

INTRODUCTORY ELEMENTS FOR THE ANALYSIS OF DISSIDENTSHIP. A DIACHRONIC PERSPECTIVE IN FORMER COMMUNIST COUNTRIES

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Abstract. The issue of dissidence, as it evolved in the former communist countries, can contribute to defining a complex social phenomenon because even if a relatively small number of elites were more exposed, in reality, entire masses of people tacitly agreed with the opposition to the political regimes in those countries, the stake being, in fact, the transition to democracy. The resistance was rather moral and ethical, focused on respecting human rights and much less on violent actions of social change. From the outside, the Helsinki Accords of 1975 also had an increased importance. The complexity of the dissidence phenomenon comes from the diversity of the social groups involved: intellectuals from literary or scientific fields, groups of whistleblowers regarding the respect of human rights, certain religious groups, or bodies specific to economic activity (unions). Relatively small groups of opponents had a significant social impact through the force of the messages they transmitted, by creating a 'parallel society' of openness, by encouraging social change, and by providing a new elite capable of managing broad social reforms. This article proposes a complex approach to the phenomenon of dissidence, starting from the definition of the phenomenon, the analysis of its historical evolution, and insisting on the role of elites, but also on the social dimension of an important phenomenon of recent history.

Keywords: communism, dissidence, social change, political power, recent history

Résumé : La question de la dissidence, telle qu'elle a évolué dans les anciens pays communistes, peut contribuer à définir un phénomène social complexe. En effet, même si un nombre relativement restreint d'élites y était davantage exposé, en réalité, des masses entières adhèrent tacitement à l'opposition aux régimes politiques de ces pays, l'enjeu étant, en fait, la transition démocratique. La résistance était plutôt morale et éthique, axée sur le respect des droits humains et beaucoup moins sur des actions violentes de changement social. Vu de l'extérieur, les accords d'Helsinki de 1975 ont également revêtu une importance accrue. La complexité du phénomène de dissidence tient à la diversité des groupes sociaux impliqués : intellectuels issus des milieux littéraires ou scientifiques, groupes de lanceurs d'alerte concernant le respect des droits humains, certains groupes religieux ou organismes spécifiques à l'activité économique (syndicats). Des groupes relativement restreints d'opposants ont eu un impact social significatif par la force des messages qu'ils ont transmis, en créant une « société parallèle » d'ouverture, en

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encourageant le changement social et en fournissant une nouvelle élite capable de mener de vastes réformes sociales. Cet article propose une approche complexe du phénomène de dissidence, partant de sa définition, puis de l'analyse de son évolution historique, et insistant sur le rôle des élites, mais aussi sur la dimension sociale d'un phénomène important de l'histoire récente.

Mots-clés : communisme, dissidence, changement social, pouvoir politique, histoire récente

Rezumat. Problematica disidenței, așa cum a evoluat în fostele țări comuniste, poate contribui la definirea unui fenomen social complex, deoarece, chiar dacă un număr relativ redus de elite au fost mai expuse, în mod real mase întregi de oameni au practicat în mod tacit cu opoziția față de regimurile politice din țările respective, miza fiind, în fapt, tranziția spre democrație. Rezistența a fost mai degrabă morală și etică, concentrată pe respectarea drepturilor omului și mult mai puțin pe acțiuni violente de schimbare socială. Din exterior, Acordurile de la Helsinki din 1975 au avut și ele o importanță crescută. Complexitatea fenomenului disidenței vine din diversitatea grupurilor sociale implicate: intelectuali din domeniile literar sau științific, grupurile de avertizori în ce privește respectarea drepturilor omului, anumite grupuri religioase sau organisme specifice activității economice (sindicate). Grupuri relativ reduse de opozanți au avut un impact social semnificativ prin forța mesajelor transmise, prin crearea unei „societăți paralele” a deschiderii, prin încurajarea schimbării sociale, prin oferirea unei noi elite capabile să gestioneze reforme sociale ample. Articolul de față propune o abordare complexă a fenomenului disidenței, plecând de la definirea fenomenului, analiza evoluției sale istorice, insistând pe rolul elitelor, dar și pe dimensiunea socială a unui fenomen important al istoriei recente.

Cuvinte cheie: comunism, disidență, schimbare socială, putere politică, istorie recentă

Introduction

After World War II, certain states in Central and Eastern Europe entered the Soviet sphere of influence, „importing” the form of government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) - the communist political regime. The group of states formed by the USSR, the German Democratic Republic, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania, and Bulgaria constituted what is now known as the Eastern Bloc, an area ideologically dominated by Moscow, considered a „sanitary” perimeter between East and West during the Cold War.

