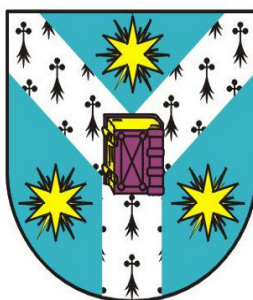


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THE ROLE OF POLITICAL ELITES IN CONSOLIDATING DEMOCRACY

- abstract of PhD thesis -

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THE ROLE OF POLITICAL ELITES IN CONSOLIDATING DEMOCRACY

The PhD thesis entitled „The role of political elites in consolidating democracy” is part of a series of relatively recent concerns in the field of political science in Romania regarding the political elites in relation to the processes of transition, democratization and democratic consolidation.

The title suggests the existence of a paradox between the political elites, defined as „strategic” minority groups which constantly exercise or influence the power, and the democratic consolidation as process of institutionalizing norms, values, procedures and behaviours through which the democracy, as „power of people”, becomes „the only accepted game” in a society. There was often a tense, often conflictual relationship between the elite theory and the democracy theory, relationship that results from the opposition between the democratic ideal and the reality that the society is governed by one or many elites that have cooperation or conflictual relationships.

In „Prolegomene” we start from explaining the etymology of the „elite” term, we emphasise the fact that the study of elites represents the geometrical point in which the sociology and politology concerns meet, reunited in a possible border discipline that we might call *elitology*. Then, we go further with the contributions of the elitism precursors in the history of political philosophy (Plato, Aristotle, Machiavelli, „the moderns”, Nietzsche) and with a synthesis of the classical elite theories.

The classic elitists were „anti-democratic” because they were skeptical regarding the concrete possibilities of implementing democracy. Giovanni Sartori prefers to call them rather „realistic” than „anti-democratic”. Pareto, Mosca and Michels have properly noticed the inadequacy of the democratic ideals to the political reality of the time when they wrote their works. The fact that the society cannot be governed directly by the people is a reality that cannot be contested not even today. The classics of the elite

theory have called in question the practical possibilities of achieving democracy, admitting however some of its normative prescriptions. Therefore, the elitism classics (V. Pareto, G. Mosca, R. Michels, M. Weber) have solved the contradiction between the elite theory and the democracy theory by tipping the scales in favour of the elites whose reality could be empirically demonstrated, while democracy could only be addressed as „ideal-type”, without being confirmed by the realities of the society in which they elaborated their works.

„The contemporary approaches of the elitist phenomenon” piece together in a theoretical synthesis the contributions of three important schools of thought: radical elitism, pluralist elitism and democratic elitism.

The radical elitists (Th. Veblen, C. Wright-Mills, W.G. Domhoff) will reaffirm the leading potential of elites based on empiric proofs provided by the way the American society was operating, a society dominated by corporatism and conservatism in the second half of the 20th century. The American radical sociologists of the 60's had the vision of a democratic society based on the emancipation, participation and involvement of individuals and masses in taking decisions at the head of power and in the socialization of the benefits that result from exercising power towards extended social categories. Mill's optimism regarding the possibilities of achieving participative democracy will anticipate the gateway towards democracy for the following schools of elitist thought: pluralist and democratic elitism. Compared to the classic elitism, the representatives of radical elitism formulate a critical perspective on the „elite of power” and, at the same time, show themselves optimistic regarding the future of the participative democracy based on the emancipation of the individual through knowledge, information and involvement in the democratic game.

Unlike the monism of the classical and radical elitist theories, the pluralist elitism or the elitist pluralism represents a theoretical and methodological „jump”, meaning that the elites are analyzed as social groups in a

fierce competition for power. The power itself is seen as a polyarchical structure whose power centres are the sources of the competition between various elitist groups (R. Dahl). The first successful attempt of bringing together the elite theory and the democracy theory will belong to the pluralists (R. Aron, R.A. Dahl, J.A. Schumpeter), who see the „democratic game” as a competition between a plurality of elites. Inspired by the offer and demand economic mechanisms, Schumpeter elaborates what we call today the competitive theory of democracy or „the democracy theory through reverse connection” (G. Sartori). Thus, democracy is nothing else but a set of procedures through which the many (the governed) are regularly called (during elections) to elect the few (the rulers/governmental elites) to lead their destinies.

