

POLITICAL PARTIES IN THE CONTEXT OF CIVIL SOCIETY

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Formulation of the problem. Interest mediation between society and the political institutions of the state is one of the crucial elements of the democratic process. In democracies, citizens organize in order to express and defend their social and political interests.

In making demands on the state and providing support for specific preferences, political organizations act as «input» agencies in the political systems. Political organizations may, however, also be involved in state decision-making and the implementation of public policies, thus acting as «output» agencies. In both ways, political organizations provide linkages between society and government.

Analysis of the main research and publications. In traditional foreign literature on civil society, political parties are not thought of as part of civil society. They are either part of the regime or they are the «government in waiting», hoping to be elected. It is suggested that political parties are driven by a desire to govern, rather than by a desire to associate for common objectives as do civil society organizations. But political parties are also a means to channel people's aspirations and if they are unable to perform this function, civil society is the loser.

The main results of the study. In particular, the (Western) European parties emerged as an organized expression of social and political conflict. The liberal, conservative, rural, and the Social Democratic organizations tried to reaffirm their positions in and through party organizations.

Through participation in elections, representation in parliaments and participation in democratically elected governments, they sought to implement social and political reforms. By their origins but also by their parliamentary orientation, and the desire to achieve public office, until today the political parties are positioned between civil society, parliament and government.

Comparative research often has problems in agreeing on a common vocabulary and in identifying equivalence. For the purposes of this theme, we may want to work with a minimal definition of political parties as political organizations that compete in elections on a regular basis and maintain some form of internal structures (e.g., party executives, party conferences, membership branches). Following

Alfred Stepan's usage, politywide parties are parties that organize and compete across the whole of the territory (or most of it), while non-politywide parties, which may or may not have an ethno-nationalist agenda, are restricted to specific regions.

We should keep a clear analytical distinction between party organizations and party systems. The latter refers to the patterns of interaction resulting from inter-party competition.

With respect to civil society, we propose to make a similar distinction between the system of civil society organizations and the territorial structures of individual organizations and associations within civil society. We suggest to employ a wide definition of civil society as a «set of self organized intermediary groups» (P. Schmitter). Civil society comprises a diverse spectrum of voluntary associations, which are organizing around shared interests, objectives and values. This spectrum includes organizations and groups which strongly vary in their degree of formality, autonomy and power.

Civil society associations include, for example, trade unions, professional and business organizations, churches and clerical groups, advocacy groups in areas like the environment, equality and liberal freedom, and social movements.

In a certain way, political parties can be considered as political organizations of the civil society that aggregate the interests of a particular group (or several groups), articulate and represent them. Through participation in democratic elections, they are anxious to present these interests to the representative and formal institutions of politics.

Links between civil society organizations and political parties vary from country to country. While civil society discourse in Europe and North America is biased against NGOs and social movement groups participating in political parties, the same groups are playing key roles in building new political parties in Latin America and elsewhere. In the Philippines, for example, social movements and NGOs are active within parties. In Indonesia, the weakness of social movements may require that NGOs concentrate at this time on helping to build strong peoples' organizations.

While it is necessary to encourage cooperation between parties and civil society organizations, it's important to recognize the differences between the two sectors. The distance between them is necessary and healthy.

Civil society should not be subordinate to parties, and it's a mistake to wrap the party sector into an undifferentiated concept of civil society. They have distinct functions that change depending on the political conditions. We should find effective ways to aid them both and, where necessary, to foster their close collaboration. But we need to respect their autonomy and help them realize their own democratic objectives.

Both political parties and civil society actors are important when linking the state to civil society. It may cause confusion as it is sometimes difficult to distinguish between civil society organizations and political parties. An old rule of thumb is that parties are in the business of winning elections and wielding power while civil society organizations are not holds true. For the most part, civil society actors do not contest elections and their rationale is to act on behalf of particular interests

and articulate their demands. However, in reality things are more complex and occasionally even civil society groups put candidates up for election.

Doherty captures this point very well: «A dynamic civil society fosters many elements essential to democracy: participation, accountability, and sustainable political reform. Civil society organizations contribute to the shaping of policy making technical expertise available for policy formulators and by exerting pressure on governments and political institutions. They encourage citizen participation and promote civic education. They provide leadership training and opportunities for the young and marginalized and act as a vehicle for their participation in civic life when working through political parties may not be the best option».

