I

Parties and Party Systems

The open and aggressive pursuit of personal interest will probably never win the admiration of any society. It certainly has not won the admiration of ours in spite of a strong capitalistic ethos. Yet the things men and women want for themselves and for others—status, security, justice, and wealth, for example—are in short supply. People compete for them by trying to influence government to recognize their claims rather than those of others. This striving to win through government the things we think desirable—a striving we call "politics"—is therefore widespread.

The pervasiveness of politics is a central fact of our times. We have seen in the twentieth century an enormous expansion of governmental activity. The demands of a complex, increasingly urbanized, industrialized society, and the dictates of a world beset by international tensions, do not easily permit a return to limited government. For the foreseeable future, a substantial proportion of the important conflicts over the desirable things in American society will be settled within the political system. Indeed, some would argue that intense conflicts can be resolved only through politics, if at all. The really meaningful issues of our time will surely be how influence and power are organized within the political system, who wins the rewards and successes of that political activity, and to whom the people who make the decisions are responsible. It will increasingly be within the political system that we will decide, in the candid phrase of Harold Lasswell, "who gets what, when, how."[1]

In the United States, these political contestings are directed largely at the regular institutions of government. Few political scientists believe that the real and important political decisions are made clandestinely by murky, semivisible elites and merely ratified by the governmental

[1]The phrase comes from the title of Harold Lasswell's pioneering book *Politics: Who Gets What, When, How* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1936).

bodies they control.[2] It may happen, to be sure, that political decisions in a local community are made by a group of influential local citizens rather than by a city council or a mayor or a school board. Nonetheless, one is reasonably safe in looking for the substance of American politics in the legislatures, executives, and courts of the nation, the fifty states, and localities. The politics of which we have been talking consists, therefore, of the attempts to influence either the making of decisions within these governmental bodies or the selecting of the men and women who will make them.

This struggle for influence, this "politics," is not unorganized, however confusing it may seem to be. Large political organizations attempt to mobilize influence on behalf of aggregates of individuals. In the Western democracies the political party is unquestionably the most important and pervasive of these political organizations. It is not, however, the only one. Interest groups such as the American Farm Bureau Federation and the AFL-CIO also mobilize influence. So do smaller factions and cliques, charismatic individuals, and nonparty political organizations such as Americans for Democratic Action and the American Conservative Union. And so do the political action committees (PACs) that pay a substantial part of the costs of American campaigning. Even ostensibly nonpolitical organizations—e.g., churches, civic clubs, ethnic group associations—may from time to time play important roles as political intermediaries.

In spite of the prominent role parties play in organizing this struggle and their centrality to this book, therefore, the term "politics" refers to much more than the activities of the political parties. A substantial portion of American politics goes on within and through the political parties, but a substantial portion also goes on outside them, especially in recent years. Interest groups rather than parties, for example, bring certain issues and policy questions to legislatures and administrative agencies. Nonparty organizations also support candidates for office with money and manpower, sometimes even more effectively than the parties do. Thus, the terms *politics* and *political* include not only the activity of the political parties but also that of other political organizers.

At this point, it may help to step back and survey the entire political system in order to understand the place of parties and other political organizations in it (Figure I.1). All these political organizations work as *intermediaries* between the millions of political individuals and the distant policymakers in government. They build influence into large

[2] C. Wright Mills, in *The Power Elite* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1956), offers the best-known example of such interpretations of American politics. For a parallel "elitist" account of community politics, see Floyd Hunter, *Community Power Structure* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1953). The alternative "pluralist" perspective adopted by most political scientists is well illustrated in Robert A. Dahl, *Who Governs?* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1961).

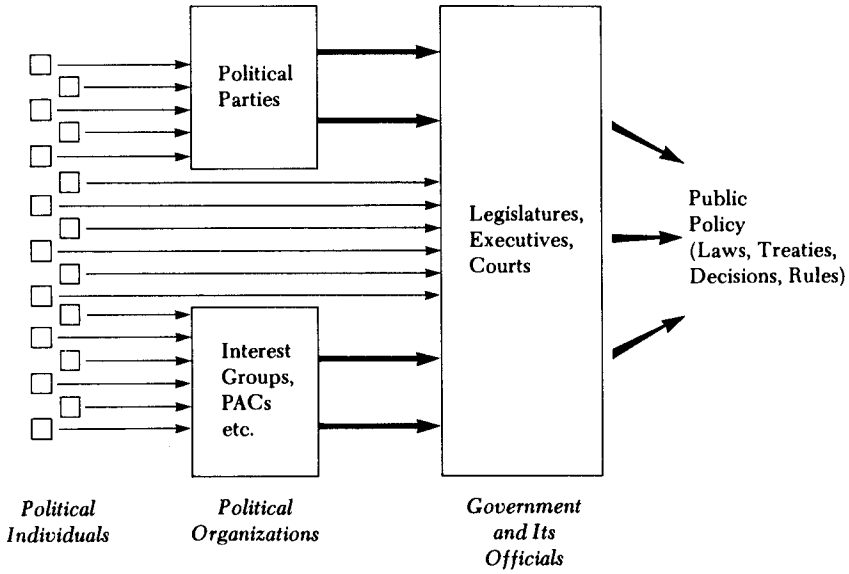

FIGURE I.1 *Political Organizations As Organizing Intermediaries in the Political System*

aggregates in order to have a greater effect on the selection of policymakers and the policies they will make. At the same time, they codify and simplify information about government and politics as it moves back to the individual. In a very real sense, therefore, these political organizers are the informal agents by which individuals are represented in the complex democracies of our time. They are both the builders and the agents of majorities.

