

The Relationship between Political Parties and Civil Society

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Abstract

Since their genesis in the XIX century, political parties, social organizations have been initial. In particular, European parties (Western parties) emerged as an organized expression of social and political conflict. Organizations liberal, conservative, rural and social democrats tried to reaffirm their positions and through the organization of parties.

Through participation in elections, representation in parliament and participation in governments elected democratically, they sought to implement political and social reforms. Since their origins but also since their parliamentary orientation and desire to achieve public office, political parties so far are positioned between society civil society, parliament and government.

In a certain way, political parties can be considered as political civil society organizations that comprise the interest of a particular group (or several groups), articulate and represent them. Through participation in democratic elections, they want to represent these interests to representatives and formal political institutions.

Keywords: Political parties; Civil society; Stakeholders; Governance

Introduction

The term "civil society" today is increasingly used in conversations, discussions, and press statements of popular and unidentified characters. In the period in which we live, it is clear that civil society has a great value. According to some sociologists, this term has taken as much importance as it deals with terms and concepts such as freedom and historical value [1].

Although this term is used very often today, we must bear in mind that this term is not an invention of the twentieth century.

In a certain way, political parties can be considered as civil society organizations that summarize the interest of a particular group (or groups), articulate and represent them. By participating in democratic elections, they want to present these interests to formal political representatives and institutions.

Parties are usually established in two ways: from the social elite that gather around them a group of influential supporters to defend their positions or citizens who seek the support of people of the same opinion in order to achieve a political or social change. In the first case, more is a top-down approach to party building, as has been the case with the first liberal parties that were based on freely formed parliamentary election commissions applying for parliamentary representation [2].

These ways of creating political parties are not typical only in the history of the Western European parties in the late 19th century.

Reformist movements in the former Eastern European Communist countries, such as "Charter 77" in Czechoslovakia, "Solidarnosc"; Trade union movements and social reforms in Poland, or the democratic

movement of citizens in former East Germany, such as the "Initiative for Peace and Human Rights", "the new Forum" and the "Democratic Initiative" have emerged from civil society And later turned into political parties or joined the existing political parties.

Since 1990, in the context of increasing general criticism of political parties by socialist activists but also of social scientists, an intense international debate has started on the concept of representation and participation. There was a general perception of a crisis of democracy focused on a crisis of representation and institutions and less of the political parties.

Within this debate, expanding direct participation seems to be a cure for all measures to replace all unspecified principles of representation. Civil society organizations, such as: Civic initiatives or "new social movements" (movements, peaceful, women, environmental) have become a challenge for parties considering their inability to solve existing problems and demobilization of their members.

Greek philosophers Plato [3] and Aristotle [4] have argued and debated how people should benefit from civil society, which in the case referred to referred to the government elected by citizens and citizens.

The number of such initiatives and movements, in many cases, the so-called "movement for a single issue" has increased considerably in the last two decades. In some states, new political parties have been centered on only one or several issues (anti-immigration parties, "internet parties" etc.).

According to Habermas's theory, the political and social system has enabled the creation of civil society communication structures in the form of "a wide network of sensors", enabling the discussion and rationalization of the political decisions taken. In the same direction to Gottweis, civil society is comprised of an active, politically and

interested citizen conglomerate based on total solidarity, respect for and protection of minorities, free thinking, transparency, openness to the world and the fight against any Forms of discrimination.

In many cases, traditional political parties have integrated new issues such as environmental protection, alternative energy, and sustainable development. These issues nowadays are part of the established party programs. On the other hand, some of the new societal movements have taken over party functions, mainly articulating and representing social interests [5].

However, in recent years there have been signs of disillusionment with civil society organizations regarding their capabilities and capabilities and increased consent to the need to reach a reasonable balance between representation and participation. It has been shown that mass democracy can only function in the form of representative democracy and the parties are ultimately the only institutions legitimized with their participation in the general elections, justifying their representation and legitimacy through their participation in these elections.

Civil society organizations are usually unable to prove their rightful representation (unless they are clearly defined clientele associations). They also lack the structures, processes, experiences and also the staff necessary to exercise the classical functions of political parties, such as; Legitimizing, selecting candidates, and most importantly by all democratic governance. Civil society organizations cannot replace political parties.

However, it should be noted that civil society organizations offer a contribution to political processes and stabilization of democracy in each society. A higher number of civil society organizations and their growing importance throughout the world prove that virtually an important part of citizens wants to participate in political processes.

However, in the field of civil society organizations, there are similar tendencies similar to those of political parties: traditionally strong institutions are weakened, such as; Labor unions nowadays, the large number of organizations is not necessarily evidence of greater influence, but an indicator of their division; Many of these organizations are neither transparent nor respect democratic rules in their internal procedures; They are usually weak in terms of organization and rarely meet long-term relationships with their members; Too often identification with them is short-lived.

So the demobilization of the parties is only partially offset by civil society organizations.

Civil society organizations can perform certain functions that also apply to parties. However, they cannot fulfill the most important function of the parties; Participation in general elections, which not only assures parties of their political power but at the same time, provides them with representation.

