

What Can Be Learned from International Practices?



Catrina Schläger and Judith Christ (Eds.)

Modern Political Party Management - What Can Be Learned from International Practices?

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Foreword

Impressum

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Editors: Catrina Schläger and Judith Christ
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How do political parties react to social changes? What are the advantages and challenges for parties with regard to new and social media? How and to what extent can party members be included in intra-party decision-making? In what way do parties deal with internal conflicts? How can corruption be dealt with and prevented within a party? These and many other questions arise in relation to political party management, the overall organizational aspect of political parties.

Nowadays, political parties are part of different political, economic and social systems and accordingly face different challenges, but when it comes to their management, they all have one thing in common: management is closely connected with the perception of the political system they are part of. Forms of mismanagement and the abuse of power within political parties have a strong negative impact on citizens’ consent towards the political system they live in and on the legitimacy of the political party itself. Consequently, it is a serious task for all parties to continuously improve their party management, to adapt it to the latest changes and challenges within the societies they represent and to search for institutionalized forms of party management that guarantee good governance.

In the case of China, the Communist Party (CPC) is facing various challenges when it comes to party management. They include the questions of how to prevent and control corruption and lavish expenditure within the party and how to represent the interests of the majority of the people and include new social strata, as the CPC is no longer the revolutionary party it used to be but has transformed into a mass ruling party over the years.

In order to identify better and worse practices in party management and further promote research and discussion on this topic the Shanghai Administration Institute and Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (Shanghai Office) jointly organized an international symposium on 24–25 September 2013. Under the title »Modern Political Party Management – Chinese and International Practices«, scholars from nine different countries presented their findings on a wide range of parties, including social-democratic, conservative, communist and liberal parties. Other than that, the presented parties were chosen regarding their significance for the national policy making process not necessarily because they serve as a shining example.

Apart from scholars from international universities and research institutes, experts from Chinese party and state organs attended the conference, which marked the vivid interest in and timeliness of this topic in China. Due to this interest and the excellent quality of contributions to the debate, SAI and FES decided to publish the contributions in two volumes, one in Chinese, the other in English. All chapters are also published as part of the broader Chinese volume „Research on Chinese and International Party Management – a Comparative Approach“, which will be published by China Social Science Publishing House at the beginning of 2014.

The Shanghai Administration Institute and the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung would like to thank all authors and translators involved in this publication for their excellent work.

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We hope this publication will be a valuable contribution to comparative research on international party management.

Shanghai, December 2013

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Experiences in Party Management of Political Parties: The French Socialist Party

Laurent Bouvet

1. Introduction

The French Socialist Party (PS, Parti socialiste) has been in office for more than a year now, since the election to the French presidency of its candidate, François Hollande, and the following victory at the National Assembly election. When this victory occurred, in May–June 2012, the PS had been out of office for exactly 10 years.

But this paper is not about the PS in office, but about the PS as an organisation and the challenges it encounters.

After a short overview of the general characteristics of the party (1), and a brief description of its central organisation (governance bodies) (2), we will focus on intra-party democracy and the decision-making process inside the party (3).

2. General Characteristics of the Party

First, the PS is a social democratic party (according to the general European meaning of this expression): it has a reformist platform and policy agenda, a deep attachment to the EU, together with a democratic and liberal approach to institutions. Be that as it may, it still relies on a far more leftist discourse than its other European counterparts, because of its specific history – the long standing revolutionary past of the French left – and its difficult relationship with Marxism, and because of the breadth of its political composition, itself a result of history.

The PS is a truly pluralistic party. Thus my presentation will first focus on this aspect by underlining its internal organisation and decision-making processes.

Second, the PS is a catch-all party with a strong public sector base (especially among teachers). Higher educated and upper-middle classes are overrepresented among both the party members and its core electorate (around 20 per cent of voters since the 1980s). Its core constituencies are located in the large urban areas (higher-educated professionals), in the suburbs (recent immigration) and the public sector as a whole. By contrast, blue-collar workers, small towns and rural areas are underrepresented.

Demographically, it has been rapidly ageing and slow to integrate more women. For example, according to the last study carried out in 2011, only 3 per cent of party members are blue-collar workers (20 per cent of the French active population as a whole), whereas 38 per cent are higher-educated professionals – including 18 per cent teachers of all kinds. A total of 60 per cent of the party members (including retirees) come from the public sector. The average age of the party members continues to rise: it is now a little more than 55 years. Only 23 per cent of party members are under 40 and 38 per cent are over 60. Only 30 per cent of party members are women, although the constitutional ‘parité’ rule has existed for more than 10 years now: in other words, strict equality between men and women is the rule for all positions in the party and for candidacy in elections.

Third, the evolution of the PS for two or three decades now could easily be considered one of the clearest-cut examples of what Katz and Mair describe as the cartelisation of a party. The public funding of the parties in the French system, the prominent role of professional bureaucrats and the weight of elected officials, the importance of being in office and the decreasing number of

supporters are clear signs of such an evolution.

One could add that the collective choice of the party to maintain strict control of its support and not to address either its ‘doctrine’ or its wider relationship with society reinforces the cartelisation trend. Such renewal as has been undertaken so far has been very marginal and thus overemphasized broadly and publicly. It could be summed up in three words: young, women and minorities. However, the appeal to the young remains in the hands of small and bureaucratic organisations closely linked to the party (Socialist Youth Movement, the student union ‘UNEF’) . The active promotion of women, applying the constitutional rule of gender equality (‘parité’), is clearly a tool in the hands of senior elected officials to preserve their grip on the party and electoral candidacies. The promotion of ‘diversity’ and the consideration of minorities in a clearly multiculturalist fashion is being used exactly the same way, more as a utilitarian aim than a real opening up to French society. Last but not least, all forms of ‘renewal’ are designed to hide the »elephant in the room«: nothing has been done for decades to regenerate the party beyond its public sector, college-educated professionals and ‘minority’ constituencies. The working and the middle classes are no longer represented by the PS; their interests are no longer defended. Besides the moral and historical problem of this evolution, it is the core electoral problem of the PS nowadays: its core constituency is far too narrow to allow it to implement a long-term strategy in office that is supported by a large enough part of the population.

Because of these characteristics a national election victory (for example, that of May–June

2012) could only be the result of a paradox, if not a misunderstanding: »talking left« to convene the core electorate on »traditional« social values; saying little, but showing a pragmatic understanding of the challenges involved in assembling a large enough coalition to win. The accent during the campaign was necessarily on what can unify the left in the absence of economic policy (which is far too divisive).

3. The Party's Organisational Structure

The PS's organisational structure is typical of European left-wing parties or of »broad-based« parties in general. Here, I will present the national structure only, as that model is replicated at every other level: province (»fédération« in each French »département«) and local (»section« in cities and towns throughout France).

Four institutional bodies govern the party :

(i) »Conseil national« (CN), the party assembly (elected by all party members at the party congress every three years, whose composition is based on a proportionality rule and based on votes on »motions«, policy declarations containing lists of people proposed by the »courants« or member factions).

(ii) »Bureau national«, the national bureau (elected by the CN from among its members, based on proportionality). It meets every week to discuss what the party should say and stand for in the political debate.

(iii) »Premier secrétaire«, first secretary: the party's chief executive or general secretary (the person who won a majority at the Congress and

was formally elected by all the party members in a vote in which the leaders of the different factions could be candidates).

(iv) »Secrétariat national«, the party executive (chosen from the majority of the national bureau by the first secretary to manage day-to-day party affairs and to deal with the media).

Besides this central organisation, the party's elected officials have their own organisations, in particular a federation of all elected officials belonging to the PS or other small organisations. A youth movement (‘MJS’) is now independent from the party but is associated with debates and decision-making.

4. Intraparty Democracy and Decision-Making

The French Socialist Party could be characterized as a strongly pluralistic organisation. For French socialists, pluralism is what Tocqueville called a »habit of the heart«. This is because of its deeply rooted historical tradition, a strong commitment to the French Republic's democratic institutions (as the main party of government on the Left), and as a democratic organisation in which the various French socialist traditions can be represented.

Historically, the PS was constructed by the wide range of groups making up the French socialist tradition originating in the nineteenth century and enriched in the twentieth: revolutionaries and reformists, orthodox and revisionists, Jacobins and Girondins (strong state vs a more decentralised state), parliamentary and social movement-oriented (trade unions, associations), supporters of state-driven policymaking and pro-civil society.

A number of key moments that clearly express this preference for pluralism can be identified in the history of the party:

1905 The creation by unification of the party, triggered by Jean Jaurès, who struck a compromise with a strong orthodox Marxist group led by Jules Guesde.

1920 The split between the socialists and the communists after the Bolshevik Revolution and the Third International, when at the Congress of Tours, Léon Blum kept, as he put it, »the old house« with a minority of the members of the party against the communist majority (this majority didn't retain the name of the party but it did keep its newspaper, founded by Jean Jaurès, L'Humanité). Blum achieved this by asserting an attachment to democracy and the rule of law against the revolutionary overthrow of the state (Third Republic).

1971 The refounding of the party under the leadership of François Mitterrand in order to win the presidential election and to become the first party of the left against the French Communist Party. At this time and in the following years, the new PS integrated a lot of different groups from other parts of the left, the trade unions and civil society, especially left-wing Christians. Diversity in the ideology and sociology of the party was at its peak at this time, before 1981.

1981 The historic (landmark) victory of the PS under Mitterrand's leadership. He became the first president of the French Republic from the left since 1958 and created a

new historical cycle : the PS was in office and the main (hegemonic) alternative force to the French right. Its pluralism has changed, of course, but remains a component of party life and, to some extent, of its agenda.

The French Socialist Party is also deeply pluralist in its values and organisation:

– The fundamental doctrine of socialism in France is closely related to democratic institutions. This is the big difference from the French Communist Party. Even if for decades the PS called for revolution and the overthrow of capitalism in its manifesto, the means have always been democratic: winning elections to change the system by implementing laws (and within the framework of the rule of law). One of the consequences of this attachment to democracy is that it has given elected officials (representatives, members of government, mayors and so on) huge weight within the party, as we will see.

– The party organisation itself is testimony to its profoundly pluralistic nature. All the governing bodies of the party are elected in a democratic bottom-up process on the basis of proportionality, ensuring the due representation of every group and faction.

Internal democracy in the PS is – when out of office – very lively. There are plenty of opportunities for discussions and debates, both at national and local level. Regular meetings of members at local level; national discussions on particular issues; the party conference every three years, which is the core of party life and at which party policy is laid down.

The organising principle of the main party doctrine or policy debates is both top-down and bottom-up: issues are defined by the central office and then discussed at local level. After that, a synthesis is worked out for the final document at national level. The members of the party vote to decide whether they accept (or wish to amend) the text.

In the course of all this, the role of the factions is very important. All party members are associated with one organised faction or another, more or less differentiated along doctrinal or political lines: statist, reformist, green and so on.

In practical terms this means that the factions (and their central government, around a prominent leader, often a potential candidate for the party leadership or the French presidency) decide what they want and how their members should vote.

In the public debate, facing the right and the far right, the notion of the »general interest« of the party often prevails: once the party members have voted, the official position of the party is defined. On some occasions, a dissident opinion might be expressed publicly. The most important example of this was in 2005 during the referendum on the constitutional treaty for the European Union. During an internal referendum in 2004, the PS chose to vote »yes« in the national referendum. But some members and elected officials of the party campaigned for the 'no' vote against their own party during the national referendum. Today, it remains a major trauma and a big divide inside the party.

However, the most important event within the party – besides votes on candidates for local and national elections – remains the party conference,

held every three years. It is an opportunity for both doctrinal and policy debate, and for the appointment of party officials. It involves complex and lengthy procedures, from local to national level.

The key aspect of a conference is the building of factions ('courants'). They are created on the basis of policy declarations called 'motions'. All the party members (there is close monitoring of the list of party members and eligibility to vote at the local level, to combat fraud) vote for the different declarations (ranging from two to seven or eight) and thus for lists of members of the various local and national bodies (conseil, bureau, secrétariat), as well as for the leadership at each level.

This process determines a majority (during the three days of the conference, if no motion has gained a majority in its own right, the motion with the largest share of members' votes invites others to try to constitute a majority: this process is called 'synthesis').

The motions that reject this synthesis – in practical terms, the conditions laid down by the dominant 'motion' – become the minority. They cannot participate in the party's executive government.

All the central governing bodies are constituted on the basis of the votes for these 'motions'.

– 'Conseil national' (all motions are represented if they obtain more than 5 per cent of the vote). It meets every three months and is the forum for big political debates.

– 'Bureau national' (each 'motion' chooses its representatives to the Bureau national from

among the members of the Conseil national) meets on a weekly basis for general political discussions and decisions.

– ‘Secrétariat national’: the party executive, its members are chosen from the members of the majority in the Bureau national by the first secretary, himself the leader of the majority motion. It is in charge of party organisation, elections and policy implementation.

One of the main characteristics of the PS is the weight – increasingly over the past 10 years – of elected officials, especially local elected officials (mayors of big cities, presidents of regions and ‘départements’): there are now 50,000 elected officials as against 120,000 members.

There are two reasons for this. First, the long-term decline in party membership. It currently stands at around 120,000, down from around 150,000 at the end of the 1990s and 200,000 in 1981. Although it is true that membership of political parties has never been high in France, this is quite a low figure. Second, the number of elected officials has increased so rapidly because of a series of electoral gains in local government (and then at national level in 2012) over the past 10 years.

There are two consequences of this. On one hand, all of party life, party policies and decisions are oriented towards the interests of these elected officials. Thus the party concentrates on winning elections and no longer on organising doctrinal debates or civil society, training supporters and so on. Both ideologically and sociologically, this has changed the nature of the party. A more ‘centrist’, pragmatic and reformist doctrine has emerged. Furthermore, a large number of party members

have become dependent on the ‘system’ for jobs, positions and so on doled out by elected officials because of their position. The same applies to money: the party is funded mainly by public subsidies (depending on the number of representatives and the results of national elections) and contributions from elected officials. On the other hand, the party has become very dependent on election victory. In case of defeat – which will certainly occur over the coming year at local level – such an organisation is easily weakened and ultimately vulnerable.

One might say that this is the price of operating in a democratic and pluralistic political system. Others say that the party in its traditional form and organisation is a thing of the past, after more than a century in existence.

One of the key aspects of this prominence of elected officials in the party is the appointment of candidates to the various national and local offices. Along with the party conference, which appoints the ‘courants’ (party factions), this is the other main event in party life.

This process could be described in two ways: first, in terms of official procedure and rules; second, in terms of the unofficial process involving the factions and elected officials.

5. The Revolution of Open Primaries

The appointment of PS candidates to French elections by party members in organised votes at local level is a kind of internal primary system.

Taking into account the prominent role of both elected officials and factions, however, things

are a little different. In some places (traditional ‘fédérations’, in which a tight patronage system operates), the vote is not really free. The PS works as a party machine in the sense defined in American political science.

Thus a new procedure was introduced: an open primary (open to all citizens who simply declare themselves supporters of the PS and pay a little money to participate) could bring about an enormous change in the definition, role and organisation of the PS.

The first two experiments with such a system took place in 2007 and 2012 for the presidential elections. In 2007, the opening-up was narrow, reserved for new party members who paid 20 euros to vote (it added 70,000 members at that time to the existing 150,000). But this small opening had a major effect, resulting in the designation of a candidate who wasn’t part of the party bureaucracy. She (a female candidate for the first time) was the favourite candidate in the media and opinion polls. In 2012, and after a very tough debate, the party decided to open the primaries. In November 2011, the two rounds of this procedure involved more than 3 million citizens. This gave François Hollande, the appointed candidate, real momentum and the legitimacy to be the candidate not only of the PS but of the whole opposition to the conservative president Sarkozy, who was seeking re-election. Hollande won the election in May 2012.

Today, the principle of an open primary is becoming unavoidable for all appointments at local level and especially for the coming local elections in March 2014.

The consequences are both huge and unpre-

dictable for party life and even for its very existence, creating more difficulties for factions and pre-organised candidacies. The role of the party members is becoming less important, less central in the game, and they could resent this dispossession of their power to choose candidates. For many of them, this was the sole remaining privilege of being a party member. The very role of the party may change from selecting candidates to that of mere technical organizer of the primary process.



The African National Congress of South Africa: Experiences of Party Management

Anthony Butler

1. Introduction: Characteristics of the African National Congress

The African National Congress (ANC) describes itself as a “liberation movement” with a long-range project of racial and class emancipation (ANC 1969, 2000, 2002, 2007), but it is also a political party in a constitutional, representative democracy. It commands the support of almost two-thirds of those who vote in South Africa’s competitive elections. Through its mass membership and long-standing alliances with the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) and the South African Communist Party (SACP), the ANC dominates the political terrain in this country and seems set to do so for many years to come. The movement, however, faces major governance and organisational challenges.

The ANC emerged relatively recently as the pre-eminent force in South African politics. Founded

in 1912 by black elites in response to a political settlement that favoured whites, the movement was elitist and politically conservative. In the 1920s and 1930s, these weaknesses lead to the marginalisation of the ANC. Faced with the National Party’s intensified “apartheid” (racial separation) doctrines after 1948, the ANC launched a series of defiance campaigns that brought it to a position of national leadership for the first time. The ANC joined with other anti-segregation forces in the 1950s to propagate the “Freedom Charter”, a quasi-socialist and non-racialist agenda. Concealing the divisions between “Africanists” and “non-racialists”, the Charter did not, however, prevent the breakaway in 1959 of the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) with its more activist Black nationalist agenda (Butler 2013a: 16–32).

The political turmoil of the 1940s and 1950s culminated in the suppression of black opposition

in 1960 after the Sharpeville Massacre (Lodge 2011: 74–108). Subsequently, the ANC was banned and launched an armed struggle. The joint military wing of the ANC and the SACP, the “spear of the nation” (Umkhonto we Sizwe, or simply MK), embarked on a long and mostly fruitless campaign of sabotage against a state with overwhelming military and intelligence superiority. Key ANC leaders, including Nelson Mandela, were jailed for treason in the 1963 Rivonia trial, and other ANC leaders went into extended exile and did not return to the country until shortly before the first non-racial elections in 1994 (Butler 2013a: 45–7).

The ANC has exhibited marked ideological diversity. Religious activists have worked alongside communists and traditionalists (Erlank 2012). Communism was especially influential in the development of the ANC – but not straightforwardly so (Cronin 2003; Netshitenzhe 2003, Slovo 1988). The ANC was to remain a black African movement at leadership level until 1985. Multiracial anti-apartheid struggle was largely the product of an increasingly deep partnership between the African ANC and the non-racial SACP. Black Africans, unlike their white, Coloured, and Indian peers, were able to hold dual leadership positions in both entities.¹

The SACP adopted a resolutely pro-Moscow profile, but it was always primarily an organisational rather than an ideological vehicle: members of the SACP, many of whom were white or Indian, considered themselves to be a vanguard within the ANC. The SACP was greatly weakened by the collapse of communism in the USSR, and this epochal event led to mass

resignations as well as to many doctrinal and political changes. Economic policy conservatism, meanwhile, led to growing tensions between the ANC and both the SACP and the ANC-aligned union federation COSATU, which was formed in 1985.

The memberships of the three movements overlap substantially. Almost all SACP cadres are also ANC members – but the sharply eroded prestige and power of the communist party after 1989 has turned it into just one of many major factions in the ANC. The SACP does not stand for election but rather lobbies to place its candidates on ANC electoral lists. The leadership of COSATU has strong links with both parties, and it is both a major funder of the SACP and an important mobilising force for the ANC.

The ANC embraced labour and civil society allies in the “transition to democracy” period of the early 1990s, and it was widely acknowledged as the natural party of government. Over its first decade of rule, it also became an impressive electoral machine. The liberation movement’s uneven democratic tendencies coexist with democratic centralist and hierarchical conceptions of legitimate authority. The struggle between these elements is unlikely to be decisively resolved in the foreseeable future. The country’s constitution, however, entrenches representative democracy and liberal political rights.

Achievements since 1994

The ANC has successfully managed many political and economic challenges associated with profound inequality and social division.

¹ These racial classifications were a cornerstone of the system of apartheid. They remain very much in use today.

Five achievements stand out. First, the ANC has secured political stability. Despite its strong electoral performance – the ANC has secured between 63 and 70 per cent of the vote in national elections since 1994 – it has mostly avoided the use of non-democratic means to achieve its goals. Its carefully constructed programmes have helped to structure citizens' electoral choices; filtered, prioritised, and reconciled demands; and neutralised potentially divisive ideological conflict (Butler 2007: 36).

Second, the movement's continuing electoral popularity has allowed it to enforce an unpopular but necessary programme of economic stabilisation (Maphai & Gottschalk 2003). Third, the ANC has created a new system of government out of the chaos of the apartheid state (Picard 2005). Fourth, it has retained a degree of trust among the poorest citizens, for whom the first decade-and-a-half of democracy brought a deepening of poverty rather than a relief from it (Simkins 2004).

Finally, the ANC has discouraged racial and ethnic conflict. Despite three centuries of white supremacy, segregation, and apartheid, the ANC has relentlessly promoted non-racialism as an ideology and as a guide to practise, regulating internal discussion of ethnicity and averting overt tribalism in competition for office. Ethnic balance has (until recently, at least) been a cornerstone of ANC party lists and National Executive Committee (NEC) elections, and key ANC institutions and the cabinet itself have a carefully managed diversity (Butler 2005).

The movement has evolved from a party of exile (and prison) to a mass movement. It combines the hierarchy and democratic centralism of an

exile movement with the mass organisational politics that characterised the domestic anti-apartheid struggle. Members continue to voice their demands for participation, and committed activists bewail any dilution of the party's ideological character in the pursuit of wider electoral support. As an electoral party, however, the ANC has become "catch-all" in character (Lodge 2004).

The complex interests and voices in the movement dictate that both central discipline and wide deliberation are necessary to maintain political unity. A large activist base remains essential for the ANC to mobilise electors at registration and voting time, and to enhance the legitimacy and understanding of the movement's programme of government. The ANC's system of alliances allows diverse class and ideological interests to be represented, but the movement's own policies to build a black business and middle class have created internal class tensions that threaten its own unity. The ANC leadership now contains a very significant "black bourgeoisie" as a result of Black Economic Empowerment policies and the politicisation of some state procurement processes (Butler 2011). The movement has also fostered the growth of a black middle class, particularly in the public sector. But most ANC activists at the grass roots level remain poor (Butler 2013a, Jordan 2011). This has resulted in significant tensions based on the different class positions and economic interests of activists and leaders.

Challenges

The ANC has been confronted by four major challenges in recent years. First, a growing proportion of the ANC's active membership has

little respect for conventions of authority in the movement. The ANC's membership has grown by over 300 per cent since 2002 – from 416,846 members to more than a million today (ANC 2012b). Most of the new members know little of the party's history and values.

Second, the ANC has been suffering from "money-politics" and "careerism" – i.e., the use of the movement by its members as a stepping stone to political office or public positions that can be abused for personal gain, and the use of private resources to win internal party elections. In the 2012 elective conference at Mangaung, for example, the deputy presidency of the ANC was contested by political leaders who had also become extremely wealthy businesspeople. At the lower levels of the movement, the leadership has not been able to stamp out corruption, in part because it is itself implicated in it (Butler 2010).

Third, the internal politics of the ANC has been marked by factional conflict. At the national level, former president Thabo Mbeki's faction tried to suppress competition for senior ANC offices. Mbeki's intention in 2007 was to retain the ANC presidency and to control the state presidency from ANC headquarters. This effort backfired dramatically when Mbeki's competitor, Jacob Zuma, swept to the ANC presidency.

Finally, there has been ongoing organisational disarray. Manipulation of internal elections and the abuse of access to resources have resulted in paralysing political turmoil, in particular at the

local and provincial levels.

2. Party Organizational Structures

The ANC operates at four levels. The National Conference, which is held every five years, elects the NEC.² ANC conferences in South Africa's nine provinces elect Provincial Executive Committees (PECs). Regional Executive Committees are elected at the sub-provincial level, and ANC branches exist in almost every community (ANC 2007).

There are also three "leagues". The ANC Women's League (ANCWL) is open to women who are members of the ANC, and it has national, provincial, and branch structures. It functions "as an autonomous body", but its constitution, rules, and regulations must comply with the ANC's own constitution (ANC 2007: 7.3). The ANC Youth League (ANCYL) is open to people between the ages of 14 and 35, and it also operates on national, provincial, and branch levels. The ANCYL has been a major force in the internal politics of the ANC since the 1950s. It was recently involved in attempts to remove ANC president Jacob Zuma – whom it had previously helped to elect – and as a consequence, its leadership was suspended in the run-up to the 2012 Mangaung Conference.³ The ANC recently launched an ANC Veterans' League open to long-standing ANC members aged 60 years or above.

The ANC's "tripartite alliance" with the COSATU

² With 80 members, the NEC is the executive body of the ANC between conferences.

³ This is the latest of the five annual ANC conferences at which policy positions are endorsed and national leaders elected by branch delegates and others.

and the SACP also operates at the provincial and local levels, although it is highly inconsistent in its operations except at election time.

National Level

The National Conference is the supreme body of the ANC; and 90 per cent of its delegates come from the branches – the community-level structures that overlap with municipal boundaries – and are meant to be elected at “properly constituted branch general meetings” (ANC 2007: 10). The number of delegates is intended to be proportional to paid-up membership, and each branch “in good standing” – i.e., deemed to have fulfilled necessary procedural and membership regulations – is entitled to at least one delegate. The remainder of the voting delegates at the Conference are allocated by the NEC “from among members of the Provincial Executive Committees, the ANC Veterans’ League, the ANC Youth League, and the ANC Women’s League” (ANC 2007: 11).

The formal responsibilities of the National Conference are as follows: to determine the policies and programmes of the ANC; to deliberate upon reports by the ANC President, Treasurer-General, and Secretary General; to deliberate on the activities of the various Leagues; and to elect the “top 6” office holders and the remaining 80 “additional members” of the NEC (ANC 2007: 11).

The NEC is the highest organ of the ANC between National Conferences. It is elected by secret ballot at national conference, and 50 per cent of its members must be women. The NEC elects a National Working Committee (NWC) to serve as the secretariat and “engine room” of the

movement (ANC 2007: 11).

The NEC’s responsibilities include overseeing provincial, regional, and branch structures; overseeing the ANC Veterans’ League, the ANC Women’s League, and the ANC Youth League; and managing candidate selection processes. Candidate selection for national elections is controlled by a National List Committee appointed by the NEC.

NEC subcommittees cover areas such as: communication and media; education and health; economic transformation; international relations; legislature and governance; organisation building and campaigns; political education; and fundraising. The members of these committees are primarily drawn from the NEC; many of them are cabinet or deputy ministers in the national government (ANC 2013b). In some areas of policy – for example, economic policy and international relations – there are strong (but concealed) conflicts between party committees and government departments.

The national headquarters – in Luthuli House, Johannesburg – provides institutional support. Its key areas of activity concern organisation and mobilisation, political education, information and publicity, and finance. The three full-time office holders – the President, the Secretary General (SG), and the Treasurer-General – have significant permanent staffs. The national headquarters is managed by the SG, but a secure President, such as Thabo Mbeki, can dominate its operations (Butler 2005, 2007).

Just as relations within ANC headquarters have fluctuated, so has the balance of power between state and party (Lodge 2004, Butler 2007). In the

1990s, a relatively small coterie of former political exiles dominated key positions in the movement. During Mbeki’s ANC presidency (1997–2007), government ministers increasingly dominated the NEC and government departments dominated policymaking. Since 2007, however, there has been a resurgence of NEC committees. This has resulted in the ANC serving as a veto point in government decisions. It has also resulted in slow and cumbersome decision-making within the state.

The ANC President, currently Jacob Zuma, is the political head of the ANC. He is elected to a five-year term at the National Conference. There are no limits on how many terms can be served. The ANC President, by recent convention, is the ANC’s candidate for the state presidency, a position that is filled by the National Assembly after parliamentary elections (Republic of South Africa 1996). There is an ANC policy commitment to avoiding “two centres of power” – a division between the leadership of the ANC and of the state.

The Deputy President, currently Cyril Ramaphosa, performs a primarily supportive role. Nonetheless, there is arguably a convention that the ANC Deputy President should become ANC President.⁴

The National Chairperson formally presides over the National Conference, the NEC, and the National Working Committee (NWC), but in practice this office confers few real powers. The Secretary General is the chief administrative officer of the ANC. The Treasurer-General is “the chief custodian of the funds and property of the

ANC” and should (in theory at least) “receive and bank all monies on behalf of the NEC” (ANC 2007: 16.10). In reality, the control of party finances within the ANC is deeply contested.

