

## INTEREST GROUPS AS INTERSTATE ACTORS

ADNAN LIMANI, PhD. Candidate

Faculty of Social Sciences & International Relations  
European University of Tirana, ALBANIA

### ABSTRACT

Interest groups or pressure groups in their activity appear as strengthening element and as a major potential to cure or at least to improve the concept of democracy, due to the fact that democracy is something that grows in flow of the history a never finished task. Was supposed that influence is not simply a characteristic function of interest groups but that strongly shapes, depending from the issue. In time was understood that interest groups are important actors in decision-making and that their direct influence lies in drafting, organizing and exchange of interests including those based to the weight and their representing character. In many societies and political systems exist a big number of interest groups and having in consideration the number and their variety it is not simple to make their perfect classification but based to it do they base to the intercommunity or in the union; they can be classified in four groupings. Justification of groups of the interest as important interstate actors as well as their classification which enables to be understood easily the nature of their requests and the manner in which they try to get realized will be our main goal of this study.

**Keywords:** Interest groups, interstate actors, pressure, influence, concept of democracy.

### INTRODUCTION

Drafting of politics and decision making process is not compulsory and formed only by actual rulers and by official institutions but also by interstate actors, by governmental agencies and more and more by the pressure and the influence of the different groups of political and economic interest. Government and official institutions in their case are being treated only as one of the participants in drafting of politics and in decision making.

Drafters of politics and their action are faced with political collisions and pressures that are being carried out by the society and which influence in its drafting. These collisions and this pressure get co-listed and become operational through different channels in different societies. When is about pluralist democracies the interested parties carry out their influence through political parties, independent consultants, a major number of citizen organisations, representatives of the industry, different commercial societies, syndicates, solicitor companies and similar, but very important and undeniable place occupy different groups of economic interests or groups for political pressure.

Groups of interests respectively pressure groups appear as important factors in political decision making. Their existence and acting is more than visible. They are oriented to promote interests of particular groups in wide public sphere, respectively in political sphere. Many groups of interest which exist and act today favour or help certain parties during following political competitions or in election campaigns. Their activity except the influence in the party is oriented also towards decision centres: in Parliament, in Government and in State Administration. In recent times this group activity is more and more oriented in direction of the government that is reliable indicator of real position of the government.

## ABOUT INTEREST GROUPS

With modernising and democratisation of the society and politics the interest groups entered through big gates in political fields. Although this does not mean that they are completely new phenomenon. It is known that groups, especially in economic sphere have their roots since the gild medieval system (guild). What differs new groups of interest from their previous sisters is the more sophisticated manner of work and more widely social-politics system in which they act. With opening of the post-materialism era in which electoral body is becoming less and less structured many key factors as classes, religions and parties lose their importance. Together with it it's born the golden period of interest groups.

Today, the scope and the influence of modern groups of interests set difficult questions regarding the separation of power in democracy. Consults between governments and groups of interests are permanent and intensive; the group's offer information to the governments and necessary technical advices for approving of sensitive politics. Numerous active modern groups of interest respectively groups for pressure give today to political life dynamism and specific characteristic. Even though their activity is spread and very developed in contemporary democracy; many of them perform their activity in silence. But there are many other groups which when they want to negotiate with bureaucrats regarding details of proposed different details of regulations make pressure for their case and they ask that media from their positions to influence and to cover them. Otherwise in authoritarian regimes the articulation of interests is with less public but more vigorous and it's more based to the corrupted mode. In such regimes the interests get articulated by the part of the government, often also through individual companies or powerful individuals and not through organized groups of interest.<sup>1</sup>

Groups of interests rally and advocate for different types of interest. They can have success in their development and through lobbying to aim the achieving of their goals. However the success of development and their activity firstly is secrecy in itself. In his book with influence "Logics of collective operation" by Mancur Olson Jr. pretends that people do not have a reason to join groups, if the achievement and common efforts are in equal manner in disposition also for non- members. It is not small the number of researches that show that politic groups of interest in greater extent are connected to the business groups. Therefore in reality the groups for pressure or how some of them name them as political groups of interest in the major part present the form of articulation of their interests, which even though other means already provided big benefits for themselves by societies defined by law, but most of them exceed those legal frameworks and perform lobbying actions even that are registered under totally different name and destination.