In any political system, the political organizations develop an informal division of labor. The political parties concentrate on contesting elections as a way of aggregating influence. Others, especially the interest groups, pursue the avenues of direct influence on legislators or administrators in articulating the demands of narrower groups. Still others seek mainly to propagate ideologies or build support on specific issues of foreign or domestic policy. Indeed, the nature of the division of labor among the various political intermediaries says a great deal about any political system and about the general processes of mobilizing influence within it. The division also speaks meaningfully about the political parties. It is a commonplace, for example, that among the parties of the democracies, the American political parties are occupied to an unusual extent with the single activity of contesting elections. The parties of Western Europe, on the other hand, have been more committed to spreading ideologies and disciplining legislators as well. And those of countries such as India play important roles in transmitting political values and information to

a citizenry that lacks other avenues of political socialization and communication.

The division of labor among political organizations is, however, neither clear nor permanent. There is always an overlapping—and hence a competition—among political organizations over the performance of their activities. That competition is most obvious when it takes place within the party system, the competition of one party against another. It also takes place, however, between parties and other political intermediaries—for example, in the competition of parties and powerful interest groups for the attention and support of legislators or for the right to name a candidate in a primary election. Furthermore, the extent to which any one kind of political organization controls or participates in any one kind of organizing activity may change radically over time. Certainly, no one would argue that the American political parties today control as much of the business of campaigning as they did 70 or 80 years ago.

All of this competing for a role in American politics implies another kind of competition. The political organizations compete among themselves for political resources: money, skills, expertise, the efforts of men and women. All of these resources are necessary for the fueling of organizational activity, but none of them is in particularly abundant supply in the American society. Then, with those resources at hand, they compete for the support of individual citizens—that is, they seek their support for the goals and leadership of the organization. In sum, the parties and other political organizations compete for scarce resources with which to mobilize the political influence necessary to capture the scarce rewards the political system allocates. They compete first for the capacity to organize influence and then for the influence itself.[3]

Despite these excursions beyond the subject of political parties, however, this *is* a book about political parties. The broader survey of politics and political organizations has merely been background for two themes that will recur throughout the remainder of the book. The first is that the political party is not the unique political organization we have conventionally thought it to be. On the contrary, it is frequently similar to other political organizations, and the difficulty of coming to a clear, agreed-on definition of a political party illustrates that point only too well. When one undertakes any exercise in definition, as we do for the parties in the first chapter, the temptation is always to err on the side of the distinctiveness, even the uniqueness, of the phenomenon one is trying to define. It may well be that the distinctions between parties

[3]The classic treatments of political intermediation are Arthur Bentley, *The Process of Government* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1908) and David B. Truman, *The Governmental Process* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1951). For a more recent examination of the changing role of intermediary groups, see Byron E. Shafer, "Reform and Alienation: The Decline of Intermediation in the Politics of Presidential Selection," *The Journal of Law and Politics* 1 (1983): 93-132.

and other political organizations are not, after all, so great as one might imagine. Parties do have their distinctive qualities—and it is important to know them—but there is little point in denying their similarity and, in some cases, their functional equivalence to many other political organizations.

Second, the broad perspective is essential background for assessing the role and position of the political parties in the American democracy. American writers about the political parties have not been modest in their claims for them. They have celebrated the parties as agents of democracy and even as the chosen instruments through which a democratic citizenry governs itself. Some have gone a step further to proclaim them the architects of the democratic processes that they now serve. E. E. Schattschneider opened his classic study of the American parties this way in 1942:

> The rise of political parties is indubitably one of the principal distinguishing marks of modern government. The parties, in fact, have played a major role as *makers* of democratic government. It should be stated flatly at the outset that this volume is devoted to the thesis that the political parties created democracy and that modern democracy is unthinkable save in terms of the parties.[4]

Other scholars, and many thoughtful Americans, too, agree that the American democracy presumes the two-party system of today. Similar paeans to political parties are sounded by some observers of the development of democracy in new nations.[5]

This heroic view of parties stands in stark contrast to recurrent expressions of antiparty sentiment and the general ambivalence about the parties found in the American political culture. The Republic's Founding Fathers were wary of organized factions in political life, as is exemplified by James Madison's famous peroration against the "mischiefs of faction" in *Federalist* #10. The Progressive reforms a century or so later were directed in large part against the perceived evils of political parties and their control over the political process. Antiparty sentiment has intensified once again in recent years, providing fertile ground for yet another series of party reforms. Many Americans today, among them certainly many readers of this book, are skeptical of the value of parties in our politics and may view them as the adversaries rather than the guardians of political democracy.[6]

[4]E. E. Schattschneider, *Party Government* (New York: Rinehart, 1942), p. 1.

[5]Illustrations of this favorable treatment of parties as crucial to the democratization of new nations may be found in David Apter, *The Politics of Modernization* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965), Chapter 6; and Joseph LaPalombara and Myron Weiner, *Political Parties and Political Development* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966).

[6]Austin Ranney provides an excellent account of these antiparty attitudes and reforms in *Curing the Mischiefs of Faction* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975).

Nor do the immodest claims for political parties give adequate recognition to the fact that the major American parties have changed and continue to change—both in the form of their organization and in the pattern and style of their activities. Political parties as they existed a century ago scarcely exist today, and the political parties we know today may not exist even a half-century from now. In this book, a vigorous case will be made for the proposition that the political parties have lost their preeminent position as political organizations and that competing political organizations and other institutions now perform many of the activities traditionally regarded as the parties' exclusive prerogatives.[7] If this is really the case, we must face the question of whether political parties are indeed indispensable and inevitable shapers of our democratic politics.

