PHILOSOPHICAL PRACTICE APPLIED TO DEMOCRATIZATION PROCESS

(Case study on Republic of Moldova)

Angela SPINEI

Catedra Filosofie şi Antropologie

Articolul vine să exploreze axele mentale autohtone, în scopul cercetării funcționalității modelului democratic occidental. Observațiile directe asupra realității sociale din Republica Moldova demonstrează o rezistență mentală la adoptarea valorilor democratice. Astfel lucrarea se structurează în jurul a şase concepte esenţiale: identitate – suveranitate – structură socială – democraţie – dialog socratic – practici transformative.

În opinia autoarei, o societate democratică autentică poate fi formată numai în baza unei comunități de Ego-uri suverane. La rândul ei, suveranitatea va fi definită ca structură internă a individului, în care „Dreptul se referă la viaţa în sine şi o include". Un Ego suveran va avea capacitatea de a fi flexibil şi de a recunoaşte Alteritatea. Analizând societatea moldovenească, ajungem la concluzia că aceasta nu poate fi numită democratică la moment. Filosofia va interveni în construcția Ego-ului suveran, prin intermediul dialogului socratic modern, sau al consilierii filosofice, şi utilizând strategii şi tehnici de flexibilizare a personalităţii, numite sintetic tehnici de hermeneutică situaţională.

The post Soviet countries, nowadays, confront a big social issue- what is the real democracy? How to establish it in a post Soviet country? Concomitantly, the concept of democracy is truly linked to that of suzerainty and of course to Freedom issue. At the same time, one cannot conceptualize democracy and suzerainty outside the human individuals.

Contemporary philosophers J. Rawls (1955), J.Battaille, (1976)) are emphasizing that there are two kinds of suzerainty as well as two kinds of freedom: that of an individual and that of a society. According to the next level of reflection, a society is functioning like a system, an organism T.Hobbes (1651), C.Mosca (1923), V.Paretto (1935), J.Rawls (1955,1971), M.Bakounin (1976), J.Lucacs (1984); there is a permanent relation between a particular person and the society he lives in. Furthermore, by a word game, the Suzerainty and the Ego would become the Suzerainty of the Ego, in our work. A real democratic society would be formed on the basis of a community that was made by suzerain Egos.

What is then democracy then in a modern term**?** *Why democracy links with the concept of freedom, responsibility and the ability to make decisions?*

The most important value of contemporary policy is life itself. As a result, the idea of democracy has been transformed too [1] - modern democracy is a claim and liberation of Zoë, the transformation of sacred life in concrete bios. Putting together the freedom and happiness of an individual is the aim of modern democracy. For building a democratic society the individuals have to be suzerain.

According to Schmitt, it is suzerain '*the individual who decides in case of exceptions'*. It does not express the power of a man over the other. On the contrary, it is the internal power to decide over the problems and make social decision. The act of suzerainty comprises the sublimation of one's own power, if necessary. Suzerainty is not a completely political or juridical concept, it is the inner structure of a human being in which the Right refers to life itself and it includes it.

The concept of Suzerainty could be inquired using the theory *of ambiguity of the Sacral*. According to R. Otto the Sacral comprises two different attitudes: the horror and the fascination. This inner attitude penetrates the public sphere and in this process the concept of *Homo Sacer* plays a very important role. That is the idea that Foucault is promoting in "La volonté de savoir".

'Longtemps, un des privilèges caractéristiques du pouvoir souverain avait été le droit de vie et de mort' [2].

According to Agamben the fundamental act of a suzerain power is to produce the bios of the Zoë (sacred life, life itself). The author links the idea of Sacral and that of Politics. He uses the term of Ban (one cannot kill a murderer because he becomes a murderer) in order to demonstrate that there is no more One Homo Sacer, that may be all of us are Homo Sacer. What is then the 'path' to follow in the modern world in order to build a democratic society?

"One could build the power relationships by having the courage of truth" [3], emphasizes Foucault. The idea of biopolitics is used and applied by Hanna Ărendt in "Projet de recherché sur le champs de concentration" on totalitarian states.

The ultimate goal of a totalitarian state is the total domination of man. For that reason, every aspect of life is politicized.

