

POLITICAL OPPOSITION – AN OBJECT OF SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH IN THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA

OPOZIȚIA POLITICĂ – OBIECT AL CERCETĂRII ȘTIINȚIFICE ÎN REPUBLICA MOLDOVA

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Abstract: *The article examines how the institution of political opposition has been conceptualized, analyzed, and evaluated in scholarly research published in the Republic of Moldova between 2009 and 2024. Based on a corpus of representative works, including conceptual and methodological studies, investigations into the institutionalization of opposition, analyses of government-opposition conflict, research on recent crises, and legal-constitutional approaches, the study identifies the major thematic and chronological dimensions in the research of the institution of political opposition in the Republic of Moldova: 1) a conceptual stage, in which opposition is treated predominantly as a relational characteristic of political power; 2) an institutional stage, in which opposition acquires the status of an indispensable institution within the democratic state; 3) an applied stage, focused on the analysis of political instability, electoral competition, and hybrid regimes and 4) an interdisciplinary stage, in which opposition is examined through the lenses of governance, crises (including pandemic-related ones), and constitutionalization. The main conclusion of the study is that the concept of political opposition has evolved from a secondary notion into a mature object of scholarly inquiry, while the recent trend points to a shift from general recommendations for institutionalization toward arguments in favor of constitutionalization, as a mechanism for protecting pluralism and limiting majority abuse.*

Keywords: *Republic of Moldova, political opposition, political power, pluralism, institutionalization, constitutionalization*

Rezumat: *Articolul examinează modul în care instituția opoziției politice a fost conceptualizată, analizată și evaluată în cercetările științifice publicate în Republica Moldova în perioada 2009-2024. În baza unui grup de lucrări reprezentative care include studii conceptual-metodologice, investigații asupra instituționalizării opoziției, analize ale conflictului guvernare-opoziție, cercetări privind crizele recente și abordări juridico-constituționale, au fost identificate dimensiunile tematico-cronologice majore ale cercetării instituției opoziției politice în Republica Moldova: 1) conceptuală, în care opoziția este tratată preponderent ca o caracteristică relațională a puterii; 2) instituțională, în care opoziția capătă statut de instituție indispensabilă în statul democratic; 3) aplicativă, focalizată pe analiza instabilității politice, a competiției electorale și a regimului hibrid; 4) interdisciplinară, în care opoziția este cercetată prin prisma guvernării, crizelor (inclusiv pandemice) și a constituționalizării. Concluzia principală a studiului este că conceptul opoziție politică a evoluat de la unul secundar la un obiect matur de cercetare, iar tendința recentă este trecerea de la simple recomandări de instituționalizare la argumente pentru constituționalizare, ca mecanism de protecție a pluralismului și de limitare a abuzului majorității.*

Cuvinte-cheie: Republica Moldova, opoziție politică, putere politică, pluralism, instituționalizare, constituționalizare

Introduction

In the theory and practice of contemporary democracy, political opposition cannot be reduced solely to the role of a contestatory actor or an electoral competitor. At the same time, it represents: a) an expression of democratic pluralism, b) an instrument of social oversight and accountability, c) an effective mechanism for the institutional channeling of political conflict, and d) a prerequisite for the alternation of power. In the absence of a functional opposition, governing political forces tend to deviate from democratic norms and to gravitate toward the monopolization of power, the erosion of decision-making transparency, and the weakening of public accountability. For this reason, the manner in which political opposition is studied and legally regulated constitutes a sensitive indicator of a state's democratic quality.

In the Republic of Moldova, political opposition emerged under conditions of post-totalitarian transition, which explains the presence of several persistent characteristics: institutional fragility, enduring polarization, the frequency of crises (political, economic, social, energy-related, medical, etc.), and oscillation between the formal rules of a democratic society and informal, clientelistic practices. Domestic academic literature reflects this contextual framework, as well as an internal evolution of research approaches – from conceptual definitions (opposition as a “component of power relations”), to institutional analyses (opposition as an “institution of parliamentarism”), to applied studies (opposition in elections, coalitions, and crises), and, ultimately, to legal-constitutional approaches (opposition as a subject of constitutional protection).

The purpose of the present study is to analyze how the institution of

political opposition has been addressed in academic research conducted in the Republic of Moldova, highlighting the evolution of the topic, the main research directions, and their contribution to the development of domestic political science. The research objectives can be summarized as follows: a) identifying the main thematic-chronological stages and theoretical-methodological directions in the study of the institution of political opposition, and b) analyzing the thematic evolution of research – from concept to institution, and ultimately to constitutionalization.

Research Methodology

The study employs a qualitative, descriptive-analytical, and interpretative approach, focusing on the analysis of how the institution of political opposition has been conceptualized and examined in the academic literature of the Republic of Moldova during the period 2009-2024.

The temporal delimitation of the research to the 2009-2024 interval is not arbitrary, but rather grounded in theoretical, methodological, and contextual considerations that reflect both the evolution of the political regime in the Republic of Moldova and the maturation of scholarly research on political opposition as a democratic institution. First, the year 2009 represents a major political and institutional turning point in the country's recent history. The political events of April 2009, followed by a change in government and the intensification of democratization processes, marked a transition from a formally competitive political system dominated by a hegemonic party to a more pronounced pluralist competition. In this context, political opposition began to acquire a more visible and active role in political life, both at the parliamentary and extra-parliamentary levels. This reconfiguration of power-opposition relations created the premises for the emergence of a systematic scholarly interest in political opposition as an institution.

Second, the post-2009 period corresponds to a phase of consolidation in domestic political science research, during which political opposition started to be analyzed not merely as a notion derived from the concept of power, but as a distinct institution endowed with its own democratic functions. Thus, 2009 marks the beginning of a reflexive phase in the academic study of political opposition in the Republic of Moldova. Third, the 2009-2024 interval allows for capturing the full evolution of the academic discourse on political opposition, from conceptual and methodological approaches to institutional, applied, and, ultimately, legal-constitutional analyses. Fourth, this temporal delimitation is also methodologically justified, as it enables the examination of political opposition across multiple electoral cycles and under diverse contexts of governance and crisis (political, institutional, and public health-related). Such a longitudinal perspective is indispensable for identifying regularities,

discontinuities, and trends in the maturation of the institution of political opposition in the Republic of Moldova.

The empirical basis of the study consists of a corpus of representative academic works, including articles published in scholarly journals and collective volumes authored by researchers from the Republic of Moldova. The selection of sources was conducted based on criteria of thematic relevance, methodological rigor, and academic visibility, and includes works that explicitly address political opposition or government-opposition relations from political science, legal, constitutional, or interdisciplinary perspectives.

