Political Parties and the Crisis of Democracy

Political Parties and the Crisis of Democracy

Organization, Resilience, and Reform

Edited by
Thomas Poguntke
and
Wilhelm Hofmeister

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1
Introduction

Thomas Poguntke and Wilhelm Hofmeister

Democracy is under threat worldwide. This is the assessment of numerous books and articles that analyse a democratic recession, describe the ill winds blowing into its face and explain how democracy dies (Diamond 2008, 2015, 2019; Rich 2017; Levitzky and Ziblatt 2018; Runciman 2018). Surprisingly, most of these analyses give little attention to the analysis of the role of political parties in this decline of democracy. Mostly, the role of political parties and their failure are briefly mentioned, but they are not subject to a systematic and detailed analysis concerning the individual and structural conditions of the character of their failure. This is also the case for different international reports on the state of democracy which receive a lot of attention but usually describe the decay of democracy rather than analyse its causes. They put emphasis on bad governance and corruption as one of the main reasons for the weakening of democracy; however, they barely mention the role of political parties as political and governmental actors who have a decisive influence on the shape of a democracy (International IDEA 2019, 2021; EIU 2022; V-Dem 2022). Accordingly, when these analyses try to show ways out of the crisis, they often stress the need of free and fair elections, independent judiciary, free media, the respect of human rights, and especially the role of civil society; however, they tend to remain relatively silent about the potential role and contribution of political parties. International cooperation to promote democracy, for example through the European Union, also focuses more on these issues than on the political parties.

This is remarkable given the undisputed essential role of political parties for modern democracy. Political parties are the distinctive institution of modern democracy. Hence, when it comes to analysing the operations of modern democracies and their potential weaknesses, it is important to have a clear understanding of how their parties operate and what challenges they are facing. Frequently, they may be victims of the decline of democracy but, in many cases, they also bear direct or indirect responsibility for the problems. Above

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all, however, they are part of the solution, because modern democracy cannot function without political parties (Dalton and Wattenberg 2000).

Yet, as the late Peter Mair (2013) famously put it, they are in danger of 'ruling the void', being relegated to a largely ceremonial role in democracy. Are they really becoming the 'dignified part of the constitution' without having a real say over how political decisions are made (Mair 2013: 18)? Are modern democracies drifting towards a technocratic mode of governance (Caramani 2017) where (supranational) elites are those who really control the course of events? From this point of view, the (re)emergence of populist parties and their recourse to nationalist language and appeals might be seen, at least in part, as a reaction to the hollowing out of party government (Poguntke and Webb 2018).

To be sure, these diagnoses may be too dramatic. However, the ongoing fragmentation of party systems and the rise of new challenger parties are reason for concern. Also, the trend towards the presidentialization of governance and the overall personalization of politics (Poguntke and Webb 2005; Rahat and Kenig 2018) have the potential to erode the role of parties as coherent organizations within and for democracy. Are parties in danger of becoming 'empty vessels', as Katz and Kolodny (1994) dubbed the US parties in the early 1990s, that can easily be taken over by political entrepreneurs who may have little concern for the traditions of the party? In sum, there is a need to specially address the relationship between the crisis of democracy and the role of political parties.

How parties can contribute to democracy is best understood by looking at a very diverse range of cases in different parts of the world. Instead of taking a regional approach, which dominates the literature on political parties, this book takes a global perspective, covering 23 countries in different regions of the world. It covers Western and Central Europe, Israel, and Turkey; Asia-Pacific; Latin America; and Africa. This includes new and old, presidential, semi-presidential, and parliamentary democracies, as well as some countries where democracy is seriously threatened or eroding. Hence, we have included countries which are classified as 'partly free' by Freedom House (Mexico, India, Philippines, Nigeria) and Turkey, where democratic erosion has gone furthest.[1] This selection offers unique comparative perspectives on the role of political parties in the democratic process combined with a detailed analysis of individual countries and their party systems. For organizational ease the volume is organized along geographical lines, but there could be alternative ways of reading the studies: for instance, presidential vs parliamentary countries, established vs newer democracies, or functioning democracies vs partly free countries.

We ask why parties fail today, why new parties emerge and displace old parties, and also what parties need to do in order to survive cutthroat competition, above all with new (and sometimes not so new) variants of populist parties (Mudde 2004; Mudde and Kaltwasser 2012). Current developments must therefore also be understood as a challenge to party research. If it is true that the parties play a decisive role in the development, consolidation, and stabilization of democratic systems, then the question is what specific organizational, strategic, and programmatic characteristics of parties are conducive to the protection of the democratic order. This question applies to the parties that are upstaged by the new developments, those that successfully resist or adapt to the pressure to change, and those which emerge as 'new' parties out of crisis.

As has been noted elsewhere, 'there is generally too much variation for any structural model to be convincing' (Webb et al. 2017: 308). Hence, the contributors to our book attempt to identify appropriate answers specific to national or regional circumstances. In other words, there is no general answer to what parties need to be organizationally and do strategically and programmatically. Rather, we tackle the diversity of regional differences by asking identical questions but not expecting uniform answers.

Research Questions

Each country chapter will address the most topical issues regarding the role of parties for the functioning of the democratic order in the context of the current crisis of democracy. The chapters begin with general information about the country and its party system, including relevant framework conditions such as party legislation concerning party organization and internal party democracy, party finance, and electoral system. Furthermore, relevant developments with respect to electoral volatility, party system fragmentation, party membership, and other aspects affecting the structure of parties and the party system are covered. In order to ensure maximum comparability, all country chapters follow a common set of questions; in addition, many authors are also members of the Political Party Database Project (PPDB) coordinated by Susan Scarrow, Paul Webb, and Thomas Poguntke and can therefore draw on the same data source. The volume begins with a conceptual discussion of the study of political parties, which is followed by 23 country chapters. It concludes with a review of the experiences of international party assistance and a short comparative reflection.

The centrepiece of the country chapters consists of an in-depth analysis of the core parties of the national party system (usually between two and four parties), addressing the following questions:

(1) Party organization: What characterizes the organization of these parties? What role do variables such as the number of party members play? Why do parties gain members and why do they lose members? What kind and degree of intra-party democracy characterizes these parties, and how strong is the party leadership?
(2) Party ideology: What are the most important features of theses parties' ideologies or programmes? Are there new, even provocative, responses to a country's challenges?
(3) Connection to social groups: With which groups do individual parties maintain strong contact? Which groups are more relevant today, and which have lost their importance? Do the parties grant a formal status to certain groups within their organization (e.g. youth, women, workers, professionals, civil servants, entrepreneurs)?
(4) Significance of state subsidies: Do state subsidies exist? Are the parties dependent on them? Do state subsidies help to distance the parties from their voters or are they used to incentivize parties to maintain contact with the voters?
(5) Party unity: How united are the parties? How frequent are internal party conflicts and how serious are they? Have they led to resignations of prominent leaders? How do they affect (if at all) voting behaviour in the legislature? Are there disciplinary measures against legislators?
(6) Communication: What characterizes the form of communication of the parties. How do they use social media?

The chapters conclude with a discussion of the reasons for the rise and decline of individual parties and, above all, with an evaluation of the role of political parties for the future development of democracy. Will the parties be able to defend the democratic system in the future? What are the most promising—or successful—responses of political parties to challenges to democracy? What pressure can be expected on the political system?

As always, publications such as this have a long history. This book started as a conference in Madrid in October 2021, which was generously supported by the Konrad Adenauer Foundation. We also gratefully acknowledge the financial support of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation to make the open access publication of this volume possible. Last but not least, we are indebted to Julian Bogenrieder, Nico Bodden, Pauline Marquardt, and Benjamin Hoss

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The Madrid meeting was one of the first face-to-face events after the COVID-19 pandemic, and even then some contributors could not be present due to travel restrictions. These extraordinary circumstances remind us of the importance of a functioning democracy—of which political parties are an essential element—to cope with crises. Unlike some suspected at the beginning of the pandemic, China did not set the standards.

Note

1. https://freedomhouse.org/countries/freedom-world/scores (Accessed 25 September 2023).

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2

Analysing Political Parties and Democracy

Themes, Questions, Problems

Thomas Poguntke, Susan E. Scarrow, and Paul D. Webb

Introduction

No one doubts that political parties play a central role in democratic governance around the globe.[1] However, many doubt that they are doing it well. The writings on the wall are manifold: the decline of former core parties, the fragmentation of party systems, the rise of populist challenger parties, the rise of populist leaders within established parties—the list could easily be continued. Not all failures are of the parties' own making. While they may be able to perform better on some accounts, they could also be victims of wider societal trends over which they have little control.

This volume, taking a global view, takes stock of where the causes of party failure may lie and where parties could do better—or simply do something different. It also looks for evidence of some 'better practices', areas in which some parties seem to be doing comparatively well. To this end, this chapter presents an inventory of perspectives and questions that serve as guidance for the country chapters. Given that the volume covers parties and party systems across very diverse regions and political systems, the editors have chosen not to propose a rigid framework of analysis; instead, they present an inventory of theoretical and empirical questions that are addressed by the authors in the light of their specific conditions of the country which they study (see introduction). This chapter groups these questions into several thematic blocs. In particular, we suggest that parties should be analysed as products of their (changing) environment, as professionalized organizations, as actors that create and maintain organized linkages to other collective actors, as recipients of public funding, as legislators who may act more or less cohesively

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and, last but not least, as communicators. Throughout, and particularly in the concluding sections of individual chapters, the underlying theme is the role of parties in their given countries for democratic governance.

Parties in a Changing Environment

Parties are a product of their environment, operating under conditions which are only partially of their own making. Yet they are also masters of their own fate in that they decide which organizational or ideological route to choose. To be sure, parties, in their capacity as lawmakers and policymakers influence their environment. However, there are many factors that influence their political fortunes which are beyond their influence or control. In most parts of the world, social change and value change (Inglehart 1990; Dalton, McAllister, and Wattenberg 2000) have weakened the traditionally solid anchorage that many parties once enjoyed in systems with strong socio-political cleavages. Declining party membership, growing volatility, the decline of traditional parties and the rise of new challengers have been the hallmarks of the changing political environment in which political parties operate (e.g. Franklin 1992; Webb et al. 2002; Webb and White 2009; Biezen et al. 2012; Neff Powell and Tucker 2014; Poguntke and Schmitt 2018). Meanwhile, in newer and emergent democracies, parties face their own challenges, such as immersion in the politics of clientelism or corruption, imperfect adaptation to the norms of the democratic game, and the politics of ethnic mobilization and defence.

How do existing parties respond? Essentially, they can and must adapt to changing environments (Harmel and Janda 1994; Harmel 2002). If they can no longer recruit members as they used to, they may respond by changing the nature of party membership, for example, by introducing new 'membership-light' categories in order to attract those who might otherwise not be willing to get involved (Gauja 2015; Scarrow 2015). If demands for more political involvement are voiced, they may open up their decision-making routines to grassroots members or even mere supporters (Hazan and Rahat 2010; Sandri and Seddone 2015; Ichino and Nathan 2022). If political agendas change as result of changing values or problems, parties need to adjust their programmatic offers or face declining electoral returns (Kriesi et al. 2008; Kriesi et al. 2012; Hutter and Kriesi 2019). If new competitors begin to threaten the ascendency of established parties, they may adapt to these challenges in order to win back voters—or they may close ranks and try to form defensive cartels (Katz and Mair 1995). More often than not, attempts to keep new competitors out have failed and new parties have emerged—which can be seen as a sign of democratic viability and representative renewal as long as

they are committed to the basic values of democratic governance. In other cases, more dominant parties have responded by retreating in their commitments to democracy, eroding the protections afforded to challenger parties in a bid to solidify their own hold on power.

But even where the main parties remain committed to democratic norms, they still may seek to influence their environment by re-writing the rules of the democratic game. This, however, is a collective effort except in those relatively rare cases where single parties control the required majorities on their own. It is here that the idea of the cartel party is particularly relevant as several major parties normally need to cooperate in order to muster the necessary simple (or even qualified) majorities.

First and foremost, this applies to electoral laws which are largely under the jurisdiction of the parties themselves (despite some constitutional safeguards). Party laws are another important factor which substantially mould parties' environment. While the legal regulation of political parties has become almost the norm in established European democracies (Biezen and Piccio 2013), party laws are also found widely across other parts of the world. Janda (2005), in his analysis of 1,101 party laws from regimes both democratic and non-democratic, found that the former tend to generate laws that mainly permit and promote party activities, whereas those in non-democracies and semi-democracies are especially inclined to promulgate laws that protect particular (presumably dominant or ruling) parties while proscribing or banning others. Even in established democracies, however, party laws may constitute barriers to activity, for instance by requiring fairly substantial organizational or programmatic institutionalization as a precondition for inclusion in a party register to qualify for electoral participation or public funding. Speaking of the latter, of course, the rules of access to public funding are a crucial aspect of parties' environment, and these conditions are a part of the competitive context which parties can heavily influence themselves.

These legal framework conditions can have a substantial impact on the openness of electoral competition and hence on the fortune of those political parties which are capable of controlling the design of these rules and regulations. Hence, one important perspective of the volume will be the openness of party competition as it materializes in legal framework conditions.

Parties as Organizations

Parties as organizations structure political behaviour in many ways. By offering choice between policies and candidates, they encourage or inhibit

political participation. How they do this is something that reflects the organizational models they adopt. For instance, parties' internal operations offer variously inviting incentives for ordinary citizens to get involved in political activity. Sometimes these participation incentives involve material rewards, but often they include rights to participate in key decisions such as the selection of leaders and candidates for public office, or even (less frequently) the formulation of public policies. To the extent that party organizations do a better or worse job of channelling participation and of reflecting popular priorities, they may ultimately influence levels of legitimacy and public protest.

Parties are widely understood to play important roles in a number of central functions of the democratic political process. They formulate policy, recruit elites, run election (and other) campaigns, and provide linkages between rulers and ruled—or, to put it differently, between state and society. However, they can and do organize themselves in quite different ways in the performance of these functions. In newly industrializing countries, parties are often involved in distributing clientelistic payoffs to supporters (Kitschelt and Wilkinson 2007), but linkage is also often based on group identity. Thus, some parties have emerged as representatives of social groups in societies where politics revolves around inter-group conflict. These cleavage-based parties may make very different organizational decisions compared to those parties built around the charisma of a dominant leader. They may be able to rely on other cleavage organizations to do much of the work of mobilizing individual political participation, but in return, these external actors may benefit from important participation opportunities and rights within the party—for instance, representation in party congresses or on party executives (Allern, Hansen et al. 2020). The other groups might be accorded formal roles in key decisions about selecting party leaders or candidates for public office. This has certainly been the case for some trade union movements which have close relationships with social democratic and labour parties (Allern and Bale 2017).

This approach contrasts with that of electoralist parties which seek to present themselves as brands that appeal to 'consumers' (i.e. voters). Such parties may run organizations that are more dependent on paid professional employees than on grassroots volunteers, and these are much leaner between elections than the organizations of cleavage-based parties. Electoralist parties often rely on appeals that are more candidate-focused or 'personalistic' than programmatic (Gunther and Diamond 2003). As social anchorage has declined and the focus on leaders has grown, parties (particularly those in government) have tended to drift towards a presidentialized working mode

characterized by leaders who claim a personalized mandate from the electorate and tend to govern past their own parties and its ideological tenets (Poguntke and Webb 2005). In its most pronounced incarnation, we see in some countries, particularly presidential ones, deliberately ephemeral parties (often not much more than umbrella labels) created for the purposes of contesting a single election.

How exactly parties link to society through their own organization is strongly influenced by changing societal conditions. This analytical perspective has given rise to an influential body of literature that has sought to identify major party types and present them as products of different phases of socio-political development. From this perspective, the history of party development is best summarized as a history of dominant party types, beginning with the cadre party, followed by the mass party, the catch-all-party, and finally the cartel party (Duverger 1954; Kirchheimer 1966; Katz and Mair 1995). These are ideal types, that is, stylized abstractions that serve as benchmarks against which to gauge empirical investigations.

The list of classical ideal types begins with the cadre (or elite) party, which is characterized by a loose organizational structure run by social elites who need little formal organization to accomplish the party functions of campaigning and elite selection (Duverger 1954). The origins of such (often classical liberal or conservative) parties typically lie in the pre-democratic era of parliamentary politics. In Neumann's terminology, this is a party of 'individual representation' with only rudimentary formal organization, and one which invites only limited participation by a restricted electorate (Neumann 1956).

With the advent of universal suffrage, the mass party (or party of mass integration in Neumann's terms) became the dominant model of party organization. As large numbers of newly enfranchised voters sought representation in the political process, the mass party emerged as the most appropriate tool for this. It was characterized by a coherent ideology and a strong organization and was, first and foremost, a tool for the mobilization of collective interest. It therefore maintained exclusive organizational links to relevant mass organizations (typically trade unions or religious organizations). The more institutionalized the party bureaucracy became, the more the initial ideal of internal democracy controlled by grassroots mass membership eventually gave way to a hierarchy that controlled the party machine from the top, as Michels famously remarked in stipulating his 'Iron Law of Oligarchy' (Michels 1989). The success of such a model in the democratic era led to at least partial emulation by older parties of the right—a process of 'contagion from the left', as Duverger described it.

As cleavages based on class and religion began to weaken from the 1960s onwards (in Europe, at least), Otto Kirchheimer (1966) identified the catch-all party as the new modal party type. Characterized by weaker but more diverse ties to society, the catch-all party was mainly an elite-dominated campaign organization that de-emphasized the group linkage function and the role of party members. Party competition was less about how to change the system than about who would run it better. In light of this, elections became more competitive to the extent that they were less about parties mobilizing their own camps of core identifiers and more about persuading more open-minded voters to make choices between different parties.

Taking this development to its logical conclusion gave rise to the cartel party, according to Katz and Mair (1995). This new party type was strongly anchored within the institutions of the state while the role of the grassroots membership was increasingly marginalized. From their perspective, party democracy became primarily a service provided by the state for society instead of being a political process that leads to the steering of the state through societal forces. This model owes something to Angelo Panebianco's (1988) electoral-professional party, which also emphasized the electoral role of modern political parties, and their dependence on state funding for their organizational resources.

To be sure, this literature is strongly focused on Europe, and we need to remind ourselves that developmental trajectories of parties will have been different elsewhere owing to different processes of nation-building and democratization. In other parts of the world, other party types prevail, e.g., ethnic parties and parties based on liberation movements (Gunther and Diamond 2003) The business firm party (Hopkin and Paolucci 1999) and the digitally organized platform party (Gerbaudo 2019) also have some, albeit more limited, relevance. Yet the different logics of these party types will also be relevant in other regional settings as they refer to fundamental aspects of party organization and parties' linkage to society.

In addition, a closer look at this body of literature shows that these classic authors have focused more efforts on describing allegedly new modal types of parties rather than on trying to capture the complete variability of party organizational types. Consequently, while these ideal types inform a great deal of current and classic discussions about classification and trends in party organization, they do not easily encompass the full range of parties' organizational patterns. For instance, a study of 122 parties from 19 parliamentary democracies estimated that, at most, just under two-fifths of them could be said to conform clearly to one or other of the classic ideal types (Webb et al. 2017). As this suggests, the empirical reality is much messier than the neat

world of academic taxonomy; organizational hybrids and idiosyncrasies are commonplace. Moreover, where we find evidence of contagion, it tends to reflect national pressures rather than the influence of developmental eras driven by technological changes or transnational socio-economic changes. That is, parties simply emulate the rivals with whom they directly compete (and sometimes cooperate) in their own countries (Poguntke et al. 2016).

However, certain broad trends can be identified. Over time, it does appear that (contra the catch-all thesis) more parties have accorded their members rights to vote in the selection of legislative candidates and party leaders, although this has not gone so far as to be the norm for a majority of parties even now (see, for an overview, Poguntke and Scarrow 2020: 330). This has happened even as the number of people willing to join parties has declined in many countries. Whether these overlapping developments are causally connected is not certain, but in at least some cases it seems likely that the extension of members' participatory rights has been a deliberate organizational response on the part of leaders who have been concerned by the erosion of their grassroots memberships. The most cynical interpretation, associated with the cartel thesis, suggests that electorally motivated leaders might extend such participatory rights as a way of diluting the intra-party influence of radical mid-level party officers and activists, often via party congresses. In such cases, we might observe:

> an erosion of the boundary between formal members and supporters, particularly through the spread of primary elections; use of direct votes—sometimes merely to ratify, other times to decide among alternatives determined by the party leadership; and by-passing of party congresses or meetings, in which communication and coordination among the members/supporters and from them to the center is facilitated, in favor of direct, unmediated, and one-way communication (e.g., via direct mailing or e-mail) from the center to the members/supporters. (Katz and Mair 2009: 761)

However, whatever the explanations for why these new rules have been adopted, in practice when these rules are used, they do not necessarily serve to consolidate the power of existing leaders. For instance, analysis of recent leadership contests in European parliamentary democracies reveals that they tend to be more genuinely competitive where they are decided by membership ballots than by other means, such as votes by party congress delegates (Scarrow et al 2022). Nor does it seem likely that most parties have been able to respond to membership decline exclusively by substituting professional staffing for 'footsoldiers' on the ground, not least because few parties have

sufficient resources to mount nationwide campaigns for local and national offices without the help of volunteers. In fact, qualitative research with party officials has revealed little evidence that parties accept, let alone welcome, the loss of members; on the contrary, they continue to see the need for grassroots members and are often quick to publicly proclaim any short-term successes in reversing membership decline (Scarrow 1996; Ware 1996: 63–84; Bale et al. 2019: ch. 9).

Even though amateur politics still co-exists with professionalism in many parties in regards to their intra-organizational life and campaign efforts, there is one crucial aspect of party democracy where we have witnessed considerable trends towards professionalization: In many countries, politics has become a life-long career, and parties are the crucial gatekeepers (e.g. Cotta and Best 2007). Arguably, this is also facilitated by the growth of public funding in many countries which provide parties with resources to employ aspiring activists before they are elected to a representative body (see the following section).

Parties as Linkage to Society

In many regions and historical phases, organized interaction of political parties with specific social groups has been an important tool of parties to stabilize their relevant environments and obtain structured and reliable information about relevant social interests. The literature on Western European party systems has emphasized the organizational aspect of linkage between parties and collateral organizations defining social cleavages, particularly during the era of the party of mass integration (Lipset and Rokkan 1967; Lawson 1980; Poguntke 2002). For many decades, the freezing of the cleavage system has worked to the benefit of political parties which had a stable organized relationship to the major cleavage-forming interest organizations such as trade unions, employers' federations, farmers' organizations, or religious movements. Giving these organizations privileged access to party decision-making arenas and meetings ensured a stable relationship with major social forces capable of mobilizing electoral support for specific parties in exchange for the realization of desired policy goals.

However, social change and the widening perspective to newer democracies or regions with very different historical trajectories has led to a more encompassing conceptualization of linkage, including also a range of regular yet more informal interactions (Allern, Otjes et al. 2020). While parties in long-established democracies are struggling with the loosening of their

previously stable social anchorage, parties in newer democracies (such as Central Eastern Europe) entered into the era of party democracy under a very different setting. Decades of Communist rule had largely wiped out earlier pluralistic organizational life, and hence parties had comparatively few or only weak potential partners in civil society. In other parts of the world, such as Latin America, the dominance of presidentialism may have led to very different patterns of interaction between parties and organized social groups, while ethnicity-based collateral organizations and former liberation movements play a larger role in African democracies (Mainwaring and Scully 1995; Randall and Svåsand 2002; Elischer 2013; Casal Bertoa and Enyedi 2021).

Parties can also follow a different organizational strategy to connect to civil society. Rather than reaching out to more or less formally organized social interests and offering them privileged organizational access, parties can choose to diversify their own organization by creating multiple sub-organizations catering for the interests of specific social groups (Allern and Verge 2017). Youth and women's organizations are widespread examples of this, but the range of specific party sub-organizations is potentially limitless—as older examples of organizations of socialist stamp collectors or socialist car, motorbike, and bicycle drivers in Austria exemplify (Müller 1992).

Like linkages with external organizations, these party sub-organizations may serve as important anchor points for the structured exchange between party elites and relevant social constituencies about specific policy goals in return for general party-political support or, at least, specific electoral support. Parties can also seek to preserve or strengthen their links to specific groups or sectors by using candidate selection rules to guarantee minimums of descriptive representation for designated categories, such as quotas related to gender, age, regional origin, or linguistic community.

To be sure, the continued functionality of such structured interaction between parties and civil society is far from assured, and it is an important analytical perspective of this volume to what extent they continue to be relevant and to what degree they have been superseded by other means of exchange between parties (party elites) and society.

Parties and State Funding

Widespread availability of legally regulated public finance for political parties constitutes one of the biggest changes in the environment of party politics in the past 30 years. Only five of the 23 countries covered in this volume have no direct public party funding.[2] This change fits at least part of one of the specific

predictions of the cartel party model, namely, that parties will increase their reliance on public funding as a way of compensating for decreased revenue from party members (Katz and Mair 1995). Yet while there has been policy contagion or convergence in regard to the acceptance and introduction of public funding for political parties, this is not to say that public funding plays the same role in all political systems. In fact, countries differ widely in the per capita amounts they allocate for such funding and in how they distribute these funds. They also differ widely in the extent to which the introduction and expansion of public funding has been accompanied by limits or bans on other sources of party funding, and by disclosure rules. These differences can have important consequences for the political system in many ways, including for the prevalence of corruption. However, we can understand some of the main predicted impacts on parties and party systems by asking the following key questions about national structures of public financing:

- How much do the funding rules favour large parties?
- How are funds distributed within parties?
- To what extent does a specific party rely on non-public funding?

How much do the funding rules favour large parties? One important distinction between systems of public funding is the extent to which funds are available to small parties, including ones that do not win seats in the national legislature. Rules for distributing public subsidies can discriminate against smaller parties by excluding parties that do not win legislative seats. Rules on donation limits can discriminate against small parties by setting no limits, or high limits, on campaign donations, thus favouring established parties which have had more opportunities to connect with (and do favours for) potential donors. In their cartel party article, Katz and Mair (1995) suggested that established parties would use systems of public funding for their own benefit and would therefore seek to exclude new entrants to the party. If successful, this would then increase party system stability and potentially limit the range of party competitors. Others predicted that the spread of public funding for parties could have the opposite effect, encouraging new party entrants (Mendilow 1992). Perhaps not surprisingly, research in this area has found some support for both assertions, suggesting that the effects are more nuanced than merely the presence or absence of public funding. According to some research, public funding is indeed associated with greater party system stability (Booth and Robbins 2010). It may nevertheless support and sustain a greater number of small parties (Pierre et al. 2000; Scarrow 2006; Rashkova and Su 2020), but it is not necessarily associated with new party survival

(Bolleyer and Bytzek 2013). Other research suggests that it is the combination of subsidies and restrictions that matter, with combinations favourable to new parties associated with more parties than would be expected purely on the basis of social structures and electoral systems (Potter and Tavits 2015). Whereas some research has found that far-right parties have a disproportionately high reliance on public funds (Biezen and Kopecký 2017: 96), research on European party systems has found that access to public funding exerts a moderating influence on the small and new parties that compete in elections (Casal Bertoa and Rama 2022).

How are the funds distributed within the party? Whatever a party's main sources of funding, intra-party dynamics may be affected by how resources concentrate within a party and how much economic autonomy is enjoyed by different party strata or actors. One set of relations concerns the economic standing of a party's central office as compared to the resources enjoyed by the party in public office; these economic relations may be indicative of broader power relations within parties (Hagevi 2018; Biezen 2000). Another set of relations concerns the distribution of public funding across multiple party levels. To the extent that such resources disproportionately accrue to national-level parties, this may further accelerate centralization of party organization and of intra-party career ladders. Conversely, in systems where regional or local governments provide additional public subsidies to support party activity at their political level, such funds may strengthen decentralization. A third set of relations concerns the funding of candidates as opposed to parties. If parties allow, encourage, or even require candidates to raise a large portion of funds for their own campaigns, this may encourage greater personalization of politics and of political messages (Cross et al. 2020). Such dynamics may also be associated with clientelistic politics, under which candidates are expected to raise and distribute large sums to their supporters.

To what extent does a specific party rely on non-public funding? Whether or not public funding is available, parties may still rely on other financial supporters; in some cases, such funding is associated with overt or covert influence over the party's decisions. For instance, the status of trade unions in the British Labour party and the Swedish Labour Party (until 1990) offers extreme examples of major funders having a large formal say in party affairs. Both parties were originally created (and funded) by the trade unions. This funding came in the form of the unions paying party dues on behalf of collective members; in return, the unions were able to cast the votes of these members in party conference decisions. However, arrangements which translate funding into direct influence have been relatively rare. Much more common is the informal influence that accrues to donors of all types in rough

proportion to their financial importance to the party—an importance which diminishes when parties have access to high levels of public funding (Allern et al. 2021). Where large private donations are legal and are subject to disclosure laws, it is sometimes assumed that businesses may be more likely to donate for purely quid pro quo reasons, whereas individuals may be more likely to be motivated by ideological or other collective incentives (Fink 2017). In a party finance system that depends heavily on large private donations, the extent to which donors receive anything specific in return for their donations is usually hard to judge, and this is particularly true when corporations pragmatically give to parties deemed most likely to win (McMenamin 2012; Harrigan 2017).

In sum, for these and other reasons, it can be important to take account of variations in party financing regimes if we wish to understand party system variations, and in order to understand variations in the distribution of power influence within parties.

Parties as Legislators

Anyone who knows anything about intra-party politics would recognize the truth in Giovanni Sartori's claim that, 'as with icebergs, it is only a small part of politics that rests above the water-line' (1976: 106). Students of party politics have long been fascinated by the periodic (and in some cases seemingly endemic) bouts of internal conflict and factional infighting that afflict parties. Intra-party politics can be as important as inter-party competition for public policy outcomes; a party which cannot deliver on promises made to voters because it lacks legislative cohesion will be ineffectual and will likely lose the confidence of those who gave it their support via the ballot box.

In general, legislative parties tend to be more cohesive in parliamentary systems than in presidential regimes (Sieberer 2006; Carey 2007). This is because legislative defeats in parliamentary systems often lead to loss of office (via parliamentary votes of no confidence or dissolution of parliament and early elections), but this is rarely true in presidential regimes with separation of powers. Under presidentialism, the head of both the executive and state generally has his or her own direct mandate from the people and cannot (except in extraordinary circumstances) be removed by a separately elected legislature (Poguntke and Webb 2005: ch. 1). Even so, it is certainly not the case that legislative parties in parliamentary democracies

are completely unified. Even in the UK system, renowned for its party discipline, MPs have always had the capacity to exert pressure on their leaders by threatening or enacting rebellion against the party line. Moreover, their willingness to do so has been increasingly apparent since the 1960s (Cowley 2005)—never more so than in the tortuous passage of Brexit-related legislation in the late 2010s (Webb and Bale 2021: ch. 7). As Anthony King once pointed out, whereas a government can usually withstand the attacks of the opposition, it 'cannot always shrug off attacks from its own backbenchers' (1976: 214).

This serves to affirm a conviction that research into the extent and causes of legislative party cohesion (Bowler et al. 1999) is important to any understanding of the performance of political parties. We have already noted that the broad distinction between parliamentary and presidential regimes is important to any appreciation of the drivers of intra-party cohesion. Beyond this, John Carey (2007) has shed light on a number of other factors. For one thing, electoral systems can make a difference, in that open-list systems which allow for competition between candidates from the same party tend to produce lower levels of cohesive legislative voting behaviour than closed-list systems. For another, federal systems also tend to produce lower levels of intra-party cohesion, given the cross-cutting pressures they produce on parliamentarians. Finally, parties' own performance in seeking to discipline and ensure that their MPs toe the party line is an important factor in explaining legislative party cohesion (Müller 2000).

We should also note that even in presidential systems, while the general level of party cohesion is lower than in parliamentary systems, the direction of travel may be towards *higher* levels of party unity. This has plainly been the experience in the USA, where the growth of hyper-partisanship has seriously eroded the previously well-recognized tradition of cross-party voting in Congress. In a system characterized by institutional checks and balances, this can be a recipe for political paralysis—or 'gridlock' in the American terminology. This cautions us about the virtues of (too much) intra-party cohesion—particularly in presidential systems. While fundamentally necessary if leaderships are going to act as effective governments (and oppositions), taken to extremes in certain settings, it can become pathological in a political sense. Understanding where the lines between healthy and pathological levels of party cohesion can be drawn—finding the 'sweet spot' which balances discipline and free expression—is a task for researchers and practitioners alike.

Parties as Communicators: New Communications Technologies and Party Development

Political parties have traditionally engaged in communication that flows in two directions. Thus, they seek to communicate the party message to supporters and potential supporters. Often, these are very top-down efforts, particularly in national election campaigns. Yet they are also (more or less) receptive to bottom-up communication, using their support networks to help them stay in touch with the concerns and priorities of those whose support the party seeks. Since the end of the 20th century, parties' tools for engaging in both types of communication have been significantly augmented by new forms of digital communication, and by the increasing extent to which citizens have access to digital networks.

These tools, sometimes referred to under the umbrella label of Information and Communications Technology (ICT), are techniques that in the early 21st century rapidly became *de rigueur* for all organizations and firms concerned with customer outreach—including for political parties. They include using e-mail for contacting known and potential supporters (active contacting), maintaining websites to promote the party message (waiting for visitors), and engaging with supporters through an array of social media channels (a potentially interactive medium). Compared to print or broadcast technologies, these tools are relatively cheap, and because publication and distribution can be done quickly, they allow for very fast messaging. They can be used in very sophisticated ways, but there are quite low barriers to entry, as evidenced by the proliferation of self-made social media influencers and viral video clips.

The emergence of these new tools led to multiple and sometimes contradictory predictions about their probable impact on the evolution of political parties and the party landscape. The more conservative predictions saw them as most likely to amplify trends stemming from the media revolutions of the last decades of the 20th century. These included the increased centralization of political campaigns in response to the pre-eminence of televised messages, and parties' and candidates' increased reliance on professional marketing staff to manage these campaigns (Lofgren and Smith 2003; 47–48). If such trends are reinforced by the introduction of new technologies, they will reward well-financed parties which can afford to hire a large professional staff and will reduce incentives for parties to organize supporters through formal membership structures. They may also increase personalization of politics if citizens are more interested in the social media pronouncements of individual politicians than of the parties with which

they are associated. These predictions fit what Anstead and Chadwick (2009) labelled the 'normalization' scenario.

Others, whom Anstead and Chadwick (2009) label the 'optimists', have seen these new technologies as having much more potential to disrupt traditional patterns of political organizing. Such disruption could take multiple forms. For instance, because the new technologies make it easier and cheaper to disseminate political messages, they decrease the entry costs for new parties and make it easier for small parties to maintain their positions by implementing communications strategies that do not rely on traditional media outlets (Spierings and Jacobs 2019). In this sense, the new media could at least somewhat 'level the playing field' for parties, even if bigger parties also prove adept at using these tools. At the same time, they can potentially alter power balances of political elites compared to non-politician citizens by creating new channels for partisan participation. This could affect not only the amount of participation but who gets involved. For instance, online political discussion groups might appeal more strongly to younger citizens, who tend to be most familiar with whatever is the latest communication app. They might also be more appealing to women partisans compared to more traditional forms of political participation, which may take place in local party branches which in the past have been male-dominated (Stolle and Hooghe 2011; Gerl et al. 2018). In addition, parties might be able to capitalize on this differential appeal by creating organizational forms such as cyber-branches or affiliation opportunities for supporters who wish to limit their party connection to the digital realms (Scarrow 2013); cyber-parties might entirely downplay the role of party members in favour of other kinds of unmediated digital communications (Margetts 2001). Thus, some see new technologies as helping to renew traditional parties by creating new links between citizens and their representatives (Chadwick and Stromer-Galley 2016; Vaccari and Valeriani 2016). Others foresee more fundamental transformations as new digital technologies create opportunities for parties to turn to online platforms as their main channels for recruiting and mobilizing supporters rather than as a supplement to more traditional organizational forms. This is what Paolo Gerbaudo (2021) described as the rise of the digital party. In the 2010s such efforts were most notably pursued by the German Pirate Party, with its 'Liquid Democracy' debate platform, and by the Italian Five Star movement, with its own platform, named 'Rousseau' (Bordignon and Ceccarini 2013; Hartleb 2013; Koschmieder 2016; Niedermayer 2013).

Research from the first decades of experiences with the new technologies has not decisively backed either of these perspectives, but initial evidence seems more to support the idea of the new tools as offering additional

opportunities rather than as entirely superseding old approaches. For one thing, research suggests that although social media certainly has been effectively deployed as part of successful campaigns, traditional face-to-face mobilization efforts remain at least as effective as social media campaigns, meaning that in-person campaign volunteers retain their value (e.g. Nyman 2017; Bale et al. 2019: ch. 6; but see also Bhatti et al. 2019). In terms of the effects on partisan political participation, while they may be offering some citizens more opportunities to voice their opinions, the new technologies may be having more effect on participation disparities by altering behaviour outside the party realm rather than within it. On the radical end, very few parties have copied the all-digital efforts of the German Pirates or the Italian Five Star Movement, and the pioneers in these efforts found it difficult to sustain such efforts, particularly those that began to enjoy electoral success (Gerbaudo 2019). Yet even if there is at best limited support for the disruption arguments, this does not necessarily validate the 'normalization' predictions of greater personalization and professionalization, since the two trends are not logically obverse propositions.

One of the reasons that results may be inconclusive is that many studies have been limited to single parties or single countries. Some argue that clearer patterns may emerge if research takes a more broadly comparative view which controls for contextual factors that might affect the political impact of these new technologies, including the degree of pre-existing personalization in national political life, the extent to which citizens have digital access, the nature of campaign regulations, and the state of existing partisan organizations (Anstead and Chadwick 2009; Ward and Gibson 2009). The countries discussed in the chapters that follow offer a great deal of diversity along all these dimensions, and thus may help shed light on where new communications technologies are having the greatest impact on parties, party systems, and/or political participation patterns.

Conclusion

This chapter has sketched out the arguably most important aspects of political parties' characteristics and functions that are relevant for their success or failure in facilitating democratic governance. Yet we have been largely silent about what exactly we mean by these terms. At the level of party systems, the most important sign of success surely is the peaceful alternation of government, which is an essential and powerful mechanism for the legitimation of democracy. For any individual party, the terms encompass the basic metrics

of electoral performance or longevity, but for the set of parties within a single country, the standards are probably somewhat different. For instance, while it is commonplace to regard the rise of extreme challenger parties as indication of party failure in established democracies, party systems that entirely block the rise of new parties are sometimes described as 'cartelized', or as lacking in democratic responsiveness. In other words, the success or failure of party democracy is not the same as the longevity or continued dominance of a particular set of party options. Moreover, party success and failure is certainly context-bound—and the standards of judgement vary with the context. Furthermore, party success on one dimension may impede party success on another. Success in recruiting new members, for example, may undermine party cohesion. Alternatively, long-term government incumbency—certainly a sign of party success—may ultimately weaken a party's capacity to maintain strong linkage to society. To be sure, this list could be continued, yet we do not aim at being exhaustive. Instead, we leave it to individual country studies to explore different patterns of party success and failure in line with the questions we have outlined in this chapter.

Sometimes, specific parties abruptly disappear or entire party systems fail to facilitate democratic government, but slow decline and gradual adaptation are probably more common. Whether changes are abrupt or gradual, they are likely to have consequences for how parties and party systems facilitate representative democracy; these changes and their consequences are the focus of the chapters in this volume.

The following chapters focus on party and party system challenges and adaptations in 23 countries from four continents. In all of them, parties compete for power, but not all are fully fledged democracies. If we want to understand the challenges to party democracy, we need to include also cases where democracy has been eroding.

The diversity of these countries covers a wide range of factors which are known to condition party and party system development, including regime type (parliamentary, presidential, and semi-presidential regimes), electoral systems (proportional representation and majoritarian), age of democracy, population size, ethnic homogeneity, availability of public subsidies to political parties, and level of economic inequality. It is not the aim of this volume to provide systematic quantitative analysis of the impact of such factors; indeed, a guiding premise of this volume is that there continues to be a role in political science for the contextual richness offered by parallel case studies. Such studies can complement cross-national analysis based on standardized quantitative measures, illuminating outliers to general tendencies, identifying new trends, and promoting theory-building.

Notes

1. The authors share equal responsibility for this chapter.
2. https://www.idea.int/data-tools/data/political-finance-database (Accessed on 25 September 2023).

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I

POLITICAL PARTIES AND DEMOCRATIC CHALLENGES IN WESTERN AND CENTRAL EUROPE, ISRAEL, AND TURKEY

3
The United Kingdom Party System

John Bartle, Nicholas Allen, and Thomas Quinn

Introduction

The United Kingdom (UK) party system is 'one of the oldest, strongest, and most stable of the party systems in Europe' (Mair 2009: 283). Simplifying only a little, it comprises two major parties—Conservative and Labour—that dominate both government and the House of Commons. These parties have collectively shaped the agenda, generated most of the 'big ideas', and made the UK what it is today. The performance of British democracy depends almost entirely on these two parties (Bartle et al. 2019, Clark 2018, McGann et al. 2023).

The current UK party system has moulded British politics for 100 years. For much of the last 50 years, commentators have speculated whether that mould might break (Webb and Bale 2021). Such speculation has sometimes been based on incontrovertible evidence that the public are discontented with the parties and the choices they provide. At other times it has been based on little more than the 'unnatural' longevity of the system. It often seems that the system does not adequately reflect contemporary political conflicts. Nevertheless, the two parties have staggered on, fitfully adapting to preserve both themselves and the system.

The Two-party System

A party system comprises a recurring interaction between the parties that make up that system (Sartori 2005). The UK's framework conditions mean that the goal of parties is to win a majority in the House of Commons. Since 1918, all but four governments have been either Conservative or Labour single-party administrations. All four coalitions involved the Conservatives. Three were Tory administrations in all but name. The 1918 coalition, under the Liberal Lloyd George, overwhelmingly relied on Conservative MPs. The

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Conservatives supplied most MPs in the National governments from 1931 to 1940 and dominated the 2010 to 2015 Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition. Labour, by contrast, has only shared power in wartime coalitions from 1915 to 1918 and 1940 to 1945.

Figure 3.1 displays the number of days that the parties have been in office by each government.[1] To simplify things, the three peacetime coalitions are classified as Conservative. This visualization illustrates the pendulum-like swing from one side to another. Yet the swing of this pendulum is far from regular. If we exclude the three Tory-dominated coalitions, the Conservative advantage (16,475 days to 12,096) is pronounced. If we include coalitions, the Conservatives have been in government for almost twice as long: 22,899 days to Labour's 12,096. While the 20th century was the 'socialist era' of increased government activity and collective action, it was the 'Conservative century' in terms of governments (Jenkins 1988; Seldon and Ball 1994).

Figure 3.2 illustrates how the two parties have dominated UK politics. The broken line displays their combined share of the vote. From 1918 to 1929 the parties won on average 69% of the vote. From 1931 to 1970 they won over 90%. In February 1974, the two-party joint share fell by 14-points. It drifted downwards until 2010 when it reached just 65%. Two-party domination seemed to have been re-established in 2017 when it rose to 82%, but it fell to 76% in 2019 due to a sharp fall in the Labour vote.

Figure 3.2 also illustrates the growing gap between the two parties' share of seats and share of the vote. The two parties' share of the vote fell steeply from the 1950s, but their share of seats (represented by the solid line) declined much less. This is simply because the plurality electoral system insulated the

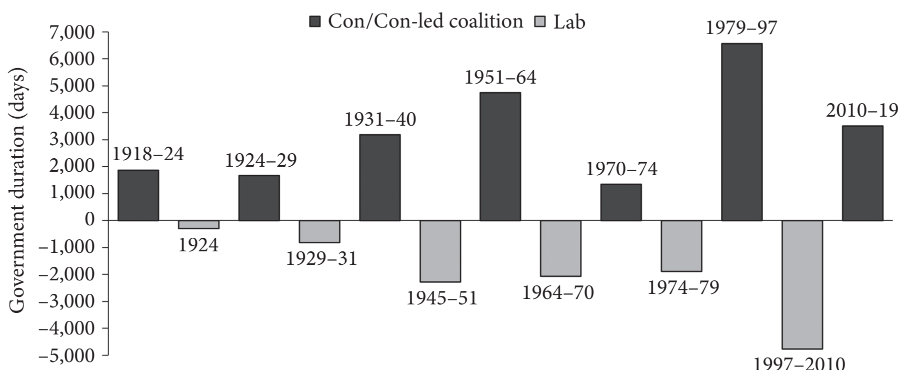

Figure 3.1 Government duration (days in office), 1918–2019
Source: Authors' calculations

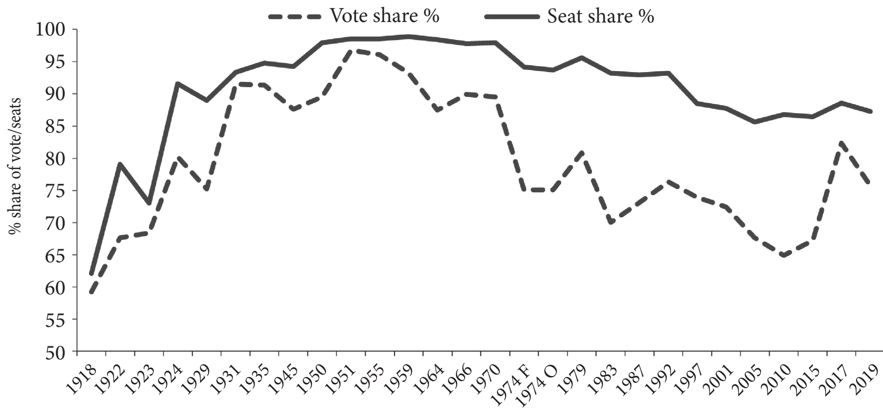

Figure 3.2 Conservative and Labour joint seat and vote share, 1918–2019
Source: Authors' calculations based on Pilling and Cracknell 2021

two parties. From 1931 to 1970 the difference between the two parties' seat and vote shares averaged just 6 points. From 1974 to 2015, it averaged 18 points.

To make comparisons with other multi-party systems, it is useful to examine standardized indicators. Figure 3.3 displays the effective number of electoral parties (ENEP) and effective number of parliamentary parties (ENPP) from 1945 to 2019. The two-party dominance is illustrated by the almost flat line for the ENPP, which varies between 2 and 2.5. The increased willingness of voters to support parties other than the two parties of government is illustrated by the increase in the ENEP from around 2 in the 1950s to 3.9 in 2015. The gap between the two indices increased from roughly 0 in the 1950s to around 1 by 2010. It then peaked at 1.35 in 2015. The gap closed in 2017 as both major parties made gains but re-opened as Labour lost votes in 2019. Figures 3.2 and 3.3 both illustrate that the electorate has become more willing to vote for parties that had little prospect of either forming or participating in the government.

Although the two parties disliked coalitions with other parties, electoral competition compelled them to become broad coalitions themselves (King 2009). These coalitions were so broad that it should have been possible to form a party made of the left wing of the Conservative party and right wing of the Labour Party or have some degree of cooperation 'across the aisle', as Americans say. National governments of the sort seen on continental Europe were never needed, but even when they were possible, they were never seriously considered. While the parties often struggled to agree on policy, the one thing that both parties agreed on was that the 'other' party was 'beyond the pale'.

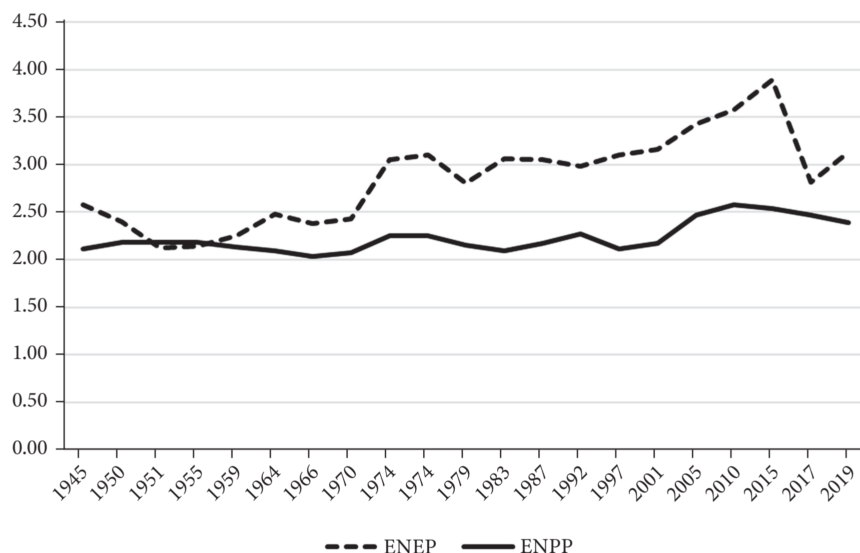

Figure 3.3 Effective number of electoral and parliamentary parties, 1945–2019
Note: ENEP—effective number of electoral parties, ENPP—effective number of parliamentary parties

Source: Döring et al. 2022

Framework Conditions

The 'closed' nature of the party system provides the electorate with the same binary choice at every general election (Mair 2009). This limited choice is a product of the 'framework conditions'—constitutional rules or conventions, and the electoral system. Most studies tend to emphasize the impact of the electoral system (Duverger 1954). Nevertheless, other constitutional rules matter a lot. In the UK's 'political' constitution the enforcement of conventions is a matter for politicians drawn from the two major parties, not the courts (Griffiths 1979). These parties have a common interest in maintaining the conditions that sustain the system (Katz and Mair 1995). This is most obvious in relation to the electoral system but extends to the broader constitution.

Constitution

One of the reasons for the longevity of the party system is the importance that the constitution attaches to 'strong government' (King 2009). This is a product of parliamentary sovereignty, the rule that Parliament has unlimited legal

authority (Dicey 1885). It is also a product of the convention that a Prime Minister must command the confidence of the Commons. British governments can always act without depending on other parties. Historically, this rule encouraged the formation of parties to control the executive (Cox 1987). Since the UK is weakly bi-cameral, the party that controls the Commons can act as an 'elective dictatorship' (Hailsham 1976). The government controls the parliamentary agenda, and party loyalty is strong. The 'strong government' mindset extends beyond Westminster. Most voters think of elections as a chance to choose a government, not a local representative.

Strong government in a two-party system requires a strong opposition to provide voters with a choice. Government proposals are invariably opposed by the 'other side'. The continual reproduction of binaries makes choices comprehensible to the electorate (Budge 2019). The larger of the two main parties forms the government and the other becomes the 'official' opposition. The leader of the official opposition draws a salary paid for by public funds. They appoint a shadow cabinet and establish a 'government in waiting'. Significant resources are placed at the disposal of this institutionalized opposition. The funding formula for the allocation of money to support opposition parties in their parliamentary duties is based on representation in the Commons. This favours the official opposition over other parties (Kelly 2020). Other features of the parliamentary system reinforce the binary choice. Prime Minister's Question Time in the Commons gives MPs a chance to question the Prime Minister for 30 minutes once a week while the Commons is in session. These exchanges are dominated by exchanges between the Prime Minister and Leader of the Opposition and between Conservatives and Labour. The major parties rarely engage with challenger parties, denying them opportunities for publicity.

Control of the Commons is determined by the electorate and the electoral system. To make their choices, voters must be informed. Since party membership is small, voters have traditionally relied on the mass media for information (Bartle 2006). The UK national press is highly partisan and reinforces binary perspectives. The Conservatives have usually enjoyed the overwhelming support of the newspapers. Yet since newspaper readership is self-selecting, it has limited electoral impact. Broadcasting is potentially more impactful but regulated to ensure 'due impartiality' (Ofcom 2020). The definition of impartiality is heavily influenced by the parliamentary status quo. Most news stories are framed by the government and 'official' opposition. Alternative perspectives are often ignored. The major parties have cultivated relations with the media who want to hear from those parties that might form the government. Both parties know how to shape the political

agenda and provide content that satisfies the media's news values. The major party domination of the media has changed a little with the rise of social media, which provide platforms to those beyond the mainstream. Populists on both the right and the left have used social media to shift the major parties towards their polar positions. Both the election of Jeremy Corbyn as Labour leader in 2015 and the victory of the Leave Campaign in the 2016 referendum on the UK's membership of the European Union owed much to the activities of these 'keyboard warriors'.

Changes in the framework conditions have produced party system change. The establishment of devolved institutions in Scotland and Wales from 1998 onwards has nibbled away at the two-party system (Johns 2018).[2] The new legislatures are elected by proportional electoral systems that lower barriers to challenger party success. Other changes have also been impactful. British government was traditionally based on a strict division of labour between parties and the public. The electorate chose governments, but government made all the decisions. The public were never asked to directly decide policy (King 2009). In 1975 the Labour government broke with this tradition and referred membership of the then Common Market to the people. From 1975 onwards anyone who was dissatisfied with the choices provided by the parties could campaign for a referendum. While referendums are not legally binding on Parliament, they are politically binding. Since parties are often internally divided on issues and referendum outcomes divide party members into winners and losers, governments have generally avoided references to the people. When governments have granted referendums—either because of electoral pressure or miscalculation—they have risked destabilizing the party system. The outcomes of the 2014 Scottish independence referendum and 2016 referendum on the UK's membership of the European Union (EU) produced shocks that will reverberate through the system for years (Fieldhouse et al. 2019).

Electoral system

The UK's plurality electoral system for elections to the House of Commons awards seats based on votes obtained in constituencies. Put simply, the candidate with the most votes is elected. If there were just two candidates, the plurality winner would necessarily gain a majority (50% plus one). If there are two or more candidates a candidate can win with significantly less than a majority. This rule affects both voters and parties (Quinn 2017). Voters must consider both their preferences and the probable election outcome. If they

vote for a candidate that cannot win, they arguably 'waste' their vote. Voters may vote strategically or tactically for a less preferred party to stop another less preferred party from winning. Minor parties must consider the likelihood of winning before entering the race. If they nominate a candidate and fail to obtain 5% of the vote in a seat, they will lose their £500 deposit. And, if parties from the same side contest a seat, this may split the vote and let the other side win. This consideration may also dissuade politicians from breaking with their party (Cox 1997).

The plurality system has different effects on minor parties depending on the geographical distribution of the vote. In 2015 the Liberal Democrats received 7.9% of the vote and just 1.2% of the seats because its vote was not concentrated. The anti-EU United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP) won 12.6% of the vote and just 0.15% of seats in the same election. The Scottish National Party (SNP), by contrast, received just 4.7% of the UK vote and won 8.6% seats because its vote was concentrated (Johns 2018).

Changes in the electoral system are likely to have profound impacts on the party system. This is illustrated by the new legislatures created by the Labour's programme of devolution. The Scottish Parliament, Welsh Senned, and Greater London Assembly are all presently elected using proportional systems (Additional Member System). Many voters opted to split their constituency and top-up vote between different parties. Both major parties performed far less well in these elections than their Westminster equivalents. Challenger parties like UKIP, the Greens, the SNP, and Plaid Cymru did better (McLean 2006). The consequences for Labour in the Scottish Parliament were disastrous. It was forced to form a coalition with the Liberal Democrats from 1998 to 2007 and then lost power in 2007. The SNP has formed the Scottish government ever since, as a minority, a majority or, from 2021, in coalition with the Scottish Greens. Over time, it established its credibility and an image as the protector of a distinctive Scottish national interest. By 2014 it was confident enough to request a referendum on Scottish independence. Although, the Scottish people voted 55% 'no' and 45% 'yes' to independence, the referendum destroyed Labour's reputation as a party that looked after the Scottish interest. Labour was virtually wiped out in Scotland at subsequent Westminster elections. This example is one reason why the major parties resist demands for further electoral reform.

The contrasting fortunes of the Liberal Democrats, UKIP, and SNP in 2015 illustrated how the plurality electoral system could lead to a multi-party system. Many minor parties could emerge to represent distinct areas. This does not usually happen because regional interests are normally muted and because parties want to win a majority of seats. Nevertheless, if large parts

of the nation decide that they no longer want to remain in the union, these considerations become less important. By 2014 many Scots concluded that they could achieve more by abandoning the pro-Union Labour Party (Johns 2018). This example illustrates how a plurality electoral system can produce rapid transformation of party systems at the regional level.

Resources: membership and finance

Party members have played a limited role in both major parties until recently (McKenzie 1955). In the 1950s the Conservatives claimed 2.8 million members and Labour around one million (UK Parliament 2022). Neither claim can be validated. Record keeping in both parties was poor. Definitions of membership varied across local Conservative associations, and constituency Labour parties routinely exaggerated their membership so they could send delegates to annual conference. By the late 1990s Conservative membership had dwindled to under 500,000 and Labour to slightly lower levels (UK Parliament 2022). These figures are again unreliable, but the accuracy of these records hardly mattered because members had little power. It was only when they acquired responsibilities for electing leaders and selecting candidates that figures became more accurate. From 2002 onwards parties had to produce accounts to the Electoral Commission but did not have to give membership figures. When the accounts include such figures, they provide reliable indicators. Labour membership surged under Corbyn's leadership from 388,000 in 2015 to 544,000 by 2016 and around 575,000 in 2017. Membership fell away after defeat in 2019 and the election of Keir Starmer as party leader in 2020. Nevertheless, by 2022 Labour had 432,000 members, while the Conservatives had just 172,000 (UK Parliament 2022: 4).

Party members have not been important in the UK because the parties did not rely on members for funds and were reluctant to give them a direct say over policy, the selection of candidates, or party leaders (McKenzie 1955). Until the late 1990s, Labour obtained most of its money from affiliated trade unions. The unions in turn obtained votes at the party's annual conference and a say over policy. The Conservatives relied on donations from companies and from rich individuals. From the late 1990s onwards, the unions have become a less important source for Labour as membership of unions has declined and trade unions have withdrawn support. Companies have largely stopped donating to the Conservative party. New limits on election expenditure were imposed under the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 spending limits on national campaigns. Nevertheless, parties still

need funds. Both parties became more dependent on individual members and donations from individuals. The first development increased demands for members to have a say over leaders, candidates, and policies. The second has embroiled the parties in controversies about the ethics of donations, transparency, and the influence of donations on party policy.

Party Adaptation in a Strong Party System

Despite the transformation of Scottish politics, the UK has a strong party system. At a national level, challenger parties still find it very hard to break the mould. The identity of the parties that frame the system is a result of historic social structures and a long history of party adaptation (Lipset and Rokkan 1967). This section examines the electoral performance, origins, ideology, and adaptation of the two parties over time. The parties endure because the framework conditions protect them and give them time to adapt. The failure of one of these major parties to adapt—first Labour, then the Conservatives, and then Labour again—produced a pattern of 'alternating predominance' from 1979 onwards (Quinn 2012).

UK elections, 1918–2019

Figure 3.4 displays the vote share received by parties from 1918 to 2019. Over those 101 years the Conservative party averaged 41.8% of the vote and Labour 37.5%. From 1945 to 2019 the advantage is somewhat smaller (40.9% to 39.3%) but still visible.

Figure 3.5 displays the seat share won by parties from 1918 to 2019. Over the whole period Conservatives won an average of 49.9% of seats compared to Labour's 40.9%. From 1945 to 2019 the figures are almost exactly equal (46.8% to 46.6%). Figure 3.4 illustrates the pattern of 'alternating predominance' since 1979 (Quinn 2012). The Tories won comfortable majorities in 1979 and 1992 and massive majorities in 1983 and 1987. Labour won 'landslide majorities' in 1997 and 2001 and a large majority in 2005. The Conservatives have won the four subsequent elections. While the first three victories were unconvincing, the party's 56.2% share of the seats in 2019 was impressive.

Votes for 'challenger parties' are the 'canary in the coalmine'—they indicate discontent with the two-party system. The vote share of the UK's traditional third party, the Liberal Democrats, is displayed in Figure 3.4. In the 1950s

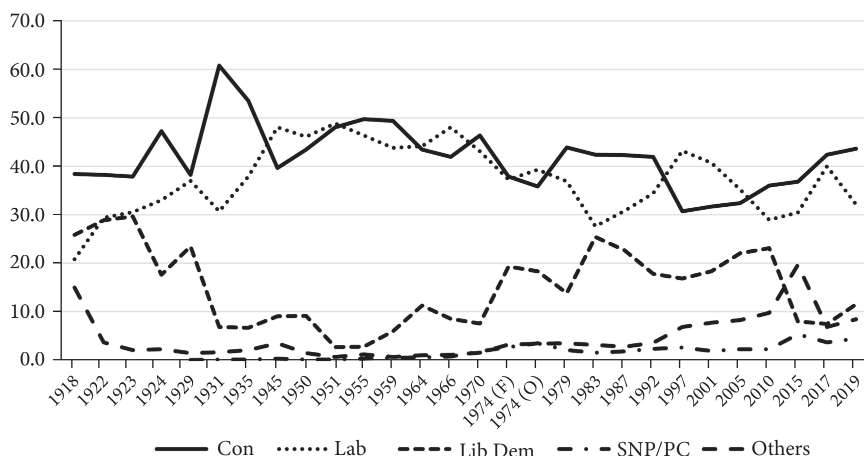

Figure 3.4 Party vote share in UK general elections, 1918–2019
Source: Pilling and Cracknell 2021

its share of the vote share fell to 2% but then trended upwards until 2010. This rise was driven by social changes, including a larger middle class and the expansion of higher education (Heath et al. 1989), the periodic tendency of the major parties to 'vacate the centre' (Nagel and Wlezien 2010) and both parties' poor performance in office (Bartle et al. 2019). Figure 3.5 shows that the electoral system failed to reward the Liberal Democrats with seats even when their vote increased dramatically in February 1974 and 1983. From 1997 onwards, however, it picked up more seats because of tactical voting by Labour voters in Conservative seats.

By 2010 the Liberal Democrats had gained enough for it to enter a coalition with the Conservatives and govern in accordance with a coalition agreement (Quinn et al. 2011). This experiment in coalition politics proved disastrous for the third party (Curtice 2018). Its share of the vote plummeted from 23% in 2010 to 7.9% in 2015 (see Figure 3.4). Its share of the seats fell from 8.8% to 1.2% (see Figure 3.5). This reversal of fortunes represented the largest change in vote share for any party in any general election.

The vote for 'other' or 'minor' parties has generally been small but tended upwards since the early 1970s (Figure 3.4). It peaked in 2015 following the collapse of the Liberal Democrats, a large rise in UKIP vote, a surge in votes for the SNP, and a smaller rise in the Green Party vote. The rise in support for UKIP before 2015 was politically consequential because it was one of the factors that persuaded the Conservative government to hold a referendum on the UK's membership of the EU. UKIP claimed that the two major parties

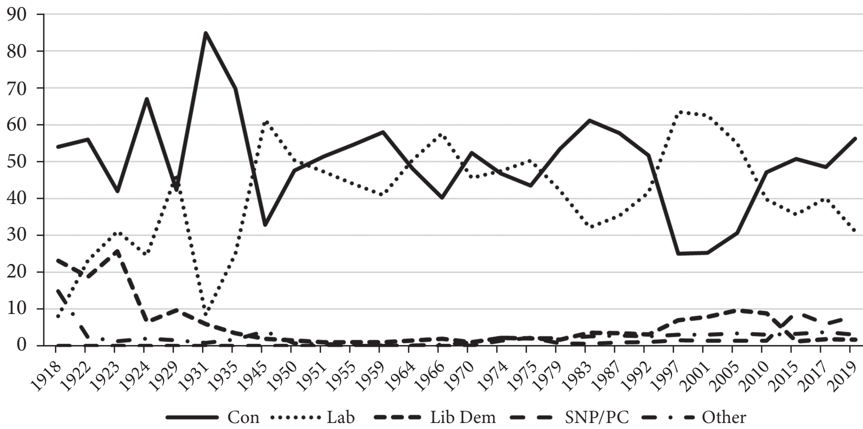

Figure 3.5 Party seat share in UK general elections, 1918–2019
Source: Pilling and Cracknell 2021. Authors' calculations

agreed about transferring sovereignty to the EU. They argued that switching from one side to the other would not provide voters with more control over policy towards the EU. Instead, they argued that the people should be given a direct say in a referendum. These arguments initially had limited impact because sovereignty was an abstract issue. They became more impactful after 2010 when sovereignty became bundled with the issue of immigration. UKIP claimed that the UK could not control immigration while a member of the single market. This made the invitation to 'take back control' much more appealing and was a major factor in both the growth in UKIP vote in 2015 and the Leave vote in 2016.

The variations in the vote for 'other' parties did not generally translate into seats at Westminster. The only exception was the vote for the SNP since 2015. Nevertheless, the threat of challenger parties meant that the two major parties had to factor in these parties to a degree when formulating their electoral strategies.

The Ideology and Performance of the Two Major Parties

In a two-party system the ideology and electoral performance of the parties cannot be studied in isolation. The strategy of one depends on that of the other, and the vote for one party depends on voters' judgements about the 'alternative'. To simplify matters, we start with Labour because the current system was established when it replaced the Liberal party. While the

Conservative party has undoubtedly dominated government, moreover, it has often been on the political defensive. If we are to understand the party system, we must understand Labour.

The Labour Party

The present party system is the third system in the UK. The first, between 1740 and 1840, pitted the Whigs against the Tories. The Whigs opposed monarchical rule, championed the political and economic rights of the urban middle class, and advocated religious freedom. Together with a small group of radicals, they formed a progressive wing in Parliament before mass democracy. The Tories supported the monarch and championed the interests of the aristocrats and the established churches. The second system lasted from 1860 to 1918, when both the parties split. 'Whigs' and 'radicals' were drawn to the Liberal Party that supported personal freedom, free trade, and non-conformists.[3] The Tory Party re-formed as the Conservative party that championed traditional values, empire, and the established church. Both parties developed organizations to mobilize the expanded electorate (McKenzie 1955).

The Labour Party was established in 1906 to achieve working-class representation in Parliament (McKibbin 1974). The Liberal Party recognized the threat that Labour represented and acted to contain it. The Liberals agreed not to compete with Labour in 50 seats in return for being given free runs elsewhere. This helped Labour establish a foothold in Westminster. Nevertheless, Labour's future was far from certain. The Liberals increasingly recognized demands for greater state activity and collective action to enhance individual freedom (Heywood 2017). If the First World War had not intervened, the Liberals may have forged a coalition that incorporated Labour (Marquand 1999).

The First World War split the Liberal Party into two groups: those who supported the coalition under Lloyd George and those who supported a distinctly Liberal alternative under Asquith. In 1918 Labour decided to take advantage of this split and the extension of the franchise to male workers and most women by trying to replace the Liberals. It adopted a new constitution and advocated a massive expansion in state activity. This programme established a new left–right economic dimension that formed the basis of party competition in all future elections (Bara and Weale 2006). Labour ('the left') advocated 'more' government activity, 'more' collective action, and 'more' equality, while the Conservatives ('the right') advocated 'less'.

These developments, coupled with the operation of the plurality electoral system, resulted in the two major parties squeezing the Liberal vote by the end of the 1920s (McKibbin 1974). Labour's electoral strategy focused on mobilizing the majority working class. Nevertheless, it also attracted other social groups to the party's coalition. Labour's proposals to expand state activity appealed to egalitarian non-conformists and radicals. Some in the middle class recognized that an expanded state provided them with opportunities. Labour also advocated polices that favoured urban dwellers and those who lived in the Celtic periphery of Scotland and Wales (Lipset and Rokkan 1967). The party failed to attract all former Liberals, however. Many remained suspicious of Labour's socialist and class politics. Labour's post-war victories demonstrated that it could attract enough voters in favourable circumstances, but its limited appeal to the middle class became an increasing handicap as the working class became a smaller portion of the electorate.

The proletarian origins of the Labour Party also affected the party's ethos and the way that it interacted with other parties (Drucker 2018). Labour claimed to be democratic but was heavily influenced by its affiliated trade unions. Supporters of the union link claimed that it kept Labour 'grounded' (Minkin 1992). Conservative opponents claimed Labour was a 'wholly owned subsidiary' of the unions. Others suggested that the union link tied Labour to intellectually timid policies (Marquand 1999). What is beyond doubt is that the trade unions made Labour more tribal and more suspicious of other non-Conservative parties. Labour formed minority governments in 1923 and 1929 rather than form a coalition. It also rejected coalition in 1931 following the economic crisis. MacDonald's decision to form the National Government was regarded as a betrayal. Labour reluctantly joined Churchill's wartime coalition and withdrew before the war with Japan ended. The party's unwillingness to surrender its exclusive right of opposition to the Conservatives has continued. In 1997 Tony Blair was dissuaded from inviting Liberal Democrats to join his government by internal opposition. In 2010 some senior Labour figures similarly urged the party to reject a 'progressive coalition' with the Liberal Democrats, SNP, and Greens that might have prevented David Cameron becoming Prime Minister.

Labour ideas about government intervention, collective action, and equality have dominated British politics in the 20th century. Nevertheless, as Figure 3.1 shows, the party has spent little time in government. The continued contraction of the working class because of deindustrialization raised questions about whether Labour could win an election. Labour's problems were compounded by the fact that the 1945–1951 Attlee government achieved virtually all its goals. This success led to factional disputes. The left wanted to

expand the state, while the right wanted to consolidate. In the 1960s Wilson emphasized the 'white heat of technological change' (Ponting 1989), which untied the party for a time. Nevertheless, Labour again descended into factional infighting as the economic crisis of the 1970s unfolded (Jenkins 1988).

From 1945 to 1970 the Labour leadership was protected from the demands of the left by the trade unions. From the late 1960s, however, the trade unions swung leftwards in response to the failures of Labour governments. Labour lurched left in February 1974 and again in 1983, vacating the centre, increasing support for the third parties (Whiteley et al. 2021). In 1974 the impact of these changes was concealed by the disastrous performance of the Conservatives. In 1983 the party had no such luck. It faced a Conservative party buoyed by military success in the Falklands War and an economic boom and went down to a landslide defeat (Jenkins 1988). Only the electoral system saved them from an even greater loss of seats.

Labour's tendency to vacate the centre had a dramatic effect on British politics. In 1981 a significant portion of the party's right broke away to form the Social Democratic Party (SDP). This party fought the 1983 and 1987 general elections in alliance with the Liberals (Crewe and King 1995). This split contributed to a dramatic rise in the third-party vote, but the electoral system again protected Labour from losing seats. The Liberals and SDP merged to create the Liberal Democrats in 1988. Labour moved back to the centre under the leaderships of Kinnock and Smith. From 1994 onwards Blair speeded up the party's 'modernization' by accepting many Conservative policies on trade unions, privatization, and lower income taxes. The party was re-branded as 'New Labour' and appealed to the educated middle class by emphasizing education, constitutional reforms to protect human rights, liberalizing laws relating to sexuality, protection of the environment, and expanding the competence of the EU. These adaptations, together with Conservative failures, resulted in Labour landslide victories in 1997 and 2001 and a significant majority in 2005. This unusual period of Labour predominance ended when Labour went down to a heavy defeat in 2010 following the financial crisis.

Blair also modernized Labour by reducing the power of trade unions over policy. The unions' share of the vote at the annual conference that decided policy fell. The balance of power shifted to ordinary members who were more concerned about social issues than the working class. Since participation is higher among the educated and middle class, Labour increasingly reflected their concerns. By the mid-2000s most Labour members and virtually all its most prominent figures were middle class (Bellucci and Heath 2012). These changes, together with disillusion following Blair's support for the invasions

of Iraq and Afghanistan, resulted in the election of Corbyn as leader in 2015 by party members, despite his minimal support among Labour MPs. This pulled the party further left.

The gap between the party and its working-class supporters on non-economic issues under New Labour was not entirely new. The Wilson government's support for reforms of the laws relating to homosexuality, divorce, and abortion were driven by middle-class advocacy groups (Ponting 1989). Any differences between the classes were not electorally consequential because these were secondary issues. Labour governments in the 1970s balanced limits on immigration with laws to end racial discrimination. As the non-economic dimensions of politics grew in importance, the electoral risk increased. By the late 1990s, Labour's liberal policies appealed largely to young, educated, and middle-class voters (Sobolewska 2021). So did Labour's enthusiasm for the EU. This led it to allow workers from the new member states in Eastern Europe to immediately work in the UK from 2004. Net migration to the UK surged. Concerns about the impact of immigration on employment, wages, and public services increased, particularly among the working class. Over time, large parts of the white working class came to feel that Labour no longer represented them (Evans and Tilly 2017). These concerns initially resulted in declining turnout. From the mid-2000s they produced increasing working-class support for the British National Party and UKIP (Ford and Goodwin 2014).

In the 2016 referendum on EU membership, older voters, the working class, and less educated voters overwhelmingly voted to 'take back control'. Younger voters, the middle class, and more educated voters overwhelmingly voted Remain (Clarke et al. 2017). Victory for Leave meant that Labour was out of line with working-class Leave voters. In the 2017 general election Corbyn promised to honour the decision to leave but to negotiate a new withdrawal agreement to protect labour rights and the environment. The party also announced popular plans to increase government spending and nationalization. This united the party and helped Labour attract the votes of enough Leavers and Remainers to gain votes and seats and produce a hung Parliament. By 2019 adversarial politics reasserted itself. Labour's members demanded a distinctive Labour policy that a renegotiated withdrawal agreement should be put to a second referendum with the option to remain. Corbyn agreed in order to unite his party ahead of an election (Whiteley et al. 2021). He then declined to say how he would vote in that second referendum. This satisfied no one. Leavers felt betrayed by the promise of a second referendum. Remainers felt that Labour lacked commitment to the EU. Some Remainers moved to the Greens, others to the Liberal Democrats. The party's

2019 coalition quickly eroded. Labour was soundly defeated in 2019, winning fewer MPs than at any election since 1935. Most strikingly, the Conservatives outpolled Labour among the working class. Many seats with long Labour traditions (the so-called 'red wall') fell to the Conservatives. While the vote for 'Remain' parties exceeded that for 'Leave' parties, it was scattered across more parties (Johns 2021).

After the defeat, Labour elected Starmer as leader. Despite making promises to retain the left-wing policies of his predecessor, he reined in the party's ambitious spending and nationalization plans. He also nodded to working-class patriotism when the party sang 'God Save the King' at the 2022 annual conference. He moved to exclude left-wingers from senior positions and selection as parliamentary candidates in key seats. He also barred Corbyn from standing as a Labour candidate again after the former leader criticized a report about antisemitism under his leadership. Labour's return to the political centre, following the New Labour model, was completed with brutal determination.

The Conservative Party

Since the UK is a two-party system, any analysis of Labour says much—but not everything—about the alternative. While Labour has been electorally unsuccessful, the Conservative party has won election after election with generally sizeable majorities (Seldon and Ball 1994). While Labour styled itself as the party of the workers, the Conservative party has portrayed itself as a national party that transcends narrow interests (Butler and Stokes 1974). And while Labour has demonstrated commitment to big ideas, the Conservative party has—with one notable exception—prided itself on its pragmatism.

The Conservative party, like the Tory Party before it, has drawn support from those groups that support the status quo: owners of industry, the middle class, homeowners, members of the established church, and farmers, together with unionists in the three Celtic nations. Deindustrialization, social mobility, the spread of property ownership, and migration from the cities have all increased the size of these groups. Yet the party has always attracted many working-class voters. Indeed, since workers were long the majority class, the party obtained over half of its vote from this source in the 1950s and 1960s (Butler and Stokes 1974). Some of these were repulsed by socialism or labourism. Others deferred to their 'social betters' (McKenzie and Silver 1968). The leftward movement of policy after 1945 led some workers to conclude that welfare was too generous, taxes were too high, and

personal incentives had been eroded (Bartle et al. 2011). In a two-party system the Conservatives were the only other option. The Conservative party's continued association with symbols of 'Britishness' including the monarchy, armed forces, and churches consolidated its reputation as the 'national' party.

The Conservative party of Churchill and Macmillan in the 1950s prided itself in its pragmatism (Heywood 2017). Some have claimed that party ideology was summarized by a principled commitment to the free market (Willetts 1992). Yet while this is true of Margaret Thatcher, she is the exception to the rule. The Conservative party has usually simply tried to 'conserve'. It has favoured traditional institutions like the nation, the established church, and the family. Nevertheless, it has also accepted Burke's advice about the need to 'change to conserve' (Burke 2015). This willingness to adapt was most clearly illustrated by its acceptance of the National Health Service (NHS) from 1948. The Thatcher administration's attempt to 'roll back the frontiers of the state' from 1979 to 1990 was the exception to the party's tendency to accommodate the public mood. Thatcher had the freedom to pursue those goals because Labour was widely thought to be extreme and incompetent in the 1980s. From 1997 to 2005, the Conservative party became more ideological and tied to Thatcherite policies. Its vacation of the political centre contributed to the period of Labour predominance. Nevertheless, the party rediscovered its pragmatism under Cameron. It accepted the need for coalition in 2010 and adopted many of the policies of its Liberal Democrat coalition partners when in government.

The most enduring basis of the Conservative party's appeal is its claim to be the national party. It is for this reason that the issue of Europe caused it such problems. From the 1960s to the late 1990s most of the party viewed membership of the Common Market, the European Economic Community, and the EU as in the British national interest. The Heath government took the UK into the Common Market in 1973. Many Conservatives, including Thatcher, campaigned to remain in Europe in the referendum in 1975. Thatcher accepted the expansion of European competence in the European Single Act 1986. Yet by the late 1980s some Conservatives became worried about the erosion of national sovereignty implied by further integration. In her 1989 Bruges speech Thatcher proclaimed the need to maintain national distinctiveness. These views led to her removal as leader in late 1990. This, in turn, signalled the start of a long struggle about European policy that created disunity. From the mid-1990s the struggle was heightened by the emergence of challenger parties such as the Referendum Party and later UKIP. The leadership tried to unite the party by adopting increasingly Eurosceptic positions, but none satisfied the demands for a 'repatriation of sovereignty'. In 2005 Cameron

warned his party that 'banging on about Europe' was damaging. He appeared to win the argument. Over time, however, support for withdrawal from the EU increased, especially among party members.

The Conservative party has traditionally been advantaged in the competitive struggle for the vote by the fact that party members rarely tried to determine policy or constrain its leaders. Only the leader has authority to make party policy in consultation with colleagues. The leaders' duty was simply to stop Labour from winning. The Conservative party made little pretence to be democratic until the late 1990s. Conservative leaders sometimes found it expedient to take note of the mood in the party but never gave members a direct say over policy (Kelly 1989). Over time, members have become more visible. In 1998 they acquired the final say in the election of party leaders, choosing between two candidates selected by Conservative MPs (Quinn 2012). Despite these reforms the parliamentary party was still able to engineer the removal of the unpopular Duncan-Smith in 2003 and ensure that his successor Howard faced no rival. Nevertheless, members' significance increased. They tended to select Eurosceptic parliamentary candidates, and the balance of opinion slowly shifted in a Eurosceptic direction.

Under Cameron the Conservatives settled on a policy of Euroscepticism that fell short of advocating withdrawal. This united the party for a time. The demands for a more sceptical position increased during the coalition, when sensitivity to the Liberal Democrats led to less Eurosceptic policies. From 2010 onwards UKIP performed well in polls (Clarke et al. 2017). Ordinary Conservatives grew alarmed by this threat. The real impulse for change, however, was that Conservatives came to share both UKIP's analysis and prescription. Many concluded that EU integration was unstoppable and that the UK should leave.

Cameron yielded to party pressures by pledging a simple 'in–out' referendum on EU membership in 2013. This was designed to unite the party and stem the growth in support for UKIP in the next general election. When the Conservatives won the 2015 election, Cameron acted on his promise. He called a referendum, recommending a vote to remain. The resulting campaign brutally exposed Conservative divisions. Most MPs supported Remain; most members supported Leave. The eventual decision to leave the EU led to Cameron's resignation and replacement. Theresa May, the new Prime Minister, tried to unite her party by proposing to leave both the single market and customs union. Her initial popularity led her to call a general election in 2017. She promised a 'strong and stable' government but then performed a series of campaign U-turns that made her appear weak. May's

decision to call an election backfired, and the party lost its majority (Bartle 2018).

The May government from 2017 to 2019 became dependent on the small Democratic Unionist Party from Northern Ireland. For two years May's efforts to get a withdrawal agreement were blocked by a combination of opposition MPs, Remainer Conservatives, and Eurosceptics who demanded a clean break with the EU (Quinn 2021). Many Brexiteers feared that 'the Westminster establishment' would block withdrawal and joined the new Brexit party. This party's success in the European elections of June 2019, like UKIP's before it, caused panic. May resigned. In the subsequent leadership election, the party took the enormous risk of electing Boris Johnson—a man with a colourful past—as its leader (Allen 2021). He imposed party discipline by sacking most Remainers in the cabinet and withdrawing the whip from MPs who did not promise to 'get Brexit done'. He then renegotiated the EU withdrawal agreement and manoeuvred the other parties to accept a general election. His campaign combined traditional national appeals for strong government with a commitment to 'level up every part of the country'. While few knew precisely what this meant, it generally implied government activity and spending on a scale that horrified some Thatcherites. Nevertheless, the appeal worked. The Conservatives obtained a massive majority in the 2019 general election.

The Conservative party had little time to enjoy its victory. Johnson managed to 'get Brexit done', but his government was immediately overwhelmed by the COVID-19 pandemic. The government enforced lockdowns, outraging many of those who longed for a smaller state. Johnson's government became embroiled in scandal after scandal relating to breaches of COVID-19 regulations by those in government, including the Prime Minister himself. Johnson was finally forced to resign in 2022 after he made a questionable appointment to a sensitive role in the parliamentary party. In the resulting leadership campaign, party MPs presented members with a choice between Liz Truss, a politician who viewed herself as a Conservative in the Thatcherite mould, and Rishi Sunak, who enjoyed far more support among his parliamentary colleagues but was blamed by many for Johnson's resignation. Party members opted for the more ideological Truss, selecting yet another leader who did not enjoy the confidence of their parliamentary colleagues. Her government launched an ambitious tax-cutting plan to boost growth without explaining how it would be paid for. Bond traders took flight and interest rates rocketed. The party's reputation for competence suffered a grievous blow. She quicky resigned and was replaced by Sunak. The new leader set about trying to unite his fractured party around action to stop illegal immigration,

commitments to support the NHS and promises to bear down on inflation. It remained difficult to see how he could adapt in time for a general election that would come in January 2025, at the latest.

The Future

If an intelligent designer who was otherwise ignorant about the past were to design a two-party system to reflect contemporary political conflicts, it is doubtful that they would produce the current Labour–Conservative system. Yet the UK remains a strong and closed system. Challenger parties are unlikely to break the mould by replacing either of the two main parties. This does not mean that the two major parties are invulnerable. British history provides examples of parties that have disappeared because of internal splits or changes in the suffrage. Referendums may produce more chaos, though it is difficult to identify issues that would break the party system. Yet the framework conditions provide parties with time to adapt.

Both parties have been associated with policy failures. Labour presided over an economic crash during 2008–2010. The Conservatives presided over shambolic governments during Brexit, COVID-19, and the short-lived Truss administration. In an era of increasing intra-party democracy, both parties have proved vulnerable to takeover by their radical wings. The empowerment of party members has made it more difficult for leaders to resist the lure of ideological consistency. Both parties have periodically vacated the centre, reducing their credibility. This has allowed governments to either move toward their polar position or act less cautiously, confident that the electorate has no alternative. Such developments have illustrated the weakness of the UK constitution, which depends on voters and politics rather than judges and law. When the opposition fails to offer a credible choice, electoral checks are weak.

The two-party mould of British politics does not appear to be in danger of breaking anytime soon. The current Conservative government is willing to use its predominance to shore up its position. It has put pressure on the BBC to produce more favourable media content. It has also introduced legislation to require voters to use identity cards, even though the evidence suggests that impersonation is a trivial feature of UK elections. This may reduce the vote for non-Conservative parties. These are worrying indications that the party may use its power in the manner of authoritarian populists in other countries (Birch 2021).

Electoral reform would break the mould of the party system, but it is not on the agenda. Only Parliament can change the electoral system, and both the parties that dominate at Westminster and are likely to control government have resisted reform. The Conservatives are steadfastly opposed. The Labour leadership has ignored calls from party members for proportional representation. The party's experience in Scotland illustrated the dangers of that system to the party. Labour still jealously guards its monopoly on anti-Conservative opposition even though its electoral record is poor. And even if Labour were to contemplate reform, it is less likely to happen than in the past because there is now a convention that any reform to the electoral system must be referred to the people. Figure 3.6 displays the public's preferences for single-party and coalition government, from 1983 to 2017. From the early 1990s to late 2000s, roughly equal portions of the electorate preferred single-party and coalition government. After 2010, the public's preferences for single-party government shot up. In short, the experience of coalition between 2010 and 2015 set back not only the Liberal Democrats but also the cause of power sharing.

More recent evidence about public preferences for single-party or coalition government is not yet available. Nevertheless, it seems fair to speculate that the public's desire for strong single-party government can only have been bolstered by recent experience of parliamentary stalemate under May and administrative incompetence under Johnson. There is little prospect that the party system is likely to change anytime soon.

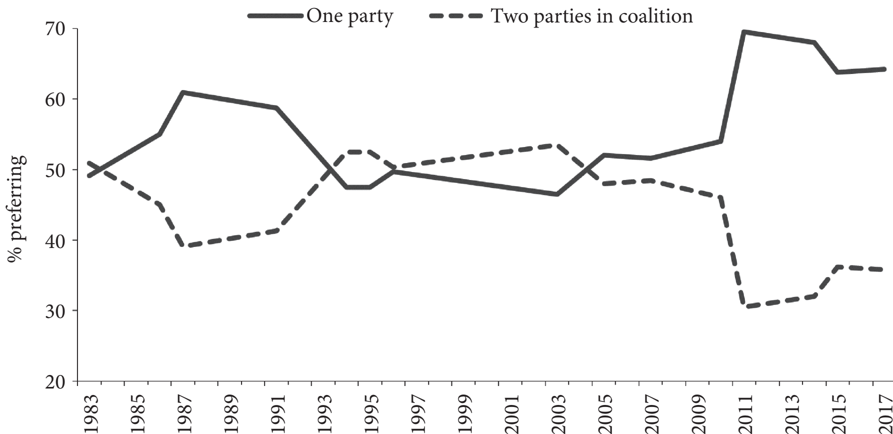

Figure 3.6 Preferences for single-party or coalition government, 1983–2017

Source: British Social Attitudes, https://natcen.ac.uk/british-social-attitudes (Accessed 15 December 2023)

Notes

1. Figure 3.1 excludes the wartime coalition from 1940 to 1945.
2. The party system in Northern Ireland has always been different from that on the British mainland.
3. Non-conformists hold Christian beliefs that do not conform to the established Church of England.

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4
French Political Parties and Democracy

Elodie Fabre

French parties are increasingly weak, with low party membership, factionalism, and regular splits, and their links with citizens and civil society are often quite limited. For French democracy, this creates several issues: low level of trust, declining partisan attachment, and increasing voter volatility and apathy. In recent years, the party system and electorate have become more polarized. While the French party system has always provided a wide range of options across the left–right spectrum, parties such as the *Rassemblement National* (RN, National Rally) and *La France Insoumise* (LFI, France Unbowed) have become stronger at the expense of the traditional and more moderate parties of the right and left. These trends culminated in the 2017 election, when Emmanuel Macron, a newcomer who had only created an organization to support his candidacy a year earlier, was elected President of the Republic. The first round saw Macron, Marine Le Pen, and Jean-Luc Mélenchon, three candidates who had rejected traditional parties and politics, in top positions, and the second round between Macron and Le Pen marked the first time since 1965 that none of the traditional parties was present in the second round of the presidential election.

This analysis of political parties in France will focus on the four parties that have reached the second round of the presidential elections during the last 20 years: *La République en Marche* (LaREM, Republic on the Move)[1], the RN (the new name of the *Front National*, FN), the *Parti Socialiste* (PS, Socialist Party), and *Les Républicains*, (LR, The Republicans). The French party system counts many more parties, including the Green party *Europe Ecologie-Les Verts*, the leftist LFI, and the *Parti de Gauche*, Left Party, along with several centrist parties such as the *Mouvement Démocratique* (MoDem, Democratic Movement) and the *Parti Radical de Gauche*, some of which often play a role in shaping parliamentary majorities.

Party organization in France is characterized by the great diversity of its types. These parties vary greatly in terms of age and represent a wide ideological spectrum ranging from the far left to the extreme right. Party origins

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and ideology both influence the type of organization of each party. This chapter will focus on the following aspects: parties and society, relationship with the state through party funding, and differences in organization and organizational change. Overall, we observe a tendency of increased direct participation of members in some areas of party life and high levels of public funding, both symptoms of party cartelization as defined by Katz and Mair (1995). However, the party system has remained open, and parties have remained a vital part of French democracy.

A Party System in Flux

The French party system has undergone significant changes in the last few decades. After the period described as a 'bipolar four-party system' composed of the Gaullist party Rally for the Republic (RPR)[2], the centre-right Union for French Democracy party (UDF)[3], the PS, and the Communist Party (Duverger 1973; Cole 2003: 12), new parties emerged in the mid-1980s, most notably the radical right FN and the Green party *Les Verts*. The period that followed saw a regular pattern of alternation between left and right in power, with smaller parties, except the FN, often aligning behind the RPR/UMP (Union for a Popular Movement) on the right or the PS on the left (Grunberg and Haegel 2008), with the FN as a third electoral force. However, it is in the centre ground that recent changes have most shaken French politics. The election of Emmanuel Macron as President of the Republic and the parliamentary elections that followed have placed both traditional governing parties in the opposition and significantly reduced their representation in parliament. This shows that newcomers have overcome obstacles to entry for new parties (presidential elections, a majoritarian electoral system, and the party funding regime).

French electoral politics have become increasingly volatile. The semi-presidential nature of the French regime has always tended to focus party competition on candidate-centred politics and the main parties that have a realistic chance of winning the Presidency. Since 2002, four parties have placed a candidate in the second round of the presidential election, whereas only two parties had managed that in the previous two decades. Table 4.1 shows that the effective number of presidential candidates (ENEP Pres) decreased and then increased again after 2007, and the effective numbers of electoral parties and parliamentary parties increased every year after the 2002 election. In 2017–2022, these indicators returned to pre-2002 levels.

Table 4.1 Effective number of parties in presidential and parliamentary elections, 1995–2022

	1995	1997	2002	2007	2012	2017	2022
ENEP Pres R1	5.76	n.e.	4.93	4.52	4.75	5.18	5.35
ENEP Parl	n.e.	6.56	4.22	4.32	5.27	6.82	5.49
ENPP	n.e.	3.54	2.26	2.49	2.83	3.00	3.72

Note: n.e.: no election
Sources: Author's elaboration for ENEP Pres R1 (for the first round of the presidential election), ENEP Parl 2022 and ENPP 2022; Gallagher (2019) for ENEP Parl (first round of parliamentary elections) and ENPP 1995–2017.

Changes to the electoral calendar and length of the presidential term in 2002 have resulted in a perfect coincidence of the presidential and parliamentary terms, each occurring every five years within a month of each other, with the presidential election held first. This has strengthened this presidential dynamic, turning parliamentary elections into a contest about whether voters should give the President a parliamentary majority to implement their programme (Dupoirier and Sauger 2010). Until the 2022 elections, voters preferred to give the new President a supportive parliamentary majority, and France has not experienced a 'cohabitation' between a President and a National Assembly majority from different parties or coalitions of parties since the presidential term was cut from seven to five years. Emmanuel Macron's election illustrates these trends: even a President with a very new party like LaREM won a parliamentary majority in 2017. Although LaREM's electoral coalition with the MoDem (*Ensemble*, Together) fell short of winning a majority of seats in the National Assembly in 2022, they still won more seats than any other party by a large margin. However, the Prime Minister's failure to build a stable governing coalition is proving problematic, as the government is seen to force through legislation without sufficient consultation and legislative collaboration with other groups. The repeated use of what are meant to be exceptional tools to pass legislation without a vote has increased tensions, as demonstrated by the lengthy wave of demonstrations against the 2023 pension reform.[4]

Since the early 2000s, parties have suffered from low levels of trust and strong dissatisfaction with their performance and their responses to the country's problems, such as unemployment and, more recently, terrorism (Grossman 2019). At the same time, France is grappling with issues such as immigration and integration, which leads to an increasing focus on the

values and identity axis of party competition at the expense of the traditional left–right economic axis (Sauger 2017: 21–22). While this focus on identity issues was originally initiated by the FN, these issues have become increasingly important for the main centre-right party LR and the PS, as voters found it increasingly difficult to tell the difference between the economic policies of the two traditional parties. In parallel, some newer parties have emphasized other issues (notably the Greens with the environment), while others have argued that the traditional left–right cleavage has lost its relevance. The FN/RN accused the mainstream parties of forming a cartel ('UMPS'), and Macron declared that he and his party were neither left nor right and that this cleavage had become obsolete. This does not, however, mean that voters have ceased to care about traditional economic issues (Tiberj 2017; Mossuz-Lavau 2020), and there is a risk of an increasing disconnect between voters and parties, which in turn fuels political distrust, voter apathy, and polarization.

In addition to these changes to party competition, both traditional and new parties have also had to deal with the issues of attracting and retaining members, engaging their membership, and reconnecting with the electorate, often with limited success.

Party Organization in France

The 1958 Constitution recognizes in its Article 4 the role of parties as organizations that contribute to the expression of suffrage and allows them to form and organize freely (Légifrance 2021). Parties are free to organize as they please, and there are no requirements in terms of intra-party democracy or territorial organization, as exists in other countries. The law started to regulate some aspects of party life in 1988 with the first law on financial transparency in public life (Marcilloux-Giummarra 2011: 164). Later, legislation to ensure gender parity, enshrined in the Constitution in 2000 and in 2008, added to the legislative framework that applies to political parties (Lépinard 2016).

A brief overview of the four main parties

The PS is the oldest of the four parties. Although it only existed under this name since 1969; it used to be the *Section Française de l'Internationale Ouvrière* (SFIO, French Section of the Workers' International), founded in

1905. It is a social democratic party, although it does not use the term (Deschodt 2007). The party adopted a traditional form of assembly-based intra-party democracy, and the party in public office has dominated the party since the 1980s (Bachelot 2007: 151). Local branches send representatives to a national congress, which debates motions and policy. The party recognizes tendencies (called 'currents'), and these factions propose distinct lists and motions to the conference. If no list receives a majority of the vote, a second round is organized, and motions may merge to form a winning coalition. The making of 'syntheses' (merger of different motions to form intra-party coalitions) is a socialist tradition which shields party elites from the rest of the party conference, as negotiations between currents take place behind closed doors (Bachelot 2007). The use of proportional representation (PR) facilitates the expression of internal divisions and provides opportunities for ambitious politicians and programmatic factions to make a bid for the party leadership.

The Republicans (LR) is the new name of the UMP, which was a merger of the old Gaullist party RPR and smaller centre-right parties that were member parties of the UDF. Some centrists in the UDF refused to join the UMP, which they saw as a hegemonic project of the mainstream right in which their centrist voice would be lost, and formed the MoDem. The UMP operated on a plebiscitary model, with a congress that elected the party leader and voted on programmatic texts by membership ballot. The RPR was very focused on unity behind the leader but had to adapt to its increasing hegemony on the right in the late 1980s and adopted congress votes on motion as well as the direct election of the party leader by membership ballot. The UMP went further in its recognition of internal pluralism and recognized factions, in large part to accommodate the diversity of parties that merged into the UMP. These 'internal movements', however, never really developed (Haegel 2007: 232–235). Overall, the party in public office dominated the party. LR kept this model of organization, in which the party in public office dominates the party in central office, gave more voice to party members (through members' election of local federation chairs and membership consultations on election nominations), and ended the recognition of internal factions.

The RN is the new name of the FN, which was created in 1972. Like many radical right parties, the RN places a lot of power in the hands of its leader and her circle (Amjahad and Jadot 2012). Towards the end of the 1980s, the FN developed a strongly centralized structure, with local branches at the bottom and ancillary organizations designed to attract sectoral groups such as

farmers, women, workers, and people working in the security forces (Marcus 1995: 47; Mayer 1998: 15–16). Under Marine Le Pen's leadership, the FN and then the RN adopted similar strategies to attract new members and potential candidates from a range of civil society backgrounds (Dezé 2016: 55–56). The leader selects the members of the executive and represents the party publicly. The election of 100 delegates to the National Council allows the membership to express preferences in terms of orientation and shows who is popular in the party. However, the leader's ability to choose another 20 members of the National Council limits the membership's influence in a body that is mostly advisory. The composition of the executive board (*bureau exécutif*) shows that it is the leader's inner circle that dominates the party (Amjahad and Jadot 2012: 60–61).

LaREM is the result of the transformation of Emmanuel Macron's movement En Marche! (EM!, which translates roughly as Forward!), created in 2016 to support his presidential bid, into a political party. EM! was created by Macron and his circle of early supporters to engage citizens at the local level. Supporters ('marcheurs') were given autonomy to run local actions to support Macron's candidacy, and were activated for The Big Walk, an initiative that saw thousands of volunteers knock on doors across France to gather the opinions of 100,000 French people on political, social, and economic issues (Raulin 2016). LaREM aimed to retain EM!'s local-level organization, with self-organized branches that run relatively independently from the central party. However, in return, they had no influence centrally. This stratarchical model of organization ended up being rather centralized, as lower levels of organization have very little power. The leader (general secretary) was not elected by party members but instead by the party's Council, in which members represented only 25% of the membership. Members could declare their interest to sit on the Council but were drawn by lot, which prevented any form of direct representation of or delegation from the membership (Delaurens 2018: 15) In 2019 this model was abandoned and sortition was replaced by a more traditional election of delegates by local party branches at the department level. These locally elected representatives constitute a larger share of the National Council,[5] although elected representatives from the local to the European levels still represent a majority. Many of the founders of EM! came from the Socialist Party and viewed its organization as a source of problems and divisions. As a result, they opted for a much more centralized form of organization that would insulate the leadership from challenges and divisions, leaving the party in public office very much in charge.[6]

Leadership selection and selection of the parties' candidates for the Presidency

The leaders of LR, the PS, and the FN are all elected by membership ballot, whereas the leader of LaREM is selected by the party Council, which mixes elected officials and party members. The party leader (first secretary) of the PS has been elected by membership in a two-round ballot since 1995. The leadership election used to follow the national congress, so that party motions were debated first and the leader elected second. Since 2010, the vote on motions and the first round of leadership selection have been coupled: the leaders of the two motions that receive the most ballots automatically become the candidates for the second round that takes place a week later. Leaders of LR are also elected by membership ballot, with results announced at a special congress. The only time there has been a contest in the FN/RN is when Jean-Marie Le Pen retired in 2011. After Marine Le Pen was elected party president, she remained unopposed. Any potential candidate to the party presidency needs the support of 20% of the National Council, which is a high bar.

In a semi-presidential system such as France's, the selection of the candidate for the Presidency is an important moment in party life. This is the area where we have seen most change in recent years, as the main parties try to manage the personal ambitions of their most prominent politicians, demands for intra-party democracy, and the potentially negative impact of multiple candidacies in a fragmented party system. The PS adopted membership ballot for the selection of its presidential candidate in the mid-1990s and turned to open primaries with candidates from a few other centre-left parties in the mid-2000s. The electoral weakness of the PS since 2017 means that other parties on the left have decided to present their own candidate in 2022, and the 2022 candidate was selected by membership ballot again. The RPR also adopted membership ballots to select its presidential candidate in the 1990s, but it has held very few contested ballots. In 1995, the party decided against choosing between then party president Jacques Chirac and then Prime Minister Edouard Balladur, and there were two RPR candidates in that election; in 2002, incumbent President Chirac sought re-election, supported by the UMP. The first ballot took place in 2007 with only one candidate: party president Nicolas Sarkozy. With Sarkozy the incumbent president seeking re-election in 2012, there was no ballot in 2011–2012. In 2017, LR and some of its allies on the right adopted open primaries to select a single candidate on the right. After the 2017 candidate, François Fillon, failed to reach the second round, LR then abandoned open primaries in favour of a two-round

membership ballot ahead of the 2022 elections. In the RN, the congress selects the candidate, but there has never been a candidate against the party president, who has always been the party candidate for the presidential election. The congress closest to the election is therefore the moment when the party president is announced as the party's official candidate. LaREM has yet to set out how it will select its presidential candidate in the post-Macron era, an issue they will have to address ahead of the 2027 presidential election.

The selection of presidential candidates has returned to being a purely partisan affair. We have seen a retreat from open primaries, as they had led to the selection of candidates that were more polarized, which then opened a wide gap at the centre that Macron was able to fill (Fabre 2023). The lack of success of these candidates also placed the PS and LR in a weak position to convince other parties to participate in common primaries.

The selection of parliamentary candidates

Candidate selection in France is often a rather centralized affair. In all parties, the central party approves candidacies, and the local parties may present prospective candidates to the attention of a central selection committee. This being said, there are clear differences in practice. In the PS, local branches organize hustings and a ballot to select their candidate. National bodies then ratify these choices. The national executive has the final say, notably in case of dispute either at the local level or between the local and national levels (Squarcioni 2017: 22). In LR, the national executive appoints a national commission to select candidates, and local party members may be consulted. The commission tends to consult local elected officials instead of party members (Squarcioni 2017: 26). LaREM has a similar system: a national commission is set up and may consult local members on candidate selection, and the national executive ratifies the selection. In 2017, without an actual party organization, a national commission selected candidates from a pool of prospective candidates including MPs who had defected from the PS or the UMP and new candidates who were selected based on their CVs and interviews. In addition, the party chose not to present candidates in a number of seats held by 'Macron-compatible' high-profile socialists and in seats negotiated with the MoDem (Evans 2017). In 2022, LaREM, renamed Renaissance, used a central selection panel for each constituency, and sitting deputies were not automatically reselected. Finally, the RN also has a national commission in charge of selecting candidates; its statutes do not mention membership consultations (Rassemblement National 2018).

Two major factors contribute to this centralization: electoral pacts and gender parity legislation. As parties build election pacts, they need to be able to tell local branches that they should not select a candidate and support another party's candidate instead. This particularly applies for the PS and LR, which have had long-standing pacts with smaller parties. This has remained true in 2017 and 2022, in particular for the PS, which joined the NUPES (*Nouvelle Union Populaire, Ecologique et Sociale*, New Ecological and Social People's Union) left-wing coalition in 2022. LaREM made some strategic withdrawals in 2017 and formed a pre-electoral coalition with the MoDem in 2022. In contrast, the FN does not make electoral pacts, so this is not a factor in the centralization of its selection process.

Parties are also required by law to have 50% of women candidates in all elections. When the electoral system has single-member constituencies (in parliamentary elections), parties need to present 50% of women candidates, with a two-point allowance.[7] Parties that fail to meet this target receive a fine (a deduction on their public subsidy). If progress was rather quick in bodies elected with PR, it has been considerably slower in elections to the *Assemblée Nationale* (lower house of parliament). Women represented only 26% of deputies elected in 2012, a share that increased to 39% in 2017 and was 37% in 2022 (215 female deputies out of 577). In 2022, women candidates represented 44% of all candidates, 48% of FN candidates, 48% of *Ensemble* (LaREM + MoDem) candidates, 51% of NUPES (LFI, PS, and Greens) candidates, and 36% of LR candidates. LR has always been the party most reluctant to select more women candidates, and its public funding was cut by €1.8m (out of €12.9m) every year between 2017 and 2022 (Lombard 2017).

Overall, it is the older parties that have tried to engage their members, and sometimes their unregistered sympathizers, through the selection of their presidential candidate. The selection of parliamentary candidates is a much more centralized process; the PS is the only party that formally involves its members in candidate selection. The RN is a very centralized party, and members are mostly an electoral resource. In all parties, power rests mostly within the party in public office, in charge of strategic decisions on policy and candidate selection, with their party in central office in change of organizing the local branches, activating them at election time, and providing resources for the party leadership (see Table 4.2). Despite its portrayal as a structure built by grassroots activists, LaREM set up a rather unique form of organization that goes against trends towards membership empowerment. Recent organizational reforms in LaREM suggest a change towards a more 'normal' form of membership participation, but the central party remains formally quite insulated from bottom-up pressures.

Table 4.2 Summary of leadership and candidate selection rules, 1994–2022

	Party leader	Presidential candidate	Parliamentary candidates
PS	Membership ballot (2 rounds vote on motions)	1994–2006, 2021: membership ballot 2011–2017: open primary	Local selection National approval
RPR/UMP/ LR	Membership ballot (2 rounds)	1994–2011, 2021: membership ballot * 2017: open primary	National commission Informal local consultation
FN/RN	Membership ballot (2 rounds)	Membership ballot (congress vote)	National commission
LaREM	Vote of the National Council (elected officials + local delegates)	No statutory provision	National commission Informal local consultation

* No ballot in 1995 (2 RPR candidates stood for election), in 2002 or 2012 (the party's candidate was the incumbent President)

Parties and Society

French parties have traditionally been unloved. Through a combination of factors including revolutionary distrust of organizations that could prevent the expression of popular will, Gaullist distrust of divisions, and the perceived role of parties in the instability of the IVth Republic, the French have traditionally been wary of political parties (Charlot 1986: 5–7, Sauger 2017: 18–19). The Gaullist presidential ideal is that of a President separate from parties, and candidates to the Presidency who are also party leaders generally resign from the leadership of their party once selected.

Over the course of the 1960s and 1970s, the share of French people who declared that they identified with a political party increased. By providing stability and personal identification through presidential candidates, the semi-presidential nature of the Vth Republic seemed to have strengthened the bond between citizens and parties (Charlot 1986: 6–7). However, survey data from the Cevipof (2010–2020) show that the last decade has been characterized by a clear distrust towards political parties, with 80 to 90% of respondents saying that they do not trust parties. This distrust is partially explained by the perception that the distance between the main parties has decreased, that parties have similar economic policies, and that politicians are principally office-seeking (Perottino and Guasti 2020: 548). François Hollande's rapid U-turn on his most significant fiscal promise, increasing

taxation for the very rich, was recently seen as a symbol of the shallowness of politicians' promises. New parties such as LaREM but also the left-wing LFI reject the word 'party', usually preferring the term 'movement'; argue that parties are out-of-date organizations; and prefer 'more flexible' forms of organization in which membership is only a click away and policy debates are often online.

Party membership data are not always reliable, as parties often exaggerate the size of their membership base. Party membership was among the lowest in Europe, at roughly 2% of the electorate in the 2000s (Scarrow and Gezgor 2010: 825), and it has continued to decline. The two traditional parties have lost significant shares of their membership. In 2006, the PS counted 210,000 members. At the end of François Hollande's Presidency in 2017, it had around 100,000 members; membership in 2021 is around 22,000. LR membership has followed a similar trajectory: the party had over 250,000 members in 2012 and nearly 150,000 in 2017. At the end of 2021, 140,000 members were eligible to vote in the party's membership ballot. The RN claimed to have 80,000 members in 2017 and a similar number in 2021. Other sources, however, argued it had just over 40,000 in 2017 and still did in 2021. By the time Macron announced his candidacy, EM! counted 93,000 members, and 1,700 local committees had been created (Pietralunga 2016). LaREM claims to have 400,000 members, but this number does not seem to have changed at all since the party's formation. In 2019, 71,000 members voted on statute changes in an online ballot.

LR, the PS, and the RN all have a traditional form of party membership: requiring members to pay a fee for membership. Payment of the fee entitles members to participate in party life, from local party meetings to internal party votes, as well as stand in internal elections or seek selection as a party candidate. The PS is the only party with a variable fee, indexed on the members' income. In 2006, the party exceptionally lowered its annual fee to €20 to attract more members, and membership costs now €20 for the first year. Membership of LR costs €30, with special prices for couples (€40), young people, students, and unemployed people (€15). The RN has a higher fixed membership (€50), with prices for couples (€80), young people (also €15), and people on low income (€30).

LaREM is the only one of the four parties that does not require the payment of a membership fee. One only needs to join the party online, and there is no need to confirm continued membership on a regular basis. This likely explains the unchanged number of members. It remains unclear whether the enthusiasm that led many to join LaREM when it was formed was intact five years later, and the party has struggled to mobilize members in local

branches and in campaigns for intermediary elections since 2017. By Scarrow's (2015) standards, En Marche! adopted a hybrid mode of membership: there is no fee to join the party, but members are not simple 'cyber members'. The party encourages its members to be active locally and provides forums to engage in online and offline policy debates.

The distance between politicians and citizens is also compounded by the shallowness of the links between parties and organized groups. Most French parties do not have any link with the trade union movement or other organizations, including churches. The French Communist Party (PCF) had traditional links with the CGT (*Confédération Générale du Travail*, General Labour Union) union, but these links were severed in the early 2000s as the PCF was reaching a single-digit share of the vote. The Gaullist party was the other mass organization, while other parties had weaker social ties and fewer members (Sauger 2017: 19). The PS had links with teaching and student unions, as well as some of the 1980s anti-racist movements, but these links have become weaker, as have some of these organizations. The shift towards values-oriented politics and the rise of individualism and single-issue groups have weakened all parties' ties with specific socio-economic groups.

All French parties have a youth wing, but they do not have any other sectoral groups, such as women's or farmers' branches or organizations for Black and ethnic-minority members. In a French context where 'universalism' is seen as a key republican principle, dividing people by their origins or skin colour is very controversial. The same arguments were once used against gender quotas (Murray 2012). Recently, the issue of women-only meetings or ethnic-minority-only meetings has become heavily politicized and criticized (called 'separatism'). There seems to be a consensus among mainstream parties as well as the RN on this issue, so that this group-based approach to representation and diversity seems presently unlikely. This limits French parties' ability to reach out to specific groups and restricts their recruitment strategies to equality rhetoric.

The FN developed a series of sectoral 'circles' in the 1980s and 1990s, each designed to attract a specific socio-economic group (e.g., national circle of public servants, national circle of banking, national circle of Paris students). They remained largely dormant. New thematic organizations ('collectives') were created under Marine Le Pen's leadership, including collectives for young people, teachers, and a new ecology (Dezé 2016: 56). Although it is hard to assess the level of activity and membership of these organizations, they serve the purpose of demonstrating an interest in these topics and openness towards socio-economic groups, some of which (education and the environment, for instance) are traditionally seen as owned by the left.

The traditional parties also organize summer 'universities' that bring together party members, non-members, guest speakers and organizations, and party leaders and elected officials. They are an opportunity for parties to reach beyond their base by inviting like-minded organizations to have a stall and/or participate in thematic discussions.

As in most other European countries, party membership is in decline in France. In addition, parties' links with organized interests and civil society are quite weak. Attempts to attract more members have been limited in their scope and success. LaREM's hybrid model of party membership does not seem to have altered this trend, as initial success in attracting members does not seem to have lasted.

Parties Dependent on State Subsidies

Political parties must be registered in a prefecture as non-profit associations. Once registered, they must report their accounts and provide a list of donors to the National Commission for Campaign Accounts and Political Funding (CNCCFP) annually. After a series of scandals that involved illicit party funding in the 1980s and 1990s, donations were particularly restricted in France: private donations from foreign and domestic companies are banned, and individual donations are capped at €7,500. In return, public funding for political parties with representation in Parliament is generous, depending on the party's number of seats and votes.

Figure 4.1 shows that French parties are very reliant on state funding. Since 1995, state funding has represented 50% to 70% of LR's annual income and between 30% and 45% of that of the PS.[8] The importance of public funding for the RN has varied considerably over time, depending on its electoral fortunes and the size of other sources of income. LaREM stands quite apart from the other parties: it participated in the 2017 elections without any state support and thanks to tens of thousands of private donations (Guesdon et al. 2019), but it has since relied heavily on state subsidies, which represented over 90% of its income in 2018 and 80% in 2019. Since it does not ask its members to pay a fee, it does not have any income from party members, although some may make donations. For the other parties, membership fees amount to at least 10% of their revenue, a small share of the parties' resources. In addition to membership revenue, many parties make it compulsory for their elected officials to pay an additional contribution. This contribution represents a small proportion of revenue for the RN and LR, but between 10% and 25% of annual income for the PS.

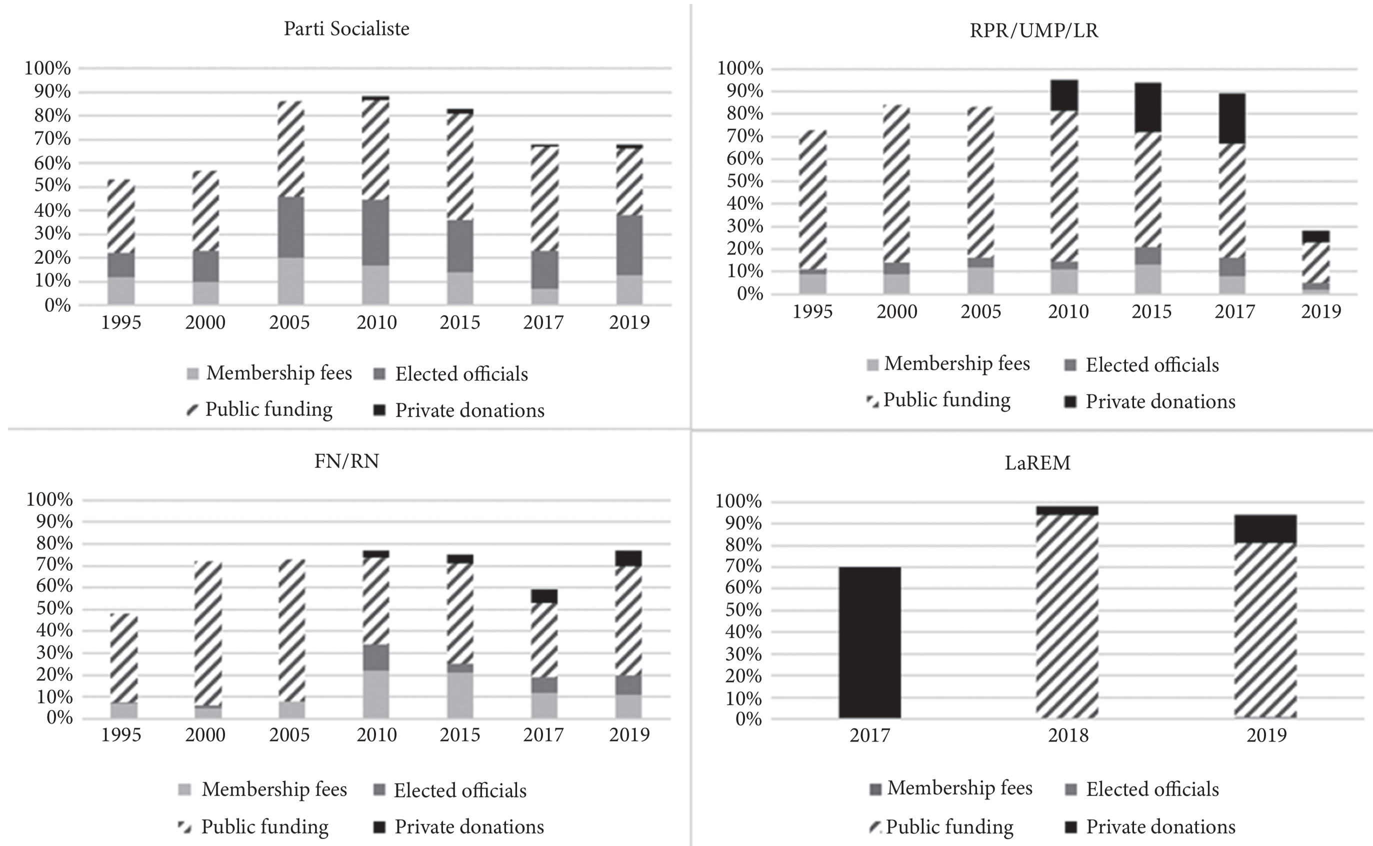

Figure 4.1 Sources of party income (%)

Source: Author's elaboration from Légifrance 1996 JORF 264, 1996; JORF 79, 2002; annual reports from the CNCCFP website

Private ordinary and campaign donations have a rather low cap, making it hard for parties to find important resources from private sources. As election campaigns have become more expensive, parties have tried but often failed to find additional sources of funding. With low donation caps on campaign donations, many parties and candidates have been found to have been at the limits of legality over the years, with several condemned for illegal party funding (like former President Jacques Chirac) or campaign funding (such as former President Nicolas Sarkozy). Although these examples come from the main right-wing party, politicians from all parties, including the PS and the RN, have at some stage received convictions for illegal party or campaign funding.

The introduction and development of the public funding regime corresponded to an imperative in the face of political and financial scandals. The decline in party membership does not seem to particularly coincide with the introduction and development of public subsidies (as also shown for other countries by Pierre et al. 2000). Contrary to the cartel thesis, the funding regime did not prevent the emergence and success of competitors like LaREM and the RN, or LFI and the Greens (Katz and Mair 1995; Clift and Fisher 2004: 691).

Divided Parties in a Changing Party System

As mentioned previously, the PS allows for the development of party ideological factions (called 'currents') thanks to its use of PR in leadership elections and all intra-party elections. It is the only party that still recognizes such factions. This recognition of factions has not always been without problems. Throughout its history, the PS has been divided between centre-left and left-wing factions, and more recently between Europhiles and Eurosceptics (notably at the time of the 2005 referendum on the European Constitution but also later during debates over the European Fiscal Compact and the EU's attitude towards Greece during the Great Recession). PS factions are not permanent; the coalitions of prominent party cadres that constitute the leadership of these factions can change rapidly as they fall out over programmatic differences or personal ambitions. The 2017 elections marked a turning point, and party divisions contributed to the weakening of the party. Even before the election, some members and party cadres left to support Emmanuel Macron's campaign, while others left to seek nomination as a parliamentary candidate for LaREM. At the other end of the PS ideological

spectrum, a few followed 2017 presidential candidate Benoit Hamon and joined his new party, Generation.s.

This factionalism of the PS became the model not to follow for the PS defectors who founded LaREM. They saw this factionalism as one of the main causes of the PS's problems and chose a form of organization that prevented the emergence of programmatic groups that could openly criticize the party line and the development of alternative sources of power and resources for ambitious politicians eager to take over the party. As a result, LaREM does not recognize factions, and its first statutes severed the link between members and party leadership and executive bodies, which were mostly selected by the leadership. However, this did not prevent the development of tendencies in LaREM. Perhaps inevitably in a party that included former members of the PS, MoDem, and LR, there are tensions over several policy issues, notably economic and social policy. The strict party discipline imposed by the parliamentary leadership and the difficulty to channel issues internally led to breakaways from the parliamentary party and the formation of a new parliamentary group of former LaREM MPs in the 2017–2022 National Assembly. As a result, LaREM lost its parliamentary majority, but its coalition with the MoDem and a few other MPs still sufficient to provide the government with a majority in parliament.

On paper, the UMP recognized factions even more than the PS because of the different parties and tendencies that contributed to its formation. This was designed to pacify some of the more ambitious small parties from the UDF that joined the UMP. Intra-party factions, called 'movements', could gain official recognition and financial resources provided they garnered the support of at least 10 MPs, 10 local federations, and 10% of the congress. 'Movements' were not granted the promised support and were scrapped when the UMP was transformed into The Republicans in 2015 under former President Nicolas Sarkozy's plan to return to politics. His ambition was to lead the party into the next presidential election as the leader of a new, united party, following the Gaullist model of a party unified behind its leader (Olivier 2003: 761). The open presidential primary that took place ahead of the 2017 election and the internal ballot ahead of the 2022 elections pitted several candidates representing different sensibilities in the party against each other, from candidates who focused on immigration and security (Sarkozy in 2017, Ciotti in 2022) to more centrist and economically liberal candidates (Alain Juppé in 2017, Pécresse in 2022). After Fillon's victory and subsequent defeat in the first round of the 2017 elections, the party was weakened by several defections to Macron's side. For instance, deputy

Edouard Philippe, who had supported Juppé in the primary, and Gérard Darmanin, an ambitious conservative deputy who had supported Sarkozy, became Prime Minister and Minister for the Budget, respectively, in Macron's first government.

The FN and then RN were and are traditional radical right organizations in which the party leader suffers little challenge. However, the late 1990s saw a brief period of intra-party divisions between the supporters of party leader Jean-Marie Le Pen and those of Bruno Mégret, who was then Le Pen's second-in-command. The division, over the extent to which the party should aim to be 'respectable' and reach out the elements of the centre-right, eventually led to a split in 1998–1999, with Mégret forming his own party and taking with him many FN elected officials and party cadres (Ellinas 2009: 213). The FN remained the dominant party at the extreme right, but this debate was to remain important for the party. When Marine Le Pen succeeded her father as party leader in 2011, the party moved towards a more 'respectable' image, rejecting Jean-Marie Le Pen's tendency to create scandals with extreme positions on the Holocaust or the Nazi occupation of France. Such a statement even led to Jean-Marie Le Pen's removal from the position of Honorary President in 2015 (a position that was scrapped in the reform of party statutes the same year). The party also has several tendencies, an ethno-nationalist group, a Eurosceptic sovereigntist group, and a small traditionalist Catholic group, but they are not formally organized. The FN and now RN also have relatively unstable parliamentary groups, with members often leaving their parliamentary groups. For instance, the FN group in the European Parliament lost 9 of its 24 members between 2014 and 2019, and one of its 2017 MPs, José Evrard, defected in November of the same year. However, the larger parliamentary group elected in 2022 is more cohesive and disciplined, suggesting a more professional approach to party discipline as the party feels that it could be close to power.

All the parties have suffered from divisions in recent times and had to manage different internal tendencies. Battles for internal power, candidacies, and strategies have led to splits and defections. Governing parties have always needed to be broad churches, and the strength of the various tendencies is often measured in internal ballots for the selection of candidates in presidential elections or for internal party elections, but even small divisions sometimes seem to lead to a split. The presidential nature of the system leads some ambitious politicians to think that they can form their own party and succeed without the support of a major party. Even though Macron's success shows that it can be done, he remains an exception.

Communications

Like all parties, French parties face citizens who are harder to reach and less deferential to elites. In a context of an increased variety of online sources that citizens use to find political information and express political views, French parties have had to engage with the online space.

All four parties naturally have a website. These websites provide information about party positions, campaign activities during pre-election periods, recent events, and discourses from prominent party leaders. These websites also have clearly indicated buttons that allow visitors to join and donate to the party. The PS allows visitors to subscribe to a newsletter, and the websites of the PS, LaREM, and the RN also allow visitors to become 'volunteers', separately from membership, in a range of activities. For the PS, volunteering opportunities were focused on online technical support and the production of online materials, whereas volunteering activities in the RN and LaREM were mostly about campaign activities and supporting the party to disseminate its message. The website of LaREM also allows visitors to 'join a cause' or even create one, provided it adheres to the party's 'values charter', join a local committee, or attend events, which are listed on a page and can be found through a search by location. The website of the RN also allows visitors to sign petitions and, uniquely, buy RN-branded products. The website of LR was the only one that asked for visitors' opinion on an issue. Its homepage has a 'question of the week', asking for visitors' views on a pre-selected question. With the exceptions of this question and LaREM's causes, these websites are mostly designed to share information with visitors and facilitate their engagement in the party, but they do not provide many opportunities for visitors to share their views with the parties.

The parties have also all engaged with social media. They all have YouTube channels and active X (formerly Twitter), Facebook, and Instagram accounts (although the Instagram account of the PS shows irregular levels of activity) with tens or hundreds of thousands of followers (see Table 4.3). Facebook and Twitter are clearly the main channels. The parties have not really engaged with TikTok, which appeals to a younger audience, with the exception of the RN, although some individual politicians do have accounts (Emmanuel Macron has 3.9 million followers; Marine Le Pen, 589,300; Olivier Faure, PS general secretary, 3,722; LR president Eric Ciotti does not have an account; neither does Stéphane Séjourné, general secretary of Renaissance). Although comments are also possible on these platforms, these accounts are again mostly a way to inform and engage citizens through short, sharable content,

Table 4.3 Number of followers of French parties' social media accounts, 2023

	Facebook	Twitter	Instagram	TikTok
LR	205,000	327,400	53,600	2,275
PS	127,000	240,000	17,500	6,804
RN	500,000	328,200	48,200	637,600
Renaissance	255,000	316,900	92,500	3,218

Source: Data compiled by the author

not really to engage in meaningful conversations with citizens or specific groups.

As forms of communication have become a lot more atomized, political parties have developed communications strategies to include a variety of social media platforms and provide websites that allow visitors to gain information, join, or donate to the party. In a context in which citizens are looking for more ways to engage with their representatives and institutions, these mostly one-way, top-down forms of communication are unlikely to satisfy citizens' interest in more direct forms of political engagement.

Conclusion: French Parties and Democracy

French political parties vary greatly in age and ideological leanings; they also vary in their organization, although there are some similarities. Party members are generally involved in the selection of party leaders and candidates for the Presidency, and the party leadership is responsible for party policy and the overall selection of parliamentary candidates. Parties are quite centralized, but this centralization also goes together with divisions and occasional splits and defections. Like parties elsewhere, French parties have lost members, and innovations to attract new members and engage members differently are rare.

The French party system has undergone significant changes, most notably in the range and strength of relevant parties. These changes, though, do not necessarily mean that France is facing a decline of parties. The semi-presidential system allows some personalities to build a large following outside of parties, but the example of Macron shows that a President elected without a traditional party to support his candidacy then builds a party to back his action. French democracy has not become any less centred around

political parties: it is now centred on a larger number of parties, while parties have tended to lose members, confirming Svåsand's (1994: 304) distinction between 'crisis of party' and 'decline of party'. However, the parties are suffering from a double problem: an issue-salience gap between voters and parties, and younger citizens increasingly interested in non-electoral forms of political participation.

A sign of weakness in the workings of French democracy may be the disconnect between citizens' main concerns and the issues most emphasized by political parties. Whereas a majority of voters are still mostly interested in 'old' left–right issues about economic policy, the role of the state in the economy, and redistribution, political debates now seem to focus on cultural issues, most notably immigration, national identity, and security (Tiberj 2017). This shift towards a competition based on cultural issues was initiated by the RN, and other parties followed suit. This gap between the concerns of citizens and the issues politicized by parties and their candidates is a source of frustration for voters, which can fuel abstention but also protest votes.

The decline in electoral participation and party membership that has happened in France as it has in other European countries is not necessarily a sign of democratic crisis. It may be more a crisis of representative democracy, of which parties are a key agent, but research has shown that although post-baby-boom generations vote less systematically than previous generations, they are no less interested in politics than previous generations. They are, however, interested in forms of political participation that go beyond casting a ballot every four or five years (Tiberj 2017). For parties, this means finding ways to engage citizens differently, demonstrating that party members can have more of a role to play, but also thinking creatively about citizen engagement with institutions. However, like parties elsewhere, French parties have not yet found a way to demonstrate that they can indeed engage their members differently and more efficiently than single-issues groups or individual campaign action.