It has to be mentioned although, that every aspect of life is politicized in democracy too. The biggest difference between the two of them is that in democracy the private sphere is supreme and the public one is sub summated, when in totalitarian states the private matter becomes a question of public decision. It is happening because the biologic life becomes a political fact. Every private experience is a subject of public judgment or decision. For example, the very intimate problem of being pregnant without being married was a subject of Komsomol Committee (Youth Communist Organization in the URSS) of the organization, that was able to make the decision of marrying the two individuals, even the father does not agree. That way, an individual looses the capacity of making own decisions in private life and to use practical reasoning in order to act as a potential social agent.

What is then the relationship between individuals and community, and why individuals must be suzerain in order to build a strong democratic society?

The modern concept of Ego could be seen from the perspective of social individualization. Thus, the relationship of a knowing subject with his self is the guaranty of moral responsibility of a social agent.

Bourdieu [4] claims:

"The mental structures which construct the world of objects are constructed in the practice of a world of objects constructed according to the same structures. The mind is a metaphor of the world of objects which is itself but an endless circle of mutually reflecting metaphors."

Thus, extra personal culture, which is building the network of democratic values, is a product of an intra-personal culture. Social suzerainty is a result of Ego Suzerainty.

Jahoda [5] claims that in order to understand the origins and the nature of social phenomenon, one should analyze their internal determinants, by reducing the complex data to elementary structures meaning mental structures.

Why talking about mental structures of a culture when referring to social phenomena, considered to be an objective one?

The main reason is that all of objective ideas are founded and generated by our internal world. Thus, because of their structural characteristics, social phenomena could be analyzed at two levels: empirical and dialectical. I am using both of them in my presentation. The dialectical analysis is being used in order to define Ego and Suzerainty, as well as biases of "situational hermeneutics" concept. For determining the type of social structure of Republic of Moldova and the type of mentality the empirical analysis would be applied.

What is then a Suzerain Ego?

Firstly, when referring to Ego one cannot escape the concept of identity. There are of course many ways to define identity, from scientific to philosophical point of view.

For me, identity is always a social construct. In order to be suzerain, an Ego has to fulfill two conditions:

1. to be flexible
2. to be built on a disposition to constitute and recognize the Otherness.

In order to show the lack of Suzerainty of Ego in Moldova, there is a need to inquire the social structure of the Moldovan society.

One could compare the social structure and its functions with anatomy and physiology of a biological organism, even if there is a possibility for them to be studied separately as entities.

Let us revise the principles on which social structure is based and try to fill in Moldovan society. Thus, social structure is defined by sexual, aging, localization and kinship differences.

Trying to categorize the Moldovan society, I have come to several conclusions:

1. The clan-lineage society that is respecting gender roles according to biological and sexual data and marks as very important the area of residence could not be assigned as a democratic society.

2. The modern morality (which comprises democratic values) has a very special relationship with religion. In that respect, Moldova's citizens as well as the others from ex-soviet Union, have a special morality, which is based on de-sacralized rules. One of the principles of soviet propaganda is: *is easier and more efficient to manipulate an undeveloped moral system*. Thus, the system of laws was kept at primitive level, so people would have the same primitive value system. At the same time, community members are more likely to respond to continuous stimulus or to those that are connected to traditional national values and forms of orga-

nization. This way, one of the propaganda methods was keeping the line of an undeveloped moral system, which was "indulged" with false nationalist ideals, for example the transformation of the Romanian poets and heroes in the Moldovan ones, etc.