These two suspicions—that the parties may be less distinctive and their activities less pervasive than we have thought—add up, perhaps, to no more than a plea for modesty in the study of the American political parties. It is perfectly natural for both young and experienced scholars to identify with the objects of their study and thus to exaggerate their importance. Medievalists often find the late Middle Ages to be the high point of Western civilization, and most scholars of hitherto obscure painters and philosophers find the objects of their study to have been sadly neglected or tragically underestimated. So, too, has it been with the study of political parties.

All of this is not to suggest, out of hand, that the American political parties are or have been of little importance. Their long life and their role in the politics of the world's oldest representative democracy scarcely lead to that conclusion. The plea here is merely for a careful assessment, for an abandoning of preconceptions, old judgments, and "great general truths." Assertions that political parties are essential to or the keystone of American democracy may or may not be true, but simply as assertions they advance our understanding of politics and parties very little. The same is true of predispositions to the contrary—that political parties are unnecessary or baneful influences upon a democratic politics. The proof is in the evidence, and the evidence is to be found in a detailed examination of what the political parties are and what they do. That examination is the task of this book.

[7]See also Anthony King, "Political Parties in Western Democracies," *Polity* 2 (1969): 111-41.

1

IN SEARCH OF THE POLITICAL PARTIES

What is a political party? Is it the group of people who identify with that party—who, for example, say they are Democrats or Republicans? It is unlikely that they ever worked within the party organization of their choice, or gave it money. They probably do not know the party's platform commitments or feel any need to support them. Their loyalty probably doesn't extend beyond a predisposition to vote for the party's candidates at elections, *if all other considerations are fairly equal.* Yet when asked, they hesitate not at all to attach themselves to that political party, and in a few states the mere declaration on primary election day that they are Democrats or Republicans qualifies them to select party candidates for office. Or is the party the people who are officially registered as its voters? They have made a relatively long-standing public declaration and, by this act, have earned the right in many states to participate in the party's selection of candidates for office. But they probably differ little from the above identifiers in party activity, platform commitments, and voting loyalty.

Or is the political party the combination of functionaries and activists who are involved in the regular business of the party organization? Some of them have been selected to represent the party under the statutory authority of a state. They do work for the party and doubtlessly are more familiar with its platform stances even if they exhibit little more fealty to them than do ordinary party voters. And by the visibility of their involvement, they publicly announce that they have cast their lot with the party. The American parties are also organizations. It is possible to join them, to work within them, to become officers in them, to participate in setting their goals and strategies—much as one would within a local fraternal organization or a machinists' union. They have characteristics we associate with social organizations: stable, patterned

personal relationships and common goals. In other words, they are more than aggregates of people clinging with various degrees of intensity to a party label.

Or is the political party the sum total of elected officeholders who wear the party label in legislative, executive, and even judicial offices throughout the land? They too have been active in party work, if only in running for election; are more aware than are party voters of what the party stands for, even though that doesn't always command their fealty; and have publicly committed themselves to the party. Their party role is codified in the statutes of many states, and they have taken the additional step of qualifying as the party's representative for a particular office. Moreover, the legislators among them often meet together in caucus to make important decisions in the party name.

American political parties may be any or all of these things. The act of defining the political party, and the American parties in particular, is hampered by the fact that the political party can be different things to different people. The definition is often a personal perception; it seems to depend on what one is looking for, what one hopes to see, what consequences one wants parties to have. (See, for example, the range of definitions in the box.) Any one person's definition is likely to be rooted in a particular time and orientation and therefore is not likely to reflect the diversity that marks the parties. Whatever the reason, however, neither political scientists nor politicians have achieved any consensus on what sets the political party apart from other political organizations.

Despite the absence of consensus, however, the most common definitions fall into three main categories. Those whose approach is ideological define the parties in terms of commonly held ideas, values, or stands on issues—as a group of like-minded people. That approach has not engaged many observers of the American political parties, for ideological homogeneity or purpose has not been a hallmark of the major American parties, even if it may describe those groupings of political leaders that became the first American parties. Most of the attempts at definition vacillate between two other options. One of these views the political party as a hierarchical organization or structure that draws into its orbit large numbers of voters, candidates, and active party workers. The other approach sees the political parties largely in terms of what they do—their role, function, or activities in the American political systems. Proponents of this approach frequently identify American political parties with election campaigns. We now turn to these two approaches.

THE POLITICAL PARTY AS A SOCIAL STRUCTURE

Large organizations or social structures consist of people in various roles, responsibilities, patterns of activities, and reciprocal relationships. But

A Variety of Definitions of the Political Party

> Party is a body of men united, for promoting by their joint endeavors the national interest, upon some particular principle in which they are all agreed.
>
> Edmund Burke,
> *Thoughts on the Cause of the Present Discontents* (1770)

> ...Any group, however loosely organized, seeking to elect governmental officeholders under a given label.
>
> Leon D. Epstein,
> *Political Parties in Western Democracies*
> (New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction, 1979), p. 9.

> "Party" or "political party" means any political organization which elects a state committee and officers of a state committee, by a state convention composed of delegates elected from each representative district in which the party has registered members and which nominates candidates for electors of President and Vice President, or nominates candidates for offices to be decided at the general election.
>
> *Delaware Statutes* (15 Del. C § 101)

> "Established political party" for the state shall mean a political party which, at either of the last two general elections, polled for its candidate for any state wide office, more than two percent of the entire vote cast for the office....
>
> *Missouri Statutes* (V.A.M.S. § 115.013)

> At the local level parties have degenerated in most parts of the country to the point where they are now simply legal conveniences by which ambitious people with independent financing gain access to a ballot line.
>
> John B. Anderson,
> independent candidate for president in 1980,
> in *New York Times*, October 31, 1982.

which people, what activities, what relationships are we talking about when we speak of the two major American parties? The party leaders and officials, the thousands of anonymous activists who work for candidates and party causes, the people who vote for the party's candidates, the actual dues-paying members, the people who have an emotional involvement in the fortunes of the party, the men and women elected to office on the party's label? All of them? Some of them?