Notes

1. This chapter chooses to use the acronym LaREM, which is used by the party itself, although other acronyms can be found, including LREM (see Perottino and Guasti 2020) and LRM (see *Le Monde* 2017 and all *Le Monde* articles on the subject). The party was renamed Renaissance in 2022.
2. The RPR is the result of the transformation of the old Gaullist party UDR (Union of Democrats for the Republic) into a new party by Jacques Chirac in 1976.

3. The UDF was created in 1978 as an electoral alliance of small non-Gaullist centre-right parties to support President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing against the hegemony of Gaullism on the right.
4. Article 49.3 of the Constitution allows the Government to pass legislation if a majority of deputies reject a motion of no confidence. The motion of no confidence on pension reform failed by nine votes.
5. There is also a convention, which includes all party members, but no party congress proper made up mainly by delegates elected by lower-level party bodies.
6. LaREM became Renaissance after the 2022 presidential elections, with new statutes adopted in September 2022. This chapter does not include details about these changes, focusing instead on party rules that affected the 2017 and 2022 electoral processes.
7. When the electoral system is list-based (local, regional, and European Parliament elections), lists must have 50% of women and alternate men and women candidates (a method called zipping).
8. The 2019 accounts of Les Républicains are not representative of their usual income: the sale of their headquarters brought in an additional €50m to the party's coffers.

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5

The Long Way towards Polarized Pluralism

Party and Party System Change in Germany

Michael Angenendt and Simon D. Brause

Introduction

In October 2019, the entire republic looked at Thuringia, a federal state located in eastern Germany: for the first time in German history, a coalition of the political centre had become impossible in numerical terms after a federal state election—the Christian Democrats (CDU), Social Democrats (SPD), Greens, and Liberals (FDP) were outnumbered in parliament.[1] Furthermore, for the first time in a German federal state, a far-left party, The Left, represented the largest political force, followed by the populist radical right Alternative for Germany (AfD). The political centre had eroded; the left and right fringes had clearly strengthened. The erosion of the political centre outlined is, so far, an exception. Nevertheless, it points to profound changes in the German party system. Over the last decades, CDU/CSU[2] and SPD, which can be characterized as catch-all parties, were losing support among the electorate at both federal and federal state levels (Poguntke 2014). Simultaneously, other parties like the Greens, The Left, and more recently the AfD gained votes.

In consequence, the (formerly) dominant Christian Democrats and Social Democrats are no longer automatically senior partners in coalitions, a trend that became apparent in the 2010s. In 2011, the Greens in Baden-Wuerttemberg provided the prime minister for the first time and became the largest party in the subsequent election in 2016. With the establishment of the AfD in the German party system, for the first time a populist radical right party has been represented in the Bundestag since 2017. Consequently, the alternating coalition model that has characterized German politics since the 1960s, with the CDU/CSU and SPD competing to lead the government,

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has become outdated. These developments have significant consequences for party competition and have an impact on German politics.

Challenges may arise for the German party system and its actors, especially from a weakening of the function of government formation. The number of small, stable government coalitions decreases, while oversized coalitions increase. This makes it more difficult to change the status quo. At the same time, the opposition is weakened and splits into small democratic parties and extreme parties. Overall, this development could lead to a centrifugal dynamic of party competition in the future that further bolsters extreme parties, particularly when coupled with an irresponsible opposition that promotes unrealistic political demands, thus fuelling a politics of overbidding. Sartori (2005: 116–123) addressed some of those potential problems as constitutive factors for a polarized pluralism type of party system: the existence of a bilateral opposition and anti-system parties, as well as a polarized centrifugal party competition. Such a multi-party system exhibits a high degree of conflict, with extreme parties on both sides of the ideological spectrum further increasing polarization. This creates a higher probability for democratic dysfunction and unstable governments.

Therefore, we analyse the challenges facing the established parties and the party system in Germany in the early 2020s and trace the path towards polarized pluralism. For this purpose, our study focuses on the changing supply and demand in German politics and is structured as follows. We first describe the major trends of the party system in the post-war period. Thereafter we systematically analyse these developments using several indicators to assess the party system and party competition based on longitudinal data. On the demand side, we examine volatility, parties' vote share in the federal state elections, and turnout.[3] On the supply side, we shed light on the polarization of the party system and on coalition constellations in the German federal states. We also address the challenges parties face as organizations in a changing political environment to draw a comprehensive picture. Here the focus is on membership figures, party financing, intra-party democracy, and digital communication. Finally, we discuss our findings and the consequences for the future of German politics.

Party System Change since 1949

After the first federal election in 1949, 10 parties entered the Bundestag, covering a broad spectrum from left to right. However, the strong fragmentation decreased noticeably in the three subsequent federal elections. In the

election to the fourth Bundestag in 1961, three parties still managed to enter parliament: the Christian Democrats, the Social Democrats, and the Liberals. For the next 22 years, they shaped German politics in different coalition constellations. This period represents the famous 2.5-party system, in which one of the two catch-all parties—together with the Liberals as 'kingmaker'—formed either a centre-left or centre-right cabinet (except for the first grand coalition from 1966 to 1969) (Niedermayer 2006: 115). After the initial phase of relatively high fragmentation and the subsequent phase of the stable 2.5-party system, the spectrum has widened since the 1980s. Figure 5.1 illustrates this development.[4] The solid line displays the electoral fragmentation in terms of the effective number of electoral parties (ENEP) from 1949 until 2021 for the federal elections, while the dotted line represents the parliamentary fragmentation for the federal elections in terms of the effective number of parliamentary parties (ENPP).

The increasing fragmentation corresponds to social changes and the modernization of Western European societies, with considerable impact on

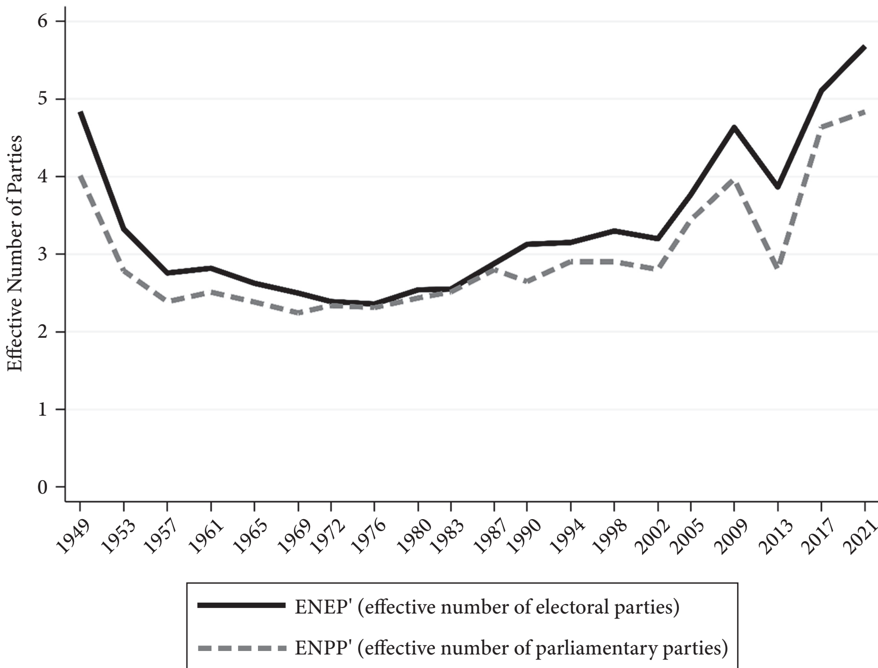

Figure 5.1 Fragmentation of the German party system, 1949–2021

Source: Author's illustration, based on https://www.bundeswahlleiterin.de/ (Accessed 15 December 2023)

the political agenda which led to permanent changes to the party system. Due to a general increase in prosperity in Western European societies, economic issues became less relevant, and a new, socio-cultural conflict was gradually established. This differs from the old class conflict between labour and capital and shifts public attention to issues such as environmental protection, emancipation, and the inclusion of social minorities. Various labels in political science now address the two opposing poles (e.g. Kriesi et al. 2006; Merkel 2017). Essentially, the contrast refers to green, alternative, and libertarian values (GAL) on the one hand and traditional, authoritarian, and national values (TAN) on the other (Marks et al. 2006). The changing demand in the electorate has been reflected on the supply side since the beginning of the 1980s in the establishment of Green parties in Western European party systems (Poguntke 1987; Franklin 1992). In Germany, the Greens, founded in 1979–1980, succeeded in entering the Bundestag for the first time in 1983.

Subsequently, the German party system first took a different path from other party systems in Western Europe. As a reaction to the post-material change, described as the 'silent revolution' by Inglehart (1971), right-wing populist parties emerged in many countries, occupying the traditional, authoritarian, and nationalist pole in party competition—the 'silent counter-revolution' (Ignazi 1992) spread in Western Europe. However, a populist radical right party in Germany succeeded relatively late on the federal level—namely the AfD, which was founded in 2013 (Arzheimer 2015).[5] Contrary to expectations, economic issues continued to dominate German politics as the country struggled with the social and economic consequences of reunification. The economic reforms implemented to solve these problems are known by the slogan 'Agenda 2010'. They were introduced by the centre-left coalition of Social Democrats and Greens under Chancellor Schröder, following the politics of the 'third way'. Consequently, disappointed Social Democrats split off and founded the 'Electoral Alternative for Labour and Social Justice' (WASG) in early 2005, which two years later merged with the post-Communist Party of Democratic Socialism (PDS), the successor party to the Socialist Unity Party (SED) (which governed the German Democratic Republic), to form The Left (Spier et al. 2007). Thus, the Social Democrats' shift to the right on economic issues created a gap on the left of the political spectrum, which The Left party has since occupied in the Bundestag.

Since the 1980s, the value change and the individualization of society have resulted in the vanishing hold of the catch-all parties (Poguntke 2014). Until the mid-2010s, the dwindling electoral anchorage was more noticeable for

the Social Democrats than for the Christian Democrats, as the former came under competitive pressure due to the success of the Greens and The Left party. Thus, the first grand coalition under Chancellor Merkel, from 2005 to 2009, was already the consequence of the declining support of the catch-all parties, especially the Social Democrats. The effective number of parties (see Figure 5.1) reflects this development. In 2009, we see almost the same picture of a fragmented party system as in 1949. The second grand coalition under Chancellor Merkel, which governed between 2013 and 2017, triggered a dynamic that accelerated the downward electoral spiral and put the Christian Democrats under increased competitive pressure from the right. The AfD was initially a populist Eurosceptic party that criticized government policies dealing with the European financial and economic crisis since 2008 (Franzmann 2016a). Its approval ratings had been falling before the refugee crisis in 2015–2016 again boosted its electoral appeal. The AfD thus shifted away from stressing liberal market positions on the economic dimension to emphasize traditional and nationalist positions on the socio-cultural dimension (Franzmann 2016b). Since then, the party has represented the central antipode to the Greens on the socio-cultural dimension. The entry of the AfD after the 2017 federal elections had thus further 'normalized' the German party system, as a populist radical right party was now represented in the Bundestag for the first time (Berbuir et al. 2015). Since then, six parties have held seats in the Bundestag—which had not occurred since the founding years of the republic. This recent development in party competition might be transforming the German party system from one of moderate pluralism to polarized pluralism, as the fragmentation and ideological range during the Bundestag elections are increasing (Schmitt 2018: 61). The fragmentation of the opposition and the conflicts with the AfD correspond to the patterns described by Sartori (2005), which are expected in polarized party systems.

The 2021 federal election marked the end of the Merkel era after 16 years (she did not stand for re-election). After the election, a three-party coalition was formed for the first time at the federal level, led by Chancellor Olaf Scholz and including the SPD, Greens, and FDP. Never before in German history had a party with such a small vote share selected the Chancellor and been confronted with comparatively strong coalition partners (Angenendt and Kinski 2022), which is a consequence of the growing fragmentation of the party system. The federal election has presented an additional challenge, as forming a government majority has become increasingly arduous, potentially necessitating oversized coalitions. Consequently, the fragmentation of the German party system has resulted in the need to form cross-ideological

alliances, as exemplified by the establishment of the so-called 'traffic light coalition' following the 2021 federal elections.

The Demand Side of German Politics: Dwindling Anchoring of the Party System in Society

Our empirical analysis illustrates the development of the party system and the resulting challenges for parties and voters based on various established indicators. In this section, the focus lies on the anchorage of party democracy in society.

Volatility

Figure 5.2 shows the changes in aggregate voting behaviour. The high volatility in the initial phase weakened until the 1980s but has increased since then. While the increased volatility indicates a dealignment process (Norris 1999), it is also an indicator of intensified competition for votes, which puts catch-all parties in particular under competitive pressure. Our data correspond to

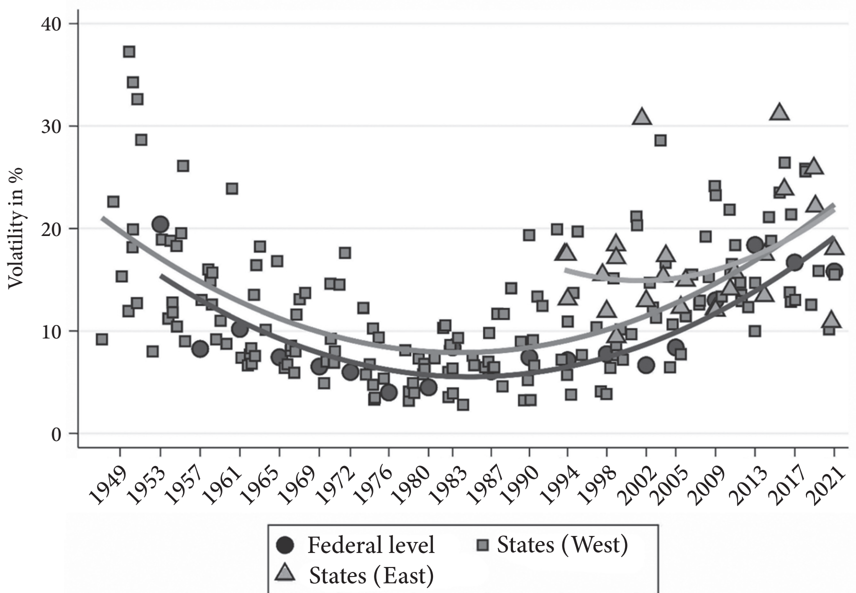

Figure 5.2 Volatility in German federal and federal state elections

Source: Author's illustration

studies investigating individual voting behaviour, which show an increased number of swing voters (Schoen 2003). Party identification, which shapes voting behaviour in the long term, loses importance for voting behaviour in favour of an orientation towards candidates and issues (Arzheimer 2006; Rahat and Kenig 2018). These criteria also affect the supply side. In the German mixed-member electoral system, constituency candidates increasingly pursue a candidate-centred and localized campaign strategy to gain personalized votes (Kriesi 2011; Bukow and Angenendt 2019).

The evolution of vote share and voter turnout

When examining the vote share development[6] in West and East Germany, several significant patterns emerge. First and foremost, it is evident that the catch-all parties experienced a decline in electoral support in both the federal and federal state elections across the country. Moreover, while The Left party and the AfD have particularly strong support in East Germany, the strength of the Greens is primarily concentrated in West Germany. The notable presence of the Greens in West Germany and the AfD in East Germany illustrates the pronounced cultural divide within German party competition that exists between the East and West.

In terms of voter turnout[7], we observe an initial increase until the mid-1970s, reaching a peak of approximately 91%, followed by a decline to an all-time low of 71% in the 2009 federal elections. In eastern Germany, turnout is lower than in western Germany, reflecting a relatively weak anchoring of party democracy. Despite starting at lower levels during federal state elections, a decline in voter turnout from the 1970s until the mid-2000s can be observed. Since then, voter turnout has been rising in western and eastern German states. The increase has been particularly noticeable in the east since 2013, indicating an ongoing politicization of citizens due to the emergence of the AfD, which mobilizes both supporters and opponents to cast their vote (e.g. Schulte-Cloos and Leininger 2022).

The Supply Side of German Politics: Altered Party Competition

This section addresses the altered party competition. To this end, we investigate the polarization within the party system and the resulting changed patterns of coalition formulae.

Polarization

Polarization describes the pattern of interactions between parties within a party system. We understand polarization as an indicator of 'the overall spread of the ideological spectrum' (Sartori 2005: 111). Polarization is one of the distinctive features of polarized pluralism, which develops from centrifugal party competition (Sartori 2005: 120). The larger the ideological distances between parties, the harder it will be to form a majority government. Hence, in an extreme form, polarization is a threat to the functioning of democracies (Dalton 2008: 902; Schmitt and Franzmann 2018: 170). To measure polarization, we use left–right values from Franzmann and Kaiser (2006: 168), which are derived from manifesto data (Volkens et al. 2021). We calculated polarization based on the weighted standard deviation of all left–right values of the relevant parties[8] from the mean left–right value of the party system and based on the range between the maximum and the minimum of ideological positions for each election. This measurement is fit to assess the overall polarization of the party system and takes extreme parties (e.g. AfD) into account (Schmitt 2022: 63, 100).

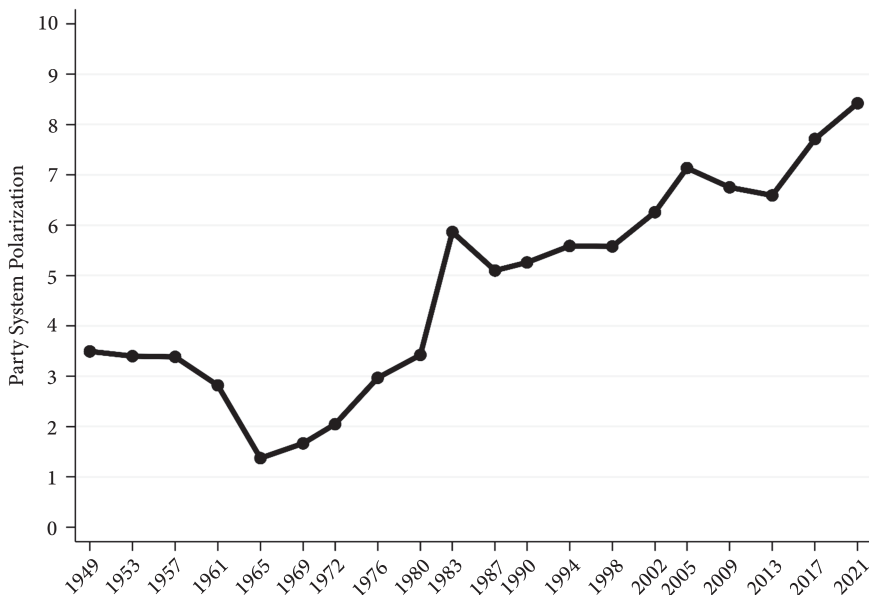

Figure 5.3 Party system polarization in Germany, 1949–2021

Source: Author's illustration

As seen in Figure 5.3, the polarization of the party system is higher in the formative years of the republic and then drops to an all-time low in 1965. This coincided with the formation of the first grand coalition in 1966. Following that, the party system polarized continuously, showing a steep increase from 1980 until 1983. This increase could be attributed to the shift towards more conservative positions by the CDU/CSU under Chancellor Kohl (called *geistig moralische Wende*[9]) and the establishment of the Green party (Franzmann 2008: 30). After the next federal elections, from 1987 until 1998, polarization stabilized on this level, although the PDS (later The Left) entered the federal politics stage in 1990 (Franzmann 2008: 30). Until 2002 the German party system was a moderately polarized party system.

Since then, the party system has increasingly polarized (Schmitt 2018: 55), reaching a high point in 2005. This resulted from a shift to the right by the CDU/CSU and to the left by the SPD (Schmitt 2018: 53). Nevertheless, a grand coalition of CDU/CSU and SPD was formed, as the other coalition options would have included the FDP and the Greens, which was considered an impracticable choice at the time. However, the next election in 2009 produced a bipolar competition resulting in a classic centre-right CDU/CSU–FDP government coalition. Since then, until the 2021 federal election, the German party system created only grand coalitions situated in the ideological centre. This was accompanied by a leftward drift of CDU/CSU in the 2013 election and contributed to depolarization for a short period. The ideological centre's occupation was followed by the establishment of a new competitor on the right side of the ideological spectrum, the AfD (Schmitt 2018: 53). This caused heightened polarization in the 2017 elections, introducing the first right-of-CDU/CSU party in years.

The 2021 federal election witnessed a fluid competition between mainstream parties, with discussions about various coalition options that cut across ideological lines. In the run-up to the election, the Greens, CDU/CSU, and FDP demonstrated a movement towards the political centre, while the AfD distanced itself from other parties. Hence, the overall polarization of the German party system was mainly a result of the radicalization of the AfD between 2013 and 2021, when it shifted considerably further to the right of the CDU/CSU position.

To summarize, polarization in Germany has increased considerably since the 1960s. In the following decades polarization rose with the establishment of new competitors, like the Greens in the 1980s, The Left in the 1990s, and the AfD in recent years. The establishment of the latter two, especially, has produced a centrifugal party competition that has weakened the ideological

centre parties and strengthened the bilateral opposition on the left (The Left) and the right (AfD). However, these dynamics exhibit asymmetry as the AfD achieves greater electoral success compared to The Left, which encountered challenges in securing parliamentary representation during the 2021 federal election.

Coalition governments

From the 1960s onwards, the stable Germany party system led to similarly stable governments dominated by either CDU/CSU or SPD as the major coalition partner and the FDP or, later, the Greens as the junior partner. This stability resulted in the impression of a plebiscitary element regarding the election of the Chancellor, as it was clear that the candidate from either CDU/CSU or SPD would be the next head of the government (Niclauß 1987: 227). This stability, however, has changed drastically. Today, the electoral weakness of the former catch-all parties, the high volatility, and fragmentation lead to the necessity to form larger coalitions. Moreover, parties have begun to keep their options open and are willing to form various coalitions, which means that voters are increasingly unsure which political constellation they support by voting for a specific party.

This is shown by Figure 5.4, which looks at the size of coalition cabinets at the federal state level for each decade, differentiating between two-party and three-party coalitions.[10] After a short transformation period in the 1950s, where the size of the coalitions differed significantly from coalitions in later years, the 2.5-party system is reflected in the size of the governing coalitions until the 1980s (Aleman et al. 2018: 52). In most cases, either the SPD or the CDU were the senior party in such coalitions, while the FDP served as a pivotal party to form a governmental majority (Oberndörfer et al. 2009: 257). With the Green party gaining strength, this pattern changed in the 1990s. The first complete alternation of a federal government in the republic's history in 1998 was part of this development. The Left party (former PDS) was of importance only in eastern Germany and where it could join government coalitions.[11] For a short period, a bipolar competition between a centre-left bloc (SPD and Greens) and a centre-right bloc (CDU/CSU and FDP) characterized the German party system. In summary, for the period from 1960 to the early 2000s, more than 90% of coalitions consisted of two parties.

Since 2010, the situation has changed drastically, as in the past decade only 69% of all governments were formed by two parties, while 31% were

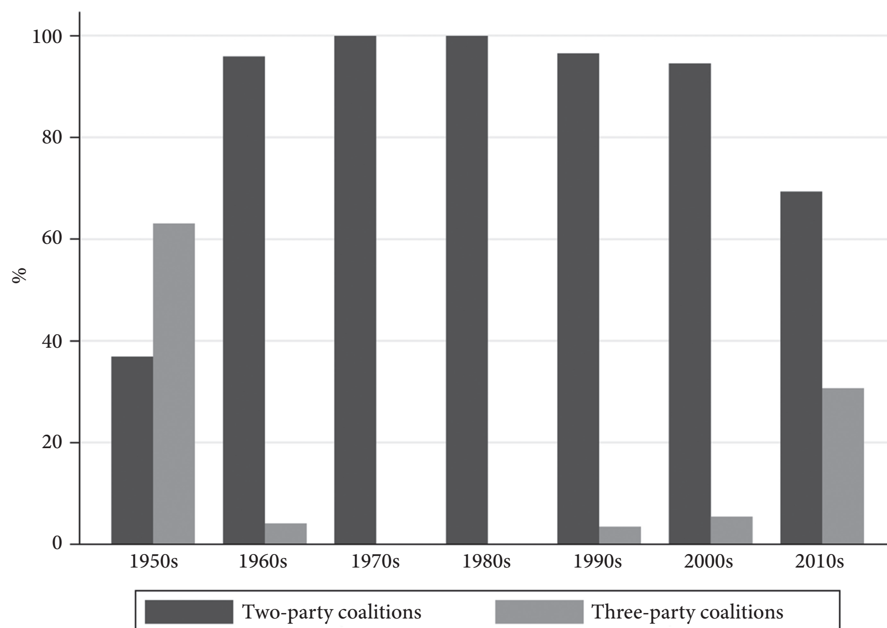

Figure 5.4 Coalition formulas in German federal states, 1950–2019

Source: Author's illustration; data for cabinet constellations were collected from the official websites of the federal state governments

formed by three parties. Other competitors gained strength as the catch-all parties (SPD and CDU) lost ground. The main beneficiary of this development was the Green party, which increased its total number of governmental participations from eight in the 2000s to 24 in the 2010s.

To sum up, the altered processes of governmental formation mirror the party system's growing fragmentation. While in the 1990s only a few coalition configurations were common and the lines between ideological blocs were clear, those lines have now blurred and opened the possibility for varying coalition compositions. Currently, there are 11 different coalition formulae at the federal state level. All relevant parties except the AfD are part of those coalition formulae. This can result in two challenges for the functioning of democracy. Firstly, larger coalitions are generally less stable than smaller coalitions, making it more difficult to enact significant changes and reducing the space for common compromises. This can potentially undermine the effectiveness of policymaking. Secondly, it becomes increasingly challenging for voters to anticipate the composition of future governments, which can lead to concerns regarding representation.

Party Organization in Germany: Institutionalised Uniformity

This last section analyses the challenges that the transformation of German politics pose for parties as organizations. The German Party Law governs the organizational structure of German parties and prescribes several obligatory components of party organization, e.g. the requirement to be internally democratic (Poguntke 1994: 189). Hence, party organizations in Germany are remarkably similar. However, we now see a change in German party organizations, especially regarding three central components: party members, intra-party democracy, and party financing.

Membership ratios

Table 5.1 displays membership figures at the time of each federal election from 1965 until 2021. To control the changes in the size of the electorate, we refer to the ratio of membership figures and the electorate (Katz et al. 1992: 331).

The catch-all parties reach their highest level at the end of the 1970s (Social Democrats) and the beginning of the 1980s (CDU/CSU). Thereafter, they almost continuously lose members. Until the beginning of the 2000s, the Social Democrats could retain more members than the Christian Democrats. Since then, both parties are at about the same level. The general pattern is in line with the declining membership figures in other European countries (Biezen and Poguntke 2014). The membership decline also affects other, previously large mass organizations, such as trade unions and churches.

For the smaller parties the change does not follow such a uniform pattern. The membership figures of the Liberals rise until the 1980s, after which they stabilize at a lower level (apart from a temporary increase due to German reunification). A slight increase can be seen in 2009 after the Liberals entered as a junior partner in coalition with the CDU/CSU, also after parliamentary re-entry in 2017. Nevertheless, the level is clearly below that of the 1970s and 1980s. The membership of the SED successor party halved after German reunification. After the fusion with the West German left-wing protest party WASG, it briefly gained members but overall has remained at the same level since the beginning of the millennium.

Table 5.1 Membership ratios of the German parties, 1965–2021

Year	CSU	CDU	SPD	FDP	Greens	Left	AfD
1965	0.20	0.75	1.84	-	-	-	-
1969	0.20	0.78	2.01	0.15	-	-	-
1972	0.26	1.02	2.30	0.14	-	-	-
1976	0.34	1.55	2.43	0.19	-	-	-
1980	0.40	1.60	2.28	0.19	0.04	-	-
1983	0.42	1.67	2.10	0.16	0.06	-	-
1987	0.41	1.56	2.01	0.14	0.09	-	-
1990	0.31	1.31	1.56	0.28	0.07	0.46	-
1994	0.29	1.11	1.41	0.15	0.07	0.20	-
1998	0.29	1.03	1.28	0.11	0.09	0.16	-
2002	0.29	0.97	1.13	0.11	0.07	0.12	-
2005	0.27	0.92	0.95	0.11	0.07	0.10	-
2009	0.26	0.84	0.82	0.12	0.08	0.13	-
2013	0.24	0.75	0.76	0.09	0.10	0.10	0.03
2017	0.23	0.69	0.72	0.10	0.11	0.10	0.04
2021	0.22	0.64	0.65	0.13	0.21	0.10	0.05

Notes: The figures are calculated as the membership share of the electorate (M/E). M/E was multiplied by 100 and represents the percentage share of the electorate.

(*Source:* Niedermayer (2020, 2022).

Although the Greens' mobilization capacity has been low, they managed to grow—a rare exception for an established party; since 2016, it has recorded a noticeable increase compared to the previous three decades. Typically for a new party, the AfD has been gaining members since its foundation in 2013 but has remained at a rather low level. Looking at the growth of both since the refugee crisis in 2015–2016, it is apparent that parties on the GAL–TAN axis fringes are increasing their membership base. The growing mobilization may indicate a polarizing electorate, as the socio-cultural dimension has recently structured party competition (Franzmann et al. 2020).

Intra-party democracy

Subsequently, we take a look at intra-party democracy (IPD) in Germany. An increase in IPD may be linked to the parties' loss of members. Arguably, parties try to make their organizations more attractive to party members through expanding IPD. This can positively affect democracy, as it increases the transparency of decision-making processes and the responsiveness of parties and their participation (Shomer et al. 2016: 515). We present two

dimensions of IPD, first the assembly-based intra-party democracy (AIPD, see Figure 5.5a), and second, the plebiscitary-based intra-party democracy (PIPD, Figure 5.5b). AIPD captures the representative logic of democratic decision making, therefore measuring the inclusiveness of parties' decision making based on deliberation within party bodies and assemblies. PIPD is concerned with the logic of direct democratic choice. Hence, it measures to which degree party members have a direct say on party programmes and personnel selection.[12] PIPD follows an either/or logic and may transfer power to the party leaders (Berge and Poguntke 2017: 144). This transfer of power can be seen as one aspect of the cartelization of party democracies. Here, the broader electorate can serve as a means of legitimizing the decisions of party leaders through plebiscitary voting, at the same time weakening party activists at the regional and local levels (Katz and Mair 1995: 21). Hence, an increase in PIPD could also indicate an erosion of AIPD, although it can also work in the opposite direction (Scarrow et al. 2022). For both indices, high values indicate more inclusive rules of decision making.

Between 2011 and 2017, German parties significantly shifted towards more IPD, especially in terms of PIPD (Figure 5.5b). The Greens consistently had the highest degree of assembly-based intra-party democracy (AIPD, Figure 5.5a) due to their tradition of grass-roots democracy (Poguntke 1987). They are closely followed by The Left, FDP, SPD, and AfD, with minimal variance.[13] The AfD's high AIPD is linked to its populist stand against alleged elitism in established parties (Berge and Poguntke 2017: 137). The SPD notably increased its AIPD between 2011 and 2017. The IPD similarities across ideological boundaries suggest that country-related factors might be more influential in Germany to explain the level of IPD than ideology or party families, aligning with findings by Pilet and Cross (2014: 228) and Poguntke et al. (2016: 672). Christian Democrats traditionally score lower on IPD, with a significant gap between them and other parties. As for PIPD, there is high uniformity across parties, all of which increased their scores, particularly the CSU.

Party funding

The cartel party thesis (Katz and Mair 1995) suggests a closure of party competition and a withdrawal of parties from civil society. Parties are increasingly losing members and are forced to draw more financial resources from

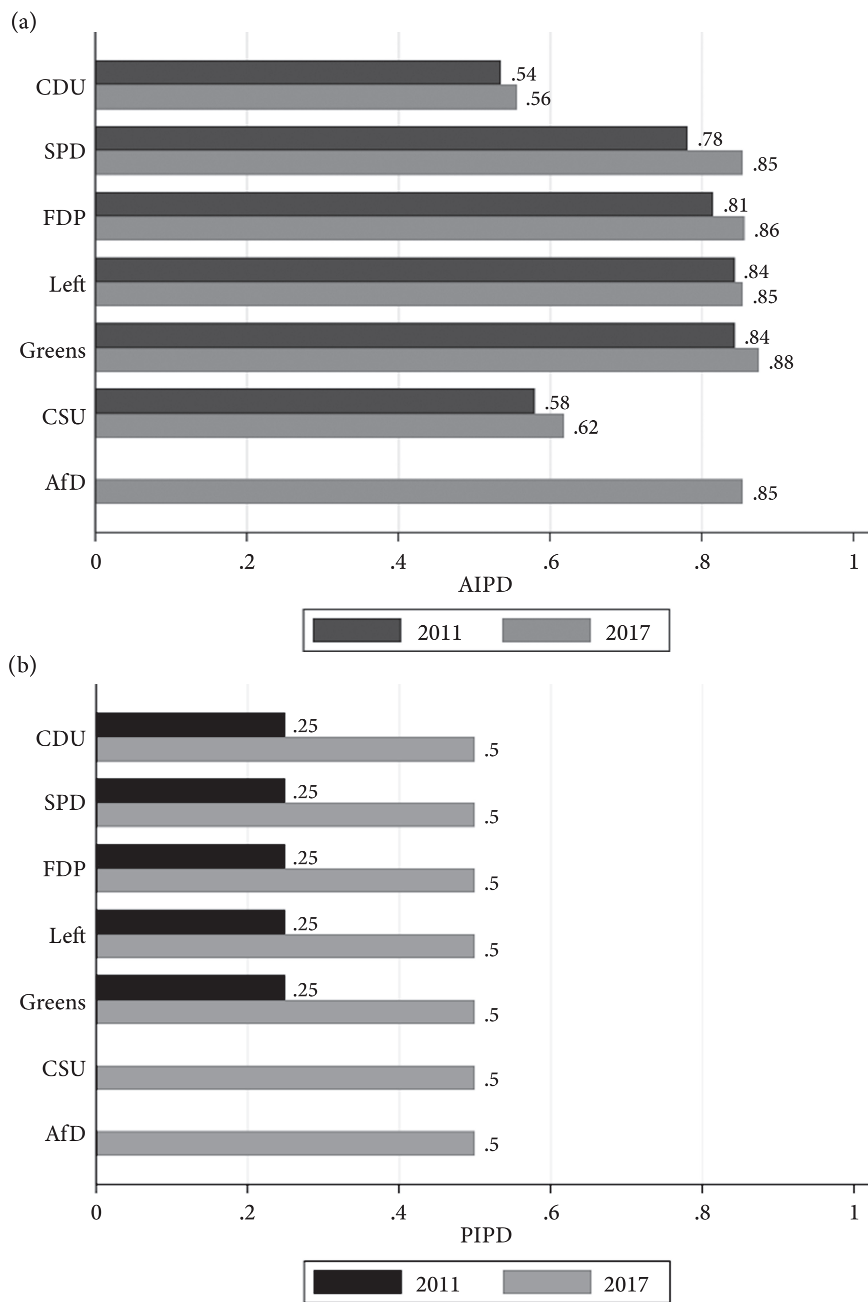

Figure 5.5 Intra-party democracy in Germany. (a) AIPD: assembly-based intra-party democracy; (b) PIPD: plebiscitary-based intra-party democracy

Source: Author's calculation, based on Poguntke et al. (2016), (2020); Scarrow et al. (2022)

state sources (Katz and Mair 1995: 16). As a result, parties secure their survival and simultaneously hinder the emergence of new alternatives. This can result in a loss of legitimacy and trust and prevent functioning party competition. Therefore, we turn to party funding in this section. Germany, in 1959, became the first state in Europe to introduce public party funding (Koß 2008: 289).

The main funding sources for parties in Germany are donations and fees through party members, private and corporate donations, and state subsidies. The German Political Parties Act sets a cap on state funding. Parties earn state subsidies per vote in various elections and for each euro received in donations or membership fees up to €3,300 per person (§18 Party Law). The SPD and CDU/CSU grand coalition raised the total state funding cap from €161.8 million to €190 million in 2018, but in 2023 the Federal Constitutional Court deemed this change unconstitutional (BVerfG, 2 BvF 2/18, Judgement of the Second Senate of 24 January 2023).

Turning to the distribution of the three main income sources (party members, private donations, subsidies) at the party level (Figure 5.6), the first observation is the different relevance of membership fees and donations for parties. Financing through membership is of greater importance for parties on the left and centre-left (Left, Greens, SPD), while the share of private donations is larger for those on the right and centre-right (CDU/CSU, FDP, AfD).

For the CDU, CSU, and the FDP, we see that the share of income by members decreased while the share of private donations increased. The share of the state subsidies changed only for the SPD, which increased its share, and the FDP, which decreased its share. The Green party was the only one that could increase its share of member financing due to its rising membership. The AfD, as a new competitor, resembles the FDP regarding the distribution of income sources, although the dependence on state subsidies is of greater importance for the AfD. Overall, German parties still rely on non-state sources for a substantial share of their funding (as required by the Party Law). The importance of different income sources varies for different parties. Firstly, smaller parties (Left, Green, AfD) depend more on state subsidies than bigger parties. Secondly, as argued, centre-right parties still create a larger share of income through private donations, while centre-left parties rely the most on membership income. Thus, it could be concluded that state subsidies do not promote 'cartelization' but rather help smaller parties to establish themselves.

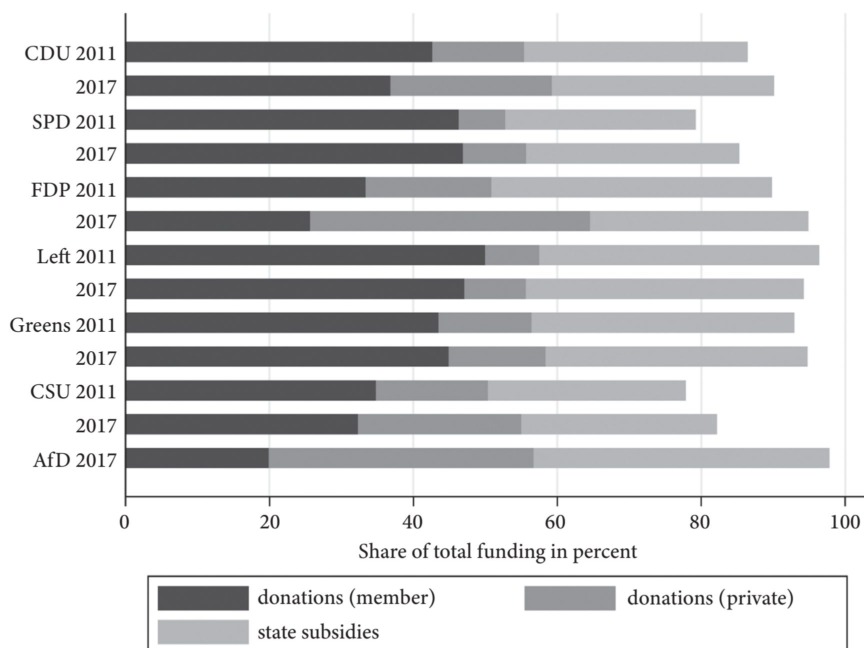

Figure 5.6 Distribution of income sources

Source: Author's illustration, based on Poguntke et al. (2020); Scarrow et al. (2022)

Party communication

Social media shape political communication and have become an established part of parties' communication strategies in an increasingly fragmented public sphere (Angenendt et al. 2022). The use of social media enables parties to bypass journalistic gatekeepers and transport their content instantly and unfiltered to the public (Barberà et al. 2021: 2). On the downside, the fragmented use of social media may trigger echo chambers and reinforce the polarization of society (Terren and Borge-Bravo 2021: 100).

Recent results for Germany show that party politicians use different social media platforms for different purposes, which 'underscores the need to argue with the utmost caution when trying to infer findings from one platform to social media as a whole, as it has often been done' (Stier et al. 2018: 67). Taking this as a starting point, we analyse the number of followers per social media platform and party as an indicator of parties' anchoring in the digital sphere.

Adding up the follower numbers for each party by platform, (Figure 5.7) shows that parties overall have the most followers on Twitter, followed by

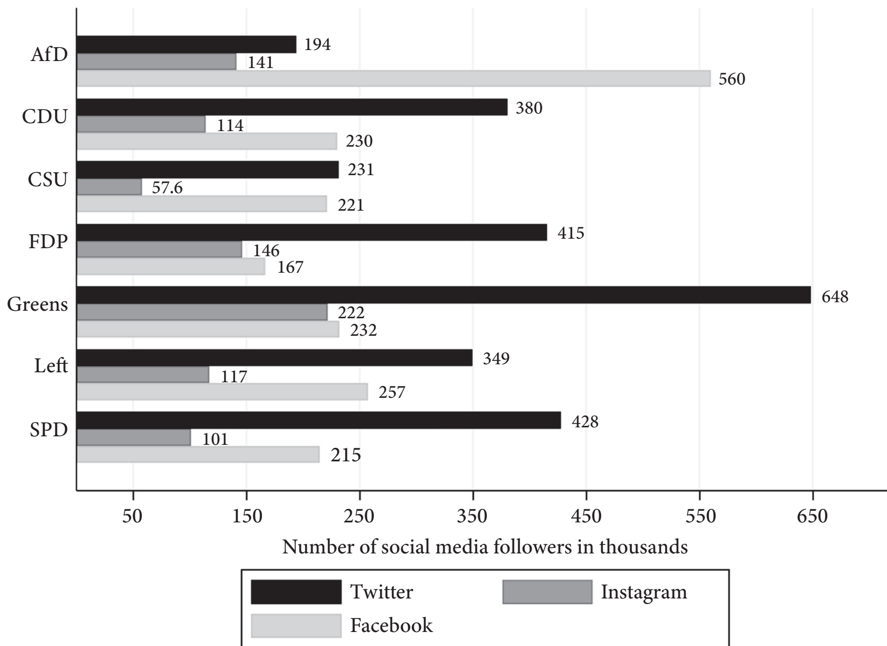

Figure 5.7 Social media followers per party in 2023

Source: Authors' illustration; all figures taken from the official party accounts (accessed 19 May 2023)

Facebook, and then Instagram. However, the outreach of the parties differs considerably between the platforms. While the AfD has by far the most followers on Facebook, the Greens have the most followers on Twitter. Therefore, the results support the thesis that the relevance of different social media platforms varies between parties (Kelm et al. 2023). Moreover, the results reveal that parties differ in their coverage more generally, i.e. in their capability to generate followers in the digital sphere. The Greens have by far the highest range with a total of over one million followers on the social networks, followed by the AfD with nearly 900,000 followers. The other four parties all have a similar coverage, with slightly more than 700,000 followers.

Both parties are effectively mobilizing support online, mirroring their real-world success. This online engagement also indicates that socio-cultural divisions, characteristic of these parties' support bases, are present in the digital sphere. With digital communication becoming an important arena of political competition, this could potentially amplify polarization. The phenomenon of media fragmentation should be considered in this context. The digital divide and the reliance on social networks can contribute to the

polarization of political discourse, as individuals may be exposed to information sources that align with their existing beliefs, leading to echo chambers and the spread of fake news. This further reinforces the concept of polarized pluralism, as described by Sartori (2005), where political parties and their supporters become more polarized in their ideologies and communication strategies.

Discussion and Conclusion

Our study has analysed the long journey of the German party system towards polarized pluralism, thereby providing various insights into the development of German parties, party competition, and the party system since the founding of the Federal Republic in 1949. Our results show that supply and demand in German politics have systematically changed, putting parties under increased competitive pressure. The increased volatility in aggregate voting behaviour exhibits an intensified competition for votes, and a renewed politicization drives the diversification of political competition through the establishment of the populist radical right AfD. As previous studies have shown, the catch-all parties are becoming less entrenched, while challenger parties have made substantial gains. Moreover, our study highlights that the party system is now more pluralized and polarized than in previous legislative periods. New and more diverse coalition models reflect the changed competitive situation. Although the catch-all parties occupy the party system's ideological centre, only a moderate centrifugal dynamic in competition is evident. An apparent strengthening of the political fringe is recently only observable on the right but not on the left of the political spectrum; the socialist Left party failed to pass the five per cent hurdle in the 2021 federal election and is just represented in the Bundestag because they were able to win three constituencies directly (the so-called basic mandate clause). Therefore, the path to polarized pluralism has not yet been completed. Nevertheless, the East German party systems are already in a state of polarized pluralism, which complicates government formation and poses a noticeable challenge to the stability of federal state governments. It is noteworthy that the AfD is the second-strongest parliamentary group in almost all eastern German federal states, while the CDU and SPD have lost ground. The increasing centrifugal competition in that region demands that parties adapt their strategies and compete for the support of voters across the ideological spectrum. Therefore, party competition differs between East and West, even 30 years after reunification.

As modern democracies are party democracies, it is crucial how parties adapt their decision-making processes and communication strategies in a changing political environment to fulfil their linkage function between society and state. Following on from the decline of party membership, we studied how parties try to make their organizations more attractive to non-members and voters by expanding IPD. The analysis shows that IPD has expanded in all parties over the past 10 years. Nevertheless, it remains an open question whether this will lead to the desired results and enhance parties' images in public. So far, parties' financial resources do not reflect their dwindling anchorage in society. Conversely, their income increased during the observed period, whereby the catch-all parties CDU/CSU and SPD still have the highest revenue. However, despite the increased income, no trend of cartelization can be observed, as new competitors have also entered the scene. In the digital sphere, the rise of challenger parties is manifest, along with the relative loss of importance of the two catch-all parties; the Greens and the AfD are particularly successful in generating followers on social media, and their digital mobilization may be a further manifestation of increased polarization. Therefore, the dynamics in social media and the dissemination of fake news pose a potential threat of exacerbating polarization.

A consequence of the fragmented party system became apparent after the 2021 federal election. A slight lead was sufficient to become the senior partner in government—never has a party with such a small vote share as the SPD succeeded in obtaining the chancellorship. The relevance of leadership in German politics manifested in Angela Merkel's retirement after 16 years as Chancellor; the CDU/CSU reached their historic low and thus followed the downward trend that the SPD had already gone through. It remains to be seen whether the CDU/CSU will reposition successfully after the end of the Merkel era. However, with the outlined transformation of parties and the party system in mind, it seems unlikely that the former catch-all parties will regain their former strength in the (near) future. Consequently, the implications of voting behaviour for coalition formation are more opaque than in previous years, which poses a challenge to German party democracy. Parties will be required to show an enhanced willingness to compromise to ensure the ability to govern in various coalitions beyond long-standing ideological boundaries to counteract the consequences of a possible further increase in polarization. This development may be a challenge to government stability and could impede efforts to efficiently implement reforms. The extended coalition negotiations after the 2017 federal election already hinted at possible difficulties. Four years later, however,

the coalition formation of the unequal alliance of SPD, Greens, and FDP succeeded quite quickly—it remains to be seen how open to compromise parties in Germany will be. A serious threat to liberal democracy is the rise of right-wing populism. In Germany, the AfD has been radicalizing since its foundation in 2013 and is currently a populist radical right party with extreme tendencies. However, even if German party competition has become polarized and pluralized, it would be too far-reaching to speak of a crisis of democracy, as strong centrifugal dynamics are only apparent in the eastern German federal states. Nevertheless, the increasing polarization must be kept in mind as it may endanger the future stability of the German party system.

Notes

1. The chapter was written in equal parts by Michael Angenendt and Simon D. Brause. We are grateful to Pauline Marquardt, Nico Bodden, and Aaron Schlütter for their help. Furthermore, we would like to thank Simon Franzmann, who provided data on the left–right positions of parties.
2. The Christian Democratic Union (CDU) and the Christian Social Union (CSU) are two autonomous parties, whereby the CSU only exists and competes in elections in Bavaria and the CDU in all other federal states of the country. In the Bundestag, the national parliament, a joint parliamentary group is always formed. For most analyses, they are treated as one party.
3. The developments in German local politics are outside the scope of our analysis. For the role of national parties and independent local parties, see Angenendt (2021, 2023). For the local party system, see Linhart and Eichhorn (2022), and for party competition, see Gross and Jankowski (2020).
4. We use the effective number of parties (ENP) based on the vote share as an indicator to measure party system fragmentation (see Laakso and Taagepera 1979: 4–7).
5. During the 1960s and 1980s other right-wing parties had some electoral successes in some of the federal states and one of them even entered the European Parliament for one electoral period in the 1980s, but they never succeeded in winning a seat in the Bundestag.
6. See Schmitt-Beck et al. (2022: 5) for further insightful information on the development of the vote share over time.
7. These data were obtained from Voter Turnout Database (International IDEA 2022).
8. Relevant parties include those that gained at least one seat in the German Bundestag, the FDP, and the AfD in 2013, due to their high blackmail potential. The index was weighted by the vote share of each party.
9. This loosely translates to a 'moral turning point'.
10. In the 1950s, there were a few coalitions with four or more parties. In order to keep the presentation clear, these coalitions have been grouped under the coalitions with three parties. These are the governments Hellwege I (Lower Saxony), Bartram (Schleswig-Holstein), Müller I, Müller II, Müller III, and Kiesinger I (all Baden-Württemberg).

11. In Berlin from 2002 until 2011 and in Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania from 1998 until 2006, as part of an SPD-PDS/The Left government.
12. Data are derived from the Political Party Database Project. A detailed conceptualisation, as well as the index construction, can be found in Berge and Poguntke (2017) and for round 2 of the IPD in Brause and Poguntke (2021).
13. For the AfD, a comparison between both time points is not possible, as the party was founded in 2013.

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6
Fragmentation and Anti-Establishment Politics

The Czech Party System in the 2020s

Tomáš Cirhan and Petr Kopecký

Introduction

The electorally volatile and highly unstable party systems in the post-communist countries of central-eastern Europe are associated with the constant (re)emergence of new parties. The Czech Republic had for a long time after the emergence of democracy defied these patterns of unstable party politics. In the first few decades following the fall of communism, the political competition was based on the clearly defined, ideology-driven conflict between two relatively stable and numerically limited blocs of political parties. The left-wing social democracy, with the Czech Social Democratic Party (ČSSD) as the main protagonist, and right-wing neoliberalism, with the Civic Democratic Party (ODS) as the key player, represented the two opposing views on how to run the country and economy that structured the country's political competition. Consequently, some referred to the Czech party system as institutionalized or consolidated (Berglund and Dellenbrant 1991), well established with a high level of programmatic crystallization, and not being fragmented into many smaller parties (Hanley 2008). The above characteristics made the Czech party system de facto an exception in the context of post-communist countries. Only a few other countries, such as Slovenia or Hungary, witnessed similar developments.

However, the Czech party system has registered fundamental changes in recent years in terms of the number of (new) parties that compete in elections and enter the parliamentary arena, as well as in the issues structuring the political struggle between the parties. Beginning with the 2010 elections, the relatively predictable pattern of party competition and the stable format of the party system started to unravel. No longer driven only by left–right

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divisions, the conflict between parties started to be drawn along different lines: between the parties representing the political establishment and those profiled as anti-establishment (Cirhan and Kopecký 2019). Although the anti-establishment parties initially performed well in elections, their fortunes were often short-lived. Many of them made an electoral breakthrough utilizing their anti-establishment appeal but, with the notable exception of Action of Dissatisfied Citizens (ANO) and the Pirate Party (Pirates), fell apart quickly afterwards, often consumed by intra-party organizational divisions and conflicts. This is how the Czech party system gradually transformed into the new more fragmented constellation with one bigger party that succeeded by running on the anti-establishment ticket (ANO) and several smaller parties. In the Czech context, anti-establishment and anti-corruption appeals may still help new parties to enter parliament, but it takes more than that to survive in the longer term (Kubát and Hartliński 2019: 107). The new parties that currently prevail in the Czech party system are those that avoided scandals associated with their participation in politics. Some scholars have noted that such scandals, especially those related to corruption, were a plague to the established parties in the past, and some of the new parties have learnt the lesson (Haughton and Deegan-Krause 2015). Others observed that the anti-establishment stance among some of the leaders of new parties is only a product of party marketing. In reality, these individuals can be recognized as an elite with respect to their wealth or prominence (that they use to fund their political enterprises), and in many cases, their fortune is even a result of their political connections in the past.

In this chapter, we chart these recent transformations of the Czech party system, focusing on the surge of anti-establishment parties that exemplifies the most significant of these changes. We will start with a brief analysis of the institutional conditions that provide basic parameters for party development, followed by an analysis which will show how the Czech party system has fragmented as a result of the wave of anti-establishment politics. By further zooming on two new political parties—one short-lived (Public Affairs, VV) and one electorally and organizationally very successful (ANO)—we will also show some important trends in intra-party organizational development which further point to a general decline of partisanship and party strategies in Czech politics. Throughout the chapter, our empirical strategy is to highlight several organizational features of two new anti-establishment parties and, where possible, contrast them with the established parties which represent the 'old party system', and which are still important players in the country's party system.

The Czech Party System and the Framework Conditions for Party Development

Parties play a fundamental role in Czech politics. This is certainly true for the first two decades of post-communist politics, but even the recent wave of ant-establishment politics did not fundamentally alter the overall strong role of parties in the system. Parties enjoy a near monopoly of representation, and alternative channels of representation such as social movements and trade unions are relatively weak (Kopecký 2001; 2007). Some of the longer established parties, like ČSSD and the Christian Democratic Union (KDU-ČSL) have been associated, even organizationally linked, with different social organizations, such as youth organizations, women´s organizations, or labour unions. Although these different social organizations were significant with respect to their internal party democracy, they did not turn these parties into mass parties, nor did they strengthen the role of social movements in politics overall. Political parties have no challengers as selectors of candidates for key elected positions within the state: independent candidates stand no chance in lower chamber elections conducted according to the PR list system (see below); even the Senate seats (contested in single-member districts) are mostly divided on the basis of straight inter-party contests.

One important constitutional position which has gradually started to escape a partisan grip is that of the country's president. Until 2012, the president was elected by a joint vote of both chambers of the Czech parliament. Although one such elected president, Václav Havel (president for two terms between 1992 and 2000), profiled himself as a 'non-partisan' (if not anti-partisan) figure, even he could be not elected without strong backing from key political parties. Since the introduction of a popular vote for the president in 2012 (a two-round system, with a run-off between the two strongest candidates if no candidate reaches more than 50% of the vote in the first round), the losing candidate in the second round was always a non-partisan figure, indicating that presidential races might eventually produce results not fully under partisan control. However, while important in many respects (e.g. for constitutional court and other judicial appointments), the Czech president is part of a parliamentary system of government. The key position of executive power is the Prime Minister (PM), who is dependent for approval and survival on a majority in the lower chamber of parliament. With a few exceptions in caretaker governments, the Czech PM is always a partisan figure, coming from and often leading the largest party within a coalition government. The selection of ministers is similarly party centred in that, typically, the key source of recruitment for cabinet posts is parliamentary parties. Those

recruited to a cabinet post from outside of parliament are often party members or part of wider party networks; even the few non-partisan experts in coalition governments that Czech politics has known were pressured to act within the political guidelines of the nominating party. Finally, there are only very few regional governors (*Hejtman*), the highest administrative positions at the sub-national level, who are not members of one of the political parties.

There are at least two important institutional features that are responsible for the strong role of parties in Czech politics. The first one is a generous system of state subsides which favours (registered) political parties over all other political actors. All parties that receive over 3% of the votes in general elections (the threshold for representation in the lower chamber is 5%) are entitled to public subsidies in two forms: as a permanent contribution for political activities of the party, and for mandates allocated to the party (for more details on party financing, see Pšenička 2019). As we shall see later, Czech parties would unlikely survive organizationally without such public subsidies, which moreover endow them with resources very few other actors can match.

The second feature is the electoral law for parliamentary elections, which stipulates that the lists of candidates can only be drafted by registered parties. Only party-selected[1] 'independent candidates' are therefore allowed to run for both the lower (the Chamber of Deputies) and upper (the Senate) houses of the parliament. This legal provision de facto turns the national elections into party races. The electoral system to the lower chamber of the parliament is a proportional representation (PR) list system. Voters choose in 14 multi-member districts between party lists of candidates. The d'Hondt formula that was introduced to distribute the seats in districts has been subject to several alterations throughout during the last three decades (Kopecký 2004). All these modifications had two main underlying reasons. The first reason was to limit the competition of new parties by increasing the barrier for entry into the lower house of parliament, especially for electoral coalitions. The second reason was to empower larger political parties by increasing the disproportionality of electoral results (Crawford 2001).

For nearly 20 years since the end of communism, these framework conditions for party development, together with their relatively predictable electoral performance, translated into the dominance of four political parties, ODS and KDU-ČSL right of the centre, and ČSSD and the Communist Party of Czechia and Moravia (KSČM), left of the centre (see Table 6.1 for details). A small liberal conservative party, first under the name of Civic Democratic Alliance (ODA), later to be known as Freedom Union (US-DEU) and now competing as TOP 09, completed the picture. It is because of this

Table 6.1 Electoral results to Chamber of Deputies (lower chamber; % of votes)

	1992	1996	1998	2002	2006	2010	2013	2017	2021
ČSSD	6.5	26.4	32.3	30.2	32.2	22	20.5	7.3	4.7
ODS	29.7	29.6	27.7	24.5	35.4	20.2	7.7	11.3	27.8*
KDU-ČSL	6.3	8	9	14.3	7.2		6.8	5.8	*
KSČM	14.1	10.3	11	18.5	12.8	11.3	15	7.8	3.6
ODA	5.9	6.4							
US-DEU			8.6						
SRP-RSČ	5.9	8.1							
SZ					6.3				
TOP 09						16.7	12	5.3	*
VV						10.9			
Dawn							6.9		
ANO							18.7	29.6	27.1
SPD								10.6	9.6
STAN								5.2	15.6**
Pirates								10.8	**

Source: www.volby.cz (accessed 15 December 2023)

* result for SPOLU (Together) coalition (ODS, TOP 09, and KDU-ČSL),
** result for PIRATSTAN coalition (Pirates and STAN)

relatively stable constellation of political parties—which, with the exception of the pariah KSČM, were also responsible for the formation of most coalition governments until 2010—that the Czech party system was for a long time 'renowned' for its relative stability, one would even say for its hostility towards new parties.

However, even before 2010 and the 2013 earthquake elections, there were signs that the dominant parties were starting to lose the trust of the electorate, which became increasingly frustrated with political and corruption scandals over the years. In fact, despite their strong institutional position and good electoral performance, political parties have repeatedly been placed among the least trusted institutions in the country (Čermák and Stachová 2010). Fuelled by strong anti-party sentiments and strengthened by every major corruption case that involved high-ranking politicians from one of the two major established parties—ODS and ČSSD (Klíma 2015)—the protest vote started to gather momentum and, in the 2010 elections, resulted in the electoral breakthrough of the populist and anti-establishment Public Affairs (VV) (see Table 6.1).

This tendency continued in the 2013 earthquake elections, when two new anti-establishment parties, ANO and Dawn of Direct Democracy (Dawn),

made electoral breakthrough, with ANO nearly winning these elections. The 2017 elections further strengthened this trend of anti-establishment parties´ emergence and electoral success. Three other such parties succeeded electorally and performed above the electoral threshold—Pirates, Freedom and Direct Democracy (SPD), and Mayors and Independents (STAN). It was only in the 2021 elections that, for the first time in nearly a decade, no new political party entered the lower chamber of Czech parliament. However, two long-standing parties ČSSD and KSČM—disappeared from it, leaving the left-of-centre largely unrepresented in parliament.

What does this mean for the Czech party system? Ultimately, the numerous new anti-establishment parties´ electoral breakthroughs translate into the fragmentation of the Czech party system, one could say its gradual 'Dutchification'. As can be seen from Table 6.2, the effective number of parliamentary parties (ENPP) has gradually risen since 2010 and only dropped to the levels observed around the turn of the millennium after the 2021 elections, largely thanks to the disappearance of two major left-wing parties. The more fragmented the party system, of course, the more difficult it is to form government coalitions. Indeed, as seen in Table 6.2, the vote and seat shares of the two largest parties have gradually declined since the 1990s, with 2013 representing an all-time low on both shares. Translated into executive

Table 6.2 Czech party system competition

	ENEP*	ENPP*	Volatility	Turnout (%)	TLP* vote share	TLP* seat share
1990	3.38	2.24	-	96.33	62.74	78.50
1992	7.14	5.71	-	84.68	43.80	55.50
1996	5.14	4.15	28.20	76.29	56.00	64.50
1998	4.55	3.71	15.90	74	60	68.50
2002	4.14	3.81	16.30	57.95	54.70	64.00
2006	3.61	3,10	18.40	64.47	67.60	77.50
2010	6.38	4.62	32.60	62.60	42.20	54.50
2013	7.21	5.79	36.50	59.48	39.20	48.50
2017	6.49	4.81	28.30	60.84	40.96	51.50
2021	5.04	3.34	12.90	65.39	**	53.00

* ENEP—effective number of electoral parties; ENPP—effective number of parliamentary parties; Volatility as the total volatility; Turnout as share of all registered voters; TLP—two larges parties; '-' —missing data

** One of largest parties running under electoral coalition, cannot determine vote share

Source: Parliaments and Governments Database (Döring et al. 2022); Database on WHO Governs in Europe and Beyond, PSGO (Casal Bértoa 2022); Voter Turnout Database (IDEA 2022)

politics, government coalitions containing more than two or three parties has been the norm since then. Indeed, if we split two electoral alliances of SPOLU (ODS, KDU-ČSL, and TOP 09) and PiratStan (Pirates and STAN) into their individual parts, the government of Petr Fiala formed following the 2021 elections consists of five political parties, a record coalition size in the entire post-communist period.

VV and ANO: The Background of Two Anti-establishment Parties

In this section we focus on two new political parties that perhaps best embody the recent changes in the Czech party system. VV was established in 2002 in Prague. Similar to other new parties, in particular Pirates, it was founded as a local party that was initially embedded solely in municipal politics. However, unlike some other new parties like US-DEU or TOP 09, VV lacked connection to pre-existing party structures or to individuals with political capital and, nationwide, made an electoral breakthrough only in the 2010 general elections. Together with TOP 09, it immediately participated in the government led by ODS. Nevertheless, VV´s engagement in this government was marred by scandals, and thus short-lived, and the party fell apart not much later.

VV´s ideology was always rather shallow, centred around anti-corruption and anti-establishment appeals, combined with calls for simpler laws and slim state administration. Initially, the party initially did not attract many charismatic individuals to lead it, but this changed in 2009 when some celebrities became associated with the party, in particular the investigative journalist Radek John, who became the party leader. Other individuals, like the businessman Vít Bárta, became highly influential within the party (ČTK 2011). Because of his prominence in VV and the closeness of his business and VV´s politics, some researchers have referred to the party as to a business-firm party (Hloušek 2012). Indeed, a close proximity to business groups is what differentiates VV (and ANO) from the other new Czech parties, many of which were associated with different social groups. For instance, the Green party (SZ) was connected to various ecological initiatives and environmental organizations, while Pirates started around the community of the PirateLeaks website (the Czech equivalent of WikiLeaks) organizing online petitions promoting internet freedom. In contrast, VV´s and ANO´s electoral success can be seen as a part of the wider phenomenon of political entrepreneurs infiltrating the Czech party system (Hloušek et al. 2020).

Like in VV, in ANO the worlds of politics and business intertwine. ANO was established in 2012 by Czech businessman Andrej Babiš, and his personality and business background characterize the party to this day. Before founding ANO, the second-richest Czech, a billionaire and owner of the Agrofert business conglomerate, was virtually unknown to the public. Unlike VV, ANO did not have rudimentary party organizational structure from local politics to build on. However, using the vast economic and personnel resources of Babiš´s business companies, ANO was from the beginning professionally organized, with input from external consultants and marketing experts. In that sense, ANO´s background and origins are quite reminiscent of Silvio Berlusconi´s Forza Italia. Similar to VV, ANO´s initial appeal consisted mainly of a critique of the entire political establishment and widespread corruption. Ideologically, ANO offers a specific kind of technocratic populism, in which it combines anti-establishment rhetoric with centrist managerial-like technocratic policies (Havlík and Voda 2016); it involves the idea of running 'the state like managing a private business-firm'. This includes appeals for fixing and centralizing the state administration, tackling the incompetence and corruption of civil servants, and introducing vast infrastructure projects.

This mixture proved to be the winning formula for Czech voters, especially considering the timing of ANO's entry into Czech politics (Roberts 2018). In the course of the next seven years, ANO became the strongest political player in the country (see Table 6.1). ANO's electoral success in the 2013 general elections was unexpected by many, especially since the main opposition party (ČSSD) was supposed to win by a landslide, considering the major scandal haunting its main competitor (ODS). However, with the exception of the Senate elections, ANO has excelled in all successive elections since then, and this in different electoral arenas, including regional and European elections. As a result, the party has become fully implanted at all levels of public administration. After the 2013 elections, ANO formed a coalition government with ČSSD and KDU-ČSL. In the 2017 general elections, ANO received its largest share of votes to date and formed a minority coalition government with ČSSD, relying on the support of KSČM (Krumphanzl 2018). Although now weakened after losing the 2021 parliamentary elections (and Babiš in the 2023 presidential elections), the party seems firmly established on the Czech party scene, representing a populist alternative to ČSSD and KSČM on the left of the spectrum.

Organization of New Anti-establishment Parties

Unlike other studies of these two parties which deal mainly with their ideology (e.g. Haughton and Deegan-Krause 2015; Hanley and Vachudova 2018), we now focus on their party organization (party membership and party elite) and financing. Both parties share a number of party organizational approaches, which differ from the established parties (ODS or ČSSD). We start by looking at party membership.

Party membership and communication

As we can see from Table 6.3, the number of party members in ANO and VV is much lower when compared to the established parties (i.e. those established prior to or shortly after the 1989 revolution). The contrast is particularly stark when comparing ANO and VV to the two established parties with long historical roots: KSČM and KDU-ČSL (see also Rovenský 2018). Nevertheless, ANO's and VV's membership is fairly comparable with that of the other newer parties, such as Pirates, SPD, TOP 09, or STAN (see Mazancová 2018). All the newer parties in the country, that is those which have emerged in the last decade or so, register very few members compared to their established counterparts from the 1990s and before.

In a post-communist social environment hostile to partisanship and other conventional forms of political participation, extensive organization building

Table 6.3 Membership of Czech parties

Party	M/E	Income through members (%)	Income through state funding (%)
ČSSD	0.23	50.60	44.10
ODS	0.17	2.35	20.17
ANO	0.04	1.30	87.43
KDU-ČSL	0.30	3.37	37.32
KSČM	0.45	15.13	62.93
TOP 09	0.03	4.07	71.70
Mean	**0.26**	**12.80**	**53.94**

Source: Political Party Database Round 2 V4 (Scarrow et al. 2022), data retrieved for 2017; the reported income share refers to the total party income; M/E was multiplied by 100 and presents the percentage share of the electorate

and membership recruitment were never among parties' highest priorities, especially among these immediately involved in parliamentary and executive politics (Kopecký 1995, 2001, 2007; Biezen 2003). Most Czech parties have restricted their organizational efforts almost exclusively to the party in public office, often failing to establish a strong extra-parliamentary organizational structure. The only two notable exceptions in this regard are KSČM and KDU-ČSL, long-established parties with a pre-1989 history, which are by far the closest to the definition of a mass party in the Czech context (see, for example, their M/E values reported in Table 6.3; see also Biezen 2003). The parties established after the Velvet Revolution (mainly ODS and the recreated ČSSD) never matched them regarding the extensiveness of party organization. And parties even newer than ODS or ČSSD, like ANO, VV, Pirates, SPD, TOP 09, or STAN, do not seem to even attempt to match the parties established in the 1990s in this respect.

Overall, the trend in post-communist Czech politics is that the party membership as a percentage of the electorate (M/E ratio) is at a low level (see Table 6.3 for more details). This is especially the case in comparison to Western European democracies (see Delwit 2011: 35; Kölln 2014). The same can be observed for the size of party membership relative to the number of the individual party voters (M/V ratio): with the exception of KSČM and KDU-ČSL (both commanding M/V ratio of about 10%), the only other party with some, although minimal, M/V ratio is ODS (about 3–6%).

Interestingly, VV and ANO also display a strong emphasis on the alternative and limited forms of party membership (Cirhan and Stauber 2018). ANO cultivates a far more closed elite-like membership base, while VV was relatively open to recruit new members without setting any major restrictions. In ANO, screening of members´ backgrounds and corresponding long probationary periods were a norm in the party at its inception. These restrictions on party membership resulted in numerous failed or pending membership applications. In order to compensate for the (self-)limited number of party members, both parties gradually started to focus on registering alternative forms of membership, in particular party sympathizers, who have no rights, nor any influence on their parties (in VV, sympathizers initially had voting rights but had them restricted later) (Cirhan and Stauber 2018).

The focus on alternative forms of membership is also crucial with respect to party communication. ANO, in particular, established a robust network of party sympathizers and online supporters who have been widely used for communicating the party message to its potential electorate. The party has

also invested in a specialized social media team in order to boost this important strategy of party marketing (Cirhan and Stauber 2018: 475). In contrast, VV did not invest so much in its online activities, most likely because the party emerged prior to the spread and popularity of social media

Arguably, the strategy based on alternative forms of membership is advantageous with regard to the maintenance of the party organization: both ANO and, to lesser extent, VV focus on the advantages of membership in the form of voluntary labour and restrict those types and aspects of membership that are not easily maintained organizationally (Cirhan and Stauber 2018). Similar developments can be observed in the case of other newer parties like TOP 09, SPD, Pirates, or STAN, which also register very limited numbers of party members and do not invest in building extensive party membership.

Party elites

Another aspect of VV´s and ANO´s party organization that is crucial for understanding their involvement in Czech politics relates to the party elite. Previous research has established that the contrasting political and organizational fortunes of VV and ANO can be partially explained by the different composition of their party elites (Cirhan and Kopecký 2017). Concretely, the similarity in professional and career backgrounds among the party elite could act as one of the contributing factors for their organizational survival (by facilitating party cohesion). In theory, party cohesion is a crucial part of party unity (see Andeweg and Thomassen 2010); commonly shared career and professional backgrounds of party elites are variables that support party cohesion (Putnam 1973). ANO displayed a highly homogenous party elite, (67% of its party elite were managers), while VV´s party elite included individuals with much more heterogenous career pathways (only 24% of its party elite shared the same career background). Also, in ANO a non-negligible proportion of the party elite (17%) was recruited from the Agrofert business conglomerate of the party leader. Many of these individuals associated with Babiš´s business hold important posts within ANO (see Cirhan and Kopecký 2017 for more details).

For the ANO, party cohesion resulting from this organizational strategy of relying on Agrofert managers proved to be especially relevant and advantageous when it had to deal with major scandals. It was most strongly tested when Babiš began to be investigated by The European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) and by the Czech police for an alleged fraud in the application for

EU funding for one of his companies (Rankin, 2018). When the party faced serious scandals concerning the party leader, the party elite stayed firmly united behind him, and none of the party elite voiced any opposition towards Babiš in public (ČTK 2015). There was no publicly visible faction within ANO asking for his resignation, questioning his position, or even suggesting changes in the leadership. On the contrary, in the months and years following the scandal, all members of ANO´s elite continued and continue to support Babiš publicly in the media and in parliament (Kosová 2018).

When VV went through a similar test concerning a scandal with much less significant magnitude, it failed miserably. The corruption scandal in VV involved an influential member of the party and one of its main donors, Vít Bárta (ČTK 2011). Bárta has been labelled by local commentators as the grey eminence of VV and the most influential individual in the party, who was de facto running the party instead of the party leader John. The organizational crisis in VV was complex; however, its trigger was rather straightforward—bribery and party financing scandals among its party elite. Bárta´s ABL security agency and his relatives were involved in non-transparent party funding both to the party and to different individuals within the party organization. A trial took place in 2012, in which Bárta was sentenced for providing interest-free loans to members of the VV's parliamentary group (Cirhan and Stauber 2018: 464). Handing money to different MPs was considered bribery, and the scandal had a destructive impact on the party organization. VV quickly fell into internal conflicts and party divisions following the media coverage of Bárta´s scandals. The party elites were divided and started to blame each other in the media; there were frequent changes in party leadership, and the party split into different factions.

This political strategy of targeting managers from outside of politics is not an entirely new idea in the context of contemporary post-communist Czech politics. A similar strategy was implemented in ODS in the 1990s. In this respect, Hadjiisky (2011) talks about an essential group of so-called post-normalization technocrats: individuals that formed the ideology and public image of ODS throughout this period. This ODS elite shared similar political attitudes based on their common professional past as managers or financiers and their educational profiles as economists. Hadjiisky (2011: 102) referred to ODS as a business enterprise because of the influence of these professionals on the party ideology. For similar reasons, Hanley (2008) described ODS as the tool of technocratic modernization, emphasizing the substantial impact these professionals had on the party. Although the difference between economists and engineers within the party leadership later led to widespread disputes and tensions and the struggle for control over the party,

in the 1990s it unified the party ideologically. The common ground on main policies and a common-sense technocratic approach shared by ODS's elite helped it to share common political attitudes which, in turn, protected the party organization from larger conflicts and the risk of disintegration.

While in ANO and ODS the parties' unity stemmed partially from the similarity in the career profiles of their party elites, other parties relied on connections to social groups (e.g. the Greens with environmental organizations) as their source of cohesion. The same cannot be said about some of the other Czech parties, notably ČSSD, where the conflicts between different party factions (stirring internal conflicts) were notorious throughout its history. The conflict was mostly visible between the faction standing behind the former party leader (and the former Czech president Miloš Zeman) and a more liberal wing of the party. The struggle between the two factions culminated after the 2013 general elections, when a faction around regional party leaders in Brno (the second-largest Czech city) organized an attempted leadership coup against the then party leader Sobotka. The conflict between the two factions took weeks to resolve. It severely weakened the position of party leader within the party, as well as the position of ČSSD in the newly forming coalition government with ANO. The conflict between the two different factions in ČSSD never fully disappeared and continues to this day. It re-emerged repeatedly during the period when ČSSD participated in Babiš's coalition government and ultimately could be seen as one of the major contributing factors for the weak electoral performance of the party in the 2021 elections and its exit from the lower house of parliament.

A similar fate of losing its presence in the Chamber of Deputies was also haunting TOP 09. Although a relatively united party that did not have many publicly known scandals or internal party conflicts, it has had issues of its own. A deficit of charismatic candidates, on one side, combined with the entry of new successful liberal parties (like Pirates), on the other, represent a serious problem for TOP 09, which relies on a similar type of voter to Pirates. Regarding the party elite, we can see a specific personnel continuity between previously mentioned minor centre-right liberal parties like ODA, US-DEU, and most recently TOP 09. Many of their elite have originated from the early days of Civic Forum and transferred through several of these parties.

For the other newer parties, like Pirates, it still remains to be seen how they will hold together now that they have become involved in the coalition government after the 2021 poll. From the very beginning, Pirates has presented itself as a party with a novel approach to party organization, relying on its grassroots structures and online forums for its internal decisions (Nattrass 2021). It could then be expected that the relationships within the party

elite would matter less for such a party, as its source of party unity could be based elsewhere. However, research on Pirates indicates that although the so-called 'member initiative' theoretically gives members more power to influence the internal party functioning than in the established parties, its actual usage in the party is limited (Michalčák 2018). The party leadership of Pirates maintains autonomy in matters related to the programmatic priorities and organization of campaigns. Another limitation of members' impact within the party is related to their relative passivity: the party members in Pirates seem to be much more active locally than at the national level. This shows that, even for parties that may on the outside appear less strictly hierarchical and more grassroots driven, the intra-elite relationships are probably the most important ingredient for their survival.

Party financing

One can only speculate if Babiš learnt from the mistakes of VV when he established ANO and recruited its party elite. However, one aspect that most certainly contributes to any new party´s success, especially at the early stage of its formation, is the availability of party financing. There is no doubt that the vast financial resources of its party leader were an obvious advantage at the beginning of ANO's existence, as nearly all of its total revenue before the party won parliamentary seats was donated by Babiš or by companies affiliated with his Agrofert business conglomerate. In this part of the chapter, we therefore pay close attention to how Czech parties are funded.

Between 1990 and 2012, Czech parties received over 40% of party funding from public subsidies (Kopecký and Biezen 2017); the data in Table 6.3 indicate that this percentage is now well over 50%, representing a very large proportion of their overall finances. In the context of the Czech party system, parties are highly dependent on public subsidies for their existence and long-term survival. Indeed, as can also be seen from Table 6.3, which reports some of the most recent data, public subsidies constitute the largest share of income for most parties. ODS and KDU-ČSL, which receive a sizeable proportion of their party finance from private donations and their own economic activities, are an exception. Most Czech parties represented in parliament depend almost exclusively on funding from the state. In some cases, like ANO or Pirates, public subsidies are almost the sole source of party income, with income from members in particular representing only a very negligible source of money.

However, as mentioned in the second section of this chapter, parties are only entitled to receive the funds from the state when they perform well in

elections (when the party receives at least 3% of the vote in general elections). The availability of private funding for a party at the time of its emergence (or, alternatively, at the time of a disastrous electoral performance) may therefore be a crucial aspect of its success, and indeed also an opportunity to control the party organization from the early days. Babiš seem to be the case in point here. As mentioned previously, ANO (unlike VV) depended highly on private sources during its emergence, in particular from Babiš and his companies. Importantly, this private funding from Babiš to ANO was made in the form of loans to the party. The fact that these loans represented a large proportion of this party's income meant that Babiš could directly exercise control over the party organization. One could argue that because ANO could not function without his financial support (and the party was highly indebted to him for it), this financial backing made it much easier for him to secure a dominant position within the party.

Conclusion

The Czech party system in the 2020s is more volatile than in the late 1990s, with new parties making an electoral breakthrough and gaining seats in parliament while some of the seeming mainstays of the party system, like ČSSD and KSČM, have been forced to leave it. Simultaneously, it is more difficult for the parties to form a government, and coalition governments consisting of three or more parties are likely to become the norm. Some of the newcomers into the party system fall apart quickly after making an electoral breakthrough, while some appear to be here to stay. The comparison drawn in this chapter focused on two new parties with opposite political and organizational fortunes. The successful ANO has become one of the biggest and most important parties in the country, while VV has failed and disappeared despite a successful start. The focus of this comparison was on how these two political parties' organizational features have influenced their survival. On one hand, they are fairly similar in their approach towards party membership, although ANO is much more restrictive and closed, almost elite-like in this respect. Both parties rely on alternative forms of membership that provide the perks of having members without having to pay for their maintenance organizationally. On the other hand, the homogeneity of the ANO party elite, absent in VV, facilitated the party's survival even when it was severely tested in government. The overlap between the party leadership structures and private company networks seems to have facilitated unity within the party. In the absence of such unity, the shocks

triggered by scandals have proven to be organizationally fatal, as shown by the case of VV.

What has been the wider impact of ANO and VV on the development of democracy in the Czech Republic? VV was too short-lived to leave an impact, but when it comes to ANO, certain red flags appear. For instance, Babiš expressed ambitions to amend the constitution, ostensibly to make the system more 'efficient'. He planned to abolish the Senate and the regional level of governance, and to reduce the size of the parliament. He repeatedly attacked the legislative process in the Chamber of Deputies as just endless twaddle. He presented himself as a pragmatic businessman with a real-life, hands-on approach, and who does not waste time on long discussions. This perspective of politics has been fully in line with ANO´s version of technocratic populism that reduces democratic governance to managing the state efficiently like running a private company. In this context, some well-known intellectuals warned that Babiš as PM (in cooperation with the then Czech president Miloš Zeman) might attempt to dismantle liberal democracy in a way parallel to the political changes seen in Poland or Hungary.

This turned out not to be entirely the case. ANO´s technocratic populism (rather than the nationalist and illiberal approaches of PiS or Fidesz in Poland and Hungary, respectively) and its shallow ideological anchoring meant it lacked zeal and purpose for systematic changes that would lead to the dismantling of democracy. Importantly, given the diffuse institutional structure of the Czech political system and a fragmented political class, ANO was frequently challenged by the Senate, the courts, media, and powerful regional governments, and it always lacked the parliamentary and political majority necessary for a sustained attack on democracy. Instead, a major problem in the Czech case has been the tremendous accumulation of economic, political, and media power in the hands of one person and its subsequent use in the way that Abby Innes (2016) succinctly described as a corporate state capture. Even then, however, Babiš´s conflicts of interests, frequently pursued by some media, together with a mismanaged COVID-19 pandemic, rising inflation, and other economic issues, have consistently brought pressures on his party and ultimately led to its defeat.

The 2021 general elections were de facto a referendum on Babiš. Two previously mentioned anti-ANO electoral coalitions, together consisting of five individual parties, were formed ahead of the elections to challenge Babiš: the more conservative SPOLU coalition of ODS, KDU-ČSL, and TOP 09, and the more liberal centrist coalition of Pirates and STAN. Both coalitions performed well electorally. SPOLU received the highest number of votes and defeated Babiš by a few votes. More importantly, however, together with the

coalition of Pirates and STAN, they hold a majority of seats in the lower house of parliament and now form the government under the leadership of Petr Fiala (ODS). To make things worse for Babiš, he decided to run for the presidency but was decisively defeated in the 2023 direct presidential elections by Petr Pavel, a non-affiliated former NATO general, who was politically supported by all the parties in the government coalition.

This now leaves the country and its party system in a somewhat paradoxical situation: Babiš has been replaced in government by some of the very same parties whose past scandals led to his successful entry into politics. Considering that Fiala's government consists of five ideologically rather heterogenous parties and now faces ANO as its main opposition party at a time of high levels of inflation and social unrest, it remains to be seen how stable the post-2021 government will be. The fragmentation of the Czech party system that precipitated the emergence of ANO is also unlikely to be fundamentally reversed by the defeat of Babiš's technocratic populism. However, this peaceful and strategically manufactured transfer of power, both in parliament and in the presidential office, shows that while parties are often the Czech political system's main problem, they are still also the only institutions capable of solving these problems.

Note

1. Depending on the individual party rules, either the local or district branches draft the candidate lists that are sent for approval to the higher levels of party organization, be it the regional executive committee or the national executive committee. Additionally, in the case of some parties, the party leadership maintains a veto right on the candidate selection.

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7

Italian Parties and Party System(s)

Enrico Calossi and Eugenio Pizzimenti

Introduction: The Italian Party Systems

The Second Republic: The never-ending reform of the rules of the game

The party system that had been established in Italy after the end of the Second World War suddenly collapsed around 1992–1993 as a consequence of a combination of both exogenous and endogenous shocks (Harmel and Janda 1994; Pizzimenti 2020).[1] Party system change was attributed to a number of different factors: a) the collapse of international communism and its impact on domestic electoral alignments; b) the disclosure of a widespread system of political corruption; c) the country's fiscal crisis at a critical time in the process that eventually gave birth to the euro; and d) a referendum that forced radical changes in parliamentary election rules. All these factors climaxed at the same time, and at least some of them had mutually reinforcing effects. The general elections held in March 1994 marked the beginning of the so-called Italian 'Second Republic'. A systemic change had occurred (Jones and Pasquino 2015), although the institutions did not significantly change compared to the previous period. In fact, the modification of the format and mechanics of the party system, as well as of the relevant parties, was significantly profound. Thus, the Second Republic has been characterized by an over-production of political reforms, in particular, concerning electoral rules and the public funding regime.

As for the electoral rules, three reforms were approved by Parliament, in 1993, 2005, and 2017. The underlying logic of all these reforms was the limitation of proportionality to strengthen the link between the parliamentary majority and the executive. Disproportional mechanisms were introduced in order to favour the establishment of a bipolar competition. A mixed electoral system (3/4 single member plurality and 1/4 party list proportional)

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was initially introduced, which lasted until 2005; it was then replaced by a proportional system strongly unbalanced in favour of the winning coalition, which was guaranteed the absolute majority of seats in the Chamber of Deputies. In 2014, the Constitutional Court established the partial unconstitutionality of this law. Three years later, a new mixed electoral system was approved (2/3 single member majority, 1/3 party list proportional). However, the debate about the need for a new reform persists.

Regarding the funding and regulation of party politics, the Italian constitution (Article 49) mentions political parties as fundamental actors in determining national politics through 'democratic methods'. However, the constitution neither regulates specific aspects of intra-party dynamics (functional/organizational arrangements) nor defines binding requirements that political parties must conform to (Pacini and Piccio 2012). The Italian case has been defined as a case of 'inclusive cartelization' (Pizzimenti 2017). The inclusiveness of the cartel was the by-product of a bipolar electoral competition within a highly fragmented party system, which gave coalition potential to a number of small parties: these were 'rewarded' by progressively lowering the electoral threshold to access public funds.

The first legal framework disciplining public funding to parties was introduced in 1974; it was partly modified in 1979 and 1981 and it was significantly reformed after a people's referendum in 1993. Direct funding was then provided only as electoral reimbursement. However, normative legislation and amendments (in 1997, 1999, 2002, 2006, and 2012) dramatically increased the total amount of money assigned to parties far beyond the level of electoral reimbursements (Pizzimenti and Ignazi 2011; Pizzimenti 2018). In 1999, an amendment was introduced that aimed at granting 5% of electoral reimbursements to initiatives that promoted the political participation of women. Since 2017, Italy has been an evident anomaly in the context of the European Union, as it is the only large country that does not provide any direct public funding to parties (Pizzimenti and Calossi 2020; Ignazi and Fiorelli 2021). In fact, as a consequence of a growing anti-party sentiment, between 2014 and 2017 direct funds destined to parties were abolished; simultaneously, a mild state regulation was introduced to discipline party organizations.

Party system stability in time, 1948–2018

To appreciate the patterns of continuity and change between the First and the Second Republic, it is helpful to resort to a set of party system indicators

which are integrated with measurements of other important aspects of the political competition. First, by focusing on the propensity to change the rules of the game (number of relevant reforms/number of years) it is clear how the First Republic was more stable than the Second (0.16 vs 0.89, respectively). The same holds when looking at the degree of party organizational and electoral consolidation. Following Pizzimenti (2020), we resort to an indicator that measures the ratio between consolidated parties (ConsP; i.e. parties that show both organizational and electoral stability for at least 15 years and/or four general elections [Arter and Kekkonen 2014]) and competitive parties (ComP; i.e. parties that win parliamentary seats). Our data show that the ConsP/ComP ratio was much higher during the First Republic (0.6) than in the Second Republic (0.2).

As Table 7.1 shows, significant changes affected electoral turnout (TO): while the mean 1948–1992 value was 91.6%, in the following decades it fell to 80.4%, thus signalling an increasing disaffection towards politics, a

Table 7.1 Party system indicators: Second Republic, 1993–2018

	TO	EFRG	ENEP	PFRG	ENPP
1948	92.2	0.66	2.94	0.611	2.57
1953	93.8	0.761	4.18	0.718	3.54
1958	93.8	0.741	3.87	0.71	3.45
1963	92.9	0.759	4.15	0.733	3.74
1968	92.8	0.747	3.95	0.717	3.53
1972	93.2	0.754	4.07	0.719	3.55
1976	93.4	0.716	3.52	0.684	3.16
1979	90.6	0.744	3.91	0.713	3.48
1983	89	0.778	4.51	0.751	4.01
1987	88.8	0.783	4.61	0.755	4.08
1992	87.3	0.849	6.62	0.825	5.73
st.dev	**2.30**	**0.04**	**0.91**	**0.05**	**0.78**
Mean	**91.61**	**0.75**	**4.21**	**0.72**	**3.71**
1994	86.1	0.868	7.58	0.862	7.58
1996	82.9	0.86	7.14	0.868	7.14
2001	81.4	0.841	6.31	0.823	5.65
2006	83.6	0.818	5.5	0.797	4.92
2008	80.5	0.738	3.82	0.675	3.08
2013	75.2	0.815	5.39	0.715	3.51
2018	72.9	0.807	5.19	0.768	4.32
st.dev	**4.71**	**0.04**	**1.23**	**0.07**	**1.72**
mean	**80.37**	**0.82**	**5.85**	**0.79**	**5.17**

TO—turnout; EFRG—electoral fragmentation; ENEP—effective number of electoral parties; PFRG—parliamentary fragmentation; ENPP—effective number of parliamentary parties

Source: Authors' elaboration on Siaroff (2019).

well-known phenomenon in all Western democracies. However, the destructuring of the party system emerges in both the electoral and parliamentary arenas. In fact, all the indicators measuring the level of fragmentation increased: this is particularly evident concerning the effective number of electoral parties (ENEP) and the effective number of parliamentary parties (ENPP).

Finally, Figure 7.1 presents the changes which occurred between the First and the Second Republic in terms of party system volatility in the three main arenas of political competition (Bardi and Mair 2008). As for government volatility—the percentage of ministers belonging to new parties which were present in the previous executive—the Second Republic actually shows elements of typical competitive and majoritarian democracies, while the First Republic was characterized by a strong stability in parties occupying the executive. Regarding electoral and parliamentary volatility, the highest values are observable in 1994 and 2013. These years coincide with general elections that followed deep economic, political, and even moral crises of the country; these elections registered the success of brand-new parties, namely Forza Italia in 1994 and Movimento 5 Stelle (M5S) in 2013, whose success was heavily based on a rhetoric of rupture with the past.

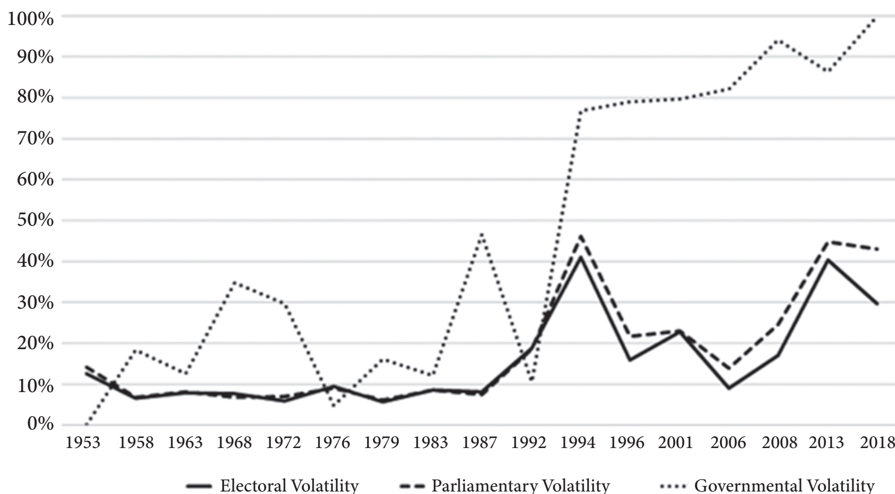

Figure 7.1 Party system volatility, 1953–2018

Note: Governmental volatility is calculated in analogy with parliamentary volatility. Thus taking into account the number of parties present in the previous executive, and the share of the occupied ministerial positions. These data are compared with the number of parties and ministerial positions occupied in the following cabinet.
Source: Calossi and Cicchi 2018

The Organization, Ideology, and Communication of Four Italian parties

The relevance of the selected parties

Our empirical analysis focuses on four parties: the largest parties of the two main competing coalitions and two parties that have played (and still play) a crucial role in influencing the mechanics of the party system. These four are the Partito Democratico (PD) and its major predecessors, the Partito Democratico della Sinistra (PDS) and the Democratici di Sinistra (DS), which have always been the pillars of the centre-left alliance. We also include the two 'editions' of Forza Italia, around which the centre-right coalition was formed in 1994, and which was re-established in 2013 after the failed merger with Alleanza Nazionale that led to the birth of the short-lived Popolo della Libertà (PDL) in 2008. The third party is Lega, which was created in 1991 as Lega Nord by federating several regionalist and autonomist lists, adopting the name of Lega Salvini Premier in 2019. Lega is the oldest party in the Italian party system, even though it has changed its electoral strategies several times. The fourth party is the M5S. It took part in the 2013 general elections outside the bipolar scheme by not placing itself along the left–right axis. Thereafter, it suddenly and unexpectedly became the largest party in terms of votes. Its success was further reinforced in 2018, when it increased its percentage of votes, gained more seats, and formed a government for the first time.

As shown in Table 7.2, until 2008, the most important centre-right and centre-left parties plus the Lega obtained, on average, 57.9% of votes cast. After the entrance of the M5S into the electoral arena, these four parties accumulated far more than 75% and 80% of the votes cast in 2013 and 2018, respectively, even if the electoral results of each party significantly changed over time (in particular those of the Lega and PD). As for seats, in all seven elections the analysed parties have obtained, cumulatively, more than 50% of the seats. In 2008, 2013, and 2018 they won more than 80% of the seats.

Table 7.2 Aggregated votes and seats to the four parties (%), 1994–2018

		1994	*1996*	*2001*	*2006*	*2008*	*2013*	*2018*
TOT	**Votes**	49.8	51.7	49.9	59.1	78.9	76.6	82.8
	Seats	53.9	56.2	55.1	60.8	86.2	81.8	85.4

Source: Authors' own calculation on official data provided by https://elezionistorico.interno.gov.it/ (Accessed 15 December 2023)

Furthermore, all these parties had a coalitional potential. In this respect, the relevance of the M5S is well represented by its changing partners that have been included in government since 2018 (first the Lega, later replaced by the PD), until the launch in February 2021 of a technocratic government lead by former president of the European Central Bank Mario Draghi, supported by almost all parliamentary parties.

Membership and intra-party democracy

Regarding the organization of the selected parties, we first focus on the evolution of party membership. Table 7.3 indicates the evolution of party members in the Second Republic.

The PDS-DS inherited the mass-party tradition from the Italian Communist Party (PCI) and continued to be the largest party in terms of members until 2007, notwithstanding a constant decline. On the right, the newly founded Forza Italia had a fluctuating membership, while the Lega Nord kept constant figures of about 120,000 members. In 2007, the almost simultaneous birth of PD and PDL led to an increase in overall membership figures. In 2008, the PD exceeded 800,000 members. Additionally, the PDL publicly announced its membership in 2011, when the central party organization confirmed one million members—a figure that the literature considers as implausible (Pizzimenti 2020). In the following years, a clear trend towards a continuous decline in total party membership emerged—this was particularly evident for PD, which lost almost half its members, but it holds also for the reborn Forza Italia. Figures referring to the Lega remained constant at least until 2013, the last year for which data are available. Finally, the M5S—which was launched as a digital party (Gerbaudo 2018)—registered shrinking figures, despite the remarkable increase in the number of members from 2010 onwards.

Moreover, the types of membership as well as the status and powers assigned to members are crucial aspects of the party system. In the literature, growing attention has been paid to the diffusion of more 'relaxed' forms of affiliation to political parties, with fewer obligations and limited rights (Biezen et al. 2012; Scarrow 2017; Archury et al. 2018). These types of affiliation often take different names, such as 'supporters' or 'friends', and are characterized by an inactive role in the life and organization of the party. This kind of membership is provided by the Lega, whose statutes explicitly indicate the existence of the 'soci sostenitori' (supporters) alongside normal members. Further, the PD, since its foundation, has adopted open primary

Table 7.3 Evolution of party membership

	PDS-DS	PD	FI	PDL	Lega	M5S
1994	698,287	NA	NA	NA	167,650	NA
1995	682,287	NA	5,200	NA	123,031	NA
1996	686,713	NA	-	NA	112,970	NA
1997	640,838	NA	139,546	NA	136,503	NA
1998	613,412	NA	161,319	NA	121,777	NA
1999	656,146	NA	190,398	NA	123,352	NA
2000	555,171	NA	312,863	NA	120,897	NA
2001	598,085	NA	271,751	NA	124,310	NA
2002	534,358	NA	222,631	NA	119,653	NA
2003	549,372	NA	249,824	NA	131,423	NA
2004	555,481	NA	-	NA	-	NA
2005	543,907	NA	190,012	NA	131,423	NA
2006	615,414	NA	-	NA	-	NA
2007	571,583	NA	401,214	NA	-	NA
2008	NA	791,517	-	NA	150,000	NA
2009	NA	831,042	-	NA	-	6,123
2010	NA	617,897	-	1,000,000	182,505	60,456
2011	NA	607,897	-	-	-	100,789
2012	NA	500,163	-	-	-	255,339
2013	NA	539,354	-	-	122,000	80,383
2014	NA	378,187	-	NA	-	87,656
2015	NA	395,320	110,000	NA	-	120,369
2016	NA	405,041	-	NA	-	135,023
2017	NA	-	111,000	NA	-	140,147
2018	NA	374,786	-	NA	-	100,258
2019	NA	412,675	-	NA	-	115,372
2020	NA	-	-	NA	-	175,281

Source: Adaptation from Pizzimenti (2020)

elections to choose the party leader. Voting rights in primary elections are granted to all those who agree to pay a small contribution (over time it has increased from one to two euro). Furthermore, voters must agree to be registered as 'party supporters' (Seddone and Sandri 2020).

By focusing on the rights and powers accorded to ordinary members, it is possible to resort to the Index of Members' Prerogatives. This is calculated by combining eight variables, which assess the prerogatives of members within party organizations[2]. We rest on the rationale of the Political Party Database Project; thus, we analysed and codified party statutes by assigning values ranging from 0 to 1. The two polar models are represented by a party in which democracy follows a bottom-up process of delegation and membership borders are clearly defined (score: 1). In contrast, in a plebiscitary/top-down

Table 7.4 Index of Members' Prerogatives*

Party	1991–1998	2002–2006	2008–2009	2015–2017
PDS-DS-PD	0.61	0.33	0.22	0.16
FI-PDL-FI	0.55	0.72	0.44	0.72
Lega	0.61	0.61	NA	0.27
M5S	*	*	0.55	0.27

Source: Pizzimenti (2020)

model, membership is open and the leadership is legitimized by a large base of sympathizers (score: 0). The first pole is typical to mass/traditional parties, while the second pole is expected to be associated with newer parties.

Table 7.4 shows that during 1991–1998, the PDS and Lega adopted a mass-party/traditional model. Forza Italia, which was then the newest party and was characterized by the strong leadership of Berlusconi, was more oriented towards plebiscitary democracy. Over time, both Lega and, even more evidently, DS and later PD adopted a plebiscitary model: the DS introduced a closed primary election to elect the party leader, which turned into open primaries in the PD; the Lega introduced closed primary elections in 2013. In contrast, the organizational consolidation of Forza Italia resulted in a more traditional internal functioning. The M5S, which entered the scene only in the early 2010s, adopted an internal functioning typical of traditional parties. In fact, despite its strong anti-party rhetoric and pro-novelty propaganda, the M5S accorded rights and active roles only to officially registered members. It was only in the mid-2010s that the movement adopted a rather plebiscitary style through the introduction of closed primary elections. The paradox is that Forza Italia, which in the 1990s was the party with the least traditional internal functioning, is now the party with the most traditional membership regulation. The inverse development characterizes the post-communist family, that is, the PDS-DS-PD evolution, which currently displays the most plebiscitary internal functioning.

Ideologies and programmes

Concerning party ideologies, in Italy all the main spiritual families have been represented in Parliament, except the agrarian/rural parties (Pizzimenti 2020). This was facilitated by the electoral system, which was almost purely proportional in the First Republic; the Second Republic forced the main

parties of the centre-right and the centre-left coalitions to include representatives of minor and often ideologically distant parties. In order to assess party ideological orientation, we resort to European Parliamentary (EP) Group membership, which is a useful indicator in the field (Hix 1999; Hanley 2008).

The PDS-DS was the result of the social-democratic turn of the former Communist party. This change was already confirmed in the early 1990s after the entrance of its European Parliamentarians into the Socialist Group. The situation is more complicated for PD: the party is the result of a merger between DS and Margherita. The latter, established in 2001, was itself a heterogeneous party in which the heirs of the Democrazia Cristiana—reorganized in the smaller Partito Popolare Italiano—coexisted with other parties (Pizzimenti 2007). The ambiguous positioning of the PD was partially clarified in 2014 when the party officially joined the Party of European Socialists.

Forza Italia has also experienced several changes in its ideological orientation. Although, according to its founder Berlusconi, the party was destined to be a 'liberal mass party', it quickly strengthened its links to liberal conservativism. In 1994, the MEPs of Forza Italia formed the original and almost mono-national group of Forza Europa. However, in 1998, first as individual MEPs and then as an entire party, Forza Italia embarked on the path to joining the Christian-Democratic European People's Party (EPP). Hence, Forza Italia, with the PDL, became one of the most important parties of the EPP. Forza Italia, which had become more conservative when it merged with post-fascist Alleanza Nazionale (AN) in 2008, recovered its neoliberal and moderate orientation after its re-establishment in 2013.

The ideological profile of Lega and its international affiliation is even more interesting. When it was created, Lega Nord wanted to focus its efforts only on Northern territorial and political autonomism. Although many of its founders (above all its leader Umberto Bossi) had a left-wing orientation, the party's goal was to include all the autonomists (or even the separatists) whatever their political placement on the left–right axis. Despite this heterogeneous origin, the party has permanently joined the right-wing coalition since 2001. In 2014, the new leader Matteo Salvini imposed a decisive turn towards a nationalist orientation upon the party. The adoption of the slogan 'Prima gli Italiani' (Italians First!) instead of the former 'Prima il Nord' (North First!) was emblematic. These ideological changes are reflected by the European affiliation of Lega. It was part of the Rainbow group in the European Parliament until 1994. Between 1994 and 1997, it was member of the Liberal group, and in 1999–2001 it was part of the 'Technical

group of Independent MEPs', demonstrating its difficulties in finding a clear international collocation. Since 2004, it has been member of Eurosceptic groups, such as Independence/Democracy (Ind/Dem) and Europe of Freedom and Democracy (EFD), or of right-wing groups, i.e. Union for Europe of the Nations (UEN), Europe of Nations and Freedom (ENF), and Identity and Democracy (ID)).

The ideological orientation of the M5S has attracted the attention of many scholars as the Movimento has explicitly rejected any collocation along the classical left–right axis of competition. It has certainly emphasized its strong anti-party sentiment (Viviani 2019) and its anti-establishment attitude (Hartleb 2015). For these reasons, some authors define the M5S as a pure populist party, instead of including it in the family of populist radical right parties (Mudde 2007). This confrontational behaviour against other (established) parties made it difficult for the M5S to find a political group within the European Parliament. In 2014, the M5S joined Nigel Farage's UK Independence Party (UKIP) and together formed the 'Europe of Freedom and Direct Democracy' group, in which anti-EU sentiment and a right-wing spirit coexisted. Ahead of the 2019 election, the M5S tried to find another alliance. An attempt was made with the Liberal group (ALDE) in 2017, but the EP group's president Guy Verhofstadt publicly rejected the proposal. In 2019, the fears of remaining alone materialized and the M5S did not find any suitable group to be part of. Therefore, its MEPs joined the 'non-inscrits' group, demonstrating the M5S's difficulties in positioning itself among the traditional political families.

As for the parties' political programmes, Figure 7.2 offers a snapshot of the placement of the Italian parties along the state–market and the progressive–conservative axes of political competition in the 2018 national elections (Bardi et al. 2018).[3] In 2018, the most pro-market party was Forza Italia, while the Lega and the PD were almost in a centrist position on the left–right dimension. Surprisingly, the M5S was more pro-state than the PD. As for the cultural dimension, the Lega and PD occupied the two opposite poles. Forza Italia and M5S had a median orientation, as the M5S did not take clear positions on many issues.

Connection to social groups

In the First Republic, many strong links existed between Catholic associations and the Christian Democrats (DC), between some trade unions

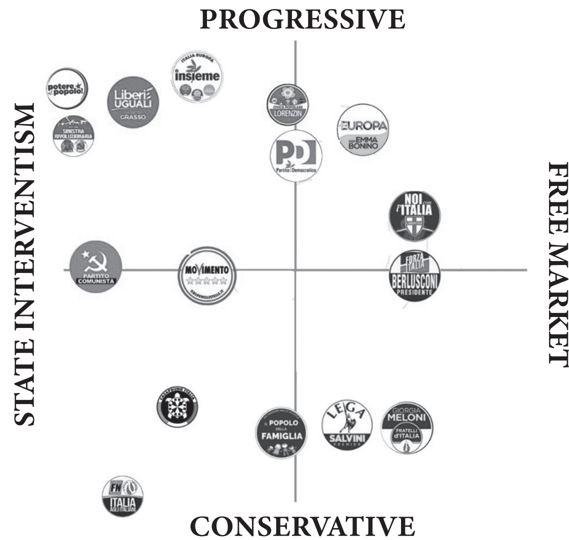

Figure 7.2 Parties' placement in 2018 general elections

Note: Of the analysed parties, we can identify Lega in the IV quadrant, M5S between the II and the III, Forza Italia between 1 and 4, and PD between II and I (anti-clockwise, starting in the upper right quadrant).

Source: Authors' elaboration of data provided by Voting Advice Application *Navigatore Elettorale*, released during the 2018 national elections.

and some leftist parties, and between sporting and cultural associations and parties. However, these connections with social groups have never been made explicit formally in party statutes. In this respect, we do not observe any evolution in the past 25 years. A partial exception is constituted by Lega, which tried to establish a party-associated trade union, the 'Sindacato Padano', which however did not have significant success. In contrast, the M5S has never been supported by any collateral organization. Moreover, the movement did not create intermediate organizational layers (such as regional or provincial layers). Further, the M5S had expressed its rejection several times for any kind of intermediate organs that might interfere with the direct connection between the leader and the members (Mosca 2020).

If we focus on party organizations, some kinds of special representation exist, especially for younger members. In the PDS-DS, young people were given a special status through the 'Sinistra Giovanile'; the same happened

when the PD was founded in 2008 ('Giovani Democratici'). In Forza Italia, from 1994 to 2008, we find 'Forza Italia—Giovani per la Libertà'; and 'Studenti per le libertà' as a specific organization for students. In the post-2013 party, we find 'Forza Italia Giovani'. During the brief existence of the PDL, the youth group was named 'Giovane Italia'. Within the Lega, the young members were organized in the 'Movimento dei Giovani Padani', which, alongside the nationalist/right-wing turn launched by Salvini, dropped the reference to the North and became 'Lega Giovani' in 2008. Much more variance can be found when focusing on intra-party organizations based on gender (women's organizations) or age (senior citizen organizations). The PDS-DS explicitly provided for a National Coordination of women—which became a 'Permanent Conference' in the PD—that was granted specific participation rights; Forza Italia also always provided for organizations based on both gender (Movimento Azzurro Donna) and age (Movimento Seniores) criteria. In contrast, the M5S has never recognized intra-party organizations of these kinds.

Finally, it could be interesting to analyse changes in the socio-demographic profile of party constituencies. Like the PCI, PDS and DS were able to keep a meaningful connection with workers, but they also progressively increased their appeal among executives and middle-class employees (Pizzimenti 2020). Forza Italia had an inter-class profile, but the party was particularly attractive for professionals and entrepreneurs. Lega was popular with artisans and shopkeepers, but it was not able to find a widespread consensus among public officers. However, during its recent expansion phase, Lega broadened its appeal among manual workers. The rise of the M5S caused a shock among the traditional *classe gardée* of other parties. It became immediately interesting to manual workers and unemployed people (who previously voted mainly for the centre-left), but also to entrepreneurs and autonomous professionals (who were previously strongly linked to the centre-right). Thereby, the movement soon became an inter-class party by receiving votes from several and differentiated social sectors (IPSOS 2018). By contrast, the PD has been the party that has changed its electoral constituency the most (Pizzimenti 2020). In fact, despite the roots of its predecessors, the PD has lost its appeal among people with lower incomes and, conversely, has strengthened its links with higher-income classes. In some respects, it has become and is perceived as the 'party of the elites' (De Sio 2018): while it could not be maintained that this was an explicit aim of the party's founders, the commitment to 'break' with the original political cultures (communist and catholic) facilitated a move towards the *bloc bourgeois.*

Parties' resources and state subsidies

The structure of party revenues followed the main trajectories of the reforms of state funding (Table 7.5). From 1994 to 2007, all the analysed parties show decreasing ratios between private funding (grassroots revenues plus plutocratic funding) and total party income. Needless to say, the data must be interpreted in the light of the dramatic increase in state funding, which had a clear impact on the relative weight of parties' autonomous financing. Be that as it may, all parties (apart from Lega) were heavily dependent on public funds. The data seem to tell us a different story in the following periods, when all parties (except the PD) show a reverse trend. However, the data must be read as a consequence of the cut to state funding until its final abolition in 2017. In addition, it must be noted that a significant amount of the revenue raised by the parties comes from their MPs according to intra-party agreements.

Another interesting indicator of party strength is represented by the percentage of expenditure used for party staff. Wages, fiscal dues, liquidation, and pension contributions are all revealing elements which can be compared with the resources spent by parties for electoral campaigns. Forza Italia has always privileged spending for electoral campaigning rather than for the functioning of the party, while the Lega has devoted a significant proportion

Table 7.5 Party private revenues on total party income, expenditures for personnel and electoral campaigns on total expenditures (%), 1994–2018

		PDS-DS-PD	FI-PDL-FI	Lega	M5S
1991–1998	Private income	47	33.7	58.7	*
	Staff	41.4	12.7	13.5	*
	Campaigns	5.8	22	10	*
2002–2006	Private income	25.2	29.2	46.5	*
	Staff	20	6.4	25.2	*
	Campaigns	9.1	27.5	6.4	*
2008–2009	Private income	7.8	31.6	NA	NA
	Staff	9.3	7.4	NA	NA
	Campaigns	27.1	42.6	NA	NA
2015–2017	Private income	42.8	77.5	71.8	NA
	Staff	42	8.4	20	NA
	Campaigns	7.1	10	16.3	NA

Note. * refers to parties that did not exist at the time.

Source: Authors' own work based on Pizzimenti 2020

of its income for party staff. In the centre-left camp, the tendency is less clear. PDS and DS prioritized the maintenance of party staff (in line with the mass-party principle), while the interpretation of the balance sheets of their successor PD is less univocal. Finally, it is not possible to assess the profile of the M5S along this dimension, as the movement reports neither income nor expenditure.

Degree of internal cohesion of parties

To assess the degree of internal cohesion of political parties, we resort to three indicators: the continuity of their leadership, the number of significant splits suffered by the party, and the loyalty of the elected personnel.

Table 7.6 shows us data regarding the first two indicators. Among the right-wing parties, there has been high leadership stability. Berlusconi, who passed away in June 2023, was always the leader of Forza Italia (1994–2009 and 2013–2023), and also of its (temporary) evolution, the PDL (2009–2013). In practice, the major centre-right parties have always kept their founder as the only leader. The Lega also presents a high level of stability in its leadership. The founder of the party, Umberto Bossi, served as leader from its foundation in 1991 and held the office until 2012. After the brief leadership of Roberto Maroni, Salvini became the party secretary in 2013 and radically changed the orientation of the party by transforming it from an autonomist/separatist anti-Italian actor into a pro-Italian nationalist right-wing party. Further, in the M5S, the founder of the party has long held the top-level leadership. Between 2007 and 2017, Grillo behaved as the movement's leader, even if no official role was specified in party statutes. In 2017, a 'Capo politico'[4] (Political Chief) was formally introduced, to be chosen through closed primary elections, but Grillo kept the role of the 'guarantor of the movement' and has remained the owner of the party logo. However, the events associated with leadership changes in the main centre-left parties are more complex. For both the PDS and the DS, we find continuity in the leadership. If we consider the

Table 7.6 Number of leaders and of significant splits, 1994–2018

	PDS	DS	PD	FI	PDL	Lega	M5S
Number of leaders	2	3	6	1	1	3	2
Significant splits	0	0	1	0	1	0	0

Source: Authors' elaboration from Pizzimenti (2020: 178)

two parties as one, there were four general secretaries from 1991 to 2007. The average time in office is reduced for PD leaders. In fact, after Walter Veltroni (founder and first general secretary in 2007), we find a long list of 'regents' (temporary leaders) and new appointed secretaries—a total of 7 in 14 years.

Less variance is recorded for relevant party splits. By taking into account only those splits that gave birth to a competitive party (i.e. a party that is able to appoint some cabinet members or to elect parliamentary representatives in the following elections), we can identify a few episodes. On the left, we find only the 'Movimento Democratico Progressista—Articolo 1', which in 2017 left PD because of its strong opposition to the centrist and moderate path chosen by the then secretary Matteo Renzi. On the right, the 'Nuovo CentroDestra' left the PDL under the leadership of the former deputy leader Angelino Alfano, who wanted to continue to be part of the grand coalition cabinets led by Enrico Letta in 2013 and Renzi in 2014. Neither Forza Italia nor the Lega have experienced relevant splits.

Another type of departure, more significant in quantitative terms, is represented by the number of parliamentarians who changed the group that they had joined at the time of the elections. Table 7.7 clearly shows that at the end of the term, the number of deputies still part of the same group they joined at the beginning of the term is usually lower. One exception is the PDS in 1994, which was able to enlarge its group by welcoming many individual deputies who had been elected in the first-past-the-post constituencies by the left coalition without a clear partisan affiliation. The other exception is the Lega in the 2018–2022 term. The Lega group grew from 125 deputies in 2018 to 138 in 2022. However, the most important feature is that, in all other cases, party parliamentary groups progressively lose members during the term, in some cases in sizeable numbers. Particularly significant is the decline of the M5S group in the 2018–2023 term (−27% of deputies). But the biggest failure of group unity occurred in the 2013–2018 term for the PDL. In fact, the result of 2013 election saw a heavy decline of 15.88 percentage points for the centre-right party. This led Berlusconi's party into a strategic crisis. At first, it decided to form a grand coalition with PD, but in November 2013 he decided to leave the governmental coalition and to re-establish Forza Italia, with the aim of giving a new priority to the centre-right alliance. However, a large share of parliamentarians did not follow the leader and formed the Nuovo CentroDestra (NCD), choosing to support the executive of Letta.

Table 7.7 Evolution of the party group composition in the Chamber of Deputies, 1994–2021

	PDS		DS		PD		FI		PDL		Lega		M5S	
	BEG	END	BEG	END	BEG	END	BEG	END	BEG	END	BEG	END	BEG	END
1994	143	164	NA		NA		113	110	NA		117	71	NA	
	+15%		NA		NA		−3%		NA		−39%		NA	
1996	NA		172	161	NA		122	117	NA		59	46	NA	
	NA		−6%		NA		−4%		NA		−22%		NA	
2001	NA		136	129	NA		178	167	NA		30	26	NA	
	NA		−5%		NA		−6%		NA		−13%		NA	
2006	NA		NA		218	194	134	131	NA		23	22	NA	
	NA		NA		−11%		−2%		NA		−4%		NA	
2008	NA		NA		217	203	NA		275	202	60	58	NA	
	NA		NA		−6%		NA		−27.00%		−3%		NA	
2013	NA		NA		293	282	NA		97	56	20	22	109	88
	NA		NA		−4%		NA		−42.00%		+10%		−19%	
2018	NA		NA		111	93	104	78	NA		125	132	222	161
					−16%		−25%				+6%		−27%	

BEG—beginning of term; END—end of term

Source: Authors’ own calculation

Means of communication

Regarding the means of communication, the PDS had inherited from the PCI the historical communist newspaper *l'Unità*. Although it saw a huge crisis in the early 2000s—it was temporarily closed between 2000 and 2002—in 2007 it became the official newspaper of PD. The party also inherited the newspaper *Europa* from La Margherita, the other merging party. Eventually, the two newspapers closed in the 2010s (*Europa* in 2014 and *l'Unità* in 2017), leaving the PD without any official newspaper. Even the online magazine *Democratica*, which was established to fill the gap left by the disappearance of the two newspapers, closed in 2019. The newspaper of the Lega, *La Padania*, and its official radio broadcaster, Radio Padania Libera, were both founded in 1996. However, in the 2010s, following the nationalist turn of the party, these two channels of communication—whose names harked back to the party's separatist past—were liquidated. A new official party newspaper, *Il Populista*, had an online circulation between 2016 and 2020 (Tizian 2021). Neither Forza Italia nor the M5S aimed at owning official party media. However, Berlusconi was the owner of Italy's biggest private broadcasting company, Mediaset, which also had interests in book publishing and magazines. Furthermore, some newspapers were directly owned by political and economic collaborators of Berlusconi or even by his relatives. Newspapers like *Il Foglio*, *Libero*, *Il Giornale*, to mention a few, all had experienced editorial direction closely connected to Berlusconi and, therefore, to Berlusconi's party (Poli 2001). Something similar happened for the M5S. In this case, although the M5S does not own any newspaper or radio channels, its founder Beppe Grillo had a very popular website. In the mid-2000s, the blog beppegrillo.it offered the first space for political discussion, organization, and external promotion for the 'Amici di Beppe Grillo'. In 2008, *The Observer* placed Grillo's website in ninth position in the global ranking of most influential blogs, and in 2009 it became the web-space for the 'Liste Civiche 5 Stelle', which became the 'Movimento Nazionale a 5 Stelle' by the end of that year. Going through several changes, 'Il Blog delle Stelle' became the official online party organ only in 2018. Furthermore, in its history, the M5S and its leader Grillo have repeatedly shown that they employ private social media in an effective way.

Table 7.8 shows that social media represent an important means of communication for the four analysed parties, with different numbers and styles depending on the party organization and party leader. The M5S is the most popular party on social media among the four. Its unofficial leader Beppe Grillo is also the most followed leader on Twitter and the second most 'liked' on Facebook (Salvini being the most liked there). The Lega's leader, Salvini,

Table 7.8 The four parties and their leaders in social media (number of followers)

	Facebook	Twitter	Instagram
PD	367,384	360,495	117,000
Enrico Letta	122,179	624,857	65,100
Forza Italia	227,612	166,855	62,700
Silvio Berlusconi	1,090,896	166,452	356,000
Movimento 5 Stelle	1,543,434	713,941	356,000
Beppe Grillo	1,919,205	2,400,000	111,000
Lega	799,527	178,648	326,000
Matteo Salvini	4,542,639	1,400,000	2,200,000

Source: Authors' own elaboration of data gathered in Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram (13 July 2021)

is by far the most followed on Instagram, with approximately seven times more followers than his party. Overall, as a further demonstration of their level of personalization, on both Facebook and Twitter leaders are generally more popular than their corresponding parties, along with Instagram in two out of the four cases.

Summary Evaluation

The Italian political system has often been depicted as an outlier (Lijphart 1999). Although this well-rooted image mainly referred to the First Republic, the heavily criticized Italian 'particracy' has given way to an even more anomalous party system. The so-called Second Republic is characterized—since its beginning in the early 1990s—by a persistent weakness. The continuous reforms of the 'rules of the game' have been (erroneously) considered the means through which the party system and its units could have been reinforced. The perverse effects produced by redundant and incoherent political regulation has come to reduce the (already limited) incentives to party organizational consolidation. Parties have privileged their competitiveness in the electoral arena to survive in the institutions, thus becoming heavily dependent on the state (Pizzimenti 2018, 2020). This long-lasting dependency is no longer based on direct public funding—which was abolished in 2017. However, looking at the present parties' balance sheets, other public resources (such as parliamentary salaries) are still relevant.

To date, we can identify at least three problem areas in the relationship between political parties and the functioning of representative democracy:

institutional design, the format and mechanics of the party system, and party organizational features.

Considering institutional design, the electoral system is a factor of persistent instability and uncertainty. As we have outlined, the last 30 years have been characterized by frequent changes in electoral law. In some phases, these changes have also become prominent themes of political debate, with two negative effects on the proper functioning of Italian democracy. On the one hand, the instability of the 'rules of the game' has made the 'game' itself less credible and legitimized. On the other hand, the great attention and time paid by the political class to electoral regulation has worked to the disadvantage of other important issues. Recently, this situation has worsened since a referendum in 2020 reduced the number of members of both chambers of the parliament. This cut has further intensified the debate on the need for an umpteenth electoral law. However, whatever the new electoral system may be, lowering the number of parliamentarians will increase the ratio between MPs and inhabitants.

As for the format and mechanics of the party system, the Second Republic shows a clear inclusive nature. Even though most of the successful new parties have emerged as anti-establishment parties, the already existing parties had no problems in establishing parliamentary agreements or even electoral and government alliances with these actors. The socialization of anti-system or challenger parties is particularly evident during technocratic governments, when very few parties were excluded from the *unions sacrées* which sometimes emerge in Italian politics. The post-2018 parliamentary term proved that even the most populist and quintessential anti-party movement, the M5S, was able to ally with almost all the other competitor parties (from the right-wing Lega to the left-wing Liberi e Uguali—LeU; from the socialist PD to the conservative Forza Italia). However, the ductility of the system—which someone could interpret as a sign of maturity, tolerance, and sense of responsibility—could also be seen as a clear sign of the parties' indistinguishability for voters, thus explaining the falling turnout figures. This aspect is detrimental to Italian democracy because it risks pushing more voters into abstention and apathy.

Finally, the organizational characteristics of Italian parties also show a number of dangerous weaknesses. The first element, which is common to all parties, is the extreme identification of the party with its leader. In our analysis, two out of the four parties were specifically founded as leader's parties. This is the reason why Forza Italia and the M5S also follow the individual

fortunes and evolutions of their leaders. Forza Italia has not been able to experience a different leadership than that of its founder, Berlusconi; the M5S has unsuccessfully tried to overcome Grillo's prominence, first by electing Luigi Di Maio as a leader and then choosing former Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte. The parties' adaptation to their leader is also evident for the Lega. In 2012, the election of Salvini as federal secretary provoked a change in the party's goals. It moved from being an organization rooted in a specific area of the country (the North) to behaving as an 'opinion party', attractive to occasional sympathizers from the whole country. The extreme personalization of parties, which is less evident (albeit present) in the PD, has weakened the parties' organizations and also had consequences on the capacity of politics to respond to citizens' requests and expectations. In fact, most of the parties (including those in our sample) have striven to find brand-new organizational arrangements by changing their names or symbols or even merging with other parties, often in order to match their leaders' ambitions. In general, most of the parties have increased their plebiscitary profiles, mainly through the introduction of direct forms of legitimization of their leaders—such as primary elections, whether open or closed. However, the blurring of the organizational boundaries, the lightening of structures, and the parallel empowerment of the party leader have tended to weaken the parties as organizations. Overall, the general personalization of parties suggests a negative perspective on the future of Italian democracy.

In addition to these general tendencies, some specific problems affect the parties in our sample. Forza Italia, which is epiphenomenon of a personalized party and which was originally labelled as the prototype and model of new populist parties in Europe, seems to have an uncertain future. The party is experiencing a long decline in parallel with the personal ageing and physical deterioration of Berlusconi. Even the recent party relocation towards institutional, responsible, and fully pro-European positions seems to be more an effect of the cooling down of Berlusconi's lively personality than of a profound ideological evolution. What will become of Forza Italia after Berlusconi is one of the big question marks hanging over the future of Italian democracy. Another point of interest concerns the future directions of M5S's unstable electorate. The 'Movimento' was able to gain voters from all political orientations, with a specific attractiveness for those with an extreme and anti-establishment profile. However, the extent to which these voters will appreciate the change in the very nature of the M5S towards a centre-leftist profile is an open question. Another specific point of inquiry concerns the Lega's ability to keep together the original Northern regionalist

and governmental wing with the new extreme-right nationalist positioning of the party. As long as Salvini was on the top of opinion polls, there was no open criticism towards his nationalist course. However, after his removal from the national government in 2019, an increasing malaise has been moving through the party, initially in silence, and then after the forming of Draghi's cabinet in 2021. We will see whether the Lega is able to maintain its current two-headed nature. The PD has an opposite long-standing problem: the endemic weakness of its leaders. The party has experienced, by far, the largest number of leadership changes. This could be the result of the perverse effects produced by the open primary elections, a foundational myth of the party; of the uncertain and hybrid nature of the party's ideological profile; as well as of the extreme intra-party factionalism, which the party inherited from its Christian-democratic wing (Bardi and Pizzimenti 2020). All these features have undermined the stability and the autonomy of the national leadership. By contrast, the organizational consolidation of the major party of the centre-left coalition could be beneficial for Italian democracy as a whole.

Overall, we can affirm that, faced with multiple and highly complex challenges—such as globalization, monetary integration, or the financial crisis, to cite a few—Italian parties have proved totally inadequate, thus boosting the vicious circle of political and institutional delegitimization. Technocratic governments—another Italian anomaly—and the rise of new (or renewed) anti-establishment actors represent phenomena which are deeply connected to Italian parties' fragility. All of them look like 'paper tigers' whose apparent strength and legitimacy are only connected to their capacity to survive within the institutions in a persistent vacuum of any reliable organizational projects.

Post-script

In late July 2022, the technical government led by Mario Draghi resigned due to increasing political tensions among the heterogeneous coalition of supporting parties. The President of the Republic, Sergio Mattarella, opted to dissolve Parliament and called for early elections, to be held in September. The unexpected resignation of the technical executive forced parties to run an unusual summer election campaign. While centre-right parties (FI, the Lega, and Fratelli d'Italia) had already agreed on a possible coalition pact, the other parties showed no clear strategies. The PD decided to break up the existing coalition with the M5S, as it was considered the main culprit

for Draghi's resignation. At the same time, the centrist liberal parties Azione and Italia Viva opted for a solo race by launching a new electoral cartel (AZ-IV).

These sudden events further hindered the (already unlikely) reform of the electoral system, which was deemed necessary after the reduction of the number of deputies and senators. As widely forecast, the centre-right coalition won the elections. However, compared to the past, the political profile of the coalition had changed. In fact, the extreme-right parties (Lega and the post-fascist Fratelli d'Italia) overwhelmed the parliamentary representation of the previous main party of the coalition, Forza Italia. The former two parties won a total of 184 representatives in the Chamber, while the latter had only 44 deputies. Unsurprisingly, Fratelli d'Italia (FDI) benefited from the opposition to Draghi's government, thus becoming the most popular party in the poll. Compared to the 2018 elections, the once anti-establishment M5S more than halved its electoral figures, while the PD confirmed its disappointing performance.

By mid-2023, the government led by FDI leader Giorgia Meloni has not fully addressed the issue of institutional reforms, despite its public inclinations towards increased regionalism and presidentialism. In parallel, however, several events have occurred that might alter the political competition in the years to come. First, in February 2023, the open primary elections set by the PD to select its party leader were won by Elly Schlein, a liberal-leftist politician who registered as a party member only in late December 2022. This unexpected result opened the door to a potential alliance with the M5S, which was marginalized until then. Second, and probably more important, Silvio Berlusconi passed away on 12 June 2023. This event symbolically put an end to the Italian Second Republic while posing a major threat to Forza Italia's survival.

All in all, despite several scandals affecting relevant members of the ruling coalition, the centre-right government looks healthy and is fully supported by its member parties. In contrast, the opposition is still divided into different poles and thus does not currently represent a viable alternative.