To achieve the stated objectives, the following scientific research methods were employed:

- Documentary analysis, applied to relevant academic texts in order to identify definitions, typologies, and theoretical frameworks used in the study of political opposition;
- Conceptual analysis, aimed at clarifying the notion of political opposition and distinguishing it from related concepts such as power, majority, pluralism, political competition, or political regime;
- Comparative analysis, through which different theoretical and methodological approaches in the national literature were examined and related to established models in international scholarship;
- Systemic analysis, which enables the examination of political opposition as an integral component of the political system, interacting with state institutions, political actors, and the constitutional framework;
- Interdisciplinary analysis, applied to the assessment of contributions that address political opposition from legal-constitutional perspectives, democratic governance, and the management of political and social crises.

The research strategy consisted of systematizing and classifying the analyzed works according to the main thematic and methodological dimensions identified: conceptual, institutional, applied, and interdisciplinary. This structuring made it possible to highlight the evolution of the concept of political opposition, the dominant trends in national research, and existing gaps in the scholarly study of the institution of political opposition in the Republic of Moldova.

The study focuses exclusively on academic literature published in the Republic of Moldova and does not include a direct analysis of political practices or the behavior of political actors. Furthermore, the research does not aim to test quantitative hypotheses, but rather seeks to provide a theoretical reconstruction and critical evaluation of existing academic contributions.

By employing this methodological framework, the study offers a coherent and well-argued perspective on the institution of political opposition in the Republic of Moldova as an object of scientific inquiry, as well as on the future

directions for the development of this field of research.

Results

The analysis conducted is an analytical-comparative review based on critical reading and thematic triangulation. From an operational perspective, in domestic academic literature the institution of political opposition is examined along four main axes: a) opposition as a notion derived from power (relational approach), b) opposition as a democratic institution (institutional approach), c) opposition as an empirical actor (applied approach), and d) opposition as a subject of normative/constitutional protection (legal approach).

1. The Conceptual-Methodological Dimension: Opposition as a Relational Entity of Power (2009-2012)

1.1. Opposition as a “Derivative” of Power: The Primacy of the Concept of Power. In the works published at the beginning of the analyzed time interval, political opposition is addressed predominantly through the prism of political power. The article “*Power and Opposition: Concepts and Methodological Aspects*” [Puterea și opoziția: concepte și aspecte metodologice] by I. Nicolaev (2009) proposes a theoretical analysis of the relationship between political power and opposition, highlighting the conceptual and methodological difficulties present in the specialized literature. The author starts from the observation that there is no unified paradigm allowing for a comprehensive analysis of these two fundamental concepts of democracy, emphasizing that political opposition has been theorized to a much lesser extent than power itself. Nicolaev argues that any political power, regardless of regime type, seeks to promote the interests of the majority, while the differences between governing forces and opposition are determined primarily by the means, rhythms, and doctrinal paradigms employed (Nicolaev, 2009, p. 74).

The author defines political opposition as the totality of political actors positioned in opposition to the regime or governmental policy. The existence of opposition is regarded as an essential criterion for distinguishing democratic regimes from non-democratic ones. A distinction is drawn between loyal opposition and fundamentalist opposition, the former acting within the constitutional limits of the system, while the latter challenges the very legitimacy of the existing political order. Furthermore, the differentiation between parliamentary and extra-parliamentary opposition is examined, with an emphasis on the functions, instruments, and risks associated with each form. Extra-parliamentary opposition is portrayed both as a potential factor of political innovation and as a source of instability when it resorts to radical or violent means (Nicolaev, 2009, pp. 75-76).

According to the author, power and opposition are constitutive and interdependent elements of the democratic system, and their coexistence – both

de jure and *de facto* – determines the level of democratic development and the capacity of political and legal mechanisms to support societal progress. Political dialogue between power and opposition is considered an imperative necessity in the context of contemporary political realities. Importantly, opposition is classified according to loyalty to the constitutional order and the arena of manifestation: loyal versus disloyal opposition, and parliamentary versus extra-parliamentary opposition (Nicolaev, 2009, pp. 76-77). This analytical scheme becomes a recurrent reference in subsequent literature, establishing the idea that democratically “acceptable” opposition is that which contests governance, rather than the democratic order itself.

1.2. Methodological Perspectives: Opposition as a Result of Analyses of Power. V. Moșneaga, I. Nicolaev, and I. Bucataru, in the article “*Conceptual and Methodological Dimensions of Political Power as a Component of the Power–Political Opposition Relationship*” [Dimensiuni conceptuale și metodologice ale puterii politice în calitate de componentă a relației putere–opozitie politică] (2012b), provide an in-depth theoretical analysis of the concept of political power, explicitly approached from the relational perspective of the power–opposition nexus. The authors proceed from the premise that a proper understanding of political opposition is impossible without a rigorous conceptual and methodological clarification of political power, which represents the core of any political science framework. Political relations are presented as relations of organization, leadership, and governance, within which the fundamental dichotomy of politics is configured: political power and political opposition. The authors emphasize the relational character of power, insisting that it cannot be analyzed outside the interaction between power holders and the actors who oppose or react to its exercise (Moșneaga, Nicolaev, & Bucataru, 2012b, pp. 99-100).

A central theoretical contribution of the article lies in the identification and systematization of the main methodological approaches to political power, analyzed as a constitutive element of the power–opposition relationship. Four major scientific perspectives are distinguished: anthropological, legal-institutional, sociological, and behaviorist (Moșneaga et al., 2012b, pp. 100-106).

A key concept examined in the article is the asymmetry of the power relationship, generated by the difference in potential between power holders and the opposition. The authors reject the idea of absolute equality of powers, arguing that such a situation would lead either to destructive conflict or to the disappearance of the power relationship itself. The balance of power is accepted only as a theoretical principle of modern constitutionalism, not as a fully attainable empirical reality (Moșneaga et al., 2012b, pp. 106-108).

In their conclusions, the authors argue that the analysis of political power within the power–opposition relationship must combine institutional and

relational perspectives. From an institutional standpoint, power represents the objective of political competition, while opposition constitutes the force aspiring to obtain it. From a political science perspective, the power-opposition relationship is a continuous process of interaction, confrontation, and political communication that provides meaning and dynamism to the political system. The consolidation of democracy depends on the quality of this relationship and on the ability of political actors to maintain a functional balance between authority, legitimacy, and political competition (Moșneaga et al., 2012b, p. 109).

