


**CHALLENGES TO THE PRESERVATION/RECONSTRUCTION OF DEMOCRACY IN
BRAZIL**

DESAFIOS À PRESERVAÇÃO/RECONSTRUÇÃO DA DEMOCRACIA NO BRASIL

**DESAFÍOS PARA LA PRESERVACIÓN/RECONSTRUCCIÓN DE LA DEMOCRACIA EN
BRASIL**

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ABSTRACT

This article discusses democracy and the importance of political parties in the process of preserving/reconstructing democracy in Brazil, as well as our ephemeral exercise of citizenship, which presents itself as a passive subject of rights in an alienated and cowardly society. It emphasizes dilemmas for preserving/reconstructing Brazilian democracy and identifies fragile social participation as one of its main challenges. This article focuses on partial results of research conducted using the critical dialectical method and Gramscian categories, based on bibliographical research in doctrinal and legal sources, both physical and digital.

Keywords: Citizenship in Brazil. Democracy. Political Parties. Social Participation.

RESUMO

O artigo trata sobre a democracia e a importância dos partidos políticos no processo de preservação/reconstrução democrática no Brasil, assim como de nosso efêmero exercício de cidadania, que se apresenta com a expressão de um sujeito passivo de direitos, em uma sociedade alienada e acovardada. Enfatiza dilemas para a preservação/reconstrução da democracia brasileira e aponta a frágil participação social, como um de seus principais desafios. O conteúdo deste artigo versa sobre resultados parciais de pesquisa realizada, para tanto utilizou-se do método dialético crítico e a utilização de categorias gramscianas, a partir de uma pesquisa bibliográfica, em fontes doutrinárias e legais de material físico e digital.

Palavras-chave: Cidadania no Brasil. Democracia. Partidos Políticos. Participação Social.

RESUMEN

Este artículo analiza la democracia y la importancia de los partidos políticos en el proceso de preservación/reconstrucción democrática en Brasil, así como nuestro efímero ejercicio de la ciudadanía, que se presenta como un sujeto pasivo de derechos en una sociedad alienada y cobarde. Enfatiza los dilemas para preservar/reconstruir la democracia brasileña e identifica la frágil participación social como uno de sus principales desafíos. Este artículo se centra en los resultados parciales de una investigación realizada con el método dialéctico crítico y las categorías Gramscianas, basada en la investigación bibliográfica en fuentes doctrinales y jurídicas, tanto físicas como digitales.

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Palabras clave: Ciudadanía en Brasil. Democracia. Partidos Políticos. Participación Social.

1 INTRODUCTION

This article discusses the theme of the preservation/reconstruction of democracy in the country. In this sense, it points out the important role that political parties play in this scenario and the fragile exercise of citizenship in our reality, reproducing a passive subject of rights. The exercise of citizenship should be reproduced within the associations and take over the spaces of social control, disputing the definition of priorities and monitoring of the execution of social policies, steps that are still to be consolidated.

In this sense, social participation has been slowly constructed and is a process to be improved, also constituting a possible movement of resistance in a scenario of political, economic and sociocultural crisis in a society that must seek to preserve and/or rebuild its democracy.

Resistance can express the dissatisfaction of citizens in the face of social reality, acts and facts implemented by the rulers and the ideology contrary to the exercise of freedom and defense of the dignity of the human person. Law and resistance are used in history in the perspective of guaranteeing the exercise of freedom (BITTAR, 2016).

Citizenship represents, primarily, the fight against social exclusion, against misery and must be developed in order to change daily life and structures that historically benefit some to the detriment of millions of others, to consolidate the rights already conquered in the Citizen Constitution. This situation is the result of the economic model adopted, which, in addition to having enabled the concentration of wealth, has led the country "[...] to an ethically reprehensible, politically unsustainable and socially suicidal situation" (CARAVANTES, 1991, p. 21). Thus, in order to transform "law in principle" into "law in practice", important political and economic subjections are faced, accentuated in the recent period.

From this scenario, the present work seeks to analyze the characteristics of the democratic regime and the need (or not) of party associations for its effectiveness. The exercise of citizenship also becomes relevant to this discussion, because, according to AZAMBUJA (2008, p. 345), political parties are "[...] permanent foci for the dissemination of political thought, stimulate the organization and action of individuals, incite them to defend their opinions and to take an interest in public affairs, as is the duty of every citizen".