Provinces, Regions, and Branches

The Provincial Conference is the highest organ of the ANC in each of the country’s nine provinces. Branch delegates have 90 per cent of the votes (ANC 2007: 17.1). Provincial conferences elect a 20-member Provincial Executive Committee (PEC) by secret ballot, as well as senior office holders. These elections have been volatile and factionalised in recent years.

PECs dominate provincial decision-making and usually possess veto powers over provincial government decisions, including government contracts and tenders. The regions and branches – and their Executive Committees – are partially overseen by the provinces. PECs appoint Provincial List and Candidates Committees to regulate candidate lists for provincial and local government elections, but they are subject to oversight by the NEC (ANC 2007: 19.9).

Provincial Regions are demarcated to overlap district and metropolitan municipal boundaries in each province (ANC 2007: 21). Regional Executive Committees supervise and direct the work of the ANC and all its organs in the region, including the ANC local government caucuses.

The ANC describes itself as a mass organisation and branches are ostensibly the “basic unit of the organisation” (ANC 2007: 23.1). It does

⁴ Mbeki succeeded Nelson Mandela, and Zuma succeeded Mbeki, in just this way.

indeed possess a mass membership and there are various institutional mechanisms for branch delegates to influence policy and elect leaders, but only a branch in “good standing” is entitled to participate in elective and policy conferences. Moreover, national leaders and regional powerbrokers both try to manipulate and control branch opinion. This results from administrative and organisational weaknesses, from a hierarchical ideology, and from the manipulation of electoral and other processes. Regional offices control paper-based membership systems and are able to control branch accreditation.

3. Intra-Party Democracy and Decision-Making Processes

Although branch delegates comprise 90 per cent of the voting delegates at ANC conferences, where policy positions are deliberated and endorsed, conference resolutions are drafted by national committees. Candidate and leadership selection processes are more highly contested. In a statement in early 2012, Zuma observed that the ANC should review its election systems “in order to enhance internal democracy, credibility of the process as well as the integrity and suitability of candidates” (ANC 2012a). This would “protect the ANC from the tyranny of slates, factions and money”. The proposals that are being considered include the establishment of a permanent electoral commission.

The ANC’s “broad church” character combines histories and practices associated with exile, military organisation, domestic struggle, trade unionism, communism, and imprisonment, which together help explain its complex behaviour. It displays both democratic and hierarchical

aspects, and its style of conflict resolution is sometimes described as consensual. This conventional assessment of the movement has been undermined by escalating conflict and attempted centralisation in recent years, and by the increasing role of procedural manipulation and money-politics in internal elections.

In 2012, conference delegates endorsed a new focus on organisational issues. The next decade will be a “decade of the cadre” in which members will allegedly enjoy ideological, academic, and moral training in a “comprehensive political school system”. Cadres will be subjected to “performance monitoring”, “firm and consistent action” will instil discipline, and “integrity commissions” will purportedly blossom (ANC 2013a: 4–6).

Inside Luthuli House, an information technology revolution will apparently sweep aside antiquated membership and communications systems. Political funding transparency will oblige wealthy loyalists to donate openly and generously to the Treasurer-General’s office, and fundraising will be restricted to mandated officials. By banning simultaneous membership in more than one constitutional structure, ANC leaders hope to exclude provincial power brokers from the political centre (ANC 2013a: 5–6).

The dangers posed by unwieldy and technologically backward internal systems came into sharp focus before the Mangaung Conference. Members of the “change faction” spoke darkly about the paralysis into which they would plunge the movement if they were defeated by unfair procedural means.

Few such challenges to auditing, accredita-

tion, and delegate selection processes actually materialised. Despite complaints that many branches included “ghost” members, that delegates were not properly elected, and that money and other inducements were used in internal power struggles, the margin of victory enjoyed by the Jacob Zuma slate made it credibly impossible to reject the outcome. In future elections, the lack of credibility of internal electoral and campaigning processes could generate significant tensions. In particular, the ANC has recently passed through a period of more than 30 years – spanning exile and democratisation – in which the key leaders at the national level were drawn from families from one region (the Eastern Cape), belonging to one language group (isiXhosa), and drawn from closely related ethnic groups (amaXhosa and abaThembu). The recent transition to a more balanced leadership, but one increasing dominated by amaZulu leaders from KwaZulu-Natal, has generated significant political tensions. Contested internal elections that possess an ethnic or regional dimension could in future pose a threat to party survival (Butler 2013b).

Current elective processes cannot confer such legitimacy upon leaders in a closely fought internal election. Money-fuelled lobbying plays a prominent role in every province. Cycles of money and power connect public offices to ANC positions. Auditing, accreditation, and record-keeping systems of all kinds are largely paper-based, where they exist at all. Political actors at all levels have learned the art of manipulating membership numbers.

Three times every five years, the movement is paralysed by elective or candidate list processes. The weaknesses of internal systems also prevent

the ANC from successfully performing the broader functions of a political party. It cannot serve as a strong bridge between activist citizens and the national political elite, because it can neither communicate the discontent of ordinary people to the leadership, nor serve as an instrument for the political education and mobilisation of the poor (Butler 2013b).

Major obstacles confront those who wish to “modernise” the ANC. Party modernisation is time consuming and painful, and it could well be deferred once again to a future that somehow never arrives. Furthermore, if new organisational systems are brought in to end the manipulation of paper records by the regions, a computer-enhanced Luthuli House might then use its technological power to impose stricter discipline on recalcitrant activists, or even to engage surreptitiously in membership and list rigging escapades of its own. For these reasons, many activists are deeply suspicious of information technologies.

4. Settlement of Intra-Party Conflicts/ Disputes and Intra-Party Ideological Differences

The 2012 conference adopted new policies on lobbying, the use of resources in internal elections, and improper conduct in political meetings (ANC 2013a). Despite much talk about renewed discipline and the political education of cadres, the party is increasingly unruly at the provincial, regional, and local levels. In some provinces (notably KwaZulu-Natal), there has been an upsurge in political assassinations.

The ANC strongly discourages the use of the

courts to resolve organisational issues. Instead, members are obliged to take their complaints about breaches of the ANC Code of Conduct through internal disciplinary processes, which are set out at every level of the movement. Unfortunately, those who should enforce the rules are often those who also break them.

At the local level, branches have been subjected to destabilising factionalism. Regional power brokers are often responsible for manipulating branch politics, and those who lose out in elections routinely turn to street-level protest. Factions can crystallise around the Youth League, local SACP organisers, civic activists, trade unionists, or a range of other actors.

Provinces also exhibit factionalism and similar motivations appear to be key drivers in the less wealthy provinces. Ethnic and racial mobilisation has played an alarming role in intra-party conflicts in the Western Cape, and to some extent elsewhere. Disciplinary processes are themselves controversial and often result in fresh waves of disputation and violence. The most effective purges of allegedly corrupt or violent activists have been managed by national officials, and they have been interpreted (mostly accurately) as factional power plays rather than as genuine efforts to resolve conflict.

At the national level, the NEC operates two disciplinary committees with the power to sanction, suspend, or expel members: the National Disciplinary Committee and the National Disciplinary Committee of Appeal (ANC 2007: 25). This machinery has not been used often – with the exception of the closing down of the ANCYL in 2012, when it was spearheading a campaign to remove Zuma from the ANC

presidency. As a result of controversies over centralisation in the Mbeki era (ANC 1997a, 2001), it is widely believed by activists that disciplinary sanctions are primarily designed to favour incumbents and to suppress opposing factions.

5. Measures for Preventing and Controlling Corruption

The transition from authoritarian rule created vulnerability to corruption and criminality. Moreover, the local state, the legal system, and the police were compromised by the history of apartheid. “Bantustan” (racial enclave) bureaucrats brought with them traditions of bribery, money laundering, and nepotism. The ANC acted carefully to create an institutional framework to improve governance and limit the abuse of public authority by officials. Unfortunately, it has not been energetically applied (Camerer 2011).

Given the ANC’s political predominance, the securing of political office is often a first step towards public office and potential private gain. ANC Secretary General Kgalema Motlanthe (2005) used an ANC National General Council to lament memorably: “[T]he central challenge facing the ANC is to address the problems that arise from our cadres’ susceptibility to moral decay occasioned by the struggle for the control of and access to resources. All the paralysis in our programmes, all the divisions in our structures, are in one way or another, a consequence of this cancer in our midst.”

International indices suggest that corruption is not strikingly high for a middle-income

developing country (see, for example, Transparency International 2013). The ANC deals with political corruption allegations primarily within party structures. Sustained attempts to bring some political leaders and officials to trial have been rejected because such efforts have been viewed as power plays in factional conflicts. Thus, they have succeeded only in destroying anti-corruption institutions. Parliament’s non-partisan public accounts committee tried to investigate corruption in a major arms procurement programme (Holden and Van Vuuren 2011); the result was that the ANC deployed new senior members to the committee with apparent instructions to disable it. In the mid-2000s, one effective national investigation and prosecution unit, the “Scorpions”, pursued then Deputy President Jacob Zuma on fraud and corruption charges; it was dissolved when Zuma secured the ANC presidency. There is, however, some renewed willingness to subject lower ranking public sector officials to the law, and new legislation may soon result in prosecutions of such officials (DPSA 2013).

The ANC has debated internal controls on members’ business activities for almost a decade – without reaching any conclusions. Proposed measures to end “revolving doors” between state, party, and business do not appear to enjoy significant support (Butler 2011: 67–8). Indeed, the ANC has used its cadre deployment powers to transfer significant funds from state-owned enterprises into party coffers via party-linked businesses. The recent introduction of “integrity committees” at all levels of the ANC is not likely to change current abuses of office for financial gain, and money-politics is likely to continue eroding public trust in ANC and state institutions (Butler 2010: 237–50).

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III

The Management and Structure of the People's Action Party of Singapore

Terence Chong

1. Introduction

The People's Action Party (PAP) was formed in 1954 while Singapore was under British colonial rule. Along with the Workers' Party, the PAP is one of the oldest and certainly most dominant political parties in Singapore, having been in government since 1959. Founded by a core of English-educated, middle-class professionals, many of them educated in Britain, the PAP initially campaigned for independence and self-governance from British rule. When Singapore was part of Malaysia from 1963 to 1965, the party stood for multiculturalism and meritocracy, as it does to this day. Earlier, in 1961, the PAP experienced a schism when its left-wing and pro-

communist factions resigned to form the Socialist Front (Barisan Sosialis) in opposition to the planned merger with Malaysia. The Socialist Front won thirteen seats in the 1963 state elections but in 1966 boycotted Parliament, effectively paving the way for a one-party state in Singapore. Today, of the eighty-seven seats in Parliament, the PAP controls 80 and the Workers' Party only seven.¹

Initially steeped in socialist philosophy and left-wing politics, the PAP moved to the centre with the schism, but later, in the 1960s and 1970s, moved to the right. Under the leadership of Lee Kuan Yew, its first secretary-general and the country's first prime minister, the PAP government oversaw steady economic growth

¹ Singapore has appointed members of Parliament in addition to elected members. The non-constituency MP (NCMP) scheme was introduced in 1984 to ensure representation for political parties that do not form the government. There are currently three NCMPs. There are also nominated MPs (NMPs), a post introduced in 1990 to address fears that the dominance of PAP representatives would result in a lack of alternative views. NMPs are not members of any political party but may have specific expertise or knowledge that they bring to the legislature.

in the city-state. Its second secretary-general and second prime minister, Goh Chok Tong, took over from Lee in 1990. Lee Hsien Loong became the country's third prime minister, in 2004, and is the party's current secretary-general.

In addition to its core beliefs in multiculturalism and meritocracy, the PAP is elitist, valuing stellar educational credentials, strong proficiency in the English-language (with proficiency in Mandarin ideal), as well as professional achievement and success in private industry in its leadership and parliamentary representatives. The party has traditionally valued economic growth and strong governance over the protection of civil liberties and freedoms but currently faces pressure from a younger and increasingly vocal generation of voters to allow greater political pluralism.

2. Party Structures

Central Executive Committee

The power centre of the PAP is the Central Executive Committee (CEC). The head of the CEC is also secretary-general and leader of the party. Other positions include the chair and vice-chair, first and second assistant secretary-general, treasurer, and vice-treasurer.² All officeholders in the CEC are cabinet ministers, while newer ministers and popular members of Parliament

(MPs) make up the rest of the CEC.

The CEC incumbents and the cadres share the task of selecting candidates to sit on the CEC. The outgoing CEC nominates eight candidates, while the party cadres present ten. The party cadres, party members who enjoy voting privileges, then vote, and the first twelve vote getters are elected to the committee. A further six candidates may be appointed, with two of them – the thirteenth and fourteenth candidates – automatically appointed by the CEC. Although there is no hard and fast rule about quotas for women and ethnic minorities, the slate of candidates often contains a number of Indians, Malays, and women, reflecting the party's commitment to multiculturalism. The CEC convenes a few times a year, with increasing frequency in the run up to general elections.

PAP HQ Executive Committee and the Party's Three Pillars

Given Singapore's size, the PAP's bureaucracy is relatively small and highly centralised. There are no state, regional, or provincial party organizations as with major parties in larger countries. The PAP HQ Executive Committee, directly under the CEC, carries out administrative tasks.³ It also oversees twelve sub-committees, including on new media, Malay affairs, and membership recruitment and cadre selection as

² As of late 2013, the leadership consisted of the following: PAP secretary-general, Lee Hsien Loong; PAP chair, Khaw Boon Wan; PAP vice-chair, Yaacob Ibrahim; PAP first assistant secretary-general, Teo Chee Hean; PAP second assistant secretary-general, Tharman Shanmugaratnam; PAP treasurer, Lim Swee Say; PAP vice-treasurer, K. Shanmugam. The rest of the CEC are as follows: Gan Kim Yong, Ng Eng Hen, Heng Swee Keat, Chan Chun Sing, Grace Fu, Vivian Balakrishnan (co-opted), Halimah Yacob (co-opted), Tan Chuan-Jin (co-opted), Lawrence Wong (co-opted), Denise Phua (co-opted), and Seah Kian Peng (co-opted).

³ People's Action Party Who's Who, HQ Executive Committee, <http://www.pap.org.sg/about-pap/whos-who/hq-executive-committee> (accessed 11 August 2013).

well as the Women's Wing and Young PAP.⁴ PAP HQ is located in Changi, on the eastern part of the island, and has a small staff that maintains party accounts, membership records, and archival materials and coordinates feedback through the network of party branches (Mauzy and Milne 2002). It also serves as the PAP's operations centre during elections.

Of the twelve sub-committees the HQ Executive Committee oversees, the Young PAP and Women's Wing are the most high profile and symbolic, representing two of the three pillars of the PAP. The Young PAP was formed in 1986 and was initially open to individuals between seventeen and thirty-five years of age (later raised to forty). Set up by Goh Chok Tong while first assistant secretary, the objective was to raise the party's attraction and relevance among Singaporean youth feared by PAP stewards to be increasingly apolitical or narrowly focused on their careers and material success. The Women's Wing was established in 1989, ostensibly to encourage more women to join the party and to integrate them into the policy-making process. The Women's Wing had been preceded by the Women's League, founded in 1955 to champion political education, suffrage, and the Women's Charter, passed in 1961 to advance women's rights. The league was dismantled upon the PAP's split from the Socialist Front in 1961. The Young PAP and Women's Wing are not traditionally talent pools for recruiting candidates for Parliament in part because the party's elitist stance compels it to look beyond its own organization for nominees.

The third pillar of the party is the PAP Policy Forum, established in 2004. Its objective is to offer an opportunity for rank-and-file party members to meet with party leaders and engage them on policy issues. Each of the party's eighty-seven branches elects two members to the forum, and the Young PAP and Women's Wing contribute ten members each. The forum was designed to address concerns that the elitist practice of selecting parliamentary candidates from outside the party was alienating rank-and-file members, who were only mobilised during elections.

Government Parliamentary Committees

The PAP established government parliamentary committees (GPCs) in 1987. They are not required by the constitution and serve largely as party organs. Currently all the members and chairs of the eleven GPCs are PAP backbenchers. Each GPC has a resource panel composed of members of the public who are experts in their field. The committees essentially shadow different government ministries to examine policies and proposed legislation in order to provide civil servants with suggestions and expert feedback. The GPCs were intended to heighten PAP MPs' input in the policymaking process, provide public feedback through the resource panels, and strengthen democratic institutions in the country (Tan 1999).

The GPCs were also established in part to counter criticisms that the PAP's overwhelming majority in Parliament had led to a decrease in robust and informative debate. The GPCs could thus

⁴ The other sub-committees include those for branch appointments and relations, constituency relations, information and feedback, PAP Awards, political education, publicity and publication, and social and recreational activities.

play the role of an opposition and challenge the views of ministers in Parliament. When the 1991 general elections saw the oppositional Singapore Democratic Party winning three seats, and the Workers' Party gaining one seat out of a total of eighty-one, it was announced in 1991 that GPCs would no longer play an adversarial role as initially envisaged.

PAP Branches and Para-State Organizations

Each of the PAP's eighty-seven constituencies has a party branch, but they are rather marginal in operations. Many of them are located amid public housing flats, where the PAP logo is prominently displayed. PAP branches are financially independent and headed by the branch chair, who is also the incumbent MP for the area. The chair is supported by the branch secretary and the branch executive committee. Groups of branches are under the authority of District Committees, or the Group Representative Constituency (GRC), led by a minister.

Despite being entrenched in the suburbs, the organizational and bureaucratic role of PAP branches is minimal. They neither represent the power base of an MP or minister, nor do they function as voting blocks in party elections. They play no role in the selection of party candidates and have no say in policy decisions. In addition, branch members cannot expect to be rewarded with official positions further up in the party. Their minor role stems from the traumatic 1961 schism, which saw the PAP lose control of the majority of its branch organizations and the destruction of branch office property by pro-

communists factions (Lee 1998).

The primary role of PAP branches today is to serve as sites for MPs to conduct their weekly Meet-the-People sessions. These gatherings, initiated by David Marshall while leader of the opposition Workers' Party but later adopted by the ruling party, are evening clinics during which residents can discuss their problems and concerns with their MP. The sessions are usually held on Mondays or Wednesdays. Party branches also assist with logistics and constituency walkabouts by MPs and provide help during elections.

The party is financially supported by contributions from ministers and MPs. The latter contribute S\$1,000 a month while ministers and other appointees give varying amounts. The contribution is deducted monthly from the MP's annual allowance of S\$192,500. Other sources of party revenue derive from property on Napier Road, fundraising events, and donations from supporters (Mauzy and Milne 2002).

Para-state organizations, rather than party branches, are used to maintain contact with the populace and mobilise on the ground. These organizations include the Citizens' Consultative Committees (CCCs) and Residents' Committees (RCs), which fall under the umbrella of the People's Association (PA). The PA receives state funding and is a statutory board under the Prime Minister's Office. The close relationship between the PA and the PAP is not a secret. Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong is the chair of the PA, while Lim Swee Say, minister in the Prime Minister's Office, is deputy chair.⁵ These para-state organizations

⁵ People's Association Board of Management, 2012–2015 <http://www.scribd.com/doc/127520463/PA-Board-of-Management-2012-2015> (accessed 12 August 2013).

oversee public programmes such as welfare and financial assistance schemes, free health-screening sessions, festival celebrations by clans and religious groups, and leisure and educational tours.

Only PAP members or MPs can be appointed by the PA to be "advisers" to CCCs. This allows a PAP MP to tap into the network of state apparatuses and public funds to implement public programmes and to raise his or her profile among the local constituency. While the CCC staff and grassroots volunteers may not necessarily be PAP members, though many are, they are closely aligned with the political values of the ruling party.

Given the elitist character of the PAP, these para-state organizations are one of the few bridges left connecting high-ranking ministers and MPs with ordinary Singaporeans. It is of no surprise that they make it a point to block opposition MPs from becoming grassroots advisers. In a public letter justifying this practice, the PA asserted, "Besides connecting people to people, grassroots advisers are required to help the government connect with people and help promote government policies and programmes, such as anti-dengue and active ageing. Hence, the Government has to appoint grassroots advisers who support its programmes and can play this role well. Opposition MPs cannot be expected to do this and thus cannot become advisers to GROs [grassroots organizations]."⁶ Why opposition MPs cannot be expected to support anti-dengue and active ageing efforts is never explained. Whatever the reason, this practice effectively bars non-PAP MPs from state resources, thus giving the ruling party a clear advantage over the opposition.

3. Intra-Party Democracy and Decision-Making Processes

Sources of Power

As noted, the PAP is an elitist organization, and this particular characteristic has influenced the nature of the country's power structure given the party's dominance. According to Chen (1978: 9) the country's power structure is "formed by a cohesive power elite which is made up of the political elite, the bureaucrats and the select professional elite." Opting for an ideological explanation of the elite's cohesion, Chan (1975: 301) opines, "The amazing elite cohesion of the present PAP leadership, must to a great extent be attributed to their experience in fighting and manoeuvring against common enemies, first the colonial authorities, but more so in the intra-party struggle."

In terms of party structure, decisionmaking power rests exclusively with the CEC. Power is highly concentrated among party officeholders, all of whom are cabinet ministers. Major party matters are discussed and resolved within the CEC, with the HQ Executive Committee or its sub-committees tasked with executing decisions. Initially described as a Leninist party with a vanguard cadre and strong socialist leanings, its CEC is "autonomous and autocratic" and is a reflection of the way the English-proficient elite in Singapore has monopolised power (Ortmann 2010: 103), resulting in a "state of governance in Singapore in which the PAP has almost complete domination over national resources and assets" (Ho 2010: 70). Meanwhile, party discipline is high, and leaders claim that while issues are

⁶ Ooi Hui Mei, "Why opposition MPs can't be advisors to grassroots bodies," Straits Times, Forum Letter, 31 August 2013.

thoroughly debated internally, the party exhibits a united front once a decision has been made.

Indeed, S. Rajaratnam, one of the party's founding members, opined that the party's role in the country's political life had declined (People's Action Party 1999). What he meant was that after more than fifty years in government, the PAP had become synonymous with the government and, indeed, the state, such that many ordinary Singaporeans are unable to differentiate between them. The above example of how the PA, a state apparatus, systematically excludes non-PAP MPs illustrates the problem.

In this sense, the centre of power in Singapore lies not with the party's CEC, but with its members who make up the cabinet. Individuals wishing to become part of this structure must have access to the elitist and credential-based education system, win government scholarships and perform outstandingly, and then excel in their chosen field or industry. Individuals ascending a hierarchy of groups through the discourse of meritocracy and shared values are tracked and brought to the attention of the ruling elite. This elite's emphasis on meritocracy – the ideology and system in which rewards and remuneration are objectively distributed according to the talent and industriousness demonstrated by an individual – is crucial in assuaging fears of cronyism or clientelist practices. The shared values of the ruling elite generally revolve around pro-business policies and the primacy of economic growth for national survival; strong resistance to the ideology of the welfare state though not to piecemeal welfare policies; the prioritising of national defence and internal security over arts

or heritage; and commitment towards upholding multiculturalism and meritocracy. Upon undergoing a selection process, these individuals may become part of the power centre.

PAP Membership and the Cadre System

The cadre system, a key feature of the PAP, was instituted after an attempted takeover by the pro-communist wing of the party in 1957. To prevent another such takeover, Lee Kuan Yew introduced the system after a trip to Rome. Borrowing from the Vatican, PAP membership was divided into two tiers: cadre members and ordinary members. "Only cadres who had been chosen by the CEC could in turn vote for the candidates to the CEC, just as cardinals nominated by a Pope could elect another Pope. This closed the circuit, and since the CEC controlled the core of the party, the party could not now be captured" (Lee 1998: 287).

Potential cadre members are usually nominated by an MP and are subsequently interviewed and screened by a CEC panel of four or five ministers and MPs (Mauzy and Milne 2002). There are about 100 cadre recommendations a year. The exact number of ordinary and cadre members remains vague in light of the party's silence on the matter. In 1998, however, Second Assistant Secretary-General and Home Affairs Minister Wong Kan Seng revealed the number of cadres to have reached one thousand.⁷ Ordinary members numbered approximately fifteen thousand (Mauzy and Milne 2002).

According to Mauzy and Milne (2002: 41), "Lee Kuan Yew did not want a mass party and

⁷ Buck Song Koh, "The 1000 PAP 'cardinals' who appointed the pope," Straits Times Weekly Edition, 11 April 1998.

populist demands, and he wanted to avoid the Asian problem of 'guanxi,' or individuals seeking financial gain out of political association." As such, potential party members are expected to be active in grassroots or civic activities before they are considered for membership. The main difference between ordinary and cadre members is the latter's ability to vote for CEC members. As a rule, party members are not paid, but they may receive certain perks as grassroots leaders in para-state organizations such as RCs and CCCs. These perks include priority allocations of public housing, admission of their children to preferred schools, and free parking in public housing car parks.

Selection of Parliamentary Candidates

One of the most important tasks of the CEC is to select candidates for parliamentary elections. The PAP magnifies the importance of this task by making party survival synonymous with the renewal and succession of national leadership. In Singapore, strong emphasis is placed on the smooth political transition of leadership to younger and more energetic individuals to maintain socio-economic stability and continuity for the international business community and the electorate. This leadership renewal process is made more difficult in light of the country's small talent pool and the general aversion of capable individuals to politics.

The PAP began its renewal process when it fielded doctoral degree holders, lawyers, physicians, and top administrators as candidates in the 1968 general elections. Lee Kuan Yew (2000: 737) wrote that he quickly discovered that

bright minds alone did not necessarily make for good political leaders, thus making the job of finding individuals competent and courageous enough and with moral character increasingly "urgent at each subsequent election because I could see that my colleagues were visibly slowing down". This renewal process is an aggressive one with an average slate of twenty new candidates introduced at every general elections for approximately eighty-five available parliamentary seats.

The PAP's selection process has two main parts. The first is the actual short-listing of possible parliamentary candidates. Here the PAP recruits almost exclusively from outside the party, with a keen eye on successful individuals in the private and public sectors. These individuals will only take up party membership once slated to stand for election. Party stewards with grassroots experience have virtually no chance of being selected for higher office. Cabinet ministers actively look for men and women in their thirties and forties in the top echelons of academia, banking, law, medicine, army, trade unions, and so on. Such individuals, either tracked by the PAP or recommended by their superiors, are invited to "tea sessions," where they mingle with other potential candidates and ministers. Short-listed candidates are invited back for discussions with additional ministers, sometimes up to five rounds, before meeting the prime minister for a final interview.⁸

The second part involves the character and psychological assessment of candidates for leadership positions. While all short-listed parliamentary candidates are likely to have been

⁸ Seth Mydans, "In Singapore, the party in power offers new faces," New York Times, 18 April 2011.

educated at the best universities, achieved stellar academic results, and demonstrated industry competence, political leadership, according to Lee (2000: 739), demands more: "Ability can be assessed fairly accurately by a person's academic record and achievement in work. Character is not so easily measured. After some successes but too many failures, I concluded that it was more important, though more difficult, to assess a person's character."

Taking its cue from the way NASA evaluates its astronauts, the PAP puts candidates with ministerial potential through psychological tests to assess their character profile and values. Another mode of testing, applied to the broader civil service, is from Shell, the petroleum company. Shell determines a person's "currently estimated potential" by looking at his or her power of analysis, imagination, and sense of reality to determine their "helicopter ability," that is, a person's ability to see the big picture and yet zoom in on critical details.

4. Settlement of Intra-Party Conflicts, Disputes, and Ideological Differences

Internal Dispute over Pace of Leadership Renewal

The PAP's aggressive rate of renewing its MPs and ministers has led to two main types of resistance. The first is internal, from older MPs and ministers who feel that they are not yet ready to retire from politics. Lee Kuan Yew (2000) states that when he quickened the pace of leadership renewal in late 1970s, Toh Chin Chye, a founding member of the PAP, emerged as his most vocal internal critic. Toh not only disagreed with Lee over the pace of

renewal but also over the PAP's new recruitment process. He felt that young successors to the old guard should not be headhunted or parachuted into the upper echelons of government, but instead, should rise through the party as activists and mobilisers. Toh was the most senior party critic and had the support of other ministers of state and parliamentary secretaries, including Lee Koon Choy, Fong Sip Chee, Chan Chee Seng, and Chor Yock Eng. This faction stood at odds with Prime Minister Lee, Goh Keng Swee, Rajaratnam, Lim Kim San, and Hon Sui Sen. Sensing a split with the potential to lead to a power struggle, Lee removed Toh from his cabinet in 1981. Toh remained a PAP backbencher, occasionally criticising government policies and legislation but accomplished nothing substantial in his opposition.

