Case Study: Political Parties, Their Social Ties and Role in Political Change

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Overview

This is a case study on how political parties link society and state in developing countries. There is a great variety and number of political parties in developing countries; there has also been a tendency to study them in terms of western experience. By the 1980s the consensus was that their political role was marginal, but subsequently interest grew in their role in processes of democratization. This case study considers the main features and sub-types of political parties in developing countries; it explores their interaction in party systems; it examines the way that parties relate to their 'social base' and civil society organizations; and it analyses parties' political role, in particular their contribution or otherwise to the building of democracy.

The case study comprises the following sections:

Introduction

Parties as institutions

Parties and party systems

Parties and their social base

Parties' political role: building or undermining democracy?

Conclusion

Introduction

Parties are political institutions linking society and state. As such they are of the greatest political relevance to the relationships explored in parts two and three of *Politics in the Developing World*. However, not only are they a revealing reflection of state-society relationships but also, in the right circumstances, they help to shape these relationships and can constitute an independent political variable.

The great number and variety of parties make all attempts at definition perilous but the following is a good start: parties are 'associations formally organized with the explicit and declared purpose of acquiring and/or maintaining legal control, either singly or in coalition or electoral competition with other similar associations over the personnel and the policy of the government of an actual or prospective sovereign state' (Coleman and Rosberg, 1964 : 2). Whilst this is helpful, clearly in the real world there are many ambiguous cases where parties overlap with social movements, civil society organizations, guerrilla movements, or government institutions such as the military (as in Iraq's former Ba'ath Party).

Political scientists have devoted endless attention to western political parties but until recently much less to parties in the developing world. There has also been a tendency to analyse parties in the developing world in terms of features and issues arising in the literature on western political parties. As such, when developing countries first gained political independence parties were expected to contribute to the building of democracy. As this expectation appeared increasingly unrealistic and with the new preoccupation of writers like Huntington (1968) with 'strong government' (see Chapter 1), parties were instead seen as potential agents of state and nation-building. When this expectation in turn was, with some notable exceptions, largely disappointed, there was a tendency to write off parties in developing countries; they were perceived as organizationally weak and only marginal political players.

It was only from the 1980s with the new focus on democratization that they became the subject of renewed attention with the central question once more being their contribution to democracy. Their role in building democracy was seen to be crucial and in this context a substantial literature has emerged analysing, among other things, their features, interactions, and regulation. One stimulus has been the growing interest of western agencies in forms of party assistance. However as our knowledge and understanding of political parties has expanded, and in line with the growing recognition of the limits and setbacks to democratization in the developing world, parties have more recently been seen as potential obstacles as well as agents for democratization.

This case study begins by considering the main features, and sub-types, of parties as institutions. The second section discusses the relationship between parties and the broader party systems within which they operate, as well as the kinds of factors shaping these party systems. The third section then returns to the question of the links between parties and society, the nature of their social base and of the party's relationship with this base. In the fourth section the focus is on what parties *do* in the context of state-society relations and more specifically, complementing the discussion in Chapter 14, their contributions to democratization.

Political parties as institutions

Chapter 3 focuses on the 'new institutionalist' approach which has become an influential strand of political analysis. Its premise is that 'institutions matter'; they have an independent impact on political processes and outcomes. Political parties are important examples of such institutions. Additionally, the 'new' institutionalism, as opposed to its earlier form, has laid greater emphasis on the contrast and relationship between 'formal' and 'informal' aspects of institutions. This formal-informal dimension has been taken up in particular in a developing world context, when considering political institutions, such as parties.

Political parties in the developing world are often contrasted with those in western democracies. Indeed, frequently they are described as 'weakly institutionalised'. The concept of party institutionalisation, though much employed, is hard to pin down. Randall and Svåsand (2002a) suggest it includes internal aspects (organization and 'value-infusion' or commitment) and external aspects (decisional autonomy, and rootedness in social and public life). Others, for instance Basedau and Stroh (2008), have sought to operationalize and measure these dimensions in concrete situations.

The main arguments as to why parties in the developing world are considered organizationally weak will be briefly explored. For example, factors like the weakness of an independent middle-class and extreme social inequality give rise to a hierarchical political culture, prejudicial to the consolidation of democracy in general (see Chapter 14). Parties are also faced with severe resource shortages, exacerbated by the needs of increasingly expensive electoral campaigns. Although there is growing interest in the

possibility of state funding for parties, in practice they remain chiefly reliant on either the personal fortunes of their leaders or donations from wealthy individuals. Problematically, this funding creates the opportunity for 'reverse clientelism' in which donors exercise inappropriate influence over party decision-making (Austin and Tjernström 2003).

Furthermore the perceived weakness of institutional parties reflects the political and historical context of their countries. Long periods of authoritarian rule have often disrupted party development and have meant for other parties a very close and debilitating association with the state.

Finally the weakness of political parties in developing countries has been exacerbated by the effects of 'globalization'. Thus from the 1980s reduced western support for authoritarian regimes and more positive pressures for democratic opening meant that rather than representing the outcome of a gradual internal political process, 'founding' multi-party elections often arrived at extremely short notice, encouraging a proliferation of 'instant' and frequently ephemeral new parties. The apparent inevitability of processes of economic globalization has diminished scope for meaningful ideological differences between parties that could have helped them to develop a distinct identity. Moreover globalization has been associated with striking developments in mass communications. In the west this has contributed to the change from old style mass membership parties to 'catch-all' or 'electoral-professional' parties, with an increased focus on the personality of the party leader. In many developing countries the impact has been more dramatic.

