The Change of Function of Political Parties
at the Turn of Millennium

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Introduction

The free competition between political parties is an indispensable condition of the modern democracy. Their origins, development and function have always been the topic of interesting debates in the framework of political sciences.

While analyzing the history of the debates on political parties, we observe that even from the very birth of these, they were surrounded by intense professional and ideological debates relating also to the role played by the political parties themselves in the whole democratic system, from Ostrogorski (1906) to Weber (1917), from Ware (1987) to Blondel (1993) and Sartori (1999). The central points of these debates were mainly the sense of crisis relating to the political system and mechanisms and the sense of constraint aiming at renewal. The intensity of the debate among politicians, party sociologists and social analyzers, furthermore the violent political fights between political parties significantly influence how and when the conceptions relating to the crisis of political parties enter political journalism, appear in the daily newspaper or in the daily public thinking.

As far as the role played by the political parties is concerned, the approach of the debating parties often had a very different ideological basis or systematization principal. Among the systematization principles they usually analyzed the relation between the political parties and civil society or the state, or their relation to both of these entities. However, there is one aspect in which they differ even today. Those who have acknowledged that there is a need for a multi-party system and free competitive elections, were in one-way or another the supporters or forerunners of modern democracy. The ones opposing these principles, through their ideologies they were aiming at establishing, supporting or ideologically legitimating one or another type of an authoritarian regime.

The establishment of modern political parties

There are three different significant theories with regard to the

origins of political parties. Each of them contains an important amount of truth regarding one or another aspect of reality, however, none of them explains it entirely.

The first theory emphasizes the uniqueness of historical development stating that the establishment of political parties is the result of a series of accidental factors and their joint effect, and among these the prominent role is played by the formation of electoral systems and the continuous expansion of the right to vote, respectively the formation of parliamentary systems. Its standpoint is that it is owing to the particular institutional situation that this process is unique and that this is non-repeatable in another place and in the same form. Its main representative is *M. Duverger*.

The second theory explains the birth of political parties with the factors outside parliament. It departs from the expansion of the political freedoms, considering laws regulating freedom of assembly and freedom of association the most important ones since these made possible for the isolated individuals to gather into groups and establish party initiatives and later on political parties. As a result of the liberalization of constitutions and the expansion of different rights, particularly the right to vote, these played an important role also on the political stage. The political party –with respect to its function– was regarded as a channel expressing the interests of people. This tendency –similarly to the previous one– claims the uniqueness and non-repeatability of this process.

According to the third theory, the parties are "the children of revolution" (Daalder, 1966: 52; Daalder, Mair, 1983), respectively as a result of this it connects it to the direct consequences of the breaking points occurring in the traditional societies, and to the process of economic and cultural modernization. At their birth, the political parties were playing some kind of substitute function, the essence of which was the more modern institutional reintegration of the society built upon archaic relationships (Ostrogorski, 1906; Daalder, 1966; Rokkan, 1967; Panebianco, 1990). *Rokkan* and his successors regard the political parties themselves as entities built upon breaking points (Lipset, Rokkan, 1967). However, some

of the writers split this third theory into two further parts. The ones belonging to the first group emphasize the modernization process, those belonging to the second group regard as essential the significant social convulsions, crisis and historical and political breakings (e.g. the unification of a nation or an armed revolution) (La Palombara, Weiner, 1966: 3-42).

It is characteristic for the scientific literature dealing with political party theory of the last three decades that these analyzes emphasize two types of catch situations (Katz, Mair, 1995). The first was that during the eighties the mass parties were regarded as end points of party development and the earlier stages of development were assessed in this light (Lawson, 1980; Sainsbury, 1990). The other one disregarded as an analysis possibility or frame the different relation between each party and the state, in spite of the fact that throughout the 20th century the changing character of this relation accompanied the development of parties and defined their possibilities of renewal (Ware, 1987b).

During the 20th century the debates pertaining to the crisis of political parties were the most intense in the periods in which the social tensions appeared in the political life and they brought along significant changes. These kinds of waves can be showed during the years preceding the First World War, when primarily left wing or extreme left wing political theorists initiated the debates. In the twenties the crisis of the German and Italian democracy, the appearance of the right wing radicalism, respectively the raising popularity of the nationalist political parties in the successor states of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy questioned the raison d'être of the free competition of the political parties among many people.

Subsequent to the Second World War, especially at the beginning of the fifties the left wing orthodoxy attacked the multi-party system as one of the basic institutions of democracy. During the seventies the citizens turned to new forms of political participation, the result of which was the weakening of class parties and class voting, furthermore the drastic decrease of party membership and participation in elections. *Mass parties* took the place of the *class parties*. In the eighties the crisis and finally the break of the Soviet type socialism brought along the depreciation of the

former left wing values and political powers, which transformed mainly the communist parties of the South European countries. The ignorance toward politics and the distrust toward political institutions and political players increased in Europe. Gradually the political parties lost their movement character, and as a result in the nineties the party leadership concentrated with its politics mainly on the media and elections.

Most of the party theories usually analyze separately the changes of characteristics of particular political parties, regarding it as a result of a gradual accumulation (Katz, Mair, 1992: 9). As opposed to continuality there is hardly any attempt to think in a logical system of impulsive, explosion-like changes and transformations, which methodologically would be a difficult task (Panebianco, 1990).