This incident, among many, indicates that for the longest time, Lee Kuan Yew, undoubtedly occupied the seat of power. That is, internal disputes were not settled democratically but by the power of a single individual. It also demonstrates how internal critics, regardless of their stature, were efficiently jettisoned once they were perceived as threats to party or government cohesion. Of interest, the major players, among them Keng Swee, Rajaratnam, Kim San, and Sui Sen, were supportive of Lee's ideas about renewal even though their careers were at stake, suggesting that those closest to the seat of power were generally on the same page.

The second type of resistance has come from the electorate. The PAP's relatively poor showing in the 2011 general elections – when it secured 61 percent of the popular vote, its lowest share since independence – was partly blamed on the number of new faces presented by the party.

The explanation was that ordinary Singaporeans were not familiar with the new PAP candidates and thus could not relate to them. Stung by this lesson, the PAP announced only five months after the 2011 elections that it had begun looking for candidates for the next elections so it could introduce them to the public as early as possible. According to media reports, "This time round, the [PAP] MPs said the new faces are expected to be seen on the ground learning the ropes as early as mid-2012, in preparation for the next election due in 2016."⁹ More to the point, the earlier introduction of new faces addressed Toh's earlier concerns. According to the same report, "PM Lee added that PAP aims to avoid 'parachutists' coming in at the last moment, in reference to the party's history of new candidates suddenly appearing in its branches just before GE [general elections]."¹⁰ Nevertheless, an unexpected by-election in January 2013 compelled the PAP to put up a relatively unknown colorectal surgeon as its candidate. He proceeded to lose convincingly to a more familiar face from the Workers' Party.

With Goh Chok Tong and Lee Hsien Loong taking over in 1990 and 2004, respectively, PAP conflict management styles have evolved. Goh was touted to be more interested in consensus-building than the autocratic Lee. Nevertheless, Goh has demonstrated flashes of intolerance for

critics who are deemed to have strayed beyond their field of expertise.¹¹

5. Anti-Corruption Measures

Although no country is immune to corruption, Singapore consistently ranks as one of the least corrupt countries in the world. In the 2012 report by Transparency International, Singapore came in fifth on the Corruption Perceptions Index, after Denmark, Finland, New Zealand, and Sweden.¹² This did not happen by accident. Corruption was a major challenge for Singapore during the British colonial era, especially among the police force, customs operations, and local politics.

When the PAP took power in 1959, it quickly streamlined bureaucratic procedures and cut red tape to stem low-level corruption and bribery. As a symbolic gesture, party members wore white shirts and trousers to symbolise purity and honesty in their private and public lives. Perhaps the most important PAP measure was to strengthen existing laws and give anti-corruption agencies more investigative powers. The Prevention of Corruption Act (PCA), enacted in 1960, introduced several important changes. It broadened the definition of "gratuity" to include anything of value, not just money, which

⁹ "Gan Kim Yong spearheads search for new PAP candidates," Asiaone, 29 November 2011, <http://news.asiaone.com/News/AsiaOne+News/Singapore/Story/A1Story20111129-313370.html> (accessed 12 August 2013).

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ In 1994, local novelist Catherine Lim wrote an essay for the Straits Times titled "The PAP and the people - A Great Affective Divide," in which she argued that there was little public empathy or warmth towards the ruling party, which she described as isolated and lacking in "affective dimension." Prime Minister Goh denounced the essay and challenged Lim to enter politics if she wished to comment on it.

¹² Transparency International, "Corruption Perceptions Index," 2012, <http://cpi.transparency.org/cpi2012/results/> (accessed 20 August 2013).

made the law more flexible in dealing with different kinds of bribes. Anti-corruption officers were endowed with greater powers to arrest individuals, search premises, and investigate the bank accounts and bank books of suspected individuals as well as their closest relatives. It was also no longer necessary for the state to prove that the person who accepted a bribe was in a position to dispense favours. Accused persons living beyond their means or who were unable to explain their wealth would be treated as potential corruption suspects, with the onus placed on the person to prove his or her innocence.

The PAP government also implemented several long-term measures. First, and most important, was investigating and prosecuting corruption. The political will to do so had to be shared not just among the top leadership, but also among heads of different state bodies and agencies because this is the premise on which other legislative and enforcement measures had to be predicated. The second measure was to strengthen anti-corruption agencies. The PAP allocated generous resources to the Corrupt Practices Investigations Bureau (CPIB), established in 1952 by the colonial government, so it could pursue its mandate. The third long-term measure was to regularly revise and increase the salaries of public servants, beginning in 1972. In 1994, the government introduced "Competitive Salaries for Competent and Honest Government," a controversial White Paper proposing that the salaries of ministers and civil servants be pegged at two-thirds the average earned income of the top four earners in five professions, namely engineering, banking, law, accounting, and local

and multinational corporate leadership.¹³ The fourth measure, already noted, was the selection of parliamentary candidates who are financially secure and professionally successful. There are few career politicians in Singapore. Most of them are accomplished professionals who have been co-opted by the PAP in part because the elitist character of the PAP prefers such individuals over party stewards to run the country, and also to avoid a situation where long-time party stewards may build up powerbases within the party to compete for higher positions.

6. Conclusion

PAP government has been a responsive government. Together with high-calibre civil servants and bureaucrats, the PAP has adapted and anticipated the contemporary forces of globalisation and neo-capitalism to consolidate the country's status as a financial hub and global city. How the PAP as a political party will adapt to the shifting mood and expectations of the electorate is more of an open question. There is no doubt that as a rule of thumb, a ruling political party benefits from government's good performance, but national politics in Singapore has become too complicated for such a simplistic assumption.

Liberal immigration policies, the widening wage gap, expensive housing, and increasing cost of living, as well as the perception that ruling party elites are out of touch with ordinary Singaporeans are slowly but surely taking its toll on the PAP's popularity. Younger Singaporeans,

¹³ These professions were chosen because their top earners would have the managerial and leadership qualities that ministers should possess.

many of whom are less deferential and more critical of the party's shortcomings, may not share the relationship their parents did with the PAP's founding members. Indeed, one of the keys to the PAP's past strong connection with older Singaporeans was the implicit understanding that the ruling party held their interests at heart and could be trusted to work towards improving their lives. Today, the main challenge for the PAP is to revive that understanding.

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IV

Congress Party: Ideology, Organization and Finance

Zoya Hasan

1. Introduction

The Indian National Congress (hereafter: the Congress) surprised everyone when it defeated the Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP)–led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) and returned to power in the 2004 parliamentary elections at the head of a coalition, the United Progressive Alliance (UPA). It has won two consecutive elections, winning again in 2009, something it had not done since 1984. The elections resulted in both the BJP and the Communist Party of India (CPI (M)) becoming politically weaker but paradoxically the Congress appears weaker, too. It has not made any significant gains in states that it has lost to the opposition in the past decade, notably Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal and Tamil Nadu. The overdependence on the Nehru-Gandhi dynasty remains an enduring fault line in the party. The excessive reliance on the family's charisma is not enough in an India defined by the mobilization of

a plethora of identities and aspirations, and the diffusion of political power from New Delhi to the states.

The point of departure for this paper is the 2004 parliamentary elections that brought the Congress back to power at the centre (central government in New Delhi), helping the party to assert its national presence. This is a fascinating moment in the history of India, which is at once a rising power with an expanding middle class and a poor, unequal and misgoverned country. This process of change started in 1989 when the leadership, constituencies and electoral strategies of political parties – including that of the Congress – underwent significant changes. From this point the Congress ceased to be the fulcrum of the political system and increasingly had to respond to shifts in politics – the rise of the BJP and of various regional parties which doubled their share of the votes and seats at the

expense of national parties – as well as economic changes, many of which were in turn brought about by its own policies in its previous stint in power in the first half of the 1990s. This period is also particularly interesting because in some ways the Congress had to reinvent itself in these changed circumstances.

Four key elements are essential to an examination of political parties, especially the Congress party: (i) ideology and programmes as embodied in policies; (ii) leadership; (iii) organization; and (iv) party finance. This paper aims to capture the structure of the Congress, as well as the transformation within the party, both in its policy and strategy and in its organization and leadership. It also investigates the structure and direction of change within the party and its governance agenda in response to these changing conditions, as well as its own internal dynamics.

2. Origin and Development of the Congress

This brief historical background sets the context for understanding the political development of the Congress. The political history of modern India is intimately intertwined with the history of the Congress, India's largest and oldest party. It is unique not only for its longevity but also for its role in the building of the Indian nation. It played a crucial role in shaping modern India and establishing a democratic system. Globally, the Congress is one of the most important, durable and influential political parties in the world. No

party, at least in the developing world outside Western democracies, can claim such a long innings in power.¹

Established in 1885, the 125-year old party was born out of India's struggle for freedom from British rule. As the vanguard of the national movement, it was the natural party of governance from Independence in 1947. Out of the past 66 years it has run the central government in New Delhi for all but 11. In most general elections held prior to 1989, with the exception of that in 1977, it commanded an outright majority or emerged as the party with the highest number of seats in parliament. As a movement that became a party, it encompassed virtually every shade of political opinion and social constituency of the nation.

Led by Jawaharlal Nehru, the Congress reaped the rewards of its role during the anti-colonial movement against the British. Although dominated by upper-caste/class leaders, there were various castes, communities and regional and linguistic groups represented in its higher echelons. Its early hegemony was based on a concrete set of achievements: an independent model of industrial growth; considerable reduction in large-scale feudal landholdings, which benefited the upper peasantry; growth in infrastructure; expansion in educational facilities and technical personnel. It did deliver some tangible benefits to the broad mass of the population through various development projects, the initiation and construction of the public sector and the provision of public services, such as health, education and transport.

¹ This section is based on Zoya Hasan, *Congress after Indira: Policy, Power, Political Change (1984–2009)*, New Delhi: New Delhi: Oxford University Press 2012.

This political system worked until the split in the Congress in 1969 when Indira Gandhi acted against the old guard, accusing them of being reactionaries and against progressive policies, such as the nationalization of banks and abolition of privy purses of princes.² The consequence was a radicalization of the Congress in the short term and centralization of power, and Indira Gandhi's complete control over the cabinet and the party. The once robust Congress roots withered and governance became less institutionalized, more personalized and highly centralized. She discarded the intra-party democracy of the old decentralized structure and placed individuals who were personally loyal to her at the head of Pradesh Congress Committees. It was clear that her lurch towards authoritarianism had cost the party heavily in terms of its popular credibility in north India which had to suffer the worst excesses of the Emergency – a watershed in Indian politics since popular opposition to it broke the political monopoly of the Congress.³ Its three-decades-long rule at the Centre was broken when the 1977 general elections brought the Janata Party, a conglomerate of four parties (the Jana Sangh, Bhartiya Lok Dal, Congress (O), and the Socialist Party), to power.

Much of the responsibility for the decline of the Congress and the weakened governmental and administrative institutions was attributed to Indira Gandhi's personal ambition and dynastic

proclivities as she went about refashioning the party to suit her political interests. However, neither the need to reshape the Congress nor her capacity to do so would have been conceivable had the party not already been in serious and growing disarray. In short, the decline itself was not due to factors that were altogether internal to the Congress or because of the top leadership's centralizing drive but essentially the result of paradigmatic changes in the polity, economy and society. The Congress was both shaping and being shaped by societal changes. As the Congress was changing, so was India.

All these trends were indicative of a great ferment in Indian society. Social and political change was aided by affirmative action and reservation policy, which created a lower-caste elite of substantial size that had acquired education and joined non-traditional occupations and professions. This section formed the nucleus of a small but highly vocal political leadership which began to alter the public discourse. This process came to a head in the course of the Mandal Commission's proposal to extend reservations in central government jobs and education to the »Other Backward Classes« (OBCs) in 1990, a course that was vehemently opposed by the upper-caste middle classes. The backward castes were questioning the way the country had been governed and, above all, their exclusion from bureaucratic and political power. These trends point to a social revolution

² Privy purse was a payment made to the royal families of erstwhile princely states as part of their agreements to first integrate with India in 1947, and later to merge their states in 1949, whereby they lost all ruling rights. The Privy Purse continued to be paid to the royal families until the 26th Constitutional Amendment of 1971 – by which all their privileges and allowances from the central government would cease to exist – was implemented after a two-year legal battle.

³ On the request of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, President of India Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed declared a state of Emergency under Article 352 of the Constitution, effectively bestowing on her the power to rule by decree, suspending elections and civil liberties. It is one of the most controversial decisions times in independent India. The Emergency lasted for 21 months, from 26 June 1975 to 21 March 1977.

that had given voice to previously marginalized groups and enabled them to gain access to the political system. In consequence, political power moved downwards from the old established elites to new groups who pushed for a politics of parity and equality of opportunity. The Congress gradually lost the support of the backward castes, scheduled castes and even Muslims who had constituted its most loyal supporters, as they began drifting away in several states. The latter two groups had constituted the very foundation of the Congress's political power, and once they began shifting their loyalties to different regional parties, the Congress's political dominance was truly shaken.

Prior to the early 1980s, the political impact of religion was limited and communal parties won few seats. Ethnic and secessionist troubles in Punjab, Kashmir and Assam allowed room for such tendencies. Its greatest failure was in the way it approached the growing Hindu assertiveness spearheaded by the BJP and Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) combine. As the Congress resorted to ethnic appeals and flirted with religious politics to shore up its dwindling support, it was eventually to become the principal victim of these actions. It committed strategic errors in its approach to the politics of organized religion taking shape outside the party system. Above all, this created conditions conducive to the rise of the BJP, which formed a government at the Centre in 1998, ending decades of erstwhile political isolation. With the emergence of a clear right-wing alternative at the Centre and regional parties in the states, the Congress found it difficult to occupy and define the middle ground as political competition was

increasingly along communal and caste lines. These developments were undermining it in two ways: directly, by challenging secular pluralist foundation of the political system, and indirectly, by shifting the political discourse away from development to ethnic identity issues. All in all, the Congress sought to remain broadly centrist, but the centre ground got squeezed. Since then, secularism/communalism has remained an important ideological divide in Indian politics. The Gujarat violence of 2002, in which over 1,000 Muslims were killed, was a turning point in compelling the Congress to confront the BJP's divisive politics.

3. Ideology and Strategy

The central pillar of Congress ideology was the legacy of Nehru's leadership in the freedom struggle and the first decades of the nascent state which he steered with great distinction. The legitimating ideology of the Congress since independence had been secular nationalism and developmentalism. It was in the name of these ideals that it claimed to speak for the nation, regardless of creed or class.⁴ India's Constitution, with its focus on secularity, political democracy, social justice and quasi-federalism, is a representation of the ideology of the Congress as a nationalist organization.

However, major ideological shifts took place in the overall framework of development in the early 1990s, from a state-regulated economy to a market-centred one and to a greater role for religious politics. Post-1991 the Congress committed itself to economic reform and freedom

⁴ Perry Anderson, *The Indian Ideology, Three Essays*, New Delhi, 2012, p. 145.

for markets. The basics of this policy were put in place in the early 1980s during the period when Indira Gandhi (1980–84) was prime minister and later during Rajiv Gandhi's prime-ministership (1984–2009). This economic transition had actually begun during Indira Gandhi's last term in office (1980–84), when she moved away from *garibi hatao* (remove poverty) to creating an environment in which the industrial sector would take the lead in economic development strategy. Indira Gandhi's government began to change the traditional anti-capitalist approach of the Congress to embrace a pro-business orientation. Increasing growth and enhancing production were to become the hallmark of policy from 1980 onwards.⁵

The pace of economic liberalization has been nuanced by the need to avoid conflict and confrontation. Hence, changes have occurred in a piecemeal manner as the Congress did not altogether abandon its commitment to the dirigiste regime while pursuing its commitment to economic liberalization. From time to time it has sought to continue what many see as the social democratic strand in the party's political tradition. Indeed, the Congress Party's distinctiveness lies in the fact that, even though its current policies are conditioned by global economic forces, at the same time, in order to dominate national politics, it is sensitive to the compulsions of democracy and development in a poor country. Post-2004 the Congress government began to

shape a new form of »welfare politics« through the introduction of rights-based legislation, such as the right to employment (2005), the right to education (2009) and the right to food (2013) and larger allocations for the social sector. Articulating the party's philosophy, Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee claimed that the Congress's development strategy had changed radically with the right to information act, employment, education and food for a large section of its people.⁶ »I don't know [of] any [other] country in the world which has given the legal right to food to its people«, Pranab Mukherjee said, referring to the right-to-food legislation. These legally mandated rights went counter to the global consensus on market-led growth which overrides political and ethical concerns about inequality. Thanks to the revenue-rich state, the United Progressive Alliance was able to unveil the biggest ever post-independence expansion of public expenditure.⁷

The repertoire of social policies built up by the Congress was a sign that mass perceptions do matter in democratic politics. The UPA's experience shows that there was room for government policies to provide direct benefits to people who were unable to meet their basic needs. Greater political participation has led to a sharper sense of inequity and an attempt to use politics to rectify it. The need for the Congress to change course and accommodate the broader social interests of the poor to secure their political

⁵ Atul Kohli, 'Politics of Economic Liberalization', in *Democracy and Development in India: From Socialism to Pro-Business*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2009.

⁶ Pranab Mukherjee's speech at the AICC session in 2010 reported in the *Hindu*, 3 November 2010.

⁷ »How did the UPA Spend Our Money: An Assessment of Expenditure Priorities and Resource Mobilisation Efforts by the UPA Government«, Centre for Budget and Governance Accountability (CGBA), New Delhi, 2009. Available at: http://www.cbga-india.org/whats_new/How%20did%20the%20UPA%20spend%20our%20money.pdf

support was the strongest indication yet of these pressures.

Numbers matter in electoral politics and yet the Congress is currently going all out to woo the upwardly-mobile middle classes at a time when the economy has witnessed a loss of economic momentum, causing both a political crisis and policy paralysis. The Congress has had to reconcile the contradiction between economic reforms, which benefit the elite and upper-middle classes, and its mass support among the poor, who have been the losers in this process. This contradiction results from the change in India's social structure from an elite/mass structure to one with a substantial middle class sandwiched in-between. For some time now, the Congress has been wondering how to reconcile attempts at appealing to the newly powerful middle class, with its focus on its traditional support base, India's poor. Rahul Gandhi, vice-president of the Congress has been, in some ways, a lightning rod for that conflict. His political sympathies may privately lean towards a pro-poor platform but fear of middle-class antagonism to social welfare policies has meant that he remains non-committal in public. He has acknowledged the need to take on board the aspirations of the middle classes, who are not finding their concerns reflected by the political process.

4. Organization and Leadership

The Congress is a mass party, that is to say, it attempts to base itself on an appeal to the masses. Congress has no cadres: it recruits anyone who is willing to join. Formally,

the organization developed by Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi's reorganization of the Congress in the years 1918 to 1920 has been retained. Before Independence, the Congress organization extended down to the village level. Each district had a committee that reported to a provincial committee. India's division into provincial committees was based on regional languages. The provincial committees reported to the All India Congress Committee (AICC), a body of about 350 people. The Congress Working Committee (CWC) was responsible for policy decisions and daily administration.

After independence, the Pradesh Congress Committee (PCC) became the centre of power in each state. District units of Congress corresponded to administrative boundaries of districts. Each PCC has a Working Committee of 10–15 key members and the state president is the leader of the state unit. The PCC is responsible for directing political campaigns at local and state levels and assisting the campaigns for parliamentary constituencies. The AICC is formed of delegates sent from the PCCs around the country. The delegates elect various Congress committees, including the CWC, which consists of senior party leaders and office bearers, and takes all important executive and political decisions. The CWC and the president remain at the top of the national party structure, which runs the party at the national level on a day-to-day basis and take all the key decisions.⁸ Control of the presidency is critical for the control of CWC, the Congress Parliamentary Board (CPB) and the Central Election Committee.

For much of its history the Congress had strong

⁸ Stanley Kochanek, *Congress Party of India*, Princeton University Press, 1968, 189.

state units and dedicated workers. Because of this, its influence penetrated downwards quite effectively, at least to the sub-district level and sometimes further down to the taluka level (an administrative division at the local level, also known as tehsil). This influence had, however, been seriously eroded since the late 1979s as the party machinery began to break down. Until the early 1970s, the Congress used to have regular elections, even if they were sometimes stage-managed. No elections were held after Indira Gandhi felt let down by the Congress organization leaders. Elections which had been promised early in Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's tenure were never conducted during his term as party president. Since then, elections have been repeatedly postponed on one pretext or another. Sonia Gandhi joined the Congress in 1998 and was immediately elected as the president and has remained in the post ever since. She was elected unopposed as the president of the Congress for the fourth time in September 2010.

There is no reliable information on party management and how the Congress deals with different voices and clashes of interests within the party. There are no objective answers to the question of party management and internal conflict resolution because there are no rules and regulations for the same. However, it is clear that the Congress, despite several changes of leadership and personnel at various levels, operates with a centralised top-down structure. Decision-making is the preserve of the »high command«, headed by the Congress president –

a post which for the most part has been occupied by a member of the Nehru-Gandhi family.

Most parties in India are controlled by influential political families but none more famous than the Nehru-Gandhi family. The top leadership has remained within the family, with Jawaharlal Nehru, Indira Gandhi, Rajiv Gandhi and Sonia Gandhi all heading the Congress. As a party, the Congress has never been quite the same without a member of the Nehru-Gandhi family at the helm as it is believed that only a member of this family could capture votes across the many divisions of caste, creed and class.⁹ The reliance on the family has failed time and again but this has not lessened the party's dependence on them.¹⁰ This dependence is confirmed by the elevation of Sonia Gandhi's son, Rahul Gandhi, as the vice-president of the party in January 2013, despite the disastrous performance of the Congress under his leadership in the north Indian state of Uttar Pradesh legislative assembly elections a year earlier.

This family-centric arrangement and the ready acceptance of the »natural order« within the Congress is surely a sign of its limitations. The dynasty has become the organizing principle of the party, a substitute for ideology. The dynasty's primacy and pre-eminence is justified by its role as an arbiter and keeps the party united, which is generally prone to factionalism and indiscipline.¹¹ The Nehru-Gandhi family has been able to play this role because of the perception that it is fair and just in its judgments in adjudicating factional

disputes. Groupism and infighting are rampant, which needs a neutral arbiter to keep the peace. It could be argued that Sonia Gandhi's presence at the top has prevented the fragmentation of the party. Conflicts are settled by Sonia Gandhi who takes the final decision and the squabbling leaders accept her decision. This is not true when a non-Gandhi is at the helm. For instance, during the presidency of Narasimha Rao and Sitaram Kesri, every decision was hotly contested, with leading dissidents coming from the ranks of the top leadership. Under Sonia Gandhi, on the other hand, the Congress negotiates unity among contending factions by leaving conflict management to her.¹² But this approach works in states where the Congress has a semblance of organisation; it does not work in states where the organization is defunct, as in Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and West Bengal, or where vicious factional struggles persist, where her writ does not run. In these states disputes have to be settled locally, often without a reference to the conflict-resolution mechanism of the AICC.

More than one-third of all Congress MPs inherit their seats by family connection (twice the figure for the BJP), and most of them are young MPs. In Germany, for example, parties are required to meet certain conditions in nominating their candidates. They have to be chosen by a direct secret vote at both constituency and federal levels. Likewise in America laws were enacted that required the use of secret ballots in intraparty elections.

The lack of internal democracy is incon-

trovertible, even after the party's new importance under the UPA government (2004–2014) following Sonia Gandhi's decision not to take up the prime-ministerial post which altered the party/government equation in favour of former. There are institutional and systemic obstacles to democratic accountability within the Congress, most conspicuously the lack of credible elections and the failure to nurture state leadership. Most of the coveted party posts are distributed through nomination and not election. The Congress has also shied away from holding internal elections to the AICC or CWC or PCCs. AICC and CWC members have not come from the election process for decades.

Comparative evidence from other democracies shows that the general trend is toward greater internal democracy, decentralization and transparency within parties. The British Labour Party, the Spanish Socialist Party and the Progressive Conservative Party in Canada have seen movements by party activists and by the rank and file to reduce the power of entrenched party elites. Likewise, there are strong shifts within parties to democratize nomination and leadership selection processes and make them open to broader and more inclusive electorates.¹³ There is no discernible trend in this direction in India. One consequence of the lack of internal democracy is that it has clogged the conduits for political mobilization. The lack of intraparty democracy reduces the quality of deliberation and representation and thereby the quality of democracy. As a result, institutions like parliament are rapidly declining in terms of

⁹ Francine Frankel, »India's Democracy in Transition«, World Policy Journal, vol. 7, no. 3, Summer.

¹⁰ Zoya Hasan, Congress after Indira: Policy, Power, Political Change.

¹¹ Baldev Raj Nayar, »India in 2004: Regime Change in a Divided Democracy«, Asian Survey, vol. 45, issue 1, 2005: 77.

¹² James Manor, »The Congress Party and the 'Great Transformation«, in Sanjay Ruparelia, Sanjay Reddy, John Harris and Stuart Corbridge (eds), Understanding India's New Political Economy: A Great Transformation? Routledge, New York, 2011.

¹³ E. Sridharan, »Do the Major National Parties Function Federally?«, in Ajay Mehra, D.D. Khanna and Gert W. Keuck (eds), Political Parties and Party Systems, New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2003.

deliberative capacities and oversight functions. It is no surprise that the Lok Sabha now debates and deliberates for just one-third of the time it used to spend on them.

Party democracy requires that all parties exercise greater transparency and account-ability and open up specific areas to public scrutiny. This requires that parties have regular elections (based on secret ballots) and term limits for office bearers and that their finances and other activities come under public scrutiny and regulation. In a petition filed with the Central Information Commission (CIC) the Association of Democratic Reforms (ADR) argued that political parties must be treated as public authorities because they receive substantial government support in the form of free air time on Doordarshan and All India Radio during elections, discounted rents for party offices and large income-tax exemptions. The CIC in a landmark ruling (June 2013) mandated parties to provide requisite information in regard to the funding of political parties and their expenditure, membership registers and the constitution under the provision of the Right to Information Act (RTI). The CIC ruling has visibly shaken political parties which keep secret the information on their donors and managed not to reveal the source for a large part of their incomes by showing them as small voluntary donations exempt from disclosure. Even as activists argue it will go a long way in ensuring transparency in finances parties are united in their resolve not to

reveal donors.¹⁴ Lack of scrutiny had led to parties being able to accumulate unexplained wealth running into hundreds of crores of rupees. So far, political parties have managed to stay out of any kind of financial accountability, which they evade by reporting most donations to be under 20,000 rupees. This allows even the mainstream parties, which receive corporate funding, to altogether escape scrutiny.¹⁵

Members of Parliament cutting across party lines had closed ranks to override the CIC decision bringing political parties under the purview of the information law. This only goes to show that when political parties themselves are subject to the transparency law, they are willing to go to the length of amending this landmark legislation to ensure that they are not open to public scrutiny under the Act.¹⁶ Without even waiting to legally challenge the order of the CIC bringing parties under the ambit of the RTI Act, the government decided to amend the Act to nullify the effect of the aforementioned order. Ironically, the Congress-led UPA which birthed the RTI Act is itself debunking a law that is its own creation because it is being harnessed for unearthing scams.¹⁷

The government was all set to bring legislation in the monsoon session of Parliament (August–September 2013) for amending the RTI to keep political parties out of the ambit of the transparency law. However, in the face of

¹⁴ National Campaign for People's Right to Information (NCPRI) amongst others made this point. »Transparency groups oppose attempts to dilute RTI Act«, The Times of India, 1 July 2013.

¹⁵ Editorial, »Saved for Now«, The Hindu, 7 September 2013.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Editorial, »No place to hide«, The Hindu, 5 June 2013.

sustained public pressure and civil society campaigning against amending the RTI, the UPA government referred the RTI amendment bill to a parliamentary standing committee for »elaborate study«. Instead of negating the effect of the CIC's order by exempting political parties from mandatory public disclosures, the government can use this as an opportunity to find ways to make political parties more financially accountable and less corrupt.