Notes

1. Acknowledgments. We would like to thank Editage (www.editage.com) for English language editing.
2. The variables are: 1. Leader's selection, 2. Candidates' selection, 3. Differentiated membership, 4. Registration of non-members, 5. Possibility of party affiliation directly to the

centre, 6. Possibility of enrolment to other parties, 7. Delegated affiliation, 8. Time limits for membership.

3. These analyses have been provided by the Voting Advice Application NavigatoreElettorale.it, developed by the Università di Pisa, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, and Kieskompas BV.
4. The expression 'capo politico' is the same as that explicitly mentioned within the Legge Rosato, which has regulated the electoral system and procedures since 2017. Indeed, its use to define political parties' leaders is rather unusual. Other words, such as 'segretario', 'presidente', or 'portavoce', are usually employed. We can reasonably think that in this aspect—mainly symbolic—the M5S wanted to differentiate itself from the other traditional parties.

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8

The Greek Party System’s Ongoing Crisis

The Cases of ND, SYRIZA, and PASOK-KINAL

Costas Eleftheriou

General Characteristics of the Greek Party System

Political parties have always been relatively strong in Greece. Due to their pivotal role in the democratization process during ‘*Metapolitefsi*’ (‘regime change’) from 1974 onwards, they enjoyed primacy vis-à-vis civil society organizations and exercised privileged access to state resources. Notably, political parties emerged as champions of democratization due to the low acceptance of other institutions, such as the monarchy, Church of Greece, Hellenic Army, or trade unions; this was the direct by-product of parties’ performance during the colonels’ dictatorship of 1967–1974. Political parties were the only institutions that could claim to ensure the transition to and consolidation of democracy, and to achieve the legitimacy of the new democratic regime (Spourdalakis 1996).

Article 29 of the 1975 Greek Constitution (along with its four amendments) states that ‘Greek citizens possessing the right to vote may freely found and join political parties, the organization and activity of which must serve the free functioning of democratic government’. While the parties constitute one of the foundations of the Greek polity, only their management and the transparency of party finances are subject to legal regulation. There is no party law regulating intra-party democracy or defining what it means to be a democratic party; the only prerequisite for a party to participate in Greek elections is to file a declaration at the ‘Supreme Civil and Criminal Court of Greece’ (*Areios Pagos*).

In this sense, in party statutes, most parties opted for structures corresponding to the mass type (centralized and organized on a local basis), which gradually incorporated procedures of direct democracy (primaries). To fulfil their role in the democratization process as it unfolded in Greece, parties utilized the following type of party organization: mass inclusion of

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potential members, organizing political mobilization and participation and colonizing civil society and the state. While the two governmental parties (Panhellenic Socialist Movement, PASOK, and conservative New Democracy, ND) almost inherently pursued a catch-all strategy, especially from the 1980s and later, they initially developed mass structures which created polarized party competition that affected most aspects of civil and social life (Spourdalakis and Tassis 2006; Alexakis 2020). In one sense, it is extremely difficult to understand the mass politics of the democratic period and the cleavages that prevailed if one ignores the clash between mass party machines in the 1980s. The dynamics of party competition produced 'limited but polarized pluralism' (Mavrogordatos 1984) in the party system comprising the two powerful governmental parties and the Communist Party of Greece (KKE), which held a stable and significant position as a third party.

During the 1990s, the close relations that the parties had forged with the state and the existence of latent anti-party sentiment among the electorate necessitated the making of detailed party finance laws, especially concerning election funding, as means to enhance the parties' transparency and accountability. To ameliorate their public image and re-establish their links with society, the latter sought to 'open' their organizations to the electorate in the 2000s through the direct elections of their leaders (PASOK from 2004, ND from 2009; Tsirbas 2020). During the 1990s and 2000s, the number of parties with parliamentary presence ranged from four to five, with the socialists and conservatives remaining the basic actors of party competition (Figure 8.1). From the late 2000s, the far right made its appearance through the Popular Orthodox Rally (LAOS), thereby altering the dynamics of party competition and the ideological space. The financial crisis after 2010, which deeply affected the Greek economy, created the conditions for a major dealignment that radically changed the Greek party system (Tsatsanis 2018). The demise of PASOK, the rise of the Coalition of the Radical Left (SYRIZA), the advance of the Neo-Nazi Golden Dawn, and the emergence of many new parties—most of them flash parties—challenged the ways that political parties were organized and appealed to the electorate.

Regarding the electoral system, the Greek Constitution does not regulate the electoral laws (Koustenis 2013). There was a long tradition of exploiting and altering electoral laws in Greek electoral history, a manifestation of the pathogeny of the Greek political system in the post-war years. During the democratic period, the most frequently used electoral system was a mixed one, which functioned as a prerequisite for the emergence of the two-party system. This electoral system is usually described as 'enhanced proportional', as it allowed a relatively low threshold (3%) that enabled the

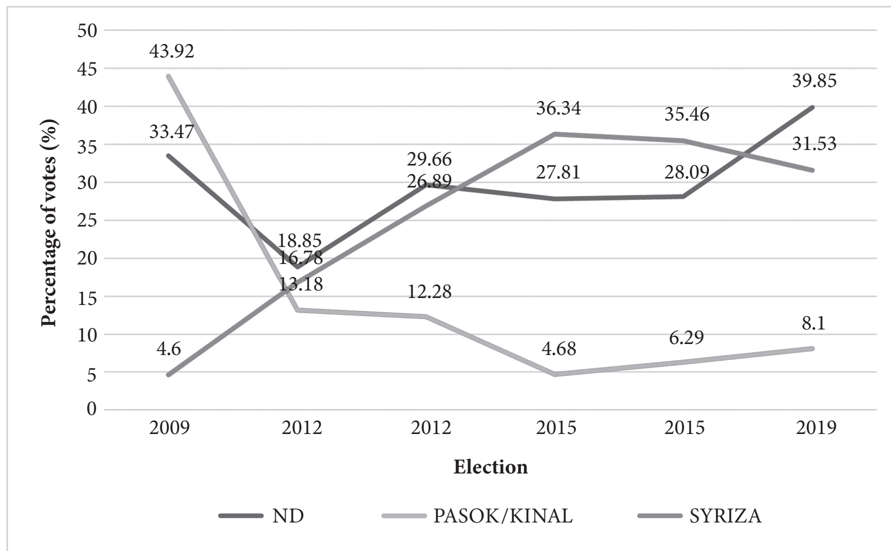

Figure 8.1 ND, SYRIZA, and PASOK/KINAL electoral results, 2009–2019. At the May 2023 elections, the respective results were 40.79%, 20.07%, 11.46%. At the June 2023 elections, the results were 40.56%, 17.83%, 11.84%.

Source: https://ekloges.ypes.gr/en, Ministry of Interior (Accessed 1 March 2024)

representation of minor parties, especially from the left, and simultaneously, especially from the mid-2000s, awarded the party gaining most votes with a generous bonus in seats. This favoured the formation of single-party governments. After 2010, the disintegration of PASOK and the near collapse of ND paved the way for multi-party cabinets and multiplied the number of parties in the Greek parliament (Table 8.1). Furthermore, in this period the same electoral law produced different results than it had previously; thus, the critical factor for the development of the Greek party system is the socio-economic environment in which the parties have functioned.

Here, we focus on the development of ND (led by Kyriakos Mitsotakis from 2016), SYRIZA (Alexis Tsipras from 2013 until 2023, then Stefanos Kasselakis), and PASOK-Movement of Change (PASOK-KINAL) (Fofi Gennimata from 2015 until 2021, then Nikos Androulakis)[1], which constitute the representatives of the three major ideological currents in Greek political history: conservatism, radical left, and social democracy, respectively. ND and SYRIZA were until 2023 the competing building blocks of party competition, while PASOK-KINAL is the rebranded version of the once hegemonic PASOK. We chose not to include KKE, even though it is the oldest political party in Greece, because in many ways it chooses to entrench itself in party

Table 8.1 Greece: Core party system indicators, 2000–2019

Election year	ENEP	ENPP	Volatility	Turnout (%)
2000	2.53	2.21	6.90	76.00
2004	2.61	2.18	5.50	75.64
2007	2.90	2.62	6.00	74.14
2009	3.01	2.59	9.80	70.92
2012 (I)	8.02	4.83	3.40	65.10
2012 (II)	4.91	3.76	18.00	62.47
2015 (I)	4.29	3.09	19.50	63.87
2015 (II)	4.20	3.24	8.60	56.16
2019	3.51	2.71	15.90	57.78

Note: ENEP—Effective Number of Electoral Parties; ENPP—Effective Number of Parliamentary Parties; Volatility as the total volatility; Turnout as share of all registered voters
Source: Parliaments and Governments Database (Döring et al. 2022); Database on WHO Governs in Europe and beyond, PSGO (Casal Bértoa 2022); International IDEA 2022)

competition and not interact substantially with other parties. After 2019, the extreme-right Golden Dawn dissolved and its leaders are in prison. Lastly, the radical right Greek Solution (Kyriakos Velopoulos) and radical left MERA25 (Yanis Varoufakis), which entered the parliament at the 2019 elections, still have not institutionalized in a way that predicts their resilience[2].

Greek Party Organizations: The Demise of the Mass Party Type

In general, current Greek party organizations originate from the mass party organizations of the 1970s and 1980s that shifted to the implementation of a catch-all strategy. This meant that party members gradually shifted from being 'party militants' to become leadership 'cheerleaders'. This is one development from the early 1990s onwards that, in one sense, undermined the participatory spirit of the early *Metapolitefsi* period. Mass membership, especially the urge for party organizations to attract and recruit party members on a quantitative basis, was directly connected to democratization and was initially considered a project occupying the parties on the left (Eleftheriou and Tassis 2013). During the 1980s, the conservatives experienced their own version of the 'contagion from the left' (Duverger 1964) by embracing the need for mass organization and becoming the most populous party, in terms of members, in the Greek party system (Kalyvas 1998; Papavlassopoulos 2004).

From the mid-1990s, the epicentre of party politics was the technocratic capacity of each governmental party. Thus, the previous politicization of

mass membership gave way to direct and non-mediated links between the technocratic elites and voters. This usually took the form of a firm and client-style relationship between parties and society (Vernardakis 2011). This had a profound impact on party members deprived of motives to join party organizations. Available party organization data for Greece reveal a trend of non-decline of party membership (Biezen et al. 2012), something that pushed some scholars to think that Greece is an exception to the party decline thesis. However, it is usual for party membership data in Greece to be largely unreliable. Frequently, party members register whenever their favoured party is reaching a governing potential and demobilize when it suffers electoral defeat. Parties' access to state resources was and still is a critical factor for party participation. In most cases, this simply means the possession of formal party membership status with no obligations whatsoever.

Consequently, in the mid-2000s, both PASOK and ND opted for the inclusion of non-members in intra-party processes, not just to revitalize participation but also to rebrand their image as organizations with visible links to society on an exclusively electoral basis. However, the demise of the role of the party member was detrimental to the legitimacy of the Greek party system, eventually became almost catastrophic for the once mighty PASOK, and allowed the inevitable advance of tangible anti-political and anti-party sentiments during the crisis.

As for intra-party democracy and the relationship between the three faces of party organizations (Katz and Mair 1993), Greek party organizations were always conditioned by one inherent trait in Greek political culture: the centrality of (at times charismatic) leadership in party politics. This was not just the by-product of the prime minister-centric institutional framework, but an element closely tied to the petit bourgeois character of Greek society. Therefore, during the 1980s, the canon of Greek party politics was the co-existence of strong leaders with mass bureaucratic organizations, with the former being obliged to consider the party in central office (Kalyvas 1998; Eleftheriou and Tassis 2022). During the 1990s and 2000s, the professionalization of political communication and cartelization of the Greek party system both presidentialized Greek political parties in a way that marginalized the party in central office and concentrated critical decision making in the party in public office. This shift was more evident in PASOK than in ND (Spourdalakis and Tassis 2006); in the minds of both parties' executives, inclusiveness of intra-party democracy—if we accept that intra-party democracy stands for a set of procedures that regulate meaningful participation—cost electoral efficiency. Intra-party democracy was useful only when members and non-members selected and legitimized the party leader. In all other aspects of decision

making, such as party programmes or candidate selection, the respective processes were probably contingent but certainly centralized.

These tendencies intensified during the crisis, at least for mainstream parties. For example, they suffered membership losses (Vernardakis 2011). Moreover, to implement the bailout austerity policies, they were forced to reduce intra-party democracy in terms of imposing strict discipline on their parliamentary groups. This further promoted the marginalization of their organizational faces in central office and on the ground. Indeed, this proved to be the point of departure for PASOK's demise and an increasing pressure on ND. In one sense, the move of PASOK voters to SYRIZA and the creation of the Independent Greeks party (ANEL) in 2012 is explained, among other factors, as the last outcome of the continuous and deepening decline of intra-party democracy in mainstream parties before and during the crisis (Lyrintzis 2011; Eleftheriou and Tassis 2013).

SYRIZA has partly inherited the intra-party democratic model of the Coalition of Left and Progress (SYN), a small democratic-socialist party in the 1990s and 2000s that gave special relevance to the proceedings of the party's central office (Eleftheriou 2009; Katsourides 2016, 2020). SYN and SYRIZA traditionally enjoyed high levels of intra-party democracy in terms of internal pluralism and the centrality of collective party bodies. The party leader held a distinct position in intra-party politics, regulating the competing factions and functioning as the party's public face. After Alexis Tsipras' selection as SYN's leader in 2008, the party produced more personalized appeals; yet, due to its status as a political coalition, it still preserved its internal pluralism. From 2004 to 2013, SYN was the largest constituent party of the political coalition of SYRIZA, consisting of groupings representing all existing strands of the radical left galaxy (Maoist, Trotskyist, left socialist, eco-socialist, etc.) (Eleftheriou 2023). In 2013, SYRIZA became a single, unified party, thereby discarding internal pluralism; after 2015, it ended as a governing and highly presidentialized party, thereby marginalizing the parties on the ground and in the central office. In a similar vein to PASOK and ND, this change in SYRIZA's intra-party politics came from the conditionalities of the third bailout programme, which narrowed the margins for policy manoeuvring for the SYRIZA-ANEL government (Spourdalakis and Eleftheriou 2019).

In general, today, the definitions of party members are extremely inclusive. This is a legacy from the democratization period when participation in parties was encouraged as a democratic duty. New Democracy (2018) accepts as a member 'any Greek citizen or nationally Greek or citizen of an EU member state or anyone that resides legitimately in the EU' (Article 3). A candidate

member registers himself or herself on the 'National Membership Registry' and then is granted the right to vote in several internal procedures of the party. The party congress is composed of many ex officio participants and almost a thousand representatives from local branches. The party leader is selected by those members of the National Membership Registry that have registered 15 days prior to the selection event. A total of 330,521 members participated in the 2015–2016 leadership selection (data for the second round of the selection process); however, in 2018, only 155,335 were verified as party members to participate in intra-party elections for the bodies of municipal and prefectural branches. In 2021, this figure was 134,802 (author). Even so, ND still possesses the largest membership base in Greece (Table 8.2), which exhibits significant influence in leadership contests but is granted low access in decision making. In many ways, Kyriakos Mitsotakis opted for the inclusion of non-partisans in the party's inner circle and initiated the creation of the 'Personnel Registry', through which he tried to attract potential political personnel by overriding traditional partisan channels.

SYRIZA (2022) accepts as its member any 'person who has reached 16 years, and lives in Greece' (Article 3) and whose application is made at a SYRIZA local branch, a central or intermediate party body, or the party's digital platform (Article 4). The members participate in internal elections and select the representatives for the party congress. The party leader was formerly selected by the party congress; however, the previous statutes (SYRIZA 2013) referred to the congress as the party's 'sovereign collective body' that

Table 8.2 Membership and party finance of ND, SYRIZA, and KINAL

	ND	SYRIZA	KINAL
Number of party members (latest leadership contest)/M/E	330,521 (2016)/3.30	148,821 (2023)/1.51	270,706 (2021)/2.70
Annual party income (2019) in euro	11,011,333	13,288,058	2,991,291
Income through state funding (%)	85.00	85.00	84.00
Income through MPs and members (%) (2019)	9.70	14.00	5.00
Electoral expenses (2019) in euro	2,928,080	3,894,207	591,498
Bank debt (2019) in euro	308,665,292	1,017,531	284,004,003

Note: Party income data were retrieved for 2019; the reported income share refers to the total party income; M/E was multiplied by 100 and presents the percentage share of the electorate. In Greek parties' financial reports, members' contributions are not discerned from MPs' contributions.
Sources: Annual financial reports for 2019 (epitropielegxou.parliament.gr); PPDB Round 2 Data; author; the data for KINAL came from the financial reports of KINAL, PASOK, Democratic Alignment (DISI), and Olive Tree–Democratic Alignment combined

may choose a different method of leadership selection, thus paving the way for open primaries—a development that unfolded in 2022 both for leadership selection and selection of central committee members and again in 2023 for leadership selection (SYRIZA 2022). In general, after 2012, the party had difficulties in keeping membership numbers corresponding to its expanded electorate. In organizational terms, the low numbers in membership recruitment were the result of the activities of factions, which functioned as gatekeepers by excluding potential members to preserve their positions in the intra-party power balance. This was particularly visible in 2015 when SYRIZA had only 35,000 members, which was a low number compared with the 2,245,978 voters for the party in the January 2015 elections (i.e. only a 1.5% members/voters ratio). After the electoral defeat in 2019, Tsipras declared the need for SYRIZA to reach 180,000 members, thus employing the use of a digital platform to facilitate registrations. The extent of party membership expansion became a crucial intra-party issue, which in many cases halted the dynamics of expansion. In 2022, SYRIZA claimed approximately 172,000 members[3] (Table 8.2), marking a major departure from its long-standing low membership tradition. For Tsipras, the main goal in SYRIZA's post-incumbency period (2019—2023) was to attract 'centrist' voters and cadres, something that provoked internal criticism, especially from 'leftists' inside the party who think—not without good reason—that his leadership style sometimes violated intra-party democracy.

PASOK-KINAL (KINAL 2018; PASOK-KINAL 2022) notes that its members are 'Greek citizens, EU citizens and foreigners residing legitimately and permanently in Greece from the age of sixteen' (Article 4). Potential members can register themselves either at a local branch or at the digital 'Membership Registry' and, at least in theory, have formally increased rights concerning decision making. Similar to the Memberships Registry, PASOK-KINAL has the 'Friends' Registry', which records party supporters and non-members. The party leader is elected in an open primary by the total votes from party members and 'friends'; importantly, candidates should be proposed by at least 5,000 members. In the 2017 leadership contest, 211,191 members and non-members participated, and in the 2021 leadership contest, 270,706 (Table 8.2). In 2018, 65,000 members voted for representatives for KINAL's founding congress (author). Regarding the state of intra-party democracy, note that the founding of KINAL resulted from the quasi-dissolution of PASOK in April 2017. PASOK's leader, Fofi Gennimata, abolished at her own will all elected organs of PASOK, from the party in central office to the party on the ground, and decided unilaterally on the liquidation of PASOK into KINAL. Nikos Androulakis, the new party leader elected in 2021, stated

his intention to reinvigorate PASOK-KINAL's internal democracy, mainly by reinstating the collective functioning of party bodies.

Greek Parties' Social Links: From 'Colonization' of Society to Disengagement from Society

In general, through the democratization process and until the late 1990s, most Greek parties 'colonized' civil society by transferring the dynamics of party competition to pressure groups and civil society organizations (Spourdalakis and Papavlassopoulos 2008; Mavrogordatos 2009; Sotiropoulos 2019). This took the form of the *parataxi* ('formation', with its military meaning), which was a party-aligned group inside civil society organizations. Thus, in trade unions, small and medium-sized employers' associations, professional unions, chambers, and student unions, these party-aligned groups were competing for the control of a given pressure group. Until the mid-1990s, socialists and communists controlled the trade union confederation (GSEE), while the conservatives influenced employers' associations, professional unions, and chambers. Concerning farmers' unions and cooperatives, the main parties created distinct organizations; the same also happened in women's organizations. After the mid-2000s, SYRIZA emerged as a party prioritizing its links with social movements, something that became more evident after the eruption of the Greek debt crisis (Tsakatika and Eleftheriou 2013).

Today, organized interests have lost a great deal of their relevance, mainly because social dialogue collapsed under the requirements of the post-crisis bailout agreements (Aranitou 2013). In one sense, organized interests are still considered sources of legitimation for government and party policies, though their relationship with political parties is characterized by a system of mutual autonomy. Parties cannot exert the same degree of control over civil society organizations; this is a crucial factor that has allowed civil society to gain autonomy and the capacity to promote its initiatives independently, especially some non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Nevertheless, the parties, while in crisis and suffering anti-party disapproval, are still the source of policies and have tried to ensure privileged relations with specific groups (mostly business interests or associations) to preserve access to valuable resources (funds, personnel, and policy proposals).

ND historically established persistent links with Greek society, mainly forged by the monopoly that the Greek right enjoyed on state management in the pre-democratic years. During the 1980s and 1990s, the dominance of

PASOK deprived ND of this monopoly and pushed the conservative party to form a party network with strong organizational and non-state-sponsored links to society. Today, ND accepts as ex officio members at its 'political committee' (party executive) representatives from several pressure groups, such as GSEE, ADEDY (representing civil servants), SEV (industries and big businesses), GSEVEE (small industrialists and artisans), ESEE (commerce), SETE (tourism enterprises), professional associations and chambers. This stands for a quasi-corporatist conception of the party's relations with society, in which the party functions as an umbrella for all conservative forces in Greek society. Its *parataxi* in trade unions, the Democratic Independent Movement of Employees (DAKE) (Table 8.3), secured a share of 19% in the last GSEE elections (March 2023). ND is more popular among the business sector, free professions, significant segments of upper civil service, small farmers, pensioners, and military and police personnel. The Youth Organization of New Democracy (ONNED) and its student wing DAP-NDFK (Democratic Renewing Group—New Democratic Student Movement) constitute two of the strongest youth and student organizations in Greece in organizational terms (Table 8.3). Finally, ND organizes its women-focused interventions through the party secretariat of family politics and gender equality rather than a distinct organization.

SYRIZA's links with civil society organizations are weak because of its tradition as a small-sized party with loose internal structures (Tsakatika

Table 8.3 Greek parties' party networks

Political party	Trade unions	Youth organizations	Institutes
ND	Democratic Independent Movement of Employees (DAKE)	Organization of New Democracy's Youth (ONNED), student wing Democratic Renewing Group—New Democratic Student Movement (DAP-NDFK)	Konstantinos Karamanlis Foundation
SYRIZA	United Militant Movement (EAK) and United Front of Strong Trade Unions (EMEIS)	SYRIZA Youth, student wing Bloco	Nicos Poulantzas Institute
PASOK-KINAL	Panhellenic Trade Union Movement (PASKE)	Youth Network, student wing Panhellenic Militant Students' Group (PASP)	Institute for Social Democracy (INSOCIAL)

Source: Author

and Eleftheriou 2013; Eleftheriou 2023). As already noted, SYRIZA directed its linkage strategy towards various social movements, especially the anti-austerity movements during the crisis period. However, during its electoral and organizational expansion, it failed to institutionalize these links, thus losing the support of social movements when it rose to government. In this sense, while the party proved sensitive to demands originating from identity politics groups or trade unions, it failed to connect itself in a stable manner with these groups. Moreover, in the trade union movement, the *parataxi* aligned to SYRIZA secured only 6% of the votes at the last GSEE congress, although the bulk of the party's electoral support still comes from wage earners of public and private sector. SYRIZA, in general, has cultivated a rather individualistic relationship between its members with civil society. As noted in past party statutes (SYRIZA 2013), 'the members of SYRIZA, as active citizens, participate in trade unions and other associations, in social movements, according to their personal interests'. This created a party organization with no formal links to civil society and encouraged the personalized participation of individual members in groups and movements, which the party declared that it wished not to patronize. The departments of the party's central committee functioned as the coordinating structures of the members' work in civil society, such as the department of labour or feminist politics, without managing to create separate organizations. Moreover, SYRIZA's long-standing low membership has affected the size of its youth wing (SYRIZA Youth) (Table 8.3), which is extremely small compared to those of other parties.

PASOK-KINAL inherited the weakened links of the once powerful PASOK, especially in the trade union movement (Bithymitris 2018; Eleftheriou and Tassis 2022). Nevertheless, electoral demise limited the party's capacity to control, guide, or even communicate with civil society organizations. During Giorgos Papandreou's leadership, PASOK was eager to appeal to NGOs, thus highlighting NGO politics as the backbone of its linkage strategies (Eleftheriou and Tassis 2013). The disintegration of its organization over the years severed its entire long-established links to civil society. This created, in the case of PASOK-KINAL, a new party with a one-way electoralist orientation. PASOK's historic *parataxi*, PASKE (Table 8.3), still enjoys majority at GSEE's general council; however, this is not something attributed in any way to PASOK-KINAL's intervention or political assistance. Its shrunken electorate, confined to pensioners, farmers, and public servants, narrowed the social space in which the party could employ its linkage strategies.

State Subsidies and the Cartelization of Greek Party Organizations

The significance of state subsidies in the development of the Greek party system is one of the most evident features of the symbiotic relationship between the Greek political parties and the state (Vernardakis 2012; Rori 2015). Party funding comes from the following sources: state subsidies, parliamentarians' and members' contributions and donations, bank loans, and the utilization of party-owned real estate. State subsidies are divided into three types: the annual state subsidy; electoral subsidies in election years; and regular subsidies for research and education (directed to party research foundations and institutes) (Vernardakis 2012: 14). From 1997 to 2007, 75–80% of the total party funding came from state subsidies (PASOK, ND, and SYN/SYRIZA), while only 5.4% for PASOK and nothing for the other two parties came from members' contributions and donations (Vernardakis 2012: 15). In 2019, according to party financial reports, ND received 85% if its income from state subsidies, and 9.7% from members of parliament (MPs) and members' contributions, SYRIZA received 85% and 14%, respectively, and KINAL received 84% and 5%, respectively (see Table 8.2).

Therefore, the reliance of parties on state subsidies remains strong, although the total sum of available state funds is decreasing on a yearly basis (Rori 2015: 190–193). In 1996, the annual state subsidy amounted to 1.2‰ of total government budget; in 2002, it fell to 1.02‰ and 0.5‰ during the crisis in 2014. From 1997 to 2014, the Greek state has spent nearly one billion euro on party funding, from which PASOK collected 361 million euro, ND 354 million, and SYN/SYRIZA 67 million. In the crisis period, available state funding reduced by 43% and was distributed to a larger number of parties with parliamentary representation, especially after 2012. Thus, there was less funding for larger parties, pushing them to reform their spending to adapt to the new conditions.

Nevertheless, the 'elephant in the room' is the parties' debt to the banks, which reached almost 500 million euro for both for PASOK and ND (Table 8.2). Prior to the crisis, the relevant parties were receiving bank loans by using present and future state subsidies as collateral. The high costs of party competition from the early 1990s to 2009 skyrocketed party loans and, consequently, party debt. In this situation, mainly mainstream parties were then hit by the drastic reduction of state subsidies.

How has all this affected Greek party organizations? The cartelization thesis addresses the increased reliance of parties on state subsidies as a sign of

their dependence on state resources and disengagement from society (Katz and Mair 1995, 2009). The Greek case corroborates the thesis since members' contributions and donations constitute a very small piece of Greek parties' total budget. Until 2009, the increased reliance on state-related economic interests pushed mainstream parties to converge especially on issues of economic policies and to try to undermine or block the advance of new challenger parties. The latter emerged as new political actors during the crisis period as a response to the pre-crisis party system shortcomings; however, SYRIZA's U-turn after 2015 favoured the reconvergence of relevant parties inside a renewed cartel. In intra-party politics, this type of party funding caused the ascendancy of the party in public office as the specific face that managed and distributed state-originated funds, while the minute economic contribution of party members marginalized the party on the ground. Finally, resorting to bank loans on inconspicuous terms and the general lack of transparency concerning party funding enhanced the anti-party sentiment in Greek public opinion, with the parties being treated as 'puppets' of powerful economic interests. This was something that favoured the rise of challenger parties. The significant reform of party finances that happened during the crisis did not decrease parties' reliance on state funding; rather, it merely decreased their income. Meanwhile, the burden of debt remained for ND and PASOK-KINAL. This, especially, still questions the credibility of the party system in the Greek public mind.

Intra-party Politics in the Greek Party System

Political parties, as we know, are not unitary actors (Sartori 2005 [1976]); they comprise intra-party groups that reflect either different ideological approaches or competing personalistic networks. The Greek case is no exception. Nevertheless, the culture of the mass-type organization imposes the logic of internal homogeneity for all parties, thus suppressing overt factional activity (Eleftheriou and Tassis 2013). Every Greek party, except the Eurocommunists and SYN, presented itself as comprising non-organized internal groupings. The post-1974 rapid institutionalization of the party system and the hybrid character of the relevant parties, especially the governmental ones, created favourable conditions for internal fragmentation. The polarization of the 1980s forced the main parties to conceal their internal diversity; after 1990, the salience of intra-party conflict in party competition revealed the reality of PASOK and ND as multi-tendency actors. The only party

that sanctioned the existence and free activity of factions was SYN, which conducted its decision-making process, at least until mid-2000s, through compromises between existing factions (Eleftheriou 2009).

ND does not allow formal factional competition, though three distinct tendencies have characterized its intra-party politics from its earliest years (Kalyvas 1998; Alexakis 2020). The first tendency, 'karamanlist', stems from the tradition of the party founder, Konstantinos Karamanlis, who emphasized conservatism, moderate statism, and paternalistic social protection. The second, 'popular rightist', appeals to the popular strata of ND's electoral base and stresses cultural conservatism, anti-communist and anti-PASOK sentiments, and right-wing populist demands. The third, 'liberal', is the proponent of an unbounded free-market economy with salient anti-statist views. Each tendency, being non-organized and consisting of prominent cadres, MPs, and their respective clienteles, used to intervene in intra-party politics mostly after electoral defeats; their aim was to influence the leadership selection by forming temporary alliances with another tendency or parts of it. The karamanlist faction, apart from the founder (1974–1980), was also represented by the latter's nephew, Kostas Karamanlis (1997–2009); the popular-rightists were represented by three leaders—Evangelos Averoff (1981–1984), Miltiadis Evert (1993–1997), and Antonis Samaras (2009–2015); and the liberals by the Mitsotakis father-and-son duo, Konstantinos and Kyriakos (1984–1993, 2016–present, respectively). Today, Kyriakos Mitsotakis is generally considered as a leader who managed to, on the one hand, reconcile all tendencies under his leadership and, on the other hand, draw support from other parties' supporters, especially the 'modernizers' of PASOK.

SYRIZA and its predecessor SYN were the only parties that tolerated the organized functioning of factions in their internal politics (Eleftheriou 2009). From 1993 to 2005, SYN experienced divergences between leftist and moderate factions, interrupted by a 'centrist' faction close to the party leader. After 2005, leftists and moderates competed in a polarized way; this led, in 2010, to the departure of the moderates, who formed Democratic Left (DIMAR). The remaining leftists from 2010 onwards divided on the question of the eurozone in the context of the debt crisis. The majority faction led by Tsipras rejected any Grexit-type strategy, while the minority faction supported the potential of a 'Plan B' strategy, the exit of Greece from the euro currency, and the return to a national currency. After July 2015 and the acceptance by the majority faction of the third bailout programme, the minority departed from the party to form Popular Unity (LAE). Since then, intra-party conflict in SYRIZA is about the level of moderation that the party is ready to embrace. Today, the free activity of factions refers to the existence of organized factions

with their own procedures; disclosure of distinct position papers during party procedures; competition for the control of party bodies and MPs' candidacies; and access to party bureaucracy resources. While party statutes regard factions as 'ideological currents', this kind of intra-party competition is fully tolerated (Eleftheriou 2023). Tsipras' proposal for a direct leadership election polarized SYRIZA's intra-party politics between two factions: the 'presidentialists', in favour of Tsipras' proposal and centripetal strategy, and the 'umbrella', comprising various leftist currents which criticize Tsipras' proposal and overall strategy. Between them was the centrist faction 'six plus six' that supported eventually Tsipras' proposal. After the departure of Tsipras in July 2023 and the election of Kasselakis in September 2023, the most of the former 'presidentialists' re-grouped around the new leader. The centrists and 'umbrella' left SYRIZA afterwards to form the New Left party.

PASOK-KINAL is a highly fractionalized party due to its coalitional origin. PASOK, which is the strongest component of PASOK-KINAL, was characterized by an enduring conflict between the 'modernizers', who favoured a Third Way-style social democracy, and the 'presidentialists', who appealed to the radical project of 1980s' PASOK. This conflict was relevant from the early 1990s to the mid-2000s. After the selection of Giorgos Papandreou in 2004 as party leader, PASOK took the form of a 'confederation' of various intra-party networks that were trying to ensure a certain space in intra-party politics and party bureaucracy (Eleftheriou and Tassis 2013). After 2010 and the implementation of the first bailout agreement by the PASOK government, party discipline became loose enough to have the party organization liquidated. Gradually, the demise of PASOK followed a status of intra-party politics marked by a total absence of internal ideological struggle. The remaining intra-party groups became personalistic networks that claimed the extremely scarce party resources. In this context, the late Fofi Gennimata's most obvious achievement was to regulate this competition by distributing resources to almost everyone, simultaneously securing an adequate share of votes to preserve the party's parliamentary presence (Eleftheriou and Tassis 2022). Gennimata's death dissolved this intra-party status, and the new leader, Nikos Androulakis, attempted to re-formulate a new equilibrium between the various intra-party groups and his own faction.

The Professionalization of Political Communication

The Greek party system has followed the trend towards professionalized political communication strategies, especially from the 1990s, when the

newly founded private TV stations began to dominate the public sphere (Papathanassopoulos 2007). In the case of ND and PASOK, this meant rising campaign budgets. This intensified, as shown above, the dependence of parties on state funding. The privileged use of TV-based communication tools enabled the parties to promote personalized campaigns and de-emphasize the role of party organizations, especially members, in campaigning. Moreover, the parties' heavy reliance on political marketing professionals for their communication created gaps between party leaderships and collective bodies. The content of the party appeals became less ideological and more adapted to the semiotics of TV imagery and language (Andreadis et al. 2011).

SYN, until the mid-2000s, held a middle ground concerning its communication strategies. On the one hand, it sought high representation in the TV-regulated public sphere. It presented a group of party cadres and MPs that were considered as moderates and acceptable to public opinion. On the other hand, it gave roles to party members due to the party's low funding and small membership. After the mid-2000s, SYN followed an activist-based grassroots approach in campaigning while preserving its mass media participation and expressing views that were considered as more radical. The internet was a latecomer in political communication; PASOK and SYN attempted to exploit digital means for their communication strategies, especially the former under Giorgos Papandreou's leadership.

During the 2010 economic crisis, the increased importance of social media and the emergence of street politics challenged the mainstream of political communication. This invigorated grassroots demonstrating and campaigning, at least for the parties of the radical left. SYRIZA's insistence on movement-type linkages allowed it to conduct decentralized electoral campaigns at the 2012 dual elections, dominated by Tsipras' image. Nevertheless, in 2014, when Tsipras stood as a candidate for the President of the European Commission, the party turned for the first time to an advertising company to enhance its public image and professionalize its strategy. Gradually, SYRIZA's shift from opposition to government altered the methods and content of its political communication to personalized appeals, reliance on advertising companies, and less ideological discourse (Koliastasis 2022). During its governmental spell, the prime minister's office monopolized the party's communication, sidelining the party's press office.

The ND and PASOK/KINAL communication strategies were also challenged during the crisis period. On the one hand, PASOK approached the 2012 elections with a highly personalized logic; however, in tandem with

its organizational decline, it experienced the well-known collapse of 2012. From 2015 onwards, the weakened KINAL tried to rehabilitate PASOK's public image with a new face in its leadership. Under Fofi Gennimata, KINAL produced extremely personalized appeals on a professional basis, given the low organizational penetration of the party in society. Androulakis' PASOK-KINAL seems to be less personalized, although the image of the leader is still the main reference of party communication.

On the other hand, ND's electoral survival in 2012 was a landmark that ensured that the party was still the conservative pillar of the Greek party system. Traditionally, ND was a highly personalized party that had professionalized its communication earlier than others. Therefore, after his selection as leader in 2016, Kyriakos Mitsotakis sought to re-modernize the party's communication appeals (Koliastasis 2022) by utilizing, at a high level, the available digital means and forging close links with private mass media. Mitsotakis' inner circle comprised, apart from politicians, marketing professionals who did not necessarily belong to the party but heavily influenced strategic decisions. Along with Giorgos Papandreou and PASOK in the past, Kyriakos Mitsotakis probably exemplfied the most Americanized version of political communication in recent Greek electoral history.

Concluding Remarks

In general, the Greek party system was relatively stable until the so-called electoral 'earthquake' of 2012 that demolished the electoral base of PASOK and ensured the electoral rise of SYRIZA (Voulgaris and Nicolacopoulos 2014). The system of 'two-partyism' reproduced itself through the confrontation of two mass socialist and conservative poles, and the parallel existence of radical left actors. This system started displaying signs of delegitimization from the mid-2000s, when the radical left and emerging far right challenged the two-party consensus. In this sense, the economic crisis and the deep political crisis that followed functioned as a catalyst for the collapse of the old party system.

The decline of PASOK was the landmark event of the period as it had been the 'hegemonic party' in Greek party competition (Eleftheriou and Tassis 2013). PASOK had a pivotal role in promoting organizational innovations and programmatic shifts, as well as influencing its main political adversary. Yet PASOK's decline is the embodiment of various developments

in the Greek party system. These developments included the cartelization of party organizations (which signalled the retreat of intra-party democracy), de-mobilization of party members, professionalization of political communication, and rupture of party–society links. The implementation of the first bailout programme left PASOK on the margins of party competition, being resilient only in a small niche of the electorate (Eleftheriou and Tassis 2013; Sotiropoulos 2014). PASOK was made the ultimate 'scapegoat' for the country's tragedy; therefore, its demise was conceived as 'catharsis' for Greek society. In other words, a devastating economic crisis during which the country lost 30% of its gross domestic product was needed for the hegemonic party to stop being resilient.

On its part, ND, being a party with deep roots in certain conservative segments of Greek society, displayed its longstanding experience in systemic politics. It eventually represented the pro-bailout strata in Greek society, utilized its expertise in managing the state and its historic pro-EU stance, and stood decisively against the Golden Dawn phenomenon and contributed to the latter's demise. In most of the democratic period, ND simply followed PASOK's lead; as a result, it did not receive as much negativity as PASOK did. Furthermore, it did not have to face a strong right-wing challenger, except from the rather weak ANEL (the Golden Dawn was an extreme-right case). In the 2019 elections, ND managed to cast itself as a political force of 'normality', that is, the guarantor of the post-crisis normalization, something that was repeated at 2023 dual elections.

SYRIZA emerged as the main challenger party by receiving the bulk of the de-aligned PASOK voters. Its rise was the by-product of the crisis and the 'Indignants' square demonstrations: it managed to articulate a diffuse anti-bailout sentiment and claimed the power to implement a programme of this kind. However, in 2015, the defeat of its strategy forced SYRIZA to moderate its position and accept the bailout logic. Seemingly anti-system, SYRIZA contributed substantially to the stabilization of the political and party system during and after the political crisis. For instance, it incorporated the anti-austerity protest dynamics and moderated its extremist tendencies. SYRIZA is not a new party, as it stems from a democratic-socialist predecessor in the 1990s and the moderate Eurocommunists of the 1970s and 1980s. In this sense, by being an established but small party, it managed to function as a democratic alternative for exiting the political crisis against the calamitous threat of the anti-democratic Golden Dawn. Moreover, due to the failures of consecutive governments to implement the bailout programmes, the SYRIZA government was the only one remaining to conclude successfully a

bailout programme; this was mostly because it emerged from the anti-bailout camp that could legitimize the necessity of the bailout programmes and finally conclude the last of them. This was something that cost SYRIZA credibility and, more importantly, the capacity to present itself as an alternative to systemic politics.

The 2019 elections, as the first post-crisis poll, seemed to provide a repetition of the old two-party system: a conservative pillar versus a radical left pillar, with the parallel presence of a centre-left minor party. However, the 2023 elections confirmed the dominance of the conservative party with over 40% of the vote and marked the decline of the centre-left, with the combined electoral influence of SYRIZA and PASOK-KINAL falling below 30%. There are two different elements in the new party system. First, the post-crisis politics are still extremely unstable: volatility is still high, and a new crisis may erupt. In this sense, the two-partyism of 2019 was in the making as it is the dominant-party system of 2023, although ND seems to have institutionalized its dominant position. Second, competition between mainstream parties is still largely based on negative identifications: most people vote on an anti-right or anti-SYRIZA basis. This makes the new party system vulnerable to anti-mainstream challenges.

Concerning the state of party democracy, all three parties share the same signs of decline. The parties are highly presidentialized, with leaders that function beyond any accountability to party members or collective bodies. Direct forms of accountability are dysfunctional mainly because there is no permanent plebiscitary accountability (e.g. through intra-party referenda) but only appeals from party elites to the constantly changing selectorates through leadership contests. Intra-party democracy is declining as critical decision making is undertaken in the leaders' inner circles, while all relevant collective procedures are reduced to symbolic partisan 'festivities' or totally ignored. The utilization of digital tools has furthered the ascendancy of party leaders, who have monopolized party communication and produced non-ideological and inclusive personalized appeals. The context of the bailout programmes restricted the space and content for policymaking and led to programmatic convergence. However, in the economic context of the post-bailout period, external pressures also impose necessary programmatic adaptation to any party aspiring to rise to power. Finally, party–society relations are still characterized by suspicion from society over the honesty of parties and their capacity to respond to citizens' problems.

Thus, it is not easy to predict the direction of party strategies in a post-crisis environment. There is still political space available for challenger parties and

issues that provoke populist responses. The inadequacy of Greek political parties to reform themselves, enhance party democracy, mend their broken links with society, and revitalize their public images can always allow the emergence of new anti-party parties that will threaten the norms of democratic party competition. Moreover, the COVID-19 pandemic period again challenged the Greek party system, not only on questions of health and economic management but also on the capacity of parties to function under imposed multi-level restrictions. In this sense, party democracy, whenever a state of emergency is declared, is deemed as a political luxury vis-à-vis dire collective dangers. Therefore, the parties' tendencies toward practices of limited democratic justification find breeding ground in the subsequent crises to grow further. Nevertheless, for the recent Greek party system, instability and turbulence are commonplace, and the parties are accustomed to functioning within that context. While the parties may end up being less democratic, they will continue to exist. After all, the resilience of Greek parties is not just a domestically inherent feature of theirs but also a reminder that the age of political parties has not yet passed.

Notes

1. From 2017 to 2022 PASOK was the core party of KINAL (coalition with centre-left groupings). In 2022 KINAL was renamed PASOK-KINAL.
2. The chapter mainly covers developments in the Greek party system up to the summer of 2022. It does not address extensively the context of party competition after the two elections in 2023. Greek Solution managed to remain in parliament, while MERA25 did not. There are two new far right parties in the parliament – Spartans and Niki – and Course for Freedom a sovereigntist left party originating from SYRIZA.
3. Prior to its April 2022 party congress, SYRIZA claimed 61,600 members. At the May 2022 leadership selection, SYRIZA claimed the participation of 151,842 members. Given the abstention of almost one-third of pre-congress members at the leadership selection process, the party claimed the recruitment of 110,000 additional members who enrolled before the leadership selection day. 148,821 party members participated in the September 2023 leadership selection, of which 40,000 were new members registered on the day of the first round of the selection process.

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9

Parties and the Party System in Turkey

From the System of 'Double Tutelage' to a 'Personalistic Hybrid Regime'

Toygar Sinan Baykan

The System of 'Double Tutelage' and a Deficient Democracy

Turkey made a transition towards democracy in the mid-20th century. Although Turkey has a long history of democratic contests and governments compared to many similar developing countries, its democratic system, surprisingly, has not been consolidated so far. What is even more surprising is that the country has experienced a marked backsliding of democracy in recent years. The development of the Turkish party system and the parties it contains has been one of the root causes of the problems of democracy in Turkey.

As a first step in explaining this puzzle, the specific historical development of the founding political party of modern Turkish Republic, the CHP (*Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi*—the Republican People's Party), should be elaborated because it was a blueprint for the development of other Turkish parties in the following decades. The CHP was the party of the coalition between the military–bureaucratic elites and Turkish notables (including merchants and landlords) that fought the National Independence War against the Greek invasion between 1919 and 1922 (Keyder 2003). Hence, there was no agrarian or working-class mass mobilization behind the CHP. In fact, the party's roots could be found in the assembly that gathered to run the National Independence War.

Initially, the CHP was a sort of 'vanguard organization' which was extremely hesitant about mass mobilization (Plaggenborg 2015). The CHP created an authoritarian single-party regime, mainly relying on the prestige of its founder, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, stemming from the victory in the

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National Independence War. But the CHP's authoritarian vanguardism was also uniquely blended with a skilful pragmatism which made the central CHP elite establish and sustain coalitions across provincial Turkey with segments of powerful local elites (Meeker 2001). Thus, the first prominent party of the Turkish Republic was the creation of military and bureaucratic elites and, to a lesser extent, social and economic elites who were obedient to the political vision of this petty bourgeois leadership. Hence, the CHP, as a founding pillar of Turkish democracy in the mid-20th century, was the party of an elite coalition that was born in the parliament. This was largely understandable, since the rural population of Turkey in the 1920s was deeply segmented, poor, and uneducated, and a degree of industrial development—and therefore a sizeable working class—was almost non-existent.

After the Second World War, as a result of the combination of various internal and external factors, Turkey made a transition to multi-party politics with the foundation of the DP (*Demokrat Parti*—The Democrat Party) (Özbudun 2011). The transition was mainly the outcome of an internal rift within the CHP elite. The founders of the new DP were prominent figures from the CHP, and the transition to the multi-party regime was made in the parliament (*Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi*—The Grand National Assembly of Turkey) by the foundation of a new party by politicians from the establishment. There was no major social pressure or public mobilization at all preceding this episode in Turkey's political history. Hence, the DP was an elite-based party mostly relying on provincial elites left behind by the CHP's elite coalition, and it formed the first two-party system of Turkey together with the CHP in the 1950s. Thus, the party system in Turkey (and the parties forming it) emerged within the parliament, and this pattern largely reproduced itself in the following decades. In fact, the Turkish party system appeared as a contest between rival patronage networks (Akarlı and Ben-Dor 1975), and it would be futile to define insulated social sectors behind parties such as peasants, working classes, or denominational or ethnic groups, at least until the rise of the Islamist and pro-Kurdish parties in the mid-1990s.

In the 1950s, a majoritarian electoral system was one of the factors that sustained the DP's predominance, and this generated a marked frustration in the opposition. For example, in the 1954 general elections, the DP got 92.8% of all seats in the parliament with 57.6% of all votes (Turan 2016: 114). The DP rule became increasingly authoritarian in the second half of the 1950s. The first two-party system came to an end with a military coup, staged mostly by lower-ranked officers of the Turkish Armed Forces, in 1960. After a short interim process, Turkey returned to multi-party politics with a new, more liberal constitution and a proportional electoral system. This proportional

system remains intact to the present day, with various important modifications. The result of this proportional system, combined with a more liberal constitutional framework and rapid industrialization and urbanization, was the rise of a remarkably more fragmented and unstable party system in the 1960s and 1970s. More problematically, the rising political polarization from the mid-1970s onwards escalated into a civil-war-like left–right conflict in Turkey.

These developments culminated in another military coup in 1980 which, this time, was led by top military commanders and resulted in unprecedented bloodshed and oppression. While the proportional system was protected by the military junta, there were two new important measures that shaped the party system in the 1980s and 1990s. The military junta, as a part of a legal engineering process aiming at curbing polarization and fragmentation in the political system (which was evident in the 1970s), decided to erect a 10% electoral threshold (Özbudun 2013: 73). The other legal measure to achieve a more stable party system was the restrictive party law that was promulgated in 1983. Combined with the 10% electoral threshold, as Kabasakal notes, this party law imposed a very similar organizational structure to all Turkish parties by forbidding branches below the district (*ilçe*) level, in workplaces, and so on. It hindered a healthy relationship between parties and society (2016: 234).[1]

For a short period of time, this restrictive framework worked in the way the military junta had wished, and the Turkish party system seemed to be stabilized around 2.5 parties, with a single-party majority government (Özbudun 2013: 73). But the 1990s reproduced the fragmentation that the Turkish party system had witnessed in the 1970s. Throughout the 1990s, there were five parties in the parliament with an almost even number of seats. Most notably, the rise of a new type of party (the Islamist RP—*Refah Partisi*—the Welfare Party, the predecessor of the AKP) akin to a classical mass party model[2] by ideologically appealing to devout Sunni Muslims, was a major development in the 1990s. A backlash against this party by the secular establishment in the form of an indirect military intervention toppled the Islamist-led coalition government in 1997. Turkey had been governed by several unstable coalition governments throughout the 1990s, and the general legitimacy of the system hit rock bottom at the beginning of the 2000s due to mismanagement (which became all too evident after the inability of the government to handle the consequences of a devastating earthquake) and the economic crisis in 2001. In the general election in 2002, a moderate splinter group from the Islamist political tradition, the AKP (*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi*—the Justice and Development Party) of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, won 34% of the vote. But

due to the 10% electoral threshold, the party won 363 seats out of 550 seats in the parliament. Around 45% of all votes cast in this election were wasted. These wasted votes mostly belonged to the ruling parties of the 1990s and—combined with their failure in government throughout that period—their failure in this critical election suddenly pushed these centre-right and centre-left parties out of parliament, and incrementally out of the political system in the 2000s.

There are two major points that needed to be asserted for the period until the rise of the AKP. One of them is that the party system in Turkey during the second half of the 20th century was frequently interrupted by interventions of powerful institutional veto players, most notably the Turkish military. Hence, the Turkish political regime had never been a liberal democracy in this period and developed under the tutelary impact of a Kemalist institutional order that reduced the Turkish political system to a deficient 'electoral democracy' (Özbudun 2011). The other leg of this 'double tutelage' was rooted in political parties and how they were organized as elite-based patronage structures with no meaningful input into decision-making processes from societal groups. This was largely a consequence of the development of Turkey's political parties inside the parliament due to an underdeveloped agrarian economy and the strategic decisions of military–bureaucratic elites to curb the penetration of party competition into local societal groups.

However, despite the seeming conflict between military–bureaucratic and political elites at certain periods in the history of Turkish competitive party politics, keeping popular participation and mobilization restricted and orderly remained one of the top priorities for these different elite sectors in Turkey. Hence, competition between parties (under firm elite control) and alternation in office were possible, but a healthy representative relationship between parties and society was missing. The participation in party decisions by members was highly restricted, and the military elite, albeit for short periods of time, took control of the political system when they deemed it necessary.[3]

As a result, the Turkish political system, despite the application of various electoral systems and the formation of various party systems throughout the second half of the 20th century, remained a deficient democracy with high levels of fragmentation, polarization, and volatility (Özbudun 2013). This system of 'double tutelage' (consisting of tutelary attitudes of military–bureaucratic as well as political elites) came to an end within a decade with the rise of Erdoğan's AKP. However, as is demonstrated in the following sections, this happened at the cost of further democratic backsliding.

The Rise of a 'Personalistic Hybrid Regime'

The system of 'double tutelage' in Turkey that was based, on the one hand, on frequent interventions from non-party actors (such as the army and the high judiciary) in party politics and, on the other hand, on authoritarian domination of powerful political elites/patrons (Akarlı and Ben-Dor 1975; Bektaş 1993; Ayan-Musil 2011) over poor, segmented, and subjugated social sectors gradually started to dissolve in the years preceding the rise of the AKP. In the 1980s and 1990s, urbanization and domestic migration gained momentum, and Turkey witnessed the rise of two identity-based mass party-like political entities; one of these entities was a series of parties including the Islamist RP (the predecessor of the AKP), and the other was a series of left-leaning pro-Kurdish parties including the HADEP (*Halkın Demokrasi Partisi*—The People's Democracy Party). The rise of those two parties in the 1990s was a remarkable change in the Turkish political system, which, at least for a few decades, started to deconstruct one of the legs of the 'double tutelage' in Turkey by establishing profoundly ideological linkages with their supporters (instead of mere patronage relations); to a remarkable extent, these parties transformed their sympathizers' worldviews. Both parties were targeted by the military–bureaucratic leg of the 'double tutelage', and the interactions of these parties with its institutional leg resulted in the incremental transformation of some of the elites of the Islamist RP into a moderate, conservative, democratic party at the beginning of the 2000s. While the AKP transformed into a catch-all-like party in the 2000s, it retained the mass party features (an ideologically motivated and active grassroots organization) inherited from its Islamist past for a remarkably long period of time. This provided the party with a notable advantage against its left- and right-wing rivals, which had looser links to social sectors (Baykan 2018).

From the beginning of the 2000s until 2015, partly thanks to Turkey's extremely high electoral threshold, the AKP was able to win more than two consecutive general elections and form single-party majority governments. Hence, by the beginning of the 2010s, there was a marked trend to define the AKP-led party system as a 'dominant party system' (Aslan-Akman 2012; Gümüşçü 2013; Özbudun 2013; Keyman 2014; Ayan-Musil 2015; Ete et al. 2015). The transformation of the Turkish party system during the AKP period can also be observed in the change of core party system indicators set out in Table 9.1. Starting with the 2002 general elections, the effective number of parliamentary parties as well as volatility in the Turkish party system decreased remarkably. The main parties in the parliament since the

Table 9.1 Core party system indicators in Turkey

	ENEP	ENPP	Volatility	Turnout (%)
1983	2.79	2.52		92.27
1987	4.02	2.05	38.50	93.28
1991	4.66	3.58	17.40	83.92
1995	5.90	4.40	21.90	85.20
1999	6.22	4.87	20.70	87.09
2002	5.01	1.85	42.60	79.14
2007	3.00	2.30	23.40	84.25
2011	2.44	2.35	11.00	83.16
2015	3.54	3.13	-	83.82
2015	2.84	2.45	-	85.23
2018	3.67	3.07	-	86.22

Note: ENEP—Effective Number of Electoral Parties; ENPP—Effective Number of Parliamentary Parties; Volatility as the total volatility; Turnout as share of all registered voters; '-'—missing data.

Source: Parliaments and Governments Database (Döring et al. 2022); Database on WHO Governs in Europe and Beyond, PSGO (Casal Bértoa 2022); Voter Turnout Database (IDEA 2022)

2007 general elections (namely the AKP, CHP, pro-Kurdish parties, and the MHP-*Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi*—Nationalist Action Party) were, more or less, able to protect their vote and seat shares in the 2015 and 2018 general elections, with the exception of the rise of a splinter party from the MHP, Meral Akşener's *İyi Parti*—The Good Party, in the 2018 elections. Thus, it is safe to argue that the volatility in the Turkish party system remained limited throughout the AKP years.

Nevertheless, the process of AKP's rise into a predominant party within the system by getting around twice the number of votes received by the main opposition for more than two consecutive elections, and the seeming party system stability this predominance has provided so far in terms of core party system indicators, has been accompanied by a process of autocratization. While this process was not clearly discernible before 2015, as Sözen (2020) states, there were signs regarding this authoritarian tendency, such as the 'aggrandizement in the executive branch' well before this date. Yet the authoritarian characteristics of the AKP more clearly emerged after 2015. Thus, the case of Turkey demonstrates that improvements in the quantitative indicators of party system stability may not always accompany democratic stability (Yavuzyılmaz and Tsarouhas 2022). Not only the relationship between parties but also the complex relationships among parties, non-party institutional actors (such as the military), and patronage-oriented societal actors (such as

religious communities and powerful regional patronage networks/clusters) should be taken into account in the examination of the nexus between political parties and democracy in cases like Turkey.

One of the important points that should be asserted in this context is that by 2015, in collaboration with a Muslim religious cult (the GC—the Gülen Community) that had colonized important state institutions for decades since the 1980s, Erdoğan's AKP had crippled the military–bureaucratic leg of the 'double tutelage' in Turkey. They did this by promulgating laws diminishing the role of military elites (Gürsoy 2014), which was supported by the ongoing EU negotiations at the time, and with dubious legal cases carried out by Gülenist prosecutors against an alleged 'coup plan'.

The rift between the GC and the AKP should be further explored, for it has implications regarding the relationships between parties and non-party organizations in Turkey: while the symbiosis between these two groups benefited both of them until the beginning of the 2010s, the power struggle between them reached an irreversible point in 2012 when the GC started to use its cadres in state institutions (such as the police and judiciary) to corner the AKP government (Çakır 2014). Such non-party influences on party politics in Turkey become more intelligible when these religious communities are seen as powerful patronage networks and/or pressure groups with vested interests in the private sector and functioning as economic actors. The distinguishing feature of the GC was that, towards the end of the 2000s, it became colossal with a very well-organized and semi-clandestine elite core embracing an elitist Islamist authoritarian ideology and controlling key bureaucratic institutions. The GC was also based on a remarkably broad social backing consisting of people benefiting from patronage resources provided by the community. From a liberal democratic point of view, while both groups had tendencies towards authoritarianism, the GC's position was more questionable. Perhaps it was more culpable in undermining Turkish electoral democracy since it was a semi-clandestine organization that was not officially part of the party competition. More importantly, it was almost completely lacking any kind of (vertical or horizontal) accountability while engaged in a power struggle with the AKP.

After 2015, with a series of emblematic incidents and important changes in government institutions, it became clear that Turkey had moved into a 'personalistic hybrid regime' under the AKP's predominance. This regime was called 'authoritarian' (Arat and Pamuk, 2020), 'competitive authoritarian' (Özbudun 2015; Esen and Gümüşçü 2016; Castaldo 2018) or 'new authoritarian' (Somer 2016). But in all cases, the authors make it clear that the democratic dimension of Turkey's deficiently democratic system

progressively degraded from 2015 onwards. After a bloody putsch to topple the Erdoğan government in the summer of 2016 (mostly carried out by desperate Gülenists within the army), the AKP transformed the Turkish political system from parliamentarianism to presidentialism in 2017. They did this with a constitutional referendum which equipped the head of the executive (Erdoğan) with extensive rights and diminished the veto power of the parliament and the judiciary's capacity to check the executive (Gözler 2017). The parliament, since Turkey's transition to presidentialism, has become almost powerless; the rule of law has deteriorated considerably; and the progressive deinstitutionalization has rendered Erdoğan almost the sole decision maker in governmental affairs. Hence, the demise of Turkey's deficiently democratic system of 'double tutelage', despite the optimistic expectations at the beginning of the 2010s, ironically resulted in a more authoritarian system under the control of Erdoğan's AKP.

Both the AKP's transformation and strategies and the inadequacies of opposition parties to respond to the changing electoral environment paved the way for the consolidation of the civilian leg of the 'double tutelage' in Turkey with the rise of the AKP as a 'fragile'[4] hegemonic party with some marked 'sultanistic' tendencies (Linz 2017), despite the existence of fairly complex social and economic structures in a highly urbanized and remarkably industrialized country. The ability of a strongman to accumulate such extensive powers within such a complex socio-economic structure is certainly a puzzle in its own right, which can only partly be explained by the presence of a robust party organization (Baykan 2018).

The Ruling AKP and the Main Opposition CHP

The AKP

The AKP was founded under the leadership of Erdoğan in 2001 as a reformist splinter from the strictly Islamist National View tradition. While it was founded within the parliament with the participation of deputies from the Islamist Fazilet Partisi, the party was in fact partially based on an Islamic social movement. One of its main organizational characteristics, particularly throughout its first decade, was its successful blending of features of a classical mass party (local embeddedness, ideologically motivated mass following, strong grassroots organizations, year-round routine organizational activity) with modern political marketing techniques and a catch-all (Kirchheimer 1966) orientation that highlights the role of the party leadership. This hybrid

model provided the AKP with superior leverage compared with its rivals within the party system in the 2000s.

An important point that should be asserted here is that this hybrid model was very different from the organizational culture of pre-existing and effective right- and left-wing parties which heavily relied on amalgamations of various patronage networks across Turkey. In those parties, power was much more dispersed among a plethora of locally embedded elites, and despite the predominance of the top leadership role (the party chair), there were always powerful figures within these parties that could counterbalance the national leadership. Parties as amalgamations of these patronage networks (ranging in size and influence) formed the civilian leg of the 'double tutelage' in Turkey. The AKP, to start with, had the capacity to destroy this civilian leg too (alongside the military–bureaucratic leg) by institutionalizing a programmatic party with a clear political identity, akin to the Christian Democratic parties of Europe.[5] However, the AKP did not choose to do so and has increasingly become a nationwide personalistic and clientelistic electoral machine. But the hybrid model that the party initially embraced worked very well.

The party's membership quickly enlarged following its foundation, and official records state that the party currently has 11,241,230 members.[6] In 2018, the total AKP electorate was 20,981,842, and the total number of registered voters for Turkish general elections was 59,369,960.[7] Thus, the members/voters ratio for the AKP is a staggering 53.5%, and the party has managed to recruit more than 20% of the Turkish electorate as members. These extraordinary numbers and ratios certainly require closer examination given the trends in other parts of the world, particularly in Europe, towards a marked decline in membership numbers (Biezen et al. 2012). While a small segment (most probably around 10% of the entire membership body) of this large body of membership within the AKP could be considered active supporters, an overwhelming majority of these members could be considered sympathizers and, more recently, people who are seeking clientelistic benefits. Hence, even the extraordinary volume of the party's membership indicates the choices of the leadership throughout the party's evolution. While the AKP had a chance to construct a remarkably different party organization that completely took down the system of 'double tutelage' in Turkey, throughout the years it decided to corroborate the civilian leg of this sophisticated semi-authoritarian control system by deploying highly centralized and effective clientelistic linkages with society.[8]

This choice to drive the party from a programmatic and institutional route to a personalistic and clientelistic direction certainly had consequences for

intra-party democracy and leadership (Lancaster 2014; Baykan 2018). Such choices made Erdoğan the sole decision maker within the party regarding important matters such as candidate and provincial party chair selections (Baykan 2018: ch. 7). This control of Erdoğan over the party was complemented by highly developed intra-party communication based on new information technologies (Baykan 2018: ch. 6, Boyraz 2018) and an almost total control over the mainstream media in Turkey (Yesil 2016; Yıldırım et al. 2020). Now, numerous newspapers and TV channels, including the official Turkish Radio and Television, are under the firm control of the AKP, which skilfully uses these instruments to shape public opinion. Some of these news channels, such as Ahaber, embrace popular styles and have enormous influence on less educated groups within the electorate. Meanwhile, the AKP's use of social media has been problematic in two respects. Until the Gezi protests (a weeks-long wave of demonstrations against the AKP government in the summer of 2013 which started as an environmentalist reaction in İstanbul's Gezi Park), the AKP had problems deploying social media to reach out to younger voter groups. But after the Gezi protests, the party attached great importance to social media, even to the extent that various international organizations accused the AKP of hiring trolls to dominate Twitter.[9] Nevertheless, the party's leadership, and most notably Erdoğan, still see the organization on the ground as the main channel of communication between the party and the electorate.[10] Furthermore, the party's increasing reliance on centrally controlled clientelistic strategies requires a relatively strong organizational mediation between the party elite and the electorate. Hence, the party's linkages with society (and particularly with lower socio-economic groups, which comprise a considerable part of the party's constituencies) transformed mainly into a clientelistic bond, as revealed by a series of works on the AKP's clientelistic practices (Arıkan-Akdağ 2014; Çarkoğlu and Aytaç 2015; Çeviker-Gürakar 2016; Çınar 2016, 2019; Ark-Yıldırım 2017; Arslantaş and Arslantaş 2020; Yıldırım 2020). The party's programmatic and ideological appeal increasingly became blurred.

Currently, it is hard to define the AKP as an Islamist, conservative, or nationalist party in any precise doctrinaire senses of these terms. The AKP is now, first and foremost, a right-wing personalistic and clientelistic electoral machine under the command of Erdoğan, akin to some populist parties in Latin America. As well as clientelistic linkages with dispersed low-income social sectors, the party has close unofficial ties with various NGOs, including some religious communities (Göçmen 2014; Lord 2018). However, in their relationship to the party, such groups have no meaningful autonomy, and the upper hand belongs to the party.

According to the party's official records,[11] in 2019 approximately 335 million Turkish Liras (equivalent to 33,216,400 euro at the time of writing in 2021) of the AKP's total income of approximately 383 million Liras (37,975,800 euro), stemmed mainly from state subsidies. The rest came primarily from income stemming from the party's property (46 million Turkish Liras, equal to 4,561,060 euro). The contribution of dues and donations to the party revenues are negligible. Thus, almost the entire income of the party comes from sources other than its members. In this sense, the AKP really approximates to the 'cartel party model' proposed by Katz and Mair (1995). Nevertheless, its clientelistic linkages with its supporters and its control over the state are well beyond the scope of a cartel party in a 'consolidated democracy'. The AKP's clientelistic practices and its authoritarian control over state institutions, in fact, provide the party with vast resources for clientelistic exchange, presumably well beyond the amount cited in official party records. The crony relations between the AKP and a segment of businesspeople across Turkey is the key to the clientelistic practices of the party that include aid in cash and kind to poor constituencies as well as employment in the enterprises of those businesspeople who support the party (Esen and Gümüşçü 2018). The outcome of such strict and authoritarian control over state resources, combined with an already centralized and disciplined organizational culture, indicates a high degree of party cohesion and highly disciplined legislative behaviour by AKP deputies throughout the party's incumbency.[12] It is very costly for deputies to diverge from party decisions in the AKP in such an authoritarian context. However, this discipline could not inhibit the splitting of two senior elite members of the AKP (the former Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu and the former Minister for the Economy Ali Babacan) and the establishment of two new parties by these actors in 2019 and 2020.

The CHP

The CHP is the founding party of the modern Turkish Republic; as such, its position within the Turkish party system has always been profoundly defined by the party's historical legacy. The party was incorporated into the state institutions throughout the decades after the foundation of the Republic in 1923. However, with the transition to multi-party politics, except for a couple of short periods in office, the CHP remained in opposition throughout the following 75-year period of tumultuous democratic experience. As a consequence of its origins as the party of 'secular nation builders', the CHP always struggled to directly appeal to broad, mostly conservative

lower-class constituencies in Turkey. Instead, it either appealed to better-off secular segments of Turkish society or to provincial and rural constituencies through various negotiations with provincial power holders. Hence, the CHP, like most of the other parties of the Turkish party system since the 1950s, remained a kind of elite-based entity. It was based partially on large patronage networks, on the one hand, and cadres embedded in the state apparatuses, on the other (at least until the rise of the AKP in the 2000s). With this characteristic of the party coupled with the absence of national office (and the patronage resources this could have provided), the intra-party politics of the CHP has always remained publicly and visibly contentious. For example, the party's mayors, who are in control of some important economic resources, always had a decisive influence on the intra-party decisions of the CHP (Kocaaga 2019), and their defiant positions vis-à-vis the local and national party centres usually further corroborated the contentious politics within the party (Savaşkan 2020). Hence, the CHP always had a contested leadership, but it is hard to claim that these challenges to the leaders were the reflection of a democratic intra-party life. Many general conventions of the party in the recent past resulted in the re-election of the current chair of the party, Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu. On the contrary, even when the party embraced primaries for selecting its candidates in localities, the results remained similar to the previous, less participatory candidate-selection processes. A plethora of established local bosses have always dominated the party's seats in the parliament (Kocaaga 2019). This certainly has implications for party cohesion and discipline, as well as intra-party communications. It is common to come across incidents in which party members (deputies and provincial and sub-provincial chairs) publicly criticize the party's leadership.[13]

The intra-party communications in the party, as Turan (2006) highlights, has always been erratic, and the CHP has not yet been able to resolve the ongoing issues regarding communicating the party's message to the electorate.[14] The party's communication with the electorate mainly relies on its organizations, but their use as communication channels is far from perfect because of contentious intra-party politics within the CHP. Due to the AKP's control over the mainstream media, the CHP has found itself in increasing difficulty with regard to appealing to broad and heterogeneous masses using conventional media such as newspapers and TV channels. However, the party also supports channels like Halk TV, which it uses to appeal to broad segments of the electorate, albeit with less success compared to the AKP. Furthermore, some media outlets, such as *Sözcü* and *Cumhuriyet*, partially support the party. When it comes to the use of social media, the CHP's

performance is far from impressive, but it certainly harnesses the anti-AKP mood on platforms like X, formerly Twitter.

According to official records, the CHP currently has 1,369,430 members.[15] In the 2018 general elections the party received 11,275,577 of 59,367,469 total votes.[16] Hence, the members/voters ratio for the CHP is 12%, and the party could only recruit 2% of the electorate as its members. However, just like the membership structure of the AKP, an overwhelming majority of these members are no more than party sympathizers, and the active core of this large body of membership is much smaller in the CHP. Nevertheless, one should point out the dramatic rise of membership numbers in both the AKP and the CHP since 2010 compared with the figures in previous studies (Tosun and Tosun 2010: 52). Such a rapid increase in membership numbers could well be explained by the extraordinary rise of polarization in Turkey (Somer 2019). However, there is also compelling evidence to think that such a dramatic rise in membership numbers, staggeringly contradicting with the trends in Western democracies, had something to do with the renewal of the importance of clientelistic linkages in Turkish politics, at least since 2010, under an 'electoral autocracy' (Laebens and Öztürk 2021). Although the CHP is not as successful as the AKP in constructing clientelistic linkages with its supporters as the party lacks the vast resources that the national office can provide, it has nonetheless never shied away from constructing clientelistic relations with its supporters where it had the chance to distribute municipal resources (Schüler 1999; Ayata 2010). It is evident that the party still engages in clientelistic relations with local constituencies (Joppien 2018; Kılıçdaroğlu 2019) as the logic of clientelism has started to increasingly define electoral competition in Turkey.

Another important point regarding the membership of the CHP is that it is considerably older than that of other parties (Tosun and Tosun 2010: 137). This was even the case in 2010 when the AKP's predominance was not very evident. Currently, due to the authoritarian and clientelistic nature of Turkey's personalistic hybrid regime, young people try to stay away from the CHP and other opposition parties lest they encounter partisan discrimination in applications for jobs in public bureaucracy. The CHP also has close, unofficial relations with a cluster of left-leaning, Atatürkist non-governmental organizations such as the ADD (*Atatürkçü Düşünce Derneği*—Atatürkist Thought Association) and trade unions such as the DİSK (*Devrimci İşçi Sendikaları Konfederasyonu*—Confederation of Revolutionary Worker Trade Unions).[17] Nevertheless, it would be misleading to think that the CHP enjoys a kind of superiority (akin to the one enjoyed by the AKP) in these relationships. The relationships between these actors

in civil society and the CHP are not stable at all, and such associations and trade unions are completely autonomous entities.

Having said all this, the CHP also had a non-clientelistic appeal to a broad and better-off constituency in Turkey as the representative of a certain type of secular middle-class lifestyle. While the party defines the principles of Atatürk as its raison d'être and embraces a social-democratic identity,[18] it is misleading to think that these principles constitute a well-defined ideology like socialism, liberalism, or Islamism. It is at best a broadly defined worldview appealing to secular segments of society. Hence, the party's ideology and programme should be seen from the perspective of lifestyle choices. The party's constituency in the developed Western parts of Turkey, for example, is deeply nationalist when it comes to the Kurdish issue. Such attitudes can hardly be seen as compatible with a modern social-democratic orientation.

In a 'CHP Party Assembly Activity Report', it is indicated that the total income of the party in 2018 was 276,962,959 Turkish Liras (equal to approximately 27 million euro at the time of writing in 2021).[19] Of this total income, 213,295,284 Liras (approximately 21 million euro) consists of state subsidies to the party. In other words, almost 77% of the total income of the CHP derives from state subsidies, while only 14% comes from donations. The percentage of the party's income stemming from dues is negligible. From a very narrow point of view focusing solely on party finances, the CHP could well be described as a cartel party, but it would be misleading to call it so given the authoritarian predominance of the AKP. Nevertheless, the AKP and the CHP should be seen as colliding in certain localities when it comes to some material benefits that local elites of both parties could enjoy (Joppien 2018: 144–145). However, this certainly requires a substantial re-interpretation of the cartel party thesis that could adapt it to the context of electoral autocracies and local politics.

Concluding Remarks

The prevalence of clientelistic linkages between parties and voters in Turkey has been one of the factors facilitating a deficient democracy which has struggled to consolidate since the 1950s. Turkey's elite-based parties have not been entirely successful in representative terms, and the elites controlling these parties usually opted for 'government stability' instead of 'fair representation' in their legislative decisions regarding the design of political institutions. In fact, this preference resulted in the consolidation of Turkey's elite tutelage rather than providing government stability. While the party system in Turkey

has undergone profound changes since the 1950s, the firm hold of political and military–bureaucratic elites over society remained intact despite the relative decline of the latter in recent decades under populist AKP rule. The decline of the military–bureaucratic leg of double tutelage ironically resulted in a further deterioration of democracy, and Turkey moved into a fragile, personalistic hybrid regime under a civilian government.

This outcome testifies to the fact that, at least in their personalistic, clientelistic and centralized shape (Sayarı 2014; Laebens 2020; Massicard 2021), Turkish parties have been part and parcel of the perennial problems of democracy in Turkey. It is not surprising to see that Turkey has experienced the most authoritarian episode of the multi-party era since the mid-20th century with the rise of the AKP's powerful single-party governments. Hence, as a civilian force, the AKP helped the authoritarian proclivities of civilian party politics in Turkey to fully unfold in the wake of the weakness of military–bureaucratic veto players. However, it is worth noting the merit of this elite tutelage, which has gained a markedly civilian character during the AKP rule. Despite their democratic deficiencies, patronage and clientelism-based hierarchical parties tightly controlled by elites, and a party system with its own peculiar authoritarian proclivities, have always rendered Turkish society surprisingly fused, integrated, and orderly even in the face of major genuine crises such as ethnic tensions, economic problems, terror, the influx of millions of refugees, or natural disasters. Hence, the system of 'double tutelage' in Turkey has provided a remarkable degree of security and social stability, albeit at the cost of democracy.

Although the state of Turkish democracy currently seems bleak,[20] there are signs that sustaining the AKP-led tutelage over society is becoming increasingly difficult.[21] In the absence of a military–bureaucratic system of control, the fragmentation (and pluralization) of the political system in Turkey that we have witnessed in recent years (especially outside the parliament) may well pave the way for a more democratic system after a prolonged period of democratic struggle among the political elites. Currently, another promising feature of the Turkish party system for the future of democracy is the high degree of coordination among opposition parties, making them capable of challenging the AKP's predominance (Selçuk and Hekimci 2020).

There are other positive structural features that offer hope for Turkey's future democratization. Despite all the limitations and inadequacies of parties and the changing party systems addressed so far, competitive party politics (including a considerable degree of territorial penetration by individual parties with strong organizations) have been substantially internalized by political and bureaucratic elites as well as broad social sectors. Here, an

unintended outcome of the AKP's prolonged and firm hold on power, relying on widespread clientelistic relations, should also be emphasized: a powerful, routinized organization that has penetrated the veins of Turkish society. The AKP today seems under the total control of Erdoğan, but it is by no means a 'personal party' (Calise 2005; McDonnell 2013) lacking a solid, routinized organization. Although the party's demise after Erdoğan is certainly a possibility, it should be noted that the AKP today is a 20-year-old, bureaucratic entity with its own life. Under a skilful new leader with a democratic orientation,[22] it may survive after Erdoğan. Under the circumstances of a more competitive party system with considerable checks and balances curbing clientelistic linkages and 'executive aggrandizement', as now being proposed by opposition parties as a 'consolidated parliamentary system'[23] before the elections in 2023, the AKP may well lean towards establishing more programmatic linkages with its electorate and may be more willing to accept genuine grassroots participation in party decisions.

In addition, while the AKP's move towards a more autocratic system was feasible, it has not been possible to suppress the organizational capacities of opposition parties below a certain level (which may render them electorally irrelevant), and the AKP has not been able to inhibit the emergence of new effective parties such as the liberal nationalist İYİ Parti (The Good Party) and smaller splits from within its own ranks. The AKP's move towards a more autocratic system is also clearly observed by the electorate and seen by most ordinary citizens as stifling the competitive system that Turkey used to have.[24] Nonetheless, it should be noted that democratization of the AKP—and the entire party system—requires the empowerment of non-partisan political institutions (i.e. checks and balances mechanisms) in the service of democratic consolidation more than stiff party competition. And building liberal democratic institutions certainly requires time and, more importantly, political agency in favour of democracy.

Notes

1. The impact of the law on political parties should be seen in combination with a previous regulation promulgated just after the military coup in 1960s which banned all the sub-district level official organizational activity of political parties in Turkey lest there be social polarization. From the introduction of this regulation onwards, 'linkages between parties and society gradually deteriorated' (Kabasakal 1991: 233).
2. Party typologies widely used for describing organizational characteristics of parties have recently been subject to compelling, empirically robust criticism. See the volume by Scarrow et al. (2017). Nevertheless, distinctions between cadre, mass, catch-all, and cartel

models still have value in guiding empirical research and presentation of findings in an accessible way.

3. For the role of military elites in Turkish politics, see Cizre (1999) and Karaosmanoğlu (2016).
4. From the perspective of the distinction between 'predominant' and 'hegemonic' parties proposed by Sartori (2005), it is currently hard to fit the AKP clearly into one of these categories. While the AKP enjoys privileges in the Turkish party system that a predominant party in a democratic system cannot benefit from, the AKP's position is not as safe as a consolidated 'hegemonic party' in an authoritarian system, such as the PRI analysed by Magaloni (2006) and Greene (2007) in Mexico or Putin's United Russia analysed by Reuter (2017). As the AKP faced some major electoral setbacks recently and has had to rely on a minor party to sustain its position, I propose to define it as a 'fragile' hegemonic party.
5. There were clear signs that the top leadership groups within the party had a strong proclivity for such an institutionalization process at the beginning. For example, Yalçın Akdoğan, one of the top elites of the party, wrote a short book on the notion of 'conservative democracy' which was expected to be the ideological framework of the party's institutionalization process. See Akdoğan (2004).
6. https://www.yargitaycb.gov.tr/icerik/1095 (Accessed 28 February 2023).
7. https://sonuc.ysk.gov.tr/sorgu (Accessed 28 February 2023).
8. We are focusing on these novel clientelistic strategies in a joint work (Baykan and Somer 2022).
9. https://www.bbc.com/turkce/haberler-dunya-56663072; https://www.birgun.net/haber/twitter-ak-trol-agini-ifsa-etti-akp-muhaliflere-karsi-cikmasi-icin-6-bin-kisi-calistiriyor-304294 (Both accessed 28 October 2021).
10. https://www.trthaber.com/haber/gundem/cumhurbaskani-erdogandan-teskilatlara-2023-talimati-570824.html (Accessed 28 October 2021).
11. https://www.akparti.org.tr/media/337783/01-01-2019-31-12-2019-genel-merkez-gelir-gider-cetveli.pdf (Accessed 12 May 2021).
12. A longitudinal analysis of the AKP's legislative discipline is unfortunately not available; however, divergent voting behaviour by the AKP deputies in the parliament is an extremely rare occurrence.
13. For the criticism of one of the top figures of the party towards the party headquarters, see https://www.cnnturk.com/turkiye/muharrem-inceden-parti-yonetimine-sert-elestiri (Accessed 14 May 2021). Many similar criticisms towards CHP HQ by national and provincial party elite can be found in the media.
14. See the news regarding an intraparty discussion marking 'communication problems' as one of the weaknesses of the party at https://www.cnnturk.com/video/turkiye/chp-kendini-analiz-etti-video (Accessed 14 May 2021).
15. https://www.yargitaycb.gov.tr/icerik/1110 (Accessed 28 February 2023).
16. https://sonuc.ysk.gov.tr/sorgu (Accessed 28 February 2023).
17. In the 1960s and 1970s, DİSK was a remarkably revolutionary organization founded mostly by workers in line with socialist ideals and a socialist programme (Algül 2015). Since the 1980s, however, trade union activity, and most notably the DİSK, has been under increasing pressure and subject to effective restrictions. I would like to thank Erhan Özşeker for providing me with a perspective regarding the transformation of DİSK.

18. See page 9 of the party's constitution for these principles: https://content.chp.org.tr/file/chp_tuzuk_10_03_2018.pdf (Accessed 14 May 2021).
19. See page 606 of the party's 'activity report' on the period between 2018 and 2020 for party income in 2018: https://chp.azureedge.net/56b9d40cdf3b478b8f24da9887a9c05e.pdf (Accessed 14 May 2021).
20. Turkey was defined as 'not free' by Freedom House in 2020. See https://freedomhouse.org/country/turkey/freedom-world/2021 (Accessed 16 May 2021).
21. Two important trends are worthy of indication here. One is that the AKP lost two major municipalities (İstanbul and Ankara metropolitan municipalities) to the opposition alliance among the CHP, İYİ Parti, and the HDP. The other trend is, as addressed in the main text, party splits from the AKP. For the socio-cultural and political basis of these splits, see Baykan (2021).
22. While Erdoğan always occupies the centre stage, the AKP, in fact, has brought up a generation of new political elites in the centre and in provinces containing some young and skilful figures. For a look at the party's central decision and administration board reveals this phenomenon, see https://www.akparti.org.tr/ak-kadro/merkez-karar-ve-yonetim-kurulu/ (Accessed 28 October 2021).
23. https://chp.org.tr/yayin/guclendirilmis-parlamenter-sistem-anayasa-degisikligi-onerisi/Open (Accessed 1 March 2023).
24. See page 92 of a report on democratic demand in Turkey by the KONDA research company: https://www.stgm.org.tr/sites/default/files/2020-09/denge-ve-denetleme-agindan-turkiyede-demokrasi-talebi-raporu.pdf (Accessed 28 October 2021).

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10
The Portuguese Party System

A Realignment?

Marina Costa Lobo

Introduction

Largely due to the huge economic and financial crisis that befell Europe from 2009 onwards, there have been important electoral and voting consequences (Bellucci et al. 2012). Across Europe, the last few years have been characterized by a greater fluidity in party systems (Hutter and Kriesi 2019), with the emergence of challengers to mainstream parties. In Southern Europe, and in general in the eurozone countries that were forced to implement difficult austerity measures, there was first the emergence of parties to the left of the socialist parties in countries where the far left had long since become residual (Hernández and Kriesi 2016). This was the case of Syriza in Greece and Podemos in Spain (Santana and Rama 2018). More recently, in Spain and Portugal the extreme right has also established itself, namely Vox in Spain and Chega in Portugal (Mendes and Dennison 2021). In Northern Europe, the fragmentation of the party system was already much more pronounced, as a result of the greater number of cleavages existing in the societies of the oldest EU member states in more permissive electoral systems but also due to realignments that occurred in the eighties, which led to the emergence of Green parties and far-right parties (Hutter and Kriesi 2019) at an earlier stage. In the case of Portugal, which had hitherto had a tendentially majoritarian party system but underwent a bailout in 2011, recent analyses have marked the small, incremental change which has occurred in the Portuguese party system since the eurozone crisis (Morlino and Raniolo 2017; Jalali 2018, Lisi et al. 2021).

Our argument is in line with these analyses, namely that the Portuguese party system has evolved with comparative stability in the last decade. The continuing strength of the two main parties in the system, as well

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as the Socialist Party's absolute majority in the 2022 election testifies to this. Yet this does not mean that the Portuguese party system has been completely impervious to change. Rather, the crisis accelerated a process of new parties entering the system. Long seen as an exception to the emergence of populist radical right parties, one such party, Chega ('Enough'), has consolidated to become the party with the third-highest vote share in 2022, getting 12 MPs elected, having entered parliament only in 2019. Besides Chega, three other parties have also entered parliament in recent times—the ecological PAN (Pessoas Animais Natureza, 'People Animals Nature') in 2015, as well as left-wing Livre (Free) and right-wing IL (Iniciativa Liberal, 'Liberal Initiative') in 2019. In 2022, IL managed to win eight MP seats, while PAN and Livre each had one MP elected. Thus, the party supply is increasing, even though overall fragmentation declined in 2022 due to the absolute majority obtained by the Socialist Party (PS). This was a relatively surprising result as it was only the second time in its history that the Socialist Party had achieved this. Moreover, the victory occurred in a difficult economic climate and during the slow ebbing of the COVID-19 pandemic, with the PS having governed in the previous six years as a minority government.

The chapter is developed in the following way. We introduce the Portuguese party system and its development throughout the period, including the results of the most recent snap elections of January 2022, as well as the transfer of votes which produced such a result. We begin with a brief characterization of the party system since its inception after the transition to democracy in 1974. Next, the way in which the party system consolidated around four parties which dominated the system from 1974 until today is explained. Portugal has indeed been a case of relative stability in comparison to Spain, Greece, or other EU countries in recent times. In the second section we introduce the main parties in the system, as well as some of the characteristics which have contributed to their endurance and the resilience of the party system. Next, we present the elections held in the post-bailout scenario, namely 2015, 2019, and 2022. These elections saw some incremental change to the party system, and so they deserve scrutiny. Given that 2015–2019 pointed to a greater polarization of the party system, we consider the change in ideological positioning of the parties using CHES (Chapel Hill Expert Surveys) data for this period. Focusing on 2022, we present the degree of vote-switching that contributed to the PS absolute majority. In the Conclusion, we consider the degree to which the recent 2022 election results undo the previous trends in party system change.

The Portuguese Transition to Democracy and the Portuguese Party System

Portugal initiated the third wave of democratization in 1974, after forty years of authoritarian regime. The 'rules of the game' which were agreed to in 1976 largely reflect the historical and political circumstances of that period, which was characterized by a strong presence of the military in the political life of the country, an ascendancy of the left, and a strong cleavage concerning the future nature of the political regime (Lobo et al. 2011). Following a turbulent period of transition to democracy and a revision of the constitution in 1982, democracy consolidated with a semi-presidential regime, where both the president and the parliament are directly elected.

In the first elections for the Constituent Assembly, held in 1975, four parties emerged that structured the Portuguese party system. With the exception of the Communist Party (PCP), founded in 1922, these parties were formed shortly before or after 25 April 1974.[1] The Socialist Party was founded in 1973, while the centre-right Partido Social Democrata (PSD) and the conservative CDS-Partido Popular (CDS-PP)—which lost all its MPs in 2022—were founded in mid-1974. Soon afterwards, a founding conflict emerged over the political nature of the regime that would separate the two biggest left-wing parties, which overrode the importance of the left–right cleavage in Portugal and separated the PCP from the other parties. This party was opposed to a liberal democracy along the lines of Western Europe, and this separated it from the Socialist Party that emerged as the most committed defender of this model with the consequent option for European convergence and membership of the then EEC, an objective to which the PCP was opposed from the outset. Electorally, the relative hegemony of the PS on the left was defined right from the first election. However, given its fundamental disagreement about the nature of the regime and about Portugal's pro-European vocation, the PS always refused any coalition with the PCP, appealing to a moderate electorate, and won decisively in 1975–1976 (Lobo et al. 2011).

This explains how, in the first decade of democracy, the coalitions and understandings of the PS were always carried out with the parties to its right (i.e. the PSD or the CDS-PP), since the gap that separated it from the Communists was greater than that between it and the other parties. It also explains why, despite the social cleavages in Portugal being deep, they were never strongly explanatory of voting (Jalali 2007). It must also be stated that the radicalization of the transition to democracy during 1974–1976 had forced the right-wing parties in Portugal to take positions more on the left, from

a programmatic point of view, for fear of being banned from competing in elections. These two effects together served to create an electorate relatively unpolarized around left–right issues. The way in which party system dynamics worked in the first decade had consequences for government formation and government stability: between 1976 and 1985 there were eight executives formed in 11 years. Electoral and parliamentary fragmentation, coupled with lack of polarization and Presidential interference in a difficult socio-economic context, help to explain the lack of stability.

It was in this status quo that a decisive election took place that changed this party dynamic born with 25 April—the 1985 election. In that election, a new party, the centre-left Partido Renovador Democrático (PRD), captured a remarkable 17.9% of the votes and divided the left into three roughly equal parts. In the following elections, held in 1987, the PRD lost the majority of its votes, falling to 4.9% of the electorate. Where did these voters go? Contrary to what could be expected, they did not return to the Socialists, which between 1985 and 1987 rose from 20.8% to 22.3% of the vote share. These voters transferred their vote to the centre-right PSD, thus contributing decisively to the absolute majority of that party. The partisan realignment that took place between 1985 and 1987 was accompanied by a fundamental shift in voting logic, with a refocusing of voters on the two centre parties (the PS and the PSD) and losses for the smaller parties, both on the right (the CDS-PP) and on the left (the PCP). On the right, CDS-PP voters showed for the first but not last time that they were willing to vote strategically to contribute to a right-wing government (Lobo et al. 2011). On the left, the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, as well as the deep-rooted Euroscepticism of the Communists at a time when an overwhelming consensus prevailed in Portugal in relation to the benefits of the EU (from 1986 onwards), served to diminish their electoral importance.

As democracy consolidated, the liberal political regime asserted itself, and Portugal's European vocation became a reality, the result was the emergence of a centrist electorate that was not ideologically differentiated and very sensitive to leaders of the main parties as well as to the economic performance of governments (Magone 2003; Lobo 2009). Thus emerged a majoritarian logic in Portugal, characterized by majority governments and democratic alternation of PSD and PS governments.

The governing parties have traditionally been relatively personalized. This historic trait is due to the late democratization of the country, which occurred in a period of mass communication. This trait was then reinforced due to changes in the mode of election of party leaders. In most parties, with the exception of the Communists, leaders are now directly selected by militants.

The introduction of direct election was a process initiated by the Socialists in 1998 that has been followed by most other parties (Lisi 2010). Moreover, it is quite clear that the two main party leaders have become more important explanatory factors of voting behaviour for their parties (Lobo and Silva 2018). The result is that when forming a government, party leaders have wide discretion to choose members of that government. The relatively high percentage of independents close to the Prime Minister included in the government are a symbol of the leaders' power vis-à-vis the party (Pinto and Almeida 2008). In addition, the electoral and party developments contributed to the strengthening of the position of the Prime Minister, which has emerged as the main political role in the democratic regime (Lobo 2009; Lobo and Ferreira da Silva 2018). Although parties do nonetheless remain important in Portugal, as can be seen by the relative resilience of the party system, they are leader centric.

It is also noteworthy to mention that this party system change occurred virtually without any changes to the electoral system. Portugal employs a D'Hondt PR system, with closed lists. The only change which the electoral system underwent was a decrease in the total number of MPs from 250 to 230 from the 1991 elections onwards. As is known, PR systems tend to favour parliamentary fragmentation, but the D'Hondt formula is the least proportional. Also, electoral districts tend to be of moderate to small size, with two large exceptions: Lisbon and Porto, which elect, respectively, 47 and 27 MPs.

Yet, the centrist majoritarian logic began to be threatened from 2009 onwards, albeit not dramatically, as can be seen from the electoral results. Figure 10.1 shows electoral fragmentation growing from that election onwards and also a decline in the vote for the two major parties, the PS and the PSD.

Figure 10.1 gives an account of this phenomenon. While the average effective number of parliamentary parties between 1987 and 2005 is 2.47, this value rises to 2.84 on average between 2009 and 2022. Yet, in the latest legislative elections, which took place in 2022, the fragmentation once again declined to 2.56. Considering the sum of the two centre parties' vote share, between 1987 and 2005 the average was 76%, while from 2009 to 2022 it dropped to 68%. This value is still inflated considering that in 2015 the votes of the CDS-PP were added in, taking into account that PSD and CDS-PP formed a pre-electoral coalition in that year.

Thus, party system fragmentation in Portugal has been contained and the two centrist parties are still dominant. Figure 10.2 shows the relative strength of the centre-right and the centre-left parties. In the last two decades, the PS

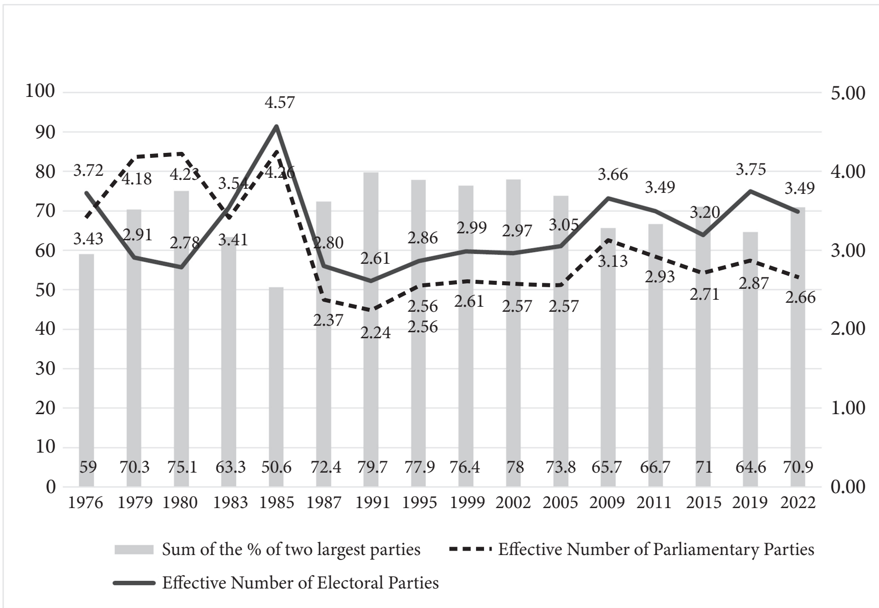

Figure 10.1 The effective number of parliamentary and electoral parties in Portugal, 1976–2022 and the sum of the two major parties, PS and PSD

Source: Döring et al. 2022 (ParlGov) and National Electoral Committee

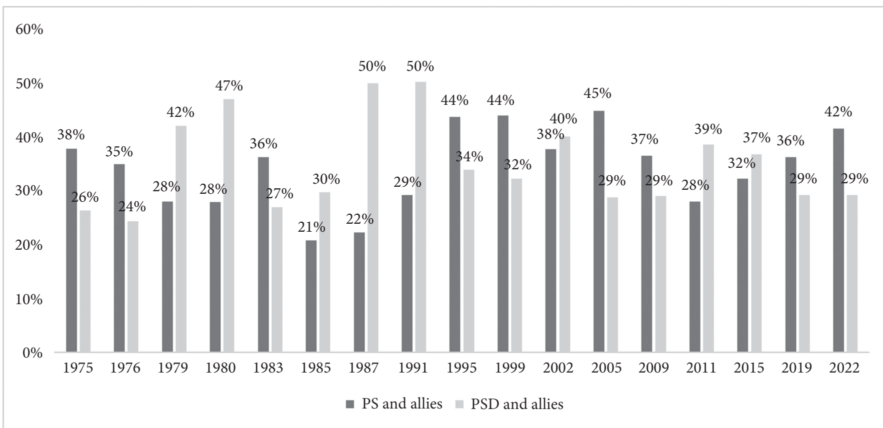

Figure 10.2 Comparing the votes for the two major Portuguese parties, PS and PSD, 1976–2022

Source: National Electoral Committee

has largely outvoted the PSD. As a result, the Socialists governed for 12 years between 2002 and 2022, while in the same period the PSD governed for only eight years. Following this long spell in opposition for the PSD, in the 2022

election two new parties made large gains, both on the right: Chega (7%) and IL (5%). They pose a threat to the PSD's dominance on the right in future elections.

What may explain such stability? Several hypotheses have been put forward to explain the relative lack of change in the Portuguese party system when compared to other Southern European countries. Morlino and Raniolo (2017) develop the idea that the stability of the Portuguese party system can only be understood in light of the high abstention levels which characterize it. More recently, Lisi et al. (2021) also test this idea that abstention levels contribute to support for larger parties, considering electoral districts' abstention levels and the vote for the larger parties in 2015 and 2019. Related to political attitudes, the lack of enthusiasm of Portuguese citizens for new parties may also be related to high levels of political cynicism. Research has shown that those with lower levels of trust in the political system tend to vote less often (Cancela and Vicente 2019). Still, with the growing number of parties, 2022 saw an increase in turnout in the national territory the first time since 2005.

Second, there are also institutional reasons which favour party system stability. Lago and Lobo (2014) show that there is a correlation between district magnitude and turnout which increases over time as a consequence of the psychological effect of the electoral system, and that there is furthermore a partisan turnout bias. This bias has favoured larger parties, and the PSD especially, which tend to perform better in smaller districts.

Third, as we will explain later in the chapter, existing parties have been able to set rules both for the constitution of parties as well as public finance, which has given them an advantage over new parties.

Fourth, the context of interpenetration between television and the main political parties, whose leaders tend to be a constant on public and private TV channels, may also contribute to the incremental change in the party system. Indeed, the entry into parliament of a substantial number of new parties coincided with the growing importance of social media for political messaging in Portugal. From 2015 onwards, four new parties have achieved representation in the Assembleia da República for the first time since 1999.

We will now turn now briefly to the description of the organization of the main parties which have dominated the system from 1976 onwards.

Party Organization

As explained above, the main Portuguese parties, with the exception of the Communist Party, were formed on the eve of or just following the transition

to democracy. Not only the Communists but also the Socialists and the right-wing parties adopted a proximate mass-based organization. This means they are parties which tried to maximize the number of members, where militancy is highly prized. During the transition to democracy, the Communists and the Socialists diverged on the issue of trade union membership, with the resulting creation of two trade union umbrella organizations, one umbilically linked to the Communists (the CGTP-IN) and the other closely aligned with the Socialists and the PSD (the UGT). These two umbrella organizations have been the major associations with links to the mainstream parties in Portugal. Despite their mass-based organization and their close links to mass organizations, parties can also be characterized as considerably centralized.

Indeed, following Michels' formula of the iron law of oligarchy for party organizations, there is a tendency for parties to adopt oligarchic traits, where the militants are dependent on the party leadership. Party leadership has been central in all Portuguese parties, as these parties were formed in the 1970s in the age of mass communication. Television is the prime way for parties to communicate with the electorate, which tends to strengthen leaders. In addition, the party statutes give a lot of power to the central institutions and to the party organization, rather than the party in office or the party on the ground. In the PS, Mario Soares was the leader and a central figure until 1985. In the PSD, the founding leader died prematurely in 1980 in a plane crash. Both the CDS-PP and the PCP also had dominant leaders who lasted more than a decade and shaped their parties.

From the outset, parties have legislated to their own benefit regarding state subsidies (Nassmacher 2006). Thus, this is a party system that was created with a relative abundance of state financing. Although militancy has been prized in accordance with the formal mass-based organization, the main parties have been careful not to depend on militants for their financial needs, instead legislating in favour of generous public subsidies (Table 10.1). A law passed in 2003 was particularly important in that respect. The younger parties, such as the Bloco de Esquerda (BE) or the PAN (People Animals Nature Party), which entered parliament for the first time in 2011, depend almost exclusively on state transfers. Not only are existing parties generous to whomever is able to obtain parliamentary representation, they have made party creation slightly more difficult, namely by raising the threshold of necessary signatures for the constitution of a political party to 7,500, a measure introduced in 2003. Thus, we can state that Katz and Mair's conception of the 'cartel party' is well suited to characterize the Portuguese party system until recently (Jalali et al. 2012). Yet there are signs that despite this cartelistic behaviour, fragmentation has been impossible to avoid. Since 2015, four

Table 10.1 Organizational characteristics of Portuguese parties

Party	M/E	Income through members (%)	Income through state funding (%)
Socialist Party	0.94	25.00	72.00
Social Democratic Party	0.00	15.00	83.00
Communist Party	0.56	78.00	14.00
Left Bloc	0.09	14.00	85.60
Mean	0.40	33.00	63.65

Note: Data were retrieved for 2017; the reported income share refers to the total party income; M/E was multiplied by 100 and presents the percentage share of the electorate; the value for the Social Democrats is 0.001.
Source: Political Party Database Round 2 V4 (Scarrow et al. 2022)

new parties have achieved representation in the Assembleia da República. Yet, given their small size, the increase in number of effective parliamentary parties has not been dramatic. We will now focus on the last three legislative elections to understand the degree of party system change that has occurred in the post-bailout scenario in Portugal.

While, as explained above, leaders have always been crucial for the functioning of parties in Portugal, there has been further personalization of party organization in the last decades. Namely, there has been the emergence of direct election of party leaders by members or even party sympathizers. This trend began in 1998 when the Socialist Party, followed by the centre-right PSD and the CDS-PP in 2006, switched from having leaders elected by their party congresses to having leaders elected by party members. This trend has been maintained by the large parties, but the CDS-PP suspended direct leader direct elections in 2011, returning to a congress-centric election. The Communist Party has also resisted this tendency, with the leader being selected from the party secretariat, while the Bloco de Esquerda, having resulted from the amalgam of different extreme-left parties and movements, has tended to have formally collegial leaderships, even if it has an official coordinator since 2016 who is not directly elected. On the right, both Iniciativa Liberal and Chega elect their leaders among the party members.

Thus, the Socialist Party led a trend which was followed by PSD, as well as CDS-PP, for a while. More recently, in 2014, the PS held open primaries to select its prime ministerial candidate, which saw António Costa beat António José Seguro. This type of election has not been held since, even though in 2018 the Socialists changed their statutes to allow for ‘sympathizers’ to vote for the party leader’s direct election, which occurred for the first time in the re-election of António Costa as leader in 2020.

The Post-bailout Elections: A Time of Party System Realignment?

2015 was marked by a recovery in the opinion polls of the government's right-wing PSD-CDS-PP coalition, Portugal Ahead, as economic indicators, in particular household consumption, were improving after the end of the troika-led adjustment programme implemented between 2011 and 2014. Meanwhile, the right-wing government's 'economic narrative' started to gain credibility throughout 2015. The more optimistic perspective for the future that the economic confidence indices confirmed still strongly contrasted with the social reality and the memory of recent times: the previous four years in Portugal had been characterized by huge increases in taxes, cuts in the salaries of civil servants, cuts in pensions, and even cuts in social benefits with consequent increases in unemployment.

It was in this context that, following the vote held on 4 October 2015, the government coalition, which brought together the PSD and the CDS-PP, won the elections (Table 10.1). Despite this victory, the coalition fell far short of an absolute majority, securing 107 out of a total of 230 elected deputies. The main opposition party, the PS, did not get more than 32% of the votes and 86 deputies. Further to the left, the Left Block won 10% of the electorate, placing it for the first time ahead of the Portuguese Communist Party, which obtained 9% of the valid votes. In addition, PAN managed to elect one deputy to the Assembly of the Republic (De Giorgi and Santana-Pereira 2016).

Faced with the parliamentary fragmentation resulting from these legislative elections in 2015, on election night Passos Coelho, PSD leader, was the winner and promised to start talks with the other parties, but without success. Given the uncertainty about the left's capacity to generate understandings, the President of the Republic nominated Passos Coelho to form a government. The president inaugurated the XIX executive, which a few days later saw its programme rejected in the Assembly of the Republic by all left-wing parties.

After several rounds of talks, it was announced that for the first time PS, BE, PCP, and its satellite Green party, the PEV, had reached an understanding with governability conditions for the formation of a PS minority government with parliamentary support from the remaining three parties. Three different documents were signed between the PS and each of the other parties, all generally vague and without concrete goals for public policies. Thus, on 24 November 2015, after consulting the social partners, President Cavaco Silva appointed António Costa, Socialist leader, the new Prime Minister of Portugal. At the time, António Costa stated that 'It's as if we were tearing down the rest of the Berlin Wall'. However, the PS did not move to the side

of the anti-Europeans. They are the ones who agreed to negotiate a common government programme without jeopardizing Portugal's commitments as an active member of the eurozone'[2].

This was the first time since democratization that the Socialists had agreed to a coalition with the Communists. Indeed, in 40 years of democracy, no such agreement had occurred, thus marking a fundamental change in the way parliamentary parties in Portugal relate to each other. As explained above, the divide between these two parties was key to explaining the Portuguese party system dynamics up to that time.

The expectations on the durability of this novel coalition were quite low, yet it proved remarkably resilient and completed the full mandate until 2019. Across the whole period, the Socialists negotiated in parliament with the Left Block and the Communist Party on each law to ensure its passing.

After the formation of the left-wing government in 2015, an interesting puzzle has emerged regarding the extent to which these parties altered their positioning on Europe. According to the manifesto data, it is possible to see that the Socialists, the BE, and the PCP remained distinct in their stance on Europe; the latter had traditionally been Eurosceptic (Lisi et al. 2021). Also, Moury et al. (2019), considering bailout policy reversals, show that they were more extensive in Portugal than in Spain, and most were enacted during the 'Geringonça government' (2015–2019). On the other hand, Fernandes et al. (2018) argue that there was a balancing act in the Costa (2015–2019) government, whereby the government decreased austerity in key policies such as pay checks, pension checks, and tax returns, which ensured that key sectors of the electorate had an increase in their disposable income. Yet, to comply with the Stability and Growth Pact rules of the eurozone and keep to the targets for public deficit, there was a corresponding decrease in public investment.

Between 2002 and 2015, no new party emerged in the political system, with the exception of PAN, a centrist animal rights party. There was, however, a decline in votes for the mainstream parties, an increase in abstention, and a strengthening of the radical left. Namely, the BE's vote share doubled from 5.2% in 2011 to 10.2% in 2015, whereas the Communists' share increased marginally, from 7.9% to 8.3% (De Giorgi and Santana-Pereira 2016; Lisi 2016). As Hutter and Kriesi (2019) note, there is indeed a pattern whereby first voters turn to the traditional opposition before opting for more radical alternatives.

Further, since 2019 there have been signs that fragmentation is also ensuing on the right of the party spectrum. Indeed, in the last election, there were three new entrants into parliament, two of them on the right: one MP from an extreme-right party Chega, and a right liberal party, Iniciativa Liberal, both

managed to elect one MP. The entry of the far-right Chega into parliament constituted an important watershed, as Portugal was one of the few remaining countries of Europe without an extreme-right populist party (Mendes and Dennison 2021).

Following the 2019 elections, the Socialists improved their share of the vote; there was little change in the vote for the BE, while the Communists actually lost votes (Table 10.2). There had been expectations that António Costa would re-enact the left-wing parliamentary coalition government or even enter a full-blown coalition with one or both of the left parties. Despite this, the Prime Minister decided not to enter into any formal agreement with the left-wing parties. The PS decided instead to reinforce its pivot role in the political system, negotiating to its left and, to its right, with the main opposition party, the centre-right PSD, depending on the legislation in question. From 2019–2022, the Socialists voted less often with its left partners, with the exception of the budget approval[3]. Then, the Left Block refused to support the PS budget in 2020 and in 2021, both the Communists and the Left Block voted against the Socialist government's budget.

Faced with this fallout, the president decided to hold a snap election in January 2022. In the event, both the PCP and BE were punished by the electorate. In contrast, the Socialist Party was rewarded and achieved an absolute majority in parliament. This majority, following six years in power, places the Socialists as one of the most successful social democratic parties in Europe. The 2022 result also counters the previous trend of fragmentation

Table 10.2 The distribution of votes in elections and seats in the Portuguese Parliament, 2015–2022

Party	2015		2019		2022	
	Votes (%)	Seats	Votes (%)	Seats	Votes (%)	Seats
PAF (CDS-PP and PSD)	38.36	107	-	-	-	-
BE	10.19	19	9.52	19	4.40	5
CDS-PP	-	-	4.22	5	1.6	-
Chega	-	-	1.29	1	7.18	12
IL	-	-	1.29	1	4.91	8
Livre	0.73	-	-	1	1.28	1
PAN	1.39	1	-	4	1.58	1
PCP	8.25	17	6.33	12	4.30	6
PS	32.31	86	36.34	108	41.37	119
PSD	-	-	27.76	79	27.67	78
Total Seats	-	230	-	230	-	230

Source: Interior Ministry

documented in Figure 10.1. While BE and PCP may have hoped that the results of 2022 would force the Socialists to negotiate with these parties in parliament, the results in effect spell the death knell of the left alliance and ensure that the Socialists can govern for the full legislature.

In 2022, it seems the election campaign may have made a difference for the election results. Opinion polls carried out late in the campaign seemed to indicate a great proximity between the two major parties, the PS and PSD. During the campaign, Prime Minister Costa on the one hand dramatized the possible entry of Chega into government if the PSD came first without securing a majority of seats. He also repeatedly explained that the BE and the PCP were irresponsible not to approve a budget which was relatively left-wing. Not approving the budget and forcing elections also led to delays in the implementation of the EU's Recovery and Resilience Plan. While economic perceptions had been declining in the previous twelve months along with government popularity, the incumbent Prime Minister was seen as rather more competent than the leader of the main right-wing party, Rui Rio. In the event, the PS managed to attract left-wing voters who abandoned both the BE and the PCP, and to retain centrist voters who were not convinced by the PSD's alternative.

With the Socialists winning an absolute majority, the fragmentation was reduced on the left, spelling the definitive end of the left-wing coalition which lasted from 2015 to 2019. Thus, the resilience of the party system is maintained overall as is shown by the effective number of parliamentary parties presented in Figure 10.1.

In addition, the absolute majority also pauses the seemingly inevitable tendency towards the formation of coalition governments on the right and left. Yet, on the right, fragmentation and change did accentuate. The centre-right PSD did not manage to improve its voting, and the conservative CDS-PP, the junior party on the right since democratization, did not elect any MPs. In contrast, two new parties, far-right Chega and right-wing Iniciativa Liberal, won 7% and 5% of the vote, respectively. In a report published following the Portuguese post-election study which tracked the transfer of votes from 2019 to 2022, we can see that the PS majority was composed of voters which had voted PS previously, had abstained, or had voted BE. The PSD did win over voters from abstention too, but lost them to IL and Chega (Lobo et al. 2022). The latter party's voters came from abstention as well as from the PSD. Geographically, while Chega gathered more votes in the interior of the country, due to the disproportionality of the electoral system, the new MPs were elected in the largest districts on the coast. The leader will now hope to capitalize on this growth to consolidate the party over the next four years.

A Realignment in the Parties' Political Positioning?

Figure 10.3 presents the left–right positioning of the main parties from 2011 to 2019, using CHES data. From the point of view of programmatic evolution on the left–right axis, there had been a modest increase in polarization; that is, there was a gap between PS and PSD. An 'anti-austerity' stance was consolidated from the last quarter of 2014, when António Costa was elected Secretary-general. This bipolarization occurred due to a growing divergence in relation to the theme of the European Union. The parties' positioning in relation to Europe—understood as the crisis in the eurozone and the management of the bailout conditions administered by the troika in Portugal in these years—came to divide the two ideological blocs in Portugal, left and right. Indeed, in a recent analysis of parties' issue polarization, Da Silva and Mendes (2019) note that economic issues became even more important after the onset of the eurozone crisis in 2009, and polarization was increasing between the centre-right and the centre-left concerning these issues. Not only were these issues important, but the political space in Portugal also became unidimensional during the crisis period. Thus, before the 2015 elections, the politicization of Europe through the lens of austerity brought the PS slightly

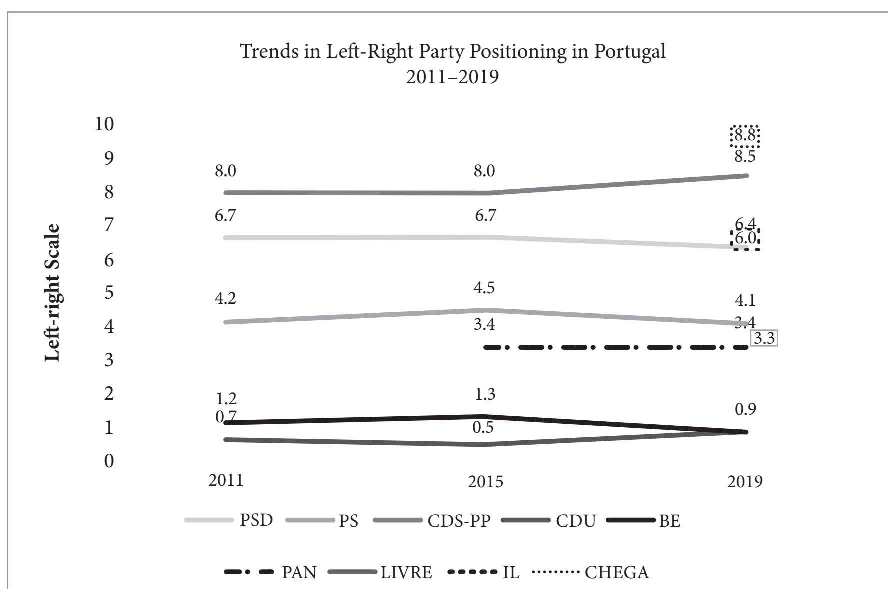

Figure 10.3 Trends in left–right party positioning in Portugal, 2011–2019
Source: CHES dataset

closer to both the BE and the PCP. In addition, the importance of the left–right issue has remained the main ideological anchor in Portugal (Heyne et al. forthcoming), and this benefits the major existing parties which compete on those issues.

Although this left-wing positioning and Euroscepticism marked the position of the PS before the legislative elections in 2015, some fundamental differences remained on the left. Namely, the PS maintained that it would 'fulfil and honour all of Portugal's external commitments', while in their manifestos both the BE and the PCP did not rule out a possible exit from the Euro; the ambivalence of the PS towards a restructuring of the public debt while the BE and the PCP were both in favour of this measure; and the genetic Europeanism of the PS, which contrasts with the Eurosceptic position in relation to the European project of the BE and the PCP (Lobo 2022). From an economic perspective, the BE and PCP took much more extreme positions in relation to favouring the nationalization of banks and other companies; regulating the prices of fundamental goods; or of state intervention in the economy than the PS, which remains quite moderate in these areas. Still, in 2019, at the end of the government mandate, the Socialists were perceived as slightly more left-wing, having moved from 4.5 to 4.1 on the left–right scale.

Since the onset of the crisis there had been little revision of the BE's and PCP's political programme with regard to an ideological approximation to the PS, either from the point of view of the left–right axis or from the point of view of pro- or anti-Europeanism.

On the right, the PSD is perceived as relatively right-wing at 6.7, both in 2011 and 2015, whereas the CDS_PP is conservative at 8. There is change, however, from 2015 to 2019: in 2018 the PSD elected a new leader who insists he is a social democrat, and he has been available for supporting the Socialist Party in ad hoc legislative proposals. The CDS-PP also elected a leader, Francisco Rodrigues dos Santos, who is perceived as rather more right-wing than his predecessor. Chega, the extreme-right party, entered the 2019 parliament with an 8.8 average positioning on the left–right scale. This is due to the fact that in their 2019 electoral manifesto they combined a strict anti-state perspective with a nationalist standpoint on the EU and an anti-immigration stance.

Conclusion

In this chapter, we aimed to present the Portuguese party system and its development since democratization. We explained the way in which the party

system consolidated around four parties which dominated the system since 1974, and how, from 1987 to 2009 it was characterized by a majoritarian logic with alternation between the two major parties, the PS and the PSD.

Next, we introduced the main parties in the system, as well as some of the characteristics which have contributed to their endurance. The main parties have mass organizations, and links to interest groups. Yet, there is an undeniable trend towards both personalization and dependence on public funding.

We have been witnessing slow and hitherto modest changes to party system format in Portugal with the entry of an extreme-right party and progressive fragmentation of the system. In addition, there was a change in the party system dynamics in Portugal from 2015–2019, driven by 'opposition to austerity', which lead to the first left-wing coalition government (a coalition of parliamentary incidence) since democratization. Whereas in other European countries the onset of the Great Recession led to an increase in voting for challenger parties based on issues such as EU politicization and immigration, in Portugal economic issues remained predominant, framed around the topic of austerity. As a result, in 2022, in a pandemic context, the voters decided to reward the Socialists with an absolute majority when the two left parties—which had hitherto supported the minority PS government decided to vote against the budget law.

From the point of view of party positioning, the evolution of the crisis in the Euro zone created the conditions for an ideological greater divergence between the PSD and the PS. Yet, the government experience since 2015 has shown that the Socialists kept its European and mainstream credentials. The BE and the PCP did not change their programme, as we saw above. These two parties suffered electoral defeats in 2022, losing votes and MPs. Strikingly, they are no longer the third and fourth largest parties in parliament. The decline of electoral support forces a rethink on their role within the left, both in terms of representation and government support. On the right, the entry of Chega into the system and its growth potential, following the opinion polls, poses a challenge for the mainstream right-wing parties that will be ongoing for the next few years. Namely, it remains to be seen whether the PSD is able to maintain itself as the predominant party on the right in the near future, and whether it will enforce a cordon sanitaire with Chega or, on the contrary, will embrace a government coalition with this party. While the factors which contribute to the party system stability seem strong in Portugal, there are also seeds of change which have been sown in the past few years.

Notes

1. The military coup of 25 April 1974 marks the beginning of democratic transition.
2. https://www.tsf.pt/politica/e-como-se-estivessemos-a-deitar-abaixo-o-resto-do-muro-de-berlim-diz-antonio-costa-4833329.html (Accessed 18 December 2023).
3. https://visao.sapo.pt/atualidade/politica/2022-01-27-ps-e-a-esquerda-o-divorcio-que-ja-tem-dois-anos/ (Accessed 18 December 2023).

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11
Spain

Party System Change and Fragmentation

Luis Ramiro and María Salvador

The Party System in Spain and Its Framework Conditions

Contemporary party politics in Spain is in a state of open-ended flux. Since 2015, the configuration of the party system has changed dramatically from a de-facto two-party system to a plain multi-party system.[1] The Spanish party system in the current democratic period which began at the end of the 1970s has always contained many parties winning parliamentary representation (both nationwide parties and non-nationwide nationalist and regionalist parties). However, the party system was usually dominated essentially by two larger centre-right and centre-left parties, and the governments were always single-party ones (although they were minority governments on several occasions) (Gunther et al. 2004). The moderate political preferences of Spanish voters during the first elections in the 1970s paved the way for this party system configuration; further, the institutional framework also contributed to this outcome. The parties and party system development were certainly affected by some institutional and legal factors, particularly the electoral system. This made the parliamentary representation of multiple parties possible while favouring the dominance of two larger nationwide ones. Some additional institutional rules contributed further to the stabilization of the party system by consolidating the mainstream or established parties and their dominance in the party system. Among these, the regulations on party funding and the provision of state subsidies, basically distributing funds in accordance with parties' parliamentary representation and weight, have affected party development and favoured insiders against challengers.

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All this relative stability has changed radically since 2015. Until then, Spain showed some patterns in common with other contemporary Western democracies regarding the state of their political parties, although with some specificities. Spanish parties had experienced the normal functioning of a democratic polity only since the end of the 1970s, without ever having experienced an extended period of democratic politics and mass political involvement. Some parties recovered their routine working or were founded in a political environment dominated by mass media and TV. They were dependent on state subsidies rapidly established by themselves and acted upon a Spanish society that reflected—even with some delay and at lower levels—the common Western trends of rising educational levels and affluence. Spanish parties initiated their democratic activity in an era in which Western party politics had already shown clear indications of the crisis of party loyalties and identities, in which the distance between parties and citizens started to grow, and in which a media-dominated political environment favoured the presidentialization of politics. This context was conducive to producing parties with strong leadership and weak social roots, membership, and party–civic organization linkages. All Spanish parties—dependent on state subsidies and with weak party-on-the-ground organizations—responded to this pattern (Ramiro and Morales 2004, 2010). However, another characteristic element of Western party and electoral politics was not so visible in the Spanish case: high electoral volatility and party system instability were not so manifest in Spain. Parties with weak social roots and limited membership enjoyed a relatively stable electorate following the last electoral earthquake of 1982 that defined the Spanish party system once the democratic transition ended. However, this relative stability ended in 2015. In the 2015 parliamentary elections, Spanish party politics and the Spanish party system acquired another two features common to other Western democracies, which were not fully evident in Spain until then: Spanish politics entered a period of increasing party system fragmentation and electoral volatility. Two additional elements characterize Spanish party politics: First, the fragmentation is due not only to a change in support among already present parties but also to completely new challenger parties entering the parliament. Second, the parties themselves show a notable level of organizational instability, with some parties suffering notorious internal crises and many parties experimenting with organizational innovation.

How did the Spanish party system arrive at this open-ended period of restructuring?

Recent history of the Spanish party system

The peculiarities of the Spanish two-party system, 1977–2015

Sometimes considered a moderate multi-party system, the Spanish party system between the democratic transition at the end of the 1970s and 2014–2015, when a period of fragmentation and instability began, can be better described as a two-party system. In the first two free elections, held in 1977 and 1979, a basic format was already visible, including two large state-wide centre-right and centre-left parties (the Social Democrat PSOE/Spanish Socialist Workers' Party and the centre-right UCD/Union of the Democratic Centre) flanked by two much smaller state-wide parties (the Communist PCE/Communist Party of Spain and the Conservatives grouped around AP/Popular Alliance and, later, CD/Democratic Coalition), and several non-nationwide regionalist and peripheral nationalist parties of diverse ideological leanings (from the radical left to the right). After the reconfiguration of the party system in the 1982 elections, the format of the party system remained unaltered in its basic structure for more than 30 years—changing only the protagonist parties in those different political and ideological fields.

After the 1982 general elections, the party system included as the main state-wide parties the larger centre-left PSOE (in office during 1982–1996 and 2004–2011, enjoying strong parliamentary majorities during the 1980s) and the centre-right PP (in office during 1996–2004 and 2011–2018). Besides these two larger parties, there was always a radical-left party (since 1986, IU/United Left) and a centrist party (in the 1980s, the CDS/Social and Democratic Centre, and between 2008 and 2015, UPyD/Union, Progress, and Democracy). The most important non-nationwide parties, the Catalan and Basque nationalists, have always won parliamentary representation together with many other MPs from peripheral nationalist or regionalist parties from Galicia, the Canary Islands, Valencian Community, Aragón, Asturias, Cantabria, Navarre, or Andalucía that have obtained a less regular and fluctuating representation.[2]

The electoral system, as mentioned in the introduction, has played an obvious determinant role in the configuration of the party system. The electoral rules favoured the formation of single-party majority governments, and this has been the experience until very recently. This traditional single-party government characteristic of Spanish national politics also contributes to the consideration as a two-party system of what could otherwise be judged a moderate multi-party system. The PSOE during the 1980s and the PP during 2000–2004 were in office, enjoying comfortable absolute majorities. In legislative terms when the PSOE and PP got only a relative majority in

Parliament, some Catalan and Basque nationalists (but also Canary Islands regionalists or nationalists) played a key role in supporting them in Parliament and making the formation of single-party minority governments possible (although the PSOE also counted on the support of the radical-left IU at certain times during the Zapatero premiership).

The transformation of the Spanish party system after 2015: Instability and fragmentation

This two-party system in Spain has completely transformed itself since the 2015 general elections (Orriols and Cordero 2016). The 2011 elections—the first to be held after the effects of the 2008 Great Recession and the severity of the austerity policies could be fully felt—already signalled some potentially relevant changes. In the 2011 elections, won by the PP, the two larger parties saw their combined vote share reduced. Most importantly, the PSOE suffered a crushing defeat, and its support decreased compared to that in the 1970s during the democratic transition. Since the first democratic elections in 1977, the weight of the two larger parties—the combined support of the larger centre-right and centre-left parties—has varied according to the voters' preferences; the fluctuating support received by the smaller state-wide parties and the fragmentation level of the party system have not been static. However, the party system definitively entered a new period of greater and substantial fragmentation and ended 38 years of a two-party system after the 2015 elections (see Table 11.1).

The party system changes since 2015 have followed several phases demonstrating also that, together with fragmentation and electoral volatility, an open-ended general instability has characterized Spanish party politics since the mid-2010s. The 2011 general elections resulted in the PP winning office (44.6% of the vote) and the PSOE suffering a crushing defeat (28.8% of the vote, 15.1 points below the party's previous result). The nationwide radical-left IU won 6.9% of the vote and the centrist UPyD 4.7%. However, the electoral earthquake of 2015 did not consist of these minor parties increasing their support by taking advantage of the losses of the larger mainstream parties. On the contrary, in 2015 these smaller parties lost support (IU) or collapsed (UPyD), while the larger PSOE and PP certainly suffered great losses. The most relevant feature of the 2015 elections was that two new parties gained very notable electoral support: the populist radical-left Podemos (We Can) and its regional alliances got 20.7% of the vote (a staggering level of support for a party created hardly one year before), and the right-wing liberal Ciudadanos (Citizens, Cs) received 13.9% of the vote.

Thus, the party system at the time included four state-wide parties of not-so-unequal electoral weight (PP, 28.7%; PSOE, 22%; Podemos, 20.7%; Cs, 13.9%) and the still surviving nationwide IU (3.7% of the vote) (Vidal 2018). While Cs had already existed in Catalonia before it decided to expand to the rest of the country, the rise of Podemos was surely more spectacular: the party was completely new having been created hardly a year before, at the beginning of 2014 to run the European Parliament Elections of that year. Beyond these parties, the party system included many non-nationwide peripheral nationalist and regionalist parties where some electoral changes were also visible (mainly regarding the balance of support among different Catalan nationalist parties favouring the previously smaller Catalan nationalists of the Republican Left of Catalonia, ERC).[3]

To some degree, the 2011 and 2015 elections can be understood as elections in times of deep and concatenated economic and political crises (Bermeo and Bartels 2014; Medina 2015; Hernández and Kriesi 2016). In 2011, the electorate strongly punished the incumbent PSOE after, first, the effects of the 2008 Great Recession and its Spanish specificities (a housing and mortgage bubble, the oversized construction sector, and very high unemployment, among other key elements); second, the austerity policies implemented by the incumbent PSOE were all fully felt. The PP, as the main opposition party, benefited from the voters' discontent and gained office. The PP government maintained the austerity policies and fiscal consolidation measures under EU supervision, confronted a bailout affecting the Spanish banking system, and designed special measures to financially support the regional governments.

Although the economic situation started to improve, the public perception of the economy and the very high levels of unemployment did not reflect that improvement because of the depth of the crisis. Additionally, post-Great Recession politics in Spain was characterized by not only economic discontent but also an associated political discontent (with government, parties, and other institutions), first demonstrated in 2011, accompanied by the constant presence in the public debate and media of corruption scandals that chiefly affected the incumbent PP.

This context culminated in the 2015 elections, in which voters punished the incumbent PP, as would be expected. Moreover, the main opposition party, the PSOE, still tainted by its 2008–2011 term in office when the country suffered the consequences of the Great Recession, did not benefit but suffered an additional weakening. The context of economic crisis, political crisis, corruption scandals, high political discontent, and distrust towards parties and politicians was ripe for new and challenger parties.[4] Two parties, Podemos and Cs, were able to take advantage of this political environment

by representing the newness and the promise of political, social, and economic renewal against discredited old, traditional, and established parties and politicians.