Researcher David Truman writes and defines the groups of interest in analytic manner. He notices that the pressure groups develop the possibility of the access and influence and that administrative process leaves place for more points where groups of interest can have access. He also emphasizes that groups interact, function and influence in whole political system. Researcher Erl Latham concepts the government as reflection of different private groups that aim influencing. Based to him the government becomes as one "arbitrator" for conflicts of the group, while public politics become "result" of this effort. Latham analyses also about what makes a coalition of groups successful. He notices that regulative agencies are mainly

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<sup>1</sup> Binderkrantz, A. (2005) 'Interest Group Strategies: Navigating Between Privileged Access and Strategies of Pressure', *Political Studies* (53), 694-715.

conquered by coalitions of interest groups which request to change regulations, legislation and procedures.

Latham developed a typology of groups based to their phase of development: incubation, consciousness and organized group. Special contribution and extremely important for developing of the theory of interest groups gave the theoretician Arthur Bentley. He emphasizes that the group and the interest are inseparable, that the one without the other do not exist, that interest is the effort of the group to act and to behave in certain manner and does not exist something like that as general interests. With this view Bentley promotes one change in political analyse moving away from forms of governing towards group activities which he considers as critical mechanism of action that enable a big number of people to achieve the political intentions as well as the social ones. Bentley especially analysed the connection of interest with politics. He sees the politics as one battle of groups of interest for fulfilment of their interests. According to him political practice is reduced in continuous expression of individual and group interests of the match and their allocation.<sup>2</sup>

## GROUPS OF INTEREST AND THE PARTIES

Group of interest based to Wilson G. are groups until certain point independent by the government or by the political parties which try to influence in public politics. It is known that articulation of different interests in one democratic society is being made through different political parties. Since that for articulation of interests are in charge the parties therefore appears the need for researching of the reason for existing of group interests as well as the difference between the group of interest and the party.

The group of interest wish to influence in government, but unlike from political parties they do not wish to control the government. Almost in all democratic countries the interests are carried from the government to the state. The studying of dimension and the manner of “such articulation of interests” is important to understand the politics of one country. As political parties also the groups of interest conquer the space between the society and the state, helping the connection between them. But when political parties aspire to become a part of the government the groups of interest try to influence on it. Reflecting this narrow focus the group of interest do not fight for solution, instead they usually adopt a pragmatic and often a low access which has to do with different structures of the government that oppose them. Besides this maybe can be said that parties have rating and influence somehow weaker than before while the influence of groups until certain point increased but this did not bring any big change in listing of power and the places of actors in political table of contemporary democracy. On the other side the American authors the difference between the group of interest and the party support in existing condition in USA. There the political parties deal only with collecting of votes in elections (aggregate function). For this reason the role of articulation of specific interests or of the stance take the groups of interest.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Hague R., & Harrop M. (2001) *Comparative Government and Politics: An Introduction*, 166-181.

Olson, M., (1968) *The Logic of Collective Action: Public Goods and the Theory of Groups*, 199-226.

Moe, T.M., (1980) *The Organization of Interests*, University of Chicago Press, 768-808.

Andreas, D., & De Bièvre, D. (2007a) *The question of interest group influence*, 1–12.

Latham, E., (1952) *The group basis of politics*, Published by Cornel, 58-87.

Bentley, A., (1908) *The Process of Government: A Study of Social Pressures*, 123-4.

<sup>3</sup> Thomas, C. S., (2001) *Political Parties and Interest Groups: Shaping Democratic Governance*

(Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publisher), 16-34.

Schattschneider, E., (1942) *Party Government* (New York: Farrar & Reinhart), 115-85.