The major American political parties are, in truth, three-headed political giants—tripartite systems of interactions that embrace all these

individuals. As political structures, they include a party organization, a party in office, and a party in the electorate (Figure 1.1).

The Party Organization

In the party organization, one finds the formally chosen party leaders, the informally anointed ones, the legions of local captains and leaders, the ward and precinct workers, the members and activists of the party—that is, all those who give their time, money, and skills to the party, whether as leaders or as followers. The organization operates in part through the formal machinery of committees and conventions set by the laws of the fifty states and in part through its own informal apparatus. Here one finds the centers of party authority and bureaucracy, and here one also observes the face-to-face contacts and interactions that characterize an organization of any kind.

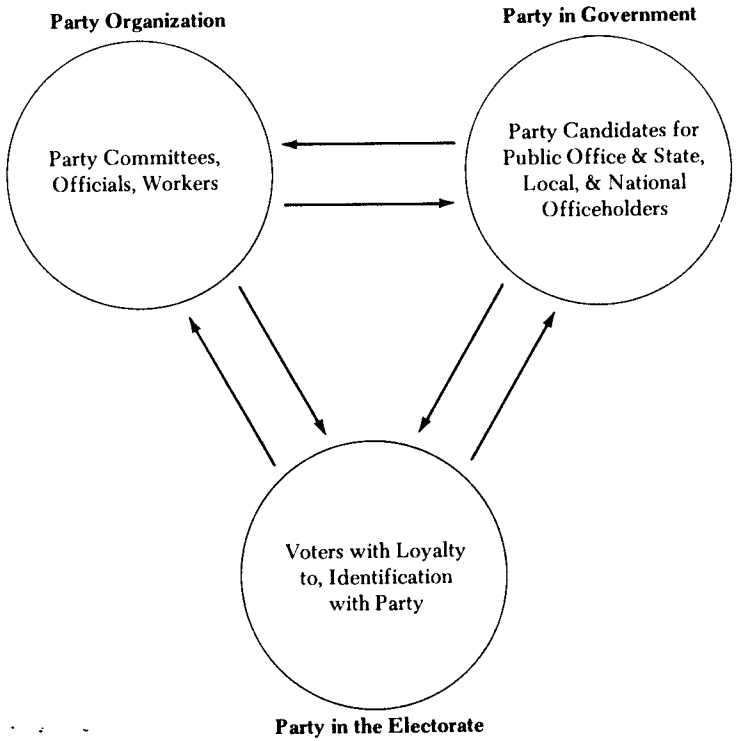

FIGURE 1.1 *The Three-Part Political Party*

The Party in Government

The party in government is made up of those who have captured office under the label of the party and of those who seek to do so. The chief executives and legislative parties of the nation and the states are its major components. Although in many ways they are not subject to the control or discipline of the party organization, they do, in the broadest sense, speak for the party. Their pronouncements are the most audible party statements and carry the greatest weight with the public. A party's president or leader in the Congress claims more attention than its national chairperson. Its governor or state legislative leader usually has more visibility as a party spokesperson than its state chairperson.

The Party in the Electorate

The party in the electorate is the party's least well-defined part. It comprises the men and women who affiliate casually with it, show it some degree of loyalty, and even vote habitually for it, even though they do not participate in the party organization or interact with its leaders and activists. Many of these "partisans" may be registered officially with the party where the state prescribes party registration (and more than half do); but many others are no less a part of the electoral party even though they have not taken the official step of declaring a party for registration purposes. These individuals are not subject to the incentives and disciplines of the party organization. They are, in effect, the regular consumers of the party's candidates and appeals. As such, they make up the coalitions necessary for effective political power in the American political system. Their association with the party is a passive one, however—accepting here, rejecting there, always threatening the party with the fickleness of their affections.

In their three-part structure, therefore, the major American parties include mixed, varied, and even contradictory components. Each party, for example, is a political organization with active, even disciplined participants. It is also an aggregate of unorganized partisans who may begrudge the party organization even the merest public gesture of support or loyalty. The party thus embraces the widest range of involvement and commitment. It is a reasonably well-defined, voluntary political organization and, at the same time, an open, public collection of loyalists.

Perhaps the most telling characteristic of the major American parties, therefore, is the relationship that their clientele—the party in the electorate—has to them. The other political organizations, such as interest groups and ad hoc campaign organizations, usually work to attract supporters beyond their members and workers; but this wider clientele remains outside the political organization. This is not so with the political

party. The party in the electorate is more than an external group to be wooed and mobilized. State laws usually permit it a voice in the selection of the parties' candidates in the direct primary, and in many states it helps select local party officials such as ward and precinct committeepersons. Consequently, the major American party is an open, inclusive, semipublic political organization. It includes both a tangible political organization and its own political clientele (as well as the party in government, of course). In this combination of exclusive organization and inclusive clientele, of organization and electorate, the political party stands apart from the other political organizations on the American scene and apart from parties elsewhere.

Finally, each major party differs from state to state in the relationships and interactions among its three sectors. The Republicans and the Democrats are so decentralized and so diverse that virtually every state party has its own distinctive mix of the three. Party organizations, for example, differ in form from state to state; in some the party organization dominates the party in government, whereas in others the reverse is the case. Also, party electorates differ in composition and in the bases of their loyalties; in some states the two parties in the electorate divide roughly along social class lines, but in others they do not. The parties also differ from state to state in their inclusivity for the purpose of nominating candidates for office. In some states, a voter can participate in a party's nomination process merely by voting for a candidate of that party on a ballot that includes candidates from both parties. In others, a prior (to election day) act of registering with the party is necessary for a voter to participate in that party's nomination process. Indeed, much of the distinctive quality of a state party is a reflection of the form and composition of each of the party sectors and of their relationships with each other.

