

## THE ROLE OF THE POLITICAL PARTIES IN THE DEFENSE SYSTEM AND THE NEED FOR INTER-PARTY CONSENSUS\*

Oliver Bakreski

Institute of Security, Defense and Peace in Skopje, Macedonia

Milan Milošević

Faculty for Education of Executives in Novi Sad, Serbia

The theoretical elaboration in this paper is moving toward two directions: *firstly*, the starting premise is that the political parties have an important role in the democratization of the societies and that the examination of the political parties should not be substantially different from the other sub-spheres of the political sciences. The second line of analysis refers to the concept for building an inter-party consensus for the defense which, based on the permanent accumulation of knowledge by the parties should result with a rational decision – which will mean to get out from the magic circle in which the political parties fall regarding the defense. It is also a concept necessary for overcoming certain disproportions which are a result of an inconsistent accumulated knowledge and the hard attitude, and the prestige in advance of their competitors not to ever withdraw, that will mean that there will exist strict outskirts in comprehension and contribution for reconciliation of the popular thesis for consensus and compromise.

*Key words: political parties, inter-party consensus functions, defense, defense system.*

### About the political parties

Political parties are the heart of democracy. Beside the electors, the parties and their elected representatives are the key participators in most of the basic procedures that vitally constitute the democracy: the decisions for delivering laws and (directly and indirectly) the government. In a democratic regime, the political parties are the leading intermediaries between the electors and their interests on one hand, and the institutions for decision making on the other hand. Those are the channels of political interaction between the civic society and the state.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ganter R., Montero R.H. & Linc, H.H. (eds.), *Politički partii*, Skopje: Akademski pečat, 2009, p. 79.

So, the political parties are the fundamental part of the democratic political ambience in the state with certain stability and solidity, and they also have the necessary authority on disposal. Without the “moral authority” that justifies their role, the political parties remain socially unintegrated and their ability to govern is rather reduced.<sup>2</sup>

The political parties, by rule, are found where the political movements and their ideologies exist. In the background of every ideological struggle there is a political struggle, therefore the political parties are most commonly the main conspirators or carriers of political ideologies. Meantime, the existence and the action of the political parties is closely<sup>3</sup> related with the struggle for political supremacy, more accurate: for the state power.<sup>3</sup>

On the forming, the character and the role of the party in a society, a determining influence is the governmental system, as the activity of the political party affects as a feedback on the physiognomy and the eventual change of the governmental system. Therefore, the parties shouldn't be viewed separately from the hystorical and from the social context in which they ocured, or from the societies and the governmental system in which they act. Basically, the political parties differ between them pretty well as a result of the originality of the societies in which they act (the level of economic development, cultural and political characteristics, class, rase, religious and national structure), and also the diferent tendencies of the parties themselves.<sup>4</sup>

The political parties enable the mechanism through whom the questions of public interest find their way to the political agendas. Different demands could be articulated by different parties. On the other hand, some demands, due different reasons could be rarely or never articulated. Yet, the need for the parties to maximize the votes in the liberal democracies provides a sense of hearing on what the electorat says.<sup>5</sup>

The key difference between the political parties and groups that put pressure is that the parties are responsible for forming order into chaos and through turning the demands of a broad spectrum of interests in appropriate political questions that the electorate has on insight. So, the parties develop programs which further decant into an electional manifesto. Through grouping the interests the parties simplify the elections and give choice to the electors which is a key characteristic of the party system in the liberal democracies.<sup>6</sup>

The power of the parties is primary measured with the number of their members and through the capability and capacity of the party to close (to exclude) certain sectors from the electorat body. The weakening (deduction) of some of these factors which can appear through the processes of privileging designated leading groups inside the party itself or through development of programs focused broadly toward the voters instead of few party supporters which can mean weakening of the party itself.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Kamrava M., *Politics and Society in the Developing World*, London - New York: Routledge, 2000, p. 13.