As you can see there is much to support the perception of weakly institutionalized parties in developing countries. However, it is also worth considering the arguments against such an opinion.

Firstly, these political parties are often being compared with a particular type of western party, sometimes referred to as the 'class-mass party', as typified by the Labour Party in Britain or Germany's Social Democratic Party. These parties were never

particularly representative of western parties and have changed considerably over recent decades.

Secondly, this perception does not do justice to the variety of parties to be found within the developing world, and even within its constituent countries. Within the developing world, and especially as a consequence of the last wave of (re-) democratization, there are well over a thousand political parties. Indeed new or ostensibly new political parties are being formed all the time. In 2016 alone, such parties were launched in countries such as Kenya, Hong Kong, Zimbabwe, Malaysia, India, and southern Sudan. Some have been a response to democratic openings; others are new incarnations or amalgamations of older parties. Alongside this continual stream of new parties sit many other older parties, some with a long and continuous history. For example, India's Congress Party founded in 1888 (see Chapter 29), Mexico's PRI (Institutional Revolutionary Party) founded under another name in 1929 (Chapter 23), and South Africa's African National Congress (ANC) likewise founded under another name in 1912. Some of these long lasting parties are of course but pale shadows of their former selves, for instance Zambia's UNIP (United National Independence Party) which occupied a dominant position both in the struggle for independence and in the first quarter century afterwards (see web case study 2).

Furthermore, the political parties in developing countries also vary from a western model in the way they were formed. Some of the strongest, most institutionalized parties, for instance India's Congress Party, the ANC in South Africa, and FRELIMO (Mozambique Liberation Front) in Mozambique are based on movements for national independence or liberation. This is also true for a number of other parties in tropical Africa that became single ruling parties following independence in the 1960s. Some of which, like KANU in Kenya and Chama Cha Mapinduzi in Tanzania, have survived the recent return to multiparty democracy to remain major political players. New parties continue to form on this basis. For instance in south-east Asia, Partai Aceh was formally established in 2008 and based on the former rebel movement in Indonesia's province of Aceh (see Chapter 21).

Other parties have been based on movements for social revolution – notably Mexico's PRI. Or they have been originally based on a religious movement, for instance India's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and a succession of Islamist parties, many of which, like Turkey's AKP, and Ennahda in Tunisia are currently (as of 2016) key political players.

There has been much recent academic interest in a particular sub-type of this kind of party: those based on a former guerrilla or armed rebel movement. Whilst they have always existed, as in the case of FRELIMO or the ANC, Ishiyama (2016) suggests that they have become more common since the end of the Cold War. For instance, the FMLN in El Salvador formed as a party following the 1992 Peace Accord and is generally held up as an example of rather successful transformation. This is in contrast to the URNG formed following Guatemala's 1996 Firm and Lasting Agreement (see Chapter 26). Allison (2016) suggests that factors contributing to the relative weakness of the URNG have included its comparatively small size, internal disunity, and the fact that it had failed to develop an effective political wing with strong links to civil society. It is perhaps noteworthy that this recent literature on parties linked to former rebel movements is unusual as an attempt to theorize parties that is not based on European historical experience.

Another category of parties have been formed by sponsoring in some sense from government, or the state, itself. In the past there were a large number of such parties including: the Arab Socialist Union, formed by Nasser in Egypt in 1962; its successor the National Democratic Party, founded by Sadat in 1978; and the National Renewal Alliance (Arena) formed by the military government in Brazil in 1965. More recently numbers of these state-sponsored parties may have declined, but some remain a significant political force. For example, Golkar, originally established at the end of the 1960s as the ruling party under Suharto's New Order regime in Indonesia, was the second largest party in the parliament formed in 2014, winning 91 seats.

In contrast, other political parties in the developing world have been formed by politically ambitious, and often wealthy, individuals as vehicles for their own personal advancement. This was true of the parties that sustained President Collor in Brazil, and President Fujimori in Peru. A more recent example is the Thai Rak Thai Party in

Thailand, formed by business tycoon Thaksin Shinawatra, which gained an absolute majority in the parliament elected in November 2000 even though it had only been formed a few months before. Although the party lost power for a while, Thai Rak Thai reemerged as the Pheu Thai Party to make Shinawatra's sister, Yingluck, Prime Minister from 2013-14 (Pongsudhirak, 2012).

Given this variety of parties in the developing world, it would be very useful to be able to categorize them in terms of a relevant and accepted typology. Unfortunately for the moment such a typology is not available and constructing one would be no easy task. Western political science, beginning with Duverger (1954), has tended to focus on organizational features, distinguishing between: *cadres* parties set up by 'notables' to get them into parliament, with limited organization; *mass* parties either, as in communist parties, cell-based and highly disciplined or in the class-mass type referred to above, enjoying a degree of internal democracy; pragmatic *catch-all parties* that originally evolved out of class-mass parties; and, most recently, reflecting developments in communications technology and electoral competition, the streamlined *electoral-professional* party.

