

# PARTIES AND POWER: THE STUDY OF POLITICAL POWER

*NORMATIVE THEORY*: to **empower** the citizens/masses

*REALIST THEORY*: small **group of politically active** people, citizens  
**consent to give power** to this group

## PARTIES: basic organisation basis for political activity

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- The prism through which citizens **view/filter/respond** to politics
- Commonly found **in all** political systems
- Linkage role between **citizenry and institutions of governance**
  - **PARTY POLITICS**: collective political action
- *Modern democratic government is actually party government*
- Provides **normative or ideological direction** to governance
  - Accumulate and **communicate policy demands**
- **Provides policy framework** for governance
- Case studies in the distribution of political power
  - Internal politics of organisation = **INTRA-PARTY POLITICS**
- Reflection of **basic social cleavages**
  - *EXAMPLE*: one's relation to the economy (business vs labour)
  - **Rural Urban Divide** - social-economic divide/cleavage
- To what extent should a system of politics **empower minority opinion?**
  - *'Organisation is the political weapon of the weak'* (Michels)

## THE LIBERAL DEMOCRATIC FOUNDATION

- Liberal democratic evolution and the ascendancy of '**mass society**'
  - **Ascendancy of the 'common' person** in the extension of the franchise
- *The Tyranny of the Majority* (Liberal concern)
  - **Empowerment** of the masses
  - Barred from politics if you don't own property
- SCHUMPETER'S Theory of '**Representative Democracy**'
  - A theory of democracy that emphasises the **importance of elections and parliaments**
  - Argues that **citizens seek nothing more than participation** in the electoral process to satisfy the notion of democracy
    - The significance of the '**democratisation**' of the institutions of **governance**

- Seen as a theory that is comfortable with a **quite minimal approach to civic culture**
- The theory clearly highlights **the importance of the contest between the political parties** to both the electoral process and to determine whom shall become a members of the legislature and the executive
- Describes as a **'realist'** model of democracy
- The importance of **associational freedom** to liberal democracies (parties and interest groups)

## POLITICAL PARTIES

- Organisational means by which **citizens seek to gain access to power**
  - **POWER** - legislative/governmental power
- Form of **collective political action**
- **PARTY**: an organisation that **contests elections with the intention of winning executive power**
- 'Party' Variations:
  - The parliamentary wing (*caucus*)
  - The parliamentary leadership
  - The extra-parliamentary party (*organisation*): **the 'machine'/'the party organisation'**
    - Extra-parliamentary wing of a political party **where the party executive and the party secretariat are important components of a mass party.**
    - 'Party Organisation' is usually **associated with the idea of the 'mass party'**
    - The organisation is responsible for **conducting pre-selections, raising party finances, and assisting in the running of election campaigns.**
    - **PANEBIANCO**: organisation is where you also find **'party professionalization'**
    - Link with V.O. Key's **'Party Organisation'/'Key Party Types'**
  - The membership
    - 'Hollowing out' of the mass party

## THE LIBERAL DEMOCRATIC SETTING

- The political party and **'responsible party government'**
  - As long as the governing party holds the majority, the government and its ministers are **more accountable to their party than to the Parliament.**
  - Parties as the **'link'** in **representative democracy**
  - Parties enable coherent alternatives to be offered to voters; stable governments to be formed and accountability for outcomes to be sheeted home somewhere.
  - **TO WHAT EXTENT IS MODERN GOVERNMENT IN FACT AN EXTENSION OF 'RESPONSIBLE PARTY GOVERNMENT'?**
    - Responsible and accountable for actions taken

- Duty to responsibly represent electorates
- Modern democratic government is actually party government
- Legislature is composed of those democratically elected with government being formed by the most successful party

## Parties and THE DEMOCRATIC CONSEQUENCE:

- **Representational** outcomes (*the gender debate*)
  - The case for diversity: in terms of fairness and democratic legitimacy the political system should be more inclusive of women.
- **Internal** party democracy (*the idea of a 'mass party'*)
  - Distribution of power and influence within the party
  - 'Mass Parties' and 'Elite Parties'
    - MASS: Upper levels should be responsive to the branch membership
      - Decentralization of power
      - Allocation of party power
  - 'Inter-Party Politics' and 'Intra-Party Politics'
  - The parliamentary party and the extra-parliamentary party (the party organisation)
    - The party leadership
    - The party organisation executive (the secretariat)
      - 'The party machine'
      - Administrative power
      - Green's: the convenor
      - The politics of language (connotations)
  - The mass membership
  - Factions and factional tendencies (*SARTORI*: Sub-Parties or parties within parties)
    - Factions: *Labor*
    - Factional Tendencies: *Liberal*
- Parties and **the policy debate**: the issue of party and '**ideology**'
- Multi-party politics or a **two-party dominance**
- Parties and the integrity of democracy: **the problem corruption**