One part of critics, Low J. T. and Benson, G.C.S. notice that such wide action of groups of interest hampers the leadership of general national politics, above all resolving of global contradictions and determining of strategic direction of social and political development. Low emphasizes that such system is unable and does not have possibility to plan, adding that groups of interest are corruption of democratic government. Benson warns that this system in which the representatives of the government leave the public sphere and sovereignty is released to private satraps and that the richness more often appears as road towards political influence than that political service is road towards richness. James Medison notices that the groups of interest are very much oriented in realizing of their interests and for this reason they act against interests of the other groups or of the wider public interest. It can be concluded that such group-interest dynamism does not offer equal possibilities for all groups as well as for all layers and classes. He is if not a form of domination for powerful layers, then in any case is a form of political life under their control. In such systems, a significant part of the population remains disconnected from effective participation in political life.<sup>4</sup>

### **MOTIVES FOR ORGANIZING THE GROUPS OF INTEREST**

The most often motives for organising or involving of groups of interest are economic interests but as well they can have different nature. Therefore for example organizing in syndicate promises higher daily-pays or better working conditions as well as the other benefits. Other reasons of commitment in group can be individual believes and values respectively stance for some issues. It's not small the number of people which are interested for certain goals or principles and try to inject them in legal norms. Such are many ecologic moves. At the end should not be left out the accompanying motive respectively the will of certain people to participate in some organisation or group which has several wider and general social intentions. Many people and specifically those from the lower layers of the society do not belong to any group of interest. In other words the major part of the members of a certain group of interest usually belongs to higher layers of society.

### **SPECIFICITY OF 'GROUPS OF INTEREST' AND 'GROUPS FOR PRESSURE'**

In many places in literature we can find the group of interest and group for pressure and till the lobe of groups are synonyms. However for needs of systematization and the scientific opinion can be recorded the specifics of these meanings between which in practice often interconnect and match and sometimes is not possible to be done strictly dividing and their classification.

The term 'group of interest' is more extensive and has wider meaning then the term 'group for pressure' which is being explained and understood in a more specific and narrow sense. When is talked for a group which promotes and defends their interests influencing in media, through propaganda, education and similar then it's about 'group of interest' while in the other side when we have to do with a group which focuses in accomplishment of the intention influencing in direct manner in the decision-maker then we have to do with 'group for pressure'.

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Wilson, G., (1990) Interest Groups (Oxford and Cambridge, MA: Blackwell). 129-40.

Wilson, G., (2003) Business and Politics: A Comparative Introduction, 221-35.

<sup>4</sup> Low, J.T., (1969) The End of Liberalism, New York: Norton, 288.

Benson, G.C.S., (1978) Political Corruption in America, Toronto, 212.

Irving, B., (1952) "James Madison and His Times". The *American Historical Review* Vol. 57, 4, 853-70.

Once the term 'group of interest' was used with same meaning with which was used also the term 'group for pressure', however among them was done also the difference in the meaning that 'group for pressure' would be the group of interest organised specifically that with pressure means at the decision-making centres, respectively in other important policymakers could achieve wanted decisions for the group in general. Therefore having in mind negative sounding of the word 'pressure' in this case the term 'group of interest' started to be used more and more in both above-mentioned cases although did not manage completely to translocate from use of the term 'group for pressure' and precisely not from the political publicities.<sup>5</sup>

## METHODS AND ACTING MEANS OF GROUPS OF INTEREST

With extraordinary political insight, contemporary political science started to follow participation, ways and manners in which powerful and rich groups of interest or their coalitions take part in creating and forming but also in inability of decision making and certain unwanted political affiliations. This activity, this influence of groups of interest is actually one technique. Those thanking too many and intensive appearances, have established perfidious and various methods in a manner that in front of the others to reach the treasured information as hearing techniques and techniques of expression and communication in a way that their message to be transmitted and sometimes to use also the public.

Methods, forms and other means with which are served the group of interest or groups for pressure can be different. The first and most important method or the first technique of acting groups of interest is lobbying. Lobbying is the direct contact of representatives of the groups of interest or of the lobbyists with representatives of narrow politic structures with intention for accomplishment of any of their goal. Other important acting form of groups of the interests is also the work in preparing the draft laws. Representatives of the groups of interest with invitation of respective political organ or thanking to their pressure join in process of consultations and the compilation of certain decisions and especially the draft laws. It is worth to mention the involvement and commitment of groups of interest also in medial campaigns especially in electronic media as well as on the written ones (internet, TV, radio and daily mail and magazines) lobbying with aim of informing the opinion and obtaining support for certain purposes. Among the activities of groups of the interests became also part for giving the support to certain candidates, parties or groups.<sup>6</sup> Support is often of material nature but could also be of some other character. It is worth to mention also the acting of groups of interest in sphere of judiciary to realize some of their intentions. There are opinions and impression that whole activity of groups of interest is spontaneity.

