ROLE OF POLITICAL PARTIES IN STRENGTHENING DEMOCRACY

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Abstract

A fundamental tenet of democratic theory is that representative democracies are more likely to cater to their citizens' individual tastes. Party politics is the backbone of any contemporary democracy, and some have even gone so far as to say that parties are the driving force behind how responsive democracies are. But there are those who argue that political parties just serve to amp up radicals and make governments less accountable to their citizens. As democracies spring up all over the world, new challenges like representation and governability are reviving the discussion over democratic parties. The aims and structure of the parties determine how we perceive their influence on democratic responsiveness, as I will demonstrate. I discuss existing theories of parties, outline their testable consequences, and make note of empirical results that can be useful for making a decision between them. Also included are discussions of where parties came from, what factors influence the size and makeup of party systems, and how parties compete with one another.

Keywords: political parties, responsiveness, elections.

Introduction

From a "small experiment in republicanism" that drew the people into political life, Schattschneider argued that political parties "created" American democracy. Political theorists were there during the formation but chose to stay mute on parties for the next 150 years, despite this accomplishment, Schattschneider said.1 However, parties emerged throughout the early stages of American democracy, as they have done in every democracy across the world, despite the founders' best efforts to establish institutions that would cause parties and "factions" to fade away. Political parties seem to be seen by subsequent normative thinkers—many of whom share Madison's and Jefferson's scepticism about parties' ability to further the common good—as an unattractive fact, a resilient plant that grows amid an otherwise flourishing ecosystem of democratic institutions.

Those who study democracy from an empirical and positive theoretical perspective hold political parties in greater esteem. American political scientists in the immediate aftermath of World War II longed for stronger parties so that "party government" could take root; today, observers of emerging democracies in Latin America and Eastern Europe share this desire, attributing the failures of these democracies to the lack or ineffectiveness of political parties. Party politics is more like a necessary microbe stuck deep in the digestive tract—not pretty, but essential to keeping the body politic in good health—to positive democratic theorists, maybe because their normative world is structured not around ideas of the public good but around the effective representation of inherently conflicting interests. On the one hand, there's the idea that parties serve as a conduit for citizens' interests to be addressed by the government. On the other hand, there's the idea that parties promote radical or partial objectives. Political parties are believed to do more than only make governments listen to their constituents; they also supposedly bring legislative procedures into order, simplify the issue space, and provide people someone to hold to account. Political parties: a necessary evil or a contentious topic? Do they constitute the essence of democracy? has not been resolved. It will remain unresolved until there is a consensus over the parties' characteristics, goals, and organisational structure. This study aims to provide an overview

of the many viewpoints on this dispute and to propose avenues for future empirical research that might lead to a resolution, or at the very least, bring it to a more normative level. In Section 2, I return to that assignment. First, I survey major schools of thought in postwar political science that have examined parties in politics.

For the sake of this discussion, I will limit myself to political parties in democracies. By this I mean political systems in which the appointment of key government officials is determined by regular, open, and competitive elections, where the right to freely associate and express oneself is guaranteed, and where almost all adults are eligible to vote. See Duverger 1963, LaPalombara & Weiner 1966, and Janda 1993 for considerations of parties in nondemocratic settings. The growing body of literature on the actions of legislative parties is one area that I will have to go over due to space constraints. See the unpublished manuscript for an example of recent contributions.

Objective of the study

1. To study the role of political parties in strengthening democracy.

2. To research Political parties are vital to the growth of democracy.

Political party research: what are the problems?

Political Parties: Their history

Democracy cannot exist without political parties. Not only do most democracies' constitutions do not specify the function of parties, but they are also not included in the official definition of democracy. In fact, the area in which parties function is seldom if ever governed by statute in the majority of nations. The founders of the United States were adamantly opposed to parties. In Federalist 10, Madison did not differentiate between parties and factions, describing them as "a minority or majority" united by "some common impulse of passion, or of interest, adverse to the rights of other citizens, or to the permanent and aggregate interests of the community." However, he did recognise that the cost to liberty of doing away with parties would be excessive. The republican community's liberties and the human tendency for division and conflict inevitably led to the formation of parties; "where no substantial occasion presents itself, the most frivolous and fanciful distinctions have been sufficient to kindle their unfriendly passions.". Within a decade after the American state's founding, the founders had started to organise the political life of the new country, despite their attempts to create institutions to regulate factions and parties (including the writers of the Federalist writings).

A lot of modern democracy scholars respond to the question, "Why parties?" with a more optimistic tone. Legislators who want to accomplish something and have their chosen ideas adopted will create parties, since the political climate in the legislature is unstable without them. Rather than being a negative byproduct of liberal liberties and human nature, parties actually strengthen democratic institutions.