Democratic elitism is the political school that aims at going thoroughly into the compatibility between the elite theories and the democracy practice and theory, by turning to profit the pluralist empirical approach on the elitist phenomenon and the democracy competitive theory and by harmonizing the philosophical-ideological-normative issues with the analytical aspects of the cohabitation between political elites and the democratic ideal. If the pluralist elitism has tried and succeeded to give an answer to the question „How is it possible for a „dominant minority” to govern when the electoral majority decides who will govern?”, the democratic elitism faces the problem of the „commitment” of the political elites towards the democracy values, norms and rules. According to John Higley and Heinrich Best, „the democratic elitism describes the elites as being guardians of democracy”. If classical elitism was critical regarding the concrete possibilities of achieving democracy, the democratic elitism sees the functioning of democracy as an *elites settlement*. The comparative studies made by John Higley and Mattei Dogan have elucidated the relationship between the political regimes (democratic, semi-democratic, non-democratic) and the political elites, in the sense that the consolidated democracies become possible in the countries where the elites are united through

consensus (*consensually united elites*), seeing democracy as the only possible political option (*the only game in town*).

The theoretical novelty issues brought in the present research consist of the synthesis of the elitist theories related to the theory and practice of democracy, reunited in the four great politological schools of thought – classic elitism, radical elitism, pluralist elitism and democratic elitism – and of a critical synthesis of the elitist theories formulated in terms of marxism, populism, pluralism and democracy.

The chapter „Towards a critical approach of the elitist theories” is inspired by a work of the politologist L.-P. Zăpârțan and it represents an over time response to elitism in terms of marxism, populism, pluralism and democracy. All these philosophies or political theories that have an anti-elitist background call into question the pre-eminence of elites in the society and their role in the functioning of democracy. From the intellectual protest from „*The revolt of the masses*” written by Ortega Y Gasset, elaborated against the authoritarianism of his time and the tendencies of massification and standardisation of society, we get to „*The revolt of elites and the betrayal of democracy*” of Christopher Lasch who criticises the autonomization of elites compared to the rest of the society, their moral decay and their exclusive concern for power and wealth.

The economic-financial crisis which started in the U.S.A. in 2008, become global by contagion and extension, has brought again into discussion the role of the political, corporatist, military etc. elites in consolidating democracies and for a better governance and, the last but not the least, in ensuring the welfare for the many. Street protests as *Occupy Wall Street* or *Indignatti* have started public debates regarding, besides concrete issues related to jobs, income, social protection, health, also the problem of the responsibility of political (governmental) elites. The democracy itself, as a mechanism that regulates the competition between political elites, is contested since the

governmental elites are perceived as governing for their own benefit and to the detriment of the many.

In the chapter „Concepts, typologies and methods of researching political elites”, we study thoroughly the debate monism *versus* pluralism in researching elites, we define the „elite” concept in relation to the correlative concepts („sub-elites”, „counter-elites”, „non-elites”) and we present a typology of elites based on fourteen classification criteria, focussing on describing the typology elaborated by John Higley in collaboration with other representatives of the democratic elitism (M. Dogan, M. Burton etc.). The last sub-chapter focuses on elaborating an inventory of methods for researching elites: the deductive-historical analysis, the positional analysis, the reputational analysis, the decisional analysis or *event analysis*, the comparative analysis and the combined methods applied in the research of elites. The purpose of this epistemological-methodological study is to emphasise the conceptual frame and the applicable methods in researching the role of the political elites in consolidating democracy.

The research *design* of the role of political elites in consolidating democracy describes the empirical approach of the PhD thesis: justification of the theme of research; establishing the research objectives; prior documentation; the theoretical frame of research – democratic elitism; the analysis and operationalization of the concepts used in defining the theme; elaborating the hypothesis; specifying the investigated population – governmental elites; the strategy for researching the role of governmental elites in consolidating democracy in Romania; selecting the methods, techniques and work procedures; data processing.

In order to study the role of the political (governmental) elites in consolidating democracy (in post-communist Romania), we have used the following work hypotheses:

- 1) The concrete methods of recruiting and selecting the governmental elites determine the configurations of the governmental elites;

- 2) The elitist configurations have a direct impact on the type of governance;
- 3) The type of governance (democratic or non-democratic) determines the democratic consolidation process. The research hypotheses are placed in causality relationship (recruitment-configuration-governance) with the democratic consolidation process.

