

On Some Methodological Approaches to Investigation of Political Parties

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Abstract. Some different approaches to the research of political parties (sociological, institutionalist, structural-functional) used by sociologists and historians are analysed in the paper, and the systematic individualised study of political parties is offered as well.

Keywords: *methodological approach, political system, political party, sociological approach, institutionalist, structural-functional approach, systematic-individualised approach.*

Anotacija. Straipsnyje analizuojami įvairūs (sociologinis, institucionalistinis, struktūrinis-funkcinis) sociologų ir istorikų požiūriai į politinių partijų tyrimus ir pateikiamas sisteminis individualizuotas politinių partijų tyrimas.

Esminiai žodžiai: *metodologinis požiūris, politinė sistema, politinė partija, sociologinis požiūris, institucionalistinis, struktūrinis-funkcinis požiūris, sisteminis-individualizuotas požiūris.*

Introduction

The nature of any activity including that of scientists is paradoxical; it is always a continuation of what is hidden in the “emptiness of the past”¹ and a starting point for further research. The combination of these characteristics turns any created work into a starting point for further studies. The given research, on the one hand, relates to nearly a hundred-year old tradition of studying political parties, the appearance of which was

¹ ДРОЙЗЕН, Иоганн. Энциклопедия и методология истории. Из: ДРОЙЗЕН, И. Г. *Историка*. Санкт-Петербург, 2004, с. 61.

caused by and became one of the first striking features of “the rebellion of the masses”² which, in its turn, was triggered by the industrial revolution with its ambivalent socio-psychological consequences and democracy system³. On the other hand, it does not fit in with both political science and a traditional ideographic strand in historical science, thus being rather an attempt at synthesising history and sociology, which characterises “a new historical science whose beginnings are usually associated with the journal *Annals* founded in 1929 by Bloch and Febvre”⁴.

Political parties and movements have been studied by historical science which still remains primarily a factual account of events from a positivist perspective⁵, as well as by political science, mainly the comparative one, which was founded by Ostrogorsky, Michels, and Weber, and reached its peak in the 50s–70s of the 20th century when the study of parties became a separate branch of political science and when, as contemporary specialists believe, the conceptual and empirical basis for limitless further studies⁶ was created in the works of Duverger, La Palombara and Weiner, Sartory, Rokkan, etc. This statement is likely to demonstrate the signs of stagnation in historical science, the elimination of the historical method, namely such a component of this method as the recognition of the ability of concepts and classifications to change their content over time. The above mentioned thesis also testifies to the gap existing between the discipline claiming the status of science and historical reality; it is an instance of a static analysis which is widely spread in certain studies and is nothing but a snapshot of an individual element devoid of its social context. Such analysis can register the current state of affairs but it cannot possibly explain it. And it is exactly the latter that makes the essence of science, sociology, particularly political sociology, among its branches, that was born as a desire to give a meaning to the facts of history⁷ and answer the questions how and why people do what they do⁸.

² See ОРТЕГА – и – ГАСЦЕТ, Хосе. Восстание масс. Из: *ОРТЕГА – и – ГАСЦЕТ, Х. Дегуманизация искусства*. Москва, 1991, с. 40–228.

³ Ibid.; see also: ТОЙНБИ, Арнольд. *Постижение истории*. Москва, 2002, с. 18; ШЕЛЕР, Макс. Человек в эпоху уравнивания. Из: ШЕЛЕР, Макс. *Избранные произведения*. Москва, 1994, с. 98–128; ФРОММ, Эрих. *Бегство от свободы*. Москва, 1990.

⁴ ГУРЕВИЧ, Арон. Загадка Школы «Анналов»: Революция во французской исторической науке, или об интеллектуальной ситуации современного историка. Из: *Мировое древо (Arbor mundi)*. Москва, 1993, вып. 2, с. 168; see also: ГУРЕВИЧ, Арон. К дискуссии о капиталистических общественных формациях: формация и уклад. *Вопросы философии*, 1968, № 2, с. 118–129.