But while these categories are not irrelevant to the developing world, they do not capture the range or the most representative types of its parties. Gunther and Diamond (2003) proposed a new provisional typology of the world's parties. It posited five broad types, based on organizational characteristics and, within these, further sub-types based on their ideological character and their strategic orientation (whether they abide by pluralistic norms or aim at hegemony). The typology includes three particularly relevant innovations. The first is to introduce, within the general category of 'mass party' a new sub-type, the proto-hegemonic *fundamentalist party*, examples being Algeria's Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) and Turkey's Welfare Party (see Chapter 8). However, this begs the question of just how fundamentalist such parties prove to be. For example, in the recent developments of the so-called 'Arab spring', Ennahda in Tunisia and the subsequently disbanded Freedom and Justice Party (FJP) in Egypt have both been electorally successful Islamist parties but opinions are divided on how fundamentalist they have shown themselves to be.

The second innovation is to introduce a new type of party, the ethnicity-based party. This is not a mass party because, typically, it is organizationally very limited and more interested in accessing state resources than in ideology or policy. Within this latter category Gunther and Diamond distinguish two sub-types. One is the *ethnic party*, which Chandra (2011) has more recently defined as 'one that champions the interests of an ethnic group'). Numerous such parties are to be found in Asia, for instance India's Telegu Dasam Party representing the Telegu-speaking people and the Dravida Munnetra Kazagham (DMK) and its offshoots representing the Tamils. They similarly abound in tropical Africa, although given the often very large number of ethnic groups in a single African country, parties that represent only one such group are relatively unusual. So-called indigenous parties based on Amerindian communities have also become a recent development in Latin America. Although ethnic parties have not traditionally been a feature of Latin America, there are now parties such as Pachakutik in Ecuador and the MAS (Movement for Socialism) in Bolivia founded in 1997, whose leader, Morales, was re-elected for a third term as President in 2014.

The other sub-type of the ethnicity-based party distinguished by Gunther and Diamond is the *congress party,* which brings a range of ethnically-identified groups together. India's Congress Party and the United Malays National Organization in Malaysia are cited as examples, although, certainly in the Indian Congress case, this seems to understate the role of organization and ideas, at least in the past.

The third innovation Gunther and Diamond introduce is a new sub-type within the electoralist type of party, the *personalistic* party, to apply to parties like the Thai Rak Thai Party mentioned above. (See Table 1.1 for Gunther and Diamond's categories and parties they could apply to.) Overall this typology is undoubtedly a great advance in getting us to think in a more systematic way about how parties vary. However, the typology does have some limitations. Firstly it still remains in some ways western-oriented and secondly, as the authors acknowledge, all categories represent 'ideal types' and actually existing parties tend to straddle across them. For instance, many seemingly ethnic, or multi-ethnic, parties in Africa are actually mainly vehicles for individual political leaders, though these are hardly the high-tech, professionalized organizations evoked by the term 'electoralist'.

Table 1.1: Typology of parties in developing countries

Elite-based parties	**A** traditional local notable party	**s**ome conservative parties in Latin America
	B clientelistic party	seen as emerging to replace A
Mass-based parties	**C** Leninist	communist parties, as in North Korea or Cuba, but also Taiwan's Kuomintang prior to democratization
	D pluralist nationalist parties	
	E denominational mass-party	predominantly Roman Catholic
	F fundamentalist party	eg FIS in Algeria
Ethnicity-based parties	**G** ethnic party	just concerned with own ethnic group
	H congress party	best examples are Congress, UMNO in Malaysia
Electoralist parties	**I** programmatic party	sub-type which is a bit more ideological eg DPP in Taiwan
	J personalistic party	Fujimori's and Collor's parties, and Thai Rak Thai Party

(Source: adapted from Gunther and Diamond, 2003)

Parties in party systems

Individual political parties also need to be understood in the context of party systems – the interactions between a set of parties – that help both to shape and constrain them. Party systems vary considerably, and different ways of classifying them have been advanced. In this context the thinking of Giovanni Sartori (1976) has been seminal. His approach to classification involves the number of parties, the degree of ideological polarization and whether the system is competitive or authoritarian. By 'number of parties' he is not referring to literally how many parties there are. In developing countries, especially when competitive elections have only recently been (re-)introduced, there are often a great number of parties. For instance 26 parties contested the first competitive elections in Côte d'Ivoire in 1990 and more than a

hundred parties were formed and 38 parties contested in Indonesia's 1999 General Election (see Chapter 21). What matters for taxonomic purposes are the 'relevant' parties. For Sartori, these include the strongest in terms of votes and seats but also those with either 'blackmail' or 'coalition' potential. (Many scholars studying party politics in Latin American or African settings have preferred to follow the formula for calculating the number of significant or 'effective' parties, based on the distribution of seats between parties, put forward by Laakso and Taagepera (1979)).

The typology that results from Sartori's approach is set out in Table 1.2, with suggested examples of national party systems fitting the different categories. Obviously many developing countries in the past were 'one-party systems', either *de jure* (by law) or *de facto* (in effect) and some still remain, including the communist party-states of Cuba, North Korea, Vietnam, and China. Within the general context of authoritarian systems these are distinguished from those where one party is hegemonic and 'other parties are allowed to exist but as second class, licensed parties' (Sartori 1976: 230), for example Mexico up until the 1990s and Singapore, where the People's Action Party (PAP) has ruled continuously since 1959.

