

Political Parties

Why Parties

Definitions

Dictionary	an organization of people who share the same views about the way power should be used in a country or society (through government, policy-making, etc.)
Leon Epstein	Any group, however loosely oriented, seeking to elect office holders under the given label
Giovanni Sartori	Any organization that presents candidates for elective offices and to legislative bodies
Kenneth Janda	Those organizations which pursue the goal of placing their avowed representation in governmental positions

What purpose do parties serve?

according to John Aldrich, political parties...	help to solve the "social choice problem" for office-seeking politicians, help to solve the "collective action problem" for office-seeking politicians, and have been an appropriate mechanism for organizing and communicating with voters in a historical sense
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Historical Development of Parties

First Party System: "Proto-Party System" 1800-1824

Parties	Jeffersonians (Jeffersonian, Republicans, Democratic-Republicans) and Federalists
Competition	dominated by Jeffersonians
Coalitions	Jeffersonians do well with southerners and westerners and Federalists do well in New England
Issues	scope of federal governing power, states' rights, scope of democratic participation
Mobilization?	elite-level only

Second Party System "Jacksonian Party System" 1828-1856

Parties	Democratic and Whigs
Competition	balanced and fierce
Coalitions	Democrats do slightly better in southern and western states and Whigs do well in New England and Midwest
Issues	states' rights, immigration and national expansion, tariff
Mobilization?	extensive grass-roots mobilization

Third Party System: "Civil War Party System" 1860-1892

Parties	Democrats and Republicans
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Political Parties (cont)

Competition Republicans dominate 1860-76, then balanced and fierce

Coalition Republicans dominate in North and West and Democrats dominate in South and urban areas

Issues "Waving the bloody flag", commercial/transportation regulation

Mobilization extensive grass-roots mobilization

Fourth Party System: "System of '96" 1896-1928

Parties Democrats and Republicans

Competition Republicans dominate, except for Wilson years (1912-1920)

Coalition Republicans dominate in North and West and Democrats dominate in South and urban areas

Issues Progressive "good government" reforms, economic regulation

Mobilization? de-mobilization as primaries, civil service reforms, ballot reforms occur

Fifth Party System: "New Deal Party System" 1932-1964

Parties Democrats and Republicans

Competition Democrats dominate

Coalitions democrates dominate South (white), urban areas with new immigrants and Republicans do well with northern WASPs

Issues government intervention in the economy

Mobilization mobilization of 2nd generation immigrants and women

Sixth Party System: "Post-New Deal Party System" 1968-?

Parties Democrats and Republicans

Competition balanced and fierce

Coalitions Democrats dominate with middle and lower status whites, racial and ethnic minorities and Republicans do well with white southerners and evangelicals

Issues Civil Rights and government intervention in the economy

Political Parties are Endogenous

what constitutes a party causes their behavior (coalitions dictate behavior), reflection of members

What do parties provide voters and candidates?

information shortcuts for candidates and voters (parties have reputations), candidates choose to side with a party because of ideological similarity and its probability of winning

Converge when parties are able to keep dissimilar candidates out



Political Parties (cont)

Diverge when parties can't keep dissimilar candidates out

Democrat Monopoly in TX

for 100 years only democratic governors in TX, tension regarding Liberal versus Conservative Democrats (poor interest likes farmers and workers like the Liberals and corporation interests like businesses and firms like the conservative), Ma and Pa Ferguson and the New Deal (racism and prohibition are bad so Liberals got control)

Decay of Democratic Party in TX

1952 and 1956 Democratic Party State Convention

Democrats backed Eisenhower (republican), Liberals won but the in fighting fractured and weakened party, conservative democrats became republicans

V.O. Key and Southern Democrats

strange political ideology, vote Democrat locally, vote Republican nationally, Republican power in TX relatively new (but Democratic conservatives look like republicans)

Rise of Republican Party in TX

Legacy of Governor Edmund Davis (ex-union soldier, proponent of Lincoln) hurt Republican reputation because people hated Lincoln and the union, causing no Republican Government for 100+ years

Now, we haven't had a Democratic Governor for almost 30 years because Democratic party diverged (couldn't keep dissimilar interests out)

Political Parties—Are they strong or weak?

Party in Government

Do members of Congress vote with their party most of the time? YES!

