

POLITICAL PARTIES ARE THE MAJOR INSTRUMENT OF RECRUITMENT OF ELITES: AN ANALYSIS

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***Abstract:** This paper is based upon political parties, party system, political culture, political ideology, elitism, elitist theories and political recruitment of elites. This paper will analyse the recruitment of elites as an important function of the political parties. It will contain a critical study of political parties as a major platform, source and an instrument of recruiting elites while identifying other sources or instruments. For this very purpose, major classical and contemporary elitist theories would be considered and would be applied in the practical cases. In this research paper it has been seen whether the practical cases approve the theories or they are defying in certain cases. This research paper is an effort to answer few questions i.e. are political parties the only major source of recruitment of elites in a political system? If not, identify the other sources and what are the different types, modes and dimensions channels of political recruitment of elites through political parties?. For this purpose, an insight of different party systems i.e. zero-party system, one-party system, two-party system and multi-party system is taken. Further, in the end, it has been concluded that political parties are the only major sources of recruiting political elites in a political system. Qualitative method has been applied in this research paper for deriving inferences. The research method is solely based upon secondary data and information. It is mainly deductive in nature based upon the existing research data.*

Keywords: Political Parties, Political Recruitment, Political Socialization, Political Institutions

Introduction:

Elites are a very important faction of the society as this group makes and determines the policies and take important decisions. They are a source of political education to the non-elite and provide leadership to the masses. They set certain standards, values upon which the society is based and is run. Actually, they build a culture whether it is social, political or economic.

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When such standards are established in a society especially in the political arena, it ensures stability and most essentially political stability. When a society is politically stable, then there can be positive development in all sectors of life. Unlike other groups in the society, elites are more adaptable to the change in social and political scenario. So, they are more vocal regarding modernization. They are actual drivers of essential and notable change in all aspects of life of all individuals living in a society. In regard to such crucial importance of role of elites in a society, it is important to study their recruitment into the political process and especially through the political parties. Political parties perform various functions e.g. political socialization, political education, political awareness, political recruitment, political training and many other functions. Political parties are present in all kinds of political systems i.e. in both democracies and authoritarian rules in the form of different party systems. The stability of the political system depends upon the recruitment of the elites from different parts and groups of the society through these political parties. Elites are the most important and major source, platform, and instrument of recruiting elites in a political system. The nature of the political system isn't significant in this regard. It is still a major source both in democracies, communist and fascist regimes and under authoritarian rules. Since, political parties exist in all these political systems with varying party systems such one-party system, two-party system and multi-party systems in poly archies. While, there may be other platforms and channels of recruiting elites and may have relative importance, the importance of political parties as a channel of recruitment outstrips all of them.

If elites are the drivers of change in the society with their feature of adaptability and guide the course of society through their unique leadership skills, then how these elites are selected/appointed and elected in a political system. How they reach at the apex of the political system and what type of hierarchy they form? Is it the political parties that provide the platform for elites to reach at the top of the governmental power or the elites themselves form political parties in order to get legitimacy from the masses to rule over them. Especially, one has to consider the political recruitment of elites in zero-party system. However, one may ask what zero-party system is and if it exists or not. Are one-party system or zero-party system the same things or whether they are either minor significant differences between them. All of these arguments and questions highlight the significance of our research

problem. Qualitative method has been applied in this research paper for its findings. The research method is solely based upon secondary data and information. It is mainly deductive in nature based upon the existing research data.

Literature Review:

A lot of work has been done on the recruitment of elites through the platform of the political parties by different writers, experts and political scientists. Most of them have based their studies upon the political systems of one country. A very few of them have generalized it and even less of them have utilized the elitist theories in their research studies. Gracjana Dutkiewicz in his research paper “processes of recruitment and selection of political elites as a theoretical concept” have tried to link the study of recruitment with the classical and contemporary elitist theories. However, he hasn’t provided a detail, how such recruitment processes work in different political systems in the past and in present.¹ Cheng Li has given an insight of recruitment of elites in modern China i.e. a case study and similarly Adriana Seagle and Woleola J. Ekundayo for Romania and Nigeria separately using historical and sociological approach.² Antonio Costa Pinto takes an insight of routes to governmental power, decision making and working of political parties in the fascist eras.³ John Ishiyama has done the same by taking the cases of some particular parties in Eastern Europe in the post-Communist era. This research paper tries to embody the recruitment of elites through political parties while identifying other platforms and compares their working in different political system. It takes into account the political party system and most importantly combines the classical and contemporary elitist theories.

