the acknowledged right to appeal to the constraint of those who do not obey. Considering the ways of interaction between the coercion and legitimacy, in the power relations, it must constitute a central theme of the research in the political sciences and sociology, in the field of human relations. The political power is not reduced, but, at the coercion, however this may be useful in many circumstances for power, and, even less so, on the physical coercion, which is an extreme form of action.

The absolutization of the constraint method, in the form of the coercive means (defined and "hard power") induces an existential fear, psychological and emotional in equal measure, over the governors and the governed. This seems to be the last time of a moral crisis of system in which the power in state may lose the supremacy and those subjected to the power should return, for a while, at the feeling of being free again. "You hold the power over the people - Alexander Solzhenitsyn wrote - just as long as you have not taken everything away from them. But, when you have robbed a man of everything he has, he is no longer in your power, he is free again."

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