Table 1.2: **Typology of party systems (based on Sartori)**

FRAMEWORK	PARTY SYSTEM	EXAMPLE
Within authoritarian frameworks	One party (party-state)	Communist countries, Taiwan up to 1990s, Zimbabwe
	Hegemonic party	Mexico 1920s-1990s, Singapore
Within competitive frameworks	Predominant party	South Africa from 1994, India 1950s-1990s, Tanzania, Botswana, Namibia
	Two party	Colombia from 1950s, Costa Rica, Jamaica from 1950s, Ghana from 2000
	Limited pluralism (3-5 parties)	Chile 1930s-1973 and from 1990s, India from 1990s
	Extreme Pluralism (6-8 parties)	Peru, Brazil, Benin
	Atomized	

Competitive party systems have been a persistent feature of a number of developing countries including Costa Rica, Jamaica, India, Sri Lanka, Botswana, and Mauritius, and in many others (as described in Chapter 14) they have been restored or introduced more recently. In particular Latin America provides convincing examples of two party (Costa Rica and Colombia), limited pluralism (Chile), and extreme pluralism (Brazil, Peru) systems. Elsewhere, the dimension of ideological polarisation is more difficult to map on, since the model is plainly concerned with ultimately class-based ideology along a left-right spectrum. As discussed below, even in Latin America, such ideological distinctions are diminishing but in other parts of the developing world they have less resonance or may be competing with other bases for identification, for instance religion, ethnicity, or caste.

But on the other hand Sartori's concept of the *predominant party system*, in which there is genuine party competition but one party continues to be clearly dominant over several (we can dispute how many) elections has proved very useful, especially in regard to tropical Africa. There many observers (for instance Bogaards 2000; van de Walle 2003) that have pointed to a tendency either for the originally ruling party to remain dominant in practice (as in Tanzania) or for the opposition party (often some kind of coalition) that succeeds in defeating the former ruling party then to use all the advantages of incumbency to consolidate its rule, raising fears of a new predominant party system in the making (as in Zambia, see web case study two). Analysing election results in the over 40 sub-Saharan African states, van de Walle (2003:298) concluded 'the emerging modal party system in the region consists of a dominant party system surrounded by a large number of small, highly volatile parties'.

Whilst this Sartori-style typology is helpful, Mainwaring and Scully (1995) suggest that for developing countries a further crucial criterion must be the degree to which the party system as a whole is 'institutionalized'. Bertoa (2016: 8) has usefully defined party system institutionalization as 'the process by which the patterns of interaction among political parties become routine, predictable and stable over time'. Mainwaring and Scully suggest two polar types: the institutionalized system and the inchoate system with actual party systems lying at different points somewhere between. For instance in

Latin America Chile comes close to the institutionalized pole, while Bolivia, Brazil, Peru, and Ecuador tend towards inchoateness.

Mainwaring and Scully suggest four measures of party system institutionalization: stability in the rules and nature of inter-party competition; parties should have 'somewhat stable roots in society'; political actors should accord legitimacy to parties and the party system; and parties should have effective organizations. Two of these measures refer back to the constituent parties. At this point we should note a potential contradiction: individual strongly institutionalized parties are not necessarily conducive to party system institutionalization, since they may produce a very imbalanced party system with one party predominant, as in the case of Tanzania cited above (see Randall and Svåsand 2002a: 8-9).

Mainwaring and Scully's approach has been highly influential. On the one hand it has been applied empirically to a wide range of countries and regions; on the other its assumptions, concepts and operationalization have been widely discussed and criticized. For instance Luna (2014) has recently argued that the four key variables do not necessarily develop in the same direction and at the same time. He advocates a more streamlined version that distinguishes between necessary and sufficient elements of institutionalization, and suggests that in the context of Latin America this will help to set up a distinction between systems that are stable but with weak programmatic rootedness and systems (to his mind preferable) which are stable and well rooted programmatically.

Obviously the factors determining the character of individual party systems, whether in terms of the number and cohesion of relevant parties or of system institutionalization, are numerous and varied. To some extent we must see the character of party systems as historically determined or 'path-dependent'. But they may more specifically be affected by features of a country's other political institutions or constitution.

Here particular attention has been paid to the type of *electoral system* prevailing. Traditionally plurality systems based on first past the post (FPTP) have been thought to

promote two-party or predominant party systems by awarding the electoral winner a disproportionately large number of seats whilst Proportional Representation systems promote systems with a larger number of effective parties and greater ideological polarisation. And in some instances this has also been the case in developing countries: in Iraq, following the 2003 US-led invasion, the choice of a PR system arguably helped to ensure that ethnic and sectarian concerns dominated party formation and voter behaviour, thereby serving to entrench 'the logic of electoral politics as an identity referendum' (Dawisha and Diamond, 2006: 96). However in tropical Africa where the number of countries employing plurality and PR systems is roughly balanced, analysis suggests that PR has had little effect in modifying the trend to predominant systems, suggesting that other factors, especially the overwhelming logic of presidentialism discussed below, have been much more important (Bogaards 2000). It is also necessary to distinguish different forms of plurality, and PR, systems. For instance the usual form of PR is a closed list system, as in South Africa. Brazil however has an open list system, which, it has been suggested, encourages individual politicians within parties to cultivate their own personal following, thereby contributing to intra-party factionalism and weak party system institutionalization (Mainwaring 1998) (see Table 1.3 for details of electoral systems for a selection of developing countries). Also relevant under PR are rules establishing thresholds in terms of vote share below which parties cannot be represented in parliament. For example in Turkey and the Seychelles this threshold is set relatively high, at 10 per cent, in Turkey and the Seychelles, while in South Africa no threshold is imposed.