It was up to members of Congress to make weighty choices about the repayment of debt and the future structure of the government; a new book, Why Parties?, delves at the beginnings of the US party system. Even for anti-party thinkers like Jefferson and Hamilton, the benefits of having lawmakers with similar opinions coordinate their votes on several subjects became apparent. Instability and issue cycle caused by a multidimensional issue space prompted the development of legislative parties. Legislative parties evolved into mass parties when the minority party became interested in gaining support to strengthen its position in the legislature. Drawing on ideas of the instability of choices under majority rule, Aldrich reiterates Schattschneider's description of the inherent benefits of party organisation in legislatures.

It has not been shown that the scenario where parties start in legislatures and subsequently branch out to the electorate is universal. When a country starts to transition to democracy, parties typically emerge before

legislative politics begins, especially in nations where parties were repressed for lengthy periods by military dictatorships. There seems to be cases when party organisation becomes advantageous due to the dynamics of a negotiated change from autocratic government, which could or might not resemble the typical legislative procedure. In order to reach a consensus, which may include determining not where parties originated but what factors, if any, would lead to the formation of political parties—elite politics or public mobilization we want more rigorous historical study that is grounded in social science.

Several top-down theories contend with the extension-of-legislative-politics response to the "why parties?" topic in recent study. One theory holds that parties are the political manifestation of deeply ingrained societal divisions. One further way of looking at it is that parties form when people compete for office at the district level. When people go up the political ladder, they tend to do it along partisan lines since it's easier to coordinate and use heuristics. Despite the fact that parties do not help to stabilise legislative politics, they do make it easier for the interests and solidarity of the people to be expressed, therefore it is important to remember that, according to Madison, the normative impact of parties is still positive.

Election Laws, Social Divisions, and Party Structures

Democracy cannot exist without parties. However, their form, quantity, and level of institutionalisation differ greatly between continents and nations. A party system's breadth (the extent to which certain divisions and identities are politicised) and size (the number of parties that typically fight in elections) have significant moral consequences. The expression or repression of societal interests via the party system has a fundamental impact on democracy's quality, since parties communicate constituency' preferences, views, and interests to the government.

A "comparative sociology of politics" and an institutional analysis are the two main schools of thought when it comes to the question of what factors determine the structure and size of party systems. Varieties in party systems are explained by the political sociology perspective as manifestations of fundamental social divisions. The party system that developed in Europe, according to Lipset and Rokkan, was the product of coalitions formed after three pivotal historical moments: the Reformation, the rise of nation-states, and the industrial revolution. Despite stereotypes to the contrary, sociological research often recognises the influence of institutions on party systems and the role that election laws play within them. The "rules of the electoral game" are obviously quite important, and Lipset and Rokkan go some way towards attempting to explain how they emerge from existing social divisions. This project has advanced thanks to recent scholarship. When workers gained the right to vote and socialist parties emerged in Europe, Boix, who takes a strategic-action perspective, explains why nations went for majoritarian rather than proportional systems. The question of how to maintain control of parliamentary seats was a quandary for liberal voters and parties. One of the extant liberal parties might represent liberal voters and keep majority rule appealing if it were to win more elections than the other. The liberal leadership would rather switch to a proportional system to guarantee sustained liberal representation if two current liberal parties had a tendency to split the vote evenly.

When it comes to agency, Boix's argument provides a refreshing change of pace for the comparative sociology of politics. The rise and maintenance of one set of divisions relative to another has long baffled comparative sociologists. Claiming that some social divisions were more significant than others overlooks a mountain of data showing that inequalities that may be logically or historically characterised as politicised were not mobilised. Without adequately considering the instability of the party system and the fall of parties impacting several democracies, comparative sociologists attempt to explain the manifestation of cleavages in the party system by tracing them to long-gone alliances and splits. As Kalyvas demonstrates, ideological differences, such as those based on religion, are not static but may reshape themselves with time, impacting party systems in profound ways. He demonstrates how liberal anticlericalism in the late 19th and early 20th centuries pushed the Church into defensive measures, which lead to the unexpected consequence of Christian Democratic parties. It is unlikely that party systems will stay unchanged so long as agency exists.

As a counter-narrative to political system comparative sociology, institutionalism emerged. When asked, "How many parties?" instituionalists do a better job than when asked, "What kinds of parties?" Institutionalism may be traced back to Duverger's writings. At the electoral district level, "Duverger's law" states that two-party systems emerge when a simple plurality is necessary to win a seat in a single-member district. Voters, according to Duverger's logic, would not throw their support behind ineffective parties, and those that were unable to muster enough support would eventually disintegrate. When it comes to multi-member districts that use proportional representation to distribute seats, Leys applies the same argument. The number of parties in a proportional representation system may range from two to three or even more, depending on the district seats and the minimal vote needed to be represented in the legislature.

