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REVIEW
on the article “On the problem
of institutionalization of political parties”
by T.A. Vasilyeva, D.D. Prokopchuk, R.A. Gritsenko

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For more than two hundred years, attempts have been made by the best political and humanistic minds to develop and approve an integrated system for the institutionalization of political parties as organizations of collective actions aimed at achieving specific goals of social groups, individual party members or the entire parties. But to this day, this topic remains relevant in theoretical and practical sense¹. Not without a reason the relevance of the problem of institutionalization of political parties and the party system in our country can be supported by the statement by V. Zorkin, Chairman of the Constitutional Court of the Russian Federation: “As the world political experience shows, in organizational terms, the real democracy is most effectively secured by a two-party (two-bloc) system that allows to form the political will of the main socio-political forces of the elites and of the masses. The competition between these forces within the paradigm of “the ruling majority and the parliamentary opposition” prevents the political system from stagnation and decay, allows “political ventilation of the lungs” in the state body, and ensures not only “the ability to hear,” but the “audibility” of the masses by those in power”². The urgency of the topic can be proved by the search for updated methodological grounds expanding the content of the problems of

¹ See: for example, Spassky E. N. Political parties of the West and their research in the Western political tradition. – URL: <http://www.politex.info/content/view/412/> (Date of the application: 21.12.2018).

² Zorkin V. Letter and spirit of the Constitution. – URL: <https://rg.ru/2018/10/09/zorkin-nedostatki-v-konstitucii-mozhno-ustranit-tochechnymi-izmeneniyami.html> (Date of the application: 21.12.2018)

the institutionalization of political parties as cultural, civilizational and historical realities with still unclear meanings that are successfully or defeatingly used by the subjects of the politics, considered to be "darlings of history"¹.

Since the bourgeois era, political parties have not been regarded as homogeneous subjects of the political process. Moreover, for a long time the public consciousness of the most developed part of humanity was dominated by the idea of interpreting the political party as a tool of struggle for power. And the proletariat, for example, had no other tool, except its organizations. It was in the Euro-Atlantic intellectual environment that the view was born and developed that the ideological unification of the most exploited part of the local society on the relevant principles is fixed by the material unity of the organization. The twentieth century has already demonstrated a change in the ideological, theoretical and practical views and practices both on the role of political parties and on the mechanisms of their institutionalization not only at the level of ideas, ideological, stylistic, cultural and mental levels, but also at the level of constitutional and legislative procedures. The "Golden era" of the mid-twentieth century, when political parties finally took root in political systems, and even states became party states, was replaced by the fall of the social influence of the parties and by the growth of the anti-party associations and movements. It is still premature to say that political parties will lose their place and purpose in political and public life even in the long term. The renewal of parties, the consolidation of their traditional and modern roles, responding to the challenges of politics, economy and social arrangement should be apparently considered through the prism of continuous improvement of the system, mechanisms, procedures and norms of institutionalization.

There is no doubt that the ability of political parties to express and defend the will, sentiments and expectations of the part of society they serve, or of a new and effective policy in comparison with the current and promoted ruling and governmental party, will require serious theoretical reflection and practical study of the existing realities. Unfortunately, we must admit that in the research community, there is no single theory of institutionalization in political parties. And there is little concrete research of this process. Against this background, the article by researchers from the Far Eastern Federal University "On the problem of institutionalization of political parties» is a rare positive example for the last several years.

The article is based on the ideas of mainstreaming the problems of institutionalization of political parties considered in the belief that such topic is of particular importance for the development and functioning of modern institutions of representative democracy. The research plan focuses the attention of both research-

¹ See: Slizovsky D. E. Modern historical knowledge: methodological problems of interpretation of ideas about the fair world of "darlings of history" / History that unites us. – M.: RUDN, 2016. – Pp. 199-205.

ers and consumers of this intellectual product on the obtaining by the parties of the official status and on securing it in the political system along two channels. The first one is through political institutionalization; the second - through the constitutional and legal registration of the status and role of the party in the structure of social, political and state structure.