In the forthcoming part of this study we will look at the theories pertaining to the types of political parties, subsequent to that we will assess the basic functions that political parties have in the modern democracies, and among these which and in which direction changed, transformed at the turn of millennium.

The short history of political party types

First of all we should review how did the theorists and analysts of the 20th century dealing with politics contribute to the enrichment of the theories relating to political parties. We will summarize primarily the work of Max Weber, M. Duverger, F. Neumann and O. Kirchheimer.

Max Weber's systematization

At the beginning of the 20th century Max Weber put together a few types of parties, in different systems.

The Weber party types were answering the question of what is the party representing. According to this he distinguished two types of political parties: the *party of elites (honorariums)* and the *party of masses*. The party of elites is an entity of pre-modern periods since this type is organized based upon "pre-political principles". It was built of acknowledged eminent

persons (lawyers, journalists, doctors, leading officials, school directors, teachers, businessmen etc.), based on their authority in the given community, their influence, possibly based on their financial possessions, and they regard politics as being compulsory activity due to their position, however, a "secondary activity". The members of the elite type of party gather periodically and accidentally, primarily for the preparation of elections, its organizations are less structured; they focus almost exclusively on the voter turnout. Its inner organizational life is not based on representatives elected by voting, but on some kind of trust basis, the acceptance of their prestige obtained in the local social hierarchy and their leading role.

This party organization form lived further on, but with the expansion of the right to vote parallel to this appeared a new type of party organization, the mass party. Its main characteristic is the strong and differentiated organization, which produces professional politicians, who dedicate their lives entirely to politics. The author sees the prototype of modern political parties in this latter one, which is capable of helping the fulfillment of the rational bureaucracy, the establishment of democracy and a social constitutional state. At the same time the changes brought along by the mass parties meant a challenge also for the elite parties, which were forced to modernize their structures and expand their political basis (recruitment).

Further on Max Weber created the types of parties even with more nuances. The main organizing principle of their grouping were the aims of the party leadership, the leitmotiv of their power aspirations, and based on these elements he distinguished three types of parties: the *patronage party*, the *class party* and the *ideology party*. The main aim of the patronage party is to find a position of power and decision making for its leadership and its clientele. The class party acts on behalf of a particular class and in the interest of that. The organization and the activity of the ideology party is built upon theories, world attitude and a view of future abstract from the practical processes of reality.

Finally, we find it necessary to remind about Weber that he was

amongst the first ones to call upon the importance of the way political parties are financed. According to him the way of party finance fundamentally influences the character of the party itself, since "the one who pays, orders the music". Many of the theorists dealing with party theory and party finance recall this conception even today. Providing that the expanses of the elections are beard by the candidates themselves, they will gain significant power within the party, and the parties will be formed as the "plutocracy" of rich candidates, the power of capitalists. Providing that the money comes from outside "patrons" (landowners, finance capitalists, industrial capitalists), the character of the party will be formed according to the interests of the representatives of these groups, as the organization of the "going out agent".

Weber was the first one to draw the attention upon the fact that the way a party is financed might be a party organizational principle and it could define its character and by that could form the political competition arena of a country.

Maurice Duverger's systematization

M. Duverger first made the classification of systematically comparing the types of modern political parties at the beginning of the fifties (Duverger: Les parties politiques, 1951). Although his work contains mainly the synthesis of his previous part analysis's, in the field of political party sociology it is a fundamental source even today, since he is the first one to methodologically define a series of expressions. He distinguished the part structure based on two considerations, on the one hand the organizational setting up and on the other hand the relation of the membership.

As far as the organization is concerned, he distinguished the following four "basic components": party cell, party militia, caucus and the branch (Duverger, 1951: 23.). The cell and the militia are likewise half-military organizations, which came into being mainly during the twenties and thirties. The cell-type entities were characteristic primarily for the Bolshevik-type communist organizations, the militia –though not

exclusively– became the generally used means in power fight in the case of fascist organizations. However, both of them were particular half-military organizations, which pushed the system toward military dictatorship instead of democracy.

In the chapter of Duverger's book dealing with party structure, party "arsenal" we find further significant notes. At the "basic components" subtitle he mentions the "comité" and the "section". Compared to the section, the comité is a more decentralized organization. Referring to the comité, he states that "This notion approximately covers the reality that the Anglo-Saxon terminology called <caucus>". It has to be mention that the author's book written in French appeared only several years after in English language, and some of the notions are hard to be translated into other languages (The Modern Standard Dictionary: 91, Katz and Mair, 2001: 131-156). The author defined the elite type organization as having limited functions, on the one hand having a few members and not even aiming at enlarging its membership, it does not have any recruitment propaganda, on the other hand it does not have a strict membership since at the same time this is a more exclusive organization. A person becomes a member of the elite type committee only with some particular kind of cooptation or named subsequent to formal references. In spite of its weakness in number, it often has significant power, its power being based on the quality (relations, prestige) and not the quantity of its members. "It is constituted of worthy people, who are selected based on their influence" (Duverger, 1976: 63-64). In contrast to that the branch type party definitely aims at membership increase, propagating itself everywhere.

With regard to party membership Duverger distinguished the *"cadre parties"* and the *"mass parties"*. Similarly to the caucus and the branch parties, the basis of the distinction was the number of members. The cadre parties, built on selected persons are active in the period of elections, they focus on campaign organization and contact with candidates. The mass parties dispose of large membership and thus with large financial background, being able to finance their campaign from several sources. The cadre party is the equivalent of the caucus party, it is a decentralized

and weakly linked, as opposed to this the mass party requires a more centralized leadership and it is more strongly linked. Nevertheless, it has to be acknowledged that the caucus/cadre party and the branch/mass party systematization involves not so much two categories that are of different quality and can be clearly defined, but rather the two endpoints of a continuum.