In order to test the validity of the formulated hypotheses, we have applied the following methods and research techniques:

- 1) The analysis of the political biographies of the ministers that belonged to the governmental post-communist elites, combined with the sociological interview analysis (20 ministers were interviewed) and the analysis of the statutory documents of political parties, in order to emphasise the concrete methods of recruitment and their impact on the governmental elites configurations;
- 2) The statistical analysis of data provided by *EliteGuvPostCom* data base, which includes socio-educational, demographic, political and professional data concerning the people that have occupied ministers positions during the post-communist period;
- 3) The institutional political analysis of the successive governments during December 1989 – May 2012, starting with the „temporary” government led by Petre Roman and ending with the government led by Prime Minister Victor Ponta.

The democratic consolidation as process starts where the „electoral democracy” (minimal democracy) already operates, confirmed by passing the „test of the double alternation in power” (S.P. Huntington) by organising and conducting fair and transparent elections, respecting the legislation in force. Unlike the Central and Eastern Europe countries with which Romania is often compared, Romania has stepped on the „long road of democratic consolidation”

starting with the first democratic alternation in power that produced in 1996. From this moment, it follows a relatively ascendent trajectory of the democratic consolidation process with a maximum point in the period 2004-2007 or between „the two adhesionations” (NATO and EU). Romania’s adhesionation to the EU represented a confirmation of fulfilling the political criteria officialized at the *Copenhagen Summit* (1993). These historical moments (2004, 2007) also represent landmarks of the consensus between political elites in post-communist Romania, to which the project of admission in Schengen area is added, which is in process of being finalized.

In order to evaluate the stage of democratic consolidation in Romania, we shall undertake a comparative analysis of this process in five post-communist countries of Central and Eastern Europe: Poland, Czech Republic, Hungary, Bulgaria and Romania, using the data provided by the *Nations in Transit* reports of Freedom House Organization, afferent to the period 2000-2011. We have focused on this group of countries from the Eastern-Central European area in order to compare the way the following democratic consolidation „parameters” have evolved: electoral process, development of civil society, democratic governance, independence of the Media, independence of justice and the level of corruption. Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary were part of the Visegrad Group, countries that joined the first wave of NATO enlargement (1998), respectively EU (2005). Bulgaria and Romania have adhered in the second enlargement wave of NATO (2004), respectively EU (2007). The analyzed period is 1999-2011. The purpose of the comparative analysis of the democratic consolidation process in the five post-communist countries is to highlight the progress *versus* regress of every country.

The nature of the communist regime before the 1989 revolutions, the behaviour of the communist elites when the communism started to dissolve and their relationship with the counter-elites are defining for the post-communist transition development. The communist elites from Central

and Eastern Europe have had different reactions towards the wave of change triggered by *Glasnost* and *Perestroika*, launched by Mikhail Gorbachev, starting with 1985.

Research on elites and political regimes experienced a sudden change after the collapse of communism in the Central and Eastern countries. The sociologists and politologists concerned with the study of elites have asked themselves what role would the former communist and post-communist elites have in the process of transition from communism to democracy. The nature of the communist regime (totalitarian or authoritarian), the behaviour of the communist elites when communism was dissolved, their relationship with the counter-elites (anti-communist) are defining elements for the way in which the post-communist transitions were conducted. Romania is the only country in Central and Eastern Europe where the end of communism was produced by a violent revolution, held in the street, with fights between the army of the communist regime and protesters, resulting with victims. In Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic and even Bulgaria, to which Romania is often compared, the dissolution of the communist regimes took place though a so-called „Velvet Revolution”, as a result of a „pact of elites” held at the „round table”. The peaceful way in which the change of the political regime took place in these former communist countries subsequently led to a consensual approach of the transition towards democracy and market economy. In this context, the post-communist researchers have wondered whether we are dealing with a reproduction or movement of the communist elites.

Inspired by the theoretical and empirical approaches of the political elites, both globally and nationally, we have studied the role of the governmental political elites in consolidating democracy in Romania. Similarly to the research undertaken by Irina Culic, we have considered the “democratic consolidation” a dependent variable that should be explained with the help of the independent variable „political elites”. After reading the *tranzitological* and *consolidological* literature on democracy and

democratization, we have dwelled upon the theoretical frame proposed by the Austrian politologist, Andreas Schedler. According to his teleological perspective, the consolidation of democracy (seen as purpose) represents a sequence of the complex paradigm of democracy. The process of democratic consolidation starts where the democratic transition ends (from a totalitarian or authoritarian regime to democracy). The electoral democracy represents the first step in the democratic consolidation process, equivalent to meeting the „institutional requirements” of polyarchy, as they were formulated by Robert A. Dahl. In Romania’s case, the electoral democracy was fully institutionalized after seven years of democratic transition. The 1996 elections will mark the first „peaceful” transfer of power from the rulers (PDSR) who organized and democratically lost the elections in favour of the winning opposition (reunited around CDR) which would form the future government.