A quick look at the roles frequently attributed to civil society organizations and political parties reveals great overlap. Wading through the muddy waters between the distinction of political parties and civil society organizations a summary of their functions in the process of democratic consolidation is outlined below.

Civil society organizations offer an important contribution to the political process and to the stabilization of democracy in each society. The higher number and increased importance of civil society organizations all over the world prove that practically everywhere a significant proportion of citizens wishes to take part in political processes. But even in the area of civil society organizations similar tendencies as for political parties can be observed: traditionally strong institutions like the labour unions are nowadays weakened; the multitude of organizations is not necessarily proof of stronger influence, but an indication of their fragmentation; many of those organizations are neither transparent nor do they respect the democratic rules in their internal procedures; they are usually rather weak in terms of organization and rarely accomplish long-term relations with their members; identification with them is often ephemeral. Thus, the demobilization of the parties is only partly compensated by the civil social organizations.

At article 1 of the Law of Ukraine from 05.04.2001 № 2365-III «**On political parties of Ukraine**» citizens' right to freely associate in political parties to exercise and protect their rights and liberties, and to satisfy their political, economic, social, cultural, and other interests is determined and guaranteed by the Constitution of Ukraine. Restrictions on this right are allowed pursuant to the Constitution of Ukraine in the interests of national security, public order, health care, or so as to protect the rights and freedoms of other peoples, as well as in other cases envisaged by the Constitution of Ukraine. No-one shall be forced to join a political party or restricted in voluntarily withdrawing from a political party. Partly affiliation or non-affiliation shall not warrant any restrictions of [civil] rights and liberties or any benefits or privileges on the part of the state. Any restrictions in terms of political party membership shall be the sole prerogative of the Constitution and [other] laws of Ukraine.

A political party shall be understood as a legally registered voluntary association of citizens adhering to a certain national social development programme, aimed at assisting in the formation and expression of citizens' political will, participating in elections and other political events.

Only citizens with a right to vote under the Constitution of Ukraine shall be eligible as members of political parties. A citizen shall be a member of only one political party at a time. The following persons shall not be eligible: (1) judges; (2) officials of the public prosecutor's office; (3) officials of bodies of the Interior; (4) officials/officers of the Security Service of Ukraine [SBU]; (5) servicemen.

Members of political parties shall terminate their membership while occupying any of the above posts/ranks/positions.

The procedures of joining a political party, suspending or terminating membership shall be determined by that party's statute/charter.

Political party membership shall be attested. A compulsory condition of such attested membership shall be a Ukrainian citizen's statement submitted to a given party's statutory body and expressing that citizen's desire to become a member of that party.

The form of attesting [recording] political party membership shall be determined by a given party's statute/charter.

No political party structures shall be formed within the executive, judicial or local self-government authorities, military units, state enterprises, institutions of learning, and other government-run institutions and organizations.

Conclusion. Political parties should work with civil society to re-structure the party system by reducing the number of political parties. Political parties should work with civil society to push the political parties to be more responsible in articulating their identity and policies, recruiting candidates and communicating with the grass roots. Political parties should create a structure which will control political parties' funding mechanisms. The leaders of political parties should change their orientation from simply seeking power to engaging with issues. This needs to be done, specifically, by communicating with their constituencies.

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Olga Lotyuk. Political Parties in the context of civil society

This article analyzes the relation between political parties and civil society. Disclosed problem understanding of political parties in the context of civil society.

Keywords: *political parties, civil society, political system, democracy, law.*

Лотюк О. Політичні партії у контексті громадянського суспільства

У статті аналізуються питання співвідношення політичних партій та громадянського суспільства. Розкриваються проблеми розуміння завдань політичних партій у контексті громадянського суспільства.

Ключові слова: *політичні партії, громадянське суспільство, політична система, демократія, закон.*

Лотюк О. Политические партии в контексте гражданского общества

В статье анализируются вопросы соотношения политических партий и гражданского общества. Раскрываются проблемы понимания задач политических партий в контексте гражданского общества.

Ключевые слова: *политические партии, гражданское общество, политическая система, демократия, закон.*

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