Several aspects of Duverger's description are used even today, however, time did not prove its conclusion. Amongst others, it was *Alan Ware* who pointed out that the statement according to which the caucus/cadre parties gradually lose their effectiveness in favor of the branch/mass parties does not stand out. Neither does the statement that they cannot mobilize their voters during the electoral campaigns, and they either disappear, or they can overcome their disadvantage only with becoming a mass party, in other words they "are infected by the left wing" (Ware, 1987a: 1). Besides this, there is no straight-line development in party development. Nowadays the development of communication is capable of surmounting the possible hardships occurring from low number of members. The acknowledged caucus/cadre parties not only lived through the 20th century, but new caucus/cadre parties were born from the old elite organizations. This phenomenon was primarily experienced when the rival was a mass party (Hodder-Williams, 1987: 24-50; Criddle, 1987: 136-157).

The modern scientific literature refers to Duverger's pioneering systematization with respect to membership relations and organizational setting up; however, it overstepped it with regard to several aspects. In the sixties and seventies Hans Daadler, in the eighties Kay Lawson and in the nineties Richard Katz and Peter Mair were the ones who elaborated analysis's that are still standing, they are going to be discussed further on.

Franz Neumann's systematization

While Weber regards political parties as means of obtaining power, Neumann primarily emphasizes the role that these entities play in the organization and representation of its members (Neumann, 1956).

Weber distinguished the individual representative and the social

integrative parties, and he further divided the latter category into the democratic integrative party and the totalitarian integrative party. Those who elaborated a systematization of the modern political parties developed the latter idea. The main distinction between the democratic and the totalitarian integration lies in the degree of exclusion; the democratic integration is less exclusive than the totalitarian one. The latter one aims at unconditioned and total unification, by this neglecting the various alternatives of freedom, choices and differences etc. (Bartolini, 1986: 254-255).

The individual representative party is repeating Weber's elite category, when stating that it is characteristic for societies with low political mobilization and participation, and that politics have limited power influence. The activity of its members is reduced to the period of the elections. Neumann's contribution is especially innovative with regard to the analysis of integrative parties. These presuppose a much stronger commitment with respect to their members. This aspect is visible not only as far as party finance is concerned (e.g. the existence and role of membership fees), but also the party's immense influence in the field of everyday life –with special regard to their organizations and activities– and this goes with them from cradle to grave.

The integrative parties turn toward those particular social groups, which they try to politically mobilizes and involve in the party activities. They bring together those strata of the society that express the interests of a specific group of citizens, like women, young people, and trade unionists. The party knowingly aims at making a sympathizer out of every voter, and making each sympathizer a member. Their main financial source is the support and membership fee of their sympathizers and members. Moreover, very often the support of the members is the single financial source for the party and the media of the party. The members do the propaganda work on a volunteer basis, and they participate in social help activities, they offer legal advice free of charge, they do fundraising, they teach others and retrain unemployed people. The social integrative party proved to be an adequate political-organizational answer to the expansion

of the right to vote, this type of party basically reflected the politics turning toward a particular kind of mass. It addressed new voter groups that previously the political representative parties were not able to cover, and thus they were excluded from competition. Neumann identified the main types of democratic integrative parties in the social-democrat parties and the parties working on a religious basis, and the Bolshevik and the fascist parties as the main types of totalitarian integrative parties.

The main function of the party, according to Neumann, was that it made possible the representation of interests of various qualities and composition, equally the national interests, the regional interests, the part-interests and the individual interests. At the same time it hinders the subordinate interests to dominate the national interests. "According to this the function of political parties is twofold in a democracy" (Neumann, 1956: 13).

Otto Kirchheimer's systematization

In 1966 was published Kircheimer's study on the transformation of Western European party system, which had a great impact (Kirchheimer, 1966: 177-200). The essence of the author's conception is that subsequent to the Second World War the Western European political parties changes their character, instead of their ideological character, their "catch-all" character gained more space. The explanation of this phenomenon is that the rate of the laics being ignorant to ideologies and the masses concentrating on consumption increased, and thus the intensity and importance of the break line between the traditional classes drastically decreased. These changes affected equally the parties of conservative, liberal and social democrat character, and instead of an ideology class character they adopted the character of a more pragmatic catch-all party. The changes manifest themselves primarily in the following (Kirchheimer, 1966: 190): 1. the ideological character of the party decreased drastically; 2. the leader groups of the party gained more power, their activity was not judged any longer by the local organization, but by the whole society itself; 3. the role of an average member decreased; 4. a perceptible move from a

support coming from a more narrow and concrete social group toward the support of a larger and more complex group; 5. a stronger plurality of interests, namely the increasing capability of the parties to represent the interests of various interest groups.

According to Kirchheimer, the catch-all parties are more suitable for a successful election process, since compared with the previous party formations, they are more effective in mass communication, they are better in building up the image of their parties, this type of party is reacting better to the social changes and it is capable to represent at the same time several social groups.