In all these states, the communist regimes installed between 1947 and 1949 were harsh, repressing fundamental freedoms. Deprived of minimum rights, faster or slower, depending on the country and the political and social context, society reacted. The opposition to power took different forms in the Eastern Bloc states, manifested itself gradually and had the final effect either of „taming” the political regime and a profound social change through the peaceful transition to democracy (in states such as Hungary, Czechoslovakia or Poland), or an attempt to reform the communist system of government and then the transition to a democratic regime (USSR in the era of *glasnost* and *perestroika*) or it just maintained hope at the social level and was a support for the population in not forgetting the meaning of democracy (Romania).

For this article, we consider it important to clarify the concept of *dissidence*. The meaning that consecrated this term, especially in the West, and later also in the Eastern Bloc countries, was that of „movements and reactions of society to the totalitarian phenomenon, in the proper sense of the public expression of difference of opinion, opposition/opposition and resistance” (Bălănescu, 2020, p. 383). At the international level, the unanimously accepted definition for dissidents in the communist states of the Soviet Bloc is the one given by the KARTA Center in Poland, which, wishing to produce a *Dictionary of Dissidence in the former communist countries*, took into account criteria such as: active attitude against the communist system in defense of human rights and fundamental freedoms, inspiration of resistance actions, peaceful opposition and respect for „the principles of democracy in their undemocratic world” (Andreeescu, 2009, p. 16). „The dissident, as defined by the West in relation to socialist countries, is the person who 'publicly manifests nonconformist attitudes and critical opinions', gaining a certain degree of respect in his own country and a certain protection from the West, protection that will not save them from being marginalized by the authorities, but saves them from any form of radical persecution” (Deleanu, 2015, p. 64). In this sense, the concept was used in the present research, highlighting some nuances necessary in certain particular cases.

Theoretical framework of the research

The theme of dissidence is addressed in numerous classic reference works in the fields of communication sciences, social sciences, history, and political sciences, as well as in current scientific studies and articles in these fields. Historiography and political science refer to this concept as a form of open, public opposition to the communist regime, in the sense consecrated by Western journalists regarding public intellectuals who were known opponents of the regime, especially through samizdat, in the USSR. „Anti-communist dissidence developed within totalitarian societies, the strategy, the dissident action being built in relation to the Leninist-type political system and its related constraints” (Cătănuș, 2014, p. 25).

In the social sciences, *dissent* is explained as a form of opposition to the dominant discourse, to the majority. In the 16th century, Protestants who did not accept the official religion of the Church of England were called dissidents. In a political sense, the term was used only in the first half of the twentieth century. In these terms, of opposition to the hegemonic position of the discourse of power, the phenomenon is observable especially in the case of authoritarian or totalitarian states, as is the case with those analysed in this research. Havel, for example, gives expression to this action of contestation with the phrase „living in truth”, suggesting that dissent must be above all a living form of moral opposition to the official lie. The dissident doesn't need to have a political program, but to „live in truth”, to refuse conformism and to reach a reconciliation with himself. A similar point of view is held by Solzhenitsyn, who appreciated that dissent is represented as an ethical choice of a few to live „not by lies” (Budraitiskis, 2022, p. 108).

In communication sciences, dissidence is defined as the discursive and semiotic process by which individuals or groups express their opposition to the dominant discourse and the official norms of communication. The perspective on dissidence is, therefore, closely related to the public space, a phrase theorized by Jürgen Habermas. Dissidents become the creators of a communication space in dissonance with the official public space. In this sense, in the communist states of the Eastern Bloc, dissidents opposed the regime through codified forms of communication: samizdat – the clandestine self-publication of literature or texts in which social, ethical and opposition issues against state ideology were addressed; tamizdat – consisting of samizdat texts or publications illegally transferred to Western Europe or the United States and published as separate volumes or collections; cultural metaphors; aesopic language; Satire; subversive literature. They also resorted to publicly assumed forms of communication: open letters, public appeals, platform-manifestos (“The Two Thousand Words”, a manifesto written by the writer Ludvík Vaculík and published on June 17, 1968 in Prague, Charter '77, founded by Václav Havel and Jan Patočka, also in Czechoslovakia), letters sent and read to the Free Europe radio station. In a public space occupied by ideology and official propaganda, dissidents tried to offer alternatives for communication and debate on issues important to society, such as fundamental rights and freedoms. From their ranks crystallized what Marlies Glasius calls in research related to the writings of dissidents in Eastern Europe and South America „proto-civil society” (Glasius, 2011, p. 7).