The passionate desire of researchers to dramatize the process of institutionalization (which is a long and controversial process), through which all legally operating or ready for such activities political parties will necessarily pass, does not add much to the theoretical or applied developments. More convincing for the same theory and practice is the prediction and justification by the authors of the article of the thesis about the trends demonstrating expansion of indicators of institutionalization in the dynamic processes of social and political life. Therefore, in our opinion, this study is of a research character.

The author's position in relation to the topic under consideration can be regarded as an institutional position. It is based on the recognition of the role of the institutional mechanisms in such senses as the development of the organization according to certain laws, immanent for such structures. It would be justified if the authors of the article confirm the ideas of S. Huntington, used by them, in full or clarify them, perhaps, correct their essential elements, citing facts and examples demonstrating that political parties can acquire stability through institutionalization.

Turning to the material on legislative institutionalization, the authors of the article give a detailed list of elements of the party status regulated by legal acts. The most interesting and noteworthy is not only the list of legislative regulation circulating in the scientific turnover. We hope that the proposals of the authors of the article on the procedure of registration and financing, as the main aspects of the activities of the parties, will become subjects of future discussions. Just as the proposed justifications why such aspects (registration and financing procedures) are necessary and essential for the legislative regulation and institutionalization in general.

Proportionally large volume of the article occupies the material and analysis of what relates to the problem of the subject of the research with the involvement of developments by the American scientist K. Jand.

The research group considered it justified to give a detailed model proposed by the above researcher regarding the basic parameters of the life of a political party and its status as a political institution. Of course, the seven basic elements of the structuring and institutionalization of political parties and their specific content develop modern ideas about the parties, their nature and specificity of their activities, especially the institutionalization of this activity in relation to the new realities. But how justified is the inclusion in the small article of the material and provisions that have already been widely discussed and became common knowledge for a wide group of scientists not only abroad, but also in Russia? Our

claims to the authors are not removed by their reservation that the methodology proposed by K. Jand "does not claim to be a complete coverage of the problem, but expands the possibilities of research and understanding of the features of the process of party institutionalization." And so, this is why the authors of the article cite it in such details.

In our opinion, it would be acceptable and worthy to add and develop the Jand's ideas. Possible versions and directions of development of this problem can be described in the following terms:

- the degree of materialization of their foundations through the institutionalization can be achieved by the political parties under equal or even similar conditions. Not only the party's non-participation in national elections as a criterion of its non-institutionality is questioned. The complex of conditions for the functioning of the political parties forms different reactions on their part. That is, political parties react differently in most situations of internal and external immersion. This is a general rule, as their reactions depend on the institutional arrangements in which the political parties operate.

More and more researchers are working on this topic in a broad conceptual framework and in a system of rules. With this approach, the qualitative characteristics of the party are associated, for example, with the formalization of the statutes and organizational codes. At the same time, the activities of the parties are affected by informal parameters of institutionalization: agreements, traditions and customs. More generally, it is a cognitive and normative framework that usually penetrates party programs or discussions on specific policy areas. Researchers in such cases should proceed not only from such assumptions, but also complement them;

- political parties should not be seen as homogeneous entities. They are collective organisms, kind of institutionalized arenas with their specific internal structures. On the party platform, there are processes that are crucial not only for the party itself and its members, but also for its sympathizers and supporters; and for party competitors and opponents. Impulses from within and from the environment are common for political parties. The political party should be considered, first of all, as an organization. And the organization is an institutional form of collective action to achieve specific goals of individual members and of the party as a whole. Party goals should not be confused with the goals of its individual members. The party as an organization is institutionalized in a structure in which: coordinated actions of its members on the borders distinguish it from other actors in the political process, define and develop the style and nature of actions of the individual members of the party or its groups.

In 2015, Czech researchers Martin Polacek, Velem Novotny and Michelle Porottino wrote that "political parties in Europe are in a privileged position in policy making."¹ But even they were surprised by the fact that, with the privi-

¹ Policy-Related Expertise and Policy Work in Political Parties: Theory and Methods. – URL: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/279871959> (Date of the application: 21.12.2018)

leged position of political parties, neither the parties themselves nor the researchers have sufficiently studied the relationship between politics and the ability of the parties to generate political expertise. In this regard, they tried to create the theoretical foundation of relations between the theory of political parties and the theory of public policy. In their research, they relied on the theory of the cartel parties of Richard Katz and Peter Mayer, the integrated theory of party goals and changes of Robert Harmel and Kenneth Jand (K. Jand is popular not only in Russia). These theories gave rise to the idea about political parties as organizations with an internal structure and with specific objectives in the struggle of actors and groups pursuing certain goals, as well as specific ways parties react to external challenges.