The 2015 elections were key not only because they transformed the party system by putting an end to the two-party system configuration but also because the fragmentation of the party system after the elections made government formation, government investiture, and getting a parliamentary majority in support of a government more challenging tasks than ever. The PP won the 2015 elections, although in a very weakened position, benefited from an early election in 2016 slightly improving its result, and formed a single-party minority government. However, government stability has been a very salient aspect of Spanish politics since 2015 (Simón 2016). Fragmentation, difficulties in creating parliamentary majorities in support of a cabinet, and government parliamentary stability are central features of current Spanish politics.

An open-ended transformation: Political instability, electoral volatility, and the rise and demise of new parties

These new features explain the no confidence vote in 2018 that succeeded for the first time in forming a new government (where the incumbent PP lost Parliament's confidence and the PSOE won the Prime Minister's position)[5] and led to the repeated early elections of 2019 (April and November). Between December 2015 and November 2019, there were four general elections, with the parties unable to reach an agreement to form a government amid a fragmented party system. The 2016 elections did not produce relevant changes in the parties' support apart from unavoidable minor fluctuations (Cs and Podemos losing some ground, PSOE and, especially, PP improving their support). However, the April 2019 elections demonstrated again that not only party system fragmentation but also electoral volatility was a significant element defining Spanish party politics (see Table 11.1). In the April 2019 elections, held after the successful no confidence vote promoted and won by the PSOE, the PP suffered a harsh defeat (losing half of its support, scoring a very poor 16.7%), the PSOE grew to 28.7% of the vote, Cs got 15.9%, Podemos kept losing ground (14.3%), and a new radical-right party, VOX, entered Parliament for the first time with 10.3% of the vote, up from completely insignificant support in the previous elections.[6] The end of the two-party system was accompanied by a notable growth of affective polarization (measured through leaders' evaluations), and especially inter-bloc (left vs right) polarization after 2018 (Orriols and León 2021).

However, if the April 2019 elections showed the fragmentation and volatility reigning over Spanish party politics, the new early elections held in November 2019 fully confirmed this picture. Again, the electorate showed notorious levels of volatility. In this case, besides an additional weakening of Podemos (12.9% of the vote), the elections showed how the other new party that had entered Parliament in 2015 with astonishing success, Cs, suffered important losses, receiving only 6.8% of the vote. Four years earlier, Podemos and Cs had challenged the two-party system after entering Parliament with high levels of support. In November 2019, they were electorally weakened, and Cs had lost much of its political significance. More importantly, the November 2019 elections resulted in the radical-right VOX becoming the third largest state-wide party with 15% of the vote.[7] The swift electoral rise of the radical right was based on an expanding constituency that not only showed high levels of political dissatisfaction, conservative cultural backlash, and Spanish nationalism but also a willingness to be mobilized by what they understood as the threat of Catalan secessionism (Turnbull-Dugarte 2019; Turnbull-Dugarte et al. 2020; Anduiza and Rico 2022).

The mutation of the party system initiated in 2015 produced a multiparty system with five state-wide parties, four of them receiving relatively high levels of support after the 2019 elections. This political change has resulted in a fragmented party system that makes the formation of single-party governments difficult and that generated the first coalition government (a minority coalition government between the Social Democrat PSOE and the radical-left Unidas Podemos)[8] since the democratic transition. Finally, the transformation of voters' electoral preferences and the notable electoral volatility has produced the end of the Spanish exceptionality in the West European context regarding the parliamentary presence of the radical right.

The legal framework conditions

As in all democracies, the legal framework has had a considerable influence on the characteristics of the Spanish party system. However, as we will see, the Spanish case is one of moderate constitutional regulation of party politics, with the 1978 Constitution providing limited detail on party regulation.

The Constitution and party laws

The current Constitution was adopted in 1978 after 40 years of dictatorship. It was the result of a process of democratic transition with the participation of many political and social actors, and a basic consensus on the constitutional

text was reached in most areas. Regarding the matter at hand, there was absolute agreement that the new political order should be a pluralist democracy and that political parties would be the leading protagonists. Thus, the Constitution designed a parliamentary model and assigned a central and leading role to political parties. As a result, they have (almost) a monopoly of political representation, and there are very few channels of direct democracy participation. One of the main goals at the time was to strengthen parties to bring stability to the new democratic system.

The Constitution includes a provision in its preliminary part specifically dedicated to political parties—Art. 6, which sets out the essential and defining elements of the new constitutional order. This article states as follows: 'Political parties are the expression of political pluralism; they contribute to the formation and expression of the will of the people and are a fundamental instrument for political participation. Their creation and the exercise of their activities are free in so far as they respect the Constitution and the law. Their internal structure and operation must be democratic'. The drafting of the article was influenced by similar provisions in constitutions

Table 11.1 Larger parties' electoral decline, party system fragmentation, volatility, and turnout in Spain since 1977

Election year	Votes for the two largest parties (%)	ENEP	ENPP	Volatility	Turnout (%)
1977	63.76	3.94	2.89	-	76.96
1979	65.24	3.79	2.81	-	68.13
1982	74.47	3.00	2.33	19.70	79.83
1986	70.03	3.25	2.68	12.80	70.37
1989	65.39	3.69	2.85	10.00	70.01
1993	73.54	3.20	2.67	11.50	77.05
1996	76.42	3.10	2.72	6.00	78.06
2000	78.68	2.85	2.48	10.10	68.71
2004	80.3	2.81	2.50	10.20	75.66
2008	83.81	2.61	2.34	5.10	75.32
2011	73.39	3.22	2.60	16.10	68.94
2015	50.71	5.48	4.53	35.10	73.20
2016	55.64	4.82	4.16	5.50	69.84
2019 Apr	45.36	5.86	4.94	22.20	71.76
2019 Nov	48.81	5.93	4.68	10.70	66.20

Note: ENEP—Effective Number of Electoral Parties; ENPP—Effective Number of Parliamentary Parties; Volatility as the total volatility; Turnout as share of all registered voters; '-' —missing data.

Source: Parliaments and governments database (Döring et al. 2022); Database on WHO Governs in Europe and beyond, PSGO (Casal Bértoa 2022); Voter Turnout Database (IDEA 2022); Votes for the two largest parties (%): authors' elaboration using electoral data from the Spanish Ministry of Interior

approved after the Second World War (those of Italy, Germany, and France) and in the Constitution of Portugal, also approved after a period of dictatorship (Blanco 1990; Morodo and Lucas 2001). Thus, Art. 6 means that the Constitution recognizes the central and crucial role played by parties in a democracy and assumes the task of guaranteeing certain conditions so that parties can correctly fulfil this role and, thereby, ensure the proper functioning of the democratic system. There are four of these conditions: freedom from the state, internal democracy, equal opportunities, and transparency and accountability. The development of these principles, however, has been uneven, albeit ever-changing (Salvador 2021).

After the dictatorship, the priority was obviously to guarantee the freedom of parties from the state. Moreover, it was understood that freedom was basically the only requirement of the parties to correctly fulfil their role in the democratic system. The requirement of internal democracy is specifically set out in Art. 6, but its legal development has been slow. Early in the 21st century, an intense and interesting doctrinal and social debate started regarding the significance of this principle and its materialization, and the first legislative measures were adopted in this respect. Meanwhile, the Constitutional Court has ruled that the demand for internal democracy is materialized in two elements: a principle of democratic internal organization and functioning, and members' rights that ensure their participation in the party's decision-making (STC 56/1997). The principle of equal opportunities for parties is surmised from various constitutional provisions (the principle of political pluralism, Art. 1.1; the principle of equality, Art. 9.2; and the right to effective political participation, Arts. 9.3 and 23) and has been projected in electoral law, in parties' financing and access to media and other public utilities. However, this principle has been understood basically as a 'graduated equality'; that is, the state does not treat all parties equally but grades its treatment according to the representation obtained in the last elections (for example, the amount of financing subsidies is not the same for all the parties: it is tied to the results of the last elections). Therefore, this principle has clearly tended to maintain the status quo; in other words, it has favoured the major parties with parliamentary representation and hindered the emergence of new political actors. Legal doctrine considered this interpretation to be justified during the first years of democracy because parties were numerous and weak and there was a need to promote strong parties that would sustain the new democracy. However, it is now thought that some of these developments are no longer justified and should be modified to favour new or small parties. Finally, the principle of transparency and accountability is not explicitly included in Spain's Constitution, although it is inferred

from the general principles of the democratic state and the rule of law. Its legislative development, however, was very limited until recent years, during which there have been major reforms in funding and financial-economic control and regarding parties' organizational transparency, functioning, and activities.

At a legal level, the legislator's activity in the development of these constitutional principles has undergone a significant evolution, from less to more, and more intensive, regulation. The first Political Parties Act (LPP), Law 54/1978, was approved by Parliament while the Constitution was being passed, with a high degree of consensus, and was published just a few days before the constitutional text. This law contained some minimal and extremely concise provisions, as it was believed at the time that the legislator should respect the freedom of parties and barely intervene in the determination of their legal structure. Parties were free to create themselves, decide their organization and functioning, and act subject to hardly any kind of provision. As has been noted, at that time the primary objective was to guarantee the freedom of parties and prevent state interference.

In 2002, the legislator approved a new law, Organic Law 6/2002 on Political Parties (LOPP). The goal was to provide a response to some issues that were salient at the time: the need to define the minimum requirements of internal democracy and the need to regulate the dissolution of parties whose actions are against the Constitution (in other words, the need to address the problem of support for terrorist organizations by certain Basque parties). Thus, the LOPP responds to a historical moment different from that of the LPP and to a phase of greater intervention by the legislator (Casal Bértoa et al. 2014). The new party law also assumes that the principle of freedom is not the only one that determines the legal status of parties, and the legislator has the responsibility to establish the limits and guarantees necessary to ensure that parties would fulfil their function in the democratic state.

In the same spirit, in recent years, new laws have been passed on financing, transparency, and economic-financial control.[9] Their most significant aspect is that they have been approved despite the hesitance shown by the parties themselves in the context of political dissatisfaction and recurrent recommendations of some international organizations, especially the reports issued by the Group of States against Corruption (GRECO) body of the Council of Europe.

The influence of the legal framework

The legal decisions that have most influenced the development of the party system refer to the following five issues:

a) Regarding the creation and existence of parties, the law establishes a register system to acquire legal status, which has posed some abstract, but not practical, problems. Only twice have the application for registration of a party been rejected (during the early democratic years) but the Constitutional Court ruled that the registrations should take place because the registry could only perform mere formal control (SSTC 3/1981 & 85/1986).

   However, the most significant decision on this matter was the adoption of a dissolution system in 2002 to address the question of parties that supported terrorism. Under these, a party can be dissolved 'when [it] violates in a continuous, repeated and serious manner the requirements of democratic internal structure and functioning established in the law' (an unlikely scenario in practice) or 'when in a repeated and serious manner, a party's activity violates democratic principles or seeks to damage or destroy the system of freedoms or hamper or eliminate the democratic system, through conduct stipulated in the law'[10] (the law specifies in considerable detail the elements, conducts, and facts that would make it possible to confirm when a party is guilty of this offence).

   There was an intense legal and political debate about the new dissolution system. Most legal scholars believed that the grounds for dissolution were consistent with the Constitution, although some technical aspects were criticized (Bastida 2003; Montilla, 2003; Tajadura 2004). The Constitutional Court confirmed the constitutionality of the new system, based on the European Court of Human Rights jurisprudence. As expected, the law's adoption was followed by the dissolution of some parties (HB, EH, and Batasuna) because the Court considered proven ETA's participation in these formations and their conscious and reiterated activity as a political complement to terrorist activity. This decision was ratified by the Constitutional Court (SSTC 5/2004 and 6/2004) and the European Court of Human Rights (Decision of 30 June 2009).[11]

b) The electoral system was adopted in 1977 to facilitate the political transition to democracy and to guarantee the political stability of the new democratic order. The electoral regulation established many electoral districts of low magnitude under a closed-list proportional representation system using the D'Hondt formula. These rules have resulted in a notable disproportional outcome of overrepresenting larger nationwide parties, underrepresenting smaller nationwide parties with a scattered electorate, and giving a representation closer to their electoral weight to peripheral nationalist and regionalist parties. The electoral system is responsible for the continuous overrepresentation in the parliament of the two larger

centre-left and centre-right political parties, which receive a proportion of seats in the lower chamber well above their proportion of national votes. Besides, the system favours the representation of some scarcely populated, mostly rural electoral districts (provinces) generating a relative advantage for the centre-right. In any case, the electoral system has very significant detrimental effects on the parliamentary representation of the smaller nationwide parties who have seen their aspirations to political relevance historically constrained by the effects of the electoral system. The nominally proportional Spanish electoral system behaves in a very disproportional way with these parties. The electoral rules do not negatively affect the representation of the non-nationwide regionalist and peripheral nationalist parties who, with a territorially concentrated support in a few electoral districts, have seen their relevance increased and have often become kingmakers in the Spanish party system. Although reform proposals and studies have existed for years, the essence of the system is yet to be modified.

c) The system of party funding was also established during the transition to democracy and has been kept until now. It is a mixed system, with a significant predominance of public funding (it covers the electoral, parliamentary, and ordinary activities of parties at local, autonomous and national levels), in which public subsidies are distributed among the parties that obtained parliamentary seats in the previous election, according to their number of votes and seats in the parliament (graduated equality). It has favoured larger and parliamentary parties and penalized small or new parties. Strong public funding was justified in 1978 because parties had weak structures at that time. The outcome has been parties who are over-dependent on public money (see Table 11.2). In any case, despite this public funding, some parties have sought channels of illegal funding (Pajares 1998; Sánchez 2013; Iglesias 2015).

Economic-financial control is mainly exercised by the Tribunal de Cuentas (Court of Audit), but this control was relatively limited until a few years ago. Parties have demonstrated considerable resistance to imposing the obligations or constraints in this area on themselves. Initially, the economic-financial control established by the legislator was so insufficient and flawed that it was effectively impossible to control either the legality of channels of financing or the economic administration of parties. Since 2007, and especially during the 2010s, some legislative measures have been adopted in this respect, owing to public opinion and the intervention of international institutions such as GRECO.

Table 11.2 Parties' income, 2017

Party	Income through members (%)	Income through state funding (%)
People's Party	15.00	85.00
Spanish Socialist Workers' Party PSOE	21.00	55.00
We Can	4.80	95.20
Citizens	14.00	85.00
United Left IU	15.00	75.00
Mean	13.96	79.04

Note: data were retrieved for 2017; the reported income share refers to the total party income.

Source: Political Party Database Round 2 V4 (Scarrow et al. 2022)

d) The rules that regulate parliamentary activity have consolidated the central position of parties in the Spanish political system, as all the initiatives and decisions adopted in Parliament practically refer to the parliamentary group and not to individual MPs. The MPs are the holders of parliamentary seats; in theory, they are free to act but, in practice, they are subject to strict party discipline. There have been several cases of MPs' defection that parties have faced by signing an anti-defection agreement, which seeks to limit this practice and penalize individuals and parties who engage in it.

e) Finally, regarding internal democracy, the party law contains some minimum requirements for internal organization and functioning and makes it obligatory for parties' statutes to regulate certain areas. This has led to significant progress, for example, in relation to members' rights and parties' transparency. However, the regulation is not detailed on certain aspects of party organization, for instance, the internal selection of electoral candidates. In this respect, since 2007, electoral lists must have a balanced composition of men and women (a minimum of 40% of each in the list of candidates or, in certain cases, the proportion of men and women must be as close as possible to numerical balance).[12] Nonetheless, the legal provisions on parties' internal democracy do not seem to have been very influential. We will approach this aspect in the next section by mapping some of the developments in this regard.

The Changing Models of Party Organization

Spanish political parties' organizational model has classically corresponded to a mass party model without 'masses'. Spanish parties are all membership

organizations. No Spanish party has appeared under any format other than one of an organization formed by members; all the parties have formally intended to create membership organizations extended across the territory. The multi-level nature of Spanish domestic politics (with national, regional, and local levels, and even other additional levels such as provincial or island ones) involves the need to recruit thousands of candidates to be part of the parties' electoral lists at different levels, and this favours the recruitment efforts by parties and the creation of territorial sublevels with parties' local branches at the base of the parties' organizational structure. This basic model, adopted or attempted since the democratic transition in the 1970s, has not been altered despite the multiple changes experienced by party politics in Europe and those occurring specifically in Spain.

However, Spanish parties have usually not been very successful in attracting members, and they remain weak in terms of the members/voters ratio, social linkage and, in general, membership base.[13] This relative weakness is compatible with parties that, at least in the case of the larger state-wide and non-state-wide parties, are present in most cities, towns, and villages and are able to run the local elections with a party list. Therefore, the parties—at least the larger state-wide and non-state-wide ones—have a territorially extended organization but low levels of membership.

Party membership during the last two decades has remained at similar levels; there is no clear indication of any other pattern than a flat trend. There are two methods to approach the gathering of membership data: through the data provided by the parties themselves and through the information gathered by population surveys. Parties do not provide this information regularly or frequently; the figures are only reluctantly publicly mentioned when journalists and media cover party events such as conferences and congresses; they appear in internal party documents that are not supposed to circulate widely, shown in partial ways on the parties' web pages, or indicated in the reports the parties provide to the Tribunal de Cuentas. In general, party information in this area is not very reliable. The data coming from population surveys might be more reliable except that the membership figures are so low that the analysis should be made with some caution. According to the population surveys from the publicly funded Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas, party membership in Spain between 2000 and 2019 represented around 3% of the total Spanish population. This means that despite the electoral changes around the 2015 elections and afterwards, despite the creation of new parties ranging from the radical left to the radical right, and despite the organizational innovations that had been implemented by parties in the last two decades, the general membership trend remains practically unaltered in a significant or stable way.

The parties' weak social roots are also discernible in the absence of clear linkages between parties and groups or parties and social organizations. Certainly, they do not exist at a formal level; they are also relatively weak even at an informal level. The traditional close relationship between conservative parties and business organizations, or between centre-right parties and the Catholic Church, exists only at an informal level of both parties and social organizations sharing and agreeing on policies and principles. Something similar can be said regarding the relationship between left-wing parties and unions or new social movements. Spanish unions have clearly been autonomous and independent of any political party since the 1980s; the political concordance between them and the Social Democrats has even suffered periods of serious disagreement. This relationship remains informal but very close only in the case of the Spanish radical left, given the policy concordance between the radical left and unions, and the radical left and the 'traditional' new social movements. Additionally, beyond some classic groups (young people and, to a lesser degree, women), parties do not have special internal groupings organizationally targeting socioeconomic groups in most cases (some parties have internal groups for sexual orientation or citizens of immigrant origin).

Parties have evolved since the 2000s, increasing their intra-party democracy. The area in which party members' participation has increased in the most significant and general way is in the selection of the party leader. Parties that are very different in their ideological leaning are now using open or, most frequently, closed party primaries (restricted to party members only) to select the party leader. However, the selection of party candidates, even the selection of the candidate to the position of Prime Minister, is done mostly through internal procedures involving different party organs without involving mechanisms of individual members' participation for most of the parties. Podemos and Ciudadanos implemented certain modes of primaries, while the PSOE and PP have followed less inclusionary methods (Jaime-Castillo et al. 2018). Similarly, manifesto and policy drafting remains, except in very specific cases and occasions, an area with hardly any relevant or consequential innovation.

Another aspect in which some changes are visible, although they are far from consolidated and not clearly consequential in terms of the internal distribution of power, is the adoption by Spanish parties of the multi-speed membership model (Scarrow 2014), with the creation of different types of party members. Several Spanish parties have designed membership types such as 'friends', 'sympathizers', 'active members', or 'militants', but these types have been implemented half-heartedly or are still too recent to analyse their impacts.

In this regard, the fragmentation and change of the Spanish party system since 2015 has meant changes of relatively modest consequence for the parties' organizational models. The rise of Podemos in 2014 certainly involved very conspicuous innovations including, among others, lower barriers to party membership, many participation procedures for the selection of party elites and candidates and for manifesto drafting, and the adoption of multiple online procedures for members' participation (including internal referendums on political decisions and policy drafting). However, these important innovations now appear overshadowed by the organizational weakening of Podemos, its declining internal participation, the party splits, the very conflictual internal party culture, and their disputable impact on members' commitment and involvement (Gomez and Ramiro 2019). While all parties make extensive use of social media in their communications, only Podemos consistently and intensively uses online participatory tools in party decision-making. However, the democratic quality of these digital procedures was relatively low; they were top-down and sometimes even elite-controlled plebiscitary processes (Gerbaudo 2021).

The parties' weak social roots are to some degree compensated for by considerably closer party–state links. This closeness can be observed on two different dimensions. First is the party funding in which, as mentioned before, state subsidies are of great importance. In short, most Spanish parties are hugely dependent on state subsidies that constitute the larger part of their income. The second dimension is the ongoing important influence and intervention of parties in the appointment of the members of certain constitutional, professional, and administrative organs. However, some significant changes have diminished the parties–state connections on these two dimensions. Regarding the first, organizational innovation has fostered new and significant instruments for party funding by individual citizens (for example, micro-credits). Moreover, the entry of new challenger parties into Parliament has made some collusion and cartelization dynamics more difficult. Regarding the second one, the disappearance of regional public saving banks (as one of the consequences of the crisis of the Spanish financial sector during the Great Recession), on which parties exerted a considerable influence, has reduced some opportunities for party patronage.

As well as having relatively weak social roots, Spanish parties are mostly unified and disciplined. In the larger Spanish parties, formal factions do not exist, and parties' parliamentary groups behave in a very disciplined way in comparative terms. This is strengthened by the notable overlap between the party in central office and the party in public office. However, even if this image of unified and disciplined parties is still the general pattern, the

economic and political crises experienced by Spain after the 2008 Great Recession, the successive party system changes, and the rise of new parties have somewhat modified this picture. First, the usual intra-party competition has certainly not generated formal factions as such, but the political instability meant competitive leadership contests in both the PP and PSOE, and the latter suffered a particularly conflictual period that included a very unusual leadership resignation and breaking of party discipline in a key parliamentary vote. Second, the new parties—Podemos, Cs, and VOX—have all experienced serious organizational problems and grave internal conflicts at the national, regional, or local level or at all of them, including party splits, membership defections, and exit from the party of MEPs, local councillors, and/or regional MPs.[14]

Conclusions: The Open-ended Change of the Spanish Parties and Party System

The Spanish parties and party system are experiencing an ongoing and open-ended period of change. The party system has ceased to respond to a two-party system model and appears now as a multi-party system. The 2008 Great Recession and its consequences contributed to a change in party preferences that reduced the support received by the larger centre-left and centre-right parties. The Spanish party system joined the trend of increasing fragmentation visible in other West European countries. However, Spanish party politics have also shown high levels of electoral volatility and instability that imply that the current party system format cannot be regarded as definitive. These changes also include an increase in affective polarization and the successive rise of electorally strong radical-left and radical-right parties whose support, however, given their relative organizational instability, cannot be considered stable.

Parties' organizations have also experienced some significant although uneven changes. The increase in party democracy or of individual members' involvement in decision-making processes—above all, in party leader selections—is a change that deserves attention. However, apart from that change, some other important party characteristics (reliance on state subsidies, overlap between the party in central office and the party in public office, and party cohesion) remain unaltered.

Some Spanish parties have implemented new approaches to party organization and have attempted innovative internal procedures closer to

multi-speed membership party models or even to digital party models. Above all, this has certainly been the case with Podemos, but the results seem to be far away from their original goals or the party rhetoric in that regard. Overall, Spanish parties have a comparatively weak membership, and this has not changed despite the rise of new parties.

The Spanish party system has entered uncharted territory since 2015. The increased polarization and volatility, the electoral crisis of the larger mainstream centre-left and centre-right parties and the rise of new parties, the strengthening of the radical left, the formation of a minority coalition government in 2020 for the first time since the democratic transition, and the ascent of a radical-right party with a very significant level of electoral support marked a new era of Spanish party politics. This situation appears far from consolidated, with these new features generating a conflictual and unstable political climate.

Looking at Spanish party politics since the democratic transition in the 1970s, the parties seem to have consolidated their central role within the political system favoured by the institutional rules. However, the parties' weaknesses already identified at the beginning of the democratic period (oligarchic trends, weak social roots, dependency on state funding, public mistrust) seem to have consolidated as well. While parties are certainly key for Spanish democracy, these weaknesses might challenge the parties' responsiveness, and the organizational continuance of at least some of them, and finally pose problems for the proper working of democracy. Additionally, in party system terms, the new fragmentation, polarization, and electoral volatility patterns are all features that might pose difficulties in relevant areas such as government formation and stability. In this way, the party system and the parties face the challenges affecting Spanish democracy.

Notes

1. The contribution of M. Salvador is part of the research project 'El estado de partidos: raíces intelectuales, rupturas y respuestas jurídicas en el contexto europeo', PID2021-124531NB-I00.
2. Party systems including different parties, competition patterns, and government formation dynamics dissimilar to the national party system exist at the regional level.
3. In this chapter, we focus on the nationwide Spanish party system and its main changes. However, the multi-level nature of Spanish politics includes specific regional partysystems in many autonomous communities where peripheral nationalist and regionalist parties are significant actors. Since the mid-2010s, some important changes have taken place in several of these party systems, and some non-nationwide parties have

experienced relevant political changes too. The growth of the nationalist mobilization in Catalonia that climaxed in 2017 is particularly important due, first, to the changes in the Catalan party system that this process fostered (notably the strengthening of the ERC's role and electoral support) but, second, to its influence on some changes at the national level (the increased but temporary relevance of Cs and the later rise of VOX).

4. Spain has traditionally shown notable levels of political disaffection (Montero et al. 1997) and anti-party sentiment (Torcal et al. 2002).
5. Spain has a constructive no confidence vote formula that favours government stability.
6. Until then, Spain remained one of the few West European countries where the radical right was not represented in parliament (Llamazares and Ramiro 2006).
7. The electoral rise of VOX was certainly spectacular. VOX presents a far-right programme and rhetoric based on Spanish nationalism, nativism, law and order themes, neoliberal economic policies, and conservative positions on sociocultural and moral issues; the party is radical-right rather than extreme-right given that it does not appeal to the use of violence and does not propose the creation of an authoritarian regime, and populist tones are not very relevant in its discourse (Ferreira 2019). The party gained 0.2% of the vote in the 2015 and 2016 elections but grew to 10.3% in the April 2019 elections and 15% in November 2019. The rapid electoral decrease of the centre–right new party Cs was also remarkable: from 15.9% in April 2019 to 6.8% in November 2019.
8. Unidas Podemos is the name of the coalition between Podemos, IU, and their regional alliances. In any case, the transformation of the unstable Spanish radical left seems to be, like the general change of the party system, an ongoing and open-ended process (Plaza-Colodro and Ramiro 2023).
9. Organic Law 8/2007 on financing of political parties, subsequently reformed by Organic Law 5/2012; Law 19/2013, on transparency, access to public information, and good governance, which establishes some obligations of transparency for parties; and Organic Law 3/2015 on control of the economic-financial activity of parties, which introduces relevant reforms in internal democracy, intensifies regulation of sources of financing, and reinforces mechanisms of economic-financial control.
10. Art. 9.2, Organic Law 6/2002 on Political Parties.
11. Following these proceedings, Batasuna reorganised itself and attempted to register on various occasions as a new political organization, but use was made of the legal measures envisaged to prevent the creation of a party that was the continuation of one that had already been banned, until an application was finally submitted to register a new party, Sortu, whose statutes included the objective of contributing to the definitive and complete disappearance of any kind of violence and terrorism, in particular that of ETA, and in which the break with the dissolved parties was evident.
12. The legal quota was implemented when there had already been a steady progress in women's representation and, especially, left-wing parties had been advancing towards parity in the preceding years (Verge 2012).
13. In this way, the M/E ratio (membership as a proportion of the electorate) in 2017 was 0.25 for PP, 0.54 for PSOE, 1.32 for Podemos, 0.07 for Cs, and 0.06 for IU (Scarrow et al. 2022).
14. Podemos is a notable case in this regard. Since 2015, it has run general elections through different regional alliances including, apart from Podemos, different groupings in different regions. The party experienced significant splits in Andalucía and Galicia, and another more relevant one at national level with the formation of Más País.

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12

Party Organizational Development in Poland, 2001–2021

The Cases of Law and Justice (PiS) and Civic Platform (PO)

Wojciech Gagatek

Introduction

The year 2021 marked the 30th anniversary of the first democratic parties in Poland, which had contested the first fully democratic parliamentary election in 1991. After 45 years of communist centralism and authoritarianism, the democratic transformation was expected to stop public apathy, reduce mistrust of politicians, and increase public activism. However, it was soon clear that building a functioning democracy with parties competing for votes based on different programmes would be more difficult than expected. Since 1991, voter turnout in Poland's national elections has oscillated around 40–50% (only recently exceeding 60%), and party membership has been among the lowest in Europe at approximately 1% of the electorate.

Such a picture was presented in the academic literature dating back to the 1990s, when Poland was portrayed as an extremely unstable party system coupled with feeble party organization (Mair 1996; Millard 2009b). However, since the early 2000s, the party system has stabilized, the number of effective parties has decreased, and the number of major parties has remained (roughly) the same (Walecka 2018). Usual explanations indicate the impact of electoral rules (most notably, a 5% electoral threshold) and the introduction of public financing of political parties in 1997, the full effects of which had been felt since the 2000s (Casal Bértoa and Walecki 2017). While the party system stabilized and parties received stable public financing, by the 2010s

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Poland was commonly portrayed in various rankings and analyses as a model example of a fully fledged democracy, thanks to stable political institutions and a good economic situation. Thereafter—somewhat surprisingly—since the Law and Justice (PiS) party came to power in 2015, the country has witnessed dramatic democratic backsliding, with the result that it is no longer classified as a full democracy (Hellmeier et al. 2021), and the level of political polarization, commonly portrayed as top-down political strategy by PiS, has increased significantly (Tworzecki 2019).

Based on this perspective, while both the intentions and actions of the PiS government seem to be clear, one may wonder what kind of party organization PiS is. Long-standing arguments in the literature highlight that the condition of parties as organizations indicates the health of a democratic system. However, can we surmise that the way PiS has structured Polish politics since 2015 reflects its internal organization? Alternatively, is the vision of democracy that this party is implementing in Poland reflective of its internal democracy?

In order to place this question in a broader context, it needs to be noted that research identifies two simultaneous tendencies to explain the recent organizational development of political parties. On the one hand, because of falling membership figures (Mair et al. 2012), the model of party activism is evolving (Biezen and Poguntke 2014). Some parties try to retain members by increasing intra-party democracy (Bolin et al. 2017) and by experimenting with different types of less formal affiliations (Scarrow 2015). This process occurs despite the fact that in most European countries parties are now directly subsidized from state budgets (Biezen and Kopecký 2014). On the other hand, together with the presidentialization of politics in general (Poguntke and Webb 2007; Elgie and Passarelli 2020), we also observe the presidentialization of political parties (Passarelli 2015) and a general empowerment of party leaders. So, theoretically, greater intra-party democracy does not exclude strengthening the role of leaders, particularly when they benefit from being directly elected by party members. Passarelli argues that the level of party presidentialization is affected by constitutional structures and, following Panebianco (1988), by the genetic characteristics of parties. I follow this perspective, but the key point in which I extend the above approach is based on including into an analysis not only the constitutional structures but also a constitutional vision, that is, the view of the preferred shape of the political system that individual parties have and its potential reflection in party organization. Therefore, a comparative approach is required to focus on the question of how similar or different the Polish political parties are.

Additionally, we must examine how stable their organizational structures have been since their establishment.

This study is based on a combination of primary and secondary sources. First, we will present an overview of Polish party politics since the beginning of Poland's democratic transformation, moving on to case selection. Second, a quick overview of the legal and regulatory framework that regulates party activities will be presented. Third, based on the analysis of party statutes, I will present the organizational development of two major political parties in today's Poland, namely PiS and PO. Finally, this picture will be illustrated by the results of various studies and press coverage on the practices of internal democracy and the role of members in Polish parties.

General Information on Polish Party Politics

When democratic transformation began in Poland in 1989, the country was divided into two large camps. The first comprised the communist party (PZPR) and its two so-called satellite parties, agrarian ZSL and another small party, SD, designed as a representation of the so-called intelligentsia. The second was a united block of all major democratic forces that had not yet formed a party. Only in 1990 were the first democratic parties created, as the divisions within the democratic camp proved too strong (Millard 2009a). After that, parties mushroomed, reaching about 1,000 registered entities. Party labels were constantly changing, which meant that a fresh set of parties was contesting every subsequent election, and the lack of any electoral threshold resulted in an extreme level of party fragmentation. The post-communist party organizations proved much more durable; after changing their names in 1990, their organizations have survived until today. The PZPR became the Social Democratic Party of Poland (SdRP, later SLD, and most recently the New Left) and the agrarian ZSL became the Polish People's Party (PSL). In 1993, a 5% nationwide electoral threshold was introduced, which significantly decreased party fragmentation in parliament. The party system stabilized in the early 2000s, when the liberal Civic Platform (PO) and conservative Law and Justice (PiS) parties were formed. Since 2001, PiS, PO, SLD, and PSL (regardless of the fact that they sometimes formed a coalition with some smaller parties) together received on average 82% of the vote and 88.8% of seats in the lower house of parliament (Sejm). However, the period after 2005 marks yet another development, when the SLD lost its relevance and two newer parties rooted in the anti-communist opposition began their dominance of the electoral process, which is most visible at the level of seats

Table 12.1 Key indicators of the format of the party system in Poland, 1991–2019

Indicators/Election year	1991	1993	1997	2001	2005	2007	2011	2015	2019
Turnout (% of active voters)	43.2	52.08	47.93	46.18	40.57	53.88	48.92	50.92	61.74
ENEP	11.62	9.58	4.55	4.45	5.64	3.24	3.68	4.39	3.35
ENPP	10.80	3.88	2.95	4.04	4.26	2.87	3.00	2.75	2.83
Volatility	N/A	28.9	19.30	35.20	34.00	23.70	7.70	29.70	7.40
Sum of two biggest parties (votes, %)	24.31	35.81	60.96	53.72	51.13	73.62	69.07	61.67	70.99
Sum of two biggest parties (seats, %)	26.52	65.87	79.35	61.09	61.96	81.52	79.13	81.09	80.22
Biggest to second party ratio (votes)	1.03	1.32	1.25	3.24	1.12	1.29	1.31	1.56	1.59
Biggest to second party ratio (seats)	1.03	1.29	1.22	3.32	1.14	1.26	1.32	1.70	1.75

Note: ENEP—Effective Number of Electoral Parties; ENPP—Effective Number of Parliamentary Parties; Volatility as the total volatility; Turnout as share of all registered voters

Source: Markowski (2020), Parliaments and governments database (ParlGov: Döring et al. 2022), Database on WHO Governs in Europe and beyond, PSGO (Casal Bértoa 2022), Voter Turnout Database (IDEA 2022)

in the parliament. PiS governed from 2005 to 2007 (in coalition with two junior radical partners), and then, after 2015, in coalition with a group of different parties running for parliament on PiS's ballot; PO, with PSL as a junior coalition partner, governed from 2007 to 2015. Table 12.1 presents standard indicators of the party system in Poland since 1991, documenting its overall stabilization and consolidation.

Party Competition and Political Organization

But what Table 12.1 does not reveal is that the agendas of PiS and PO have strongly dominated political competition since 2005, and although nominally they would be categorized as (centre) right, the ideological distance between them has always been significant (Kwiatkowska et al. 2016). One can easily notice this by inspecting various databases and expert surveys, such as the Chapel Hill Expert Survey or the Comparative Manifesto Project, alongside the party programmes. For this chapter—and with some simplification—it suffices to say that, on the one hand, there is PiS, with its emphasis on social spending and redistribution in the economic field; traditional, conservative views on moral issues; soft Euro-scepticism regarding European integration;

and a negative view on the general record of democratic transformation in Poland. On the other hand, there is PO, with its liberal economic orthodoxy of a 'small' state; progressive views on moral issues; pro-EU attitudes; and a more positive overall evaluation of the Polish democratic transformation. Around 2005, a metaphor of a competition between 'solidary' (PiS) and 'liberal' (PO) Poland was commonly used—the term liberal being pejoratively associated with the Polish political context. However, later—and definitely since the 2015 general election when PiS took all executive power—the patterns of political competition extended to the general nature of the political system, including the practice of checks and balance, the rule of law, the independence of the Constitutional Court and the judiciary, and the freedom of the media, among other factors.

However, what is particularly important from the perspective of this chapter concerns certain elements of the constitutional vision of the political system cherished by PiS, which can be reconstructed based on its programme (PiS 2005; 2014) and interviews with Jarosław Kaczyński (Rzeczpospolita 2013). PiS has always emphasized the preponderance of the state central apparatus in all spheres of political, economic, cultural, and social activities; all other actors, such as regional and local governments or NGOs, have to play second fiddle. Regarding the division of power, PiS never favoured the powerful role of the Constitutional Tribunal as a sort of veto player. They argued that it is not a healthy situation when—replicating their jargon—a few judges can overturn the will of the people reflected in the election results. The concept of 'impossibilism' was coined to characterize the situation of an elected government that cannot execute its programme because of the role of veto players. In other words, once people support a certain political programme, no other institution should interfere in its implementation and execution. Hence, PiS strongly criticized the 1997 Constitution, and in its 2010 proposal for a new constitution, it wanted to significantly strengthen the role of the President and, in practice, limit the Montesquieu separation of powers by increasing the supervision of the judiciary by the executive (PiS 2010). Since 2015 (Maatsch 2021), the parliament is fully subordinate to the government: legislative bills must be fast-tracked and adopted with little or no debate—virtually overnight, with no amendments or consultation with stakeholders except, perhaps, those that are close to the government. If, despite commanding an overall majority in the parliament, PiS loses an important vote, then the ballot is repeated by using a procedural trick. The same applies to a parliamentary group and ministers. In a much-quoted pre-national election interview in 2013, when asked who would be in his government if PiS wins, Kaczyński did not reveal the names but said: 'not everyone will be a

genius, not everyone particularly talented, but they have to be disciplined, honest and know what they want to achieve' (Rzeczpospolita 2013).

Although PO was established by politicians, it has always emphasized its civic, deregulatory, and decentralizing vision of the role of the state: its belief that things get done better at the lowest possible level and that it is better to empower individual citizens at the cost of political parties. The party strongly backed the proposal that led to direct election of mayors in cities, towns, and villages (in force since 2002); a few years later, it suggested direct election of regional presidents (*marszałek*), but this proposal was not passed. At that time, the party strongly promoted the introduction of the majoritarian, first-past-the-post electoral system for both national and local elections. In its rhetoric, it often used metaphors such as 'let's activate the energy of the Poles'. It has unequivocally supported the 1997 Constitution and, unlike PiS, never questioned the major contours of the political system (PO 2007). Needless to say, since 2015 PO has strongly criticized the constitutional and parliamentary practices of PiS.

All these factors led me to select PO and PiS for further analysis. Unlike SLD and PSL, PO and PiS were established in the same year, when both the new Constitution and the new party law were adopted (see the following discussion). Therefore, they were subject to the same (potential) impact of the political and regulatory environment that influences party activities. To date, they have had comparable membership rolls and budgets (see Table 12.2). They have had similar governing experience: from 2005–2021, the two parties governed and remained in the opposition for eight years each. Additionally, both faced electoral defeats that removed them from office.

Table 12.2 Membership figures and party finances in the four largest Polish political parties

	PiS	PO	PSL	SLD
Membership roll (2018)	33,500	37,409	100,320	33,554
National party income (in Polish zloty, in 2017)	22,540,879	17,541,176	7,720,336	6,168,769
Share of total party income from individual member donations	3.8%	5.2%	28%	8%
Part of total party income from direct public subsidies	82%	88%	58%	70%
Election expenditure (in Polish zloty, 2019)	30,029,081	30,220,938	8,468,107	9,641,495

Source: author's own work regarding collection of membership data; the official election reports by the Polish Election Committee for other items in the table: www.pkw.gov.pl (Accessed 15 December 2023)

Therefore, juxtaposing PiS and PO, we can 'control' the impact of party age, membership numbers, financial resources, and governing experience. What clearly emerge as principal differences are their ideologies and origins as far as personal history is concerned—the impact of this is difficult to show but worth investigating. Overall, we could argue that these two are the most similar cases of parties that could be selected.

I will begin the empirical part of this study conventionally, with party statutes. Analysing the organizational development of the parties, I will highlight their main differences, which will be contextualized in the subsequent section by reconstructing the narrative that the parties use when referring to internal democracy and the role of members. However, first let me briefly explain the legal and financial settings in which political parties operate in Poland.

The Constitution and Party Law

The current legal framework to regulate party activities dates back to 1997. First, the Constitution adopted that year—and in force ever since—confirmed several principles that had been governing the functioning of political parties since the beginning of the democratic transformation; political parties appear in the Constitution in four instances. First, it ensures that the creation and functioning of political parties are based on the principle of freedom and equality, that parties are voluntary organizations based on the membership of Polish citizens, and that they are transparent in their financing ('the financing of political parties shall be open to public inspection'), while their goals shall be achieved by democratic means (Art. 11 of the Constitution). Second—and in the latter context—Article 13 lists criteria for banning certain types of parties, and it is worth quoting in full:

> Political parties and other organizations whose programmes are based upon totalitarian methods and the modes of activity of Nazism, fascism, and communism, as well as those whose programmes or activities sanction racial or national hatred, the application of violence for the purpose of obtaining power or to influence the State policy, or provide for the secrecy of their own structure or membership, shall be prohibited. (The Constitution of the Republic of Poland 1997)

Third, the competence to adjudicate whether the purposes and activities of political parties conform to the Constitution is vested in the Constitutional

Tribunal (Art. 188, Para. 4 of the Constitution). Finally, the power of nomination of candidates to become Members of Parliament is granted to political parties and voters (Art. 100, para. 1). No other elements of the functioning and activities of political parties are regulated, and the above rules were not amended since the adoption of the Constitution. They have also caused little controversy in constitutional practice.

In the same year, 1997, the new party law was adopted; like the Constitution, it has been in force ever since, though with a few amendments (Sejm 1997). This law introduced direct subsidies to those parties that received at least 3% of the vote in the last parliamentary elections, or 5% in the case of coalitions. As far as party organization is concerned, Article 8 of the party law rules that parties 'shape their structure and rules of work according to the principles of democracy, in particular by ensuring the transparency of these structures, appointing party bodies through elections, and taking decisions by majority of votes'. The law specifies areas of party activities that must be regulated in party statutes, including the rights and obligations of members and the procedure for selecting the governing bodies of the party; at least 1,000 people must support a motion for registration. The registrar court examines whether the motion for registration and, in particular, party statutes, conform to the conditions stipulated in the party law and in the Constitution. Later, I will discuss how such inspection can interfere with the freedom of establishment of parties by using the PO example.

The Origins of PiS and PO Party Organizations

The year 2001 saw a spectacular electoral failure of the broad-church post-solidarity government of the right-wing Electoral Action of Solidarity (AWS) and the liberal Union for Freedom (UW) that governed from 1997 to 2001; the post-communist SLD won and governed (in coalition with PSL) from 2001 to 2005. In the same election, PO and PiS contested for the first time, attaining 12.68% and 9.50% of the vote share, respectively.

PiS, established in 2001, capitalized on the popularity and authority of Jarosław Kaczyński's twin brother, Lech, as justice minister in the AWS-UW government (2000–2001). In the popular imagination, the party and its leader were inseparable. Lech was the first chair of the party (2001–2003); after he was elected as Mayor of Warsaw in 2002, his brother Jarosław took over as party chair and has remained in that role until the time of writing. However, during the eight years of PiS government, Jarosław Kaczyński

served as Prime Minister for only one year, favouring the position of party leader on whom the Prime Ministers from PiS are strongly dependent.

Three politicians—referred to as the three tenors—with significant political experience in government and party politics established PO in 2001. Most party members were drawn from a split in the UW, and others were remnants of the AWS. The criticism of their former party organizations (portrayed using oligarchical metaphors and an inability to enthuse members) formed the basis for a new movement. The term 'party' was avoided in its name, and the organization pictured itself as a (civic) movement that would not only propose different policies but also organize differently—that is, in a less hierarchical and more deregulated manner, allowing members a greater say in party activities. Gradually, one of the 'tenors', Donald Tusk, marginalized the other two and became a powerful party leader, serving as Prime Minister from 2007 until 2014.

I will later discuss the organizational development of PiS and PO from 2001 until 2021, first by analysing their statutes and internal rules, then by reconstructing the narrative that party leaders used regarding party organization and, especially, the roles and rights of members.

Law and Justice (PiS)

A reading of the statutes of PiS adopted in 2001 reveals that it was an extremely centralized and hierarchical party. Local and regional party organizations were subordinated to national organs; the latter could suspend or replace the former. In most important matters, decisions of the regional executives needed a 2/3 majority, failing which, the matter was decided by the national executive. Another example of this centralism concerned the youth section of the party, whose leaders, both at the national and regional levels, were nominated by the party executive on the motion of the party leader, not by the members of the youth section.

Although party congress remained the most important body, the centre of attention in party statutes comprised the leader and the main, small executive organ (Zarząd Główny) including the party chair, vice-chairs, and the leader of the parliamentary group. A common phrase in party statutes was 'on the motion of the party chair', revealing their dominant role in major party decisions. Zarząd Główny played a crucial role in candidate selection, defining the procedure, and taking the final decision on the candidate list. Similarly, the regional executive organized and took a decision on candidate lists in regional and local elections (with local party branches only giving an opinion

on the already completed list of candidates) and suggested candidates for national elections to the Zarząd Główny.

Membership applications were accepted by the regional executive, not the local party branch. Apart from their membership application being supported by two existing members, applicants had to fill in a personal information form, after which they could be accepted as probationary members for a period of one year. One of the national executive organs, the Political Committee, could veto the decision of the regional executive on the acceptance of membership applications.

Although the list of members' rights seemed conventional—with the exception that the party would help those who were oppressed because of their membership of PiS—the list of obligations was much more demanding. This suggests that the party expected active, loyal, and engaged members with unquestionable moral and ethical credentials. Therefore, considerable space was devoted in the statutes to sanctions and disciplinary procedures in case of the violation of obligations.

PiS transformed its internal organization considerably after losing the 2007 election by making it slightly less hierarchical and centralized. The Zarząd Główny was dissolved and its powers given to a broader executive organ (the Political Committee) comprising both ex-officio and elected members. The competence to elect party vice-chairs or treasurers—still on a motion of the party chair—was attributed to a broad intermediary legislative organ (the Political Council), whose members were elected by the congress. A larger consultative role was also given to regional party chairs and regional executive organs by giving them the right to select candidates for regional elections. The leader received the sole power to present the list of candidates in all types of election for the approval of the Political Committee, with the regional party structures being able to express their non-binding opinion. Overall, compared to the earlier period, this was still a centralized party—both vertically and horizontally—and strongly centred on the leader; however, the decision-making system now included a wider set of inclusive organs.

Equally important is the noticeable attempt to loosen the party's restrictive membership criteria. The newly adopted party statutes did not mention any probationary period; support of two existing members to submit a membership application was not required (although, in practice, the membership application had to be sponsored by two existing members); and the decision on accepting an application, while still taken by the local executive, could not be vetoed by central party organs. However, as before, the party listed a long and extensive catalogue of obligations and gave strong disciplinary functions to the national executive organs.

Civic Platform (PO)

PO presents an entirely different case. One inspiration for the emergence of this party was its criticism of conventional party politics and the pitfalls of Polish parties of the 1990s. Its first statutes adopted in 2001 contained two revolutionary proposals.

First, instead of a congress, the most important party organ was a parliamentary group of the party and its presidium. The group not only adopted the party statutes and political programme but also selected the party chair, vice-chairs, and other positions of influence within the party from among members of the group. The only organ that was not composed of group members was the national convention, tasked with establishing party values and adopting an election platform. The parliamentary group was adopting candidate selection procedures for all types of elections. The group presidium was competent to interpret the statutes and decide on membership fees. The party was based on strong independence of regional and local structures, while still dominated by elected representatives. For example, the regional leader was a PO member with the highest regional vote share. The acceptance of membership bids was the prerogative of a branch chair. Second, PO wrote in its statutes that candidate selection would be based on closed primaries in which all members would participate equally. This is how the party selected its candidates, but only for the election in 2001.

However, the registrar court rejected the party statutes on the grounds of not fulfilling the criteria set in the 1997 party law. The most important reservation was that in the court's opinion, the party law excluded a situation in which the most important party organ, capable of adopting statutes and deciding on party termination, was not a delegate-based representation of all members. For this reason, PO had to place these competences with the national convention. A party must also have a representative organ in between the congresses; hence, the decision to establish the National Council (Rada Krajowa). Given that there were controversies about how the party primaries were organized in 2001 (as discussed later in the chapter), they removed this mode of candidate selection from the statutes, and instead, the rules on candidate selection were attributed to the National Council.

Since the mid-2000s, compared to PiS, PO was still a case of a much more decentralized party, with a clear division of competences between different territorial levels of party structure. The internal structure created at the beginning of the party's history has remained unchanged since the early 2000s, as characterized earlier in this section. The same applies to the rights and

obligations of members, with a small exception worth mentioning: the new rules specify that the right to participate in internal elections begins only six months after joining the party. This rule was introduced to prevent a situation typical for PO in its early years, when boosting membership figures in a region just before party congress was a means to increase the number of congress delegates attributed to that region.

Although party primaries were no longer held to select candidates for legislative elections, the party introduced them in two cases: when selecting a candidate for the office of President of Poland (for the first time in 2009) and when electing the leader of the party (2013). The rules of these primaries are not stipulated in the statutes but were adopted by the party Board. As far as the selection of candidates for national elections is concerned, it is based on a bottom-up process, in which the regional legislative organ of the party submits candidates for the approval of the National Council of the PO. In special cases, the Board, on the motion of the party chair and under an absolute majority of Board members, may alter the choice of candidates made by the National Council.

Overall, in the initial period, both parties started with completely different visions regarding party organization. In the case of PO, the registrar court crushed this vision, and in the case of PiS, the level of centralization was only slightly reduced because of an electoral defeat. However, do these parties really need members, and how do they attract them?

The Role of Party Members in PiS

It is common to emphasize the positive role of inclusive and active membership for effective social engagement; much less common is acknowledging the costs and risks associated with members. However, the latter perspective is necessary to understand the vision for and role of members in PiS. In a 2001 interview (Gazeta Wyborcza 2001c), Jarosław Kaczyński argued that post-Solidarity parties of the 1990s expanded excessively by inviting too many members of dubious quality that later led to their decomposition. To avoid this mistake, Kaczyński declared that PiS would carefully verify the application of every potential candidate. Hence, the references to building a cadre-based party were understood by Kaczyński in this manner. The plan was to open the party for membership at a later stage but to remain quite selective. From this perspective, while it would be far-fetched to argue that members were a necessary evil, it is fair to say that PiS was not enthusiastic about rhetoric that would emphasize their extremely positive

role. The success of the party had to lie elsewhere—in the ability to have a smaller, reliable, and tightly controlled membership. To be included on a candidate list in the 2001 national elections, members had to be thoroughly cross-checked (Gazeta Wyborcza 2001b, 2001d).

In subsequent years, it became clear that the national leader tightly controlled the party, being surrounded by a small group of the most reliable members that stood with Kaczyński from the early 1990s. Only the chair could submit candidacies for major positions of influence, including regional leaders, and the regional congress of the party could only accept or reject them, without the right to suggest another. No candidate suggested by Kaczyński was ever rejected. Only in 2009 did party statutes include the possibility that party chairs in boroughs did not need to be suggested by the regional leader but could be proposed by branch members. However, this change did not weaken Kaczyński and his sole competence in suggesting candidates for regional leaders. These changes were meant to attract new members. One of the closest advisors to Kaczyński, Adam Bielan, declared this explicitly by saying, '[t]he largest number of membership applications are submitted to the party while in government, but the most precious are those that are sent when the party is in opposition' (Gazeta Wyborcza 2009). He added that the party needed members for a better selection of potential candidates for local and regional elections (in 2010 PiS submitted 32 000 candidates in these elections) and to draw greater revenue from dues, as at that moment PO was discussing the possibility of scrapping public funding for political parties. More recent data revealed in the study by Jacuński et al. (2021) confirmed that Kaczyński repetitively encouraged local branches to expand their membership base.

Until 2015, despite repeated election losses, when the party witnessed splits, Kaczyński could still rely on the loyalty of the most trusted collaborators that ensured his prolonged tenure as the party leader. Since the 2015 victory, he has not become Prime Minister and has focused on running the party and parliamentary activities. During this period, the issue of organization of party membership emerged only rarely, and that too, in a negative light. The PiS, especially, gained notoriety not only for curtailing democracy, the rule of law, and media freedom, but also for a high level of clientelism, patronage, politicization, and nepotism of state-owned companies, central state administration, and the like, whereby either PiS members or their families received various economic benefits or influential positions. PiS officially admitted this in the declaration adopted during its 2021 congress (PiS 2021), and which Kaczyński described in his congress speech as a potential cause of failure in the next election (Rzeczpospolita 2021).

Party Members in PO

As depicted above, in their initial statutes, PO and PiS stood at completely different poles. In fact, the entrepreneurial spirit characteristic of the party programme was also reflected in the party organization. Tusk declared at the first convention of PO in 2001 that 'we are not against democracy, and hence we are not against political parties, but we are against such political parties'.[1] However, the experiment with organizing party primaries was only partially successful. The event took place outdoors in an atmosphere reminiscent of a barbecue party. An impressive figure of 187,000 citizens signed a membership declaration (though at that time PO was not formally formed as a party), but only 69,000 took part in primaries. The biggest problem was that in some places candidates brought 'busloads' of supporters to achieve nomination (Gazeta Wyborcza 2001a). For this reason, in some constituencies, the party leaders had to cancel the result or alter the order of the candidates. In subsequent years, the new party suffered throughout the country from a well-known tendency that in Polish political language is called 'pumping the branches'. The method is very simple: before internal elections, local or regional leaders do everything they can to bring in as many membership applications as possible, as this directly translates into the number of delegates in party organs such as the national convention or the congress. This was possible because the statutes gave the right to accept a membership application to a branch chair. However, as the national leadership of the time admitted, once these newly arrived members did their job, that is, voted in branch elections, they usually became passive (Gazeta Wyborcza 2010c). Sometimes, their membership applications were faked, leading to the disbandment of all local party structures (Gazeta Wyborcza 2011). In these circumstances, PO was hesitant to run any special campaign to bring more members to the party but still tried to audit its membership to exclude such practices. A proposal considered in 2013 but not implemented was to introduce probationary periods for new members and the need to have a recommendation from an existing member (Gazeta Wyborcza 2013c). What the party did add to its statutes in 2013, however, was the requirement that each candidate should present himself or herself during a meeting of the party branch, which was meant to limit the risk of admitting a non-existent person. Overall, about half of PO members do not pay membership dues and are thus excluded from direct elections and primaries, which translates into an average turnout of 45–50% (Gazeta Wyborcza 2010b, 2019).

When, after the changes ordered by the registrar court (see previous discussion), the organization of the party remained unchanged until 2006 despite

two lost elections (presidential and parliamentary), an internal opposition arose against Donald Tusk and his 'authoritarian' leadership. Not only did Tusk remove his critics from the party (the Board agreed that these members acted against the party's interests), but he also managed to centralize some aspects of its functioning, such as candidate selection, which became less inclusive, and the Board was given the competence to expel members without the right to appeal to a peers' court. Later, in 2010, Tusk strengthened his statutory role as party leader (e.g. by receiving the sole prerogative to nominate party vice-chairs) in order to quell internal opposition (Gazeta Wyborcza 2010a). However, at the same time, the party supported a motion to organize primaries for candidates in presidential and mayoral elections, subject to approval by the delegates' assembly, and, since 2013, direct elections to the party chair. At that moment, Tusk was confident that he could bypass the internal, middle-level opposition, capitalizing on the low level of party support in the opinion polls, by directly calling on individual members. Although the internal campaign before these primaries was planned for almost a year, Tusk reduced it to six months, as internal divisions and factional divides were one of the major headlines in the news, thus undermining the public image of the party. Tusk won convincingly against another candidate and, drawing on his direct mandate, ruled the party with a firm grip, marginalizing his internal opponents first in the regional and then in the national party organization. 'Party leadership must be singular, not plural', he said at the time (Gazeta Wyborcza 2013a, 2013b). However, when Tusk was elected President of the European Council in 2014 and resigned from the party leadership, the leader of his former internal opposition was elected party chair. To keep the party united and allow greater control over various factions, in 2017 it introduced direct elections for regional and county chairs and members of the regional and county delegate assemblies, and it increased the number of national Board members elected by the National Council, thus limiting the power of the party leader (Gazeta Wyborcza 2017).

Regardless of their different origins and histories, scholars argue that Polish parties are quite similar to each other both with regard to campaign patterns and communication strategies (Cwalina and Drzewiecka 2019; Jacuński et al. 2021). This way, while progressive professionalization is visible over the years, what is common are the leader-oriented, centralized, rather repetitive and reactive campaigns led by party leaderships (rather than campaign professionals) who pay considerable attention to opinion polls, focusing on external audiences through media presence. Cwalina and Drzewiecka (2019) argue that during the 2015 election campaign PiS mobilized better than PO on the internet. Still, in both parties, internal communication with

party members plays little or no role. Jacuński et al. (2021) argue that from this perspective PiS and PO are alike. Based on the 2018 survey of party members, these authors showed that when parties ask members for help, they mostly need it to help collect signatures to support the registration of the list of candidates for elections (more than a quarter of all cases), but they hardly ever put their input into the programmatic work and rarely get in touch directly with voters (Jacuński et al. 2021). Recent studies (Jacuński et al. 2021; Wincławska et al. 2021) revealed that PiS members are united in their overall positive view of the role they play within the party, whereas PO members are much more divided and critical. It is worth mentioning that Kaczyński was hesitant to allow researchers to survey members of his party, and in the end did not let them send a survey to all members; instead, they had to distribute it by themselves during local party meetings. In this light, it will not be a surprise to learn that last congress of PiS was also, for most part, closed to the public.

Conclusions

Based on the above analysis, we can conclude the following. First, in terms of the organizational development of political parties, the case of PiS shows a strong overall level of continuity in organizational choices. Although the party slightly decentralized after the electoral defeat in 2007 and then continued in this manner until today, it has kept its overall organizational logic constant. This is an extremely centralized party organization, with national levels dominating regional levels, a powerful role of the chair, and low levels of intra-party democracy. Members are mostly needed as potential candidates for elected representatives, but they must be loyal and disciplined and avoid criticizing the party leader. In contrast, PO has created a sort of circle. Starting with revolutionary proposals, it gradually centralized many aspects of party functioning, most notably by increasing the role of the chair. Unable to control internal party debates, it even considered copying the solutions for membership policy typical of PiS. However, after Tusk left, the party returned to a higher level of dispersion of influence. In this sense, this is not a full circle, but at least a symbolic reference to the early days of the party. At the same time, and quite systematically, the party introduced participatory mechanisms, first as primaries for presidential elections and then as direct elections to the party chair. In this sense, the case of PO fits the general description of the development of some parties in the world today that I presented at the beginning of this chapter.

Second, while it would not be justified to argue that the different structure of PO and PiS originated from their different constitutional visions, or even more to try to prove the impact of the former on the latter, nevertheless, the link between the two seems visible. PiS as a party, like the state it governs, must act quickly; so, discussions and deliberations are not a priority. The leadership should not be limited, checked, or counterbalanced by anything or anyone, either in the party or in the state, as it draws its legitimacy directly from the voters (state) or party members (party); internal opposition in the party or in the parliament is crushed by the power of majority; lower levels of state (regional and local governments) and party (regions and branches) must be subordinate to the government. In general, executive aggrandizement, both at the national and party levels, is the key to understanding this process. The case of PO is more problematic from this perspective. Initially, it seemed that the way they wanted to organize the party reflected their constitutional vision quite strongly. It is not the structure, but agency and individuals who should be empowered at all spheres of party and state activities, with both words (state and party) avoided in the political rhetoric as representing old politics. The cost of such a vision was party fragmentation and fractionalization, which the leader of the party, Donald Tusk, tried to organize by increasing his powers and responsibilities. During his government, while the narrative and rhetoric of individualism, support for state decentralization, and deregulation as a programme for the state continued, at the party level, it was the opposite.

A common argument in recent Polish public debate has been that people do not care about the independence of the Constitutional Tribunal, the judiciary, or any other less 'monetized' issue as long as the PiS government provides social and economic benefits. The same could perhaps be argued about the importance of party organization or, to be more precise, its potential in attracting new voters. The cases of organizational development of other parties lead to such conclusions. Kukiz'15 was a movement established by a former punk rock star. From formal and practical perspectives, it was a non-party and the only parliamentary force that rejected public subsidies. Although it started with a great ambition, it was soon decimated and lost political steam.

Only when the opposition captures the majority in the parliament are prospects for the revival of liberal democracy possible. In fact, the very negative opinion of how PiS dismantled liberal democracy in Poland is the main factor uniting opposition forces, rather than a clear programmatic set of views. Still, even if PiS does not govern beyond the 2023 election, it is likely to remain a very strong player in the parliament, with its own president ending their term only in 2025. Furthermore, PiS successfully created a dense chain

of political, institutional, and economic networks that are likely to stand against a rapid return to liberal democracy. However, if PiS wins again, we may expect even greater steps back from liberal democracy, in particular targeting media freedom, which has been observed in the last months before the 2023 election.

Note

1. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AZHSUvcj_Lc.

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13
Political Parties and Democracy

The Israeli Case

Assaf Shapira

Background: Parties and the Party System in Israel

The political map

Israel is a developed parliamentary democracy with a closed-list PR electoral system. In the November 2022 elections for the 25th Knesset (Israel's unicameral parliament), 10 electoral lists (among them joint lists consisting of more than one party) won seats (see Figure 13.1). While some are veteran parties with origins dating back to the pre-state period—first and foremost Likud and Labour—there are also many new parties, some of which were established less than a decade ago (e.g. Yesh Atid, Hosen Yisrael, New Hope). Some are distinctly sectoral parties—representing especially ultra-religious (United Torah Judaism, Shas), religious (Religious Zionism), and Arab (Hadash, Ta'al, Ra'am) electorates—while others are more aggregative. Additional important distinctions concern the patterns of party organization and the political bloc to which they belong.

Legal background

Israeli law distinguishes between a party, a list, and a (Knesset) faction. A party is an extra-parliamentary institution that is regulated by various laws, including the Parties Law, 1992. One or more parties can submit a list of candidates to the Central Elections Committee. Once a list is elected to the Knesset, it becomes a faction.

The relevant laws regulate certain intra-party aspects yet neglect others completely. For example, unlike some democracies, there are no rules relating to gender representation (some parties adopt voluntary gender quotas). There are also no requirements concerning intra-party democracy. However,

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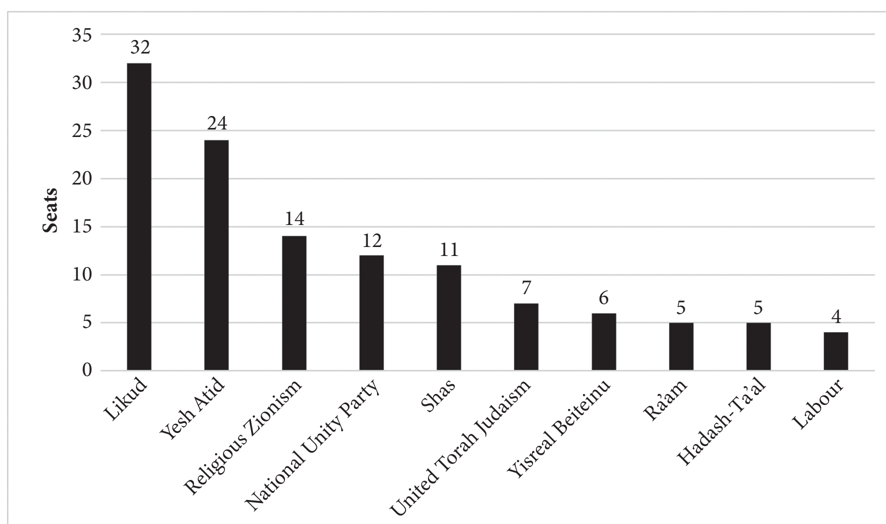

Figure 13.1 Results of the 2022 Knesset elections*

* Joint Lists: Religious Zionism (Ichud Leumi-Tkuma, Jewish National Front, Noam); National Unity Party (New Hope, Hosen Yisrael); United Torah Judaism (Agudat Yisrael, Degel Hatora); Hadash-Ta'al (Hadash, Ta'al)

Source: Central Elections Committee, 2022. 'Actual Results of the Elections to the 25th Knesset'. https://votes25.bechirot.gov.il/ (Accessed 14 October 2023)

parties that voluntarily decide to conduct intra-party candidate or leadership selection, as well as elections for their internal organs, are subject to detailed regulation, mainly concerning their candidates' financial conduct.

Like most developed democracies, Israel provides parties with public funding (both ongoing and electoral) based on their electoral achievements and their size in the Knesset. In return, the state imposes restrictions on parties, such as ceilings for donations and expenses. Parties are required to submit financial reports to the State Comptroller, who examines them and publishes reports on their conduct. Since funding in Israel is comparatively generous and the donation ceiling is low (Ben-Bassat and Dahan 2014), parties almost exclusively rely on state funds. In 2018, for example, 86.6% of the parties' revenue came from state funding, while only 8.3% was from membership fees and 0.5% from donations (the rest was drawn from other sources, mostly payments for the employment of parliamentary advisors to Members of the Knesset (MKs); State Comptroller 2021a).

Intra-party democracy

As mentioned, the Israeli party law does not require parties to be internally democratic, and thus each party selects its own path. Some Israeli

political parties (e.g. Likud, Labour, Meretz, Ichud Leumi-Tkuma, Hadash, and Balad) are relatively democratic, especially in terms of participation and inclusiveness. They have representative institutions that are selected by party members, and they select their leader and candidates via democratic competitive processes (primaries or selection by the representative party institution).

By contrast, other parties are non-democratic. Prominent among these are personal (or personalistic/personalist) parties. In recent years, a number of researchers have found that personal parties have become more widespread in developed democracies and have sought to define their characteristics—especially the dominance of the leader, who is often also the founder of the party, and the party's very weak organizational structure (for example: Kostadinova and Levitt 2014; Calise 2015; Kefford and McDonnell 2018). Since the 2013 elections, all new parties that were elected to the Knesset have been personal parties. In the 2022 elections, Yesh Atid, Yisrael Beiteinu, New Hope, Hosen Yisrael, and Ta'al constitute clear examples.

The religious and ultra-religious sectoral parties are also non-democratic (except for Ichud Leumi-Tkuma). However, in these parties, the politicians are subordinate to, or more often influenced by, other intra-party actors. In the ultra-religious Shas, United Torah Judaism, and Islamic Ra'am, internal bodies composed of religious leaders have the final say on leader and candidate selection as well as policy formation (although in Shas the dominance of the political leader, Aryeh Deri, has greatly increased in recent years).

The decline of Israeli political parties

Like parties in many other developed democracies, over recent decades Israeli political parties have suffered from a decline. This has resulted from a variety of economic, social, and cultural factors that are also relevant to Israel: cultural trends such as individualization; social phenomena such as the decline in traditional cleavage politics; and technological developments that created alternative channels for political information and participation (Dalton and Wattenberg 2000). It also resulted from the difficulties that specific parties have encountered.

The decline of Israeli political parties is particularly pronounced because in the first decades following its establishment in 1948, the State of Israel was described as a 'parties state' (Akzin 1955). Mapai and its successor Labour, as well as other parties, controlled the bureaucracy, local authorities, and unions; enjoyed mass membership; and had affiliated youth movements, sports clubs, newspapers, healthcare associations, and banks.

However, since the 1970s, and more prominently since the 1990s, Israel's parties have radically weakened. In fact, Israel is an extreme example of this universal phenomenon. Rahat and Kenig found that Israeli parties experienced the third largest decline—measured as an average of a dozen indicators—among a group of 26 democracies (Rahat and Kenig 2018). This decline may have been especially sharp due to the fact that Israel's starting point was very high—as noted, it was described as a parties state—but also due to the adoption of institutional reforms that enhanced political personalization and fragmentation. These include the direct elections of mayors in the 1970s and of the Prime Minister (1996–2001) and the adoption of party primaries by Labour and Likud in the early–mid-1990s. All of these reforms made individual politicians more prominent than their own parties. The long personalistic rule of Netanyahu (2009–2021, 2022–present) accelerated this process. Not only has Likud, his own party, been personalized, but the main challenges he faces increasingly come from new personal parties; parties with more collegial patterns seem to fail.

One of the most prominent indicators of this phenomenon in Israel is the decrease in institutionalized political participation. Indeed, while at the end of the 1970s 17% of adult citizens were party members, by 2022 the number had fallen to less than 4% (see Table 13.1) (Kenig and Rahat 2023). Voter turnout, which stood at 78.5–83% in the years 1959–1999, fell sharply in the early 2000s, and since 2003 stands at 63.5–72.3% (see Figure 13.2). Likewise, public trust in parties has severely deteriorated, and today they are the least-trusted institutions in Israel (in a 2020 survey, only 17% of Jews and 30% of Arabs expressed 'very much' or 'quite a lot' of trust in Israeli political parties) (Hermann et al. 2020). The presence of national parties in various institutions, such as labour unions, student associations, and local government, has also declined (Kenig and Rahat 2023).

Table 13.1 Party members in Israel, 2022

Party	Members (in thousands)	M/E
Likud	140	2.06
Labour	40	0.59
Ichud Leumi-Tkuma	24	0.35
Meretz	20	0.29
Others (Yesh Atid, Yisrael Beiteinu, Hadash, Balad, Jewish Home)	10 (est.)	0.15 (est.)
Total	234	3.4

Source: Author's own work based on Kenig and Rahat (2023)

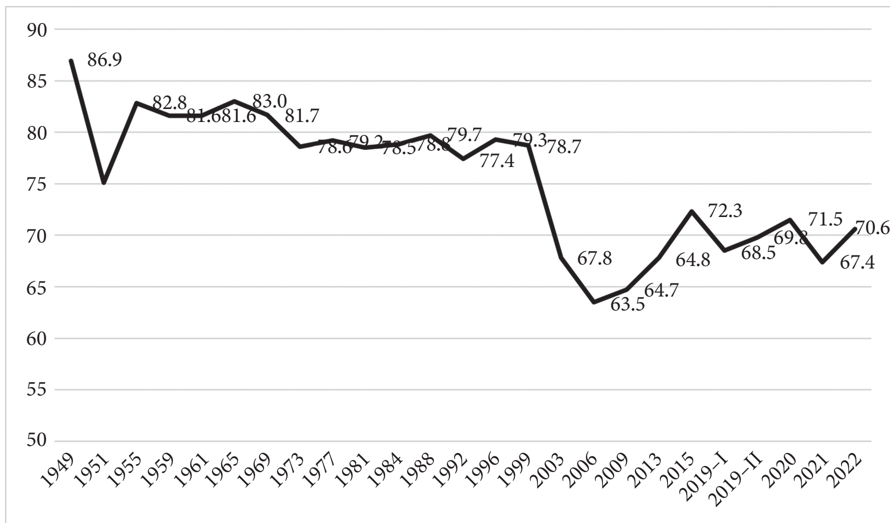

Figure 13.2 Voter turnout in Knesset elections, 1949–2022 (%)

Source: Central Elections Committee, 2022. 'Voter Turnout in previous Elections'. https://www.gov.il/he/Departments/Guides/election-committee-history?chapterIndex=4 (Accessed: 14 October 2023)

Relevant processes of increasing fragmentation, volatility, and dealignment will be discussed below. It should be noted, however, that party decline has not affected all parties equally. It particularly harmed the large aggregative parties (Likud and especially Labour) yet had little impact on sectoral parties such as the ultra-religious and Arab parties. One of the main reasons for this is the pathologies that have accompanied the primaries system that these parties have used since the 1990s to select their leader and candidates.

The impact of the primaries on Israeli parties that use them, particularly Likud and Labour, is multi-faceted. Although this system has positive effects, such as encouraging politicians to maintain close contact with the public, thus allowing the party to preserve a grassroots presence, it also has clear negative consequences: it imposes a heavy economic burden on the party—indeed, a primary election can cost more than $1 US million; it places a heavy regulatory burden on the candidates, who are required to submit detailed reports regarding their expenses and income to the State Comptroller; the party's democratic and judicial institutions are occupied with endless internal confrontations—and consequently they find themselves increasingly dealing with procedures rather than substance; the over-influence of pressure groups—such as Jewish settlers and labour unions in Likud, and kibbutzim (a unique form of collective communities, identified with the Israeli–Jewish left) in Labour—whose members are over-represented among the parties'

members; problematic phenomena such as suspicions of forgery and the violation of financing rules; and increasing incentives for harmful behaviour by politicians, such as populist conduct designed to achieve media exposure, as well as increasing numbers of internal conflicts.

At least some of these pathologies stem from the specific model of primaries adopted by Israeli parties, in which party members are the sole body involved in the process of candidate selection. From a comparative perspective, this is an extreme model—in most parties in democratic countries the selection process is more centralized, with the participation of bodies such as the party leader, an inner circle of the party elite, representative party institutions, and sometimes also supporters who are not party members.

These pathologies have severely damaged the image of the primaries and the parties that hold them. Likewise, they have led, over the past decade, to the increasing success of the exact opposite model, meaning personal parties such as Yesh Atid. These non-democratic parties are exempt from all the difficulties detailed above, and they even have inherent advantages. For example, it is clearly easier for them to attract new 'stars', among them senior military leaders and media figures, to join the party: in personal parties, the leader determines the composition of the list and accordingly can simply place such a star in the list at his/her discretion. By contrast, in parties that hold primaries, the same star will have to undergo an exhausting process in order to attain a high place on the list.

The party system since the 90s

Israel has always had a multi-party system. This is due to two main factors. First, Israeli society is extremely heterogeneous, in both social and ideological terms. Ideologically speaking, while the disparity between socialist and capitalist views has faded over recent decades, other divisions—especially concerning Israel's relations with its Arab neighbours and the relationship between state and religion, and more recently also the status of the judicial system—have become more pronounced (Kenig and Tuttnauer 2017; Shamir et al. 2017). Israeli society is also divided by various cleavages. In addition to the divide between Arabs and Jews, there are also various politically relevant divisions, among them the divisions in Jewish society among secular, religious, and ultra-religious; veterans and newly arrived immigrants; and Mizrahi and Ashkenazi Jews (immigrants from Asia-Africa or Europe, respectively, and their descendants). Each of these social groups has been represented by or through various parties in the Knesset.

Second, the electoral system in Israel is highly proportional. The legal electoral threshold, which was initially very low, was raised over the years (from 0.83% in the first elections to 3.25% in 2014). Yet Israel lacks any regional component: The entire country constitutes one nationwide electoral constituency of 120 seats, and thus the system is highly proportional in comparison to most countries.

Israel's party system has become much more fragmented since the 1990s. The reasons for this include internal splits within Labour and Likud, the two largest parties (as will be discussed later), and demographic changes that increased the sectoral parties' share of the vote.

The implementation of the direct election of the Prime Minister in the 1996 and 1999 Knesset elections gave a boost to this trend. It allowed and even encouraged voters to split their vote, voting for their preferred Prime Minister, a Labour or Likud candidate, and using a second ballot to elect a smaller, usually sectoral, party. Consequently, the combined power of the two largest lists sharply decreased from 76 seats (out of 120) in 1992 to 46 seats in 1999, and the effective number of parliamentary parties increased from 4.39 to a peak of 8.69 (see Figure 13.3 below). The effect of direct elections did not fade when this system was abolished before the 2003 elections. While the share of

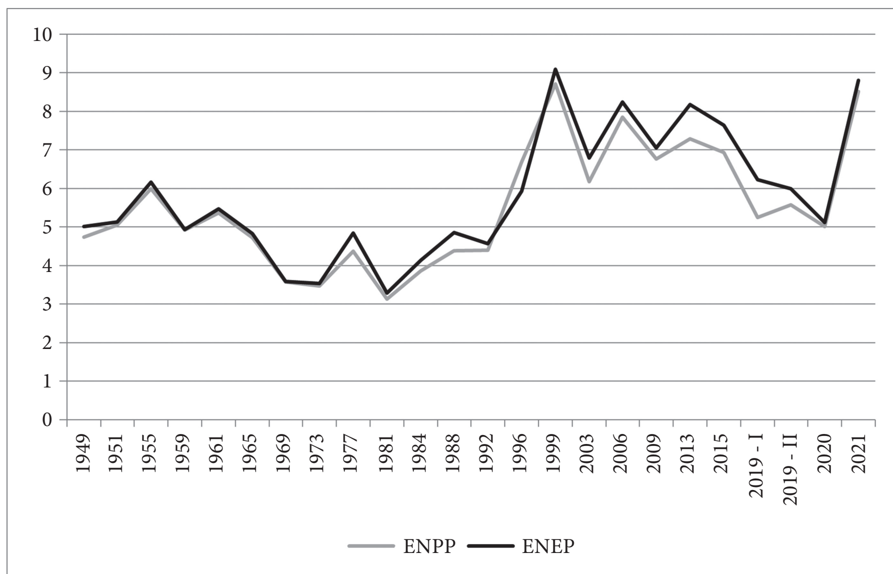

Figure 13.3 Effective number of parliamentary parties (ENPP) and effective number of electoral parties (ENEP) in Knesset elections, 1949–2021

Source: Döring et al. 2022, https://www.parlgov.org/data-info/ (Accessed 1.2.2024)

the major lists somewhat increased (and political fragmentation decreased), it has never returned to its previous level: since 1996, the effective number of parliamentary parties has remained higher, and the two largest lists weaker, than in all elections held between 1965 and 1992.

While some sectoral parties (e.g. Shas) lost support compared to their peak period during the direct elections, they have still been able to preserve a relatively solid power base to this day. Centrist parties, especially personal parties, have become stronger and increasingly won the support of the electorate that used to vote for Likud and, especially, Labour. A detailed analysis of the reasons for this phenomenon is beyond the scope of this chapter, but it can be linked to the steep personalization of Israeli politics and the growing feelings of distrust in institutionalized politics.

The increasing political fragmentation is closely related to the process of dealignment, which continues to this day. The evolution of Israel's party system can be broadly divided into three phases (Hazan 2021).

(a) Until the 1970s, Mapai and its successor party Labour were dominant parties. They were both ruling parties and the largest parties in the Knesset from the first elections, held in 1949, to the 1973 elections, although they never won a majority of seats.
(b) The weakening of Mapai/Labour began as early as the 1960s. Following the 1977 elections, for the first time in the country's history, Mapai/Labour was no longer the largest or the ruling party—it was replaced by the right-wing Likud. From 1981 until the late 1990s, a competitive bipolar system existed. The two largest parties in each bloc, Likud and Labour, switched positions as the ruling party (though as before they never won a majority of seats).
(c) As noted, the power of Likud and Labour greatly weakened in the 1996 and 1999 elections. Although the direct election of the Prime Minister was abolished before the 2003 elections, the competitive bipolar system did not reemerge. While Likud eventually managed to recover and maintain its status as a large party, Labour has been in a near-continuous process of deterioration since the 1990s, and no other party replaced it as a stable alternative. Potential candidates included Kadima (2006 and 2009) and the Blue and White electoral alliance (2019–2020), but these prematurely disintegrated. These days, centrist, personalistic, Yesh Atid is the second-largest party, but its electoral achievements are far behind those of Likud. For some time it seemed that Likud might become a dominant party. It held power

from 2009, but it was unable to form a government in 2019, and in 2021 found itself in opposition before it once again became the ruling party after the 2022 elections.

These developments are clearly reflected in the increase in electoral volatility over the years (see Figure 13.4). The first two periods, the 1950s–1960s and 1980s, were characterized by increasingly stable voting patterns, with the 1977 elections constituting the turning point of realignment; however, during the 2000s no similar process of stabilization occurred (the low levels of volatility in the 2019b and 2020 elections were due to the fact that each was held only a few months after the previous elections).

The best description of the Israeli party system since the early 2000s is thus a 'mess': 'a unique, fluid, and perplexing category, excluded from most typology . . . no clear pattern has yet emerged from this volatile era' (Hazan 2021: pp. 363–363). Only a few parties maintained stability—mainly the sectoral ultra-religious parties, and to some extent the Arab parties, and since 2009 also Likud.

Personal parties are particularly likely to reap ephemeral success, disappearing quickly. Prominent examples are Tzipi Livni's Hatnu'a, which won 6 seats in 2013 but disappeared before the April 2019 elections; Moshe Kahlon's Kulanu, which won 10 seats in 2015 and ceased to exist

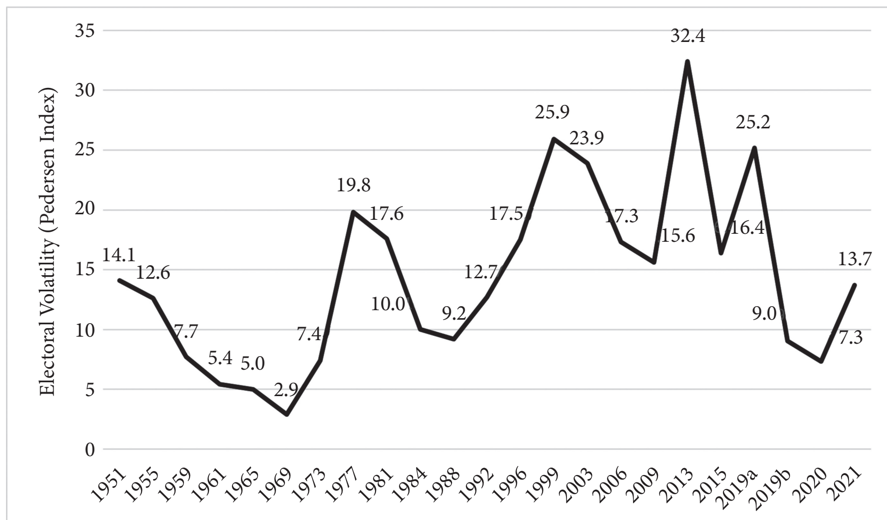

Figure 13.4 Net volatility in Knesset elections

Source: Kenig and Tuttnauer 2017, and authors' calculations

in practice before the September 2019 elections; and parties that managed to emerge and disappear during the 2019–2022 elections, such as Orly Levi-Abekasis' Gesher, Moshe Ya'alon's Telem, and Naftali Bennet's Yemina. Interestingly, also from a comparative perspective, personal parties are often characterized by a short lifespan: it is quite unlikely that a personal party successfully survives after the founder-leader leaves, given his/her centrality.

Case Studies of Specific Parties

In this chapter, I will focus on three prominent parties: Likud, which at the time of writing is the ruling party and has been the most successful party in Israel since 1977; Yesh Atid, which is the second-largest party and the main governing alternative in Israel today; and the Labour Party, which, together with its predecessors, dominated Israeli politics from the establishment of the state until 1977 and later returned to power three times (1984 in a unity government, 1992, and 1999). However, since then Labour constitutes the clearest example of the process of party decline. The changing Knesset representation of the three parties is shown in Figure 13.5.

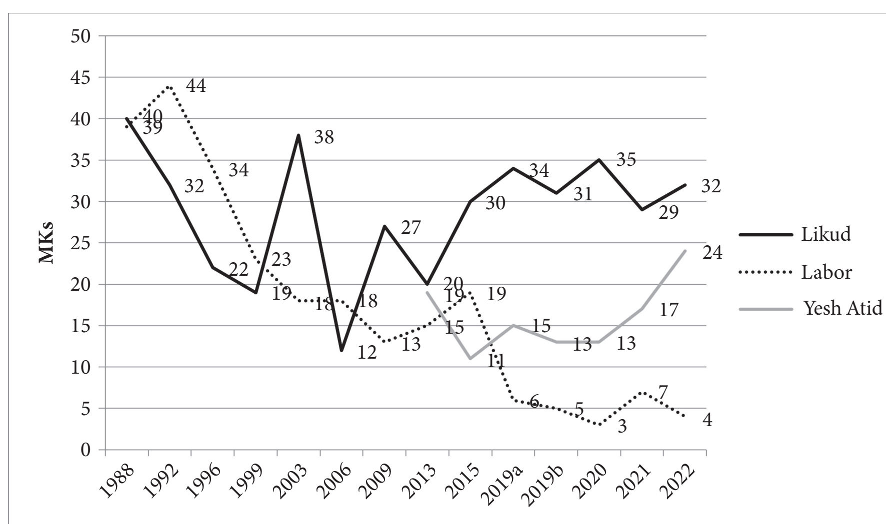

Figure 13.5 Likud, Labour, and Yesh Atid in Knesset elections*

*In cases of joint lists, the data indicate the number of Members of the Knesset (MKs) that represented the specific parties, which is smaller than the number of seats won by the list.

Source: Kenig and Rahat, 2023; Central Elections Committee, 2022.

Likud

The roots of Likud ('union/consolidation') can be traced back to movements and parties that were founded with and before the establishment of the State of Israel, mainly Herut and the General Zionists/Liberal Party. These two competed on the same joint list (Gahal) since 1965, together with other smaller parties establishing Likud as a list in 1973 and a party in 1988.

In terms of ideology and supporters, Likud is an aggregative party. While traditionally defined as a moderate right-wing party in terms of economics as well as foreign affairs and security issues, it nevertheless contains a wide range of positions. In recent years, it abandoned its previous liberal doctrines, increasingly adopting a populist stand directed against both the Arab public and Jewish 'elites', especially human rights organizations, the judicial system, and law enforcement institutions (the last mainly in light of the criminal proceedings against its leader, Benjamin Netanyahu).

Its support base comprises Jews from the middle and lower classes, many of them of Mizrahi origin, with close ties to Jewish tradition. In the 2021 elections, for example, Likud won close to 40% of votes in the so-called 'development towns' (low and middle-class Jewish, mostly peripheral municipalities). Yet it also has many supporters from other publics—it received 20% of votes in the West Bank settlements and affluent cities in the centre of the state (near Tel Aviv), as well as some support among the ultra-religious and Arabs (about 5%).[1]

The Likud is democratic in terms of its internal conduct. It has vibrant democratic institutions including a conference attended by thousands of delegates. It had a long and continuous tradition of heated debates in those institutions as well as competitive internal elections to these bodies from the 1980s and up to 2012. In the 1990s it also instituted primaries for the selection of its leader and candidates and, apart from a few short periods, has continued to use them to this day.

Although Herut/Likud has demonstrated great loyalty to its leaders—only four have held office since 1948—it was not a personal party. However, since Netanyahu returned to power as prime minster in 2009, the party has become increasingly identified with him, to the extent that internal democracy and party institutions, which continue to exist on paper, have been largely paralysed. Netanyahu and his loyalists control the party's campaigns and its apparatus, and any politician who (sometimes only potentially) has dared to challenge his leadership has been excluded from the party's upper echelons. While potential or actual challengers have not been ousted from the party, Netanyahu and his supporters have used their power to harm them in

various ways, including by accusing them of collaborating with other parties, calling party members not to vote for them in the primaries, and refraining from granting them senior government positions. Consequently, in some primaries, no candidate ran against Netanyahu.

However, even during this period we can still define Likud as a democratic party. An index that examined the level of internal democracy according to five dimensions gave Likud relatively high scores: on the eve of the 2015 elections, it received a score of 75/100, putting it in second place among Israeli parties; and on the eve of the April 2019 elections it achieved a score of 67/100, putting it in fifth place (Rahat and Shapira 2015; Shapira and Freedman 2019). However, the representation of women in Likud—despite the adoption of (low) voluntary gender quotas in the 1990s and gradual improvement in this respect—is still low. After the 2022 elections, 19% of its MPs were women, with the first located only in ninth place on the candidates list (as noted, Israel has a closed-list electoral system, and each list submits a ranked list of candidates to the Central Elections Committee before the elections).

Throughout its history, Herut/Likud has constituted a classic mass party, with mass membership, affiliated institutions, and internal elected institutions. During the competitive bipolar period in the 1980s, it also reached impressive electoral achievements, winning over 40 seats in the Knesset.

However, it has not evaded the crisis of political parties that has developed since the 1990s. In particular, the direct elections for Prime Minister had negative electoral ramifications for Likud. Later, in the 2006 elections, it suffered a steep decline and won as few as 12 seats. More than half of its voters from 2003 voted for Kadima (see below). Yet in 2009 most of them returned. The party has recovered (although never returning to its peak of the 1980s), and in recent elections it won between 29 and 35 seats.

The party also declined in local government. If in the 1993 local elections 11 of the 30 mayors in Israel's largest cities were Likud representatives, by 2018 this number had dropped to 4. The share of Likud's representatives in these cities' local councils fell from 22% to 8%.[2]

Since the 1990s, Likud has also suffered from many splits and retirements that harmed—albeit mostly temporarily—its electoral power. The most notable case was the 2005 defection of Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, together with 14 of the 40 Likud MPs, who created a new centrist party, Kadima. In recent years, senior politicians who disapprove of Netanyahu's populist line have also left the party.

Likud also suffered from difficulties stemming from its democratic internal proceedings. Many of these difficulties concern the primaries, especially suspicions of forgeries and financial irregularities and the excessive influence

of interest groups such as the unions and right-wing settlers. As noted, these factors have also damaged the party's public image. The primaries likewise imposed a heavy economic and regulatory burden on the party. Moreover, the party's democratic and judicial institutions have been embroiled in endless internal confrontations and find themselves increasingly occupied with procedures rather than essence.

Furthermore, Likud has experienced financial difficulties. Like other parties in Israel, most of the party's revenue comes from party funding (in 2018, 85%; State Comptroller 2021a). The party generates some money from member fees (the exact amount is not specified in the State Comptroller's report for 2018, but presumably this represents the largest share of the remaining 15%), but it hardly gets any donations (in 2018, no donations were received). Its economic conduct is based on accumulating deficits in Knesset and local authority elections, which are subsequently covered by the state's ongoing party funding. A combination of extremely irresponsible economic conduct during elections and the proliferation of elections resulted in a heavy deficit throughout most of the 2000s (about $17 million in 2009) (Kenig and Rahat 2023). Subsequently, thanks to the use of ongoing funding (and despite continuously irresponsible conduct in elections), the deficit shrunk, disappearing by the end of 2018 (State Comptroller 2021a). Yet, since the 2019–2021 electoral cycles, the deficit has returned to its previous level. The use of ongoing funding for election purposes makes it difficult for the party to maintain continuous intra-party activities between elections, thus harming its ability to function as a democratic party.

Likud's impressive ability to survive and recover should be attributed to the popularity of its leaders, Sharon and Netanyahu, but also to the fact that it has been the governing party since 2009. This enabled it to maintain significant ties to, and presence in, society, through patronage.

Moreover, despite a decline in numbers compared to the past, Likud remains the Israeli party with the largest number of members. Since 2005 it has had 95,000–130,000 members (in the 1990s it often had over 200,000).[3] Moreover, despite the deterioration in its internal democratic procedures, its vibrant internal life characterizes it as a popular party with deep roots among the public. It is still the closest party in Israel to the ideal type of a mass party.

One of the main channels through which Likud maintains contact with its supporters and conducts campaigns is the internet and especially (since 2013) social media networks. Today, Likud, its leader, and its representatives operate on all relevant platforms—Facebook, Twitter/X, Telegram, YouTube, WhatsApp, and more. In the run-up to the April 2019 elections, the party also launched its own TV channel, Likud TV, with various broadcasts uploaded

to YouTube and Facebook. However, Likud's online activity reflects the personalization of the party: politicians, first and foremost Netanyahu, are much more prominent on platforms such as Facebook and Twitter than the party itself (Rahat 2022).

Labour

The Labour Party was established in 1968 as a unification of three parties: Mapai, Ahdut Ha'avoda, and Rafi. Mapai/Labour dominated Israeli politics before 1977. After 1977 it became one of the country's two main parties. From 2009 (save for a revival in 2015) it lost its status as the second-largest party and as a governing alternative. Labour suffered most severely from the crisis of Israel's political parties, as its electoral achievements demonstrate: since the early 1990s, it has weakened almost continuously. Before the 2021 and 2022 elections, polls even predicted that it would hardly pass the 3.25% electoral threshold.

Like Likud, Labour is an aggregative party. It is usually identified with the Social Democratic party category, although over the years it has moved between 'third way' stances and more genuine Social Democratic approaches. Unlike the hawkish Likud, in recent decades it is mainly identified by its dovish positions in regard to Israel's relations with its neighbours. Since the 2000s, it has also emphasized issues relating to human and civil rights. Indeed, the current party chairwoman is a quintessential feminist.

In the past, most Labour voters originated from the more affluent sectors and were mainly secular Ashkenazi Jews, yet it also received significant support from other publics: in the 1992 elections, it received nearly 30% of the vote in development towns, more than 20% in Arab localities, and about 10% in settlements. However, in the 2021 elections it received little support from all these sectors and only maintained relatively significant support, around 20%, in places such as kibbutzim and Tel Aviv.

Labour is a democratic party, and in this respect transcends Likud. Its internal democracy received the highest scores of the intra-party democracy index among Israeli parties on the eve of the 2015 elections and the April 2019 elections (85/100 in both cases; in 2019, Meretz received the same score) (Rahat and Shapira 2015; Shapira and Freedman 2019). It has used primaries to select its leader and candidates continuously since the eve of the 1992 elections; it has representative democratic institutions, including a conference attended by thousands of delegates that are selected by party members. It adopted voluntary gender quotas for its candidate list in the early 1990s, and

before the 2021 elections employed, for the first time, the zipper mechanism to ensure gender equality. As a result, four of its seven MPs after the 2021 elections, and three out of four following the 2022 elections, were women. Unlike Likud, it has had female leaders—Golda Me'ir in 1969, Shelly Yachimovich in 2013, and Merav Michaeli since 2021.

In stark contrast to Likud, Labour demonstrates little loyalty to its leaders. Between 1992 and 2022 it had 12 leaders. This indicates high competitiveness, a democratic feature. However, such turnover seems to have reached a damaging level. Like most other parties, Labour has witnessed political personalization. However, unlike Likud, it is much more decentralized in nature; it concentrated not only on the leader but on several senior politicians.

Traditionally a mass party in terms of mass membership, affiliated institutions, and control of various state institutions, its ties with and presence in society have dwindled over the past decades. For example, Mapai/Labour's connection to the Histadrut, Israel's largest labour union (in fact an association of many unions), was for years considered one of the pillars of its success. In the first decades following the establishment of Israel, the Histadrut was a very powerful organization, controlling almost all unions and owning central institutions such as the largest health association (General Sick Fund, or Kupat Holim Clalit). The ties between the Histadrut and the party were largely based on patronage, and any of its leaders were also members of Labour. The Histadrut provided support for the party in various ways, notably by mobilizing voters and campaign workers, providing funding, and promoting the party's platform and ideology. In return, the Labour Party was expected to implement policies and programmes that were beneficial to the Histadrut and its members, such as collective bargaining rights, social welfare benefits, and employment protection. Moreover, the leaders of the Histadrut received considerable political influence, including within the party's inner cycles, and many of them later became Labour MKs and ministers.

Indeed, Labour continued to rule the Histadrut even after the 1977 elections. Yet in the 1994 elections for the Histadrut, Labour was defeated. During the same period, the power of the Histadrut also significantly weakened, among other reasons because it no longer owned institutions such as the health association. Since then, the relationship between Labour and the Histadrut became weaker. Today, the connection is through personal channels, and its status therein is not better than that of other parties, including those that do not belong to the Social Democratic family (Mandelkern and Rahat 2017).

Labour's decline is also evident at the municipal level. Until 1973, Mapai/Labour held the majority of city mayorships (in Jewish and mixed

communities). Its power gradually decreased, and by the late 1990s it had almost disappeared from this arena. In 1993, eight mayors among the 30 largest cities were Labour Party representatives, but in 2018 this number decreased to 1. The proportion of Labour representatives in these cities' councils decreased from 23% to 2%.

There are several reasons for Labour's steep decline. First, like Social Democratic parties in Europe, Labour suffered from the decline and to some extent disintegration of the working class. Second, the dovish positions espoused by the party became much less popular with the outbreak of violent protests by (and conflict with) the Palestinians in the early 2000s (the Second Intifada). Third, demographic changes—an increase in the size of the Arab and ultra-religious population and mass immigration from the former USSR in the 1990s—reduced the proportion of the population that constitutes Labour's 'base'. Fourth, internal difficulties played a significant role. The frequent changes in leadership were mentioned above. In addition, Labour has suffered from some of the same difficulties that affected Likud: internal disputes and splits (especially the move of prominent MPs to Kadima in 2005), and the various pathologies of the primaries. Yet, unlike Likud, since the early 2000s it has not spent many years in government to compensate for them through patronage.

Labour continues to exist, and from time to time (in 2015 and to some extent 2021) it has even seemed to recover slightly. One reason for this is that it has always continued to be a democratic party, with elected institutions and primaries, as well as a grassroots presence. Thus, while the number of party members has declined dramatically, it continues to be impressive in Israeli terms—around 2008 it stabilized at about 50,000 (compared to at least 150,000 in the 1990s). The party also maintains many local branches and conducts activities among young people and in other sectors.

The party's financial conduct also reveals the difficulties that it encountered as well as its ability to survive and recover. Like Likud, it largely relies on party funding (in 2018–81%; State Comptroller, 2021a) and to a lesser extent on membership fees and income from its real-estate assets; it receives barely any donations (1% in 2018). Due to its electoral decline and irresponsible economic conduct in the Knesset and local elections, it accumulated a large deficit that had to be covered by ongoing state funding (a practice that impairs its ability to function between elections). In the early 2000s the party accrued very heavy debts of about $38 million (Kenig and Rahat 2023). Yet with the help of a recovery plan and more responsible economic behaviour, it reached a positive balance sheet at the end of 2018 (State Comptroller 2021a).

After the four rounds of elections in 2019–2021 it has accumulated a relatively moderate deficit of a few million dollars.

Yesh Atid

Yair Lapid, a journalist and media celebrity, founded Yesh Atid ('There Is a Future') on the eve of the 2013 elections. The party has won between 11 and 24 seats in each Knesset election since then. In the 2019–2020 elections Yesh Atid was part of the Blue and White alliance. In 2020, after the alliance broke up, Yesh Atid chose to stay in opposition. In the 2021 elections it positioned itself as the main centre party and as a governing alternative. After these elections it played a crucial role in forming the new government, in which Lapid served as foreign minister and later, for a short time, as Prime Minister. After 2022, the party once again became the largest opposition party.

Yesh Atid is a rare example of a successful, stable, aggregative personal party.[4] Not only have most personal parties quickly disappeared, but those that are represented in the current Knesset are much younger (and likely to have a short life expectancy) and smaller than Yesh Atid.

Ideologically, Yesh Atid is a centrist party. While in 2013 it joined Netanyahu's government, in recent years it has clearly belonged to the anti-Netanyahu bloc. This is both in terms of its desire to oust Netanyahu from power and its opposition to his populism. The party blurs its stance on security and foreign affairs issues, trying to capture a pragmatic middle ground between doves and hawks. In the civic spheres, it is clearly a liberal party. It presents itself as the champion of the middle class, supporting a free economy, relatively secular stands, and the protection of human and civil rights.

Accordingly, its supporters are predominantly upper-middle-class secular Jews. While the national support rate for the party in the 2021 elections was 13.9%, in Tel Aviv, affluent central cities, and kibbutzim it stood at 22–25%. By contrast, it received zero support among Haredim and very little support in Arab localities (2.1%) However, it would be erroneous to define Yesh Atid as a sectoral party. It also appeals to a religious-liberal Jewish public (some of its leading members are indeed liberal-religious Zionists) and to immigrants from the former USSR (from which it gets significant support).

The most striking feature of Yesh Atid is its almost complete identification with its leader and his absolute control of the party. These features are openly entrenched in the party's regulations. Between its establishment in 2012 and late 2021, the party did not reform its autocratic structure at all; its

electoral success, especially compared to the decline of its democratic competitors (Labour and Meretz), gave it no incentive to reform. In November 2021, the party announced that the procedures for selecting the leader and the list of candidates would become somewhat more inclusive. However, as will be explained later, it is highly likely that Lapid will continue to exercise actual control over these proceedings.

Here are some expressions of the personal nature of the party. First, the party's official registered name is Yesh Atid—Headed by Yair Lapid. Second, from its formation there has been no competition for the leadership position: Lapid's status as leader was secured by party bylaws. While these bylaws stipulated that this is a temporary situation and that competitive elections will be held in the future, in practice this has been delayed repeatedly. In November 2021 the party announced that the first elections for its chairmanship will be held in January 2022. However, no candidate challenged Lapid's position, therefore no elections took place. Moreover, the elections were supposed to be held at the party conference, which is attended by prominent activists and the party's representatives in various arenas, most of them nominated by Lapid himself.

Third, Lapid exclusively draws up the party's list for the Knesset. Here, too, in November 2021 it was declared that in the run-up to the next Knesset elections at least some of the candidates would be selected not by Lapid but by a small nominating committee. Yet in practice, as far as we know, the committee that chose the candidates before the 2022 elections was totally controlled by Lapid. Naturally, Lapid's control over the selection of candidates incentivizes MPs to maintain high party cohesion—and great loyalty towards Lapid.

Fourth, the party does not have any elected internal institutions such as a conference, although according to the bylaws such institutions should be established. In January 2022 a party conference was convened for the first time, but as noted, it was not an elected or representative institution. The party has a low number of members (an estimated number of 1,700 in 2017; it can be assumed that most of them are prominent party activists and relatives of politicians) with no influence over the party's conduct. There are still no signs that Lapid or the party intend to empower the members. Centralized personalization is also evident in the online arena, in which Lapid is much more prominent than his party and its other politicians (Rahat 2022).

The undemocratic nature of the party is reflected by the intra-party democracy index—in 2015 it received a score of 23/100, and in 2019 this rose by only one point. Two aspects in which the party nevertheless demonstrates democratic features concern transparency (measured as a combination of public

exposure of various aspects connected to its internal affairs) and female representation (Rahat and Shapira 2015; Shapira and Freedman 2019). Lapid determines the gender balance of the party candidate list (it has no gender quotas). Nine out of 24 of the party's MPs after the 2022 elections were women (37.5%), of which three were located in the top five positions on the party list.

However, all these undemocratic characteristics are also found in the other personal parties. The interesting question is, therefore, what distinguishes Yesh Atid? Why has it succeeded where other personal parties have failed?

Yesh Atid's success may be attributed to specific circumstances, in particular the disintegration or significant weakening of other centrist and leftist parties, but it also has to do with the political skills of Lapid. Beyond that, Yesh Atid conducts itself, internally, differently from other personal parties. Although autocratic in character, with no intra-party actors to balance the leader's power or exert any influence over the party's conduct, it is not a 'hollow' party or merely a platform for the leader. Yesh Atid presents a unique model—an undemocratic leader party that keeps ties with society and maintains a grassroots presence as well as a highly professional management style. This is in contrast to other personal parties that have operated in Israel, especially in the past decade, and are characterized by the absence of any grassroots presence.

The party has a large pool of activists that conduct various field activities. It is operated in a centralized manner by the professional echelon of the party, which is headed by its CEO. It has 11 sectoral 'headquarters' (such as women, youth, LGBT, and French-, Russian-, and English-speakers) and about 120 municipal branches, as well youth and student organizations. It also operates in the local arena. As early as the 2013 local elections, shortly after its establishment, 30 local Yesh Atid lists won seats on local councils, and four mayors were elected on its behalf. Lapid also made efforts to incorporate mayors into his Knesset list. In this respect it differs from other leader parties (besides Yisrael Beiteinu), whose activities in the local arena are very limited, at most. As noted, Yesh Atid and especially Lapid also maintained from the outset a significant social media presence, with Lapid managing to position himself as one of the most prominent politicians in this arena (Rahat 2022).

To this we can add responsible economic conduct. Yesh Atid relies almost exclusively on party funding (in 2018, 98%; State Comptroller 2021a) and, like Likud and Labour, barely collects donations (2% in 2018). Yet, unlike Likud and Labour, it has not accumulated heavy deficits. In fact, it ended the 2013 elections with the largest surplus, more than that of any other party

(about $3 million), mainly due to its impressive electoral achievements. It subsequently accumulated a small deficit (about $300,000) due to wasteful conduct in the 2013 local elections and its decline in the 2015 national elections (Kenig and Rahat 2023). However, it soon covered the deficit, and by the end of 2018 it once again had a positive balance sheet (State Comptroller 2021a). As a lesson from the 2013 local elections, in the 2018 local elections it invested in fewer candidates but more wisely, thus achieving similar accomplishments yet reaping a financial surplus (of about $360,000; State Comptroller 2021b). After the 2019–2021 cycle, it accumulated a deficit of around $6–7 million. This is significant, but much lower than that of Likud, its main competitor.

Summary and Conclusion

Israeli democracy faces severe challenges. Among them are veteran challenges such as the occupation of parts of the West Bank, whose residents are not Israeli citizens; the status of Arab citizens of Israel; and the influence of the Jewish religion on the public sphere. A newer challenge is the populist and to some extent anti-liberal and anti-democratic tendencies that have emerged in recent years.

This last trend culminated in the current government, which was formed following the 2022 elections, with the participation of Likud, the ultra-religious parties, and the parties that make up the Religious Zionism electoral list. The coalition agreements signed before the formation of the government include highly problematic clauses from a liberal-democratic point of view, such as the abolition of some of the bans on discrimination, especially on an ethnic and gender basis; expanding the influence of religious institutions and practices on public life; and amendments to the Knesset Elections Law that will make it easier to disqualify Arab lists and candidates. The government itself includes ministers such as Itamar Ben-Gvir, chairman of the far-right Jewish National Front party, who was previously convicted of incitement to racism and membership in a terrorist organization. At the time of writing (March 2023), the coalition is rapidly advancing a series of bills that would severely undermine the independence and power of the Israeli judicial system—placing the judicial selection process under the control of the coalition as well as almost cancelling the High Court's ability to review bills and government decisions. This legislation has met with a large protest movement, which includes many of the Israeli (legal, economic, security, academic) elite, and it is difficult to predict the final result.

Regarding political parties, the most significant phenomenon to arise since the 1990s seems to be the weakening of the large, aggregative, democratic parties. This is a universal phenomenon, but in Israel it is particularly extreme. The party crisis alone may not pose an immediate danger to Israeli democracy, but it certainly harms it, even seriously, by encouraging or accelerating the populist, anti-liberal, and anti-democratic processes that jeopardize liberal democracy in Israel.

I would like to propose several channels via which the crisis of the major parties might be related, directly or indirectly, to the danger of democratic backsliding in Israel.

First, the weakening of the large, moderate parties has been accompanied by the growth of smaller and more extreme ones. Some of them, the ultra-religious and far-right parties, are members of the current coalition, strong supporters of its anti-democratic agenda, and—especially Religious Zionism politicians such as Simcha Rotman, chairman of the Knesset's Constitutional, Law, and Justice Committee—are among the main actors pushing for the promotion of anti-democratic legislation.

Second, Likud itself has also become more extreme, as a result, among other reasons, of the influence exerted by pressure groups such as the Jewish settlers in the West Bank, who have gained considerable power in the party through the primaries. In general, the primaries in Israel incentivize politicians to adopt populist behaviour and positions, and this has also influenced the transformation of the Likud into a more populist party.

Third, the extreme political fragmentation and instability of the party system (especially the blooming of the short-lived personal parties) impairs the ability of the Knesset and government to function, as well as affecting politicians' accountability (which is based on citizens' ability to reward or punish parties for their past performance, thus requiring a certain level of stability) and public trust in institutionalized politics. The weakness of the aggregative parties also contributes to 'dismantling' Israeli society into separate sectors because, in contrast to the instability of the aggregate parties, the sectoral parties maintain impressive stability, enabling them to significantly influence policymaking. Indeed, according to studies that have comparatively examined the phenomenon of democratic backsliding around the world, processes such as increasing political polarization and decline in trust in democratic institutions are among the main factors driving backsliding (Haggard and Kaufman 2021).

Finally, from a cultural perspective, the deterioration of intra-party democracy limits political participation in institutionalized politics and may harm the democratic political culture in general. Personal parties signify and

encourage the transformation of the central type of authority in politics from legal-rational (most compatible with democratic principles), in which leaders derives their authority from the fact that they were formally selected by the party, to a personal-charismatic authority.

Looking at the future of Israel's party system and its ability to contribute to democracy, two main questions can be asked:

First, given that the model of the personal party has become the default for new parties in Israel, as well as a popular model also in other developed democracies, one must ask whether such a party can serve Israeli democracy, for example by stabilizing the party system and renewing the party-society linkage? It is not totally unlikely. While most of the personal parties have not done so, the case of Yesh Atid shows that this is possible. It is a relatively stable party, professionally managed, with a grassroots presence. However, Yesh Atid has not yet experienced the challenge of replacing its leader, and it is impossible to tell whether it will survive this. The advantage of the old democratic parties, which have replaced their leaders more than once, is evident.

Moreover, not only Yesh Atid but most of the personal parties that have operated in Israel over the past decade have strongly defended liberal-democratic institutions and procedures. These include right-wing personal parties such as New Hope and Kulanu. By contrast, Likud is a democratic party that recently adopted a populist and to some extent anti-liberal-democratic stance. In this sense, in the Israeli case, we can find no correlation between populist or anti-democratic agenda and intra-party conduct, as was found in general (Böhmelt et al. 2021).

Second, is it possible to rehabilitate the democratic parties—to build democratic, aggregative parties that will maintain success over time? It is true that the decline of these parties resulted from socio-economic and cultural phenomena that are difficult to counter. However, the largest party in Israel today is a democratic party (although less democratic than in the past), and even the Labour Party has survived (although barely). Even if there is no proof of a causal relationship, this can indicate the advantages that democratic parties with grassroots presence enjoy, especially in terms of their ability to survive and recover. Therefore, one must look for a way to rehabilitate the parties while adapting them to the current era, especially in the face of technological (especially social media), social (e.g. individualism), and political (in particular political personalization) challenges.

We will not be able to detail here all the necessary changes.[5] We note only that parties in Israel can learn both from the experience of (successful) parties in other developed democracies and from some of the patterns

that have made Yesh Atid successful. It seems that parties these days need to be more professional and less political in their management; to adopt more flexible models for intra-party participation, especially allowing activists to choose their preferred forms (e.g. adding the status of 'supporters' who are not official members) and areas of activity; to strengthen ties with society in various arenas, such as local government; to conduct themselves in a more responsible manner, including increasing grassroots fundraising efforts; and to expand and upgrade social media activity in a way that will integrate the personal and the partisan.

At the same time, democratic parties must counter the pathologies of primaries by adopting complex selection methods that also involve less inclusive selectorates, such as the party elite (Rahat 2009). It seems that such a change is especially necessary in Israel. In particular, the result of a transition to a candidate selection system that grants nearly all power to party members has led the Likud to adopt more extreme and populist tendencies. The adoption of a moderate, mixed system may, perhaps, change this trend—thereby helping to reduce the serious dangers that these trends pose to Israeli liberal democracy today.

Notes

1. All data concerning the parties' electoral support in different sectors and localities are based on: Kenig and Rahat (2023).
2. All data concerning the parties' achievements in local elections are based on: Kenig and Rahat (2023).
3. All data concerning party membership are based on: Kenig and Rahat (2023).
4. Yisrael Beiteinu, founded by Avigdor Lieberman in the run-up to the 1999 elections, is also a successful personal party. Yet it is significantly smaller than Yesh Atid and partially relies on a sectoral basis of immigrants from the former USSR.
5. For more recommendations, see: Shapira et al. (2021).

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II

POLITICAL PARTIES AND DEMOCRATIC CHALLENGES IN LATIN AMERICA

14
The Weakening of the Mexican Party System

The Rise of AMLO's MORENA

Aldo F. Ponce

Introduction

Until recently, the Mexican party system was one of the most stable and institutionalized in Latin America. Mexican parties were disciplined and relatively strong organizations (Greene 2007; Greene and Sánchez-Talanquer 2018a, 2018b; Mainwaring 2018). However, these conditions have changed with the two recent national elections (presidential elections in 2018 and legislative elections in 2021)[1] revealing a very different outlook (Garrido and Freidenberg 2020). The electoral outcomes portray the recently formed National Regeneration Movement (MORENA hereafter) as unequivocally dominant over long-standing political parties in Mexico. A dominant party in Mexican politics is not a new phenomenon; witness the seven-decade rule of the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI hereafter) until the 2000 national election (Greene 2007).[2] But is MORENA's swift ascendancy the product of the inherent instability that poor governance outcomes and presidential multi-party systems create in Latin America, or is it the result of some of the factors that helped the PRI achieve dominance in the past?

I pose that poor governance outcomes are relevant factors that have led to a weakening of parties in Mexico and instability in the Mexican party system. I also pose that some factors that contributed to the PRI maintaining power for seven decades are enabling the current dominance of MORENA. In addition, the popularity, populist appeals, and electoral strategies of President Andrés Manuel López Obrador (AMLO hereafter) have played a relevant role in the rise of MORENA as currently the dominant party in Mexican politics. Following this, I argue that MORENA's dominance in the future will depend on the extent to which MORENA continues strengthening its connections with

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society, and on the future success of the populist appeals of its leader, AMLO, who was elected President of Mexico in 2018.

Before the victory of AMLO and MORENA in the 2018 national election, the Mexican party system comprised three major parties—the PRI, the National Action Party (PAN), and the Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD)—and some minor parties with a much lower share of electoral support. The PAN is a centre-right confessional party founded in 1939 which remained relatively small during the PRI's dominance; it won its first gubernatorial elections and legislative seats in the 1990s (Loaeza 1999). Until 2018, the PAN was relatively stronger in the west and northern states of Mexico (Klesner 2005, 2007; Johnson and Cantú 2020). The PRD is a leftist party formed in 1989 that brought together former members of the PRI and small leftist parties, and social movements of poor people (Bruhn 1997). Until 2018, the PRD received relatively more support in the southern states of Mexico (Klesner 2005, 2007; Camp 2014; Johnson and Cantú 2020). During the legislative period from 2012 to 2015, these three parties held 86% of seats in the Chamber of Deputies. Minor parties—the Labour Party (PT hereafter), the Mexican Green Ecologist Party (PVEM hereafter), the Citizens' Movement (MC), and the New Alliance Party (PANAL)—together held only 14% of the seats. The 2018 and 2021 national elections brought overwhelming victories for MORENA, which together with its close allies, the PT, the PVEM, and the Social Encounter Party (PES), achieved control of the legislative branch. Figure 14.1 shows how electoral support for Mexican parties has changed over time, as measured by the number of seats held by each Mexican party in the Chamber of Deputies. Overall, we can distinguish three stages in the recent history of the Mexican party system: 1) PRI dominance before 2000; 2) a competitive period between 2000 and 2018, with power-sharing among the three previous major parties—the PRI, the PAN, and the PRD; and 3) the dominance of MORENA following the 2018 national elections.

Electoral support has not only shifted political power towards MORENA in absolute terms (as Figure 14.1 shows), but it has also concentrated power on MORENA in relative terms. The steep decline in the effective number of both electoral parties and legislative parties since 2018 suggests such greater concentration of power. Figure 14.2 displays this change. The effective number of parties after 2018 resembles that of the authoritarian period led by the PRI.

While the major Mexican parties of recent decades share some organizational similarities in terms of participation of members and supporters, and also in the designation of leaders and representatives, they differ in their capacities, as Table 14.1 shows. In 2015, the PRI was still the largest

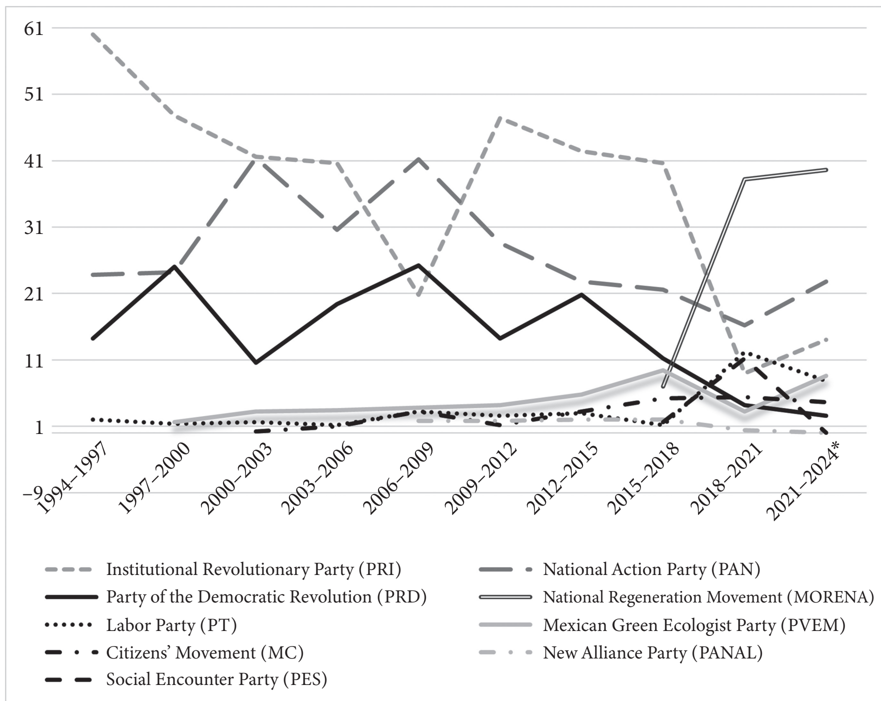

Figure 14.1 Evolution of seat shares in the Mexican Chamber of Deputies by party

Source: Author's elaboration based on data from the National Electoral Institute ∗estimated; taken from Infobae (2021)

organization, with almost 10 million members registered.[3] The PRI's income and campaign spending were also the highest among the major Mexican parties, totalling 1,360 million and 307 million Mexican pesos, respectively.[4] However, its major rivals had also developed robust organizations and memberships over the years[5], enabling the PAN to defeat the PRI in the 2000 and 2006 presidential elections. Table 14.1 also shows how all major parties have created sub-organizations to improve their connections with society. The PAN possesses a well-organized party with professional staff and a membership strongly identified with PAN's ideals. In terms of membership requirements, the PAN has set higher barriers than other parties (Langston 2007), with the requirement that new members be sponsored by existing members. These stricter membership standards help explain why the PAN holds a lower number of members than rival parties. Opposition parties during the authoritarian period led by the PRI created partisan identities based on strong ideological beliefs to attract and retain members, as selective incentives were hard to offer (Greene and Sánchez-Talanquer 2018a).

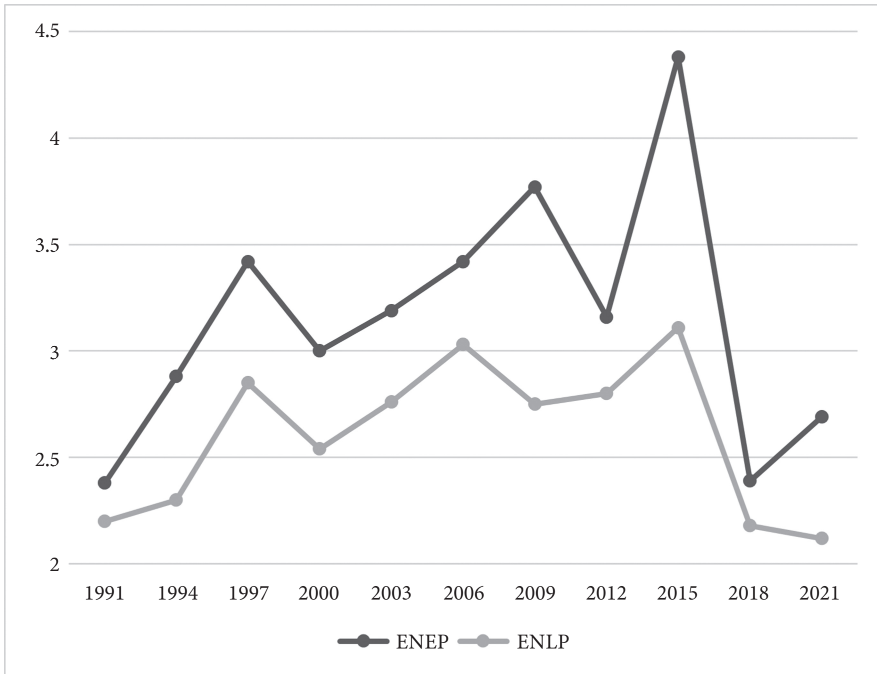

Figure 14.2 Evolution of the effective number of electoral parties and the effective number of legislative parties

ENEP—effective number of electoral parties; ENLP—effective number of legislative parties; figures for the periods 1991–1994 and 1994–1997 are taken from Garrido and Freidenberg (2020)
Source: Author's elaboration based on data from Gallagher (2023)

The requirement of affirming principles is likely to have been inherited from this authoritarian past.

By 2015, MORENA had already created an organization with 923,861 members. As Table 14.1 shows, MORENA had also established several types of sub-organizations to strengthen its connections with society, resembling to some degree PRI's strategies during its dominance. Although it had created a competitive organization, MORENA did not hold any advantage over the other major parties in terms of organizational strength before its victories in the 2018 presidential election and the 2021 legislative election. Therefore, how was MORENA able to achieve an astounding victory in the 2018 presidential and legislative elections? How could MORENA achieve an additional electoral triumph in the mid-term 2021 legislative elections (as MORENA, together with its allies, held on to its majority in Congress)?

I contend that two different types of factors explain the rapid transformation of the Mexican party system and how it is evolving, and, in turn, the

Table 14.1 Organizational differences among major parties in Mexico, 2015

Organizational capacities and rules	MORENA	PRI	PAN	PRD
Organizational capacities				
Membership as a proportion of the electorate +	0.38%	7.62%	0.45%	6.29%
Number of party members	923,861	9,934,820	484,800	2,590,972
Number of party members (updated December 2020) **	278,322	1,578,242	234,450	1,250,034
National party income	101,648,192	1,360,270,592*	969,531,648	870,428,928
Percentage of income from state funding +	98.4%	97.48%	96.34%	97.78%
Percentage of income from party members +	1.6%	2.52%	3.66%	2.22%
Share direct public subsidies of party's national income	90%	90%	90%	90%
Subsidy allocation based on	Votes	Votes	Votes	Votes
Campaign spending	23,457,274	306,726,482	257,623,465	196,394,734
Full-time employees in national party headquarters	90	132	352	200
Sub-organizations***				
Women's sub-organizations	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Youth sub-organizations	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Senior sub-organizations	No	Yes	No	No
Farmer's sub-organizations	Yes	Yes	No	No
Ethnic/linguistic groups	Yes	Yes	No	Yes

Continued

Table 14.1 *Continued*

Organizational capacities and rules	MORENA	PRI	PAN	PRD
Rules regulating participation				
Voting eligible at party congress	All attending members	All attending members	All members, attending or not	All attending members
Membership must be sponsored	No	No	Yes	No
Members must affirm principles	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Dues requirement for members	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Voting eligible at party congress: All party members in attendance****	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Voting eligible: All party members, attending or not****				
Women's representation at party conferences, party statute rules	50% gender equality	50% gender equity	50% gender equity	50% gender equity
Women's share of party's total candidates in the most recent national elections for the national legislature	50%	42.9%	50%	50%
Local-level organizations' prerogatives				
Voting eligible: delegates from local or regional parties	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Receives subsidy	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Note: Data on finance in Mexican pesos.

Source: PPDB (Poguntke et al. 2020, 2022)
+ These figures refer to 2017
* This figure corresponds to 2013
** The Instituto Nacional Electoral requested to update these figures
*** Organizations with individual memberships (types of sub-organizations that are mentioned in the party statutes)
**** Only members are eligible to vote in all parties

success of MORENA. The next section elaborates on the first type of factors, which are the structural determinants that explain the recent instability and fragility of the Mexican party system. The following section discusses the reasons why the Mexican party system appears dislocated, with one relatively new party currently dominating the others. In doing so, I offer an analysis on how MORENA has been constructing its swift dominance over other parties. The last section concludes the discussion and offers suggestions for further research.

The First Type of Factors (the Structural Effect): Explaining the Instability and Fragility of the Mexican Party System

The current literature has identified three possible explanations for the rise of MORENA. First, voters' frustration about persisting levels of poverty and inequality, as well as low economic growth, could have led voters to support a party advocating change (Greene and Sánchez-Talanquer 2018b; Espinoza Pedraza 2019; Gegg 2020; Sánchez-Talanquer and Greene 2021). Neither the PRI nor the PAN offered solutions to these social problems. The Mexican state falls short in providing sufficient capacities and resources to guarantee social and citizen rights (Sánchez-Talanquer and Greene 2021). For instance, its social spending represents only 10.9% of gross domestic product (in 2019), far below the spending levels of other OECD countries (Hannan et al. 2021; Sánchez-Talanquer and Greene 2021). It is difficult for the Mexican state to boost productivity, as it has relatively low taxes and public investment levels remain low compared to those of other OECD countries (Sánchez-Talanquer and Greene 2021). The scale of the problem is highlighted by the fact that 51% of Mexicans prior to the 2018 election were earning less than enough to afford basic goods and services (Greene and Sánchez-Talanquer 2018b, Sánchez-Talanquer and Greene 2021). Employing a populist discourse, AMLO has repeatedly criticized this poor performance to weaken support for his rivals (Greene and Sánchez-Talanquer 2018b).

The second potential explanation relates to Mexico's high crime rates since 2007 (Greene and Sánchez-Talanquer 2018b; Gegg 2020; Prud'Homme 2020; Sánchez-Talanquer and Greene 2021). When former President Felipe Calderón from the PAN decided to shift policy to a confrontational crackdown on illegal drug trafficking, the public security forces concentrated on capturing or killing leaders or lieutenants of criminal organizations (Flores 2009; Chabat 2010; Montero 2012; Ríos 2012; Atuesta and Ponce 2017). This

strategy led to an increase in inter-organizational violence, as sub-leaders of the affected organizations fought among themselves for new leadership positions (Phillips 2015; Atuesta and Ponce 2017). Such internal fights led to splits within organizations and the formation of new factions, resulting in greater competition[6] and rivalry, and the rapid increase of violence (Phillips 2015; Atuesta and Ponce 2017).[7] In addition, other types of violent crimes, such as disappearances, torture, extortion, and kidnappings, affected a substantial portion of the population. The 2013 Instituto Nacional Electoral and El Colegio de Mexico (INE-COLMEX) Survey indicated that approximately 14% of respondents had suffered a violent crime within the previous 12 months. In addition, members of governments at all levels were continuously accused of being linked with organized crime (Espinoza Pedraza 2019).