⁵ See, for example: COOK, Chris. *A Short History of the Liberal Party 1900–84*. London, Basingstoke, 1984; МСКИБВИН, Росс. *The Evolution of the Labour Party 1910–1924*. Oxford, 1974; ШЕЛОХАЕВ, Валентин. *Кадеты – главная партия либеральной буржуазии в борьбе с революцией 1905–1907 гг.* Москва, 1983, etc.

⁶ MONTERO, Jose; GUNTNER, Richard. Introduction: Reviewing and Reassessing Parties. In: *Political Parties: Old Concepts and New Challenges*. Oxford, New York, 2002, p. 2.

⁷ NAEGELE, Kaspar. Some Observations on the Scope of Sociological Analysis. In: *Theories of Society: Foundations of Modern Sociological Theory*. Ed. by T. Parsons, E. Shils, K. D. Naegle, J. R. Pitts. New York, London, 1965, p. 28.

⁸ *Encyklopedia of Social Measurement*. Ed. – in – Chief Kimberly. Kempf – Leonard. Oxford, Vol. 3, p. XLI.

Political scientists about political parties

Political parties have always attracted the close attention of political scientists as they are considered the major characteristic of the modern democracy. Some Finnish researchers, though, believe that democracy is conditioned by such factors as the size of the country, its geography and culture; hence, democracy can exist without parties⁹. Besides, there exists an opinion that the core of democracy is the public opinion towards the policy of the state rather than a set of related institutions¹⁰. Whilst accepting the perceptive aspect of democratic organization, it seems possible to amend it with such a feature as reciprocity and mutuality, as the degree to which the state is responsive to public opinion is equally important.

Specialists agree¹¹ that the investigation into political parties has always been in the centre of political studies and is characterised by the depth of insight and attention to various sides of parties. The substantial shift in the relations between parties, on the one hand, and the society and the state, on the other, the relations among parties, as well as the globalization of the democratization process, quite ambiguous in its consequences, which took place in the second half of the 20th century, brought the theme of political parties in the forefront of the western comparative political science in the 90s. This shift brought about the discussions about the factors causing changes in political parties and party systems and the ways in which these processes developed as well as the appearance of new party types¹², and highlighted the theme of political parties in the western comparative political science in the 90s. The objects of analyses though were party systems rather than political parties as such, i.e. the systems of relations among parties based on competition and cooperation. The studies of the 90s emphasised cooperation in party relations¹³, whereas

⁹ ANCKAR, Dag; ANCKAR, Carsten. Democracies without Parties. *Comparative Political Studies*, 2000, Vol. 33, No. 2, pp. 225–226.

¹⁰ AARTS, Kees; MACDONALD, Stuart; RABINOVITZ, George. Issues and Party Competition in the Netherlands. *Comparative Political Studies*, 1999, Vol. 32, No. 1, p. 63.

¹¹ JANDA, Kenneth; COLMAN, Tyler. Effects of Party Organization on Performance during the “Golden Age” of Parties. In: *Parties and Democracy: Party Structure and Party Performance in Old and New Democracies*. Ed. by R. Hofferbert. Oxford, Malden, 1998, p. 189.

¹² See, for example: KIRCHHEIMER, Otto. The Transformation of the Western European Party Systems. In: *Political Parties and Political Development*. Ed. by J. La Palombara and M. Weiner. Princeton, New Jersey, 1966, p. 177–200; HARMEL, Robert and JANDA, Kenneth. An Integrated Theory of Party Goals, and Party Change. *Journal of Theoretical Politics*, 1994, Vol. 6, No. 3, p. 259–287; KOOLE, Ruud. Catch – All or Cartel? A Comment on the Notion of the Cartel Party. *Party Politics*, 1996, Vol. 2, No. 4, p. 507–523; MAIR, Peter. *Party System Change: Approaches and Interpretations*. New York, 1997; *Comparing Party System Change*. Ed. by P. Pennings and J. E. Lane. London and New York, 1998; *Parties and Democracy: Party Structure and Party Performance in Old and New Democracies*. Ed. by R. Hofferbert. Oxford, Malden, 1998; *Political Parties: Old Concepts and New Challenges*. Ed. by R. Gunthner, J. R. Montero and J. J. Linz. Oxford, New York, 2002 etc.