Table 1.3: **Electoral systems in selected developing countries**

Country	Electoral System
Bangladesh	FPTP
Barbados	FPTP
Benin	List PR
Brazil	(Open) List PR
Chile	List PR
Ghana	FPTP
India	FPTP

Indonesia	List PR
Jamaica	FPTP
Kenya	FPTP
Malaysia	FPTP
Mozambique	List PR
South Africa	List PR
Taiwan	SNTV (Single Non-Transferable Vote)
Tanzania	FPTP
Turkey	List PR

(Source : IDEA web-site 2004)

The character of the party system will also be affected by *laws or constitutional provisions* imposing requirements on parties. Recently there has been growing scholarly interest in the possibilities of using such measures to restrain ethnically-based conflict and combat party fragmentation (Reilly, 2006). For instance a number of African countries including Tanzania, Ghana, and Nigeria proscribe the formation of parties based on religion, region, or ethnicity. Many countries, including Turkey, Nigeria, Indonesia, Colombia, and Ecuador, require parties to demonstrate a 'national' character, with offices in a certain proportion of regions and/or districts. Again in many countries measures have been passed banning defection of MPs from one political party to another unless they are prepared to seek re-election under their new affiliation in a bid to strengthen party discipline. This has been seen in India from 1985, and more recently Bolivia, the Philippines, Thailand, and South Africa.

More fundamentally, however, the character of the party system will be affected by the *system of government*. Presidential systems prevail in Latin America and largely dominate in sub-Saharan Africa. As noted above, strong presidential systems are more likely than parliamentary systems to be associated with party systems. In presidential systems executive powers and patronage are concentrated in a directly elected president, whereas in parliamentary systems the opposition is weak and fragmented and parties, including those supporting the President, are weakly institutionalized. Zambia is a good example of this in practice. However, this is not an iron law and in

Latin America there are countries, like Chile, where a strong presidency coexists with a stable, institutionalized party system (on presidentialism see also Chapter 3).

Parties and their social base

A further factor shaping party systems is the nature of the society within which they operate. This section explores parties' links with their social base, including social groupings and civil society associations. Strong roots in society are seen as a defining feature both of individual and of party system institutionalization. But in addition to identifying which groups or associations parties have links with, we need to consider the character of those links.

Within western political science the Lipset-Rokkan cleavage model has been very influential in the analysis of bases of support for political parties. That model, however, strongly reflects the experience of Western Europe. Lipset and Rokkan identified a series of social cleavages that could serve to structure party systems: between church and state; centre and periphery; urban and rural sectors; and labour and capital. They implied that with economic development and growing national integration, class-based cleavages would increasingly come to the fore. At the same time their 'freezing thesis' hypothesized that party systems would be strongly imprinted by the main cleavages that had been politicized at the time they came into being, that is, in Western Europe, on the eve of mass suffrage (Lipset and Rokkan 1967).

In practice, when applying this approach, analysts have primarily concentrated on electoral behaviour, as a guide to 'cleavages'. A number of studies have considered how far the model illuminates electoral behaviour in Latin America (Mainwaring and Scully 1995; Dix 1989) and in Asia, especially India (Chhibber and Petrocik 1990, Heath and Yadav 1999). Latin America is the region where the character of cleavages and tendency for class-based cleavages to grow in importance has come closest to the Lipset/Rokkan scenario. Chile also has been singled out as an almost classic instance (Scully 1995). Even then, the observation is that, for a number of complex reasons, including the fact that the restricted scope for departure from neo-liberal economic polices limits the credibility of left-tending discourse, Latin American parties now increasingly pursue a 'catch-all' electoral strategy and the volatility of their electorates

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is growing. In the early years of the C21st observers noted a 'turn to the Left' in Latin American politics but generally and with the possible exception of Bolivia's MAS and the Workers Party (PT) in Brazil, this was not expressed through the vehicle of political parties.

In Africa and Asia Lipset and Rokkan's 'freezing thesis' helps to explain the long-lasting impact in many countries of political divisions formed on the eve of national independence, especially the persistence of support for parties based on nationalist movements, such as India's Congress Party. But beyond this, their specific predicted pattern of social cleavages has little relevance. Thus there has long been general agreement that in Africa 'ethnicity' has a primary role in shaping patterns of electoral support. Even if we accept that parties representing a single ethnic group are relatively rare and, given the very large number of ethnic groups prevailing in some African countries, unlikely to make much headway, it is clear that such groups are the main units out of which blocks of party supporters are assembled. Accordingly party competition does not typically or explicitly entail conflict over classic policy issues. Although it should be mentioned that recent scholarship has suggested this may be changing; party leaders already *do* emphasise valence issues (that is issues like democracy and development on which voters are likely to share a common preference) and in the right circumstances this may be evolving into defined policy positions (see Bleck and van de Walle 2012).