The author's analysis stimulated several researchers to elaboration of further theories and their empirical testing (Habermas, 1967; McKenzie, Silver, 1968). Together with the expansion of this theory, there were other opinions at the beginning of the eighties according to which the methodological testing and the empirical analysis of the theory of catch-all parties has not taken place yet (Dittrich, 1983).

Summary of the experiences of the theoretical approaches

The thoughts of the party sociologists and political analyzers of the 20th century subject to the present analysis have a common particularity, a conclusion that cannot be accepted. It cannot be accepted that their categorization is the newest, the most modern, moreover, that is the single, exclusive way of the future. Duverger for example thought that the future is in the hands of the mass party described by him, having a strong organization, and this organization must be taken over also by other parties, otherwise they would cease to exist. Neumann interpreted his own integrative party, as being a more modern party formation than the representative party. Kirchheimer, on the other hand, in its catch-all party saw the end of the mass parties and the integrative parties, stating that with these parties started a fundamentally new stage in the party development.

Duverger, Neumann and Kirchheimer believed to have found some kind of regularity in the party development, while most of them were only

the characteristics of a certain period and the particular alternatives of the party development of a certain country. We believe that there each period has its own efforts of renewal, but these do not cancel the old ones, but – often in a competition– they exist simultaneously. The old one does not start to chase the new one, it does not try to copy it, but with minor changes it retains its own basic characteristics. In the party competition it often plays the role of the looser or the subordinate, at other times the processes of reality are favorable to it and it becomes the winner again and it gains dominant position again. Thus the palette of the political parties became more colorful with time, the real life always produces more variations. In the 21st century in Europe there are present simultaneously the various party types of the different periods of the 20th century, respectively their well-identifiable heirs. We can find the elite party (for example the French central right party), the party conserving the traditions of indirect structures, at which the collective membership of an organization lived (the British Labour Party, the Swedish and Norwegian Social-democrat Party), the parties having a strong ethnic character (almost all the significant Belgian parties, or the Catalan and Bask national parties), the parties built on religious basis (the Dutch and the Bavarian Christian democrats) or the traces of the integrative catch-all parties (the present French or the former Italian communist parties).

However, the above-presented authors undoubtedly contributed significantly to the interpretation of party development. They made important statements and elaborated interpretative frames that are used even nowadays with special regard to the function of parties in the changing political competition arena, the structure of the organizations, the relation with the membership, the importance of the homogeneity level of the voter base and the exploration of the relation between the pressure groups and the ideological commitments.

At the beginning of the 1990s R. Katz and P. Mair suggested to the researchers that during the analysis of party development instead of the threefold relation between the static party –state– civil society they should depart from a more complex process of party evolution, since the analysis

of the latter one brings us closer to the understanding of transformations (Katz, Mair, 1994). This more complex process, through the so called internal and external effects, respectively the answers given to those by the various developments is more appropriate for the description of the development of the political parties throughout the last two hundred years. Based on this the authors distinguished for periods: the age of the *elite parties*, the *mass parties*, the *catch-all parties* and the *cartel parties*. This meant that in certain periods there were several types of parties existing simultaneously, but there were the dominant parties that the particular period was named about.

In their opinion the 19th century was a period dominated mostly by the elite parties, when the right to vote was limited, the competition between the various partied took place in a limited frame, based on authority and influence. The small number of members was coming from the elite circles, the membership was not significant, and it was rather the quality of the leader elite bearing importance. According to that information was flowing throughout the personal channels and the representation type was of delegate character. The period from the 1880s to the 1960s was one dominated by mass parties, since it was that period in which the right to vote became general and gained mass proportions. The party competition was based on the achievements of party representatives; during the party campaign the financial aspect beard less importance, the campaign being primarily characterized by intensive work. Thus the increase of the number of active, easily mobilized members in front of whom the rights and obligations are equally emphasized became important. The party has its own membership fee income; it is the party itself forming and sustaining the propaganda channel, the media, and the informational and training system. The representation type is of delegate character.

The mass party began to expand subsequent to the Second World War, particularly from the end of the fifties, adapting itself to the competitive situation with its efficient group made up of professional politicians, and appearing with a representation type having a venture character. Besides the campaigns needing work, the campaigns needing

financial support gain more importance; along with that the state funded campaign become important. During member recruitment there are the rights and the obtainable favors that are emphasized and they accept anyone. The party has to compete to obtain the independent radio and television stations dominating the mass media and thus excluding the party media.

The cartel party appeared in the 1970s, the leaders of which consider politics an occupation, since it is regarded as a great income source. The party competition is based on managerial skills and efficiency; the election campaign needs more and more financial support. The members of the party are not important because of their identity, but because they contribute to legitimating the party myth. The appearance of the party in the state-owned media and public broadcast is institutionalized. According to Katz and Mair the essence of cartel is that the parties gaining seats in the parliament harmonize their interests and they do everything to exclude the smaller or the newly established parties from the party competition (Katz, Mair, 1994). Thus the party is nationalized again, since organizationally it becomes a part of the state and its politicians become "state agents".

