

Sustainability of democratic and electoral processes: The role of political parties

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As discussed during the previous morning presentations, the political sustainability of democratic processes and their EMBs depends on different elements:

Political sustainability of democratic processes and their EMBs

Electoral system

Rules of the game

Public opinion

Forum of the public mind

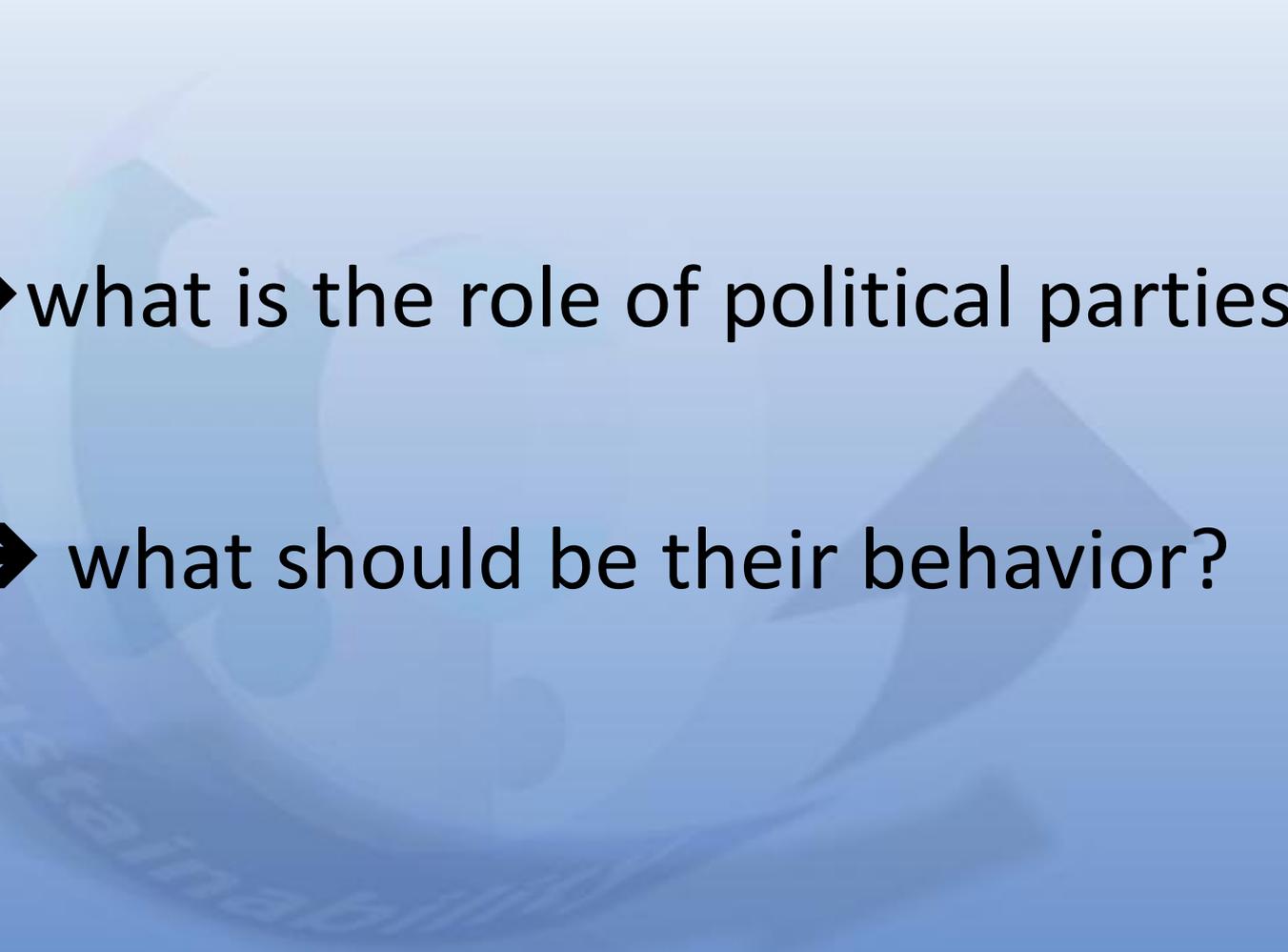
Political parties

Vehicles to articulate values and interests

**EMB:
Fair referee of electoral contenders**

**EMB:
Transparency, trust and confidence building**

**EMB:
Trusted and fair referee**

- 
- what is the role of political parties?
 - what should be their behavior?

The role of political parties

- the institutions that make possible a nonviolent form of competition between different factions in electoral processes
- provide avenues for public participation and national dialogue in post-conflict and fragile states
- provide a peaceful arena for public debate, political competition, and mediation of social conflicts

The role of political parties

- aggregate and represent local concerns and interests in the political system
- articulate positions on, and stimulate debate about, issues of public concern
- link the state and the civil society, they influence the executive, and they formulate public policy
- together with civil society groups, the media, and domestic and international observers, political parties also have a watchdog role to play in the electoral process

The role of political parties

→ In democratic contexts, political parties are the vehicles that articulate the interests and values of the population **towards** governmental policies **through** electoral processes

Yet, some question marks...

- What is the relationship between parties and democracy and the influence that one can have over the other?
- Can a country be truly democratic with only two political parties?
- Does it make a difference to a country's level of democracy if there are multiple registered parties, but only one or two parties dominate the system?

Some question marks...

Do third parties really give voters more choices on how the country should be managed? Or do they create instability in governance?

Does the lack of third parties alienate the citizenship from effective participation?

The crisis of political parties:

- ➔ Are political parties still the vehicles that articulate the citizenship's interests and values?
- ➔ And what does this mean for electoral administrators?