Does party membership matter? YES! for agenda control, committee assignments, campaign contributions and fundraising, encouraging/discouraging primary election challenges

so party in government is STRONG

Party in Electorate

Does party structure politics and voting in a meaningful way for voters? YES! measured through 2 simple survey questions: Direction (Do you think of yourself as a Republican or Democrat or neither?) and Intensity (Do you think of yourself as strong or weak Democrat/Republican? or Do you lean toward Republican or Democrat?)

Thus, party in the electorate is STRONG

Party Organization

Do parties raise money and enlist votes? YES!

Do parties contact and mobilize voters? YES!

thus, party organization is strong

Since party in government, electorate, and organization are STRONG

Third Parties

The Importance of third parties



Political Parties (cont)

1912 election as an example
Teddy Roosevelt runs as 3rd party (Bull Moose/Progressive Party including universal healthcare) and splits Republican vote with Taft so Wilson wins

Rosenstone, Behr, and Lazarus "Third Parties in America"

legal constraints
(1) most votes = win so shift to 2 party system so one candidate has majority (2) third parties have to jump through hoops to run (signatures, fine, etc.)

handicaps
(1) little media attention (2) belief they won't win so it's a wasted vote (self-fulfilling prophecy) (3) seen as fringe/wasted vote (4) fear of major parties going after them

Why do people vote for third parties?

(1) major party deterioration (2) neglected issues (third party will address) (3) neglected preferences (4) unacceptable major party candidates (5) attractive minor party candidates

Notable 3rd Part Candidates

Strom Thurmond
in 1948 people were upset with Truman's Civil Rights push so Thurmond and several other southern Democrats split with party and formed Dixiecrats (Democrats for States' Rights), Thurmond got on ballot in MS, AL, SC, LA and while he didn't win it quieted call for Civil Rights bill within Democrats

George Wallace
nationally known for his 1963 attempt to block 2 black students from entering University of AL and in 1968 formed The American Independent Part appealing to those who felt that Civil Rights policies were hurting them and whites with lower socioeconomic status and the young, Wallace and the AIP forced Nixon to take a stronger conservative stance on race issues

Ross Perot
Perot benefited from Americans displeasure with the major parties and the key to his success was that he was well financed (\$73 M campaign, gaining ballot access and TV time and participating in Presidential debate), he won 18.9% of popular vote but no electoral college votes taking votes from republicans and democrats (Clinton still would have won if Perot didn't run)



The Media

Historical Development of U.S. Media

Today we have an adversarial, argumentative, cynical, and negative media, BUT the media are largely independent, subject to their own economic interests, professional norms and standards.

1760-1850s: Era of the Political Press

- consist of vehicles for advocacy (e.g., federalist Papers/Anti-Federalist Papers, Jefferson v. Adams, Abolition Movement prior to the Civil War)
- these were the primary forms of political communication
- they were controlled by the political parties with no pretense of objectivity

1850-1920s: Era of the Commercial Press

- began to target mass audiences
- coverage moved toward more sensationalist stories to drive sales (sex, violence, scandal)
- "Yellow Journalism"
- 2 dominant figures: Joseph Pulitzer (St. Louis Post-Dispatch, New York World) and William Randolph Hearst (San Francisco Examiner and New York Morning Journal)

1920s-1960s: Era of the Professional Press

- new journalistic norms develop after WW1: objectivity, discretion, "just the fact" (who, what, when, where, how, and why)
- political news develops and evolves: newspapers have full-time DC staffs, standards emerge with respect to coverage (what's in play and what's "out of bounds"), newspapers still have their favorites

1960-today: Era of Adversarial press

- News media began to change in 1960s: media discretion abused by JFK in Bay of Pigs, media suspicion mounts over LBJ and Vietnam, Nixon and Watergate, TV challenges newspapers for pre-eminence as the primary source of news, Watergate marks the end of the "professional press" and the beginning of the "adversarial press", political parties decline and the new media rise as king-makers in politics

Characteristics of Contemporary US Media

- Cynical and probing: assume ulterior motives; always looking for "bigger" story
- Negative: negative stories are always more "newsworthy" than positive stories
- Process oriented: more interested in process (campaigns, back-room deals, and negotiations) than in outcomes
- Empirical: preference for "facts" to opinions and argumentation

Minimal Effects Thesis

argues that the media has little to no effect on public opinion



The Media (cont)

we should reject this thesis on the basis of agenda setting, framing, and priming

Agenda Setting

tells you what to think about (what they cover out of everything possible indicates what's important, influences what public thinks is important; covered=important)

What gets on the agenda?