5. Party Finance

Indian elections are entirely privately funded, which makes illicit election finance pervasive. This stands in contrast to most other countries, which have partial or full public funding or transparent regulation and financial accountability of election finance.¹⁸ Contributions were provided in several ways, through companies, individuals and industry groups. Party membership fees, contributions of candidates and their friends and a levy on parliamentary income provided a small part of the funds needed. But as elections became more competitive and progressively more costly, financial support and funds assumed a new importance. Electioneering is labour-intensive and expensive in India's sprawling urban and rural constituencies. Parties and candidates need large sums of money for advertising, polling, consulting, travel, vehicles and fuel, and the printing of campaign materials that have to

reach voters in constituencies.¹⁹

There are laws to limit campaign finances and restrict expenditure in elections but they are ineffective because it is easy to circumvent them. At present, parties are required to declare to the Election Commission donations in excess of 20,000 rupees. However, non-reporting and under-reporting are common and the Election Commission does not have the power or the capacity to verify declarations. The huge gap between statements submitted and real expenditure during elections is an open secret. Indeed, the low expenditure ceilings induce circumvention and evasion.²⁰ The main source of funding comes from donations of under 20,000 rupees. To evade disclosure most contributions of less than 20,000 rupees are given to individual candidates and political parties anonymously, which means it is possible for a donor to give any amount of money if it less than this amount.²¹

Elections are an expensive business in India and the Congress party leans heavily on business for election expenditure. Congress is the biggest beneficiary of corporate largesse based on a quid pro quo between the party and business groups. Donations by business groups have been the major source of funding for the party since India liberalized its economy in 1991. In addition, a great deal of money comes through illegal channels.²² The trend of underhand funding also intensified after liberalization. The Congress is the

¹⁸ M.V. Rajeev Gowda and E. Sridharan, »Reforming India's Party Finance and Election Expenditure Laws«, Election Law Journal: Rules, Politics, and Policy. June 2012, 11(2), p. 239.

¹⁹ V. Venkatesan, »Chequered relations«, Frontline, Vol. 16, Issue 16, 31 July–13 August 1999.

²⁰ M.V. Rajeev Gowda and E. Sridharan, »Reforming India's Party Finance and Election Expenditure Laws«, p. 236

²¹ Ibid. p. 231.

richest party, raising and spending more money than all other parties.²³ Its income went up from Rs 222 crores in 2004–2005 to Rs 307.08 crores in 2010–2011. Its total assets in 2011–2012 stood at 2471.45 crores.²⁴

The flawed system of campaign finance and limited requirements with regard to reporting and disclosure of expenditure drive parties and politicians to misuse their powers to raise funds for election expenditure. Donations from corporate and private interests heavily influence government decisions, policy and legislation. Since the party receives huge amounts of money from business groups to win elections it will inevitably favour them in terms of policies and concessions. Thus the revelations of corruption and crony capitalism which have dominated the headlines mostly refer to the period 2004–2009, when the party was celebrating its role in presiding over an unprecedented boom.²⁵

Transparency in the funding of parties and the monitoring of their expenses is essential in any functioning party-based democracy. In India, the gap between acknowledged and actual party expenses is huge. Lack of transparency and accountability within parties reinforces corrupt fund-raising and parties spend much more than campaign laws allow them. Most of these problems arise from complete dependence on

private funding and the absence of state funding. Opening up the accounts of political parties to public scrutiny could be the first step in making them more accountable.

6. Conclusion

The Congress has not fared well since UPA-2 came to power in 2009. From 2004 to 2008, India experienced heady growth averaging 8 per cent. The overall achievements of UPA-1 are considerable: the right to information, the employment guarantee and larger allocations for the social sector. By comparison, under UPA-2 there has been a rapid decline of economic growth, high inflation, stagnation in industry, infrastructure bottlenecks and a middle class-inspired civil society revolt against corruption and the political class. Growth has slowed down as the economic strategy of the past few years is showing signs of losing steam. Giving up on its strategy of reform by stealth, for the first time in eight years the CWC declared clear support for a growth-first perspective and the government's reform agenda in the belief that it would generate dynamism in the economy and provide funds for UPA's pro-poor programmes. Sonia Gandhi's endorsement of the prime minister's economic roadmap towards the end of 2012 suggests that neoliberals have been able to convince the top

leadership that reform measures, such as foreign direct investment (FDI) in retail and liberalization of insurance and pension funds, are the only way out of the economic slowdown and to deliver a new round of prosperity. Such a business-driven development model is a recipe for exacerbating inequality. Indeed, the pattern of corrupt state-business relations in sectors such as mining, infrastructure and land has worsened inequality.

The Congress's political recovery and revival, which began in 2004, depended on its ability to sharpen the focus on economic and political inclusion, which helped to renew its relevance. Since then, it has been keen to demonstrate that its policies stress both growth and equity, mediating and arbitrating between various interests, which included the middle classes and the poor. The extent to which this approach will endure and help the party to meet the new challenges of a rapidly changing society depends on its capacity to rebuild its organization, ensuring substantive representation for marginalized groups and defining an overarching vision for a country focused on promoting high growth, even though it is divided by rising inequalities.

²² Ibid.

²³ National Election Watch, »Analysis of Total Income and Total Assets of Major Political Parties for Assessment Year 2006–2007 to 2011–2012. Available at: http://adrindia.org/sites/default/files/Donations%20Report%20-%20FY-2004-05%20to%202010-2011_0.pdf (accessed on 21 July 2013).

²⁴ National Election Watch and Association for Democratic Reforms, »Analysis of income tax returns filed and donations received by political parties: A Report«. Accessed on 21 July 2013.

²⁵ C.P. Chandrasekar, »Age of Graft«, Frontline, 31 May 2013.

V

The Democratic Party of the United States: Formal Rules; Influence Determined by Context

L. Sandy Maisel¹

1. Introduction

The Democratic Party of the United States is the nation's oldest political party. Formed by the country's first politicians, who opposed the »spirit of faction« but founded a political party in order to elect legislators who would support their view of the direction the country would take, the Democratic Party was programmatic at its inception but exists largely for electoral purposes today.

The political system in the United States has been characterized as a competitive two-party system (Maisel and Brewer 2012: Chapter 2). Certainly the description as a two-party system is accurate, as only the Democrats and the Republicans compete for most offices. But in truth, whether the system is competitive or

not depends on context: what election one is describing in what locale. For the vast majority of offices, American politicians run in single-member districts with plurality winners. Only the President is elected nationally, but the winner of the presidential election is actually the individual who accumulates most Electoral Votes from 51 separate elections (50 states plus the District of Columbia); all save two of these elections are contested under plurality winner-take-all rules. United States Senators are elected in plurality winner statewide elections; members of the House of Representatives are elected by plurality winner in geographically determined districts within the fifty states. Many states and many districts within the states heavily favor one party or the other. While the two parties are closely competitive nationally, winners in many states and districts are easily predictable well in advance

and elections in those are not hotly contested.

How the Democrats and Republicans – the two parties that have vied for power in the United States since the mid-nineteenth century – are distinguished from one another has varied throughout their long histories. In the late nineteenth century, the key distinction reflected partisan differences during the Civil War. The Republicans were the party of Lincoln, who had freed the slaves and preserved the Union by military force; the Democrats were viewed as the party that resisted government action to bring on the end of slavery. In the first years of the twentieth century, the Republicans were the party favoring the gold standard; the Democrats, softer money and a silver standard. After the Great Depression, the Democrats were viewed as the party of Franklin Delano Roosevelt, who led the country out of the Depression and through World War II, favoring an activist government willing to serve as the employer of last resort, to aid those unable to provide for themselves. The Republicans resisted the New Deal and favored less government.

For most of the last half of the twentieth century, the Democratic Party was considered a center-left party; the Republicans, center-right. The Democrats favored a government that was more active in economic affairs, more permissive on social issues, and less interventionist in international affairs. Though the differences were often nuanced, the Republicans were for market-based economic policies, more conservative social policies, and a more interventionist foreign policy. Both parties were »umbrella« organizations; it was not at all unusual for individuals to agree with one party on some issues and the other on different issues.

In the past two or three election cycles, however, the Republicans have become a more doctrinaire, programmatic party. While the Democrats have remained a center-left party, accepting individual variation from the party norm, the Republicans have moved far to the right, considered by many (including many establishment Republicans who feel deserted by their party) as an outlier party (see Mann and Ornstein 2012; Edsall 2013). The Republican lurch to the right has been particularly evident in the first two years of President Obama's second term. On issue after issue, successful bipartisan negotiations have eluded leaders, as Republicans, who hold the majority in the House of Representatives, have refused to compromise.

In a federal system, with electoral as well as governing separation of the executive and legislative branches of government, »party« is a complex term. The late V. O. Key provided the useful analytical distinction among three aspects of party – the party in the electorate, the party in government, and the party organization (Key 1964).

The party in the electorate is comprised of those voters who normally cast their vote for a particular party. They are not members of the party in any formal sense, but many identify with the party and, barring unusual circumstances, usually cast their ballots for candidates of that party (Campbell, Converse, Miller, and Stokes 1960). Because each state's internal politics are often based on issues different from those dominating national politics, voters who constitute the party in the electorate for a party in a state with regard to elections for offices within that it – for example, state governor or state legislature – may well be part of the party

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in the electorate for the other party in national elections. However one defines the party in the electorate, it is a fluid concept, with party coalitions and allegiances changing as the issues confronting the government and the two parties' responses change (Brewer 2010).

The party in government comprises elected officials who won office under a party's label. The President is the »leader« of the Democratic Party in government. The Senate Majority Leader, Senator Harry Reid of Nevada, and the House Minority Leader, Congresswoman Nancy Pelosi of California, are also »leaders« of the Democrats in government. The most important aspect of the party in government to note, however, is that, while leadership positions exist, the leaders' powers are mostly persuasive, not formal. Each elected officeholder has his or her own independent power base. The leaders can seek legislators' support for policies, but in the final analysis, each Senator or Representative decides whether to support the party position or not, depending on whether he or she thinks it is in his or her best interest. What is good for a national party candidate may not be good for a state or local party candidate. Party leaders in government cannot »whip« legislators to support a position. Party leaders in government have only limited powers to discipline legislators who do not follow the party policy line.

If the party in the electorate is a fluid concept, and if the party in government comprises literally hundreds of individuals with independent and autonomous bases of support, the party organization is a structure in search of a function. The Democratic Party organization, the formal structure of the party, is what is most often meant when one says »the Democratic Party«.

That organization has a hierarchical structure, formal rules, and institutional component parts with detailed responsibilities. Yet the Democratic Party organization has no power over those who run for office under its label and no control over the actions of the party in the electorate.

Fifty years ago Cornelius Cotter and Bernard Hennessey wrote a book about the two national party committees, entitled *Politics without Power* (Cotter and Hennessey 1964). The description was apt at the time. In the ensuing half century, under the leadership of a succession of strong party leaders, in a series of independent but parallel steps – each party reacting to the successes of the other – both the Democratic National Committee and the Republican National Committee have increased their power, not in a formal sense, but in a practical, political sense. That aspect of the Democratic Party in the United States will be discussed in the remainder of this paper.

2. Democratic Party Organization and Structure

The Democratic Party is hierarchical and decentralized. The party is organized at the most local level – wards or precincts in urban areas, towns in rural areas. Each of these local units has a party committee and a party leader. In the vast majority of localities throughout the country, these slots are either self-recruited and essentially self-appointed or vacant. In only the rarest of circumstances are these committees active – and then only in the majority party in one-party areas.

Local committees »elect« or recruit individuals to serve on county committees. Counties – or

their functional equivalent in a few states – are a local unit of government with responsibilities assigned by state governments. There are over 3,000 counties in the United States, with state totals ranging from three in Delaware to over 250 in Texas. County political committees have traditionally had practical importance because, before the advent of the civil service system, county government controlled many patronage jobs, in other words, jobs given to the supporters of the party in power. While patronage positions are largely a relic of a bygone era, the county committee as a political unit remains intact.

County committees elect their own leaders. In the past, county political leaders, particularly those in urban centers, have been among the most important (and at times corrupt) power brokers in a state (see Royko 1971, on the power of the legendary »boss«, Richard J. Daley of Chicago and Ackerman 2005, on Boss Tweed of Tammany Hall in New York). Many retain considerable power today, though none has the near dictatorial power alleged to have been held by bosses of the past, and rampant corruption is mostly a thing of the past.

County committees and their leaders are responsible for politics at the local level. In the past, they often selected candidates. Since the advent of the direct primary election – an election in which the »party in the electorate« selects candidates to run under the party label, party leaders have had a role in recruiting candidates for office, especially when the office does not hold much prestige, but they cannot guarantee that a recruited candidate will win a contest nomination or an election. At times the role becomes to »de-recruit« another candidate, perhaps by suggesting that they run for another

position, so that the chosen candidate can be nominated. County committees and bosses lost much of their power when they lost the ability to guarantee nominations, a loss that occurred at different times (and with different processes) in different states (Key 1956; La Raja 2010, in Maisel and Berry 2010: Chapter 9).

County committees in turn elect members of Democratic state committees, which have functions parallel to the county committees at the state level. Whereas county committee members are often self-recruited and in certain cases need convincing that their service is worthwhile, state committee members, particularly in the majority party in a state, frequently face competition to gain their seats. State committee members in turn elect their chair and other officers. These officials, paid for full-time service in most states, run a professional organization that has significant campaign responsibilities on behalf of party candidates.

At the pinnacle of the party organization committee hierarchy is the Democratic National Committee (DNC). The DNC comprises the state party chair and the highest ranking official of the opposite gender from each state, 200 additional committee members apportioned among the states according to population and party strength in recent elections and elected by either the state committee or delegates to a state convention, representatives of various Democratic elected officials and party groups (for example, College Democrats, Democrats Abroad, Democratic State Attorneys General), plus up to 75 additional members chosen to assure gender equity and representation of groups important to the party coalition, for example, organized labor. The DNC elects its own chair, who need not otherwise

have been a member of the committee, five vice chairs, and other officers, all of whom become voting members of the DNC.

The DNC by party bylaws must meet at least once a year. Between meetings work is done by an Executive Committee, elected by and serving at the pleasure of the DNC. The Executive Committee must meet at least four times a year. Its actions are subject to the rules set forth in the Charter of the party and the actions of the National Committee and the quadrennial Democratic National Convention (Charter and Bylaws 2012).

The responsibilities of the Democratic National Committee, again as specified in the Charter and Bylaws, include: issuing the Call to the National Convention; running the presidential campaign; filling any vacancies that occur for Presidential or Vice Presidential candidate between the convention and the election; and formulating and presenting party policy statements.

The change in the role of the Democratic National Committee (and of its Republican counterpart) since Cotter and Hennessey's (1964) characterization of these bodies and comprising powerless political hangers-on has been the institutionalization of national party organization. The two national party committees are now aptly described as »financially secure, institutionally stable, and highly influential in election campaigns« (Herrnson 2010, in Maisel and Berry 2010: 245). The work of the national party that Herrnson describes is largely done by the full-time, year-round professional staff that works under the direction of the party chair, often in the name of the DNC. The party structure has adapted to a changing political

environment, characterized as more democratic, candidate-centered, and largely dependent on the expenditure of large sums of money to run highly technical modern campaigns. Had the party not adapted to perform a function needed by candidates for office (Aldrich, 1995), the party would have become largely obsolete, as many predicted some years ago (see, for example, Broder 1972).

The institutional role of the party organization in assisting candidates and assuming important electoral functions is further highlighted in the roles of two committees, vitally important to the party but outside the formal hierarchy, the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee (DSCC) and the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee (DCCC). The two so-called Hill committees (the Congress is located on Capitol Hill in Washington), and their Republican counterparts, began as efforts by incumbents to help fellow legislators win re-election. They have evolved into significant institutions that raise substantial sums of money to support not only incumbents (but only those who are electorally endangered) but also challengers to vulnerable incumbents in the opposite party. The legislators who lead these committees are considered among the most important members of the congressional party leadership, that is, the party in government. They work hard to recruit good challengers and candidates in seats without an incumbent running. They also work to discourage poor candidates (or candidates thought to be less strong in a general election) from challenging their recruited candidates. They raise money for these candidates, train their staffs, do research on their opponents, and generally play a key role in winning seats for the party in the House and Senate.

The most important role that the Democratic Party plays in the United States is to nominate a candidate for President. This role is played by the quadrennial Democratic National Convention. The Convention is, in fact, the ultimate decision maker for the party. However, for more than half a century, the Convention has played a pro forma role, ratifying a candidate for President who was selected by the party in the electorate in a series of state contests (mostly primary elections, but in some states local caucuses and statewide conventions of delegates elected at those caucuses). The Presidential candidate, in turn, selects his or her Vice Presidential running mate, who is ratified, without controversy, by the delegates to the National Convention. What is most important, then, is not what the National Convention does, but rather how delegates to that National Convention are chosen.

3. Delegate Selection Rules and Party Decision Making

If a careful observer of Democratic politics and the Democratic National Conventions that nominated Harry S. Truman for President in 1948, or Adlai E. Stevenson in 1952 and 1956, or John F. Kennedy in 1960 described the process to someone visiting the United States to watch a Presidential nominating contest in the twenty-first century, their descriptions of how a nomination is won would be absolutely useless. Everything has changed radically, largely because of two critical episodes of American history: the Civil Rights Movement and the Vietnam War.

Prior to 1964, African Americans were excluded from all state politics throughout the South, the region in which most Blacks lived. The

Democratic Party in the South, which dominated regional politics, was a virtually all-White, pro-segregationist party that fought for individual states' rights to pass laws on issues related to race as they wished. That changed with the Civil Rights Movement, with the Presidency of Lyndon B. Johnson (a pro-Civil Rights Southerner), with the passage of important Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965, and with a successful challenge to White domination of the Democratic Party in the South, led by the Mississippi Freedom Democrats who gained, at the insistence of President Johnson, symbolic seating and important rule changes at the Democratic National Convention in 1964. Blacks from then on became an important part of the Democratic coalition, in the South and in the North (White 1965).

In 1968, the American public was divided over national policy in Vietnam. President Johnson decided not to seek re-election after he was challenged by anti-Vietnam War candidates in his own party. At that time the delegations to the Democratic National Convention in many states were chosen well in advance of the gathering, often by party leaders without consulting the public. While primary elections were held in some states, in many more the majority of delegates were chosen and closely controlled by party leaders. In a tumultuous Convention, Johnson's Vice President, Hubert Humphrey, was nominated for President, despite the fact that he had entered no primaries and that anti-War candidates had prevailed in contest after contest (White 1965).

As a result of this selection, viewed by most as secretive and undemocratic, party leaders convened a series of reform commissions whose goal was to make the party more democratic and

its processes more open, timely, and accountable to Democratic voters. The Democratic National Committee adopted the suggestions of the first reform commission and applied the rule changes to the 1972 Call to the National Convention. While subsequent reform commissions tweaked those rules, the basic principles behind them govern delegate selection and party governance today.

Those basic principles, as laid out the Article 2, Section 4 of the Democratic Party Charter, state:

The National Convention shall be composed of delegates equally divided between men and women. The delegates shall be chosen through processes which:

- (a) assure all Democratic voters full, timely and equal opportunity to participate and include affirmative action programs toward that end;*
- (b) assure that delegations fairly reflect the division of preferences expressed by those who participate in the Presidential nominating process;*
- (c) exclude the use of the unit rule² at any level;*
- (d) do not deny participation for failure to pay a cost, fee or poll tax;*
- (e) allow participation in good faith by all voters who are Democrats and, to the extent determined by a State Party to be in the interests of the Democratic Party in that State, by voters who are not registered or affiliated with any party.*

In short, the process is designed to be open, timely, non-discriminatory, and representative of the Presidential preferences of those who choose to participate in the process. States are given leeway as to how they implement these principles. Most states hold Presidential Primaries and choose delegates whose Presidential preferences reflect those of the voters in those primaries. Other states hold well-publicized and open meetings (caucuses) of any voters who choose to associate with the party (formally in some states; less so in others), record the Presidential preferences of those who attend the meeting, and elect delegates, frequently after statewide conventions, who reflect those preferences.

The adoption of these principles has not been without controversy and conflict. The first Presidential nominee under the new rules, Senator George McGovern of South Dakota, lost very badly in the general election; President Richard Nixon was re-elected with the highest electoral vote total ever recorded. Old-school political leaders, who lost much of their influence under the new rules, blamed the rules for McGovern's defeat, and some scholarly analysts viewed the reforms with skepticism (Polsby 1983).

Over a series of elections, rules were altered to permit so-called Superdelegates, party leaders and elected officials who were delegates to the Convention by virtue of their office and without having to pledge to support a particular candidate. The goal was to allow some peer-

² The Democratic Party Charter's reference to the »unit rule« is to a rule, once mandated in some states and permitted as an option until 1972, that awarded all of the delegates allotted to state or district at the National Convention to a plurality winner in that state's or district's contest for delegates. That is, the state or district voted as a unit.

review of the potential nominees, by those who had or would have to work with them. But, as the proportion of Superdelegates at the Convention grew, those less likely to gain support from the political establishment objected. This criticism reached a peak in 2008, because many of the Superdelegates favored Senator Hilary Clinton, despite the fact that those voting in the early primaries and caucuses favored Senator Barack Obama. Most of the 2008 Superdelegates eventually favored Obama, reflecting the party in the electorate, but the number of Convention attendees given automatic status was reduced nonetheless.

4. Rule Violation and Political Corruption

The Democratic Party has an elaborate series of mechanisms at every level to deal with rule violations. The most important potential violation of party rules would involve state rules for electing delegates to the National Convention. A state could try to structure its rules, in violation of national party principles, to aid one candidate or another.

Two examples suffice to demonstrate the conflict resolution principles in play. In 1972, when the reform principles were first implemented, a number of state delegations were challenged, as some party leaders tried to avoid the new rules and proceed as they always had. The Illinois delegation, headed by the powerful leader of the Cook County Democratic Committee, Chicago Mayor Richard Daley, was challenged by a reform slate that claimed that the Daley delegation was elected under a closed and undemocratic process that violated the new rules. The California delegation, pledged entirely to

Senator McGovern as a result of a winner-take-all primary, was challenged because its election violated the prohibition of a unit rule (which functioned to eliminate any representation from those who did not finish first in a plurality winner election). The Credentials Committee and the Convention, in accepting its report, ruled in favor of the challenge to Illinois' delegation, seating the reform delegation instead, and against the challenge to California's delegation, retaining the McGovern delegates. While the legal reasons were complex, the political reality was clear; McGovern had a majority of the delegates, and his supporters would do nothing that might jeopardize his nomination – regardless of the principles involved (White 1973).

In 2008, Florida and Michigan delegations were elected through processes that started before the first date permitted under the Call to the Convention. The specified penalty was a loss of delegates to the Convention. However, after Obama won enough delegates to secure the nomination, the party reached a compromise with the offending states. Once again, pragmatism ruled over principle. The party did not want to alienate voters in states that would be important for the general election. Once the basic principles have been adopted and accepted, rule violations become less important than pragmatic politics. This 'non-principled' approach is accepted by all involved.

Parties can, however, be involved in political corruption. Much of what the party does in politics today involves campaign finance – and the laws are complex. On one hand, policing is done through disclosure and media exposure; on the other, the offended party has legal redress through either the courts or the Federal Election Commission.

Again, I would argue that pragmatism rules, for two reasons. First, the laws are written and have been interpreted so imprecisely that parties have a great deal of leeway in how they act. The Federal Election Commission, which is composed of an equal number of Democrats and Republicans, is a weak agency that takes very little action. But, secondly, even though parties spend a great deal of money on campaigns, as a percentage of total campaign spending that amount is negligible. Parties help to coordinate others' spending and donating, but the money they actually spend themselves amounts to less than 10 percent of that spent in almost any campaign. Corruption is not a major problem when the stakes are so low.

5. Conclusion

Political parties in the United States are unlike parties in most other nations. Because the party organization is so loosely linked to either the party in the electorate or, more importantly, the party in government, American parties, in the post-reform era, have influence but not real power.

Democratic Party rules – and the structure of the party – guarantee that certain fundamental principles of participation, representation, and democracy are followed in the Presidential nomination process. Beyond that, however, the party's importance and power are derived from its ability to serve the candidates who run under its label. The party does this through raising money, coordinating candidate efforts to raise more money, and providing technical and political assistance and expertise to candidates, but it does not do so by providing any guarantees that their assistance will result in nomination, much less

election. This has been most evident recently in the Republican Party in the United States, when insurgent Tea Party candidates have defeated establishment Republicans, including incumbents. The Democratic Party could easily be susceptible to a movement with equal appeal from the left.

As a result, officeholders owe very little to party leaders. They are free to vote and act as they choose, knowing that the party does not control their electoral fate. In many nations, that would define a weak party. In the United States, it defines a party as strong as the context of the electoral process will allow.

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VI

Experiences in Party Management of Political Parties: The »United Russia« Party

Boris Makarenko

1. Introduction: Institutional and Programmatic Characteristics of the Party

How Does »United Russia« Differ from Other Parties

In a comparative perspective, »United Russia« is different from political parties in other countries. In democracies, parties are institutions for the political mobilization of the public and the organization and competition of elites, as well as electoral machines. Even a dominant or predominant party that operates in an environment characterised by limited or restricted competition performs the same functions (Sartori 1976). In non-democracies, such as China in this sample, the ruling party constitutes the political decision-making and control mechanism, de facto governing the executive and legislative institutions of the state.

In contrast to both these cases, »United Russia« (like a number of similar parties in presidential post-Soviet republics) is not an independent political institution. What appears to be a ruling party, winning an overwhelming majority of all elections, is in effect an auxiliary mechanism created by the executive branch of power in order to represent and promote its position in elections, legislatures and the public arena. Although it possesses a complex structure, status, programmes and intra-party managerial mechanisms (implying autonomy in managing its internal affairs) it is not free in making key decisions on nominating leaders and elaborating programmes and policies: both are imposed on the party by the relevant level of executive bureaucracy. In many ways, it resembles the Mexican Institutional Revolutionary Party (Gelman 2006) at its prime, but even the Mexican analogue had much broader autonomy. We

would argue that United Russia and its analogues constitute a class of its own: not a party in power, but a party of power, implying that it is not a party that forms the institutions of government, but one which is formed by these institutions (Makarenko 2011: 49).

While in a »normal« party, intra-party management constitutes a mechanism of decision-making and a procedure for implementing adopted decisions, in case of United Russia such management often formalizes and procedurally shapes decisions already taken outside the party.

A Brief History of the Party

United Russia was formed in 2001 as a »bloc of blocs«. Two electoral blocs in the Third State Duma merged and formed an informal coalition with two groups of independent deputies, the centrist »Russia's Regions« and the centre-left »People's Deputy«.¹ The total strength of the alliance was 236 mandates, or 52 per cent of the total seats: for the first time in post-communist history pro-Kremlin political forces obtained a majority in the Lower House of the federal legislature. Prior to that, Russia was the only one of the 29 post-Communist states that was implementing the transition with the executive cohabiting with an opposition majority in parliament (Makarenko 2010: 351–353).

The birth of United Russia signified the end of a split in the political and bureaucratic elites over

Boris Yeltsin's succession. Kremlin-based and associated with Vladimir Putin the »Unity« bloc prevailed over a coalition of dissenting elites in economically strong regions, »Fatherland–All Russia«, and three months later Putin was elected president. It took a year for the elites to become reconciled and the factions of these two blocs merged into a single party, as described above.

The subsequent years were marked by unprecedented growth in the Russian economy. It involved the formation of a massive redistributive coalition dominated by the federal and regional bureaucracies. The ruling coalition had at its disposal high oil and gas revenues and redistributed part of that wealth in welfare payments and benefits to the rest of the population. Under the circumstances, various elite and interest groups were motivated to become part of the redistribution mechanism rather than try to challenge and compete with it through opposition parties. This situation strongly encouraged the growth of United Russia as an organized elite coordinator.

The party grew quickly and absorbed most regional governors (who either formally joined the party or switched allegiance from the Communist and Agrarian parties); big business and other interest groups were discouraged from supporting other political parties.² This entailed the emergence of a clientelist and neo-corporatist, top-down organization, camouflaged by a solid mass base.

¹ In the next Duma (in 2004) almost all the re-elected members of »Russia's Regions« and »People's Deputy« joined the faction of United Russia and many of them became members of the latter.

² Particularly after 2003, when Mikhail Khodorkovsky was arrested in the midst of the electoral campaign in which his YUKOS company financially supported several opposition parties, from the liberal »Yabloko« to the Communists. Although his political activities were never part of the formal charges, the »lesson« was more than obvious for the business community.

The composition of such a »party of power« reflects the regrouping of elites in the course of the post-Communist transition, coordinating the interests of and containing conflicts among the »former Soviet nomenclature adapting to the reforms ... new business circles and neo-Soviet bureaucrats«, as well as various clienteles trying to attain dominance in intra-party life (Turovsky 2006: 150–154).

Further milestones in the party's history are as follows:

– In the 2003 Duma elections,³ United Russia scored an impressive victory, with 38 per cent of party list votes and 100 elected direct candidates (plus a number of independents), and formed a 68 per cent majority, giving it total control of the House.

