ROLE AND FUNCTIONS OF POLITICAL PARTIES IN DEMOCRACY

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ABSTRACT

The presence of political parties is one of the positive indicators of the healthy democratic transition in any country. Role and functions of political parties in democracy is unconstrained. Parties play very crucial role in political, economical and cultural development of the country. This article mainly focuses on role, functions and performance of political parties in democracies and in the process of contemporary democratization. It will also examine the types and classification of parties and party system. In order to examine the role and functions of political parties in democracy, the study derived theoretical framework of parties from scholarly insights contributed by various scholars such as Duverger (1954), Lipset and Rokkan (1967), Epstein (1967) and Sartori (1976). This article will end by explaining the importance of political parties and emergence of multiparty system for democracy.


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INTRODUCTION

The emergence of political parties and multi-party system are positive indicators of sturdy process of democratic transition. Modern representative democracy cannot operate without political parties. In democratic societies, people who share similar views and goals often join together to form political parties. They form parties to strengthen their ability and also to influence the decision making in the state. The main idea behind founding a political party is to promote a common set of values (ideology) and beliefs and develop a memorandum which influences others on the basis of collective beliefs and values. Founders of parties try to reach out to as many groups as possible. For example, several parties have been established in order to take up the issues related to various groups such as women, labour, farmers, youth and business groups. In order to remain untainted and successful especially during elections parties promote their message, policies and agenda. Parties grow and obtain power when they build alliances with other groups by linking their member’s interests in order to widen more universal values. Parties provide ideas, structures, concepts and instruments of liberty, democracy, market economy, social justice, self determination and peaceful co-existence (Thesing 1995).

UNDERSTANDING THE CONCEPT OF POLITICAL PARTY

The definition of political party encompasses numerous aspects. There is no all agreed definition available on political party. Several authors have studied political parties and multi-party system and conceptualized party in various ways.

By and large, political parties are coalitions of the people organized formally to recruit, nominate and elect candidates for public office. They are also instrumental in running the government, creating and implementing shared political goals through the election of officials to the executive and legislative branches of government, and being stability to the political
system (Maisel and Brewer 2012). Sartori (1976) defined political parties as “organizations that contest political election and seek governmental office”. Diamond and Gunther (2001) defined parties on the basis of their functions. According to the authors, in established democracies political parties perform the function of recruitment of candidates for public office, mobilization of electoral support, the structuring of policy agendas, societal representation, forming and sustaining of government, bring together sectional interests, social integration and stabilize political process (Diamond and Gunther 2001). As per Downs’s view parties are “teams of men” seeking to maximize their electoral support for the purpose of controlling government (Downs 1957). According to Mac Iver “a political party is an association organized to support of some principles of policy, which by constitutional means, it endeavours to make the determinant of government” (quoted in Kumari 2009). Epstein (1980) argues “party means any group, however loosely organized, seeking to elect governmental office holders under a given label. Political party is an organization that sponsors candidates for political office under the organizations name and ideology (Janda et al 2009). A political party can be defined as an organized group that nominates candidate and contest elections in order to influence the policy and personnel of government (Dyck 2012).

From the above definitions it could be understood that political parties are organizations of likeminded people. They contest for elections seeking public office. Political parties organise government and influence policy making. Political party should be a legally accepted and legitimate organization as per the prevailing law. They must have common political objective and programme. In this way the activities of political parties are absolutely essential for proper functioning of a representative democracy. As defined by Downs a democracy is a system that demonstrates the following characteristic features: “(a) Two or more parties compete in periodic elections for control of the governing apparatus; (b) the party (or coalition of parties) winning a majority of votes gains control of the governing apparatus until the next election; (c) loosing parties never attempt to prevent winners from taking office, nor do winners use powers to vitiate the ability of losers to compete in the next election and (d) all sane, law abiding adults, who are governed, are citizens, and every citizen has one and only vote in each election” (1957). In a democratic system political parties has several important functions and they play very important role in the process of democratization in transition countries.