Cox demonstrates that, within the larger framework of strategic voting, Duverger's rule should be seen as imposing a maximum number of parties. Cox states that the effective number of parties in a system is determined by the interaction between electoral rules and "social diversity" after analysing the effects of several types of proportional representation and single-member simple majority and run-off voting. As the narrative progresses from state to federal party systems, social diversity becomes an issue. Possible examples of preexisting groupings are religious factions, ethnic communities, labour unions, or regional interests. It is not the election rules that lead one group to be more prominent than another. There is an upper limit to the number of effective parties due to local-level district magnitude, which is determined by electoral rules. This institutional effect interacts with social heterogeneity to produce the effective number of parties, as supported by empirical findings from Taagepera & Grofman, Powell, Ordeshook & Shvetsova, and others. To sum up, party systems cannot be adequately explained by institutionalism without the help of comparative sociology. Boix and Kalyvas's research points to the need for a more active and politically aware branch of comparative sociology.

Parties and Electoral Mobilisation

Party mobilisation: how can it be done? When asked how parties affect democracies, postwar political science provides conflicting responses with different ramifications. In order for governments to be responsive to people, do parties disclose and compile voters' preferences? On the other hand, may political parties be seen as oligopolies when members' interests and preferences are in direct opposition to the voters'?

Party organisations were seen by the top early research on voting behaviour as a means of mobilising people via social and affective bonds. The idea of party identification was created in the 1960s by researchers from the Michigan school, who relied mostly on social psychology. They posited that people are emotionally tied to a political party from an early age, and that this connection determines their voting behaviour throughout their lives, unless they undergo significant partisan realignments. Eventually, this view gave way to another in which political parties fought for the allegiance of people who took a more pragmatic and practical stance. According to Downs, people pick their political representatives according on how closely a party's stance on an issue matches their desired policy position. While voters may not have access to comprehensive information on the histories or current plans of incumbents or challengers, Downs made some comments implying that party labels can serve as a heuristic to help them discover candidates on an issue space. Key laid the groundwork for modern theories of retrospective voting, which hold that voters should look at how their governments have voted in the past rather than at their own stances on issues. Similarly, the party designation serves as a heuristic in this case. An extension of this viewpoint is the "running tally" approach to parties, whereby party labels provide an overview of how governments led by a certain party have performed in the past.

The work of Rabinowitz and Macdonald suggests an alternative form of cognitive function for parties. Starting with the fact that the median voter's preferred position has not been achieved in practice, they follow D. Stokes's lead in highlighting the significance of "valence" rather than position issues and propose that voters view politics in black-and-white terms. Any given party may take the "my" or "other" stance on a given

subject. One way for parties to make their positions known is by sending "intense" signals that may be described as excessive in terms of space. Rabinowitz et al. back up their "directional theory" of party rivalry with some US-based empirical data.

Directional theory and spatial models provide different predictions, as pointed out by Iversen. If the directed approach is right, political parties should take stronger stances than the voters. The median voter's chosen party programme is supposed to converge under Downs's geographical model.3Iversen uses data from democracies throughout Europe to investigate these expectations. He finds that party leaders on both the left and the right have quite radical views on policy compared to their members and even party activists, which goes against the assumptions of spatial models. Only parties that lean towards the centre tend to represent the middle ground of their voters. The results provide credence to the directed model and a "mobilizational" viewpoint, according to which political parties aim for both immediate electoral success and the long-term transformation of their constituents' political ideology and worldview. Voters are influenced by electoral politics and party rivalry, according to Iversen's research on party positioning. They react to positional signals about a government's intentions as well as, maybe, more profound calls for societal change.

Democracy and Political Parties

Democracy, as a political system, engenders a state of affairs wherein governments are compelled to exhibit a heightened level of receptiveness towards the preferences and desires of the populace. At the very least, numerous democratic theorists posit this as a pivotal assertion. As Dahl astutely posits, the fundamental tenet of democracy lies in the perpetual receptiveness of the government to the predilections of its citizenry. This notion finds resonance in numerous analogous assertions. However, much like the normative controversy surrounding the responsiveness of governments to the will of the people, there exists a contentious debate regarding the extent of responsiveness exhibited by elected governments. In the realm of postwar democratic theory, it is frequently posited that political parties serve as conduits through which popular preferences are effectively channelled into policy outcomes. In accordance with the insights of Schattschneider, Key posited that one of the fundamental roles of political parties is to procure the "popular consent" necessary for the pursuit and implementation of public policy. However, once again, a great deal hinges upon an individual's perspective regarding political parties. According to certain perspectives, political parties exert pressure on elected governments, compelling them to be more receptive and attentive to the needs and desires of their constituents. It has been posited by various individuals that political parties possess the capacity to render governments unresponsive. The competing perspectives on political parties give rise to a significant number of stakes.