In much of Asia, and indeed much of the Middle East, social divisions are more complex and even cross-cutting, based on ethnic, religious and class/caste differences. India epitomises this complexity, which is compounded by its federal system of government. India's caste system is a distinctive feature of its social structure, with continuing relevance for patterns of party support. The Congress Party which remained electorally dominant at national level into the 1990s, and was again at the centre of a ruling coalition from 2004-14 draws support from all sectors of society, though at state (provincial) level it rests on particular, and locally varying, caste groups. The BJP, which has led the ruling coalition from 2014, as a Hindu nationalist party seeks to appeal in general terms to the 83 per cent of the population who are Hindu, but its original support base was amongst the upper castes and northern 'Hindi

heartland'. The 1990s also saw the formation of state-level parties based on particular caste blocs, notably the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) in the state of Uttar Pradesh, whose support comes mainly from the *dalits* ('untouchables').

Whilst the emphasis in the preceding paragraphs has been on the social, or electoral, base of political parties, this is not to imply that such social divisions created the parties. In some cases it is politicians who mediate in this process, politicizing and mobilizing around particular cleavages, other times parties create their own political cleavages within society. For instance, the party founded by Colonel Juan Peron in 1946 (forerunner of the Justicialist Party, JP) is credited with having created the powerful Peronist/anti-Peronist cleavage that has divided Argentinian society to this day.

Moreover to demonstrate more or less stable patterns of voting support for individual parties is not necessarily to show that they have deep roots in society. In particular, where political parties make little attempt to project distinctive ideologies or programmes and instead rely on clientelistic relationships to reach and mobilize voters, how rooted can the party be? Thus Chabal and Daloz (1999: 39) argue that in tropical Africa, on the whole voters 'do not vote because they support the ideas, even less read the programmes, of a particular party, but because they must placate the demands of an existing or putative patron', though we have seen that this may be beginning to change (Bleck and van de Walle 2012).

But some parties also have more direct links with social movements or organizations. The classic mass-based party in the Europe-centred literature has been the social democratic party with strong ties with the trade union movement. For many reasons (some of which are explored in Chapters 4 and 16) the scope for developing substantial, politically independent trade unions has been limited in developing countries. Rather than unions helping to form parties, in the case of the PRI in Mexico and Communist parties and the Congress Party in India, parties have themselves formed and sought to control union federations. For example, while in Argentina, Peron dismantled the union-based Labour Party which had helped bring him to power and replaced it with his own Peronist party in which unions played a prominent, but never properly

institutionalized, role (Levitsky, 2003). An exception to this pattern is the Workers' Party (PT) formed in Brazil in 1980. Its former leader, Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva ('Lula'), who became President of Brazil in 2002, began his political career organizing an independent union of metalworkers in the major auto-manufacturing suburbs of São Paulo. In Africa, trade unions have also played a role in struggles of national independence or democratization. For instance the ANC in South Africa has strong ties with the trade union federation COSATU, while in Zambia, the Zambia Congress of Trade Unions helped to form the then democratic opposition party, the MMD. In both cases, however, party-union relations worsened once these parties attained power and pursued policies of economic liberalization.

Indeed as a generalization, parties' links with civil society organizations in the developing world tend to be either 'top-down' or fairly tenuous. Many of the more institutionalized parties (for instance Mexico's PRI, India's Congress Party, the National Congress Party (NDC) established by the former military ruler of Ghana, Jerry Rawlings, in 1992) have established different kinds of affiliated organization, for youth, peasants/farmers, women and so forth, with varying degrees of independence and vitality. But significant links with more autonomous civil society organizations are less common. Though such associations often played an important role in movements for national liberation and/or democracy, and in the transformation of such movements into political parties, thereafter there has been less incentive from the perspective of either the party or the association to retain a close relationship (on Africa, see Widner 1997).

This raises the question of what is to be included as a civil society association (see Chapter 10). In the case of parties based on more particularistic, ethnic, or especially religious, identities, links with social associations are often stronger. Thus India's BSP, representing the interests of the 'dalits' in the state of Uttar Pradesh has been described as a 'trade-union turned party', or the political arm of the Backward and Minority Communities Employees Federation (BAMCEF), although both have been dominated initially by their founder Kanshi Ram and subsequently by his protegé Mayawati (Pai 2002). India's BJP has particularly close links with the militant Hindu

Rashtriya Sevak Sangh (RSS) which originally set it up and with its *parivar* (family) of social organizations of which by the 1990s there were over 2000.

In the context of democratization studies, there has been growing interest in prospects for democratization in Islamic countries, with attention beginning to focus on Islamic political parties. A central question is the extent to which such parties are independent of the sectarian social movements and organizations giving rise to them. The main Islamic party in Turkey has been through many incarnations and name changes. Traditionally it was closely tied to particular religious orders, which helped deliver votes and were also an important source of leadership, and to Islamic business houses – the 'Anatolian tigers' (Yesilada 2002). However opinions are more divided since the currently ruling AKP formed after the party split in 2001, with writers like Özbudun (2006) maintaining that it is moving closer to a classical vote-maximizing 'electoralist' party model. Turkey's experience may however be exceptional: since the time of Ataturk there has been a strong state commitment to a secular constitution, reinforced for a time at least by the prospect of joining the EU (though by 2013 this was looking less likely). In several other cases Islamic parties retain strong links with their underpinning social movements. For example the IAF (Islamic Action Front) in Jordan is embedded in the Jordanian Muslim Brotherhood, extraordinarily influential not only within mosques, but schools, professional associations and charitable activity (Jonasson 2004). Also, the FJP in Egypt, which was founded in 2011 and came to power in 2012 until the military coup of 2014, was deeply embedded in the powerful and longstanding Muslim Brotherhood.