ROLE AND FUNCTIONS OF POLITICAL PARTIES IN DEMOCRACY
Parties contribute to democratic government through the functions they perform for the political system. Janda, outlined four important party functions in democratic political system. These are structuring the voting choice in elections, nominating candidates for election to public office, proposing alternative programs and coordinating with the government officials (Janda. et al. 2009). The foremost function of the parties in the democratic system is to act as an intermediary between society and state and between the rulers and ruled. Diamond and Gunther (2001) also identified seven types of functions of parties such as candidate nomination, electoral mobilization, issue structuring, represent various social groups, interest aggregation, performing and sustaining governments and social integration role. They also serve as instruments of political education, interest articulation, political mobilization and political recruitment (Diamond and Gunther 2001).

Parties identify the needs and concerns of the people by interacting with the public at different levels of society. They bring people together who have similar political philosophies and empower people through elected representatives (Matteo 2011). Parties recruit talented individuals to become party candidates. In this way parties help not only to ensure a minimum level of equality among candidates who run for office but also to raise the quality of these candidates (Janda. et al. 2009). Political parties are not only electoral, they are movements of people with similar values who sought by grouping together to use the political system to bring about social change in line with their values. For example in almost all the third world countries (Indian congress party etc.) political parties were born and developed from the nationalist movements. Moreover parties provide people with important political information; they educate, inform and influence the republic. Parties’ recruit people and train as a good politicians (Dyck 2012). They provide various types of political rights to the citizens, such as right to equality, right to vote, right to contest for any public office, right to assembly, right to freedom of speech and expression, and equal protection from the law. Political parties launch certain issues and discourses into civil society, providing the public with the possibility to discuss matters and form opinions. Since the word democracy derives from the word demos meaning the people, as it must involve the participation of the people. People should take part in the societal decisions which affect their lives directly or indirectly. There should be a possibility of government by the people and an idea that the people can collectively manage their societies (Diamond and Gunther 2001). Practically in a large society individuals cannot take part in the decision making. Decision-making lies in the hands of the representatives.
who are said to decide and act on behalf of the people. If parties are not appropriately connected to society, they will remain distant from voters’ concerns (Matteo 2011).

The fundamental role of political parties in almost all democratic states is to motivate people to go to elections and participate in the electoral process. Elections are very important because they provide the people the freedom to actively participate in electing their representatives (Trent and Priedenberg 2000). Political parties also help democratic government by structuring the voting choice. This is ensured by different kinds of mobilization. This includes active campaigning in order to get votes. Moreover parties try to mobilize citizens by involving them in the campaign and as well as participating in other aspects of the democratic process. The ability of established parties to mobilize their supporters has the effect of discouraging non-party candidates from running for office and discouraging new parties from forming (Janda. et al 2009). In any given election, there may be hundreds of candidates. It is extremely difficult for a voter to judge the individual record and platform of every eligible candidate. Party identification allows a voter to make an informed choice without searching every detail of a campaign. Parties also help voters to choose candidates by proposing alternative programs. Even if voters know nothing about the candidates of the party, they can vote rationally for the favour program (Janda. et al. 2009).

Since democracy is based on free and fair election mechanism, adult franchise, participation of people in decision making, freedom of all parties to take part in election is one of the most important features of democracy. In order to maintain democracy there should be more than one or multiple parties. It reflects public opinion and mass participation in decision making. Elections can occur without democracy, but democracy cannot endure without elections. The existence of multi-party and elections broadens the concept of democracy.

Political parties have also been the instruments for inspiring voters. They organize citizen’s around ideological and policy platforms, establish basis for voters to choose their representatives, and collectively represent diverse interests of the people. Traditionally, people get involved in public life via political parties. They support candidates and parties that reflect their views and interests. People give various reasons for their support to specific parties. Occasionally they follow family history to support parties; if parents voted for a particular party then the whole family will tend to vote for the same party. In some instances citizens will support party on the basis of political, economic, and social principles with regard to the public life. Parties organize themselves; determine their own process for
membership, collective decision-making, platforms, candidates and collective electoral action. One of the unusual functions of the parties in party democracies is to make politics more accessible for citizens. Voters are provided with valuable information about specific candidate’s policy concerns through media. These are the strategies to attract the media attention for campaigning; creating city or state, negotiating with world leaders, attacking the opponents and calling for change (Trent and Priedenberg 2000). The party labels also provide key information for the electorate. The political culture among voters is also very important for the success of party system. In short, though spreading their policies an ideology to the public political parties identify and recruit candidates to participate in elections and win the elections. By winning elections, a party policy can be put into practice (Trent and Priedenberg 2000).