The Role of Dominant Parties in Regimes Seeking Democracy Support

The growth of regimes defined by dominating political parties that show a tendency towards autocratic consolidation of power is a noticeable and increasingly important trend that is contributing to the comeback of authoritarianism on a worldwide scale. Many different countries are part of the aforementioned trend, and their levels of democracy range from very weak democracies to quite autocratic ones. The typical trend here is for one political party to strengthen its grip on power and then undermine the effectiveness and influence of its opponents. Because of their tendency to coopt many programmes meant to aid state institutions, election commissions, technical bodies, intraparty mediators, and members of civil society, dominant-party regimes provide substantial obstacles to foreign democratic assistance.

As part of their work on behalf of the European Democracy Hub, the writers analysed this prevalent phenomenon from every angle with a group of national specialists. This analysis clarified the concerns that have surfaced among foundations, donors, and practitioners of democracy about aiding democratic processes. This study makes good use of and combines the findings from four previously published case studies on different types of dominant-party regimes in Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Nicaragua, and Georgia. This research

sheds light on the complex dynamics of authoritarian regimes, which weaken traditional ways of promoting democracy and good governance. A more thorough and systematic strategy is needed in terms of policy attention for the current situation, which the democracy support community has begun to address in certain places, since it is becoming more important.

For a long time, the democracy support agenda has focused heavily on dominant-party regimes, a common occurrence in political landscapes. Although experts have spent a great deal of time discussing what makes a government dominant-party, a final and widely accepted definition has evaded them all. Although there are some differences between the various definitions, they all agree that a dominant-party regime exists when one political party has absolute power over a country's voters, other political groups, government formation, and public policymaking for a long period of time.

Some major political parties may have far-reaching effects than others. From a democratic perspective, there are several political systems where one party has a disproportionate amount of power. The Swedish Social Democratic Party and the Japanese Liberal Democratic Party are two examples of such phenomena that have persisted throughout history. But it's more common to see dominant-party systems having negative effects on democracy. Dominant parties actively work to undermine democratic processes and prevent other political rivals from rising to the top.

The existence of dominating parties within political ecosystems allows for a level of electoral rivalry, which eventually leads to the party's success throughout numerous election cycles, in contrast to authoritarian regimes or full single-party systems. An ideal description of a political system dominated by one party is one in which elections are somewhat meaningful but always tainted by inherent injustice. The dominant political party in any given system becomes known as the "party of power" when it forges an unusually close relationship with the executive branch. Therefore, the party in question does not function as a separate political body but rather as a tool of the state.

Dominant political groups are proliferating at an alarming rate. Notably, 56 states exhibited traits often linked to dominant-party systems between 2011 and 2011. There were forty-four states with these characteristics a decade ago, therefore this number is an increase. Additionally, it should be noted that throughout the 2010s, a noticeable trend towards authoritarianism occurred in a substantial majority—roughly two-thirds—of the fifty-plus nations studied from 2011 to 2011.The number 1 is essential to many mathematical ideas. Many see it as the first organic Within this specific framework, it is reasonable to see autocratization, which has been spreading at an alarming rate throughout the world, as including dominant-party governments as a subset. As a result of one political party's established control, democratic institutions tend to deteriorate under dominant-party regimes, which are a part of the larger trend of authoritarian politics taking hold.

The current study provides insight into four separate cases: Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Nicaragua, and Georgia. These examples illustrate the general tendency towards dominant-party systems by shedding light on specific dynamics. A striking example of dominant-party dynamics in a reasonably free political system may be seen in Georgia, where one dominating party has been forced to relinquish power to another. After a decade in power, the Georgian Dream party is now unquestionably the country's leading political force. Alternative avenues for political variety and representation do, however, continue to exist. In order to strengthen their clientelistic networks and have considerable influence on the court, the leading political group channels vast sums of money via them. Over and over again, the ruling political party in Georgia has reaped disproportionate benefits from the state's voting rules. The administration, however, has been forced to make modifications in order to correct these inequities as a result of the opposition's and civil society's combined efforts.

It has been quite clear that the dynamics in Zimbabwe and Nicaragua are very similar. Unfortunately, it seems that no amount of pressure from inside Nicaragua or outside has been able to stop the country's slide towards open tyranny. Several governmental agencies have been taken over by the Sandinista National Liberation

Front (FSLN) since 2007, which has virtually put an end to opposition parties, limited other ways for pluralism, and legislated restrictions on civil society groups. It is important to remember that since Zimbabwe gained its independence in 1980, the Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) has been the leading party in the country's political arena. The political body in question has persistently shaped domestic policy, with the exception of a short period of power sharing from 2009 to 2013 and the subsequent deposal of long-serving president Robert Mugabe from office in 2011. When compared to the three countries described before, Zimbabwe's military plays a much larger and more central role in protecting the privileges of the ruling political party.