There are, however, epistemic controversies surrounding the concept of *dissent*. Not every form of disagreement, resistance or distancing from power, during the communist regime, can be considered an act of dissidence, at least not in the unanimously accepted sense regarding the phenomenon manifested in the Eastern Bloc – that of open opposition to the political regimes in power. An example is the *ketman* (inner exile), illustrated by Czeslaw Milosz (1999). Also, the duplicitous attitude encountered in many cases in the Eastern space (Czechoslovakia, Romania) – one thing you think, another you say – does not have the characteristics of a dissident act, being rather a form of personal salvation, mental and moral hygiene.

Ana Maria Cătănuș underlines the temptation that existed, especially in Romania, after 1990, to consider dissidence the courage to listen to or tell jokes about the communist regime or the oft-invoked „resistance through culture”, suggesting that from here to saying that all Romanians were, in one way or another, dissidents is only one step (Cătănuș, 2014, p. 12). Real dissent is, from the perspective of discourse and public action, the most elaborate form of opposition. Gabriel Andreeșcu offers a clarification in this controversy, proposing the term resistance for those people who tried to oppose the regime in a subversive way (planning demonstrations, spreading manifestos, sending information abroad, letters to Free Europe). Some had the power to then move from the stage of „resisters” to that of „dissidents”, that is, of public assumption, of anti-communism (in the '80s, the case of Iulius Filip or that of Radu Filipescu) (Andreeșcu, 2009, p. 16).

Methodological framework of the research

This article presents a series of results of documentation through the content analysis of scientific articles, studies, volumes, etc., an analysis structured according to three criteria:

1. The historical dimension (certain identifiable moments in the communist period that produced transformations in terms of the manifestation of dissidence as a phenomenon – de-Stalinization, the period 1975-1985, *the perestroika* and *glasnost period*, the post-1990 period);
2. Geographical dimension (the states of the Eastern Bloc geographically closer to the West and those isolated from the West, in the immediate vicinity of the USSR);
3. Typology of communist regimes (authoritarian or dictatorial).

The historical and geographical dimensions allow us to follow the evolution of the phenomenon of dissidence in the Eastern Bloc states by identifying a „map” of the phenomenon, which could indicate directions of irradiation from one country to another or possible causal links that can be traced in future research.

Results of documentary research

The emergence of the phenomenon of dissidence

Opposition to communist regimes in the Eastern Bloc has gradually increased. It started in the USSR, where, although social manifestations and actions of disagreement appeared in the circles of poets and in the circles of young socialists since the late 1950s, a visible movement of dissidence coagulated only at the end of the thaw period instituted by Nikita Khrushchev, in the mid-1960s. It was characterized by a „common space for communication and distribution of information” (Judt, 2008) through samizdat literature. Samizdat was then a communication platform used in other Eastern Bloc states, such as Czechoslovakia, Poland, and Hungary. In the USSR, dissidence had prominent figures in the field of literature, starting with Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, Vladimir Bukovsky, Yuri Galanskov, Ilya Bokshtein, Gabriel Superfin, Ludmila Alekseeva, Joseph Brodsky, and Nadezhda Mandelstam. Mikhail Gorbachev is a prominent figure of dissidence within the Communist Party. In other European countries, the phenomenon of dissidence took shape and developed only 10 years later, after the Helsinki Agreement of 1975. „From that moment on, dissidence encompassed a wide range of approaches and strategies, from rejecting politics to exerting pressure on communist regimes to make them reconsider their relationship with their societies” (Cătănuș, 2011, p. 348).

The characteristics of dissidence in the Eastern Bloc identified from various messages, open letters or public appeals were generally the following: open, public position, respect for the law (given that the communist states did not respect their own laws), non-violence, disagreement with the ideological, economic, moral principles promoted by the communist regimes, the use of the discourse related to

human rights as a strategy to build a „moral platform” into which to attract so many dissidents from the intellectuals, as well as reformist communists (the case of the Charter of '77 and the essay *Power of the Powerless*, in which Václav Havel called for a peaceful opposition, centered on respect for human rights and the rejection of ideological lies), the „anti-political” approach, theorized by the Hungarian dissident György Konrád (Konrád, 1984) and the „apolitical politics” popularized by Havel (Havel, 1978). Until 1989, *apolitical politics* „meant the refusal to participate in corrupt and ossified political institutions and, from a position outside power, the demand for fundamental civil rights and the fair application of the law” (Feinberg, 2022, p. 153). After all, what we today would call activism.