– In 2003, in accordance with the new federal law, all regional parliaments introduced mixed or fully proportional electoral systems; by 2008 United Russia factions were formed and obtained majorities in nearly all regional legislatures.

– In 2005, popular elections of governors were abolished and they were henceforth to be appointed by the President, followed by

confirmation by simple majority in the regional legislatures. Although such confirmation was merely a formality,⁴ it gave United Russia a central status in regional politics. In 2009, the law was amended to give the majority party in regional legislatures – in practical terms, United Russia – the prerogative to nominate three candidates, one of which was selected by the President as governor-nominee.⁵ The evidence suggests that the names of the candidates were communicated to the party from the federal executive and thus the formal role of the party increased further.

– In the 2007 Duma elections, President Putin personally headed⁶ the list of United Russia, bringing the party a record 64 per cent of the vote and 70 per cent of Duma seats. In April 2008, the outgoing president was elected Chairman of United Russia (without becoming a member). This was the peak of the party's popularity: it commanded absolute (in many cases, two-thirds) majorities in federal and regional legislatures, most governors were formal members and the popular prime minister Putin was its chairman (Makarenko 2009; 2011).

– The 2011 Duma elections were marked by post-crisis depression, conducive to a reduction of redistributive politics and a decline of social

³ In 1993–2003, the federal Duma comprised 225 seats filled through party lists and another 225 elected in first-past-the-post majoritarian districts; the two votes were not tied to each other, however, as in German system. In 2007 and 2011, the electoral system was wholly proportional. An electoral reform bill currently being considered by parliament re-introduces the old mixed system.

⁴ Even opposition candidates in many cases voted for the nominated governor, fearing that dissent would hamper their ability to work with the executive.

⁵ In 2012, gubernatorial elections were re-instituted, but at the time of writing, only five of 83 governors were elected, all of whom belong to United Russia.

⁶ Most analysts agree that this unprecedented move was intended to give Putin, about to leave his presidential office, the highest possible »approval rating«.

optimism. Anti-government sentiments were further aggravated by the arrogant manner in which Putin announced (notably at the United Russia convention in September 2011) that he would be running for president in 2012. In the subsequent electoral campaign United Russia was overshadowed by the vague construction of the »All-Russia Popular Front«, initiated by Putin as a broader informal coalition nominating its candidates for UR party list; 87 of 238 current members of the United Russia Duma faction were nominated by the Front.⁷ Despite a loss of 15 per cent of the popular vote (the decline was particularly heavy in the big cities) and 77 seats, the party still won a majority in the Duma. Nevertheless, its prestige was undermined. Its candidate for the presidency, Putin, campaigned in 2012 without ever mentioning the party (relying instead on the »Popular Front«) and stepped down from the party chairmanship in May 2012, to be replaced by the new prime minister Dmitry Medvedev.

Programmatic and Ideological Orientation

Predominant parties almost never have distinct ideologies (see discussion in Makarenko 2011: 45–46). In order to capture overwhelming majorities, such parties claim that they are acting in the interests of the whole nation, serving the common good, and stress national unity over diverging partial interests.

United Russia positions itself as a party that »expresses and advocates the interests of the majority of the Russian people« (United Russia Programme 2001). In an entirely corporatist

manner it claims »not only to lead, but to overarch narrow interests, to attend not only to its supporters, but opponents as well« and »not to surrender Russia to those who want to ruin it ... who deceive people with hollow and unrealistic pledges« (United Russia Electoral Platform 2011). Like many predominant parties, United Russia builds its ideological identity on its past achievements and/or charismatic leaders, accentuating the role of Vladimir Putin and the progress made under his leadership since the 1990s, when Russia »was in a state of profound decay and systemic crisis, which has done damage comparable with the aftermath of a civil war« (UR Platform 2011).

The party elite likes to characterize United Russia as »conservative«. The tenth party convention (2009) initiated an intra-party discussion of »conservatism« and adopted the central slogan of the party: »To preserve and multiply«. All three party clubs (discussed below) have a conservative tinge and since 2011 the party has emphasized its adherence to conservative values (family, religion and so on), which is in accordance with the ideological disposition of the majority of Russians. However, the »Russian version« of conservatism remains underdeveloped, theoretically superficial and de facto contradicts a number of values traditionally associated with conservatism (small government, free enterprise, respect of property rights).

Campaigning for United Russia's list, which he headed, Putin admitted in 2007 that the party »to this day has no standing ideology or principles for which the overwhelming majority

⁷ Info from an icon on the Popular Front website, www.narodfronr.ru. No list of these MPs is provided.

of its members would be ready to fight».⁸

The party's stand on social and economic issues mirrors the agenda of the cabinet,⁹ not the other way around (Makarenko 2009: 56). In 2008, the then speaker of the Duma and Chairman of the Party's Supreme Council Boris Gryzlov identified two functional roles of United Russia: »to formulate proposals for the [Cabinet's] »Strategy 2020« ... and to promote projects corresponding to the formulated priority proposals«, thus de facto recognizing the party's subordinate role in the elaboration of the executive's policy agenda (Gryzlov 2008).

United Russia programmatic documents thus combine pro-market reforms and center-right economic policies with highly redistributive social policies (usually with an accent on the latter). Russia can afford such an unusual combination due to high returns from oil and gas exports. In the previous decade, United Russia electoral programmes were fairly specific and contained numerous target indicators (for example, the 2007 Electoral Platform). By contrast, the 2011 and 2012 programmes were formulated in vague terms and contained very few specific figures (Electoral Platforms 2011 and 2012).

United Russia programmes tend to stress social paternalism and statism, to the extent that it at times contradicts the socio-economic policies of

the executive. In real terms, the Duma majority conclusively approves at the first (political and conceptual) reading all the bills originating in the presidency or the cabinet (non-conceptual amendments can be made at the second reading).

The controversy between the policies of the executive and the paternalistic populism of the United Russia party went almost unnoticed by the public during the period of economic growth and even in the short period when Russia was experiencing the effects of the global economic crisis (2009–2010). However, post-crisis depression undermined social optimism. Since 2011, the widespread negative attitudes and criticism of government policies tend to target United Russia, while the approval of the president has declined only modestly. In these terms, United Russia has turned into a »Mr Hyde«, the »evil face« of the Russian government. In April 2013, 51 per cent of polled Russians agreed with the definition of United Russia as »a party of crooks and thieves«¹⁰ (the highest number since the term was coined by opposition blogger Alexei Navalny in 2010).

2. Party Organizational Structures

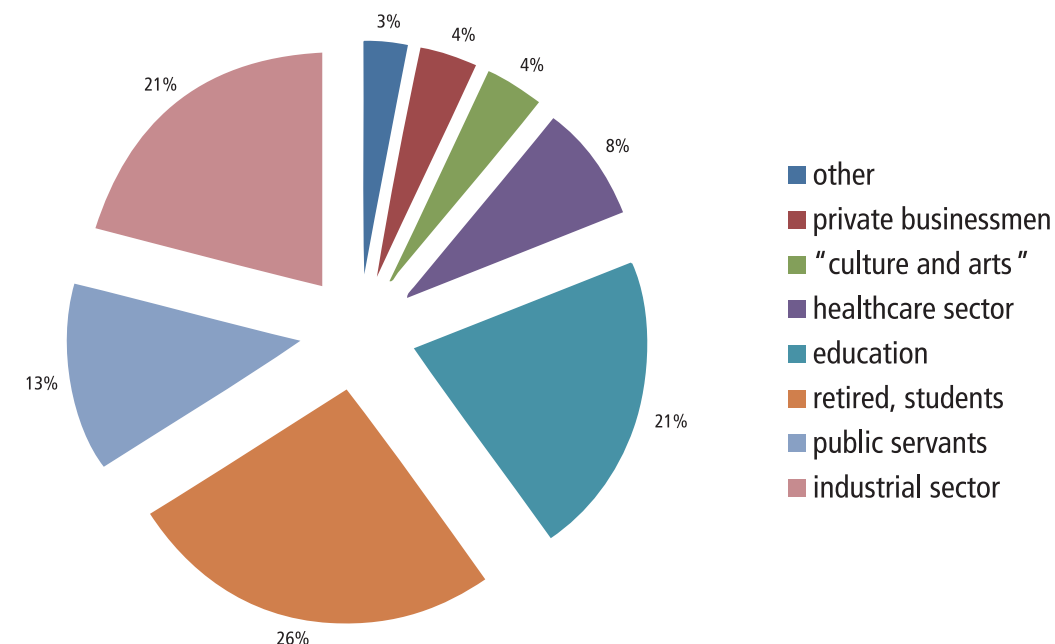
United Russia combines a 2 million-strong mass base with a pronounced reliance on elites, an all-Russia »vertical structure« governed

⁸ See: http://www.kremlin.ru/appears/2007/11/13/1829_type63376type63381_151056.shtml.

⁹ The cabinet in Russia is de facto presidential: the Duma only approves the prime minister nominated by the president and has almost no influence on the composition or programme of the executive. Some ministers are members of United Russia, but the party membership has no influence on their performance.

¹⁰ See: <http://www.levada.ru/29-04-2013/svyshe-poloviny-strany-schitaet-er-partiei-zhulikov-i-vorov>.

Figure 1: Breakdown of United Russia membership by occupation (2010)¹¹



by democratically formulated and detailed procedures with an obvious domination of central structures over the subordinate levels of party organization.

Such features are not unique to United Russia: the statutes and management practices of all Russian political parties include strong checks and controls over regional and local structures. This predisposition to »central control« can be explained by a combination of two factors. First, parties are consensually perceived by the Russian political class as federal institutions representing national interests over regional (including ethnic, confessional and other) ambitions, and therefore the central leadership of a party is supposed to have levers to manage conflicts or deviations at lower levels of the hierarchy. Secondly, parties are only weakly rooted in society and their success

in the national arena depends heavily on their national leadership's resources (public popularity, access to sponsors and national media, primarily TV). United Russia differs from other parties not in the degree of top-down control, but in the political weight of its elite figures. The domination of the centre is instrumental in managing potential conflicts between regional organizations' allegiance to the governor (usually, the de facto »head« of the regional ruling elite) and to the federal leadership.

Party Membership

In the past five years the number of United Russia members has remained stable, at slightly above 2 million (the last membership figure posted on the United Russia website until May 2008 was 2,000,020 [Nagornyykh 2008], while in May

¹¹ Zakatnova, op.cit.

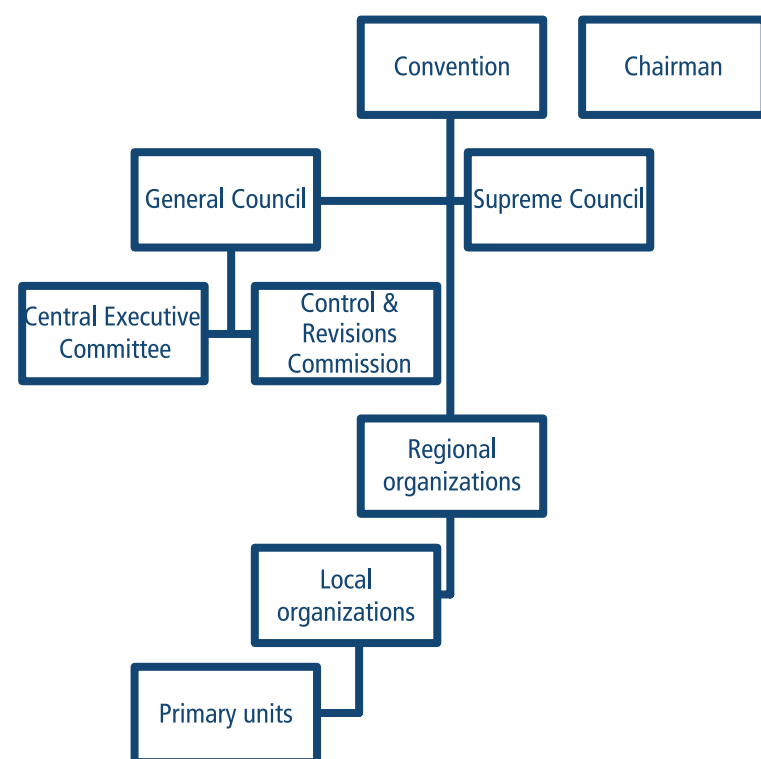
2010 it stood at 2,030,164 [Zakatnova 2010], and in May 2013 it was »about two million«. According to the Secretary of the Party's General Council Sergei Neverov, about 80 thousand new members joined the party in 2012–2013 and »no mass desertions occurred« (Nagornyykh 2013).

Prior to May 2008, recruitment of new members was considered a high priority. With an initial membership of around 400,000 in 2003, membership reached 1 million around 2006 (data vary) and 1.8 million by the beginning of 2008. When Putin formally associated himself with the party, a massive new inflow of members was observed (around 40,000 per month). But exactly at the peak of its popularity the trend

was reversed: the party initiated a »purge« of its party ranks (involving about 4 per cent of the total), and introduced a new, more complex procedure for admitting new members (6 months probationary period, interviews with and/or recommendations from local »cell« members).

The reasons for such a policy change were never officially explained by the party, but it seems fairly logical. In its early years, United Russia needed to present evidence of its advantage over other parties and a large membership was perceived as one way to do it. With its stunning success in the 2007 elections and Putin as formal leader of the party this objective was attained and the party leadership recognized that growth of the ranks

Figure 2: Organizational structure of the United Russia party¹²



¹² The figure was designed by the author on the basis of the statutes of United Russia.

was no longer necessary. In reality, the mass base had little influence in party life and its growth would have necessitated enlargement of the party bureaucracy.

The recruitment of new members is in many ways – although not entirely – formal. A case-study journalistic investigation undertaken by the Vlast weekly in Kazan, Tatarstan, shortly after the »purge« provides evidence of that. The speaker of the Tatarstan legislature, Farit Mukhametshin, admitted that in the period of the most rapid growth, 2002–2004, »the entire [staff] of hospitals or theatres were admitted into United Russia«. The same trend was confirmed by the »purged« members of the party: most of them were expelled because they had stopped paying membership dues,¹³ in most cases because they had retired or changed jobs. This implies that both the recruitment and collection of fees occurred at the workplace (Begimbetova 2008). The breakdown of members by type of occupation presented in Figure 1 demonstrates that most party members receive their primary income from the government: 46 per cent are in the civil service or education, health care and »culture« (all overwhelmingly state-run in Russia); another 26 per cent are retired people and students. It is unclear which part of the 21 per cent of those employed in industry work in public enterprises (the service sector, a huge employer in the Russian economy, is missing from this breakdown). In all these spheres, it is much easier to »persuade« a person to join the party and record their membership. A significant exception is the relatively high (4

per cent) membership of private businessmen, who are presumably motivated to join the party to improve their status by »getting closer« to the ruling establishment. Otherwise, we see no evidence that people working in the private sector, free from bureaucratic pressure and attempts at »persuasion« are motivated to join the ruling party.

Party Structure

The party consists of 83 regional (that is, all the federal units of the Russian Federation), 2,595 local and 82,631 »primary units«;¹⁴ it covers the entire territory of the Russian Federation.

»Primary units« are formed on a territorial basis: recalling the Soviet party-state, Russian law explicitly forbids the formation of »cells« of any political party in the workplace (although, according to the experience described in the previous section, at least the recruitment of new party members is done at work). Primary units form local (rayon: district or municipality) organizations. In big cities the party statutes provide for intermediate levels of coordination, with the exception that local organizations form and report to the regional (federal state) organization, and the latter to the federal leadership (see Figure 2). For the purposes of coordination, several regions may be united in an interregional group, coordinated by a member of the federal leadership (normally, a distinguished Duma member), but such associations have no statutory powers.

¹³ Payment of dues was mandatory at that time; under the current version of the Party statutes, it is voluntary.

¹⁴ See: <http://er.ru/party/today/>.

United Russia has a number of flanking organizations, most of which were created in 2006–2007. The »Council of Supporters« coordinates work with »supporters« (storonniki): originally this status was created for people who supported the party but either chose not to join it or were not allowed by law to belong to a political party (members of the military, law enforcement officers and – the until mid-2000s – top civil servants). Now this status applies mainly to prospective members of the party during their probationary period. The party's youth structure is called the »Young Guard of United Russia«.¹⁵ The party cooperates with and influences the Union of Pensioners, the Union of Women and the All-Russia Council on Local Government (all chaired by leading members of United Russia).

3. Intra-Party Democracy and Decision-Making Processes

As noted above, decision-making on the principal issues in the party takes place outside it. According to a confession by Alexei Chesnakov, who held top positions in both the party and the administration of the President in 2000–2013 (he left the party in May 2013), »it was impossible to get permission from the party leadership for such [substantive] discussions ... whatever one tries to suggest within the party, the answer is always the same: let's first get clearance from the Administration of the President« (quoted

in: Tirmaste 2013).

Statute procedures regulating the internal affairs of United Russia are detailed (the statutes are 22,570 words long); they combine democratic mechanisms with carefully designed checks and controls of the central bodies over subordinate structures.

The party has a »top-heavy« structure: it has »governing bodies« (the party convention and the General Council) and »central bodies« (all federal-level structures). One of these central bodies is the Supreme Council, composed of »outstanding public and political figures ... including non-party members« (Article 7.3.2).¹⁶ This body is a survivor from the times when top executive officials (for example, governors) could not be members of a political party: now its functions are largely ceremonial, but it is preserved as a means of increasing the number of prestigious posts and titles »awarded« to members of the elite coalition.

The post of party chairman was introduced specifically for Putin when he decided to formally associate himself with United Russia in 2008. The chairman (Articles 7.1 and 7.2) (a) is »optional«, in other words, this position can be filled or remain vacant (depending on the will of the de facto leader of the party); in the latter case, the chairman of the Supreme Council acts as the top elected official; (b) can be a non-party member;¹⁷ (c) is elected by open ballot on a

¹⁵ The name is derived not from Napoleon's Jeune Garde, but from the famous youth anti-Nazi underground in the town of Krasnodon (1942–43), which in turn was derived from the Communist youth song of the 1920s – We are the young guard of workers and peasants.

¹⁶ References to »article« imply the relevant articles of the party's Internal Statutes.

¹⁷ The incumbent chairman, prime minister Medvedev, joined United Russia in 2012; Putin has never been a member.

non-alternative basis; and (d) has no statutory obligations, but possesses broad prerogatives, including suspension of any officeholder in the party and any decision of the party central or territorial bodies (except the party convention), pending further decisions of the appropriate collegial organ of the party. This institute is therefore entirely corporatist: the leader stands above all the statutory regulations and is de facto omnipotent.

Aside from that, all intra-party procedures follow basic democratic principles at all levels of party organization, such as elections of all governing bodies, rotation of 10 per cent of the collegiate bodies, accountability, free discussion, election of leaders in the party organizations and parliamentary factions on a competitive basis (since 2012). The Statutes also provide for regular meetings of the governing bodies (presidia) on all levels. With the effective dominance of the executive branch of power over its party, all these democratic procedures de facto provide only legal and binding shape to decisions taken »above« and function smoothly. Conflicts over programmes or agendas never surface in statutory conferences or conventions: as described above, the party programme only mirrors the executive power agenda and is therefore not viewed as a priority.

As for the selection of party leaders and, particularly, nomination of party candidates in elections, the Statutes provide for a set of what might be termed »anti-mutiny controls«:

– A party member elected to a legislative

assembly is required by the Statutes (Article 5.2.8) to join the Party faction and »act in accordance« with decisions made by the party's governing bodies at the relevant level.

– A secretary in a lower-level party organization elected to the General Council is suspended in the Council if he/she loses the post in the lower level organization (Article 9.2).

– Higher-level bodies, particularly the General Council Presidium (standing governing body) can take or overrule decisions made by lower-level organizations pertinent to participation in elections (Article 10.12.12), compulsory for local organizations.

– Selection of candidates for elections by local and regional organizations and elaboration of platforms is controlled by the superior levels of the party hierarchy.¹⁸ A compromise solution was reached in 2005 after protests from stronger regional organizations, particularly Moscow's heavyweight mayor Yuri Luzhkov (Veretennikova 2005): the superior level now »approves« (»utverzhdает«) only the more important decisions, such as the nomination of mayoral candidates – with regard to would-be members of legislative assemblies and platforms, a »milder« verb is used, namely »soglasovyvaet« (»does not object to«), still leaving the higher authority with a veto right, presumably to be applied only in exceptional cases (Article 10.12).

A positive development in intra-party democracy is the introduction of the mechanism of primaries. It started in 2007 as mere acclamation

¹⁸ See: <http://er.ru/news/2012/5/25/partijnye-platformy-podderzhivayut-iniciativy-medvedeva-po-demokratizacii-edinoj-rossii/>.

of candidates handpicked by party organizations. On the eve of the 2011 federal Duma elections, however, the primaries became more competitive and were used to seriously redefine the list of would-be deputies by the inclusion of nominees of the »Popular Front«. In most cases, the primaries were still a »controlled« procedure, but in several regions this provoked conflicts: after a complaint from a local member, Putin cancelled the results of primaries in two towns in the Maritime Territory; other scandals occurred in Volgograd and Irkutsk.¹⁹ In 2013, the party gave its organizations a choice of four models for primaries, ranging from the most »open«, allowing any registered voter to participate (applied in Ivanovo and Vologda regions) to the most »closed«, in which electors chosen by party members vote on candidates participating in intra-party debates (opted for in Chechnya and several other regions).²⁰ Introduced as a deliberate measure to contain the elitist and bureaucratic character of selection processes, primaries constitute a definite step forward, although they remain »controlled« in the majority of cases.

4. Settlement of Intra-Party Conflicts and Disputes and Ideological Differences

Intra-Party Conflicts and Their Resolution

As noted above, the most serious conflicts within United Russia are over the nomination of

candidates for elections (the latter are presumed to bring guaranteed success to whoever is chosen). The selection is closely controlled by the executive branch of power at each level. In most cases, the party machinery successfully manages competition within the ruling elite. Save for individual conflicts (such as at the primaries discussed above), selection for positions in the legislature goes smoothly: multiple seats on party lists allow for compromise between competing groups within the ruling elite. For example, in 2011 numerous federal MPs who were in conflict with governors of regions they represented in the Duma were »transferred« to other regions (in other words, electors in the primaries in such cases had to vote for people with no connection to their regions, more evidence of bogus intra-party democracy).

Most conflicts occur over the election of mayors, in other words, the heads of municipal executives,²¹ particularly in regions in which the elites are fragmented due to territorial and/or economic diversity (Makarenko 2009: 54) and the governors are unable to either suppress or effectively manage conflicts between various elite groups:

– In 2008, several members of United Russia ran against their fellow party candidate for mayor in three towns in Sverdlovsk region and were expelled. In a similar situation in Smolensk in 2009, the »dissenter« was expelled but nevertheless won the election, upon which they

¹⁹ See: <http://www.svobodanews.ru/content/article/24299873.html>.

²⁰ See: <http://er.ru/news/2013/4/23/partiya-zadaet-vyborye-standarty/>.

²¹ According to the Russian Constitution, local governments (including mayors) are not subordinate to governors and constitute a separate level of public authority. In reality, governors tend to control and dominate local government, particularly in larger cities, which are often the main donors of regional budget revenues.

were admitted back into the party, only to be arrested a year later on charges of »corruption«. However, the conflict continued for another year in the town's assembly: even the mediation of the Party's general council proved insufficient and the United Russia faction remained »divided against itself«. Similar »mutinies« occurred in Tula legislature in 2010, and in a district assembly in Krasnoyarsk region in 2013, where 60 members of the party resigned (having sent a letter to the party chairman) in protest against the district's chief executive.²²

– In 2009, Murmansk governor Yuri Evdokimov publicly accused United Russia of »dirty tricks« in campaigning for its candidate against a formally independent candidate whom Evdokimov supported, ignoring the threat of expulsion from the party. Evdokimov's candidate ended up winning in the runoff, but the governor resigned »voluntarily«.

– The most prominent conflict occurred in 2010 in Nizhny Novgorod, where a new governor (Valery Shantsev, »parachuted in« from Moscow) blocked the re-election of the mayor Vadim Bulavinov, although the latter was a respected politician and originally enjoyed the support of a majority in the city assembly and the federal General Council. The governor managed to »persuade« a number of party assemblymen to vote against Bulavinov. A similar standoff between Shantsev's and Bulavinov's factions occurred in the 2011 primaries (Makarkin 2010).

These examples demonstrate that conflicts

in United Russia: (a) occur almost exclusively around dogfights for positions of power, not over ideology or platform; (b) are moderated by a higher level or party authority, not managed within the relevant chapter of the party; and (c) this higher level (often federal) strives primarily for stability of the executive power, either by supporting the governor or by replacing him. This pattern confirms the nature of the party as a neo-corporatist coalition of elites.

Ideological Platforms

Being a broad elite coalition, United Russia contains people of diverse ideological preferences (for example, from private business or the traditional bureaucratic nomenclature, civilians and members of the military). To accommodate these differences, the party seeks a balance between manifestations of pluralism and the need to maintain internal cohesion and discipline.

In April 2005, »liberal conservative« and »social conservative« groups or »wings« were formed within the party's Duma faction. The leadership reacted with caution: »Bears²³ need no wings«, said Duma speaker Boris Gryzlov (Veretennikova 2005). However, the need to provide institutional shape for intra-party discussion was recognized and the two wings were transformed into party clubs. A third »Patriotic« club was added later.

According to MP Andrei Isaev, the party's »ideology tsar« and chairman of the social conservative club, the clubs »set the framework of admissible differences« and therefore

²² See: <http://lenta.ru/news/2013/03/18/out/>.

²³ A bear is the official logo of United Russia.

legitimize intra-party discussions. The common denominator was defined as a »conservative ideology to which we all subscribe, irrespective of our differences«. ²⁴ Furthermore, each club is supposed to reach out to public circles close to their respective ideologies and therefore broaden the party support base.

Until 2008, the clubs' activities were low-profile; it was the need to react to the economic crisis that forced the clubs to increase its activity. The clubs elaborated plans to tackle the crisis and then tried to achieve consensus on an anti-crisis programme. On one hand, the experience was positive: for the first time intra-party discussion became substantive and club members learned the skills of negotiating compromise. On the other hand, the task of elaborating an update of the party platform for the annual (2008) convention failed, and the joint anti-crisis programme, which had been so difficult to work out, was de facto ignored by the cabinet. Clubs gradually spread: their chapters appear in many regional organizations. In 2012, the party formally presented its platforms based on the clubs. Sergei Neverov, secretary of the General Council Presidium, announced that these platforms were viewed as an important mechanism of intra-party democracy and that the party was considering giving it institutional status in the statutes. ²⁵ However, this idea has not yet been implemented.

The major limitation on development of intra-party discussion is lack of any institutional status framing its work. Only a tiny minority of

party members (even in the Duma faction) are genuinely involved in any of the clubs; there are no binding or even "habitual" procedures or requirements regulating whether and how policy positions of the club are taken into account by the party or its Duma faction. It remains a largely informal ad hoc discussion mechanism having no direct impact on the decision making.

5. Measures for Preventing and Controlling Corruption

The formal requirements pertaining to party finance in Russia are strict and detailed, and United Russia duly follows those requirements. Its annual statements are audited by the Control and Revision Commissions at all levels, and are further approved by government agencies. Such statements (a summary of the 2011 figures is presented in Table 1) disclose the sources of party revenue and are subjected to both internal and external audits. Detailed requirements apply to campaign spending.

However, at least three factors negatively affect the transparency of party financing. First, the bulk of corporate donations – 85 per cent in 2009 (Shleinov 2010) – are made indirectly, through regional »foundations to support United Russia«, which are not required to disclose their sources of revenue. This is not sufficient to suspect corruption, however: presumably, donations to the »support foundations« come from legal businesses and are voluntary; the donors simply see an advantage in building relations with the

²⁴ See: <http://www.cscp.ru/clauses/6/397/c/3797/>, 30 декабря 2008 г.
²⁵ See: <http://er.ru/news/2012/4/6/edinaya-rossiya-predstavila-ideologicheskie-platfony-partii/>.

Table 1: Financial statement of United Russia, 2011²⁶

Source of revenue	Roubles (million)	Euros (million)
Balance at the beginning of the fiscal year	677.0	16.9
Total revenues	3958.0	98.9
Membership fees	163.0	4.0
Government financing ²⁷	894.0	22.3
Donations, total	2867.0	71.7
From corporate donors	2756.0	68.9
From individual donors	38.0	1.0
Donations violating rules set by federal law (liable to return)	73.0	1.8
Other sources	16.0	0.25

ruling elite (with rare exceptions, for example, quoted by Shleinov 2010), but the lack of publicity and transparency²⁸ is worthy of notice.