Tabel

The principles	Primitive society	Republic of Moldova	Democratic society
Sexual differences 1. agreement on clothing 2. the labor division 3. Patterns of behavior 4. Rules of habits	Strong respect of 1. clothing 2. labor division 3. traditions 4. patterns of behavior	Mixed [6] – depending upon the localization of the individual [7].	Clothing, labor division, and behavior, there are not based on sexual differences.
Aging	Social structure is gradated according to the age (you cannot become a chief if you are not old) The ritual of initiation is important in old societies – you cannot be a man if you are not initiated (cratophany)	1. Mixed – the Honorific Functions are held by old people, young people could be managers, they are working for both of them, but their position is not recognized as being high in society. 2. The ritual of initiation is present: transformed in bath- sauna ritual (mix of cratophany and hierophany)	There is no interdependence between age and the level of social structure. - Merit based society. The initiation is mythical rather that ritual – hierophanic
Residence	The tribe is the most important, there is a local patriotism	The same, - The area the individual is coming from is the most important in making connections.	The area of residence is not a criterion of social efficiency
Kinship	Different forms of marriage are experienced The kinship is extremely important because it offers basis for economic cooperation and politic unity	1. Economic and politic relationships are constructed on the kinship basis, but they could be purely symbolical in contemporary society. For example, Godfathers are considered brothers of the parents of the child – constructing on those bases a clan-lineage society [8]. 2. The lineage is pattrilateral. Father has a symbolical power, fact that is very efficient to be used in political reasons.	Kinship relationships are not important, they are not determinant in economic or politic al relationships development

Thus, I cannot categorize Moldovan society as a contemporary one, in anthropological sense of the term. Undeveloped value system leads to the absence of mechanism of decision-making. The individuals do not recognize themselves as independent entities of a society that could form a community.

Let me revise now the dispute of featuring traditional and modern societies. Levi-Bruhl claims that traditional thinking is influenced by mystical participation, fact that leads to a mystical categorization of reality, rather than causal. In Moldova's case we could emphasize the communist ideals according to which, The Communist party is invested with the power of decision over the population and the Father figure is present at all levels of private life[9]. One of the most important features of matrix of social representation based on mystical participation is a system of thinking that avoids contradictions.

I would refer in this respect to R. Jacobson and then to Gr. Bateson, which are basing world view categorization on two linguistic constructs: metaphor and metonymy. In traditional societies there is a mix of metaphor and metonymy; individuals do not know how to separate the meanings of metaphor from that of metonymy. There is a commutation of signs and symbols that leads to possibility of manipulation of the individual. Bateson names it schismogenetic view on reality. Thus, for realization of manipulation a metaphoric non-sense is presented as metonymic reality. There are series of understanding mistakes in this case:

1. a symbol is interpreted as a sign(in the magic act, Lenin's 'shapca' that symbolizes the person becomes the person itself [10])

2. the sign is treated as an index

3. the sign is interpreted as a signal which is able to provide immediate consequences.

One of the conclusions to be drawn is the following: traditional societies are oral, symbolic cultures, which are based on metaphoric view on reality. I would call this type of rationality as being a *Significant* one; modern societies are those of the sign, based on metonymy. Thus, the type of rationality is the *Operational* one.

Let us see now what exactly the term of rationality means. Habermas [11] claims that rationality is linked to cognition. Its specific consists of the fact that it has a propositional structure that is applied to action. Therefore, rationality concerns not just an application, but a tendency of realization of a goal. There could be two types of action in this case:

1. Communicative action is based on *know-how to do* something; it refers to immediate present, to finding the meaning of an action and it does not clearly make the difference between Real and Unreal

2. Teleological action is based on *know-what to do* and is measured by efficiency or non-efficiency of an action. The modern world is to be understood through the concept of cognitive-instrumental rationality.

Mentalities are determining the ontological structure of a society. Nevertheless, it has to be mentioned that the two types of rationality are not bi-polar; they could coexist in one personality. According to Piaget, the mind of a traditional man could be compared to 7-8 years old modern child. Thus, the stages of rationality are internal; they could be used in a flexible manner when needed.

In order to be Suzerain, an Ego should accept the idea of Otherness and to be flexible, as said before.

Now let us go back to the role of philosophy. *The 'know- how to use'* one or other type of rationality requires a specific kind of reality interpretation techniques. I am calling those techniques **Situational Hermeneutics.**

From Habermas's point of view, the concept of rationality could be conceived as reasonability. Because of the fact that rational expressions have pretensions to validity, thus they can be criticized; therefore they could be taught or learned. Here is in my opinion the role that philosophy has to play.

And I am referring to the Socratic Modern Dialogue – a theoretical, hypothetical discussion in which the controversial pretensions of the truth are schematized and directed to the moral perspective. When speaking about Socratic Dialogue, I am referring specifically to a mechanism that builds up, on symbolic bases flexible or relative [12] identities. The very main idea is that being involved in practical reasoning, the individual will start to distinguish between **Me**, as an entity, with my own private world view and **US**, the way is conceived as a result of soviet propaganda [13].

