

INTRODUCTION

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Political parties are located at centre of both politics and political science for good reasons. The latter assigns to political parties a bundle of “functions” that they have to perform. According to that comprehensive understanding, parties are channels for the political participation of citizens, they articulate and aggregate political interests, they develop political programmes and visions in competition with others, and they integrate voters from different social strata, denominations and beliefs. In so doing, parties “structure” the voter market, which would otherwise fray to anarchy (Lipset and Rokkan 1967). Additionally, parties (s)elect political leaders who compete – ideally on democratic grounds – for public office. These (s)elected representatives then exercise political power for the duration of their terms. Once in office, political leaders who have made their way through parties make decisions that influence other people’s lives significantly.

Even if many parties around the globe fall short of fulfilling all of these ideal functions, there is no doubt that they are important for at least some of these purposes. Without political parties, it would be impossible to organize modern politics, and especially democracy (Dalton and Wattenberg 2000, p. 260). However, if we take a look at the findings of this Democracy Report, quite a lot of parties deviate significantly from the ideal type of democratically organized mass parties whose leaders pursue programmatically elaborated policies devoted to a sustainable increase of public welfare and to the consolidation of liberal democracy. Rather than being a means to the fair participation of citizens in public matters, many parties come close to an instrumental definition, as given by Anthony Downs in his economic theory of democracy (Downs 1957). According to Downs, a political party is a “team of men seeking to control the governing apparatus by gaining office in a duly constituted election” (Downs 1957, p. 25; see also Schlesinger 1994, p. 5–6). If we ignore the last part of this sentence for a moment, this definition comes close to the reality of parties in developing countries and countries in transition around the globe.

Numerous parties are not organized in order to perform as democratic linkages between civil society and state institutions or as a means of good governance to the benefit of the vast majority of “ordinary citizens”. In fact, some parties in this sample (and beyond) have been founded by political elites by decree – in part already under authoritarian conditions – in order to give the impression to outsiders of a degree of pluralism. Moreover, numerous parties are electoral platforms founded by candidates and supported by loyal followers in order to run for office – completely in accordance with the Downsian definition. Frequently they are “resource pools” and personalized electoral machines used by expectant candidates for their own individual ends. In turn, in some cases parties serve as a site for hidden business and corruption.

Between elections many parties are almost completely inactive and thus irrelevant for the political integration and socialization of potential supporters. If parties are used for political mobilization, in various cases – especially in Africa – this tends to be on the basis of the cultural-ethnic or religious mobilization of prejudices against others, rather than through the long-term political integration of supporters on the strength of commonly shared values and visions. With the exception of (post)communist parties, the programmatic foundations of many parties are rather vague, sometimes interchangeable and lacking in substance. Complete control of the parties by their

leadership, the purchase of necessary support from below or outside parties, and other deviations from the ideal of inner-party democracy are not unusual. Frequently parties operate as hierarchical organizations in which decisions are taken by the leadership without significant input from grassroots members or affiliated civil society organizations. The absence of linkages to civil society groups in the transitional societies of Middle and Eastern Europe has led parties to be described as "artificial superstructures without any societal entrenchment" (Veen 2007, p. 30), a conclusion that can be applied to other parts of the world. In sum, in both developing countries and those in transition to (imperfect) democracy, parties are frequently evaluated by researchers as only low-democratic political organizations and as weakly institutionalized (Köllner 2006).

Though this conclusion is chiefly confirmed by the findings in this volume, there has nevertheless been progress in the development or even stabilization of party democracy. In South Africa, for example, there have been four credible and legitimate elections and party democracy is, according to the author of the country study, "strong and under no threat" (Booyesen in this volume). As regards the countries of Southeast Europe, analysts attest that parties are generally fulfilling their functions. By and large, parties integrate voters on the basis of political programmes which tend to become crucial to political life (Naumovski in this volume; in a similar vein see also Lovrić in this volume). Likewise, Uruguayan parties have been successful in the political integration of voters, in citizens' political socialization and in introducing programmes along with both ideological and personnel alternatives. They participate in democratic elections and compete peacefully for public positions (Caetano in this volume). However, looking at the entire sample of this study, the worrying cases of only weakly organized and scarcely democratic parties and poorly institutionalized party systems seem to prevail.

In essence, these deviations from the ideal type of democratic political parties are not completely new. They are the "standard lament" about parties (Carothers 2006, p. 4), and there is no need to add further shortcomings to an existing long list at this point. What is much more challenging than the mutual confirmation of common knowledge, especially for an organization like the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS) engaged in international party cooperation, is to know why parties and their leaders in many cases fall short or even fail completely in the realization of functions that genuinely contribute to the stabilization of democracy as "the only game in town", to paraphrase two of the pioneers of democratic consolidation research (Linz and Stepan 1996, p. 4). Only if the reasons are known – not only generally but for each individual country too – these problems can be tackled through continuous cooperation with democratically oriented parties and consultation of their leaders, as well as ordinary members.