¹³ WARE, Alan. *Political Parties and Party Systems*. New York, 1996, etc.

in previous studies the importance of competition was underlined¹⁴. Party systems are looked at either in the context of election systems that determine the appearance and functioning of parties and, consequently, the election that reveals inter-party relations¹⁵, or in the context of the state as an aggregation of powers and particularly the government¹⁶, or else with the account of both parameters¹⁷.

While political sociologists of the 50s–70s based their theories on the analysis of empirical material and were quite aware of the interconnection between the multi-facet social context and the party, its type and structure¹⁸, many researchers in the sphere of political science do not demonstrate these qualities at the turn of the century. Their authors are often guided by the existing classification of parties and party systems and the classification criteria that are sometimes expressed with the help of mathematical formulas, which they apply to the data that are not related to the socio-cultural context. This is characteristic of many publications in the journal *Party Politics* founded in 1995¹⁹. In the Latvian context, similar secondariness of research in political science is characteristic of the articles written by Mednis²⁰ and Ikstens²¹. Judging by the works published in international sources, they focus on the empirical testing of the existing theoretical models rather than on interpreting historic reality²².

The tradition, which is relatively long-standing for the swift 20th century, and a huge corpus of related literature (around 11,500 books and articles about parties and party systems were published from 1945 till 1998 in the West alone²³) created the necessary prerequisites for classifying the approaches to the study of this socio-political institution.

¹⁴ La Palombara and Weiner, for example, defined the types of party-political systems depending on the presence or absence of the competitive atmosphere in the country: La PALOMBARA, Joseph and WEINER, Myron. *The Origin and Development of Political Parties*. In: *Political Parties and Political Development*. Princeton, New Jersey, 1966, p. 33–41.

¹⁵ See, for example: LIJPHART, Arend. *Electoral Systems and Party Systems: A Study of Twenty – Seven Democracies*. New York, 1994, etc.

¹⁶ See, for example: KATZ, Richard and MAIR, Peter. *The Ascendancy of the Party in Public Office: Party Organizational Change in Twentieth – Century Democracies*. In: *Political Parties: Old Concepts and New Challenges*, p. 113–135; BLONDEL, J. *Party Government, Patronage, and Party Decline in Western Europe*. *Ibid.*, p. 233–256, etc.

¹⁷ See, for example: SARTORI, Giovanni. *European Political Parties: The Case of Polarized Pluralism*. In: *Political Parties and Political Development*, p. 137–176, etc.

¹⁸ See, for example: DUVERGER, Maurice. *Political Parties: Their Organization and Activity in the Modern State*. New York, 1963; *Political Parties and Political Development*, etc.

¹⁹ See, for example: *Party Politics*, 2001, Vol. 7, No. 4; 1999, Vol. 5, No. 2; 1998, Vol. 4, No. 3; 1997, Vol. 3, No. 2, 3, 4; 2002, Vol. 8, No. 1, 2, 4, etc.

²⁰ MEDNIS, Imants. Mūsdienu Latvijas politisko partiju klasifikācija. *Latvijas Vēsture: Jaunie un jaunākie laiki*, 2002, nr. 4, 57.–75. lpp.

²¹ IKSTENS, Jānis. Partiju darbības paradoksi Latvijā starpkaru periodā: Par 15. maija apvērsumu domājot. *Latvijas Zinātņu Akadēmijas Vēstis*, A., 1999, nr. 1./2./3, 115.–123. lpp.

²² See, for example: LUSTICK, Jan. *History, Historiography, and Political Science: Multiple Historical Records and the Problem of Selection Bias*. *American Political Science Review*, 1996, Vol. 90, No. 3, p. 605; LOHMANN, Susanne; BRADY, David and RIVERS, Douglas. *Party Identification, Retrospective Voting, and Moderating Elections in a Federal System: West Germany, 1961–1989*. *Comparative Political Studies*, 1997, Vol. 30, No. 4, p. 420, etc.