The third source of discontent pertains to extensive corruption among public officials in Mexico (Córdova Guzmán and Ponce 2017; Greene and Sánchez-Talanquer 2018b; Ang 2020; Prud'Homme 2020; Sánchez-Talanquer and Greene 2021). In particular, police corruption has been rampant in Mexico (Ponce et al. 2021). The 2018 Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP) survey reports that approximately 25% of Mexicans have experienced police corruption. Ponce et al. (2021) found that such experiences increase the likelihood of victims taking to the streets in protest. Thus, discontent and anger are likely to be prevalent in Mexican voters (Ponce et al. 2021). AMLO cunningly criticized the main Mexican parties as being 'corrupt' and part of the 'mafia of power', and promised a deep change if MORENA won the election (Greene and Sánchez-Talanquer 2018b; Espinoza Pedraza 2019).

I argue that one more factor could be proposed to explain the high volatility apparent in the 2018 election. Latin American party systems are, sooner or later, victims of instability. Like the Mexican party system, other previously stable party systems in Latin America, like the Chilean, Costa Rican, and Colombian party systems, have experienced substantial electoral instability and the deinstitutionalization of their main parties (Sánchez 2008; Roberts 2014; Albarracín et al. 2018; Lupu 2018). This recurrent pattern suggests that the combination of strong presidentialism[8] and proportional representation in elections might create a noxious macro-political environment for parties (Ponce 2022).[9] Proportional rules, which dominate in Latin America in elections to Congress, tend to be permissive to the emergence of populist presidents and new parties, and some such parties might become successful in the short term, weakening the support base of existing ones. Greene and Sánchez-Talanquer (2018a) found that the Mexican electoral system allows for the existence of up to around 17 competitive parties. Therefore, although

private contributions are restricted in Mexico and public funding is allocated mainly to the major parties,[10] the electoral system is still permissive and partisanship volatile enough to allow for the emergence of new parties.[11] The destabilization of established parties in such contexts appears more likely when the president holds a populist or/and an authoritarian agenda (as is the case with AMLO) (Weyland 2021). Overall, this is a macro institutional context that could hinder the consolidation of Latin American democracies. Further research will deepen the knowledge on this possible factor and its causal mechanisms.

The combination of these four factors could have produced the observed instability of the Mexican party system. Whatever the relative importance of each of these four factors, these fragile conditions appear to have given MORENA fertile political ground and a receptive audience for the emotive and personalist appeals of AMLO. This new party, characterized in its beginning as a movement, won the 2018 presidential[12] and 2021 legislative[13] elections. For the moment, at least, MORENA is occupying a dominant position among Mexican parties.

The Second Type of Factors (AMLO and the Party Effect): The Rise of MORENA

The second type of factors relate to decisions made by Mexican parties in recent years. Although the triumph of MORENA in the 2018 presidential election was overwhelming, it did not completely come as a surprise. In fact, AMLO was already a well-known, popular, charismatic, and professional politician, a former leader of the PRD who had run twice before for the Mexican presidency, in 2006 and 2012 (Espinoza Toledo and Navarrete Vela 2016, Lucca 2020; Navarrete Vela 2020a; Johnson and Cantú 2020).[14] MORENA's triumph was accompanied by the highest levels of nationalization of electoral support among major parties in Mexico (Johnson and Cantú 2020).

In the 2006 electoral contest, the PAN candidate Calderón defeated AMLO by just 243,934 votes (36.69% of votes for PAN and 36.09% of votes for the coalition of parties led by AMLO, called 'Coalición por el Bien de Todos').[15] AMLO again ran for the presidency in 2012, losing to Enrique Peña Nieto from the PRI, who won with 38.2% of the vote. AMLO again came in second, with 31.6% of the votes.

After these two defeats, AMLO modified his strategy. He abandoned the PRD and formed a new political party as his own electoral vehicle out of a political protest movement he had established in 2011, MORENA (Espinoza

Toledo and Navarrete Vela 2016).[16] The party was born from an alliance of several groups with diverse ideologies (mostly leftists, but also conservatives from evangelical organizations) and from different parties and organizations, the majority from the PRD, but also from the PAN, the PRI, and labour unions (Greene and Sánchez-Talanquer 2018b; Espinoza Pedraza 2019).

Several reasons could have led AMLO to form this new party. First, he could have perceived the weakening of the political establishment due to the economic and societal problems discussed in Section II. In particular, given the PRD's weakness, AMLO initially planned that MORENA would be the main leftist party. Second, although the PRD had not previously ruled the Mexican federal government, it had already ruled some state governments. Mexican voters could have therefore perceived it as a traditional party, partially responsible for the entrenched societal problems in Mexico. The creation of MORENA allowed AMLO to more freely develop a populist discourse that was separate from but not in conflict with the PRD's party brand and other PRD leaders (Espinoza Toledo and Navarrete Vela 2016). Third, AMLO aimed to develop a party organization strong enough to succeed in electoral contests. He retains considerable power within MORENA's organization, especially in the selection of candidates (Lucca 2020. AMLO also paid special attention to strengthening the local presence of the party and forming strategic alliances with unions and other civil society organizations (Lucca 2020 Navarrete Vela 2020b), attempting to emulate, to some extent, the strategies the PRI developed at the local level during its authoritarian rule.

The rise of MORENA can be explained by not only the party's actions but also their rivals' self-defeating decision making and internal conflicts. For the 2018 presidential election, the PRI presented a technocrat, José Meade, with scarce chances of becoming a popular candidate (Aragón et al. 2018; Greene and Sánchez-Talanquer 2018a). The other traditionally strong parties—the PAN, the PRD, and the MC—formed an electoral alliance called 'Frente Ciudadano por México' (Aragón et al. 2018; Prud'Homme 2020). The combination of a party holding a rightist and religious brand (PAN) with one representing a leftist ideology (PRD) is likely to have damaged their party brands' reputation, and consequently their electoral chances (Lupu 2014; Greene and Sánchez-Talanquer 2018b).

In addition, the PAN faced internal conflict when Gustavo Madero, elected president of the party in 2010, faced internal pressure from several local branches and the followers of former President Calderón, with demands for greater participation of members in the selection of candidates and leaders (Prud'Homme 2020). Internal conflict within the PRD became stronger

when AMLO resigned following his electoral defeat in 2012. AMLO stated that he resigned because the PRD had signed the 'Pacto for México', an inter-party agreement to implement structural reforms in Mexico (Lucca, 2020). Since the PRD was formed by different leftist groups and parties, the absence of AMLO as a unifying force prompted the reemergence of differences among these groups (Prud'Homme 2020). Internal conflicts reached a boiling point when one faction of the party, 'Nueva Izquierda', opposed the resignation of the governor of the state of Guerrero, Ángel Aguirre, who was somehow linked to the massacre of 46 students (El Universal 2020). Due to this opposition, other PRD factions requested the resignation of the party's leadership (Prud'Homme 2020). The later alliance with the PAN also exacerbated internal divisions within the PRD. The product of these crises was that several PRD members changed their affiliation to MORENA (Prud'Homme 2020). Overall, these internal divisions are likely to have made coordination and mobilization within the PRD and PAN more difficult to accomplish.

After its outstanding triumph in the 2018 elections, MORENA continued being successful. Despite its underperformance in ruling the federal government[17] and the societal costs of the COVID-19 pandemic, MORENA was able to retain a majority in the Chamber of Deputies (in coalition with the PES and the PVEM) in the 2021 legislative elections.[18] Several factors have contributed to MORENA's continued dominance over opposition parties.

First, AMLO continued employing a populist discourse criticizing the opposition parties' leaderships as corrupt, for being 'neoliberal', and for having failed to develop the country in the past. AMLO often promises to 'purify public life' and punish the 'mafia of power'. AMLO portrays himself as a loyal representative of the 'pueblo bueno' ('the people') who have been mistreated by the corrupt and powerful opposition parties. This is an image that AMLO regularly cultivates and that has undoubtedly contributed to his popularity. And in a departure from previous presidential incumbents, AMLO broadcasts his own TV show every morning, exploiting the opportunity to criticize rivals and publicize his reformist agenda. Overall, AMLO frequently seeks to undermine existing opposition parties through his populist tactics.

Second, this prominent role of MORENA's leader has helped keep the party relatively united compared to competitors (Lucca 2020; Prud'Homme 2020). Although MORENA's internal dynamic is far from being united in absolute terms, as several MORENA leaders have fought one another publicly (Acuña Murillo 2019; Monroy 2019; Zepeda et al. 2020), these battles do not seem to have significantly affected MORENA's electoral support. AMLO deliberately minimized his public interference in these battles. This strategy helped him construe the image of being a 'democratic' leader in his own party

and insulate him from problems arising from these conflicts. Unlike these skirmishes in MORENA, conflicts in opposition parties have tended to produce scandals, breaks in their ranks, and difficulties in rapidly adapting to the overwhelming competition from MORENA.

Third, AMLO has also criticized the functioning of several constitutionally autonomous institutions, undermining independence from the executive. This strategy has also contributed to strengthening his reputation as a keen reformist. Rather than cultivating a typical reputation as a leftist party, AMLO has aimed to shape MORENA's image as a reformist and inclusive party that rejects the past and constructs a new future in different ways (Espinoza Toledo and Navarrete Vela 2016). AMLO calls this reformist agenda 'La Cuarta Transformación', which aims at weakening and replacing the PRI as the main party by following a catch-all strategy (Aragón et al. 2018; Navarrete Vela 2020a; Freidenberg and Casullo 2020).

Fourth, MORENA's campaigns have emphasized connections to diverse groups and sectors in society, in particular women, rural people, the youth, students, the elderly, and marginalized peoples (Alva and Díaz 2019; Navarrete Vela 2020b). In similar fashion to the tactics employed by the PRI during its dominance, MORENA has continued expanding local networks and mobilizing followers for electoral purposes or party meetings. More specifically, MORENA has established alliances with teachers' unions: 'el Sindicato Nacional de Trabajadores de la Educación' (CNTE) and 'la Coordinadora Nacional de Trabajadores de la Educación' (Navarrete Vela 2020b).[19] AMLO stopped educational reforms aimed at teacher evaluations in exchange for teachers unions' support (Rojas and Ponce 2021). AMLO also forged alliances with women's organizations, such as 'Mujeres de Hierro', and other diverse organizations throughout Mexico, such as 'Colectivo de Asociaciones AC', 'el Movimiento Amplio Social', 'el Colectivo 19-S-17', 'el Movimiento Ruta 5', and 'el Movimiento Esperanza Ciudadana #2018' (Navarrete Vela 2020b).

Finally, although under AMLO's presidency unemployment has soared in Mexico and certain social programmes, such as childcare services, have been cancelled or dismantled, he has created other social programmes, such as those supporting unemployed young people, and increased the number of social programme beneficiaries, and therefore potential supporters. The number of families benefiting from social programmes was 26% in 2019, 28% in 2020, and 30% in 2021,[20] giving MORENA additional advantages over rival parties while in government. Still, we cannot be certain whether this short-term dominance will consolidate into a new order. The institutional macro-environment coupled with persisting societal

problems might ultimately put an end to this advantage. In all probability, the answer also depends on how strong MORENA becomes in both its organizational capacity and its links with society. If MORENA continues to build on these strengths, it may retain control of the legislative branch and most of the governorships. But, since the electoral fate of the party depends on AMLO's popularity, it is also likely that MORENA's dominance will be temporary. As the re-election of a Mexican president is not allowed,[21] AMLO's reputation and character is likely to play a less prominent role for the 2024 national elections in ensuring MORENA's victory by an ample margin.

If MORENA's fortunes fade, the Mexican party system is likely to experience more changes in coming years. Since the Mexican party system has been until recently one of the most institutionalized in Latin America, many of the societal benefits related to this condition, such as greater representation and accountability, cannot be taken for granted.

Conclusions: Mexican Democracy Under Stress

It is possible to learn several lessons from this chapter. First, the Mexican political system is currently under stress. While the first group of factors, which I call the 'structural effect', partially explains the rise of MORENA and the recent instability of the Mexican party system, it falls well short of accounting for MORENA's electoral success in the most recent legislative election which occurred in 2021. The second group of factors seems to better explain this outcome. These factors pertain to the strategies and actions that AMLO and MORENA adopted. MORENA has been increasingly acquiring more organizational capacity and political power at the expense of other parties in Mexico. AMLO implemented an aggressive populist discourse against opposition parties' leadership that portrays them as 'corrupt'. AMLO's attacks also targeted governors, high-level public bureaucrats, physicians, and scholars[22] that criticize MORENA's government or hold (or held) links with opposition parties to weaken them. Simultaneously, AMLO sought to increase support for his 'crusade' against the 'corrupt' (Sánchez-Talanquer and Greene 2021). On many occasions, AMLO complemented his populist rhetoric with accusations that the Attorney General of Mexico made against certain troubling rivals or critics.

Second, AMLO's skill in connecting with voters through these populist tactics has contributed to MORENA's current advantageous position. MORENA currently holds control of Congress and has been compromising

the independence of Mexico's judiciary and key autonomous institutions[23] (Sánchez-Talanquer and Greene 2021). Moreover, other parties have become weaker, in part due to their previous performance in government but also because of AMLO's relentless smear campaigns. Overall, the current stress in the health of the Mexican party system extends to Mexican democracy. There has been a disproportionate accumulation of power in the Mexican presidency since 2018 at the expense of the Mexican Congress, autonomous agencies, the judiciary, and academia. Because of fears of retaliation from the executive, freedom of expression and the freedom of the press have been compromised to some degree. AMLO has also forged a close alliance with the military and enhanced the military's roles, budget benefits, and prerogatives. For instance, the Mexican police are now under the control of the military. AMLO has also granted concessions and property of key projects to the military such as the 'Tren Maya' and the construction and administration of the 'Santa Lucía Airport' close to Mexico City (Linares 2019; Brooks 2020; Reina 2021). In sum, AMLO systematically intimidates his critics. Although this institutional deterioration could cease once AMLO's rule ends, Mexican democracy might again become prey to another authoritarian leader who might adopt the same populist strategies. Relevant institutional reforms are needed to prevent this outcome from repeating in the future. These reforms might range from moderate changes, such as the strengthening of autonomous agencies and the judiciary, to more radical ones including the reduction of presidential powers, reforms in the electoral system to reduce permissiveness, or the replacement of presidentialism with a parliamentary system.

Third, opposition parties have suffered due to both AMLO's populist discourse that criticizes them as 'corrupt' and their own strategies to minimize electoral losses in the short-term (e.g. the alliance between the rightist PAN and the leftist PRD in the 2018 elections). Despite the low performance outcomes of AMLO and MORENA in government and the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, the major opposition parties of Mexico—the PRI, the PAN, and the PRD—have not recovered sufficient electoral support to counterbalance MORENA's dominant position. While core supporters and members enable them to remain potentially (electorally) competitive, these parties have yet to implement successful strategies to enhance their reputations, and to strengthen their parties' brands and followers' party identification. If the PRI and the PAN adjusted their strategies successfully, they might recover in the future as their organizations remain reasonably competitive. Of course, a decline in MORENA's support would also contribute to this outcome.

At the same time, MORENA's advantage over competitors is likely to be temporary given the magnitude of entrenched societal problems, such as poverty, inequality, violence, and corruption, in combination with presidentialism that have weakened the other major parties, and indeed party systems in other Latin American countries. Considering no significant improvements have been made in any of these societal domains during MORENA's rule, these failures might produce electoral losses for MORENA in future elections. In addition, if AMLO is unable to stand as MORENA's candidate for the 2024 presidential election, or the degree of his influence on electoral outcomes diminishes significantly, MORENA's chances of maintaining power are expected to be lower. If this were to be the case, divisions within the party might grow further among prominent leaders who would fight to win the candidacy of MORENA for the presidency. Therefore, the electoral fate of MORENA depends on the extent to which it continues strengthening both its roots with society and organizational capabilities, as well as whether it continues to expand the social programmes that the federal government provides.

Temporary or permanent, the weakening of the Mexican party system seems to fit well with the typical context of institutional crisis in Latin America: strong presidentialism in highly unequal countries breeding authoritarian populists who actively look to undermine political competition, discrediting other parties' leaders as 'corrupt' and 'mafiosos', and accumulating political power at the expense of institutions' independence. The rise of Bolsonaro in Brazil, Morales in Bolivia, Correa in Ecuador, Bukele in El Salvador, AMLO in Mexico, Fujimori and Vizcarra in Peru, and Chávez in Venezuela exemplify this extended phenomenon in the region. The ultimate outcome is the existence of populist illiberal cycles that produce the weakening and instability of Latin American party systems. It is certainly very difficult for democracies to flourish and/or consolidate in such political systems.

Notes

1. In Mexico, while presidential and Senate elections occur every six years, the Chamber of Deputies is renewed every three years.
2. PRI's dominance was possible thanks to a broad coalition of organizations and societal sectors such as labour unions, the industrial bourgeoisie, regional elites, government workers, and the working classes (Greene 2007; Greene and Sánchez-Talanquer 2018a).
3. This figure, like those of the other parties, is likely to be inflated as parties do not update their membership lists. In order to keep their registration as parties, they

must demonstrate they have a number of members no less than 0.26% of those who could have voted in the previous federal election. Recently, the electoral authority, the Instituto Nacional Electoral, asked parties to update their membership lists. For further information, see https://centralelectoral.ine.mx/2020/02/18/concluye-ine-procedimiento-actualizacion-padrones-militancia-los-partidos-politicos/

4. The source of these figures is the Political Party Database Project (Poguntke et al. 2020).
5. The PRI inherited its strong party organization from its authoritarian past. The PAN and the PRD had invested in building strong organizations to put an end to the PRI regime. Such strategies have been also observed in other countries ruled by dominant parties (Hicken and Martinez-Kuhonta 2015; Greene and Sánchez-Talanquer 2018a).
6. The number of criminal organizations grew from 20 in 2007 to almost 80 in 2011 (Atuesta and Ponce 2017).
7. For instance, homicides resulting from confrontations among members of criminal organizations increased from 2,347 in 2007 to 12,896 in 2011 (Atuesta and Ponce 2017).
8. For further discussion on the effects of presidentialism, consult Shugart (1998) and Martínez (2021).
9. In the Mexican Chamber of Deputies, of the 500 deputies, 300 are elected by plurality rule from single-member districts. The remaining 200 deputies are elected by proportional representation in 5 constituencies (40-seat constituencies). In the Senate, of the 128 senators, 96 are elected in three-seat constituencies (representing each of the 31 Mexican states and Mexico City). Two of these three seats are awarded to the winning party and the third seat to the party in the second place. Finally, the other 32 senatorial seats are elected by proportional representation in a single nationwide constituency.
10. A total of 70% of public funding is allocated by vote share. The remaining 30% of public resources are equally distributed among registered parties.
11. The threshold for registering new parties or keeping registration is 3% of votes. In addition to the parties shown in Figure 14.1, several other small parties have emerged since 2000, though some were short-lived. Examples of new parties are Partido Democracia Social, Partido Auténtico de la Revolución Democrática, Democracia Social Partido Nacional, Convergencia por la Democracia, Partido de la Sociedad Nacionalista, México Posible, Partido Liberal Mexicano, Fuerza Ciudadana, Convergencia, Partido Socialdemócrata, Primero México, Salvemos México, and Partido Humanista (data from the National Electoral Institute).
12. AMLO from MORENA received 53.2% of votes, Ricardo Anaya from PAN received 22.3% of votes, and José Antonio Meade from the former dominant PRI got only 16.4% of votes (INE 2018).
13. In the Senate, MORENA secured 55 of 128 available seats (42.97% of the Senate). Furthermore, MORENA together with its allies—the PES and the PT—were able to take control of 69 seats (53.9% of Senate seats). Meanwhile, the PRI secured just 13 seats and the PAN 23 seats (10.16% and 17.97% of the Senate seats, respectively). In the Chamber of Deputies, MORENA's advantage was even greater, because while it only obtained control of 191 seats (38.2% of Chamber of Deputies' seats), it achieved a majority in coalition with the PES and the PT, together taking 308 seats of the available 500 (61.6% of Chamber of Deputies seats). The PRI and the PAN achieved control of 45 and 81 seats, respectively (9% and 16.2% of Chamber of Deputies seats).

14. AMLO was a prior member of the PRI and then of the PRD. When the PRD was formed in 1989, AMLO decided to join this party, and he repeated the same strategy with MORENA.
15. This coalition was formed by the PRD, the PT, and Convergencia.
16. AMLO resigned as a member of the PRD on 9 September 2012 (Prud'Homme 2020). MORENA was then registered as a political party in 2014 (Zepeda 2014).
17. The rate of economic growth was −0.05% in 2019 and −8.24% in 2020 (The World Bank 2021).
18. The alliance of MORENA, the PT, and the PVEM, called *Juntos Haremos Historia*, achieved 56% of available seats in the Chamber of Deputies.
19. PANAL also established close links to these organizations.
20. Data from the National Survey on Employment (ENOE)
21. A constitutional reform would be needed to allow for presidential re-election. MORENA and its allies do not hold the required supermajority to implement this reform.
22. AMLO has dissolved public trust funds that finance research in universities, the arts, and protections for journalists and human rights activists.
23. Sánchez-Talanquer and Greene (2021: 60) state as an example: 'the autonomous National Electoral Institute (INE)—which organizes elections and anchored Mexico's democratic transition—has been subject to scathing verbal attacks from AMLO and his allies, budget cuts in the name of "republican austerity", and proposals for a major overhaul that could presage an attempt to subdue it'.

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15

The Colombian Party System, 1991–2022

Deinstitutionalized but Flexible and Resilient

Laura Wills-Otero

Introduction

Colombia's political party system is a multi-party one.[1] At the beginning of the third decade of the 21st century (2022), 9 political parties (8 in the Senate of the Republic and 9 in the House of Representatives) and 14 coalitions obtained political representation in the country's legislative elections.[2] These included traditional parties such as the Partido Liberal (PL) and the Partido Conservador (PC) that have existed for over 150 years and that were the dominant actors within the restrictive two-party system that operated until 1991. They included organizations that were created following the enactment of that year's Political Constitution, which through its political reforms induced a multi-party system and the consequent decline of the two traditional parties. They also included parties that emerged at a critical juncture for the country, resulting from the peace negotiations between the National Government of Juan Manuel Santos and FARC-EP, the oldest guerrilla group in Latin America, during 2012–2016.

The party system is also a deinstitutionalized one (Albarracín et al. 2018). It exhibits high electoral volatility due to the entrance of new parties and the decline of traditional ones. In addition, the levels of partisan attachment and trust are low (Plata Caviedes et al. 2021) and most parties are internally fragmented.

Despite the high levels of party system fragmentation and electoral volatility, it is important to point out that, unlike other countries in the region (i.e. Bolivia, Ecuador, Peru, and Venezuela), Colombia's party system has not collapsed (Albarracín et al. 2018). Although the traditional parties have declined in their electoral power, nationally in particular, they have been able

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to survive and have remained key players (Wills-Otero 2014). Other parties that emerged after the enactment of the 1991 Constitution and the political reform of 2003 have become prominent actors in the coalitions of the different governments, or in the opposition.

Thus, although the high levels of volatility and effective parties explain the system's tendency towards deinstitutionalization, they also demonstrate its flexibility. At critical junctures in particular, flexibility has prevented crises similar to those that have occurred in some of the region's other countries mentioned above. The collapse of party systems in these countries has produced power vacuums and low levels of governance or has led to the rise of populist leaders who lack an effective counterweight in the representative institutions. These leaders' accumulation of power has put democratic regimes at risk. In Colombia, many parties have suffered electoral weakening, uprooting, or internal fragmentation. Clientelism negatively affects electoral competition and de-ideologizes the parties. In spite of this and the limitations that such problems place on political representation, the country's democratic regime has survived.

In a rapidly and substantively changing political context, long-standing parties have been able to adapt, and new parties have been able to overcome the thresholds imposed by the electoral system by obtaining political power in multiple elections. Some of these new parties have been formed to represent interests arising from new divisions that the existing parties have not been able to integrate. The existence of alternative parties, in some cases opposed in their programmatic agendas and ideological identification, has revitalized the country's representative democracy. The rules of the electoral game have created conditions for actors that were politically excluded or marginalized until three decades ago to become legitimate party options, with rights and guarantees—at least in theory—for their operation and security.

The scope of this chapter is to observe the political and electoral performance of two parties that were created at a critical juncture triggered by the peace negotiations between the national government and the FARC-EP guerrillas in 2012–2016. The emergence of two ideologically opposed parties (Centro Democrático and Comunes) illustrates some of the characteristics of the Colombian party system: It is volatile to the extent that in short periods of time new parties are created and others disappear; it has an effective number of parties that determines it as a multi-party system; it is flexible and permeable to the arrival of alternative options; and party performance varies significantly, in spite of the common conditions that define the rules of the game. Finally, its internal organizations have a significant impact on

the variation in the electoral results. In the next section, I provide a brief overview of the rules of the electoral system over time (1991–2022) and their consequences for the party system. I then analyse and compare the electoral performance of the Centro Democrático (CD) and Comunes and discuss how these two cases illustrate some of the broader characteristics of the system. Finally, I offer a set of conclusions on the prospects for Colombian democracy in light of its party system.

The Rules of the Game and Their Consequences

The electoral system from the 1991 Political Constitution until the 2016 Peace Agreement

The political charter enacted in 1991 defined the ground rules that were intended to open up the political regime, which was classified as a restrictive two-party system (Botero et al. 2016). Rights, guarantees, and requirements were established to create new parties and promote their participation in the country's political life. As of that year, the number of parties in the system increased significantly, with some of these involving dissidents from the PL and PC. Others emerged as new political alternatives. Among the latter, the Alianza Democrática M-19 (AD-M-19) emerged from successful negotiations between the National Government and various insurgent groups that agreed to demobilize in exchange for the possibility of becoming a political option (Boudon 2001). The 1991–2002 period saw an explosion of new political parties and movements, leading to the fragmentation of the multiparty system. During the same period, the electoral system that had been in place, which had allowed political parties to register an unlimited number of lists in the elections to collegiate bodies, promoted internal party fragmentation. In 2002, about 40 political parties and movements elected seats in the Congress of the Republic (Wills-Otero 2011). Several of these parties were dissidents from the two traditional parties, and very few of the new players managed to consolidate themselves as stable and viable organizations. The sub-national sphere was also subject to an average increase in partisan options. The political decentralization that began at the end of the 1980s with the popular election of mayors and further consolidated after the 1991 Constitution with the popular election of governors led to the emergence of new local and regional electoral mechanisms. After the introduction of these reforms, political competition, and configurations at the national, regional, and local levels varied significantly (Hoyos 2007; Batlle et al. 2020; Pino

2020). At each level—although not in all constituencies—there was a clear shift from an entrenched two-party system—in some cases, a single-party system—to a multi-party system.

In 2003, 12 years after the implementation of institutional changes that determined the opening of the political system and the transition to a multi-party system, a new reform of the electoral system was approved. The focus at that time was on organizing the system by reducing the number of organizations and promoting their internal cohesion (Botero and Rodríguez-Raga 2006; Botero et al. 2016). The possibility of each party presenting an unlimited number of lists to legislative bodies in the elections was eliminated. As of the following contests, they could only present one list for each electoral district. On the other hand, an electoral threshold was determined,[3] establishing the need for each list to obtain a minimum number of votes to participate in the distribution of seats. The electoral formula of higher residuals (Hare) was changed to the distribution figure (d'Hondt) to promote greater proportionality in representation (Wills-Otero 2009). It was also established that political parties would define whether their lists would be closed or be subject to preferential voting. In the former case, voters choose the party as a whole, while in the latter, they have two options: they can either vote for the party or for the candidate of their preference within the list they choose. In either case, the votes are added up at the party level. In addition to these reforms, the Congress of the Republic passed a caucus law to promote cohesive and disciplined behaviour by political parties (Law 974 of 2005), along with other constitutional provisions (Legislative Act No. 1 of 2009 and Legislative Act No. 1 of 2011). The first of these (AL1/2009) makes it mandatory to establish mechanisms of internal democracy in candidate selection processes and in making other decisions concerning principles and rules related to its organization and operation. The second (AL1/2011) prohibits double militancy; in other words, it forbids whoever participates in the internal proceedings of a political party or movement from registering for another in the same electoral process (Hernández Becerra n.d.).

Regarding women's political participation, Law 1475 of 2011 mandates a legal gender quota, by which 'political party lists for the election of five seats or more should include at least 30 percent of candidates of each gender' (UN Women 2019: pp. 15). In 2020, this percentage was intended to rise to 50% in a draft Legislative Act presented and processed in the Congress of the Republic. However, in 2022 the Constitutional Court rejected the reform. Political parties are responsible for ensuring that their statutes comply with the provisions of the law.

Finally, the signing of the peace agreement in 2016 between the National Government and FARC-EP established that as of the following elections and for two consecutive periods (2018–2026), the political party emerging from the demobilized group would be guaranteed a portion of power in the Congress of the Republic. The agreement defined 10 seats—5 in the Senate of the Republic and 5 in the House of Representatives. In addition, an Opposition Statute was approved as law (Law 1909 of 2018) that provided guarantees to opposition and independent parties. This includes, for example, rights such as obtaining state financing, access to the state's social communication media and to official information and documents, the right to reprisal, and the unrestrained exercise of political rights, among others. Finally, in 2021 a constitutional reform was approved that, through the creation of 16 new seats in the House of Representatives, grants political power to the victims of the armed conflict for two consecutive periods (2022–2026 and 2026–2030). Candidates who aspire to occupy these positions are presented through victim organizations in civil society. In 2022, representatives of victims were elected for the first time.

The impact of the rules of the game on the party system

In general terms, those mentioned above are the main characteristics of the Colombian party system in 2023. However, how do these conditions or rules of the game influence the party system? As noted above, the changes enacted by the 1991 Constitution gave way to the establishment of an atomized multi-party system, with more than 40 political parties—only 8 of them effective—between 1994 and 2002 (Castañeda 2018). The reforms introduced after 2003 to counteract this outcome led to the configuration of a party system with fewer organizations. The absolute number of parties began to decrease in 2006—to about 13 parties—and the effective number of parties (ENEP) decreased from 8 (2006) to 5.97 in legislative elections by 2010 (Gallagher 2022). This number increased to 8.74 by 2022. This resulted from the fact that more parties and coalitions competed after 2014 and that some of them had greater relative weight following the 2003 reform. The increased size of the organizations is partly explained by inter-party alliances. Smaller parties (or in some cases, their members), which need to obtain a minimum number of votes to win seats and maintain their legal status, form strategic electoral alliances (not necessarily programmatic ones) with larger parties. Table 15.1 illustrates the evolution of the ENEP and the effective number of parliamentary parties (ENPP) for Colombian legislative elections between 2010 and 2022.

Table 15.1 The Colombian party system's fragmentation, 2010–2022

	ENEP	ENPP	Turnout (%)
2010	5.97	4.95	43.75
2014	7.36	5.69	43.58
2018	8.46	6.38	49.00
2022	8.74	N/I	47.43

Note: ENEP—effective number of electoral parties; ENPP—Effective number of parliamentary parties; Turnout as share of all registered voters.
Source: Gallagher (2022); IDEA (2022)

The possibility of establishing lists with preferential voting—most parties do this—hampers parties' internal cohesion. The candidates that make up the lists compete with their party members, and electoral campaigns focus more on individuals than organizations. Despite this, single-party lists have prevented further personalization and internal atomization.

Regarding the gender quota, the lists have complied with the requirement of integrating women to at least 30%. However, it was only in the 2022 legislative election that a similar percentage of women won political power (28.8%). Until then, the percentage of women in representative institutions was lower, at around 20% (UN Women 2019). The latter outcome is explained, in part, by most parties' decision to register lists with preferential voting rather than closed lists, reducing the possibility for more women to be elected. This is accentuated by the fact that there is no mandate requiring that the women on the lists be interspersed with the men in the top positions (Ortega and Camargo 2015, Camargo and Ortega 2022). In fact, the coalition that won the most power in 2022 (Pacto Histórico), made the decision to intercalate men and women from the first to the last position in its list for the Senate election, effectively closing it. This decision helps to understand the increase in the number of women in Congress.

Finally, the individualization or personalization of politics in the electoral arena is transferred to the political arena where the discipline established by the caucus law is not an obvious result. The level of discipline varies between and within parties (Bitar et al. 2023).

In the 2022 legislative elections, the coalition that held the most seats in the Congress of the Republic was Pacto Histórico (PH) with 16.6%. This was followed by the PL (15.6%), the PC (13.9%), Cambio Radical (CR) and CD (9.5%). Meanwhile, the organizations with the least power were most electoral coalitions (between 0.3% and 1%), a Christian coalition between Colombia Justa y Libre and Movimiento Independiente de Renovación Alternativa (1.7%), the leftist Comunes (3.4%), and the centrist

Alianza Verde (3,7%). When comparing this information with the previous four-year period (2018–2022), there appear to be changes that account for the electoral volatility of the party system. Between 2018 and 2022, political parties emerged and disappeared. Those that were able to obtain political representation in both elections increased or decreased their relative power. This behaviour was repeated in each election and is mainly due to the emergence of new parties and the decline (and eventual disappearance) of existing ones (Gutiérrez 2007). Table 15.2 presents the political composition of the legislature between 2018 and 2022.

The following section describes the emergence of two parties that were created in 2014 and 2018 and analyses their electoral and political performance as well as some of their internal characteristics. The study of these two parties illustrates some of the features of the party system. It shows that it is flexible, particularly at critical junctures. Flexibility promotes political plurality, but at the same time, it produces electoral volatility and increases the absolute number of parties and the system's fragmentation. The party system is open to ideologically opposed parties. However, it also shows how much easier it is for pro-status quo new parties to be more successful than parties that oppose it. Finally, the analysis of these two parties illustrates variation in their electoral performance and the influence that internal organizations have on it.

Centro Democrático and Comunes: A Rift over Peace Negotiations (2012–2016)

Origins and electoral performance

The negotiations between the Colombian government and the oldest guerrilla group in Latin America, the FARC-EP, caused a political split that resulted in the creation of two new ideologically opposed parties: CD and Comunes (originally called the Fuerza Alternativa Revolucionaria del Común, or FARC-EP). The first was created in 2014 under the leadership of former president Álvaro Uribe, with one of its main objectives being to oppose the negotiations that the then-government was holding in Havana, Cuba. The second was a concrete derivation of the agreement that was established around the issue of political participation by the former guerrilla group. Without the certainty of obtaining a share of power in the Congress of the Republic, as well as rights and guarantees to exercise opposition, FARC-EP would not have committed itself to moving towards demobilization, disarmament, and reinsertion into civilian and political life.

Table 15.2 Colombian party system in the legislature, 2018–2022

Political Party	2018			2022			
	Senate	House	Congress	Senate	House	Congress	Change in Congress
Partido Conservador	13.1	13.0	13.0	14.0	13.8	13.9	0.9
Partido Liberal	13.1	21.6	18.2	13.1	17.0	15.6	−2.6
Coalición Alianza Verde y Centro Esperanza				12.1		4.4	4.4
Centro Democrático	17.8	19.8	19.0	12.1	8.0	9.5	−9.5
Cambio Radical	15.0	18.5	17.1	10.3	9.0	9.5	−7.6
Partido de la U	13.1	15.4	14.5	9.3	8.0	8.5	−6.0
Comunes	4.7		1.9	4.7	2.7	3.4	1.5
Partido Verde	8.4	5.6	6.7				−6.7
Polo Democrático Alternativo	4.7	1.2	2.6				−2.6
MIRA	2.8	0.6	1.5				−1.5
Colombia Justa Libres	2.8	0.6	1.5				−1.5
Decentes	2.8	1.2	1.9				−1.9
Indígenas	1.9	0.0	0.7				−0.7
Opción Ciudadana	0.0	1.2	0.7				−0.7
Coalición Alternativa Santandereana	0.0	0.6	0.4				−0.4
MAIS	0.0	0.6	0.4	0.9	0.5	0.7	0.3
Pacto Histórico				18.7	15.4	16.6	16.6
Coalición MIRA-Colombia Justa Libres				3.7	0.5	1.7	1.7
Movimiento Alternativo Indígena y Social				0.9	N/A	0.3	0.3
Alianza Verde					5.9	3.7	3.7
Liga de Gobernantes Anticorrupción					1.6	1.0	1.0

Continued

Table 15.2 *Continued*

Political Party	2018			2022			
	Senate	House	Congress	Senate	House	Congress	Change in Congress
Alternativos (AV-PDA)					1.1	0.7	0.7
Coalición Centro Esperanza					1.6	1.0	1.0
Gente en Movimiento					0.5	0.3	0.3
Fuerza Ciudadana La Fuerza del Cambio Magdalena					0.5	0.3	0.3
Coalición Cambio Radical—Colombia Justa Libres					0.5	0.3	0.3
Coalición Partido Liberal—Colombia Justa Libres					0.5	0.3	0.3
Coalición Partido Conservador—Partido de la U					0.5	0.3	0.3
Coalición Partido Conservador—CD					0.5	0.3	0.3
Coalición Cambio Radical—MIRA					0.5	0.3	0.3
Coalición Juntos por Caldas					0.5	0.3	0.3
Partido Colombia Renaciente					0.5	0.3	0.3
Nuevo Liberalismo					0.5	0.3	0.3
Coalición Partido de la U—Colombia Justa Libres					0.5	0.3	0.3
Consejo Comunitario de Comunidades Negras Palenque					0.5	0.3	0.3
Consejo Comunitario Fernando Rios Hidalgo					0.5	0.3	0.3
Curules de Paz					8.0	5.1	0.3
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	0

Source: Registraduría Nacional del Estado Civil; MOE, 2018

Table 15.3 Centro Democrático and Comunes election results, 2014–2020 (% of valid votes)

Elections	Centro Democrático	Comunes
Presidential first round 2014	30.28%	N/A
Presidential second round 2014	47.02%	N/A
Senate 2014	14.3%	N/A
House of Representatives 2014	9.5%	N/A
Presidential first round 2018	39.34%	Candidate withdrew during the campaign
Presidential second round 2018	53.98%	N/A
Senate 2018	16.4%	55,587 votes (0.36%)
House of Representatives 2018	16.02%	33,956 votes
Presidential first round 2022	Candidate Zuluaga resigned before the first round	N/A
Presidential second round 2022	N/A	N/A
Senate 2022	11.85%	0.19%
House of Representatives 2022	9.86%	0.12%

Source: Registraduría Nacional del Estado Civil

CD participated in the national elections—presidential and legislative—for the first time in 2014. It subsequently competed in the 2015 and 2019 regional and local elections and in the 2018 and 2022 national elections. Meanwhile, Comunes participated in the 2018 and 2022 national elections and in the 2019 sub-national elections. The electoral performance of the former party has been better at the national level than locally, while the results for the latter have been very poor at both levels. Table 15.3 presents the results obtained by these two parties in the 2014, 2018, and 2022 national elections.

These results show that the two parties differ significantly in their capacity to attract voters and to obtain political power. CD reached the presidency of the country the second time it presented a candidate, and in the legislative elections of 2014 and 2018, it was one of the three parties with the greatest relative vote share. At the sub-national level, the results were not as conclusive, but it also managed to elect some governors, mayors, deputies, and municipal council members. The party's performance in those elections was better in 2015 than in 2019. In 2022, the party experienced a decrease in its share of power in the legislative elections and did not participate in the presidential elections. With the victory of Gustavo Petro from PH as the first leftist president in the country's history, the party shifted to become part of the opposition. The pro-status quo rightist party received fewer votes and seats than the leftist coalition led by Petro. At that time, the party was affected by the poor performance of the then-president, Iván Duque, and by the decline

suffered by its leader, former President Uribe, who faced a judicial process. Several prominent militants left the party/retired from politics (Ortiz and Wills-Otero 2023).

Meanwhile, Comunes' performance was very poor at each of the three times it participated following its demobilization and reintegration into political and civilian life. In 2018, its presidential candidate, Rodrigo Londoño (alias Timochenko), withdrew from the campaign due to security concerns, as he had received several death threats. In the 2018 and 2022 legislative elections, the party aspired to obtain more seats than it had agreed with the national government (10 in total, for two consecutive four-year terms) but was equally unsuccessful. It did not manage to obtain enough votes to participate in the distribution of additional seats in either of the two chambers. In 2018, it obtained (for the Senate) 'in the vast majority of municipalities…only…less than one percent of the total valid votes' (Bolívar et al. 2023: 6). For the House of Representatives, 'it only presented candidates in five territorial constituencies: Antioquia, Atlántico, Bogotá, Santander and Valle del Cauca' (Bolívar et al. 2023). In 2022, the situation was similar. The party obtained a very small number of votes and was unable to increase its number of seats in Congress.

What factors can explain the differences in the electoral results of these two new political parties? Although the objective of this chapter is not to provide a systematic answer to this question, it is possible to suggest some hypotheses to be tested in future works. First, the origin of each of these parties is a central variable in understanding the differences. CD rose in reaction to a potential rupture of the status quo that would occur upon the signing of a peace agreement between the government and an insurgent group. Comunes, on the other hand, is the result of this agreement. That is, it is the consequence of the very rupture that the other party opposed. Thus, one hypothesis would be that the electoral performance of these parties is mediated by the electorate's preferences regarding changes in the economic, political, and social models. The increased resistance to change would explain the better performance of CD and poorer one of Comunes.

Secondly, although the organizational structures of the two parties are hierarchical in nature, the leadership of their top echelons has influenced the electoral results in different ways. In the first, popular former president Álvaro Uribe has been decisive in attracting voters in line with his political and ideological project. Uribe was a candidate in the 2014 legislative elections when he headed the closed list presented by the party, which aspired to seats in the Senate of the Republic. The more than two million votes (2,045,564) obtained, equivalent to 14.3% of the political representation,

earned the organization 20 Senate seats and made it the second strongest force in the institution. In the presidential elections, the former president was also a deciding factor in the newly created party's victory in the first electoral round in 2014, and in reaching the presidency in the second round in 2018. In 2022, the decline of Uribe's prestige harmed the political party.

In the case of Comunes, Rodrigo Londoño's leadership and presidential candidacy were detrimental to the party. During the public events in which he participated throughout the 2018 campaign, he was the target of aggressive attacks by his detractors. Several threats to his life led him to withdraw from the political race, and, although the new party was assured of 10 seats in the Congress of the Republic (5 in each chamber), the lists put together by the party to increase the number of seats were headed by former commanders of the insurgent group considered by the public to be responsible for the prolongation and degradation of the armed conflict. Thus, the hypothesis in this case suggests that the greater the popularity of the party leader or leaders, the greater their electoral success.

Third, the organizations' electoral success was influenced by their differentiated origins and legacies. As mentioned above, CD emerged under the leadership of Álvaro Uribe, former president for two consecutive terms (2002–2006 and 2006–2010) and previously a politician who had forged his political career as a governor and senator in the traditional PL. In 2002, he launched his candidacy under the new movement 'Primero Colombia' and was re-elected four years later, also under this movement. His background in traditional politics provided him with material resources and support from local and regional leaders. Partido Social de Unidad or Partido de la U was created under his leadership in 2005, bringing together politicians from different organizations, especially from the traditional PL and PC. This new organization, which ran in the 2006 legislative elections, supported Uribe's candidacy and became the main coalition party of his second government. It obtained 17.03% of the political representation in Congress, the highest share obtained by any party. The programmatic agenda that Uribe promoted during his two presidencies focused primarily on military combat against the existing guerrilla groups and bolstering the military forces. The so-called Seguridad Democrática ('democratic security') also included aspects aligned with a conservative agenda that promoted the status quo in the political, economic, and social spheres. This legacy was taken up by CD in 2014 when it participated in its first elections. The new party, whose logo clearly alludes to its leader, 'became an attractive alternative for some sympathizers of the blurred and de-ideologized PC who ceased to feel identified with it' (Rodríguez-Raga and Wills-Otero 2021: 83). It also attracted other voters

who viewed this alternative as an opportunity to convert programmatic proposals into public policies.

Meanwhile, the Comunes party emerged as a result of the final peace agreement, which established the conditions for guaranteeing the political participation of the demobilized group. The promoters of the new party were mainly the former commanders who had participated in the peace negotiations in Havana. They drew on their previous experience gained in the insurgent group's organizational structures. Within these structures, which evolved differently from one region to another, there was a clandestine political faction or party that imparted ideological content to the insurgent actions of the armed group. The other organizations were made up of the people's army and militias. It was from these structures that the new party emerged. Its construction was inspired by the Leninist model and was permeated by the regional political work of the armed organization and by its multiple linkages with local communities (Bolívar et al. 2023). These features of the legacy that inspired the new party influenced its first electoral results as well as its performance in the political arena. It did not emerge as an internally cohesive organization, but as one with different leaderships and with different positions on the various issues on its programmatic agenda. The original name given to the party—Fuerza Alternativa Revolucionaria del Común (FARC)—kept the acronym of the armed group, a decision that could have affected its electoral results, as it reminded the public of the group's past illegal and violent struggle. The hypothesis that emerges from this approach is that electoral success is conditioned by the availability of material, political, and organizational resources. The more resources a party accumulates, the better its electoral performance.

Parties' internal characteristics

What are the organizational characteristics of these parties? Clearly, both parties have hierarchical structures, in which a leader (CD) or group of leaders (Comunes) holds great power in setting the political agenda, selecting candidates for elections, and in deciding upon campaign strategies, among other activities. Former president Uribe is the main leader of CD, while Comunes is led by a collegiate group of former FARC commanders. This structure is determined by both parties' statutes. Article 40 of the CD's statute 'exalts and honours the administration of President Álvaro Uribe Vélez and recognizes him as the party's leader and guide'. It also determines that he 'shall have a seat with voice and vote in all of the party's organs of direction

and representation'. The bodies defined in the organizational structure (six in total) are headed by the 'Founding President', a figure defined as the organization's highest authority, above the collegiate bodies, which consist of the national convention, the national leadership, the congressional caucus, and the sectorial committees (Losada and Liendo 2016).

On the other hand, the statute of Comunes does not specify who the party leaders are. They determine a structure that considers the country's different levels of administrative organization: the nation, the departments, and the municipalities. The highest leadership body is the National Assembly, which is made up of delegates from local, departmental, and national councils. The assembly discusses, formulates, and approves the party's political line, its ideological platform, strategic plan, and national political action plan. Although the other levels fulfil important functions, it is the National Assembly that has the greatest decisive power within the party and determines its direction. The hierarchical structures of the two parties influence their electoral performance (Wills-Otero 2014). In the first case, the popularity of the CD leader, along with his charisma, explains part of the party's success. Many of its voters, and even its militants, support Uribe, or 'whatever Uribe says', over the party. He determines the candidates for elected office (mainly for the country's presidency) and the programmatic agenda that the elected leaders should promote. The personalization of politics embodied in this leader has brought electoral benefits to the party. However, it also explains the internal fractures, and even withdrawals, by militants who have expressed their disagreement with his decisions (Ortiz and Wills-Otero 2023). The popularity decline of the sole leader and his followers puts the political and electoral capacity of the party at risk. Its concentration of power at the top prevents the renewal of leadership at other levels of the organization and therefore creates incentives for ambitious politicians within the party—who have no chance of achieving their goals—to defect and seek other party alternatives. Meanwhile, the leadership of Comunes, headed by former leaders of the organization, has also influenced (in this case, negatively) its electoral performance. The leaders, and those who decided to occupy seats in the Congress of the Republic, came from the organization's high military command, thus damaging the party. Middle-level and base commanders did not have the opportunity to occupy seats, resulting in ruptures between these groups and the leaders. Thus, a more horizontal structure—contemplated in principle in the statutes—could hardly be put into operation. The operation of these hierarchical structures can be observed, for example, in the candidate selection processes. Although the statutes of the two parties define internal democracy mechanisms regarding decision making, the rules defined therein are not

fully complied with, and are even changed during the selection process. In the case of CD, Uribe centralizes the process and is the one who makes many of the final decisions concerning the definition of candidacies (Ortiz and Wills-Otero 2023). For Comunes, in contrast, the party's internal fragmentation hinders the selection process.

Political parties in Colombia are still not clear about how many militants and affiliates are involved in them. Their estimates are made on the basis of the number of votes they obtain in each election (El Nuevo Siglo 2019). Even so, the information offered by different media and other sources suggests that the affiliation of militants within CD and Comunes has varied throughout their trajectories. Both have been subject to accessions and defections over time. In CD, there are a greater number of affiliates and militants than in Comunes, which coincides with the levels of party affinity that correspond to each of these parties. CD ranks third among parties with which the electorate feels the greatest affinity (18.9%), while the percentage of affinity for Comunes is so low that it is listed under the 'others' category in the survey (Plata Caviedes et al. 2021). According to current Comunes congresspeople, 'less than half of the 13589 signatories of the peace agreement are currently party members or belong to the official party' (El Espectador 2021). Added to this is the call by some of its members to authorize their split from the party as a result of internal investigations and sanctions they have faced for diverging from decisions adopted by the party's leadership (El Espectador 2021). CD has also seen the resignation of some of its militants, some of whom participated in electoral contests after having been endorsed by the party. Fundamental programmatic disagreements, and the rupture of relations with the top party leaders (Uribe in CD and Londoño in Comunes), explain the decision of former militants to withdraw from these organizations (La Silla Vacía 2020; Ortiz and Wills-Otero 2023; El Espectador 2021). On the other hand, in CD, a variable that explains why new militants join the party is their admiration for its leader, former president Uribe, which is based on his legacy, charisma, and closeness to his followers (Ortiz and Wills-Otero 2023). Although this strengthens the party, it raises questions about its durability if its leader retires from the party.

CD defines itself as a party composed of citizens from different political backgrounds who are attracted to the seven pillars it promotes: 'democratic security, investor confidence, social cohesion, an austere and decentralized state, dialogue with communities, transparent management of public institutions and international relations, and respect for the environment and for regional diversity' (Ortiz 2021). Those who are closest to the organization and its leaders are those on the right of the ideological spectrum,

adults over 50 years of age, and people from the highest (6) and lowest (1) socio-economic strata (Semana 2019).[4]

The two parties can be differentiated in terms of their ideologies and programmatic agendas, and it is these characteristics that point to the rupture that gave rise to their emergence. As mentioned above, the 2012–2016 peace process involving the national government and the guerrilla group produced incentives for the formation of these parties. CD was created in 2014 and participated in the national elections of that year. Its goal at that time was to gain political power, prevent the re-election of the president, and redefine the course of the peace process negotiations, with which it disagreed. Comunes was born as a result of the second point of the Peace Accord, related to its political participation. It participated in the 2018 national elections and the 2019 local elections (see Table 15.2). Ideologically, the parties are located on opposite sides of the spectrum. CD identifies with the right and Comunes with the left. The pillars of the former, mentioned above, focus on the principles once promoted by President Uribe during his term in office (2002–2010). One aspect of particular importance in understanding the rift between the two parties is CD's predominant objective to strengthen the state's security apparatus, and with it to confront the threat posed by subversive actors (terrorists, according to the party) to the country's stability. Military defeat prevails over peaceful solutions to the conflict, even following the agreement signed between the previous government and the former guerrillas. The delay during the government of Iván Duque (2018–2022) in the implementation of the Havana agreement was a manifestation of the disagreement with the peace agreement.[5]

In turn, the left-wing ideological orientation of Comunes focuses, according to its statutes, on overcoming a number of factors, including:

> [the] capitalist social order in force in Colombian society…, and the promotion of an alternative model in which there is social justice; real and advanced democracy; the overcoming of all exclusion, discrimination or segregation for economic, social, ethnic or gender reasons; the guarantee of life and dignified existence…, the construction of a new political economy that guarantees the material realization of human rights. (Art. 5, Estatutos del Partido)

In practice, the party has promoted legislative initiatives that are in line with some of these principles. However, as discussed in the following paragraphs, Comunes has been unsuccessful in pushing through bills and constitutional reforms to fulfil its political agenda. Its condition as a new party, emerging from an insurgent organization with several complex

structures, added to its status as an opposition party with little relative power and weak internal cohesion.

The internal discipline of the two parties and their ability to act cohesively vary both between the two and within each. The early years of CD's political activity (2014–2018) were characterized by the high level of discipline that the party recorded in its legislative performance. At the time, CD defined itself as an opposition party, and its purpose was to delay initiatives promoted by the coalition parties of the government of Juan Manuel Santos, especially those related to the implementation of the peace agreement signed in 2016. Uribe, the party's leader and then senator, was successful in promoting and maintaining high levels of internal cohesion. Subsequently, when CD became the governing party in 2018 and obtained the most seats in the Congress of the Republic, it was also successful in securing a broad coalition to support government initiatives. However, fractures within the party emerged throughout the quadrennium. In 2020, Uribe resigned from his seat in the Senate of the Republic after the opening of a judicial process against him. In 2022, CD became part of the opposition in Congress.

Comunes, on the other hand, has struggled to behave in a cohesive and disciplined manner in the Congress of the Republic, the main focus of democratic representation. Intitally, the decision on who would occupy the 10 seats guaranteed to them by the Peace Accord caused internal fractures in the new organization. Two of the seats were designated to former commanders, who did not take them up. One of these commanders—alias Iván Márquez—withdrew from the list and did not participate in the elections after alleging a lack of security conditions. He was replaced by another former militant. The other—alias Jesús Santrich—was arrested before his inauguration for alleged drug trafficking activities following the peace accord. His seat was declared empty, which took political power away from the party (Bolívar et al. 2023). Throughout its first three years in the Congress of the Republic, Comunes acted as an opposition party, and most of the legislative initiatives it presented (150 as of 31 March 2021) were co-authored with members of other opposition parties. The issues discussed in the legislative agenda have been varied (Bolívar et al. 2023) and are not limited to aspects related to the implementation of the peace agreement. Only two bills and two legislative acts filed during the aforementioned period have been successful in the legislative process and have been sanctioned either as laws or constitutional reforms. In none of these four initiatives did all the members of the party participate as co-authors. Nor have they done so in most of the projects. The party has not appeared to be disciplined. Its members' performance has been variable, with some being more active than others (Bolívar et al. 2023), and there have

been internal fractures, which led some of its members of Congress to request a split (El Espectador 2021).

Conclusions

CD and Comunes—created at the political juncture of the negotiations between the government of Juan Manuel Santos and FARC-EP—are 2 of the political parties that currently have legal status in Colombia. They are part of a multi-party system, which in the two decades of the 21st century has been deinstitutionalizing (Albarracín et al. 2018) given the electoral decline of traditional parties—the PL and the PC—and the entry and exit of new parties. As illustrated in Table 15.1, the effective number of parties has changed between elections. The instability of the first period (1991–2006) coincides with the transition from the two-party system that lasted until the early 1990s to the multi-party system that emerged as a result of the political opening promoted by the 1991 Constitution. Meanwhile, the reduced volatility observed since 2010 is a consequence of the political reforms that began in 2003, whose main objective was to reorganize the system through rules of the game that would encourage internal party cohesion and induce inter-party alliances that would lead to a reduction in the absolute number of parties in the system.

Despite the evidence showing the deinstitutionalization of the Colombian party system, it is important to highlight its resilience in the midst of a number of significant critical junctures. One such juncture was the 2012–2016 peace process; the other was the accession to power in 2018 of a government that opposed that process; and one more was the election the first leftist president in history. It was during the first juncture that the two parties observed in this chapter were created while the existing parties adapted, even though in some cases their power diminished. The entry of the new parties into the system resulted in volatility. In 2022 new parties and coalitions won political power in Congress, as shown in Table 15.2. Despite this, the system has demonstrated both an ability to adapt and the permeability to make room for diverse and ideologically opposed political expressions. Although it is not clear whether the CD and—especially—Comunes will survive, their members may find a place in other existing parties, or they may opt to create new alternatives. The existing multiparty system is pluralistic in ideological terms, and at the same time flexible. There are parties located on different parts of the ideological spectrum, and there is room for alternatives that represent new divergences. Traditional parties retain substantive power, especially at the sub-national level (Albarracín et al. 2018), while others that formed

after the 1991 Constitution have managed to establish themselves. Among the latter, left and centre parties that had no place in the system before 1991—e.g., Polo Democrático, Partido Verde and more recently the PH coalition (2022)—have become options that revitalize and strengthen the country's democracy. Over time, they have gained rights and guarantees that create favourable conditions for their survival.

Thus, without ignoring the problems arising from the deinstitutionalization of the party system, we must also recognize that preventing system collapse favours the democratic regime, and that the existence of pluralism and variety in the parties' profiles reduces the chances of the successful emergence of personalist leadership that threatens political institutions. The challenges to the democratic regime are enormous: high levels of corruption; increased violence, poverty, and inequality; political polarization and personalization; and social mobilization, among others. Political parties are responsible for designing public policies to find solutions to these problems, and, to this end, overcoming their internal fractures and creating inter-party agreements will be fundamental. Without this, personalist leaders with aspirations of concentrating power and acting above the institutions may gain ground.

Notes

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2. Before 1991, the effective number of parties was two. It increased to eight between 1991 and 2002 and decreased to seven in the senate elections after 2003 (Castañeda 2018).
3. For the Senate, the threshold corresponds to 3% of the valid votes. For the lower chamber, the threshold corresponds to half of the electoral quotient, which is calculated by dividing the total number of votes in a specific constituency by the total number of seats available in that constituency.
4. This information needs to be confirmed. In the case of Comunes, there are no sources that provide any relevant information.
5. During Uribe's two consecutive administrations, the guerrillas were militarily undermined and paramilitary groups were demobilized as a consequence of a law passed by congress (Law 975 of 2005). The rate of extortive kidnappings and homicides dropped significantly during this period (Rettberg 2020). This was one of the factors behind the former president's popularity and his ability, years later, to lead the creation of the new party.

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16

Political Parties in Brazil

Tradition and Trends in the New Democracy

Silvana Krause and Bruno Marques Schaefer

Introduction: The Tradition and Trust

Since 1985, Brazil has been going through a process of democratic stabilization while facing a series of challenges: party fragmentation, polarization between political forces, fluid political careers, corruption, and widespread distrust of the electorate in relation to the parties. All the factors that led to the critical 2018 election with the victory of a right-wing populist candidate, Jair Bolsonaro, mirror this scenario (McKenna, 2020). Elected by a party without wide national representation, Bolsonaro shortly thereafter left that party and remained two years in government without party affiliation.[1] His government, with anti-partisan strategies in Congress, marks a cycle of crises for traditional parties that began in 2013. These conjunctural aspects are added to historical and structural aspects that reflect the characteristics and trends of the new Brazilian democracy.

The development of the Brazilian case allows us to assess to what extent and in which ways the country's parties have performed the basic functions demanded of them in representative democracies: political representation, selection and recruitment of members, and the elaboration of public policies. The history of instability and short-lived parties in the country also reveals a rationale with characteristics that do not always align with classical typologies such as the emergence of modern parties of 'cadres and masses' at the end of the 19th century (Duverger 1979), or of catch-all parties that arose from transformations in the European political and electoral market after 1945 (Kirchheimer 1966). Moreover, the changes in organizational models highlighted in contemporary theories, such as the phenomenon of cartelization of parties and party systems (Katz and Mair 1995) and the formatting of the professional–electoral party (Panebianco 2005), are not sufficient to

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understand the complexity of Brazilian parties or their different dimensions of action.

Throughout its republican history since 1889, Brazil has had six different configurations of party systems: a) 1889–1930: non-competitive system with state parties, nominally identified with the federate units; b) 1930–1937: an early-stage competitive and multi-party system, with the formation of nationally prominent parties; c) 1937–1945: prohibition of the legal existence of parties; d) 1945–1964: a competitive multi-party system comprising three parties with significant representation; e) 1966–1979, a bipartisan system, imposed by the military regime; f) 1979–1989: a moderately fragmented multi-party system; and g) 1990–present: a highly fragmented multi-party system. Despite this instability, it is possible to highlight a few persistent elements indicating ongoing challenges to the new Brazilian democracy inaugurated with a civil government in 1985.

Brazilian parties underscore a tradition of fragile ties with social groups and cleavages, predominantly representing regional oligarchies; disputes between family clans; and groups associated with economic activities, investment, and public subsidies. This weakness in the bonds of party representation needs to be considered when analysing the factors for the party's lack of centrality in the conduct of important moments in the country's political life. From gaining independence in 1822, to liberation from enslaved labour in 1888, the proclamation of the Republic in 1889, the fall of the authoritarian regime in 1945, and the civil–military coup in 1964, the parties did not lead political movements. It was only during the democratic transition process negotiated in 1984 that the country's main opposition party played a leading role in the formation of a civil government and building the new democracy.

The legacy of the small number of social ties for party organizations comes from an originating model with a mostly top-down profile, induced and driven by incentives from the executive power and the state machinery (Souza 1983). This origin, in other words, hardly comes close to the traditional model of the emergence of modern European parties, with clear differences in social cleavages and functions of organizing interests, intermediation, and political integration.

Consequently, there is a consolidation of a culture with minimized focus on political parties and a tradition of personalist leaderships in conducting the lives of the parties. If, in the 21st century, parties with long-standing traditions in mature democracies face profound challenges with a reduction in members and rejection in the electorate, the panorama in Brazil is more

accentuated. For example, the voters' confidence in parties reached its lowest percentage in 2018 (6.20%), with the most trusted institutions being the church and the armed forces (Barômetro das Américas 2019)

The Parties in the New Brazilian Democracy: Macro Institutional Environment and Legislation

Institutions and fragmentation

Despite the new Brazilian democracy facing considerable legal instability regarding the norms and rules of electoral competition, which also influence political disputes and the organizational life of parties, certain institutional elements have remained. In general, the following are highlighted as encouraging factors of Brazil's scenario of low institutionalization of parties: the presidential system of government associated with an open-list proportional system in electoral districts throughout 27 federal units (these elections being of great scope, each district electing between 7 and 70 seats) and a robust political federalism (Abranches 2018).

The arrangement of presidential elections with an open-list proportional system for legislative elections must be considered to understand the party landscape, because they foster the development of a fragmented party system in the national legislature and difficulties for parties to generate national leaders or deliver cohesive action at the national level with party agendas. The open list reinforces a vicious cycle of party weakening, encouraging individual political careers which are largely independent of the party's organizational life.

Figure 16.1 summarizes the evolution of important indicators of the party system in the country: the vertiginous growth of the number of parties in the Chamber of Deputies, with its peak in the 2018 election,[2] and overall party fragmentation, which follows the same trend. Throughout the new democracy, the parties of elected presidents have not reached a majority in the legislature and have turned to forming alliances with various parties. Nevertheless, it should be noted that in the 2022 elections there was a decrease in party fragmentation.

Electoral volatility was higher during the political transition period (1982–1986) because of the entry of new parties into the political market, and since 2010, it has entered a phase of a continuous cycle of growth. The absence of stable party preferences for voters with a panorama of instability in party representation is aggravated by constant party switching by parliamentarians (Melo 2004).

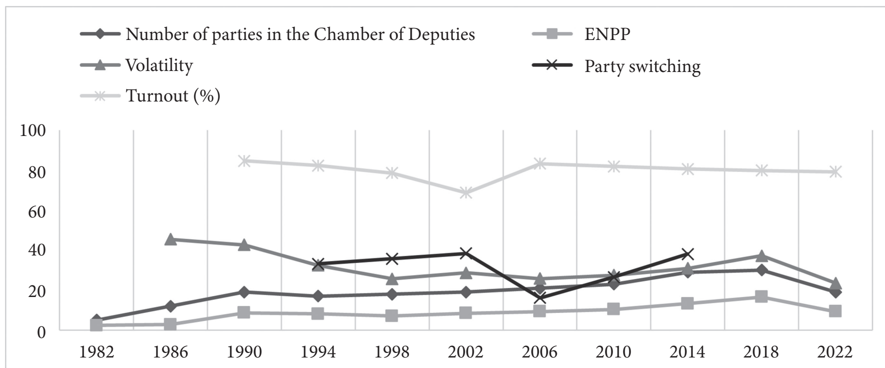

Figure 16.1 Evolution of the number of parties, effective number of parliamentary parties (ENPP), and party switching in the Chamber of Deputies. Party switching: percentage of deputies who switched parties during their term. In 2022, new legislation made it possible to form party federations. They must act as single party in electoral competition and inside parliament are hence counted as one party.

Sources: Superior Electoral Court (TSE); Chamber of Deputies; Gallagher (2022) Election indices; Voter Turnout Database (IDEA 2022)

Legislation: Party autonomy and resources

The Federal Constitution of 1988 established general principles for party organizations, and it reflected the concerns of the lawmakers in guaranteeing the administrative autonomy of parties (Article 17). Moreover, introduced in 1995, the Party Law (9.096/95) set regulations for the operation, financing, and accounting of parties and emphasized parties' ample autonomy for the elaboration of their statutes, forms of organization, and internal functioning.

However, subsequent changes to party legislation challenged this, reflecting the reactions of parties and political leaders. These initiatives were implemented by different actors: partly by the judiciary, through consultations with the Superior Electoral Court (TSE), and partly by the legislature, responding to public opinion or echoing survival strategies by party leaders. Mainly, these have focused on three dimensions: strengthening party organization, improving political financing, and confronting the fragmentation of the party system.

To strengthen party organizations, four central fronts of initiatives and reactions emerged: a) tools to prevent and inhibit party switching by parliamentarians and political leaders; b) definition of ownership over the political mandate; c) membership time necessary to be nominated; and d) requirements for the formation of new parties.

To discourage party switching, it was an influential initiative by parliamentarians to change the internal regulations of the Chamber of

Deputies (Resolution 34/2005): the distribution of positions in parliamentary committees was tied to the party's electoral result and no longer to their representation on the date of inauguration of the Chamber of Deputies. This resolution also established punishment with the deputy's loss of office and the guarantee of the affected party to maintain its quota of nominations for legislative offices in accordance with its election result. Along these lines, parties impacted by the loss of mandates consulted the TSE to clarify the definition of ownership over the political mandate. The TSE Resolution 22.526/2007 defined that the mandate belongs to the parties. This measure was relativized by TSE Resolution 22.610/2007, which established the possibilities of not losing a mandate: in cases of incorporation, merger, or formation of a new party, as well as programmatic changes and persecution of the party, the mandate is guaranteed to the migrant deputy. This instability especially weakened traditional and consolidated parties, as switching deputies saw 'windows of opportunity' in their careers with alternatives for new parties or mergers. This measure, reinforced by another decision of the Supremo Tribunal Federal (STF)[3] in 2012, established that the Free Electoral Propaganda Schedule and the Party Fund are to be distributed not according to the number of seats acquired in the election, but during the year in which the election will take place, encouraging switching of parties and formation of new parties between election and inauguration.[4] Another disincentive to political careers with long-term political ties was the reduction in the requirement of affiliation time for candidacies in 2015 (Law 13.165). It no longer requires one year of membership to be a candidate, reducing that time to six months. The same legislation still allows politicians with mandates to change parties within 30 days prior to the six-month membership period.

Recent legal modifications, in 2017, moved in the opposite direction by targeting lower campaign costs, changing party funding, and introducing a performance clause.[5] The expected effect of the establishment of greater restrictions is to limit the formation of new parties and inhibit so-called 'parties for hire'—those without programmatic identities and predominantly instrumentalized by leaders with little political reach.

Regarding the financing of Brazilian parties and elections, the model that was in force for more than 20 years (1993–2015) was mixed: private contributions to candidates and parties by companies, individuals, and the candidates themselves, as well as public funding through the Party Fund. In 2015, after a decision by the Supreme Court, corporate contributions were declared unconstitutional.

Reforms to party/electoral finance legislation have been a reaction to scandals. Corruption allegations served as an exogenous influence for changes in the law. In 1993, Law 8713 was passed after a corruption scandal involving

the campaign accounting of Collor, elected president in 1989 and impeached in 1992. Until that moment, legislation originating from the military regime did not allow donations from companies to campaigns or parties. The scandal and the subsequent Parliamentary Inquiry Commission culminated in the approval of a law that allowed electoral financing by companies. Subsequently, the Law on Political Parties and the Law on Elections consolidated the model of private and public financing.

Until 2015, this model favoured the influence of large donors, while not regulating the expenses of candidates and parties. The laws of 1993 and 1997 allowed business donations without nominal caps: the limit for contributions from firms was proportional, up to 2% of gross sales. This criterion favoured companies with higher revenues. In the case of individuals, the limit continues to be as set in 1993: up to 10% of gross earnings in the year preceding the election. This also favours contributions from large donors.

The data shown in Table 16.1 indicate that the Brazilian general elections were almost exclusively financed by companies until 2014. In 2018, public resources represented more than 70% of the total value of campaigns. In 2022, public resources represented more than 80%.

Table 16.1 also shows the Gini Index for business donations and indicates a trend towards growth in the concentration of resources between donors and economic sectors. In the latter case, there is no correlation between the weight of each economic sector in the national gross domestic product (GDP) and the weight of campaign contributions (Mancuso et al. 2021). It

Table 16.1 Sources of the resources for Brazilian general elections, 2002–2022 in million dollars ($) and proportional (%) values

Source	Statistics	2002	2006	2010	2014	2018	2022
Companies	Total ($)	25.4*	37.3	78.3	81.4		
	%	60.11	61.64	71.48	70.93		
	Gini	0.87	0.89	0.92	0.93		
Individuals	Total ($)	65.2	98.8	145.2	149.5	86.3	171.3
	%	15.41	16.31	13.25	13.03	14.41	14.25
Own Resources	Total ($)	59.0	84.7	112.7	101.2	75.7	35.9
	%	13.95	13.99	10.29	8.82	12.64	2.99
Public Resources	Total ($)	44.5	48.8	54.6	82.7	436.8	994.97
	%	10.52	8.06	4.98	7.21	72.95	82.76
	Total	422.9	605.4	1095.5	1146.9	598.8	1202.2

Source: Elaborated from data by Mancuso (2020) and information available with the Supreme Electoral Court

* The resources were adjusted for inflation as in December 2020. After this procedure, it was further adjusted considering the dollar quotes for the same period.

was the sectors most dependent on the state, such as civil construction, which ended up investing proportionally more in elections. In 2014, companies in the civil construction sector represented around 6% of the Brazilian GDP but 27% of total business donations. The manufacturing sector represented 12% of GDP but 35% of total contributions. The distribution of company resources followed a catch-all pattern for the benefit of the largest Brazilian parties (and several candidates within them) and without ideological distinctions (Krause et al. 2015). In the case of the 2014 presidential elections, the three best-placed candidates in electoral polls accounted for 99.7% of the total donated by companies to all candidates.

After the ban on business donations, politicians and parties came together to increase the value of public resources available for financing both party organizations and electoral campaigns. In the first case, between 2014 and 2015, there was an increase in the value of the Party Fund (from US$70 million to more than US$180 million). In the second case, also in the 2017 electoral reform, the Special Fund for Campaign Financing (FEFC) was created. This is available to parties in both general and municipal election years (hence, every two years), and is distributed to national directorates, which subsequently transfer the funds in a discretionary manner to candidates and/or other sections of the party (at state and municipal levels). In 2018, the total value was US$330 million.

Resources available from the FEFC and the Party Fund are distributed to the parties based on two criteria: equitable and proportional (to the electoral weight).[6] As can be seen in Figure 16.2, the increase in the supply of public resources represented greater dependence of party organizations on the state.

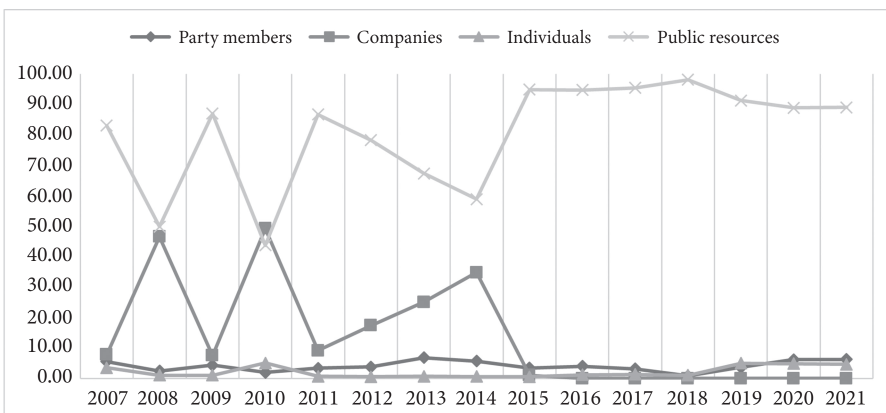

Figure 16.2 Sources of financing of Brazilian political parties (%), 2007–2021
Source: Elaborated from Superior Electoral Court (TSE) data

Considering the parties' accounting and sources of resources, it can be noted that after the STF's decision, public resources represented more than 90% of the total party budgets. Considering Poguntke et al. (2016), Brazilian parties compare to those in Hungary (81.63%), Israel (81.24%), and Austria (79.88%) in terms of party dependence on direct public subsidies. It is interesting to note that, overall, Brazilian parties register a minuscule percentage of contributions from members. On average, from 2007 till 2018, only four out of every 100 dollars collected by Brazilian parties came from their members.

Overview of Main Political Parties

Why these parties?

In the following sections, we discuss the three main Brazilian parties in terms of their origins, political representation, resources, ideologies, and internal dynamics. The weight of these parties has declined. In 1994, the three parties held 42.9% of the seats in the Chamber of Deputies; in 2018 this figure fell to 22.8%. Figure 16.3 illustrates membership development in relation to total number of voters who are members of a party and to data on party preference.[7] There was a trend of decreasing membership in all parties and a decrease in preference, apart from the Worker's Party (PT), which in 2018 had a significant recovery.

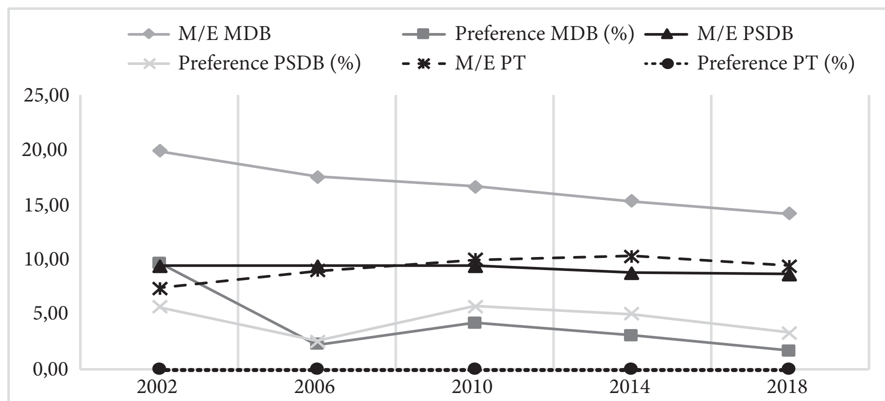

Figure 16.3 Party preference and membership as a proportion of the electorate (M/E)
Source: Brazilian Electoral Studies (ESEB) and TSE

MDB-PMDB

Origins and evolution of representation

Movimento Democrático Brasileiro (MDB[8]) is the oldest party, created in the bipartisan system of the civil–military regime with the objective of keeping the legislative power functioning with a consented and controlled 'opposition'. The party welcomed leaders with different ideologies who sought to maintain an institutional political role within the authoritarian period, agglomerating from liberal democrats to leaders of the clandestine Communist Party. A central element that ensured its initial internal cohesion was the unifying banner of opposition to the regime and a return to democracy. In the new democracy, the party became the centre of support in the formation of governments, although it was not successful when it presented candidates for the presidency of the country. In 1989, its candidates obtained only 4.9% of the vote; in 1994 it reached 4.5%, and in the 2018 election, 1.2%. MDB participated in national governments, whether establishing electoral alliances for the vice-presidency or joining the administration of the elected governments of Partido da Social Democracia Brasileira (PSDB) and PT, offering a legislative basis and occupying ministerial positions in the executive power.

The importance of the party for the country's governability is explained by two reasons: first, the capillarity of the party's presence in state executives, especially ascending from regional leaders with a legacy of a local and regional organizational structure built since the civil–military regime (Melo 2013). If, on the one hand, this was the organization's strength, on the other, the party was held hostage by regional leaders with little national relevance, which explains their difficulty in building expressive national leaders with competitive candidacies for the presidency of the country. Second, the significant representation of the party in the national legislature was of particular relevance in the context of fragmentation of the party system.

MDB experienced a huge drop in its representation in the 1990 elections, when it was blamed for the economic crisis, inflation, and frustration with the first civil government. It went from 53% to 21% of representation in the Chamber of Deputies and suffered substantial loss of control of state governments, going from 95.7% to 26.9% of governors. More impactful was the 2018 election, when the party reached its lowest representation in the new democracy, reaching 6.6% of the seats in the Chamber of Deputies and 11.1% of state governors. The reasons for this are associated with its participation in PT governments, its leadership in the impeachment movement in 2016,

and corruption accusations.[9] Moreover, in 2022 the party slightly increased its representation in the Chamber of Deputies (8.18%) and maintained its numbers in state governments (11.11%).

Funding

First, the financing profile of MDB reveals the insignificance of the party members in sustaining its operation and their dependence on public resources (in 2018, practically 100% of the budget). Second, the most significant impact of corporate financing in election years (2008, 2010, 2014) stands out, especially when the party had the winning candidacy for the vice-presidency of the country. In 2014, the MDB received more than US$18 million from corporate donors, with around US$3 million originating from just one company. The civil construction sector was responsible for more than half of the resources from corporate donations.

Ideological positioning and agenda

Even with different methodologies applied to classify parties (surveys, legislative voting, interviews with experts, and programmes), the party has been identified at the centre of the ideological spectrum (Krause et al. 2017).

The unifying agenda for the 'democratization' of the country allowed the party a minimum cohesion of action until participating in national governments. Although MDB is identified as in the centre, this suggestion exemplifies the limits of evaluating parties as indivisible units. Internal divisions are often expressed as 'sub-parties' within the same party (Sartori 1982); these are not based on ideological and programmatic disputes but, predominantly, clashes between regional leaders. MDB's agenda has ambiguous characteristics, defending, on the one hand, the development of an economy of free competition and, on the other, the need for greater state intervention in the economy (MDB 1996). In the 2018 election, it defended both the privatization of state-owned companies and a state that protects society and regulates economic activities.

Two elements explain MDB's capacity for electoral mobilization and access to the state machinery: its programmatic–ideological hybridity with broad alliances on the right and left, which resulted in participation in almost all the country's governments in the new democracy; and its flexibility regarding the political dynamics of the country's federated units, giving autonomy to regional leaders, guaranteeing its local and regional territorial presence. If, on the one hand, its structure as a 'party federation' (Ferreira 2002) and its flexibility of alliances (Krause et al. 2017) was fundamental for the expansion and maintenance of its electoral machinery, on the other, it brought a

challenge. Its loyalty ties with the electorate were tenuous and sustained by regional leaders, which also explains its electoral downfall in recent years and difficulties in controlling the country's executive seat.

Internal operational dynamics and leaderships

Based on the premise that intra-party democracy is based on participation and control by members in the organizational structure and decision-making process, a recent study on the internal democracy index of Brazilian parties (Salgado 2019) places MDB in 10th position in its general ranking.[10]

As for the provisions in MDB's statutes on the composition of its governing bodies, the party has a configuration of participation of minority slates with the adoption of a proportional system and guarantees all members to present themselves as a candidate for the party organizational bodies, provided that their membership contributions are paid. Conversely, MDB does not establish quotas for the participation of minorities (women, blacks, young people, indigenous people etc.).

Party leadership mandates have a limit of four years but no re-election prohibition. During the period 2007–2018, MDB had three National Executive Committees (CEN).[11] The party is composed of politicians with elected positions or with experience in elections. During the period considered here, of the 50 names, only one did not have this profile. The data corroborate other findings in the literature on the party. Ribeiro (2014), for example, points out that the party has a historical tendency of containing public officials on its national leadership. Since the 1980s, the number of CEN members with a political background (in elected and commissioned positions) has tended to exceed 90%.

The party guarantees organizational decentralization in its statute, giving wide autonomy regarding decisions on electoral alliances and forecasting the distribution of public financial resources to local and regional bodies. It is, however, up to the national executive to intervene regarding local and regional bodies when deemed necessary.

The lack of focus on internal participation in the elaboration of the party and government programmes is noteworthy, as the statute does not require the involvement of members of local and regional bodies. These also do not need to be consulted on strategies for electoral alliances.

As for the recruitment of candidacies, all members have guaranteed this right, but there is no norm for the participation of minority candidacies or guarantee of equal competition of members in the definition of candidacies. It is important to highlight that there is no regulation regarding the distribution of public resources for financing candidates from the party.

PSDB

Origin and evolution of representation

PSDB[12] has its origin in a dissidence of parliamentary leaders from the MDB in 1988, a classic case of internal origin. The parliamentary importance of the party can be seen since its founding year. Even though it had not yet participated in an election, when formed, it represented the third-largest representation in the Chamber of Deputies with the inclusion of deputies to the new party, and in its provisional national executive almost all its members (91%) were politicians (Silva 2017).

The reasons for the split emerged in the context of the work on the new Constitution in Congress. The dissidents defended a parliamentary system of government and opposed extending the presidential term of office of five years. In addition to these differences, the dispute between regional leaders of the MDB in the largest electoral district in the country, São Paulo, was also central to the creation of the party. In the founding meeting, the Southeast region constituted 53.2% of the members of the board, and the state of São Paulo provided the majority of its leaders (Silva 2017). The party welcomed during its foundation distinct groupings from Social Democrats, Christian Democrats, Democratic Socialists, and Progressive Liberals, but with few links with civil society associations and trade union movements.

The legacy of programmatic–ideological heterogeneity in PSDB's origins and its essentially regional base impacted its expansion from electoral and organizational viewpoints. However, the party rose with the corruption scandals and impeachment of the first president elected in direct elections in the new democracy and participated in President Franco's government between 1992–1994. Moreover, the presence in the government as minister (leader of the stabilization plan) proved to be essential for the victory of the PSDB candidate in the 1994 presidential election, Fernando Henrique Cardoso.[13]

The organization's birth within the political system, without a solid base of social groups and movements, limited its mobilization and national electoral capillarity. Even during the years of electoral victory for the country's presidency (1994 and 1998), it did not reach a majority in the legislature, winning 12.1% and 19.8% of the seats in the Chamber of Deputies in 1994 and 1998, respectively. Its biggest loss was in the 2018 election, with only 5.6% representation in the Chamber of Deputies, but its representation had been decreasing since PT's presidential election with Lula in 2002. This is a symptom of the struggle of the parties to maintain their electoral strength in opposition and away from the structure of the state machinery.

From the viewpoint of regional strength, PSDB, since 1994, governed a significant portion of the country's federated units, but as of 2014 it has lost this strong presence. Corruption scandals involving leaders and governors in the states of the Southeast region (São Paulo and Minas Gerais) impacted the 2018 election, and the party acquired 5.6% of representation in the Chamber of Deputies—the worst result since its establishment. Additionally, in the 2022 elections it further lost representation in the Chamber of Deputies and elected the same number of governors as the previous election (11.1%).

Funding

The party's funding profile reveals the insignificance of members in sustaining the party's life throughout the analysed period. The dynamics of corporate financing until their legal permission and of public resource financing show a logic of strong impact of corporate financing in election years. In practically every year of national, regional, or municipal elections contemplated (2008: 57%; 2010: 72%; 2014: 55%), the largest funding originated from companies.

Ideological positioning and agenda

Being named 'Brazilian social democracy' could hastily classify the party as centre-left. The boundaries for placing PSDB on the ideological dimension are even more tenuous when we consider the original trajectory of European social-democratic parties. These originated with a broad social and trade union base and later, in the 1980s, underwent programmatic–ideological transformations when they formed governments (Kitschelt 1994). The case of PSDB is an inverse trajectory: a social democracy without the classical roots of traditional parties of this lineage.

Since its first presidential campaign in 1989 and during its two governments (1995–2002), PSDB has been notable for an agenda of liberal conception of economic stabilization policies, privatization of state-owned companies, control of public spending, and opening the Brazilian economy to the international market. Its programmatic documents, however, are characterized by clearly social-democratic proposals and formulations. The party is located halfway between a 'strong state' and having a 'market orientation', favouring the reduction of the state in certain sectors and the presence of a regulatory state where necessary.

Moreover, the party's trajectory in relation to the ideological programmatic field is also related to its competitive environment. The growth and consolidation of PT on the left, especially from the mid-1990s onwards, 'pushed'

PSDB further to the right. Electoral alliances and government coalitions in confronting PT as its main opponent led the party to occupy the space from the centre to the right.

Internal operational dynamics and leadership

PSDB statutorily ensures that minorities are incorporated in the direction of its bodies through the system of proportional representation. All members who are up to date with their membership fee contributions can apply for leadership positions in the party bodies. There is also a quota policy requiring the representation of minorities.

Executive committee terms are limited to two years, the re-election of chairpersons being prohibited. During the period 2007–2018, the PSDB had five CENs. Analysis of the CENs reveals a prevalence of public officials in the leadership: out of 83 names, only seven lacked a history of elected positions. Within the executive committee, there is also the presence of the National Political Council. Comprising six members, it has the power to deliberate on national coalitions and determine the method of selection of presidential candidates (Ribeiro 2013).[14]

The party statute guarantees the organization's decentralization with the right to regional and local leaders who have established their electoral alliances, as well as providing the allocation of public financial resources to local and regional party bodies. Yet the participation of members in these decisions is not established. It is also not possible for the national board to dissolve regional and local directorates. However, national committees have the prerogative to replace and withdraw decisions made in local and regional bodies and to maintain its nominations to local and regional provisional committees indefinitely.

For the elaboration of the party programme, there is no requirement for the participation of local, regional, and affiliated bodies; the agenda for the party's national election candidate also does not require the involvement of party bodies and members. PSDB makes it possible for all its members to run as candidates, but without a policy of quotas or incentives for minorities. The central issue for the encouragement of candidacies, the criteria for the distribution of public resources for financing campaigns, and free electoral propaganda time in the media are not regulated by the statute.

The party has faced many internal conflicts in recent years. Involved with previous corruption scandals, the governor of the state of Minas Gerais (southeast region) and candidate for the presidency of the country in the 2014 elections, Aécio Neves, exacerbated internal rifts. There are also divergent positions of party leaders in relation to the participation of the MDB

government after the impeachment of President Dilma Rousseff (PT) in 2016. The party faces disputes between new regional leaders who intend to succeed the founding generation of the party and are trying to run for the country's presidency in 2022. Furthermore, traditional party leaders have threatened to abandon the party.

PT

Origin and evolution of representation

PT originated through the 1979 party reform and the process of Brazil's political opening. The party appears as a 'novelty' in the Brazilian party system as it emerged from outside parliament. It was the combination of diverse social groups, such as the Basic Ecclesiastical Communities (CEB),[15] the Catholic Church, workers organized in the new Brazilian unions, and left-wing intellectuals. This external origin, added to organizational innovations such as the formalization of internal competition in factions, the mechanisms of internal democracy, and a bold left-wing programme with incentives for participatory democracy (in a context of democratic transition), gave the party a distinct profile from the tradition of Brazilian parties.

The main leader of the party, Ignacio Lula da Silva, was the presidential candidate. He was defeated in three elections: 1989, 1994, and 1998, before winning in 2002 and 2006; his successor, Rousseff, won in the elections of 2010 and 2014. In total, from the presidential conquest until Rousseff's impeachment, the party remained in national power for 13 years. In 2018, Lula led the presidential elections until he was prevented from competing.[16] Even with this impediment, the party's substitute candidate, Fernando Haddad, managed to reach the second round.

Rousseff's impeachment and several corruption allegations involving party officials affected PT in several ways. In addition to the loss of representation at the national level and defeat in the 2018 presidential election, the party's rejection (*anti-petismo*) has reached high levels in recent years. In the 2016 and 2020 local elections, PT lost a large part of its representation in Brazilian municipalities. Allied to this, there has been, since 2006, the realignment of the social and geographic base of the party, more centred on the poorest population and, above all, on the Northeast region of the country. The reasons for this transformation have been extensively studied, and there is a certain consensus that public income transfer policies (such as Bolsa Família), wage indexation, and the country's own economic growth (until 2014–2015), changed *petismo* significantly in recent years.

Lula's 2022 victory, supported by numerous parties, led to a recovery in the party's representation in the Chamber of Deputies, while also maintaining the same number of state governments (4 governors).

Funding

Resources from members represented, on average, more than 10% of the party's budget, considering the period 2007–2018, unlike the profile from other parties. In recent years, however, the party has focused almost exclusively on state resources for its maintenance.

PT differentiates itself in terms of contributions from individuals. Although this type of resource, on average, represents less than 1% of the party's budget, the organization has greater plurality in donations, that is, it does not depend strictly on a specific donor. In 2018, more than 13,000 people contributed to the party at the national level, with an average contribution of $10. Business donations, however, were concentrated. While in charge of the presidency, the party received more than US$14 million from companies in 2014. Until the beginning of the 1990s, the party did not approve of this type of financing, but it altered its position with time. Although the party raised the agenda of ending corporate campaign donations, funds flowed abundantly into the party's coffers when it was legally permitted during the analysed period.

Ideological positioning and agenda

PT is classified as a left-wing party; however, it has moderated its ideological discourse over time (Power and Zucco 2009). This shift was already reflected in its electoral strategies, establishing, in states and municipalities, alliances with centrist and right-wing parties, especially from the mid-1990s onwards (Krause et al. 2017). In the 2002 election, the very choice of Lula's vice president reflected this moderation: businessman José Alencar from the Liberal Party. Shortly before the election, Lula released a manifesto entitled 'Letter to the Brazilian People', in which he pledged to control inflation, pay off the country's foreign debt, and guarantee a surplus in the public budget. The manifesto was aimed at the country's business community, which was fearful of PT's possible victory.

PT's organizational system contains internal tendencies that vary ideologically (Lacerda 2002). Since 2001, the trend that commands the party, led by those with greater access to positions in the national structure, has been more 'right-leaning': in defence of alliances with conservative parties and reflecting concerns that institutional and social struggles go together.

Programmatic moderation can be seen in the manifestos and agendas of the party. In 1987, for example, at the fifth PT National Meeting, one of the resolutions pointed to: 'radical democratisation of space and society—tasks that are articulated with the denial of the capitalist order and with the construction of socialism' (Partido dos Trabalhadores 1998). The aspect of building democratic socialism is progressively dropped from official party documents in favour of greater emphasis on building a welfare state. The arrival in power also changes the profile of the party's militancy (which starts to occupy public positions), while programmatic moderation moves PT away from its historical social bases. In 2007, for example, the party's National Congress recognized the 'loss of vigour' in the dialogue with social movements. Even with attempts to return to the base, it is only with Rousseff's impeachment in 2016, and the significant loss of mayors in that same election, that the party resumed a more left-focused agenda. For instance, in 2018 the party proposed, among other things, the taxation of large fortunes and banks, investment induced by public banks, and regulation of media ownership.

Internal operational dynamics and leaderships

The main bases of the party are the nucleus, directorates, and executive committees. A nucleus can be organized by at least nine members and is based on the member's place of residence, work, social movement, or place of study, among other factors. The other bodies are based on the federative structure of the Brazilian state: municipal, state, and national.

The national executives are elected by direct vote of the members, in a proportional system, respecting criteria of gender parity, racial proportionality, and at least 20% of members being under 30 years of age. Executive committees, in turn, are elected by the corresponding members at the regional and national levels. The national leadership also has the so-called sectoral secretariats dedicated to specific themes that have arisen with the aim of bringing the party closer to social movements (Amaral 2010). The current statute requires that minorities (women, blacks, young people, indigenous people, etc.) are included in party bodies.

Since 2001, PT has adopted the Process of Direct Elections (PED) to choose the members of the national leadership. The process of direct election of the party leadership changes the incentive structure of both leaders and members regarding the internal dynamics of the organization. The PED is criticized by leaders within the party as a process of depoliticization and has had fewer and fewer participants.[17] The direct involvement of members in the electoral process produced a 'plebiscitary' rather than

deliberative climate, removing the vitality of the internal collective debate, which was structured and fostered by the nucleus and trends of political thought. An effect of this process was also an 'atomization' and 'individualization' of internal decisions, strengthening a verticalization and concentration of power, a similar phenomenon to that observed in European democracies (Ignazi 2020).

Party leadership mandates have a limit of four years, but re-election is permitted. During the period 2007–2018, PT had three CENs, which were proportionally composed of politicians and bureaucrats, the latter representing 28 of the 55 members considered. The external origins of the party partially explain the tradition of the lower weight of public officials in the CEN (Ribeiro 2014). However, the number of political members of the board increased and in 2014 represented the majority (15 out of 25 members). This change must be considered in the context of PT assuming the command of the federal government.

PT guarantees organizational decentralization in its statutes, giving autonomy regarding decisions on electoral alliances and instructing the distribution of public financial resources to local and regional bodies. It is possible for the national management to intervene in local and regional organizations when it deems that necessary. In practice, however, the number of interventions is low when compared to other parties (Guarnieri 2011).

The participation of members is not considered in the statutes for the elaboration of the party programme, but it is in the government programme. Members are also consulted for settling electoral alliances. It should be noted here that the party has two other structures that are not common in other parties: the 'Encounters' and 'Congresses'. In the case of the former, the objective is the definition of short- and medium-term strategies, and these are scheduled by the national executive. In the latter, the objective is to define long-term strategies and statutory changes. Delegates for these Encounters and Congresses are chosen by the members.

As for the recruitment of candidacies, all members have guaranteed this right, but there is no norm for the participation of minority candidacies or guarantee of equal competition of members in the definition of candidacies. The distribution of public resources for financing candidates from the party is not regulated. The party statute stipulates that pre-candidates must be approved by a percentage of the corresponding executive or a percentage of party members in the district where the electoral competition will take place.

PT, unlike most Brazilian parties, has a unifying leadership and a broad electoral reach. Lula da Silva's leadership is undisputed in the party: he is

a facilitator of cohesive actions and vital in assuring that internal conflicts do not challenge the party's unity. However, new leaders struggle to achieve generational succession.

Conclusion

In Brazil, political parties were held responsible for the low quality, or incompleteness, of the new democracy during the 1990s and the beginning of the 21st century (Mainwaring 2001; Kinzo 2004). Studies have indicated a reverse, more positive 'wave', highlighting trends in the development of party organizations with the stability of electoral competition for the presidency of the Republic between the PSDB and PT (Braga and Pimentel 2011), as well as discipline and party cohesion in the legislature (Limongi 2006). However, a more pessimistic assessment restarted with the political destabilization in 2013 and was reinforced with the 2018 election, when the main parties suffered large losses.

As we have shown, it is possible to see the upholding of some trends that have already been observed since the 1990s: increased party fragmentation with low levels of confidence in the parties and high levels of switching parties among politicians. In contrast to other democracies, even with a small growth in the number of voters affiliated to parties, from 9.5% to 11.4% during 2002–2018 (Biezen et al. 2012), there was a decrease in membership among the main parties in recent years. These variables, associated with an inherited insecurity with the rules of the game (political–electoral reforms every two years) and non-solid relationships between political and economic actors, generate instability in Brazilian democracy. However, party fragmentation rates decreased in the 2022 elections.[18]

Although the country has a significant percentage of party-affiliated voters, they are insignificant for the financial survival of party maintenance. Dependence on the government tends to be the rule, underpinning the vicious cycle where the starting point is difficult to identify: do voters distrust parties and not contribute, or do parties anticipate not depending on voters and reinforce the distrust?

Brazilian democracy faces a challenging scenario given the weakening of the parties central to the country's political stability, posing the greatest threat the political system has faced since democratization. Bolsonaro's government was characterized by constant initiatives that threatened democracy, such as mobilizing undemocratic acts, questioning the suitability of elections, and intimidating the press, the Supreme Court and Congress.

The rise of a right-wing populist government without stable party ties and the deterioration of democracy[19] was related to this scenario regarding the main parties. These parties have been challenged to answer for their growing dependence on public resources, diminishing representation, difficulty in mobilizing members and recruiting new leaders, and lack of cohesive action in the face of a government that disrupted the country's political institutions.

The main leaders of the two centrist parties supported Bolsonaro's right-wing populist candidacy in the 2018 runoff. They also later failed to lead a clear opposition to the president's initiatives which threatened to destabilize democracy during his first years in power.

Additionally, they needed to reduce the polarization which had allowed the entry of a right-wing populist government, thus rescuing the democratic agenda they sidelined in the 2018 elections due to populist anti-corruption discourse. At the end of 2021, Bolsonaro faced low approval ratings due to his mismanagement of the COVID-19 crisis, investigations surrounding the use of fake news by the government and Bolsonaro's family members, and the parliamentary commission created to inquire into the misallocation of federal resources to states and municipalities.

MDB and PSDB found themselves divided on several points about the government. For instance, both parties supported the executive's measures on the economic agenda, which focused on liberalizing the economy, privatization, and restriction of labour rights. On the political agenda, they were not cohesive regarding their positioning on the government's attempts to delegitimize electronic voting machines and the electoral process in the country. More than half of PSDB parliamentarians voted for the adoption of the printed ballot, and MDB also had parliamentarians who voted for Bolsonaro's proposal, based on conspiracy theories about the quality of Brazilian electronic voting machines. Yet, since 2021, Bolsonaro's calls for radicalization of street mobilizations, the closure of the Supreme Court, and a coup put PSDB and MDB in a stronger position of opposition to the government and in favour of defending democracy.

A strategy of launching a 'third candidate' placed at centre of the political spectrum was not effective to break the polarization. The 2022 presidential election was decided in a second round with the formation of a 'Frente Ampla' (translated as: 'Broad Front') in defence of Brazilian democracy, with Lula as candidate. The construction of the 'Frente Ampla' had as its candidate for vice president the former traditional leader of PSDB in São Paulo, Geraldo Alkmin, who had broken with his party. Lula's victory was narrow, with just a 1.8% lead over Bolsonaro's re-election candidacy.

The 2022 election presented distinct challenges and outcomes for the two centrist parties. PSDB, for the first time, did not present a presidential candidate and has since faced internal conflicts between leaders who have positioned themselves for leadership in the organization. The party was the one that lost the most representation in the legislature, and in the second round it did not have a cohesive position on which candidate to support, leaving the regional directorates free to decide for either Lula or Bolsonaro. MDB had a recovery of representation in the legislature and presented a woman as a candidate for the presidency: Simone Tebet. Her support grew during the presidential campaign, taking third place in the first round. In the second round, the candidate took an engaged position in the candidacy of the Frente Ampla led by Lula, but the party, without internal cohesion, left its voters, affiliates, and militants free to position themselves in the polarized campaign. The support of Tebet and important traditional regional leaders gave the party space to occupy three ministries in the Frente Ampla government.

PT not only recovered in 2022 and continued to be the reference point through which the electorate's voting intentions are structured, but it also led the construction of a Frente Ampla government composed of leaders who opposed the government in other cycles of the new democracy. The party remains the most preferred and also the most hated in public opinion polls (Paiva et al. 2017). Nevertheless, throughout its trajectory and government experiences, it has demonstrated that its performance has been configured within the rules of Brazilian democracy. It did not adopt strategies that would delegitimize or threaten the institutions of the new democracy. In the lead-up to the dismissal of the PT government in 2016, his arrest, and the subsequent impediments to his candidacy in 2018, Lula did not become radicalized. Instead, he continued to bet on defending himself within the rule of law and running for elections under the rules of the new democracy.

Brazil has faced setbacks in the last few decades in the evaluation indicators of democracies. This downward movement in the indices began with the mobilizations of 2013, especially with the emergence of anti-corruption, anti-partisanship, and impeachment movements against President Rousseff of PT, and democracy in Brazil has been threatened and attacked through attempted coups in January 2023.

If, on the one hand, the main parties analysed were central to the political transition and governance of the new democracy, the longest achieved in the country's political history, on the other hand, they have been worn down in recent decades, opening a window of opportunity for a government that weakened democratic institutions.

Analysing the trajectory of Brazilian democracy presents trends with dynamics in two directions. In the first, one can observe that parties with inadequate and insufficient responsiveness have fed a scenario of the retrogression of democracy. The second tendency, observed in recent movements, has indicated its importance in halting the weakening development of Brazilian democracy.

Notes

1. This changed in November 2021 when he affiliated with the relatively minor party Partido Liberal (PL).
2. Presidential and legislative elections have taken place simultaneously in the country since 1994. The first direct election for the presidency in the new democracy was in 1989 and without simultaneity with the legislative ones. Brazil has a bicameral legislative system (Senate and Chamber of Deputies), and we have opted for analysing the Chamber of Deputies, which currently has 513 deputies. The Senate consists of 81 seats (three senators per federated unit).
3. Brazil's Supreme Federal Court (Supremo Tribunal Federal)
4. Elections are held in October or November, but the inauguration happens the following year.
5. Starting in 2019, only parties that have received at least 1.5% of the valid vote, distributed across one third of federal states, in the 2018 elections for the Chamber of Deputies have access to the party fund and electoral propaganda time. If the party fails to achieve this parameter, the party can have access to it if it has elected at least nine federal deputies, distributed in at least nine federate units.
6. Of the FEFC, 48% divided among the parties in proportion to the number of representatives in the Chamber of Deputies in the last general election; 35% divided among the parties in proportion to the percentage of valid votes obtained by those that have at least one representative in the Chamber; 15% divided among the parties in proportion to the number of representatives in the Senate. From the party fund, the remaining 95% is distributed according to the vote.
7. Data from Brazilian Electoral Studies (ESEB) opinion poll. Respondents indicate their preferred parties.
8. Translated as: Brazilian Democratic Movement (MDB), previously Party of the Brazilian Democratic Movement (PMDB).
9. The vice-president of Rousseff (PT), Temer, was from MDB. He assumed the presidency, and the party was pivotal in the approval of impeachment in Congress.
10. A total of 35 parties registered in the Superior Electoral Court.
11. See: https://www.tse.jus.br/partidos/partidos-registrados-no-tse/movimento-democratico-brasileiro. Data on profession, geographical origin, and elective roles were collected through various websites and, especially, from the Dicionário Histórico Biográfico-Brasileiro (DHBB), Fundação Getúlio Vargas (FGB), and Barbosa (2013).
12. Translated as: Brazilian Social Democracy Party.
13. Vice-president who assumed the presidency in 1992 after Collor's impeachment.

14. The 2022 presidential candidate was chosen through primaries.
15. Basic Ecclesiastical Communities represent communities which follow liberation theology and are organized with the support of the church.
16. Arrested for a Lava-Jato operation conviction; later reversed in the Supreme Court.
17. In 2005, 40.6% of members participated in the process; in 2019, only 19.3%.
18. Two central structural changes explain this observed phenomenon. The first was the introduction of a ban on electoral alliances for proportional elections. Research has shown that in Brazil, electoral alliances permitted a higher number of parties reaching the required electoral quota. This granted more parties political representation in the legislature. The other initiative was the introduction of a 'barrier clause' that stipulated a gradual increase in the requirements for the access of public financing by the parties.
19. See https://www.idea.int/our-work/what-we-do/global-state-democracy.

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17

Democracy and Political Parties in the Argentine Republic

Carlos Fara and José Emilio Graglia

Introduction to the Party System

Argentina began to have more structured political parties towards the end of the 19th century with the emergence of parties representing the middle- and low-income sectors of society.[1] From 1912, with the Saenz Peña law legislation establishing universal, secret, and compulsory suffrage, free elections began to be held. The first President to be elected in a transparent manner was brought in under this law in 1916. Primarily, four parties came into being on that occasion: the Unión Cívica Radical ('Radical Civic Union'; UCR—Radicals), the Conservative Party, the Progressive Democratic Party, and the Socialist Party. The UCR was to dominate party politics until the 1930 coup, which sparked off a period of electoral fraud.

With the 1943 coup, Peronism/Partido Justicialista ('Justicialist Party'; PJ) appeared on the scene. This was to become one of the major political forces right up to the present day, and it triumphed in the 1946 elections as well, only to be overthrown by a military coup in 1955. From then until 1973, there were two stages of elected governments, with the exclusion of Peronism. That year there were free elections in which the Justicialists won again. However, in 1976, another military coup installed a dictatorship until 1983. Since then, Argentina has experienced the longest democratic period in its history, with the holding of regular free elections along the lines established by the national constitution.

The 1994 constitutional reform enshrined political parties as fundamental institutions of the democratic system (Zovatto 2006), establishing that only they can present candidates for public office. The state contributes to the financial support of their activities and the training of their leaders. The 1994 constitutional reform also solidified a presidential political system,

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where the head of state and government is a directly elected President who holds significant executive powers and serves as the chief executive of the country.

An important detail incorporated in this constitutional reform is the mechanism of the ballot, with an unusual system for electing the President. The incoming President is elected in one of the following three ways: 1) if a candidate's party or alliance obtains more than 45% of the votes in the first round, it is automatically the winner without the need for a second round; 2) if the party or alliance that obtains most votes receives between 40% and 45% of total votes and with a difference of more than 10 points over the second, it is declared the winner; if the difference is less than 10 points, a run-off vote must be held; or 3) if no party or alliance obtains 40% of the votes, a second round is held between the two with the most votes. These new rules were intended to promote the formation of electoral alliances reaching the minimum required and thus generate a clear result and legislative legitimacy.

Argentina is a federal country with 23 provinces and 1 federal district. All 24 jurisdictions elect their own national deputies and senators to the National Congress under the same rules. Seats are allocated on a proportional basis according to the D'Hondt system. Legislative lists are fixed and closed. A gender parity law has been in force since 2017, establishing that both genders must be allocated half of the national elective positions.

Parties are currently regulated by Law 23.298. In order for a political grouping to be recognized, it needs to have a number of members equal to or greater than four for every thousand voters on the total electoral roll. District parties recognized under the same name in five or more districts may apply for recognition as national parties. Political parties with provincial legal recognition can only field candidates in provincial elections (governor and provincial legislators). On the other hand, district parties are authorized not only to participate in provincial elections but also to compete in national legislative elections, meaning they can present candidates for the National Congress. Meanwhile, political parties with national legal recognition are the only ones authorized to participate in presidential elections (candidates for President and Vice President), in addition to all the aforementioned elective positions.

The requirements for a political party to obtain provincial recognition depend on each province and are determined by the respective electoral judicial body in each province. To establish itself as a district party, the party's representative must present the necessary endorsements and affiliates before the federal court to be recognized as such.

To obtain national recognition, a political party must gather endorsements from at least five district parties located in different provinces, all with the same name and logo.

In 2009, the system of open, simultaneous, and compulsory primaries (PASO) was introduced. As some parties or alliances did not have internal competition regarding the selection of candidates, this system was expected to reduce the number of candidates, because anyone who does not participate in internal party primaries can no longer stand as a candidate.

The free distribution of electoral advertising was also established in an equitable manner. It is drawn by lot and distributed among political parties, with 50% of space being allocated equally among all political parties and the remaining 50% in proportion to the number of votes obtained in the previous general election. Broadcast TV stations, cable TV, national signals, and AM and FM radio stations authorized by the National Communications Agency ENACOM, (created in December 2015 through Decree 267, which establishes its role as a communications regulator in order to ensure that all users in the country have quality services), must provide 5% of 12 hours of transmission (2,160 seconds per day) for free. This was intended to generate greater democratization within political parties and greater openness to society, to reduce asymmetries between political forces by regulating party and campaign financing mechanisms, and to rationalize and modernize certain aspects of electoral administration while also bringing greater transparency. Moreover, a change was made to the minimum number of members a political party must have to participate in an election and not to lose its legal status (Cámara Nacional Electoral 2015).

The current electoral system, inspired by European models, has always sought to ensure the representation of political minorities through the proportional allocation of seats, thus avoiding concentration in the hands of a small number of parties. As the rules for the legal registration of a party are relatively open, parliamentary representation has gradually become fragmented over the last 38 years.

Distrust of political parties is high. According to the Corporación Latinobarómetro (2016), only 14% of Argentinians trust political parties. Five Latin American countries have a higher percentage of trust in their political parties: Uruguay, Paraguay, Ecuador, Costa Rica, and Colombia (the Latin American average is 13%). Only 22% of Argentinians trust electoral institutions. Thirteen countries have greater faith in their electoral institutions: Costa Rica, Colombia, Uruguay, Peru, Mexico, Dominican Republic, Chile, Paraguay, Brazil, Panama, Ecuador, Bolivia, and Guatemala (the Latin American average is 28%).

Evolution of the Party System

During the first stage of democracy from 1983 until the mid-1990s, a classic two-party system prevailed. Peronism and Radicalism predominated, alternating in power. During the 1980s, a centre-right party appeared—the Union of the Democratic Centre (UCeDe)—promoting the concept of a market economy. In the 1983 presidential election, it won just 0.17% of the vote, while in the subsequent presidential election six years later it took 7%. This was the beginning of a progressive fragmentation of the party system due to a series of factors, as explained in the following discussion.

In the mid-1990s, a coalition—Frente País Solidario (FrePaSo)—appeared on the scene and for the first time displaced one of the two historic parties from second place. In the 1995 presidential election, FrePaSo managed to drive a wedge through the Peronist–Radical bipartisanship, winning 29% of the votes, an unprecedented occurrence. FrePaSo was a coalition of dissident Peronists from the PJ controlled by President Menem, Socialists, Christian Democrats, and other centre-left forces. With its strong performance in 1995, FrePaSo was able to build an alliance with Radicalism, which triumphed in the 1997 mid-term legislative election and then in the 1999 presidential election. It was the first time that power was held by an alliance in which the specific weight of the actors was relatively balanced.

This experience of switching from two players to three remained short-lived. FrePaSo allied with the UCR in 1997 and thus won the presidency in 1999. The two main forces once again won more than 80% of the vote. The two-party trend continued, although one of the two players was a coalition.

In 2003 there was a major break as a result of the economic and political crisis of 2001–2002. Peronism split into three and Radicalism into two groupings. This implosion of the historic parties led to unprecedented fragmentation. But it was an exceptional case, and the fragmented multi-party system model did not last long.

In 2002–2003, a new centre-right force was born, Propuesta Republicana (PRO), led by Mauricio Macri, who later became President of the country. In 2015 he allied with Radicalism and a couple of smaller forces, forming a coalition—Cambiemos—which four years later would be defeated by the union of all the Peronist forces grouped in the Frente de Todos, whose leader was former President Cristina Kirchner.

The PRO, unlike the FrePaSo experience, was set up like a typical 21st-century party, with special emphasis on the use of contemporary political communication tools, a modest structure with professional management and

the presentation of political personnel who could reach the mass electorate. Unlike Peronism and Radicalism, it was not a big bureaucratic party but was, primarily, a party based on public opinion, in line with contemporary politics.

Apart from the historical parties and the successful experiences of the FrePaSo and the PRO, presidential and legislative elections saw competition among forces that were mainly associated with a specific person, with their legitimacy always depending on the electoral success of such personality-centred leadership and on favourable circumstances. These forces are what the literature calls 'flash parties': they have moments of success but do not last. This was the case with the parties created by former economics ministers Domingo Cavallo, Ricardo López Murphy, and the Rodríguez Saá brothers, among others. The only case that has survived and is a founding partner of the Cambiemos alliance is the Civic Coalition, which answers to former national deputy Elisa Carrió, although it remains small in structure.

In the presidential election of 2015, a coalition was formed between Radicalism and PRO—Mauricio Macri's party—and the 1999 experience was repeated in part, but now with divided Peronism. The two parties with the most votes together accounted for 71% of the votes, with a third option appearing—Sergio Massa's Frente Renovador—with 21%. It is possible to speak of a multi-party system that was neither fragmented as in 2003 nor showing a tendency towards a dominant party as in 2007, but it was the only time in history that a run-off ballot was required in a presidential election.

From then on, the system seemed to return to a two-party one, but given that in 2019 the Frente de Todos was formed, bringing together almost the entire arc of Peronist sectors (including the Frente Renovador), one could speak of a two-coalition system, since the two main forces were both coalitions. Figure 17.1 shows the results for the two most popular alliances supporting a presidential candidate for each election and mentions the candidate who won it.

In summary, most of the time there was a two-party system of either parties or coalitions. Out of nine presidential elections, in five more than 70% of the vote went to two forces; in three elections there was a multi-party system with a dominant party (1995, 2007, and 2011); and in one election there was extreme fragmentation (2003).

This two-party system continued during the first decade of institutional recovery until the early 1990s. In parallel, between 1983 and 1991, provincial parties persisted (Movimiento Popular Neuquino, Partido Bloquista in San Juan, Pacto Autonomista Liberal in Corrientes, among others), and in 3 of the 22 districts where governors were elected, these local forces triumphed.

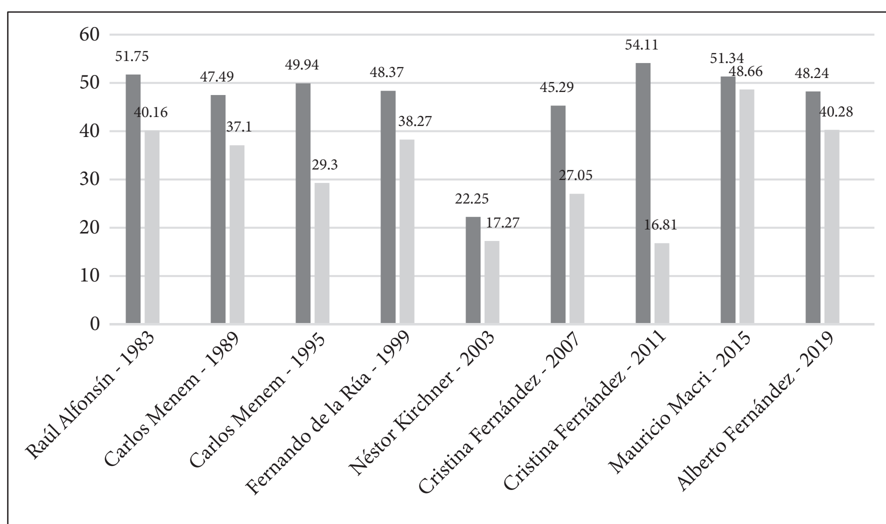

Figure 17.1 Presidential elections

Source: DINE (National Electoral Chamber); Elecciones 2011 | https://www.argentina.gob.ar/

Note: In 2003, former president Carlos Menem, facing disastrous polling results, withdrew before the second round. Hence, Kirchner was elected president on the basis of his result in the first round.

Party Organization

Given the successive institutional interruptions that took place between 1930 and 1983, together with fraudulent practices (1930–1943) and the proscription of Peronism (1955–1973), this chapter will focus on the description of the party system from 1973 to the present day.

When analysing political parties in Argentina, it must be understood that they do not correspond to European political party type that is commonly used as a model. In Latin America, because of several variables, among them the repeated interruption of democratic processes and the military coups that undermine the democratic regime and its consolidation, parties have developed around various practices that were not contemplated in their founding statutes. Hence, we must talk of parties with medium-to-low institutionalization in that their internal life does not always follow their institutional canons, despite them being formally organized and registered.

Historically, two parties in Argentina have been protagonists of the system: the UCR and the PJ. The former is a middle-class party which is organized and federal in scope. It emerged in 1891 and since then has sought to be the opposition to the national oligarchy. It was only with the first free, secret, compulsory, and universal elections under the Sáenz Peña Law that they won, with Hipólito Yrigoyen as their candidate for President in 1916.

The PJ emerged under its charismatic leader Juan Domingo Perón, a military man who took part in the 1943 coup. This group, with Catholic, nationalist, and anti-Communist ideas, had a reformist vision of society and drew on the social doctrine of the Church (Plotkin 2007). This party has been characterized by several stages of ideological fluctuation over its 75 years of existence, the most important of which was the shift to the centre-right during the government of Carlos Menem (1989–1999), with pro-market reforms and alignment with the US in foreign policy. After the severe economic crisis of 2001–2002, it shifted more towards its origins from 2003 with the governments of Néstor Kirchner (2003–2007) and his wife Cristina Fernández de Kirchner (2007–2015), thus establishing itself more as a centre-left force.

The two main historical forces were born as political movements rather than as parties in the strict sense of the word, although the UCR had a more classic structure from the start. In any case, both are the sort of big bureaucratic parties that are typical of the 20th century and are 'catch-all parties', according to the usual description in the literature.

Radicalism always had a more orderly internal institutional life, with elections for the party authorities in the districts and assigned representatives to the national convention, which regularly elects the National Committee every two years. After its 1983 triumph, Radicalism oscillated between a more social-democratic wing (it actually belongs to Socialist International) and a more centre/centre-right wing (expressed by the 1989 presidential candidate Eduardo Angeloz, or former President Fernando De la Rúa, 1999–2001).

Peronism, for its part, was always marked by a top-down logic with a personality-centred mandate. After the 1983 electoral defeat, a phenomenon called the Peronist Renovation presented to society greater internal democracy and certain methodological and ideological changes. This process led in 1988 to Peronism choosing its presidential candidate for the 1989 election for the first time in an election among its members. The winner was Carlos Menem, who was later elected President of the nation.

The 1973 election—the first without a ban on Peronism since the military coup of 1955—saw a PJ majority, which managed to obtain almost 50% of the votes in an electoral front. The other forces were very fragmented, with the main opposition party being the UCR. In 1976 a coup d'état removed Isabel Perón from the presidency. From that moment until 1983, the Proceso de Reorganización Nacional (National Reorganization Process), as the civil–military regime described itself, established its power over Argentine society, suspending all constitutional rights. This means that the party system was also suspended with the excuse of restoring order and peace in the country.

When democracy was restored in 1983, a two-party system emerged with Peronism and Radicalism as the two exclusive forces. In that first presidential election, the two parties together received 92% of the votes. That was the first time that the PJ lost a presidential election in an election without proscriptions.

Worth mentioning is the historical existence of hard-left groupings, which always stand for election in more than one formation. These are classic ideological parties which have a minor representation—in the 2019 presidential election they won 2.19% of the vote. One of them is the Socialist Party, with approximately 125,617 members.

The Frente Renovador is also of interest—led by Sergio Massa, a dissident Peronist from Cristina Fernández's Kirchnerism. It ran in the 2015 presidential election and obtained 21% of the vote, thus becoming the third most-voted-for party in Argentine history. As its strength was waning towards 2019, it decided to join the Frente de Todos, which won the presidency of the nation with the current President Alberto Fernández and the leadership of Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner (CFK).

Peronism always returned to power—after electoral defeats by non-Peronist forces—in the wake of deep economic crises that triggered pronounced demands for change by the electorate. This happened in 1989 (Menem), in 2002–2003 (first Duhalde and then Kirchner), and in 2019 (Alberto Fernández and CFK). Their initial proposal in each case was different: in the first, it was a series of profound pro-market reforms, typical of those of several Latin American countries in the 1990s; in 2002–2003, the emphasis was on greater state intervention in the economy, which went from moderate to more radical over the years; in 2019, more of the 2003 formula was offered, although this particular government must be contextualized in the framework of the global COVID-19 pandemic.

At the time of writing, both Cambiemos and Frente de Todos are national in scope and, to a greater or lesser extent, present in all provinces of the country. In turn, they have alliances with local parties and representatives at that level. The large structures of the PJ and UCR that are behind them help in establishing these coalitions, as they have woven a network throughout the 20th century and updated their image in order to survive into the 21st century.

The UCR and the PJ have a similar territorial reach. They have historically been present in all 24 electoral districts of the country. The PRO is present in all provinces but has no real structure in many districts, which is why it depends on its alliance with Radicalism.

The membership figures of the most important parties in the country give an insight into their organizational reach. In 2014, according to the National Electoral Chamber, the PJ had 3,531,445 members, and the UCR, 2,136,955.[2] The PRO Party had 107,944 members.

Connection with Social Groups

The party system in Argentina has traditionally been divided between those political forces that represent the middle and upper sectors of society and Peronism, representing the popular sector or working class, as has been the case in several countries in the region. However, due to historic structural characteristics, the system did not experience the classic division between conservatives and liberals, or between Christians democrats and social democrats. There were two waves of the expansion of democracy, first with Radicalism and then with Peronism. Perhaps for this reason, among others, for many decades the key divide in the political system was between Peronism and anti-Peronism.

The two major economic crises in Argentina since the return to democracy—in 1989 and 2001—generated realignments within the electorate that had an impact on the constitution of the party system, breaking down previous political identities. The main victim was the UCR, which gradually lost support, falling from 52% of the vote in 1983 to 37% in 1989 and 17% in 1995; it then triumphed in alliance with FrePaSo in 1999 before falling again to 2.34% in 2003. These crises not only eroded Radicalism because of decreasing faith in its leaders and their ability to govern but also due to an overarching phenomenon of social fragmentation, which began at the top of the social pyramid and particularly affected the middle sectors, its historical electoral base.

In addition to these crises, political phenomena also affected the divide. In 1993, for example, former President Alfonsín reached an agreement with the then President Menem to reform the national constitution and allow his re-election. This generated a great deal of dissatisfaction among the Radical voters, which led to the party's progressive erosion. In 1994, when the members of the constitutional convention were elected, the UCR barely managed to gain 20% of the vote.

The other political phenomenon that broke down Radicalism was the political project of Néstor Kirchner who, convinced that Argentina should be divided according to a classic centre-right and centre-left model, recruited

Radical leaders and called on an opposition governor—Julio Cobos—to join his wife Cristina Fernández de Kirchner as Vice President when she was elected President in 2007. From this point on, ideological, leadership, and electoral realignments took place, disrupting the historical pattern of Peronists versus Radicals.

Specifically, the parties' links with society are strong and almost always informal. For example, Peronism's ties with the trade unions are not formalized, unlike those of some European social-democratic parties. They were traditionally based on two mechanisms: that of the '62 organizations', and the system of thirds. The former is the part of the party that is embedded in the trade unions, which nominated trade unionists for candidatures and leadership positions. The latter guarantees one-third of the candidatures and leadership positions for the unions. Neither is set out in the party's statutes.

Historically, the PJ also had a strong link with women, given the promotion of women's suffrage and the figure of the very popular Eva Perón, wife of Juan Perón, who died at the young age of 33 years in 1952. This took shape through both the Fundación Eva Perón and the Unidades Básicas Femeninas (Women's Basic Units). Later, they formed part of the Peronist Women's Party and continued to involve women in politics, not only as militants but also as civil servants (Barry 2011).

As for the UCR, its connection with society had been developing since the end of the 19th century, and when it was elected, it managed to expand territorially, which influenced its structure and forced it to reconcile new practices with old ways of doing politics. The fundamental basis of this was the collection of clubs and local bodies that later became known as committees. Students and student movements also emerged under the radical wing as university politics was born during radical periods and found strong roots among the young. Today Radicalism continues to be one of the main forces in university politics (Persello 2000).

Each of the two major parties always had its own social structure that served as a territorial political base and a breeding ground for political cadres. On the Peronist side, the trade unions traditionally grouped together in the General Confederation of Labour (CGT), which was for a long time almost the sole central organization. This is a classic feature of grassroots parties or movements in different parts of the world. Given the progressive social fragmentation and the growth of the service sector, Peronist trade unionism has been losing power to other radicalized left-wing or more progressive trade unions, which challenge the traditional CGT.

As for Radicalism, it is based on the sectoral representation of students in the public universities through the Franja Morada group, which has

historically provided it with militant cadres, leaders, and candidates. The strength of the university trade union movement has fluctuated over time and, like the trade union movement, has also become fragmented.

Other key groups, such as the different business sectors, have never been formally associated with any of the political forces, although most of them are not Peronists. In any case, small industrial entrepreneurs linked to domestic consumption have always been more sympathetic to the PJ, while the agricultural sector has been more linked to the UCR or other centre-right political expressions.

A new set of actors in Argentine politics, which appeared in the late 1990s and clearly became more prominent after the 2001 crisis, are the so-called social or picketer movements, which represented former workers in the formal sector or in informal employment who had been unable to find jobs and received state aid. These movements are linked to Justicialism and sectors of the hard left.

Finally, as in various parts of the world, over the last 15 years various groups have been appearing representing new demands for rights and rejecting traditional political representation for gender issues, LGTBQ rights, ecology, etc. As so-called progressive and anti-status quo groups, they are generally more closely linked to left-wing parties and have found more affinity with Kirchnerism.

Although there are representatives of all social sectors in the two main electoral coalitions, there is basically a process of integration that tends to be more informal than formal.

Impact of the Party Funding System

As already mentioned above, the state has contributed to the economic support of parties' activities and the training of their leaders since the 1994 constitutional reform; however, state funding also existed prior to the implementation of the reform. In national elections—given that Argentina is a federal country—advertising in electronic media (radio and television) that depends on a state concession is paid for by the state, thus offloading a large proportion of the expenses involved. Funding comes from a mixture of public and private sources.

Public funding: The state contributes to the funding of electoral campaigns for primary and general elections through the extraordinary campaign contribution and the contribution for the printing of ballots.

Distribution of campaign contributions: The funding intended for the upcoming electoral campaigns, for both primary and general elections, is distributed among the political groupings that have formalized their lists of candidates as follows (Law 26.215):

a) Presidential elections

Among the lists presented, 50% of the amount allocated by the budget is shared equally. For example, in the last PASO elections the public sector gave 3,753,560.88 Argentine pesos (18,674.43 USD) to Cambiemos, to be distributed between the three lists they presented. In the case of Frente de Todos, for the one list competing they received 2,531,471.13 Argentine pesos (1,259,438 USD).[3] Fifty per cent of the amount allocated by the budget shall be distributed among the 24 districts in proportion to the total number of voters in each district. Once calculated, it is distributed to each political group in proportion to the number of votes it obtained in the previous general election for the same category. Political groupings participating in the second round receive as a campaign contribution a sum equivalent to 30% of the largest general campaign contribution in the same category.

b) Elections of deputies and senators

The total contributions are distributed among the 24 districts in proportion to the total number of voters in each. Once calculated, 50% of the resulting amount for each district is distributed equally among the lists presented, and the remaining 50% is distributed in proportion to the number of votes they obtained in the previous general election for the same category.

General elections: Contribution to the printing of ballots: Political groups that present official candidatures for the general elections receive contributions from the appropriate authorities that allow for printing of the equivalent of two and a half ballots per registered voter in each district, for each voting category (Law 27.504, Arts 16 and 35).

Funding of the PASO elections: The contribution of the national state in relation to the PASO is equivalent to 50% of what is set aside for electoral campaigns for general elections. The National Electoral Directorate provides each political group with the resources to print the equivalent of one ballot per voter. The contributions to the campaign and the printing of ballots are distributed equally among the lists of authorized pre-candidates (Law 26.571, Art. 32).

Private funding: Any contribution, in money or in kind, that a person or legal entity makes to a political grouping to finance electoral expenses constitutes private funding for an electoral campaign. The law provides for private contributions to political parties but imposes restrictions on the category or activity of the donor and the amount of such donations. The new regulation combines provisions that aim to:

- Incentivise private contributions by allowing tax deductions of up to 5% of annual net income
- Ensure transparency in funding, expressly prohibiting anonymous donations and requiring the identification of donors
- Promote fairness in the funding of political parties by setting limits on the number of private contributions that each party can receive annually from the same person for its ordinary financing (1% of authorized expenditure when the donor is a legal entity, and double that when the donor is an individual; Law 27.504). (Sitios Argentinos, s.f.)