Overall, the works published during the 2009-2012 period conceptualize political opposition as a notion dependent on the concept of power. Their originality lies in the development of definitions and typologies; however, political opposition does not yet emerge as an “institution” in the full sense of the term, remaining instead an explanatory dimension of political power.

2. The Institutional Dimension: Opposition as a Democratic Institution (2010-2015)

2.1. Opposition within the Competitive Political Field. Professor V. Saca, in the article *“The Meanings of the Political Field under Conditions of Democratic Transformation: Dimensions of Power and Opposition”* [Semnificațiile câmpului politic în condițiile transformărilor democratice. Dimensiuni ale puterii și opoziției], analyzes political opposition within a competitive political field in which actors compete for resources, legitimacy, and influence. The author emphasizes that the relationship between power and opposition constitutes one of the structuring axes of this field, and that the quality of this relationship depends directly on the physical and functional condition of the political field itself. Saca's analytical approach is grounded in Pierre Bourdieu's theory of social fields, adapted to the political science analysis of Moldova's post-communist transition (Saca, 2010, pp. 70-71, 75).

A central section of the study is devoted to examining the power-opposition relationship in the Republic of Moldova, highlighting its profoundly contradictory and unstable character during the post-independence period. The author identifies several specific features: a) the dysfunctionality of interaction mechanisms between governing authorities and opposition; b) a tendency toward mutual exclusion among political actors, in contrast to Western models based on dialogue and consensus; and c) a significant gap vis-à-vis Central and Eastern European states that have completed democratic transition and acceded to the European Union (Saca, 2010, pp. 71-73). According to the author, a major turning point was represented by the events of 7 April 2009 and the subsequent reconfiguration of the power-opposition balance following the parliamentary elections of July 2009. The transition of the Party of Communists into opposition and the assumption of government by the Alliance for European Integration did not automatically lead to the democratization of political relations; on the

contrary, procedural confrontations and institutional boycotts – particularly in the process of electing the President – intensified the instability of the political field (Saca, 2010, p. 73).

The study also examines the impact of excessive politicization on other social fields: economic, social, cultural, educational, scientific, and informational. Saca demonstrates that under conditions of a political field dominated by authoritarian practices, these spheres are transformed into “quasi-political fields,” losing their autonomy and functional specificity. Detailed examples concerning the monopolization of the economy, the degradation of social policies, the instrumentalization of culture, the obstruction of educational reforms, and the marginalization of academic science illustrate the systemic effects of the dysfunctional power-opposition relationship (Saca, 2010, pp. 76-79).

A distinct section of the study is dedicated to the informational field, emphasizing the role of mass media and the major risks generated by the monopolization of informational capital by either governing forces or the opposition. The author stresses that the manipulation of public opinion and the exclusion of opposition voices from the official media space severely undermine pluralism and the quality of democracy (Saca, 2010, pp. 79-80).

Saca concludes that the power-opposition relationship in the Republic of Moldova exhibits a democratic form but a predominantly authoritarian content, marked by the persistence of political mentalities and practices inherited from the Soviet period. In his view, the consolidation of democracy is conditioned by several key factors: a) the institutionalization of political dialogue; b) the mutual assumption of responsibility for the national interest; c) the rational use of capital from other social fields; d) the genuine democratization of the informational field; and e) the modernization of education and the revitalization of social sciences. Authentic democratic progress in the Republic of Moldova can be achieved only through the balancing of the power-opposition relationship and the restoration of the autonomy of non-political social fields (Saca, 2010, pp. 80-83).

2.2. The Institutionalization of Opposition: The Argument of Modernity and Parliamentarism. V. Moșneaga, I. Nicolaev, and I. Bucataru, in the article “*Conceptual and Retrospective Delimitations of the Institutionalization of Political Opposition within Power Relations*” [Delimitări conceptuale și retrospective ale instituționalizării opoziției politice în cadrul relațiilor de putere] (2012a), address political opposition as a constitutive element of power relations, emphasizing its insufficient exploration in the specialized literature, particularly in comparison with studies devoted to political governance. The authors place political opposition at the center of democratization analysis, viewing it as an active and legitimate subject of the political process in modern democratic regimes. Political opposition is defined as the component of the power

relationship that does not hold political power in the institutional sense, yet actively participates in political life through available means in order to influence or change public policy content or power holders. Opposition is analyzed as an active element of the “object” of political power within the subject–object relationship, which endows it with a dynamic and contestatory role in the political process (Moșneaga, Nicolaev, & Bucataru, 2012a, p. 115).

A key element of the article is the justification of the need to study political opposition as a distinct actor of power relations, based on four fundamental arguments: a) a gnoseological argument – political opposition is insufficiently reflected in political science research; b) a methodological argument – the increasing emphasis on relational approaches necessitates the inclusion of opposition in the analysis of power; c) a functional argument – the consolidation of the executive at the expense of the legislature diminishes the potential of parliamentary opposition; and d) a contextual argument – the specificity of democratic transformations in the Republic of Moldova requires a tailored analysis of post-totalitarian political opposition (Moșneaga et al., 2012a, pp. 115–116).

The authors distinguish between political opposition in a broad sense, understood as a social attitude of resistance and contestation, and political opposition in a narrow sense, as a political institution integrated into the decision-making process. Opposition is correlated with political conflict, which is considered an inherent dimension of politics. A distinction is made between value-based conflicts, ideological and principled in nature, and interest-based conflicts, which are pragmatic and conjunctural (Moșneaga et al., 2012a, p. 116).

An important theoretical contribution consists in the retrospective analysis of the process of institutionalizing political opposition. The authors argue that institutionalized political opposition is a phenomenon specific to modernity, even though embryonic forms of opposition (proto-opposition) have existed in all historical epochs. The transition from proto-opposition to modern opposition was conditioned by the emergence of public opinion, the expansion of political participation, the development of civil society, and the institutionalization of parliamentary representation (Moșneaga et al., 2012a, pp. 116-121).

The study highlights the decisive role of parliamentarism in consolidating political opposition through the acceptance of the majority principle, which necessarily implies the existence of a minority and, implicitly, of opposition. Political parties are presented as the primary link between society and power, while parliamentary opposition is considered the classical form of political opposition in Western democracies. At the same time, the authors emphasize the importance of extra-parliamentary opposition, which includes mass media, civic associations, professional organizations, and other forms of social activism. This form of opposition has a broader scope of manifestation and plays a crucial role

in monitoring governance and articulating social discontent (Moșneaga et al., 2012a, p. 121).