Conceptualization of Elitism and Political Parties:

The term “elite” can be understood in many ways and has been defined in different ways. It can be a group of people which is educated, wealthy, have property,

¹Gracjana Dutkiewicz, “Processes of Recruitment and Selection of Political Elites as a Theoretical Concept,” *Colloquium Wydziału Nauk Humanistycznych I Społecznych Kwartalnik* (Mar 2014):99

²Cheng Li, “The Chinese Communist Party: Recruiting and Controlling the New Elites,” *Journal of Current Chinese Affairs*, Vol. 38. No. 3, (2009): 17

³Antonio Costa Pinto, “Elites, Single Parties and Political Decision-Making in Fascist Era Dictatorships,” *Contemporary European History*, Vol. 11, No. 3 (Aug 2002): 430.

have intellectual superiority, are few and are highly organized. As they are highly organized, they are very much capable to rule over the masses and exercise their influence. According to John Higley, “elites may be defined as persons who, by virtue of their strategic locations in large or otherwise pivotal organizations and movements, are able to affect political outcomes regularly and substantially.”⁴

There can be different types of elites. There are different ways of classifying elites and different authors have classified elites in their own understanding. Geraint Parry has differentiated elites into military elites, bureaucratic elites and business elites. John Higley talks about three kinds of elite’s i.e. disunited elite, ideologically united elite and consensually united elite. They may be also intellectual elites, administrative elites and even sports elites and in every field of life as by the standard definition, they are minority group highly organized and have special capabilities. In our study, we would be specifically dealing with political elites and their induction into the political system. So, for our purpose, we should define political elites first.

Political elites can be defined as a group of people which are top decision makers in the political arena, have monopoly over political power, influences the masses as well as the political parties and have the reins of the political command. They can be both elected and selected/nominated especially to the legislatures. They are people who are the leaders of the important national and even regional political parties. They may also be individuals who don’t possess any formal political power but due to their high political prestige and power are able to influence decisions. They can also be people who have the highest position in various political institutions, state military, economic organizations. The term “political elite” has been used in various connotations by various authors and writers. Wright Mills has used the term “power elite”. Pareto has used the term “governing elite”. Karl Marx has used the term “the ruling class”. Riesman has used the term “veto group”. Floyd Hunter has used the term “top leaders”. Gracjana Dutkiewicz has described political elites in two ways: “political elite means: (a) in a narrow meaning, members of the power system who directly take part and influence the process of decision-making in the state (power elite), whereas (b) in a wider context, all persons who occupy important positions in the system of power and who serve important roles and functions (such as members of

⁴ John Higley, “Elite Theory in Political Sociology,” *International Political Science Association*: 3.

local governments)”.⁵ On the other hand a political party is like any other organization which is composed of people possessing identical ideas, values and through their organized platform contest elections to gain governmental power by appealing to the masses for their support in the form of votes. Political parties achieve this by formulating a manifesto and agenda presented to the voters. Political parties are very important any kind of political system in the world as they perform various functions and roles and are an inherent and vital element for the stability and working of the political system. They perform various functions i.e. political socialization, political recruitment, political education and awareness and political identification and recruitment of people. However, there may be functional and structural differences between political parties. Some political parties have ideology as the basis of the functioning of its internal system while others do not have well defined political ideologies. “The primary objective is that political parties seek to organize themselves, to dominate the organs of government and ultimately to provide governmental and political leadership.”⁶ Political parties may work in different political systems i.e. in democracies and authoritarian or totalitarian regimes. They may also be a part of different party systems i.e. one-party system, two-party system and multi-party system. The main functions of the political parties are as follow:

1. Political socialization of the masses
2. Political recruitment of elites
3. Political identification of supporters and future elites
4. Political training of masses and elites
5. Political education and awareness of masses
6. Providing platforms for policy development
7. Regulates the conduct and behaviour of different office holders within political parties and in the governmental structure of the states

⁵ Gracjana Dutkiewicz, “Processes of Recruitment and Selection of Political Elites as a Theoretical Concept,” *Colloquium Wydziału Nauk Humanistycznych I Społecznych Kwartalnik* (Mar 2014): 100.