The final level of analysis involves the role that parties play in managing and structuring the affairs of government. Parties are crucial to the operation of government, once the election is over (Dyck 2012). Parties provide the structure and organization to the government. Political parties play a significant role as the intermediate between citizens and government institutions in internal political environment of the country. Party organizations also help to coordinate the action of public officials (Janda. et al 2009). A party represents a general view about the relationship between the government and society. Parties are the central intermediate structures between society and government (Sartori 1976). Parties formulate and develop policies for the governing of the state. They are more effective when they are founded on a set of ideas for governance. In contemporary democracies, it is the responsibility of a single political party or a coalition of parties to organize enough elected representatives to form a government. Political parties are the prime actors in this process, and that the formation of a coalition is a partisan activity. Parties provide the government as well as the opposition. The party or parties, who win a majority of seats in the lower house that is the House of Representatives, form a government. The party or parties which win the second largest number of seats becomes the opposition (Dyck 2012).

Although the political activities of parties are often focused in the legislative and executive branches of government, another important role of parties is to establish and maintain a political presence within the government bureaucracy. A stable party usually accounts for a stable government. Bearing all this into mind the functions that political parties perform contribute to both the democratization process and good governance. Political parties have a responsibility to analyse the laws and further implement it by an elected government body.
This process will strengthen a party by attracting public input and support further providing strong leadership (Dyck 2012). Parties are ultimately responsible for the structure of the machinery of government. The organization of the Public Service and statutory authorities lies in the hands of the government of the day. In practice, parties can make appointments to the public sector from the ranks of their members and supporters (Dyck 2012).

When parties fail to be elected to form the government, they form the opposition. Opposition parties keep government accountable. The role of the opposition is to criticise government policy and prevent mismanagement of power. This role is essential for ensuring good governance and protecting the rights of citizens. Such opposition parties ultimately provide an organized alternative for the voters to support in the next election if they are not satisfied with the incumbent government performance (Dyck 2012).

Political parties are very essential for state building and establishment of democratic institutions. In the process of establishment of constitution, electoral institutions and judicial system political parties play a significant role. Parties played a significant role in the post-communist states. After the breakdown of communism and the Soviet Union, majority of the new European democracies had to engage in a process of state and nation building (Ole and Johannsen 1996). In the period of transition, parties are very important to adopt democratic principles and market economy in the new independent states. Without a well-developed institutional capacity as well as with a domestic instability and irregularity, states remain weak and worried with internal problems and unable to pursue efficient international policies (Ole and Johannsen 1996).

CHARACTERISTICS OF POLITICAL PARTIES

Political parties hold several distinctive features. Ideology is a significant feature of the political party. Ideology helps to entice and mobilise the masses. It is the very spirit of the political party which decides its actions. They are model of multifaceted political ideas presented in an understandable structure that inspires individuals to proceed to accomplish certain goals (Gitelson and Dubnick 2001). Based on ideology, political parties develop policies on how they believe the country should be governed. Parties can be grouped under a few general labels according to their places on the political and ideological spectrum such as left, right, centrists, radical, conservatives, religious, etc.
Political manifesto is another important aspect of political parties. Since political parties act as agents in connecting citizen’s preferences with government policies and the main linkage between the society and politics, party manifestos play a very important role. The manifesto is a statement of the goals and principles of the party. It is a formal document which puts forward the party’s policies, aims, agenda and many more. When elections are called, parties draft a program with a list of policy preferences which will be further presented to the electorate. Party manifestos are implemented because they influence the political agenda and steer policy situation towards certain issues. As circumstances change- new demands, new issues, new popular preferences, and new challenges-party manifestos are expected to follow and change as well (Nuytemans and Walgrave 2009).