A. Panebianco summarized the difference between the bureaucratic mass parties and the professional election parties as follows (Panebianco, 1990: 492):

The main characteristics of the bureaucratic and professional parties (based on Panebianco)

Bureaucratic mass party	Professional election party
1. Bureaucracy plays the main role	1. Special knowledge plays the main role
2. Membership has a significant role, the vertically divided basic organizations lead by an elected leader are strong	2. It is an election party with a weak organizational build-up
3. The party leadership has an important role	3. The officials have an important role. There is a single person leadership
4. The party finance is based on the number of members and on additional party activities	4. The party finance is based on interest groups and public money
5. Ideology is emphasized, the belief in	5. The ideology is not important, the

ideology is important in maintaining the membership	leadership focuses on successfully solving the problems, the interests groups and the carrier politicians gain importance

The political parties are waiting for renewal also at the beginning of the 21st century. The question is, however, where is the force urging the renewal coming from, and in which direction turns or forms that force the political parties. This has to be analyzed with the function of the parties.

The Functions of Political Parties, New Challenges and Answers

The most widely used definition for political parties is also connected to the role played by these entities. According to *Cotarelo's* definition of the political party, the main criteria for being regarded as one is to have a governmental program for the society, to represent clearly defined interests and to gain power through elections (Cotarelo, 1985: 14). In *Sartori's* opinion a party is "a political group that can identify itself with an official name appearing during the election period, and at elections (whether free or limited) is capable of providing candidates for political functions". (Sartori, 1992: 89).

It was already obvious in the first half of the 20th century that the political parties play different roles in a democracy and in a dictatorship. In 1927 *Dewey* considered that the main function of a political party in a democracy is fulfilling the vacuum between the citizens and the government, and he regarded as their basic task the forming of the public opinion (Dewey, 1927: 120). *Duverger* and *Kirchheimer* identified the function of the political parties in the relation between the civil society and the state, in which either the dominance of the state or that of the society gains importance (Duverger, Kirchheimer). They emphasized that the political parties are those constituent parts of the political system that through their utterance of interests and expression of values link the society and the political state. The authors of subsequent analysis having a great

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impact and preparing the party typology have exceeded these conceptions in analyzing not only the parties themselves, but also the relations between the parties and the competition arena of party politics in particular countries (Rokkan, Sartori, Blondel).

In the democracies of free party competition the political parties have a series of roles to be fulfilled with regard to civil society (the citizens) and the state. *Hernandez Bravo* for example pointed out four roles: the expression of social conflicts, their rationalization, the insurance of participation in their solving and the solving itself of the social conflict (Bravo, 1983: 172-180). *Almond* and *Powell* emphasize four general functions of the political parties: the institutional expression of individual and group interests, the aggregation of interests, namely the expression of the necessities as an alternative on the level of general politics, the political recruitment and the political socialization (Almond, Powell, 1966). Along with several other authors we believe the following six functions to be the most important, though –due to several interactions– it is hard to clearly divide them (Alcántara, 1977: 37-56; Körösényi, 1998: 72-74). With regard to the voters, we stress primarily the function of socialization, mobilization, representation and participation, while with respect to the political system we point out the legitimating and operational activities. During our further analysis's we consider these as points of departure, and we will examine the essence of these functions and the transformations that these have gone through until the turn of millennium.

We will analyze the functions of parties, but mention must be made, that we definitely accept the Philippe C. Schmitter's observation about the intermediaries in the consolidation of neo-democracies. He underlines, that three generic types of intermediaries, the political parties, the interest associations and the social movements, play a significant role in the consolidation of new democracies. But "there is no longer any *a priori* reason to suppose that political parties should be privileged or predominant in this regard" (Schmitter, 1997: 9).

The Functions of Political Socialization

It is well known that the political socialization is the process during which the people become aware of and acquire the norms, values and rules of political behavior. Throughout this process the family, the school, the community of the friends, the informational channels (e.g. lectures, media, mobile phone relations etc.) and the events directly experienced by the individual gain a prominent importance. The socialization process is also influenced by the habits of the individual, particularly his or her ability to receive new values, and how much these values are exclusive or inclusive with regard to other values. These factors altogether define the interest and responsiveness of the individual towards politics, his or her political tolerance, group or party identity.

At the end of the 20th century in the field of political socialization the most significant changes were brought along by the developments taking place in the flow of information. The essence of this development is that information on the one hand can come from anywhere and get to anywhere; on the other hand it comes from a larger spectrum and finally it comes a lot more quickly. As a result of all these factors in the middle of the 1990s it is an observable tendency in the socialization processes of the Western European countries that the influence of the family and school relatively decreased and the effect of information transmitted through the means of media and the environment of friends increased (Hoffmann, Lange, 1995). In order for the voter to be able to guide himself or herself efficiently in the torrent of news and process it in a democratic frame of norms, he or she has develop a value system that is simultaneously coherent and includes the eagerness toward becoming familiar with the new and the capability of renewal. This phenomenon of the turn of millennium can draw the attention on the teenagers neglected during the nineties, and especially on the importance of the education and orientation of the teenagers and also the younger age group.

According to some researches by this age period the basics of community identity are already formed, and these can serve as a basis for the national and political identities to be built on, furthermore by this time

the basics of the ability to form the attitudes are already present, and the relation, affinity and interest towards politics can be built on these (Hoffmann, Lange, 1995; Szabó, Örkény, 2001).

From this perspective the case of new democracies is instructive, since previously in the frame of the single-party system of the authoritarian regimes the significant part of the citizens were socialized to watch everything –thus the events of reality– through the prism of the sympathetic leading party. When the multi-party system replaces the single-party system, these citizens become uncertain, they pass through an orientation crisis and they rather choose the successor party and follow its views instead of individually forming responsible opinions about the events of public life. They always wait for their favored party to state its opinion, and based on that they interpret the reality and form their own opinions. This particular "party-norm following" behavior was so deeply rooted in them that it became a constituent element of their character and they would possibly never be able to change. For them there are not the real processes that are important, but what their favorite party says about those. As far as the mechanism of opinion forming is concerned, the essential changes can only be brought about by the masses of young generation socialized in the frame of multi-party system when reaching the voting age.