The second factor is illegal campaign financing: all parties are suspected of this, but it is practically impossible to document and verify.

The most significant factor, however, is the »convergence of the State and governing party«, which in Russia is referred to as »administrative resources«, as noted by the OSCE Observation

Mission.²⁹ This convergence provides extra assets and opportunities for the ruling party and de facto constitutes corruption. However, the party turns a blind eye to it.

6. Conclusion: Prospects of United Russia

In June 2013, the »Popular Front for Russia« (renamed from »All-Russia Popular Front«) was inaugurated as a public movement, chaired by Vladimir Putin. Claiming to have a non-party,

²⁶ See: <http://er.ru/party/today/userdata/files/2012/06/13/edros.pdf>
²⁷ Parties that receive at least 3 per cent of the vote in federal parliamentary elections are eligible for government funding: 20 roubles (around 50 eurocents) for each vote received in 2009–2012, raised to 50 roubles since 2013.
²⁸ Links to most financial reports on the United Russia website do not open.
²⁹ OSCE International Election Observation. Russian Federation, State Duma Elections – 4 December 2011. Statement of preliminary findings and conclusions, available at: <http://www.osce.org/odihr/85757>.

»catch-all« character, it is due to become the principal public institution for support of the popular president.

The implications of this development for United Russia are extremely significant. For 12 years, the Russian presidency was building a predominant party, thus de facto trying to replace a highly personalistic regime with a regime relying on institutionalized party support, which in the common wisdom of the political science, is believed to be more stable, flexible and more capable of solving the problem of power succession (Meleshkina 2006). Now the trend has been reversed: United Russia's popularity with the public remains almost entirely dependent on the prestige of the national leader (plus the varying popularity of governors and mayors in local elections). Its role as a mediator of the ruling elite is subordinate to the bureaucratic machinery. In power successions, it seemed to have learned about Putin's decision to nominate Medvedev (in 2008) and to return to the presidency (in 2012) only when the incumbent president was ready to announce it (therefore it had no influence on the decision). To sum up, it failed to become an asset and a support base for the executive and, with receding popularity, was becoming a liability. The emergence of a different »public face« of the president's mass support base is a logical outcome of this trend. The Popular Front is being built as an even more corporatist institution: its statutes only vaguely stipulate internal management mechanisms and decision-making procedures, leaving most of the authority with regional and federal headquarters. Thus Russia's political regime

will, for the foreseeable future, be even more personalistic than in the previous decade.

This development does not signal the end of United Russia. It will continue to »represent« the executive authority in party-list elections and fill legislative assemblies, guaranteeing »core support« for governing legislative initiatives: in regions with paternalistic electorates, its results will remain sufficiently high to ensure a majority or a plurality. To this end, United Russia will retain its party structures and managerial mechanisms. However, in majoritarian elections³⁰ we will probably see many pro-government candidates running as »independents« with the informal support of the Popular Front. Within several years it will produce a two-tier »party of power«: highly disciplined United Russia deputies will be elected on party lists and more autonomous and ambitious deputies will be elected as direct candidates. This transformation is inevitable and will have multiple effects on the party system in general and on the »party of power« in particular. It may lead to the assimilation of the current United Russia by the Front (which under this scenario will have to transform into a political party), or alternatively the two tiers will continue to co-exist for one or two electoral cycles. In any case, United Russia will not remain in its current shape.

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³⁰ The Russian electoral system is undergoing a transformation consistent with our assumptions: in federal parliamentary elections a fully proportional system is already being replaced with a 50:50 mixed majoritarian-proportional system. A recent legislative initiative will reduce the required share of proportional representation from the current 50 per cent to 25 per cent in regional (land) elections, and lift the requirement for a proportional component in municipal assembly elections.

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VII

Experiences in Party Management of Political Parties: The Case of the Social Democratic Party of Germany

Gero Neugebauer

1. Introduction

Due to the implications of ongoing economic and social changes, political parties are forced to adapt and adjust the relations towards their political environments accordingly (Poguntke 2000: 31). Especially in pluralistic democratic societies, competing parties constantly have to monitor any changes in the electorate's political attitudes, and review whether the party is assumed to have expertise in solving existing problems. Thus, party management is responsible for taking measures to align the party correspondingly. Hence, more and partially new tasks arise – such as professional election campaigns, recruiting new members, political communication. Furthermore, a higher degree of professionalism regarding membership administration, finances, communication, and human resources can be displayed. At the same time, a party's political success crucially depends

on the performance of its representatives and the related public response, since its policies and representatives are exposed to the media's ongoing attention and interest in communicating crises and scandals to the public. Such scandals may occasionally become part of legal disputes and hence influence electoral behaviour (von Alemann 2010: 236ff). In Germany, parties are already faced with the lowest level of public trust among all political institutions (Güllner 2013: 37). If they are repeatedly accused of abusing power, having a self-serving mentality, developing rigid structures, and being corrupt, these accusations may not only have a negative impact on the public support for the party, but also on the general approval of the political system; after all, the parties are present in all spheres of the political system.

2. Legal Provisions for Party Management

The German Constitution (Grundgesetz) defines the role of parties, as part of the public process of aggregating the political will: "Political parties shall participate in the formation of the political will of the people" (Section 21). This participation means that parties have a de facto monopoly in the national decision-making process. This situation in turn provides manifold incentives to influence the actions of office holders and elected representatives.

Article 21 of the Constitution stipulates that the internal organisation of parties has to conform to "democratic principles". This means that parties have to make their committees eligible for election, and to democratically organise decision-making processes within the parties – i.e., with the participation of their members. In addition, they have to "publicly account for their assets and for the sources and use of their funds" (2010). This desire for transparent finances – which is based on the negative experiences with the first German democracy (1919–1932), the regulations for public financing laid down in the Political Parties Act (Parteiengesetz), and fiscal management – forms a separate area for party management (Morlok 2009).

The German Political Parties Act sets regional organisations as the basis for party organisation (section 7) and regulates the principles for the internal organisation. Each party is required to have a written statute and a written programme. The statute contains, inter alia, provisions about life within the party (organisational statute), financial concerns (financial statute), and the settlement of disputes through rules of arbitration. More regulations are provided by

different norms, such as the electoral legislation regarding the nomination of candidates.

3. The SPD within the German Party System

The Social Democratic Party of Germany (SPD) is the oldest party in Germany; in May 2013, the party celebrated its 150th anniversary. Hence, it looks back on a long tradition of more than 120 years as a parliamentary party. The SPD began as a working-class party, but today it constitutes a professional electors' party on its way to becoming a "professionalised media communication party" (Grunden 2012: 107). Politically, it is legitimised by participating in elections, delegating representatives to various parliaments, recruiting political elites, and filling political posts in municipalities, as well as in states (Länder) and national institutions.

The SPD sees itself as a member and a programme party. Its members, who numbered 477,000 at the end of 2012 (13,000 less than in 2011), constitute the party's most important resource. They participate in the decision-making processes within the party, elect party organs, co-determine policy and personnel issues through membership votes, and represent the most important multipliers of party politics. In the wake of the recent party reform, non-members were offered guest memberships, allowing them to participate in internal decision-making processes.

As a programme party, the SPD has to derive its policies and the claim for political and social governance from its programme. This leads to certain problems, such as supporters of various positions within the party holding controversial

discussions, or the need to constantly update the party programme. These discussions arise primarily when the guiding core value of social justice – and to some extent the additional values of freedom and solidarity – are concerned. According to its manifesto, the party is committed to the principle of democratic socialism. However, this is not relevant for its social democratic policy, rather it represents an attempt to keep alive a conventionalised political position within the party, so that it can be recalled should the necessity arise.

The most important condition for implementing the core values of a party is to participate in government, particularly as the leading party in a coalition. However, since 1945, the SPD has only succeeded in doing so between 1969 and 1982, and from 1998 until 2005. Between 2005 and 2009, the party was the junior partner in a coalition with the Christian Democratic Union of Germany / Christian Social Union of Bavaria (CDU/CSU), and since then has been in the opposition.

4. The Organisation of the SPD and its Party Management

Party Structure

In general, the SPD organises its regional structure according to Germany's territorial set-up, nevertheless, it exhibits a few distinctive features. Regional associations exist in the states (Landesverbände), districts (Bezirke) and so-called subdistricts (Unterbezirke); the latter are formed on the basis of few constituencies. The basic organisational units are municipal branches (Kreisverband or Stadtbezirksverband) and local branches (Ortsverein or Abteilung). With few

exceptions, a party district does not correspond to the actual territorial structure; the former is defined by the party leadership according to "political and economic expedience" (Organisational Statute §8). Corresponding to these principles, district boards set the boundaries of the subdistricts, and their executives in turn do the same for the local branches. Following the tradition within the SPD, the districts will always be the political basis for the organisation within the party.

Regional associations deal with political tasks at the federated state level, as well as with those that were passed on to them by the districts. As a result, they will also bear the administrative and any further costs that arise in fulfilling their tasks. Parallel to the federal level, they have executive boards. Furthermore, they either possess or otherwise demand autonomy from the federal party in some political issues – e.g., when forming a coalition. They are not, however, independent in terms of their party administration. Nevertheless, this relatively essential role of the medium level, which is based on the federal structures, impedes a centralising trend at the federal level.

Party Hierarchy

Conforming to its party structure, the SPD's organisation follows the principle of a democratic and bottom-up decision-making process. In theory, the highest organ at the federal level is the party conference (Parteitag), which is held every two years. A special party conference can be summoned, if needed, to decide on personnel issues or agreements with other parties in order to form a coalition. Usually, a party conference consists of members of the executive board as well as delegates, who were elected at the

district level. Whether or not a party conference is more than a body of acclamation without any actual importance for party politics and personnel decisions depends entirely on the party's internal condition and the given political challenges.

The latest organisational reform in 2011 established the party convention (Parteikonvent). It consists of 200 delegates, who were elected on the state level and are thus entitled to vote, as well as those members of the executive board who are entitled to vote. The body replaced the former party council. It is held twice a year between the party conferences, and once during the year in which a party conference is held. The convention is responsible for all political and organisational issues and is allowed to take decisions, if no other body is entitled to do so. Unlike party conferences, party conventions are not allowed to take place on the lower levels.

Party Administration

The party's executive board (Parteivorstand), with the party's Chairperson and the Secretary General, are the central persons and bodies. The executive board, whose members also represent the political factions of the party, is where SPD policy is made. In practice, it takes the fundamental decisions about party politics, organisation, and personnel – some of which may be approved later by the party congress. It coordinates and guides the operational political work of the party on a national and international

level. Although the party's Chairperson is the representative of the SPD, it may occur that the formal structure does not correspond to the political reality.¹

Under §24 of the statute, the Secretary General heads the party management. Having a political function at the same time, he also comments on party political issues. His responsibility ranges from organisational and administrative work – including the support of the Chairperson, his five deputies, the committees, and the lower bodies – to directing the party headquarters (Willy-Brandt-Haus), as well as preparing and organising the federal election campaigns.

Central Committees

The party conference not only elects the executive board, but also a control committee and the federal arbitration committee. The control committee is entrusted with checking the party leadership and dealing with complaints about party members from within the party. Neither members of the executive board, the party convention, nor the federal arbitration committee are allowed to be on the control committee. Local branches, subdistricts, and districts are permitted to appoint investigative committees, which establish facts in order to settle conflicts. The disputes themselves, however, are handled by arbitration committees, which exist on all but the local levels and are independent of any instructions.

¹ In 2012 and 2013, the task of representation was fulfilled by three people: the party's Chairman, Sigmar Gabriel; the Chairman of the parliamentary group in the Bundestag, Frank-Walter Steinmeier; and, since September 2012, the SPD candidate for Chancellor for the federal elections in 2013, Peer Steinbrück. This situation has had a negative effect both on the communication within the party and on the public, because these three individuals displayed a diversification within the power structure.

Party Member Organisation

The SPD not only underwent important social shifts in its membership, but also heavy losses. For this reason, it is still important for local branches to recruit new members. Their admission is usually carried out by the local branch or by the executive board. Afterwards, the districts and a special department at party headquarters are responsible for the administration of party members. All members pay a membership fee via direct debit, which is graduated according to their income. The districts are responsible for allocating this money to several party organs. Party headquarters issues an annual report about the development of membership figures. However, it is not necessary to become a full member of the SPD in order to contribute to its work. Those who respect the core values of the party are invited to become guest members, and may thus participate in members' meetings as well as in intra-party associations, in project teams, or ad-hoc working groups.

Professionals and Honorary Functionaries

The SPD employs full-time staff on the basis of regular labour contracts for the tasks requiring continuous party work. This is true for all levels – from the subdistricts up to party headquarters. Honorary functionaries – i.e., Chairpersons and elected members of the boards of local branches and regional associations – do not receive any material compensation for their commitment. Subdistricts usually bear any costs arising from fulfilling their tasks.

Intra-Party Democracy and Decision-Making Processes

Both the Constitution and the Political Parties Act require parties to obey democratic principles in any decision-making processes regarding personnel issues and further matters. Thus, the administration of intra-party organs, as well as the procedures and structures of decision-making processes – from the local up to the federal level – are organised accordingly. There are, however, opposing positions about the purpose and problems of intra-party decision-making processes. Some maintain that problems may arise due to the conflict between the interest in and the need for quick decisions (flexibility and efficiency), and a broadened participation of party members. Others argue against the broad participation of party members, noting that political elites are already elected according to democratic principles – i.e., in a transparent and pluralistic procedure – and that they are legitimised this way. Supporters of grassroots democracy, however, accept only those decisions as democratic that were taken by the party base. One example of this position is the idea of a membership vote that can change, reject, or substitute the resolution of a party organ and can designate a candidate for Chancellor (Statute §13).

The political reality within the SPD shows that members' participation is valued in the context of a functioning member party, thus non-members are offered a form of participation as well. The actual participation of party members, however, is generally rather low.² As mentioned previously,

² 2010, a nationwide interview about several issues of the political work at the federal and the local level, as well as the party organisation, was conducted among the local branches of the SPD. One conclusion was that, in the future, more members, non-members, and local branches should be consulted about political content.

executives and informal bodies take preliminary decisions in certain areas – for example, when selecting political elites – but there are additional factors that might be responsible for limiting the participation of party members at congresses. These are, above all, prior consultations between party factions, the influence of organisations from the party's environment (like trade unions), or the choreographing of party conferences. In order to effectively counter the impact of these factors, one could publicise the attempts to exercise influence.

Forms of Intra-Party Democracy

Ideally, the common forms of intra-party democracy within the SPD are votes and majority decisions during various members' and delegates' meetings. Based on these decisions, the executive boards form their decisions using the same voting systems. In reality, however, it is common that the national leadership at the federal level often influences the lower levels in their decision-making. In order to prepare decisions, boards or Chairpersons may appoint working groups or advisory committees and hear experts. Membership votes are a form of participation that is specifically democratic in terms of grassroots involvement. With these votes, a number of motions about local, regional, and overarching issues are decided upon. Examples include the SPD's pension policy, drafts for organisational reforms, and draft programmes (party manifestos,

election manifestos). Local membership meetings also have the right to select persons, who will run for elections or positions in state organisations.³ The executive boards, members' meetings, and party conferences in the constituencies are entitled to propose one or more persons for an intra-party pre-elections list. It is still possible to make personnel proposals during the members' meetings. Prior decisions are made during negotiations in the respective executive boards, which will present the party conferences with the electoral list. Usually, the delegates agree with the lists; only occasionally, can the order be changed. This does not mean that rival candidates have no chance – sometimes they succeed as well.

During discussions about the party manifesto, it is possible and commonly accepted that members contribute and make a motion. In 2013, the SPD even introduced a dialogue with the public to solicit their ideas about the manifesto for the campaign.

Selection Process of Party Leaders

The decisions about leading positions and executive bodies within the party are taken in separate ballots during party conferences, either via a list system or in a single vote based on a simple majority. According to the Statute, usually – with an exception in 1993⁴ – there are no preselection processes with alternative candidates when appointing a Chairperson. This

³ The convention within the SPD is that although the Chairperson is entitled to propose a candidate for Chancellor, he only does so after consulting with the committees. As a rule, the Chairpersons nominate themselves. In 1998, however, the incumbent Chairman refrained from executing this right and proposed a very successful campaigner for the election instead. In 2013, the candidate was de facto nominated by the Chairman and afterwards confirmed at a party conference.

⁴ In 1993, there were three candidates for the office. To reduce the chance of one candidate becoming Chairperson, some leading functionaries successfully organised a membership referendum between three candidates.

is different from the elections for posts in the executive boards or the Secretary General. Here, the party conference will occasionally decide between alternative candidates in a list system or a single vote. Typically, all of these decisions are well prepared by arrangements between factions, persons, and occasionally attached organisations.

A Chairperson who has suffered an election defeat will either resign, or at least forego a re-election. Generally, the announced resignation, as well as the unscheduled displacement of an incumbent Chairperson, is preceded by closed intra-party consultations. Here, potential successors try to organise a majority for their candidacy. In case of unscheduled displacement, a potential successor tries to organize support and a majority for his candidacy - sometimes at a party congress (Lafontaine vs. Scharping in 1995), sometimes secretly (Steinmeier vs. Beck in 2008). As soon as such a secret candidacy is leaked to the media, not only does the Chairperson's reputation suffer damage, but he also has to announce his abdication without being able to nominate a successor.

The history of SPD Chairpersons between 1995 and 2009 reveals several ways people come into this position and leave it again.⁵ The only constant element in this process was that the

Chairpersons of the SPD, who have thus far only been men, have never been voted out of office by a party conference.

Intra-Party Conflicts

There is a wide range of conflicts within the party, which may vary from personal resentments to ideological differences between factions. They often conceal quarrels about the distribution of power and party posts, and are rarely about diverging convictions. The parties involved are usually individuals from committees, representatives of different factions within the party or the parliamentary group in the Bundestag,⁶ as well as Chairpersons of associations at the federal and district levels. In the case of content or personnel decisions, conflicts are solved – either definitively or provisionally – through changing majorities, agreements, or renouncement. Hence, conflicts do not necessarily result in the forming of splinter groups. However, the labour market and social policy of the SPD-led government after 2003 (Agenda 2010) violated social democratic values so severely that various members left the party. Furthermore, a rival party was founded in 2005, which was presided over by a former SPD Chairman. He had left the SPD immediately before in order to avoid an arbitration proceeding against him.

⁵ Rudolf Scharping, who was elected in 1993, lost the Bundestag election in 1994. Oskar Lafontaine replaced him as Chairman in 1995, but resigned from all of his party posts in 1999. His successor Gerhard Schröder, Chancellor at that time (1998–2005), resigned as Chairman in 2004. He was followed by Franz Müntefering, who gave up one year later because his candidate for Secretary General was defeated in an internal election. Matthias Platzeck served as Chair between November 2005 and April 2006. He resigned due to illness. From 2006 until 2008, Kurt Beck held the office, but was considerably weakened by intra-party rivalries. His successor - again Müntefering - resigned after the SPD lost the election in 2009. His successor, Sigmar Gabriel, is still in office but refused to become candidate for the national election in 2013.

⁶ Currently, the following factions within both the party and parliamentary group exist: Seeheimer Kreis (right), Netzwerker (centre), and Parlamentarische Linke (left). The Demokratische Linke (DL21) and the Nürnberger Forum, which is rather conservative, are only represented within the party.

Political conflicts are decided by majorities, other by arbitration committees. They settle any disputes regarding the Organisational Statute and the party manifesto, as well as contestations of elections. They also conduct internal party proceedings against members or units. Internal party proceedings are opened against any party members who have violated the party statutes, core principles, or the party order. This includes infringements of the "rule of intra-party solidarity" – e.g., by founding or supporting another party – as well as "infamous acts" that severely harm the SPD (Organisational Statute §35). As a possible penalty, members can be rebuked, banished from any positions within the party, or expelled from the party. The aggrieved members can file an appeal until the Federal Arbitration Committee delivers a final judgement. If party members are convicted by a criminal court, as in the case of corruption proceedings, they may also have to face an internal party proceeding.

5. Measures for Preventing and Controlling Corruption

According to German criminal law, corruption entails the acceptance of an undue advantage (German Criminal Code §331), passive corruption (Criminal Code §332), offering an undue advantage (Criminal Code §333), and bribery (Criminal Code §334). From what is known, however, these offences are not an issue within the SPD – at least if material rewards, like money in exchange for a certain vote, are concerned. This appears to be different, however, if one applies a definition based on Laswell and Rogow, who understand corruption within an organisation as a destructive violation

of the organisation's interests for the benefit of a specific advantage (1963: 132ff). This may already occur in the forming of networks to advance and secure one's posts. Networks create structures that provide advantages for everyone involved. Corruption may be suspected, if someone is promised a job outside of the party. To challenge this impression, one can introduce rotation schemes, limit mandates to a certain time period, or conduct new elections. Nepotism – i.e., promoting family members by employing them within the functionary's task area – is not considered to be corruption according to criminal law.

Measures for Preventing Corruption

General anti-corruption measures are adopted from the respective provisions on transparent party finances within the Political Parties Act, as well as from the ban on accepting rewards and gifts worth more than 15 €, which applies to every public administration. Additionally, the SPD established its own regulations, which are supposed to lower the risk of corruption within the party. These include, for instance, not attracting new members with loyalty cards that would entitle them to purchase goods and services at a reduced price. Furthermore, the Election Code stipulates that everyone running for a public office has to "disclose the type of his income" (Election Code §8 subsection 7). It is also checked whether those members, who derive their main or additional income from mandates, functions within the party, or political posts are paying the respective contributions regularly and correctly (Financial Statute §2). Furthermore, there are explicit regulations for accepting and rejecting donations – e.g., from parliamentary groups, political foundations, or

foreigners. Another set of standards was initiated for those donations that provide the donor with a certain economic or political advantage.⁷ This way, the party strives to prevent the influence of money on the general performance of its decision-makers or even individual decisions. Although this practice has also been considerably limited by court rulings and legal provisions, it has not yet been eliminated.

Notwithstanding the above, the party's executive board and the party council enacted a specific regulation for the conduct of elected representatives and office holders from the SPD in 1995.⁸ If a party member violates these rules, this act is judged as violation of the party's principles. These violations can thus result in a proceeding before arbitration committees and in respective penalties.

The "Rules of Conduct" stipulate that members shall not accumulate political posts, mandates, or other roles within the party. Regarding their business interests, SPD members have to "be prepared to accept strict standards". Party units are encouraged to have a critical eye when members assume offices, mandates, and party roles. They are supposed to guarantee that, "the accumulation of responsibilities, a conflict of interests and overwork are prevented" (Rules of Conduct, subsection I).

Members must not accumulate roles or mandates, nor are they allowed to have more than two

elected positions, with the exception of the local branch. There are, however, no rotation schemes or limitations of mandates. If full-time party employees assume paid mandates, they will be put on unpaid leave from their original post. As a matter of principle, no one is to assume more than two mandates in supervisory or administrative boards, provided he receives attendance fees and monthly payments for them.

Like public servants, full-time employees in the SPD must not accept rewards and gifts. Furthermore, office holders are not allowed to accept benefits from institutions or companies, particularly if these benefits are related to their offices. This includes offers from banks, savings banks or credit institutions, services or supplies from public supply industries (electricity, water), discounts in companies and for journeys and holidays, or when purchasing or renting a flat or real estate. Moreover, private legal transactions and employment contracts between office holders and elected representatives, on the one hand, and companies with economic activities, on the other hand – e.g., with construction firms – are not seen as a private affair. Office holders are explicitly encouraged to prevent even "the impression of a conflict of interests" (Rules of Conduct, subsection II par. 7).

Interest-led contributions are often declared as donations. Functionaries and elected representatives are allowed to raise funds, but single donations in cash must not exceed 1,000 €. All

⁷ After Chancellor Merkel raised an objection to more rigorous EU-rules for car emissions, the BMW Group donated 690,000 € to the CDU. See <http://www.spiegel.de/wirtschaft/soziales/bmw-quandt-familie-spendet-an-cdu-kritik-von-parteienrechtlern-a-927959.html>

⁸ The executive board agreed upon the so-called Rules of Conduct within the SPD on 16 October 1995. The party council followed the next day.

donations have to be reported in the party's annual statement to the President of the Bundestag. Donations of 50,000 € or more have to be reported at once to the President of the Bundestag with the donor's name. Donations from individuals (natural persons) and companies (legal entities) may be money, as well as cash-value services.⁹ They are generally supposed to support the political work of the party, but people also donate in order to stop the party from realising certain policies – specified, for instance, in party decisions (Rule of Conduct subsections II par. 8). If members of the SPD assume an elected office in the state administration or work in the civil service, they are not allowed to request, receive, or accept the promise of an advantage for themselves or anyone else; otherwise, they can be accused of passive bribery. Those who accept an advantage – or the offer or promise of it for themselves or anyone else – in exchange for a certain act in their functions, will be accused of bribery. The maximum penalty is five years in prison.

Typical instances of corruption involve money, gifts, job offers, or the offer to supply goods and services – e.g., trips, residential construction – at a reduced price. Often, monetary contributions for personal or other use – e.g., contributions to social facilities – are masked as donations for the party. A party may quickly slide into a grey area when their events are sponsored by enterprises, because this may raise the suspicion that the sponsor is trying to create a favourable climate

for upcoming decisions. Private relations between politicians and entrepreneurs or big businessmen may favour not only common interests, but also careers that may follow political careers.

6. Conclusion

Both the constitutional and the legal regulations on organisational and decision-making principles within political parties lay down a binding framework and fixed responsibilities for party management. Furthermore, the Organisational and Financial Statute, as well as the Rules of Arbitration set the content and the order of decision-making processes, define the responsibilities of party bodies and members, and set rules for formal conflict management. Leadership problems, as well as factional and sometimes ideological schisms, often mark the background of the political work of and within the party. A number of reforms have been envisaged to increase party management's effectiveness and the party's appeal – for example, by expanding the possibilities for membership participation and offering participation to non-members. This in no way means that the power of the party leadership is weakened, but at least their management can be made more transparent. If the lower bodies are strengthened, it is possible to stop the tendency for centralisation. The SPD's latest organisational reform – for which an advisory board with experts from various fields was consulted – was

⁹ When the last Bundestag elections were held in 2009, the SPD gained nearly 11% of its revenues from donations. Approximately 18.8 million euros came primarily from party members and supportive citizens. Donations from companies accounted for about 4.2 million euros. In 2010, the share of donations in the overall revenues decreased to about 6.5% (9.55 million euros). For more information, see the treasurer's financial report 2009/10, presented at the Party Conference in Berlin in 2011, p. 9.

also initiated for this purpose. Whether the reform will show the desired effect remains to be seen. The same is true for the reform of central party bodies, which did away with the party's presidium, reduced the size of the executive board, and established the party convention. It is hoped that the reforms will initiate a change in attitudes among the central bodies and top officials, and will ultimately lead to a higher degree of participation among party members and units.

The most significant problems for party management lie with membership (falling membership figures, recruitment), and finances (decline in donations, government funding, and membership fees, with members not paying the fees they are supposed to pay). Poor elections results as in 2009 have had an additional negative effect on the SPD's financial capacity, making political work more difficult and the party thus more dependent on donations, particularly during election campaigns.

Given that political and economic decisions are often closely intertwined – less so within the party, but to a larger degree when office holders and elected SPD representatives are concerned with these decisions – many problems arise if services are promised for certain rewards. Thus, there are no reports about corruption cases within the party, which would be relevant under criminal law aspects, but time and again about corrupt office holders or elected representatives. These reports reveal that the effectiveness of intra-party measures is reduced due to the self-

interest of individual functionaries. Usually, the offenders and their activities are exposed by the media and subsequently brought to justice by criminal law courts. However, all cases have shown that corruption harms the image of the party and its officials in the estimation of the public, and may affect the relation to its political environment.

Generally though, the awareness of the problem is adversely affected by the fact that the Political Parties Act and the case law may indeed offer sufficient possibilities for judicial interventions. Until today, however, the German government has refused to submit the United Nations Convention against Corruption to the Bundestag for ratification. The government parties declare that the convention would have a negative effect on the free mandate of the members of the Bundestag,¹⁰ but this is clearly based on the perception of corruption and not on its actual occurrence. It also goes against the public attitude about corruption and contradicts the legal efforts, as well as the attempts by nearly all political parties to hold corruption in check. As a result, this position leads to public disappointment about politics and will eventually harm the political parties – although the SPD and other parties support the ratification of this Convention into German law.

¹⁰ At present, only the actual buying of votes is illegal for representatives. Everything else – like the acceptance of benefits, rewards, gifts, or a big honorarium for a speech – are not liable to prosecution. The bribery of representatives is only regarded as a crime on the local and federated state level (German Criminal Code §108e).