²³ MONTERO, Jose; GUNTNER, Richard. *Introduction: Reviewing and Reassessing Parties*, p. 2.

Thus, several approaches based on the highlighted factors of the party development are distinguished, the sociological one being the first to be mentioned among them²⁴. This approach tends to explain political phenomena by social developments, namely by the existence of social groups whose interests are expressed by certain parties. In such a case, a political party appears to be a mere mediator while a causative interpretation of politics is reduced to the registration of social conflicts that occur in society²⁵. The proponents of the sociological approach, though, differ in the degree of tightness that they ascribe to the links between political parties and particular social groups and sections of the population.

Thus, Lipset, for example, who does not negate either this connection or the fact that political parties have their social basis, avoided any extreme unambiguousness in his interpretations. First, he correlated social structure of society with the nature of political struggle and election system, paying special attention to the ways in which parties exercise their influence on social audience which, in its turn, behaves in two ways, putting forward their demands and offering support to “their” political organizations. Second, he stressed that certain combinations of relations between parties and their social bases influence the possibility of creating a stable and effective government system in the country²⁶. Third, according to Lipset, the social base of the party is not confined to a particular class. Various groups, such as religious, ethno-linguistic, regional, in town or the countryside can play a substantial role. Taking the above said into account, Lipset raises the problem of behaviour of social groups in politics which involves both the means and ways that political parties resort to in influencing their social audience and the “response” of the latter to the efforts exerted by the parties. It is worth mentioning that like many other researchers, Lipset stresses the first aspect of the problem where the “response” of the party’s social audience is reduced to the results of elections²⁷, a straightforward treatment of which does not appear quite adequate from a scientific point of view. He admits that the number of political parties, their types, demands and politics that they support do not automatically result from the division in society²⁸. This leads to the conclusion, which the author did not express overtly, about the relative autonomy and integrity of parties as social formations, while the admitted flexible link between the party and the social group (groups) encourages the research of the essence, intensity, regularity and the degree of the “reciprocity” of these links.

²⁴ WARE, Alan. *Political Parties and Party Systems*. New York, 1996, p. 8–9.

²⁵ See, for example: KEY, Vladimer. *Politics, Parties, Pressure Groups*. New York, 1964. (5th. ed.); LIPSET, Seymour. Party System and the Representation of Social Groups. In: *Readings in Modern Political Analysis*. Ed. by R. A. Dahl and D. E. Neubauer. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1968, p. 84–114.

²⁶ LIPSET, Seymour. *Party System and the Representation of Social Groups*, p. 87.

²⁷ LIPSET, Seymour. *Party System and the Representation of Social Groups*, p. 93; ROKKAN, Stein. Electoral Mobilization, Party Competition, and National Integration. In: *Political Parties and Political Development*, p. 241–266. See also: etc. LIPSET, Seymour. *Political Man: The Social Bases of Politics*. Baltimore, 1988; EYSENCK, H. *The Psychology of Politics*. London, 1999, etc.

²⁸ LIPSET, Seymour. *Party System and the Representation of Social Groups*, p. 93.

The second, institutionalist, approach²⁹, unlike the sociological one, stresses the role of institutions, namely governmental and judicial, which create the “background” for political struggle³⁰.

The third approach, a controversial (competitive)³¹, is a variation of the institutionalist one. This approach to the study of political parties, firstly, emphasises the potential independence of parties as the subjects of the historical process having their own aims that they strive to achieve. Secondly, it is oriented towards the exploration of mutual relations among parties and their qualitative characteristics, establishing the possible configurations of these relations which determine the image of political party systems.

In the frames of the two latter approaches, a structural-functional one appeared in the 60s–70s under the influence of structuralism. It focused on the analysis of stable relations among parties, as well as between parties and the government understood in the strict and special sense. These relations were considered from the point of view of exercising power³².

It was noticed³³ that the dominant paradigm in political science disappeared by the 90s, and a number of competing approaches emerged that seem likely to contribute to the understanding of society as a multi-dimensional, multi-layered system of relations of different character, and consequently to the combination of the range of approaches to the study of any social phenomenon including political parties.

