POLITICAL PARTIES are the distinctive institutions of modern democracy. They articulate and aggregate social interests, develop political programmes and connect the society with the state. They recruit candidates for elections, select political leaders and organise governments. They promote political participation of the citizens. Furthermore they contribute to the legitimacy of the democratic political system.

In this book, political parties are presented as central institutions of a modern democracy. The characteristics and functions of parties, the basic elements of their organisation, their political and social context, as well as the problems of party democracy and the specific challenges faced by parties are the main topics. This is to convey fundamental information on the different facets of political parties. At the same time it is meant to raise interest in one's engagement in a political party.
Political party, a group of persons organized to acquire and exercise political power. Political parties originated in their modern form in Europe and the United States in the 19th century, along with the electoral and parliamentary systems, whose development reflects the evolution of parties. Political parties are important democratic institutions that allow citizens political participation and representation, which are among the key expressions of democracy. They remain the primary avenue through which candidates for various levels of public office are nominated. Thus, members of a political party can be chosen to run for public office and, when elected, become public officials. Once in Parliament, political parties can formulate and vote on public policies.