Organisational structure forms the foundation of the political party. Political parties are usually required by law to have certain organization structures, such as a constitution, officers and local branches of parties. The legal requirements vary from country to country; and different political parties have different organizational structures. The underlying purpose of the organizational structure of any political party is to enable the party to develop standard policies, broaden its support and campaign efficiently in elections. It is in this background that the political parties require an organizational structure, which can be used by the members to run the parties through choosing their leaders and members. In a broader sense the organisational structure determines the party policies. As such, ethnic political parties have an extremely low level of ideological influence and it leads to lack of highly developed organizational structure. The elite-based parties are those whose principal organizational structure are minimal and based upon established elites within a specific geographic area (Diamond and Gunther 2001).

Political parties must have a constitution based on which it functions. The constitution is the party’s fundamental law. It sets out the values and operating procedures of the party, specifies the rights and tasks of members and officers and lays down the rules for the internal governance of the party. The constitution should be accurate with regard to the party’s leadership structures, the rights and powers of the leaders and members, the nomination and election procedure.

The institutionalization of political parties is considered to be highly important for democratic development and consolidation. (Randal and Svasand 2002). According to Huntington “Institutionalization is the process by which organizations and procedures acquire value and
stability (quoted in Randal and Svasand 2002). In contemporary democracies, parties are usually regarded as vital political institutions (Biezen 2003). In order to stabilize democracy and improve the quality of democratic process, it is imperative to institutionalize measures that would effectively develop the functioning of the political parties. Political institutionalization is generally seen as the most important and necessary factor in the consolidation of democracy (Biezen 2003). The degree of party’s institutionalization depends significantly on how the party was founded, but also on its genetic model and on the party-building pattern during the institutionalization process.

Membership is another indispensable characteristic of political parties. It is the foundation of any political party further determining its existence. Number of members influences the smooth performance as well as the strong base of any political party. Generally political parties try to build large and broad-based membership. Parties make large membership in terms of age, gender, education, occupation, social class, ethnicities, region etc. The larger membership parties are more successful and will have additional chances to win the elections. If the party wishes to control the society to a large extent, it will require a mass membership. All party members must pay a membership fee; keep informed of party activity and attend a party meeting in order to participate in national politics (Cross 1962). Pluralist parties seek to win elections and their vote-mobilization strategy relies heavily on the development and activation of a mass membership base (Diamond and Gunther 2001). In addition, the membership base is vital for the internal functioning of a political party. A political party recruits people who are committed to its ideology and principles and who will be able to participate in party governance, policy formation and campaigning. Among the members of the party, leaders are elected. One of the main reasons for the development of mass membership in the party is to have a stable income in the form of the membership subscription (Katz and Mair 1994). Hence, the membership base of a political party is also an important aspect of citizen’s participation in national policies and the future of a political party.

Finance is essential factor for the regular activities and electoral campaign expenditure of political parties in modern democracies. It is essentially necessary for any party to stay economically resilient in order to compete in the political forum. There are two major sources of funding for parties: public and private funding. According to Ware (1987) there are seven types of funding facilities to the parties such as candidate expenditure, patron, interest group, and payment of officials from their salaries, party capital, mass-membership, and state
funding of parties. Parties in contemporary democracies need appropriate funding facilities in order to carry out their core functions and activities. Epstein suggested two ways of finance to parties: (1) to obtain large sums from a few wealthy contributors and (2) to collect small sums in the form of regular dues, from the members. The first method followed by business or industrial class parties and second method by socialist working class parties (Epstein 1980).

Public finance for political parties is a recent trend in European democracies. Public subsidies are primary sources for political parties and organizations. The state should provide finance to parties in order to prevent dependence on private finance and also to restrict the flow of illegal money. State should provide finance to free broadcasting and media, elections, campaign and expenditure. Public subsidies create equal competition limiting the role of private money. Federal republic of Germany was among the first democracies in Western Europe to grant public financing to national parties (Ware 1987).