2.3. Power–Opposition Interaction: Toward a Dynamic Approach. The article *“Interaction between Political Power and Political Opposition in the Context of Democratic Transformations: Theoretical and Methodological Dimensions”* [Interacțiunea dintre puterea politică și opoziția politică în contextul transformărilor democratice: dimensiuni teoretico-metodologice], authored by V. Moșneaga and colleagues (2013), offers a systematic and in-depth analysis of the relationship between governance and opposition in societies undergoing democratic transition, with particular emphasis on the Republic of Moldova. The authors integrate perspectives from democratization theory, comparative politics, and the theory of power relations in order to highlight the central role of political opposition in the consolidation of democratic regimes (Moșneaga, Nicolaev, & Bucataru, 2013).

The theoretical framework of the article draws on the contributions of established scholars such as R. Dahl, S. Huntington, A. Lijphart, and G. Sartori. The authors discuss the minimal conditions of democracy, as well as their limitations in the absence of a participatory political culture and the institutionalization of democratic consciousness among citizens. They emphasize that the formal existence of democratic institutions does not in itself guarantee the effective functioning of democracy. An important conceptual contribution is the comparative analysis of majoritarian and consensual models of democracy, based on A. Lijphart's theory. The majoritarian model is characterized by the exclusive governance of the majority and an antagonistic relationship between power and opposition, whereas the consensual model promotes inclusion, negotiation, and political compromise. The authors argue that deeply divided societies, such as the Republic of Moldova, are more compatible with a consensualist model of democracy (Moșneaga et al., 2013, pp. 141-144).

A substantial section is devoted to the contemporary challenges faced by political opposition: a) the diminishing role of ideology in favor of political pragmatism; b) the chronic electoral incapacity of certain parties to accede to government; c) the asymmetric expansion of executive power in relation to the legislature; d) the exclusion of opposition from the decision-making process; and e) the consolidation of extra-parliamentary opposition and new centers of power, such as mass media and economic interest groups (Moșneaga et al., 2013, pp. 144-145).

The authors contend that authentic democratic transformation cannot be achieved without the institutionalization of relations between power and opposition and without the adoption of an inclusive model of governance. The consolidation of democracy in the Republic of Moldova requires not only institutional reforms, but also profound economic, cultural, and attitudinal

changes aimed at fostering a culture of compromise, tolerance, and political responsibility (Moșneaga et al., 2013, pp. 144-145).

2.4. Opposition in the Post-Totalitarian Context: Evolution and Vulnerabilities. Researchers I. Rusandu and N. Enciu, in the chapter “*Political Opposition*” [Opoziția politică] included in the volume “*The Republic of Moldova on the Path to Modernization*” [Republica Moldova pe calea modernizării] (2015), address the topic from a historical-institutional perspective, with a focus on the rupture between monopartism and post-1991 pluralism. The study provides a comprehensive and wide-ranging analysis of the concept of political opposition, approached both from a general theoretical perspective and from the standpoint of the historical and institutional evolution of the Republic of Moldova. The work combines doctrinal reflection with empirical analysis of post-Soviet political processes, emphasizing the role of opposition as an indispensable element of liberal democracy.

The authors define political opposition as the totality of political actors (individuals, groups, parties) positioned antagonistically toward governmental power or the existing political regime. They stress that free and fair elections constitute the essential foundation of modern democracy, and that opposition can exist authentically only within an institutional framework that guarantees political pluralism, freedom of expression, and equal opportunities in electoral competition. References to M. Duverger and the European democratic tradition strengthen the theoretical dimension of the analysis (Rusandu & Enciu, 2015, pp. 127-128).

The chapter offers an extensive historical retrospective of the trajectories of political opposition in the territory of today's Republic of Moldova. The authors show that during both the Tsarist and Soviet periods political opposition was virtually nonexistent, as the communist regime established a total monopoly over political life. The Constitutions of the Moldavian SSR of 1941, 1952, and 1978 enshrined the one-party system, explicitly prohibiting any form of political opposition or ideological pluralism (Rusandu & Enciu, 2015, pp. 128-129).

The transition toward political pluralism is analyzed beginning with the period of Gorbachev's perestroika, highlighting the decisive role of the Democratic Movement in Support of Restructuring and of the Popular Front of Moldova as the first organized forms of anti-Soviet political opposition. The authors describe in detail the process of establishing the multiparty system and the legal framework that enabled the liberalization of political life after 1989 (Rusandu & Enciu, 2015, pp. 129-131).

A substantial section is devoted to the evolution of the party system and electoral competition during the 1991-2005 period. Based on the analysis of available electoral data, the authors identify several key trends: a) excessive fragmentation of the political spectrum; b) personalization of political parties; c)

weak doctrinal anchoring; and d) a persistent shift of the electorate toward left-wing parties, especially in contexts of socio-economic crisis. This evolution of Moldovan party politics is interpreted as an expression of the fragility of civil society, identity ambiguities, and the geopolitical instrumentalization of ideological cleavages, particularly the pro-EU versus pro-CIS divide (Rusandu & Enciu, 2015, pp. 131-135).

The authors conclude that the process of establishing political opposition in the Republic of Moldova has not yet been completed, unfolding instead in an uneven and contradictory manner. Among the factors hindering the effective functioning of political opposition, they identify: a) the absence of clear legal regulation of the opposition's status; b) the low level of political and legal culture among opposition actors, governing elites, and civil society as a whole; c) the protracted nature of reforms in the legal and administrative domains, coupled with high levels of corruption; and d) the persistence of identity and geopolitical cleavages (Rusandu & Enciu, 2015, pp. 142-143).

In the final part of the examined chapter, the authors analyze the structural confrontation between the liberal democratic model and the collectivist-egalitarian (communist) model in the Republic of Moldova, particularly during the governance of the Party of Communists (2001-2009). They argue for the moral, political, and economic superiority of liberal democracy, maintaining that democratic regression during that period severely affected human rights, media pluralism, and the autonomy of civil society (Rusandu & Enciu, 2015, pp. 143-146).

Overall, the works produced during the examined period approach political opposition as an institution of democracy, a product of modernity, and a mechanism of political balance. A clear consensus emerges around the idea that opposition must be procedurally protected in order to function effectively.