⁶ Woleola J. Ekundayo, “Political Parties, Party System and Leadership Recruitment in Nigeria Since Independence in 1960” *Public Policy and Administration Research Vol. 6, No. 5.* (2016): 39.

8. Providing platforms for debates and discourses on social, economic, political, cultural and even educational issues. In fact, political parties provide platform for discourse on any topic relating to every aspect of human life.
9. Consciously or unconsciously formulates a political culture in the society.
10. Source of Political Communication
11. Perform functions of interest articulation and interest aggregation
12. They are the drivers of political change and ensures political stability.

Political Ideology:

Political ideology can be defined as a set of beliefs, ideas, values doctrine of any political institution regarding society and provide normative political solutions and framework and mechanisms in this regard. Political ideologies define the goal that how society should be organized and structured, so it can perform and function at its best. The second thing it provides details on the appropriate methods and techniques to achieve this main goal. Every political ideology presents itself as the best and advocates a certain form of political system e.g. monarchy, aristocracy, democracy or autocracy etc. It may support a typical economic system e.g. between capitalism and socialism. The purpose of discussing political ideologies in our paper that the major political parties have at least some elements of these different political ideologies. We have to see how these different political ideologies affect the recruitment of potential elites by the political parties. “It is therefore imperative for a political party to have a political ideology that will distinguish it from others in terms of socio-economic and political views and approach in solving societal problems.”⁷

Political Party Systems:

There are generally four types of political party systems which we will discuss in our paper.

1. **Zero-party system:** a political system comprising no genuine political party. There are only individual candidates who are contesting for elections. Examples can be found in different countries where local government elections are held on non-party basis.

⁷ Ibid., 40.

2. **One-party system:** a political system which legally comprises of one genuine political party. Most prominent example is the Communist Party of China which has the governmental power of Republic of China in its control.
3. **Two-party system:** a political system which have two dominant political parties. Prominent examples are the Conservative Party and the Labour Party in UK and the Republican party and the Democratic Party in the USA.
4. **Multi-party system:** a political system where there is no legal restriction on the number of political parties. Prominent example is Pakistan itself where there are different political parties working in our political system.

We will see in detail the working of political parties in recruitment of elites in these various political party systems.

Elite Theories:

Vilfredo Pareto talked about the circulation of elites during the process of recruitment and selection of political elites. Circulation only occurs when only two groups are discussed i.e. elites and non-elites. He was of the view that every political elite is subject to change by eliminating weak individuals and recruiting new individuals from outside who are more capable than their predecessors. This circulation of elites consequently ensures political stability. His elites are then divided into two types i.e. governing elites and non-governing elites. Governing elites are those who take important political decisions while non-governing elites don't have the capacity to take decision, but they can influence them.

Gaetano Mosca describes two modes of political recruitment i.e. aristocratic and democratic. In the former one, the selection of elites is a closed deal and recruits members only by reproduction, passed on from generation to generation. The latter mode is a comparatively open one which recruits members from different segments of the society. In this case, excellent capabilities and talents and skills are identified and recognized of individuals of executing governmental power.

Karl Mannheim describes three different criteria for recruiting elites i.e. criteria of blood in which aristocratic societies choose their elites, criteria of property in which bourgeoisie societies choose their elites and criteria of achievements in which democratic societies choose their elites. He describes four different processes for recruitment of modern elites i.e. increment of elites and dilution of their power,

non-exclusivity of elites, change of rules regarding the selection of elites and change in inner composition of elites. Janusz Sztumski talks about feudal societies. In such societies, the criteria for recruitment of political elites was based upon social background i.e. those possess certain feudal titles. In capitalistic societies, political elites are recruited on the basis of property and ownership of different companies. Jerzy Wiatr tells that there were changes in the social background of political elites especially during the 19th and 20th centuries. There was development of mass political parties especially workers' party which organized people from lower segments of the society and emergence of universal suffrage.

Different Types of Recruitment of Elites:

There are many types of elite recruitment through the political parties and different writers have classified these recruitment processes in their own perspectives. Mainly there are two types of elite recruitment i.e. through either *election* or *selection/appointment*. There are also different dimensions for recruitment of political elites i.e. internal, external, party and individual.