This article presents partial results of qualitative research, unfolding the study in different methodological moments. This is a research with secondary data (MACHADO, 2019, 2022). The epistemological framework was structured and articulated from a dialectical-critical approach, built on the object-subject synthesis and its contradictions, which

served as contributions to the knowledge of reality, as well as as an instrument for analysis and action.

2 DEMOCRACY AND SOME OF ITS CHARACTERISTICS IN THE BRAZILIAN CONTEXT

Democracy can be considered recent in Brazil and is the regime marked by the principles of equality and freedom and by the rights of participation and contestation. The Federal Constitution of 1988 established a Democratic State of Law. Under the bulwark of a new constitutional order, citizens had back the right to choose their representatives and rulers, previously made impossible by the military dictatorship². In a democracy, the authorization to exercise power is conferred through voting.

Democracy still needs to be worked out in order to concretely implement the social banners advocated in the Federal Constitution of 1988. And political parties, in this logic, must play a fundamental role in democratic consolidation, because the ideal in this perspective, "[...] is characterized by the right of the people to choose their representatives for the various functions of government and to control the way in which those elected exercise the power delegated to them [...]" (BRUM, 1988, p. 10).

Therefore, democracy "[...] expresses a political demand for the participation of the people in decisions that concern the life of society against the concentration of power in the hands of a few aristocratic families or some powerful groups" (BRUM, 1988, p. 9). The power to vote and, as a result, to choose the representatives, was one of the main mottos, because, "[...] power will only be legitimate when established by the sovereign will of individuals" (BEDIN, 2002, p. 33).

In this context, it is based on the conception that democracy presupposes dialogue, contrasting ideas and the search for the common good. The great challenge for people's participation, as an indispensable element for the maintenance and effectiveness of the Democratic Rule of Law, is the formation of a social group called the people that requires, as advocated by BRUM (1988, p. 14), "[...] at least four basic ingredients in permanent interaction with each other: awareness, organization, participation and organized action [...]". Brazilian development in its social and economic aspects requires an active population, as a basic characteristic of this new governmental model instituted in the country since the second half of the 1980s.

² The military dictatorship in Brazil was an authoritarian regime that began with the military coup on March 31, 1964. This regime lasted 21 years (1964 to 1985) and established censorship of the press, restriction of political rights, among others.

Ratifying, democratic ideals presuppose constant dialogue about the numerous areas that make up the State, since, according to MARQUES (1999, p. 37), there is a "[...] a plural space of feelings and ideas, attitudes and behaviors, desires and dreams of a better life for all". And it is from this debate, with the aim of finding consensus and a project for the common good, that democracy is founded and consecrated.

3 THE ROLE OF THE POLITICAL PARTY IN THE PROCESS OF PRESERVATION/RECONSTRUCTION OF DEMOCRACY

In Brazil, article 1 of the Organic Law of Political Parties determines that "[...] the political party, a legal entity governed by private law, is intended to ensure, in the interest of the democratic regime, the authenticity of the representative system" (BRASIL, 1995). Also, the Federal Constitution of 1988 declares in article 17 that "[...] the creation, fusion, incorporation and extinction of political parties is free, safeguarding national sovereignty, the democratic regime, multi-party system, the fundamental rights of the human person [...]" (BRAZIL, 2012).

In this regard, ZILIO (2014, p. 65) collaborates when he states that the value of parties is indisputable, "[...] since it is not conceivable to postulate an elective mandate if not through adhesion to a certain association, by virtue of the diction of the constituent that erected party affiliation as a condition of eligibility". AZAMBUJA (2008, p. 66), in the same way, points out that "[...] without political parties, there are no candidates; without candidates, there is no election and, consequently, the participation of the citizen in the democratic formation of the State is restricted". However, the party as a space for militancy has been emptying, further weakening the exercise of citizenship of the population and making it difficult for them to participate in the sphere of this collective.

Modernity brings with it a debate about the effectiveness of political parties, especially with regard to the number of associations constituted. Brazil, according to the Superior Electoral Court, currently has more than 30 registered associations. The discussion in this aspect revolves around the real need for such a considerably high number for the realization of democratic ideals to actually occur.

It is through political parties that many of the social banners are claimed in competent bodies and, consequently, met (Castro, 2016). Thus, "[...] based on doctrinal principles and an identical interpretation of reality, the members of a political party agree on a set of

programmatic proposals in defining the direction and conduct of society, with a view to the common good" (BRUM, 1988, p. 19).