Limits on election campaign expenses: The allowed expenses in the campaign, both for candidates for national legislative positions and for the President and Vice President of the nation, cannot exceed 1 peso and 50 cents ($1.50) per eligible voter in the election. It is worth noting that Law 25.600 set the maximum limit of allowed expenses at 1 peso ($1) per eligible voter in the election. With the new regulations, the allowed expenses for the run-off election also increase, from 30 cents of a peso ($0.30) to 50 cents of a peso ($0.50). In national elections, expenditure by a political group on the electoral campaign for each category may not exceed the sum resulting from multiplying the number of eligible voters by an electoral module, which is an amount established in the General Budget Law of the National Administration for the year in question that defines the limits of donations of individuals to electoral campaigns of political parties. No district shall be considered to have less than 500,000 voters (Law 27.504, Art. 45). Donations from individuals must be made by bank transfer, cheque, internet, or any other means as long as the donor is identified. All persons who have made contributions or donations must be identified in the final campaign report (Law 27.504, Art. 44 bis). Expenditure on campaign advertising by third parties is expressly prohibited (Law 27.504, Art. 49).

On one hand, a study by Centro de implementación de Políticas Públicas para la Equidad y el Crecimiento (CIPPEC) ((CIPPEC), 2016) on the general elections of 2015 shows that the funding of Cambiemos came mainly from the private sector (around $90 million Argentine pesos). The income

from the public sector was only $10 million. On the other hand, Frente para la Victoria had received equal amounts coming from private and public sectors. It is important to highlight that the public contribution depends on the number of candidates and lists that the parties present.

In spite of these regulations, it is clear that the different political forces always resort to some kind of extra funding, whether monetary or in kind, which is outside the law. Moreover, those in executive positions always have some resources from the executive that they can apply to campaigns, thus unbalancing the competition. The main informal sources of funding are usually networks of sponsors or unregulated public funding, which is difficult to trace. Despite gradual improvements in the rules, a major problem in Argentina is the lack of transparency in the declaration of the incomes that each party receives. An example that illustrates this problem is the general election in 2015. The research from CIPPEC showed that the activities of the parties could not have been financed by the income they had declared. Financing by bank account is not mandatory, so many receive money in cash, which clearly promotes money laundering.

Internal Situation of Parties: Conflicts and Party Discipline

The law on open, simultaneous, and compulsory primaries ensures that if candidates lose an internal election within a party, they can no longer present a list in the general election. The intention was to strengthen internal competition, open it up, make it transparent, and prevent greater party fragmentation. Prior to this reform, when a minority was not allowed to compete by the party leadership, this was a great incentive to leave the party.

Internal divisions within parties tend to be very frequent and, in all cases, can only be contained by the existence of a unifying leadership. Over the years, the two traditional parties have gone through splits. However, never has a separatist faction been able to draw the mainstream away; at least the bulk of the vote has always stayed with the historical party identity. Often these conflicts have been ideological—for example, the drift towards the Movimiento de Integración y Desarrollo (MID) or the Partido Intransigente in the case of Radicalism, or the Frente Grande in the case of Peronism—but on many occasions there have also been fights for the party leadership.

In the case of Peronism, the most recent split was that of the current president of the Chamber of Deputies of the Nation, Sergio Massa, who formed the Frente Renovador and managed to beat the official PJ in the

national legislative election in the province of Buenos Aires in 2013. Then, in 2019, he rejoined the party. In the 1980s, on several occasions sectors of the Renovación Peronista presented lists outside the official leadership because they were not guaranteed internal representation. The greatest fragmentation of the PJ took place in the 2003 presidential election, when three candidates stood—each one for a different manifesto—because they were unable to achieve unity of vision. On that occasion, former presidents Menem and Rodríguez Saá competed with future President Néstor Kirchner.

In the vast majority of cases, members of a parliamentary group vote in line with party discipline, although there are always some acts of rebellion in specific cases (for example, when a law harms the interests of a district). There are three possible forms of rebellion: absence from the session, abstention, or a vote contrary to the indication of the head of the bloc. Each group reacts to such behaviour differently, depending on the case. Sometimes there is an agreement to dissent, sometimes freedom of action is given for reasons of conscience (e.g., the law authorizing abortion). There are few situations in which member of parliament is expelled for indiscipline. It should be borne in mind that, although the law gives precedence to political parties, legally and in practice, if legislators want to separate from their groups, there is nothing to prevent them from becoming an independent and still retaining their seat.

Party Communication

In Argentine political practice, those who hold executive or legislative positions have a predominant role in setting public policy or positions on issues of public interest. Thus, apart from formalities, it is very unlikely that those in office will be subjected to the judgement of party authorities.

This point is important because, in general, the positions adopted by leaders, whether in the ruling party or in the opposition, are more important and decisive than the positions of the party as such. Although there may be institutional communications from the parties in various circumstances, this is a practice that has been somewhat relegated in the information dynamics of the late 20th and early 21st century, obviously reinforced by the existence of social media.

The party with the most professionalized institutional communication clearly is former President Macri's PRO, which some refer to as a 'designer' force. It has been conceived in line with a series of organizational concepts to compete in the structural circumstances of politics in the 21st century, such

as the open data that was shared by its government or its communications strategy, working intensely with social media and young people. Radicalism, despite showing more institutional and traditional behaviour, considering its 130-year history, has also been modernizing its communication system. The PJ is the party with the least institutionalized behaviour, and this has an impact on its communication policy. However, like any force with a strong vocation for power, after its 1983 defeat it quickly incorporated the tools of up-to-date political communication, and its leadership has been adapting rapidly over the last 40 years.

The Party System in Perspective: Party Models for the Future

Argentina's two historic parties—Peronism and Radicalism—are still in operation, despite criticism that they have merely become electoral machines that have no institutional life and are only aimed at satisfying their clientele by distributing positions and perks from a position of power. There are other historic parties—the Socialist Party, the Communist Party, the Progressive Democratic Party, or the MID—but they have no impact at national level.

Both main parties were born out of profound transformations in the social structure that were translated into political and ideological representation. The UCR was created in 1891 with the emergence of the urban middle classes and anti-status quo sectors of the elite who demanded the political participation that the oligarchy was denying them, at a time when there was no universal and secret ballot. Peronism was created in the post-war period, following an important process of urbanization and an economic model based on import substitution after the worldwide economic crisis of 1929. It was constituted as an inclusive movement that brought together pre-existing political sectors and represented above all the poorest sectors and industrial workers.

The emergence of other national parties tended to be primarily the fruit of personality-centred projects that generated a transitory grip in an electoral segment; however, they did not manage to become consolidated over time. As already stated, there were two exceptions. One was the emergence of the Frente Grande, which later joined up with FrePaSo. This force was based on an ideological difference with Menem's Peronism and found a place among middle class that were gradually growing disenchanted with what was previously on offer. The framework for this was the profound ideological shift established by Menem in the post-crisis period of 1989. The other was the

PRO, as described above, which was born in 2001 out of the economic and political crisis, in the context of the demand for the renewal of the political class ('Let's get rid of them all').

In view of this description, it could be said that the two historical parties emerged out of two processes of social and economic transformation—typical of the 19th and 20th centuries—and that the other two forces that have appeared in the last 30 years were born out of processes of social and political crisis that generated realignments of the representation that existed before. As already noted, all the other political projects were more of the 'flash party' type.

The two historic parties also experienced ideological swings—from Menem to the Kirchners, from Alfonsín to De la Rúa—only to be expected to navigate through different historical circumstances over many decades. This brought them crises and divisions, but not the threat of total disappearance.

Given that Argentina is a large country with a federal and presidential system of government, there is a great demand for territorial structures. Therefore, a party relying only on the opinion vote is considered to have no chance unless it joins forces with another party with a territorial tradition. This is what made the alliance between the UCR and the PRO productive.

Since 2019, there has been a shift towards a bi-coalition system, as the two forces most likely to prevail in a presidential election are a combination of different groups. This evolution of the two-party system—characteristic of the 1980s—towards a system of two coalitions is the model that has allowed limits on electoral fragmentation and a productive situation for the actors that make up each alliance, competitive alternation within the political system, and a simpler supply from the point of view of electoral demand.

Given that Peronism has had the largest faithful following to date, the fragmentation of the rest of the political spectrum has worked against it for many years. Of the three times that a non-Peronist option won the presidential elections, two were the result of coalitions (1999 and 2015), which allowed for a complementary and productive partnership. Despite the pervasive use of the internet and social media, territorial presence remains valuable.

If a new political force were to emerge that wishes to be more than a mere 'flash party', it should consider how the PRO emerged, building an option with an organizational scheme adapted to the new technological, social, and cultural circumstances, looking towards the long term and not just offering a short-term option. It should develop a flexible, low-cost, professionalized format that can survive ups and downs like a rapidly deployable military unit rather than a large traditional structure, with an emphasis on spokespersons

who can effectively project their message in the media. The era of mass bureaucratic parties appears to be over.[4]

A successful party model would combine an extensive territorial presence in the geographically and culturally diverse territory of a federal country with ongoing adaptation to the use of new information technologies, taking on board as far as possible any changes in public opinion. However, it seems unlikely that a single force would be able to combine both factors, because Argentina faces a major challenge with a lack of political federalization.

Prospects for Democracy

Argentina has had 40 years of uninterrupted democratic life with free, regular elections. Though the system is imperfect, there have been no complaints of fraud in national elections, and it can be said that there is a majority commitment to this situation among the different parties (Ibarreche, 2017). There are, however, many anomalous situations that distort the functioning of the republican system through autocratic behaviour. One of them is the lack of autonomy of the judiciary in several areas that affect the functioning of the state and of politics.

The various pressures faced by Argentina's democracy are similar to those prevalent in the rest of the region:

1. Authoritarian and populist tendencies with anti-elite discourses;
2. The phenomenon of encapsulation resulting from social media and a lack of objectivity in the information provided by some mass media
3. The high level of poverty resulting from recurrent economic crises
4. The high level of social inequality
5. Social fragmentation
6. A state co-opted in various sectors by lobbies
7. Lack of transparency and corruption at different levels of the state, with feudal practices
8. Mafia-like and violent practices that threaten the rule of law, such as drug trafficking and other types of globalized crime
9. The decline in public confidence in democracy, its institutions, and political parties
10. The absence of broad consensus among the main forces on the direction of the country and key public policies
11. Polarization between political leaders and part of society (the 'rift').

Despite these 11 factors, there is a fairly mobilized society—at least in terms of plurality of opinion—that has not hesitated to vote against the incumbent government on several occasions. To take just one example, after the 2001 crisis there were 10 national elections, in half of which citizens voted against the incumbent government, yet this did not alter the institutional system. From this point of view, Argentina's democracy is not under threat.

The resilience of the parties can be seen more in their ability to gain power than in their ability to successfully deal with new challenges on the public agenda. This has to do with aspects of the political culture that are very difficult to change in the long term. Parties are more efficient in winning elections and holding on to power than in devising and implementing actions to benefit the electorate.

To date, it cannot be said that there are anti-system political options. At least in crisis situations like the current one, there are anti-status quo political options, but in principle they do not challenge democratic rules. Argentina has a system that captures a good part of the political representation of society, which ensures a certain predictability. However, it does not have a tradition of outsiders challenging the dominance of the historical parties or of any possible alliances among them.

In any case, the last 10 years have witnessed a phenomenon of polarization of opinions among political leaders and in society that has come to be known as 'the rift', undermining some of the common denominators that have existed since the return to democracy. This polarization reduces the possibility that basic political agreements on long-term policies can be reached. Overall, polarization creates a divisive and adversarial political climate that inhibits the formation of broad-based political agreements. It perpetuates a cycle of ideological rigidity, partisan politics, distrust, and short-term thinking, making it challenging for political leaders to find common ground and work towards long-term policy solutions.

In conclusion, there are at least seven tasks to be undertaken to improve the democratic system and the functioning of political parties. The first is to ensure the loyalty of representatives, who should be elected by those they represent through competitive elections and, above all, should decide and act as agents of the country's general welfare. Second, the Argentine political system should work on stronger political parties and improved electoral systems. Third, the promotion of accountability towards those represented, so that voters can control and evaluate the decisions and actions of their representatives, is imperative. Fourth, Argentina should develop stronger accountability mechanisms, which should be suitable to empower citizens and not distract them while those in power do what they want. Fifth, there

is an important need for sensitive and effective republican powers so that rulers, legislators, and judges are receptive to guidance about the processes of administering, legislating, and judging. Sixth, it is necessary to legitimize the republican institutions through stabilization and consolidation. Finally, Argentine politicians should work towards recovering public confidence so that citizens can trust in the organization and functioning of republican institutions out of conviction and not out of convenience.

Notes

1. We thank Sabrina Corbacho, Fernanda Veggetti and Franco Marconi for collaborating in the production of this chapter.
2. Statistics on members in the second half of 2014. Registro Nacional de Agrupaciones Políticas. Cámara Nacional Electoral. See: https://www.electoral.gov.ar/pdf/estadistica_afiliados_2do_semestre_2014.pdf (Accessed 18 December 2023).
3. Dirección Nacional Electoral (DNE).
4. Whether President Javier Milei, who was unexpectedly elected in 2023, will be able to usher in such a new era remains to be seen.

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III

POLITICAL PARTIES AND DEMOCRATIC CHALLENGES IN ASIA-PACIFIC

18
Taiwan

Party System of a Young Consolidated Democracy

Alexander C. Tan

Introduction

Prior to 1986, Taiwan was a one-party authoritarian state with the Kuomintang (KMT or Nationalist Party) having dominated the island's politics since 1949. Since Taiwan was technically still in a civil war with mainland China, Taiwan's National Assembly enacted a 'Temporary Provisions against the Communist Rebellion' as a constitutional amendment that formed the basis of the martial law which was in effect from 1949 until its repeal in 1987. Under martial law, the KMT maintained its authoritarian rule of Taiwan though other approved parties, such as the Chinese Youth Party and China Democratic Socialist Party, which existed under the 'guidance' of the KMT. Opposition to the KMT's rule and the regime was not allowed to exist (at least legally) in the form of organized political parties during this period of martial law. However, an informal organization called the Tangwai, which literally means 'outside of the party' represented the loose coalition of regime opponents (Chao and Myers 1998; Rigger 1999).

KMT authoritarian rule affected and defined the development of Taiwan's eventual party system in more ways than one (Yu 2005; Tan 2021). First, the KMT's authoritarian regime unwittingly created the 'mainlander versus islander' cleavage in Taiwan. With the defeat of the KMT in the Chinese Civil War, the KMT established a rival government-in-exile on the island of Taiwan, and in so doing transferred its governmental structure, party structure, and people to Taiwan. This large, exiled group of Chinese people (or mainlanders) made up the upper echelons of government, the military, state-owned enterprises, and the political party apparatus, automatically making them the political and societal elites in Taiwan. The 'islanders'—mostly descended from the waves of Han Chinese migration throughout the centuries—had lived under Japanese colonization of the island and were

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largely kept out of national politics. One serious ramification of the wholesale imposition of the KMT governmental and party apparatus on Taiwan is the unwitting creation of a 'them' versus 'us' environment that pitted mainlanders, who benefited from the system and became core of Taiwan society, against the islanders, who remained largely in the periphery (Chao and Myers 1998; Hsieh 1999).

Secondly, as the KMT set up its government-in-exile—the Republic of China—on Taiwan, its politics and the unfinished civil war between the KMT and the Chinese communists on the mainland dominated the political agenda of the island. The KMT government at the time was focused on fighting the Chinese communists and recovering the mainland. As part of the anti-communist campaign and reunification objective, one dominant narrative of the KMT government is that Taiwan is a province within a larger Republic of China and therefore will eventually have to reunify with the mainland.

The KMT is challenged by a crisis of integration on the island, as Taiwan was only reintegrated into the Republic of China after the end of the Second World War in 1945. In 1895, Taiwan was ceded to Japan as part of war reparations resulting from the Treaty of Shimonoseki after imperial Qing China was defeated by imperial Japan in the Sino-Japanese War of 1894. From 1895 to 1945, Taiwan was part of the Japanese empire. During this period, Japan developed the island's agriculture and infrastructure and established an education system similar to that of the Japanese mainland. After imperial Japan was defeated in the Second World War, Taiwan was returned to the Republic of China. And with the defeat of the KMT in the Chinese Civil War and its establishment of a government-in-exile, Taiwan was again a separate entity (Chao and Myers 1998).

For islanders, who have experienced two generations under Japanese colonial rule and then the authoritarian control of the KMT, political and national identities are not particularly clear-cut. While the KMT regime and the mainlanders have a pan-Chinese identity, islanders tend to have a limited identity focused mainly on Taiwan. This has led to the creation of a national identity divide or cleavage that pits those who support unification with China (or at least the view that Taiwan is part of a larger China) and those who support Taiwanese independence (i.e. a separate state and identity for Taiwan). This national identity cleavage has reinforced the mainlander–islander cleavage (Ho and Liu 2003). Though the seeds of these divisions were planted in 1949, they remain the most salient ones in Taiwan's politics (Rigger 1999; Wang and Chang 2005).

The Tangwai politicians were allowed to contest elections prior to Taiwan's democratization, but they were not allowed to be a formal political

organization. As the KMT espoused a pan-Chinese identity and was dominated by mainlanders, the Tangwai group politicians were primarily islanders and those with a preference for Taiwanese independence. Sensing that Taiwan was undergoing political liberalization, the Tangwai politicians established the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) in 1986 (Rigger 2001).

The formation of the DPP and its competition with the KMT has consolidated the two reinforcing cleavages—mainlander versus islander and unification versus independence. In contemporary Taiwan, these two divisions continue to define how Taiwanese political parties align.[1] More recently, though, the mainlander–islander divide has become subsumed into the unification versus independence cleavage as the mainlander generation pass on and their offspring are born in the island (Wang and Chang 2005).

Political parties that have a pan-Chinese identity and are therefore supportive of unification are grouped in the so-called pan-Blue coalition, while those that have stronger Taiwanese identity and are therefore supportive of Taiwanese independence are grouped into the so-called pan-Green coalition. Pan-Blue (named for the colour of the KMT's party banner) largely comprises of the KMT, People's First Party (PFP), and the New Party (NP). The pan-Green (named for the colour of the DPP's party banner) is largely composed of the DPP, Taiwan Solidarity Union (TSU), New Power Party (NPP), and Taiwan People's Party (TPP).

As already mentioned, Taiwan's party system is defined by the unification–independence and mainlander–islander cleavages. The left–right cleavage is not very prominent in Taiwanese politics, and progressivism in Taiwan does not extend to the support for robust labour rights, immigrant rights, and extensive social welfare systems found in the social democracies of Western Europe. As the unification–independence cleavage remains unresolved and is the most pressing existential issue for Taiwan, political parties tend to emphasize where they position themselves on this issue (Yu 2005; Clark 2006; Tan 2021).

Besides this sociological determinant of Taiwan's party system, the electoral system has had a clear effect on party system choices in Taiwan. Prior to 2008, Taiwan operated under the single non-transferable vote electoral system (SNTV). In the SNTV system, Taiwan's political parties jockey for multiple seats in a given electoral district (Hsieh 1999). Since political parties are allowed to field multiple candidates in each district, one effect of the SNTV is that candidates from the same party are not only competing against candidates of the other party but also among themselves. To gain the maximum number of seats in a given district necessitates political parties coordinating and mobilizing votes. As a consequence, political parties that

are well organized and well resourced are advantaged by the SNTV electoral rules (Hsieh 1999). The KMT, with its extensive organization and assets, is definitely a huge beneficiary of this system. While much smaller organizationally and not as well-resourced, the DPP also benefits to some extent as it is able to capture seats in the multi-seat electoral districts.

In 2008 Taiwan changed to the mixed-member majoritarian (MMM) system in its legislative elections and at the same time reduced the number of legislative seats from 225 to 113 (Hsieh 2009; Batto et al. 2016). Of the 113 legislative seats, 73 are elected single-member districts elected under the first-past-the-post rule, 6 are reserved seats for Taiwan's Indigenous people elected using SNTV, and 34 are elected in a party-list proportional representation with a 5% threshold. While technically a proportional representation electoral system, the parallel nature of the party-list allocation rewards large parties such as the KMT and the DPP (Tan 2009). The MMM electoral system, coupled with Taiwan's semi-presidential system, contributed immensely to the largely two-party system with some minor parties (Batto and Cox 2016; Batto et al. 2016).

Arguably, Taiwan's most significant political parties continue to be the KMT and the DPP, as they dominate national politics. In 2008, the effective number of electoral parties (ENEP)was 2.09, and by 2020 ENEP was 2.18. In Taiwan's parliament, the effective number of parliamentary parties (ENPP)was 1.75 in 2008, increasing to 2.44 in 2020. From these statistics, we can infer that Taiwan's party system is very close to an effective two-party system. The other political parties have a small legislative presence and do not have a realistic chance of capturing the presidency. In the next section, I will turn our attention to these two major political parties.

The Two Major Parties in Taiwan: The Kuomintang and the Democratic Progressive Party

The situational setting

In 2016, the opposition DPP won the presidential election and, for the first time in Taiwan's political history, gained a majority in the Legislative Yuan (Taiwan's parliament). Despite the several turnovers of the executive control between the KMT and the DPP since 1996, Taiwan's first true democratic consolidation did not occur until the 2016 election, when the DPP for the first time controlled both the executive and legislative branches and was able to enact its own agenda. From 2000 to 2008, Taiwan's government had

been divided, with the DPP controlling the executive branch while the KMT controlled the legislative majority.

After the DPP's comprehensive victory in 2016, it was finally in a position to enact drastic reforms to a political system designed by the KMT. The first reform that the DPP government promulgated was to address political party financing and party-owned assets. This had previously been a very contentious issue as the KMT had a huge electoral advantage vis-à-vis the other political parties because of its extensive party businesses and assets that easily made it one of the richest political parties in the world.

The DPP government pushed for the creation of a commission of investigation into what it called 'ill-gotten assets' and quickly froze the assets of the KMT that were being investigated. The DPP swiftly passed legislation to regulate and define the status of political parties in a democratic Taiwan. On 6 December 2017, the Political Parties Act came into force. The Act requires political parties to file a declaration to the Ministry of the Interior and register as a legal person to a district court; to convene a representative assembly or party congress at least once in a four-year period; to nominate candidates in national or local elections at least once in a four-year period; and to ensure compliance on funding sources, accounting, and financial transparency.

The Political Parties Act of 2017 aimed to provide clearer process for the establishment of parties as well as to standardize how political parties operate in a democratic Taiwan. The Act's requirements are not very different from what was required of political parties under prior legislation, and Taiwan's political parties had already been complying with most of these requirements. However, one of the key requirements pertaining to compliance on funding sources and financial transparency addressed two main concerns: 1) the national security fear that external actors were financing Taiwanese parties and therefore influencing and interfering in Taiwan's politics, and 2) that political parties owning businesses and actors created an uneven advantage in the electoral arena and made corrupt practices more likely. The enactment of the legislation, especially the requirements to submit annual financial reports to the Ministry of Interior and financial transparency regarding funding sources, are the most significant changes to the political party environment in Taiwan. The Political Parties Act of 2017 has the potential of 'levelling the playing field' for Taiwan's parties.

The Kuomintang (KMT)

The KMT or the Nationalist Party is one of the two major political parties in Taiwan's multi-party electoral democracy. Established as a revolutionary

party during the waning years of the Qing Dynasty in China, the KMT was exiled to Taiwan and established a rival government—Republic of China (ROC)—after it lost the Chinese Civil War in 1949 to the Chinese Communist Party that established the People's Republic of China (PRC). Organized as a Leninist party, the KMT imposed itself as a hegemonic and authoritarian party that firmly established control of all aspects of political life in Taiwan until the end of martial law in 1987 and eventual full democratization in 1996.

The KMT's dominance of Taiwan's politics is supported by an intensive and extensive party organization that includes a large professional party bureaucracy, state-wide party-run citizen service centres, and, more importantly, lucrative party-owned business enterprises that allowed the party to have a financial advantage over its rivals. Together with its strong and well-funded party organization, the party was organized as a mass party with many affiliated organizations, such as the women's alliance and a youth corps (Clark and Tan 2012a; Tan 2014).

Structurally, the KMT is a hierarchical organization with a Central Committee that is equivalent to the politburo of Marxist-Leninist parties. The Central Committee is the power centre of the party composed of the heads of the party's different standing committees.[2] The National Congress serves as the platform for member participation as well as election of the party chairman. Since 1996, the party has transformed to become a catch-all party to remain electorally competitive (Clark and Tan 2012b). With this transformation, while the KMT claims to have over 340,000 registered party members, the increasing professionalization of the party organization has limited the role of party members within the party.

As the DPP managed to win the presidential and legislative elections in 2016, the government established the 'ill-gotten party assets settlement committee' and required political parties established prior to the lifting of martial law in 1987 to report and present an account of their party assets. The main target of this investigation is the KMT, who at one point was estimated to be the richest political party in the world ('KMT Is Again the World's Richest Party', *Taipei Times* 2014). The subsequent government investigation of ill-gotten party assets in 2016 placed the KMT on the defensive to provide a transparent accounting of how the party acquired such extensive business wealth. In the process of investigation, the government froze all of the KMT's suspect assets, which forced the party into financial difficulties and made it unable to meet its financial obligations ('Taiwan's Opposition KMT's Bank Account Frozen', *Straits Times* 2016).

As mentioned earlier, the most salient political cleavage is that of national identity, which divides society (and parties) along pan-Chinese identity (and more pro-unification) or Taiwanese identity (and more pro-independence). In this important cleavage, the KMT sees itself as the guardian of the ROC (different from the PRC) and espouses a pan-China and one-China (under a ROC) position that places Taiwan as part of that one-China. The KMT has stood for a stronger pan-Chinese identity and unification, and clearly against Taiwan's independence. The party's ideology is classified as conservative, pro-business, and centre-right.

During the authoritarian period, the KMT was a classic mass political party with tentacles stretching out to all corners of Taiwanese society, including business, academia, arts, media, and the military. Functional groups were represented in the party as a way for the KMT to co-opt these groups to ensure societal control. Among the most prominent are women's groups and youth groups. The National Women's Anti-Communist League—now known simply as National Women's League—was founded in 1950 by Chiang Kai-shek's wife Soong Mei-ling. The KMT's youth wing is called the China Anti-communist Youth Corps (now known as China Youth Corps). Until the early 1990s, these affiliated organizations continue to be very active and involved. The China Youth Corps is led by the KMT's senior party politicians and has in the past been used by the party to identify young cadres for political roles. It operates activity centres throughout the island and organizes activities for young people, not unlike scouting organizations in other countries. Since 1996, Taiwan's democratization and societal liberalization have changed the importance of these organizations to the general public (Clark 2002). The institutionalization of electoral politics has further affected the way voter mobilization is conducted; as a result, these organizations have become less prominent.

As an asset-rich political party, the KMT has not relied on state subsidies to political parties for its finances. When Taiwan was returned to the ROC in 1947, many businesses and assets owned by the Japanese colonial government changed ownership, and many became assets of the KMT. During the authoritarian years, KMT had businesses that operated in banking and finance, media, insurance, and construction, and the party had an interest in other privately owned businesses, contributing to its considerable wealth. Consequently, the KMT can afford to have full-time party bureaucrats staffing 'citizen service centres' throughout the island. These citizen service centres have served as parallel institutions to the government's own local agencies. During elections, the citizen service centres assist in voter

registration and voter mobilization, which has proved to be critical to the KMT's electoral domination.

As democratic elections began to take root in Taiwan and as the then opposition party—the DPP—increasingly became competitive in local elections, the KMT's party finances began to come under increasing pressure. The KMT's loss of the 2000 and 2008 presidential elections led to intense scrutiny of its finances, leading to a gradual reduction of the extent of the party organization. Beginning in 2016, the government's freezing of the KMT's party assets has forced a further reduction of its huge party bureaucracy due to the party experiencing some financial difficulties.

Despite the difficulties resulting from the government's investigation of the KMT's party assets and the freezing of assets suspected to be ill-gotten, in compliance with the financial reporting regulations as stipulated in the Political Parties Act of 2017, the KMT in its 2019 financial report filed with the Ministry of Interior reported a total income of US$40,814,997 (using a US$1 to NT$28 exchange rate) and a total expenditures of US$23,022,427.[3] Of the total reported income, the KMT received state subvention of US$6,143,558, while political donations amount to US$4,164,700. As a percentage of the party's total income, state subsidy accounts for about 15.1% and political donations contribute another 10.2%. While state subvention contributes significantly to the KMT's coffers, the party is not overly dependent on this money for its operations. The bulk of KMT's income of over US$39 million comes from 'other' income, which is primarily revenue generated by its total assets of more than US$750 million.

Prior to 1990, not much is known about factionalism within the KMT. While the KMT has a clear mainlander–islander divide, it is clear that under both Chiang Kai-shek and his son Chiang Ching-kuo, political power rested with the mainlanders. In the latter years of Chiang Ching-kuo's party leadership and his presidency, he began a process of 'Taiwanization', in which he promoted islander politicians to significant roles in the party and in the government (Clark and Tan 2012a; Hsiau 2005; Jacobs 2005). However, because of his strong control of the party apparatus, disunity within the party itself is not obvious or mentioned.

With the passing away of Chiang Ching-kuo in 1988 and the accession of Lee Teng-hui as the nation's President (Taiwan's first islander President), cracks within the KMT began to appear. This disunity came to the forefront of Taiwanese politics in the battle for party chairperson as supporters of Lee (called the mainstream faction) were pushing for the election of Lee as party chairperson since he was also the country's President. The non-mainstream faction, led primarily by mainlander senior KMT politicians,

was pushing for a party chairperson separate from the nation's President (as had pertained in the past). This seemingly uncontroversial proposal was mired in the fact that Lee Teng-hui, if elected, would have been the first islander party chairperson and could have threatened the dominance of the mainlanders, and that the party chairperson has control over the huge party organization and resources, which could change the balance of power in Taiwan.

While conflict between the mainstream and non-mainstream factions ended with Lee Teng-hui winning the party chairmanship, the non-mainstream faction managed to gain concessions by ensuring control of the cabinet. The continued empowerment of the islanders in the party, however, and then the ensuing conflict over national identity eventually led to some members of the non-mainstream faction splitting to establish the New Party (NP) in 1994. The establishment of the NP has not brought greater harmony within the KMT. The presidential candidate nomination was marred by conflicts among senior KMT politicians that led to a split between then Premier Lien Chan and Taiwan's provincial governor, James Soong.

Premier Lien became the KMT's official presidential candidate while Governor Soong entered the race as an independent candidate, resulting in a split of the pan-Blue (or KMT) votes, thereby handing the presidency to the DPP's Chen Shui-bian with 39.3% of the vote.[4] James Soong's independent candidacy led to another split of the KMT, where Soong and his supporters established the People's First Party (PFP). In the aftermath of the 2000 presidential election defeat, Lee Teng-hui left the KMT and together with his supporters formed the Taiwan Solidarity Union (TSU)—a party with a strong pro-Taiwanese independence position.

In today's KMT, the mainlander–islander factional divide is not as evident since KMT politicians are now primarily born on the island. However, the party is factionalized along leadership, strategic, and ideological lines. Leadership and strategic factionalisms are more fluid and related to electoral cycles. The ideological factionalism within the party reflects the unification–independence cleavage found in society. Within the KMT, this divide is about a more explicit recognition of Taiwan as part of a larger China (not necessarily PRC) and support for eventual unification with a democratic China on the one hand, and a status quo position—that is, the ROC instead of an independent Republic of Taiwan. The election for KMT party chairperson in 2021 remained focused on this national identity division as the two most prominent chairperson candidates—Eric Chu and Chang Ya-chung—represented contrasting positions along this dividing line. The eventual winner—Eric Chu—espoused a position that affirms the status quo of the ROC.

The Democratic Progressive Party (DPP)

Taiwan's governing party at the time of writing, the DPP, has come a long way from the ragtag band of opposition activists that formed in 1986, later to become one of Taiwan's major parties (Rigger 2001). Within 14 years, the DPP managed to win the presidency, and by 2004 had become the largest single party in the Legislative Yuan, effectively ending the 50-year dominance of the KMT in Taiwan politics.

The DPP's party manifesto espouses a Taiwan that is distinct and independent from China. A glaringly clear demarcation from the KMT and the pan-Blue alliance, the DPP and its supporters do not consider Taiwan as part of China, nor do they subscribe to a pan-Chinese identity. For the DPP, as far as national identity is concerned, there are two states on each side of the Taiwan Straits—(Lee 2005). It is a well-organized electoral party that appeals mainly to native Taiwanese with a strong islander identity and a staunch opposition to unification with China (Lee 2005).

Although not as well funded and well resourced as the KMT in the early years of its establishment, the DPP was effective in relying on its supporters to mobilize voters (Rigger 2001). The difficulties it faced in its early years, including the challenge of competing in the SNTV electoral system, made the DPP an innovative and resourceful political party. Today, it claims a registered membership of over 300,000 members. With the continued professionalization of the party organization, the role of party members has become more limited. However, the DPP's strong ability to mobilize partisans and identifiers alike makes the party an effective electoral machine.

Interestingly, despite its more 'progressive' image as a political party, its organizational structure looks similar to that of the KMT.[5] In the DPP, the national party congress elects members to its Central Executive Committee and Central Review Committee. The Central Executive Committee in turn selects the ten-member Central Standing Committee which serves as the power centre of the party.

Organizationally, the DPP has several committees and departments that manage policy, finance, and administrative affairs, as well as other functional departments responsible for international affairs, China affairs, overseeing social movements, youth, media relations, public opinion surveys, Indigenous affairs, and others. Since the DPP was only founded in 1986, the party's bureaucrats and the head of the various departments tend to be younger than those of the KMT.

As mentioned earlier, the DPP when compared to the KMT is not as well resourced and funded. In financial reports filed for the fiscal year 2019, the

DPP reported income of US$22,066,544 and expenditure of US$28,924,617, representing a financial deficit of US$6,858,429. It reported total assets of US$23,256,381.[6] State subsidies are in the form of support funds provided to political parties that receive 3.5% of the votes in legislative elections.[7] In the case of the DPP, in the fiscal year 2019, it reported a total state subvention of US$10,222,743, representing about 46% of the party's total income, while political contributions (donations from private individuals or associations) amounted to US$6,659,533, or about 30% of the total.[8] With nearly half of the DPP's income coming from state subvention, it is reasonable to infer that the party is dependent on state support for political parties.

A comparison with the financial resources between the DPP and the KMT shows a large gap in the wealth and financial health of the two major parties. The DPP's total income is half that of the KMT, and its total assets are only 3% of the KMT's. This disparity in wealth shows the DPP's dependence on state subvention and is a motivation for the DPP, after winning both the presidential and legislative election in 2016, to investigate the KMT's assets and their origins.

With its origins in the Tangwai, the DPP has always been known for its factionalism, as it was a coalition of people in opposition to the KMT and its authoritarian regime. Two of the most prominent factions—the Formosa faction and the New Tide faction—existed before the DPP was established. After the party's establishment in 1986, more factions were created, of which the Welfare State alliance and the Justice alliance are the most prominent.

Rather than deep ideological division, leadership and strategic differences are a better characterization of the DPP factions. One interesting feature of DPP factions is that they tend to be distinguished by the generation of DPP party politicians. The Formosa and New Tide factions are the first-generation anti-KMT regime politicians and academics. Many of these faction members were jailed for anti-regime activities during Taiwan's martial law period. The Welfare State and Justice alliance were founded in 1992 and are composed of the second generation of DPP leaders—many of whom became well known as academics and lawyers who defended the first-generation leaders against sedition and treason charges brought by the KMT government.

Prior to 2006, factions were recognized by the DPP. During the second term of President Chen Shui-bian, the party voted in 2006 to disallow factions in a bid to increase party unity (Huang, 'DPP Votes to Do Away with Factions', *Taipei Times* 24 July 2006). Notwithstanding this formal party decision, factionalism within the DPP continues to exist to this day. Despite the decision to disallow them in 2006, no less than four factions can be identified, including the Tsai faction led by President Tsai Ing-wen, NextGen led by media

mogul Lin Kun-hai of the SET media empire, and the Taiwan Normal Country Promotion Association led by Speaker of the Legislative Yuan You Si-kun. The existence of these factions does not necessarily mean that the DPP has a low level of party unity. On the contrary, the factions have learned to co-exist within the party and have managed to be able to maintain party unity by sharing power between them. Key power-sharing mechanisms include the appointment to key governmental positions and statutory boards, agencies, and state-owned enterprises. Clear power sharing is evidenced by Tsai Ing-wen as state President, Su Tseng-chang, a leading figure of the Social Welfare faction, as Premier, and You Si-kun of the Normal Country Promotion Association faction as speaker of the legislature.

Summary Evaluation

Taiwan's party system has transformed and evolved since 1949. From 1949 to 1987, Taiwan was a one-party authoritarian state. With the political liberalization that began in 1987 and the subsequent death of Chiang Ching-kuo, the political opening accelerated even further (Chao and Myers 1998). By the first direct presidential election in 1996, Taiwan was a system with one large dominant party—the KMT. The DPP was a competitive opposition party but was unable to gain control of the Executive Yuan and Legislative Yuan (Chao and Myers 1998; Tan et al. 2000; Clark and Tan 2012a). In 2000, the DPP finally captured the state presidency and the Executive Yuan, as well as a plurality in the Legislative Yuan. However, between 2000 and 2008 the KMT managed to maintain control of the Legislative Yuan through the support of the pan-Blue alliance parties. During that period, Taiwan's party system saw new additions to the party systems (e.g. NP, PFP, TSU), but these smaller parties were not able to make significant inroads to wrest voter support away from the DPP and the KMT.

From 2008 to 2016, Taiwan's party system did not deviate from the two-party system dominated by the KMT and the DPP (Tsai et al. 2007). During this period, the KMT regained control of the state presidency and the Executive Yuan as well as continued control of the Legislative Yuan. The DPP remained the most credible opposition party while the other minor parties remained present but not significant. It was during this period that several minor parties, such as the NP and the TSU, weakened substantially.

The 2008–2016 period in Taiwan's history also marked closer relations with the PRC as the KMT government was seeking a less confrontational relations to jump-start Taiwan's otherwise lacklustre economic performance

under the DPP government of the prior eight years. For various reasons, the economic rapprochement and the quickened pace of economic interaction with the PRC caused concerns in Taiwanese society and further deepened political polarization along the unification–independence cleavage (Clark and Tan 2016; Tan 2020).[9] Several new parties were established in the period leading up to the 2016 general elections, such as the NPP, which offers a contending approach but competes primarily along the unification–independence dimension. The NPP advocates Taiwan's de jure independence and is progressive in its policy positions. It espouses positions on social, labour, and welfare issues that are more progressive than the DPP.

Following this period, Taiwan's political development witnessed its first turnover of legislative power (Copper 2016). In 2016, the DPP gained majority control of the Legislative Yuan and won the state presidency. The DPP government did not waste time and pushed for the passing of the Political Parties Act of 2017 and conducted investigations of the KMT's ill-gotten party assets. Both of these initiatives have changed the party landscape as they have contributed to an erosion of the huge financial advantage of the KMT (Tsai 2018). In some ways, the passing of the Political Parties Act of 2017 has improved Taiwan's democracy as it made party and electoral financing more transparent and accountable. The removal of the KMT's huge financial advantage is an attempt to 'level the playing field', so to speak.

Despite these efforts, apart from of the two major political parties of the KMT and DPP, the fortunes of Taiwan's smaller parties are less stable (Batto et al. 2016). Since 1996, Taiwan has seen many new political parties established, but they have struggled to attain small party status.[10] Several critical interrelated factors can be identified as having significant influence on the character and colour of Taiwan's party system. These factors include the restricted issue space and the effect of the MMM electoral system.

Since 2016, several external events have had a major influence in Taiwan's politics. These include Donald Trump's election and presidency, the PRC's aggressive behaviour towards Taiwan, the Hong Kong democracy protest of 2019, and the COVID-19 pandemic. Yet these significant external events have not expanded the issue space or created a new issue dimension for political parties to compete in. Instead, to the detriment of other issue dimensions (labour rights, immigrant rights, social welfare, environmental issues), these events have served to further consolidate the overwhelming significance of the national identity cleavage (i.e. unification versus independence), as they place the state of PRC–Taiwan relations and the existential question of Taiwan to the front and centre of Taiwanese politics and the voters'

consciousness. The saliency of the national identity cleavage is reinforced by the unresolved international political and diplomatic status of Taiwan.

The minor parties that have been established since 1996 are primarily considered challenger parties on the national identity dimension rather than new issue mobilizers (Rochon 1985). This is not to say that parties mobilizing on new issues do not exist in Taiwan. On the contrary, there are mobilizer parties that are focused on left–right issues, environmental issues, and other new politics issues, such as the Green Party of Taiwan and the Social Democratic Party of Taiwan. However, the domination of the national identity issue dimension does not allow for new issues to gain equal saliency in the electoral market. As such, new issue mobilizing parties like the Social Democratic Party of Taiwan find it very challenging to mobilize voter support as most voters are not educated or attentive to those new issues. Consequently, such parties find it extremely difficult to be electorally competitive and relevant and therefore remain relatively invisible.

Challenger parties—such as the NP, PFP, NPP, TPP, and TSU—have at various elections gained legislative seats or some modicum of success in local elections. However, these challenger parties have struggled to differentiate themselves substantially from the KMT and the DPP, creating a difficulty in carving out a stable voter support base. To illustrate the conundrum of the challenger parties, we can examine the cases of the NP and the NPP.

The NP was formed in 1994 as a split from the KMT during the period of the mainstream versus non-mainstream factional infighting. While the NP had some level of success in attracting mainlander and pro-unification votes in its early years, gaining 21 seats and 13% of the votes in the legislative elections of 1995, by 2004 (a decade after its formation) the party had only gained one seat in the Legislative Yuan and 0.13% of the votes. Since the introduction of the MMM electoral rule, NP has not gained any seat in the Legislative Yuan and has struggled to get past the threshold of 5%. Many of the more prominent NP politicians have returned to the KMT.

This situation is not only an issue with pan-Blue political parties, as the case of the NPP shows for the pan-Green camp. In the 2016 election, several young pro-independence activists decided to form the NPP to challenge the DPP. Like the NP, the NPP had some success in its first electoral participation, gaining five seats in the Legislative Yuan, making it the third largest party in the 2016–2020 legislature. In the 2020 election, however, already the DPP had started to co-opt NPP politicians and to squeeze its political space.[11] In this legislative election, the party only managed to gain three seats (all from the party list) and 7.75% of the vote. The PFP and the TSU are similarly situated as they continue to shrink in their legislative representation.

In addition to the restricted issue space and issue dimension, Taiwan's MMM electoral system together with its constitutional design have contributed to a party system that converges to a two-party system (Batto et al. 2016). With the party-list seats added onto the constituency seats in the MMM electoral rule, large parties get bonus seats while small parties struggle to get over the 5% threshold. In addition, Batto and Cox (2016: 11) argue that, 'in Taiwan, the top prize, the presidency, could be won only by winning a plurality in the presidential election. Competition for the presidency thus drove the system toward two main candidates who, in turn, had strong incentives to organize legislators behind their candidacies'. Thus, the dynamics of both the electoral rules and the executive design push the party system towards a two-party system.

This scenario is unlikely to see any changes in the near future. However, the underlying dynamics of the national identity cleavage seem to be showing some signs of shifting (Rigger 2011; Clark et al. 2021). Though the problematic unification–independence issue is unlikely to be resolved, voter alignments are increasingly moving towards the independence side of the scale. This voter dealignment away from pan-Blue parties to pan-Green parties became evident in 2016 and was further evidenced by the results of the 2020 general elections (Clark et al. 2020). The KMT is at risk of becoming a perpetual opposition as voters' strengthening Taiwanese identity (and consequently weakening Chinese identity) has meant a consolidation of support of pan-Green parties.

The primary threat to Taiwan's democracy is an external one—China taking over Taiwan— but the secondary threat is internal—the huge imbalances in the financial strength of the political parties. The reality of the country's existential threat was made all the clearer with the events in Hong Kong and China's continued military incursions over the past years. China's existential threat towards Taiwan pushed voters to strengthen their Taiwanese identity separate from China. With the consequent rise of Taiwanese identity favouring pan-Green parties led by the DPP, the development of Taiwan's democracy is likely to gather pace. Interestingly, the advancement of democracy in Taiwan tends to be stimulated by wanting to differentiate a democratic Taiwan from an autocratic China rather than by deeply rooted and well-formed democratic political ideology. Progressivism in Taiwan, for example, is relatively restricted, and when progressive issues are pitted against 'materialist' concerns such as economic growth and law and order, Taiwan's major parties are unlikely to defend progressive issues. However, with the continued strengthening of Taiwanese identity leading to a dealignment of voter support away from pan-Blue parties and a likely realignment towards

pan-Green parties, there is a high likelihood that new issue dimensions will be introduced to invigorate Taiwan's young democracy.

On the imbalance of party financial strength as an internal threat to democracy, the Political Parties Act of 2017 was enacted to clearly address the huge inequalities between the KMT and the other political parties in Taiwan's electoral politics. The Act's financial transparency requirement has clarified the huge disparity in assets and revenues between the KMT and the DPP. Interestingly, it has also highlighted the wealth disparity between the two major parties (KMT and DPP) versus the other minor parties in the legislature, which has consequences for Taiwanese party system development. The more obvious consequence of the imbalance in party finance is the threat of the role of money and corruption on party politics, on the integrity of electoral politics, and on the quality of democracy itself. Equally (and perhaps more) concerning is the impact of inequity in party finance on the representation of diverse interests in a young but robust civil society in Taiwan. As parties continue to function as a bridge between civil society and the state, the huge disparity in party finance between the KMT and the DPP, as well as between these two major parties versus the minor parties, can impede and constrain the expression and representation of diverse voices in Taiwanese society. The wealthier political parties are better able to dominate or restrict the political narratives and rhetoric to the detriment of the other equally important voices in Taiwan's robust civil society. The Act's enactment is a first step towards addressing the issue of party finance imbalance in Taiwan, but whether it can effectively create a 'level playing field' for all political parties remains to be seen.

Notes

1. See Lipset and Rokkan (1967) on the relationship between social cleavages and political parties and party system.
2. KMT standing committees include policy, party discipline, culture and communications, administration, organizational development, and revolutionary practice.
3. The financial statements are available from the Ministry of Interior's website: https://party.moi.gov.tw/PartyFinancialChecklist.aspx?n=16101&sms=13073
4. In Taiwan's presidential election there is no second-round voting; elections are decided by plurality rule, i.e. a simple first-past-the-post rule.
5. In studies of complex organizations, the population ecology model argues that the environment where organizations operate affects their organizational forms; over time organization learning occurs as they copy successful models.
6. The financial statements are available from the Ministry of Interior's website: https://party.moi.gov.tw/PartyFinancialChecklist.aspx?n=16101&sms=13073

7. Party subvention is largely in the form of state funding when a political party receives at least 3% of the votes in a legislative election. Political parties receive US$1.79 per vote. Prior to the enactment of the Political Party Act in December 2017, political parties receive state funding when they receive a minimum of 3.5% of the votes in a legislative election.
8. The comparative figures for the KMT are 15% for state subvention and 10% for political donations.
9. A direct result of this societal anxiety of closer relations with the PRC is the Sunflower Movement that occurred in March–April 2014. Pro-Taiwanese independence student activists supported by pro-Taiwanese independence politicians occupied the Legislative Yuan for 21 days in an attempt to block the passing of the Cross-Straits Trade and Services Agreement. The agreement was never passed, and the resulting fiasco negatively impacted the electoral fortunes of the KMT in the presidential and legislative elections of 2016.
10. See Müller-Rommel and Pridham (1991) for definition and classification of small party status.
11. Empirical studies of West European political parties have shown that established parties are known to counter challenger parties by squeezing their issue space (see Harmel and Svåsand 1997).

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19

The Development of Party Organizations in New Democracies

Evidence from South Korea

Yeaji Kim

Introduction

From a comparative perspective, South Korea (hereafter referred to as Korea) is an interesting case for studying political parties and party systems in newer democracies. Since Korea successfully made a transition to democracy in 1987, it has gradually developed as a liberal democracy in many aspects, including a mature civic culture, high political engagement, and free, fair, and peaceful power succession. For instance, the impeachment of President Park Geun-hye in 2016 exemplifies a part of the stable democratic development in Korea. Park was involved in a massive political corruption scandal in 2016, and civil society in Korea generated numerous peaceful candle-lit protests calling for Park's resignation. As a result of the huge mass protests, the National Assembly impeached Park, and the Constitutional Court confirmed the lawmakers' decision in removing a sitting president from office.

Political parties in Korea, unfortunately, have not met our expectations for the same level of democratic development. The party system has been classified as weakly institutionalized (Wang 2012; Wong 2014; Cho and Kruszewska 2018; Lee and Singer 2022). Compared to the US and Western Europe, where there is a long-standing history of strong parties and stable partisan identities, the Korean party system has suffered from fragile ties with voters and social groups, high electoral volatility, and unstable party organizations (Croissant and Völkel 2012; Hellmann 2014; Cho and Kruszewska 2018).

Several reasons have contributed to the weakly institutionalized party system, such as personalism, regionalism, frequent merges and splits, and weak party organizations; such factors are attributed to the development of

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clientelistic relationships between parties and voters, as well as cartel-type party organizations. Parties have built clientelistic bonds with voters by relying more on the personal charisma of political leaders and strong regionalism than programmatic appeals to mobilize and gain support. The frequent mergers and splits of Korean political parties weaken their linkages with voters, leading to high electoral volatility. Parties have also been crippled by a lack of strong and democratic party organizations.

By focusing on the two largest parties in the post-democratic transition, the Democratic Party (DP) and the People Power Party (PPP), this chapter examines the organizational features of Korean political parties based on their party membership from 1988 to 2019, state subventions from 1988 to 2019, and candidate selection rules from 1988 to 2022.[1] The specific information providing details about the organizational capacities of both parties is described according to each party's statutes and the annual reports on parties by the National Election Commission (NEC).

Three main findings emerged from the analyses. First, the two parties are in the process of overcoming clientelistic party organizations as their membership has grown over the last three decades. However, the DP and PPP have very few party members who pay membership fees. Second, parties in Korea have become cartelized because the parties have heavily depended on state subventions for their income; in addition, the state subventions have exclusively been distributed to the established major parties rather than the new or minor parties. Finally, the parties have established a more decentralized and democratic candidate selection process, transitioning from closed, to quasi-open, to open primaries by transferring voting power from the party members to the general voters.

In the sections that follow, this chapter provides an overview of the weakly institutionalized party system in Korea and outlines the features of the DP and PPP across time. The chapter also includes an analysis of the evolution of the two parties' organizations, including how they developed party memberships, relied on the state for financial support, and constructed presidential candidate selection processes. The implications of Korean parties' organizational development and its impact on Korean democracy are discussed in the concluding section.

Weakly Institutionalized Party System

Since the democratic transition in 1987, Korea has been characterized by a two-party system. Table 19.1 presents data on the effective number of

Table 19.1 South Korea: Core party system indicators

	ENEP	ENPP	Turnout
1992	2.86	2.37	71.86%
1996	3.43	2.83	63.91%
2000	2.54	2.25	57.21%
2004	3.20	2.32	59.98%
2008	4.10	2.55	46.01%
2012	2.63	2.24	54.26%
2016	3.40	2.65	58.03%
2020	3.27	2.02	66.21%

Note: ENEP effective number of electoral parties; ENPP effective number of parliamentary parties; Turnout as share of all registered voters; ENEP and ENPP are calculated using the party list share and without independents

Source: IDEA (2022); Inter-Parliamentary Union (2022); Lehmann et al. (2022)

electoral parties (ENEP), effective number of parliamentary parties (ENPP), and voter turnout in South Korea's National Assembly elections from 1992 to 2020. While Korean voters have actively participated in elections, the ENEP shows that the number of influential political parties in the elections has varied over time. Specifically, the lowest number of strong parties was 2.54 in the 2000 election, whereas the highest was 4.10 in 2008.[2] Meanwhile, the ENPP indicates that two political parties have consistently won and shared seats in the National Assembly, demonstrating a dominant two-party system. Thus, the party system has exhibited a trend towards reduced fragmentation over time.

Although the National Assembly has exhibited consistent patterns of party numbers, the party system in Korea is weakly institutionalized due to several factors that create clientelistic linkages between parties and voters, as well as cartel-type party organizations. These factors include personalism, regionalism, frequent merges and splits, and weak party organizations. In post-transition Korea, the party system is structured by elite-driven party formation and regionalism. A small number of political elites have formed the party system in collusion, emphasizing their regional backgrounds.[3] From 1987 to 2002, the party system was called the 'three Kims', which signified the three most influential political leaders, all with the last name Kim, who were born in three different regions.[4] These charismatic party leaders ran the parties based on their strong personal bonds with voters. The followers electorally and financially supported the parties because of the leaders; hence, the political figures were the reasons for the parties' existence and survival. In the 'three Kims' era, this patron–client linkage was deepened because parties could not develop formally institutionalized party organizations, including

official party membership, democratic decision-making process in candidate and leader selections, or transparent party financing regulations.

Regionalism has determined the structure of the Korean party system, considering the political figures used their regional background to establish a strong electoral base. Voters tend to cast their vote on the basis of geographical regions, such as Yeongnam and Honam (Kang 2008; Wong 2014; Cho and Kruszewska 2018).[5] The ENPP data in Table 19.1 reveals this voting pattern, which contributed to the formation of a two-party system. Parties tend to rely on their leaders' popularities and emphasize deep-rooted regional sentiments to mobilize and chase voters (Wong 2014). The Korean public regards political leaders who represent their regions as their 'favourite sons' (Kang 2010, cited in Wang 2012). In fact, voters used to align themselves with political leaders and the regional orientation of the parties rather than the parties' programmatic or ideological directions. Consequently, regionalism has become a powerful political cleavage that goes beyond election issues, voters' socio-economic backgrounds, and policy-based interests. Therefore, Korean political parties have been 'more personalistic, region-based, and less differentiable by ideology or policy platform' (Cho and Kruszewska 2018: 116).

Moreover, the Korean party system has shown the highest electoral volatility compared to other countries in Latin America and Asia that also transitioned to democracy (Stockton 2001; Wong 2014). It has not been difficult to observe new parties emerging in the Korean party system, as shown by the ENEP data in Table 19.1. Nonetheless, the changes in the party system are not attributed to new parties' emergences, but to politicians' strategic behaviour in existing political parties. As Kwak (2021: 116) explains, 'the pattern of party system change appears as the splits and mergers of the politicians'. Politicians who were not chosen in the party nomination process tend to merge and split existing parties with members close to their own sub-groups by changing the labels of the parties. The goal of merging and splitting is also to achieve political success and prevent the negative image that comes with scandals and corruption. Based on their leaders, candidates, and ideological orientation, the public nevertheless recognizes that the new parties are not entirely new.[6]

The frequent merges and splits in the party system have detrimental consequences in terms of forming programmatic parties and establishing strong party–vote links. Due to the repeated merging and splitting of Korean political parties with popular political individuals and their factions, the ability to produce policy outcomes has been hampered (Kwak 2021), and voters have been unable to form solid identification with the parties over time (Cho

and Kruszewska 2018; Han 2019). Given the longevity of political elites and candidates standing for elections, the changes in the Korean party system arrangement are not significant (Hellmann 2014).

Lastly, the weakly institutionalized party system in Korea is exacerbated by a lack of robust organizational structure among Korean political parties. The parties' increasing organizational capacities are impeded by elite-driven party formation and management, as well as two institutional reforms. During the 'three Kims' era, politicians directed and controlled parties by treating them as personal property. The leaders were 'feudal lords' who consolidated power in their hands (Im 2004: 189, cited in Hellmann 2014: 66). This means that politicians had complete control over the rules governing leadership and candidate selection, as well as the hiring of party workers and the distribution of party finances (Heo and Stockton 2005; Wang 2012; Han 2020). Furthermore, public support for the parties was heavily dependent on the leaders' personal networks. The efforts of the parties to systematically acquire and maintain formal party memberships were limited. In a similar vein, party staff were traditionally drawn from kinship relationships (Hellmann 2011; Han 2020).

The Political Funds Act of 1989 and the Political Parties Act of 2004 were intended to strengthen political organizations in Korea. However, these institutional reforms have had the unexpected consequence of weakening party organizations and reinforcing cartelistic and clientelistic organizational features. First, since the Political Funds Act was updated in 1989 to formalize state subsidies for the first time, the party–state linkage has become stronger (Kim and Kim 2003; Kwak 2003). The modification was intended to create a more balanced development among political parties by allocating political funding equitably and efficiently. Instead, the state subsidy system has created a political environment in which established major parties have had little difficulty staying in power, and it has hindered parties' efforts to build strong grassroots organizations that require funding from a variety of sources, including membership dues and grassroot donations.

In Korea, the state subsidy system inhibits electoral competition between parties by giving established political parties preferential access to state subsidies. The ability of parties to form a negotiating group in the National Assembly is a major component in their eligibility to receive state subsidies according to Article 27 of the Political Funds Act. This situation tends to stifle the growth of niche and new parties, acting as a barrier to their establishment. Parties must have at least 20 seats in the assembly belonging to the same political party to form a negotiating group.[7] By creating negotiating

groups of legislators who are members of political parties, those parties can obtain 50% of the total state subsidies. Moreover, parties with more than five seats are entitled to 5% of the total subsidies, while those with no seat or fewer than five seats receive only 2% of the total subsidies. It is not surprising, then, that these parties receive virtually no state funding, despite having been elected with public support. The current system of distributing state subsidies is unfair to small and new parties and can contribute to the formation of cartels between parties and the state (Kwak 2003). The collusion among major political parties to maintain power becomes easier with this political funding structure.

Additionally, the revision of the Political Parties Act in 2004 outlawed local party branches, the most basic party organization at the National Assembly electoral district level, to 'improve the high cost and low efficiency of the party system' (the reasons for the amendment to the Political Parties Act).[8] Local branches of both major parties were abolished, with the DP eliminating 224 and the Grand National Party eliminating 227. Since then, political parties have established a central party office in addition to City/Do party offices[9], causing Korean parties to have a low level of organizational complexity (Wang 2012: 168). Two major difficulties affecting party organizations have emerged as a result of the amendment. One challenge is that the absence of grassroots party organizations exacerbates the unstable relationships between parties and voters. Because local party branches, as the initial party structure, can play a significant role in mediating between voters and parties or politicians, removing them obstructs democratic decision making inside political parties. Another concern is the persistence of politicians' clientelistic networks. Some scholars argue that the new City/Do parties have taken over the functions of the local branches in terms of maintaining electoral support and financial resources in their districts through informal and personal organizations (Chung 2005; Jeon 2009).

The Democratic Party and the People Power Party

Although the Korean party system consists of three political party families—progressive, liberal, and conservative—it has traditionally been dominated by a two-party system in which the liberal and conservative parties play a central role. However, since the 2004 electoral system change, new progressive parties have emerged, albeit with a minor political impact in terms of strongholds and the size of their representation in congress when compared to the other two parties.[10]

Two dominant political parties stand out within this system: the DP, which falls under the liberal party family, and the PPP, which belongs to the conservative party family. The parties are long-standing rivals. Figure 19.1 depicts how the labels of the DP and the PPP have evolved. The PPP has changed labels five times since 1988, demonstrating a more consistent evolution over time than the DP's history of label changes (Han, 2020). From 1997 to 2011, the DP changed its name numerous times due to various merges and splits, while the PPP ultimately kept the same name, the Grand National Party. In 2000, the Millennium Democratic Party (MDP) was split into two parties: the MDP and the Uri Party (UP). In 2005 and 2007, the MDP and the UP changed their names to the DP and the Grand United Democratic New Party

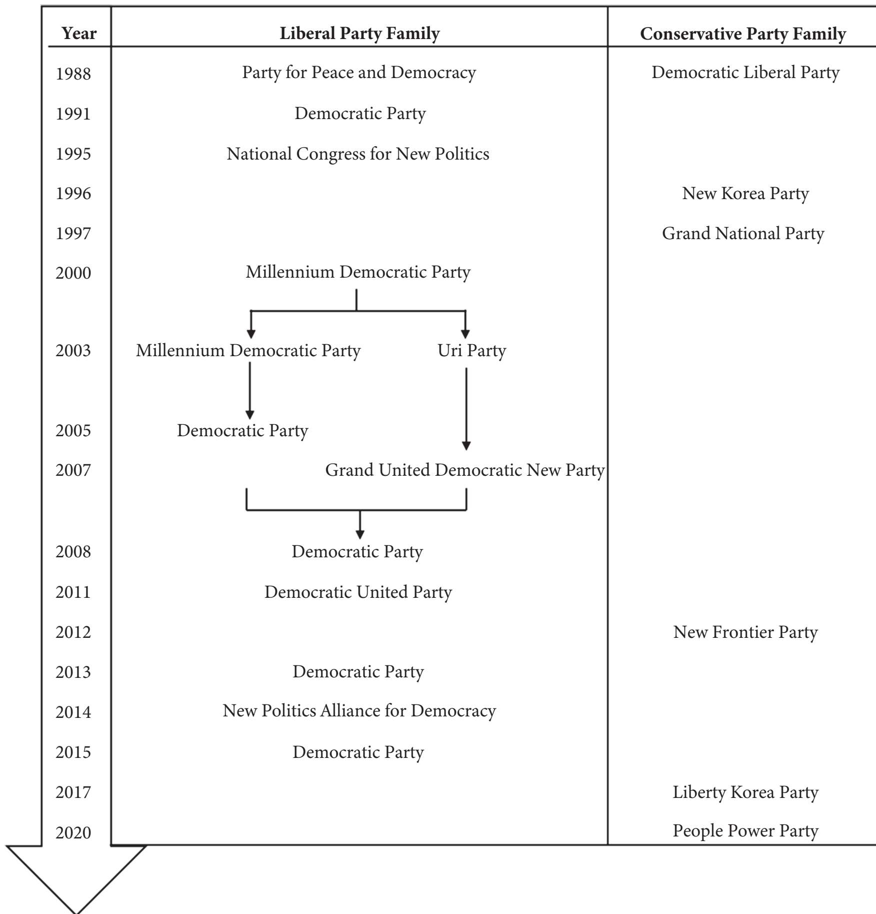

Figure 19.1 The history of the two main political parties in Korea

Note: This figure was created based on the National Election Commission's (NEC) annual reports of parties from 1988 to 2019 and the People Power Party's (PPP) party statutes since 2020.

(GUDNP), respectively. In 2008, the DP and the GUDNP combined to form the DP. The DP underwent several name changes from the DP to the Democratic United Party (DUP) in 2011, then back to the DP in 2013, followed by a change to the New Politics Alliance for Democracy (NPAD) in 2014. The party reclaimed the DP name in 2015 and has kept its name since then.

The DP originated from the Party for Peace and Democracy, which was created by Kim Dae-jung, one of the 'three Kims'. The party enjoys widespread public support in Honam, coupled with support from former pro-democracy activists during the authoritarian regimes. By contrast, the PPP descended from the Democratic Liberal Party and its leader, Kim Young-sam, who came from the Yeongnam region.

The ideological positions of the two parties on economic matters and the inter-Korean relationship have largely diverged. The DP has supported policies to extend social welfare programmes, alleviate income disparities, and maintain good diplomatic relations with North Korea. The PPP, on the other hand, has a history of supporting policies that are pro-market, anti-trade union, and anti-communist. In particular, the PPP has developed policies to provide North Korea with conditional assistance and to deploy stronger tactics to deter its nuclear programme (Wang 2012: 163). In policies regarding the relationship with North Korea, the parties' programmatic differences have been evident across time (Kang 2017). However, because Korean voters embrace pro-welfare sentiments, the PPP has stressed developmental state policies, such as free childcare, lowering pay inequities, and protecting temporary workers, which has blurred the parties' differences across socio-economic issues (Wang 2012; Lee 2018).

Increases in Party Membership

Since there is a constant trend of declining party membership across the world (Scarrow and Gezgor 2010; Whiteley, 2011; van Biezen and Poguntke 2014; Scarrow 2017), some might expect to observe a similar tendency in Korea. Although Korean parties have historically struggled to establish a solid foundation of party members (Hellmann 2014), they have managed to attract more individuals to join their rank and file in recent years. During the 'three Kims' era, political parties in Korea relied heavily on the personal networks of political figures to build their membership organizations. For this reason, the rank and file of Korean political parties acted as 'personal organizations' that provided election campaign support and financial backing for certain political leaders (Nemoto 2009: 78). However, as Wang (2012) has

pointed out, the retirement of the 'three Kims' from politics has led to a reduction in clientelistic traits within Korean party institutions. The membership data shows that the main political parties in Korea have been more successful in recent years in enrolling citizens as members, contrary to common expectations.

Figure 19.2 presents the DP's and the PPP's party memberships as percentages of the national electorate (M/E) in Korea from 1988 to 2019. The data overall reveal a U-shape curve. From 1988 to 2004, the number of members in the PPP was significantly higher than the number of members in the DP; however, this extraordinary number showed a marked decline until 2004. The PPP had the highest share of party members in 1992, with 16.86% of the total electorate as members, and its lowest proportion of members was 2.99%,

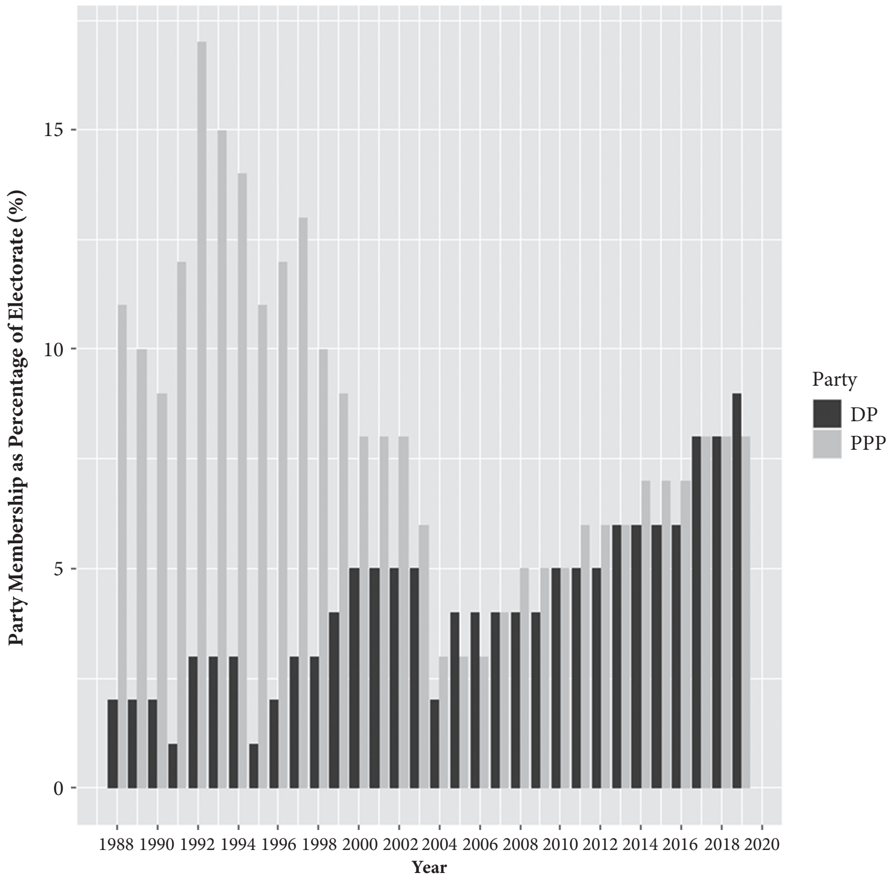

Figure 19.2 Percentage of eligible voters who affiliate with a party

Note: This figure was created based on the National Election Commission's (NEC) annual reports of parties from 1988 to 2019. DP – Democratic Party; PPP – People Power Party

in 2006. In contrast, the DP has continuously gained more party members over time. The DP had the lowest proportion of eligible voters as its party members in 1995, with 0.65%, and its highest share of members was 9.38%, in 2019. From 2016 to 2017, the DP's membership increased from 6.39% to 8.36% of the national electorate. This increase may have been a direct result of President Park's impeachment and her affiliation with the PPP.[11] The total percentage of both parties' members among eligible voters was approximately 17.4% in 2019, a higher share than the total party membership in Austria and Cyprus, which have the highest percentage of national electorates as their members among European democracies (van Biezen et al. 2012).

Although the two parties in Korea have clearly demonstrated the capacity to engage citizens by recruiting them as members in the past two decades, it is important to analyse how many party members have actually paid the membership fees to properly assess the membership organizations' characteristics. More specifically, this allows researchers to explore two important questions: (a) how many active members each party has and (b) whether parties have expanded their membership organizations through the formal process rather than via informal processes derived from personal bonds.

Unlike parties in many European countries that distinguish formal membership based on subscription (Biezen et al. 2012; Han 2019), the two Korean parties recognize party membership on two levels. While the PPP generally defines party members as those who pay dues, there are specific conditions to qualify for important rights, such as running for an election, being recommended as nominees for offices, and being executives of the party members' council. The PPP indicates that members fulfil the conditions if they have paid the dues more than three months in a year and have participated in the education programmes or events held by the party at least once a year.[12] The DP also defines party members by separating two levels of formal affiliation: (a) members who pay dues with full rights, including running for an election, and (b) members who do not pay dues and have reduced rights.[13]

Given Korean parties' different definitions of party membership, paying a membership fee would show how actively the party members aim to engage in their party organizations. Both parties identify clear distinctions between party members who pay dues and those who do not pay dues in their statutes. The definitions clarify the right of members who pay dues to be able to decide on party candidates and leaders and to be potential candidates for elections. Paying membership fees can be a great proxy for tracking active members since it signifies the degree that members play a role in party affairs. Han (2019) also found that when party members in Korea have a stronger party

identification with the parties, they are more likely to pay the dues. Therefore, it would be meaningful to delve into the percentage of party members who pay membership dues to assess the extent to which they are engaged in their parties.

Furthermore, Korean parties have been notorious for having ‘paper members’, referring to ‘those who register for party membership but do not often pay their membership fees’ (Han 2020: 14). In the early 2000s, individuals or factions in parties tried to increase the number of party members by voluntarily buying party memberships for other individuals or groups who were unwilling to pay their own membership fees. Their efforts aimed to win the intra-party competitions, hence extending their power in elections. Even though the party statutes declared that individuals need to pay the dues for a certain (minimum) period time as a requirement, parties eased the precondition by shortening the minimum period to gain more members. Consequently, paper members potentially distort the number of true party members.

Figure 19.3 shows the number of members who paid membership fees from 1997 to 2019 in each party.[14] From 1997 to 2003, both parties had less than 2% of party members who paid the party membership fees. Since 2004, the number of members who have paid the fees has gradually increased. In 2004 and 2005, the DP had substantial rises in the number of members who paid their dues. The increase in numbers was likely due to the PPP’s decreasing approval rate following the party’s attempts to impeach President Roh Moo Hyun and their involvement in a series of corruption scandals. In 2013, the number of DP members who paid membership dues more than doubled compared to the PPP. The gap between the two parties has widened since 2017, possibly due to the impeachment of President Park Geun-hye.

The results regarding party membership status show the broad gap between the total number of party memberships on record and the proportion of all members who actively pay the fees. In particular, the data reveal that both parties had extraordinary numbers of members, although the number of party members who paid membership dues was less than 2% from 1988 to 2004. This significant discrepancy between the reported number of party members and the number of those who pay fees could be explained in three ways. First, parties may have inflated their membership numbers in order to boost their influence during the early stages of democratic development when they lacked strong party organizations.[15] Second, this could be evidence of how both parties mobilized their members before 2004. Since it was before the ‘three Kims’ retired from politics, the party members were mobilized by the leaders’ personal networks and could be paper members

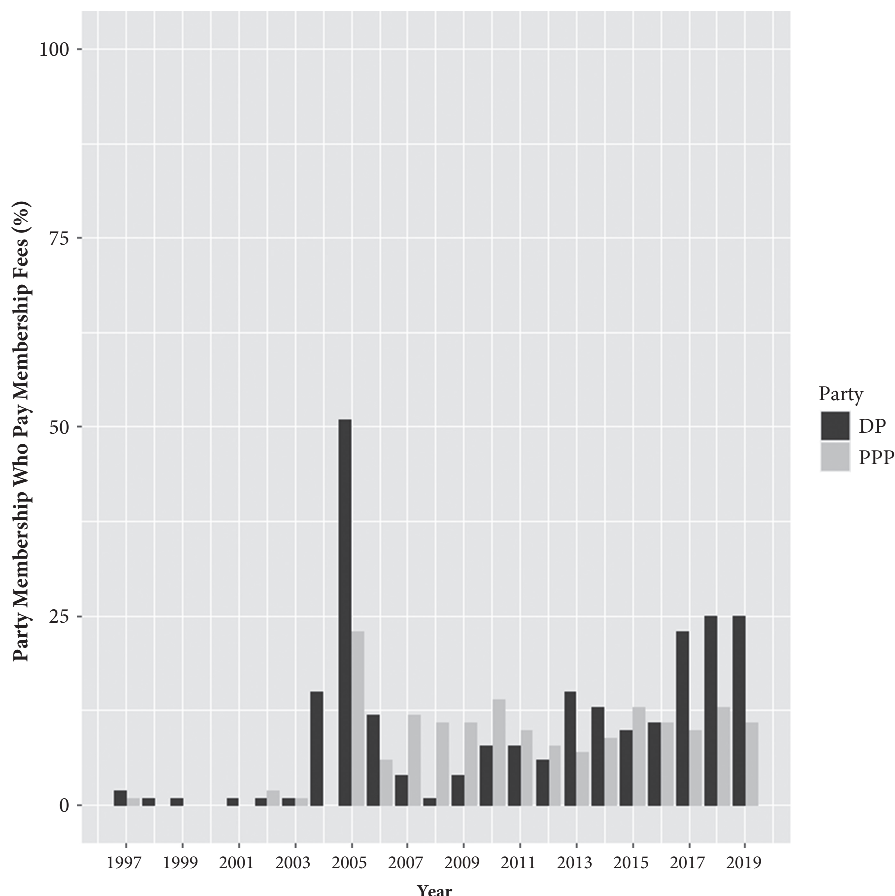

Figure 19.3 Percentage of party members who pay the membership fee

Notes: This figure was created based on the National Election Commission's (NEC) annual reports of parties from 1997 to 2019; DP—Democratic Party; PPP—People Power Party

who were registered by others. The parties may have reported the number of party members by including the paper members or those members who had once enrolled but were no longer active. Lastly, when the local branches were abolished by the revision of the Political Parties Act in 2004, Korean parties likely lost enormous numbers of party members who did not pay the dues but were managed by the local branches.

Distribution of State Subsidies

In Korea, the state subsidies for political parties are categorized by two types: (a) ordinary subsidies and (b) election subsidies. The NEC distributes the

ordinary subsidies to political parties in each quarter of every year. For the ordinary subsidies, the state provides 'an amount obtained by multiplying the unit price for appropriation of subsidies by the total number of eligible voters in an election for National Assembly members recently held at the expiration of their term of office' (the Political Funds Act, Article 25, Clauses 1 and 3). The election subsidies are paid to political parties in a year of presidential, National Assembly, and local elections. The election subsidies are added to the amount of the ordinary subsidies, considering 'the unit price for appropriation of subsidies per eligible voter for each election' (the Political Funds Act, Article 25, Clauses 2–3).

Given the state funding structure, the party system in Korea has been cartelized since the democratic transition in 1987 for two reasons. One is that political parties have heavily depended on the state subventions for their income. Another reason is that the state subsidies provide greater advantages to the established parties to remain in power compared to new or minor parties (Katz and Mair 1995, 2009).

First, the state subventions in Korea have dramatically increased over time. Figure 19.4 shows how the state subsidies for political parties have been granted from 1988 to 2019. Because political parties in Korea receive higher amounts of funding during election years, the graph shows the size of state subsidies by separating election years from non-election years.[16] When converted, one million South Korean won is approximately equivalent to US$1,000. While both election years and non-election years have presented an increase in state subsidies for political parties, the subsidies during election years have remained consistently high over time. When the election subsidies are included, the total amount of state subsidies was 1,000 million won in 1988 and 43,234 million won in 2019. This means that state funding has experienced nearly an 43-fold increase from 1988 to 2019. The amount of state funding, excluding election subsidies, has increased approximately 2.51-fold from 1992 to 2018.

The increasing state subsidies over time have undermined the voluntary attempts of political parties to enhance their supplementary sources of income, such as membership subscriptions. Figure 19.5 presents the income of the DP and the PPP from party membership dues and state subsidies. According to Figure 19.5, the two political parties have shown a relatively stable pattern of relying only on state subsidies since 1990, with their income from party membership fees fluctuating over time. The DP and the PPP have received 31 and 27% of state subsidies, respectively. For the PPP, the party membership dues have not been a main income source compared to the DP.

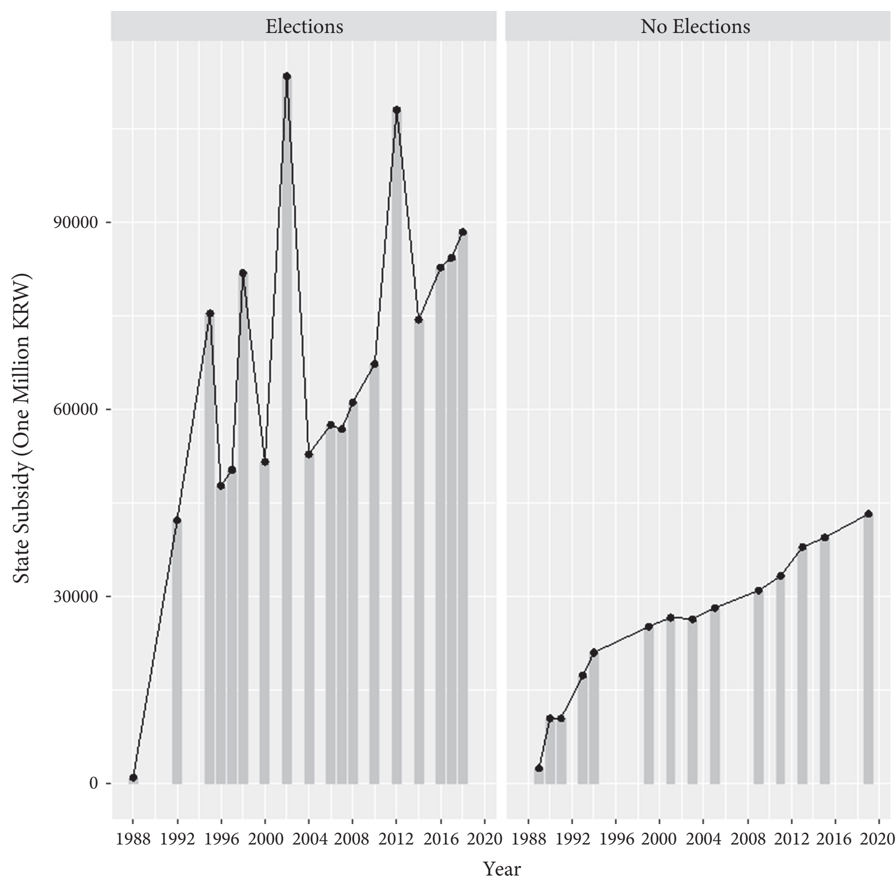

Figure 19.4 The total amount of state subventions for political parties

Notes: This figure was created based on the National Election Commission's (NEC) annual reports of parties from 1988 to 2019; Elections were held in 1988, 1992, 1995, 1996, 1997, 1998, 2000, 2002, 2004, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2010, 2012, 2014, 2016, 2017, and 2018.

The PPP's share of income derived from membership dues has averaged 15% over time. From 1988 to 1995, the DP gained the largest share of income from party membership dues, but from 1996 to 2001, the party membership dues were a minor income source. Since 2002, the DP has gained an average of 37% of its revenue through membership fees. In general, the percentage of the parties' income that comes from state subsidies has been significant.

Second, the current financial system for political parties creates a hostile environment for new or minor parties' survival. This results from the conditions that they need to qualify to get paid state subsidies by creating a negotiating group in the National Assembly. Figure 19.6 presents how much

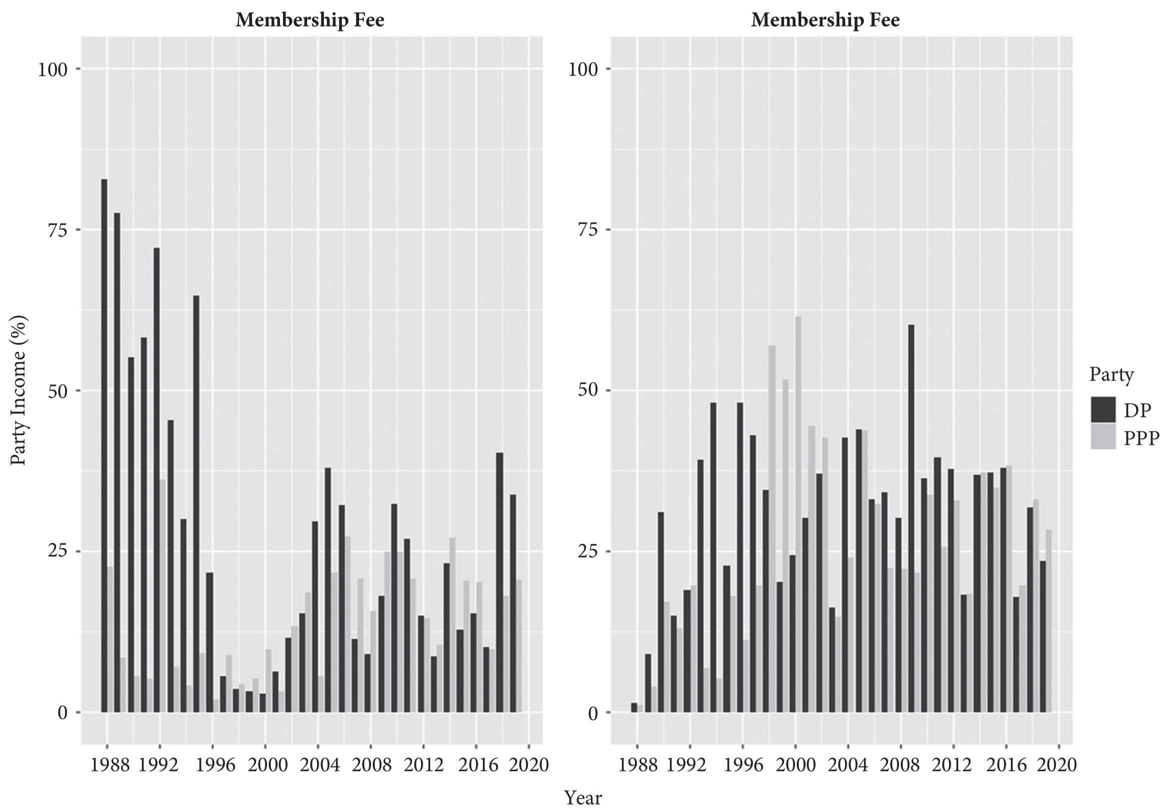

Figure 19.5 Source of party income

Notes: This figure was created based on the National Election Commission's (NEC) annual reports of parties from 1988 to 2019.

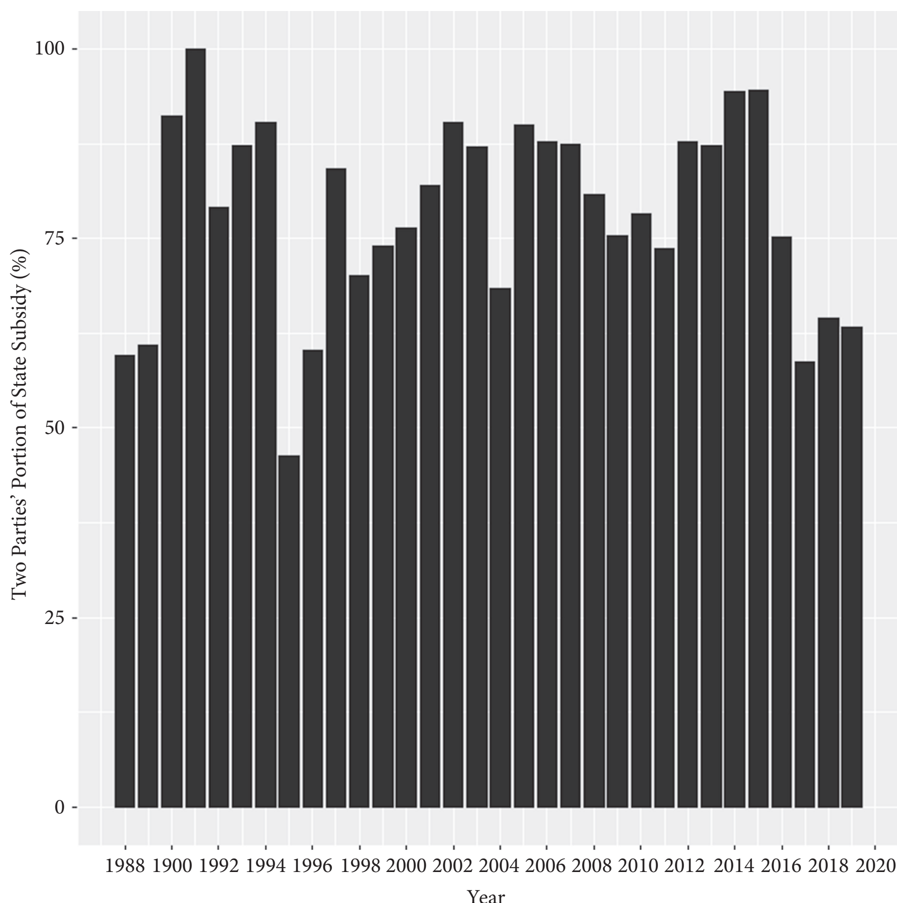

Figure 19.6 The two established political parties' portion of state subventions

Notes: This figure shows the Democratic Party and the People Power Party's portion of the total state subventions for political parties in Korea. The figure was created based on the National Election Commission's (NEC) annual reports of parties from 1988 to 2019.

the DP and the PPP have prevailed in the total amount of state subsidies over time. The two parties combined have received an average of 78% of the state subsidies from 1988 to 2019, except for 1995, when the DP and the PPP received less than 50% of the total state subsidies.

Rules on Candidate Selection: Open Primaries

Even though Korea democratized in 1987, its political parties were not internally democratic until recently. Specifically, the parties excluded party members from selecting their candidates until the early 2000s, and only a few

political figures controlled the nomination processes. Since 2002, political parties in Korea have voluntarily expanded the eligibility for the candidate selection process to include both party members and non-party members. Unlike countries such as the United States or Germany, where candidate selection rules are defined and regulated by law, Korea has never regulated the details of candidate selection (Lee 2008). Instead, parties have voluntarily democratized their candidate selection processes without government intervention, allowing each party to have different schedules and selection rules.

Tables 19.2 and 19.3 demonstrate changes to the two main parties' presidential candidate selection rules over time.[17] Until 2002, the nominating procedure of Korean political parties for a presidential candidate was dominated by party leaders and elites, meaning that the rank and file had no say in the process during the 'three Kims' era. With Kim Dae-jung's retirement from politics in 2002, the presidential candidate selection rules that empowered elites were replaced by more democratic ones, characterized as a combined system between closed and open primaries (Hellmann 2011; Wang 2012). Since then, political parties have tended to maintain more decentralized and inclusive selection processes, despite some variations regarding the level of participation in these processes.

The rules for selecting presidential candidates have changed in three ways: (a) the transition from closed primaries to quasi-open or open primary elections; (b) the way non-party members are included in the selection process; and (c) the manner in which primaries are conducted. First, designating the selectorate has been the most significant alteration in the rules for selecting presidential candidates in Korea.[18] The two major political parties, the DP and the PPP, have revised the procedures for selecting presidential candidates to create a more democratic process by including non-party members, thereby granting them greater power. The political parties transformed their closed primaries into quasi-open primaries by adjusting the proportions of each selectorate type: party delegates, party members, and non-party members. Moreover, the DP changed their presidential candidate selection rules from the quasi-open to open primaries by eliminating specific ratios of selectorate. Instead, the DP implemented survey methods to incorporate general voters' opinions into the process, in addition to the selectorate's voting results for the final nomination. With these new rules, non-party members have come to play a significant role in decision-making processes within the parties.

In 2002, the DP, called the MDP in 2001, switched from closed to quasi-open primary selection rules for the first time (Jhee and Shin 2018: 2). The DP's quasi-open primary consisted of three levels of selectorates who

Table 19.2 Changes in presidential candidate selection rules of the Democratic Party, 1987–2022

Election year	1987	1992	1997	2002	2007	2012	2017	2022
Party name	PDP	DP	NCNP	MDP	GUDNP	DUP	DP	DP
Type of primaries	Closed	Closed	Closed	Quasi-open	Open	Open	Open	Open
Methods of primaries	Selectorate voting	Selectorate voting	Selectorate voting	Selectorate voting	Selectorate voting (90%) + Public survey results (10%)	Selectorate voting	Selectorate voting	Selectorate voting
Ratio of selectorates	Party delegates (100%)	Party delegates (100%)	Party delegates (100%)	Party delegates (20%) + Party members (30%) + Non-party members (50%)	Party delegates + Party members + Non-party members (no specific ratio; 90% as a total)	Party delegates + Party Members + Non-party members (no specific ratio; 100% as a total)	Party delegates + Party members + Non-party members (no specific ratio; 100% as a total)	Party delegates + Party members + Non-party members (no specific ratio; 100% as a total)
Ratio of public survey	-	-	-	-	Non-party members (10%)	-	-	-
Number of selectorate	3,200	2,426	4,368	70,769	498,801	614,517	1,642,640	2,165,475
Number of survey respondents	-	-	-	-	5,000	-	-	-

Note: PDP = Party for Peace and Democracy; DP = Democratic Party; NCNP = National Congress for New Politics; MDP = Millennium Democratic Party; GUDNP = Grand United Democratic New Party; DUP = Democratic United Party

Sources: Park (2016); Jhee and Shin (2018); Chung and Kim (2022)

Table 19.3 Changes in presidential candidate selection rules of the People Power Party, 1987–2022

Election year	1987	1992	1997	2002	2007	2012	2017	2022
Party name	DLP	DLP	GNP	GNP	GNP	NFP	LKP	PPP
Type of primaries	Closed	Closed	Closed	Quasi-open	Quasi-open	Quasi-open	Quasi-open	Quasi-open
Methods of primaries	Selectorate voting	Selectorate voting	Selectorate voting	Selectorates voting	Selectorate voting (80%) + Public survey results (20%)	Selectorate voting (80%) + Public survey results (20%)	Selectorate voting (50%) + Public survey results (50%)	Selectorate voting (50%) + Public survey results (50%)
Ratio of selectorates	Party delegates (100%)	Party delegates (100%)	Party delegates (100%)	Party delegates (30%) + Party members (20%) + Non-party members (50%)	Party delegates (20%) + Party members (30%)+ Non-party members (30%)	Party delegates (20%) + Party members (30%)+ Non-party members (30%)	Party delegates and party members (50%)	Party delegates and party members (50%)
Ratio of public survey	-	-	-	-	Non-party members (20%)	Non-party members (20%)	Non-party members (50%)	Non-party members (50%)
Number of selectorate	7,309	6,882	12,430	48,391	163,617	103,118	39,856	569,059
Number of survey respondents	-	-	-	-	6,000	6,000	Not available	Not Available

Note: DLP—Democratic Liberal Party; GNP—Grand National Party; NFP—New Frontier Party; LKP—Liberty Korea Party; PPP—People Power Party

Sources: The data for the period between 1987 and 2017 were obtained from Park (2016) and Jhee and Shin (2018); the author generated the 2022 data; the sample sizes and methods of survey sampling used for selecting presidential candidates in 2017 and 2022 are not publicly available; the PPP staff has indicated that this information is confidential

participated in the voting process: party delegates (20%), party members (30%), and non-party members (50%). To become part of the selectorate, citizens had to register and were then chosen at random by the DP based on their age, gender, and region to represent the population (Jhee and Shin 2018). Ultimately, this gives selected citizens voting power if those individuals joined the DP.

In 2007, the DP transitioned to a truly open primary system, abolishing the quota system for the proportion of selectorates and introducing the public survey method to choose a presidential candidate. The DP's open primary election allocated 90% of voting power to the selectorate. Here, the selectorate consisted of party delegates, party members, and general voters without a specific quota system. The remaining 10% of voting power was allocated to respondents from a national survey of 5,000 individuals (Lee 2008). Since 2012, the DP has permitted Korean nationals living in other countries to participate in the selectorate, and the DP's survey methods have changed as well.

The PPP, formerly known as the Grand National Party, adopted the quasi-open primary system for the 2002 presidential election by giving voting powers to party delegates (30%), party members (20%), and non-party members (50%). Unlike the DP, the PPP has maintained the quasi-open primary system with some changes to the proportion between party delegates, party members, and non-party members since 2002. The PPP began utilizing polling results to choose its presidential candidate in 2007 and has continued to do so to the present day. In the 2007 and 2012 presidential elections, the PPP chose a presidential candidate based on selectorates (80%)—comprised of party delegates (20%), party members (30%), and non-party members (30%)—plus general voters' opinions based on polling (20%).[19] Since 2017, the PPP has boosted the weighting of public opinion from 20% to 50%.

Furthermore, the two political parties have modified how non-party members are chosen for their selectorate. The standards for selecting non-party members were simplified once the DP implemented the open primary rules in 2007, allowing non-party members to become part of the selectorate if they registered. In that sense, the DP's total number of selectors has increased from 70,769 in 2002 to 2,165,475 in 2022. The DP has not clarified if its selectorate under the open primary system represents the population. The PPP in 2002 used an identical method of selecting non-party members, wherein non-party members had to register and the party chose them at random based on their age, gender, and region to increase the representation of the population. The PPP has not required non-members to register since 2007, but the party still chooses the selectorate at random based on their age, gender, and region. The PPP's total number of selectors has grown from 48,391 in 2002 to 569,059 in 2022.

Finally, the parties have adopted different methods to conduct the primaries. The DP has operated a series of regional conventions to choose a presidential candidate from 2002 to the present. The PPP held a series of regional conventions in 2002 and has also implemented simultaneous primary elections held nationwide since then. Moreover, the DP introduced an electronic voting system at regional conventions in 2002, online voting in 2002, mobile phone voting in 2007, online voting for Korean nationals living abroad in 2012, and automatic response system (ARS) voting methods in 2017. The PPP kept their voting system to ballot voting from 2002 to 2017 and then changed to include mobile phone and ARS voting methods in 2021.

In summary, the political parties in Korea have strengthened their organizational capacity by expanding formal membership structures and the selectorates for the candidate selection processes, thereby moving Korean parties beyond charismatic political leaders' influence. This indicates that the two parties have enabled party members to play a larger role in decision-making processes, overcoming the concentration of power in the hands of a few elites. The parties have also garnered greater attention for their candidates and elections by including non-party members. Since the democratic transition, the more decentralized and inclusive selection processes have developed into plebiscitary selections. Nonetheless, the parties have still struggled with the limited proportion of party members who actually contribute membership dues. Furthermore, the state subvention system has hampered the parties' voluntary efforts to be more autonomous from state interventions and has privileged the major parties to preserve power.

Conclusion

Democratic development in Korea has been in the slow lane due to the weakly institutionalized party system. Political parties, characterized instead by clientelistic and cartelistic organizational elements, were powerless without strong party organizational capacities. From 1988 to present, the DP and the PPP have departed from the clientelistic party organizational characteristics by recruiting individuals as party members and democratizing the candidate selection rules. However, the party system is still marked by its cartelistic organizational capacity stemming from its heavy dependence on state subsidies that favour the major parties.

The organizational development of Korean political parties raises important questions regarding the development of democracy in Korea. First, not all party members are active or have strong party affiliations. The parties

may lose essential components of political success, such as party members' roles in organizations related to labour and financial contributions, due to the lack of active members in the party organizations. Without active party members, Korean parties may continue the clientelistic approach of appealing to voters by using informal organizations such as personal networks. Since the elimination of local branches in 2004, political parties may realize the value of active party members in mediating between voters and representatives.

Moreover, the current state subvention system may exacerbate cartelistic party organizational features in Korea. The parties may not be motivated to seek out alternative sources of income since they heavily rely on state subsidies. The two-party system in Korea could become consolidated since the state subsidy system penalizes the survival of new or minor parties in politics. For the foreseeable future, the structure of state subsidies will be a barrier for new or minor parties to have electoral success.

Finally, the open primary system for selecting presidential candidates may enhance the representation of regular voters and provide advantages for candidates who have less clientelistic connections (Wang 2012: 177). Nevertheless, it is not certain whether the more decentralized and inclusive candidate selection rules are a beneficial approach for the party members to be heard and rewarded by the parties. Once the DP and the PPP implement bottom-up candidate selections, the party members should agree that their opinion is important for decision-making processes within the parties. However, as the parties expand their selection rules to non-party members and utilize the polling system to gather votes from the general public, party members may regard their roles and voices as having less influence within the party.

Notes

1. The three organizational features follow the suggestions in Scarrow et al. (2017) in focusing on parties' organizational capacities, including structure, resources, and representative strategies.
2. The highest effective number of electoral parties in 2008 was derived from the change in the electoral system from a single-member district system to a mixed system in 2004.
3. The regional background includes the areas where political figures were born and where they resided (Moon 2005; Kang 2008; Kang and Bae 2018; Han 2020).
4. The 'three Kims' are Kim Young-sam, who was born in Yeongnam in the east region of Korea; Kim Dae-jung, who was born in Honam in the southwestern region; and Kim Jong-pil, who was born in Chungcheong in the southwestern region. Kim Young-sam and Kim Dae-jung were elected as presidents in 1992 and 1997, respectively.
5. Chungcheong became the 'swing-vote' province in the party competition (Wang 2012).

6. The third-party alternatives (i.e. new parties) entered the party system after a change in the electoral system from a single-member district system to a mixed system in 2004. Under the single-member district electoral system, voters had the principle of 'one man one vote', and seats in the assembly were distributed to parties based on the share of votes that candidates received in local districts. However, the Constitutional Court found this system to be unconstitutional. In 2004, the electoral system was changed to the independent mixed system, which includes both single-member districts and a proportional system. Under the mixed system, people have two votes: one for a candidate in their local districts and another for a party on the national list. The majority of seats in the assembly are allocated to the candidates who win in each electoral district, while the remaining seats are distributed proportionally based on the percentage of votes received by each party.
7. The Assembly is composed of 300 members as of May 2022.
8. Local branches of political parties in Korea were called 'Jigudang'. To prevent potential corruption related to these branches, a revision was made to the system. Operating local branches was costly due to the expenses required to maintain local offices and manpower. The chairpersons of each local branch were responsible for fundraising to cover their activities, which made them vulnerable to corruption if there were no state subsidies or other income resources available. As the chairpersons collected and distributed funds, they gained tremendous influence in candidate selection and decision-making processes at the local branch level. At the central party office level, maintaining local branches also led to corruption since the central party office needed to send significant amounts of money to the local branches during elections. Therefore, local branches of political parties in Korea had been criticized for being costly and for being managed personally.
9. A province is 'Do' in Korean.
10. Frequent merges and splits have occurred within the same set of party groups, leading the party system's ideological positions to be consistent.
11. The PPP was founded based on the merges of the Liberty Korea Party (LKP), the New Conservative Party (NCP), and Onward for Future 4.0 (OF). The LKP was the ruling party in 2017, but lost its ruling status when Park was impeached. They also lost the 2017 presidential election and the 2018 local elections. President Park was expelled by the LKP in 2017.
12. This information is based on the PPP party statute, which was revised on 1 September 2020.
13. This is from the DP party statute, Clause 5, which was revised on 3 November 2021.
14. The data on how many party members had paid membership dues is not available in the NEC annual reports from 1988 to 1996.
15. Although the NEC prohibits false self-reports on the information of parties, many scholars pointed out that parties' self-identified party membership numbers are not entirely accurate (Mair and van Biezen 2001; Scarrow and Gezgor 2010; Ponce and Scarrow 2016).
16. The elections include municipal (local), National Assembly, and presidential elections. Municipal elections are held every four years. The National Assembly members and the president are elected to a four- and five-year term, respectively.
17. This chapter focuses on analysing both parties' presidential candidate selection rules for the final round of primaries. Depending on elections and parties, there are some variations in the number of primary rounds.

18. In this chapter, selectorates are used to refer to the groups of people who are eligible to participate in the presidential candidate selection process in each party.
19. The survey, which included 6,000 eligible voters, was conducted in accordance with the rules and dates decided by the NEC.

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20
Japan

Struggle for Party System Change

Takayoshi Uekami and Junpei Yamaguchi

Introduction

Since Japan is notorious for its unwillingness to accept refugees,[1] it has been spared from political turmoil comparable to the European migrant crisis: xenophobic political parties could hardly expand their support and occupy positions in the existing party system.[2]

However, the country faces other problems. As the Japanese economy entered troubled waters after the burst of the asset price bubble in the early 1990s and its population aged at the fastest pace in the world, the fiscal deficit ballooned. The end of the Cold War and tensions with neighbouring countries such as China and North Korea also urged Japan to reconsider its role on the world stage. To deal with these issues, Japan decided to make its political system more accountable and to strengthen the positions of political leaders.

In 1994, Japan abolished its familiar electoral formula, the single non-transferable vote (SNTV), for the lower house and then adopted the mixed-member majoritarian (MMM) system, which elected 300 seats from single-seat constituencies and 200 seats from 11 proportional representation (PR) constituencies according to the d'Hondt method. At the same time, public funding for political parties was introduced. The initial focus of this reform was to drive out the money-ridden politics that prevailed under the long-ruling conservatives, the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP). The new electoral system was expected to switch the party system from one of single-party dominance to a more competitive system by consolidating opposition forces and then ousting the LDP-led government. Furthermore, by taking power away from the factions inside the LDP and concentrating it in the hands of the party leadership, it was thought that Japanese politics would become more effective.

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The LDP have successfully adapted themselves to the new electoral system. They converted themselves to a more programmatic, conservative-oriented, and less corrupt party by centralizing intra-party relations and increasing cohesiveness (Uekami and Tsutsumi 2019). On the other hand, the opposition parties remain fragmented as they are composed of old left-wingers, centrists, and conservative reformists. Since their extra-parliamentary organizations are shallowly rooted in society and divided along the lines of their predecessor parties, they have repeatedly failed to promote a single candidate running for the single-member districts (SMDs). Furthermore, they have been out of power most of the time. This means that they have not been able to utilize resources such as ministerial posts and policy influence, which the Liberal Democrats have enjoyed almost entirely without interruption, to appease internal conflicts.

Despite the electoral reforms, party politics in Japan seemingly lacks an effective means for bringing about government change. Taking advantage of the features of SMDs, the LDP successfully gained a seat bonus, but it never attained more than half of the eligible voters' support. It looks stable on the surface but loses steam because the Liberal Democrats and their junior partner almost always play dominant roles. As far as the LDP-led coalition government meets the demand of citizens, we do not expect to see a populist uprising akin to those in Europe and elsewhere. But all of these factors do not mean that Japan has been exempted from the struggle for party system change.

Our plan for this chapter is as follows. The next section will present a rough overview of post-war Japanese party politics. Then, we will explore how the LDP acclimated itself to the new electoral environment and the reasons that the opposition parties have failed to unite. Quantitative and qualitative accounts of this process will be presented. Finally, we will discuss the situation briefly and present conclusions.

Japanese Party Politics after the Second World War

Defeated and occupied by the Allied powers in 1945, Japan went through a sweeping demilitarization and democratization. The parliamentary system was retained, but the ultimate authority of selecting a prime minister was transferred from the Emperor to the lower house of the Diet. Universal suffrage was guaranteed by the newly established Japanese constitution.

Since then, many political parties have appeared and tried to fill the political vacuum. As the left-wing parties except for the Communists converged to

form the Japan Socialist Party (JSP), the conservatives merged to establish the LDP in 1955. Post-war Japanese party politics was built upon the competition between the conservatives and the progressives, but the LDP won more than half the seats in national elections most of the time until 1993. Since it successfully controlled the government, the party system of that period could be categorized as one-party dominant (Pempel 1990). Figure 20.1 shows the seat shares of major political parties since the 1958 general election. In addition to voter turnout rates, Figure 20.2 displays the effective numbers of electoral and parliamentary parties (ENEP and ENPP, respectively).

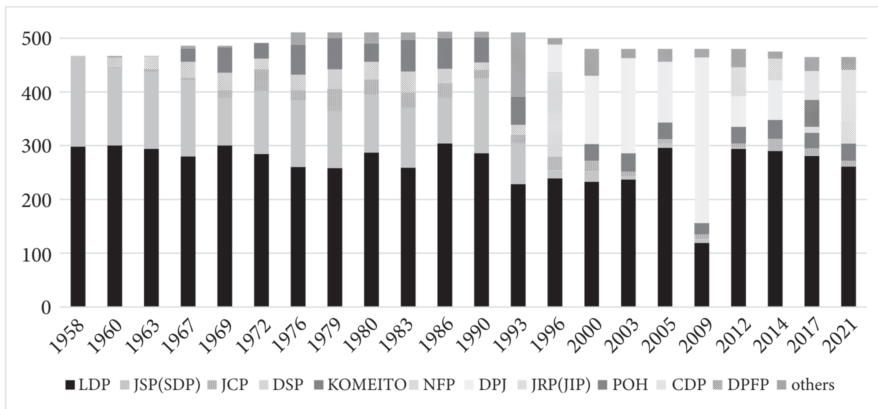

Figure 20.1 Seat share of major parties since 1955 (number of seats)
Source: Election results reports, Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications

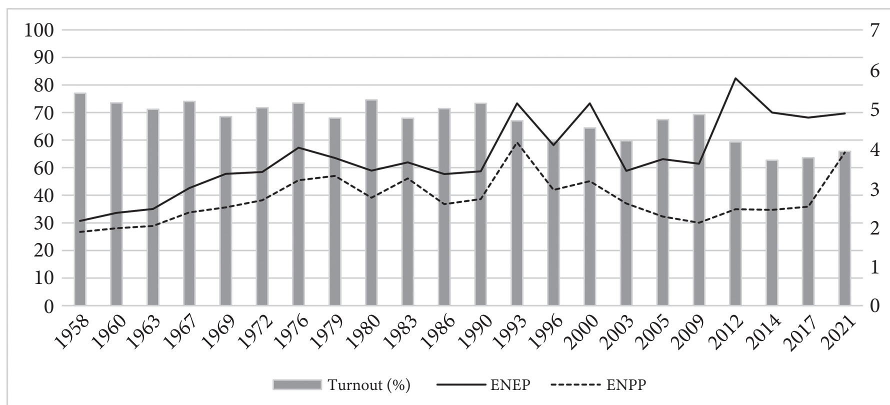

Figure 20.2 Core party system indicators: Voter turnout rates (left-side scale, %), effective numbers of electoral party and of parliamentary party (right-side scale)
Source: Election results reports, Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications

Although the LDP manifested itself as a conservative guardian, it tended to be more pragmatic and clientelistic; it put more emphasis on winning votes and seats rather than sticking to its programmatic agenda, such as a constitutional amendment that would allow the country to rearm. It advocated economic development and guaranteed material well-being for many strata of Japanese society: big businesses, small businesses, farmers, professionals, private-sector employees, etc. The party could be categorized as a catch-all party (Satō and Matsuzaki 1986).

Meanwhile, the opposition parties became fragmented. The leading opposition party, the JSP, strenuously held up its version of Marxist socialism, which was closely tied to the pacifist ideal and the militancy of its support base, the public sector unions. The 1960s saw the birth and development of the Democratic Socialist Party (DSP) and Komeito. The former was composed of non-mainstream right-wingers who had left the JSP and was backed by private-sector unions, and the latter was founded by a Buddhist sect. Together with the Japan Communist Party (JCP), it gained dozens of seats, especially in urban electoral districts where the population was growing rapidly.

From its establishment in 1955, Japan's post-war party politics did not confront a fundamental challenge until the 1990s.

The End of Cold War and the 1994 Reform

Post-war Japanese party politics was shaken badly after the collapse of the Soviet Union as it was predicated on a domestic version of the Cold War. The pro-capitalist LDP was pitted against the pro-socialist JSP, both of which took sides with their ideological friends within and outside the country. This was also reflected in their international views and foreign policies. However, the end of the Cold War stripped away the programmatic appeal not only from the JSP but also the LDP in that the latter's role as the sole defender of the market economy was discredited. To put it simply, the cost of overlooking the misconduct associated with the long-ruling LDP began to outweigh the benefit of supporting the party.

At that time, several political scandals hit the incumbent LDP hard. From the late 1980s to the early 1990s, a series of corruption cases came to light wherein private companies had bribed top LDP politicians. These scandals outraged the Japanese public and impressed upon them the need to change

the conventional way of conducting politics. In the ensuing 1993 lower house election, the LDP could not secure a majority of seats. Except for the LDP and the JCP, eight political parties formed a coalition government headed by the leader of the Japan New Party (JNP). As the LDP had monopolized the government ever since 1955, it was a historic moment. In 1994, the new non-LDP coalition government successfully changed the electoral system for the lower house from the SNTV to the MMM system, which was composed of 300 SMD seats and 200 PR seats. Public funding for political parties was also introduced.

The Struggle for Party System Change

The opposition parties confronted a coordination problem immediately after the passage of the Electoral Reform Bill. To win SMDs demanded that the fragmented opposition forces merge themselves into a new party, or at least avoid duplicate candidates. This apparent necessity for electoral adaptation led the parties that comprised the non-LDP coalition government to form the New Frontier Party (NFP). As the JSP and a small conservative party called New Party Sakigake were not comfortable with the NFP's vision, the LDP negotiated with them and came back to power by establishing a new coalition government in 1994.

Quite ambitiously, the NFP declared its goal of winning power at the coming lower house election. Though the 1996 lower house election was the first election held under the new MMM system, the result did not live up to their expectations: the number of seats the LDP won was just under the majority, but it surpassed that of the NFP by large margin. Led by the newly chosen party leader, the LDP appealed to voters with its reform agenda. Unfortunately, the NFP had to compete with the other party established just before the 1996 election: as a sizeable number of the members of the JSP (SDP)[3] and Sakigake also realized that their fate was doomed under the new system, they left their parties to form the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ), and the DPJ attained more than 50 seats. Disillusioned and disappointed, the NFP was disbanded. Many former NFP legislators, except those who were originally from Komeito, chose to join the DPJ.

After losing the 1998 upper house election, the LDP and Komeito decided to form a new coalition government with the Liberal Party as a mediator. The Liberal Party was headed by the former NFP leader to rally like-minded

members. When the party broke from its coalition partners, the Liberals fell into internal conflict. In the end, they merged with the DPJ just before the 2003 lower house election. It was not until this merger that the opposition parties provided voters with a viable alternative to the LDP-led coalition (Uekami and Tsutsumi 2011).

Although the LDP and Komeito succeeded in remaining in office, they were finally defeated by the DPJ-led coalition in the 2009 lower house election. This does not mean that the LDP just sat idle as the DPJ rose. On the contrary, the LDP sought to realize a 'structural reform' policy based on neoliberal ideas (Uchiyama 2010). To win first place in the SMD contest in the lower house election, political parties and politicians compete by selling people collective rather than divisible goods (cf. Catalinac 2016). The LDP won the 2005 lower house election by a landslide. However, struck by rising income inequality and a global recession after the financial crisis, Japanese people became sceptical about the LDP-led coalition. Instead of neoliberalism, the new LDP leadership advocated a conservative ideology (Nakakita 2014). Finally, people turned to the DPJ, which was running on an egalitarian and universalistic platform.

Although the DPJ won the 2009 lower house election, it lost a majority of seats in the 2010 upper house election. The party tried to posit an alternative idea, but budget constraints prohibited it from pursuing policies based on universalism. As the DPJ came to be divided on the issue of fiscal soundness, people's support for the DPJ-led government dwindled. In the end, the LDP and Komeito reclaimed power in the 2012 lower house election (Kushida and Lipscy 2013; Maeda and Tsutsumi 2015). After this major defeat in the 2012 election, DPJ members made several attempts to compensate for the diminution of the party. The DPJ merged with the Japan Innovation Party (JIP) to form the Democratic Party (DP) in 2016. The JIP was a new party mainly consisting of conservative but reform-minded politicians. During the long-running LDP administration, the DP laboured in vain to consolidate opposition forces[4].

In sum, LDP dominance after the introduction of MMM did not fulfil the promise made by the 1994 political reforms. As shown in Figure 20.2, the gap between ENEP and ENPP widened considerably under the new system. This suggests that the electoral system gives a huge advantage to winning parties, the LDP in most cases. Taking the declining turnout rates into account, however, the party garnered a quarter of support from the entire electorate at best.[5] Without the prospect of government change, Japanese party politics was seemingly losing ground.

Party Adaptation to the New Electoral Environment

Why did the LDP succeed in adapting to the new electoral environment? Why did the opposition parties fail to do so? We answer these questions by focusing on party organization under a particular set of electoral systems.

With the introduction of the SMD system in lower house elections, candidates were required to garner a majority of votes to be elected. They have come to emphasize policy appeal because it is impossible to buy off many voters with selective goods. In this context, party organizations play decisive roles in coordinating the preferences of candidates and letting them embrace party platforms. In purely theoretical terms, electoral mobilization based on programmatic appeal can be realized only if the problems of collective choice and collective action are resolved (cf. Aldrich 1995; Kitschelt 2000).

According to Aldrich, political parties were invented as a solution to the collective choice problem in legislative assemblies. To avoid a cyclical majority, a binding coalition of legislators was needed. By organizing legislators, a political party enables them to stay together and makes them follow the party line. To this end, a party provides aspiring candidates with side-payments such as party nominations, electioneering, or financing, but delivering these benefits always requires a concerted effort, to a greater or lesser extent. In this respect, party organizations help like-minded politicians, activists, and supporters solve their collective action problem. Kitschelt points out that the programmatic linkage requires a party to solve not only the collective choice problem, as stated above, but also the collective action problem, i.e. a party's investment in its administrative and organizational infrastructure to circumvent situations where activists and supporters do not contribute to campaigning efforts.

Before the 1994 reforms, the LDP had been plagued by factionalism and decentralized decision making. By replacing the SNTV system, which cultivates a personal vote (Carey and Shugart 1995), with the SMDs, the party was gradually transformed into one with more centralized intra-party relationships (Krauss and Pekkanen 2011).[6] This trend was further amplified by the plebiscitary mode of leadership selection which aimed to install a popular leader in the new electoral environment. The administrative reforms in and after the 1990s also dramatically strengthened the power and authority of the top executives (Takenaka 2021). According to Krauss and Nyblade (2005), Japanese prime ministers became 'presidentialized' in that they received increasing media attention during the elections[7]. As we will see later in

the chapter, the organization of the LDP remains huge but became more consolidated.

On the other hand, the difficulties faced by Japanese opposition parties can be traced backed to the fact that they only have thin and divided organizations across a wide political spectrum (Uekami and Tsutsumi 2011). In sum, they face problems of collective choice and collective action even if they share common goals such as winning elections. The party organizations often hesitate to unite their campaigning efforts for a single candidate. However, this does not mean that mergers of opposition parties always fail. It all depends on how appealing the new party is. The candidates will defect instantly and switch their attention to building their own reputation if the future of the party seems doomed.

Party Organizations of the LDP and the DPJ

In this section, we examine the responses of the LDP and the DPJ to the electoral environment by measuring the degree to which they maintain and consolidate their respective organizations.

Party members and party finance

First, let us compare the size of party organizations for the two major parties. Since the government's report on political funds provides the only available data that allow us to examine the magnitude of membership and party finance systematically, we have no choice but to describe the situation based on these data. However, the membership figures reported are the sum of formal members and party friends. As with the multi-speed model (Scarrow 2015), the LDP, the DPJ, and its successor parties have reduced forms of party membership.

According to Figure 20.3, LDP membership accounts for a much larger share of the Japanese electorate than that of the DPJ. Even after the DPJ defeated the LDP by a landslide in the 2009 lower house election, the LDP managed to keep its member numbers well above those of the DPJ, though the margin narrowed. After the 2012 election, the LDP kept 800,000 members whereas the DPJ stayed around 200,000, or only a quarter the membership of the LDP.

Turning to party finance, the percentage of state subsidies of the total income of the DPJ headquarters has surpassed that of the LDP (Figure 20.4).

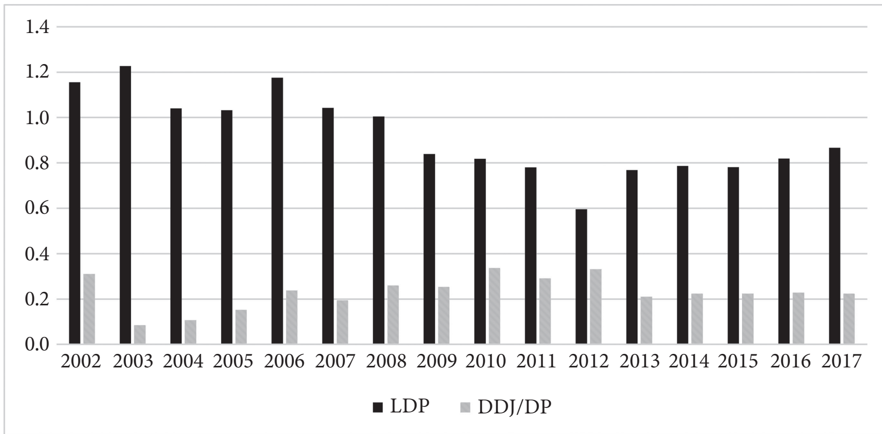

Figure 20.3 Party membership/electorate ratio (%): The LDP and the DPJ (DP since 2016)

Source: Political funds reports, Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications

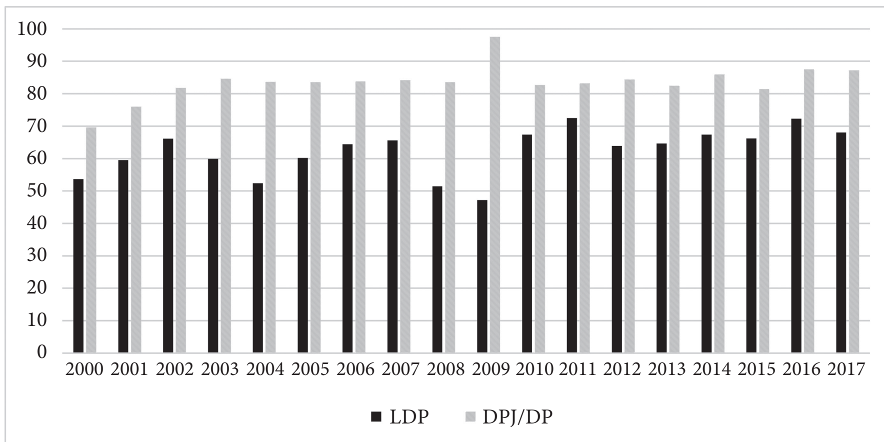

Figure 20.4 Share of state funding in party headquarters' income (%): The LDP and the DPJ (DP since 2016)

Source: Political funds reports, Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications

According to the Political Party Subsidies Act that stipulates the amount of money a political party receives from public coffers each year, subsidy amounts vary depending on the number of a party's affiliated members of parliament (MPs) and the vote share in elections.

The two major Japanese parties relied heavily on public funding to cover their expenses. Subsidies from the national treasury accounted for almost

90% of the DPJ's HQ revenue in its later years. The higher percentage on the part of the DPJ suggests that they had a hard time receiving monetary support from party members and auxiliary organizations such as labour unions. Although the LDP was less dependent on taxpayers, the proportion has gradually risen to nearly 70% in recent years. When comparing the LDP and the DPJ with this in mind, it can be said that the latter is less rooted in society (cf. Katz and Mair 1995).

Party leadership selection and membership vote

The LDP and the DPJ also performed differently in terms of plebiscitary intra-party democracy (Poguntke et al. 2016)[8]. According to LDP statutes, each party member and party friend has a right to vote in the party leadership election together with the MPs. But, in the case of an emergency where the party leader resigns before their term ends, MPs and the delegates from prefectural organizations have the exclusive right to select the next party leader. Even in this case, the prefectural organizations are not prohibited from holding primaries to nominate their preferred candidate(s) for whom the delegates can cast their votes.

Since the introduction of membership voting in 1977, the LDP has not always allowed its members to participate in the leadership selection. However, after the 2001 leadership election, the LDP has almost always let party members and friends vote (Uekami 2008). Among the 16 leadership elections since 1997, 4 cases were uncompetitive. Out of the 12 remaining races, the LDP allowed party members and friends to participate in 11.

The DPJ also adopted membership voting in its leadership election, but the details of collecting and counting votes were a bit different from those of the LDP. The eligible voters were stipulated as the following: MPs, candidates for the next national elections, local assembly members, ordinary party members, and registered supporters. The most striking difference, however, is how often they held membership votes. From its establishment in 1996 to its breakup in 2017, the party allowed its members and supporters to vote in only 6 out of 15 races (The total number of elections during this time was 24, nine of which were without contenders). Although it had the same emergency clause as the LDP, the DPJ limited eligibility to MPs; it repeatedly decided to skip the normal procedure.

In sum, besides being comparatively small, the DPJ organization performed poorly in mobilizing financial resources and encouraging members to participate.

Sources of electoral support and groupings of MPs

In terms of 'the party in the electorate', the two major parties display clear contrasts in the composition of voters. We utilized Japanese election survey data and sorted the LDP and DPJ voters according to their previous voting on recall (Table 20.1). As we paid special attention to the voting behaviour of Japanese electorate precipitated by party change, we picked those elections held just after the DPJ's formation and its mergers with other parties.

Just before the 1996 lower house election, the DPJ was established at the initiative of politicians formerly affiliated with the JSP and Sakigake, a splinter party of the LDP. As for the DPJ voters, almost half the respondents revealed that they cast their votes in the 1993 lower house election for the JSP and the LDP (27.3% and 20.8%, respectively). In contrast to the LDP, which successfully retained a long-time clientele (57.9%), it can be said that DPJ voters were divided along the old conservative–progressive cleavage from its beginning.

After the dissolution of the NFP in 1997, the DPJ absorbed many of the former NFP MPs, save for the Liberals and Komeito members. In reference to the 1998 upper house election survey, 17.6% of the respondents who voted for DPJ candidates expressed their support for the NFP in the 1995 election.

Table 20.1 Voter support in national elections for the LDP and the DPJ (DP since 2016) (%)

Party voted for in the last election (below)	1996 LDP	DPJ	1998 LDP	DPJ	2003 LDP	DPJ	2016 LDP	DPJ
LDP	57.9	20.8	79.7	30.7	63.6	24.6	72.9	10.9
JSP (SDP)	9.3	27.3	3.2	14.0	0.3	3.3		1.3
Komeito	0.6	1.9			3.2	0.8	1.6	1.0
DSP	0.4	0.9						
JCP	0.4	2.8		1.5	0.1	2.5	0.5	1.7
Sakigake	0.8	5.6	0.4	2.1				
NFP			3.4	17.6				
LP					0.4	2.5		
JIP							1.0	2.6
DPJ					3.1	26.1	5.8	66.9
Others	2.4	13.4	0.4	0.3	0.2	1.8	0.7	1.3
NA	28.3	27.3	12.9	33.7	29.1	38.3	17.5	14.2
Total	795	216	558	329	918	605	573	302

Source: JES II data for the 1996 lower house election and the 1998 upper house election, JES III data for the 2003 lower house election, and the post-election survey for the 2016 upper house election conducted by the Association for Promoting Fair Elections; the data for the secondary analyses of the 2003 and the 2016 elections were provided by the Social Science Japan Data Archive, Center for Social Research and Data Archives, Institute of Social Science, The University of Tokyo

Despite the merger of the DPJ with the Liberal Party in 2003 and with the JIP in 2016, the results of the election surveys suggest that the DPJ (DP) was no longer able to expand its support. The alchemy had ended at last.

In sum, the DPJ in the electorate became fragmented on its way to becoming a major party. Next, we turn to the backgrounds of MPs to examine the organizational divisions that the LDP and the DPJ have faced. As shown in Table 20.2a and 20.2b, both the LDP and the DPJ are internally divided by factions and groups.

To put it bluntly, there have been three major factions—Seiwa, Heisei, and Kochi—plus other rather minor factions since the early days of the LDP (Table 20.2a). The factions are groups of MPs based primarily on personal and clientelistic networks, but they also have some ideological tendencies. For example, Seiwa is said to be the most conservative (Uekami and Tsutsumi 2019). Under the old SNTV system where multiple candidates from the LDP could run in the same district, the party was exposed to pressures that could disrupt it. In the process of adapting to the SNTV, however, the factions chose to field their candidates according to district magnitude (Kohno 1997). As the party was consolidated under the new SMD system after the 1994 electoral reform, factions no longer play vital roles inside the LDP. The power shift inside the party is expressed by the increasing number of non-affiliated members.

Turning to the DPJ, it can be said that the party is divided along the lines of its predecessor parties (Uekami and Tsutsumi 2011). Table 20.2b indicates the number of MPs according to their party affiliations when they were first nominated as candidates. As time passed, the old politicians faded away and were replaced by new ones who never knew political parties other than the DPJ. But, even in the 2017 election, it should be noted that more than a third (36) of the MPs were from predecessor parties. As with the DPJ supporters, their MPs have diverse backgrounds.

Table 20.2a Number of LDP incumbents by faction just before lower house elections

	2003	2005	2009	2012	2014	2017
Seiwa	26	45	54	14	56	54
Heisei	43	27	37	10	27	33
Kochi	37	38	45	12	27	27
Others	64	58	81	23	71	102
Non-affiliated	19	20	41	46	87	46
Total	189	188	258	105	268	262

Source: *Kokkai Binran* (Handbook on the National Diet)

Table 20.2b Number of DPJ incumbents by intra-party group just before lower house elections (DP since 2016)

	2003	2005	2009	2012	2014	2017
Ex-JSP (SDP)	15	15	11	12	5	5
ex-DSP	11	11	4	5	2	2
ex-LDP	12	12	9	7	2	1
ex-JNP	14	14	5	9	5	4
ex-JIP					2	16
DPJ	50	103	72	159	39	58
Others	20	19	11	17	6	8
Total	122	174	112	209	61	94

Source: *Kokkai Binran* (Handbook on the National Diet)

Policy Coherence and Its Determinants

As we have seen, there are several differences between the LDP and the DPJ in terms of the scale and cohesiveness of party organization. This leads us to the following questions: Do the organizational features affect the other dimensions of party politics, say policy preference? How much policy variance is there in the first place? It is important to remember that a majoritarian electoral system gives a winning party extra seats to ensure that it can declare a mandate from voters. To make its mandate clearer, it is a prerequisite that a political party must attain policy coherence to some extent.