Out of the great number of published works on political parties, only those that were enthusiastically met in political science and the ones that are of special importance for the reviewed paper are highlighted below with a focus on the approach to the study of political parties and the treatment of the key concepts “political system” and “party”.

Interpretation of the concepts “political system”, “political party” and approaches to the study of political parties

The majority of definitions of political system are implicit, and it is worth mentioning that dictionaries and encyclopaedias do not contain such an entry. Political system is understood as a power dimension of society³⁴ rather than as a component or a sub-system

²⁹ WARE, Alan. *Political Parties and Party Systems*, p. 9.

³⁰ See, for example: DUVERGER, Maurice. *Political Parties: Their Organization and Activity in the Modern State*; LIJPHART, Arend. *Electoral Systems and Party Systems*; RIGGS, Fred. A. Neoinstitutional Typology of Third World Politics. In: *Contemporary Political Systems: Classification and Typologies*. Ed. by A. Bebler and J. Seroka. Boulder, London, 1990, p. 205–239; MAIR, Peter. *Party System Change*, etc.

³¹ WARE, Alan. *Political Parties and Party Systems*, p. 9. This approach is represented by the following works: DUVERGER, Maurice. *Political Parties: Their Organization and Activity in the Modern State*, etc.

³² See, for example: SARTORI, Giovanni. *European Political Parties: The Case of Polarized Pluralism*. LIJPHART, Arend. *Democratic Political Systems*. In: *Contemporary Political Systems*, p. 71–87.

³³ WARE, Alan. *Political Parties and Party Systems*, p. 12.

³⁴ See: DAHL, Robert. *Modern Political Analysis*. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1963, p. 6–7.

of it. Such understanding of political system leads to the identification of political system with society³⁵, with a political system³⁶, and with a political regime³⁷. First, the analysis of political system from the geographical and political perspective becomes possible from the perspective of political system as a power dimension of society including both the subject and the object of power and the means and methods of exercising it³⁸, as any society/nation/state is a system. Secondly, it is possible from the purely structural position by distinguishing separate elements of the system³⁹; and thirdly, it is possible from the functional point of view that emphasises the mechanism of exercising power⁴⁰. The most significant result of the latter understanding of political system is the institutional-functional approach. Moreover, the definition under which ‘institution’ means not only a formal organisation but also conventional rules and procedures that manipulate the behaviour of people⁴¹ seems quite productive. Such a wording might be considered as drawing researchers’ attention to the behaviour, including mentality as its deep basis, of both the ruling élite, i.e. those “who aspire to power” and those “who evade power”⁴², because it is exactly people’s behaviour in the political space that can determine the “quality” of democracy. In the framework of this approach, Lijpart, for example, developed a typology of democratic political systems distinguishing two types – majoritarian and consensual – whose dimensions are parties, election systems, and the organisation of power on the level of judicial and executive structures, as well as territorial-administrative one⁴³.

The majoritarian type of the democratic political system is characterised by the following features: the concentration of the executive power, the domination of the executive power over the judicial one, a two-party system, a mono-dimensional party system, a large number of elections, a unitary and centralised rule, a unicameral legislative body, and the constitution that is not rigidly fixed⁴⁴. The consensual type of the democratic political system is characterised by the following set of features: the distribution of the executive power, a balance between executive and legislative powers, a multi-party system, a multi-dimensional party system, proportional representation, federalism and decentralisation, a two-house legislative body, a fixed constitution⁴⁵.

³⁵ HUNTINGTON, Samuel. P. *Political Order in Changing Societies*. New Haven, London, 1968.

³⁶ See: La PALOMBARA, Joseph and WEINER, Myron. *The Origin and Development of Political Parties*.

³⁷ See: WIATR, Jerzy. Typologies Based on Political Parties. In: *Contemporary Politics Systems*, p. 243–248.

³⁸ See, for example: WELCH, Irvine. African Political Systems. In: *Contemporary Political Systems*, p. 281–297; HUNEEUS, Carlos. Latin American Political Systems. *Ibid.*, p. 337–351, etc.