<sup>3</sup> Klimovski S. i Mitkov V., *Ustavno ureduvanje na Republika Makedonija*, Skopje: Prosvetno delo, 1993, pp. 114–117.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Garner R. and Kelly R., *British Political Parties Today*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993, p. 3.

<sup>6</sup> Garner R. and Kelly R., *British Political Parties Today*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993, p. 4.

<sup>7</sup> Katz R S. and Mair P. (edit.), *How Parties Organize*, London: SAGE Publications; New Delhi: Thousand Oaks, 1994, pp. 1–2.

Basically, there are numerous factors that affect the work of the political parties. These are the most important ones that afflict the party's work and evolution:

1. The election dimensions – including the variable of voting (overall and between the blocks), the composition of the electorate, the reflections from the social and political divisions, the regional holdings, the values, the opinions and the preferences of the voters and identification with the party.

2. The interests of the party's electors – the studies of this kind have a tendency to focus on: the size, the social and the regional composition of the party membership regarding: the distribution, the organized interests and „sheets” from the civic society, the connections with the interest groups, with the associations or the institutions and the degree of party's consolidation and encapsulation in the society.

3. The organization of the party – earning the elites and the processes of decision making are frequently analyzed, the same as the questions for: unity instead of factions, problems with the leadership and/or „the political class”, the role of the parliament group in the party, the strategies for mobilisation, public and private sources of party's functioning, the party's bureaucracy and the implementation of responsiveness and responsibility of the political system – public institutions in general. Here, the constitutional and the election system should be analyzed.

4. The political formulation – many scientists examine the parties programs, their ideologies and systems of beliefs, their propagandas and mobilization strategies and their capacity for setting priorities, for association and integration.

5. The political implementation – the roles and the capabilities of the parties in formulating and implementing defined strategies (from a power position or as an opposition), is also a subject of many scientific examinations. The fundamental attention is dedicated to the analysis of the question are the parties capable or not to form coalitions all the other parties. This is especially important for the stability of the cabinet, the interactions between the government and the opposition, the mechanisms of distribution, the party's spirit and governance, the degree of party control on the agenda installation, the capacity of the parties etc.<sup>8</sup>

## The concept and the defining of the political parties

The theoretic approach suggests that in order to give answer of the question what is a political party, the notion party itself should be explained and defined. The international contemporary term party finds its etymological genesis in the latin word *pars* – a part of some entirety and the word *partie* – which means partition. In this context, the term political party has a dual meaning: *first*, the political party as a part of an entirety and *secondly*, the political party as a part that could be ideologically, politically and organizationally separated from the entirety, and if it is necessary, be substantively capable to reconnect with the entirety or with some essential part that remains kept.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Ganter R., Montero R.H. & Linc, H.H. (eds.), *Politički partii*, Skopje: Akademski pečat, 2009, pp. 82–84.

<sup>9</sup> Smiljković, R., *Stranke i politika*, Beograd: Informativni centar studenata (ICS), 1976, p. 11.

The historical concept of the term party did not always had the same meaning as today. For one group to be called a party it means that they selfishly represent their own collective interests, dedicating themselves and working on gaining power, in addition they destroy the real community of interests and opinions in the society.<sup>10</sup> In this context, Richard Gunther and Jonathan Hopkins highlight that the political parties are a fundamental part of the democratic political life that they even have the appearance of stability and firmness that is a subject of a doubt. With that, the political party should evaluate itself, not to serve as an instrument for accomplishment of some political goal. In this direction the continuous theoretic notions on the political parties views them as a transitional phenomena and a product from the strive for accomplishing the democratic beliefs and promises given to the citizens.