3. The Applied Dimension: Opposition in Transition, Conflict, and Electoral Competition (2014-2019)

3.1. *Opposition versus Power in Transitional Society: Functions and Vulnerabilities.* In the article "*Political Opposition versus Power in Contemporary Transitional Society*" [Opoziția politică versus puterea în societatea tranzițională contemporană], I. Rusandu provides an in-depth analysis of the process of institutionalizing political opposition in the Republic of Moldova, examining the complex, conflictual, and dynamic relationship between opposition and political power in the context of a prolonged democratic transition. The author approaches political opposition as a fundamental institution of democracy, indispensable for political modernization and the consolidation of the rule of law (Rusandu, 2018).

From a theoretical perspective, Rusandu reviews the main approaches to the concept of political opposition, referring to the contributions of Gh. Ionescu,

M. Duverger, R. Dahl, G. Sartori, D. Easton, G. Almond, and S. Verba. Political opposition is defined as “an organized group of individuals/citizens consciously united by political interests, values, and common goals, who struggle with those in power to dominate the political space.” Opposition is conceptualized both in a broad sense (as the totality of manifestations of dissent and contestation) and in a narrow sense (as a party or coalition of parties competing with the government within electoral processes) (Rusandu, 2018, pp. 6-8).

Political opposition is presented as a complex phenomenon undergoing continuous transformation since the proclamation of the Republic of Moldova’s independence. The author emphasizes that the lack of political consensus, generated by deep identity, ideological, and geopolitical cleavages, represents one of the main obstacles to European integration and political stabilization. The inefficiency of political elites in managing systemic crises has led to the erosion of state institutions’ authority and to rising social dissatisfaction (Rusandu, 2018).

From a functional standpoint, Rusandu identifies the principal functions of political opposition: a) exercising critical oversight over governance; b) elaborating and promoting alternative development programs; and c) ensuring the rotation of political elites and promoting new leaders (Rusandu, 2018, p. 8).

A substantial section is devoted to electoral processes as a privileged arena for the manifestation of political opposition. The author analyzes the early local elections of 2018 (Chișinău and Bălți) and the debates surrounding the introduction of the mixed electoral system, emphasizing the criticisms raised by opposition forces and civil society, as well as the reserved position of the Venice Commission. It is argued that changes to electoral rules favored governing parties and diminished the real chances of opposition forces, thereby affecting the quality of democratic competition (Rusandu, 2018, pp. 9-11).

Rusandu concludes that political opposition constitutes one of the key elements of the democratic political system, serving as a “guarantor of the development and modernization of the political process” (Rusandu, 2018, p. 11). At the same time, he characterizes political opposition in the Republic of Moldova as fragmented, heterogeneous, and weakly institutionalized, marked by low public trust, a lack of charismatic leadership, fragile organizational structures at the local level, and unfair competition from governing authorities. To explain the political passivity of part of the electorate and the difficulties faced by opposition forces in mobilizing society, the author invokes the concept of “learned helplessness” (Seligman), applied to the Moldovan political context (Rusandu, 2018, pp. 11-12).

3.2. Governance–Opposition as a Conflictual Relationship: Periodicity, Stages, and Consequences. In the article “*Conflictual Political Relations between Governance and Opposition in the Republic of Moldova*” [Relațiile

politice de conflict între guvernare și opoziție în condițiile Republicii Moldova], G. Trofin analyzes the conflictual nature of relations between political power and opposition in the context of the Republic of Moldova's post-Soviet transition, highlighting the impact of these relations on political stability, democratic development, and social transformations. The author proceeds from the premise that political conflict is an inherent dimension of political life; however, the manner in which it is managed ultimately determines the quality and functionality of the democratic regime (Trofin, 2014).

Trofin argues that governance-opposition relations in the Republic of Moldova are characterized by a high degree of antagonism, a lack of consensus, and a deficit of democratic political culture. These deficiencies generate chronic political instability and negatively affect economic, social, and institutional reform processes. The author introduces the key conceptual pairings "power and culture" and "opposition and culture" as central analytical lenses for understanding the conflictual mechanisms operating within Moldovan society (Trofin, 2014, pp. 140-141).

A major contribution of the study lies in its staged analysis of the evolution of governance–opposition relations in the Republic of Moldova, structured into four main phases:

1. 1989-1994 – the period of formation of the Moldovan political regime, marked by confrontation between the Popular Front and the presidency of Mircea Snegur, as well as by the gradual weakening of Parliament's role in favor of presidential power;

2. 1994-2001 – the stage of extreme pluralism, characterized by political fragmentation, ideological conflicts (unionism, statism, East-West orientation), and the rise of left-wing parties against the backdrop of socio-economic difficulties;

3. 2001-2009 – the period of governance by the Party of Communists, dominated by power concentration, the marginalization of parliamentary opposition, and strained majority–minority relations, despite episodic conjunctural cooperation;

4. 2009-2014 – the post-April 2009 stage, characterized by mass protests, changes in government, and the persistence of a conflictual climate between power and opposition, including within the Alliance for European Integration (Trofin, 2014, pp. 141–142).

The author emphasizes that, despite changes in government and political alternation, the model of governance–opposition relations has remained predominantly conflictual, marked by parliamentary boycotts, institutional blockages, recurrent political crises, and an inability to construct functional mechanisms of dialogue and compromise (Trofin, 2014, pp. 142–143).

G. Trofin underscores the role of political opposition as an essential

mechanism for preventing social conflicts and stabilizing the democratic system. Opposition is presented as an indispensable actor of democracy, provided it exercises its role within the bounds of legality and political responsibility. At the same time, the author draws attention to the tendency of governing elites to instrumentalize the media space and interest groups in order to radicalize political conflict (Trofin, 2014, pp. 140–143).

3.3. *The Post-Electoral Period as a Test of Opposition: The Case of the 2019 Parliamentary Elections.* In Chapter II of the volume “*Socio-Political Modernization of the Republic of Moldova in the Context of the Expansion of the European Integration Process*” [Socio-political modernization of the Republic of Moldova in the context of European integration], entitled “*Political Power and Opposition in the Republic of Moldova: Scientific and Post-Electoral Dimensions*” [Puterea și opoziția politică în Republica Moldova: dimensiuni științifice și post-electorale], I. Rusandu analyzes political opposition in the context of elections and post-electoral crises, combining theoretical reflection on the concept of opposition with an applied analysis of the post-electoral developments generated by the parliamentary elections of 24 February 2019. The author's approach is situated within a critical perspective on Moldova's democratic transition, marked by state capture, oligarchization, and chronic political instability (Rusandu, 2019).