³⁹ See, for example: WIATR, Jerzy. *Typologies Based on Political Parties*.

⁴⁰ See, for example: MORLINO, Leonardo. Authoritarianism. In: *Contemporary Political Systems*, p. 91–110; BEBLER, Anton. Typologies Based on Civilian-Dominated Versus Military. In: *Dominated Political Systems*. *Ibid.*, p. 261–274.

⁴¹ WARE, Alan. *Political Parties and Party Systems*, p. 6.

⁴² HUNTINGTON, Samuel. *Political Order in Changing Societies*, p. 432.

⁴³ LIJPHART, Arend. Democratic Political Systems. In: *Contemporary Political Systems*, p. 71–87.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 73–75.

⁴⁵ LIJPHART, Arend. *Democratic Political Systems*, p. 78.

A variation of the non-majoritarian democratic system that is close, according to Lijpart, to the consensual one is the consociational democratic system which develops in culturally fragmented societies⁴⁶. In the social environment divided into religious, ideological, linguistic, and ethnic groups, with each having its own parties and mass media, political systems are characterised by big coalitions, proportionality, segmentary autonomy, a mutual right to veto, and the domination of elite. It is worth mentioning that Lijpart underlines the importance of elite behaviour which, when directed to cooperation and amalgamation, is capable of turning a potentially unstable political system into a stable one. This conclusion of Lijpart is believed to demonstrate a tendency to bringing man as a subject back into the historical process in the context of political science research.

Those parties that present the phenomena which began to be conceptualised in the beginning of the 20th century make the key element in the modern political system. Thus, Michels drew on the etymology of the word “party” in his speculations about a political party, and underlined that a party is a fragment of the whole (hence the necessity of a sociological analysis, that is the analysis of the relations between a part and a whole), a politically active part of the population which aspires to obtain power in order to either achieve objective aims or to get personal benefit or both⁴⁷ with the help of publicity and propaganda (hence the need for the analysis of ideology). In this way, the research parameters for the study of parties as an inwardly differentiated whole possess the following attributes of a subject: organisation, social structure, target audience, ideology and policy, each facet of a political party being penetrated by social links which reveal and establish the relation between a whole and a part. Such sides in the study of political parties as inter-party relations are characterised by centrifugal and centripetal forces⁴⁸; the role of an individual in the creation of a party, its nature and characteristic functioning; the inner social evolution of a party, particularly of its upper layer; the correlation of party declarations and practices are elicited from Michels’ works. He thinks, for example, that the formation of a new elite, provoked by the activity of a party, is accompanied by the divide between democratic declarations and actions of party leaders⁴⁹.

The study of Duverger received a greater response; there is hardly any publication in political science that avoids referring to it, although the approach as such is assessed in a range of ways. Duverger’s work is classified as demonstrating both an institutional⁵⁰ and sociological approach⁵¹ in the study of parties and party systems. Varying evaluation of the attempts of this author to study political parties indirectly points to the synthesis of

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ See: MICHELS, Robert. The Sociological Character of Political Parties. In: *Theories of Society*, p. 603. This lecture was published in German in 1911, and in English in 1949.

⁴⁸ These views will echo in the work of Sartori: SARTORI, G. *European Political Parties: The Case of Polarized Pluralism*.

⁴⁹ MICHELS, Robert. *The Sociological Character of Political Parties*, p. 606.

⁵⁰ See, for example: WARE, Alan. *Political Parties and Party Systems*, p. 8.

⁵¹ See: BACOTT, Paul; JORNES, Claude. Commentary. In: *Contemporary Political Systems*, p. 249.

different approaches that he uses in his own one based on the understanding of multi-facetness and integrity of the phenomenon under study.

Duverger's work⁵² is remarkable for the consistency of scientific principles, i.e. the combination of empirical and theoretical bases of research; historical method, systematic approach and the synchronic and diachronic assessment of the research object which this approach requires. A systematic approach implies the treatment of the research object as a holistic, qualitatively integral, relatively stable whole in the state of continuous interaction of various nature and levels. It is exactly because of this that Duverger looks at the party in his work as a complex, structurally heterogeneous organisation which is based on internal and external connections having different forms of expression.