The empirical results by R. Katz and P. Mayer are worthy of attention for researchers of the institutionalization of political parties. They show that the role of party organizations has evolved from the role of a bridge between the civil society and the state to the role of an agent of the state. This evolution has influenced both their internal mechanisms of dispensation and their activities. The concept of a political party as a complex organizational structure may not be so much symbolic and purposeful for future researchers of the problems of the institutionalization of political parties. Such complexity can manifest itself in three parallel basic forms: a) grass-root party, based on the voluntary membership; b) the central apparatus of the party as a bureaucratic structure; c) and the party in the state apparatus exercising political power by controlling elected positions. And the party's policy then is a consequence of the relationship between such structures.

We believe that the development of the topic of institutionalization of political parties can be served not only by the recognition of many theories of this problem, but the addition and development of the existing theories. As an example here can serve an integrated theory of the parties by the already mentioned R. Harmel and K. Jand, who explained not only the ideas described by the authors of this article, but the organizational changes in the parties depending on the goals of the party itself or the goals of its structures. Organizational theory and the theory of the objectives of the parties consider the parties as complex organizations. In such a complex body as a political party, individual actors and coalitions struggle for dominance, using various resources. According to such theories, domination over the party is based on the control of the coalition or faction over such resources. American researchers¹, developing such theories, suggest the theory of political parties, in which the key actors are interested groups and activists. In such parties, coalitions of groups develop a common agenda and select candidates for party nominations based on their loyalty to the designated agenda. The authors of such

¹ Kathleen Bawn, Martin Cohen, David Karol, Seth Masket. *A Theory of Political Parties: Groups, Policy Demands and Nominations in American Politics*. Published online: 16 August 2012. – URL: <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1537592712001624> (Date of the application: 21.12.2018).

studies believe that the theory they proposed contrasts the currently dominant theories, according to which parties are controlled by politicians who are set up only for elections. In this system of logical statements, correlated and representing to varying degrees of dependence the philosophy of modern and postmodern, the study of this problem should, presumably, continue.

Concluding the review, let's say: a) the theory used by researchers is used at two levels: at the normative, legal level and at the level of political concepts and categories. Probably on the order of appearance of some of the meta-cognition and analysis, is able to combine these approaches and propose a new one, not like modernism, and even. Apparently, the next step is the emergence of a meta-system of knowledge and analysis that can combine these approaches and offer a new system, unlike modernism and even postmodernism. The latter system comes from the fact that everything should be destroyed and reformatted. The meta-system of knowledge and analysis, on the contrary, should be based on the renewal of realities without destroying the past, present and future in the evolution of political parties. Such a system describes the realities of life on the basis of a new language and a new conceptual apparatus; b) so far, neither we nor our colleagues are willing to introduce new terminology to expand the knowledge and understanding of this problem. But we insinuate that there is a need for it. In the current situation only one approach has been implemented. This is the approach in accordance with which the authors of the article were able to formulate their conceptual framework in the language of existing theories and using the methodological apparatus of the well-known experts.

Political parties continue to play a key role in democracies. What role researchers assign to political parties in authoritarian political regimes remains to be seen. It is reasonable that the message that was used earlier in relation to politics and political parties seems to lose its importance. Researchers from the regions of the Far East better than anyone else can expand not only the geography of the search, but also update the theoretical and practical developments on the given topic, referring to the countries and political parties of the Pacific region.

Not only in developed democracies, but, of course, in democracies in particular, the current situation provides parties with a privileged institutional status, the right of parties to nominate both elected and appointed representatives to the government and public administration. This situation has created for the parties the best position against other segments of the civil society. This status and this leading role is ensured by the fact that political parties shape public policy not only during the development and evaluation of the agenda, but also at the stages of policy development, decision-making and its implementation. It was not always so. But then, theoretically, we can assume that this will not always be the case. And the topic of institutionalization for political parties and political parties for a variety of political systems and regimes will not run out, causing justified interest.