THE PARTY AS A CLUSTER OF ACTIVITIES

From a discussion of the political parties as social structures, we move to a definition of them in terms of activities—turning from what they are to what they do. In varying degrees, the competitive political parties of every democracy perform three sets of activities: They select candidates and contest elections, they propagandize on behalf of a party ideology or program, and they attempt to guide the elected officeholders of government to provide particular policy or patronage benefits.[1] The

[1]The failure to recognize that political parties do not single-mindedly seek only to win office but also are motivated by the benefits that can be derived from control of office has led to some confusion about the electoral goals of parties. See Joseph A. Schlesinger, "The Primary Goals of Political Parties: A Clarification of Positive Theory," *American Political Science Review* 69 (1975): 840-49.

degree of emphasis that any particular political party puts on each of these individual activities varies within and between countries, but no party completely escapes the necessity of any of them.

Parties As Electors

It often appears that the American parties are little more than regular attempts to capture public office. Electoral activity so dominates the life of the American party that its metabolism follows almost exactly the cycles of the election calendar. Party activity and vitality reach a peak at the elections; between elections, the parties go into hibernation. Party activity is goal oriented, and in American politics most of the general goals as well as the goals of the individual sectors depend ultimately on electoral victory. It is, in fact, chiefly in the attempt to achieve their often separate goals through winning public office that the three sectors of the party are brought together in unified action.

Parties As Propagandizers

Second, the American parties carry on a series of loosely related activities that perhaps can best be called education or propagandization. There is, of course, a school of thought that argues that the American parties fail almost completely to function on behalf of ideas or ideologies. The Democrats and Republicans, to be sure, do not espouse the all-inclusive ideologies of a European Marxist or proletarian party. They do, however, represent the interests of and the issue stands congenial to the groups that identify with them and support them. In this sense, they become parties of business or labor, of the advantaged or the disadvantaged. Moreover, events since the 1960s suggest that ideology in a purer sense is coming to the American parties. In presidential politics alone, one merely needs to mention the Goldwater conservatism of 1964, the McGovern liberalism of 1972, and the Reagan conservatism of 1980.

Parties As Governors

Virtually all officeholders in American national and state governments were elected as either Democrats or Republicans. Not surprisingly, these partisan perspectives pervade the governmental process. The legislatures of forty-nine states (the exception is nonpartisan Nebraska) and the United States Congress are organized along party lines, and the voting of their members shows a noticeable amount of party discipline and cohesion. To be sure, on controversial issues that cohesion is irregular, sporadic, and often unpredictable in most legislatures. The congressional Democrats, for example, divide roughly between northern liberals and more conservative southerners. Yet, in the aggregate, an important degree

of party discipline does exist. In executive branches, presidents and governors depend on their fellow partisans for executive talent and count on their party loyalty to bind them to the executive programs. Only the American judiciary largely escapes the organizing and directing touch of the parties.

These, then, are the chief overt activities of democratic political parties generally and of American parties in particular. They are the activities that the parties set out consciously to perform. Large sections of any book on the American parties must be devoted to them.

To list these activities of the parties, however, is not to suggest that the American parties monopolize any or all of them. The parties compete with nonparty political organizations over the ability and the right to perform them. The American parties, having organized the legislatures, battle constantly—and often with little success—against interest groups and constituency pressures in order to firm up party lines for votes on major bills. In attempting to nominate candidates for public office, especially at the local level, the party faces often insurmountable competition from interest groups, community elites, and powerful local personalities, each of whom may be sponsoring pet candidates. In stating issues and ideologies, they are often overshadowed by the fervor of the minor (third) parties, the ubiquitous interest groups, the mass media, public figures, and political action groups.

These patterns of party activity also affect the party structure and its three sectors. The emphasis on the electoral activities of American parties, for example, elevates the party in government to a position of unusual power, even dominance. It frequently competes with the party organization for the favor of the party in the electorate. In parties more strongly linked to issues and ideologies—such as those of continental Europe—party organizations are often able to dictate to legislative parties.

On the other hand, individuals from all three sectors of the party may unite in specific activities. Party organization activists loyal to officeholders may unite with those persons, with other individuals of the party in government, and with individuals in the party electorate to return them to public office. When the election is won or lost, they will very likely drift apart again. Therefore, one finds within the parties certain functional clusters or nuclei, certain groups of individuals, drawn together in a single, concerted action.[2] Small and informal task groups cut across the differences in structure and goals that characterize the three party sectors. In American politics, alliances and coalitions are more common within the parties than between them.

[2] On the party as a series of task-oriented nuclei see Joseph A. Schlesinger, "Political Party Organization," in James G. March (ed.), *Handbook of Organizations* (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1965), pp. 764-801; and "The New American Political Party," *American Political Science Review* 79 (1985): 1152-69.

THE UNPLANNED CONSEQUENCES OF PARTY ACTIVITY

The goal-seeking behavior of any individual or organization has indirect, often unintended consequences. Congress, by pursuing its legislating activities, may be said to be either resolving or aggravating great areas of social conflict, depending on the judgment of the observer. Similarly, interest groups, in pursuing their particular goals in the legislative process, are also providing an informal, auxiliary avenue of representation. The same search for the indirect consequences of party activities is an old tradition in the study of the American parties. It produces rich insights into the contributions of the parties to the American political system. Yet it can be frustrating, its findings imprecise and elusive.