In many cases, the involvement of election officials has been especially difficult. The ruling political parties in Zimbabwe, Mozambique, and Nicaragua have a disproportionate amount of influence and control over the election administration organisations. There are no repercussions or sanctions for the political behaviour of election officials when this control is applied. A new deal in Georgia, mediated by the EU, has the potential to reduce the influence of Georgian Dream on the appointment of members to the country's Central Electoral Commission.

They are not alone in experiencing the difficulties shown in these case studies; rather, they are representative of similar patterns of action displayed by other powerful parties. Defeating its rivals has become second nature for Uganda's National Resistance Movement. Press freedom and the ability of civil society groups to do their jobs have been severely limited by a succession of increasingly harsh regulations enacted by Turkey's Justice and Development Party (AKP). The African National Congress (ANC) has skillfully maintained its dominating position in South Africa via the use of lawful and democratic processes. But it's not perfect; on rare instances, accusations have surfaced about the party using public resources for its own benefit.

Financial Reactions to the Increase in Powerful Parties

The policy solutions that proponents of democracy face in each of these circumstances are unique. When dealing with these types of regimes, it is clear that institutional help, like election management organisations and traditional civil society aid, is not very effective. This is mostly because powerful groups may simply take advantage of these outside financing sources.

The authors have identified local concerns in these countries through these carefully executed case studies, where they have seen that many traditional democracy support initiatives may unwittingly strengthen the positions of rulers and increase the dominance of one political party.You are asking about the number 2. According to local sources, the ruling political party in Zimbabwe has made good use of the funding that donors have given to institutions like the courts and parliament. It is worth noting that in Mozambique, the current political machinery headed by Frelimo has appropriated funds meant to strengthen institutions including the court, legislature, and ombudsman. In this specific case, it is important to emphasise that some very kind donors put up a lot of money in the early years of this century as part of a peace-building effort. Nevertheless, it must be recognised that these financial donations had little noticeable impact on creating a more fair and impartial political environment in the country.

There has been a slow but steady decline in the supply of different types of assistance in Nicaragua as a result of the growing difficulty for donors to get financing for civil society activities. Limited resources have forced donors to focus on a smaller number of community and youth group initiatives. Donors' efforts to work with the FSLN on issues without political ramifications have been significantly impeded by the authorities' pervasive animosity towards outside entities. When looking at Zimbabwe through the lens of a more egalitarian political environment, it becomes clear that generic projects aimed at civil society have mostly failed.

Evidence gathered from the prestigious Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development shows that between 2009 and 2013

, the EU's aid to Mozambique, Nicaragua, and Zimbabwe went more towards the admirable goal of democracy support than towards the worthy goal of state building. The EU is known for its humanitarian efforts. This claim only pertains to Zimbabwe in the context of OECD donors, however, so it bears mentioning. A larger share of the budget has gone towards state construction rather than democratic promotion in Nicaragua, Mozambique, and Georgia. Recognising that autocratization has been taking place in Nicaragua and Mozambique at the same time that support for state construction has declined over time is crucial.

The data presented in Figure 1 demonstrates a notable trend in the allocation of funds towards democracy support within the four countries under examination. It is evident that such funding reaches its zenith during nationwide election years. This correlation underscores the close association between support for democracy and the electoral process, which continues to be perceived as a pivotal mechanism for effecting change within states characterised by dominant-party systems.
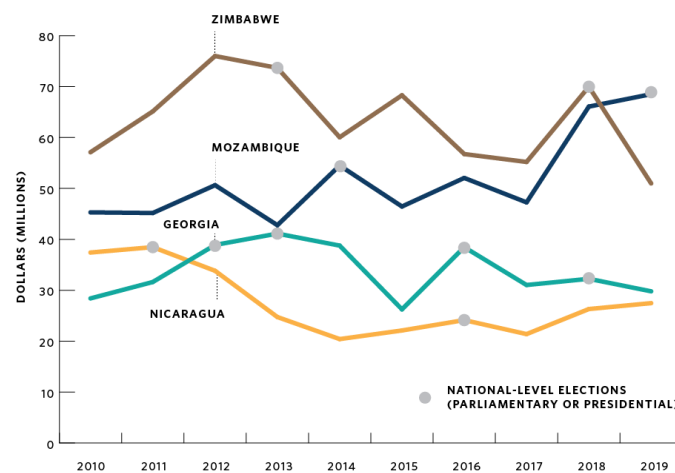

Figure 1: Funding for donors' democracy has evolved

A crucial function for political parties in bolstering democracy

The Election Commission of India (ECI) has recommended that political parties in our nation embrace the principles of democracy and the Constitution in their internal party structures, as well as a self-adopted code of conduct, as part of their plan for electoral reform. Equal representation of women and other marginalized groups in party leadership roles is a legal requirement, and the document also calls for the establishment of an internal institutional mechanism within the party to plan, think, and conduct research on pressing socioeconomic issues facing the country. It also calls for the training of party cadres to socialize them and prepare them for the duties of governance.