For the present paper, the following thoughts of Duverger are of particular importance: those concerning the correlation between the specific features of the organisational structure of a party and its social image⁵³; the nature of societal links of a party⁵⁴ and the ways in which they reveal themselves; the gap between the internal structure of a party and the declared democracy; the importance of the "inner" history of a party; the specificity of the party development viewed as the deviations of parties from the democratic regime⁵⁵; the fact that democracy is threatened by the tendencies working in the internal structure of a party rather than by the party regime⁵⁶. The above said allows the conclusion that by the party Duverger understood a social phenomenon whose dynamic existence influence both the social structure of society by creating a new elite and the political development of society. The latter became a major theme of the collection of works *Political Parties and Political Development* that was published thrice, in 1966, 1969, and 1972.

Besides, while keeping in mind the party structure, Duverger distinguished two party types, regular and mass ones⁵⁷. This encouraged the development of the following party models: a catch-all one⁵⁸, and a cartel party, which is not a part of the civil society, as some researchers think, but occupies the position between the latter and the government⁵⁹.

The systematic-holistic approach to the study of political parties as a social phenomenon that is implied in Duverger's work appears to be needed by political science to a lesser degree than a fluent manipulation with the names of many parties from different countries. Whilst Duverger managed to strike a balance between a theoretical

⁵² See: DUVERGER, Maurice. *Political Parties: Their Organization and Activity in the Modern State*.

⁵³ Duverger does not always distinguish between the social orientation of a party and its social structure. *Ibid.*, p. 3.

⁵⁴ See the concept of party membership and the definition of the levels of involvement. *Ibid.*, p. 62, 114–116.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 422–423.

⁵⁶ DUVERGER, Maurice. *Political Parties: Their Organization and Activity in the Modern State*, p. 426.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 63.

⁵⁸ See: KIRCHHEIMER, Otto. The Transformation of the Western European Party Systems. In: *Political Parties and Political Development*; WOLINETZ, Steven. Beyond the Catch – All Party: Approaches to the Study of Parties and Party Organization in Contemporary Democracies. In: *Political Parties: Old Concepts and New Challenges*, p. 113–135.

⁵⁹ MAIR, Peter; KATZ, Richard. Party Organization, Party Democracy and the Emergence of the Cartel Party. Mair, P. *Party System Change*, p. 94.

and an empirical level of analysis, there is a lack of this balance nowadays, and the gap between those “who sit in the archives and those who think”⁶⁰ has not only been bridged but became yet deeper judging, for example, by an infrequent juxtaposition of interpretation and analysis⁶¹. Besides, Duverger himself overshadowed the potential of studying parties as a social phenomenon, i.e. a “knot” of social connections which vary in their nature, degree of institutionalisation, the level of their manifestation, by a wide comparison of various parties against the selected criteria, which can ultimately reduce a party to its name.

On the whole, Duverger’s research appears to embody the view of a party as an act and result of various social interactions, as well as a factor of their further development. These sides – an act, a result, and a factor – which define the understanding of what a party is seem to have laid the basis for the systematic-individualised study of political parties⁶². An attempt at implementing this method is presented in the given paper.

Conclusions

The author’s approach, which has been moulded by the “ideas of history” belonging to Collingwood⁶³, Bloch⁶⁴, Gurevich⁶⁵, Febvre⁶⁶, Toynbee⁶⁷, Jaspers⁶⁸, and “engendered” by the sociological ideas of Parsons⁶⁹ and Weber⁷⁰, is characterised by the understanding of society, first, as a multi-dimensional, multi-layered system of physical and mental interactions; second, as an integral whole based on the diversity of its constituent components and links among them; and third, as a qualitatively defined, relatively stable (closed) and open phenomenon. Qualitative definiteness and openness characterise not only a particular human community but also each component (sub-system) of the latter. One of such components is a political system which is a combination of governmental and non-governmental institutions. It ensures integration, wholeness, stability, and a regular functioning of society, with the balance of innovation and tradition. A party, in its turn, is a constituent component of a

⁶⁰ NOIRIEL, Gerard. Foucault and History: The Lessons of a Disillusion. *The Journal of Modern History*, 1994, Vol. 66, No. 3, p. 548.