However and despite of these opinions and impressions their actions is more and more sophisticated, planned and well organized. Lobbyers use most refined methods with aim of mobilizing the basic groups and organisations in respective geographic, demographic and political zones which mainly are selected by care. Such thing verifies K.M. Goldstein. He explains convincingly that very little activity in basic lobbying is spontaneous. Basic groups are very mobile and with groups of interest are beyond measure sophisticated, technologically developed and with professional lobbers.<sup>7</sup> On the other hand when as aim

<sup>5</sup> Gamson, W., (1968) *Stable un-representation in American Society*. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 15-21.

<sup>6</sup> Eising, R., (2003) 'Interest Groups: Opportunity Structures and Governance Capacity', 147-72.

Cini, M., (2006) *European Union Politics*, Oxford University Press., 192-204.

Hosli, M. Deemen, A. & Widgrén, M., (2002) *Institutional Challenges in the EU*, 136-52.

<sup>7</sup> McConnele, G., (1966) *Private Power and American Democracy*, New York, 244.

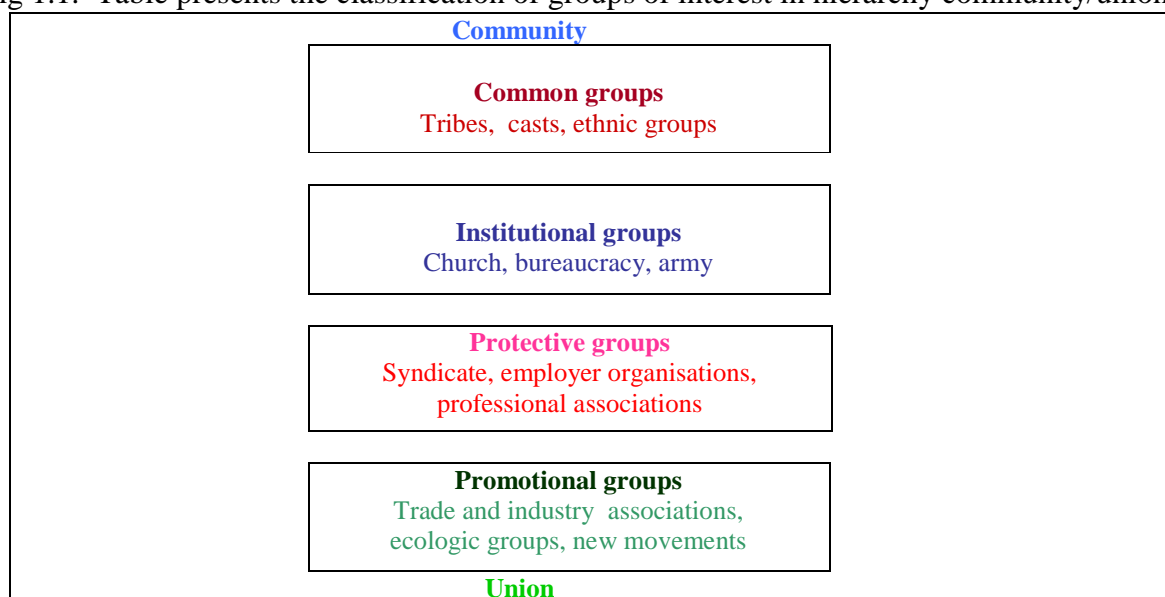
have economic interests of their members, often groups of interest join in federations or in coalition with other groups to increase its efficiency.

Such organs are known as associations “roof”. Example can be the Confederation of the Industry in United Kingdom (TUC). Their members are not individuals but companies or groups if interest that represent specific industries. Also the syndicates respond in similar manner.<sup>8</sup>

## CLASSIFICATION OF GROUPS OF INTEREST

In many societies and politic systems exists a big number of different groups of interest. The different groups based to their intern integration and hardness, organising and the level of institutionalisation, nature and manner of acting can be categorized and classified in some groups. Jean Blondel having in consideration these specific attributes categorizes the groups of interest based to the fact do they base in community or in union. Connections according to the community based to Blondel form at birth not with voluntarily membership (as family) but this meaning has to do also with ethnical, linguistic relation and with relations between casts. In the other side of the spectre he emphasizes based to the union which get created for specific, instrumental intentions. People based to him join for the reason of common intentions although limited. In the following table (Figure 1.1) are presented four types of groups: common, institutional, protective and promotional. They are listed based to the place that they occupy in this hierarchy.