Rusandu highlights the absence of doctrinal consensus regarding the definition of political opposition, despite the widespread use of the term in political and academic discourse, and proposes an operational definition structured around three essential elements: opposition to the governing majority, the exercise of critical and oversight functions, and the objective of governmental substitution. Power and opposition are presented as antagonistic components of the same political conflict, each claiming legitimacy in representing majority interests and the common good. The typologies of loyal and disloyal opposition are discussed, along with the role of opposition as a co-constitutive institution of democracy, in line with the theories of Duverger, Dahl, Sartori, Easton, and Gh. Ionescu (Rusandu, 2019, pp. 74–75).

An important segment of the study is devoted to the functions of political opposition, identified as: analyzing and criticizing governance, elaborating alternative development programs, and ensuring the rotation of political elites. The effectiveness of opposition is conditioned by the type of political regime, the maturity of elites, and the level of political culture of the electorate. In this context, the Republic of Moldova is characterized as a “hybrid state,” in which formal democratic institutions coexist with authoritarian practices and a profound oligarchization of political life (Rusandu, 2019, p. 76).

In the applied part of the study, the author analyzes the impact of the 2019 parliamentary elections, conducted under the mixed electoral system. Although

this system was presented as an instrument of political reform, the election results failed to produce a clear parliamentary majority and led to a post-electoral crisis, resolved through the formation of an “atypical” coalition between the Party of Socialists (PSRM) and the ACUM Bloc, under external pressure. Rusandu critically examines this dualistic coalition, emphasizing the strategic and geopolitical divergences between the partners: the ACUM Bloc’s orientation toward de-oligarchization and European integration, versus PSLRM’s focus on consolidating presidential power and promoting a pro-Russian vector. The analysis also addresses phenomena such as electoral absenteeism, party system degradation, “political tourism,” and the use of mass media as an instrument of political struggle, all of which severely affect the functioning of authentic political opposition (Rusandu, 2019, pp. 76-81).

In his conclusions, I. Rusandu finds that relations between power and opposition in the Republic of Moldova remain unstable, conflictual, and insufficiently institutionalized. The absence of a coherent democratic strategy on the part of governing authorities toward the opposition, combined with the structural weaknesses of opposition forces, undermines democratic consolidation (Rusandu, 2019, pp. 82-83).

Overall, the findings of the studies examined in this section bring to the forefront political opposition as an empirical actor of transition, conflict, and electoral competition. Research becomes increasingly concrete, with opposition being assessed in terms of its real capacity for oversight and the provision of viable political alternatives.

4. The Interdisciplinary Dimension: Governance, Crises, and the Expansion of Opposition Analysis (2021–2024)

4.1. Conceptual Consolidation: Opposition as a Key Institution of Political Life and the Need for Regulation. The study “*Political Power and Political Opposition in the Republic of Moldova: Institutional and Functional Dimensions*” [Puterea și opoziția politică în Republica Moldova: dimensiuni instituționale și funcționale], authored by I. Rusandu (2022), provides an in-depth theoretical and applied analysis of the relationship between power and opposition in the Republic of Moldova, situated within the context of post-Soviet democratic transition and persistent institutional fragility. The author argues that political opposition constitutes an indispensable institution of democracy, which emerged in the Republic of Moldova alongside the dissolution of the USSR and the initiation of political pluralism after 1991. Opposition is conceptualized not merely as a critical reaction to governance, but also as an essential political actor in the competition for power, playing a role in the modernization and corrective adjustment of the political system (Rusandu, 2022, pp. 23-25).

At the institutional level, the Republic of Moldova is characterized as a “hybrid state,” in which formal democratic institutions coexist with authoritarian

and oligarchic practices. Political opposition is profoundly affected by state capture, the degradation of the party system, and the weak social representativeness of political formations. The analysis indicates that most parties no longer articulate the genuine interests of citizens, while extra-parliamentary opposition is often marginalized or transformed into an electoral “spoiler” instrument (Rusandu, 2022, pp. 27-29, 35).

The examination of electoral processes – particularly the 2019 parliamentary elections – reveals the decisive role of external factors in shaping political majorities and highlights the distorted nature of political competition, exacerbated by the introduction of the mixed electoral system. The author argues that this system facilitated the abuse of administrative resources and undermined the fundamental principles of democratic voting. Special attention is given to the situational PSRM – ACUM Bloc coalition, interpreted as a conjunctural solution aimed at de-oligarchizing the state, yet marked by profound ideological and strategic contradictions. In this context, political opposition remains weakly institutionalized, lacking strategic coherence and unable to function as an authentic mediator between society and power (Rusandu, 2022, pp. 30-35).

I. Rusandu advances the argument for the necessity of legally institutionalizing political opposition, including through the adoption of a special law defining its status, role, and functional guarantees (Rusandu, 2022, p. 36).

4.2. Opposition as an Actor of Indirect Governance. In the article “*The Influence of the Power-Opposition Relationship on the Process of Governance: The Case of the Republic of Moldova*” [Influența relației putere-opoziție asupra procesului de guvernare. Cazul Republicii Moldova], authored by V. Solomon (2022), political opposition is explicitly conceptualized as an actor of indirect governance – that is, as influencing governance through oversight, criticism, public pressure, and the provision of alternatives to governmental decisions. The author conducts a thorough analysis of the impact of power-opposition relations on the quality of governance and on the dynamics of democratic transformation in the Republic of Moldova. The study is grounded in an interdisciplinary approach, highlighting the complex, contradictory, and ambivalent nature of governance-opposition relations in transitional societies.

V. Solomon proceeds from the idea of the centrality and persistence of political power in relation to opposition, emphasizing the structural ambivalence of this relationship and the direct influence of political decision-making on society. A significant thesis is advanced: the purpose of the power-opposition relationship should not be one of exclusive succession, but rather of simultaneity, whereby the two “poles” of the political sphere act concurrently, on different levels, yet with shared overarching objectives oriented toward the public interest and state development (Solomon, 2022, pp. 116-117).

From a conceptual standpoint, governance is defined as the direct and

immediate form of exercising political power and is analyzed as a relationship between two parties: governors and the governed. This relationship is inherently asymmetrical; however, the functionality of the political system depends on the capacity of both sides – power and opposition – to interact through mechanisms of oversight, feedback, compromise, and consensus (Solomon, 2022, pp. 117-118).

V. Solomon concludes that the power-opposition relationship in the Republic of Moldova is marked by a structural deficit of democratic political culture and by the absence of a functional consensus-building mechanism. The lack of a genuine opposition severely undermines the proper functioning of the political system and facilitates authoritarian deviations, including state capture and the use of public resources for private purposes (Solomon, 2022, p. 122).