Parties' political role and democratization

Given the diversity of parties and of party systems it is neither easy nor always meaningful to generalize about their political role. Early accounts tended to see parties as agents of democracy-building. Almond and Powell's structural-functional model (see Chapter 1:19) saw them as institutional vehicles of interest articulation and aggregation. Subsequently more emphasis was placed on the part parties play in nation- and state-building.

This emphasis on parties' nation-building role coincided with the emergence of single ruling parties in a succession of erstwhile multi-party systems in Africa not long after independence, and perhaps also with the spectacle of one-party or hegemonic party states such as Mexico and Taiwan, and India's dominant party system, not succumbing to the military coups endemic in their region. It was suggested that ruling parties could build national unit, through the use of resonant symbols but also through the judicious distribution of patronage. This coincided with Huntington's 'strong government' thesis, suggesting the most important institutional means of building a strong government was the political party; the party 'created' the state.

It would be wrong to ignore the historical contributions to nation- and state-building not only of India's Congress Party (in contrast to the weakly institutionalized parties of Pakistan, see Chapter 20) but also of parties like Mexico's PRI or Mozambique's FRELIMO. However, the weakness and corruption of many ruling parties and then the ultimate widespread collapse of one-party or hegemonic party rule, largely discredited this way of thinking. More recently, following the 'third wave' rediscovery of parties' contribution to democratization, the significance parties' contribution to democratization has been gained a renewed focus. Once more the contribution both of parties and of party systems to democratization is highlighted, especially with regards to democratic consolidation and increasingly to authoritarian backsliding.

With this renewed interest in democratization, there was a virtual consensus that parties do or should play a vital role. Although it may seem that it is more difficult for parties to contribute in the initial stages of democratization, especially when facing repressive authoritarian regimes, some parties, such as the opposition Democratic Progress Party (DPP) in Taiwan are credited with having helped to catalyze the democratization process. Moreover, although single ruling parties are more typically seen as obstructing than initiating transition, in some cases, including on some accounts Taiwan's Kuomintang (KMT), and Mexico's PRI, they have themselves helped to launch the process.

So, how do parties contribute to democratic consolidation? Randall and Svåsand (2002a) distinguish a number of ways (see Box 1.4). *Representation* and *integration* are processes

acting primarily on the electorate, *aggregation* and *recruitment and training* are more centrally about linking the electorate with government or the state, while *making government accountable* and *organizing opposition and dissent* are primarily oriented towards government.

Box 1.4: Party contributions to democracy/democratic consolidation

1. (Oriented towards the electorate)

   Representation: expression of people's demands; simplifying and structuring electoral choice

   Integration: integration of voters into the system, political education

2. (Linkage-related)

   Aggregating (and channelling) interests

   Recruitment and training of political leaders

3. (Government-related)

   Making government accountable: implementing party policy, exercising control over government administration

   Organizing opposition and dissent

(Source: Randall and Svåsand 2002a : 4)

The extent to which parties actually *represent* the constituencies they claim to stand for has already been touched on. Leaving aside the difficult question of how people's true interests are to be discovered, we must recognise that even in established democracies such representation may in practice be limited. A distinction is often made between *descriptive* and *substantive* representation. In some parties, especially in those identifying themselves with particular ethnic or religious communities, great importance attaches to party leaders and candidates for legislative and government office who belong to those communities. As described in Chapter 9, in the context of global gender equity programmes, many parties, especially in South America, have taken measures, including the introduction of different forms of gender quotas, to improve the descriptive representation of women. In some cases, as recently seen in Iraq, legislative quotas for women, have been written into constitutions, thereby compelling parties to select women candidates. But despite the intrinsic and symbolic importance of

descriptive representation, it is no firm guarantee of improved substantive representation.

Similarly, political parties in developing countries vary in the extent to which, beyond getting them to vote, they help to *integrate* people into a democratic political system. Some parties, like the Peronist JP in Argentina, seek to induct members and supporters into a distinctive political culture and we have seen that others (such as the PRI, India's Congress, and Ghana's National Democratic Congress) have spawned a whole network of affiliated bodies through which to involve groups like women, youth, and farmers. However, it does not follow that the supporters are thereby socialized into democratic values and behaviour.

If parties in developing countries are working within the logic of clientelist politics and play only a limited representative role, their contribution to *aggregation* and reconciliation of interests or demands is unlikely to be significant. Nor will *recruitment* typically entail significant socialization into democratic norms and practices.

One issue underlying all these potential democratic contributions is that of parties' own internal democracy. After Michels (1962, originally 1915) formulated his 'iron law of oligarchy' implying internal party democracy was unachievable and then Duverger (1954: 134) argued that internal party democracy in any case hampered a party 'for the struggles of politics', there was little scholarly interest in this subject until quite recently. A factor now is the concern of many western democracy assistance agencies with fostering internal democracy in political parties. Definitions of inner party democracy vary but Scarrow (2005) usefully suggests looking primarily at the selection of party leaders, candidates for public office and determination of party policy. Whilst the topic has enjoyed new salience (Randall 2007) the old arguments remain. Many commentators argue that internal democracy is vital for meaningful participation, instilling of democratic habits and even, through deliberation, the democratic formulation of policy. However, others argue that it encourages factionalism, and impedes party leaders' freedom of manoeuvre and effective inter-party competition. Whatever the balance of pros and cons it seems clear that, with certain exceptions

such as Brazil's Worker's Party, internal party democracy is even more confined in developing countries than in established democracies.