The democratic consolidation is a complex process that depends on a multitude of internal (national) and external (international) factors. We have mentioned the following internal factors: the democratic past of the country, the way in which the dissolution of the communist regime was held (peacefully or violently), the level of economical development, the civil society development, the type of political culture (parochial or participative), types of political elites (conflictual or consensual, disrupted or united). The mentioned external factors are the following: the role of the European institutions (European Commission, European Council, European Parliament), of NATO, of the international financial institutions (IMF, World Bank), the role of the strategic partnership with the U.S.A. for consolidating democracy and the development of competitive and operational market economies.

In order to evaluate the Romanian democracy, we have proceeded to a comparative analysis of the democratic consolidation process in five post-communist countries in Central and Eastern Europe: Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Bulgaria and Romania. The comparative analysis

focused on the following five aspects or „dimensions” of democratic consolidation: 1) the electoral process; 2) civil society; 3) democratic governance; 4) independence of the Media; 5) independence of justice and corruption perception. Thus, while Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic, countries that founded the Visegrad Group, are evaluated as being „consolidated democracies”, Bulgaria and Romania are classified as „semi-consolidated democracies”. In our country, the „outstanding” unsolved problems are the independence of justice and the high level of corruption. The graphic processing elaborated based on the data collected from the Freedom House reports afferent to the period 2000-2011 have shown us that during the EU pre-adheration period, all the analyzed post-communist countries have made remarkable progress in terms of democratic consolidation.

Paradoxically, after being admitted in the select club of EU countries, the five post-communist countries have faced a rebound or erosion phenomenon regarding the democratic consolidation. The examples are Hungary during the second government of the Prime Minister Victor Orban and Romania during the periods when it was governed by Tăriceanu (the second period), Emil Boc (the first and second period) and Victor Ponta (May 2012 – August 2012). The degradation of the rule of law functioning in Hungary and Romania has drawn the attention and intervention of high officials of EU and the USA State Department, who have expressed their “concerns” regarding the democratic deviations of the governments of the two countries. Neither Poland during the cohabitation of President Lech Kaczyński with the Prime Minister Donald Tusk, nor Bulgaria during the cohabitation of President Gheorghii Pârvanov with Prime Minister Boris Borisov were far from a severe erosion of democratic consolidation. Yet, the cohabitation of President of Romania Traian Băsescu and Prime Minister Victor Ponta registered by far a maximum tension during the period before starting the procedure for suspending the President and during the campaign of the referendum of his dismissal

(June-July 2012). The concomitant dismissal of the Presidents of the two Chambers of the Parliament and the Ombudsman, the transfer of the Autonomous Régie Monitorul Oficial under the submission of the General Secretariate of the Government, issuing emergency ordinances with the purpose of limiting certain powers of the Constitutional Court were the reasons for declaring that Romania faced a “democratic collapse”, as Andreas Schedler would say.

A veritable test for the democratic consolidation in the post-communist countries is the global economical-financial crisis that is seriously affecting the European continent since 2008. The „sovereign debt” crisis of the EU states threatens the economical, political and social stability of the entire Europe. In this difficult economical context, the legitimacy of political elites, especially of the governmental elites, and the viability of the democratic regimes are brought into discussion. As the politologist Mattei Dogan stated, „the crises and the change of elites are closely related”. In this respect, we believe that the current global economical-financial crisis will inevitably affect the composition and functioning of political elites. We already have a confirmation of Dogan’s thesis in Romania in the beginning of February 2012, when Emil Boc’s second Cabinet submitted the resignation in the lump under the effect of extensive street protests that represented, among other things, the loss of trust of the population in the government.

In agreement with the theoreticians of democratic elitism, we have considered that the political elites played a fundamental role in the transition and democratic consolidation processes. The irreversibility of democratic consolidation or the „durability of democracies” depend on two essential dimensions of the elitist phenomenon: integration *versus* fragmentation in the elitist configurations and consensuality *versus* conflictuality in the behaviour of political elites. By crossing these two dimensions we obtain a typology of political elites (Higley & Lowell-Field) out of which we extract the type of the

consensually united elites, the only one that can lead to a consolidated democracy. The fact that Romania is catalogued by independent *Think Tanks* such as *Freedom House* or *Transparency International* as a semi-consolidated democracy, "signalled" by international partners in the EU and U.S. for "democratic slippages" since the summer of 2012, we decided to focus our attention on researching the types, configurations and behaviours of political elites in post-communist Romania.