To answer the questions presented above, we analysed survey data on the policy positions taken by the candidates for the national elections[9].

Policy coherence

By applying a factor analysis to the data for all candidates since 2003, we found two dimensions: national security and social issues,[10] and economic issues. The policy items used are those which appear in all waves from 2003 to 2017. Then we calculated the factor scores for the MPs who belong to the LDP and the DPJ (DP) (Figure 20.5a, 20.5b). Although the DP was dissolved just before the 2017 election, we treat successor parties as the DP for the convenience of the reader. A higher score indicates a more hawkish and conservative posture for the first dimension and a more fiscal interventionist stance for the second.

The box plots in Figure 20.5a show that LDP MPs lean more toward a hawkish and conservative position, while DPJ MPs position themselves just

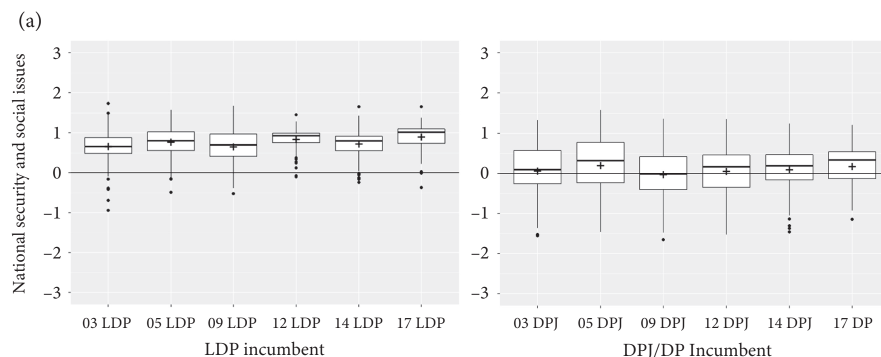

Figure 20.5a Distribution of policy positions on national security and social issues: LDP and DPJ (DP since 2016)

Source: UTokyo-Asahi Survey

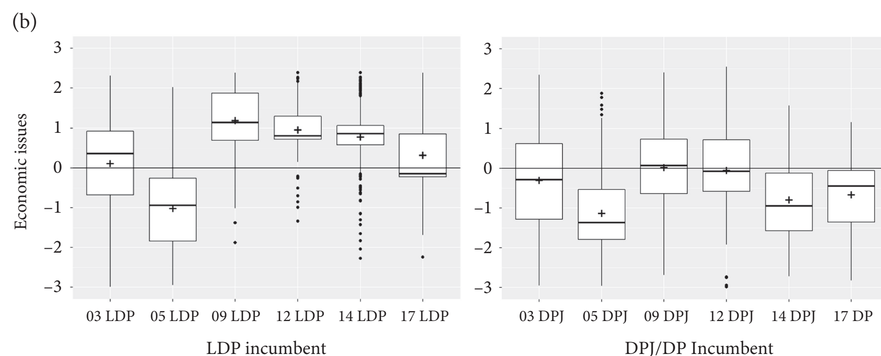

Figure 20.5b Distribution of policy positions on economic issues: LDP and DPJ (DP since 2016)

Source: UTokyo-Asahi Survey

around the middle. When we look inside of each party, however, the policy positions of the Democrats are more widely dispersed than those of the Liberal Democrats.

Figure 20.5b displays the box plots generated for the second dimension. The left-hand side shows the overall positions and inner variances of the LDP. It reflects the tendency towards the neoliberal, market-oriented economic policy advocated by the party leader in 2003 and 2005, as well as the more expansionist turn after the financial crisis in 2009. It is interesting to see that the DPJ follows almost the same pattern as the LDP, but the boxes are posted in the lower half of the area. As in the case of national security and social issues, the DPJ was incohesive. The blurred policy positions certainly

discredited its electoral manifestos, making them something the voters could not count on. To put it simply, the DPJ has not been well positioned in the electoral contests since the 1994 political reforms.

Determinants of policy positions

Now we turn to the following questions about the determinants of policy positions for each dimension. How much are the intra-party groups responsible for the policy dispersions? Is there a difference between the LDP factions and the DPJ groups? To answer these questions, we specified multivariate models and conducted statistical analyses.

Since the key variables here are the intra-party groups, we created faction dummies for the LDP and group dummies for the DPJ, respectively. We coded the value as 1 for each faction member of Heisei, Kochi, the other factions, and independents, along with Seiwa as a reference group. In the same manner, we allotted the numeric value 1 to the DPJ MPs who were first nominated as candidates of the JSP, the DSP, the LDP, the JNP, the JIP and its predecessor parties, and the other parties in order, defining the DPJ as a reference group. In addition, we input the gender and age of MPs, the number of times elected, vote share, and district population density into the models as control variables. We estimated the results by applying the ordinary least squares method.

Taking a brief look at Figure 20.6, the coefficient confidence intervals (CI) at 95% suggest that the effects of intra-party groups differ between the LDP and the DPJ. In sum, the effects seem much larger in the case of the DPJ.

According to the left-hand side of Figure 20.6, all the LDP faction dummies are statistically significant in 2003. This can be interpreted to mean that the MPs who belong to Seiwa (the reference group) take more aggressive postures than others, as is frequently alleged. However, it seems that the difference between factions has waned over time. This simply reflects the centralization of power in the hands of LDP leadership. In the case of the DPJ, the group dummies continue to exert more visible effects. Compared to the MPs originally from the DPJ, the former JSPs are apparently dovish, while those from other parties tend to be more hawkish.

So far as economic issues are concerned (the right-hand side of Figure 20.6), it turns out that the estimated results of LDP MPs resemble the case of national security and social issues: Heisei, Kochi, and the other factions display statistically significant effects in 2003, and the factional differences disappeared thereafter. In terms of policy orientation, they seem

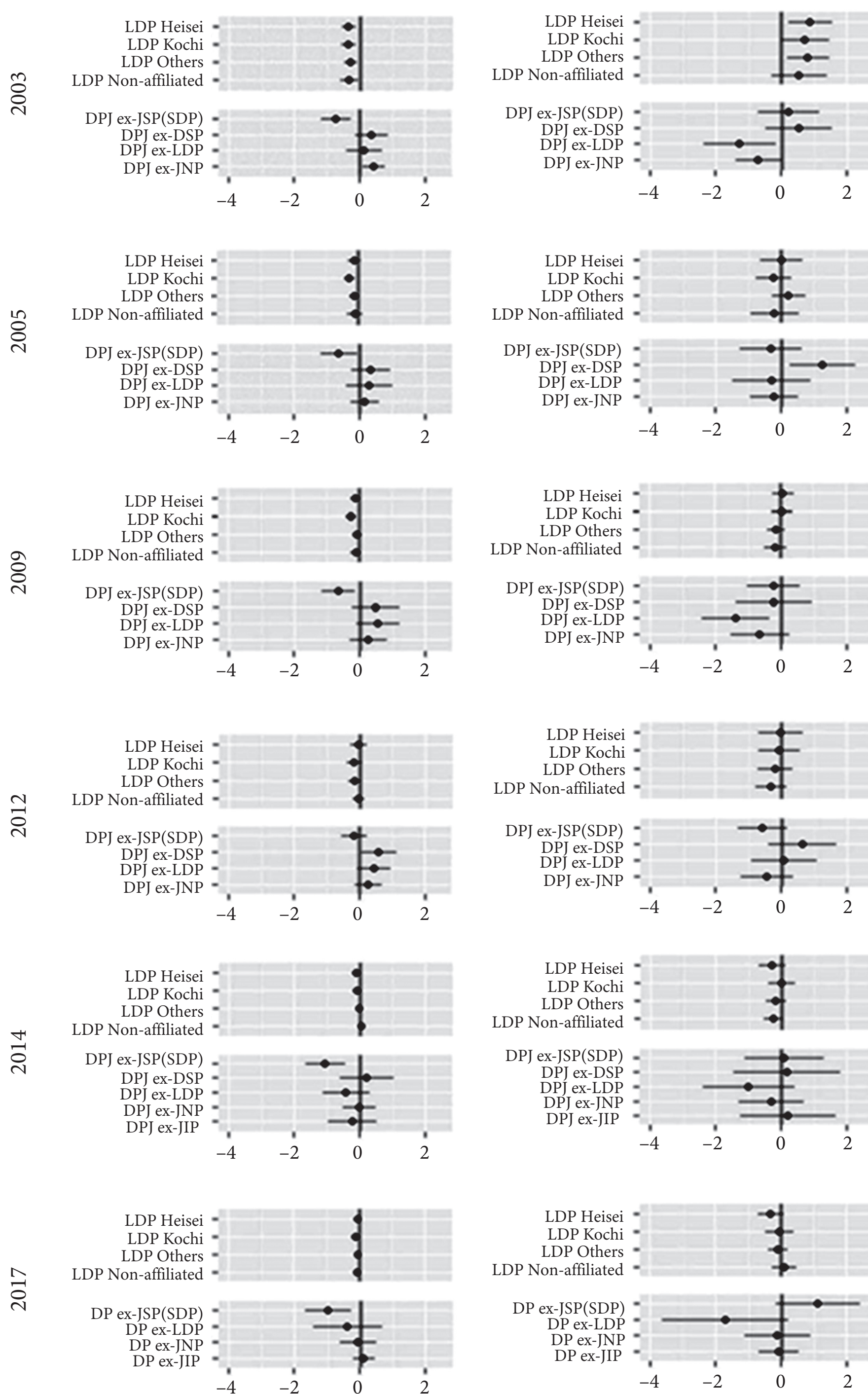

Figure 20.6 Estimated effects of intra-party groups (confidence interval (CI) at 95%)

Source: UTokyo-Asahi Survey

to be more expansionist. In the case of DPJ MPs, we still observe differences between groups, but the effects seem much weaker: JSP origins no longer distinguish those MPs from the MPs in the other groups in the realm of economic policy. However, those who came from the LDP seemingly lean toward limited government.

Conclusion

Japanese democracy has yet to see a populist uprising, but the country is not exempt from suffering the political crises, a silent crisis in this case, that plague other countries around the world: the malfunctioning of party politics.

Even though the 1994 political reforms were expected to change the LDP-dominant system by merging opposition forces, it has failed again and again. In this vein, the LDP-led coalition managed to hold on to power most of the time without winning support from a majority of eligible voters. Despite its success, Japanese party politics has suffered a loss of dynamism, which is exemplified by decreasing voter turnout.[11]

In this chapter, we diagnosed the long-lasting rule of the LDP as being enabled by its own success to adapt itself to the new electoral system as well as the failure of the opposition camp to consolidate, as shown with the case of the DPJ. In contrast to the LDP, the DPJ's organization has been so small, shallow, and divided that it has not been able to function as a safe haven for aspiring politicians. The divergent paths that Japanese political parties have followed underwrite the primary importance of party organization in party politics.

Notes

1. Out of 7,586 asylum seekers, only 125 were given protection by Japanese authorities in 2015, in the midst of the migrant crisis in Europe. By contrast, the number of foreign residents in Japan is 2.8 million as of 2020.
2. This work was supported by JSPS KAKENHI Grant Numbers 17H02481 and 18H00813.
3. The JSP changed its name to the Social Democratic Party (SDP) in 1996.
4. Just before the 2017 lower house election, they decided to form the Party of Hope (POH). The dissidents split and established the Constitutional Democratic Party of Japan (CDP).
5. The LDP garnered support from only a quarter of all voters in the 2017 general election (turnout rate (53.68%) multiplied by the party's share of valid votes (47.82%)). Its narrower, rather conservative support base chose to elect MPs whose composition was

heavily distorted by gender inequality: only one out of 10 LDP MPs was female as of 2021.

6. Krauss and Pekkanen (2011) insists that the changes in the LDP organization should be understood as multi-faceted. The leadership was strengthened the most, the factions and the decentralised decision-making were weakened somewhat, and the personal campaign organization was affected modestly.
7. See also Poguntke and Webb (2005).
8. Apart from membership vote, there are almost no other measures usually categorised as intra-party democracy.
9. The UTokyo-Asahi Survey is available courtesy of Professor Masaki Taniguchi and The Asahi Shimbun Corporation. http://www.masaki.j.u-tokyo.ac.jp/utas/utasindex.html (Accessed 19 December 2023).
10. It is not surprising to see that national security and social issues constitute a single dimension as Japanese conservatives have put less emphasis on post-war pacifism. The result of a factor analysis will be provided on request.
11. Furthermore, the LDP-led coalition became less and less accountable to the public. According to the World Press Freedom Index, for example, Japan fell in the ranks almost continuously during 2000s. In 2021, the country was ranked 67th out of 180. The sponsoring organization of the index, Reporters Without Borders (2022), heavily criticized former PM Yoshihide Suga on the grounds that he 'has done nothing to improve the climate for press freedom'. This poses a real threat to Japanese liberal democracy.

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21
The Challenges to Democracy in India

The Role of Political Parties

Eswaran Sridharan

The Downgrading of India's Democracy: The Freedom House, Economist Intelligence Unit, and V-Dem Reports

India has been widely considered an example of the success of democracy in the developing world. Since independence from Britain in 1947 and the adoption of a liberal-democratic constitution in 1950 after three years of debate in its Constituent Assembly, it has maintained itself as a democracy with free and fair elections at regular intervals and the prevalence of the usual democratic freedoms for its people. The only break in this regime of democracy was the Emergency of 1975–1977, which itself was imposed under an article of the constitution. Sustained democracy for over seven decades in a country lacking what are frequently considered the correlates if not preconditions of stable democracy (high income, mass literacy and education, and urbanization following from industrial and economic development), as well its large size combined with religious, linguistic, ethnic, cultural, and regional diversity is generally considered an achievement.

However, there has been a perceived (both domestically, by opposition parties and critics, and internationally) weakening of the quality of democracy and of civil liberties in India since 2014, when the right-wing Hindu-nationalist BharatiyaJanata Party (Indian People's Party or BJP) came to power with a majority of seats in the popularly elected Lok Sabha (Lower House) of parliament, with a further decline since 2019 when the BJP was re-elected with a larger majority. In 2021, three major international organizations that monitor the condition of democracy worldwide—Freedom House (USA), the Economist Intelligence Unit (UK) and V-Dem (Sweden)—issued reports that downgraded India's ranking as a democracy and its rankings on rights and liberties. The response of the BJP government to the reports

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downgrading India's democracy was dismissive or accused them of bias. This chapter will discuss the challenges that liberal democracy in India faces in the light of these reports and the role of political parties, principally that of the ruling BJP but also that of opposition parties, several of which are in power in many of India's 28 states.

What do these reports say about the decline in the quality of democracy in India? Let me lay this out before my analysis of what has been happening and why, centred on the role of political parties. Freedom House, in its report *Freedom in the World 2021: Democracy Under Siege*, downgraded India from 'Free' status to 'Partly Free' in 2020, its overall score slipping from 71/100 to 67/100. While its score on (formal) political rights remained relatively high at 34/40, its score on civil liberties slipped to only 33/60. The key reasons for downgrading are the treatment, in practice, of the Muslims and of dissenting groups and opinions. The key developments cited are the northeast Delhi riots in February 2020 in which over 50 people, mostly Muslims, were killed; the criminal charges filed against critics of the government including journalists, students, and others under sedition laws as well as under the Information Technology Act 2000 for expressions of protest against the new citizenship laws that were felt to be discriminatory; and the acquittal by a special court of BJP leaders who were 'credibly accused' of the demolition of a historic mosque in 1992.

The report also noted that in 2019 the Election Commission of India's 'impartiality and competence were called into question' as regards the 'timing and phasing of national elections' and 'selective enforcement of the Model Code of Conduct' which 'suggested bias toward the ruling BJP' (Freedom House 2021: section A-3 for these quotes). It also noted the 'opaque financing of political parties—notably through electoral bonds that allow donors to obscure their identities' (Freedom House 2021: section B-1). Significantly, it also noted attempts to dilute the independence of the Central Information Commission. This body administers the Right to Information Act 2005, which enables a large degree of government transparency for citizens.

The report also noted attacks on the freedom of the media and how the authorities have used 'security, defamation, sedition and hate speech laws, as well as contempt-of-court charges, to question critical voices in the media', all of which have 'exacerbated self-censorship' (Freedom House 2021: section D-1). It also noted widespread instances of attacks against Muslims, including lynching and criminalization, in many states, of conversions 'that take place as a result of "force" or "allurement", which can be broadly interpreted to prosecute proselytizers'. (Freedom House 2021: section D-2).

Freedom House also gave India a poor and declined rating in 2020 on internet freedom (from 51/100 to 49/100) as well as communication privacy, and noted the following:

- 'The Indian government continued to impose frequent internet shutdowns'.
- During the farmers' protests, and during the second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic, the government ordered social media platforms to take down online content shared by journalists, opposition figures, and ordinary users that criticized the authorities (see section B-2).
- In February 2021, the government released the contentious Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, regulating a broad swathe of social media companies, content hosts, and digital media outlets. The rules include new content-removal obligations, in-country representative and reporting requirements, message traceability mandates, and new data-retention rules. Several legal challenges against the measures were filed by the end of the coverage period (see sections B3, B6, C4, and C6).
- New reports from civil society groups and a consortium of news outlets found more evidence that the government has access to and deploys sophisticated spyware technology like the NSO Group's Pegasus and NetWire, including against activists, journalists, lawyers, and opposition figures.

The report also noted that civil society organizations, particularly those involved in the investigation of human rights abuses, continue to face threats, legal harassment, excessive police force, and occasionally lethal violence' (Freedom House 2021: section E-2) and how the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA) has been amended to target non-governmental organizations (NGOs) perceived to be political opponents, including the shutting down of the operations of Amnesty International. The report also noted that while the judiciary is formally independent, the courts have shown increasing signs of politicization in favour of the ruling BJP, including due process rights that have not been consistently upheld.

The Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU), in its report *Democracy Index 2020* (EIU 2021), also downgrades India under Prime Minister Narendra Modi, from 2014 to 2020, from a historic high score of 7.92 in 2014 to 6.61 in 2020, which should be seen as part of a general downward slide in the quality of democracy worldwide since 2006. India is downgraded to a 'Flawed Democracy' in 2020 from a 'Full Democracy' earlier, its global ranking falling from

27th in 2014 to 53rd in 2020. The report noted 'the increasing influence of religion under the Modi premiership, whose policies have fomented anti-Muslim feeling and religious strife, has damaged the political fabric of the country', also noting the Citizenship Amendment Act of 2019 'undermining the secular basis of the Indian state' and the Delhi riots in February 2020, as well as a general erosion of civil liberties, including the way the corona virus pandemic was handled (EIU 2021: 31). According to the EIU report, India's slide in rank and type to 'Flawed Democracy' was primarily due to its sharp decline in political culture and civil liberties while maintaining a high rank in electoral process and pluralism (free and fair multi-party elections).

The V-Dem report for 2020 downgrades India sharply from an electoral democracy to an electoral autocracy (V-Dem Institute 2021). India is among the top 10 decliners in democratic status. It has fallen to the status of an electoral autocracy, down from electoral democracy, liberal democracy being the highest category. India, according to V-Dem, has followed the 'typical pattern for countries in the "Third Wave" over the past ten years, a gradual deterioration where freedom of the media, academia, and civil society were curtailed first and to the greatest extent' (Pillai and Lindberg 2021: 20). India's score on liberal democracy fell from 0.57 (on a 0 to 1 scale) in 2013, just before the BJP government, to 0.34 by the end of 2020, a 23% drop on the Liberal Democracy Index scale, 'making it one of the most dramatic shifts among all countries in the world over the past 10 years' (Pillai and Lindberg 2021: 20). Apart from the deterioration of freedom for the media, academia and civil society, in effect for dissent, which have gone 'the farthest', the report also notes the decline in autonomy of the election management body (Pillai and Lindberg 2021: 20). It notes that the laws on sedition, defamation, and counter-terrorism have been used to silence critics, that more than 7,000 people have been charged with sedition sincethe BJP assumed power, and that most of the accused are critics of the ruling party. It also notes the use of the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA) to silence critics and the discriminatory amendments to the citizenship laws in 2019, as well as pressure on civil society organizations by way of the amended FCRA in 2020.

The Laws and Agencies Whose Perceived Misuse Led to Democratic Decline

I largely agree with the three reports on the decline in the quality of India's democracy, although I would not go as far as V-Dem in classifying it as an electoral autocracy. The BJP has lost state elections in major states in

India's federal system despite campaigns led by Modi and the BJP top brass. However, while it is still a democracy, I would agree with considering it an electoral democracy or an illiberal democracy rather than still a liberal democracy. In the next few paragraphs I will outline the laws which have been used to weaken civil liberties and give the government intrusive powers that threaten traditional constitutional freedoms. After that, I will give a brief recapitulation of the evolution of the Indian political and party system and the types of political parties to set the context for a discussion of the decline of the quality of democracy since 2014, the ideology and strategy of the BJP and its possible clash with India's liberal-democratic constitution, and the prospects for the future.

The key laws that have been used by the BJP to try to control dissent and protests are the following: the colonial-era 'sedition law' or Section 124A of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) as well as Sections 153A, 295A, and 505 of the IPC, which are provisions of the IPC meant to check hate speech and other activities that can lead to violence; the preventive detention and anti-terror law, the UAPA (1967, amended 2019); the counter-terrorist National Investigation Agency (Amendment) Act (2008, amended 2019), which permits investigation and arrest of people involved in (broadly defined) activities that affect the sovereignty, security, and integrity of India; and most recently the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules 2021 of 25February2021, which regulate not only international social media platforms like Facebook and WhatsApp but also online news portals despite the difference in their nature, the latter being the online equivalent of the printed newspapers.

Taken in combination with the opaque electoral bonds system of contributions to political parties in effect since 2018, which greatly advantages the ruling party, and the state's regulation of foreign donations to NGOs, including human rights organizations, by way of the FCRA law, amended again in 2020, the ruling party—if it wants to—can exercise considerable pressure on the media, as well as by the major role that government advertising plays. Furthermore, it can also exert pressure through the arrest of dissidents, protestors, and minorities. The agencies used to conduct raids, investigations, and arrests are the police (controlled in India by the states, not the central government), and central government agencies like the Income Tax Department, the (tax-investigative) Enforcement Directorate, the (counter-terrorism) National Investigation Agency (NIA), and the (criminal-investigative) Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI).

A brief account of the electoral bonds system of party finance is appropriate here. Electoral bonds are time-limited bearer bonds that corporations can

purchase from the government-owned State Bank of India and subsequently transfer to a political party's registered bank account. The fund flow proceeds entirely through the formal banking system, allowing for a step-by-step paper trail. However, the identity of the corporation purchasing the bond are not publicly revealed (although, since the transaction is taking place via the banking system, the government and ruling party presumably would have access to this information). When the corporation deposits these bonds into a specially designated bank account of a registered party, the party would know who the donor is, but neither the party nor the corporation is required to disclose this information. The upside to the new scheme is that corporations will now have a legitimate channel through which they can contribute funds to parties while protecting their anonymity, as opposed to indulging in under-the-table transactions. But the upside is also the downside: transparency, as far as the public is concerned, is arguably the biggest victim of this system; this is ironic considering the government explicitly framed the proposal under the heading of improving 'transparency in political funding'. Taking into account the elimination of the cap on corporate donations that existed before electoral bonds, the dropping of the requirement that firms disclose political donations on their financial statements, and the introduction of electoral bonds, corporations can give and parties can receive unlimited sums without the disclosure of identities and amounts. Corporations have good reason for wanting to donate anonymously: given the discretionary authorities that are vested with the state, any firm that publicly donates funds to one political party fears retribution if a competing party comes to power. Statistics on aggregate electoral bond donations, without donor identities and amounts, reveal that the overwhelming share, over 55%, of electoral bonds went to the ruling BJP. In a highly regulated political economy, there is no incentive to donate transparently to parties simply to support democracy without a quid pro quo. In a poor country with a regulated economy, the problem of donor self-interest militates against the achievement of full transparency unless some system of adequate public funding is put in place. However, this system requires internal democracy and accountability in parties, something that most parties are loath to consider. In fact, it is widely believed, though it cannot be proven, that the electoral bonds scheme is a political masterstroke that allows the ruling party to receive vast sums anonymously and legally, including what would otherwise have been considered corrupt payments for government contracts and regulatory favours, while at the same time claiming that the corruption associated with earlier governments is being eliminated.

These laws and agencies allow a ruling party, whichever it might be, to threaten dissenters and critics and infringe on civil liberties if it wants to. To be fair to the BJP, it should be noted that it was not under BJP majority rule that these laws or agencies were created. Some of them date back to the colonial era, and the others were enacted in the years of the relatively liberal and secular regime of the Congress party. Their misuse is enabled by their sweeping wording, but it is not inevitable. For example, between 2011 and 2014, when the Congress-led United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government was voted out, the bulk of the press and most TV channels turned vocally against the ruling party, which was put on the defensive without it using any of these provisions to intimidate or attempt to control the media. What came after the Modi government assumed power in 2014 were the 2019 amendments to the UAPA and NIA Acts; the new Information Technology Rules of 2021 that regulate digital media; the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) of 2019, which fast-tracks only non-Muslim illegal migrants from Bangladesh, Pakistan, and Afghanistan; the abolition of the autonomy of Jammu and Kashmir state, India's only Muslim-majority state, by abolishing Art. 370 of the constitution which gave it such autonomy; and the accompanying suspension of normal politics and media, telephone, and internet communications freedom since August 2019. The CAA is discriminatory in that it links citizenship to religion, fast-tracking only non-Muslim immigrants from the three countries for citizenship on the grounds that non-Muslims are persecuted minorities in these three Muslim-majority and formally Islamic states. However, the government does not address the question of the arbitrary selection of countries, ignoring other neighbours such as Sri Lanka or Myanmar, which persecute ethnic, religious, and linguistic minorities, including Muslims. Furthermore, what has happened in terms of the stepped-up use of the sedition and other preventive arrest laws since 2014 has opened the eyes of many to the possibility of their misuse. It needs to be noted that the three hate speech and incitement prevention laws (Sections 153A, 295A, and 505 of the IPC) have been used selectively; hate speech including incitement to violence against minorities, including by politicians, has not been seriously acted against. The Supreme Court has not yet pronounced on the constitutionality of the CAA despite a raft of petitions against it.

This brings us to the role of political parties—more specifically, to the role of the BJP, its ideology and strategy, and the leadership style of Modi. Is a decline in the quality of democracy inevitable under the rule of such a party or leader if they command a majority? Or is a moderate form of BJP rule possible if its political strategy and ideology are modified? Before coming to the

BJP, and to the role of the long-hegemonic Congress party under whose governments many of the above laws and agencies were created, a brief account of the nature and evolution of the Indian political system and the types and nature of political parties is necessary as background.

The Indian Political System in its Basics

On gaining its independence in 1947, India adopted a liberal-democratic, parliamentary, and federal framework of government in the form of the Indian constitution, which was adopted on 23 January 1950.[1] India's constitution defines it as a union of states—that is, an implicitly federal arrangement without using the word 'federalism'. It is a parliamentary system with a ceremonial president and vice-president, with real power in the hands of the prime minister and cabinet, drawn from either house of parliament. The Lok Sabha, or popularly elected lower house, is the more powerful chamber, compared to the Rajya Sabha, or upper house, which consists of members elected by proportional representation from the state legislatures. However, unlike the US Senate but like the Lok Sabha, the Rajya Sabha's membershipis more or less proportional to the population. Legislation needs to pass both houses by a simple majority, with the Rajya Sabha only able to delay but not block money bills if passed again by the Lok Sabha. Constitutional amendments require a two-thirds majority of those present, and voting in both houses is subject to a simple majority of the total membership of each house. Some articles affecting centre–state relations require a simple majority in half the state assemblies. And the final guardian of the constitution is the judiciary, a pyramidal structure with the Supreme Court at its apex, which is independent of the other two branches and has the power of judicial review—that is, it can strike down legislation that it views to be unconstitutional.

At the level of India's now 28 states (not to speak of the eight Union territories directly governed by the centre), the parliamentary system is reproduced. There is a governor appointed by the president, and the government is headed by the chief minister and cabinet, drawn from the majority party or coalition in the state assembly. Most states have unicameral legislatures, with some having an upper house.

The executive consists, apart from a council of ministers drawn from parliament, of a permanent civil service or bureaucracy recruited by competitive examinations. The All India Services comprise the Indian Administrative Service, a follow-on of the colonial Indian Civil Service; the Indian Police Service;and the Indian Forest Service. Staff in these services are recruited by the

central government but are allotted to state governments, under whom they serve for a large part of their careers, alternating between state and central governments. There are also the Indian Foreign Service and various central services like the tax collection services, the audit and accounts service, the postal services, the railway services, and others, whose officers can be transferred around the country.

India's constitution was revolutionary given that despite the country's deeply unequal and hierarchical society—largely rural, agrarian, illiterate, and poor—India adopted a universal adult franchise, something that had come into being only in stages and over centuries in most Western democracies. It assured citizens of a set of fundamental rights, including the usual democratic freedoms of speech, expression, conscience, religion, and so forth, and the right to equality and non-discrimination before the law. Citizenship, and by extension rights, was based on birth in India or to Indian parents and not on blood, race, ethnicity, religion, language, or culture.

Political Parties

We now turn to a brief overview of the main players in the Indian political landscape (for more detailed accounts, see Sridharan and Varshney 2001; Sridharan 2002, 2010, 2014a, 2014b; Gowda and Sridharan 2007, all of which this and the following sections draw on). Historically, Congress dominated the party landscape, building on its legacy as the all-encompassing movement that led India's struggle for independence from the British. Post-independence, Congress won seven of the first eight general elections from 1952 to 1984, except 1977, and has governed India for 54 of 74 years. It had an unbroken domination for the first 30 years of free India and won pluralities of the vote of 40% and above against a fragmented and regionalized opposition. Even since 1989 it has remained the single largest party by vote share, though not seats, in each of the seven elections from 1989 to 2014, losing that status in 2014 and 2019. Congress is a secular party that believes in a linguistically and culturally diverse notion of Indian nationhood and remains broadly acceptable to all segments of the population.

There are four other major categories of parties (though these groups of parties do not necessarily constitute a coalition, by any means). These are, first, the Hindu-nationalist parties (the BJP and the Shiv Sena); second, the communist parties, also termed the Left Front (including the Communist Party of India Marxist [CPI(M)] and the Communist Party of India [CPI]), and the various Communist Party of India [Marxist-Leninist] splinters);

third, the agrarian/middle and lower-caste populist parties (the Janata Party, the Janata Dal, and its offshoots like the Samajwadi Party, Rashtriya Janata Dal, Rashtriya Lok Dal, Biju Janata Dal, Janata Dal [Secular], and Janata Dal [United]); and fourth, the ethno-regional or ethnic parties based on particular regional linguistic groups or lower-caste blocs or tribes (in the north-eastern states in particular). Let me now outline the four phases of evolution of the party system up to the present before discussing the role of political parties in the current state of India's democracy.

The evolution of the party system in four phases

Congress hegemony, 1952–1967

The period of uncontested Congress hegemony from 1952–1967, coinciding largely with the prime ministership of Jawaharlal Nehru (1947–1964), was characterized by a single party winning a two-thirds majority of seats in the Lok Sabha (the Lower House) in 1952, 1957, and 1962. In each of these elections, Congress prevailed with a plurality of votes (45–48%) against a divided opposition, with opposition parties having mainly state-specific bases in a few states each. Along with these parliamentary elections, state assembly elections were mostly held concurrently in these three election years. Thus, Congress formed majority governments in almost all states during 1952–1967 against a divided opposition that varied state by state, with a few exceptions. This was so particularly after the reorganization of states on linguistic lines in 1956, with Congress winning not just a plurality, but a majority of votes in some state assemblies.

Eroding Congress hegemony, 1967–1989

The pattern of hegemony began to change with the 1967 election. Throughout this period, Congress faced growing challenges in more and more states as well as at the parliamentary level until the 1989 election, which marked the inauguration of the next phase. In 1967, Congress plummeted to a historic low of 41% of the votes and a bare majority of seats in the Lok Sabha, in the process losing 8 of the then 16 major states. At the parliamentary level, Congress continued to win majorities of seats based on pluralities of the vote as they had during the previous period, right up to and including 1984. Gradually, however, several trends began to erode Congress dominance. Most importantly, from 1967 onwards a Duvergerian dynamic gained momentum in state after state, creating a principal opposition party to Congress in more and more states as against a fragmented field, for both state assembly and

Lok Sabha elections. This has been called the bi-polarization of state party systems for both assembly and parliamentary elections, but it is a system of multiple bi-polarities, not the same two parties in each state. That is, the bipolar consolidations state-wise were between Congress and several varying opposition parties, for example, Congress vs Left, Congress vs. Bharatiya Jana Sangh (BJS, formed in 1951, the precursor of the BJP, which was formed in 1980), and Congress vs a regional party, each in some states. With these trends the Index of Opposition Unity, or the fraction constituted by the leading opposition party of the opposition vote as a whole, rose in state after state during this period. The oppositions began to coalesce.

By 1989, Congress retained its dominance only in the seven major states of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Haryana, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Karnataka, and Odisha. In these states, no single opposition party was strong enough to form a bipolar party system.

As Table 21.1 shows, the effective number of electoral parties rose from a low of 3.98 (1957) to a high of 7.11 (1996), indicating Congress decline and opposition rise before falling to a still fairly high 5.42 (2019). The effective number of parliamentary parties rose from a Congress-hegemonic 1.80

Table 21.1 India: Core party system indicators

	ENEP	ENPP	Turnout (%)
1952	4.53	1.80	45.40
1957	3.98	1.83	45.97
1962	4.40	1.85	55.76
1967	5.19	3.16	61.33
1971	4.63	2.12	55.27
1977	3.40	2.63	60.53
1980	4.25	2.17	57.00
1984	3.98	1.69	64.11
1989	4.80	4.12	61.95
1991	5.15	3.62	55.88
1996	7.11	5.83	57.94
1998	6.91	5.28	61.97
1999	6.74	5.87	59.99
2004	7.56	6.53	58.07
2009	7.74	5.01	58.21
2014	6.97	3.45	66.44
2019	5.42	3.04	67.40

Note: ENEP—effective number of electoral parties;ENPP—effective number of parliamentary parties; Turnout as share of all registered voters

Source: CSDS (2022); Turnout: IDEA (2022)

(1952) to 5.83 (1996) to 6.53 (2004), the latter two elections marking high points in the era of coalition and/or minority governments (1989–2014), before declining to 3.04 (2019) when the BJP returned with an enhanced majority. Voter participation increased fairly steadily, from 45.4% (1952) to 62% (1998), before slightly dipping and then rising again to an all-time high of 67.4% (2019).

The coalition and/or minority government phase, 1989–2014: Three megatrends

In these 25 years, the Indian party system transitioned from a one-party (Congress)-dominant system to a multi-party system characterized by coalition and/or minority governments. Three megatrends characterized this phase. First, the Congress vote share steadily declined from 39.6% (1989) to 25.8% (1998) before recovering marginally to 28.6% in 2009 and then plunging to 19.6% (2014) and 19.7% (2019). However, from 1989 to 2009 Congress remained the single largest party by vote share, although it lost that position in seats to the BJP in 1996, 1998, and 1999 before losing it decisively in 2014 and 2019 when the BJP won a majority on its own. Over this 25-year period, the loss of 20 percentage points in Congress vote share was filled by other parties, primarily the BJP but also some regional parties.

Second, the BJP's share of the national vote rose from 11% in 1989 (the first time it had ever crossed the 10% mark, aided by pre-electoral alliances with the Janata Dal throughout northern, central, and western India) to 31% in 2014, gaining exactly the 20% that Congress lost. It came within a whisker of the Congress vote share in 1998 (25.2% compared to 25.8%) but remained the second-largest party in vote share until 2014 and 2019 (37.4%). However, due to the relative geographical concentration of its votes in northern, central, and western India during these decades compared to Congress, the BJP was able to convert votes into seats more effectively, winning the largest numbers of seats in 1996, 1998, 1999, 2014, and 2019.

Third, the broad non-Congress and non-BJP share of votes remained in the range of 44% to 52% over 1989 to 2014, with the Left parties stagnant or declining while regional parties on the whole increased slightly, particularly the regional parties of northern, eastern, and western India. Regional parties are almost all, apart from the Left, in effect single-state parties, i.e. not parties that have a base in two or more states in a region. A number of regional parties grew and consolidated themselves in a number of states, some with specific sub-state geographical bases, during these 25 years, which adversely affected Congress more than the BJP. Some were breakaway factions of Congress, and some were parties that were offshoots of the original Janata Dal formed by

Prime Minister V. P. Singh after the fall of his government in 1990. Some were the older regional parties that rose to prominence during1967–1989, such as those of Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, and Assam. Most of them had formed governments in their states at least onceduring1989–2014.

The emergence of the fourth party system: Reconsolidation under BJP dominance, 2014 to the present

The key to the BJP emerging as the dominant pole in the party system in 2014 was the huge swing of 12 percentage points in its favour (from 19% in 2009 to 31% in 2014), which coincided with a 9 percentage points swing against Congress (from 28% to 19%), combined with fact that the BJP vote share was disproportionately concentrated in the states of northern, central, and western India. This concentration gave the BJP a high conversion ratio of votes into seats, which at 1.65 was the highest in Indian parliamentary-electoral history. The BJP received 52% of the seats for just 31% of the vote. By contrast, the Congress vote share dropped below 20% for the first time in its history, and the party plunged to its lowest-ever seat total (44 seats or 8% seat share). The BJP won 88% (166 out of 189) of direct BJP-Congress face-offs. In 2019 the BJP repeated this performance and pattern of victory, increasing its vote share to 37% and its number of seats from 282 to 303 (or 52% to 56% seat share). Congress retained its 19% vote share, increasing its seats marginally from 44 to 52 but still falling below the 10% seat share mark.

Arguably, a combination of contingent and structural factors explains these results. The contingent factors were the economic slowdown since about 2011 (despite India riding out the global downturn of 2008) and rising inflation before the 2014 election, further combined with credible allegations of massive corruption against the Congress-led UPA government from 2011(to which Congress was unable to mount a credible defence). The anti-corruption movement led to the formation of a new party, the Aam Aadmi Party (Common Man's Party), but the BJP partly rode on this movement and was able to leverage it. Additionally, the BJP was able to project Modi, its prime ministerial candidate, as an effective leader who had delivered growth and development in Gujarat, where he was then a third-term chief minister.

However, the underlying structural factor was the BJP's consolidation of power as the leading or second party in a large number of states during 1989 to 2014; this was the key factor that catapulted the BJP to power in 2014. It had multi-term governments in several of these states even though it had only been able to form state governments on its own for the first time as late as 1990. Survey data indicate that the electorate often rewards incumbent parties at the state level for growth and development, often finding it difficult

to identify and credit the level of government, central or state, for economic outcomes.

The BJP

Among these non-Congress parties, the BJP, in power since 2014 with a majority, merits some discussion. The BJP is among the most ideological parties of India. It was founded in 1980, but its precursor the BJS, sharing the same ideology and personnel, was founded in 1951. Its ideology, known as *Hindutva* ('Hindu-ness' is the closest translation, Hindu nationalism the closest description), is controversial in India. The roots of Hindu nationalism go back to the 1920s. The term Hindu is further specified by Hindu nationalists. V. D.Savarkar, the ideological father of Hindu nationalism, gave a definition in *Hindutva*, the classic text of Hindu nationalism: 'A Hindu means a person who regards this land from the Indus to the Seas as his fatherland (*pitribhumi*) as well as his Holyland (*punyabhumi*)' (Savarkar 1989: title page, elaborated further in 110–113). The definition is not just territorial but genealogical ('fatherland') and religious ('holyland'). Hindus, Sikhs, Jains, and Buddhists can be part of this definition for they meet both criteria. All of these religions were born in India. Christians, Jews, Parsis, and Muslims can meet only one, for India is not their holy land. The Hindu nationalists, therefore, have identified Muslims and Christians, now 14% and 2% of the population, respectively, as their adversaries. Historically, their anger has been principally directed at Muslims—partly because of their numbers, and partly because a Muslim homeland in the form of Pakistan partitioned India in 1947, though the anti-Muslim animus dates back at least to the 1920s.

The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS, or National Volunteers Organization) is the organizational core of the BJP. Founded in 1925, the RSS says it is a social and cultural organization that aims to transform India in a Hindu direction. It recruits at a young age, mostly in urban areas, and holds daily meetings of branches to train its recruits in ideology, culture, and self-defence. Highly disciplined, the cadres tend typically to develop a lifelong commitment to the ideology. Most, though not all, of BJP's leaders have come from an RSS background; in recent years many have come from other parties. The RSS has spawned dozens of offshoots that remain linked to it, operating in various spheres, including the Bajrang Dal, a private army of stormtroopers that has engaged in violence against Muslims on many occasions; why such a private force is necessary and what it says about respect for the law and faith in the police force of elected governments is unclear.

The BJP positions itself as a nationalist party. However, this is a particular type of nationalism that is distinct from the Indian nationalism represented by Congress and the independence movement and that is implicit in the constitution. The latter nationalism was inclusive in that it conceptualized India as a country of all born there (citizenship based on birth, not descent or religion), with equal rights as well as certain protections forminorities. The BJP's nationalism, explicitly or implicitly, is Hindu majoritarian. Unlike conservative parties in the Western world, the BJP does not primarily position itself as a free-enterprise and free-market-oriented party opposed to state ownership and regulation of the economy; it has been in favour of domestic deregulation but not clearly of trade liberalization and globalization. In fact, from 2013 to 2018, India's average tariffs crept up from 13 to 18%, a much higher level of protection than that of most of the developed and developing world. However, the BJP has carried out domestic deregulatory and market-oriented reforms, including easing the exit of loss-making companies through the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code instead of bailouts through the largely state-owned banking system; liberalization of labour laws; and, in late 2020, deregulation of agricultural markets. In early 2021 it announced large-scale privatization as a strategic policy initiative. And it has liberalized inward foreign investment as well as private-sector entry into hitherto state-dominated areas like defence manufacturing and insurance.

The BJP's social base, which was limited until the 1980s to the urban areas, upper castes, and middle classes in north India, has expanded greatly over the past three decades in parallel with the decline of the umbrella party that Congress was. The gradual decline of Congress—as large parts of its once-encompassing social base shifted in slow motion after 1967, accelerated in the 1990s, to regional or lower-caste-based parties in various states—benefited both the BJP and regional parties. In response partly to the rise of Hindu-nationalist ideology and partly as a backlash to public-sector job quotas for lower castes introduced in 1990, the upper-caste base of Congress shifted significantly to the BJP; lower castes, especially in north India, moved to lower-caste-based parties due to ethnic (caste) outbidding, as did Muslims, who saw these parties as better shields against the rise of the BJP (for a more detailed account of Congress decline see Farooqui and Sridharan 2016). Later, segments of the lower castes also gravitated to the BJP in response to the Hindu-nationalist ideology as well as perceived regional party failures, local caste coalitions, and, since 2014, the Modi leadership factor. The BJP, for these and other reasons too complex to discuss here, also expanded geographically to several states of eastern and southern India, becoming a

broad-based umbrella party of Hindus across caste divides but generally excluding Muslims.

This trend was accompanied by the emergence of a new, aspirational middle class, particularly a disproportionately young lower middle class, from the 140 million who were lifted out of extreme poverty during 2004–2014 by a combination of high growth and welfare policies. In 2014, the middle classes voted disproportionately for the BJP, which had successfully painted Congress as inherently corrupt based on the exposure of some scandals (Sridharan 2014b). Whether in future a growth-driven reduction of poverty and expansion of the middle classes will form a structural support base for the BJP remains to be seen, but this factor was at play in the 2014 and 2019 elections.

How well does the BJP fit the model of right-wing populism that is used to describe a range of such parties around the world, many of which are in power? Mudde has argued that right-wing populism is characterized by three features (Mudde 2007): first, an anti-elitism that is in particular opposed to established elites associated with liberal position; second, a tendency towards authoritarianism or the semi-authoritarianism of purely electoral, illiberal democracies; and third, a majoritarian hostility towards minorities and immigrants. Mudde argues that it is the reference to the will of the people prevailing which results in semi-authoritarian tendencies. The BJP appears to fit all three. It is openly hostile to the 'old' Congress elite associated with Nehruvian secularism and liberalism and portrays their position as pandering to minorities. It has semi-authoritarian tendencies as noted above, in that it has systematically sought to capture the institutions of horizontal accountability or undermine their autonomy, and it has used government agencies such as the Central Bureau of Investigation, the National Investigation Agency, and the Enforcement Directorate as well as the Income Tax Department to hound opposition politicians and dissenters in general. It has tried to dilute the Right to Information Act 2005 by reducing the autonomy of the Central Information Commission that administers that law. It has amended the FCRA to put pressure on foreign-funded NGOs, particularly those that are critical of the government, such as human rights organizations (e.g. Amnesty International). And it is viscerally hostile to Muslims, with a history of on-the-record, anti-Muslim statements by leaders of the BJP and RSS from top to bottom, too numerous to list. However, unlike the right-wing populism around the world of the past decade, the BJP's ideological positioning is not a fallout of the 2008 global financial crisis and the anti-globalization that it led to but goes back to the 1920s, well before India's independence and the partition into two states of India and Pakistan. The BJP's ideology was a fairly minor ideological current until recently, but its roots go very deep and

are complexly associated with a resentment against Muslims that is to a significant extent derived from the fact of Muslim political and cultural dominance in large swathes of India for several centuries before the British rule.

The Ideologies and Electoral Strategies of the Modi-led BJP, and the Quality of Democracy

The BJP, after winning with a majority in 2014 and again in 2019, has become more ideological in its policies as regards Hindu nationalism and minorities, particularly Muslims. It has kept on its agenda three policy positions that it had shelved during the long period of coalition and minority governments from 1996 to 2014, particularly after it formed minority coalition governments in 1998–1999 and in 1999–2004. These were the building of a temple to the Hindu god Rama at the site of the Babri Mosque, demolished by a BJP-mobilized mob in 1992; the abolition of Art. 370 of the constitution that gave special autonomy to India's only Muslim-majority state, Jammu and Kashmir; and the promulgation of a Uniform Civil Code which would abolish Muslim personal law, among other things. After the BJP came to power again in 2019, the Supreme Court in a controversial judgement allowed the construction of the temple subject to some observations and conditions. The BJP government abolished Art. 370 in August 2019, and normal politics and electoral processes have been in suspension in Jammu and Kashmir since then, accompanied by harsh repressive measures including arrest of top political leaders, internet shutdowns, and the like.

Speaking more broadly, the hardened Hindu-nationalist ideology isolates and targets Muslims, against whom there have been numerous incidents of violence since 2014 but no major riots except the Delhi riots of 2020. As a deliberate electoral strategy, the BJP has sought to create an anti-Muslim groundswell such that voters will vote for it as the party that will save and strengthen the country against a nefarious Islamic or Islamist threat, including from neighbouring Pakistan, as against secular parties that are portrayed as pandering to Muslim voters.

Along with this ideological hardening, the BJP has since at least 2017 consciously sought to split other parties and attract defectors from them towards itself, including office bearers, significant leaders, and sitting legislators in both state assemblies and parliament. This strategy has had considerable success, particularly at the state level. The BJP in 2017 managed to form the state governments in Goa and Manipur despite not having a majority (indeed, Congress was the largest party in Manipur) with the help of crossovers from

other parties. The same was achieved in the major state of Karnataka, ruled by a Congress coalition in 2019, and in another major state, Madhya Pradesh, ruled by Congress in 2020. Attempts at engineering crossovers from other parties were successful in West Bengal in 2021 although the BJP lost the election. Expansion of its footprint by engineering defections from other parties has become a mainstream strategy in the BJP.

The modus operandi for this appears to be the systematic use of tax-enforcement agencies, particularly the Enforcement Directorate, to raid opposition politicians and then strike secret deals for defection to the BJP. None of this can be concretely proven given the secret nature of the operations and negotiations, but this is widely thought to be the case.

The above two phenomena—hardened anti-minority ideology and attempts to split other parties—in combination since 2014 and especially since 2017 would appear to explain a great deal of the misuse of sedition and other sweepingly worded repressive laws, as well as that of certain federal agencies. This has led to the attendant decline in the quality of democracy, the liberal part of liberal democracy being eroded.

Conclusion

Is all this inevitable in a majority BJP government, or is it Modi-specific? This is a difficult, because speculative, question to answer. While it is possible to imagine a softer form of a Hindu-nationalist government such as the one that ruled, albeit as a minority government, from 1999 to 2004 (although that period also saw the major Gujarat riots under the chief ministership of Modi in 2002), there appears to be a strong affinity between hard-line Hindu-nationalist ideology, an electoral strategy of isolating Muslims, and splitting other parties on the one hand, and on the other hand generalized use of the aforementioned repressive laws, not only aimed at minorities but also attempting to control dissent and protest in general.

A restoration of liberal democracy is unlikely as long as the opposition parties are divided and the BJP, which enjoys a 37% vote share (2019), is able to revive the economy post-pandemic, and is seen to bedelivering the goods without a credible national electoral challenger. However, India's federal system will continue to constitute a safeguard against further deterioration to an electoral autocracy as 12 states, including many large ones, are ruled by opposition parties. Even if the opposition wins at some future point, liberal democracy can be entrenched only if the sweepingly worded

laws enabling arrest, including preventive detention on wide grounds, are amended. This means that the opposition *too* will have to be willing to give up instruments of possible arbitrary power which were, as noted earlier, created *before* the coming to power of the BJP as a majority government. A cross-party liberal consensus will be needed, perhaps something on the lines of the Model Code of Conduct, a decades-old inter-party accord that all parties have agreed to for the conduct of candidates during election campaigns.

Note

1. This section draws heavily on Sridharan 2021.

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22

An Anarchy of Parties

The Pitfalls of the Presidential-based Party System in the Philippines

Julio C. Teehankee

Introduction

Despite a long and rich history of democratic practices, party politics, and elections, the Philippines has institutionalized a clientelistic and patronage-based democracy within an underdeveloped economy.[1] Since the first party, the Partido Federalista, was founded in 1900 during the American colonial regime, political parties have existed in some form or another. Soon afterward, from 1907 to 1941, the Nacionalista Party (NP) became the ruling party. Between 1946 and 1972, a formal two-party system developed, with the NP and its breakaway faction, the Liberal Party (LP), alternating in power. Under his Kilusang Bagong Lipunan (KBL; New Society Movement), Ferdinand Marcos destroyed this party system and replaced it with a one-party dictatorship from 1972 to 1986. In 1986, a fluid multi-party system emerged following the restoration of formal democracy (Teehankee, 2020a).

While the country reverted to the pre-authoritarian presidential form of government, a multi-party system emerged during the democratic transition. The shift to a multi-party system with a plurality-based electoral system runs counter to the classic tenet of Duverger's Law that argues that plurality-based elections tend to produce two-party systems (Choi, 2001). However, the post-authoritarian period saw the rise of 'an anarchy of parties' in which inter-party competition became more fluid and fragmented, especially under Rodrigo Duterte's populist presidency. This chapter will delineate the pitfalls of the post-authoritarian presidential-based party system in the Philippines.

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Institutional Framework for Party Politics and Elections

The post-authoritarian party system is mandated by Section 6, Article IX of the 1987 Philippine Constitution, which states: 'A free and open party system shall be allowed to evolve according to the free choice of the people, subject to the provisions of this Article'. The Omnibus Election Code of the Philippines defines a political party as 'an [organized] group of persons pursuing the same ideology, political ideas or platforms of government and includes its branches and divisions'. The Constitution also mandates that national elections be synchronized with local elections. The President and Vice President are elected separately by a direct vote through simple plurality nationwide. Both serve a term of six years. However, a one-term limit disqualifies the President from re-election, while the Vice President can serve two consecutive terms. The Philippine Congress consists of the Senate and the House of Representatives. Half of the 24 Senators are nationally elected at large every six years through a multi-member plurality system (see Table 22.1). After serving two consecutive terms, at least one term out is imposed on Senators. On the other hand, the House of Representatives is elected from single-member districts every three years (see Table 22.2). House members must serve one term out after three consecutive terms.

Moreover, the Constitution introduced a novel pathway for marginalized sectors to be represented in the corridors of power, as one-fifth of the members of the House of Representatives came to be elected via a party-list system elected from one nationwide district. The Philippines adopted a mixed electoral system incorporating a strand of proportional representation (PR), patterned after the German model: a modified version of the

Table 22.1 Party composition of the Senate, 2016, 2019, and 2022

	2016		2019		2022	
Party	**Seats**	**%**	**Seats**	**%**	**Seats**	**%**
Lakas CMD	0	0	1	4	1	4
Liberal Party	4	17	3	13	0	0
Nacionalista Party	4	17	4	17	4	17
Nationalist People's Coalition	4	17	3	13	5	21
National Unity Party	0	0	0	0	0	0
PDP-Laban	2	8	4	17	5	21
Independents	5	21	4	17	5	21
Others	5	21	5	21	4	17
Total	24	100	24	100	24	100

Source: Commission on Elections (various years)

Table 22.2 Party composition of the House of Representatives, 2016, 2019, and 2022

	2016		2019		2022	
Party	**Seats**	**%**	**Seats**	**%**	**Seats**	**%**
Lakas CMD	5	2	9	4	26	10
Liberal Party	117	50	18	7	10	4
Nacionalista Party	22	9	41	17	36	14
Nationalist People's Coalition	41	18	35	15	35	14
National Unity Party	23	10	24	10	33	13
PDP-Laban	2	1	86	36	66	26
Independents	3	1	2	1	6	2
Others	21	9	26	11	41	16
Total	234	100	241	100	253	100

Source: Commission on Elections (various years)

List PR-Niemeyer electoral formula in which 'the number of seats a party (or organization) is entitled to is calculated based on the proportion by dividing the votes obtained by a party or organization over the total number of all votes cast for all qualified parties and organizations' (Agra 1997: 3).

However, unlike the German model, the Philippine party-list elections are non-compensatory. Only political parties registered for the list system can field candidates for the PR seats, while the major parties competing for single-member districts are prohibited from fielding list candidates. Hence, the majority of the seats in the House are elected through a plurality-based electoral system. The party-list election in the Philippines is peculiar, given its low threshold of 2% and a three-seat cap for winning parties that goes against the principles of PR. As shown in Table 22.3, between 1998 and 2022, an average of 115 party-list organizations participated in the party-list elections, and the average number of winning parties exceeded 28. This underperformance can be directly traced to basic deficiencies in the system brought about by the three-seat limit and the unclear minimum electoral threshold (Teehankee 2019). The proliferation of small and fragmented party-list organizations has largely contributed to the country's 'anarchy of parties'.

Presidential-based Party System

The Philippines is a prototypical example of a presidential or executive-centric party system where 'decisions to form larger parties or split into smaller ones . . . reflect their calculations about how such manoeuvres will affect their payoff in both seats and offices, weighted by their concern for

Table 22.3 Philippine party-list election, 1998–2022

Party-list election	Total Number of updated seats	Actual number of seats allocated	Number of winning parties	Number of participating parties
1998	52	14	13	122
2001	52	20	12	46
2004	53	24	16	66
2007	55	23	17	92
2010	57	41	31	150
2013	59	59	43	136
2016	59	59	46	116
2019	61	61	51	134
2022	63	63	55	177
Averages			28	115

Source: Updated from Teehankee (2019)

each' (Batto and Cox 2016: 3). For a long time, the Philippines was cited along with the United States as the 'purest two-party system' (Shugart and Carey 1992: 222). However, several scholars have noted the role of the presidency and the introduction of new electoral rules in relation to the fragmentation of the party system in the post-authoritarian period.

Kasuya (2009) observes that parties are formed around the incumbent or viable presidential candidates during and after elections. Politicians usually switch to the incumbents or viable presidential candidates to pursue pork barrel and other patronage supporters—a form of 'presidential bandwagoning'. On the other hand, Choi (2001) argues that the party fragmentation in the post-authoritarian period resulted from the adoption of a single-term limit for presidents in the 1987 Constitution. Including such a restriction nullifies or mitigates the Duvergerian effect of the plurality rule, resulting in a multi-party system. Hicken (2016) agrees with the observation that the term limit was responsible for multi-partyism. The ban lowered the entry hurdles for presidential candidates and undercut the incumbent president's incentives to invest in party formation.

Throughout the years, the Philippines' post-authoritarian election processes have revealed distinct political pathologies. These include the continued dominance of political families and clans (commonly referred to as 'political dynasties'); the existence of weak parties, as evidenced by the constant and regular practice of party switching among elected officials (colourfully dubbed 'political turncoatism' by the mass media); and the use of patronage, such as pork barrel, for political mobilization under the country's presidential system (Kasuya, 2009; Teehankee, 2013, 2018).

In 2022, Ferdinand 'Bongbong' Marcos, Jr, the sole son and namesake of the late dictator, won the presidency by a large margin 36 years after his family was forced out of the palace by a military-backed people-power uprising. Former president Gloria Macapagal Arroyo brokered an alliance between Marcos and Davao Mayor Sara Duterte, the equally feisty daughter of the populist president Rodrigo Duterte.

An Anarchy of Parties

According to Kasuya and Teehankee (2020), the Duterte presidency has resulted in an 'anarchy of parties'—a condition in which inter-party competition is fluid and fractured due to the president's party ceasing to operate as a coordination instrument for establishing the party system. An anarchy of parties is characterized by party factionalism, party switching, frequent party formation, reduced administration endorsements, and party system fragmentation.

Party factionalism

The Philippine political party system evolved from elite factions. On the other hand, intra-elite competition was historically primarily driven by local land-based political clans that served as the bedrock of Philippine party politics. Later, changes in the country's political economy influenced the nature of factional leadership within the major parties. Under Ferdinand Marcos' dictatorship, the authoritarian period disrupted the factional competitions within parties, allowing non-landed politicians to mobilize their political machines both within and outside the dictator's dominant party. Since then, many parties have been formed due to the splits and mergers of elite-based political factions that shaped the post-authoritarian multi-party system (Teehankee 2020a).

Every governing party in the post-authoritarian period was driven by intense factionalism. During the presidency of Duterte, the ruling political party—the PDP-Laban—was split into a faction supporting Senator Aquilino 'Koko' Pimentel III and Senator Emmanuel 'Manny' Pacquiao and one loyal to the populist strongman. Meanwhile, the second Marcos presidency is already facing intense factional rivalries between the supporters of Marcos, Jr. and those loyal to Vice President Sara Duterte (daughter of former president Duterte). Lakas Christian-Muslim Democrats (Lakas CMD; the de facto ruling party)—headed by Marcos, Jr's cousin, House

Speaker Ferdinand Martin Romualdez—is fending off a factional challenge from party stalwart and former president and speaker Gloria Macapagal Arroyo. The rift has resulted in Vice President Duterte resigning from the party (Galvez 2023). Meanwhile, some members of PDP-Laban who are supportive of the second Marcos presidency have switched to Lakas CMD. (Panti 2023).

Party switching

Another constant element in clientelistic practices in Philippine politics is party switching. Widely practised in the Philippines, party switching often occurs twice in an election cycle: 1) pre-election party switching—when candidates file their nomination papers and raise campaign funds; and 2) post-election party switching—when elected officials affiliate themselves with the winning party to gain access to patronage (Teehankee 2020b). From the 8th to the 17th Congress between 1987 and 2019, an average of 32% of district representatives elected to the House shifted parties (see Table 22.4).

The 1987 Constitution's introduction of a single-term limit on the presidency destabilized the legislative party system, as legislative candidates tended to align themselves with the most viable presidential contenders by switching parties. The lack of an incumbent seeking re-election and low party

Table 22.4 Party switching at the House of Representatives, 1987–2022

	Total district representatives	Total party switchers	%
8th Congress (1987–1992)	200	154	77
9th Congress (1992–1995)	200	89	45
10th Congress (1995–1998)	203	19	9
11tth Congress (1998–2001)	208	84	40
12th Congress (2001–2004)	209	15	7
13th Congress (2004–2007)	212	62	29
14th Congress (2007–2010)	219	149	68
15th Congress (2010–2013)	229	60	26
16th Congress (2013–2016)	234	15	6
17th Congress (2016–2019)	235	60	26
18th Congress (2019–2022)	238	22	9
19th Congress (2022–2025)	253	54	21

Source: Compiled by the author from various sources

loyalty incentivize possible presidential candidates to establish new parties and lure legislative candidates into switching parties in exchange for access to patronage.

Frequent party formation

According to Quimpo (2008: 128), '[f]ar from being stable, programmatic entities, [Philippine political parties] have in practice proven to be not much more than convenient vehicles of patronage that can be set up, merged with others, split, resurrected, regurgitated, reconstituted, renamed, repackaged, recycled, or flushed down the toilet anytime'. The major post-Marcos parties were products of major factional splinters. The Laban ng Demokratikong Pilipino (LDP, founded in 1988) was the dominant party under the administration of President Corazon Aquino. On the other hand, Lakas CMD was formed in 1991 by allies of President Aquino, who opted to support Defence Secretary Fidel Ramos and not the LDP presidential candidate.

Since 1992, several minor (often short-lived) parties have been organized around personalities who were then perceived to be viable presidential candidates. These 'parties of one' include the following: the People's Reform Party (PRP) of Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago; the Pwersa ng Masang Pilipino (PMP; Force of the Filipino Masses) of former president Joseph Estrada; Aksyon Demokratiko (Aksyon; Democratic Action) of the late former senator Raul Roco; Progressive Movement for Devolution of Initiative (PROMDI) of former governor Emilio 'Lito' Osmeña; Partido para sa Demokratikong Reporma (Reporma; Party for Democratic Reforms); and Bangon Pilipinas (Rise Philippines) of televangelist brother Eddie Villanueva.

These parties have become dormant after their failed bid for the presidency but are often revived occasionally to serve as a vehicle for another competitive presidential candidate. In the 2022 presidential elections, PROMDI was revived to accommodate the candidacy of former world boxing champion and senator Manny Pacquiao, Reporma was the vehicle for the second failed presidential run of the former national police chief and senator Panfilo Lacson, and Aksyon was revived to support former movie actor and Manila mayor Isko Moreno. Ferdinand 'Bongbong' Marcos, Jr, son of the late dictator, ran and won the presidency under the Partido Federal ng Pilipinas (PFP). Reestablished in 2018, the party claims to have been inspired by the Partido Federalista, the country's first political party, founded in 1900 by Pedro Paterno and Trinidad Pardo de Tavera.

Reduced administration endorsement

From 2010 to 2016, being endorsed by the president's party was a popular choice for politicians seeking a House seat: up to 70% of districts had a candidate affiliated with the president's party. In the 2019 midterm elections, just 53% of House districts had at least one candidate from the dominant presidential party (see Figure 22.1). The election of populist strongman Rodrigo Duterte in 2016 exacerbated the country's already fractured party system. He eschewed patronage-based political party building in favour of populist mobilization—a 'sustained, large-scale political project that mobilizes ordinarily marginalized social sectors into publicly visible and contentious political action while articulating anti-elite, nationalist rhetoric that valorizes ordinary people' (Jansen 2011: 82).

Unlike previous Philippine presidents, Duterte did not rely solely on patronage to consolidate his political support. Instead, he actively and personally endorsed candidates, defending his allies and attacking the opposition relentlessly. Ultimately, Duterte emerged as the big winner of the 2019 midterm elections. Most of the national and local candidates he endorsed won their contests for national and local positions. The election also resulted

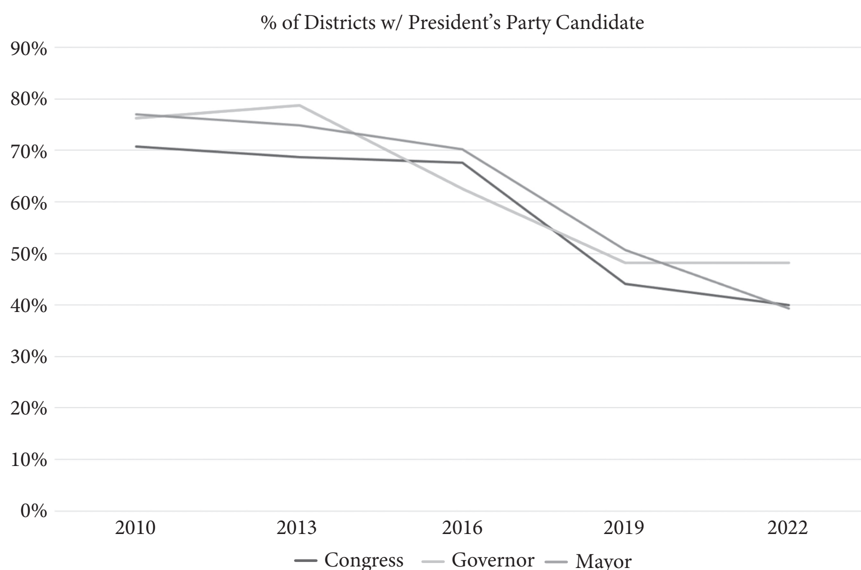

Figure 22.1 Percentage of districts that included a nominee from the president's party

Source: Updated from Kasuya and Teehankee (2020)

in a victory for the administration's 9 senatorial candidates (out of 12 seats) and most of its governors, mayors, and local legislators. Despite Duterte's high popularity at the end of his term, the percentage of politicians running under the president's party continued to decline.

Party system fragmentation

From 1946 to 1969, the effective number of national parties in the Philippines was 2.3. This number increased to 4.3 from 1987 to 2010 in the post-authoritarian period (Hicken 2016). As of 2021, there are 174 political parties registered with the Commission on Elections (COMELEC). These parties are classified as national (49), regional (23), and provincial, city/municipal (102). Combined with the 177 party-list organizations listed in 2022, there is a total of 351 political parties in the Philippines.

As shown in Table 22.5, the Philippine multi-party system has been fractured heavily through the years. From an effective number of electoral parties of 3.34 in 1992 to 8.22 in 2022. Moreover, the effective number of parliamentary parties has increased from 2.32 in 1992 to 7.21 in 2022. Both trends reflect the continuing fragmentation of the party system.

Table 22.5 Philippines: Core party system indicators

	ENEP	ENPP	Turnout (%)
1992	3.34	3.83	70.56
1995	3.17	3.64	70.68
1998	2.18	2.65	78.75
2001	4.77	3.43	81.08
2004	4.47	4.26	76.97
2007	6.32	4.81	63.68
2010	3.35	3.61	74.98
2013	4.23	3.69	77.31
2016	3.16	3.49	81.95
2019	4.35	5.59	74.31
2022	8.22	7.21	84.10

Note: ENEP—effective number of electoral parties; ENPP—Effective number of parliamentary parties; Turnout as share of all registered voters; ENEP and ENPP have been calculated for the House of Representatives

Sources: Voter Turnout Database (IDEA 2022); Lindberg et al. 2022; Varieties of Party Identity and Organization (V-Party) Dataset v2; Commission on Elections (COMELEC), various years

Major Parties in the Philippines

Based on the 2016, 2019, and 2022 election results, only six political parties are considered competitive at the national and local levels of government. These major parties are (1) Nacionalista Party (NP), (2) Liberal Party (LP), (3) Partido Demokratikong Pilipino-Lakas ng Bayan (PDP-Laban), (4) Lakas Christian-Muslim Democrats (Lakas CMD), (5) Nationalist People's Coalition (NPC), and (6) National Unity Party (NUP).

Nacionalista Party (NP)

The NP is the country's oldest party. It was founded in 1907 as a merger of Filipino nationalist parties advocating immediate independence from American colonial rule. The NP dominated electoral politics throughout the colonial period. It continued its dominance from the inauguration of the Commonwealth government in 1935 until the establishment of the Third Philippine Republic in 1946. However, the party's structure followed the elitist electoral process and was therefore elitist.

In 1946, a major faction split from the NP to form the LP. The rivalry between the two parties dominated Philippine politics from 1946 until 1972. Both took turns capturing the presidency, controlling both chambers of Congress, and winning local government seats. Ferdinand Marcos, who had formerly been affiliated with the LP, was elected president as a member of the NP. Marcos' new party absorbed the bulk of the membership of both parties—the Kilusang Bagong Lipunan (KBL; New Society Movement) after he placed the country under martial law. A faction of the NP stayed with the political opposition.

The party was revived after the fall of the Marcos dictatorship. Under the leadership of billionaire politician Manuel Villar, the party has grown in size and influence and is currently the second-largest party in the country. Aside from serving as House Speaker and Senate President, Villar is presently the wealthiest man in the Philippines. In the 2019 midterm elections, the party won 3 national positions (senators) and 2,682 local positions (district representatives, governors, vice governors, mayors, vice mayors, and local legislators).

Liberal Party (LP)

Founded in 1946, the LP is the second-oldest political party in the Philippines. For most of its existence, the party has formed half of the traditional

two-party system that dominated the post-war period. Locked out of power upon the declaration of martial law, the remaining leaders of the party who were not co-opted by the Marcos dictatorship became staunch defenders of democracy. The party embraced mass-movement politics and played a significant role in unifying the political opposition around the candidacy of Corazon C. Aquino in 1986. After the EDSA revolution (named after the location of the largest demonstrations) that ousted the dictator, the LP played an active role in the democratic transition and consolidation in the country.

After entering into coalition with successive post-Marcos administrations, the LP captured the presidency and many congressional seats in the tightly contested national elections of 2010. The LP rode a crest of strong anti-corruption voters' sentiment and the popularity of Benigno 'Noynoy' Aquino III (the son of the late democratic icon Corazon Aquino) to achieve victory. No sooner than the proclamation of Noynoy as the 15th president had been announced, defectors from the losing parties started jumping onto the LP bandwagon. Like previous dominant parties, the LP managed to attract party defectors through the promise of pork and privilege.

While the LP-led administration was able to pass several progressive socio-economic policies and legislations, it failed to fully implement its reform agenda, particularly with regard to political and electoral reforms (i.e. the political dynasty ban, freedom of information law, and political party development law, among others). The party succumbed to the necessity of money and patronage politics to ensure its stay in power. As a result, it lost its core voters and supporters, who shifted their support to illiberal populist Rodrigo R. Duterte. Soon afterwards, the LP (the ruling party from 2010 to 2016) was decimated by defection to the new ruling coalition supportive of the Duterte administration and, later, the resurgent Marcos administration.

Partido Demokratiko Pilipino-Lakas ng Bayan (PDP-Laban)

The PDP-Laban was forged in the struggle against the Marcos dictatorship. Its earlier incarnation was a promising progressive political party rooted in social democratic ideology and organized by a cadre of seasoned activists. It was the first electoral party to require ideological training before accepting members. It was the de facto political party of Corazon Aquino during the 1986 snap presidential election and was the majority party in the early part of the Cory administration (1986–1992). It suffered its first major setback in 1991 when a major faction split to form a new party—the LDP.

The party was weakened for decades and became a minor player in Philippine politics until it successfully fielded Rodrigo Duterte to the presidency in the 2016 election. As in previous administrations, droves of national and

local politicians switched parties to join the PDP-Laban. It won a dismal three seats in the House, but its number of House seats swelled to more than 200 to form a 'supermajority' after Duterte was elected president. In the 2019 midterm elections, the party won 4 national positions (senators) and 5,760 local positions (district representatives, governors, vice governors, mayors, vice mayors, and local legislators).

However, just like its predecessors, the dominant presidential party experienced a major factional split between the followers of President Duterte and those of Senator Aquilino 'Koko' Pimentel III (son of the party founder) and world boxing legend and senator Manny Pacquiao. Pacquiao ran for president in 2022. Currently, a big chunk of its remaining members switched to other political parties in pursuit of patronage.

Lakas Christian-Muslim Democrats (Lakas CMD)

The Lakas Christian-Muslim Democrats (Lakas CMD) was the country's dominant party from 1992 to 2010. The party was founded in 1991 as a merger between the Lakas ng EDSA (Power of EDSA) and the National Union of Christian Democrats (NUCD). Later it also absorbed the Union of Muslim Democrats of the Philippines (UMDP) to form the Lakas NUCD-UMDP (Teehankee 2020a).

For the 2010 presidential elections, Arroyo engineered the merger of Lakas with her original party Kampi to form the Lakas Kampi CMD (LKC). The party was decimated and weakened by party switching due to its devastating defeat in the 2010 presidential elections. In the 2019 midterm elections, the party won 1 national position (senator) and 680 local positions (district representatives, governors, vice governors, mayors, vice mayors, and local legislators). The party used to be one of the ideological parties in the country advocating Christian-Muslim democracy. It has lost its ideological integrity through the years and has deteriorated into a patronage-based machine party.

Leyte representative Ferdinand Martin Romualdez, a nephew of former First Lady Imelda Marcos, assumed the presidency of Lakas CMD in 2013. Romualdez has been a high-profile party member since the administration of former president Gloria Macapagal Arroyo. Under Romualdez's leadership, the party that was inspired by the spirit of the 1986 EDSA people-power revolution supported the vice-presidential candidacy of Bongbong Marcos in 2016. Lakas CMD has become a close ally of the Duterte administration and a principal endorser of the alliance between Bongbong Marcos and Sara Duterte in the 2022 election. Romualdez was eventually elected House

Speaker under the second Marcos presidency. Since 2022, Lakas CMD benefitted the most from massive party switching to regain its position as the most dominant party in the country.

Nationalist People's Coalition (NPC)

There were several attempts to revive the moribund NP in the early post-Marcos period. The post-Marcos NP was divided into four factions. Attempts were made to unify all factions of the NP in 1991. These attempts failed because of the ambitions of the faction leaders to be the NP presidential nominee in the 1992 presidential election. One of the factions, led by billionaire politician and Marcos crony Eduardo Cojuangco, formed the NPC (Teehankee 2020a).

The NPC has maintained its strength and number of elected national and local officials and has consistently served as a junior partner to most presidential administrations. Ideologically, it can be considered as a right-wing conservative party. The party is now identified with Cojuangco's protégé, Filipino-Chinese billionaire Ramon Ang. Currently, it is the third-largest party in the country. In the 2019 midterm elections, the party won 1 national position (senator) and 1,908 local positions (district representatives, governors, vice governors, mayors, vice mayors, and local legislators).

National Unity Party (NUP)

The NUP was formed in 2010 by members of the Kabalikat ng Malayang Pilipino (Partner of the Free Filipino abbreviated to Kampi, Tagalog for 'ally'). Kampi was founded by former president Gloria Macapagal Arroyo and was merged with the Lakas CMD to form the Lakas Kampi CMD in 2010. Soon after it failed to win the 2010 presidential elections, the merged party split into three factions (Teehankee 2020a).

Members of the original Kampi then formed the NUP and allied with the winning coalition. Like the NPC, it has become a reliable junior partner of incumbent administrations. The party is said to be supported by billionaire Spanish-Filipino Enrique Razon, Jr—the second richest man in the Philippines. In the 2019 midterm elections, the party won 1,376 local positions (district representatives, governors, vice governors, mayors, vice mayors, and local legislators).

Citizen–Party Linkage

Citizen participation is a fundamental cornerstone of democracy. Political parties serve as vehicles for citizens to engage with and reconnect with democratic institutions and processes. Regrettably, Philippine politics is characterized by a lack of citizen–party linkage. Due to the country's lack of party cohesion, political parties regularly break and combine into ad hoc alliances, displacing 'democratic accountability' in favour of 'clientelistic accountability'. Clientelistic accountability 'represents a transaction, the direct exchange of citizen's vote in return for direct payments or continuing access to employment, goods, and services' (Kitschelt and Wilkinson 2007: 2).

Political parties in the Philippines are personality-based organizations primarily organized around dominant local political clans and warlords; they are anchored in clientelistic, parochial, and personal inducements rather than in issues, ideologies, and party platforms (Teehankee 2015). In the Philippines, party membership is transient, fleeting, and momentary, as the majority of political parties are active only during election season. There is no way to collect reliable data on party membership because political parties and the COMELEC do not keep accurate records.

All relevant parties have a national territorial scope. Political parties at the national level are organized at the regional or provincial level. Local political parties have branches at the city or municipal level. Ordinary party members have little influence over party decisions, typically made by higher-level party organs such as a national executive committee or national directorate comprising a select group of party leaders and personalities (Teehankee 2012).

Party members elected to both chambers of Congress or local government positions, or appointed to cabinet or sub-cabinet positions, are typically appointed to higher party organs. On paper, all relevant party constitutions designate the party congress, national assembly, or a variation thereof as their respective parties' highest decision-making body. However, in practice, major decisions are made by a smaller group of party leaders and party bodies called the national executive committee or national directorate. The party's daily operations are typically overseen by the secretary-general or executive director (Teehankee 2012).

Party Financing

Parties, and particularly their electoral campaigns, are primarily funded by private donors, usually from the business sector. The state does not finance or subsidize political parties. Since 2003, the House has debated a

proposed 'Political Development Party Act', which aims to promote political party institutionalization in the Philippines by addressing four critical reform issues: campaign finance reform, state subsidy to political parties, a prohibition on party switching, and strengthening citizen–party ties (Teehankee 2015).

Existing election laws regulate only campaign expenditures and contributions and do not require political parties to file financial reports outside of the campaign period. Most, if not all, political parties do not collect dues from their rank-and-file members. Frequently, elected party members with access to state funds bear the burden of financing the party's day-to-day operations (i.e. pork barrel). Additionally, it is not uncommon for individual politicians who are viable presidential candidates to finance a political party's entire operation (Teehankee 2012).

Almost all major political parties are financed through campaign donations and membership dues collected from elected members. The mainstream parties have made arrangements with their elected members to deduct part of their salaries automatically. Usually, the non-elected rank-and-file members are not required to pay party dues and are subsidized by their party leaders. The three top political parties are identified with the three Forbes-listed billionaires in the country: Manny Villar with NP, Ramon Ang with NPC, and NUP with Enrique Razon, Jr.

Multimedia Communication Strategies

Given the physical, financial, and logistical impossibility of encountering the electorate personally during a national campaign in the Philippines, the media have emerged as the most efficient and cost-effective means for political party candidates to communicate with the public. The broadcast media (radio and television) have surpassed newspapers and magazines as the primary source of news and information for the general public. Broadcast media, which reach millions of people, have largely displaced print media, circulating in the hundreds of thousands. While broadcast media have the broadest reach, they also tend to lack substance as everything is reduced to two- or three-sentence sound bites. On the other hand, print media allow for extensive explanations (Teehankee 2010).

Within broadcast media, television has supplanted radio as the primary source of mass information. The rise of digital and social media is another emerging trend. Due to the exorbitant cost of political radio and television advertising for most candidates, the internet in general and social media in particular have become more cost-effective alternatives (Teehankee 2010).

Rodrigo Duterte was the first to successfully utilize social media in a presidential campaign in the Philippines. Given the initial weakness of his political party, the PDP-Laban, his campaign depended on social media to boost his candidacy. Among the presidential candidates who used social media campaigning, Duterte's online presence was the most aggressive and intense, even using trolls and fake accounts. Moreover, Duterte's supporters were not only committed to their candidate online but also offline. They were consistently part of the huge crowds who attended his political campaigns and rallies. (Sinpeng et al. 2020).

Summary Evaluation

Philippine political parties 'remain to be candidate-driven alliances of provincial bosses, political machines, and local clans, based on clientelistic, parochial, and personal inducements rather than on causes, ideologies, and party programs' (Teehankee 2012). The factionalized nature of Philippine party politics is both a cause and effect of the political parties' lack of institutionalization. Since the founding of the first Filipino political party in 1900, many political parties have come and gone. Nonetheless, the institutionalization of political parties in the country remains weak and underdeveloped.

Philippine elections continue to be patronage-driven rather than policy- or ideology-driven, in the sense that the provision of material benefits is the primary resource of politicians for courting votes. Patronage provisions include various activities, such as pork barrelling, casework, and vote-buying (Kasuya 2009). Political parties in the Philippines have essentially been an amalgamation of vote-generating machines oriented towards putting their leaders in government, gaining access to patronage, and generally securing the benefits of public office. The weakness of political parties has promoted the mobilization of pork barrel and other state patronage by presidential administrations to push for their legislative agenda in Congress.

The passage of the long-delayed Political Party Development Act might help mitigate some of the weaknesses of the party system, such as money politics, constant party switching, and weak citizen–party linkages. The legislation of the constitutional provision banning political dynasties will also facilitate a level playing field. Unfortunately, these important pieces of legislation have not yet been passed by Congress. In the long term, a constitutional review should seriously study the institutional effects of the presidential form of government on the party system and consider the feasibility of switching to a more party-oriented parliamentary system.

Halfway into the second Marcos presidency, the various political parties in the Philippines began their ritual of splitting and merging in anticipation of the 2025 midterm elections. Already, the de facto ruling party Lakas CMD has been shaken by a leadership struggle between House Speaker Romualdez and former president Arroyo. The feud resulted in the sudden resignation of the party chair, Vice President Sara Duterte, who is a known close Arroyo ally. On the other hand, the president's original party in the 2022 election—the PFP—has actively been recruiting party switchers into its ranks. Unfortunately, these political realignments reinforce the continuing 'anarchy of parties' in the country.

Note

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IV

POLITICAL PARTIES AND DEMOCRATIC CHALLENGES IN AFRICA

23
Political Parties and Democracy in South Africa

Robert Mattes, Matthias Krönke, and Sarah Lockwood

Introduction

While a sustained wave of mass opposition eventually washed away the formal edifice of South Africa's apartheid regime, ordinary South Africans have yet to develop high levels of positive commitment to the institutions of liberal democracy (Mattes 2019). Instead, the survival of liberal democracy in South Africa has been based, thus far, on the actions of individual elite 'gatekeepers' (Levitsky and Ziblatt 2018) located largely in the country's courts, parliament, and civil society organizations, and, sometimes, in political parties. While some individuals have worked to defend democratic practices within their parties, and some opposition parties have taken formal steps to counter specific acts of democratic erosion through legal action, we argue that South Africa's parties have, collectively, weakened the country's democratic experiment by failing to commit fully to all aspects of liberal democracy, engaging with voters, or offering voters a competitive electoral arena that provides them with effective choices. South Africa thus has a supply-side problem in its democracy, a problem exemplified by four important characteristics of the country's political party system, which in turn have their roots in a series of structural and contingent factors.

Four Key Features of South Africa's Party System

Two and a half decades after its transition to democracy, South Africa's political party system is characterized by four striking features, none of which bode well for the sustainability of high levels of representative democracy. The first and most prominent characteristic is its 25-year dominance by the African National Congress (ANC), which led resistance to the previous apartheid regime, culminating in the country's first democratic, non-racial election in

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1994. The ANC won that election with a resounding 62% of the vote and saw its support rise even further in subsequent years, peaking at 69% in 2004 (Table 23.1). While its electoral support has receded somewhat in recent years, the ANC still dominates the political arena, gaining 58% of the vote in the most recent 2019 national election. This dominance raises concerns about the accountability of the South African government, as well as reducing the competitiveness of the electoral arena in problematic ways.

The second key feature of the country's party system is that it is dominated by organizations rooted in the pre-democratic, apartheid era, many of whom still embody worldviews from this period which undermine genuine liberal democracy. Although the ANC successfully ended apartheid, for example, it was by no means committed to bringing about liberal democracy when it did, and it continues to have a lukewarm commitment to many aspects of liberal democracy (Dubow 2012; Southall 2014, 2016). Moreover, a tendency to identify itself as the embodiment of the nation, common among national liberation movements like the ANC, means that the party often condemns those who oppose it as 'aliens or traitors', delegitimizing opposition in the political system, and limiting the competitiveness of the electoral arena.

The main opposition party, the Democratic Alliance (DA), similarly, traces its history back to the apartheid era, and specifically to liberal opposition

Table 23.1 National election results and effective number of parties, 1994–2019

Party	1994	1999	2004	2009	2014	2019
ANC	62.7%	66.4%	69.7%	65.9%	62.2%	57.5%
DP/DA	1.7%	9.6%	12.4%	16.7%	22.2%	20.8%
IFP	10.5%	8.6	6.7%	4.6%	2.4%	3.4%
EFF	—	—	—	—	6.4%	10.8%
NP	20.4%	6.9%	1.7%	—	—	—
Other	4.7%	8.5%	9.5%	12.8%	6.8%	7.5%
VAP turnout	*85.8%*	*63.9%*	*56.8%*	*56.6%*	*53.8%*	*47.3%*
ENEP	*2.33*	*2.16*	*1.94*	*2.09*	*2.23*	*2.49*
ENPP	*2.21*	*2.15*	*1.97*	*2.12*	*2.26*	*2.57*

Note: ENEP—effective number of electoral parties; ENPP—effective number of parliamentary parties; VAP—voting age population turnout as share of all eligible voters

Source: IEC Election results (IEC South Africa 2022), Voter Turnout Database (International IDEA 2022)

parties in the old white parliament (the Democratic Party, and before that the Progressive Federal Party). From this time, it maintains a worldview based in the experience of the middle-class, white electorate, which often prevents it from seeing the world through the eyes of the majority of South Africa's citizens today. This reduces its ability to engage with voters and limits the role the DA can play as a truly competitive opposition party. Similarly, a second significant opposition party, the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP), which governed the KwaZulu Bantustan during the apartheid era, continues to prioritize issues related to the preservation of Zulu culture and interests and has struggled to jettison the militant Zulu nationalism it became known for in the 1980s and early 1990s (Piper 2005).

Indeed, of all the parties with 10 or more seats in the current 400-seat legislature, only the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) was formed since the end of apartheid in 1994. While however, certainly a new organization, the EFF is still strongly influenced by the apartheid era—it was formed largely by defectors from the ruling ANC—and it is also limited in its commitment to liberal democracy. Explicitly placing itself to the left of the ANC, with its main issue position focused on the rapid transfer of land to black people, it presents a militant image, with an informal costume of red berets and red shirts, and rhetoric that easily qualifies as 'populist' (Fölscher et al. 2021). Thus, the country's major parties all have at least some rooting in the apartheid era and limited commitments to liberal democracy in current times, weakening the democratic system in the new South Africa.

Third, the low effective number of elecotoral and parliamentary parties (ENEP/ENPP) reflected in the statistics in Table 23.1 shows the party system is also characterized by a proliferation of very small parties in the National Assembly, with 13 parties currently represented in parliament. With the exception of the Congress of the People (COPE) (2009), and the EFF (2014 and 2019), none of the parties formed in the post-apartheid period have ever won more than 5% of the popular vote, and they give every indication that they are satisfied with their limited vote shares so long as it guarantees party leaders a parliamentary seat and salary.

The fourth important characteristic of the system is a steadily declining rate of voter participation. Conservatively estimated at 86% in 1994, images of long snake-like lines of voters patiently waiting to cast their first ballots flashed around the world. But turnout has declined consistently in every election since then, falling under 50% of the voting-age population for the first time in 2019. This is not a problem unique to South Africa, of course, but it does have significant implications for the robustness of the young democracy.

In the remainder of this chapter, we will argue that these four characteristics (a still-dominant but declining governing party; the lingering shadow of apartheid; a plethora of smaller, weak opposition parties; and declining levels of voter turnout) have their roots in a series of structural and contingent factors, resulting in a supply-side issue for democracy—in which South African voters lack a truly competitive electoral arena, populated by engaged parties offering genuine alternatives. We turn first to the structural factors.

Structural Factors

Apartheid and its legacy

In their classic volume, Seymour Martin Lipset and Stein Rokkan (1967) demonstrated that a country's current electoral cleavages reflect various political, economic, or social 'revolutions'. Such cleavages often 'freeze' and continue as the dominant electoral dividing line years after the underlying conflict has ceased to be important in and of itself. In South Africa, the apartheid regime created a stark and enduring division between the interests and values of the black, African majority and white, European minority (who constituted the subordinate and superordinate groups in South Africa's 'ranked' society) (Horowitz 1985). Given the relative size of those populations, moreover, it also created a vastly numerically imbalanced cleavage, with roughly two-thirds of eligible voters on one side versus approximately one-fifth on the other (with the balance comprising what Donald Horowitz (1985) called 'middle groups' consisting of 'coloured' and 'Indian' voters).

Because the proportion of voters previously oppressed under the apartheid system (plus their descendants) is so large, any political party linked to the apartheid government (or symbolically connected to it in some way) faces a huge challenge in gaining any sort of legitimacy among the wider electorate. On the other side of the coin, the ANC has profited from a massive reserve of credit from its successful opposition to apartheid but has worked hard to maintain its position as the champion of the previously oppressed and to position all opposition parties on the other side of the apartheid divide (see Ferree 2010).

The result is a stark racial cleavage in party support bases; a dominant ANC and a fractured, weak opposition struggling to capture the wider electorate; and the continued importance of apartheid-era legacies to modern party success. While actual votes cannot be broken down by race, and survey

results vary somewhat, the general trend is clear. Black voters have given and continue to give the lion's share of their votes to the ANC and to a few other parties whose leaders came out of the ANC (the United Democratic Movement, COPE, and EFF). In contrast, only a few black South Africans vote for any political party that has historical connections to the old white political system, and completely new parties have often struggled to gain legitimacy without liberation-era credentials. Conversely, white voters have largely voted for parties that worked within the apartheid system (albeit often in opposition), with the bulk of votes going initially to the National Party (NP), and, following its demise, to the DA, the current main opposition party.[1] Very few support any political party that has its roots in the liberation struggle.[2]

Given this demographic balance, and the cleavages that are a legacy of apartheid, South Africa has developed a party system that provides one of the largest known exceptions to 'Duverger's Law', with a closed party list formula of proportional representation (PR) producing one-party dominance and a very low number of effective political parties that could exercise any real sort of checks and balances on the ruling ANC.

Electoral system

As constitutional negotiations began in 1990, virtually all participants agreed on the necessity of replacing the existing 'first-past-the-post' single-member legislative districts with some form of PR, if only to bring as many political organizations as possible into the new dispensation and reduce the possibility of civil war. As a result of three decades of apartheid settlement policies, however, voters overwhelmingly lived in a complex pattern of homogenous racial and ethnic enclaves, thus complicating the demarcation of reasonably small multi-member districts that did not simply replicate apartheid divisions. Given the urgency of reaching an inclusive agreement and bringing closure to the protracted and violent transition, moreover, negotiators opted for the simplest form of PR possible, with half of the 400-seat National Assembly selected from national party lists and the other half from nine geographically large party lists corresponding to the country's new system of provinces. Because these lists are closed, South Africans vote for a political party, not a candidate, and that single vote is then used to calculate seats on both the national and provincial lists.[3] Moreover, the constitution specifies that elected representatives lose their seats (and hence their salaries and privileges) if they 'cease to be a member' of the party they were originally

elected to represent.[4] Thus, political parties 'own' the seats occupied by elected legislators at national, provincial, and local levels. And, again, due to the need to include as many political movements as possible in the tumultuous transition period, the new system has no de jure threshold for winning seats. In practice, as long as a party wins at least 0.25% of the national vote (or around 30,000 votes), it is guaranteed at least one of the 400 seats.

The consequences of these decisions have been threefold. First, elected legislators are accountable not to voters but to party bosses (who are themselves not always elected to parliament). During elections, candidates stand on long lists in very large electoral districts with virtually no 'personal vote'(Carey and Shugart 1995), and between elections, legislators lose their seat if they are expelled from the party for any cause, including challenging the party line. While one might expect at least some degree of indirect accountability if the ruling party had to worry about pleasing voters to retain its grip on power at the next election, the ANC has thus far had little reason to fear its electoral support dropping under 50%.[5] As a result, elected representatives have few structural incentives to seek out and listen to citizen preferences, perhaps explaining why South Africa has one of the lowest rates of popular awareness of the identity of their elected representatives, or contact with them, in Africa (Mattes 2002), as well as one of the highest rates of protest (Lockwood and Krönke 2021). At the same time, South Africans seem to be increasingly aware that they need to find some way to hold their members of parliament (MPs) accountable, whether through protesting, contacting them, or voting. When asked by Afrobarometer interviewers in 2006 'who should be responsible for making sure that, once elected, MPs do their jobs', just 10% of respondents said this was the citizens' responsibility. By 2021, this proportion had almost tripled (28%).[6]

Second, although South Africa's chief executive is elected indirectly by the National Assembly, parties focus their campaigns almost exclusively around their 'presidential' candidate, who heads the party list. This forces voters to make package decisions about an entire government and focuses attention on national rather than regional dynamics where opposition parties might enjoy a relative advantage, reinforcing the dominance of the ANC and making it hard for opposition parties to build their based of supporters.

Finally, while low thresholds facilitate relatively easy entry for a wide range of small parties, often based around a single personality or issue, they also provide those parties with little incentive to expand their voter base so long as the key party leaders are able to guarantee their own high spot on the party list and, thus, re-election. This helps to explain the proliferation of very small parties and the weakness of the opposition as a whole.

Public party financing

Public financial support for South Africa's political parties takes two distinct forms. First, public funds have been available direct to parties since 1997. But while public funding is ideally intended to level the playing field and provide all significant parties with the means to put their case before the voters, South Africa's system does the opposite. Until very recently, the vast share of available funds (90%) was allotted to parties based on their national and provincial legislative representation. Only 10% was given out equally, divided proportionally among provincial legislatures—based on population size—with equal amounts given to any party represented in that assembly. While there have been attempts in recent years to improve this approach, more than two decades of this skewed disbursement pattern have reinforced, rather than reduced, the financial disadvantage of smaller and new parties vis-à-vis the older and larger ANC and DA.[7]

Second, since 2009 all television broadcasting licence holders have been required to make a specified number of two-minute slots available for party advertisements on each day of the designated election campaign period.[8] In contrast to the distribution of public funding, free time is distributed based on the number of candidates a party fields rather than its number of currently elected legislative representatives (Independent Communications Authority of South Africa 2008)

At least four points are salient. First, the already dominant ANC receives the vast majority of available public funds, reinforcing its dominance. In 2019, for example, the ANC received 59% of a total of R149 million (approximately US$10.3 million at the time), while the DA received 22%, and the EFF 8% (IEC South Africa 2019).

Second, public funds cover only a small share of all campaign expenses. While the data are spotty, we know that in 1999, for example, all parties combined spent an estimated total of R300 million to R500 million (approximately US$48.8 to US$81.3 million at the time) during the campaign, with only R53 million (approximately US$8.6 million at the time) coming from the public purse (Schreiner and Mattes 2012). This means that parties still depend heavily on their ability to raise funds for campaign and daily operating expenses from private donors. Given the ANC's control over public policy and state contracts, as well as the operation of its own in-house investment firm, and the DA's historical links with the business community, it is not surprising that these two parties receive far more in private donations than any other political party (Butler 2010). Although South African legislation now imposes more restrictions than many other African countries

(International IDEA 2021), for more than two decades the ANC and DA were able to take advantage of undisclosed private donations, an advantage that will take many years to erase. Certainly, only the ANC and DA are able to employ substantial professional, permanent staff for activities like fundraising, market research, policy development, and publicity.

Third, the ANC's campaign spending has increased rapidly over the past few elections, making it more and more difficult for smaller parties to level the playing field. The ANC spent an estimated R300 million (approximately US$44.7 million at the time) on its campaign activities in 2004, rising to between R400 and R500 million (approximately US$38.8 to US$48.4 million at the time) in 2009 and 2014, and an estimated R1 billion (approximately US$69.2 million at the time) on the 2019 general election campaign (Thuynsma 2017; Sokutu 2019; Plessis 2021).

Fourth, while free television airtime is nominally distributed among all parties on a much more equitable basis than public funding, the allocation of these spots is only finalized fairly late in the campaign (once parties' lists of candidates are vetted and verified), thus limiting its impact. Additionally, because parties are responsible for organizing the resources and expertise to produce the television advertisements, most parties (beyond the ANC and DA) have been unable to take advantage of the free time slots, often leaving them unutilized (Schreiner and Mattes 2012; Duncan 2014).

There are some important changes afoot, however. In April 2021, the 2018 Political Party Funding Act (Republic of South Africa 2021) was finally signed into law. This changed the apportionment of funds, with one-third to be allocated equitably and two-thirds proportionally; established a Multiparty Democracy Fund to raise and distribute donated funds from the private sector to represented political parties (using the same formula); and established, for the first time, rules for mandatory disclosure of private donations to political parties (Ndamase 2020; Republic of South Africa 2021). Taken together, these changes have the potential to reduce the historical inequalities between parties and increase the transparency and accountability of party funding over time.

Looking ahead, social media might also offer political parties a more affordable way to connect with voters. However, smartphone penetration and social media use is still not as widespread in South Africa as one might expect. The most recent Afrobarometer survey found that only two-thirds of all people (64%) say they get news from social media on a frequent basis (compared to 87% for television, and 79% for radio) (Afrobarometer 2021; see also Krönke 2020). It is also unclear to what extent opposition party cam-

paign strategists will have the necessary organizational capacity and skill to develop coherent campaigns across new and old media channels that would in any realistic way close the gap with the dominant and better-resourced ANC.

Contingent Factors

Beyond these structural factors, South Africa's political parties are characterized by a range of organizational, performance, and strategic shortcomings that contribute to the striking characteristics of the party system and tend to limit rather than advance democratic practice.

Party organization

The ANC

By any standard, the ANC is a highly structured organization with a long pedigree. First organized by a small group of prominent Africans in 1912 (as the South African Native National Congress), the ANC as a mass organization dates back at least to the late 1940s (Butler 2012). Since its unbanning as an organization in 1990, the ANC has had four party presidents (Nelson Mandela, Thabo Mbeki, Jacob Zuma, and Cyril Ramaphosa), with none serving more than two five-year terms, each (re)elected at quinquennial party conferences, at which several thousand delegates also elect the rest of the party office bearers and National Executive Committee. The fact that the party conference of the governing party takes place about 16 months ahead of the national election, however, introduces the possibility of prolonged periods where the party leader differs from the state president. Indeed, this has occurred on three separate occasions, with two of these instances creating considerable political tension and organizational paralysis within the party.[9]

The party has a relatively high degree of internal complexity, with functional subdivisions at the national level, nine provincial subdivisions, and thousands of local branches (African National Congress 2017). However, while South Africa is a federal system, the party's provincial structures are seen as co-equal in status to other functional subdivisions (e.g. Women's, Youth, and Veterans' Leagues) and have no special role in party decision-making. Rather party policies and key decisions are made by the National Executive Committee (which consists of 80 members elected at large and

six key office holders), and on a daily basis by a smaller National Working Committee. The ANC also has a set of policy bodies that shadow government ministries. Concerning the level of internal democracy, the ANC scores well in measures of intra-party democracy developed by the Political Party Database Project (see Figure 23.1), reflecting the involvement of local branches in both candidate selection and manifesto development.[10]

Yet despite being an organizationally complex, geographically widespread, and internally democratic organization, the ANC has not avoided episodes of excessive personal control of the party, and it has failed to rein in the autocratic tendencies of at least two of its leaders (Figure 23.2). In his first term as state president (1994–2004), Thabo Mbeki began to exercise increasing control over party policy—particularly with regard to the appointment of party personnel to government positions—and HIV/AIDS policy. Such was the extent of his obsessive control that senior cabinet members such as Kader Asmal refused to answer simple questions from reporters about the link between HIV and AIDS for fear of countering Mbeki's eccentric views on the subject. Following Mbeki's removal, the party underwent a very brief period of renewed openness during Kgalema Motlanthe's seven-month interim presidency (Kondlo and Maserumule 2011). However, his successor Jacob Zuma resumed and increased this authoritarian trend through frequent cabinet reshuffles and contentious appointments of senior civil servants, who rewarded Zuma's cronies with major state contracts and access to government policy-making processes (or what became known in South Africa as 'state capture'), sending the country into its deepest democratic crisis to date.

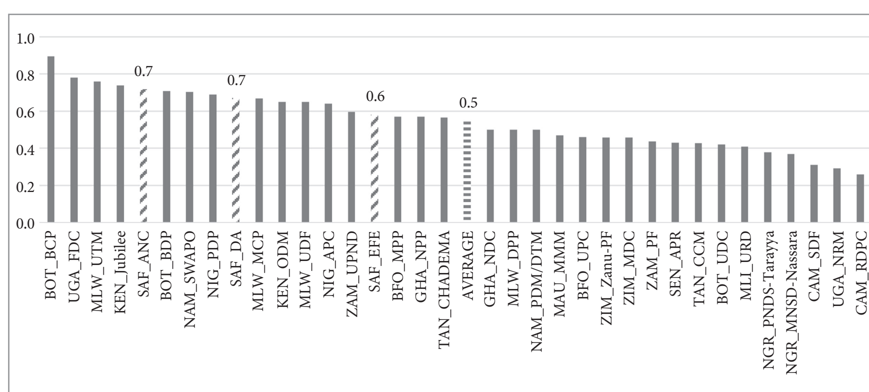

Figure 23.1 Intra-party democracy: South African parties in comparative perspective

The IPD index (0–1) incorporates three components: personnel, structure and manifesto; additional information can be found in footnote 10, and in Brause and Poguntke (2021)

Note: SAF_ANC = African National Congress; SAF_DA = Democratic Alliance; SAF_EFF = Economic Freedom Fighters; Horizontal dashed line = sample average.

Source: PPDB data (Poguntke et al. 2021)

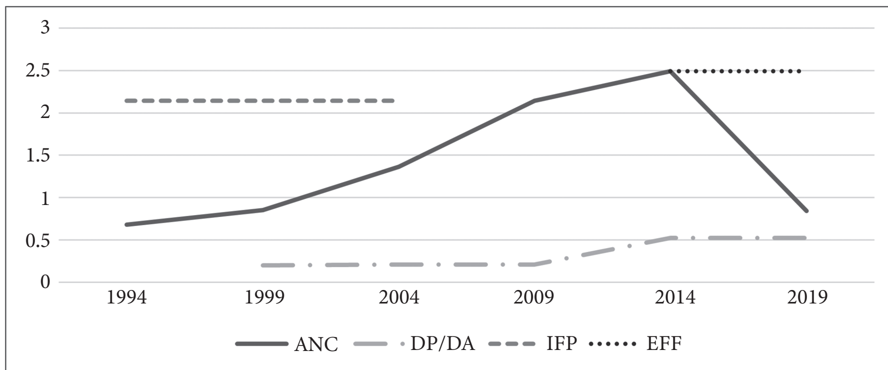

Figure 23.2 Party personalization, 1994–2019

Note: The scale runs from 0 (The party is not focused on the personal will and priorities of one individual leader) to 4 (The party is solely focused on the personal will and priorities of one individual party leader). Data for the IFP were not available for 2009–2019

Source: V-Party (Lührmann et al. 2020)

Despite grumblings from many in the ANC as this took place, old habits developed during its years in exile (including secrecy, strict discipline, and the privileging of loyalty above all else) meant that ANC caucus members were unwilling to support successive votes of no confidence in Zuma until the casting of a secret ballot became an option.

In addition to its failure to rein in autocratic tendencies, the geographically widespread organizational structure of the ANC has not prevented it from isolating itself from interactions with civil society and their associated accountability demands. In terms of its linkages with civil society, the ANC has strong and long-standing relationships with the trade union and local civic association movements. Yet it also has a strong degree of autonomy from civil society. Indeed, many question whether allied civil society organizations have retained sufficient autonomy from the ANC and, thus, space to criticize and hold it accountable. Reflecting its historic drive to present a broad united front against apartheid, the ANC has been the leading force in a tripartite alliance with the South African Communist Party (SACP) and Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), and, more informally, with the South African Civics Movement (SANCO)—linkages that provide the ANC with tremendous advantages during election campaign periods. In return for their work holding campaign rallies and canvassing and mobilizing voters, and their pledge not to run their own slate of candidates, the ANC has placed SACP and COSATU officials on the ANC list, who then take up their seats as ANC MPs. The number of such seats is probably much larger than either organization could win if they ran on their own, creating a disincentive for

these members to criticize ANC policy. For many years, for example, trade unions and grassroots civic organizations were strongly opposed to ANC economic policy, yet their MPs remained loyal to the party. In general, when COSATU and its allied organizations have publicly criticized ANC policy, the party has simply responded by condemning them as 'ultra left' rather than engaging with the critique and justifying its own economic policy.

At the citizen level, moreover, while the ANC has a large number of local branches, evidence suggests that those branches have a relatively limited presence in their communities. In the 2019 election, for example, the ANC attracted only 22% of South Africans to a party campaign meeting or rally,[11] far outpacing any other party in the country but well below averages elsewhere on the continent (Krönke et al. 2022). It also contacted 30% of South Africans as part of their canvassing or 'get out the vote' campaign. However, the ANC 'ground game' was reduced in 2019, with personal contact dropping from 21% to 15%, likely reflecting the losses of several key trade union allies (e.g. the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (NUMSA)) due to the policy tensions discussed above. The number of voters contacted by the ANC by telephone or SMS did increase, from 7% to 15%. Indeed, based on our party presence index (Krönke et al. 2022), in which we use survey data from Afrobarometer to measure the frequency with which voters at national or sub-national levels engage with parties during or between elections, South African parties (taken as a whole) have one of the lowest rates of local organizational presence in Africa [Figure 23.3]. This is most likely a consequence of South Africa's particular form of PR, which provides little incentive for local candidates to build or maintain local party organizations, combined with the historic dominance of the ANC and the role that the legacy of apartheid continues to play in voting patterns.

Opposition Parties

Of South Africa's three main opposition parties, only the DA has an organization that is both relatively internally complex and geographically widespread. Born from a 1989 merger of the liberal, anti-apartheid Progressive Federal Party with two factions that had broken from the ruling NP, it then became the DA in 2003 when it joined forces with the remnants of the NP and the small Federal Alliance. Currently, the DA controls the government of the Western Cape province and the majority of local councils in that province, as well as participating in executive coalitions in three large metropolitan municipal councils outside the province (Tshwane, Ekurhuleni, Johannesburg).

In contrast to the ANC, the DA is organized federally into nine provincial structures (as well as a youth and women's league) and led by a federal

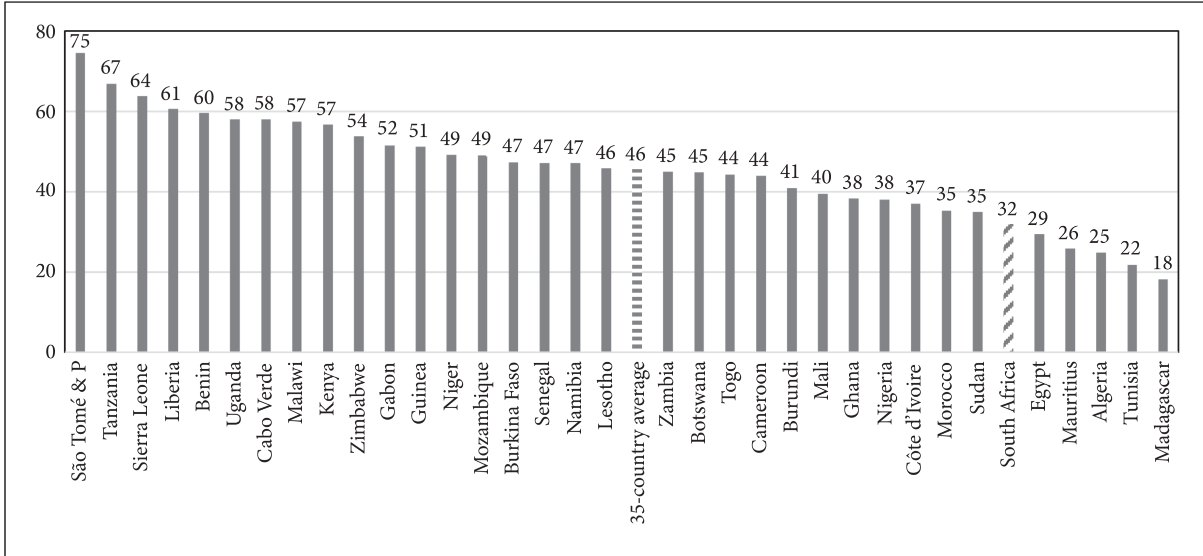

Figure 23.3 Party Presence Index, 35 countries, 2014–2015

Note: Scale represents the proportion of citizens who engaged with a political party in any one of four ways: attend rally, attend meeting, worked for party during last campaign, contacted party official

Source: Krönke et al. (2022)

council. Since 1994, the party has experienced regular turnover of leadership, with five party presidents (Zach De Beer, Tony Leon, Helen Zille, Mmusi Maimane, and John Steenhuisen) elected at quinquennial federal party congresses. As Figure 23.1 shows, moreover, the party has relatively high levels of internal party democracy (though lower than the ANC).

While the party is organizationally strong on paper, however, like the ANC it has relatively weak linkages with citizens. Compared to the ANC, the DA engages a far smaller share of the electorate in person during the campaign season. Nevertheless, the party has learned to contact voters virtually, which can be accomplished without a local organizational footprint. By 2019, for instance, the DA had caught up with and even passed the ANC, contacting 30% of all voters. While it made personal, face-to-face contact with only 8% of voters (compared to the ANC's 15%), it contacted 23% through, largely, telephone calls and SMS/text messages.[12]

Historically the DA has been seen as allied with the business community, and its roots in the old white political system and inability to develop any real connections to other mass-based organizations such as trade unions have also significantly hampered its ability to mobilize large numbers of voters, limiting its effectiveness as an opposition party. Over the past 25 years, moreover, while the party has had some success at transforming itself into an organization with growing numbers of coloured and black party officials in leadership positions, several promising black leaders have also left the party (e.g. William Mnisi, Lindiwe Mzibuko, Mmusi Maimane, and Herman Mashaba), in some cases amid claims that former DA leader Helen Zille continues to dominate party policy in troubling ways. While the DA scores relatively low on the V-Party Personalization Index (Figure 23.2), like the ANC it has struggled in practice to rein in the influence of dominant personalities.

The other two main opposition parties—the IFP and the EFF—are both far less complex and far more personalistic organizations. The IFP came into existence in 1975, initially formed as a Zulu cultural organization known as the Inkatha National Cultural Liberation Movement. The party was led for 45 years by its founder Mangosuthu Buthelezi, who, even when he handed over the leadership to Velenkosini Hlabisa in 2019, remained the leader of the party's parliamentary caucus in the National Assembly. Other aspiring senior leaders, such as Oscar Dhlomo, Frank Mdlalose, and Zanele kaMagwaza-Msibi, all saw their path to the leadership closed off by Buthelezi and eventually left the party for other pastures. A former member of the ANC youth league, and a member of the Zulu royal family, Buthelezi was Chief Minister of the Zulu Bantustan during apartheid and remains the Traditional Prime Minister of the Zulu Kingdom today. Perhaps unsurprisingly,

given this, the party's main societal linkage is with the traditional Zulu royal household. Despite trying to appeal to a broader constituency, the party's social and economic conservatism, combined with a continued focus on traditional leadership and close relations with the Zulu royal family, has continued to appeal primarily to Zulu-speaking South Africans, limiting its appeal as an opposition party. Organizationally, the party has relatively little presence outside of KwaZulu-Natal and the city of Johannesburg; however, within KwaZulu-Natal the IFP is relatively successful, controlling 9 out of 44 councils and representing the plurality of councillors in a further 16 councils.

Finally, the EFF, created in 2013 by the former leader of the ANC Youth League, Julius Malema, situates itself to the ideological left of the ANC, with its main issue position focused on the rapid transfer of land to black South Africans. It describes itself as part of a 'broad Marxist-Leninist' tradition and also draws influence from Fanonian schools of thought. The party presents a militant image, describing its party leader as 'President and Commander-in-Chief' and its organizational structures as national or provincial 'command teams'. Though it is the youngest of the major opposition parties, it has had some success at building local organizational structures in several provinces and on several of the country's university student councils, reflecting the party's appeal among many young South Africans (Lepule 2021). That said, during the 2019 campaign season the party only contacted 12% of the electorate overall (7% in person, and 5% by telephone or digital means), showing contact levels overall are still low. While it has captured sufficient support to be included in the executive councils of a number of local governments, its leader, Malema, has by far the highest profile among the party's leadership, and his charismatic personality dominates virtually all party activity, with relatively little done within the party to rein him in or hold him accountable in any way.

Taken together, therefore, this brief overview of the organizational structures of South Africa's main parties shows that all four parties struggle in some way to engage widely with voters, and they have failed to rein in dominant party members. This contributes to an environment in which voters are offered at best a limited competitive electoral arena while internal party dynamics raise the possibility that liberal democracy is far from the only game in town.

Party performance and strategy

Finally, we turn to consider the performance of the ruling party and the associated strategies of the major opposition parties. Over the past quarter of a

century, successive ANC governments have struggled to create jobs, reduce poverty, or narrow inequality in any appreciable way, issues consistently identified as the 'most important problem' by large proportions of citizens (Afrobarometer Network 2016). It has also presided over a spectacular policy failure in relation to the HIV/AIDS pandemic, and a scandal of historic proportions in relation to the 'state capture' corruption scandal. In 2019, only 26% of people said that the ANC had done a good or very good job running the country over the previous five years.

Ordinarily, reviews like this should spell doom for any governing party, but the ANC remains hegemonic, and the opposition parties have repeatedly failed to capitalize on its declining popularity. Why? A number of factors already discussed almost certainly play an important role here. For example, the legacy of apartheid means that the ANC continues to command lingering support among those who credit it with liberation, even though its performance in office has been poor. Similarly, the electoral system and party financing system have both historically favoured the ANC to the detriment of other parties, while the lower levels of presence among opposition parties limits their contact with many voters. Additionally, the DA's white image and the IFP's Zulu image have undoubtedly turned off many South Africans, reducing their appeal among broad swathes of the population. But the strategies and associated images of the country's main opposition parties are also critical. Turning to the South African National Election Study (SANES) data, just 23% of those surveyed in 2019 felt that any opposition party could do a better job dealing with their most important problems than the ANC; only 29% rated an opposition leader higher than they rate President Cyril Ramaphosa; and just 31% give any opposition party a higher trust score than the ANC (SANES 2019).[13] While the ANC many not be doing a great job, therefore, the evidence suggests that the opposition parties are failing to provide a compelling alternative.

This is, in many ways, a damning indictment of opposition strategists' failure to use the resources available to them to implant a clearer image in the minds of voters about who they are, what they stand for, and their ability to govern. Indeed, none of the opposition parties give strong evidence of any sort of well-thought-out strategy to court voters on a continuous basis by using their parliamentary platform or other events as opportunities to generate free media publicity between elections. Most wait and mount their campaign in the six to eight weeks leading up to the election, at which point it is far too late to shape or reshape their public image in any significant way (Africa 2019).

Additionally, South Africa's opposition parties have repeatedly shown themselves to be out of touch with broad swathes of the electorate, focusing instead in their campaigns on issues of interest to, at best, a small core of party voters. Let us consider the most recent national election of 2019. With Zuma's recent resignation and rapidly declining levels of voter satisfaction with government performance, the ANC was at its most vulnerable, particularly to a negative campaign focused on the tangible consequences of the massive corruption of the Zuma years, such as mounting deficits, shrinking development budgets, and neglect and damage to crucial development infrastructure (e.g. coal boilers for electricity generation, train rolling stock). Voters, as of the Afrobarometer 2018 survey, ranked unemployment, crime and security, and housing as the priority issues for government attention. Yet the DA responded by running a relatively anodyne, positive campaign focused on inclusiveness and national unity, in which the impact of corruption played a marginal role (Democratic Alliance 2018) The EFF, similarly, ignored the concerns of the majority of voters and chose to focus instead primarily on land redistribution and the nationalization of key industries—issues that few, if any, South African voters prioritized (South African History Online 2019).[14]

Summing Up: A Supply-side Issue for Democracy

For many years, the ANC played its role about as well might be expected. It entered the post-apartheid dispensation with a deep reservoir of goodwill. And given the numerically imbalanced cleavages stemming from the social and economic divisions created by the apartheid regime, and other structural advantages created by the electoral system and the party funding and campaign broadcasting rules, the ANC was rewarded handsomely at the ballot box. As Lord Acton might have predicted, however, the size of the ANC's electoral victories and legislative majorities generated arrogance at the highest levels of party leadership, leading to hesitance and a fear of questioning eccentric and misguided policies at all levels, and subsequently, malevolence and corruption spanning the entire breadth of the party. Predictably, public opinion surveys tracked consistent declines in citizen satisfaction with the performance of the ANC government and identification with the ANC as a party. But while the ANC has lost substantial voter support over the last several elections, it remains the predominant party.

As for the country's opposition parties, they have failed to play their role effectively. The evidence reviewed in this chapter shows that the growing ranks of dissatisfied South Africans feel they have nowhere to turn for a better alternative. While the chief opposition party (the DA) has improved its image in some respects, it—along with the rest of the opposition—has failed to convince a sufficiently sizeable share of the electorate that they are competent to govern, are inclusive, focused on the issues that matter, and trustworthy. Most dissatisfied voters thus face the choice of holding their noses and taking another chance with the governing party or staying home on election day—a choice that was made by a majority of South Africans in both the 2019 general election and the 2021 local council elections. While the dominant view of the problem of electoral democracy in ethnically or racially divided societies is therefore seen as a problem of demand—that is, voters who will not change their minds (e.g. Horowitz 1985, 1991; Johnson and Schlemmer 1996)—our conclusion is that the problems of South Africa's democracy are actually on the supply side. Providing voters with greater choice and accountability will require reforms in three different areas. First, South Africans must consider appropriate adjustments to the electoral system to reduce the size of electoral districts and provide legislators with greater autonomy and incentive to respond to local constituencies rather than national party bosses. Second, while recent changes have moved in the right direction, further reforms are necessary to the party funding model to provide the opposition with the means to take their message to the electorate, and to campaign broadcasting rules to allow parties to produce those messages in a more timely fashion. Finally, opposition parties need to increase their grassroots presence and improve their understanding of the electorate so as to produce more effective messages in terms of who they are, how they differ from the governing party, and the alternative they offer.

Notes

1. Ethnicity also plays an important role within racial groups in some areas. For instance, the support that the Inkatha Freedom Party receives comes overwhelmingly from Zulu-speaking black South Africans, and the votes for the Freedom Front Plus come overwhelmingly from Afrikaans-speaking whites. Even allowing for this, however, the general trend still applies.
2. Coloured and Indian voters have been more likely to cross these historical dividing lines—splitting their votes over time, as a group, between the ANC, NP, and DA. They form a relatively small part of the South African electorate, however (9% and 3%, respectively), leaving the dominant trends as above (Statistics South Africa 2016).

3. Voters are also able to cast a second ballot for representatives to their provincial assemblies.
4. The ANC briefly changed the constitution in 2002 to allow members to switch parties during specific periods and according to a complex set of rules. However, the measure proved to be highly unpopular and was abolished by a subsequent constitutional amendment in 2009.
5. While the ANC's vote share fell under 50% in the 2021 local council elections, it has so far maintained a dominant majority at the national level.
6. This figure falls well below the 34-country average (38%) for Round 8 (2019/2021) of the Afrobarometer survey.
7. Parties with representation in the national legislature also received an annual subsidy from Parliament for constituency work and outreach, which can obviously overlap with general party activities. In 2014, the overall total was R243 million (US $22.4 million), again distributed proportionally (the ANC received R160 million, DA R41 million, COPE R20 million, and the IFP R10 million) (Thuynsma 2017).
8. For the 1994, 1999, and 2004 elections, television advertising was not allowed in South Africa (with the exception of very short 'public election broadcasts' in 2004, allocated on the basis of existing legislative representation and the current number of candidates) (Davis 2005).
9. From 2007 to 2009, Zuma was party president and Mbeki state president. From 2017 to 2019, Cyril Ramaphosa was party president (having narrowly defeated Zuma's former wife Nkosozana Dlamini-Zuma) while Zuma was still state president. The third occasion (1997 to 1999) saw Nelson Mandela as state president and Thabo Mbeki as party president, but this did not create any significant tensions.
10. The Political Party Database Project (PPDB) provides a comparative measure of intra-party democracy based on formal party rules. Specifically, it identifies how inclusive three types of intra-party processes are: (1) the extent to which grassroots party members are able to influence the selection of parliamentary candidates and the party leader; (2) the development of the national party manifesto; and (3) the prerogatives of party leaders to make decisions on policy and personnel without widespread consultation. See Berge and Poguntke (2017) for more detail on the conceptualisation of the index and Brause and Poguntke (2021) for full details of variable construction, including all question phrasing,
11. The data for the 2019 election were collected by the South African National Election Study (2019) (conducted as part of the Comparative National Election Project https://u.osu.edu/cnep/). Data for South Africa are also available via the Data First repository (https://www.datafirst.uct.ac.za/).
12. Here, personal contact only refers to canvassing. According to SANES (2019) data, the difference is even more stark when comparing rally attendance (ANC = 22% vs. DA = 3% of the electorate).
13. It should be noted, however, that these numbers do not necessarily mean that the balance of the electorate see opposition parties as exclusive: rather, almost one-third (29%) say they simply do not know enough about the DA to say one way or the other. Even larger proportions said the same thing about the rest of the opposition (35% in case of the EFF, and 56% for the IFP).
14. According to Afrobarometer data, land redistribution was only seen as a key issue by 7% of South Africans in 2018 (Nkomo 2018).

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24
Political Parties in Nigeria's Fourth Republic, 1999–2019

Jake D. Dan-Azumi

Introduction

The health and resilience of a country's democracy are often gauged by the strength of its democratic institutions, including its political parties (IDEA 2017). In addition to their traditional functions, namely, 'electoral structuration', 'symbolic integration', and aggregation of the interests of citizens, political parties also contribute to ensuring political accountability, democratic stability, and national unity (Mainwaring and Scully 1995). To be effective, however, political parties are expected to be inclusive and transparent in their operations and maintain democratic principles, especially as they pertain to their internal processes (Morton 2017).

Political party systems can be one-party, two-party, or multi-party. The greater the number, the greater the likelihood that the electorate will be presented with alternative platforms. Over the last six decades, Nigeria has experimented with various systems. The one-party system has been touted in pluralistic societies, such as Nigeria, to promote national unity and manage religious and ethnic diversity (Hamalai et al. 2017). Regardless of its anticipated merits, it has been contested that the one-party system is more likely to result in authoritarianism and political exclusion. Alternatively, the two-party system, in which parties have distinct ideological postures, such as in the USA and the UK, is said to have the advantage of engendering political information to the electorate in a simplified and understandable way, political stability and balance, and fewer voting choices. On the reverse side, however, others have pointed out the challenges associated with the two-party system, such as the exclusion of minority views, limited choice (and hence voter apathy), and in some instances negative partisanship, or what has been described as affective polarization (Iyengar et al. 2012; Hetherington

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and Rudolph 2015). This system has a long history in Nigeria and was tested between 1992 and 1993 (the so-called aborted Third Republic) (Oyediran and Agbaje 1991; Lewis 1996; Adejumobi 1997). As with the one-party system, this also failed because the two parties were not ideologically different (Yaqub 2002).

Since 1999, Nigeria has had a multi-party system with several political parties contesting general elections. It is considered more suited to pluralistic societies and contexts and is more likely to offer a political platform for varied and diverse interests, including political, religious, cultural, and economic ones (Hague and Harrop 2004; Tsuwa 2014). Additionally, multi-partyism allows for opposition, the integration of minority views, greater voter participation, and linkages among electoral stakeholders. Despite its merits, the system faces several challenges, including difficulties in forming governments, high costs, fragmentation, rivalry, and weak or unstable governments (Mainwaring and Scully 1995; Kuenzi and Lambright 2005).

This chapter reviews the development of the party system in Nigeria's Fourth Republic (1999 to date), showing how dominant political parties emerged, progressed, and performed in the last four general elections. The analysis is conducted within the context of the legal and statutory frameworks regulating party politics in Nigeria, the party system, and the structure of political parties and their organizations. Data on the performance of the dominant political parties in presidential, parliamentary, and gubernatorial elections are presented and discussed, focusing on how political party structures and organizations impact the outcomes of elections.

An Overview of the Dominant Political Parties in Nigeria

A brief history of Nigeria and an overview of the evolution and pattern of political party formation in the First and Second Republics

Modern Nigeria emerged in 1914 with the amalgamation of the Northern and Southern Protectorates, hitherto administered separately by British colonialists. The societal differences and cultural heterogeneity characterizing the various nationalities that form Nigeria are essential in understanding many of the challenges facing the country today, particularly as they relate to achieving national unity and cohesiveness and building inclusive democratic institutions, including political parties. Nigeria's ethnic and religious

pluralism is also reflected in its constituent populations. While Christianity is dominant in the south and the middle belt, the north is dominated mainly by Islam. The Igbo, Yoruba, and Hausa/Fulani are the dominant ethnic groups, and more than 150 'minority' ethnic groups are distributed across the country's six geopolitical zones.

Nigeria gained independence from the British on 1 October 1960 and became a republic three years later. The country practised the parliamentary system at independence but abandoned it for the presidential system in 1979, following the end of the country's civil war (6 July 1967 to 15 January 1970) and subsequent military rule. These moments in Nigeria's political history represent the struggles of the country and its ruling elite to manage diversity, entrench good governance, and build functional democratic institutions. These challenges are still prevalent today. The 63-year history of Nigeria has been punctuated by several military coups and four distinct democratic dispensations called 'republics': the First Republic (1960–1966); Second Republic (1979–1983); Third Republic, which was prematurely terminated by the military (1992–1993); and Fourth Republic (1999–present).

Given the pluralism, vast geography, and significant differences in the historical and cultural origins of people in different parts of the country, the multi-party system with two dominant parties has been the most favoured approach since 1960. The parliamentary elections held in 1959 were contested by several political parties but were dominated by the Northern People's Congress (NPC), five other parties, and two independents with which it had entered into a coalition. The NPC controlled 148 seats in the House of Representatives, whereas Action Group (AG) won 89. The 1964 election yielded similar results (Table 24.1).

Table 24.1 Composition of Federal House of Representatives by political parties, 1959–1964[a]

	NPC/NNA	NCNC/AG	ZCP	AG
1959	148	89	-	75
1964	189	109	5	-

[a] NPC—Northern People's Congress; NNA—Nigerian National Alliance, a coalition of parties that contested the 1964 federal elections; NCNC—National Council of Nigeria and Cameroons; AG—Action Group; and ZCP—Zamfara Commoner's Party.

Source: Hamalai (2014: 47) and Independent National Electoral Commission

Five major parties competed for power in the Second Republic (1979–1983), namely; the National Party of Nigeria (NPN), considered the natural successor to the First Republic's NPC; the United Party of Nigeria (UPN), modelled on the AG; the Nigerian People's Party (NPP), succeeded the nationalist political party, the National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons (NCNC), which was active in the period before and immediately after Nigeria's independence (1944-1966). Others were the People's Redemption Party (PRP) and the Great Nigerian People's Party (GNPP). The outcome was dominated by the NPN with 36 seats, while the UPN won 28 seats and the NPP secured 16 seats. In comparison, the Great Nigerian People's Party (GNPP) received eight seats, while the People's Redemption Party (PRP) won seven (Table 24.2).