The typology of the forms of dissidence is also very diverse: social and then political dissidence, towards the end of the period, in the USSR, cultural and artistic dissidence (through samizdat – in the USSR, Czechoslovakia, Poland and Hungary, art, underground music – in Czechoslovakia), religious dissidence (the actions and support of the Catholic Church and Pope John Paul II in Poland, the clandestine actions of Greek Catholics in Romania, after the bishops were arrested), workers' dissidence (the strong trade union action of Solidarność in Poland, workers' solidarity in Czechoslovakia, strikes – in Romania the strike in the Jiu Valley in 1977 and the strike followed by the workers' revolt in Brașov in 1987), intellectual dissidence (in Hungary, through the „Budapest School”, and in Romania).

Due to the diversity of forms of action and social particularities in each country of the former Eastern bloc, a series of explanatory clarifications are necessary, because a whole series of social actions have been indirectly related to the idea of dissidence. A number of authors recall that the forms of tacit disagreement with the regime were, in fact, a necessary „mask” to resist. Those strategies that integrated the „public and private spheres” (Petrescu & Petrescu, 2007) designated *sui generis* forms of opposition. We recall here the passive resistance, marked by the culture of duplicity, practiced on a large scale in Ceaușescu's Romania, but also identifiable in Czechoslovakia, where the public characteristics of life hardly represented the reality experienced by its citizens (Brozek, 2022).

In this context, we can deduce that not every latent form of confrontation with the regime can be characterized by cowardice or collaborationism. One of these refers to „existence through culture”, a much broader phrase with a much clearer nuance than the more often circulated „resistance through culture”. Andreeșcu (2015) defines it as „an attribute of human beings for whom the cultural manifestation gives meaning to their own life.” Interiority is saved. In the extension of „existence through culture”, there are the „cultural niches of existence”, characterized by „the promotion of a true human project, built in harsh conditions”. In other words, intellectuals and artists preferred marginalization in the cultural project of the moment instead of compromise. For example, the eighties generation of authors (writers and poets) was integrated into this form of resistance in Romania.

Countries with strong dissidence

Chronologically, Poland was the next state in which a dissident movement crystallized, the strongest in Eastern Europe, favored by the existence of a strong civil society and the influence of the Catholic Church, through the personality of Pope John Paul II, a Pole by origin, considered the „spiritual father” of the Polish labor movement (Walesa, 2012). This was strengthened by workers' solidarity and then by the establishment of the Workers' Defence Committee (KOR) in 1976 and the trade union Solidarność (Solidarity) in 1980. The dissent was strong because there was a fusion of public solidarity between workers, intellectuals, and the Catholic Church. The locomotive personalities of the Polish dissidence were Lech Wałęsa, Adam Michnik, and Bronisław Geremek.

In Czechoslovakia, after the dramatic events during the Prague Spring (1968), after the Helsinki Agreement, which had the role of de-escalating relations between East and West during the Cold War, and under the influence of what was happening in Poland, the Charter '77 appeared. It was a social and moral manifesto, focused especially on respect for human rights, which resonated throughout the Eastern Bloc and constituted a platform for civic dissidence. The most prominent figures of dissidence were Jiří Němec, Václav Havel, and Jan Patočka (Petrescu & Petrescu, 2007).

Although not as vigorous as in Poland or Czechoslovakia, dissent in Hungary was visible and important, especially in the 1980s. Hungarian society alternated between the violently repressed revolution of 1956 and the „silent dissidence” of the last communist decade, as János Kornai (1992) called it. The dissidents were communist reformists, but also many intellectuals. Samizdat was also in Hungary, as in the USSR, a form of coded communication through which opposition to the regime was manifested (Deleanu, 2015). Hungarian dissidence made possible a peaceful transition of the country to a democratic regime. The most important figures were György Konrád and János Kis.