Fig 1.1. Table presents the classification of groups of interest in hierarchy community/union



Source: Adapted by: Blondel, J., (1995, 105).

Composition of groups of the interest in every society, for the most part, is a reflection of the relative importance of connections based on the community, as opposed to connections based

Goldstein, K.M., (1999) Interest Groups, Lobbying, and Participation in America, Cambridge, 602-13.

<sup>8</sup> Seymour, C.U., (1996) British Press and Broadcasting ;since 1945, Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 6.

to the union. Links based to the community are more important in developing countries, while those based on the union, in developed countries.

### **COMMON GROUPS OF INTEREST**

Common groups are not groups created with certain intention but they are part of social life. They are ranked where the communities are; common groups became more important in politics especially in post-communist world where ethnical and religious identities are important. Examples are in some former communist countries which had ethnical but also the religious character. In western world the conflict of the Protestants and Catholics in North Ireland is example of particular and harsh conflict between common groups. In many developing countries these groups based to the kinsfolk and in ethnical affiliation is the most important channel of separation for state resources. From politicians and officials is expected that they use their functions for the well-being of “their” common group. This type of group establishes the manner of living. Where group is in danger by other groups or cause of the rights which liberal democracy guarantees to all citizens break-out harsh political conflicts which with difficulty are solved. Unlike from professional associations these groups are not formally organized but only their interests are expressed through parties and protests.

### **INSTITUTIONAL GROUPS OF INTEREST**

These groups are formal big institutions which are being created to perform political pressure but often they enter also in political area. Such groups are churches, corporations, syndicates and universities. The institutional groups in society has established role which provides the autonomy authority in implementation of politics. Just like political industry could not survive without support of the industry or educational politics without teachers support. Another type of institutional group can be found in public organs within the framework of the government as bureaucracy, army and local leadership. Also in authoritarian systems where the independent groups are outside of the law or are under surveillance, institutions within the framework of the government again can express their opinion before those decisions are being taken. Such institutional groups articulate their interests within the government for this reason they do not need special organs which would represent them.

### **PROTECTIVE GROUPS OF INTEREST**

Protective groups refer also as sectorial or functional groups. They are organized formal groups which are established to protect material interests of its members starting from doctors until the teachers. When we think that these “groups of interest” among the first that remember are protective groups. Syndicates, employer organisations, industry organs as well as professional associations are good examples of these groups. Such groups get established with aim of influencing on governments and they dispose also with sanctions which help them in accomplishing of their goals. Protective groups request selective benefits and the external status for its members in respective government departments (Figure 1.2). Protective associations for the reason that represent clear economic interests often are groups of influence by all types of interest groups. They are sustainable, linked with safe and reliable resources. They often base in local interests therefore get born geographic groups as opposing form of protective groups. With their negative attitude “*build everywhere, except here*”, the geographic groups had success to obstruct the changes but unlike other protective groups they on the most of the cases are temporary and after they achieve their goal they get dissolved.

