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CONVERGENCE OF POLITICAL PARTIES:

THE GREEK CASE

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CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

2.

Political parties are popular subjects of research among social scientists. There are many scholars who have done a great deal of academic work analysing the institution of political parties from political, sociological, economic, historical and psychological perspectives, on national or on cross-cultural levels. This is not surprising. There is no doubt that political parties are the major social institution through which political action occurs in developed and in most underdeveloped political systems.<sup>1</sup>

As Roy C. Macridis observes,

"It is generally taken as axiomatic that no political system can exist without political parties."<sup>2</sup>

In fact, all types of political systems rely on political parties: democratic pluralist societies, to articulate and aggregate demands; "totalitarian societies" to mobilize support; traditional societies in a transitional period, to create and "structure new norms of behavior."<sup>3</sup> Almond and Powell go on to observe that political parties are now found almost universally around the world and that this empirical fact is be-

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<sup>1</sup>Curtis Michael, Comparative Government and Politics: An Introductory Essay in Political Science (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1968), p. 135.

<sup>2</sup>Roy C. Macridis, Political Parties (New York: Harper and Row, 1967), p. 9.

<sup>3</sup>Almond and Powell, Comparative Politics: A Developmental Approach (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1966), p. 74.

yond serious dispute;

"Totalitarian or democratic, developed or modernizing, large or small, modern nations have turned to the political party as an essential institution of the political system."<sup>4</sup>

Political parties are essential institutions of any system not only because they affect the socio-political environment but also because they reflect to a large extent changes within society. This is very clear today, with the complexity of our society imposing close interrelations among the institutions of the system.

In fact one can distinguish a recent important development of political parties, which began to take place after World War II. This contemporary stage of development has to do with the convergence of the nature of this institution.

"After World War II, and more notably in the last decade, all political parties of the Western world and of the industrially advanced societies began to display some novel characteristics; they began to lose their ideological character. All parties became brokers of a society that because of progressive industrialization became divided into many social, professional, occupational, and interest groups. Therefore, parties become both more representative and reformist; they deal with ad hoc problems and search for ad hoc solutions; that is to say, they become programatic. No longer is an attempt made to resolve issues by an appeal to total solutions involving the economic or social structure of the society, but rather by careful compromises and incremental changes. The ideologue in favor of the manipulator and the visionary leader in favor of the cautions representative."<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 915.

<sup>5</sup>Roy C. Macridis, op. cit., p. 13.

This recent development of political parties will be the major focus of our work. Given the significant role of the institution in our society, it is not only interesting but worthwhile to examine and analyse it. Furthermore, given the ever-changing nature of human society this piece constitutes not only a study of political parties in general but also a sort of case study of this institution in the context of the present. More concretely we will analyse the recent development of political parties in Greece, in an effort to examine the relevance of the concept of convergence in this case.

#### A Brief Background to the Development of Political Parties

We first encounter some sort of party in the Greek "polis", where citizens formed groups to support political leaders in the "agora". Apparently these never took the form of well organized parties. They were rather spontaneous gatherings of people with the same interests who were authorizing a statesman to represent their interests; in exchange for this they offered to him their votes.

During medieval times the social and political structure did not allow any formation of political parties. In fact, only a small group of privileged citizens affected the process of policy making while the majority of people had no opportunity to contribute to this process. It was this absence of mass participation in politics which prevented the development of political parties. However, in the Italian city-states as well as in the Byzantine Empire, there were some political factions, which had the form of political parties.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>Bakojannis, P., Parties in the Representative Democracy in per. "Syntagma", Vol. 2 (Athens, Sakoulas, 1976), p. 616.

Between the 13th and 17th centuries some forms of political parties emerged which were synonymous with a cabal or had special relationships with the monarch.<sup>7</sup> In fact, given the political structure, their main function was to provide administrators for the governmental apparatus. This was due to the fact that the number of administrative positions increased a great deal as time passed and consequently the monarch's capacity to deal with them declined proportionately.

The decline of monarchial authority under the pressure of revolutionary movements and the extension of the franchise were important factors in the development of political parties. However, one can identify the first stable representative groups in England during the 17th -18th century:<sup>8</sup> Tories and Whigs. These two parties adapted to the ideas of accepting each other's functions and existence and limiting their competition in the polls, at all times remaining far from violence.<sup>9</sup>

The greatest development of political parties occurred in the decades preceding the end of the nineteenth century and was bound up, as Maurice Duverger observes,

"...with the rise of parliamentary groups and electoral committees.... The more political assemblies see their functions and independence grow, the more their members feel the need to group themselves according to what they have in common, so as to act in concert."<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>7</sup>Roy C. Macridis, op. cit., p. 10.

<sup>8</sup>Bakojanis, P., op. cit., p. 617.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. 618.

<sup>10</sup>Maurice Duverger, Political Parties (London: Methuen and Co. Ltd., 1967), pp. xxiii-xxiv.

