

Introduction to American Politics

Week 5: Political Parties

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14 February 2023

Attendance



Outline

- Parties vs. no parties (vs. multiple parties??)
- Kernell et al. (Ch. 12)
- Additional readings (mostly Aldrich + Fiorina)
- Wrap-up

Section 1

Discussion

Should we have parties?

- What sorts of options/alternatives do we have?
- Pros/cons of each system?
- *Why* do we have the system we currently do?
- What would it take to change the status quo? (And, why *hasn't* it happened?)

What exactly *is* a party?

- Edmund Burke and Anthony Downs
- Other definitions?
- Why form them? (4 main incentives)
- 3 main “parts” of parties
- 3 main features of party *systems* (more generally)

Development of parties

- 1st system (1790-1824) → Federalists vs. Democratic-Republicans
- 2nd system (1824-1860) → Democrats, Whigs, and the “Anti-Masonic” Party
- 3rd system (1860-1894) → Republican Party vs. Democratic Party
- 4th system (1894-1932) → Republican Party vs. “Populist-platform” Democratic Party
- 5th/“6th” system (1932-?) → (Pre-/Post-) “New Deal” Democratic Party vs. Republican Party

Aldrich: *Why Parties?* (1995)

- Weak vs. strong parties “debate”
- Theory → key argument about parties?
- Key players in the modern parties?
- Why form parties? Why do they change?
- 3 types of problems that parties help solve

Fiorina: “Parties as Problem Solvers”

- What was his “original” view in the DOOCR article?
- How do the politics of the 1970s-1980s differ from the environment in the 1990s-2000s?
- What are the problems with the “responsible” parties of today?

Section 2

Outro

Outro

- Double-check the quiz schedule this week! → the syllabus has been updated (as of 2/9)
- 2/21 → Zoom discussion (link TBA)

Attendance