## PROMOTIONAL GROUPS OF INTEREST

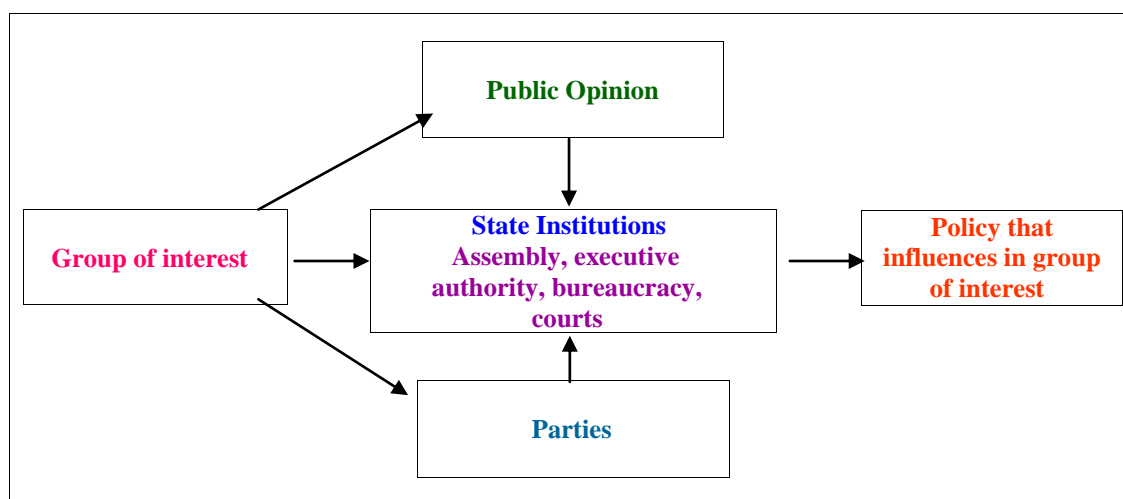
Protective groups are not the only type of organized interest. In fact many of established groups are promotional groups. Promotional groups advocate ideas, identities, politics and values. They are called also attitude groups of the cause or also campaign groups. Examples of promotional groups are trade and industrial associations, economic companies, ecological groups and new social movements, as proponents and opponents of the abortion, organisations for fighting of pornography and many others.

Classic promotional groups do not have as primarily the personal bounties of its members or their material interests but wider actuation of public interest. With lack of resources and approach which are available for groups which protect economic interests, promotional groups get service with publicity as with its own capital directed in society as much as in the state. These groups are much more developed in stable democracies cause of the participated culture and transparency of media and are precious and accepted also by the governments. The border that divides protective groups from the promotional ones is not well determined for example such groups as woman's movement or lobby of homosexuals which request to influence in public opinion often are classified as promotional. However their main reason is to promote interests of specific groups it means promotional interests but on the other side also protect the certain group.<sup>9</sup>

## ACCESS CHANELS FOR GROUPS OF INTEREST

There exist the numbers of ways how you communicate the interests to those who bring political decisions as well as a number of channels through which this process is developed. Important channels of approach of interest groups through which is developed the process of influence are direct communication with government, transverse influence through political parties and transverse influence of interest groups through public opinion.

Figure 1.2. Table presents regular mechanism of general influence



Source: Adopted by: Matthews (1989. 217).

<sup>9</sup> Blondel, J., (1995) Comparative Government: An Introduction, 2nd edn, Harlow and N.Y., 88-105.



## DIRECT COMMUNICATION WITH GOVERNMENT

All activities of the groups of interest in direct or indirect manner are directed in the government. The direct communication is focused in bureaucracy, in executive power and in Courts. In liberal democracies the major pressure is being made on bureaucracy. The groups of interest are there where power is, while decisions are taken in the offices of executive organs. Mathews commenting regarding this link between groups of interest and the government emphasizes among others that the importance of bureaucracy is being verified through her role in drafting and implementing of politics. Further on he emphasizes that many routine, technical and “less important” decisions which anyhow are vital for the group of interest, in fact deal by the part of state employees. The conceived politics of the elected officials is difficult to control also with groups with influence of interest. For this reason the witty protective groups focus in more narrow parts of interest, because for them is difficult to control of wider contours of politics, established by the part of elected officials. Most western democracies follow the tradition of discussions with the organized public through consultative councils or through committees.

Assemblies are additional channels through which interests and requests can be expressed. But the importance of legislative organs for the groups of interest depends from their political weight. As illustration can serve the comparison between the generality of western democracies in which lobbyists try to influence in executive power. But if groups of interest consider that are ignored in the process of politic drafting they can decelerate the decisions through courts. In European Union one group of interest which does not achieve to accomplish the desired goal in local area can direct to the European Court of Justice.<sup>10</sup>