In other words the parliament was the predecessor of political parties and not the political parties of the parliament as one might find logical.<sup>11</sup> Thus it is obvious that the entire development of political parties is linked with democracy, that is to say with the extension of popular suffrage and parliamentary prerogatives. This does not mean that Duverger and other scholars, who underline this important factor, disregard the role of other organisations which originated outside parliament in the activities of social organisations. Duverger does take into consideration the interrelations between the groups which originated in parliament and those which did not. According to him, as the suffrage was extended, it became necessary to organize the electors by means of committees capable of making the candidates known and campaigning on their behalf. Generally speaking, first there was the creation of parliamentary groups then the appearance of electoral committees, and finally the establishment of a permanent connection between the two: a political party.

It is generally accepted that outside of parliament, many different organizations have encouraged the creation of political parties. Many parties, with a social reform orientation have their origins in trade unions (e.g. the British Labour party). Other parties have originated through churches and religious sects (e.g. the Anti-Revolutionary party in Netherlands by the Calvinists).<sup>12</sup> Others, mainly left wing parties, have emerged from various student groups. Illegal and consequently clandestine groups, unable to function on the parliamentary plane, tend

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<sup>11</sup>P. Bakojanis, *op. cit.*, p. 617.

<sup>12</sup>M. Duverger, *op. cit.*, p. xxxi.

to change into political parties when the legal ban is lifted (e.g. the Russian Communist, the French Mouvement Republicain Populaire).<sup>13</sup> Finally, political parties have also been formed by the actions of industrial and commercial groups (e.g. the Canadian Conservative Party.)<sup>14</sup>

There are other causes for the emergence of political parties, which seem to us to be more relevant today, since parliament is unlikely to play this kind of role after all these years. Kay Lawson indicates some of these other origins of political parties<sup>15</sup>: They originated inside other parties as in the case of "Manifesto" in Italy from the Communist Party (P.S.I.) in 1969; political parties rise can also be linked to several types of crises: legitimacy crises—when the existing governmental system and its rules for electing leaders seem to be challenged, as in the case of the emergence of pro-monarchist parties in Greece after the ousting of monarchy; participation crises—when changes in the patterns of economic system demand the admittance of new strata into the process of political decision-making, as in the case of the parties of "arabic-socialism" mainly in Syria and Iraq; crises of territorial integration as in the case of E.T.A. in Spain.

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<sup>13</sup>M.R.P. (People's Republican Party) became a party after the end of "Resistance" in 1945. Ibid., p. xxxiii.

<sup>14</sup>The Canadian Conservative party emerged in 1854 as E.H. Underhill demonstrates, from the activities of the Bank of Montreal, the Grand Trunk Railway and Montreal "big business". E.H. Underhill in "Encyclopedia of Political Science", cited, ibid., xxxiv.

<sup>15</sup>Kay Lawson, The Comparative Study of Political Parties (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1976), p.226.

In conclusion, we should point out that all these patterns of the origins of political parties cannot be isolated from each other. Given the complexity of society there cannot be exclusive patterns for the rise of political parties. For example, we cannot say that the emergence of E.T.A. in Spain or the other separatist groups originate exclusively in crises of territorial integration. Apparently there were other economic, social, political and psychological reasons for the rise of these parties. That is, in the process of the emergence of a political party there can be a combination of factors contributing to this process.

#### Constitutional Status

Despite the long history and the obvious importance of political parties as an institution in any political system, there has been considerable hesitation on the part of written constitutions to recognize political parties. In fact it was only after World War II that the European constitutions started to contain positive recognition of the political parties. The vanguard of this recognition, though not clearly so, was the Italian constitution in 1948. One year later the Constitution of the German Federal Republic recognized political parties as the main factor in the formation "of the political will of the people" and consequently "they may be freely formed" (Article 21).<sup>16</sup> Article 4 of the constitution of the Fifth Republic (October 4, 1958) contains a similar regulation.<sup>17</sup> In Greece the constitutional recognition of

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<sup>16</sup>Steven Muller (ed.), Documents on European Government (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1963), p. 22.

<sup>17</sup>Lowell G. Noonan, France: The Politics of Continuity in Change (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, Inc., 1970), p. 472.

political parties took place only very recently. In 1975, for the first time in Greek constitutional history, the new constitution recognized political parties as an institution of democracy (Article 29).

This constitutional development marks a considerable step forward toward the legitimacy of political parties. There had previously been a strong detestation of them, a reaction which is certainly as old as the history of political parties. It was not only rooted in historical or political reasons such as the preservation of monarchies, since the rise of political parties and the proliferation of parliaments had meant the disappearance or at least limitation in monarchal powers.

It was also rooted in theoretical - philosophical writings of the 16th - 19th centuries. Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679) argued that the civil rights of citizens must be "united as a person by a common power"; the will of the "common power", the sovereign will must include and involve the will of everyone, so the will of one citizen was compounded "of the forces of all the citizens together."<sup>18</sup> Later on, Jean Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778) claimed that the citizens must obey only the law of society, which has been accepted by them officially in the social contract. It is obvious that in theories like these there is no room for legitimacy of political parties which would not only divide the citizens but would also ruin the whole society since the citizens would no longer obey only the social contract. Furthermore, these theories along with the divinity of the state in the Hegelian system, the use of nationalist theories and a static, abstract consideration of the "common good" created a hostile

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<sup>18</sup> Sheldon, S. Wolin, Politics and Vision (Boston: Little Brown and Co., 1960), p. 276.

climate for the legitimacy of political parties.