Countries with weak dissident

In the German Democratic Republic (GDR) the dissident movement was almost non-existent. The situation can be explained by the standard of living that the East Germans had, by the harsh repressive system, ready to stifle any action against the state, and a certain type of dialogue that Eric Honecker, the president between 1971 and 1989, managed to have with the intellectuals (Cătănuș, 2014). Therefore, from the period of Eastern European dissidents, the cases of two East German dissidents whose actions were quickly blocked by their expulsion to the Federal Republic of Germany can be remembered in the GDR: the music soloist Wolfgang Biermann and the philosopher Rudolf Bahro.

A similar situation, in the sense of a dissidence that is not very visible, was recorded in Bulgaria, a country loyal to the USSR. Here, there were only a few particular situations: the dissidence of the Turkish-Muslim minority, which militated for religious rights, and certain individual positions. The most famous Bulgarian dissident is Jeliu Jelev, who, after 1990, became president of the country.

The case of Romania

In Romania, against the background of an extremely harsh dictatorial regime, dissidence was limited in action. It manifested itself from the end of the '70s, with the Open Letter of Paul Goma, in which the author announced that he was in solidarity with the anti-communist protesters of the '77 Charter in Czechoslovakia. There was, rather, a „solitary dissidence”, as defined by the mathematician Mihai Botez, himself a dissident, a sum of individual dissidents. It was made up of a diverse social fabric. Romanian dissidence „depended on personal details, almost impossible to put into a scheme” (Andreescu, 2009, p. 15), some of the regime's opponents moving from subversive resistance to public assumption of anti-communism.

„It seems to be devoid of names and prominent movements”, says Koranyi (2023) of Romanian dissidence. The overall picture, as it looked from outside the country, shows weak dissent. The explanation comes first of all from that picture of the „political culture of resistance”, very different in the societies of these communist countries. Romania did not have a participatory political culture. (Petrescu & Petrescu, 2007).

Then, under the conditions of a dictatorial regime, as happened under Ceaușescu, Romania was an isolated, closed state. Censorship was careful to eliminate from the cultural, literary, and press discourse any type of dissonance with the official discourse. The continuous surveillance, the reprisals, the strict control of the institutions through centralization made the idea of dissidence adapt, chameleon-like, to the repressive context. However, the dissidence had a specificity that cannot be denied. The criteria for fitting into the Western construct of the term could not be reached in a critical mass of the Polish type. The reality of the opposition to the regime was much more fluid; There were gestures of dissidence, and there were also actions of dissidence. The „solitary dissidence”, theorized by Mihai Botez, implied that any person, in his own name and publicly, should express his opinion about the shortcomings of the society in which he lived and propose alternative solutions. This avoided rapid liquidation, as would have been expected in the case of dissident groups. The mathematician, therefore, proposed a platform for debate in which voices do not unite in a chorus, but assert themselves individually. The only condition is that they are heard. Among the most famous dissidents are Paul Goma, Doina Cornea (thanks to Radio Free Europe), Radu Filipescu, Dorin Tudoran, Gabriel Andreescu, Mihai Botez, Mircea Dinescu (Paica, 2011, p. 55).

Dissidence appeared sporadically, fragmented, because it did not have the necessary levers to create networks of dissidence (for example, the university system, as in Hungary) or solidarities such as those in Poland or Czechoslovakia. The only attempt to establish a trade union in Romania, SLOMR, in the late 1970s, a body that campaigned for an end to discrimination against workers who demanded rights, a shorter working week, and the right to a disability pension, was brutally repressed by the regime, with leaders being locked up in psychiatric hospitals or in prisons (Cătănuș, 2014).

As for the topics of debate that could have mobilized society towards a certain type of solidarity, they were impossible to advance in a public space occupied by official discourse and propaganda, with a main theme, that of national sentiment, confiscated by the ideology of national-communism. In addition, the support of the official church, the Orthodox Church, was lacking; the „spiritual exercise of solidarity”, as Doina Cornea called it, was missing.

The crackdown on free speech was another impediment to a broader dissent movement. Romanians did not have an internal platform for communication and debate (like the samizdat texts in the USSR), but rather one mediated externally by Radio Free Europe and Romanian intellectuals in exile. Distancing through silence and dissimulation from the regime, isolation in the intimacy of the family were forms chosen by most of society, concerned not with how to fight communism, but with how to survive physically in a country where the standard of living was below the limit of precariousness.

Continuity of forms of dissent after 1989

In all countries of the former Eastern Bloc, both former dissidents and those claiming their legacy militate for democratic principles, good governance, and the rule of law (Feinberg, 2022, p. 154). They are embedded in what is generically called „post-dissidence”.