## INDIRECT INFLUENCE THROUGH POLITICAL PARTIES

When was talked about groups of interest was said among the others that the groups of interest and parties in theory have different roles: aim of the parties is achievement of positions in government while groups of interest have the only aim for influence. Also despite these contradictory tasks, relationships of the parties and the groups of interest can be very approximate since some political parties also steam by groups of interest. Sometimes the groups of interest can imitate political parties or also to convert on them, as usually the ecological groups convert in green political party. In similar way the ethnic groups can create party which will represent their interests. Some parties especially the specialised ones in fact are masked groups of interest which try to protect some interest and not to grab one part of the government power. There where coalitions are usual the small groups can give one or two ministry posts. Such parties named as “Interest Parties” has everyday more, while with the party image they use to awaken public curiosity and to achieve certain privileges for some of their narrow interest. These small parties of interest wish to enter in parliament in a manner to work in accomplishing the goals and more specific as governing. Such parties of interest can be encounter also in post-communist parties where were developed as expression of narrow interests as those agrarian, religious or ethnical. Many of the groups more desire to try the fate rather than to develop the close connection with only one party. Therefore not strong,

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<sup>10</sup> Matthews, T., (1989) ‘Interest Groups’, in *Politics in Australia*, ed. R. Smith and L. Watson, 211-27.  
Cigler, C. & Loomis, B., (2002) *Interest Group Politics*, Washington: Congressional, 221-43.

pragmatic links between the parties and the groups of interest are rule but this is only one partnership account and nothing more.

## INDIRECT IMPACT THROUGH MASS MEDIA

Media, internet, radio and TV are additional resources by which dispose the group of interests. Medial messages direct to the wide public and not only the certain politicians. For this reason media has special importance for promotional groups which wish to influence in public opinion. Ecological groups but also the other groups of interest organize activities through which they advertise their interests and the group in which they are organised. The activities of ecologic groups can be seen. They for example can occupy one oil platform in a manner to prevent its sinking knowing that the recording of their actions will be shown on world televisions. Groups of this type consider that media always are on their side. Mass-media are less important for protection groups because their requests are more specialised more secret and they want to influence in public opinion especially in those political compilations where the assembly are important. In United States of America many groups of interest understood that firstly should influence in the opinion, if they wish to influence in Congress or elsewhere, for this reason was adopted the double tactic of public presentation and the travels to Washington.

## DIRECT ACTION, PROTESTS AND VIOLENCE

Direct action usually is a shelter of common groups to which was denied formal approach near the government. The violence escalations was and maybe still is the only way through which people which lost hope in government can express their dissatisfaction. This is not mainly historical phenomenon because in many established democracies protests break-out. In recent times we have protests also in other countries members of European Union especially in Greece and Spain. Such behaviour often is not calculated, is irrational and is expression of frustrations, but direct actions can be directed also in intentions. Massive protests have marked the end of communism in Eastern Europe. In international terrorism was marked fruitful manner the use of media for drawing global attention for its goals. Outbreak of last protests in Arab countries named "Arab Spring" covered like never before by world media also can serve as a good example. The use of pressure tactics often in careful manner is planned to accord with legitimate methods. Orthodox and not orthodox methods compose an integrated spectre of action. Protest only as protest does not have value. They only draw media attention but is necessary to undertake also additional actions to accomplish desirable political changes.<sup>11</sup>

## CONCLUSION

The role of groups of interest that act as subnational actors was made important field of political researches. In the study we followed methodology performance to arrive to the main goal, the arguing of groups of the interest as important subnational actors as well as their classification which enables to understand more easily the nature of their requests and the manner in which they try to accomplish.

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<sup>11</sup> Dellenbrant, J. A., (1993) "*Parties and Party Systems in Eastern Europe*", pub., M.E harple, 147-62.  
Dalton, R., (1994) *The Green Rainbow: Environmental Groups in Europe* London, 76-88.  
Brooker, P., (2000) *Non-Democratic Regimes: Theory, Government and Politics*, 155-223.

This research I believe is important and contributes the development of democracy in general; starting always from the fact that democracy is something that grows in the flow of history, and is never finished task. The major participation of different groups of the interest and the civil society in decision making would be one of the powers which would help the flow of legitimate democracy and would be empowering element in overcoming of deficit of democracy which is one of the main requests in the world on the new century. To enable power of decision- making and to be extended much beyond; with big number of actors with the possibility of impact in decision making.

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