Example: Disease and media coverage it's about WHO dies not total death (disease that kill more white men get more attention)

what gets on the agenda mirrors public values

Agenda Setting and public discourse

Does what the public talk about closely mirror what the media talks about? Concrete issues: YES!; Abstract Issues: NO!

Correlation between traditional social media agenda? social media = more likely to address social and public order issues and less likely to address economic and government functioning

relationship between political discussion in traditional and social media is not directly causal social media may get info first or vice versa

Priming

Priming changes in the standards that people use to make political evaluations

argues that media coverage influences what people believe and how they evaluate candidates (voters evaluate candidates based on issue media is covering)

by focusing on certain things as opposed to others you change standards of evaluation

The News Media

Basic Facts and trends

Broadcast News Weekly audiences NBC (8.3M), ABC (9.4M), CBS (5.9M)

Nightly Audience for Cable News Fox (3.62M), MSNBC (2.15M), CNN (1.79M)

Talk Radio min weekly audiences Rush Linbaugh (15.5M), Sean Hannity (15M), Marketplace (14.8M), All Things Considered-NPR (14.7M), Dave Ramsey (14M), Morning Edition-NPR (13.1M), Mark Levin (11M), Glenn Beck (10.5M), Coast to Coast AM (10.5M), Mike Gallagher (8.5M), Delilah (8.3M)

Newspapers Daily Circulation USA Today (1.6M), Wall St Journal (1M), NY Times (.48M), NY Post (.43M), LA Times (.42M), Washington Post (.25M), Star Tribune (.25M), Newsday (.25M), Chicago Tribune (.24M), Boston Globe (.23M)

Websites (monthly visitors) Yahoo News (175M), Google News (150M), Huffington Post (110M), CNN (95M), NY Times (70M), Fox News (65M), NBC News (63M), Mail Online (53M), Washington Post (4.7M), The Guardian (42M), Wall St Journal (40M), ABC News (36M)



The Media (cont)

Online news sires are gaining on TV as main news service for Americans (national and local news) with social media being another major source
the public is getting more negative about the nature of press performance despite variation in news outlets

the public trusts local news more than national news

Bias?

the public sees different outlets as leaning one way or another politically

perception of news media bias and news media trust have polarized along partisan lines (Republican :) Fox, Democrats :) CNN)

The case for "conservative bias" Most news media owned by corporate interests, who prefer conservative candidates and public policies and these controlling interests keep certain issues off the agenda, talk radio and Fox News slant strongly to the right

The case for "liberal bias" Most news reporters and journalists are personally liberal, some empirical evidence shows that conservative candidates and policy makers receive worse coverage, newspapers and mainstream media slant strongly to the left

What does the data say about ideological bias? some evidence of favoring liberals BUT main biases are not ideological

Main Sources of Media Bias Professional (rely on professionals who know about issues they cover), source reliance (protect sources as they can use them again), selection (prefer immediate, sensationalist, and sexy stories), pack journalism (pressure to write about what others are covering)

Media Coverage of Campaigns

contemporary campaigns are covered with an emphasis on... the horse race (who's ahead and who's behind), personalities, conflict, scandals, gaffes, negativity (one side attacking another)

Framing

framing the process by which a source defines the essential problem underlying a particular social or political issues

framing v. persuasion framing: how to think about something pointing out what is important to consider; persuasion: influencing someone's opinion on whether something is good or bad

Calculation of Attitudes

$A = \sum v \cdot w$
v=value of an attribute on a specific dimension; w= subjective weight of that belief on a specific dimension;
A=attitude



The Media (cont)

framing affects weight (changing weight of importance), persuasion affects value

Conflict frame and public opinion (Combative politics)

Conflict Frame a frame with a narrative structure that presents actors as polarized focus (focus on which side is winning or losing and often includes language related to war, competition, and games)

the inability of legislators to reach common ground becomes seen less as a discussion of facts of the policy and more about a politicians' political game causing debate to be thought of as ridiculous and disgusting not productive and healthy

as debate drags on and reporters continue to focus on the conflict, the public begins to associate the policy with the ugliness of the process, which in turn leads to opposition to the policy