When we say that a political party is picking a candidate or organizing an election campaign, we are talking about overt, intended, observable party activity. When we say that the same party is organizing consensus, integrating new groups into society, or giving voice to political opposition, however, we are on less secure footing. These statements are about the indirect *consequences* of party activity rather than about the activity itself. As such, they depend on distant meaning, results, or outcomes of action we, as individual observers, see. Some of our observations are more easily verified by empirical evidence than others are. It is surely easier to show that the parties contribute to the political socialization of young Americans than it is to demonstrate that they resolve social conflict, because it is easier to observe the process and results of socialization. Regardless of these matters of degree, however, the basic truth remains: It is much easier to prove or establish the activity itself than the results or consequences it brings about.

It is not surprising, then, that scholars of the American political parties have seen and recorded wildly differing sets of these indirect or unintended consequences. They have usually referred to them as "functions," but that semantic convention is virtually the extent of their agreement. It is perhaps foolish to compound the confusion, but what follows is a brief list of some of the most readily identifiable—and thus most frequently mentioned—of these functions or indirect consequences of party activity.

1. The parties participate in the *political socialization* of the American electorate by transmitting political values and information to large numbers of current and future voters. They preach the value of political commitment and activity, and they convey information and cues about a confusing political system. By symbolizing and representing a political point of view, they offer uninformed or underinformed citizens a map of the political world. They help them form political judgments and make political choices, and, in both physical and psychological terms, they make it easier to be politically active.

2. The American parties also contribute to the *accumulation of political power*. They aggregate masses of political individuals and groups and thereby organize blocs that are powerful enough to govern or to oppose those who govern. For the confused and confounded citizen, they simplify, and often oversimplify, the political world into more comprehensible choices. By using his or her attachment to the party as a perceptual screen, the voter has a master clue for assessing issues and candidates. Thus, both within the individual and in the external political world, the political party operates to focus political loyalties on a small number of alternatives and then to accumulate support behind them.
3. Because they devote so much effort to contesting elections, the American parties dominate the *recruitment of political leadership*. One needs only to run down a list of the members of the cabinet or even the federal courts to see how many of them entered public service through a political party or through partisan candidacy for office. Furthermore, the orderly contesting of elections enables the parties to routinize political change, especially change of governmental leadership. More than one commentator has noted the disruptive quality of leadership changes in those countries in which no stable political parties compete in regular elections. Also, because the American parties pervade all governmental levels in the federal system, they may recruit and elevate leadership from one level to another.
4. Finally, the American parties are a *force for unification* in the divided American political system. The fragmentation of government is an incontestably crucial fact of American politics. To the fragmentation of the nation and the fifty states, multiplied by the threefold separation of powers in each, the two great national parties bring a unifying, centripetal force. They unify with an obviously limited efficiency; for example, they often fail to bind the president and the Congress together in causes that can transcend the separation of powers. Their similar symbols and traditions, however, are a force for unity in governmental institutions marked by decentralization and division.

There are two chief difficulties with this list of party functions. First, there is not much agreement on them, a result not only of scholars' different perceptions of the parties but also of their disagreement over what the word *function* means. Some use it to denote the obvious activities of the parties (e.g., their contesting of elections), whereas others use it, as we do in this text, to describe the unintended consequences or fortunate by-products of the intended activities of the parties. For yet another group, *function* suggests a contribution the party makes to the operation of the broader political system.[3] Second, there is the problem

[3]Theodore Lowi has brought together a number of descriptions of party functions in his article "Toward Functionalism in Political Science: The Case of Innovation in Party Systems," *American Political Science Review* 57 (1963): 570–83.

of defining or formulating the functional categories so that they can be observed and measured. If, as some writers have argued, one function of political parties is to organize social conflict or to articulate important social interests, how do we verify by our own observations whether all parties or some parties do, in fact, perform those functions? For reasons having to do with both of these problems, this book will look largely at party activity itself—at the more easily observable, intended activity rather than its unintended consequences. But it must not be forgotten that political parties have effects that transcend their most immediate activities.

THE SPECIAL CHARACTERISTICS OF POLITICAL PARTIES

Perhaps it is time to end these excursions into related topics and narrow the search for political parties. Our goal is not a memorable, one-sentence definition. Rather, we seek an understanding of what characterizes the political parties and sets them apart from other political organizations. We need, in other words, a firm grasp of what the political parties are and what they do.

All political organizations exist to organize and mobilize their supporters either to capture public office or to influence the activities of those already in public office. That much, at least, they all have in common. If the term *political party* is to have any meaning at all, however, there must also be differences between parties and other political organizations. Far too much has been made of the differences between the major American parties and other political organizations, especially the large national interest (or pressure) groups. The differences are there, however, even if they are really only differences among species of the same genus.

Above all, the political party is distinguished from other political organizations by its concentration on the contesting of elections. Although the major American parties do not monopolize the contesting of elections, their preeminence in this activity cannot be questioned. Other political organizations do attempt to influence American electoral politics. Some, such as the Moral Majority, seem to do little else. In many localities, interest groups encourage or discourage candidates, work for them within parties, contribute to campaign funds, and get their members to the polls to support them. Other nonparty organizations may raise funds, organize endorsements, and recruit workers for some candidate's campaign for public office. The parties, however, are occupied with the contesting of elections in a way and to a degree that the other political organizations are not. Indeed, their names and symbols are the ones the states recognize for inclusion on most ballots, and their presence is felt throughout the nation, intruding even into its remotest corners.

Commitment not only to electoral activity but also to its organizational consequences characterizes the political party. Since the party chooses to work toward its goals largely in elections, it must recruit an enormous supportive clientele. Organizations that attempt to influence legislative committees or rulemaking in administrative agencies may succeed with a few strategists and the support of only a small, well-mobilized clientele. The political parties, in order to win elections, must depend less on the intricate skills and maneuverings of organizational strategists and more on the mobilization of large numbers of citizens. Party appeals must be broad and inclusive; the party cannot afford either exclusivity or a narrow range of concerns. It is at the opposite pole from the "single-issue" group or organization. To put it simply, the major political party has committed itself through its concentration on electoral politics to the mobilization of large numbers of citizens in large numbers of elections, and from that commitment flow many of its other characteristics.