Such is the importance of the parties in the political debate and in the discussions about the direction of the country, that the 1988 Constitution endowed them with administrative and financial autonomy, giving them resources from the Party Fund and free access to radio and television under the terms of the law. On the other hand, the obligation to account for the revenues collected and expenses ordinarily incurred during the year and during the electoral campaigns is required.

The notions of political parties and democracy (government of the people and for the people) in our experience are closely linked, as the dissemination, by the parties, of various philosophical and political doctrines existing in the world has fostered the debate and the search for solutions to the various adversities that afflict our society (Castro, 2016). favoring the formation of opinion on the main issues that involve the country and the maturation of the voter for the exercise of citizenship.

4 CITIZENSHIP IN BRAZIL AND AS A RESULT A PASSIVE SUBJECT OF RIGHTS

Citizenship as a historical category expresses the economic, political and social conditions of the society in which it is engendered and, when thought of within social relations, represents socially established values and meanings. Therefore, it is necessary to measure it based on the Brazilian economic, political and social reality. Its historical-social determinant is the existence of class society and the State.

Citizenship is the awareness of democratic rights, that is, the condition of democracy. In this sense, it is important to understand that the roots of democratic culture are not found in theories and concepts, but in conduct, experiences and their satisfaction (FLEURY, 1994).

However, citizenship should not be seen as a natural gift and much less as a concession from the State, so it is necessary to understand it as a conquest, construction, daily exercise and social role. The relationships built in our society suggest the existence of a fragile citizenship, which ignores the relevance of the defense of rights.

The exercise of citizenship in the face of the Brazilian reality — where basic social services, although guaranteed in the Constitution, are not yet universal, truly — consists fundamentally in transforming, initially, the right to all of them into a concrete and effective

reality in the life of the population, with access³ to goods and services being one of the basic elements in this context.

And it is also important to understand the patterns of the relationship between State and society, which, in Brazil, have been qualified, "[...] through the centuries, by a heavy state bureaucracy, all powerful, but inefficient and not very agile, and a cowardly, submitted, but, for this very reason, elusive and often rebellious society" (SCHWARTZMAN, 1988, p. 14). Therefore, a society subjugated, coerced and reproducing a passive citizen of his rights.

The contradiction between the emergence of a citizen consciousness with an increasingly present magnitude and the reification of the⁴ existence of states without citizens⁵ in a project of readjustment of the standard of social protection towards a segmented inclusion, postpones facing the fundamental issue of social protection: the full constitution of a democratic national community (FLEURY, 1994).

The interpellation of citizenship, in this context, functions as a communicational possibility, through which the national community can be rebuilt, giving rise to a sociability based on agreed ethical principles. Only in this way will it be possible to recover the public character that should serve as a norm on which not only state actions are based, but also those that, although private, affect the national community. Otherwise, we will continue to have a State, but not a nation, and, in these cases, every exercise of power is authoritarian and illegitimate, and, therefore, society is ungovernable (FLEURY, 1994, p. 235).

Daily life determines an immediatist way of thinking about people (HELLER, 1992). Daily life ends up discouraging systematic rationality and thoughtful action, especially with respect to those issues involving the abuses of political power and the unequal distribution of economic benefits in contemporary Brazilian society. The citizenship that has developed in Brazil is not broad and much less results from the consciousness of those who have contributed to building both the wealth and the well-being of the country. However, it still

³ Ensuring the population's access to the set of public policies is a function of the State and of the policies that are designed to materialize this right. However, the quantities of these services do not correspond to the needs, as the supply is not in the same proportion as the demand (MACHADO, 2019, 2022).

⁴ In Marxism, the concept means a peculiar form of alienation, characteristic of the capitalist mode of production.

⁵ The constitution, in Latin America, of states without citizens implies that the existence of a central political power did not correspond to the creation of a nation, understood as the construction of a sociability minimally necessary to legitimize the exercise of this power. This is the root of the crisis of governability that has been faced since the last century, with different features. We are at a critical moment, represented by the possibility of giving these societies a truly democratic face or eternalizing the differentiations they form, being built on a social model of strata that are only found in two points: the generalized dependence on a patrimonial State and the periodic and uncontrollable irruption of social violence and that also constitute migratory processes (FLEURY, 1994), an eternally current discussion.

impacts social participation, understanding it as a central element in the preservation/reconstruction of Brazilian democracy.