**TYPOLOGY OF PARTIES**

Sartori’s framework of typology parties is helpful to analyse the how a party system functions. Considering political parties are important link between society and the political system, Sartori proposes a typology of parties combining fragmentation (a number of parties) and polarization (with the extent of ideological distance between the parties in a party system). He divides party systems as two party systems and fragmented. Two party systems are governed by two parties; each is sufficiently strong to govern alone. Fragmented system comprises of more than five parties and is highly polarized parties. In two party systems each side demonstrate its political position in an attempt to win a majority of parliamentary seats in general elections. Therefore, it will result in stable and effective forms of parliamentary government. In polarized system two conditions: the presence of anti-system parties and the existence of a bilateral opposition which are mutually exclusive, determine the polarized pluralist system. Sartori notes that anti-party “undermines the legitimacy of the regime it opposes” (Sartori 1976).

Some parties are organizationally thin while others are large and complex. Some parties are entirely formed by a particular ethnic, religious or socio-economic group, while others are heterogeneous or promiscuously electic. On the one hand, few political parties are clearly pragmatic with a strong ideological base whereas, on the other, few parties are unclear and unprincipled with regard to their ideological association. There are parties which are strongly
committed towards securing particular social objective while others merely want to win elections (Diamond and Gunther 2001).

Diamond and Gunther identified fifteen types of political parties like elite based parties, mass-based parties, ethnicity based parties, electoralist parties and movement parties. These parties are divided into categories like pluralistic versus proto-hegemonic parties or into sub-categories based on their level of commitment towards an ideology or programme (Diamond and Gunther 2001). The following table shows typology of parties classified by Diamond and Gunther.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of Parties</th>
<th>Pluralistic</th>
<th>Proto-Hegemony</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elite Parties</td>
<td>Local Notable</td>
<td>Leninist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Clientelistic</td>
<td>Ultranationalist</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mass Based Parties</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ideological/Socialist</td>
<td>Class-mass</td>
<td>Religious Fundamentalist</td>
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<tr>
<td>Religious</td>
<td>Pluralist Nationalist</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Denominational mass</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnic Based Parties</td>
<td>Ethnic Congress</td>
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<tr>
<td>Electorlist Parties</td>
<td>Catch-all</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Programmatic</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Personalistic</td>
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<tr>
<td>Movement Parties</td>
<td>Left- Libertarian</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Post-Industrial Extreme Right</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: (Diamond and Gunther 2001).

Elite based parties are those whose principle organisational structures are minimal and based upon established elites within a specific geographic area (Diamond and Gunther 2001). Elite party is institutionally weak and it is not more than the loose political platform of a group of leaders without a developed nation-wide organization (Vit and Kopecek 2010). A mass based party concentrates on building strong party institution with a large membership, a territorial- broad organizational structure, a functioning party apparatus and cultivation of long-term voter alignments (Vit and Kopecek 2010). Political parties with Leninist ideology aimed at implementing change through revolutionary means. But decision making in these parties are highly centralised and authoritarian (Diamond and Gunther 2001).

Unlike the elite parties the pluralist nationalist parties involved a mass based membership and extensive party organisation. It also associated with the ancillary secondary groups particularly the cultural organisations and trade unions. Ultranationalist parties are
particularly fascist or neo-fascist and are organised under the influence of a personality (Diamond and Gunther 2001). In some respect they share various organisational and behavioural characteristics like Leninist parties particularly with regard to the selective recruitment process, intensive training of the members and strict internal discipline. Hitler’s Nazi party and Mussolini’s fascist party are perfect examples of ultranationalist parties. Ethnic based parties lack the elaborate organisational structure of mass based political parties. Their goals and strategies are narrow and one-sided largely aiming towards a particular ethnic community. They mobilise and seek votes from ethnic group only. Prominent examples of the German Greens and Austrian Freedom movement make it clear that this kind of organisations must be included in the typology of parties. These movements have been successful in electing members to the parliament. The movement parties comprises of two kinds: left-libertarian parties and post-industrial extreme right parties (Diamond and Gunther 2001).