Causal Process leading to increased policy opposition policy debat -> news focus on process/debate/conflict -> negative public sentiment toward process -> increased policy opposition -> policy debate (and repeats)

other "generic" or "-journalistic" frames economic (emphasis on profit and loss), powerlessness (describes groups as helpless in the face of greater forces), human impact (emphasis on describing individuals and groups likely affected by an issue), morality (contains indirect references to moral and cultural values)

Why do journalist choose the combative politics frame? "if it bleeds, it leads" (people like conflict), soft news vs. hard news (people like soft news because it's easy to digest and hard news has complex arguments), objectivity (just say what people are doing = objective appearance), running story (continue to tell story every day for a long period of time)

Public Opinion

Defining Public Opinion

from V.O. Key those opinions held by private persons which governments find it prudent to heed

Public Opinion and Democracy

for success of democracy, we must be aware of public opinion to have a more representative democracy

The Problems of Multiple Principals

There are lots of different opinions so difficult to articulate clear will of the people

It's hard to translate opinion into action

People aren't informed so it's hard to tell what people want

Sources of Public Opinion

political socialization

result of all the processes by which people form their beliefs and values in their homes, schools, churches, communities, and workplaces



Public Opinion (cont)

ONGOING and can change with life experiences

kids vote the same way as parents

what you are exposed to affects how you view the world

Education and Public Opinion

political efficacy the belief that one can make a difference in politics by expressing an opinion or action politically (education builds this)

citizen duty the belief that it is a citizen's duty to be informed and participate in politics (education increases this)

Religion as a Source of Public Opinion

as a socializing agent, they help you understand how to view and deal with the world
David C. Legee (1993)...

Kenneth Wald's Causes of Religious Intervention in Politics

Clifford Geertz on creed Both what a people prizes and what it fears and hates are depicted in this worldview, symbolized in its religion expresses in the whole quality of life (helps people understand how to behave in secular activity)

Social Culture develop shared outlook because similar experiences

Religion as Culture identity (who you/group is), Norms (what to do), Boundary maintenance (what not to do)
provides...

Political Knowledge and Public Opinion

Delli, Carpini, and Keeter

functioning democracy needs well informed citizens

if citizens are not well-informed they can't effectively articulate their best interests

older and more educated people are better informed

Heuristics

Lupia and McCubbins

mental shortcuts that allow individuals to make decisions without a great deal of information

"concepts such as reputation, party, or ideology are useful heuristics only if they convey information about knowledge and trust"

Hard and Easy Issues

Carmines and Stinson

hard issues voting or policy opinion is the result of a sophisticated decision calculus (you have to think really hard to come to a conclusion)



Public Opinion (cont)

easy issues issues that are so ingrained over a long periods of time it structures voters "gut responses" to candidates and political parties (symbolic > technical, policy ends>means, long on political agenda)

Origins of Political Opinions and Attitudes

Core Concepts of Social Learning Theory (SLT)

Instrumental motivation people are rational actors seeking to maximize their utilities
Reinforcement encouraging/increasing a behavior; can be positive (adding something) or negative (taking something away)
Punishment discouraging/decreasing a behavior; can be positive (adding something) or negative (taking something away)
Generalization attempting to extrapolate from a previous experience to another related experience
Discrimination learning that not all apparently similar situations are identical

Conventional Wisdom about Public Opinion

What we assumed to be true Americans are interested, engaged, and attentive to politics and public affairs, Americans know the basic facts concerning American politics, Americans listen to public officials and candidates, understand their issue and policy positions, and hold them accountable for their performance

Reasons we believe the conventional wisdom was true election results suggest rationality, high levels of literacy and educational attainment, substantial campaign communication and outreach

What early polls told us

George Gallup, Lou Harris, and other pioneers in the science of polling, discovered... Americans don't know very much about politics, Americans are not very interested in politics, Americans rely on broad and general attitudes and predispositions to make sense of politics

examples 74% can name the VP, 70% can name their mayor, 58% know constitutionality is decided by the Supreme Court, 55% can name at least one senator, 40% can name their congressional representative, 34% can name the Secretary of State, 25% can name the speaker of the House, 8% can name the Chief Justice of the US