⁶¹ See, for example: БАТКИН, Леонид. Заметки о современном историческом разуме. Из: *Казус: Индивидуальное и уникальное в истории*. Москва, 2000, с. 71.

⁶² See, for example: WARE, Alan. *Political Parties and Party Systems*.

⁶³ КОЛЛИНГВУД, Робин. *Идея истории. Автобиография*. Москва, 1980.

⁶⁴ БЛОК, Марк. *Апология истории или ремесло историка*. Москва, 1986.

⁶⁵ ГУРЕВИЧ, Арон. *Категории средневековой культуры*. Москва, 1984, and other works.

⁶⁶ ФЕВР, Люсьен. *Бои за историю*. Москва, 1991.

⁶⁷ ТОЙНБИ, Арнольд. *Постижение истории*. Москва, 2002.

⁶⁸ ЯСПЕРС, Карл. *Смысл и назначение истории*. Москва, 1991.

⁶⁹ PARSONS, Talcott. An Outline of the Social System. In: *Theories of Society*, p. 30–84; PARSONS, Talcott. *Essays in Sociological Theory*. London, 1964.

⁷⁰ WEBER, Max. Types of Social Organization. In: *Theories of Society*, p. 219–228.

political system. Such an understanding of society and its sub-systems brings forth the socio-structural analysis, including the purely structural one⁷¹, which focuses on establishing certain deep “rules” that make particular shifts in and transformations of, the society possible, as well as a functional analysis stressing the interconnection among sub-systems of the selected society, on the one hand, and components within these sub-systems, on the other.

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⁷¹ See: ЛЕВИ-СТРОСС, К. *Структурная антропология*. Москва, 1983; ЛЕВИ-СТРОСС, К. *Первобытное мышление*. Москва, 1999.

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Keletas metodologinių požiūrių į politinių partijų tyrimus

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Santrauka

Straipsnyje analizuojami įvairūs (sociologinis, institucionalistinis, struktūrinis-funkcinis, kontroversinis-sisteminis) sociologų ir politologų požiūriai į politinių partijų tyrimus ir pateikiamas sisteminis individualizuotas politinių partijų tyrimas. Vadovaujantis sociologiniu požiūriu politiniai reiškiniai aiškinami kaip socialiniai procesai, t. y. kaip socialinių grupių, kurių interesus išreiškia tam tikros partijos, egzistavimas. Šiuo atveju politinė partija tėra tik tarpininkas, o priežastinis politikos aiškinimas sumenkinamas iki visuomenėje vykstančių socialinių konfliktų fiksavimo. Laikantis institucionalistinio požiūrio pabrėžiama fono politinėms kovoms sukuriančių vyriausybinių ir teisminių institucijų svarba.

Kontroversinis (konkuruojantis) požiūris yra institucionalistinio požiūrio atmaina. Pirma, vadovaujantis šiuo požiūriu pabrėžiama potenciali partijų, kaip savo tikslus turinčių ir jų siekiančių istorinio proceso subjektų, nepriklausomybė. Antra, orientuojamasi į partijų tarpusavio santykių, jų kokybinių charakteristikų tyrinėjimus, kuriais nustatomos galimos šių santykių konfigūracijos, nulemiančios politinių partijų sistemų įvaizdį. Jei vadovujamasi sisteminiu požiūriu, tyrimo objektas laikomas holistiška, kokybiškai integrali ir santykinai stabili visuma, patirianti nuolatines įvairaus pobūdžio ir lygmens sąveikas.

Autorės požiūriu, visuomenė, pirma, yra daugiaplanė ir daugiasluoksni fizinių ir protinių sąveikų sistema. Antra, tai yra integrali visuma, grindžiama ją sudarančių elementų ir jų ryšių įvairove. Trečia, tai yra kokybiškai apibrėžtas, santykinai stabilus (uždaras) ir atviras reiškinys.

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