Marc Augé [14] calls the mechanism as being a ritual which has to fulfill the following conditions:

1. it has to provoke the events that would change the context and the effects of a former one

2. those events would provoke themselves the beginning of a myth creation, which should feed the ritual by offering symbols and stories that are permanent.

Taking Augé's position as being a general strategy to be used in post-soviet countries I would like to describe briefly the algorithm of the technique that would be used in order to fulfill the conditions. Therefore, in a Dialogue, that could be private or public:

STEP I: every participant has to justify his actions referring to a normative context.

STEP II: the facilitator would lead the discussion to practical aspect, meaning a form of argumentation in which a concrete norm is being discussed. For that reason, the facilitator must present the sense of the discussion according to the type of personality that is present in discussion.

STEP III: the discussion of the sense is based on a prototype of esthetical critics. The critique has to be indirect, has to lead to a reflexive attitude regarding the norms of action – to open the gates of liberation of illusions.

STEP IV: the play of language is being introduced in order to make a distinction between metaphor and metonymy – the symbolical expressions has to be produced according to a set of rules of symbolic production.

STEP V: the explanation of the rules and expressions used, but not in a naïve way. Then the explanation concerns the models of behavior and every decision that is made is accessible to an objective appreciation.

Conclusion:

The internalization of democratic norms is in Moldova a utopia yet. The democratic attitude and flexibility concerns just a very little part of Moldovan population even declared being there for the entire country. In order to build a civic society, one has to develop practical reasoning. In the present paper I have shown one possible pathway to achieve democracy and to drop out '*homo sovieticus*' mental structures. The role that philosophy has to play in this process is the essential one. Forming situational hermeneutic competences is a must for a society that develops a democratic organization.

Note:

1. Agamben George. Homo sacer. Le pouvoir souverain et la vie nue. - Paris: Seuil, 1997, p.17.
2. Foucault M. La volonté de savoir. - Gallimard: Bibliothèque des Histoires, 1976, p.177.
3. Ibidem, p.186.
4. Bourdieu Pierre. The dialectic of objectivation and embodiment // Outline of a theory of practice. - 1977. - P.47.
5. Jahoda Gustav. Psychologie et anthropologie. - Paris: Armand Colin, 1989.
6. Republic of Moldova is an agrarian republic. That is why the majority of population lives in the country. Thus, there are habits that are conceived as being "normal" in urban society and abnormal in rural and vice versa.
7. For example, there is one area were at weddings or social events men are standing by one part of the table, and women by the other. The rule is untouchable.
8. Unilateral group that acts like a unitary system and plays an important role in economical and political life of a society; could form different sub-groups that act independently.
9. Every body cried when of the leaders of Communist Party (L.Brejnev) died. The symbolic investment of the Pattern Figure leads to mystification of social reality.
10. For a better exemplification see G. Orwell's 1984.
11. Habermas J. Théorie de l'agir communicationnel. - Ed. Fayard, 1987.
12. To be relative to a point of reference that could be geographical, social or moral.
13. As a result of which individuals lost the ability to differentiate between public and private sphere and to make social decisions. For exactly this balance private/public make a democracy to be real and an Ego suzerain.
14. Auge Mark. Pour une anthropologie de monde contemporaine. - Ed. Flammarion, 1999.

Bibliography:

1. Auge Mark. Pour une anthropologie de monde contemporaine. - Ed. Flammarion, 1999.
2. Agamben George. Homo sacer. Le pouvoir souverain et la vie nue. - Paris: Seuil, 1997.
3. Bourdieu Pierre. The dialectic of objectivation and embodiment // Outline of a theory of ractice, 1977.
4. Habermas J. Théorie de l'agir communicationnel. - Ed. Fayard, 1987.
5. Jahoda Gustav. Psychologie et anthropologie. - Paris: Armand Colin, 1989.
6. Foucault M. La volonté de savoir. - Gallimard: Bibliothèque des Histoires, 1976.
7. Ethics and Socratic Dialogue in Civil Society / Eds. P.Shirpley, H.Maison. - Society for the Furtherance of Critical Philosophy, 2004.

Prezentat la 15.05.2007