According to Hopkin and Bradbury, these are some of the types of elite recruitment:

1. By a single individual who creates a political party for the promotion of his/her political beliefs and values. (selection)
2. By a small current elite group which form the core of the political party through either a formal vote or by an informal and obvious consensus. (election among selected elites)
3. By the party members which are seating in national or regional legislature, an important feature of parliamentary political systems. (elected by elected representatives of people).
4. Through annual convention of a political party as in non-parliamentary systems. (election by party members)
5. By vote of total party membership.
6. Through party delegate and primaries at various levels i.e. local, regional and state level. (elected by people)
7. By shadow election which are also known as open and wide elections in which anyone irrespective of their party affiliation can vote.

There are two rules of elite exchange i.e. reproduction and circulation. In reproduction, there is a recreation of elite exclusively from its own members without reaching to the lower classes of the society. In circulation, people from all walks of life are allowed to replace those current members which didn't perform. Bodio and Zaleski technically describe two types of elite recruitment i.e. guild system and entrepreneurial system. He says: "The guild system defines a closed elite (recruitment for high positions of people already functioning in the elite), many filters in the process of recruitment, a small or closed circle of selecting electorate and a tendency to reproduce the elite. The entrepreneur system defines an open elite, a small number of filters, in the recruitment process, a wide circle of electorate of recruitment process."⁸ Basically, these writers are talking about the recruitment of elite in terms of degree of easiness into entering in the elite circle. When we apply these two systems of recruitment to Mosca's elite theory, we can interpret his aristocratic mode of recruitment as guild system or reproduction and his democratic mode of recruitment as entrepreneurial system or circulation.

One thing we have to keep in mind when political parties are recruiting elites, they take into account their political ideologies. The people which are recruited should be oriented towards the party's ideology and supportive of its aims, objectives and goals. If not, then those are recruited should have flexibility and adaptability in their nature, so they can undergo through the process of political training. However, even inside in political parties, there are various factions which have different interpretations of political ideology and party's policies. Thus, in political parties, we can see cooperation, consensus, conflicts and degree of polarization. All of this have direct or indirect impact on recruitment and training of elites.

Channels of Recruitment of Political Elites:

There are different channels of recruitment of political elites in democratic and non-democratic countries. In democratic countries, there are obviously political parties and various social, cultural, academic and even religious organizations. In non-

⁸Gracjana Dutkiewicz, "Processes of Recruitment and Selection of Political Elites as a Theoretical Concept," *Colloquium Wydziału Nauk Humanistycznych I Społecznych Kwartalnik* (Mar 2014): 101.

democratic countries the important channels are army, bureaucracy and even religious organizations in theocratic states. In one-party systems, elites are recruited by the ruling political party as it was in Soviet Union.

Recruitment of Elites in Different Political Systems:

1. Recruitment of Elites in Democracies:

In democratic countries, the major platforms and channels of recruiting elites are political parties and social organizations. As our study is limited to political parties, we will analyse the stages of recruitment of elites through political parties in democracies. There are basically three main stages of recruitment.

1. The first stage is the apparatus of the political party. People at this stage perform different organizational tasks which are crucial in the smooth running of the political party.
2. The second step is the parliamentary activity. In democratic countries, parliamentary activity is given high importance and is an important factor in the development of a political career. Parliamentary activity highlights a person of his inherent capabilities and skills and enables one to move up the ladder to occupy important political, governmental and executive and leadership positions. In this stage, inherent talent is polished which would be utilized in future activities of the political party.
3. The third step is occupying positions in the political, governmental and administrative seats of the state. This is done by elections in which the party candidates are selected either by elites of the political party or through party membership and primaries. However, in democratic countries, state administration is separated from the governmental posts and bureaucracy is run by established rules recruiting people through competitive examinations. It is in non-democratic states where members of the ruling party or the dictator appoint people on the state administrative posts.

The recruitment of elites either through elections or selection is then followed by promotions which is determined by qualifications and performance. The performance and qualifications are both measured by public opinion and contributions to party's achievement of goals and policies.