Due to the fact that, at the beginning of our research Culic Irina's study dedicated to parliamentary political elites and democratization of Romania during 1989-2000 was already published, we focused on investigating the role of governmental elites in consolidating democracy. The choice for the investigated population is also motivated by the assertion that everything that happens or does not happen in a country is due to the government, the governmental elites, the governance. In other words, Romania is still a semi-consolidated democracy due to the manner in which the governmental elites have behaved during their governance. By applying the theory of John Higley and his collaborators, it results that the governmental elites in post-communist Romania are divided and conflictual rather than consensually united.

For researching the post-communist governmental elites we have chosen from the start the pluralistic approach required by the democratic elitism theory which sees democracy as a set of norms, values and procedures that regulate in a non-confrontational manner the competition for power between political elites, that are legitimized by the participation and votes of masses during the elections. The relevance of the current research is also given by the applied research strategy that combines the sociological interview technique, the statistical analysis and the institutional political analysis.

In order to investigate the methods of recruitment and selection of governmental elites we have used the sociological interview technique for a number of twenty

ministers appointed and politically supported by PSD, PNL, PDL and UDMR. During various discussions conducted through an interview guide with open questions, we tried to find information regarding the access ways towards governmental elites, selections of government elites, procedures and criteria applied in the selection of ministers, duration (time) to accede into a governmental cabinet, the impact of the concrete recruiting methods on elitist configurations.

The easiest ways to acceding to governmental elites are the political parties, especially those who get to governance, and parliamentary elites. Statistical analysis shows that 46.1% of ministers held positions in the party before entering the cabinet and 48% had been or were at the time of nomination (Euro) Parliament members. Also, 38.73% of the ministers were members of Parliament, occupying leadership positions in the party to which they belonged at the time of their appointment into the government. Hence, it results that it is easier for a person to enter the governmental elite if he has previously been part of the party elite and / or parliamentary elite. All statutes of the analyzed political parties include references to political recruitment and procedures for selecting ministers that would be part of governmental elites. UDMR statute has a specific chapter regarding the participation of the party in the governance.

From the analysis and synthesis of information gathered from the sociological interview with the twenty ministers, two sets of criteria - political and professional - have resulted, which in their turn contain two categories - general and special - used in selecting members of the governmental elite. The most important political criteria are: loyalty to the party, seniority in the party, the importance of their position in the party organization, the electoral results obtained during the last elections, notoriety and trust of candidates, the relationships with selectors or recruiters. With regard to professional criteria, we mention the following: professional training level, work experience, the compatibility of professional training and work

experience with the "job description" of a minister, communication abilities, capacity of making decisions in crisis situations and governmental teamwork. An innovation brought by the study of recruitment methods was to elaborate a formula for calculating the average duration of accessing government elites: 25 years since completing the university studies.

The conflictuality of post-communist government elites can be explained by the preeminence of informal networks on formal networks in the process of recruitment, selection and appointment of ministers in a cabinet. The study of the methods for recruiting governmental elites has not spared the role of the "new local aristocracy," the "local barons" in the recruitment and selection of ministers who were part of the governments afferent to the democratic consolidation period (1996-2012). The concrete methods of recruitment, selection, appointment and promotion of ministers directly reflect into the configurations of post-communist governmental elites.

In order to analyze the configurations of governmental elites we have applied the positional method necessary for identifying the members of governmental elite, namely, the following positions: prime minister, state ministers, "line" ministers, ministers delegated to coordinate certain departments of the government or the ministries structures. Thus, we have built the *EliteGuvPostCom* database that includes all persons who had ministers positions or assimilated positions in the government cabinets in post-communist Romania. Socio-educational and demographic variables were supplemented by a number of variables that refer to the political career before and after occupying the minister position. The *EliteGuvPostCom* database served to the statistical processing according to the reference periods of Romanian post-communism (democratic transition *versus* democratic consolidation) and according to the succeeding governments from December 1989 until May 2012. From the *EliteGuvPostCom* database that includes 452 ministerial positions, we derived two other databases that we called *MinistriPostCom* and

MinistriCuMaiMulteMandate. *MinistriPostCom* database includes individuals who occupied the minister position for at least one term. Statistical analysis of the data revealed the social background of the governmental elites during democratic transition (1989-1996), respectively the governmental elites during democratic consolidation (1996-2012). By processing the *MinistriCuMaiMulteMandate* database (ministers who had at least two terms of office during the post-Revolution governments) we have obtained useful information with regard to government stability issues and intergovernmental rotation.