Otherwise, the representation of civil society organizations remains unclear even though they are able to move large crowds for special occasions [6]. Social organizations can prove their true support within society only if they are transformed into political parties.

Understandably, civil society is not a sociological component in all social structures, but as the experience of Eastern Europe proves, it is about human invasion and a historical change of a socio-anthropological structure.

As such, civil society is increasingly exposed to the risk of attacks by strong powers. Moreover, there is the possibility of a total disappearance at the moment when the reasons that nourish its

existence are lacking. No wonder Walzer [7] describes it mainly as a "semi-structure" for which many representations are given, as are the visions and objectives of its protagonists and theorists.

Civil society does not stand as antagonist to the State; rather, it recognizes its formal and essential validity in a constructivist dialectical tension. Moreover, civil society is not a space between perceptions and markets, but an ever-changing process, but also a tool to fulfill the dynamics of democracy.

The Role of Stakeholders in Defining Ideology

Stakeholders are a special form of civil society organization. They organize and articulate the social interests of every citizen, social group or other social organization such as: business associations or trade unions. In the context of institutional policy making and decision-making structures they exercise functions of articulation of interests and mediation. They perform similar functions as political parties [8].

However, their focus lies in a particular sector, despite the generalized political and territorial representation of parties. Stakeholders are characterized by specific organizational and functional features as well as by special models of relationships with other stakeholders in; Political system, state institutions, media and, last but not least, political parties.

Even if stakeholders perform some of the party functions, they can be distinguished from parties by three main characteristics [6]:

- They do not include themselves in political races for seats in parliament.
- Missions, objectives, programs, activities and their areas of interest are usually limited to specific issues or concerns of particular social groups, while the parties generally aim for a more general purpose and representation and integration functions of groups of Different social.
- They are more closely related to those groups that represent their interests. For example, business organizations are guided by the interests of corporate members as well as their representatives; Unions represent the interests of workers before their actions which mainly relate to the fields of negotiation on wages and working conditions; while other organizations focus on social and cultural issues or environmental issues, such as welfare associations that focus on providing social.

Stakeholders are by no means homogeneous, and they differ not only in the area of interest, but also in terms of size, structure, power base, potential influence, strategies, and so on.

The political importance of stakeholders is as variable as the range of associations. However, within certain organizations, attempting to influence political debates and decisions is a key part of their purpose [8].

In general, associations strive to influence certain parties, political debates, and decisions in their favor. This may be legitimate in principle but may in particular emphasize balancing the interest of society as a whole within sectorial interests, especially in such cases when powerful stakeholders engage their resources - money or ability to mobilize large measures - to influence political decisions in their favor.

At the same time, they themselves act as actors in the political party making process of other parties. By exercising various functions,

parties and associations, in a certain way, are subject to common terms of action.

Relationships between associations and political parties depend on the role a party plays in the political system. Between parties and stakeholders there is a relationship of mutual dependence. Associations need access to parties in order to have a direct link to the policy-making process, while parties are supported by the associations during the elections. In addition, to influence the ministerial bureaucracy that on the other hand also depends on it.

From the information of the associations: Also, in this regard, there are mutually interdependent ways.

The opportunity to achieve the importance is defined for the associations not only by their organizational capacities, but also by their capacity to represent the interests even through conflicts. For example, they can organize strikes or exercise other forms of pressure.

The effectiveness of such threats is subject to certain constellations in the political system. For example, if a change of party preference with a narrow majority in parliament could be threatened, this increases the influence of stakeholders. The influence of associations on the decision-making process should be closely monitored and is a continuous topic of political science analysis. For example, in Germany, where there are a large number of associations, many fear that "the power of associations" is a threat to the sovereignty of the state. These fears are largely unfounded. Empirical studies on the creation of several laws came to the conclusion that there was no evidence of the impact of any individual stakeholders in the legislative process [8].

However, in Germany, like in many other countries, the legislative process is directly influenced by the influence of individual associations in their respective policy areas. In many cases, large business associations exert more influence than small ones.

Politicians should be aware of this issue. Due to the special relationship between political parties and associations, there is always a problem that sectorial interest can overcome the social interest. By organizing politics and the political system, the relevant rules regarding the actions of associations must strictly observe the requirements of transparency [9].

Conclusion

It is now widely acknowledged that political parties are the main actors in the democratic transition process.

Democracy is not the property of political parties and only of people involved in them, but an open process in which citizens, political leadership and civil society can and should act in different forms. The more power centers in an open society, the more effective is the mechanism of control over them and the balance between them. This is an inherent element in the normal functioning of a democratic system.

The concept of civil society and its impact on public policy has been determined by Western democracies, though in some places it is still a new thing.

NGOs operate for various purposes, mainly to advance their members' political-social instances, often neglected by governments. Some examples are: improving the environment, promoting human rights, enhancing the welfare of those unable to reach the population, but there are also many organizations that cover a wide range of political and philosophical positions such as: Ecological, pacifist movements and are not close to either a political party or issues that are not related to human rights, peace in the world, ecology and tolerance.

In short, civil society and stakeholders are needed for the functioning of a democratic state and for influence on public policy. They are a great asset to democracy.

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