Philip Converse and the Nature and Origins of Mass Attitudes



Public Opinion (cont)

Main Argument

most people do not have a full set of coherent political opinions or beliefs nor do they even know what ideology is

low levels of ideological constraint lead to low levels of conceptualization and low levels of issue consistency

Levels of conceptualization

ideologues rely on abstract ideological concepts to make judgements about political objects (with ideologues represent 15% of population)

near-ideo-
logues use ideological terminology, but don't use it correctly (with ideologues represent 15% of population)

group-interest evaluate political objects with respect to their treatment of particular groups (with nature of the times represents 60% of voters)

nature of the
times evaluations of candidates and parties are tied to general perceptions about how things are going (with nature of the times represents 60% of voters)

no issue
content focus on personalities or family traditions without any evidence of political thinking (represents 25% of voters)

Issue Consistency

Across Time people are not likely to have the same opinion on an issue at two different points in time

Across Issue
Domain knowing what an individual American thinks about one issue doesn't really tell you much about what they might think about another issue (take away: people flip flop opinions on issues)

Criticisms

Analysis and data come from a quiescent time in American politics (the 1950s). Ideology depends on political issues and context, which is more intense in the 1960s and 1970s

Relied on dichotomous scales ("yes" or "no"), more complex response options (1-7, for example) reveal greater constraint

How we measure public opinion

man-in-street interviews

focus groups

non-scientific polls

Probability Samples

key terms population, sample, representativeness



Public Opinion (cont)

sources of measurable error (sample size and response bias/response rates, which is approx. 10% and low response rates are a problem if polling error the people who choose to complete the interview are systematically different from those who decline) and unmeasurable error (question wording, response options, question order, interviewer effects)

Social Welfare Attitudes

social welfare issues include basic questions of the appropriate level of taxation and spending as well as support for funding programs on things like education, the environment, anti-poverty programs, energy, etc.

generally, Americans are LIBERAL on social welfare issues

Social Issue Attitudes

social issues include questions of religion, family, values, and personal responsibility

generally Americans are CONSERVATIVE on social issues

Foreign Policy Attitudes

Is opinion liberal or conservative?

it's neither

conservatives are not always "hawks" and Liberals are not always "doves"

foreign policy opinions seem to be affected by who is in office (party) and broader circumstances (context)

Things to know

"Rally around the flag" - Americans tend to support the president and the commitment of troops to a foreign war once boots hit the ground

support for the war almost never increases over time

opposition to war is disproportionately affected by "early" casualties

Political Cultures

collection of beliefs and values about how the government should operate

Values

Donald R. Kinder conception of desirable, not something desired, they are motivating, lead us to take particular positions on social issues, help us to evaluate and judge/to heap praise and fix blame on ourselves and others

American Political Cultures

Individualism individual versus government responsibility to provide for themselves, both blacks and whites support this

Equality nobody is inherently superior, everyone has equal opportunities, blacks are more supportive of egalitarianism

Limited Government weak central government and limits on power, large gap between whites and minorities as whites like limited government



Public Opinion (cont)

Conspiracy Theories

Oliver and Wood (2014) locate source of unusual social political phenomenon in unseen, intentional and malevolent forces

political events interpreted as struggle between good and evil

mainstream accounts of political events are an attempt to distract the public from a hidden source of power

Hofstadter (1964) when something bad happens someone is behind it allowing it to happen

Who believes?

almost all Americans know of some conspiracy theory (55% agreed with at least on general conspiracy while 45% believed in at least one medical conspiracy)

not necessarily mental illness, it falls along ideological lines and is widespread and consistent

people with a propensity to attribute the source of unexplained or extraordinary events to unseen, intentional forces are more likely to believe

people with an attraction toward melodramatic narratives that interpret history relative to universal struggles between good and evil are more likely to believe

social consequences increased feelings of powerlessness, decrease likelihood of engaging in certain behaviors

TX and Conspiracy Theories

prominent anti-gov conspiracies during Obama administration

Difficulty Correcting Misinformation

Nyhan (2010) and Nyhan and Reiffer (2010) Misinformation and conspiracy theories are difficult to correct, highly polarized elites, ideological consistency, and attempts to correct misinformation can further ingrain them

