Unit 4
Political Behavior
Ch. 11
Political Parties

Roots of the Two-Party System

- The Development of the Political Parties, 1800–1824
- Jacksonian Democracy, 1824–1860
- The Golden Age, 1860–1932
- The Modern Era
- Citizen Support and Party Realignment

The Development of Political Parties, 1800–1824

- Ratification of the U.S. Constitution
  - Federalists supported strong central government
- Election of 1800
  - Thomas Jefferson versus John Adams
  - Political parties intended to be temporary, not long-term structures
**Jacksonian Democracy, 1824–1860**

- **Political party influence**
  - Decreased at the national level
  - Increased at the state level due to expansion of the electorate
- **Whigs and Democrats**
  - Gave the United States the first broadly-supported two-party system in the Western World

**The Golden Age, 1860–1932**

- **Party Stability**
  - Characterized by the dominance of party organizations
  - Era from end of Reconstruction until reforms of the Progressive Era
- **Political Machines**
  - Organizations that use tangible incentives such as jobs and favors to win loyalty among voters
  - Provided upward social mobility

**The Modern Era**

- **Elections and social services changes**
  - Ballot printing, other elections duties handled by government instead of parties
  - Roosevelt’s New Deal put social services in hands of government, not parties.
- **Candidate-centered politics**
  - Shift to focus on candidates, their issues, and character rather than on party affiliation
Citizen Support and Party Realignment

- Party realignments
  - Dramatic shifts in partisan preference that drastically alter the political landscape
  - Existing party affiliations subject to upheaval
- Critical elections
  - May polarize voters around new issues or personalities
- Secular realignments
  - More gradual shifts in party coalitions

FIGURE 11.2 What does a realignment look like?

The Organization of American Political Parties

- The National Party
- The National Convention
- State and Local Parties
- Informal Groups
The National Party

- The national chairperson
  - Often selected by president or newly nominated presidential candidate
  - Chief fundraiser and spokesperson
- The national committee
  - Coordinates national convention and presidential campaign
  - Democratic National Committee (DNC)
  - Republican National Committee (RNC)

The National Convention

- Every four years
  - Present a positive image of the candidate
  - Serve as pep rallies
- Delegates
  - Formerly selected by party leaders, now often elected in primary elections and caucuses
- Superdelegates
  - Allow Democratic Party some control

State and Local Parties

- Roots of the party
  - Virtually all government regulation of political parties is handled by the states.
  - Vast majority of party leadership positions are held at state and local level.
- Precinct
  - Smallest voting unit
  - Fundamental building block of the party
- State executive committee
Informal Groups

- Official and semi-official groups
  - Affiliations of state and local party women
  - Affiliations with college campus organizations

- Supportive interest groups
  - Provide money and labor
  - Such as labor unions, chambers of commerce

- Think tanks
  - Institutional collections of policy-oriented researchers and academics

Activities of American Political Parties

- Running Candidates for Office
- Formulating and Promoting Policy
- Organizing Government
- Furthering Unity, Linkage, and Accountability
Running Candidates for Office

- Raising money
  - Well-developed networks of donors
  - Raise money and disseminate it to candidates

- Mobilizing support and getting out the vote
  - Public opinion polls and tracking surveys
  - Create TV advertisements
  - "Get out the vote" Election Day activities

Formulating and Promoting Policy

- National Party Platform
  - Most visible instrument used to formulate, convey, and promote public policy
  - Each party develops a lengthy platform outlining its positions.
  - About two-thirds of the winning party’s platform tends to be enacted.
  - About one-half of the losing party’s platform tends to be enacted.

Organizing Government

- Parties in Congress
  - Party members in Congress select congressional leaders.
  - Those congressional leaders hold enormous power.

- The presidential party
  - President is informal party leader

- Parties in the federal courts

- Parties in state government
Furthering Unity, Linkage and Accountability

- Party role
  - Parties are the glue that holds elements of government and political structure together
  - Link together branches of government
  - One more means of accountability

Party Identification

- Political Socialization
- Group Affiliations

Political Socialization

- Parents
  - Single greatest influence on political beliefs
- Other aspects of adult life
  - Marriage
  - Economic status
- Charismatic leaders
  - Franklin D. Roosevelt
  - Ronald Reagan
### Group Affiliations

- Geography
- Gender
- Race and ethnicity
- Age
- Social and economic factors
- Religion
- Marital status

### TABLE 11.2 Who identifies as a Democrat? A Republican?

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<th>Independent</th>
<th>Republican Identifiers</th>
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Minor Parties in the American Two-Party System

- The formation and role of minor parties
- Barriers to minor-party success

The Formation and Role of Minor Parties

- Obstacles
  - Transitioning from social movement to party is difficult
- Minor parties have had influence
  - Dixiecrats
  - Green Party

Barriers to Minor-Party Success

- Proportional representation
  - Apportions legislative seats according to percentage of votes a party receives
- Winner-take-all system
  - Party that receives at least one more vote wins the election
Toward Reform: United or Divided?

- Causes of Polarization
- Consequences of Polarization

Consequences of Polarization

- Congress
  - Least productive in history
  - Lack of moderates, lower incentive to compromise
- Consequences to electorate
  - Forcing moderate electorate to choose between extremes may increase voter apathy