Fundamentaly, the definition for a party itself represents a „democratic climate” because „to become a party of something always means an identification with one group and differentiation from other”<sup>11</sup> In the context of this observation, Hague and Harrop claim that the parties were created as a „response of the extention of the right to vote and the imposed need over the parliamentary leaderships in order to develop an extra-parlamentary organization”.<sup>12</sup>

For LaPalombara the political parties are carriers of a certain ideology and their orientation is more or less is secret and continuous, while the main purpose is gaining the authority, and for that they strive to secure a broad support from the people.<sup>13</sup>

In the same direction is Highwood’s argumentation. He considers that the political party is a group of people which are organized in order to gain the authority on elections or some other way.<sup>14</sup>

According to S. Klimovski and V. Mitkov, the political parties are social organizations or organized social groups which are most conscious for the goals that the unorganized groups with simmlar social interests aspire for and which represent the most appropriate social shape in whom these interests could be realized and satisfied,<sup>15</sup> while Vankovska considers that the political parties are a lever for connection between the citizens and the authorities, a form of civic participation in the politics, and as an instrument for selection and creation of elites.<sup>16</sup>

## The functions of the political parties

In the last decades the image for the political parties is given a final touch with the analysis that are made regarding the general categories of political parties. The one group of analysis is focused on the functions of the parties, on the organizational structure, the membership of the political parties as well. Other analysis are made regarding their achievements in the government and in the Parliament, while third analysis are fo-

<sup>10</sup> Robertson, D., *The Penguin Dictionary of Politics*, London: Penguin Books, 1993, pp. 370–371.

<sup>11</sup> Garner R., and Kelly R., *British Political Parties Today*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993, p. 1, 2.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> LaPalombara, J., *Political Parties and Political Development*, Princeton: Princeton Univerzity Press, 1966 (in: Vankovska B., *Politicki sistem*, p. 33).

<sup>14</sup> Hejvud E., *Politika*, Beograd: Clio, 2004, p. 464.

<sup>15</sup> Klimovski S. i Mitkov V., *Ustavno ureduvanje na Republika Makedonija*, Skopje: Prosvetno delo, 1993, p. 114.

<sup>16</sup> Vankovska B., *Politički sistem*, Skopje: Bomat grafiks, 2007, p. 32, 33.

cused on the questions connected with the party's support, the identification of the parties, the participation on the elections, etc. Still, beside the broad interest on this subject, it is considered that the functions of the political parties deserve more attention.

The political parties, as obvious, appear with a function of a intermediary between the civic opinion and the country's one.

This provides citizen's influence on the process of making political decisions, respectively, on the political elite, and vice versa – influence of the political establishment on the social layers (citizens).<sup>17</sup>

Fundamentally, the political parties perform many functions in the political system. The performance of the functions gives them the needed credibility, and the base for which they are formed and existing. The importance of the political parties is especially obvious when there is a synchronization of the numerous functions that the political parties perform in the political process, especially when the functions are scoped through the prism of their functioning.

The political parties as political organizations of citizens that have common interests and which are primarily organized to gain or maintain authority implement three important functions: *first*, nominating representatives for the highest political institutions in the system; *second*, direct influence on the conception of the political agenda through identification of the greatest political problems in the state and a bid for possible solutions and *third*, organizing the parliament, the government and other political institutions in the direction of creating the state policy.<sup>18</sup>

Beside these functions, the political parties exert these functions: representative (representing certain political interests), mobilization and inclusion (civic association and motivation for them to take participance in the political process), focusing relevant information for the people, influence on the defining of public policies, strenghtening the general political culture and decreasing the risk for populism.<sup>19</sup>

Beside the accomplishment of their political functions they have a far more bigger and more complex influence on the political system. Ofcourse, when it is about the functions of the political parties, there is a hazard of simplification. The constitutional parties operate in the framework of electoral competition and aew commonly described as bastions of democracy. On the other hand, the regime parties that posses monopoly over the political power are usually presented as manipulation instruments and political control. Meanwhile, there are many general political functions designated. Their fundamental roles are the following: representation, creating an elite and recruitment, designating goals, articulation and agregation of interests, socialization and mobilization, and organizing the authorities etc.<sup>20</sup>

## The parties and the state

In order to understand the party as an organization, its transformation and its adjustment, there has to be enough attention paid on the connection between the party and the state, and the connection between the party and the civil society. At the same time, it is

<sup>17</sup> Kitanoski L., *Podelba na vlasta*, Skopje: Aniskop, 1996, p. 69.