The Functions of Mobilization

Through political mobilization (urge to act, mobilize) the political parties involve the citizens into public life (Barnes, Kaase, 1979). The aim of political mobilization covers three fields: to decrease the social tensions expressed by the mobilized groups, to elaborate programs for the decrease of these tensions that further on would gain votes for the party, and to build up a group structure that the party could rely on subsequently. The goal of all political mobilizations is to achieve a favorable effect o one of these fields, respectively to ensure more favorable positions for the mobilizing political party.

At the beginning of the 20th century the mass movements and thus mobilization played a more important role, however, from the seventies the

mobilizing power of the political parties and their capacity of getting great social powers to streets started to decrease drastically. This was not only the result of the failed student movement from 1968 and other movements, but also the changes taking place in the social structure and technical development. In Western Europe the working class was getting wealthy that according to Habermas "didn't want to get rid of his chains because his ignition key was hanging on it" (Habermas: The change of structure of social publicity). Along with the establishment of the institutions of the welfare state, the economic situation of the working class improved considerably, simultaneously it was dissolved as a class in the middle class; it mingled within the intellectuals of the middle class and the employee stratum. The so-called class voting ceased to exist and the workers were voting more often for the conservatives, while the intellectuals of the middle class were voting more often for the left wing parties. Along with the satisfaction with the life conditions, the working class became conformist, it lost its rebellious character and its political activism significantly declined. As a result of the effect of the technical development, the role of the active living work decreased and the role of the television advertisements and generally that of the money and capital increased. The paid campaign personnel, the poster stickers and the political marketing stuff took over the role of the altruistic party activists.

The Functions of Participation

The political participation function of the party can be distinguished from that of the mobilization function. With the mobilization of the citizens the parties were aiming primarily at forming and influencing the political events with the help of the institutionalized circles and organizations of the political system, while participation ensured the feeling and possibility of political democracy and competence within the political party.

The parties can ensure political participation in a variety of ways. According to *Milbrath's* classification participation, as a function of political parties, involves two dimensions: the first one is the so-called *active* participation, the other is the *passive* one. The author classifies as active

participation the instrument type of work (the concrete party activity, the election of the leader) and the appearance type of work (demonstrations, political debates). He classifies as passive political participation the compliance with the laws and financial regulations. *Verba*, *Nie* and *Kim* claims about political participation that it is a lawful political activity done by the citizens having as a main goal to influence the selection of the leaders and/or the party activity (Verba, Nie, Kim, 1978: 1).

The most frequent form of participation in the life of party politics is voting, that can play a role in the election of the leaders as in decision-making, in the everyday life of the party or the election campaigns taking place at regular intervals. Another form of political participation through parties is the holding of meetings, the organization of and participation at informative community forums or concrete actions. In the last two decades the role played by community forums in election campaigns gradually decreased. Due to the fact that participation at these events proved a prior selection, since those who are taking part have already decided to vote for the organizing party, its significance decreased.

The Function of Legitimacy

The legitimating function refers to the forming of public opinion and it is based on the trust and support that the parties show toward the government and the system throughout their existence. This is some kind of collection of the various functions, containing the above-discussed functions of the party: the legitimating function is made up of the collective effect of political socialization, mobilization and participation.

The recognition and support of a governmental system depends on how much the citizens are socialized with lawfulness, respecting the norms, accepting the different and thinking in alternatives in the process of accepting the institution system and mechanisms of democracy. Participation and mobilization gives the faith and experience for the voters that their opinions, interests and value systems count, that it is not only for them, but also together with them that the system, the indispensable basis of a democracy, is working. According to some of the authors it is this

aspect that distinguishes democracy from the non-party or single-party dictatorships. Therefore, this is the main function of the political parties, since it is only the competitive multi-party system (in a poliarchic system) capable of integrating the society and ensuring the legitimacy of the system with the help of this threefold function (Alcántara: 46).

For measuring the performance of the parties *Janda* and *Colman* suggest the use of the following categories: the success of the party in the elections, the broadness of the activity spectrum, the attracting power of the party and its inner cohesive power (Janda, Colman, 1998: 193-195). There are a series of debates and doubts formulated with regard to the separation and empirical measurement of legitimacy and performance (Müller, Jukam, 1977). However, the majority of the researchers agree that the data analysis of empirical researches have an interpretative power with regard to legitimacy.

J. Blondel analyzed the legitimacy basis of the political parties themselves, and based on this he distinguished four types: the party built on clients, the party built on ethnic identity, the ones built on religion, respectively the class parties (Blondel, 1990).

With respect to the exercise of the functions of legitimating it is extremely important that people can make the distinction between the legitimacy of the whole democratic system and the legitimacy of the actual government. The previous one is called *diffuse legitimacy*, the latter one is called *specific legitimacy*. It is especially important in the new democracies that people can make a distinction between the performance of the government and the performance of the whole institution system of the democracy, more precisely that they do not interpret the negative performance of a democratically elected government as the negative performance of the whole institution system of the democracy, because based on this they could reelect the prior authoritarian regime (Maravall, 2000: 104-143). In the first half of the eighties the researchers experienced based on the Spanish, Portuguese and Greek democracies that the two types of legitimacies can be distinguished only after a longer period passed (McDonough, Barnes, López Pina, 1986; Morlino, Montero, 1995: 231-260).