2. Recruitment of Elites in Communist Countries:

In communist countries, there is basically one-party rule which adheres to the communist or Marxist ideology. The Communist Party of the Soviet Union ruled for decades till the collapse of the Soviet Union. The Communist Party of China is the de-facto ruling party of the Republic of China. It is this ruling party which recruits people from different walks of life and train them into becoming political elites. One of the important feature of recruitment of elites in these one-party communist countries is that they recruit people who are already *elites* in their own respective fields e.g. from educational background who are intellectuals and academicians, from economic background who are entrepreneurs working for state owned enterprises, military and administrative elites and even those who are foreign educated. These are technocrats, intellectuals, highly professional lawyers, journalists, political scientists, historians, military officers, top state bureaucrats and etc. A technocrat is a person who is trained in natural sciences or an engineer or a doctor. Technocrats have always dominated the core of the Communist Party of China. However, in recent years, law professionals are increasing in membership in the party. The current President of the Republic of China has a PhD in law. “... *a degree in law or politics has become a valuable credential for aspiring political leaders.*”⁹ Economy of a country is very important in running state affairs and ensures political stability. In 21st century, soft power is given more importance over hard power due to emergence of globalized economy. It is for this case; recruitment of highly trained economists and entrepreneurs isn't only the features of democratic countries anymore. We take example of China, which despite being a communist country has paved the way for private enterprises to emerge as a global economic power with joint ventures of state -run enterprises and private corporations. This has made the recruitment of these top businessmen and entrepreneurs important into the political class of China. Today, China has millions of private enterprises which reflects the due importance of the communist state upon capitalistic economy. Foreign-educated returnees are also increasing their presence in the Communist Party of China. These returnees have not only received their education in natural sciences but also in social sciences. This highlight the recruitment of Western liberal ideas in the political system of Communist China.

⁹ Cheng Li, “The Chinese Communist Party: Recruiting and Controlling the New Elites,” *Journal of Current Chinese Affairs*, Vol. 38. No. 3, (2009): 18.

Although the state is ruled by one party adhering to one specific political ideology, there may be different factions within a political party. These factions have different interpretations of the dominant ideology and believe in different modes of achieving the goals and objectives and policies. Cheng Li, in his article called described the political system of China as *One Party, Two Coalitions! “These two groups can be identified as the populist coalition.....; and the elitist coalition.”*

Even within a party, there is negotiation, compromise, consensus, conflicts and dealing behind the scenes between elites as can be seen in democracies where elites of different political parties do the same. This is called *factional politics*, or we can use the specific term as used by Cheng Li in his article *inner-party democracy*.

3. Recruitment of Elites in Fascist Regimes:

Fascist regimes emerged during the inter-war period in Germany, Japan, Italy, Portugal and Spain. We will go through elite recruitments in these different fascist regimes separately.

In Portugal, during the inter-war period, Salazari emerged as the main fascist leader. Salazar created a new party called UN (National Union). It was basically elitist in its formation. *“The UN was not given any predominant role over either the government or the administration,”*¹⁰ It had no control in the selection of the ministerial elite. The party lacked organizational ability. It was generally used for the selection of the members of Chamber of Deputies and of local administration. Salazar was in total control of the executive branch and kept important ministries for himself. Decision making power was totally in his hands.

Franco, the fascist leader of Spain, created his single fascist party called FET-JONS. He forced his party’s integration with the Catholics and monarchists to create a regime which was fascist in its beginning. During the civil war, the party provided militants to Franco for its support of fascism. However, the fascists saw themselves as weaker as the party was combination of different political groups. After establishing the fascist regime, Franco tried to keep the single part under governmental control. However, the single party created a party apparatus and additional and contributory

¹⁰ Antonio Costa Pinto, “Elites, Single Parties and Political Decision-Making in Fascist Era Dictatorships,” *Contemporary European History*, Vol. 11, No. 3 (Aug 2002): 431.

organizations for its working. It was much powerful than the UN of Salazari in Portugal and had great control over the national and local government. Franco, unlike Salazari, didn't interfere much in the ministerial affairs and the politicians make up the 40% of the ministers further highlighting the importance of the single party.