<sup>18</sup> LeLoup L. T., *Politics in America – the Ability to Govern* (Second edition), New York: West Publishing Company, p. 172

<sup>19</sup> Vankovska B., *Politički sistem*, Skopje: Bomat grafiks, 2007, p. 35.

<sup>20</sup> Hejvud E., *Politika*, Beograd: Clio, 2004, p. 470.

very clear that this special link has a tendency to be ignored or underestimated in the previous assessments for the parties and their stability, and also a tendency of almost complete focus of the attention on the link between the parties and the civic society. What is very clear is that in the last ten or twenty years the link between the parties and the state has a tendency in becoming extremely important.<sup>21</sup>

The fact that the state is really crucial for survival of the political parties is shown in the following: *first*, today it is considered that the representation of the party through the media is a base for party functioning. Through the public informing services they have the ability to address the electors and to disclose their views and opinions for solving certain issues. The way the parties transmit their messages and how much space will be set aside for that depends from the regulations and the procedures established in the state.

*Secondly*, the next method with which the state helps a certain party to exist is shown in the personal management. It is generally known that the members of some political parties are in the same time employed in the state institutions. Hence, the parties tend to employ their members in order to respond on the preference of the membership for gaining knowledge and experience and to expect a successful career that unfortunately depends on the support by the political party that practices authority.

*Thirdly*, the state has a big role for the parties from the aspect of distribution of financial resources. The parties get certain resources according to the electoral results that are in a way articulation and agregation of different interests that for some of them, especially the small parties, mean life and existence on the political stage.

If the previous is analyzed it is clear that the parties in the state institutions have the will to use the advantage from the public resources in order to reward their supporters. The potential exploitation of the state resources for indulgent goals emphasizes one general problem with a broader conception (understanding) for the state and for the parties, and that is the state plays a exceedingly important role in the „survival” of the parties and it can be said that this kind of role is magnifying.

Yet, the facts that the parties today rely on state regulated channels for communication/employment in the party organizations are conducted by the example of the state services/the state subventions constitute an increasingly larger part of the parties income, and the party life is increasingly regulated by the state laws/that the state indulgence can offer broad benefits for party supporters, it does not have to fully mean the parties all of a sudden found out an external source from which they can draw from more and more, or the state should not be seen as an external factor that affects on the life of a party. The state regulation is brought with help of the parties. That is why it is better to say the parties help them selves, regulate them selves, supplying resources in the name of the state. Based on this, if the parties enable a set base for their joint survival, than it can be said that they trace the way for their inter-assimilation and association.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>21</sup> Katz R S. and Mair P. (edit.), *How Parties Organize*, London: SAGE Publications; New Delhi: Thousand Oaks, 1994, pp. 7–8.

<sup>22</sup> Katz R S. and Mair P. (edit.), *How Parties Organize*, London: SAGE Publications; New Delhi: Thousand Oaks, 1994, pp. 10.

## The inter-party consensus and the defence

The political parties are most often focused on realizing their electoral programs. If the political parties electoral programs are analyzed, it can be seen that almost every party retains on the basic issues that the state faces, like: the political stability; the functioning of the rule of law; the economic system and providing a stable and sustainable development; promoting the health, the social and the retirement protection; providing social security to the citizens; strengthening the inter-ethnic relations; developing a regional cooperation between the state; issues related to EU and NATO; issues related to emigration; issues related to education, science and culture; strengthening the local government; population politics and demographic movements; protection of the environment; developing the tourism; etc.<sup>23</sup>