If we address the reasons why a large number of parties and party systems in developing countries and countries in transition often fall short of realizing the functions assigned by scholars and several international donors, we have to consider two different levels: parties' environment and the role of individual behaviour, especially that of political elites. As for parties' environment, it has been argued that the framework conditions for the consolidation of democratic parties and party systems in both developing countries and those in transition are fairly unfavourable. If the material prerequisites of peaceful development are missing and if the majority of people have only very limited access to food, healthcare, education and other basic human needs, there is only a small demand for voluntary engagement in politics. This holds true especially for sub-Saharan African countries and several Asian countries, which suffer from an uneven distribution of resources between ordinary people and political leaders (see, for example, Schmidt 2007, p. 99–101). While under the conditions of widespread material misery no middle class and no vibrant civil society – each one among the most important preconditions of democratic development – have evolved, leaders, once in power, use parties primarily as vehicles to preserve their privileged positions. For the countries in post-communist Europe, it has been argued that people – far from acting in the same way as people under similar poor material conditions in other parts of the world – are far more concerned with the twofold transformation of politics and economics; i.e., they have to manage their new lives as entrepreneurs, businesspeople or recipients of welfare measures, respectively (see, for example, Offe 1994). Under these conditions there is a shortage of time available for

voluntary mass participation in politics, and also only limited experience in the use of democratic mass organizations, especially following the end of mandatory enrolment in communist political mass organizations.

If we look at the behaviour of political elites, it seems from a rational-choice point of view to be much more cost-effective for them to create only ad hoc electoral machines and to gather both potent and loyal followers than to form durable mass party organizations with elaborated programmes and close linkages to civil society. In some cases, Western organizations focused on international development cooperation also set false incentives for political candidates and elites, either through offering inappropriate consultancy (see, for example, Carothers 2006, p. 120; Veen 2007, p. 30) or through honouring the promises of political actors and not actual results.

Given these inhospitable framework conditions for the development of both democratically organized parties and effective, working democratic party systems, the majority of the worldwide projects of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung in party cooperation and support focus chiefly on the improvement of the political and social environment of parties. A great deal of activities in party assistance are devoted to the improvement of the framework conditions under which free and fair party competition and democratically oriented parties can evolve. Among the most important activities are, for example, continuous dialogue programmes with leading party representatives and other leading officeholders (ministers, MPs, judges, mayors and administrative and academic elites) around the principles of democracy, its values and procedures; activities on the fundamentals of party democracy, the significance of democratic parties, elaborated programmes and effective working party structures; and cooperation with party-related think tanks and institutes to promote a sense of need for democratic ideas and procedures among the strategic advisors of parties. Normally these activities are accompanied by the regional media and rule of law programmes of the KAS. We call these measures "indirect party assistance". Together with our efforts to foster international network-building and cooperation of democratically oriented parties these activities focus primarily on imparting the norms, institutions and conduct central to democracy and on the promotion of international dialogue on democratic values and politics in general, but also on the contribution of national laws regulating party action, elections or party financing (Grabow, Dürkop and Weck, forthcoming).

OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY OF THIS STUDY

With this year's Democracy Report the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung offers essential information about the present state of party systems and individual parties around the globe, based on a sample of 16 countries. In contrast to pure academic inquiries, the case selection of this survey is not driven by the attempt to test established theories or develop new ones. Framed by general information about the political system of each country under study, this report instead reflects the structure of the party systems, the organization of political parties and their internal procedures. In much the same vein, it also reflects the recent changes and trends in the party systems of the 16 project countries of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, that is, countries in which the foundation runs offices and projects in order to contribute to the development and stabilisation of democracy. The sample thus represents the entire breadth of countries in which the KAS carries out political dialogue programmes devoted to civic education. It encompasses the old but historically challenged democracies of Latin America such as Colombia and Uruguay, emerging and developing countries from sub-Saharan Africa such as South Africa and Namibia, countries in Asia either at the fringes of democracy like Mongolia or which have descended into anarchy like Pakistan, along with essentially democratic yet extremely feeble states from the Middle East such as Lebanon and countries in transition to democracy in post-communist Europe.

While there may not be the immediate ambition to enter into deep academic discussions on the theory of political parties, these case studies will represent a strong source for further research, especially considering that several of the countries investigated – Kazakhstan, Lebanon, Macedonia, Mongolia, Peru and Uganda – have been not in the focus of European middle-of-the-road party

research so far. In this the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung demonstrates one of its major comparative advantages, namely its permanent presence abroad, the special skills and country knowledge of its resident representatives and their links with academia and ability to produce up-to-date, authentic reports. The reports of this book are likewise an important tool in the project planning and adjustment of the international work of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung.