In Nigeria's First and Second Republics, the political parties were ethnic in their outlook. The NPC was dominated by Hausa/Fulani people and led by Alhaji Sir Ahmadu Bello, the Premier of the Northern Region and Sardauna[1] of Sokoto. At the same time, the deputy leader was Sir Alhaji Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, the then Prime Minister of Nigeria. Its successor, the NPN, developed by the Northern Movement, was a political pressure group in the north. Its founding members included prominent individuals from northern elites, such as Shehu Shagari, Aminu Kano, Maitama Sule, Inua Wada, and Sule Gaya. It also had others from the middle belt and other parts of the country, such as Joseph Tarka, A. M. A. Akinloye, Anthony Enahoro, K. O. Mbadiwe, and Joseph Wayas. However, the AG/UPN (under Chief Obafemi Awolowo) was predominantly popular among the Yoruba in the south-west. Accordingly, the NPP/UPN was led by Nnamdi Azikiwe, and most of its followers were Igbo. The GNPP was dominated by members of northern elites and led by the Waziri Ibrahim of Borno.

Table 24.2 Composition of Senate by political parties, 1979–1983[a]

	NPN	UPN	NPP	GNPP	PRP
1979	36	28	16	8	7
1983	60	6	12	1	5

[a] NPN—National Party of Nigeria; UPN—Unity Party of Nigeria; NPP—Nierian People Party; GNPP—Great Nigeria Peoples Party; PRP—People's Redemption Party.

Source: Hamalai (2014: 47) and Independent National Electoral Commission

The military truncated the First and Second Republics following widespread public disenchantment with the political class and the loss of legitimacy (Diamond 1988). Other related reasons include prolonged periods of economic decline, ethnic and religious polarization (partly made worse by ethnically based political parties), massive and entrenched corruption typified by the looting of public funds, politicians' flamboyant lifestyles, and general bad governance. In addition, public disillusionment sometimes led to political unrest and widespread disorder in some regions. However, it has been argued that the collapse of the First Republic was deeply rooted in the failure of colonial enterprises (Diamond 1966).

1999 to 2019

Nigeria returned to democracy in 1999 after 16 years of military rule and maintained the presidential system that was first introduced in 1979. Since 1954, the state has promoted the integration of diverse and distinct ethnic nationalities. It comprises 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory. The president is popularly elected in a first-past-the-post system. The legislature at the national level is bicameral, consisting of a Senate of 109 members (3 per state) and a House of Representatives with 360 members, each representing a federal constituency. General elections are held every four years for legislative and executive positions, and vacancies between general elections are filled via by-elections. The legislative frameworks regulating the conduct of elections in Nigeria between 1999 and 2019 included the 1999 Constitution and the Electoral Act (2001, 2002, 2006 and 2010). Section 40 of the 1999 Constitution guarantees the rights of all Nigerians to assemble freely and form or belong to any political party, while Section 153 (f) of the Constitution establishes the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC). Part I of the Third Schedule states the INEC's functions, including organizing and supervising elections, and registering and monitoring political parties.

Political parties are required to have statutes at the point of registration with the INEC. Other requirements include open membership to all Nigerians, provision of the names and addresses of national officers, national spread, non-affiliation with any ethnic group or religion, and headquarters in Abuja (S.222 of the 1999 Constitution). Parties operate at ward, local government, state, and national levels under elected chairpersons and other officials. In addition, the parties created several organs for administrative and operational purposes. These include the Board of Trustees, a National Executive Committee responsible for formulating policies, and National Working

Committee, which operates as a sub-committee and runs the party. These committees are replicated at the state level, and their powers and functions are spelt out in party statutes. In addition, there is a National Secretariat with a General Secretary entrusted to the party's administrative management. Party membership is open to any Nigerian aged 18 years and older who has paid the prescribed fee and is formally accepted by the Ward Executive Committee. Members are issued membership cards, and their registers are usually kept by the party secretariat in various wards. While the literature on the extent of political party activism through party membership in Nigeria is limited, there has been an increase in direct political engagement through information and communications technology tools.

In the period of transition from military rule to democracy in 1999, the multi-party system was adopted, and three political parties, namely, the People's Democratic Party (PDP), the All People's Party (APP) and the Alliance for Democracy (AD) were registered by INEC. These parties participated in the 1999 general elections, in which the PDP emerged as the dominant political party in Nigeria. By 2003, the number of political parties had risen to 33. The APP and AD had formed a coalition to contest the February 1999 presidential elections after the PDP's sweeping victory in the January gubernatorial elections. As a result of this alliance, the APP gained ground in the National Assembly elections, winning 88 seats (20 of 109 in the Senate and 68 of 360 in the House of Representatives). Nevertheless, the party was subsequently beleaguered by internal crises, which led to its metamorphosis into the All Nigeria People's Party (ANPP) during the 2003 elections. The Fourth Republic has also seen a proliferation of political parties, primarily due to weak guidelines regulating party registration. However, in 2010, following the reforms in the Electoral Act 2010 on the viability of political parties, the INEC deregistered 38 parties in line with Section 78(7) of the Act.

However, the proliferation of political parties continued in 2017 when the INEC registered an additional 21 to take the total number of parties to 67. The new parties were said to have satisfied the requirements of Sections 221 and 222 of the 1999 Constitution, as highlighted above. However, many political parties have been able to work around legal and statutory requirements and establish a superficial presence in all states of the Federation. Suffice it to say that the requirement that political parties must have nationwide appeal and presence has sometimes been criticized for failing to promote national unity, which is its original intent.

The All Progressives Congress (APC) was founded in 2015, following the merger of three major political parties, namely the Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN), which was established in 2006 following the merger of multiple

parties, including the AD, Justice Party, Advance Congress of Democrats, Congress for Progressive Change (CPC), and the ANPP. These parties had spheres of influence across geopolitical zones, with the ACN having significant dominance in the south-west and the CPC dominating the north-west and north-east. This coalition of hitherto fragmented opposition parties was further bolstered by the defection of prominent PDP stalwarts, including five governors, in protest against alleged injustices and ill-treatment. More importantly, in the build-up to the 2015 campaign, the newly formed APC emphasized the challenges facing Nigeria since its return to democracy in 1999, including rising insecurity across the country, particularly militancy and insurgency, electoral fraud, corruption, and economic decline.

Emergence and organization of the People's Democratic Party (PDP)

In the first 16 years of the Fourth Republic (1999–present), the PDP was among three parties successfully registered out of the initial nine that applied, and it was granted provisional registration on 5 December 1998. The six other parties failed to meet the requirement that parties score at least 5% of the total votes cast in a minimum of 24 states across Nigeria as a precondition for final registration (Momoh and Thovoethin 2001).

The emergence of the PDP has been characterized as top-down rather than bottom-up. A national coalition of 34 ex-military officers, politicians, and other elites formed G34. This group, led by Nigeria's former vice president in the Second Republic (1979–1983), Alex Ekwueme, was a pressure group opposed to attempts by General Sani Abacha to transform from a military head of state to a civilian president. In the aftermath of Abacha's death on 8 June 1998, General Abdulsalam Abubakar took over and immediately announced a timetable for returning the country to civilian rule by May 1999. Elections for governors were scheduled for December 1998, while those for the president were slated for February 1999, with an official handover date of 29 May 1999. In addition, Abubakar released political prisoners, embarked on substantial political, economic, and social reforms, and established an independent election-monitoring body, the INEC, under Decree 17 of 1998 (Dagne 2006). Against the background of these developments, G34 was transformed into the PDP in August 1998.

Owing to its origins as a pressure group comprising various actors across the broad spectrum of Nigerian society, the PDP was ab initio elitist driven. This became evident in the processes leading to the emergence of the party's flagbearer for the presidential election. The founding chairman, Alex

Ekwueme, was pushed aside, and the ticket was given to the former military head of state, Olusegun Obasanjo. This was done with the backing of powerful and wealthy members of the party, who considered him a more predictable and reliable option.

From the onset, the PDP lacked an ideological core to distinguish it from others and determine its policy goals. Founders of the PDP portrayed the party as a natural successor to the National Republic Convention, which was established in 1993 by the military-led government of Ibrahim Babangida and the NPN. However, this is highly debatable and difficult to establish given the party's origins as a constellation of diverse and often opposing interests. This is also reflected in the party's manifesto, which was carefully crafted to ensure the inclusion and management of diversity, particularly among the various interest groups that make up the party. Some of the founding and initial members of the party collaborated with the military and even supported the annulment of the 12 June 1993 presidential elections by the military regime of General Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida. It was claimed to be one of the freest elections in Nigeria's history. Others served as members of the Provisional Ruling Council (PRC) under the dictatorship of the late General Sani Abacha. The PRC is the highest decision-making organ in the military and has 33 members, including civilian ministers.

The absence of a clearly defined ideology in the PDP is also reflected in internal party conflicts, including the choice of party head (it had 12 party chairmen in 16 years) (Hamalai et al. 2017), a weak statute and party structure, a lack of cohesion, and a disconnect with members at the grassroots level. These factors played a significant role in the party's decline in 2015, particularly given its failure to support popular candidates in the party primaries.

Performance of political parties in elections in Nigeria, 1999–2019

As stated above, the PDP became the dominant political party in Nigeria in 1999, with considerable government control at both the national and state levels. For 16 years, the party won all presidential elections and maintained a majority in the Senate and House of Representatives.

Presidential

The results of the first four general elections (1999, 2003, 2007, and 2011) clearly show the PDP's dominance (Figure 24.1). The percentage of votes secured by PDP candidates in 1999 and 2003 was 62%. This increased to 69.60% in 2007 but dropped to 58.87% in 2011.

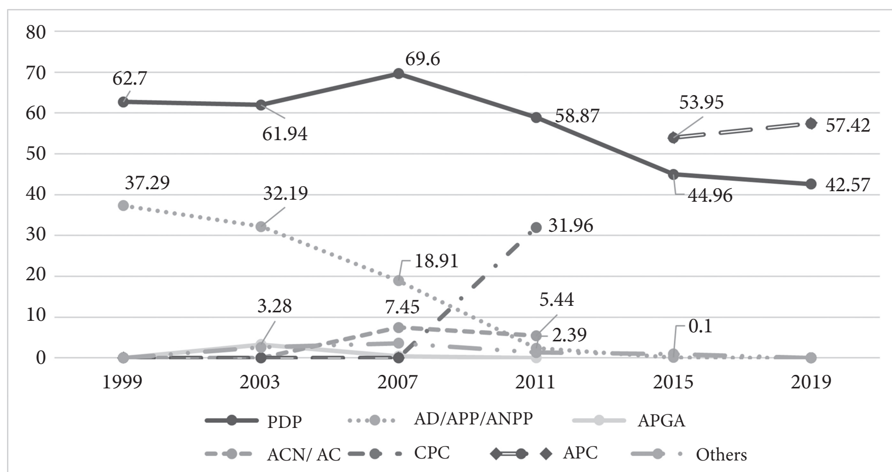

Figure 24.1 Presidential election result by political party (%)

Note: The APC was founded in 2015 following a coalition of three major opposition parties, ACN, CPC, and ANPP, and hence only started participating in national elections as a unified entity in 2025.

Source: INEC's Report of 1999, 2003, 2007, 2011, 2015, and 2019 General Elections

While the party's victory remained impressive over the period, voter support declined steadily. Nevertheless, given its dominance in all six geopolitical zones of Nigeria, the PDP can be described as Nigeria's first pan-national political party that was largely successful in transcending ethnic and religious identities. This is evidenced by the party's performance in the 2011 presidential and National Assembly elections across all six zones, averaging 64% (EUEOM 2015).

However, 2015 was a watershed moment in Nigerian political history. For the first time, an opposition party won the presidential elections. It swept away the ruling party and established solid control at the national level and across the Federation. This peaceful transition of power consolidated Nigeria's position as a growing democracy. The candidate of the APC, Muhammadu Buhari, won the presidential elections with 15,424,921 votes (53.95%), while the incumbent, Goodluck Jonathan of the PDP, received 12,853,162 votes (44.96%). In the 2019 elections, the APC maintained its control at the centre with a victory in the presidential and National Assembly polls. President Buhari was re-elected with 15,191,847 votes (57.42%), beating the PDP's closest opponent, Atiku Abubakar (who received 11,262,978 votes), by over three million votes. Simultaneously, three other political parties (PCP, ADC, and APGA) received 309,481 votes. Buhari won in 19 of the 36 states, whereas Abubakar won in 17 states.

National Assembly

The dominance of the PDP between 1999 and 2011 in both chambers of the National Assembly (the Senate and House of Representatives) was extensive, as shown in Figure 24.2. In the 20 February 1999 election, the PDP won 62 out of 109 seats (56.88%) in the Senate and 214 out of 360 seats (59.44%) in the House. The APP secured 24 seats (22.02%) in the Senate and 77 (21.39%) in the House. On the other hand, AD won 23 (21.1%) seats in the Senate and 68 (18.89%) in the House.

In 2003, the PDP increased its majority in the Senate, with 76 out of the 109 seats (69.72%), thus consolidating its hold in the upper chamber. Similarly, in the House of Representatives, the party increased its seats from 214 in 1999 to 222 in 2003 and 263 in 2007. However, in 2011, the PDP's majority in the National Assembly suffered a waning of its control, winning 72 seats (66.1%) compared to 86 in the previous election. Similarly, in the House of Representatives, the PDP saw a decline in the number of seats, from 263 in 2007 to 203 in 2011.

As with the presidential elections, the dominance of the PDP in the National Assembly was challenged in 2015, with the APC winning 60 seats (55.05%) in the Senate as against 49 (44.95%) by the PDP. In 2019, the APC maintained its lead with 64 seats (58.72%), whereas the PDP won 44 seats (40.37%). Similarly, in the House of Representatives (Figure 24.3), the APC won 225 seats (63%), while the PDP won 125 seats (35%) in the 2015 elections. Even though the APC lost a few seats, it still controlled the House with 212 seats (58.89%), while the PDP increased its seats marginally to 127 (35.28%).

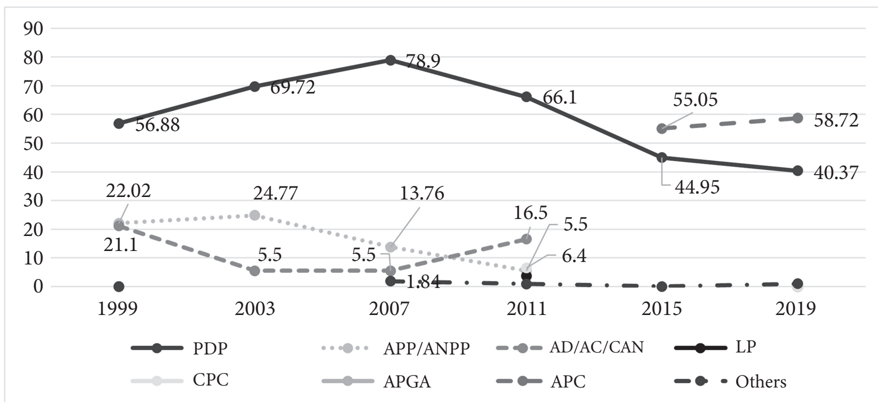

Figure 24.2 Composition of Senate by political parties (%)

Source: INEC's Report of 1999, 2003, 2007, 2011, 2015, and 2019 General Elections

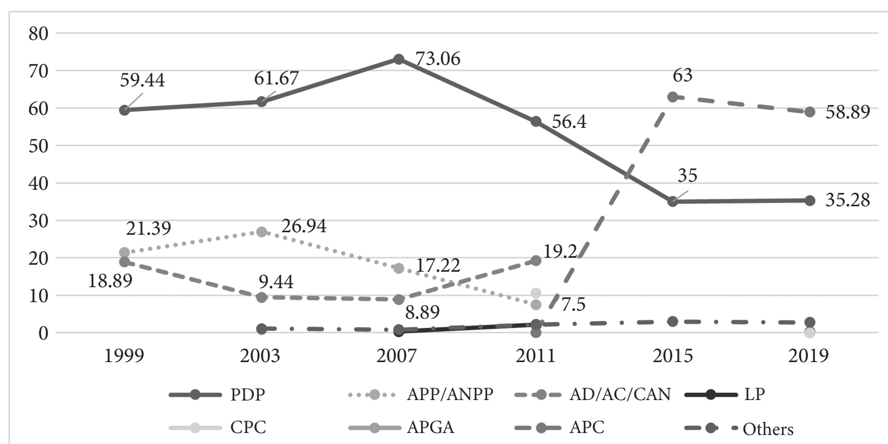

Figure 24.3 Composition of House of Representatives by political parties (%)
Source: INEC's Report of 1999, 2003, 2007, 2011, 2015, and 2019 General Elections

Thus, between 1999 and 2011, the PDP held a majority position in the House. Although it never won the two-thirds majority (72 in the Senate and 240 in the House) needed for major legislative actions (such as constitutional amendments and the impeachment of the executive or presiding officers), it nonetheless had a comfortable majority for most legislative decision making. However, in general, there was a gradual weakening of the position of the PDP in the National Assembly and a steady, even if minimal, rise in the number of seats won by other parties in the opposition. This trend has been explained by improvements in the conduct of elections and overall election management (Akhaine 2011; Gberie 2011; Omotola 2011), growing disillusionment with the ruling party, growing recognition of opposition parties, and internal conflicts within the ruling party, among others.

Suffice it to say that the erosion of the dominance of the PDP began in 2011 when its hold in the Senate was reduced from 86 seats in 2007 to 72. By 2015, the party had lost 24 seats. A similar development occurred in the House of Representatives, where the PDP lost 140 seats between 2007 and 2011—a trend that continued until 2015.

State: Governorship and State Houses of Assembly

At the sub-national level, the PDP maintained an equal lead in both the governorship and State Houses of Assembly elections from 1999 to 2011, as Figures 24.4 and 24.5 show. There was a progressive increase in the number

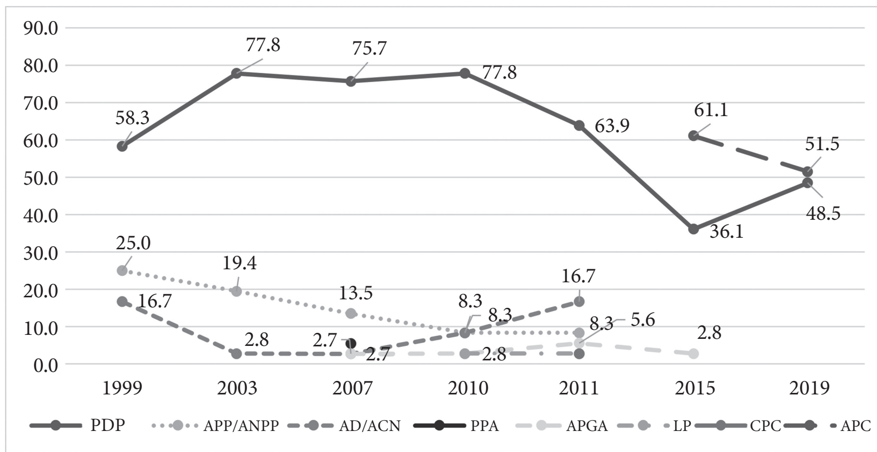

Figure 24.4 Composition of governorship seats by political parties (%)
Source: INEC's Report of 1999, 2003, 2007, 2011, 2015, and 2019 General Elections

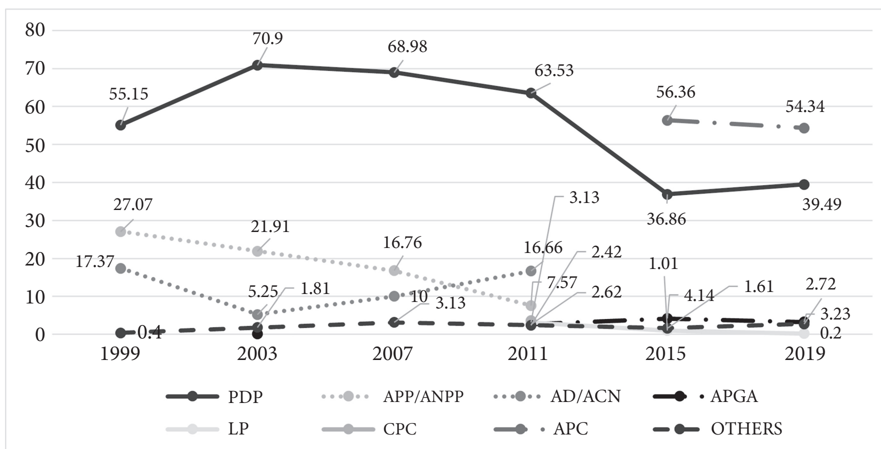

Figure 24.5 Seats won in State Houses of Assembly by political parties (%)
Source: INEC's Report of 1999, 2003, 2007, 2011, 2015, and 2019 General Elections

of governorship seats held by the party across Nigeria, from 21 in 1999 to 28 in the next three consecutive elections (2003, 2007, and 2010); the number dropped to 23 in 2011. At the same time, the number of governorship seats held by the APP/ANPP steadily decreased from nine in 1999 to three in 2011 as the PDP established its dominance at all levels. Similarly, the AD/ACN, which won six seats in 1999, only managed between one and three seats between 2003 and 2010 and six in 2011.

However, in the 2019 general elections, the APC saw a decline in control, winning 17 states, while the PDP won 16. The APC subsequently won over more states through court decisions and defections.

At the sub-national level (Figure 24.5), the PDP maintained firm control between 1999 and 2011. In the 1999 elections, the PDP won 546 seats (55.15%) out of 990 in the various State Houses of Assembly in the country, compared to AP's 268 seats (27.07%) and AD's 172 seats (17.37%). The PDP's share of seats in the State Houses of Assembly rose to its highest in 2003, when the party won 702 seats (70.90%), while AP and AD won 217 (21.91%) and 52 (5.25%), respectively. Results of the 2011 elections showed that the PDP won 629 seats (63.53%). As with other elections, the PDP had established dominance across all six geopolitical zones of the country, securing majority seats in the State Houses of Assembly despite widespread support for the leading opposition candidate, Muhammadu Buhari, in northern Nigeria.

In the 2015 and 2019 elections, however, the APC successfully established firm control of the State Houses of Assembly, having won 558 (56.36%) and 538 (54.34%), while the PDP received 365 (36.86%) and 391 (39.49%). Despite the APC's ascendancy during this period, its share of seats in the State Houses of Assembly never reached that of the PDP at its peak. The dominance of a party at the state level is significant in advancing the party's legislative agenda. The legislative process for constitutional alterations in Nigeria requires two-thirds of a majority in at least 24 states.

Factors that explain the dominance of the PDP

Several arguments have been advanced to explain the PDP's dominance over the 16 years since it won four successive elections (1999, 2003, 2007, and 2011). This is even more surprising considering the party's deficient performance in ensuring security, economic growth, and development. Figures from the National Bureau of Statistics show a steady rise in poverty levels in Nigeria between 1980 and 2010. For instance, its report shows that in 2010, 60.9% of Nigerians lived in absolute poverty, as against 54.7% in 2004 (NBS 2010).

Some reasons for the prolonged dominance of the PDP include its pluralistic outlook and success in forming coalitions among divergent stakeholders and positions. This is exemplified by the composition of its founding members, who include politicians and retired military officers. The latter has been described as a reason for the success and dominance of the PDP. The military ruled Nigeria for decades and established control and extensive

networks nationwide by creating and distributing patronage in various forms (Adekanye 1999). Similarly, the military initiated the political transition process and had an immense influence on deciding who the political actors were. It has been argued that the military was willing to hand over power only to persons with links to it or sympathetic and protective of its interests. This explains the dominance of former military leaders as candidates for the presidential and National Assembly elections in the PDP between 1999 and 2011. This trend was carried over by the APC when its candidate Muhammadu Buhari, a former military ruler, was elected president in 2015. In most instances, former military officers and their associates had the resources required to contest elections by virtue of their positions during military regimes and their access to state funds.

The PDP developed several mechanisms to manage diversity and meet the interests of its members, including the rotation of positions (including president, leadership positions in the National Assembly, and party leadership positions) among the country's six geopolitical zones (Kendhammer 2010). As such, the PDP appeared more pluralistic than the other regional parties (AD and ACN in the south-west, APP/ANPP/CPC in the north-west, and APGA in the south-east). Through these arrangements, the party reached out to ethnic minorities nationwide who had perpetually protested about political marginalization. As a result, the PDP circumvented some challenges faced by political parties in the Second Republic, which were characterized as regional and ethnic in outlook (Diamond 1988; Diamond and Suberu 2002). In addition to reaching out to minority groups, the PDP successfully built alliances with regional pressure groups and bodies such as the Afenifere in Yorubaland, Ohanaeze in the south-east, and the Arewa Consultative Forum in the north (Hamalai et al. 2017). Relatedly, under the party the rights and freedoms of Nigerians, particularly freedom of speech, were respected and protected. As a result, there was no systematic crackdown on media houses, and stakeholders—including journalists, opposition members, and the public—were free to assemble and express their views and criticisms of the government.

Other reasons for the success of the PDP include a weak legal and institutional framework (the Electoral Act 2006) and an equally weakened electoral management body (INEC) that lacked sufficient internal capacity, resources, and independence to conduct free and fair elections. The composition, manner of appointment, and lack of security of tenure for the position of the Chairman of the Commission made the INEC beholden to the executive (Omotola 2010). The preponderance of money politics and the INEC's inability to track party campaign finances made it possible for political parties

to engage in illegal conduct and raise considerable funds to support their activities. High levels of corruption related to party financing have been a recurring problem in Nigeria, as evidenced by investigations into individuals and business interests referred to as 'contractors' in 1956 and 1962. The Second Republic provided both private and public funding. The absence of a spending cap in the 1979 Constitution resulted in widespread corruption (INEC 2005). There has not been any significant change in the Fourth Republic, with widespread allegations of corruption in 1999 and 2003 against political parties by civic groups (Adetula 2008). Collectively, these factors make it easy for political actors to circumvent and undermine electoral processes.

The 'power of incumbency' also made it possible for the PDP, particularly at the level of the executive (president and governors), to perpetuate itself in power by relying on its influence, the resources of government and its control of government-owned media and the coercive instruments of the state, including security and law-enforcement agencies, to suppress opposition. This took various forms, such as denying the opposition the use of government facilities for campaigns, unequal access to government media, harassment and intimidation of opposition leaders, militarization of elections, and voter suppression. Additionally, the use of inducements and patronage in the context of high levels of poverty and material deprivation has made it easier to manipulate electorates (Hamalai et al. 2017). Over the years, there has been a significant increase in selling and buying votes, particularly following innovations that promote transparency in the electoral process. Some have argued that the PDP used government resources and instruments to manipulate elections and compromise the electoral management body, which became an extension of the executive, even in its composition (Hamalai 2014). The INEC's poor funding also limited the effectiveness of its operations, often resulting in poorly conducted elections that were subsequently confronted with litigation.

Furthermore, the absence of strong opposition parties that could present credible alternatives enabled the ruling party (PDP) to maintain its power. Over the years, opposition parties have remained largely underdeveloped, playing a minimal role in constituting effective opposition to the ruling party. In contrast, the ruling party often found ways to compromise with opposition parties and entice their members to join their ranks. The history of political developments since 1999 has been characterized by defections and counter-defections, largely because the most significant consideration is personal interest, as opposed to political ideology. The Constitution does not prohibit political defections but regulates them. Section 68 (1) states that a

member of the Senate or the House of Representatives shall vacate his seat if he 'becomes a member of another political party'. However, the Constitution further lays out the conditions for defection, that is, it can only be done 'provided that his membership of the latter political party is not as a result of a division in the political party of which he was previously a member or of a merger of two or more political parties or factions by one of which he was previously sponsored' (Section 68(g)). This latter provision has been used to justify defection, particularly because it is obscure and does not define what 'division' means. As such, any internal disagreement within a party has been described as a 'division' by members who intend to leave.

In general, political parties, including those in opposition, do not receive government funding. However, state governors who control substantial resources are known to provide bulk financing to the ruling party. On the other hand, opposition parties lack access to state resources, further weakening their positions. At the parliamentary level, however, those that occupy leadership positions (minority leaders, minority whips, and their deputies) have special budgets. To challenge the dominance of the PDP, opposition parties have formed coalitions since 1999 to bolster their positions, pool resources, and advance votes for the joint candidates of the parties.

The Emergence of the All Progressives Congress (APC) and the Struggle to Consolidate Hold on Power

As noted above, 2015 was a watershed moment in Nigeria's political history when the opposition party (APC), for the first time, defeated the ruling party (PDP) in a general election to win a presidential election and establish a majority in the National Assembly. As noted above, the APC emerged in 2013 after the merger of multiple parties, including a breakaway faction of the PDP. The election results (Figures 24.4 and 24.5) show that the party won the presidential election and established dominance in much of the north. Simultaneously, the PDP retained its traditional popular support in the south-east and south.

Several factors explain the success of the APC in the 2015 polls, including the growing disenchantment with the PDP over the past 16 years. After a long period of military rule, Nigerians had high expectations at the beginning of the Fourth Republic. However, the inability of the PDP to tackle poverty and address rising levels of unemployment has left millions disillusioned. This situation was worsened by the perception of endemic corruption and the self-enrichment of politicians and their associates. However, rising insecurity

in most parts of the country and the seeming incapacity of the government to stem the tide probably pushed the people to revolt against the PDP. The most prominent challenge was the rise of Islamic militancy in north-east Nigeria. A terrorist sect called Boko Haram, founded in 2002 but rising in prominence in 2009, grew and expanded rapidly, seizing control of several local governments in the country's north-east. Its activities disrupted the social and economic livelihoods of people in the region and caused the deaths of thousands.

Changes in electoral management by the INEC and innovations that include biometrics-based permanent voter cards (PVCs) were important factors. The use of smart card readers, introduced by INEC in 2015, has undoubtedly changed the nature of elections in Nigeria. The INEC Guidelines require that once at a polling unit, a voter first presents their PVC to one of the polling officials for verification and authentication using a smart card reader (SCR). Only after being verified and authenticated does a voter go through the rest of the voting process (Dan-Azumi and Asan 2021). This is arguably the most important innovation in Nigeria's electoral process since its independence. It removed power from politicians and placed it in the hands of the people, strengthening the democratic process and restoring public confidence in it. These innovations shaped the outcomes of the 2015 and, to some extent, the 2019 elections.

Although using PVC and SCR contributed to the electoral process, it also affected election outcomes. When it was first introduced in 2015, there were widespread reports of technical glitches in devices, ranging from battery failures, failure to decode fingerprints, and outright failures in some instances. Some of these challenges were attributed to insufficient understanding among the INEC staff about how to use the devices. As a result, many Nigerians became disenfranchised. Despite these hiccups, however, the use of card readers improved transparency and reduced the likelihood of manipulation and rigging, which have characterized most previous elections.

Similar to previous elections in Nigeria, the 2015 elections were heavily shaped by ethnicity and religion. The APC and its candidate, Muhammadu Buhari, were portrayed as contriving and advancing a 'northern' and 'Muslim' agenda. On the other hand, the PDP, which was popular in the Christian-dominated south and among 'minority' ethnic groups in the north and the middle belt, was presented as the opposite of the APC. The outcomes of the elections confirmed this bias as both parties won bloc votes in their respective states of influence: the PDP in the south and the APC in the north.

Internal party struggles, especially concerning the conduct of political party primary elections by both the PDP and APC, affected the general

elections. Some issues that confronted the parties included the imposition of candidates by political godfathers, opaque and non-competitive primaries, violations of party guidelines on the conduct of primaries, and the monetization of the whole process. The Electoral Act 2010 requires political parties to hold direct or indirect primaries for aspirants in all elective positions. The bigger parties (the PDP and APC) have often relied more on indirect primaries to nominate candidates. As a result, the party primaries process is usually controlled by powerful politicians holding public offices, especially governors of the respective states, in the case of the ruling party, or wealthy people who typically provide funding to these parties and, hence, have effectively hijacked the entire system. As such, delegates at all levels are usually not transparently elected but carefully selected by these influential and wealthy individuals through the 'consensus method', recognized in Section 87(6) of the Electoral Act, 2010.

The lack of intra-party democracy has resulted in numerous instances of litigation and party-switching. The indirect primary system using delegates has also made it easier for 'money bags' to hijack political parties and impose candidates. Internal party squabbles were more pronounced in the PDP, leading to further discontent among members and subsequent defections. In some states (e.g. Anambra, Ebonyi, Delta, and Rivers), the party held multiple parallel primary elections (Ukeh 2015; Terzungwe 2018). Election petition tribunals and other courts have subsequently overturned several elections.

In some cases, new elections were conducted (in Rivers, Anambra, Imo, Taraba, Akwa Ibom, Enugu, and Benue). However, as noted by the European Union Election Observation Mission, the lack of an effective monitoring mechanism for internal party democratic processes for candidate nominations and the 'INEC's inability to reject nominated aspirants (who emerged in dubious circumstances)' undermined the credibility of the process (EUEOM 2015). The lack of internal party democracy has affected almost every political party and has been a general problem since the First and Second Republics.

The Implication of the Rise of the APC

The APC's victory further consolidated two-party dominance within Nigeria's political system. Indeed, despite the increase in the number of political parties, data on the turnout and the effective number of parties show that Nigeria has operated a two-party system since 1999 (see Table 24.3).

Table 24.3 Nigeria: Core party system indicators (House of Representatives)

	ENEP	ENPP	Turnout (%)
1999	2.32	2.22	40.69
2003	2.18	2.16	49.32
2007	-	1.80	-
2011	-	2.76	28.66
2015	-	2.01	43.65
2019	-	2.15	32.14

Note: ENEP—effective number of electoral parties; ENPP—effective number of parliamentary parties; ENEP and ENPP have been calculated for the House of Representatives; Turnout as a share of all registered voters, '-'—missing data.

Source: Varieties of Party Identity and Organisation (V-Party) Dataset V2 (Lindberg et al. 2022); Voter Turnout Database (IDEA 2022)

To be sure, several political parties won seats in the National Assembly between 2003 and 2007. However, by 2015, all seats in the Senate were won by the PDP and APC. In the House of Representatives, the two parties dominated, whereas the other three parties shared a small number of seats. One consequence of this was the deregistration of 28 parties by the INEC, particularly because of the requirement that political parties win at least one seat in either the National Assembly or the State Houses of Assembly.

The APC's rise threatened the PDP's hegemony. Its position was partly boosted by the defection of prominent PDP members to the APC, especially in the National Assembly, where PDP legislators, including former governors and presiding officers, cross-carpeted en masse. In the build-up to the 2015 elections, these defections strengthened the position of the APC as an opposition party and significantly improved its success in subsequent polls.

The emergence of the APC as the dominant party in the Senate and House of Representatives did not significantly reverse the high rate of legislative turnover. For instance, in the Sixth Assembly (2007–2011), only 23 senators (14%) were re-elected, while 86 (79%) were new legislators. A similar trend of high turnover obtained in the Seventh (2011–2015), Eighth (2015–2019) and Ninth (2019–2023) Assemblies.

The high attrition rate of the National Assembly can be attributed to several factors. Sometimes positions are rotated based on considerations such as ethnic groups or electoral constituencies in the state. Often contrived as a way to manage diversity, this practice nonetheless buttresses the point that

political positions are often considered a means to share political favour. In other instances, political 'godfathers', who have money and influence, exercise tremendous control over the party structure and determine who gets nominated for political positions. This is usually based on the candidates' willingness to provide financial and other compensation to the sponsor or to be at their behest.

Additionally, many constituents expect legislators to perform 'executive' functions by implementing community projects and taking care of constituents' social needs. This is often compounded by unattainable election promises made by political aspirants during campaigns. Ultimately, they fail to meet most of these expectations, resulting in disenchantment and sometimes outright discontent among the constituents.

Women in Nigerian Politics

Regardless of the political party in power, the number of women at all levels of government has not changed significantly since 1999. From 1999 to 2019, women's representation in the Nigerian legislature (109 Senate seats, 360 House of Representatives seats, and 997 State Houses of Assembly seats) has never reached 10%. In the Senate, the highest was 8.3% (9 seats) between 2007 and 2011; in the House, it peaked at 7.2% (26 seats) between 2011 and 2015. It is worse at the sub-national level, where women's representation peaked at 6.9% (68) between 2011 and 2015. This is despite the policy documents of successive governments subscribing to more seats for women in elective and appointive positions.

Many reasons have been advanced for the low level of women's participation in elective politics, including an unfavourable political system that makes it difficult for women to participate fully. Additionally, women face cultural and socio-economic barriers, lower levels of employment and education, corrupt and patronage-based political systems, and electoral violence (Dan-Azumi and Asan 2021). Historically, there have been fewer female candidates in the north than in the south, mainly because of a fusion of religious and cultural factors that disapprove of women's political involvement. Despite this, there was no significant difference in the number of women elected from the two parts of the country into political positions. Women's ability to seek and win political office is further limited by their relatively weaker economic status in Nigeria. Data from the National Bureau of Statistics, the World Bank, and the International Monetary Fund have consistently shown that women constitute the bulk of Nigeria's poorest population (World Bank

2016; International Monetary Fund 2017). Given the growing monetization of politics, including the high cost of nomination forms and campaigns, women struggle to compete with men.

Women's political participation is also not supported by the 1999 Constitution or the various statutes of political parties and their manifestos, which fail to provide for women's quotas. The overarching policy document is the National Gender Policy (2006), which recommends that 35% of all elective and appointive positions should be reserved for women. However, without the necessary political will and legal support, this recommendation failed to make any difference to the actual position of women.

Conclusion

Since Nigeria gained its independence in 1960, political parties in the country have struggled to establish themselves as genuine national and unifying platforms. The political parties in the first two Republics were predominantly ethnically based. This reflects the pluralistic and heterogeneous nature of the country with multiple ethnic groups and religions. Reform attempts have sought to establish parties that transcend these limitations, with minimal success. Since the return to democratic rule in 1999, dominant parties have made significant strides towards building national appeal. Legal and statutory frameworks now require political parties to have a nationwide presence. This has resulted in the building of consensus and coalitions as strategies for winning elections. Consequently, two political parties dominated the Fourth Republic: the PDP, which dominated between 1999 and 2011, and the APC, which gained supremacy in 2015 and became the first opposition party in Nigeria's history to unseat a ruling party.

As mentioned above, the characteristics of the major political parties in Nigeria are not easily discernible. They are essentially a loose amalgam of powerful interest groups desirous of obtaining and holding power. The multi-party system adopted in 1999 gave rise to numerous political parties lacking ideological bases. Subsequent reforms have attempted to rationalize the number of parties. Ninety-one registered political parties contested the 2019 general elections.

Overall, political parties in Nigeria have faced similar challenges, including the lack of internal party democracy, which has resulted in litigation, defection, fragmentation, and conflict on numerous occasions. Whichever party is in power sustains itself mainly through reliance on state resources and

patronage distribution. Leadership tussles within major political parties have also been a significant source of conflict and have significantly determined and shaped party membership.

Sections 225, 226, and 227 of the 1999 Constitution regulate the operations of political parties, including financing. Under the current dispensation, political parties do not receive government subsidies and are responsible for funding. In the aborted Third Republic (1992–1993), a two-party system in which government finances were adopted gave a nationalistic outlook and avoided the regional nature of political parties in the First and Second Republics. A lack of funding for political parties often means that the party in power relies on state resources. By contrast, opposition parties receive funding from wealthy individuals and businesses, making them tools of these powerful interests.

The PDP, more than any other party since 1999, has maintained contact with social and pressure groups, particularly in its formative stages, when it actively sought the support of diverse stakeholders across the country. However, whereas all political parties grant formal status to youth and women's groups and often have special mechanisms (such as youth and women's wings), these are seldom assigned any real significance beyond the election campaign period.

The elected members of the National Assembly are expected to represent their parties, particularly in terms of voting and other legislative activities. However, there is little evidence to suggest that this occurs in the Nigerian parliament. In recent years, the election of leaders in both the Senate and House of Representatives has not strictly followed party lines. For instance, in the Eighth Assembly (2015–2019), opposition members were elected as deputy presiding officers. Although there are party clauses in both chambers, there is homogeneity in decision making, and party affiliations do not always take the pre-eminent position.

In conclusion, Nigeria's last four election cycles have been dominated by the PDP and APC, which have no clearly defined ideologies in their respective manifestos but rather a programme of activities. The PDP was the first and most successful political party to establish a national presence and to dominate all geopolitical zones. It dominated the political space for 16 years until its dominance was challenged and eroded in 2015. The APC has won two presidential elections (2015 and 2019) and dominated the National and State House of the Assembly. However, it has struggled to establish itself, especially in the southern part of the country, where it was perceived as a northern party with the support of the south-west.

There is little doubt that Nigeria's democracy has grown significantly since 1999, and political parties have played a significant role in this regard. Multiparty systems remain the dominant model. However, this requires significant modification, particularly given the proliferation of political parties, many of which are not viable. Thus, the political landscape will likely be dominated by two parties despite the constitutional recognition of multiple parties. The major parties can be expected to continue to dominate, but membership in both will remain fluid as members transfer allegiance in pursuit of political power. This is enabled by a weak regulatory framework that fails to hinder defection. Therefore, political parties in Nigeria can be expected to continue to be mere platforms for seeking political positions and not necessarily tools for democratic consolidation.

Note

1. An honorific title that is the equivalent of the commander-in-chief of the royal army of the Sultan and leader of Muslims in northern Nigeria.

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25
The State of Political Party Development in Ghana

Isaac Owusu-Mensah, Emmanuel Debrah, and Enock Mathapoly-Codjoe

Introduction

Ghana—the first country in sub-Saharan Africa to gain independence from British colonial rule, on 6 March 1957—remains the trailblazer of democratic governance in the continent. Except during periods of military interregnums that truncated the development of democracy, even if temporarily, multi-party politics has dominated much of Ghana's political history. Vibrant party politics had taken root as early as 1947 with the creation of the United Gold Coast Convention (UGCC) by Dr J. B. Danquah, from which the Convention People's Party (CPP) was formed in 1949 by Kwame Nkrumah. Although subsequent political competition before and during the immediate post-independence epoch recorded the appearance of dozens of parties with different interests that put stress on the political process, only the UGCC and CPP traditions have prevailed. Even when party politics was resurrected with the third wave of democratization that surfaced in the early 1990s, the parties that emerged have all had at least one leg in either the UGCC, CPP, or both. Therefore, the vibrant political party engagements that characterized post-democratization politics in Ghana owed much to the two parties' traditions. While the parties affiliated to Nkrumah's CPP have splintered[1] and only the New Patriotic Party (NPP) is historically UGCC, its arch-rival, the National Democratic Congress (NDC) is a conglomeration of the two traditions (see Figure 25.1). Its life leader, Jerry John Rawlings, until his demise in 2020, sought to propagate Nkrumahism as his political agenda in the 1980s; while doing so, he also attracted support from those among the Danquahist family. Indeed, the elite that ushered the country into multi-party politics in 1992 carried the political tags of these two traditions. Hence, the Constitution

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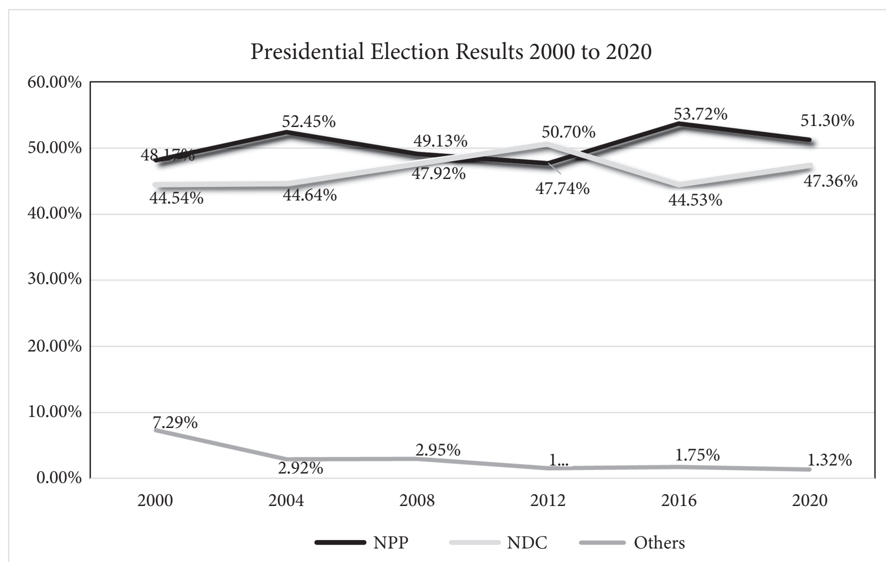

Figure 25.1 The performance of political parties in presidential elections, 2000–2022: The two main contending parties

NPP—New Patriotic Party; NDC—National Democratic Congress

Source: The Electoral Commission of Ghana

promulgated in 1992, although liberal, also embodies the social principles of equality and elements of a just society.

Political parties are prominent among the institutions that have influenced progress towards democratic consolidation in Ghana since the return of multi-party governance in 1992. Although regarded as organized voluntary and informal groups, political parties in Ghana have exerted great influence over various facets of the democratic process. Besides shaping the decision-making process for the management and distribution of the nation's wealth, they are instrumental in orienting the people's behaviour and attitudes regarding democratic norms and values that are necessary for political stability and development. They also provide the structure to incubate the political ambitions of the elite and harness their potential for national political offices. Through their political education programmes, the parties have mobilized the electorate to respond to their civic duties of participation in national decision making. The relatively high voter turnout at the polls every four years exemplifies their effective voter education programmes (see Table 25.1). Thus, through their progressive participatory activities, the parties have ensured that elections have become the only acceptable mechanism to legitimize the assignment of national leaders to political offices. Indeed,

Table 25.1 Ghana's Core Political Party System Indicators

Year of elections	ENEP	ENPP	Voter turnout (%)
2000	2.35	2.19	61.19
2004	2.21	2.10	85.12
2008	2,19	2.12	69.52
2012	2.13	2.04	80.01
2016	1.98	1.89	67.55
2020	2.00	2.01	77.83

ENEP—effective number of electoral parties; ENPP—effective number of parliamentary parties; Turnout—percentage of the share of all registered voters

Source: IDEA (2022); International Foundation for Elections Systems (2022); compiled by authors

today, the parties' platforms are the only legitimate arenas to confer political power on national leaders as well as ensure their removal. Leaning on their particularistic ideologies, the parties have intermediated and created opportunities to aid upward social and political mobility through elite consensus, which, albeit limited, can help to sustain the new democratic order.

The Legal Regime for Party Development

In democratic jurisdictions, party systems are shaped by the legal system. Thus, the nature of the party system in a country depends largely on the prevailing legal regime. In Ghana, political parties' existence and authority are rooted in the national Constitution. The 1992 Constitution remains the supreme legal framework that defines the character and functions of political parties. Important provisions in the Constitution have established the institutional architecture for the effective functioning and growth of political parties. Most importantly, they provide the freedom to form political parties and ensure the unrestricted rights of all citizens to make their own decisions regarding which party to associate with. The Political Parties Act, 2000 (Act 574), has guaranteed the parties' role in national development. While individuals are free to associate to form a political party, they must formalize it through the legislative process. An organization qualifies to be registered by the Electoral Commission as a political party when it has promulgated a constitution and established the names and addresses of all national officers, who must be registered Ghanaian voters (at least one from each constituency). The party must present evidence of the party's presence in all regions and

not less than two-thirds of the districts/constituencies. Moreover, the party must provide its name, emblem, colour, motto, and symbol, which must bear no ethnic, regional, religious, or sectional connotations or identities in accordance with the 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana. Upon satisfying these legislative requirements, a certificate of registration is issued by the Electoral Commission (see Article 55 (7) of the 1992 Constitution). These laws (the 1992 Constitution and Act 574) as well as other legislative instruments provide a sound enabling environment for parties to conduct their lawful activities.

Party Organizational Life

Political parties in Ghana are organizationally structured. At least three levels of the party structure may be discerned, namely, the national, regional, and constituency levels with sub-constituency structures only existing as offshoots of the constituency. The formal structures of both the NDC and NPP provide for five to six clusters of organizations at the branch, ward, constituency, district, regional, and national levels. However, the parties' organizational structures have been developed with emphasis on the local organization, where constituencies are the hub of party activities because they are the focus of parliamentary election contests. Consequently, the parties have had to design their structures to coincide with the centres of electoral action. At election time, the parties' constituency machinery works out modalities by performing several tasks, including arranging the communities' meetings with presidential and parliamentary candidates to cement the supporters' loyalty to the parties and candidates; campaigning by expanding the parties' operations to the electorate; disseminating the parties' campaign information to supporters; and proselytizing new members. The intermediary party structure is at the regional level, where the prime function is coordination and supervision of the branches in the jurisdiction. The parties' constituencies function under close monitoring of their regional party executives, yet the parties' structures are pyramidal, with their respective national organizations at the pinnacle even though the parties' constitutions envision grassroots party development.

The parties' structures have created formal institutions. The constituency executive committee (CEC), a partly elected and partly appointed body of local party hacks, is composed of sub-constituency representatives, usually presided over by a chairperson and associates; a secretary; treasurer; and women's and youth organizers. These local institutions are replicated at

the regional and national levels. The parties' organizations at the national, regional, and constituency levels are run by the office of their respective secretaries, or general secretaries in the case of the national party, who assist their chairpersons in the day-to-day running of the parties and traditionally act as the parties' spokespersons.

Salient among their structures are the youth and women's wings. In recognition of the special role women and the youth play in the party organization, Ghanaian parties have assigned a special place to these groups. The women's wings are noted for their caucus activities, including advocating for quotas in the distribution of internal vacant positions and filling legions of political offices when their parties win national elections, even though none of the parties' constitutions have entrenched female quotas. The youths are active on the campuses of tertiary institutions across the country. They devote much time to serving as volunteers to campaign for their parties during elections. The most influential campaigners are often rewarded for their service to their parties' activities with national and local posts.

Party Membership

It is widely acknowledged that the vitality of political parties is based on their membership. Hence, a salient element of the parties' organizational efficacy is the membership. Membership of the parties is heterogeneous in complexion. One group is labelled the 'founding members'—persons who have shared attitudes regarding the vision and philosophy of their party, who connect well with its history and traditions, and who are regarded as 'elders of the party'. Usually, people who have high pedigree in community life and belong to the top echelon of the social-economic ladder in society remain key financiers of the parties and hold the centre together. While they are not involved in the day-to-day running of the parties, they remain the unseen decision-makers of the party. Ordinary members are also known as activists (foot soldiers)—the most politically driven members, the equivalent of militants in the Communist Party—and they are found throughout the branches. They execute many of the parties' grassroots decisions and activities, including undertaking house-to-house campaigns (Gyimah-Boadi and Debrah 2008).

To be a member of a party, the person must be registered. The parties' formal machinery for enrolment reveals procedures that involve filling in a form—name, address, date of birth, ward residence, other details, and a signature—ending with the issuance of a photo ID card. (Since 2016, the

NDC and NPP have incorporated biometric registration into their registration systems.) The parties' constitutions have many rules related to loyalty and procedures for punishment for disloyalty. When the applicant's membership registration is accepted, the member is strictly obliged to conform to the party's discipline and rules of conduct. The most undisciplined members who brought the name of the parties into disrepute have been expelled. Since 2000, some members of both the NDC and NPP have faced expulsion orders on grounds of indiscipline and 'flirting' with opponents (Debrah 2014).

However, parties in Ghana have not been able to provide an 'organizational encapsulation' of the structure and social environment in which their members and voters lead their lives. Hence, in each election year, the parties have to start building membership support anew to prevent the erosion of their support base. Moreover, whereas the parties' leadership at the national level is heavily skewed towards the upper class and the regions have a high concentration of the middle class, the constituency levels are dominated by peasants, farmers, unemployed people, and people with lower educational attainment; this mirrors the elite's dominance over national-level party politics in Ghana. It is a fact that the growth of parties in Ghana has revolved around their core membership, most of whom are the parties' founders or elders. It is also evident that the spirited membership drive that characterized party activities in the early formation years has waned. Thus, there are now fewer dues-paying and card-bearing members, and the parties have survived by relying on those regarded as supporters (sympathizers who vote for the parties in elections) from multitudes of backgrounds, such as small business owners, peasants, students, members of civil society/voluntary/non-governmental organizations, public servants, employees of private organizations, and self-employed citizens.

The behaviour of Ghanaian political parties' leadership depicts them as entrepreneurs who have joined the parties to advance their particularistic rather than organizational interests. To this end, it is visible from the parties' organizational establishment and the way they have been shaped that the elite are the suppliers of public policies in response to the demand of the electorates. Thus, the parties are managed as businesses in which individuals who have entered as members pursue their particularistic interests rather than being altruistic (Strøm 1990). Thus, at all levels of the party organization, the members—both leaders and ordinary members (particularly the youth, as reflected by the wings in tertiary institutions)—have essentially been attracted to the parties for the perceived benefits they can derive from them.

Moreover, Ghanaian political parties may be classified into vote-seeking, office-seeking, and policy-seeking parties. The first category includes parties with narrow objectives to maximize votes. These parties, such as the People's National Convention, Progressive People's Party, and CPP, among the smaller parties, have largely organized their activities towards mobilizing voters to vote for them during elections. Consequently, they lack organizational coherence in terms of campaign messages and manifestos and are structurally feeble and less competitive. Second, office-seeking parties, such as the NDC and NPP, have been structured towards vote maximization to capture political power and control the public offices (Strøm 1990). These parties regard the acquisition of power and control of political offices as paramount and have treated electoral or policy goals as means to an end. Despite their belief that politics is akin to the acquisition of private goods—that is, conferment of political appointments on their members—the NDC and NPP have not underplayed the relevance of policies and programmes to their survival and organizational efficacy. Thus, while seeking to mobilize voters as well as capture power and consolidate it, they have utilized the instrumentality of their particularistic manifestos (Debrah 2014).

Party Financing

Given the centrality of funds for an efficient party organization, Ghanaian parties have prioritized funding in their activities. In particular, the parties need money to run their offices, employ personnel, conduct election campaigns, and communicate with their membership and the electorate at large. This is because, to a large extent, the parties' survival hinges on money. Money is now regarded as 'the mother's milk of politics' because there is fear that if it is not regulated, it could influence democratic distortions by corrupting the process. The situation is more volatile for emerging African democracies such as Ghana, where party financing is largely a private activity. The overwhelming funding for parties comes in the form of contributions or donations from their members, who must be Ghanaian citizens; the law disallows donations by non-citizens (Republic of Ghana 1992). Although parties require their memberships to make contributions to maintain their operational costs, the burden has fallen on a few wealthy individuals, most of whom are local entrepreneurs or part of the diaspora. It is common knowledge about party financing in Ghana that membership dues constitute an insignificant fraction of the monies that parties generate for their operational activities.

The dwindling of membership dues means that a few wealthy individuals who provide funding to the parties also control the decision-making processes (Debrah 2014). The law makes provisions for state support, but this is largely in the form of allotting to all parties time and space on state-owned media, enabling them to present their campaign programmes to their supporters (Republic of Ghana 1992, 2000). Lack of well-structured state financial support to the parties is part of the reason that smaller parties have failed to make an electoral impact on the democratic process. The laws on party financing promote transparency in the financial administration of the parties' organizations. Parties are required to declare their assets, liabilities, and expenditure at least 21 days before the general election and six months after (Republic of Ghana 2000). In addition, they are expected to file their financial accounts with the Electoral Commission by 31 December, the end of the financial year. They must also publish the declared audited accounts for public scrutiny. However, important provisions of the laws that promote transparency and financial accountability seem to be in abeyance because they lack authoritative enforcement. The Electoral Commission has demonstrated it is incapable of holding the parties accountable for non-disclosure of their financial accounts. Apart from lack of personnel to carry out the assignment, there is also an unwillingness to enforce the law. This failure to enforce party financing laws has not only denied the public the right to know or question the financial impropriety of parties but also anecdotally resulted in abuse of public resources by incumbent governments to ensure their re-election.

Party Ideology and Programmes

Ideologies have shaped party formation. Traditionally, politics in Ghana has been marked by a high degree of ideological rhetoric. Moreover, parties in Ghana historically identify with liberal capitalism and socialism. Drawing its lineage from the UGCC, which was founded on liberalism, the NPP is incurably centre-right, while the NDC and smaller parties that also trace their ancestry to Nkrumah's CPP are socialists and gravitate towards the centre-left. However, changes in domestic politics occasioned by the radical transformation of international politics, as well as financial donors' redefinition of the goals of nation-states including Ghana, means that, as the two parties (NDC and NPP) rose to political power, differences between them have shrunk gradually. Thus, in ideological terms, both the NDC and NPP are close to each other (Gyimah-Boadi and Debrah 2008). Today, all parties display a kind of pragmatism that allows them to organize their

programmes and appeal to the electorate. The parties are more concerned about the practical ways of improving the lot of the people—protecting the vulnerable, providing basic amenities, providing employment, and expanding the market base for socio-economic development—rather than about the left–right ideological continuum, even though on paper they maintain their ideological leanings. For instance, the NDC and NPP are aligned with the global coalitions of ideological parties with their corresponding regional and sub-regional parliamentary groups (the NDC and NPP belong to the Conservative and Socialist Parliamentary international groups, respectively).

Political Ecumenism

Intra-party democracy is a core feature of a party's organizational life. Both the Constitution and Act 574 mandate parties to adhere to democracy in their internal affairs. First, rules on internal party competition prohibit discrimination on the grounds of gender, ethnicity, religion, or social and economic status. Only the legal stipulations regarding suffrage—voting age of 18 years and above—and a minimum age of 40 years for candidates to contest for the office of the president are enforceable within the parties' selection processes. Moreover, the democratic principles laid out in the pages of the parties' constitutions require that leadership at all levels of the parties' organization be elective, frequently renewed, collective in character, and weak in authority. Members are allowed to choose their local executives, and an electoral college elects the constituency, regional, and national executive members. This procedure cascades to the regional and national levels. For instance, the nine branch executive members of the NDC are elected by all branch members. Two delegates from each branch, along with the other members, constitute the electoral college to choose the CEC. Five delegates chosen from the CEC, together with other political appointees within the regions, in turn elect the regional executive committee (REC). Elected members from the constituencies, various affiliates, and representatives of regional parliamentary groups, among others, attend and vote for the national executive committee (NEC) and presidential candidate of the NDC once every two years. Similar elective structures exist in the NPP, where representatives of polling station executives elect CEC members, and two delegates chosen at the party's annual delegates' conference in each constituency form the electoral college to elect the REC members. Two delegates from each constituency, members of the national council, representatives of patrons, and founding members, *inter alia*, have the mandate to elect the NEC. A larger electoral

college comprising 10 delegates from each constituency and a representative of patrons, founding members in each region, and overseas branches comprise the electoral college to elect its presidential candidate.

In theory, decision making and accountability enforcement are formalized, with annual congresses and conferences at the apex of the parties' organizational structure. For instance, the NDC congress determines the policy direction of the party by subjecting its annual report, budget, audited accounts, and any reform proposal to scrutiny and approval. The NPP regards its national annual delegates' conference as the supreme governing body with deliberative and sanctioning powers in matters of finance and discipline, among others. Further, dissent is permissible within the privacy of the parties' 'family' so long as the dispute can be presented as disagreement over means rather than ends. Hence, channels of dissent and redress as well as open competition for leadership are dogma for the parties (NDC 1992; NPP 1992) A significant amount of intra-party competition exists, and vacant positions are widely advertised through the parties' internal structures for aspirants to file their nominations to contest any of the posts. Selection of the presidential and parliamentary candidates follows acceptable democratic practice: at all levels, election of the parties' officers is supervised by the Electoral Commission, the authoritative body established by the Constitution to conduct all elections in the country. To the extent that the constituency, regional, and national executives report to delegates at the parties' congresses or conferences regarding their stewardship, accountability occurs at all levels of the parties' organizations.

The parties are anxious to maintain the appearance of democracy and accountability: On paper, election is the rule. The executives and officers are always elected and given a fairly short period of office in accordance with democratic rules. Processes allow delegates to the parties' congresses and conferences to scrutinize their activities. However, oligarchic tendencies have developed within the parties' organizations without any constitutional warrant. The parties' organizations have manifested *embourgeoisement* tendencies in their inner corridors through manipulation, corruption, and membership alienation to sidestep the accountability processes. First, the manifestation of rivalries as conflict and corruption ('moneycracy') has become widespread within leadership contests (presidential and parliamentary primaries). In the absence of laws regulating campaign spending in primary elections, contestants have resorted to clandestine methods, thereby turning the political game into a zero-sum struggle for power. This has taken the form of personalized clientelism, in which candidates contesting party primaries or leadership positions extract resources from their personal

savings, loans, and other sources to influence or bribe delegates to party conferences and congresses to enhance or secure their election or re-election.

Competition in the parties' primaries has become an occasion for contestants to distribute largesse—clothes, cars, agricultural implements, lanterns, etc.—to guarantee their victories by buying political clients—constituency, regional, and national party executives, and members of the Electoral College. Consequently, personalized clientelism has turned the election primaries into 'harvesting seasons' for party delegates and influential executive members who could even utilize a greater room to manoeuvre for voting blackmail. Optimism about winning means that a contestant renders multiple social services to delegates and party officials, including attending clients' birthdays and wedding ceremonies, giving out 'chop-money', etc. as part of the game plan. Then, in Ghana, the more patronage candidates can distribute during in-party executive elections or primaries, the higher their chances of winning. Thus, incumbent members of parliament (MPs) or executives whose meagre resources hamper or slow their patronage distribution to their clientele may lose their chance of re-election. Such patronage has not only undermined intra-party competition because other contestants with little financial resources are disadvantaged in the primaries, but it has also made the enforcement of leadership accountability palpably difficult. Indeed, in several cases, party leaders who were expected to demand accountability from the contestants were the main culprits of corruption in the primaries.

Moreover, the procedures for selecting the parties' leadership and other officers at all levels are far from being democratic. Co-optation and the widespread use of indirect representation or delegation via conferences and congresses deprive the entire membership of the opportunity to choose their leaders. In many cases, the parties' executives or some invisible officials often enunciate consensus on who should be elected. The so-called delegates' congresses and conferences themselves present a pyramidal structure with top executive members, MPs, founding members, patrons, etc. nominating themselves to supervise their own elections or promoting their favourites to leadership positions without the active participation of the general membership.

Form of Party Communication

Intra-party communication also reflects the parties' hierarchical structure and orientation. Information flows in a top-down continuum, even though the parties' formal procedures permit bottom-up processes of control and

influence. Besides being nebulous and with cumbersome utility, the processes of channelling members' grievances and resolutions from the bottom up remain exercises in futility. Moreover, the amount of information emanating from the national executives to sub-national executives rarely gets to the ordinary members. The latter's reliance on information about their parties through a few activists and rumour mills demonstrates the extent to which the rank and file are alienated from their parties. It is commonplace for Ghanaian politicians to go to their parties and supporters every four years when they need them to renew their mandates to national offices. After manipulating delegates to secure their re-election, the relationship and any form of communication end.

Inter-party Conflicts

Ghanaian parties are characterized by excessive partisanship. The result is inter-party acrimonies, which are most pronounced between the NDC and NPP. Their intense acrimonies have manifested in the national decision-making process. Since 1992, there have been fierce and uncompromising stances between the NDC and NPP on the passage of several bills in Parliament. Yet these differences are more about promoting partisan interest than auditing the ruling party to achieve quality legislation. Moreover, the stalemate on some of the legislation has proven to be counter-productive to the national development effort. Indeed, in many cases, the escalated inter-party conflicts and ambitions of the parties' leadership have been reflected in intense out-manoeuvring in the vetting of presidential nominees for several national and international posts. These inter-party conflicts have emerged from behind the walls of Parliament into society, where it is now evident that the population is sharply divided between the NDC and NPP on all matters of national importance. The excessive NDC–NPP conflicts have been obstructive to consensus on national issues. Inter-party partisanships are now recorded in the state security services, public service recruitment, and tertiary students' elections. The NDC–NPP cleavages are noticeable in the media and civil society arenas too. Demonstrable behaviours (unprofessional conduct of some media anchors) and partisanship colouration of civil society activism exemplify the depth of the inter-party conflicts. Compounding the cleavages is the growing intra-party manoeuvring over several activities of the parties. The intra-party rivalries become worse during the selection of presidential and parliamentary candidates. The development of factionalism within the parties, with each grouping having a specific agenda to stress, has

been particularly marked since 1992. Many factions within the parties have developed strategies consisting of efforts to undermine other nominees to ensure the rival faction gains a slate of sensitive positions with a view to turning the recruitment fortune in favour of their own candidate(s) and to carry out political engineering where powerful groups sponsor the disqualification of the candidacy of arch-rivals who pose a severe threat to their electoral victory.

The Challenge to Democratic Consolidation

Certain dimensions of multi-party politics pose a grave danger to the survival of democracy. Ethnicity remains an unresolved phenomenon in the political game. Although, in theory, the complexion of the parties' organizations is ethnically diverse, their campaigns project ethnic mobilization. While the Ewes in the Volta region are electorally aligned to the NDC, the NPP derives its strength from the Akan groups in the Ashanti and Eastern regions. It would not be an overstatement to say that without the Ewes and Akans voting for the NDC and NPP, respectively, their organizational efficacy and electoral success would be in limbo. Moreover, patron–client relationships have hindered the parties' move to institutionalization. The membership's mobilization is largely driven by neopatrimonialism and clientelism. Registering to become a member of a political party is regarded as a vehicle to access state resources. The elite embedded in the parties' apparatus have developed informal relationships with the so-called foot soldiers whom they would use to accomplish their political goals and, in turn, supply public goods to their clients. Membership of these parties remains the surest way to acquire employment within state institutions. Therefore, unemployed youths are motivated to join parties as insurance to get employment when their preferred party secures political power. Yet, this patron–client relationship that has emerged within the parties' organizations now serves as the veritable vehicle, channel, or breeding ground for political corruption. The intensity of membership mobilization for personal benefit has been conditioned by the situation of growing poverty in the country. For personal economic interest, voters are willing to accept money to vote for any party or candidate. Hence, monetization has been an entrenched behaviour in the membership and vote mobilization within the parties (Hoffman and Long 2013; Kosiara-Pedersen et al. 2017; Poletti et al. 2019; Achury et al. 2020), even though the parties are sustained by the activists (foot soldiers) on whom the elite depend at any time to access local political fortunes—that is, votes.

Furthermore, salient among the issues submerged within competitive multi-party politics is the phenomenon of party vigilantism. The existence of vigilante groups, which normally comprise young individuals, is not bad in itself, but these groups' modus operandi involves engaging in political fanaticism. Political vigilantes who are ordinarily regarded as the most ardent supporters of their groups have now been turned into the likes of anarchists with an agenda of terrorizing their opponents, thereby reducing electoral competition into a zero-sum game.

Although the emergence of political vigilantes pre-dates independence in 1957, recent developments indicate that they have become a political nuisance group whose activities have the capacity to turn back the clock of democratic progress. These groups of young party activists are often used as para-security forces for the parties' elite. Their deployment with the assignment to watch the polls and protect the ballot has been the source of electoral conflict.

Moreover, the monetization of politics is a lingering issue in the country's multi-party politics. Excessive use of money in Ghanaian elections is not a new occurrence; however, this practice is fast deteriorating into a common feature, thus making democracy more expensive than usual (Saffu 2003). Irregular engagements between MPs and their constituents have been attributed to the monetization syndrome—MPs regard it strategic to keep away from their constituents because regular visits would imply the distribution of largesse to them. As constituents often regard politicians as suppliers of public goods—because the politicians have unlimited access to state resources by virtue of their political office—the visits become occasions for them to receive their share of the patronage pie. Although high expenditure is required for regular visits to constituents, politicians who have avoided the electorate have suffered the constituents' wrath in their re-election bid.

Summary and Conclusion

While the prevailing multi-party politics in Ghana is largely responsible for democratic development (peace and stability), there are still growing inequalities between the elite and ordinary voters, which can be blamed on the parties' activities. The adoption of manifestos has adorned the parties' election campaign programmes; yet, after winning power to form a government, there has been a disparity between the documents and reality. The parties' inability to translate their manifestos into implementable programmes and policies has undermined public trust in party politics. The

parties have served as instruments of collective action by the elite to propagate their parochial interests to control state resources and personnel for their own benefit. The evolved two-party model appears to have been institutionalized. Since the resurgence of party politics in 1992, only the NDC and NPP have proven to be prominent in the electoral arena. Attempts by smaller parties to engineer methods to become relevant have proved futile due to deepening divisions within these parties. Personal acrimonies among the leaders, with each claiming to be capable of winning national elections to offer better leadership, have undermined unity among them. Yet if they had united, a third force would have emerged. Given the current electoral dynamics, there is no way of witnessing any ideological shift among the parties. The NDC and NPP have been strategic by promoting programmes that reflect both capitalism and social interventions (welfarism), even though they use ideological rhetoric by identifying with liberal and social ideologies, respectively.

Prospects for Democratic Development

Ghana has enjoyed a stable democracy for the past three decades, earning the admiration of both domestic elites and the international community. Political parties have remained a principal pivot around which the current democracy revolves. Without their involvement, the democratic system would have suffered irreversible setbacks. Thus, the parties can be described as the soul that has kept democracy in Ghana flourishing. Their platforms continue to serve as grounds for political participation by the citizens. The active involvement of women and youths in the political process is the direct result of their mobilization by the parties: these groups have been at the centre of political recruitment. After every election, the parties have provided human resources capable of filling the legions of vacant political office positions. Similarly, they have contributed to policymaking through manifesto drafting, which has served as a framework to develop post-election public policy instruments that direct national development. While partisanship has produced tendencies that have engendered inter-party conflicts and acrimonies, the activism of the parties' foot soldiers has kept democracy alive not only by stimulating high voter attendance but also by encouraging opposition oversight of the ruling government's activities.

Given the synergy between active participation and democratic institutionalization, the vibrant party politics that political parties' engagements have engendered among the populace points towards an optimistic outlook

for democratic progress. Thus, it would not be an understatement to say that democratic consolidation is imminent because the political parties have offered the needed platform for the mobilization of talent and cross-fertilization of ideas that can be harnessed for the socio-economic development of the country.

Note

1. They have splintered into the National Independent Party, Peoples' Heritage Party, Democratic People's Party, New Generation Party, Ghana Democratic Republican Party, Every Ghanaian Living Everywhere, National Convention Party, People's National Convention, People's Party for Democracy and Development, National Justice Party, and National Salvation Party.

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V

THE CRISIS OF DEMOCRACY AND POLITICAL PARTIES

26

Can the Parties be Helped?

Political Party Assistance in International Cooperation

Wilhelm Hofmeister

The Concept of International Party Assistance

As the chapters in this volume have underscored, many political parties face serious difficulties effectively fulfilling the functions commonly ascribed to them.[1] So, the question is whether and how the parties can be helped to perform better and whether international party assistance can contribute to this aim? In this chapter, I try to provide an answer in relation to this question. My remarks are very much shaped by my own experiences of international cooperation with political parties as an employee of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation (KAF). After a few brief comments about the basic problems of party assistance, some of these practical experiences will be presented, which are not paradigmatic but nonetheless may illustrate the possibilities and limits of party assistance. In a subsequent section, an overview of the sponsors and instruments of international party assistance will be provided, which is followed by a discussion of criticisms regarding the ineffectiveness of party sponsorship. Finally, a few recommendations will be formulated on how to make international party assistance more coherent and efficient.

Party assistance can be defined as 'the organizational effort to support democratic political parties, to promote a peaceful interaction between parties, and to strengthen the democratic political and legal environment for political parties' (Burnell and Gerrits 2012: 4). Its purpose is to strengthen one or more parties, thereby indirectly promoting democracy. Party assistance is thus a specific part of promoting democracy and is therefore characterized by the same possibilities and limitations.

Even more than other approaches to promoting democracy, such as strengthening civil society organizations or the free press, party assistance affects a central area of politics: the struggle for political power, because that is a main objective of political parties. It is for this reason that party assistance

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faces criticisms of interfering in the internal affairs of other countries, which is ultimately also the case for other types of intervention in the context of international cooperation. Indeed, due to its political dimension, party assistance operates within a particularly sensitive area since it seeks to influence the behaviour of key democratic institutions and political leaders. In terms of democratic theory, this kind of intervention is not entirely without problems considering a country's sovereignty and the right to self-determination of its citizens. Sometimes, forcefully drafted proposals and expectations for cooperating with political parties fail to recognize that foreign actors in this field must behave very sensitively and with a feeling for a country's political circumstances. Moreover, foreign actors find it hard to grasp the strategic and personal considerations of parties and their leaders (which are often closely linked!)—and they find it even harder to influence them and induce behavioural changes. Even when the consequences of actions or omissions seem inevitable, there is no guarantee that parties and politicians will change course once a strategy is adopted. Foreign sponsors rarely have any leverage in these cases. Linking aid to certain changes of behaviour, a condition sometimes imposed in other areas of international cooperation, is ineffective when it comes to party assistance. Therefore, the expectations for party assistance must be realistic. The influence of foreign assistance and advice on the dynamics of the party's development, and consequently that of party systems, is in general rather limited. However, there are certainly some examples that it is nevertheless possible.

Experiences of International Party Assistance

KAF's cooperation with the Christian Democratic Party of Chile (Partido Demócrata Cristiano, PDC) may serve as a good example for successful international party assistance (Angell 1996; Hofmeister 1996). The author of this chapter was the foundation's representative in Chile from January 1988, when the Pinochet dictatorship was still in power, until May 1993. During these years KAF funded the PDC's training institute (as it had since the early 1960s), which provided training and education throughout the country for members of the party, especially younger ones. At a think tank, also funded by KAF, Christian Democrats analysed education, health, and housing policy matters and drafted reforms. After the regime change, researchers of this think tank became government ministers and secretaries in these same areas. The head of the think tank, Jaime Lavados, was twice chosen as president of the country's largest university, the Universidad de Chile, from 1990 to 1998.

KAF also funded a training institute for trade unions that advised, among others, the most important union leader of that time, Manuel Bustos, also a Christian Democrat. In rural areas, an agrarian aid institution and two cooperative unions were KAF partners that had been closely associated with the PDC since the land reforms of the first Christian Democratic President Eduardo Frei (1964–1970), thereby strengthening the party's link to the rural population. In the poor neighbourhoods of the larger cities, or *poblaciónes*, KAF supported a self-help organization for the *pobladores*, also led by PDC members. A very important part of the foundation's work was the granting of scholarships to younger PDC members who—with strict adherence to the academic requirements—came to Germany to study for several years, earning post-graduate degrees, with many completing a doctorate. After the regime change in 1990, several of these scholarship recipients became government ministers, members of parliament and senators, and later even president of the Constitutional Court, while succeeding ambassadors of Chile to Germany were KAF scholarship holders. After the parliament convened in March 1991, KAF expanded its programmes to include a project to advise PDC parliamentarians, since the outgoing regime had not granted deputies and senators any personal or congressional staff, and they were largely left on their own, only gradually setting up the infrastructure for parliamentary work. Therefore, the KAF programme was not only designed to directly assist the partner party but also to support the development of professional skills, along with the relevant network of relationships with important social groups.

The KAF regularly reviewed its entire assistance programme along with PDC party leaders, although by no means could all wishes be met. The direct funding of party activities such as organizational support, or any campaign financing, was not possible under any circumstances. Indeed, there were many differences of opinion regarding the assessment of the work and the responsibilities of individual projects, but the mutual trust that had grown over the years between the PDC and KAF made it possible to resolve such differences.

During the regime transition period in Chile, the PDC strengthened its position, first as the leading party of democratic opposition to the Pinochet regime, and later as the ruling government party. After the victory of the united opposition in the plebiscite of 5 October 1988, in which the dictator Pinochet was seeking to extend his rule by another 10 years, PDC leader Patricio Aylwin became the candidate for the coalition Concertación de Partidos por la Democracia and, after his victory in December 1989, was inaugurated in March 1990 as the country's first democratically elected president since 1970. With the 1989 presidential elections, the PDC became the

strongest party in the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate. It won the presidency again in 1994 with Eduardo Frei.[2] This was a success for KAF not only because the foundation had been working continuously with the PDC since 1963, which had even been possible during the military dictatorship with restrictions, but also because many members of the government formed in 1994, and many members of Congress, had worked in one way or another at institutions and projects funded by KAF.

Essential for the foundation's work was the close contact between the party leadership of the PDC and the German Christian Democratic Union (CDU) party, which KAF played a key role in arranging (Hofmeister 2004). There were frequent exchanges that included inviting the PDC leadership each year to political meetings in Germany and regular visits of German politicians to Chile. In the run-up to the presidential elections of 1990, KAF arranged a trip to Germany for candidate Aylwin, during which he not only met German Chancellor and CDU Chairman Helmut Kohl but was also received by German Federal President von Weizsäcker—an unusual gesture to an opposition leader—and met with the leader of the Social Democrat Party (SPD) Willy Brandt, which helped build trust between Aylwin and the PDC and their Chilean coalition partners from the Partido por la Democracia and the Partido Socialista, with whom the SPD-aligned Friedrich Ebert Foundation collaborated.

Between KAF and the PDC existed an established structure for cooperation and a high level of mutual familiarity and trust. The work of KAF and the other German foundations active in Chile at the time was later evaluated by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development as an example of the success of party assistance (Krumwiede et al. 1995). This was a very important assessment for the foundations because Chile was drawing international attention like few other countries at the time due to the circumstances of the coup and the character of the military regime. This successful cooperation was based on two pillars:

- The selection of partners based on *ideological affinity*: Christian Democrats in Germany assisted Christian Democrats in Chile.
- *Exclusivity*: KAF worked with just one of many democratic parties (the 'partisan approach').

At the time, KAF's party assistance programme in other countries was also characterized by ideological affinity and the partisan approach, although the parties it was assisting did not always conquer top political positions, and some only managed to do so temporarily. A decade prior to its success in

Chile, KAF failed to help establish a Christian Democratic party in Spain, which, incidentally, KAF was advised to do in an extensive report written by none other than Juan Linz, a political scientist from Yale University, well known beyond academic circles for his work on authoritarianism and political transition towards democracy. Nevertheless, various authors and politicians acknowledge that KAF made a significant contribution to consolidating the democratic system of Spain by assisting Prime Minister Adolfo Suárez (1977–1982) and his party Unión de Centro Democrático (Poppen 2006; Urigüen 2018). After Suárez' term in office, however, the UCD's relevance increasingly diminished and KAF started to cooperate with the newly founded Partido Popular.

In Latin America, the Christian Democratic parties with which KAF collaborated played a prominent role at least during a certain phase of the political development of the respective countries and the region. They provided presidents and led governments in Venezuela, Costa Rica, Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, and Colombia, and later also in Mexico. The usual approaches and methods involved the funding of training and education for party members, mostly through the financial support of educational institutions, which were and are officially independent of the parties (similarly to the German foundations), advisory activities, analyses and publications, grants, and the planning of political conferences and dialogue.

Despite the success of this type of party assistance, today one must acknowledge that quite a few of the parties assisted by KAF no longer exist or have shrunk to insignificance (Kneuer 2014). In Chile, internal conflicts over party strategy and personal disputes between key party leaders have increasingly weakened the PDC, even though it continued to occupy important government positions within the framework of various centre-left coalitions until 2018. In some countries KAF, like other institutions providing party assistance, has problems demonstrating the specific contribution that the parties it supports are (still) making to the further consolidation of democracy.

This also applies *mutatis mutandis* to cooperation with parties elsewhere in the world, which started later with the 'third wave of democratization', and with whom it has been and continues to be difficult to work efficiently and successfully in the long run based on ideological affinity and exclusivity. During the transformation processes in central, eastern, and south-eastern Europe, KAF, like other foundations and organizations from Germany and other countries involved in party assistance, contributed to the development of many parties based on Western European models (Pogorelskaja 2006).

Many of those parties were accepted into the European party families. But by no means were all parties able to succeed politically.

In Asia, the recent experience in Myanmar indicates how difficult it is to promote democracy and parties. KAF was one of the first international organizations that was able to support civil society organizations through a local partner after the devastation of Cyclone Nargis in 2008. During the preparations for the 2010 parliamentary elections, which were still subject to significant restrictions, the first training activities with representatives of many newly founded parties became possible, especially regional parties. After Nobel Peace Prize laureate Aung San Suu Kyi was freed from almost 17 years of house arrest in November 2010, her National League for Democracy (NDL) party was legalized again a year later. KAF and the other international organizations that had arrived in the country tried to assist the NDL. Ms Suu Kyi somewhat reluctantly accepted that assistance. She led her party in a rather authoritarian way and discussed party affairs only with a small group of confidants. It goes without saying that reform of the party's organization or intra-party democracy were topics that could not be raised with her. She remained sceptical of foreign actors because she did not trust them to understand the country's political situation, and because many organizations carried out training activities in various parts of the country, which ran counter to NLD's claim of exclusivity. However, training and educational activities, particularly with younger members but also with NLD parliamentarians, were possible. Only very gradually did trusting relationships develop that might have resulted in additional activities and dialogue. However, Aung San Su Kyi and the NLD fell victim to another military coup in February 2021. Does this say anything about the effectiveness of party assistance by KAF and the organizations from other countries that have been active in Myanmar? Before we address the question of effectiveness, we will first briefly outline the structure of party assistance.

Party Assistance Actors and Activities

Cross-border cooperation between parties has existed at least since the founding of the Socialist International in 1864, but modern party assistance, which is not provided by parties but by intermediate organizations, first began with the international work of German political foundations in Latin America, starting in the early 1960s. Against the backdrop of the Cold War and the Cuban Revolution, cooperation with parties was intended to support reform-minded political groups while preventing them from drifting

into the political camp within the Soviet sphere of influence. The German foundations benefited from the fact that there were already parties in Latin America that had an ideological affinity with the two major parties in Germany, the CDU and the SPD. Christian Democrats and Socialists were the first partners of German party assistance. As the foundations' work expanded geographically, it became difficult to identify partners with the same political and ideological affinities. Nevertheless, the foundations clung to one element of their party assistance: exclusively working with just one party. However, they were increasingly pragmatic when choosing these partners. They established contacts in Spain in the mid-1960s and later in Portugal, promoting younger politicians from these countries through training and other activities. The democratic transition processes on the Iberian Peninsula, regarded as exemplary in the political science literature, also became a model for the success of party assistance provided by the German foundations. This helped them to grow budgets and continuously expand geographically, but also functionally, so that today party assistance is just one component of their international cooperation programme, which includes many other topics besides promoting democracy.

In the US, the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) was founded in 1983 as an instrument for promoting democracy abroad, and shortly thereafter, with explicit reference to the German experience, prompted the emergence of the two party-affiliated foundations, the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI), and today's International Republican Institute (IRI), which were also intended to assist parties abroad. As a result of the political upheaval in Europe after 1989, institutions and foundations that collaborate with parties abroad emerged in the 1990s and later, especially at the turn of the millennium, in other European countries (Wersch and Zeeuw 2004: 12; Burnell 2006: 5). The budgets of most of these institutions are relatively small, however, which limits the scope of their actions.

Organizations from Western Europe and the US continue to be the most important actors and financiers of party assistance. Their work focuses on parties in the 'young' democracies of Africa, Asia, Latin America, as well as in central, eastern, and south-eastern Europe. In addition, the German foundations also maintain party relations in all EU member states, North America, and Australia, but here they focus on programmes of political dialogue, which deviates from the traditional understanding of party assistance. The most important actors in party assistance are listed in Table 26.1.

It is not possible to determine the exact amount of the total financial expenditure for international political party assistance. The German political

Table 26.1 Actors in party assistance

Country/Actors[a]	Political affiliation	Budget for international work (in millions of €)[b]
Austria		
Dr.-Karl-Renner-Institut	Social Democratic Party of Austria	0.9 (2017)
Politische Akademie	Austrian People's Party	0.9 (2017)
FPÖ–Bildungsinstitut	Freedom Party of Austria	0.7 (2017)
Grüne Bildungswerkstatt	Austrian Green Party—The Green Alternative	0.4 (2017)
NEOS Lab	NEOS—The New Austria and Liberal Forum	0.14 (2017)
Team Stronach Akademie	Team Stronach Party	0.1 (2017)
Czech Republic		
CEVRO	Non-partisan	Not specified
Denmark		
Danish Institute for Parties and Democracy (DIPD)	Supported by nine parties represented in the Danish parliament	3.2 (2018)
Germany[c]		
Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS)	Christian Democratic Union (CDU)	116.4 (2021)
Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES)	Social Democratic Party (SPD)	110.7 (2021)
Friedrich-Naumann-Stiftung (FNS)	Free Democratic Party (FDP)	41.2 (2019)
Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung (HBS)	The Green Party	40.5 (2021)
Hanns-Seidel-Stiftung (HSS)	Christian Social Union (CSU)	37.4 (2018)
Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung (RLS)	The Left Party	47.6 (2021)
Finland		
Political Parties of Finland for Democracy (Demo Finland)	Supported by nine parties in the Finnish parliament	2.3 (2021)
United Kingdom		
Westminster Foundation for Democracy (WFD)	Joint leadership by members of the Conservative and Labour Party	11.3 (2020/21)

Netherlands		
Eduardo Frei Foundation (EFF)	Christian Democratic Appeal (CDA)	No information
Foundation Max van der Stoel (FMS)	Dutch Labour Party, (PvdA)	No information
International Democratic Initiative Foundation (Stichting IDI)	D66d Party	No information
Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy (NIMD)	Supported by several parties in the Dutch parliament	11.2 (2020)
Bureau de Helling	GroenLinks	No information
VVD International	Dutch Liberal Party	No information
Sweden		No information
Centre Party International Foundation (CIS)	Centre Party	No information
Christian Democratic International Center (KIC)	Swedish Christian Democratic Party	No information
Green Forum Foundation	Green Party Sweden	No information
Olof Palme International Centre	Social Democratic Party	Not specified
Swedish International Liberal Centre (SILC)	Liberal Party of Sweden	Not specified
Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA)	Government institution which, in addition to partially funding the aforementioned institutes, also actively promotes cooperation between individual institutes for multi-party cooperation	Not specified
Spain		
Fundación FAES	Conservative. Formerly aligned with the Partido Popular (PP), now without any party affiliation	Not specified
Fundación Concordia y Libertad	Partido Popular (PP)	1.2 (2021)
Fundación Pablo Iglesias	Partido Socialista Obrero Español	0.1 (2021)
USA[d]		
National Democratic Institute (NDI)	Democratic Party	163 US$ (2021/22)
International Republican Institute (IRI)	Republican Party	122 US$ (2021/22/20)
National Endowment for Democracy (NED)[e]		322 US$ (2021/22)

Continued

Table 26.1 *Continued*

Country/Actors[a]	**Political affiliation**	**Budget for international work (in millions of €)**[b]
Australia		
Centre for Democratic Institutions (CDI)	Non-partisan, affiliated with the Australian National University (ANU)	No information
Multilateral Organizations:		
European Endowment for Democracy		25.0 (2021)
European Partnership for Democracy	Association of various organizations, including DIPD, Demo, NIMD, WFD	No information
International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA)	Non-partisan institution supported by 34 countries around the world	28.3 (2021)

Sources: Annual reports of the individual organizations.

a. The table only lists institutions that assist international political parties. In the European Network of Political Foundations, 54 political foundations and think tanks from 23 EU member states and 6 political party families are loosely associated. All of them assist parties in their countries of origin through political education and advice, but only about half of them also carry out international party assistance projects and programmes.
b. The budget information is taken from the latest annual reports of the individual organizations as published on their websites by March 2023. For Austria, the figures come from the last accessible publication of the Court of Audit on educational institutions of political parties. The figures for the US institutions are in US$.
c. The Desiderius Erasmus Foundation, which is associated with the right-wing populist party *Alternative für Deutschland* (AfD), has not yet received public funds. Following an appeal to the Federal Constitutional Court, the latter ruled in February 2023 that the funding of political foundations must be placed on a new legislative footing. Then the Desiderius Erasmus Foundation will probably also receive public funding for national and international activities.
d. IRI and NDI have not published any of their annual reports on their website in the past years and do not disclose information about their budgets. Information on their general budget (which does not exclusively refer to international cooperation also include domestic programes) are found on the on the website https://projects.propublica.org/nonprofits/organizations/521338892 (NDI) and and https://projects.propublica.org/nonprofits/organizations/521340267 (IRI) (Accessed 22 January 2024).
e. Less than 10% of NED's funds go to NDI and IRI. https://www.ned.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/NED-FY21-Financial-Audit_Final-6.10.2022.pdf (Accessed 21 December 2023).

foundations and the two US institutes NDI and IRI have by far the highest budgets for cooperation with parties, but like most other institutions, party assistance is part of broader support for democracy, which includes other areas of activity. The share of their budgets that goes to party assistance is not itemized separately, but it should be approximately 20–25%. Some political institutions in other countries spend a higher percentage on party assistance, but in many cases this is limited to a few activities each year due to their relatively small budgets.

Regarding the international promotion of democracy, the share of party assistance is very small and can be estimated at 5% at most, but it cannot be precisely determined. The European Development Fund (EDF) alone accounted for the highest budget in the world for promoting democracy from 2014 to 2020, with €30.5 billion. Party assistance has so far been a very small part of that.

Most of the funding for international political party assistance comes from state sources in the individual countries. In addition, the EU Commission and several other multinational institutions and organizations also fund actions to assist political parties. The European Partnership for Democracy (EPD) and the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA) explicitly emphasize this area of activity (among others). The European Endowment for Democracy, the United Nations Development Fund, the Organization of American States, the National Endowment for Democracy (NED, USA), as well as the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), are also active in this area, but this primarily involves the funding of activities of other organizations and not so much the implementation of their own programmes to cooperate with political parties.

Notably, in the two large EU member states France and Italy there are apparently no institutions concerned with assisting parties beyond their national borders. This sheds light on political assessments and preferences. Norway established the non-partisan Norwegian Centre for Democracy Support in 2002, which also assisted political parties internationally, but the centre was dissolved in 2009.

Finally, we should also mention international political party associations, but they do not have sufficient funds of their own for activities to assist individual member parties. Their most important cooperation tools are international conferences and political dialogue. The most significant of these organizations are Centrist Democrat International (CDI), the International Democratic Union (IDU), the Socialist International (SI), the Liberal International (LI) and the Global Greens (GG).

Forms of cooperation

The most important forms of cooperation continue to concern the following areas (Erdmann 2008: 241):

- Support of a single party that sometimes has an ideological affinity with the sponsor's programme; however, this is no longer a prerequisite in many places (*partisan approach*)
- Cooperation with various relevant parties, e.g. those represented in parliament (*multi-party approach*)
- Promotion of a non-partisan or interparty dialogue to help overcome conflicts within society, perhaps in the period following a civil war or other conflict (*cross-party dialogue*)
- Encouragement of reforms to the underlying legal and institutional conditions of the political process, perhaps with the aim of influencing the setup of the party system (parliamentary advice, cooperation with election commissions, debates on the voting laws, etc.) (*institutional approach*)
- Promotion of trans-national cooperation between parties, or a region or subregion, and at the continental level, through party conferences, regional party associations, etc. (*international cross-party collaboration*)
- Support of civil society (*civil society approach*), i.e. of collateral or party-affiliated organizations (unions, associations, etc.), thereby promoting the linkage function of parties.

Topics of cooperation

The specific activities of the individual institutions cover the entire range of issues relevant to political parties:

- The internal organization of a party
- Promotion of the expertise of its members, especially those serving in parliament
- Local politics
- Political communication
- Supporting election campaign plans (but not the actual election campaign)
- Promotion of dialogue and cooperation with other parties (particularly relevant in post-conflict situations) and with civil society organizations.

The education and training of younger party members and women plays a very important role for virtually all sponsors. The matter of intra-party democracy is also dealt with very intensively by some sponsors, although the extent of intra-party participation has little significance for the voting behaviour of citizens, and there is no unanimous opinion in political science as to whether parties must be democratically organized to contribute to democracy in their respective countries. The fact that Michels' iron law of oligarchy is also still in force in Western democracies is overlooked by some of those involved in party assistance, whose habitus has been described as sometimes 'actionist and missionary' (Carothers 2006: 383).

The funded activities are also very similar in terms of the instruments used. Most of these activities consist of training workshops, seminars, or conferences for party members, the advising of party leaders and other party authorities, the invitation of party representatives to international programmes for dialogue and visibility, parliamentary talks, and the promotion of factual and policy-oriented debates conducted by political parties, including analyses and publications and conferences.

Contrary to some isolated allegations or assumptions made in a few publications, funding or other direct support of election campaigns has no particular role in international party assistance. Not only do donors and the legal environment in the countries of origin and the recipient countries forbid foreign funding of election campaigns, but the parties themselves want to avoid giving their voters the impression that they are 'controlled remotely' by foreign actors. Moreover, the resources of external party assistance are so limited in relation to the actual election campaign expenditures of individual parties that they could not influence any election results. However, in many cases, of course, party assistance is fundamentally geared towards strengthening parties, and that ultimately means helping them to improve their electoral results.

The Effectiveness of Party Assistance

The effectiveness of political party assistance has repeatedly been called into question (Carothers 2006; Erdmann 2008: 244ff; Burnell and Gerrits 2012: 4ff; Burnell 2017 and various country assessments of the book; Svåsand 2014: 46 ff.; Weissenbach 2016: 343ff). In view of the decline of democracy in many countries, questions regarding the purpose and effectiveness of party assistance have become more pressing.

Peter Burnell and André Gerrits have noted that those involved in party assistance set goals in a very ambitious but general way and normally seek

to promote the 'formation of stable, democratic and representative political parties, within a democratic environment' (Burnell and Gerrits 2012: 6). The current annual reports of many of the actors listed in Table 26.1 indicate that this continues to be their main objective. Few organizations publicly articulate such specific and detailed objectives and activities in cooperation with individual parties as the Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy (NIMD) and the Danish Institute for Parties and Democracy (DIPD). The US institutions NDI, IRI, and NED provide information on their websites about individual cooperation projects. On the websites of the country offices of the German foundations, there is information about cooperation with political parties. However, very specific goals or specific assistance programmes are not always mentioned.

The criticism that there is a lack of concepts and strategies to disclose motives, objectives and instruments, or the criteria and methods for assessing the promotion of (democracy and) political parties (Erdmann 2006a, 2008: 246) is even less applicable to most sponsors today than in the past. For example, in response to such criticism, KAF published various concept papers some time ago on its international work with political parties (KAS 2007, 2008a, 2008b). The NIMD is very open regarding the disclosure of planning and evaluation documents (Rocha Menocal et al. n.d.). Over the past decade, many institutions have continued to develop and sharpen their planning and evaluation tools, not least because of the requirements of their donors. Therefore, as with other international cooperation activities, party assistance projects and programmes practise stricter planning methods and establish indicators to demonstrate the achievement of specific goals.

The evaluation of cooperation programmes in recent years has intensified and its methods have improved, especially in the case of the German foundations. The reports from such evaluations, which are mostly prepared by external experts, are submitted to the German Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, which largely funds the work of the foundations, and these are usually made available to at least academic researchers. However, it should be noted that institutions with small budgets are often unable to fund very refined planning or evaluations. When budgets only allow a few training programmes or invitations for one partner party, expert reports are more likely to be foregone, and political criteria, such as affinity with a specific party, play a role in choosing a partner and the type of measures to be adopted. However, a cooperation programme does not have to lack a concept for this reason alone.

The general criticism first put forward by Carothers, and then by others, continues to persist that party assistance results in too few 'transformative

effects' (Carothers 2006: 12). Considering the state of the party systems in individual countries, that may be true. However, before we can condemn party assistance, we must consider its different levels.

The first level concerns the underlying political conditions. These largely determine which role parties play and how they (can) perform these roles. The system of government, the formal constitution, and the role of other political and social institutions (parliament, system of checks and balances, media, civil society, etc.) are important. However, there are other factors that play a major role: the historic moment of a country, i.e. how long has a democratic system existed? Is the country in the process of transition to democracy? Has it been through an internal conflict that must be dealt with? etc.; the political culture, i.e. what are the attitudes and experiences in terms of a democratic culture of debate? Is opposition generally accepted? What are the attitudes towards hierarchies and authorities? What roles are women permitted to have in public life? How important are social networks? To what degree do systems of personalism, clientelism, and patronage shape social and political manners? etc.; the ethnographic situation of a country: Are there different ethnic and religious groups?

Carothers criticized party assistance: 'As it is presently conceived and carried out in most cases, party aid does not address these sorts of broader conditions and structural factors that weigh so heavily on party development' (Carothers, 2006: 81f). However, a brief look at the basic underlying conditions makes it clear that these cannot be significantly influenced by party assistance. It is therefore surprising that scholars concerned with the transformation of political systems consider that external intervention has a significant impact on a country's future. Krastev and Holmes (2019) have reminded us recently that this is impossible, even with a much higher amount of funds than those available for party assistance. Even the institutional elements that directly affect the parties, such as party and electoral law, or party financing, cannot be changed by a few cooperation activities. This kind of influence requires long-term relationships of trust with individual parties and party leaders if the point is to achieve more than just a debate of such topics at an academic conference. In many countries, it was possible to turn such levers in the framework of party assistance. This is especially true when systems are being transformed during a transition from an authoritarian to a democratic system. The drafting of a new constitution continues to be such a moment in which the actors in party assistance set agendas and can possibly even initiate decisions in favour of certain regulations, although there is no guarantee that the intended results will be achieved. However, we cannot expect party assistance to make a major contribution to comprehensive system transformation.

Party leaders can be made aware of issues, and we can present them with alternatives to certain regulations. However, restraint must be used when assessing the chances that political engineering will successfully influence the underlying conditions. What may seem desirable or necessary from an academic or foreign perspective is often difficult to implement politically or may only be possible at best over the very long term.

At another level, there has also been criticism of the approach to and methods of party assistance, in which sponsors are accused of putting the focus of cooperation too heavily on an 'idealized or mythical' political party model of Northern European origin (Carothers 2006: 4094) which does not adequately consider the unique characteristics of the party models of other regions. Such criticisms also apply to US-based foundations, although they are not even familiar with the European party model from their own country. However, it must be noted in response that both party assistance and the promotion of democracy overall must have a clear idea of the object they want to help structure. Like democracy, the institution of the political party cannot be arbitrarily defined. Although there are many alternatives for their specific design, there are certain fundamental elements that should not be called into question (Hofmeister 2021). The sponsors generally know this and accept the fact that some of the parties they partner with do not correspond to the model of Western European parties, for which they are sometimes criticized in public or in academia. In addition, however, many of the peculiarities that characterize the parties in 'new' democracies also apply to the 'old democracies', including intentional ideological ambiguity, organizational weaknesses, dominant or authoritarian leadership, intra-party patronage networks and clientelism, a small membership base, lack of intra-party democracy, the exclusion of women from leadership posts, and an insufficient connection to society. A kind of convergence of the parties in old and new democracies, i.e. a convergence of their political party models, had already been observed several years ago. Therefore, 'it may be the parties in the West European political systems that are evolving toward the standard currently being set by the new democracies, and not the other way around' (Biezen, cited in Webb and White 2007: 5448f).

Also criticized were the methods of the sponsoring institutions, noting individual problems such as a very stereotypical way of carrying out activities, defective planning and implementation thereof, inadequate selection of topics, unsuitable training of professionals who are not familiar with local conditions, selection of unsuitable participants or the consideration of the clientele of important party leaders when assisting individuals, or research trips to donor countries with a high percentage of tourism, so that factual

information is neglected or circumstances are represented that do not reflect the reality of the participants in such programmes, etc. (Erdmann 2006b; 2008: 245). As a blanket criticism, such reproaches are unfair, even if some activities could be more carefully planned and carried out.

Apart from the fact that most sponsors are constantly adapting their methods (most recently with the move towards virtualization required by the COVID-19 pandemic), they are also dealing with very practical problems, such as: How many trainers are there in Africa or Asia who can convey their own experiences with well-organized political parties in a vibrant democracy to the participants in the advanced training courses? How many trainers from Europe or the US, upon being invited to Africa or Asia as 'experts', have knowledge of the country and local experience? Such activities do not require people who know the country so much as experts on matters such as party organization or political communication. Also, the rejection of participants who are recommended by top party leaders can sometimes create a dilemma. On the one hand, clientelism is at least tolerated, if not encouraged. On the other hand, access to important party representatives, as well as collaboration on important topics, may be blocked if sponsors have a conflict with important party representatives. Those party assistance institutions which do not have their own permanent representative in a country have a harder time identifying certain clientele relationships within individual parties, or even the participants in their own activities. These are just a few examples of the practical issues that party assistance organizations regularly face.

Multi-party vs. Single-party Approach

Some sponsors try to avoid such dilemmas by assisting several parties in a country at the same time. This 'multi-party approach' is strongly emphasized by the NIMD but also characterizes the work of institutes such as the DIPD of Denmark, Demo Finland, the Westminster Foundation for Democracy (WFD) of the United Kingdom, and the international body IDEA. This also tends to apply to the two US institutions NDI and the IRI, even if in individual cases or countries the latter work with only one party. The fact that different parties or, in the case of IDEA, different countries are represented on the governing bodies of these institutions has a decisive influence on their attitude in favour of the multi-party approach. All institutions normally work independently of one another, but there are also projects that are coordinated closely between several institutions, such as the NIMD and the DIPD. The three Swedish organizations—KIC, Olof Palme International

Centre, and Swedish International Liberal Centre (SILC)—carry out joint projects in Africa and Latin America, i.e. the Program for Young Politicians in Africa (PYPA), in which the Green Forum also participates, and the Latin America Programme of Affiliated Organisations (PAOLA). Both regional programmes focus on consolidating political parties but also assist civil society organizations and promote a free press.

As mentioned in the previous section, there is no fundamental difference between the working methods of the individual institutions that provide assistance. Cooperation with political actors who teach democratic values and specific skills such as negotiation, communication, political dialogue, and conflict management, is part of a standard programme. The effort to promote interparty dialogue is also a specific characteristic of the multi-party approach. The European Commission and some other international organizations favour this approach to a certain extent because it clearly excludes taking sides with a particular party so that these donors can remain neutral in party politics.

The alternative to the above is the partisan approach, which is not only applied by the German political foundations but also by most party-affiliated institutions of other countries. They focus their cooperation on one or—more rarely—several ideologically aligned parties in a country. In Europe, this primarily involves members of the same party family. An ideal example of this partisan approach was given at the beginning in the description of KAF's assistance to the PDC in Chile. Due to the ideological fraying of many political parties and the loss of importance of parties with their 'own' family, the German foundations have now become somewhat more flexible or pragmatic when choosing their partners. Ideological affinity in the narrow sense is no longer a prerequisite for cooperation, although agreement on fundamental goals and political issues is still expected. Overall, however, the aim of the partisan approach is also to promote a multi-party system, since it is expected that parties outside of the scope of the respective cooperation efforts will be promoted by other institutions.

The German foundations are convinced of their approach to cooperation because, in their experience, the necessary trust of party leaders and important representatives can only be achieved through a certain exclusivity, which also allows difficult topics to be addressed and facilitates a certain influence on a party's internal decisions. In addition to onsite training and advice, they offer their partners important international political contacts, professional training of party leaders and international invitations to raise their profile, or the recognition of a party through integration in international networks. This is not just the result of higher budgets but also of building trust over the

long term. The presence of their own country representatives, who maintain continuous contacts with the partner parties on the ground, is a key instrument whereby the foundations acquire direct knowledge and a feel for the political situation of a country, allowing them to implement and adapt their cooperation strategies in a differentiated and context-sensitive manner.

However, the limits of this partisan approach become more and more evident, especially when parties that have been assisted for many years become less relevant, perhaps because they lack success in governance, are paralysed by internal conflicts, have important representatives involved in corruption scandals, have lost their connection to important civil society groups, or are not in a position to address the concerns of a large part of the citizenry. These are all issues that are very difficult to influence with party assistance even after many years of cooperation. However, the institutions using the multiparty approach are in even less of a position to influence the behaviour and the structures of individual parties. Because of that, their access to important party leaders is limited since the latter often refuse to participate in talks with other parties or in joint activities. Moreover, if the work of such institutions is organized only by local employees, they may be able to run 'democratic schools' but are not generally accepted as equal interlocutors among the upper ranks of a party. The German foundations, but also smaller ones in other countries, achieve this mainly due to their affiliation with one party in their home country. On the other hand, institutions backed by various parties appear to many party leaders to be too amorphous to allow their representatives an insight into internal affairs or even to follow their advice.

This addresses a point of criticism of party assistance that concerns its lack of influence on the behaviour of party leaders (Carothers 2006: 81). Accordingly, such leaders would oppose any suggestions for party reforms that would threaten their own power base, such as intra-party democratization, and they often see parties as an instrument through which they and their supporters in the party would gain positions of political power and the benefits of parliamentarians. Putting aside the fact that this also describes the attitude of many party leaders in the 'old' democracies, we should remember that the purpose of democratic competition is primarily to gain political power. Only this can give the parties the competence to shape the future. They do not exist to offer their members a level playing field for internal democracy, or to promote specific groups such as women or young people, but to lift their leaders and representatives into political positions from which they can exercise power and implement their political programme.

The promotion of political parties and democracy, of course, makes an important contribution to educating and training young people as well as

political officeholders, providing them with advice on individual matters and integrating them into an international community of democratic parties. In this way, party assistance makes an important contribution to political education and training, which in most countries is not otherwise offered in any way. However, the specific impact of such measures and offers can neither be precisely predicted nor empirically proven. There are too many other factors that influence the direction of a party, including the personal interest of their leaders and the underlying political and social conditions, and these factors cannot be influenced by foreign sponsors. Indeed, that would go against the spirit of democracy, which lets the citizens of a country, and not benevolent foreign actors, choose their political leadership.

Conclusions and Recommendations for Party Assistance

Despite this somewhat sobering review of the possibilities and effectiveness of international political party assistance, there are good reasons to continue with it. Past experiences should be used to better gauge programmes and projects in the future. In this regard, some conclusions and recommendations are provided below.

1. Political parties play a central role in any democratic system. Even if they make difficult partners for international organizations, party assistance must be a central element of promoting democracy. Institutions, such as the European Commission, who have so far been reluctant to fund party assistance, should pay closer attention and devote more resources to this area and support the very different forms and methods of party assistance.
2. In all cases, a prerequisite for cooperation should be a clear stance by the parties and their leaders in favour of the values of liberal democracy. Ideological affinity and agreement between a sponsor and its partner party allows for broader cooperation than supposed political neutrality.
3. Party assistance can be very helpful if the party leadership recognizes its value and works to ensure the success of individual measures. The parties must therefore take 'ownership' of individual projects, i.e. leading members should be involved in discussions about objectives, priorities, and activities, not just to pursue their personal interests and those of the party, but also to gain a sense of what may help or harm their country's democracy. 'Ownership' does not mean giving

the parties a completely free hand over the assistance programmes but rather coordinating these programmes with them. Even while a project is being implemented, achievements should be regularly evaluated with the party representatives. The participation of high-ranking party representatives in such arrangements is an indication of how seriously the party takes the matter of cooperation.

4. Political momentum can significantly facilitate or hinder party assistance in a country. During a political transition process, there are more opportunities for international cooperation to influence a party in the opposition than a party established in a position of power.
5. Party assistance requires that the sponsor has a basic understanding of the nature of a party and the elements that help it achieve political success, as well as a grasp of the political situation in the country and the underlying conditions that influence the development and behaviour of political parties and their leaders. Foreign sponsors must also acquire knowledge of the driving forces and networks of relationships existing within and between the parties that influence their willingness to cooperate with foreign actors and determine the room they have to manoeuvre in that regard. Expert opinions or studies of the situation of a party or party system in a country can provide important clues and should therefore be relied upon even more when drafting or renewing concepts and strategies for assisting one or more parties. Even the most rigorous 'academic' preparation of cooperation measures, however, cannot replace a fundamental policy decision on cooperating with a specific party or group of parties.
6. In general, most international sponsors make full use of the range of actions available to them for cooperating with a party. Since party assistance consists primarily of training 'future party leaders', i.e. younger members and activists, including many women, it exploits the potential of many sponsors and the resources available to them but is an important contribution, conveying knowledge and techniques that are important for political parties yet not conveyed in many countries. Other measures that affect sensitive areas of the party, such as organizational reforms or even strategy scenarios, are normally used only when there is a close relationship of trust between the sponsor and partner party, which develops over a long period of time with the personal presence of the sponsor.
7. In addition to cooperating with individual parties or groups of parties, the structural factors that condition the development of parties must also be addressed, such as political party law, party financing,

the organization of parliamentary work, certain procedural questions when organizing elections, or voting rights in general. Of course, every sponsor must be aware that activities related to the underlying political conditions have only a limited influence on the behaviour and development of individual parties. Assisting individual parties cannot be replaced by pulling a few levers in the political or governmental system.

8. Anyone assisting political parties must take sides. Therefore, where possible, individual actors should focus on cooperating with specific parties. The clear advantage that the partisan approach has over the multi-party approach is that long-term relationships of trust can be formed with parties or party leaders; these relationships are indispensable for addressing sensitive issues during cooperation.
9. Of course, the use of funds plays an important role. Many parties, especially those in poor countries, spend a lot of money on election campaigns, but there are often only limited resources and budgets for ordinary party work. Foreign sponsors cannot and should not finance political parties. However, the implementation (and foreign financing) of educational and advisory measures is an important contribution to the parties, the actual value and scope of which often cannot be determined by the sponsors.
10. Party cooperation cannot be carried out according to a 'one-size-fits-all' method but must be adapted to the respective local conditions. Sponsors must first have a high level of understanding and sensitivity for local circumstances before they can start cooperating with the prospect of (usually manageable) success. However, overall, they must start from the premise that democracy without political parties is not possible.

Notes

1. The author is a Fellow at the Düsseldorf Party Research Institute (PRuF) and has worked for the Konrad Adenauer Foundation in Latin America, Asia, Spain and Germany.
2. He was the son of the Eduardo Frei who was President from 1964 to 1970.

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27 Parties and Democracy

A Difficult Relationship

Thomas Poguntke, Paul Webb, and Susan E. Scarrow

Introduction

Parties are essential for democracy because they represent and they govern. It is widely accepted that these two tasks are not easy to reconcile, as one tends to be stronger at the expense of the other. Depending on a given country's developmental trajectory, institutional arrangements will either strengthen the representative or the governing function (Mair and Thomassen 2010).

However, the performance of parties is not moulded solely by their institutional environment. On the contrary, it depends also to a considerable degree on their own ideology, organization, and social anchorage—three factors that covary with each other. In other words, how parties link to society, how strong their leaders are, whether or not they are committed to a coherent set of policies and can hence expect their parliamentary representatives to toe the party line—all these are also the result of the party's own choices and the societal conditions of their country. Clearly, all these aspects also influence how well parties represent and govern.

It is tempting to generalize across regions when we try to gauge the performance of parties and party systems in democratic governance. This might read as follows:

> The established, cleavage-based party systems of Western Europe have performed largely well in the post-war period, facilitating stable governments and a reasonable degree of alternation, albeit while facing the challenge of new and often more radical outsider parties in recent decades. The party systems in the new democracies in Central Eastern Europe, on the other hand, have suffered from a much higher degree of fluidity because decades of Communist rule had wiped out much of civil society and its organizations. As a result, newly emerging democratic

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> parties had little to attach themselves to and party systems remained in a state of flux. African parties have long been stereotyped as being dominated by ethnicization, often in a clientelist manner. In contrast to that view, however, one must bear in mind that almost all African countries with multiparty systems banned ethnic and other particularistic political parties. Latin American parties, on the other hand, are now strongly moulded by the logic of presidentialism, where parties are increasingly turned into instruments at the disposal of leaders aspiring to the highest elective office in the country. Asian party systems differ considerably in their degree of institutionalization, and the development of party systems is significantly affected by non-institutional factors. Among these are short-term interests; a broad range of social complexities, traditions, strategies, and decisions of political elites; and ethnic heterogeneity.

Appealing as it may be to attempt regional generalizations, they have clear limits. Think of the old French party system that had moulded the politics of the Fifth Republic. First, it was undermined by the continued attack from the populist right but then effectively wiped out by the centrist movement of President Macron. One might want to add the UK, where the post-Brexit Conservative Party seems to be a very different creature than it was before—even though it is difficult to know what exactly it is. Similarly, Italian party politics, known for hyper-stability and strong party organizations during the so-called First Republic, is now almost entirely conquered by parties that are leadership centred or even dominated. Furthermore, not all parties in Central Eastern Europe are subject to electoral vulnerability. Fidesz has dominated Hungarian politics for more than a decade, and the Polish PiS is certainly a strongly anchored party with a disciplined, albeit selective, membership.

If generalizations are difficult across specific regions which share, at least to a degree, commonalities that influence the performance of political parties, any discussion of global trends or patterns would certainly border on the unserious. Yet, if we climb down the ladder of abstraction somewhat (Sartori 1991), we can identify certain aspects of party performance in the process of democratic governance which are characterized either by similarities or clear differences, or where we can identify common challenges. This brings us back to the aspects discussed in Chapter 2, i.e. parties and their changing environment, parties as organizations, as facilitators of linkage, as legislators, as recipients of state funding, and as communicators. Conceptually, these aspects can be considered as several dimensions on which parties (or entire party systems) move in different directions. Depending on the political context of a given country and its institutional design, different values on these dimensions may be more or less conducive to democracy. An obvious

example is voting behaviour within parliament. While a very high level of legislative cohesion may undermine the quality of governance in presidential democracies because it increases the danger of gridlock under conditions of divided government (think of the USA), it is a requirement for effective parliamentary government—as long as the members of parliament (MPs) are not subjected to excessive pressure by the parliamentary leadership.

This example highlights the value of the case study approach that we have chosen for this volume. By assembling in-depth studies dealing with parties and party systems operating under very different political systems, different historical traditions, and diverse social challenges, the chapters show that identical phenomena may have different implications for the functioning of democracy. To give another example: We may bemoan the overwhelming funding of political parties by the state in Western countries because it removes the need of parties to strive for social anchorage and hence weakens their linkage function. The same funding model, however, may undercut parties' over-reliance on funding by rich individuals or strong companies, and thus in other senses such models could be said to help to stabilize party democracy. What are the benchmarks against which the performance of parties and party systems should be evaluated? As pointed out in Chapter 2, peaceful governmental alternation and stable governments are certainly hallmarks of a successful party democracy. This necessitates a reasonably stable party system because voters need to be familiar with the choices offered and need to be able to rely on the loyalty of elected representatives towards the party that nominated them. It also requires responsible party competition; it is here where the role of parties as organizations which recruit leaders is important. To be sure, there is a second chain of delegation and accountability in presidential systems connecting the chief executive directly to the electorate. Under such conditions, the competition for the highest executive office may be largely outside the control of parties. However, in order to govern, presidents need legislative majorities, and this is where the viability of the linkage between the parties in parliament and the electorate comes into play.

Ideally, parties should be both social organizations—because this holds them in place and prevents them falling victim to populist takeover—and political organizations capable of governing. The latter requires them to have reasonably strong leaderships which are selected through—and accountable to—a party organization that is sufficiently strong and unified to make sure they remain committed to the party's general political will. Otherwise, the principle of representation would be undermined (Müller 2000; Strøm 2000; Strøm et al. 2003).

Parties as Linkage Organizations

What do we learn from the country studies concerning the major aspects of party analysis introduced in Chapter 2? When we look at *parties in a changing environment*, it is evident that this is often associated with a decline of social anchorage in Western Europe, while parties tended to be a lot less socially entrenched in other parts of the world, except where strongly rooted in tribal or ethnic loyalties. In some cases, their lack of social anchorage is (partially) induced by the prevalence of presidentialism, which creates incentives for political elites to use parties as vehicles for the pursuit of power in presidential contests (e.g. Samuels and Shugart 2010). As a result, political parties are in some countries little more than transient campaign organizations with little programmatic or social profile. Here, it is an almost logical consequence that MPs frequently switch parties in order to join the winning camp for access to the spoils of patronage and clientelistic rewards. Brazil is an example, as is the Philippines. The consequences for the quality of democracy are severe: Party systems which are characterized by a lack of institutionalization and a correspondingly high degree of fluidity cannot provide a stable linkage between voters and the institutions of governance, which is the precondition of democratic accountability. While it would be an exaggeration to state that presidentialism is antithetical to stable parties and institutionalized party systems, the competing chains of delegation and accountability do not seem to work in favour of coherent and accountable parties. To be sure, this effect is particularly strong in countries where clientelism and/or ethnicity are prevalent.

Correspondingly, party membership tends to be a less clearly defined category in these countries, sometimes almost indistinguishable from the mere expression of support without any financial commitment or a real say in intra-party affairs (Gauja 2015; Scarrow 2015). This is not necessarily connected to presidentialism, as the Japanese or Greek examples show, but many of those countries where relatively loose concepts of party membership prevail are presidential (e.g. South Korea, France, the Philippines). In such cases, plebiscitary leadership selectorates can be very inclusive, simply because the boundary of the party as a membership organization is undefined. In its most extreme incarnation, this can even involve opinion polls as one element of the selectorate for presidential candidates, as the South Korean GUDNP did in 2007. While the use of opinion polls has remained an exception, there has been a trend towards increasingly open processes of leadership selection (Poguntke and Scarrow 2020: 330), which carry the risk of a takeover by outsiders or even populists. To be sure, the empirical evidence is equivocal as regards the alleged domination of plebiscitary leadership selection processes

by a unified leadership (Mair 1994: 16; Scarrow et al. 2022). However, the expansion of the selectorates has the potential to weaken the coherence of the party as a purposive actor. Instead, it may turn the party into an instrument of competing leaders who base their political power on a personalized mandate rather than on the support of the dominant coalition within their party (Poguntke and Webb 2005).

The literature on parties *as organizations* again has a European bias which is strongly influenced by the analysis of *parties and their linkage to society.* Much of the substance of the cadre, mass, catch-all, or cartel ideal-types can indeed be read as an analysis of their changing linkages to society (Lipset and Rokkan 1967; Lawson 1980; Poguntke 2002). While it is true that this has been developed with a view to European parties, elitist (i.e. cadre) parties exist also in other parts of the world, and a common trend seems to be that parties tend to be increasingly leader-dominated, even presidentialized, and sometimes led by politicians with populist leanings. What is more, parties that have formerly been characterized by large membership organizations (mainly in Western Europe) have suffered sustained membership decline which is undermining their membership-based model of intra-party politics (Biezen et al. 2012; Biezen and Poguntke 2014). In these countries, parties are beginning to lose their stable social anchorage and, concomitantly, their capacity to provide stable linkages to relevant social groups. The growth of volatility and increasing party system fragmentation are fairly direct results of such developments.

In other parts of the world, linkage is often based on clientelism and/or ethnicity which may provide more stability, at least for a limited period of time (Basedau 2019; Teehankee, Padit and Park et al. 2023). The downside of parties based on such linkages is that patronage and clientelism, as well as ethnicity-based linkages, undermine the very promise of liberal democracy, which is founded on political equality rather than privileged access to political power and/or state resources based on group membership, however that may constitute itself. South Africa may be an example here, where the ANC still benefits from its role in the anti-apartheid struggle while a party system with credible alternatives which may facilitate governmental alternation is not in sight.

Party Finance

State subsidies to political parties are an aspect that is largely uniform across all our cases. Only 5 of our 23 countries do not have public funding of political parties (the most notable exceptions are the US and the UK). Individual

chapters give more detailed accounts of the respective rules. A systematic analysis of the exact mechanics in each country would be required to arrive at a well-founded judgement concerning the conditions where they work best to support open competition and make parties less reliant on oligarchical donors and the best-funded interest groups—but this is beyond the scope of this volume. However, as our broad range of cases include countries where party democracy is functioning reasonably well and others where the challenges are more severe, it may be fair to conclude that public subsidies are unlikely to play the paramount role. Still, it is fairly evident that public funding of parties tends to weaken the influence of strong interest groups, companies, or even rich individuals. Where there are limits to private donations combined with public funding, this effect is certainly stronger. While it would be unrealistic to expect that legal limits to private party funding will entirely prevent such practices and the related political influence, it certainly makes them less likely and, depending on the sanctions, also more risky.

The prevalence of state funding as a source of party income corroborates the part of the cartel thesis that predicted exactly this (Katz and Mair 1995). Parties have indeed either retreated to the state or the establishment of party democracy has gone hand in hand with the introduction of state funding. Also, funding tends to be largely proportional to the electoral strength of parties. Even though there is some variation in that some countries combine proportional funding with an element of basic funding for all parties above a minimum threshold of relevance, it is evident that state funding helps to stabilize parties which are already established.

The dominance of state funding has changed the character of party democracy: In those parts of the world where parties originated as primarily social organizations, they have increasingly turned themselves (because they are the lawmakers!) into a service provided by the state to the citizens (Biezen 2004). By and large, this is true for the long-established democracies. In other parts of the world, state funding often came about because party democracy was established without the presence of parties that had grown 'bottom-up'. Here, the introduction of state funding was less a strategy of self-defence by the parties to compensate for their eroding social anchorage. Instead, it tended to be, at least sometimes, an example of conscious institutional engineering to prevent excessive political influence of small groups or rich individuals on the politics of a country.

Parties as Legislators

The performance of *parties as legislators*, on the other hand, offers a great deal of variation between countries. There are examples from various regions

where parties fail to generate parliamentary groups that vote cohesively or—even more problematically—stay together. In countries such as Brazil and Italy, defection is endemic. This touches upon one of the cornerstones of democratic party government in parliamentary and presidential systems alike, in that parties can only link to voters in a meaningful way if their parliamentary representatives are also accountable to their party and, via the party, to the electorate (Müller 2000; Strøm 2000). If those who are elected to parliament (also) as a representative of a specific party switch their party allegiance in considerable numbers over the course of a legislative term, the linkage between voters and what parliaments decide is severely undermined, if not cut off entirely. There is, at the same time, a danger that party politicians are then seen by the population as a 'political class' that is largely detached from the will of the people. This is, of course, an open flank for populists to attack (Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser 2013). Interestingly, some countries have tried to counteract defections by attempting to make the party the 'owner' of the parliamentary seat (Brazil, South Africa). However, this comes at the cost of undermining the liberal concept of a free mandate which stipulates that MPs are, first and foremost, representatives of the people and not party soldiers. While it is true that, in reality, they are both, such legislation could tip the balance too much on one side and also fuel possible allegations of all-too-powerful parties and their detached leaderships.

To be sure, the problem of unstable parliamentary groups is somewhat less acute in presidential systems where a second chain of delegation exists, namely between the electorate and the chief executive (Strøm 2000). However, the separation of powers also means that legislation should not be dominated by the chief executive, but in some countries the fluidity of parties in parliament has tended to give excessive influence to the chief executive over the legislature. The example of Brazil's President Bolsonaro, who was not a member of any party for some time during his incumbency, is an example of how far personalized rule can be pushed if parties fail to provide stable and accountable linkage.

Parties as Communicators

All parties are important actors in the process of *political communication*. This is hardly a surprising finding. However, when we take a closer look at what they do and how they do it, we can identify interesting and politically highly relevant differences. Some parties and some candidates have been faster and more successful than others in embracing modern social media. The 2018 campaign of the Brazilian president Jair Bolsonaro is an interesting example (Krause et al. 2019). Yet the jury is still out on whether the growing

importance of social media communication works in favour of smaller challenger parties or resourceful established parties. In any case, social media are just one facet of political communication, and the control of large portions of a nation's media sector (including TV stations and print media) by either individuals or the government remains a challenge to the freedom of party competition. Again, Italy is an example, where former Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi owned a considerable portion of the country's media. Moreover, media independence from the government of the day is not necessarily realized even where the television and radio landscape are dominated by publicly owned broadcasters (Hallin and Mancini 2004).

At the same time, political parties are not the only actors in the realm of political communication. Their processes of intra-party decision-making have become increasingly subject to public debates fuelled by social media 'discussions' (or campaigns) or the proliferation of opinion polls. Leadership contests are often accompanied by survey results reporting the most popular candidates in the population at large. As a result, even those who would not stand a chance if traditional internal party selection procedures were applied can be catapulted to the top of a party or candidate list. Hence, even parties which select their leaders at a party congress cannot fully escape the logic of primaries.

Conclusion

To conclude, this volume has assembled ample evidence that democratic parties are struggling with several challenges. The challenges are far from being uniform: similar problems, such as low membership and party instability, can have different causes. In many respects, an important common denominator in many countries is a lack of stable linkage between parties and society. While this is a sign of erosion in many established democracies, parties in newer democracies are still struggling to build up stronger societal roots. While the trajectories are different, the results are similar: strong linkages can help to provide sufficient stability of the supply side of party politics without preventing representative innovation through new parties. After all, the growth of populism around the globe is also related to the lack of a stable and attractive supply by moderate parties. If the market is in flux, radical challengers always find it easier to gain traction.

One quite common denominator is the trend towards a more personalized leadership, which often goes hand in hand with a trend toward plebiscitary leadership selection. In a way, the formerly well-entrenched (Western)

European parties in the tradition of mass parties with clearly defined membership roles and organizational boundaries are coming to resemble the more fluid parties in other parts of the world. As presidentalism tends to be particularly prevalent in Africa and Latin America, it is probably no surprise that a trend towards a more presidentialized mode of governance has also been diagnosed for modern democracies (Poguntke and Webb 2005).

What does this mean for parties and their role in democratic governance? In the first instance, it means that parties as collective entities with a clear vision of where society should go are increasingly becoming a relic of the past. To be sure, democratic parties with broad social visions were the exception rather than the rule outside Western Europe. Here, clientelism and patronage tended to serve as a functional equivalent to linkage based on group identity and political philosophy (i.e. cleavage-based politics). Also, the new democracies in Central Eastern Europe lacked the social anchor points for cleavage-based politics after decades of Communist social homogenization of society at a time when cleavages were clearly eroding on the Western side of the former Iron Curtain.

This leaves parties around the globe with relatively amorphous social and ideological identities. In other words, their programmatic, and hence representative, function is not as strong as it used to be in the party democracies of (mainly) Western Europe. Their governing function, however, is still highly relevant. They are not 'ruling the void' (Mair 2013), because they still select the personnel at the levels of governance—local, regional, national, and supra-national. Importantly, this applies also to so-called technocratic elites who are, in the vast majority of cases, party creatures in that they have either had a previous career in a party or were selected and/or appointed by party politicians.

This makes intra-party career patterns and recruitment logics all the more important. Who are the people who get to power through or, sometimes, past political parties? The quality of democracy depends to large degree on the capacity of political parties to produce responsible leaders. While the chapters of this volume are no reason for despair, they are no cause for complacency either.

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