It was only after a 7-10 year of transition period from an authoritarian regime to democracy that the researchers could show results proving unambiguously that during the experiences gathered in a democracy the legitimacy of the system separated and it became autonomous from the increasing dissatisfaction showed toward economical effectiveness and politics (Maravall, 2000: 120). It is only when this is taking place that we can talk about the end of the democratic transitional period and the beginning of stabilization of the new democracy (Whitehead, 2002). Therefore, the consolidation of the democratic systems is the result of a longer process varying in form and time from one country to another. However, their common feature is that the competitive political parties are indispensable in this process (Morlino, 1992: 38).

The Function of Representation

The significance of the representative function is the result of the essence of party plurality based on free elections. The election systems of a democracy have to comply with two criteria: representation and governance. The principle of representation guarantees the expression of the electorate's will; as the final result of the votes the parties favored by the voters enter the Parliament and the political forces gaining majority form the government. However, at the same time the principle of stable government must prevail, namely that the votes should be concentrated so that they make possible for a party or a party coalition to form a lasting government. The two principles should have a completing instead of an excluding character.

The Weimer Constitution first established the representative function of the political parties in 1919 and in Germany the working of the parties was regulated by this and by the laws on elections for a long time. Subsequent to the Second World War –drawing the conclusions of the fall of the Weimer Republic– there were elaborated more complex and more detailed laws on elections, aiming at a dynamic equilibrium between the principle of people representation and that of a stable government. Thus the expression and representation of the individual and group interests and

values, respectively the integration by parties of the part interests gained a more powerful role in the representative function of the political parties. Besides, the existence of political parties in decision-making makes possible, or could make possible the adoption and implementation of laws and regulations that are favorable even to those people, who are socially and culturally the more vulnerable and defenseless, they can express even the interests of the least represented. One of the fundaments of social democracy lays in the broad social representation, a function that can only be exercised efficiently by several competing parties.

As far as the classification of the party systems is concerned, the typology elaborated by *G. Sartori* is used most frequently. The author analyzed the European party systems in the seventies and he distinguished seven party types. These systems are the following: 1. single-party system, 2. hegemonic party system, 3. dominating party system, 4. two-party system, 5. moderate multi-party system, 6. extreme multi-party system, 7. atomic party system (Sartori: 324). In the case of authoritarian regimes one of the single-party system, the hegemonic party system and the dominating party system is characteristic. In contrast to that in the case of the modern democracies the two-party system, the moderate multi-party system, the extreme multi-party system or the atomic party system is characteristic. According to a different classification the most frequently met party system in a democracy is the two-party system, the two and a half party system, the three-part system, the four-party system and the multi-party system.

It can be claimed that the more structured a party plurality system is, the greater is the possibility of identifying ourselves with the current power, the greater is the governmental political representation and the greater is the possibility for the democratic system to be built on a broader basis. However, since democracy is not only made up of representation in the Parliament or government, but has several levels, also the two-party system can prove a high degree of stability, representation and support. With respect to that the Western European experiences do not prove a one-direction development neither toward the two-party, nor toward the

multi-party system. The changes can come from various directions, either from the reform of the election system or from the electorate's will or from the party itself.

In Great Britain for example the transformation of the two-party system into a three-party or multi-party system would be desirable for many people, so that the electorate's will could gain more emphasis in the Parliament and in the government. However, the political parties do not have the sufficient strength for a change, the strong adherence to historical traditions always hindered such reform of the election system. In Spain the parties were eliminated from the Parliament through elections, and the country stepped in the third millennium with a three-party –according to some people a two and a half party– system. In Italy at the beginning of the nineties as a result of the split of the traditional political parties (Christian-democrats, socialists, communists) the parties multiplied creating a multi-party system that was decreased by the electorate's will. In the last half century in Western Europe cannot be proved a straight line and one-direction movement –not even as a tendency– neither toward the two-party, the three-party or the multi-party system. Instead there is a long-term cycle or recurrence-taking place, however, this can only be proved during several decades. The changes can be summarized in the following way: as far as the election system makes it possible, the parties concentrate for a while (they unify and the small parties do not enter the Parliament etc.). As a result, the number of the parties decreases and after a while the process turns back and expansion starts, the platforms within the parties are formed, then the parties split and create a multi-party system reduced again by the electorate's will.

We must emphasize that this is only true if analyzed on a long-term, and it occurs only at the time and place, where the election systems do not hinder these changes with legal measures. There are several authors claiming that the political parties themselves –as all the big organizations– are traditional and they are opposed to changes and they are willing to modernize only very hardly and only after suffering a convulsion. However, in our opinion there are not the political parties

themselves that are traditional, but mostly the political arena, in the frame of which the movement of parties is hindered by several legal regulations.

The reforms within a party also depend on structural issues and power relations. However, the most changes in the life of a political party are undoubtedly brought about by the successful or unsuccessful elections, since the party has to adjust to the changed circumstances both in its structure and membership. And it is easier to change with a new leadership and a new conception.

Political Activity

Each political party elaborates its own political program and prepares its members for the implementation of that. Provided that the party is successful on elections, it enters the Parliament and its leading members become members of the decision-making body. If there is a possibility to govern by itself or in a coalition, there are primarily its own members and leadership gaining power positions.