In contrast, the development of political parties is a healthy institution of society since they legitimate the structure of the society, which is based on a multiplicity of interests. Furthermore, through out their structure, functions and ideology, political parties facilitate the legitimate expression of these interests.

### Structure - Functions - Ideology

Structure, functions and ideology are the main criteria in the determination of the type of political party. In fact, the latter reflects the general traits of structure and the functions; simply, the ideology and the program of a political party cannot be separated from its structure and functions.

### Structure

As in so many other cases, scholars approach the question of the structure of political parties in different ways depending on the purpose of their analysis. This fact along with the number of peculiarities of the issues, as a result of the complex socio-political environment, make the codification of the structure of political parties problematic. However, for the purpose of this work, some effort has to be made.

The study of party structure has been dominated by Maurice Duverger's analysis. Two classification schemes are developed by Duverger: The first is based on party organization and the second on party membership.

On the horizontal plane, Duverger makes the distinction between the direct party in which the members themselves form the party's community without the help of other social groupings, and the indirect party which

is made up of the union of the component social groups, e.g. British Labour Party, Belgian Catholic Bloc. Direct parties are the rule and indirect parties the exception. Despite this distinction, there are some indirect political parties, as in the case of the British Labour Party, which could be transformed into a mixed party over time.<sup>19</sup>

On the vertical plane, a party is made up of several basic elements, or small groups dispersed throughout the community, which are linked by coordinating institutions. Each party has its own structure, and their basic elements have their own particular form. Four main types of basic elements can be distinguished: caucus, branch, cell and militia.

The caucus parties are dominated by a small close group of experts or notabilities. The caucus is recruited by tacit cooption, which functions in a fairly large geographic area and yields considerable power due to the influence of its members. Its activities reach their peak during election times. Neumann calls these parties "parties of individual representation" and claims that they are characteristic of a "society with restricted political domain and only a limited degree of participation."<sup>20</sup> Between elections, the activities of caucus are limited and the caucus can enjoy its "absolutely free mandate" to decide only according to the members' conscience. The notion of free mandate, though well rooted in theories of representative government obviously suffered greatly with the rise of lobbies and of party discipline in legislatures.

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<sup>19</sup>Maurice Duverger, *op. cit.*, pp. 5-17.

<sup>20</sup>Sigmund Neuman, Modern Political Parties (Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 1956) p. 404.

Generally speaking, there is a decline of this type of party organization, but caucus parties still occupy an important place in the present day structure in the parties of the right in most countries.

Initially the caucus was characteristic of the Conservative or Liberal parties but later the Labour party though in a different form was organized on a caucus basis. Today the English Conservative party, the North-European Liberal and Conservative parties as well as the French parties of the Right and the French Radical party are organized on the basis of the caucus.<sup>21</sup>

The branch parties are more extensive groups, which recruit members from the masses in order to increase numbers and represent the masses. The activities of this kind of party are regular even between elections; they deal not only with election tactics but also with political education; and they function within a smaller geographic area than the caucus parties. In fact, these are what Neumann calls "political parties of integration."<sup>22</sup>

The branch type organization is a socialist invention. The socialist parties both direct such as the French Socialist party as well as indirect such as the Belgian Workers' party are organized on a branch basis. However, the branch became an interesting example of contagious

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<sup>21</sup>Maurice Duverger, op. cit. p. 21.

<sup>22</sup>Sigmund Neuman, op. cit. pp. 404-405.

organization since the Conservative or Centre parties, though more in theory than in practice have adopted the branch system (e.g. Belgian Christian Social party).<sup>23</sup>

The cell type political parties have an occupational rather than a geographically based structure. The cell unites all party members who work in the same place, and is quite a small group of about fifteen to twenty members; the area based cells, if any, are of lesser importance. These units are strong ones, in their hold on membership, due to their permanent nature, every day contact between members, and their concrete working place basis. However, this latter point may tend to minimize the importance of wider political issues.

The cell type party was an invention of the Russian Communist party, which first used it for clandestine action, and was subsequently imposed on other Communist parties. Duverger argues that the choice of the cell as organizational basis entails a profound change in the very concept of a political party. Instead of a body intended for the winning of votes, for grouping the representatives, and maintaining contact between them and their electors, the political party becomes an instrument of agitation, propaganda, discipline, and if necessary, clandestine action, for which elections and parliamentary debates are only of secondary importance.<sup>24</sup>

The militia type political parties are organized as a kind of private army; the members are enrolled along military lines and subject to

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<sup>23</sup>Maurice Duverger, *op. cit.*, pp. 24-27.

<sup>24</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 35-36.