4.3. The COVID-19 Pandemic and the Risk of Marginalizing Political Opposition. The article "*Current Dimensions of the Power-Opposition Relationship in the Republic of Moldova under the Conditions of the COVID-19 Pandemic*" [Dimensiuni actuale ale relațiilor dintre opozitie și guvernare în Republica Moldova în condițiile pandemiei COVID-19], authored by I. Rusandu and V. Sterpu (2021), examines the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the functioning of the political system in the Republic of Moldova, with a particular focus on the relationship between political power and opposition, the quality of democracy, and the capacity of state institutions to manage complex crises.

The authors address the reconfiguration of the relationship between the state and the individual under the state of emergency, highlighting the tension between the protection of life and the respect for fundamental rights and freedoms. It is argued that, in a pandemic context, democracy is subjected to considerable pressure, as the executive branch tends to expand its competences, sometimes at the expense of parliamentary oversight and the separation of powers within the state (Rusandu & Sterpu, 2021, p. 67).

A central part of the study is devoted to the analysis of the constitutional and institutional framework governing the state of emergency in the Republic of Moldova. The authors examine the rulings of the Constitutional Court regarding the constitutionality of measures adopted during the pandemic, emphasizing the necessary distinction between the legitimate competences of the executive and the risk of their overreach. The study highlights the insufficient exercise of Parliament's role as a deliberative and oversight body, as well as the governing authorities' tendency to resort to the assumption of political responsibility in a context of fragile legislative functionality (Rusandu & Sterpu, 2021, p. 68).

Another important analytical element concerns the tendency toward regime hybridization. The authors suggest that, under pandemic pressure, the Republic of Moldova risks sliding toward a model of "illiberal democracy" or "anocracy," characterized by the combination of formal democratic elements with

authoritarian practices. In this context, the relationship between governance and opposition remains deeply antagonistic and devoid of institutional cooperation, even under conditions of major crisis (Rusandu & Sterpu, 2021, p. 68).

4.4. *The Constitutionalization of Parliamentary Opposition: From Institutionalization to Constitutional Guarantees.* Issues related to the recognition, protection, and consolidation of parliamentary opposition as an indispensable element of democratic parliamentarism are examined by D. Cuciurca (2024). The study proceeds from the premise that the existence of parliamentary opposition is inherent to a parliament resulting from free and competitive elections; however, its status is not always explicitly enshrined in constitutions or parliamentary regulations, which generates institutional vulnerabilities and imbalances in power relations.

Parliamentary opposition is presented as an objective political reality, initially protected through parliamentary immunity, which guarantees deputies' freedom of expression and their right to criticize governance without the risk of reprisals. The author emphasizes that, in the contemporary context of intensified cooperation between the legislative and executive branches, parliamentary immunity has become one of the most important mechanisms for protecting opposition (Cuciurca, 2024, pp. 50-52).

A distinct chapter of the study is devoted to the functions of parliamentary opposition, which, in the author's view, extend far beyond the traditional role of criticizing the executive. Opposition is conceptualized as: a) a mechanism of governmental oversight and supervision; b) an instrument of political and constitutional censure of the majority; c) a provider of programmatic and legislative alternatives; d) a representative of social and political diversity; e) an active participant in the legislative process; f) a guarantor of the protection of fundamental rights and freedoms; and g) a "government-in-waiting," prepared to assume governing responsibility (Cuciurca, 2024, p. 52).

The expansion of these functions justifies the need for the constitutionalization of parliamentary opposition, a process distinct from mere institutionalization. The author provides a clear conceptual distinction between the two notions: constitutionalization entails the explicit enshrinement of opposition and its rights in the supreme law of the state, granting formal recognition and legal protection at the highest level, whereas institutionalization concerns the procedural and administrative mechanisms that enable the effective exercise of these rights in everyday parliamentary activity (Cuciurca, 2024, pp. 52-53).

From a comparative perspective, the article examines relevant European models for regulating parliamentary opposition, including France, Portugal, Malta, and the United Kingdom, highlighting institutions such as the Leader of the Opposition and the "shadow government." The study also references Council

of Europe standards, reflected in Parliamentary Assembly resolutions, which encourage member states to ensure a clear and functional status for parliamentary opposition (Cuciurca, 2024, pp. 53-54).

Regarding the realities of the Republic of Moldova, the author observes that the Constitution does not contain explicit provisions concerning parliamentary opposition, which is regulated only at the level of the Parliament's Rules of Procedure. The limitations of this normative framework are critically examined, along with the observations of the Venice Commission and recent jurisprudence of the Constitutional Court, which emphasize the majority's obligation to ensure genuine participation of opposition in the decision-making process and respect for political pluralism (Cuciurca, 2024, pp. 54-55).

In her conclusions, D. Cuciurca asserts that the constitutionalization of parliamentary opposition represents a fundamental pillar of modern democracies. The enshrinement of the opposition's status and that of its leader in the Constitution, the guarantee of rights to information, consultation, and referral to the Constitutional Court, as well as the strengthening of parliamentary oversight mechanisms, are necessary conditions for creating a balanced, transparent, and accountable political system. In the absence of protected and functional parliamentary opposition, any democratic regime risks the rigidification of power and the erosion of public trust in state institutions (Cuciurca, 2024, p. 55).

4.5. Political Opposition in the 2024 Electoral Year: Reconfigurations and Pressures. In *"Political Opposition in the Republic of Moldova in the Context of the 2024 Electoral Year"* [Opoziția politică din Republica Moldova în contextul anului electoral 2024], I. Rusandu and V. Sterpu analyze political opposition as an actor situated within a complex electoral sequence, in which identity-related themes are reactivated and competition for legitimacy intensifies. The focus is placed on the dynamics of parliamentary and extra-parliamentary opposition, strategies of contestation, and the role of institutions in guaranteeing fair competition. Opposition is also assessed in relation to its democratic functions – oversight and the provision of alternatives – as well as in relation to the system's capacity to ensure equitable conditions for political competition (Rusandu & Sterpu, 2024).

From a theoretical and methodological standpoint, the analysis draws on classical and contemporary literature on electoral systems and electoral behavior, emphasizing the role of elections as instruments of democratic consolidation and of citizens' direct political participation (Rusandu & Sterpu, 2024, pp. 84-85).