We come finally to ways in which political parties can help to *make government accountable.* A distinction can be made here between *vertical* accountability, making government accountable to society, and *horizontal* accountability, making the executive branch of government accountable to other central political institutions. Vertical accountability depends to a large extent on how well parties perform their representative and aggregating roles. Horizontal accountability through the legislature requires an effective organized opposition. For many commentators such an opposition is absolutely crucial for a functioning democracy. Again the record is variable but party systems in developing countries often fail to deliver in this respect. We have seen that there is particular concern that dominant party systems, especially prevalent in tropical Africa, cannot generate effective opposition. Parties and the leaders of parties not included in government tend to be more interested in being co-opted into government and gaining access to its sources of patronage rather than working with other excluded groups to forge an effective alliance (Rakner and de Walle 2009).

It should be noted that whilst the emphasis in this section has been on the contribution of individual parties to democratization, some political scientists such as Bertoa (2016) argue that it is party systems, specifically their degree of institutionalization, that are most relevant. To make his case, Bertoa uses a European dataset. However others have pointed out that there is no necessary association between democratic advance and strongly institutionalised party systems. For instance South Korea's party system is only weakly institutionalised but it is generally regarded as one of the most democratically advanced countries in East Asia (Croissant and Volkel, 2012).

The focus so far has been on ways in which political parties do or do not make these positive contributions to democracy-building. But going further there has been a growing suspicion that parties are themselves the problem or in Carothers' (2006) phrase 'the weakest link' in the democratic project.

Thus predominant parties, even in formally competitive systems, may deliberately seek to restrict their opponents' freedom of action. Manning (2010) cites the example of FRELIMO in Mozambique's 2009 elections, which without recourse to heavy-handed measures and rights violations, exploited its ruling position, manipulated the processes governing elections, and used state resources. But even in more genuinely competitive systems the corrupt conduct of political parties and their individual parliamentary representatives has undermined voters' trust in parties as institutions. Such distrust in parties may extend to distrust in democracy.

Conclusion

Political parties potentially have a significant role to play as institutions linking society and state. The general observation has been that political parties are more weakly institutionalized in the developing than in the western world, although there are numerous and important exceptions. Parties also need to be studied in relation to party systems, considering both the number of effective parties and the degree of party system institutionalization. One party or hegemonic systems are increasingly rare but amongst the growing number of competitive systems, many, especially in tropical Africa, are dominated by a single party. Again with important exceptions, parties in developing countries tend to lack deep roots in society. Outside of Latin America where parties often form along social class lines, the building-blocks of party support tend to be groupings defined by ethnicity or region, caste and religion. Party links with independent civil society organizations tend to be weak.

By the 1980s the emerging consensus was that parties played a marginal role in the politics of developing countries; they were dependent rather than independent variables. But this was to neglect the very important role individual parties had played in nation- and state-building over several decades. More recently the focus has been on parties' contribution to democratization. When we try to pin down the different potential ways in which parties could help to build democracy, it is often difficult to argue that parties do make a substantial contribution on these lines. Furthermore, in an era of social class de-alignment and expanding mass media there has also been much talk of the 'decline of party' and of parties' democratic role in western

democracies. The argument supporting the contribution of parties in the developing world to democracy thus has limitations.

Given the apparent weaknesses of political parties in developing countries a number of western agencies have sought to provide party assistance. The most significant players have been party-based foundations, such as the *stiftungen* in Germany. Their objectives and forms of assistance vary but tend to focus on: developing organisational capacity; enabling parties to participate more effectively in elections; promoting internal party democracy; and facilitating the involvement of groups such as women and youth.

Leaving aside the question of whether external agencies *ought* to be intervening in this way, it is evidently an extremely challenging task. Carothers (2006: 162) who provides an excellent overview of the activities and achievements of these agencies and remains convinced of the ultimate value of what they are trying to do, nonetheless concludes that 'It rarely has transformative impact both because of the difficulty of the task and the inadequacies of much of the assistance' (see also Burnell and Gerrits, 2012; Svåsand (2014)). Ultimately the main hopes for change in individual parties and party systems must stem from developments within the countries themselves.

Questions

1. To what extent and in what ways are political parties 'rooted' in society in the developing world?
2. To what extent is it possible to generalize about political parties in the developing world?
3. In what main ways can electoral systems influence the forms and behaviour of political parties in developing countries?
4. What do political parties contribute to the democratization process in developing countries? What obstacles do they present?
5. Should external agencies seek to provide democracy assistance to political parties in developing countries?
6. Discuss the pros and cons of state funding or subsidies for parties in developing countries.

7. How, if at all, do parties in the developing world differ from those in advanced democracies?

8. Is internal party democracy a help or a hindrance to democratisation?

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Web links

www.psr.Keele.ac.uk/parties.htm and www.gksoft.com/govt/en/parties.html

Contain links to the home pages of a range of political parties across the world

www.idea.int/

The website for the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, which includes extensive material relevant to political parties

www.nimd.org

The web-site of the Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy

www.cdi.anu.edu.au

The website of the Centre for Democratic Institutions in Australia – it is concerned with peaceful party development, though it also works with parliaments.