The National Law Commission, the National Commission to Review the Constitution's Operations, and others have recommended these changes in their respective reports. As a means of choosing a government representative, political parties play an increasingly important role in contemporary democracies. It is up to them to carry out the Constitution's provisions. No one can expect the parties to carry out the Constitution's mandate if they themselves disobey its ideals. Therefore, in order to establish a political party, members must publicly and privately demonstrate unwavering commitment to the Constitution. For the sake of constructing a more equitable society, it is imperative that party cadres and leaders live by the predetermined democratic and constitutional principles in their private and public lives. However, it has come to light that several political parties' resort to violent tactics and simple methods of mobilization based on caste, community, and

religion in order to sway voters in their favors and secure electoral victories, disregarding democratic principles and constitutional guarantees in the process.

There has been a decline in democratic values during the past seven decades of national democracy, with more and more people becoming violent at the polls and organizing along communal lines; parties are also being formed along caste and communal lines, and candidates are appealing to voters' religious, ethnic, and caste identities in order to win over their support. Any society's political parties may be seen as agents of change. No one caste, religion, social group, or geographic area should influence their actions; they must be free from gender prejudice, community interest, and casteism.

Political parties should not divide but unite the people in pursuit of justice, liberty, and equality. Rather than fostering division, parties should work to create an inclusive secular space where people of all backgrounds and genders can come together in gender-neutral socio-religious groups. The parties themselves were so expected to put aside their petty political agendas. The intellectual engagement of political parties in the nation's socio-economic and political issues is the second most important concern. This means that the parties should endeavor to understand the issues and come up with possible solutions through research, debate, and discussions that involve the larger masses in the interest of the nation.

We have the biggest democracy on the planet, yet our people are so easily manipulated because they lack the education and literacy to cast informed ballots. For a democracy to thrive, the general public must be educated about politics, and political parties play a key role in this process.

First things first: the parties need to get themselves ready to be the people' political instructors. Party cadres and leaders are required to possess solid understanding of social and economic concerns, as well as political science, governance, and economics. Their knowledge of the Constitution and the laws as they now stand must be sufficient. An increase in the number of individuals interested in serving their country and a decrease in the number of criminals, vested interest groups, and the uneducated will result from the intellectual engagement of political parties, which will attract individuals from a variety of educational and occupational backgrounds.

Regional Political Parties' Significance in Bolstering Democracy

The state parties, colloquially known as regional parties, do not inherently exhibit a strictly regional ideology. Certain political parties in India can be classified as "all India parties" due to their presence and operations across multiple states. However, it is important to note that despite their nationwide reach, these parties have achieved significant success only in specific states. Over the course of the past three decades, there has been a notable proliferation in both the quantity and potency of these political parties. The aforementioned development has resulted in a heightened level of political diversity within the esteemed Indian parliament. It is imperative to acknowledge that no single national party possesses the capability to independently secure a majority in the esteemed Lok Sabha. Consequently, the national political parties find themselves compelled to establish alliances with regional and state-based political parties. Since the year 1996, it has come to pass that nearly every state party within our nation has been afforded the opportunity to partake in the noble principles of federalism and democracy. The aforementioned instances of state parties possessing national-level political organisations with units spanning across multiple states include the Samajwadi Party (SP), Rashtriya Janata Dal, and Samata Party.

How might political parties at the state or regional level in India help to fortify democracy and federalism?

The advent of coalition governments at the central level since the 1990s marked the onset of a new era. Given the absence of a definitive majority for any single party in the Lok Sabha, it became imperative for the major

national parties to engage in a coalition with numerous parties, including various regional entities, in order to establish a government at the Centre. The aforementioned phenomenon has engendered a nascent paradigm characterised by the equitable distribution of authority and a heightened regard for the self-governance of regional administrative bodies.

The aforementioned trend was bolstered by a significant ruling rendered by the esteemed Supreme Court, which imposed substantial obstacles on the Central Government's ability to capriciously terminate state governments. Therefore, it can be argued that the efficacy of federal power sharing has witnessed a discernible improvement in contemporary times when juxtaposed with the nascent years subsequent to the ratification of the Constitution.

How Democracy Is Strengthened by Political Parties

One of the many roles that political parties play is bolstering democracy. Political parties attract candidates whose platforms and values are congruent with their own. In a similar vein, voters choose candidates from the political parties they believe would adequately reflect their views. Political parties challenge the ruling party, recruit and nominate candidates for public office, and oversee and conduct elections. The many roles played by political parties contribute to the health of our democracy.