At the end of the 1950s *Anthony Downs* emphasized the *principle of plunder taking* among the functions of a party, stating that the parties are organized for obtaining political power and that they primarily represent the power interests of their own cadres (Downs, 1957). However, beginning with the 1990s we come across more frequently with leaders having a political position (ministers, state secretaries etc.), who are not members of the supporting party, maybe sympathizers. This tendency seems to strengthen at the turn of millennium not only in the stable old democracies, but also in the new ones.

Recent Movements and Party Types

The 1970s and 1980s undoubtedly brought about several changes in party development. It became more obvious also in Western Europe that the state socialist and authoritarian regimes of the Eastern European countries and the goals of the international communist movements supported by these cannot be reconciled with the principles and practice of

democracy. There were two answers given by the citizens to the decrease of success of the extreme left wing and the weakening of the orthodox left wing movements. One of the answers is the estrangement from the parties and the increase in the number of non-voters, moreover is several countries organizations, associations, clubs and communities came into being expressly against these parties. The other answer was the forerunner of new types of social movements. We are going to analyze the latter in more details.

Among the ideologies and directions supporting the democratic values, but looking for a change and something different, there were the legal and environment protection organizations that became the strongest. There were three groups gaining a more significant political influence: the "one-issue" movements, the "self-expressing" movements and the "protective" movements.

From the protest movements of the "one-issue" organizations there have to be mentioned primarily the ones protesting against water power stations, against nuclear power stations and against the environment pollution. Besides, the "self-expressing" movements (feminists, homosexuals, cyclists, nudists) and the movements having a protective character (animal protectors, nature protectors) strengthened. A part of these movements gained an express political aspect in time and formed a particular kind of party, and became a political force having seats in the Parliament; moreover in a few countries it also gained positions in the government (Germany, Sweden).

The organizational particularity of these movements forming a party is that on the one hand its organization is the network of loose entities, on the other hand this movements are constituted generally of groups with a few members, who are very active and easily mobilized for direct actions. Throughout their political activity the appearance in the written and electronic media played a significant role, during which –for the sake of being memorable– they often use non-conformist, shocking elements.

The movements against globalization became stronger as getting closer to the turn of millennium, being lead by various ideologies. The analysis of the organizational building up and mobilization mechanism of these movements specific for the 21st century will be one of the most important scientific tasks of the forthcoming period (Szabó Máté, 2001: 57-182). In spite of the fact that nowadays we are undoubtedly facing movements, they already deserve attention from the perspective of party development, since it cannot be excluded that one of the trends of these movements becomes a political force in the Parliament and in time contributes to the renewal of the democratic party systems.

Finally we have to remind of the newly created and probably a model party type that has no commonly agreed definition and detailed description in political sciences. For the sake of clear understanding this type will be simply called the *media party*.

The party competition arena faces a specific situation when a party establishes its own commercial media network, owned by its leadership, otherwise entrepreneurs. In contrast to the state-owned media, the commercial media is allowed to broadcast anything without restrictions. Making use of the various means and tools of entertainment industry, it enters the home of the voters, it penetrates the family life and forms their election behavior and influences their party choice. All this could mean great power and could open new horizons in election campaigns. The question was first raised at the changes occurring in the middle of the nineties in Italy whether a political party with no membership or with a few members, with no network throughout the country and with no built up structure can gain power. At the same time its leadership is constituted of professional PR stuff, being trained by professionals of political marketing, it has a strong charismatic leader, whose words are transmitted to the voter through a real media empire. The example of the Lombard League and especially that of the Forza Italia is a proof that in such a frame not only the successful election is made possible, but also the forming of a government and the governance itself. The condition of that is that the party builds its opposition appearances and its electoral campaign entirely on the media,

primarily on the television and partly on the written media. This is how the leader of the Forza Italia, S. Berlusconi proceeded, who first built up a huge media empire, from here he started his political carrier and won the elections. The technical development of the turn of millennium developed and used such new types of propaganda means of the electronic media as the television, the video and the internet with the scope of forming and manipulating the opinions of the voters (G. Sartori: 351-364).

We do not know today the future destiny of this entity. However, it is obvious that in Western and Central Europe there are more and more political forces building on modern informational and manipulative systems and as a result of this the character of the political parties themselves changes. Nevertheless, we do not want to commit the same mistake as the party types analysts of the 20th century who regarded the newest development as the single and exclusive way of development that each and every party has to pass in order to be modern and successful. Moreover, the newest developments taking place in Italy and the newest studies conducted by campaign analysts also point this out. For example the Venice regional election analysis shows that the voters begin to turn away from the media as a means of forming public opinion, they are fed up with that, they do not trust it anymore and instead they favor the direct contact with the candidate (Ceccarini, 2001). The direct propaganda, the personal request, the handwritten letter of the candidate sent to the voter all proves that the direct relation becomes stronger.

We cannot realize today to what extent is this phenomenon general or exclusive, will it expand or will it remain isolated. Nevertheless, it is proven already that there are several methodologies of elections and campaigns existing simultaneously within a country. The new ones appear frequently in a pure form, at other times they mix with other types or older types adapt them. Their effect could also be of different kinds and different ways, this is why it is an opened question how will the changes influence the party membership, the party structure, in which direction will they form the party types and the political competition arena.

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