A substantial part of the study is devoted to a detailed examination of the general local elections held on 5 and 19 November 2023. The authors highlight several key characteristics of these elections: a) relatively low voter turnout (41.41%); b) broad competition among political parties and independent candidates; c) the impact of the new Electoral Code adopted in 2022; and d)

controversies related to the exclusion of certain political formations and the restrictions imposed during the electoral campaign (Rusandu & Sterpu, 2024, pp. 85-87).

Particular emphasis is placed on the geopolitical dimension of the elections. The authors argue that, although local in form, the 2023 elections had a profoundly geopolitical content, influenced by the Republic of Moldova's status as a candidate state for EU membership and by the context of the war in Ukraine. The study also analyzes the hybrid warfare conducted against the pro-European orientation, with explicit reference to the influence of groups associated with Ilan Șor, especially in the Autonomous Territorial Unit of Gagauzia (Rusandu & Sterpu, 2024, pp. 87-88).

The article separately addresses developments in the Autonomous Territorial Unit of Gagauzia, where local elections were marked by exceptional administrative interventions, the role of independent candidates, and tensions between central and regional authorities (Rusandu & Sterpu, 2024, p. 89).

From a prospective perspective, the authors discuss the reconfiguration of political opposition, identifying several trends: a) the consolidation of the pro-European right through the formation of the “Together” Bloc; b) the difficulties faced by left-wing opposition in designating a single candidate; and c) the significance of the “Pact for Europe” as a symbolic and political instrument of pro-European mobilization (Rusandu & Sterpu, 2024, pp. 89-90).

The authors conclude that the 2023 local elections represented not only democratic exercise, but also a major test of political parties' capacity to adapt their strategies in anticipation of the 2024-2025 electoral cycle. They emphasize the necessity of genuine dialogue between governance and opposition, the recalibration of PAS's (Party of Action and Solidarity) social and economic policies, and the authentic consolidation of pro-European forces in order to respond to societal expectations and to internal and external challenges (Rusandu & Sterpu, 2024, pp. 90-91).

Overall, publications issued during the 2021-2024 period have expanded the analysis of political opposition by situating it in relation to governance, crises, and mechanisms of compromise. Opposition is no longer approached solely as an electoral competitor, but increasingly as an actor of indirect governance and an institution of democratic oversight. The juridical-institutional approach has been consolidated, alongside a growing orientation toward constitutional solutions, complemented by applied analyses of electoral reconfigurations.

Discussion: Convergences, Differences, and the Evolution of the Treatment of Political Opposition in Domestic Literature

1. *Convergences (Robust Consensus)*

1. *Political opposition as a necessary component of democracy.* Across all

examined works, regardless of their analytical register or disciplinary orientation, there is a clear convergence around the idea that political opposition constitutes a foundational element of democracy. It is consistently conceptualized as an integral part of pluralism and of the mechanisms of political control and accountability (Nicolaev, 2009; Moșneaga et al., 2012a; Cuciurca, 2023).

2. *The positive functions of political opposition.* The literature exhibits a broad consensus regarding the constructive functions of opposition, including oversight, the provision of political alternatives, critical evaluation of governance, and the representation of diverse social interests. More recent studies expand this functional repertoire by introducing the notion of opposition as an actor of indirect governance and by emphasizing its role in facilitating political compromise and systemic balance (Solomon, 2022).

3. *Contextual vulnerabilities specific to the Republic of Moldova.* Another area of convergence concerns the impact of the Moldovan context on the functioning of political opposition. Prolonged democratic transition, persistent polarization, and recurrent crises are identified as structural factors that weaken the institutionalization of opposition and increase the risk of its marginalization within the political system (Rusandu, 2019; Rusandu & Sterpu, 2021).

2. Differences (Emphases and Analytical Instruments)

1. *Conceptual versus applied approaches.* A major divergence can be observed between early studies, which primarily treat political opposition as a notion derived from the concept of power (Nicolaev, 2009), and later works that approach opposition as an empirical political actor, evaluated in terms of performance, effectiveness, and institutional impact (Rusandu, 2019).

2. *Political science versus legal-constitutional perspectives.* Recent research introduces a significant shift in analytical focus by arguing for the constitutionalization of political opposition. This transition elevates the discussion from the level of democratic practices and political culture to that of normative guarantees and constitutional safeguards, fundamentally altering the framework within which opposition is analyzed (Cuciurca, 2023).

3. *Conflict-oriented versus compromise-oriented interpretations.* While some studies emphasize the inherently conflictual nature of governance–opposition relations, others focus on the role of compromise, inclusion, and cooperation as prerequisites for effective governance and democratic consolidation. This divergence reflects differing normative and analytical assumptions regarding the optimal functioning of democratic systems (Solomon, 2022).

3. The Evolution of the Theme: From a Secondary Concept to an Autonomous and Mature Object of Study

Taken together, the analyzed works reveal a clear process of maturation in the scholarly study of the institution of political opposition in the Republic of

Moldova. This evolution can be delineated into four thematic and chronological stages:

1. Political opposition as a derivative of power (2009-2012);
2. Political opposition as a democratic institution (2010-2015);
3. Political opposition as an empirical actor in transition and electoral competition (2014-2019);
4. Political opposition as an interdisciplinary subject, with an emphasis on crises and constitutionalization (2021-2024).

This progression reflects a gradual shift from abstract conceptualization toward applied, normative, and interdisciplinary analyses, indicating the consolidation of political opposition as an autonomous and mature object of scholarly inquiry within domestic political science.

Conclusions

The analysis of how political opposition has been addressed in academic research conducted in the Republic of Moldova during the 2009-2024 period allows for the formulation of the following conclusions:

- Political opposition has evolved from a secondary analytical concept into an autonomous object of scientific inquiry;
- Scholarly focus has shifted from predominantly conceptual approaches to institutional, empirical, and constitutional analyses;
- Political opposition is increasingly examined as an indicator of democratic quality;
- Recent research converges on the view that institutionalization alone is no longer sufficient, and that the constitutionalization of parliamentary opposition is necessary;
- The specificity of the Republic of Moldova lies in the treatment of political opposition within a context of prolonged transition, political conflict, and recurrent crises.

Recent studies consistently emphasize that the mere existence of political opposition is insufficient for the effective functioning of democracy. Its consolidation requires the strengthening of the institutional framework and, prospectively, the constitutionalization of parliamentary opposition.

In the context of the Republic of Moldova, political opposition thus emerges not only as a subject of academic inquiry, but also as a central normative issue of democratic consolidation and the rule of law.

Opposition is no longer studied solely in a descriptive manner – focusing on what it is and how it functions – but increasingly within a normative-institutional framework that addresses how it should be protected in order to function democratically.

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