Managing and coordinating voting is the primary role of political parties. They do things to get people excited about the elections and to encourage them to cast ballots for the politicians they favour. Canvassing doors, calling individuals, and holding registration drives are all examples of organising and mobilising tactics. Volunteers take part in these events in the lead-up to the election in an effort to increase the number of people casting ballots. As an example, some party members hand out fliers urging individuals to sign up for voter registration. In a democratic system, voters pick representatives to look out for their interests via the voting process. One method to enhance democracy is to increase voter participation by making elections more interesting.

By holding processes like primaries and caucuses, political parties can help strengthen democracy by attracting and nominating people for public service. Voters nominate their favourite candidates for office in a preliminary intra-party election known as a primary. In contrast, party officials gather in secret for caucuses to choose delegates and candidates. Parties demonstrate that democracy starts at the party level when they conduct primaries. Take the 2008 presidential election as an example; Barrack Obama was able to represent the Democratic Party since he defeated Hillary Clinton in the primaries. The importance of primaries and caucuses cannot be overstated, since they serve as evidence that democracy starts from the ground up.

The third function of political parties is to challenge the ruling party, which helps to keep democracy strong. If the governing party's programmes aren't effective, the opposition party may have superior ideas. Economic, social, and environmental ideology are common points of contention among political parties. If the ruling party's foreign trade strategy is hurting the economy, for example, the opposition might suggest a different approach. When Trump initiated a trade war with China in 2012, this occurred. Citizens' ability to voice their opinions and consider other policy options is a key component of a healthy democracy. Opposition to the government also prevents the ruling party from becoming a totalitarian regime.

Political parties play an important role in maintaining and strengthening democracies. Parties largely control the voting process by encouraging people to cast ballots. They also reach out to potential candidates who may run for public office on their behalf. Voters will be asked to choose the nominees after a sufficient number of candidates have been gathered. Party candidates should not be chosen without public input; such a process would be anti-democratic. Last but not least, the losing party's efforts to undermine the ruling party and implement new policies are an ongoing contribution to democracy. In the end, the point of political parties is to bolster democracy.

Policy Points to Remember

The present empirical research conducted on the ground elucidates three policy considerations that hold particular significance within the context of dominant-party regimes. These considerations encompass party support and negotiations, electoral processes, and direct forms of activism.

Party Assistance and Conversations

One aspect of the traditional democratic support repertoire—political party programs becomes more relevant under dominant-party regimes due to the distinctive and noticeable nature of these systems. Help from generous individuals is urgently needed so that candidates running for office from the current political party may participate in fair elections. But as we can see from those four examples, outside groups have had a tough time making headway on this front and have mostly avoided giving overt assistance to the opposing sides.

Their focus, instead, has been shifting to the creation of rules that foster a more just and equal setting for everyone involved. Primarily via actively supporting, funding, and mediating discussions between long-standing governing and opposing groups, they have successfully achieved this goal. Donors' strong financial assistance towards interparty discussions has been crucial to the continuing peace process in Mozambique since the early 2000s, and this deserves special recognition in this context. Regarding Zimbabwe, it is important to mention that funders have always supported conversations between parties that may bring about a consensus that goes beyond party lines, even after the government of national unity ended. Once upon a time, generous individuals in both countries provided direct funding to political groups; but, they have since stopped doing so, realising the political dangers it poses.

It is important to mention that the European Union (EU) played a crucial mediating role in helping the ruling political organisations and the opposition parties in Georgia reach a peaceful agreement. A thorough set of changes was agreed upon by all parties involved, and their efforts were bolstered by groups that provide assistance to political parties, leading to this convergence. Be that as it may, the aforementioned accord has only just begun to take effect. Before these programmes were halted in 2012 due to claims of government meddling in political matters, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) effectively assembled a number of Nicaraguan stakeholders. It is clear from this situation that party support groups have been successful in other political settings by using multiparty communication, but that this strategy is very difficult to adopt in regimes where one party has absolute power. To further equalise the political environment in these countries, the results of this study emphasise the need to combine and improve this technique with other forms of explicit help to political entities and long-term electoral aid.

The effort to strengthen parliamentary ability is similarly complicated due to the inherent features of regime institutions. The specified method of bolstering democracy has the ability to be a practical way to help lawmakers from different political backgrounds enhance their capability. To avoid unintentionally exacerbating an already unbalanced political landscape, it is crucial to recognise that due to the dominance of ruling parties in many countries, assistance to parliamentary frameworks and individual legislators must be carefully considered.

The authors have faced passionate pleas for additional protections for party activists and parliaments against government attacks in more constrained settings from regional proponents of democratic change in the field of case study research. The European Union (EU) and other organisations have done great work in recent years to protect vulnerable civil society leaders from government attacks. It is critical to bring this approach into the realm of political parties via all-encompassing programmes that help party members who are in danger and being singled out by hostile governments.