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VIII

Intra-Party Management of Japan's LDP

Jeyong Sohn

1. Introduction

The Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) of Japan remained in power from its formation in 1955 until 2009, with the exception of one brief period (1993–1994). In the 2009 general election, the party lost its status as the largest party in the House of Representatives for the first time, thus falling into opposition. However, in the 2012 elections, it returned to power against the backdrop of voter disappointment in the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) government. Then, in the recent 2013 upper house elections, the LDP also recovered its status as the largest party in the House of Councillors by gathering significant voter support due to high hopes for Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's economic policies, or »Abenomics«.

The DPJ, which won a sweeping victory in the 2009 general election to achieve its long-sought

ascent to power, experienced fragmentation due to internal divisions over the issue of raising the consumption tax rate and the party leadership election. By contrast, the LDP was able to achieve a change of government while maintaining party unity, despite losing its advantage as the ruling party. How did the LDP succeed in managing intra-party governance while in opposition and what is the relationship between these methods and the LDP's intra-party management experience during its long-term dominance?

In Section 1 I examine the puzzle of why LDP intra-party management has been maintained regardless of conditions conducive to intra-party conflict. Next, after reviewing the organizational structure of the LDP (Section 2), I consider the nature of its intra-party democracy with a focus on the party leadership election and the policymaking process (Section 3). In the next section, I consider how the party leadership

cope with intra-party conflicts and in what ways this affects the attitude of affiliated legislators towards party discipline (Section 4). Finally, I discuss measures taken by the LDP for preventing and controlling corruption in order to protect the party from political scandals (Section 5).

2. Puzzle: Unity despite Diversity?

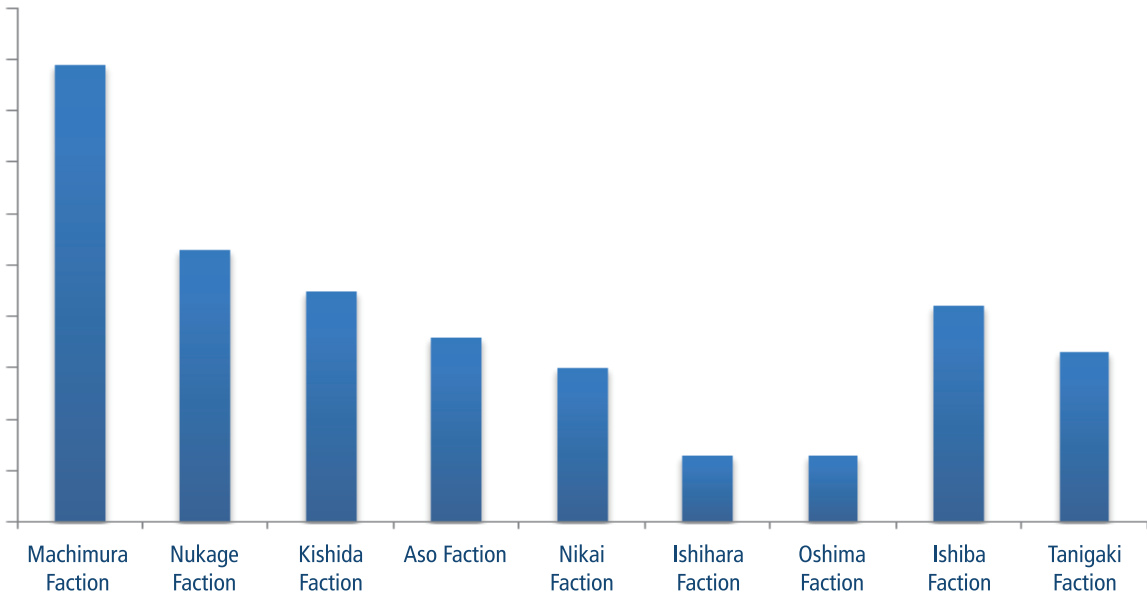
The nature of the LDP party structure makes party unity difficult to maintain.

First, the political stances of member legislators are diverse. The LDP is not a political party born of traditional social cleavages as in the case of Western European parties. Consequently, it has acquired and maintained political power, not through ideological support, but rather by gaining the support of a wide swath of voters

as a so-called catch-all party. Furthermore, Japan had been using the single non-transferrable vote (SNTV) electoral system for a long period before a mixed plurality/PR system was adopted in 1994. Under the SNTV system, legislators tend to depend on personal support from their supporter group more than on the party, which often led to a broad range of policy stances on the part of legislators (Tatebayashi, 2004: 35–44).

Secondly, there are nine factions within the LDP and the competitive relationship between them can undermine party unity. The previous five leading factions split and there are a growing number of legislators who are unaffiliated with any faction. Also, the binding force of the factions in party leadership elections is decreasing and it is no longer necessarily the heads of the factions who compete in such elections (Krauss and Pekkanen 2011: 138–149). However, the

Figure 1: Size of factions in the LDP (as of July 2013)



Source: Asahi Shimbun, 27 July 2013.

factions continue to play a role in grooming freshman legislators and in the distribution of non-ministerial cabinet posts, as well as posts in the party and the National Diet. Figure 1 indicates the size of each faction as of July 2013.

Thirdly, it is evident that conflicting opinions are likely to surface between LDP party headquarters and regional organizations. In general, regional organizations are, for the most part, not organized and exist merely as loose networks of legislators' personal supporter groups (Nonaka, 2008: 113–126). However, as discussed below, cases are arising of conflicting opinions between the party headquarters and regional organizations regarding party leadership elections and district candidate selection. In particular, expanding the participation of regional organizations in the LDP party leadership election can bring differences of opinion to the surface. For example, in the elections held in September 2012, the proportion of votes from regional organizations was higher than that of Diet members. Although Shigeru Ishiba won the first round due to regional votes,¹ the election went to a runoff vote and Shinzo Abe came out the winner.² In the runoff vote, only votes from members of the National Diet were taken into account and afterwards the local organizations demanded a revision of the election rules.³

Despite these characteristics the LDP was able to maintain unity as a political party over nearly four years in opposition before returning to power.

How was this possible?

3. Party Organization of the LDP

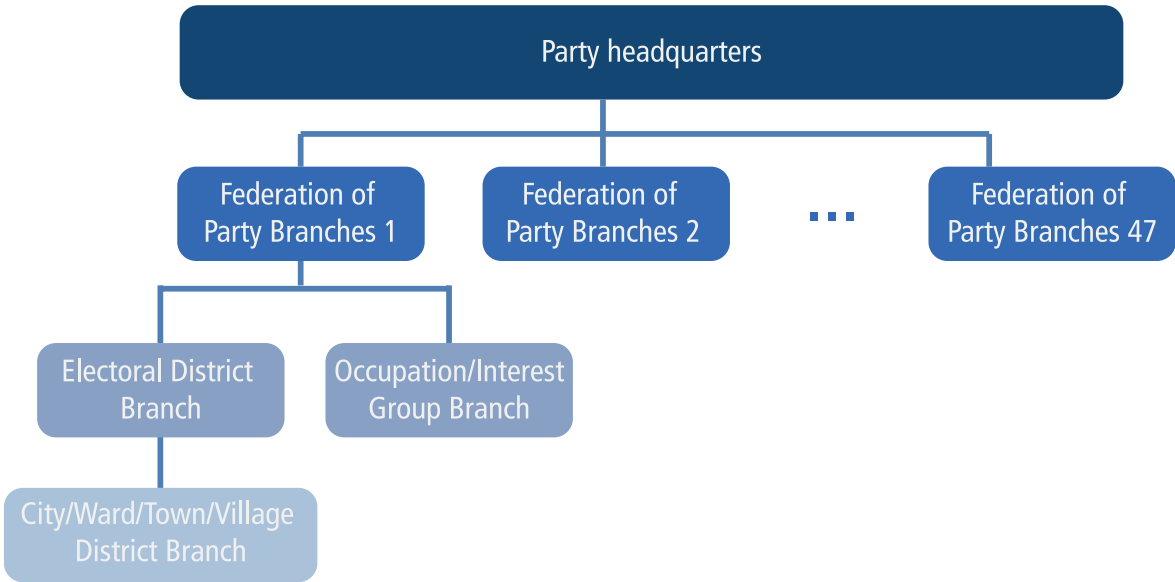
LDP headquarters is an enormous organization that consists of a number of lower branches. After the party leader (Party President), the highest officials in the LDP are the Secretary-General, the Chairman of the General Council and the Chairman of the Policy Affairs Research Council (PARC).

As the de facto second in command, the Secretary-General controls the party organization, including the Personnel Bureau, the Treasury Bureau, the Information Research Bureau and the International Bureau. In addition to supervising election activities, the Secretary-General also directs Diet proceedings and deliberation on bills through the Committee on Rules and Administration in both the House of Representatives and the House of Councillors and the Diet Affairs Committee within the party.

The Chairman of the General Council, which is the highest permanent decision-making mechanism within the party, is expected to play a consensus-building role in the General Council, in which unanimity is a fundamental rule.

Finally, the Chairman of the PARC is in charge of its operations, which include policy research and policymaking. PARC activities are reported directly

Figure 2: LDP regional organization



to the party Board and the General Council, and decisions by the General Council are subject to party scrutiny.

In terms of regional organizations, the LDP has party branches in each electoral district or local municipality⁴ and has established a Federation of Party Branches in each prefecture (Figure 2). However, the activities of the Federations revolve around personal supporter groups and regional organizations are usually not active. It is known that the LDP allocates benefits to supporter and interest groups, since it depends on them in votes and for political donations (Saito 2010: 21–51). Consequently, when a person becomes a party member in conjunction with joining a supporter group for an LDP legislator, that person's priority is the supporter group rather the party as a whole.

4. LDP Intra-party Democracy

Party Leadership Election Procedure

The head (President) of the LDP is elected according to the presidential election rules. However, in urgent cases, it is possible to select a successor in a Joint Plenary Meeting of Party Members of Both Houses of the Diet instead of a Party Convention (LDP Constitution Article 6, Section 2). According to the presidential election rules, voters include party-affiliated National Diet members, party members who have paid party dues for the previous two years, members of the Liberal National Congress (a political organization with the aim of supporting LDP) who have paid membership dues for the previous two years, and individual members and representatives

¹ According to the presidential election rules (Article 23), if no candidate receives a majority on the first ballot, the final vote by the Diet members is held between the two highest ranked candidates.

² Asahi Shimbun, 10 October 2012.

³ Asahi Shimbun, 9 March 2013.

⁴ In addition to geographical categories, such as electoral districts or local municipalities, there are also occupational/interest group branches, each representing a particular industry, such as construction or medicine (LDP Constitution Article 83, Section 2).

of corporate members of the National Political Association (LDP's political funding organization) who were approved by the Party Headquarters' Administration Committee.

In the LDP, a primary election for the party leadership was introduced in the 1970s, and participation by party members in the election became possible. Also, in a long-term view, there has been a trend towards allowing »comprehensive« participation by party members (Uekami 2008: 225–228). As of August 2013, the stipulated method involves allocating three baseline votes to each prefecture and then distributing a further 159 votes to the prefectures

in accordance with the number of voters. As shown in Table 1, 300 votes were distributed among the regional organizations starting in the 2003 party presidential election. In the 1995 and 1999 elections, the portion of votes from regional organizations was 20 per cent and 28 per cent of the total number of votes, respectively, but it exceeded 40 per cent from 2003. Furthermore, the decrease in the number of LDP members due to defeat in the 2009 election increased the proportion of votes cast by regional organizations to 60 per cent in the past two leadership elections.

As discussed above, Shigeru Ishiba achieved

Table 1: Recent party presidential elections and changes in vote distribution

Year	Method	Election Result	Diet members	Regional organizations	Total votes
1995	Party Convention	Ryutaro Hashimoto	80% (311)	20% (80)	391
1999	Party Convention	Keizo Obuchi	72% (371)	28% (143)	514
2001	Joint Plenary Meeting of Party Members of Both Houses of the Diet	Junichiro Koizumi	71% (346)	29% (141)	487
2003	Party Convention	Junichiro Koizumi	54% (357)	46% (300)	657
2006	Party Convention	Shinzo Abe	57% (403)	43% (300)	703
2007	Joint Plenary Meeting of Party Members of Both Houses of the Diet	Yasuo Fukuda	73% (387)	27% (141)	528
2008	Joint Plenary Meeting of Party Members of Both Houses of the Diet	Taro Aso	73% (386)	27% (141)	527
2009	Party Convention	Sadakazu Tanigaki	40% (199)	60% (300)	499
2012	Party Convention	Shinzo Abe	40% (198)	60% (300)	498

Source: LDP Website; Asahi Shimbun article search system.

the largest vote in the first round of voting in September 2012, but the second round of voting was contested only with Diet member votes, and Shinzo Abe was ultimately elected. After that, the regional organizations requested a change of the election rules, which was reflected in the revision in March 2013. This means that the prefectures, which previously did not have a vote in the deciding round, will be allocated one vote each (Presidential Election Rule, Article 23).

Policymaking Process

Since the LDP maintained its one-party dominance, deliberation in the Diet was gradually replaced by the so-called »ruling party preliminary review«. Also, bills that the LDP adopted as policy needed to pass through deliberation in the PARC. In the PARC, there are Divisions to study, research and produce policies, corresponding to the various ministries and agencies, as well as the committee framework of the National Diet (LDP Constitution, Article 47). Also, Research Commissions and Special Committees can be provided for under the supervision of the Chairman of the PARC, as necessary (LDP Constitution, Article 48). The decisions made in the PARC are reported to the General Council, and they are subject to party scrutiny only after a decision by the latter.

The standard policymaking process begins in the Divisions within the PARC or in sub-committees established by them. Through the free exchange of opinions and Q&A sessions, the Divisions contrive to consolidate opinions at the Division Director's discretion. Next, the decision made by the Policy Deliberation Commission in PARC is reported to the General Council. Consensus is called for in the General Council, and when there

are divergent views, these are resolved over time until there is unanimous agreement.

In this way, the PARC in the LDP is also utilized as a means of maintaining intra-party discipline. In other words, unity is maintained by allowing each member to participate in the policymaking process (Tatebayashi 2006: 167–195). A comparison with the DPJ is helpful in making the point clearer. After the 2009 general election, the DPJ government centralized policymaking by abolishing its Policy Research Council. However, DPJ inevitably suffered from the ensuing dualistic system of government and party as members without government positions were excluded from the decision-making process. The failure to initiate organizational reform is one of the factors behind the DPJ's subsequent path towards fragmentation.

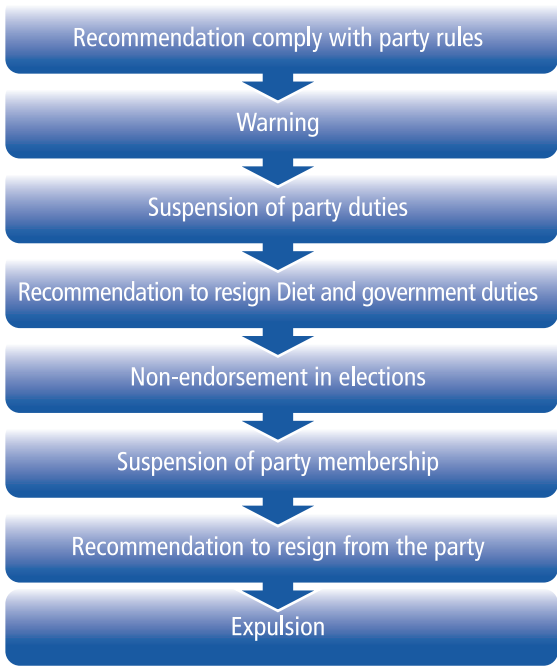
5. Settlement of Intra-Party Conflicts in the LDP

Handling Intra-Party Conflicts

The LDP's Party Discipline Rules contain measures to deal with: (i) contravening party discipline; (ii) impugning the dignity of party members; and (iii) acting against the decisions of the party (LDP Constitution, Article 96). In particular, (i) and (iii) are related to intra-party conflicts arising from opposing opinions on policies or candidate selection.

The Party Discipline Rules stipulate eight types of punishment imposed by the Party Ethics Committee when intra-party conflict of the sort described above arises. As shown in Figure 3, discipline can be applied at various levels,

Figure 3: Types of punishment imposed by Party Ethics Committee



Source: LDP Party Discipline Rules.

according to circumstances, ranging from light punishment that goes no further than a »recommendation to comply with party rules«, to quite severe punishments, such as »recommending resignation from the party« and »expulsion«.

Table 2 lists the punishments imposed in response to intra-party conflict in the LDP from its defeat in the 2009 election until its return to power in 2012. In June 2011, Kazuyuki Hamada submitted a letter of resignation to the LDP after receiving Prime Minister Kan's position offer as a Parliamentary Secretary for Internal Affairs and Communications. However, the LDP did not accept the letter and decided to expel him. On

the other hand, it is common for the relatively light punishments of a »warning« or »suspension of duties« to be used against rebellions against bills or resolutions. For example, in response to four legislators who opposed or abstained from the postal privatization review bill, the LDP prioritized intra-party reconciliation, only issuing a »stern warning« outside the party rules. In 2005, many LDP legislators who opposed the postal privatization bill were subjected to the severe punishments of »recommending resignation from the party« and »expulsion«, but this was an exceptional case during the government of Prime Minister Koizumi, who had promoted postal privatization as his top priority.

Within this framework, the measures the LDP took to maintain intra-party governance on the occasion of the consumption tax rate bill in June 2012 are remarkable. In the vote on the bill, the LDP leadership declared that »expulsion would not be ruled out« for legislators opposing the bill.⁵ In the end, only one legislator, Hidenao Nakagawa, opposed by abstaining in the lower house vote and received the relatively light punishment of »suspension of party duties« from the Party Ethics Committee.

There are almost no cases of severe punishment, such as »expulsion«, except in extreme cases such as defecting from the party or running as a candidate for another party. However, as epitomized by the strict measures adopted in response to opposition to the 2005 postal privatization bill, the party leadership can strengthen party discipline by hinting that »expulsion would not be ruled out«.

Table 2: Main LDP punishments related to voting on bills since 2009

Punishment	Date	Subjects	Reason
Suspension of political activity expenses payments	6/2011	Eight people including Itsunori Onodera, Kenya Akiba, Yoshino Masayoshi	Walked out against party policy during the vote on Diet session extension
Suspension of party duties, recommendation to resign Diet and government duties	7/2011	Taro Kono, Takeshi Iwaya	Was in favour of Diet session extension against party policy
Expulsion	7/2011	Kazuyuki Hamada	Took position of Parliamentary Secretary for Internal Affairs and Communications in the Kan cabinet (DPJ)
Stern warning	4/2012	Hidenao Nakagawa, Yoshihide Suga, Shinjiro Koizumi, Masaaki Taira	Opposed or abstained from postal privatization review bill
Suspension of party duties	7/2012	Hidenao Nakagawa	Abstained from the lower house vote on the bill on consumption tax increase
Warning	8/2012	Shinjiro Koizumi, Hidenao Nakagawa, Yoshihide Suga, Yasuhisa Shiozaki, Katsuyuki Kawai, Masahiko Shibayama, Kenta Matsunami	Vote in favour of a motion of no confidence against party policy

Source: Asahi Shimbun article search system.

Attitude towards Party Discipline

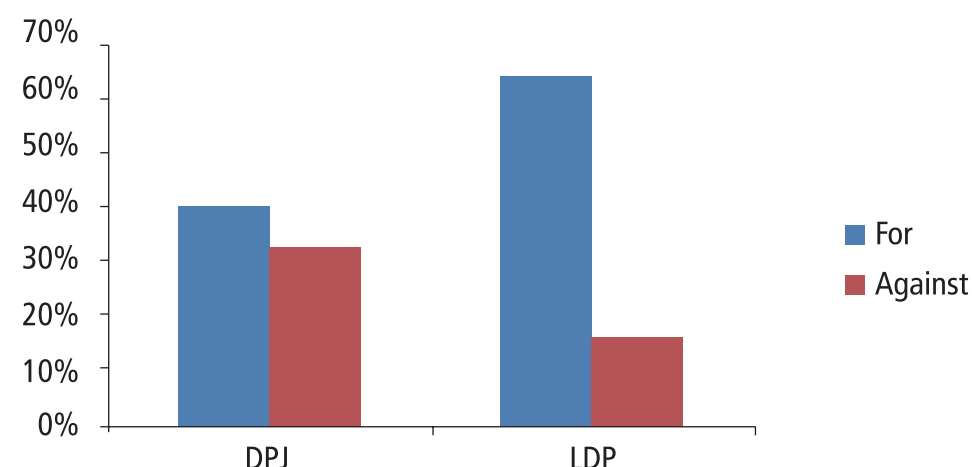
As discussed already, LDP Diet Members depend substantially on supporter networks which are composed mainly of personal supporter groups. They thus tend to have policy differences, despite having the same party affiliation. However, as stated above, the leadership contrives to maintain discipline by ensuring that conflicting opinions on policy and party operations do not surface.

Figure 4 compares the answers given by the LDP and DPJ legislators elected in the 2012 general election to the survey question »during National Diet votes, it is desirable that the political parties

invoke party discipline as much as possible, such that all affiliated legislators act in accord«. Approximately 63 per cent of the LDP legislators approved of party discipline, whereas only 16 per cent were closer to the opposite idea, namely that »it is desirable for affiliated legislators to act based on individual policy preferences«. By contrast, over 30 per cent of the DJP winners had a negative opinion about party discipline, which implies that intra-party governance in the DPJ is not as stable as in the LDP.

⁵ Asahi Shimbun, 26 June 2012.

Figure 4: Support for party discipline (2012 lower house election winners)



Source: 2012 House of Representatives election, data from a survey of candidates conducted jointly by the University of Tokyo, Taniguchi Lab and the Asahi Shimbun newspaper. Available at: <<http://www.asahi.com/senkyo/sousenkyo46/asahitodai>> (Last accessed August 2013).

6. Measures for Preventing and Controlling Corruption

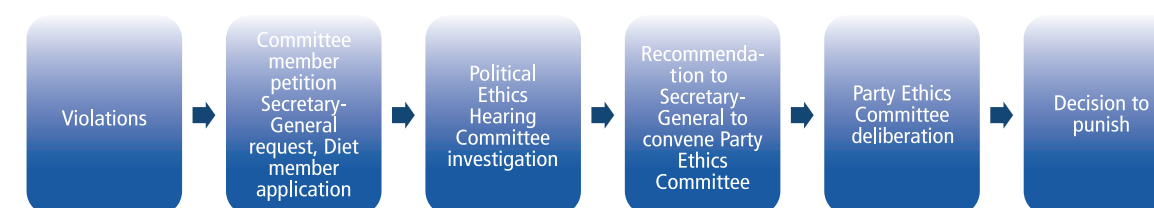
In post-War Japanese politics, scandals over »politics and money« have occurred frequently, most of them stemming from corruption related to the LDP. The opposition pressed the LDP on political corruption, and at the same time emphasized strengthening the rules regarding campaign funding. Meanwhile, the LDP established an Election System Council to evade criticism from voters while attempting to prevent legal restrictions from being tightened up. As a result, the LDP managed to maintain power for 38 long years, but preventing political scandals has become a crucial issue for it.

The LDP has set up a Political Ethics Hearing Committee for the purpose of establishing political ethics (LDP Constitution, Chapter 8). As shown in Figure 5, the Political Ethics Hearing Committee autonomously carries out

an investigation when there is a suspicion of a violation of the Political Funds Control Act or the Ethics Charter established in 1980 by the LDP (Discipline Rules, Article 22). Based on the Political Ethics Hearing Committee's investigation, the Party Ethics Committee launches an inquiry. If the member is proved responsible for arousing political mistrust, the Party Ethics Committee imposes punishment in accordance with the Party Discipline Rules (Discipline Rules, Article 23).

If the Ethics Charter established by the LDP has symbolic value in helping to establish political ethics, the Political Funds Control Act is a substantive effort to maintain intra-party discipline with regard to political corruption. For a long time after the Second World War, Japan's political funding system focused primarily on restricting political funding and expenditure, involving fairly loose restrictions; for example, corporations and labour unions were permitted to contribute to both political parties and

Figure 5: Punishment process for violations of political ethics rules



Source: LDP Party Discipline Rules.

candidates. However, in the political reforms of the 1990s, the regulations were tightened, allowing contributions from corporations and labour unions only to political parties. Furthermore, in the race to reform between the DPJ and the LDP in the 2000s, regulations were made even stricter by strengthening the restrictions on reporting income and expenditure.

To give an example of LDP punishment in response to a political scandal, in 2002 Representative Makiko Tanaka had her party membership suspended by the LDP Party Ethics Committee due to suspicion of misappropriating the salaries of her state-funded secretaries.

However, many cases do not reach the point of punishment due to voluntary resignation or defection before the Ethics Committee imposes any punishments.

7. Conclusion

The LDP has been successful in maintaining strong party discipline by using the authority of the party leadership while taking also advantage of intra-party mechanisms. In other words, despite the political diversity among individual legislators, the LDP was able to maintain intra-party discipline by allowing their participation

in the policymaking process. When intra-party conflicts arise, party leaders attempt to increase the faithfulness of legislators by declaring that strict punishment will be imposed according to the rules. Furthermore, as the example of the party leadership election procedure shows, the LDP has tried to ensure its legitimacy by gradually allowing »comprehensive« participation on the part of party members.

Although it is again the ruling party, with over 400 Diet members, the LDP is still confronted by the challenge of both adjusting disagreements between members and preventing intra-party conflict. Currently, the LDP has several tough decisions to make, such as constitutional reform, social welfare reform and elimination of the fiscal deficit, which require careful intra-party coordination. It remains to be seen how the LDP will make these critical policy decisions while maintaining party unity.

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IX

The Communist Party of China since the Initiation of
Reform and Opening Up:
Continuation and Transformation

Zhou Jianyong

1. Introduction

In the 1980s, a school of thought represented by Peter B. Evans, Theda Skocpol and Eric Nordlinger etc. advocated “bringing the state back in” in the research of politics.¹ In view of the close relationships between the Communist Party of China (CPC) and the state, many scholars concede that “bringing the CPC back in” is a prerequisite for analyzing Chinese politics. In this way, the CPC as well as the country's politics can be better understood.²

The official narrative of the CPC's transformation

can be found in Jiang Zemin's speech at the meeting celebrating the eightieth anniversary of the founding of the party. He said: The CPC has evolved from a party that led the people in the fight to seize power nationwide to one that has led the people, for a long time, in exercising state power. It has developed from an organization that managed the nation's reconstruction under external blockade to one implementing all-round reform and opening up. In other words, the CPC has transformed itself from a revolutionary party to a ruling party along a process from seclusion to opening. The Report of the 18th CPC National Congress (2012) reads, “We should enhance our

¹ Peter B. Evans, Dietrich Rueschemeyer, and Theda Skocpol, (eds.), Bringing the State Back In, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985; Eric Nordlinger, On the Autonomy of the Democratic State, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983.