The educational background of the post-communist government elites is dominated by technical studies which compete with the legal and economic studies. The preeminence of technical studies over the other categories represented a dominant peculiarity of communist elites that also applied for post-communist elites. The explanation for the dominance of technical studies in the professional training of post-communist governmental elites reside in the need of competent resources in technical and economic fields, recruited mainly from former managers of state enterprises and bureaucrats of the communist period. Regarding the technical studies, the maximum is reached during Emil Boc first governance and the legal studies prevail during Radu Vasile government. The economic studies generally have lower percentages, with a maximum point during Nastase government. The percentage of those with other studies reaches a maximum point immediately after the Revolution, as an expression of the beginning of a democratic direction, without any strict specialization. This diversity surprisingly comes back during Mihai Razvan Ungureanu government. Almost a quarter of post-communist governmental elites (19.07%) is represented by academics from higher education institutions and academic research institutions, which means that a high level of education certified by scientific titles (such as PhD title) is socially valued.

The type and level of professional training of governmental elites is reflected in the quality of

governance, the efficiency and effectiveness of the promoted public policies. This statement should be completed by the fact that the efficiency of the ministers' activity depends not only on their level of training, but also on the political and/or governmental experience before their designation in the executive government, on the political support necessary to promote often unpopular reforms, on public image.

In all governments after 1989 most of the officials were men and during only two governments the presence of women of more than 15% was admitted: Adrian Nastase government and Emil Boc government. We noticed that during the first 10 years after the Revolution practically no woman entered any of the first six governments. Currently, the Ponta Government has 21 ministers, including 3 women that represent 14.28% of the entire cabinet, compared with a European average of 25% female ministers.

After the Revolution, we observed a very high average age; then immediately the figures vary in a very short age interval [45,55]. The Government with the lowest average age is Mihai Razvan Ungureanu's and the cabinet with the highest average age is the "temporary" first government of Petre Roman. The difference of ten years between the average age during Ungureanu's Government and the Government of Ponta is also surprising. The vast majority of ministers is married and the percentages of those in other situations are very low. This was predictable due to the average age of these individuals at the beginning of their designations.

Membership to PCR and to nomenclature of the post-communist governmental elites had a significant influence on the democratic transition and less on democratic consolidation in Romania. Occupying a position by the political elites had a significant influence on the consolidation of democracy in Romania and less on transition. The democratic consolidation process depends on maintaining the political positions of government elites within the political parties to which they belong.

According to the data statistically processed using SPSS, the following profile of governmental elites in Romania results: most of them men; average age 49 years; most ministers were 53 years old at the time of their designation; mainly technical, legal or economic studies; married with at least one child; with a declared political affiliation (only 1 of 5 ministers did not declare it); from urban areas; mainly from Muntenia and Transylvania; domicile or residence in Bucharest; orthodox religion. The number of ministers vary from one government to another without a particular characteristic of this variation. The average size of a government cabinet is 32 ministers, with a maximum represented by the Nastase Government (53 ministers) and a minimum represented by Ungureanu government (18 ministers).

The institutional political analysis applied to executive power and to post-communist governments indicates the following political consensus elements within government elites: 1) admission to NATO; 2) adherence to the EU; 3) the perspective of acceding to the Schengen area. We found that after achieving a major national interest, there was a period of conflict. The main cause of the conflictual status that characterise not only the Government, but the entire Romanian political system, is the constitutional arrangement and the afferent legislation that regulates the relations between the three powers (executive, legislative and judicial), the relations between the fundamental institutions of the rule of law (Presidency, Government, Parliament, Justice, Constitutional Court). The second referendum organized for dismissing President Traian Basescu (July 2012) showed unmistakably the constitutional conflict that was amplified by political elites to paroxysm and also the urgency to rearrange the constitutional relations between the state institutions, considering the experience gained in more than two decades of democratization, the existing political realities and the requirements imposed by the Euro-Atlantic status of Romania.