Today, dissident actions similar to those of the period under investigation can still be identified in Russia, led authoritatively by Vladimir Putin. The case of Alexei Navalny is notorious, who, until his death in February 2024, and after that, remained an example of resistance and the ability to mobilize the masses to defend their rights. As a means of communicating his anti-corruption and anti-establishment discourses, he used the YouTube platform, reaching an elaborate form of „digital activism” (Glazunova, 2020, p. 129). Other activists, such as Alexei Gorinov, Grigory Melkonyants, Oleg Orlov, and Aleksandra Skochilenko, were silenced by their sentence to detention. Similar situations are recorded in the press in Belarus, where opponents of the Lukashenko regime are censored and arrested.

In Romania and Bulgaria, after 1989, dissidence took on another form of action: the fight against corruption in the system of state institutions. In Hungary and Slovakia, partly also in Poland, dissidence took the form of the fight against deviation from democratic principles and values - positions taken by intellectuals in exile (Hungary), protests, some very strong (Slovakia). In Slovakia, „post-dissidence” was at the core of the protest movement that erupted after the murder of investigative journalist Ján Kuciak in February 2018.

Conclusions: synthesis, limits, future directions

Anti-communist dissidence in the Eastern Bloc was an asymmetrical phenomenon, manifesting itself differently from one country to another. It did not consist of a traditional political opposition, not even in the USSR, only partially, in the last part of the communist regime, but in a moral, ethical opposition. The

dissidents' discourse has mostly centered on the defense of human rights, and they are sometimes referred to as „Eastern European activists.”

In Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia, countries with larger urban populations, dissent had stronger forms of public manifestation, based on consistent solidarity. In Hungary, the 1956 Revolution was one of the earliest and most violent opposition movements to the Soviet regime and occupation, and generated dissent supported by the intelligentsia and reformist communists. In Czechoslovakia, the „Prague Spring” (1968) was repressed just as violently, generating in society the seeds of vigorous dissent.

Although dissent has manifested itself to a greater or lesser extent in all the countries of the Eastern Bloc, one cannot speak of a contagion phenomenon in the full sense of the term. If we refer to the social science definition of the concept of *contagion*, which involves the diffusion between distinct groups of ideas, practices or patterns of action, we cannot say that societies throughout the Eastern Bloc have experienced the same type of social movement. There were, however, cases of imitation of some models of action (the fight for human rights, solidarity around the demands contained in the '77 Charter, such as that of Paul Goma in Romania). We consider that the most comprehensive and faithful metaphor of what dissidence meant, one from which its uneven, non-unitary character also shines through, is Vaclav Havel's remark: „the ghost that haunts Eastern Europe”. There were also influences at the level of the Eastern Bloc, made possible by listening to the same radio station - Radio Free Europe - and adhering to the principles of the 1975 Helsinki Agreement.

The distinction between an authoritarian regime and a dictatorial regime does not explain certain paradoxes. Both in the USSR and in Romania, there were dictatorial regimes, but freedom of expression made more progress under Gorbachev than under Ceaușescu. Rather, random/accidental factors have played an important role in the evolution of the phenomenon of dissidence.

The states located in central and western Europe were better able to sustain this phenomenon, thanks to their proximity to the West. In Poland, for example, the links between civil society and Western European and American sources of information and the magazine „Kultura”, which was published in Paris, were important, considered a „red thread” that united the Polish intelligentsia inside the country with those in exile.

The limits of the research are given by the fact that, in terms of dissidence in the Eastern Bloc, there is a huge volume of specialized literature, which requires systematic research, but also by the still-persistent epistemic controversies around the concept. In future research, a detailed transnational synthesis of dissident movements would be useful. As far as the Romanian space is concerned, investigating the dissidents' discourse could provide an in-depth look at the ways of challenging communist ideology and politics in the Eastern Bloc and their effects in the public sphere to date.

Starting from the title of the article, I believe that a theoretical and methodological answer is possible regarding a sociology of dissidence. The

fundamental terms that can contribute can be easily deduced from the theoretical elements already mentioned: dissidence as a form of crystallization of collective action, as broad social action based on social and political opportunities, as an element of Social Movement Theory. Another important study directions are: dissidence and the frames of reference in which it can function (Goffman, 1974), dissidence and resource mobilization, the problem of parallel society/culture, the perspective of the sociology of elites, and dissidence and the role of transnational networks.

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