Furthermore, the major American political parties and similar parties elsewhere are characterized by a full commitment to political activity. They operate solely as political organizations, solely as instruments of political action. Interest groups and most other political organizations, however, do not. They move freely and frequently from political to nonpolitical activities and back again. The AFL-CIO, for example, seeks many of its goals and interests in nonpolitical ways, especially through collective bargaining. It may, however, turn to political action—to support sympathetic candidates or to lobby before Congress—when political avenues appear to be the best or the only means to achieve its goals. Every organized group in the United States is, as one observer has suggested, a potential political organization.[4] Still, the interest group almost always maintains some sphere of nonpolitical action.

Political parties are also marked by an uncommon stability and persistence. The personal clique, the faction, the ad hoc campaign organization, and even many interest groups seem by contrast almost political will-o'-the-wisps, which disappear as suddenly as they appear. The size and the abstractness of the political parties, their relative independence from personalities, and their continuing symbolic strength for thousands of voters assure them of a far greater longevity. Both major American parties can trace their histories well over a century, and the major parties of the other Western democracies have impressive, if shorter, life spans. It is precisely this enduring, ongoing quality that enhances their value as reference symbols. The parties are there as points of reference, year after year and election after election, giving continuity and form to the choices Americans face and the issues they debate.

Finally, the political parties are distinguished from other political organizations by the extent to which they operate as cues or symbols—

[4]David B. Truman, *The Governmental Process* (New York: Knopf, 1951).

or even more vaguely as emotion-laden objects of loyalty. For millions of Americans, the party label is the chief cue for their decisions about candidates or issues. It is the point of reference that allows them to organize and simplify the buzzing confusion and strident rhetoric of American politics. As a potent reference symbol, the party label organizes the extensive confusion of American politics for individual citizens. It shapes their perceptions and structures their choices; it relates their political values and goals to the real options of American politics.

To summarize, the major American political parties exist, as do other political organizations, to organize large numbers of individuals behind attempts to influence the selection of public officials and the decisions these officials subsequently make in office. The parties are set apart by:

- The extent to which they pursue their organizing through the contesting of elections.
- The extensiveness and inclusiveness of their organization and clienteles.
- Their sole concentration on political avenues for achieving their goals.
- Their demonstrated stability and long life.
- Their strength as cues and reference symbols in the decision making of individual citizens.

No one of these characteristics alone sets the political party apart from other political organizations, but when they are taken together and the matter of degree is considered, they do set the major political party apart from other types of political organizations.

To reemphasize a point previously made, however, the differences between parties and other political organizations are often slender. Interest groups certainly contest elections to some degree, and the larger ones have achieved impressive stability and duration and considerable symbolic status. They can recruit candidates and give political clues and cues to their members and fellow travelers. The unique American nomination process also enables them to play an important role in selecting party candidates for office. Many national associations, such as those of environmentalists, differ from the parties chiefly in size and influence. They promote interests and issue positions, they try to influence and organize officeholders, and they, too, participate in elections by endorsing candidates and (through their political action committees) by contributing to their campaigns. Like the parties, they achieve symbolic status for their members and like-minded voters. They do not, however, and in most localities cannot, offer their names and symbols for candidates to use on the ballot. It is only that difference and the whole question of size and degree that separate their activities and political roles from those of the parties.

So similar are the parties to some other political organizations that they resemble them more closely than they do the minor or third parties. In other words, there are different types of political parties. The minor political parties, called minor because they are not electorally competitive, are only nominally electoral organizations. Not even the congenital optimism of candidates can lead Socialists or Prohibitionists to expect victories on the ballot. Lacking local organization, as most of them do, they resemble the major parties less than do the complex, nationwide interest groups. Also, their membership base, often dependant upon a single issue, may be just as narrow, just as exclusively recruited, as that of most interest groups. In structure and activities, groups such as the United States Chamber of Commerce and the AFL-CIO resemble the Democrats and Republicans far more than do the Libertarians and the Socialist Workers.

THE RISE OF AMERICAN PARTIES

To see the special role and character of political parties, there is no better place to look than at their origins and their rise to importance. In the United States, their history is one of an almost 200-year alliance with an emerging popular democracy. The American parties grew up in response to the gradual expansion of the adult suffrage and to all the changes it brought to American politics.[5]

In the first years of the Republic, the vote was limited in almost every state to those free men who could meet the property-holding or tax-paying requirements. Furthermore, the framers of the new Constitution of 1787 had intentionally limited the power of individual voters at elections. The president was to be chosen, not by a direct vote of the electorate, but indirectly by the electoral college. The method of selection of each state's electors was left to the individual state legislatures. Also, although election to the House of Representatives was entrusted to a direct popular vote, that of the Senate was not. Its members were to be chosen by the respective state legislatures. It was, in short, a cautious and limited beginning to democratic self-government.

In their first years, the American parties grew out of and matched this politics of a limited suffrage and indirect elections. They began, in fact, largely as caucuses of like-minded members of the Congress. They involved only the men and the issues of politics in the nation's capital. These congressional caucuses nominated presidential candidates

[5]There are, of course, many histories of the development of American political parties in general and of particular parties. Most, however, devote virtually all their pages to the candidates and platforms of the parties; few discuss the parties *qua* parties. For three that do, see William N. Chambers, *Political Parties in a New Nation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1963); Everett C. Ladd, Jr., *American Political Parties* (New York: Norton, 1970); and William N. Chambers and Walter Dean Burnham (eds.), *The American Party Systems* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967).

and mobilized groups of political figures supportive of or opposed to the administration of the time. Party organization back in the states and localities did not develop until about 1800, with "committees of correspondence." These were the first outreaches of the legislative caucuses to the voters "back home," and through them officeholders organized and communicated with the electorate. Early in the nineteenth century, the efforts at local organization resulted in the development of some freestanding local party organizations in a few counties and cities. The development of parties back in the states, however, went slowly and sporadically, at least until the 1820s.