When the KAS Democracy Report was first launched in 2005, the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung and its scientific advisors from the University of Duisburg-Essen under the leadership of Professor Karl-Rudolf Korte decided to follow a qualitative approach, namely, thick description on the basis of a standardized questionnaire for each of the reports on media freedom, the rule of law and parties (KAS 2005–08). Though the previous questionnaire to analyze parties and the party systems (KAS 2007) was modified for this year's inquiry, it remains at its core a qualitative study that presents general information about the composition and recent trends of party systems and the relevant parties of the countries under study.

While the sample is relatively large for a qualitative study, it is too small for a quantitative analysis. Yet, as mentioned above, the choice for the countries under study was not motivated by academic reasons. Neither did we wish to test or to verify theories nor can we provide results for generalizations. We simply decided to offer basic data on political parties and party systems to the interested public from countries that have not been – at least in part – under the spotlight of European party research¹.

Comparative investigations that are conducted in order to make generalizations or to measure degrees (indices) of research variables like the annual "Freedom in the World" report published by Freedom House (2009), the "Bertelsmann Transformation Index" (Bertelsmann Stiftung 2008) or *the Economist* Intelligence Unit's "Index of Democracy" (EIUID 2008) are based on large samples but often at the expense of empirical depth. Usually a large number of cases is associated with less information and reduced complexity, meaning that only limited consideration may be given to the historical, economic and political framework conditions of the cases under investigation (Grabow, Korte, and Weissenbach 2007, p. 12). In contrast, qualitative studies with only a small number of cases under investigation are less capable of drawing generalizations but, as a rule, they provide more detailed information about the subject under study.

For this purpose the authors of the country studies were supplied with a standardized questionnaire that was fully completed in most cases². The questionnaire (see appendix) was structured in three main parts. The first, "General Information", includes information about the political system of each country, key principles of the constitution, an evaluation of the general state of democracy and information about the structure, the composition and the responsibilities of the national parliament. The second part of the questionnaire was devoted to the analysis of parties and the country's party systems. On the one hand, we asked for an explanation of the legal regulation for parties and their actions, including the regulations for party financing, for the structure and ideological composition of the party systems, and for the relationship between parties and their voters. On the other hand, this part of the questionnaire also looked at the internal organization of the relevant parties, at their organizational procedures and strength, at the modes of internal decision-making, at the stability of programmes, at internal and external communication, and at the relationship between the extra-parliamentary party organization and parliamentary groups. The third main part is a "General Assessment" of the state of party democracy in each country under study, where party democracy is understood as the fair competition of democratically oriented and at least fairly democratically organized parties under legal regulation.

The questions we asked represent standard questions for analyzing and mapping parties and party systems. For the purpose of improving each chapter's readability we have used – as in previous years – subheadings to better orient the reader and make it easy to compare the findings.

PLAN OF THE BOOK

The following chapters are structured by region in alphabetical order. The report begins with three country studies from both sub-Saharan Africa (Namibia, South Africa and Uganda) and Asia (Kazakhstan, Mongolia and Pakistan), followed by four case studies from post-communist Europe (Croatia, Latvia, Macedonia and Romania). It continues with case studies from Latin America (Argentina, Colombia, Peru and Uruguay) and concludes with two chapters from the Middle East (Lebanon and Morocco). The structure of this book principally reflects the internal organization of the international cooperation department of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, with the difference being that we separated, for better orientation, Africa from the Middle East and North Africa, which together form their own division within the KAS, as Africa and the Middle East/North Africa (MENA).

As in years gone by, the report ends with a comparative analysis by the Research Group on Governance at the University of Duisburg-Essen, directed by Karl-Rudolf Korte. For the quick reader this analysis provides a profound summary of the major findings of this inquiry. Moreover, it maps out general trends around the institutionalization of party systems, the procedures of internal decision-making and the contribution or non-contribution of the parties to the development and/or stabilization of democracy. For all those interested in a deeper analysis, the case studies, written by experts in their field from the respective countries under study, may serve as an insightful source of information and further research.

- 1| For example, save for numerous comparative studies which have included some of the countries under study in this year's KAS Democracy Report (under titles like "The Puzzle of African Party Systems" or "The Dynamic Diversity of Latin American Party Systems"), single and in-depth case studies about our chosen countries are rarely published in the leading journal devoted exclusively to international party research, "Party Politics".
- 2| If questions were not answered or if the answers differed from the intended sense, the primary reason was that these questions proved to be irrelevant for that country. See, for example, the subheadings "Societal entrenchment" or (ideological) "Party families" in the chapter on Pakistan.

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