Turnout and Participation

Overview of Political Participation

Many Americans engage in simple participatory acts, but very few engage in more demanding activity

statistics

45% tried to persuade others about how to vote

18% wore a button or put a bumper sticker on their car

13% gave money to a political party or campaign

9% attended a political meeting

4% worked for a political party or campaign

Turnout in the US

Basic Facts

1. US turnout is low compared to other countries

2. turnout has varied over time (declined from 1960-1996 but increased from 2000-2020)

3. Turnout decreases in midterm elections, increases in presidential elections ("saw-tooth" pattern)

4. Political, demographic factors affect turnout rates

5. TX has lower turnout compared to other states



Turnout and Participation (cont)

6. higher income, more education, married, older (55-74), white or black, and female are all demographics that are more likely to turnout

What affects turnout?

Institutional factors (tend toward lower turnout)

1. registration requirement
2. timing of elections (Tues in Nov during work hours)
3. frequency of elections (we have a lot)
4. location/convenience of polling places
5. Complexity of ballot

Psychological Factors (trend toward higher turnout)

1. Political efficacy
2. Interest/Engagement
3. Partisanship

Paradox of turnout-Why did turnout decrease across the 1960s-1990s?

1. education levels increased dramatically
2. Civil Rights legislation ended Jim Crow laws in the South
3. Registration requirements were eased (Motor Voter Laws, Same-Day registration)
4. Convenience Voting increased

But turnout still decreased when ostensibly they should increase, why?

Answer: Parties did not contact and mobilize voters as they had done in previous eras. Increased party and candidate contacting from 2000-2008 increased turnout substantially

Calculus of Voting

from Downs 1957 $R = pB - C$ R=probability that the voter will turn out, if $R > 0$ the voter will turnout; p = probability of vote "mattering"; B = "utility" benefit of voting-differential benefit of one candidate winning over the other; C = cost of voting

Cost of voting lines and TIME and effort

Voting is illogical the probability of your vote mattering is functionally zero so the costs will always be greater than the benefits

from riker and Ordeshook (1968) $R = pB - C + D$, where D=citizen duty, goodwill feeling, psychological and civic benefit of voting

Voting Rights

- 15th Amendment voting rights to African-American men
- 19th Amendment women's suffrage (previously allowed in some states but this allows it everywhere and in all elections) (1920)
- 23rd Amendment DC gets 3 electors in the electoral college
- 24th Amendment no poll taxes allowed
- 26th Amendment voting age of 18

1965 Voting Right Act



Turnout and Participation (cont)

Barriers to Registration

- poll taxes, literacy tests, grandfather clause, intimidation
- blacks had to take extensive test on the constitution that even a constitutional law student couldn't pass
- the VRA of 1965 made these barriers illegal

Vote Dilution

scattering minorities across districts so the majority can outweigh them or putting them all in 1-2 districts to allow other districts to outweigh them

Shelby v. Holder

preclearance: 1965 VRA states or county with a history of infringing upon the vote of minority groups must receive preclearance from Justice Section 5 Dept. before making changes to voting laws

in a Supreme Court 5-4 ruling Section 4(b) was ruled unconstitutional as the coverage formula was too old and it was a burden on federalism and states rights, thus, section 5 is unenforceable

John Lewis VRA

1. Modernize the VRA's formula determining which states and localities have a pattern of discrimination
2. Ensuring the last-minute voting changes do not adversely affect voters by requiring officials to publicly announce all voting changes at least 180 days before an election
3. expanding the government's authority to send federal observers to any jurisdiction where there may be a substantial risk of discrimination at the polls on Election Day or during an early voting period

passed in the House in 2021 but stalled in the senate

Felony Disenfranchisement

if you're convicted of a crime you can't vote for a certain period of time (perhaps a lifetime)

Post-Reconstruction

Most stringent criminal disenfranchisement laws were created in southern states after reconstruction

1985 Hunter v Underwood

Supreme Court invalidated provision in AL State Constitution prohibiting all persons convicted of a crime of "moral turpitude" from registering to vote

Court ruled provision violated 14th Amendment because it was motivated by intent to racially discriminate proven by the 1901 AL Constitutional convention minutes

There continues to be challenges regarding felony disenfranchisement today