Beside these questions, it is considered that the issues related to security and defence take a significant role in the political agenda of the political parties. It is because of the character, the meaning and the resources engaged in the field of security and defence, as well the real power that these departments, because they have a real force on disposal that can be effectuated in a certain time and under certain circumstances. Hence, there is a huge interest of all political and all the rest of the subjects in every state for control in these sectors, and eventually to put them under their influence.<sup>24</sup>

The political parties, especially those represented in the parliaments, take active participation in the creating of the country's defense policy, legally regulate this matter, with that directly settling the relations in this sphere through the peace time and martial time budgets designating the resources required for the defense, through different bodies, commissions, boards or other forms control the work of the Ministry of defense and the army and directly or indirectly implementing their own political defense formulations.<sup>25</sup>

Regarding the defense, the parties initiate an avalanche of discussions related to defense and their capacities are focused toward an appropriate specification of the contemporary challenges that the defense system faces, as well as giving appropriate solutions for resolving the problems themselves that in the most cases are mutable, and sometimes are with troublesome nature as a result of their relations. Still, there are issues that don't need a political discussion and they are not supposed to be a matter of dispute between the parties or, a source of critic by the opposition political parties. Those are the issues tied with the national security and the defense system, for optimization of the army, the determination for providing the needed level for state defense, on the reforms priorities, for modernization and equipping, for the representative and integrative function of the army, for the model of the rational organization etc.

However, it should be emphasized that because of the character of the things in the field of security and defense of the country, often there are certain misunderstandings evolving on which issues could be a matter of dispute in the Parliament or in the Government and which remain to be settled by the ministry of that sphere and the Army. This challenges different discussions in the political parties. States with a longer parliamentary tradition have a practice for achieving party consensus by certain key issues related with

<sup>23</sup> Gocevski T., *Osnovi na sistemot na nacionalna odbrana*, Skopje: Filozofski fakultet, 2006, pp. 170–171.

<sup>24</sup> Gocevski T., *Osnovi na sistemot na nacionalna odbrana*, Skopje: Filozofski fakultet, 2006, pp. 171–172.

<sup>25</sup> Gocevski T. i Bakreski O., *Političkiot i ekonomski sistem i odbranata*, Skopje: Filozofski fakultet, 2005, pp. 128–132.

the defense and security of the country and these issues are further taken down from the daily policy of the political subjects, or, all the parties have an identical attitude on the issues.<sup>26</sup> Yet, if it is not possible to achieve a consensus for the most fundamental issues tied with the defense, than the practice shows that there is an effort to construct some kind of aggregation of the interests of the political parties and approach toward synchronizing the differences which requires a lot of compromise.

## *Conclusion*

The political parties are a result of the increased need, above all, in class divided societies where the political parties represent attitudes and opinions of certain citizens for issues from their sphere of action, interest and need. Since the class struggle is most often a political struggle, it is considered that the political parties have the leading word and are the leading players in that struggle. With that, the notion that the political parties act to represent different interests which enables the political enunciation to be expressed through the political parties which have similar interest program orientations.

The political parties, as we know them today, are nothing else but organizations which articulate different civic opinions for the essential issues of their concern and for which they quest possible solutions. It means that the parties will continue to be interested in providing the needed power and not only that, they will tend to get to the power in order to practice it. Yet, there are a small number of parties with a small party membership that beside the insistence to get next to the power, have real expectations far away from that.

Regarding the defense it is especially important when the parties get to the required authority and power, or when they will have the opportunity to practice power to provide and ambience where all the issues concerning the defense sector should be solved by the best practice. In that direction the states that have a longer democratic tradition achieve a consensus for the important issues that are in the interest of the defense. It means that there are laborious discussions needed, persuasion, reconciliation and a permanent dialogue in order to get to the needed consensus. If it is sometimes impossible to get to the needed balance, it should be insisted on a longer negotiation and finding a way to stimulate the communicative ability, but also to get to the needed preparedness of the subjects for finding solutions because the national issues always need a national argumentation but also a principal solution for overcoming the problems.

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid.



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