

M U N I

Political parties

PMCb1006 Political and Media Systems

Political parties and democracy

= „organized and voluntary associations of people, competing for political power in elections, taking political responsibility and seeking to implement their goals“

- Party democracies = political representation through political parties

Organizational typology of political parties

- Reflecting the emergence and development of political parties in time
- Parties as a product of societal developments
- Their importance increased with the introduction of parliamentarism and universal suffrage

Organizational typology of political parties

Four major types:

1. Elite (cadre) parties
2. Mass parties
3. Catch-all parties
4. Cartel parties

Cadre parties

= elite party, notables party, party of individual representation (S. Neumann)

- 19th century
- Internal (vs external) foundation of the party
- Mass membership not important
- members = elites – important persons, specialist in campaigning, sponsors/patrons
- Very limited electoral campaigns – personal contacts, funding, far from universal suffrage
- Decentralized organization, local branches/committees, parliamentary coordination

Mass parties

- Mass-bureaucratic party (Panebianco), party of social integration (S. Neumann)
- Extra-parliament foundation
- Linked to „universalization“ of suffrage
- Seeking for broad public support – centralized, hierarchical state-wide organizational structure
- Growing from civic associations/trade unions (social democratic parties, agrarian parties)
- Seeking for parliamentary representation

Mass parties

- Taking care of members from „cradle to grave“
- Typical for the age of highly segmented societies (vurzuiling)
- *alignments* between political parties and segments of society – linked to *cleavages*)
- Concentrated around ideologies – ideological competition
- Gradual adaptation of elite parties to mass party strategies

Catch-all parties

- Kirchheimer (1966)
- Adaptation to societal changes after the 2nd World War
- Defreezing of party systems (S. Rokkan, S.M. Lipset):
- Established patterns of party competition until the 1960s
- Weakening of party alignments
- Rise of *electoral volatility*
- Emergence of new political parties
- Reasons: consumerism, secularization, individualism, decreasing number of core voters („naturally“ voting for the same party) – the need to find new voters

Catch all parties

Features:

1. Drastically decrease of the ideology
2. Increased role of party leadership
3. Membership less important
4. Less stress on particular interests
5. Access to various interest groups

Catch-all parties and campaigning

- New campaign tools – television, „politics in TV“ phenomenon
- Decreasing importance of party newspapers
- More extensive/offensive/negative campaigning – growing number of undecided voters
- „Americanization“ of electoral campaigns – political marketing, market research

Cartel parties

- R. Katz and P. Mair
- Deepening of dealignments both to the society in general and to a specific societal segment
- Demand for whole-society problém solutions, less interest in particular issues
- Even lesser importance of membership and formal organizational structures
- Professionalization of parties (managers, similar to business)
- Internal resources (members) replaced by external ones (public funding)
- Parties decide about the access to the external sources => the cartel
- Decrease of party competition and increase of cooperation = rise of protest parties

Business firm parties

- Personal political projects of „political entrepreneurs“
- Funding from private resources
- Party on the ground limited to minimum
- Internal organization/party bureaucracy „contracted out“
- Public good exchanged for real purpose of these parties, just a by-product
- Personalized leadership, highly centralized organization

Parties in the (new) media age

- How has the Internet changed your life?
- How does the Internet shape your life?

Political parties in the (new) media age

- How has the internet changed the life of political parties?
- Has it changed evenly (all kinds of political parties)?
- Is the Internet (new media) good or bad for political parties?

Parties in the (new-)media age

- Many social interactions has moved online
- Problem with the image of parties
- Party press almost non-existent
- Negative effects of media on political attitudes but possibly increase participation and even trust
- Globalization fostered by the media

Parties in the (new-)media age

- No all parties are equal – lower cost for launching new parties
- Need for costly (?) professional online campaigning
- The character of party membership
- The strength of party identification (electoral consequences)

Cyber parties

- Attempt to use website technologies to make relationship between the party and voters stronger
- Introduction of primaries x leader selection (?)
- Facilitation of internal communication
- Potential for increase of political participation (and new forms of it)

Conclusion

- Political parties as ever-changing organizations
- The role of the context – the society
- The recent changes in parties and communication determined by the changes in the media systems
- The role of the Internet
- Challenges and opportunities for political parties