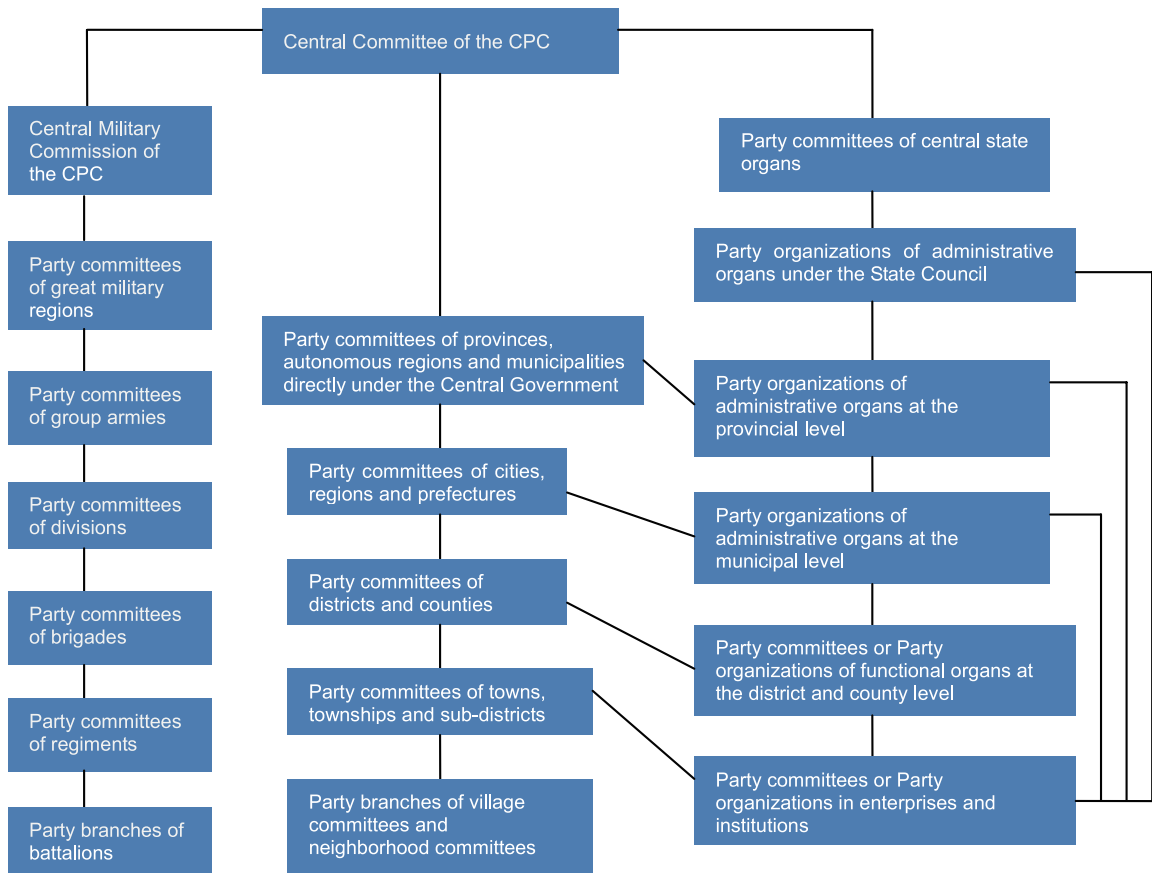
² See, for example, Zheng Yongnian, The Chinese Communist Party as Organizational Emperor: Culture, Reproduction and Transformation, London: Routledge, 2010; Kjeld Brodsgaard and Zheng Yongnian, The Chinese Communist Party in Reform, London: Routledge, 2006; Zheng Yongnian and Kjeld Brodsgaard, Bringing the Party Back In: The Party and Governance in China, Singapore: Eastern Universities Press, 2004.

capacity for self-purity, self-improvement, self-innovation and self-development and build the party into a learning-, service- and innovation-oriented Marxist governing party.” This represents the first official statement on the transformation of the CPC since the initiation of reform and opening up in 1978 and was followed by the publication of a dozen articles on this issue in the People's Tribune in August 2013.³

2. Party Structure and Membership

The structure of the CPC is determined by the rules set out in the party's constitution. The most recent amendments to it were made at the 18th CPC National Congress. In general, the CPC consists of central, local (provincial, municipal, and sub-district), and primary (grassroots) organizations. In addition, there are representative

Figure 1: Structure of the Communist Party of China



Source: From Hu Wei, Government Process, Hangzhou: Zhejiang People's Publishing House, 1998, p. 86.

³ People's Tribune, 2, No. 414, Ser. 8 (August 2013).

organs under the Central Committee and local party committees and organizations established under central and local state organs and mass and economic organizations, cultural institutions, and other non-party entities as well as the army and its party apparatus. Local party organizations operate administratively at the provincial, municipal, and county levels (Figure 1).

The structure of the CPC has basically remained the same since the initiation of reform and opening up except for the existence of the Consultative Commission from 1982 to 1992.

Central Organizations of the CPC

The central organizations of the CPC include its National Congress, Central Committee, Political Bureau of the Central Committee, Standing Committee of the Political Bureau, General Secretary of the Central Committee, Secretariat of the Central Committee, Central Commission for Discipline Inspection, and Central Military

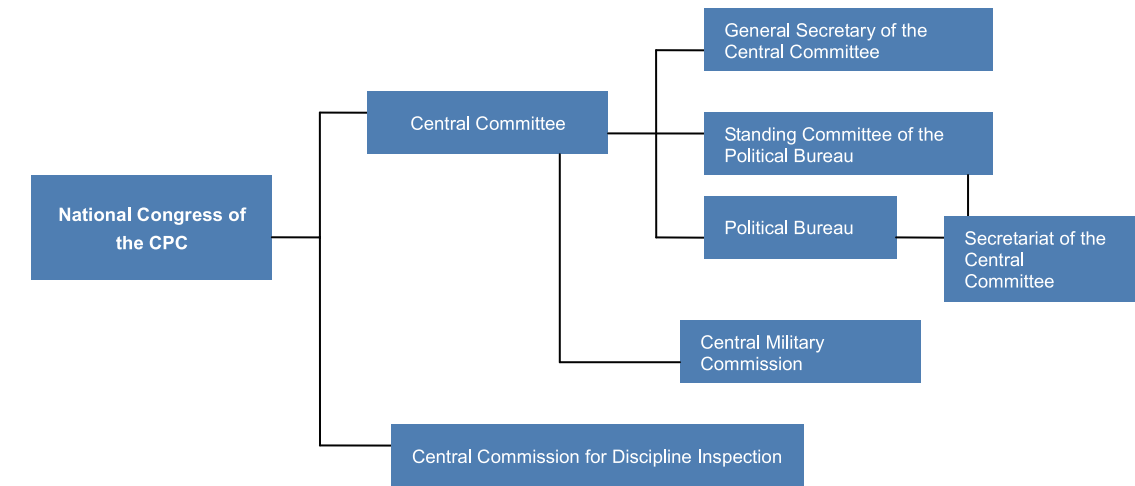
Commission. The central organizations' structure has been stabilized since the 14th CPC National Congress, in 1992. Amendments to the CPC constitution in 1992, 1997, 2002, 2007, and 2012 did not make changes to the central organizations or authorities (Figure 2).

Primary Organizations: Exploring a Setup Based on Local Areas

The past few years have witnessed some fundamental changes in the structure of CPC primary organizations. The report to the 4th Plenary Session of the 17th CPC National Congress, held in 2007, declared the following:

“We shall devote efforts to developing primary organizations in all sectors and covering party organizations and work everywhere. Where there are masses, there is party work. Where there are party members, there are party organizations. Where there are party organizations, there is an entire organizational life, and party organizations

Figure 2: Structure of the central organizations of the CPC



Source: News of the Communist Party of China, <http://cpc.people.com.cn/GB/64162/64163/6418742.html>, last accessed April 18th, 2011.

shall play a full role. Besides setting up party organizations in local areas and employment organizations, we shall improve the structure of primary organizations to help members take part in party events and help party organizations play a role.”

The following are among our efforts in party building in local areas over the past decade:

First was setting up party organizations based on employment and local areas. This change is due to the gradual breakup of many employment organizations and improvement of communities. In other words, with the de-politicization of the society, there is a trend toward de-politicization in terms of the structure of primary organizations. Given this context, primary organizations will gradually lose administrative support. Party organizations based on residential and business locations are a case in point. They are developed on the basis of local areas or “local areas + employment.” In terms of participation, party members belong to “one organization” and therefore can take part in the events of numerous party organizations. These are new experiments in the action and management model of party members in the new era.

Second was practicing larger regional party building based on administrative divisions, mainly at the sub-district level. The framework is as follows: Party work committees of sub-districts were revamped as party work committees of communities (sub-districts level). One Organization and Two Committees – i.e., party organizations of administrative sections, comprehensive party committees of economic and social organizations, and party committees of neighborhoods – were established in what is

known as the “1+3 mode”. Their characteristics include the following:

- Altering organizational structure and exercising full coverage: A network of full coverage, without gaps, is established by party organizations. By linking, dispatching, and joining various party organizations, the network paves the way for developing primary organizations on the basis of full coverage, strong appeal, and openness.
- Adjusting the current party-building framework based on the division of administrative structures and management functions: Larger party committees i.e. regional committees are put in place, based generally on big communities. Party committees’ members include leaders of communities, two new (economic and social) organizations, and local employers.
- Devoting more effort to developing member service centers (or Sunshine Stations): These serve as a work platform for party building in local areas.

Third was setting up temporary party organizations based on local areas. The coexistence of official structures and their unofficial counterparts is manifested in temporary party organizations. Whether members are migrants or locals, they have dual identities as participants in official, primary organizations and temporary, primary organizations, partaking in the events of both.

Table 1: Changes in CPC membership, selective years, 1975 – 2012

Year	Party Membership	Year	Party Membership
1975	33,378,910	2002	66,941,000
1981	39,657,000	2005	70,800,000
1985	44,258,000	2007(June)	73,363,000
1987	47,755,000	2007	74,153,000
1990	50,321,000	2008	75,931,000
1992	52,793,000	2009	77,995,000
1997	60,417,000	2010	80,269,000
1998	61,000,000	2011	82,602,000
2000	64,517,000	2012	85,127,000

Note: With the exception of June 2007, all data were collected at the end of the referenced years.

Sources: Organization Department of the CPC Central Committee et al., Literature on the Organizational History of the CPC, vol. 2, Beijing: CCCPC Party History Press, 2000. Information on other years is based on assorted Organization Department of the CPC reports.

Scale of Party Organizations: Expanding as Ever

The last decade has witnessed an expansion of the CPC in absolute and comparative terms (see Table 1).

Another criterion of change in party membership is comparative scale – the ratio of party membership to population. After the initiation of reform and opening up, the ratio increased from 3.96 percent in 1981 to 4.60 percent in 1992. In 1997, 2002, 2007, and 2012, the ratios were 5.00, 5.21, 5.61, and 6.28 percent, respectively. The party is expanding slowly by this measure. Yet another aspect is the number of primary organizations. There were 3,451,000 of them in 2003 and 42,010,000 by the end of 2012. In view of the three criteria here, the CPC

has obviously become more powerful since the beginning of reform and opening up.

Party Members: from Relative Fixed to Growing Diversified Sources

Concerning the composition of party members, the emergence of new social strata is the most remarkable change, debunking the stereotype of “two classes, one stratum.” Opinions of Reinforcing and Expanding the United Front at the New Stage in the 21st Century by the Central Committee, published in November 2006, defined the new social strata as including entrepreneurs and technical workers employed by scientific and technical enterprises in the non-public sector, managerial and technical staff employed by foreign-financed firms, self-employed and private entrepreneurs, employees in intermediary

enterprises, and freelance professionals.⁴ The phrase new social strata first appeared in Jiang Zemin's speech at the meeting celebrating the 80th anniversary of the founding of the CPC on 1 July 2001: "Most of these people in the new social strata have contributed to the development of productive forces and other undertakings in the socialist society through honest labor and work or lawful business operations. They join workers, farmers, intellectuals, cadres, and PLA officers and men in an effort to build socialism with Chinese characteristics. They, too, have made contributions to this cause."

According to statistics, there were 1.49 million party members in the non-public sector in 2002. In 2003, China conducted a pilot program to attract party members from among entrepreneurs and technical workers in non-public sector enterprises. In all, 226 private entrepreneurs joined the party. Afterward, party members from the non-public sector increased rapidly. In 2006 and 2008, they numbered 2,863,000 and 3,582,000, respectively. By the end of 2009, party members from economic and social organizations in the non-public sector increased to 3,841,000, accounting for 4.9 percent of the total (more

Table 2: Occupation of CPC members, selective years, 2000 – 2012

Occupation	Dec. 2000	June. 2002	Dec. 2005	June. 2007	2009	2011	2012
Total	64,517,000	66,355,000	70,800,000	73,363,000	77,995,000	82,602,000	85,127,000
Worker, laborer in township enterprises, farmer, herdsman fisher		29,913,000 (45.08%)	43.22%	42.3%	36.69%	38.60%	38.2%
Worker			7,959,000	7,960,000 (10.8%)	6,937,000	7,047,000	7,250,000 (8.5%)
Farmer, herdsman, fisher			22,639,000	23,102,000 (31.5%)	24,020,000	24,834,000	25,348,000 (29.7%)
Personnel in party organs and government					6,596,000	6,999,000	7,157,000 (8.41%)
Manager or technician in business enterprises and institutions					17,725,000	19,250,000	20,196,000 (23.7%)
Student			1,289,000	1,947,000 (2.6%)	2,269,000 (2.9%)	2,778,000 (3.4%)	2,905,00 (3.4%)
Retiree		10,924,000	13,283,000	13,776,000 (18.8%)	14,525,000	15,182,000	15,538,000
Other			Omitted	3,635,000 (5%)	5,923,000	6,513,000	6,733,000

Note: All material derives from information published by the Central Organizational Organ of the CPC. The standards for each year change, hence the inconsistency in the figures available for each category.

Source: Zhou Jianyong.

⁴ "Jiang Zemin's Speech at the Meeting Celebrating the 80th Anniversary of the Founding of the Communist Party of China," Selected Works of Jiang Zemin, Vol. 3, Beijing: People's Publishing House, 2006, p. 286.

recent data is not yet available).

Party members from among workers and farmers account for the majority, but their overall proportion is decreasing while government cadres and managers and technicians from enterprises and institutions are steadily increasing. Young party members, as represented by students, increased dramatically for a while, but the rate of increase has slowed in the past two years (Table 2).

3. Intra-Party Democracy and Decision Making

The CPC has made proposals and elaborated on intra-party democracy in implementing the theories of Marxism-Leninism and in this regard has gradually deepened its ideological awareness in its theory and its practice.⁵ Intra-party democracy covers the party's congress system (including elections and nominations) and the safeguarding of party members' rights at the primary level, collective leadership, and so on.⁶

In terms of process, after the sabotage of the Cultural Revolution and economic stagnation, intra-party democracy made only sluggish progress, such as in the tenure and safeguard

systems of party members' rights at the primary and collective leadership levels. Since the beginning of the reform and opening up era, more remarkable achievements have been made in theory and practice. Currently, there is an urgent need to advance intra-party democracy, because not doing so can to some extent hamper the people's democracy. On the other hand, the framework for five aspects of party building could be a breakthrough for intra-party democracy.

Intra-party democracy should be highly valued. After all, according to the 16th CPC National Congress, held in 2002, "Intra-party democracy is the lifeline of the party, which plays a promoting and demonstrative role for people's democracy." At the same time, the party represents the equal status of democracy and centralism. The report of the 4th Plenary Session of the 17th Party Central Committee reads, "Intra-party democracy is the lifeline of the party. Centralism and unity are the foundations of the party. We shall adhere to the combination of centralism based on democracy and democracy under the guidance of centralism. Through safeguarding the democratic rights of party members, we shall enhance primary democratic building within the party, promote intra-party democracy, widely consider the will and propositions of the entire party, and respect

⁵ On 7 May 1937, Mao Tse-tung employed the concept of intra-party democracy in a seven-part essay entitled "Win the Masses in Their Millions for the Anti-Japanese National United Front." In part 5, the Question of Democracy within the Party, Mao remarked that "it is necessary to practice intra-Party Democracy" to train new cadres and leaders in the party and the country.

⁶ There are different ways to classify system building in terms of intra-party democracy, thus different sections are accordingly highlighted. Lin Shangli holds that the extent of intra-party democracy covers the party's congress, party committee, and the electoral and the oversight systems. See Lin Shangli, Intra-Party Democracy: The Theories and Practice of the Communist Party of China, Shanghai: Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences Press, 2002. Newly Compiled Basics on the History and Building of the Party (Beijing: CCCPC Party History Press, 2010, 235–54) contends that intra-party democracy covers democratic centralism, adhering to and improving the party leadership system, safeguarding the leading role of party members and democratic rights, improving the decision-making mechanism of intra-party democracy, and safeguarding the centralism and unity of the party. This author contends that the five aspects can be combined into three, as presented in this paper.

the enthusiasm, initiative, and creativity of party members and party organizations at all levels. All efforts are to safeguard the centralism and unity of the party.” Secondly, China’s principle of democratic development is based on the unity of the party’s leadership, the people being the master, and rule by law. We shall adhere to promoting people’s democracy through intra-party democracy. The solid unity of the party is a guarantee to the great unity of the people of all ethnic groups across the country.

The development of party representatives at all levels is manifested by political arrangement, that is, a combination of democratic procedure with consultation and elections. With such a big party, this approach is conducive to ensuring “real” democracy within the party. Since the reform and opening up, the development of party representatives at all levels has become more and more democratic. Many improvements have been made in nominating procedures, including increasing multicandidate elections and scope and proportion. A system of directly electing party representatives has been implemented in some local areas. That is, primary party representatives are elected directly while party representatives in local areas and nationwide are indirectly elected.

Another issue is that of “open recommendation and open elections,” which combines intra-party democracy and people’s democracy. Candidates are publicly nominated by party members or voters, and then party members (or representatives) and voters elect major leaders of the party organs and the government. The

significance lies in the public’s opinions being considered in the nomination process. Party members, and to some extent voters, are entitled to certain voting rights. Currently, differences exist in this regard due to variations in the mode of determining candidates and electoral modes.

The Principle of Decision Making: Democratic Centralism

Democratic centralism is practiced when major decisions are to be made. From the perspective of the party’s nature and positioning, democratic centralism is the fundamental system of organization and leadership, the most important organizational and political discipline. It is the organizational essence of the party. Democratic centralism is an application of the party’s mass nature and an important, enduring system. In decision making, adherence to and improvement of democratic centralism receive the most attention, because it is the oldest applied democratic principle, the most workable, and most widely applied. In some sense, the principle is applicable to all aspects of decision making within the party. In 1999, Jiang Zemin proposed principles of internal consultation and decision making – collective leadership, democratic centralism, case-specific consultations, and decision through meetings.⁷ Afterward, he reiterated the principles on many occasions. In his view, these principles reflect the very essence and basic requirements of democratic centralism. They manifest the implementation of democratic centralism and function as an important guarantee for collective leadership and promotion of solidarity. Democratic centralism

⁷ “Three Emphases Education is the New Probe for Enhancing Party Building (June 28, 1999),” Selected Works of Jiang Zemin, Vol. 2, Beijing: People’s Publishing House, 2006, p. 364.

must be practiced earnestly as the basic system of internal consultation and decision making by party committees.

4. Reconciling Inter-Party Differences

Differences and conflicts within the CPC stem from tendency rather than faction. As noted, the CPC is based on democratic centralism, which has a well-defined organization and discipline. How to establish a reasonable internal balance for dealing with relations between higher and lower party organizations and among peers is of vital importance. Such a balance can help to reconcile internal conflicts and prevent organizational splits. Approaches to reconciling conflicts and differences are as follows.

First is democratic centralism itself, in two respects. Rigorous centralism involves the lower party organizations being subordinate to higher party organizations. There is also a vertical leadership relationship between party members and party organizations and between higher party organizations and lower party organizations. All the constituent organizations and members of the party are subordinate to the Central Committee.

The collective leadership system, with the minority being subordinate to the majority, is the norm

in all the party’s leading bodies at every level. As Mao wrote, “The collective leadership system is the highest principle of the party organization of our kind.”⁸ Jiang Zemin later noted, “Deng Xiaoping made a remark on the importance of democratic centralism when he summed up the lessons of the upheavals in Eastern Europe and the disintegration of the Soviet Union. He pointed out that we shall have an open debate on the principles of democratic centralism under the current context. After the Communist Party of the Soviet Union eliminated democratic centralism from the party constitution, their party became fragmented.”⁹ The top leaders of the CPC are in agreement on the cause of the party’s demise in the Soviet Union.

The second approach involves intra-party discipline, which is built to enhance, maintain, and safeguard solidarity and unity. That every party member abides by democratic centralism is the most important aspect of it. Those who violate party discipline will be punished justifiably. As Jiang Zemin notes, “Every party member is equal before discipline.”¹⁰

The third approach consists of criticism and self-criticism. Mao Tse-tung, in “On Coalition Government”, remarked that one should “fear neither criticism nor self-criticism. . . . [for] this is the only effective way to prevent all kinds of political dusts and germs contaminating the

⁸ Mao Tse-tung’s Works since the Founding of the PRC, Vol. 4, Beijing: CCCPC Party Literature Press, 1990, p. 407.

⁹ “On Adhering to the Four Cardinal Principles (2 April, 2001),” Selected Works of Jiang Zemin, Vol. 3, Beijing: People’s Publishing House, 2006, p. 226.

¹⁰ “Accelerating the Reform, Opening Up and Modernization Drive and Winning a Greater Victory of Building Socialism with Chinese Characteristics (12 October 1992),” Selected Works of Jiang Zemin, Vol. 1, Beijing: People’s Publishing House, 2006, p. 250.

minds of our comrades and the body of the party.”¹¹ Deng Xiaoping reminded that criticism and self-criticism within the party can “maintain party solidarity and unity on the basis of Marxism-Leninism and help comrades overcome their shortcomings and correct their mistakes in time.”¹²

The fourth approach consists of intensive education. In recent years, the Central Committee has conducted a series of education and study programs conducive to maintaining the solidarity and unity of the party. Among these are Three Emphases Education (which stresses theoretical study, political awareness, and integrity), Retrospectives on Three Emphases Education, the Education Campaign to Preserve the Advanced Nature of Party Members, Learning and Practicing Scientific Outlook on Development, Contending for Excellence, and the Mass Line Campaign.

5. Combating Corruption

With soaring economic development since the beginning of the introduction of reform and opening up, corruption became rampant in China. According to Transparency International, in 2002 China ranked 59th in Corruption Perceptions Index among 102 countries and regions, and in 2012, it placed 80th among 176 countries and regions.¹³

The CPC attaches great importance to battling

corruption. The Report of the 17th CPC National Congress stated that resolutely punishing and effectively preventing corruption affects popular support for the party and bears on its very survival. Combating it is therefore a major task at which the party must remain diligent. The Report of the 18th CPC National Congress asserted that fighting corruption and promoting political integrity – an issue of great concern to the people – is a clear-cut and long-term political commitment of the party. If it fails to handle this issue appropriately, it could prove fatal, possibly even leading to its collapse and the fall of the state. The report held the following.

“We should keep to the Chinese-style path of combating corruption and promoting integrity. We should persist in combating corruption in an integrated way, addressing both its symptoms and root causes and combining punishment and prevention, with emphasis on the latter. We should advance in an all-around way the establishment of a system of combating corruption through both punishment and prevention and see to it that officials are honest, the government is clean, and political integrity is upheld. We should strengthen education about combating corruption and promoting clean government and improve the culture of clean government. Leading officials at all levels, especially high-ranking officials, must readily observe the code of conduct on clean governance and report all-important facts concerned. They should both exercise strict self-discipline and

strengthen education and supervision over their family and staff, and they should never seek any privilege. We should ensure that strict procedures are followed in the exercise of power, and tighten oversight over the exercise of power by leading officials, especially principal leading officials. We should deepen reform of key areas and crucial links, improve the system of anti-corruption laws, prevent and manage risks to clean government, avoid conflict of interests, prevent and fight corruption more effectively and in a more scientific way, and increase international anti-corruption cooperation. We should rigorously implement the system of accountability for improving party conduct and upholding integrity. We should improve the system of discipline supervision and inspection, improve the unified management of representative offices of party commissions for discipline inspection, and enable discipline inspectors to better play their supervisory role. We must maintain a tough position on cracking down on corruption at all times [and] conduct (thorough investigations into major corruption cases) and work hard to resolve problems of corruption that directly affect the people. All those who violate party discipline and state laws, whoever they are and whatever power or official positions they have, must be brought to justice without mercy.”

The CPC has attempted to combat corruption in a number of ways during the past year.

First, emphasis was placed on weeding out corruption by applying institutional checks to power, party operations, and personnel management. The 3rd Plenary Session of the 18th CPC National Congress was the one to propose the policy of restraining power by means of institutional checks, upholding people's

right to oversee power, and exercising power in the open. At the 2nd Plenary Session of the 18th Congress of the Central Commission for Discipline Inspection, which convened 21–22 January 2013, General Secretary Xi Jinping agreed that the party should enhance restraint and oversight of power, constraining it by means of institutions. A punishment mechanism should be established to deter officials from involvement in corruption and a prevention mechanism instated to help them avoid corrupt activities. A safeguard mechanism should be developed to make it difficult to commit corruption.

When examined more closely, combating corruption will, first of all, be a long-term task. The party must always remain alert against corruption. The key lies in sustained efforts over the long term. Second, so-called tigers and flies – corruptive powerful leaders and lowly officials – must be brought to justice. Third, combating corruption necessarily involves addressing its symptoms and causes. Currently, the focus is on the symptoms, buying time for tackling causes. Fourth, privilege should be protested. Deng Xiaoping once said that granting privileges to cadres is a main cause of isolation from the people. Indeed, if comrades pay undue attention to their personal and family interests, they will have little concern and energy for the people.

Second, an effective power constraint and coordination mechanism should be set up, and a system of combating corruption through punishment and prevention put in place. The 3rd Plenary Session of the 18th CPC National Congress held that the party should establish an operating institution featuring scientific decisions, resolute implementation, and forceful supervision. We must have in place a system of

¹¹ “On Coalition Government,” Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung, vol. 3, Beijing: People's Publishing House, 2008, p. 1096.

¹² “Report on the Revision of the Constitution of the Communist Party of China (16 September 1956),” Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping, Vol. 1, Beijing: People's Publishing House, 1994, p. 240.

¹³ Transparency International, Corruption Perceptions Index, <http://www.transparency.org/research/cpi/overview>.

combating corruption through both punishment and prevention and see to it that officials are honest, the government is clean, and political integrity is upheld.

Third, we improved party conduct by introducing the Eight Stipulations. Improving party conduct is an arduous task. The Eight Stipulations are a stepping-stone and call to mobilize. The meeting of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee on 4 December 2012 passed the Eight Stipulations on Improving Party Conduct and Having Close Link with the People. Emphasis is placed on the issue of putting the stipulations into practice. Every stipulation is specific and workable, not mere hallow words. Do's and don'ts are clear, easing the burden on people's oversight.

Fourth, combating corruption on the Internet was promoted. The web site of the Central Commission for Discipline Inspection and the Ministry of Supervision was launched to assist whistle-blowing. The basic duties of the commission and Ministry of Supervision are as follows:

- recording whistle-blowing and accusations against party organizations and dealing with party members and persons subject to administrative supervision for discipline and administrative violations;
- receiving complaints from party organizations, members, and persons subject to administrative supervision about their punishment due to violations of party discipline and administrative or other treatment;
- proposing advice and suggestions on

construction of the party, conduct, honest and clean government, discipline, supervision, and inspection work.

Fifth, inspection tours from the central level of the CPC were conducted. Inspections and handling cases are different in regard to participants, procedure, approach, and legal bases. The duties of every organ and department are clear-cut. The responsibility of groups on inspection tours is to find and report problems. This is a stipulation of the Work Rules of Inspection Tours. Take, for example, the Central Committee. The Leading Group of Inspection Tours of the Central Committee is responsible for examining organizations at the central level. It guides and promotes nationwide inspection tours and reports to the different central organs. It reports evidence of violations of laws and discipline to the Central Commission for Discipline Inspection of the Central Committee. For problems related to official nominations and promotion, the Leading Group defers to the Organization Department of the Central Committee. After handing over evidence, the above-mentioned departments shall handle the reported problems and evidence according to precedence. Within the stipulated period of time, the two provide feedback to the office of the Leading Group of Inspection Tours.

In another measure, newly appointed cadres are being encouraged to make their property public to an extent. That is a "silent anticorruption revolution."

6. Conclusion: What is the CPC?

The Communist Party of China is undergoing changes. Some are dramatic and others are

gradual. No party remains unchanged forever. The ideology of the CPC is both abstract and pragmatic. The latter includes Mao Tse-tung's Thought, Deng Xiaoping's Theory, Three Represents, the Scientific Outlook on Development, and the theoretical system of Socialism with Chinese Characteristics. The pragmatic, after 1949, was manifested through the planned economy period (1949–1979), based on the ideas of egalitarianism; the pursuit for economic growth, safety, abundance, and stability (1979–2004); shared beliefs and values (2004–2012);¹⁴ and the Chinese Dream (2012–present). The CPC harbors idealism as well as pragmatism. Based on Austin Ranney's classification of parties as being missionary or broker, the CPC is a missionary party with a strong sense of responsibility.¹⁵

There are flexible forms of organization for the CPC. It is undergoing a transformation from a Leninist party based on building party organizations through employment associations to one by location. Meanwhile, it still adheres to democratic centralism. The CPC is no longer a purely Leninist party. It has 85,127,000 members and is growing. It is a mass party that will strive to represent the interests of the overwhelming majority of the people, including all new social strata. It is something of a catch-all party. From the perspective of political decision making, the CPC stands as an elite party. Viewing the CPC from its various perspectives helps in better understanding the party as well as politics in China.

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¹⁴ Xiao Gongqin, *Great Transformation in China*, Beijing: New Star Press, 2008, pp. 173–74.

¹⁵ Austin Ranney, *Governing: An Introduction to Political Science*, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1987, pp. 165–66.

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