5 THE DILEMMAS AND CHALLENGES IN THE PROCESS OF PRESERVATION/RECONSTRUCTION OF DEMOCRACY

The Federal Constitution of Brazil, which is the highest law of the Brazilian State, adopts multipartyism, allowing the emergence of several political parties. In general terms, the parties should represent different ideologies and political convictions existing in society, bringing together, as their affiliates, citizens who are adept at their current of thought. However, these differences are not always evidenced and reaffirmed, largely due to the practices of political coalitions, which sometimes due to their almost antagonistic ideologies are impossible to be aligned, configuring these contrasts as challenges to be equalized.

The voter should become aware of the party statute of his association, which is the internal norm that governs its organization and functioning, in order to verify his affinity with that political project. However, in practice, militancy was emptied within the parties and they lost the indispensable condition to guarantee a true party identity. Many of its practices use the justification that the ends justify the means.

BRUM (1988, p. 39), however, asserts that political parties in Brazil, with small exceptions, throughout national history, "[...] they have gone little beyond mere agglomerations of conjunctural interests, without doctrine, with only formal programs and lacking in cadres". Under the same approach, Azambuja (2008, p 348) emphasizes that "one of the vices pointed out is that political parties falsify opinion, posing questions badly, silencing what does not suit them and, in the name of discipline, force their adherents to vote against their own points of view".

Today, political parties appear as indispensable elements for the survival of modern democratic regimes. As Darcy Azambuja preached, the defects of parties are, in fact, defects of men.

What we must do is to continue correcting them, so that they can be maintained in healthy frameworks. Despite their flaws, there is no denying that political parties are fundamental pieces in the mechanics of democracy: wherever they succumb, the machinery of popular government yields with it (ALVIM, 2013).

The issue of citizenship and social participation plays a great role within the exercise of democracy and the protection of the population. It is through them that people feel part of the conduct of the political system and represented within public life.

One of the rights of the citizen is that of Social Participation, which aims to make the relationship between the Government and society more democratic. In other words, it exists in the sense of making it possible for people to interfere in the conduct of public life. This concept, combined with citizenship, therefore mirrors how groups in society can expand the strength of their word in politics, in favor of the exercise of democracy.

Being a citizen, therefore, is more than being aware that you are a user of rights. It is also of paramount importance to know that these rights can be of the most diverse natures: civil, political and social.

We take as our main assumption the understanding of social participation as a space under construction for the conquest of citizenship, from the Gramscian view, allowing us to reinterpret this theme, as resulting from a relationship of class forces, so that the process of legal and institutional embodiment of forces historically established between classes and mediated by the State, have sought to preserve these relations, in the search for the maintenance of dominant hegemony or in the consolidation of an alternative counter-hegemonic project.

We share the idea that the State is a space of conflicts, where competitive dynamics of dispute between capitalism and social movements are developed, in an attempt to expand economic, social and political power (CARNOY; LÉVIN, 1987). Thus, we can remark that it is in this space that the exercise of our participation is made possible. We also show that these spaces of conflict have an emancipatory character, to the extent that within them individualities are constituted and instituted and, consequently, individual and collective subjects.

This perspective forces us to review concepts, taking into account individual and collective experiences and actions in specific realities, creating the need to seek new ways in daily life to face the dynamics of the social process, from an essentially divided reality, emphasizing the performance of social subjects. The subjects are socially constructed, and are made through "[...] certain conditions and certain circumstances in their motivations, their ideas and their values" (CASTORIADIS, 1992: 207).

6 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The present work intended to develop a reflection on social participation, understanding it to be a social space, where different subjects and a population are articulated with their individual or group needs and interests. It consists, therefore, of a field of social relations, in which the subjects participate through different articulations, implying the offer and guarantee of goods for collective consumption, of responsibility, referring us directly to the issue of citizenship.

It seems necessary to break down the boundaries that separate the State from the citizen. "Democracy generates conditions for the densification of the social fabric, with the emergence of multiple forms of organization of political subjects that demand a role from actors in the political scene" (FLEURY, 2005, p. 86).

For the purposes of this article, social participation was understood as a space under construction for the conquest of citizenship and, at the end of the day, democracy. The Federal Constitution expanded the project of democracy, "[...] making principles of representative democracy and participatory democracy compatible, and recognizing social participation as one of the key elements in the organization of public policies" (SILVA, JACCOUD, BEGHIN, 2005, p. 374).

From the Gramscian point of view, allowing us to reinterpret this theme as resulting from a relationship of class forces, so that the process of legal and institutional embodiment of forces historically established between classes and mediated by the State, has sought the preservation of these relations, in the search for the maintenance of dominant hegemony or in the consolidation of an alternative counter-hegemonic project (GRAMSC, 1992).

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