Mussolini, the Italian dictator, took power with the help of the National Fascist Party (PNF). This party became the de-facto party. The Fascists Grand Council was created which was the party's supreme body and it was converted into state institution. This grand council was the main recruiting ground for the ministerial elite. The corporate sector was also a recruiting ground for ministerial elite. The least significant was the civil service and even from among them, the PNF had the ultimate authority to choose. Hitler, the German Nazi dictator, was the most charismatic of them all. The German Nazi Party had a greater influence over the state apparatus, political system and the society as a whole. The Nazi Party was the main recruiting ground for the ministerial elite, in fact, the recruited ministers were already leaders or occupying positions in the Nazi Party.

4. Other Channels of Recruitment of Elites:

Political elites are also recruited through *mass media, social organizations, information campaigns and social marketing*. Mass media is a platform where debates and discourses are arranged on various political, economic, social, cultural and even religious issues. It highlights the actions taken and policies adopted by the various political elites. It acts as an instrument by political elites to shape public opinion. It gives access to political elites to the public. This helps them in campaigns for elections and to build a voter base. Mass media is both used in democracies and authoritarian regimes for the recruitment of elites and to build up public opinion and to gather mass support. However, the degree of control over mass media varies in democracies and authoritarian regimes. Social organizations are very important especially in democracies for recruitment of elites whereby through their strong influence, this elite group can affect the policy making of the government. Religious platforms are very important where religion is an important aspect of social life and dictates other sectors of life. They can take the shape of pressure groups in such societies and thereby form an elite group. The bourgeoisies are very influential especially in this modern liberal capitalistic world. Marxists are very vocal on the working of this elite group. As soft power has become even more important than ever

before, so political elites has to cater the demands of the economic elites. Academic elites or intellectuals are in working in almost all political systems. Both in democracies and authoritarian regimes, the political elites utilize their services to able to pacify and even build public opinion through manipulation of academic curricula in various academic institutions.

Conclusion:

Recruitment of political elites tells about the structure, function of the political system. It acts as measure of the stability of the political system. After a through deductive analysis, we can easily answer our three research questions. We can safely say that the political parties are the major tools, platforms and instruments of recruiting elites in a political system. This holds true for any kind of political system and political party system. However, the degree of importance of political parties in recruiting elites varies in different systems. Actually, the recruitment of political elites is one of the main functions of the political parties as highlighted in the section of political parties. Political parties are thee channels where the public opinion is carried through the governmental structure. They may also be the builders of public opinion. They identify political issues and people who are adherent to their views and ideology and give them success in elections providing legitimacy. Though, political parties can't work alone in this regard. Different social, religious organizations and even mass media are important channels in this regard. It is in fact a combination of all these channels with political parties working as the main cable to recruit elites.

The main two methods of recruiting elites are election and selection and these two methods can be used separately and combined in various ways to recruit elites. The combination of these two systems may give us a handy information of the basic working of a political system of any country. It may have different dimensions i.e. internal, external, party and individual. The important aspect is whether the platform is quite open or quite closed to the public for recruitment. And here comes the concept of elite circulation and elite reproduction i.e. the entrepreneurial or guild system respectively or as Mosca called the democratic and representative mode of recruitment respectively.

Recruitment of political elites in democracies go through a well-defined process and mechanism in which the starters have to perform organization tasks in the

political party to move up the ladder and join the parliamentary activity. It isn't essential for them to be competent in other fields of life. Their success is mostly dependent upon their political careers by remaining within the political parties. Two-party or multi-party systems operate in democracies and there is a competition of elites within party or between parties to harness votes of the public to enter into governmental power. In communist regimes, one-party system dominates. Entry to the single communist party is open to those who pledge allegiance to the party's political ideology. Unlike in democracies, this single party is the only dominant platform to enter into governmental power. It is highly beneficial to be competent in various fields of life to be recruited into this single party. One can either be technocrat, lawyer, economist, businessman, military officers and bureaucrat and intellectual as we seen in the case of China because its gives one edge over others. In the fascist regimes of the past, other than Salazari's rule in Portugal, the single de-facto fascist party was the only main instrument to enter into the elite circle. Although, people from different backgrounds e.g. monarchists, Catholics and military officers were also dominant along with the fascists in some cases, but they were all united under the banner of the single party. Here, also one-party system was prevalent. Although, Salazari had formed the National Party but it was weak from its foundation, so the political system was somehow a representation of zero-party system in which only the fascist dictator prevailed. In the end, it can be safely argued that the political parties are indeed the major source of recruitment of political elites in all political systems both in past and in the present.