CLASSIFICATION OF PARTY SYSTEMS

Party systems can be classified depending on various factors such as history, size, population, geography, resources, foreign domination, liberation and popular choice. The analysis of party system would require a consideration of the number of parties, their strength, locations the ideological spectrum, the nature of their support, their organization and type of leadership (Mair 1990). Party systems are characterized on two different axes. First they are distinguished by the number of parties competing. Second, they are distinguished by the intensity of competition (Meisal and Brewer 2012). Almond classified party system as five types; totalitarian, authoritarian, dominant non-authoritarian, competitive two party and competitive multi-party (Almond 1960).

Instead of party systems Sartori identified seven classes among the parties; these are one party, hegemonic party, predominant party, two parties, limited pluralism and extreme pluralism, and atomized (Sartori 1976). Duverger explained party system on the basis of organization and membership. On the basis of organization, he distinguished four kinds of systems; these are cell, militia, caucus and the branch. The caucus is a closed group consisting of a small number of members who do not make an attempt to increase their members, while the branch is extensive tries to enrol members and to increase its total strength (Duverger 1954). Duveger made a further distinction between core and mass parties. The distinction is based on the number of members they have. Cadre parties are grouping of
notabilities for the preparation of elections, conducting campaigns and maintain contact with the candidates. Mass parties actively seek dues-paying members so that they can spread the cost of election campaigning more widely. According to Blondel classification of party system is not only by the number of parties, but also by their relative strength and the apparent dynamics of competition (Blondel 1986). Mainwaring and Torcal (2006) propose three criteria for identifying a party system, a system implies at least two parties, there must be some regularity in the distribution of electoral support, there must be continuity in the main components that form the system (institutionalization of parties) (quoted in Sanchez 2009). Five major party systems can be identified: non-party, one party, two parties, dominant party and multi-party systems.

**Non-Party System**

Non-party system is conceptualized by Sanchez that “if the identity of the top (two or three or four party vote-getters (regardless of their electoral ordering) is not the same across more than two elections, then that party universe is best described as a ‘non-system’”. According to the author at least three elections required to pass before a party universe can be labelled as ‘non-system’ (Sanchez 2009). In a non-partisan system, no official political parties are allowed to exist in the state politics.

**Single Party System**

In single party system political power is monopolized by single party. There are may be several parties, but one party is so dominant (Sak and John 2009). Single party system is also known as non-competitive system. One party system produces the autocratic or dictatorial regime. One of the most common features of the one party state is that the position of the ruling party is guaranteed in a constitution and all forms of political opposition are banned by law. The ruling party controls all aspects of life within the state. The old Soviet Union is the best example for a one party state. Egypt has operated under single party rule for several decades (Sak and John 2009). According to Sartori (1976) there are two different ways in one party system. One is Hegemonic Party that permits the survival of other parties only as satellite or secondary parties. Second is Predominant Party system which allows one party to govern the country as long as it continues to win elections. This form of government is often used by countries in the early stages of the development of a true parliamentary system, because the ruling party holds support from the vast majority. The system is not necessarily a poor one, especially when it can provide the stability and rapid growth. But when serious
economic problems persist, citizens’ disappointment and frustration may create an unpredictable situation. For example, Mexico was ruled since its revolution by the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI). Economic problems caused dissatisfaction with the PRI in the 1980s and the National Action Party (PAN), Mexico’s main opposition party, began gaining power (Sak and John 2009).

**Two Party System**

Two party system is a system in which two major political parties compete for control of the government (Janda et al 2009). There can be other parties existing (Duverger 1954) but they have no political importance (Sak and John 2009). It is also called as competitive party system. According to Sartori (1976) in a two-party system format when even the existence of third party does not prevent the two major parties from governing alone and when ever coalitions are unnecessary. Two- party system is by far the best known category and it’s a relatively simple system. In a two party system most voters are so loyal to one or the other of the major parties that independent candidates or candidates from third party have little chance of winning office (Janda. et al. 2009). This system presents the voter with a simple choice. USA, UK and New Zealand are having most obvious two-party political system (Sak and John 2009). America is following two-party system with the Republicans and Democrats dominating the politics. In this system, one of the parties must obtain a sufficient working majority after an election and it must be in a position to be able to govern without the support from the other party. There are not many western nations with two-party competition (Epstein 1980).

