Shively, Chapter 11 – Parties: A Linking and Leading Mechanism in Politics

Overview:

This chapter presents an overview of political parties in their many manifestations around the world. The origin of modern political parties is discussed and the functions of political parties beyond getting people elected to office are highlighted (i.e., parties as instruments to mobilize the masses, recruit and socialize leaders, sources of political identity, channels of political control). The chapter also discusses the various ways parties are organized (using the U.S. and Britain as examples), the sources of funding for political parties and Michels’ “Iron Law of Oligarchy.” Lastly, the chapter discusses the various types of party systems with examples (one-party systems, dominant-party systems, two-party systems and multi-party systems) and ends with extended discussions of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and Canada’s political parties.

Outline:

I. The Political Party
   A. Definition
   B. Difference between political parties and interest groups

II. Origins of the modern party
   A. Why it emerged
   B. Where the first parties emerged
   C. Parties in non-electoral democracies (e.g., communist parties of various Eastern European states, various autocratic states)

III. Political parties and the mobilization of the masses
   A. Parties as instruments to get out the vote
   B. Parties as instruments to mobilize people for special purposes or to meet crises
   C. Parties as mobilizing masses against a regime

IV. Political parties and the recruitment and socialization of leaders
   A. Making a political career in Britain
   B. Comparison of Britain and the U.S.
   C. Why parties are politically weaker in the U.S.
   D. Parties as the major avenue to political or economic advancement in one-party states (e.g., pre-1990 Yugoslavia)

V. Political parties as a source of political identity
   A. How political parties an important part of one’s identity
   B. Political parties as source of continuity and community
   C. Indiana as example of the ability of parties to establish stable lines of conflict

VI. Political parties as channels of control
   A. The unforeseen effect of political parties as means of exerting control
   B. How rewards and punishments are used by leaders to force obedience
   C. Parties as means to keep the apparatus of state under control of party leaders in one-party states
   D. Parties as means to control the masses

VII. Party organization
   A. The loose and informal structure of political parties in the US
   B. Parties as more formal organizations in other states
   C. The British Conservative Party as typical example of party organizational structure

VIII. Party finance
   A. Sources of funding
      1) public finance
      2) individual memberships
      3) bribes and kickbacks
      4) interest group donations
      5) profits from business enterprise
      6) subsidies from foreign countries
   B. Box: Michels’s “Iron Law of Oligarchy”

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IX. Political Party Systems
   A. One-party system (former communist states; Egypt; Tanzania; Nazi Germany; Franco’s Spain)
   B. Dominant-party system (Mexico; India; Israel)
   C. Two-party system (U.S., Britain)
   D. Multi-party system (Norway, most other democratic systems)

X. Examples
   B. Canada’s Political Parties

Keywords:

1) political party
2) party identification
3) party system
4) one-party system
5) dominant-party system
6) two-party system
7) multi-party system
8) glasnost
9) mobilization
10) Mikhail Gorbachev