Elections

The funding community is increasingly interested in correcting the electoral fraud that gives powerful political parties their advantages. However, relevant evidence suggests that they devote a large amount of their resources close to election day, rather than equitably distributing them across the whole political cycle. When discussing Zimbabwe in 2010, it is important to notice the coordinated efforts made by donors from the European Union (EU). Their principal objective was to provide a hand in creating and enforcing an electoral code of conduct. This code of conduct, which was considered very important, was put in place to control and direct the activities of the main political parties in Zimbabwe. In addition, the European Union's financial backers worked hard to get those big political parties to sign off on the code of behaviour we just discussed. To tackle the current problems in Georgia caused by one-party rule, donors have skillfully tailored their programmes, mainly by calling for changes to the electoral commission's structure and membership. In the case of Mozambique, it is worth noting that donors have tried to do rid of the 5% criterion for entering parliament so that opposition parties may be more easily involved.

It should be noted, nevertheless, that electoral support has faced considerable obstacles under these specific regimes. Although programmes that strive to make election administration organisations more professional are admirable in principle, they don't always succeed in making elections more democratic. This is mostly because of the power that the leaders of the big parties have, who are still effectively in charge of political patronage. According to the case studies, in order to prioritise electoral changes, outside players need to use all of their diplomatic and financial resources. Election system redesigns that effectively mitigate the disproportionate influence of strong political parties must be identified and implemented by these players in a more systematic manner.

In contrast to the common practice of donors distributing funds within a year or six months before the next election cycle, strategic consideration of such support should begin immediately after an election. International and local observers must engage in thoughtful conversations about the larger democratic procedures in these countries, not just about the election season, if they want to participate in such preparation successfully. Supporting domestic coalitions committed to change is of the utmost importance. While election changes are no picnic, the recent events in Georgia show that persistent popular pressure may produce tangible results.

Activism Directed

In all four nations under consideration, it is evident that a significant number of the authors' interlocutors have expressed a strong belief in the imperative for donors to venture beyond conventional approaches. Specifically, they emphasise the importance of providing support to innovative ideas, nonconformist organisations, and novel modes of mobilisation. The phenomenon of protests has indeed thrived as a discernible component of democratic expression in each of these instances. The protests that transpired in Nicaragua during the year 2010 were subjected to a severe and forceful suppression, akin to the manner in which the protests in Zimbabwe unfolded in the subsequent year of 2009. Periodically, protests have surged, bringing various policy issues to the forefront of Georgian politics and effectively thwarting any potential for a more profound authoritarian shift within the country. Donors exhibit a notable inclination towards exercising caution when it comes to extending their support towards protest movements that surpass mere verbal endorsements of the fundamental right to assemble. However, within dominant-party regimes, political parties can serve as one of the limited avenues through which positive transformations can be achieved.

The aforementioned case studies posit that the realm of international democracy support would benefit from allocating additional focus towards the local level. This strategic approach aims to establish a network of organisations capable of mobilising when the need arises, while simultaneously cultivating a heightened sense of democratic principles among a broader spectrum of individuals within society. Simultaneously, it is imperative to underscore the indispensability of providing core funding to local organisations, as it enables them to optimise their utilisation of opportunities as they manifest themselves. In the most arduous of

circumstances, it is imperative for benefactors to provide their unwavering support to the voices of those who have been exiled, such as the Nicaraguans who have sought refuge in Costa Rica. Given the increasing proficiency of dominant political parties in restricting alternative avenues for pluralism, it is imperative for the international community to actively seek out and identify unconventional and nonconformist modes of mobilisation and engagement. The provision of such support necessitates a certain degree of flexibility and is often most effectively administered at a distance from official governmental entities.

Conclusion

The support for international democracy must grapple with a myriad of distinct challenges that pose threats to the integrity of democratic political systems. One formidable challenge amidst the myriad of burgeoning predicaments lies in the escalating trend of countries succumbing to the influence of dominant-party regimes. The aforementioned countries pose inherent challenges to the facilitation of international democracy, which are generally prevalent in all non-democratic regimes. However, they also give rise to certain distinct predicaments that stem from the fundamental characteristics of dominant political parties. There exists no facile solution to circumvent this predicament. International powers, at the very least, require frameworks that possess the capacity to effectively delineate and oversee the various risks at hand. Donors must diligently compile precise indicators in order to effectively ascertain the probable impact of their conventional forms of democracy support within such a regime. It is imperative to underscore the necessity for more comprehensive methodologies in addressing party support, electoral reform, and civic activism. Furthermore, it is crucial to direct heightened scrutiny towards the interconnections that exist among these three domains. However, it is important to note that various forms of funding initiatives or innovative methodologies targeting local actors are improbable to suffice as standalone solutions. In order to effectively facilitate pro-democratic change, it is imperative that diplomatic engagement be fortified and donors exhibit a greater propensity for assuming risks within these particular contexts.

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