The two party system have emerged either as the result or the reflection of the will of the electorate. Often the two parties represent key ideological divisions in society over the direction of policies between left and right, small government and activist government, liberalism and authoritarianism (Trapp 2009). In this party system, the two parties generally have different philosophies resulting in a change in government policies, when one party succeeds the other. In the USA the Republican Party is often viewed as representing business interests, where as Democrats Party is often viewed as representing labour interests as well as he poor and disaffected (Sak and John 2009).

Governments in two- party system are more able to drive their policies through the legislature because they often have a clear majority of representatives. Consequently they can implement changes quickly and without compromise. This system tends to be less volatile and the
legislators are very experienced. This results in better and more consistent policy and more effective scrutiny of the executive branch (Trapp 2009).

**Dominant Party System**

Dominant party system is different from one-party system. A party is quite capable within the political structure of a state, to become dominant to such an extent that victory at elections is considered a formality. In this system one dominant party controls the electoral process and restrict the other parties, resulting in no other alternative for the people (Onkvisit and Shaw 2009). An era of a dominant party is also an era when opposition parties are in total disorder. The dominant party does not allow opposition. Cuba, Libya, North Korea and china are good examples of dominant party system. Such a system may easily transform into a dictatorship. The party is prepared to use force to maintain its power and eliminate the establishment and growth of other parties (Onkvisit and Shaw 2009).

**Multi-Party System**

A multi-party system is a system in which three or more political parties have the capacity to gain control of government. As the title suggests, this is a system where more than two parties have the possibility to influence the state’s politics. The emergence of multiparty system will be a lengthy process (Lewis and Gordon 2003). Multi-party system is also known as competitive and pluralistic party system. Party pluralism simply denotes the existence of more than one party. Multi-party system is one where no party can guarantee an absolute majority. Even though some parties may be large, their elected representatives fall short of a majority (Sak and John 2009; Sartori 1976). A government must then be formed through coalitions between the various parties, each of which wants to protect its own interests. The longevity of the coalition depends on the cooperation of party partners. Usually, the coalition is continuously challenged by opposing groups (Sak and John 2009; Trapp 2009). Parliamentary majorities in multiparty system can shift suddenly. These systems are far less stable than two-party systems. Multi-party systems are also less fair to the electorate because after the election they tend to ignore campaign promises to voters and form policies that may be against the interests of voters (Trapp 2009).

Compared to the two-party system, a multi-party system is better because it allows for more voices to be heard (Trapp 2009). A two party system greatly limits the number and diversity of candidates that can run in any given election. In a multi-party system, more viewpoints
will be discussed; and will end up with a more well-rounded government. Party formation and the emergence of multiparty system seem to offer the best prospects for political development and progress towards democracy (Pridham and Vanhanen 2003). In a multi-party system, existence of the social cleavages influences the organizational, electoral strategies and legitimacy of parties (Lipset and Rokkan 1967, Mair 1990). As Epstein explained competition among five or more political parties has earned a bad name because of the instability of governments (Epstein 1980).

CONCLUSION

The emergence of political parties and multi-party system are positive indicators of sturdy process of democratic transition. Modern independent democratic countries cannot function without political parties. The fundamental role of political parties in almost all democratic states is to motivate people to go to elections and participate in the electoral process. Parties are very crucial in mobilising citizens to participate in election and political system, which is one of the major features of the democracy. Parties contribute to democratic government through the functions they perform for the political system. In order to maintain democracy there should be more than one or multiple parties. It reflects public opinion and mass participation in decision making. It is very important to observe elections can occur without democracy, but democracy cannot endure without elections. The existence of multi-party and elections broadens the concept of democracy.

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