Beyond their incipient presence as factions in government, parties as we have come to know them were absent during the first thirty or forty years of the Republic. In fact, one of the infant parties, the Federalists, virtually disappeared in most states shortly after the defeat of its last president, John Adams, in 1800. The Jeffersonian Republicans, the new party of agrarian interests and the frontier, quickly established its superiority and enjoyed a twenty-year period of one-party monopoly. So thorough was the domination by the time of James Monroe's presidency that the absence of party and political conflict was dubbed the "Era of Good Feelings." Despite the decline of one party and the rise of another, however, the nature of the parties did not change. It was a time during which government and politics were the business of an elite of well-known, well-established men, and the parties reflected the politics of the time. In both of his successful races for the presidency (1816 and 1820), Monroe was the nominee only of the Jeffersonian caucus in the Congress.

The early politics of the country began, however, to undergo sharp changes in the 1820s. The struggle for universal white male suffrage, focused primarily on eliminating real property qualifications for voting, was over in most states by that decade—at least where state and federal elections were concerned. (Property qualifications lingered in local elections, in some places into the twentieth century, where revenues were raised from assessments on property.) The growing tide of democratization also made more public officials subject to popular election.[6]

The most obvious change in the 1820s, occurring so precipitously at the national level that its evolutionary foundation in the states often is obscured, was the emergence of the presidential selection process that has endured to this day. The framers of the Constitution had crafted a curious arrangement for the selection of the president, which has come to be known as the electoral college. They prescribed a method of indirect election in which each state, in a manner determined by its legislature, would choose a number of presidential electors equivalent to the size

[6]For a detailed account of the extension of the suffrage, focusing on the separate actions of the states, see Chilton Williamson, *American Suffrage: From Property to Democracy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1960).

of its congressional delegation; these electors in turn would meet in the state to cast their votes for president, with the winner being the candidate who received a majority of electoral votes. If no candidate received a majority, the president was to be selected by the House of Representatives, with one vote per state. With the electoral college arrangement, the Constitutional Convention was able to sidestep some difficult and divisive questions regarding selection of the chief executive. Leaving the choice of electors to the state legislatures avoided the setting of uniform election methods and suffrage requirements (involving also the contentious matter of slavery), issues on which the framers themselves were divided and on which federal intervention to dictate state practices where the states had hitherto enjoyed autonomy might have produced state opposition. Requiring electors to meet simultaneously within their respective states also prevented a cabal among electors to put forward their own choice for president.

As befit different state norms and practices, in the early years state legislatures adopted various methods for selecting presidential electors. From the first, a few states adopted popular elections, albeit typically with electorates restricted to property owners or taxpayers. This number grew during the next three decades, although unevenly as partisan majorities within the state legislatures engaged in the time-honored practice of manipulating election laws to their short-term advantage. Lame-duck Federalist legislatures were especially active in turning to popular election to avoid the sure results of a transition in legislative control to the Jeffersonian Republicans. By the 1820s, though, popular election had come to predominate, and after 1828 only in South Carolina were presidential electors selected by the state legislature.[7]

[7]For a more complete account, see Neal R. Peirce and Lawrence D. Longley, *The People's President* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981). Curiously, treatments of the electoral college in many introductory American government textbooks (the evidence is presented in Paul J. Piccard's unpublished essay, "Democratic Origins of the Electoral College: An Antidote for Enduring Myths") have advanced some serious misconceptions about the origin and development of the electoral college, probably to support a view that the framers were principally guided by antidemocratic motives in designing their new government. The most egregious of these misconceptions must be corrected. Many of the leading framers (among them Madison, Wilson, and Gouverneur Morris) advocated direct popular election of the president. The resulting arrangement was a compromise solution to some difficult issues of state representation and state autonomy rather than a device intended to subvert the democratic tendencies of the time. The electoral college never has met as a whole, something the framers feared. Instead, presidential electors gather in their separate states and convey the results of their balloting to the President of the Senate. Nor was it clearly intended that the president would be selected by an electoral college of wise and dispassionate men, free to exercise their own judgment. From the beginning, electors have almost always been mere pledged agents of candidates supported by the legislative or popular preferences in their states. Finally, it is misleading to suggest that the electoral college became democratized in one fell swoop in the 1820s, in light of the early use of the popular vote in selecting electors and the movement of many states (at least half) to that method by 1804.

The move in the states to popular election of presidential electors in the 1820s coincided with and contributed to the demise of the congressional caucus in presidential nominations. With their hegemony in Congress and the country in the two decades after 1800, the Jeffersonians were able to select the president through nomination by the congressional caucus. As the tide of democratization strengthened, however, the practice of caucus nominations fell under increasing criticism as the work of a narrow-based and self-perpetuating elite. Quite apart from criticism, however, the caucus system began to decline from its own infirmities. The attempt of the Jeffersonians to nominate a presidential candidate in 1824 was a shambles. The chosen candidate of the caucus, William Crawford, ran fourth in the race, and since no candidate won a majority in the electoral college, it was left to the House of Representatives to choose among John Quincy Adams, Henry Clay, and Andrew Jackson. The House chose Adams over Jackson, the popular and electoral vote front runner in the election. Jackson, in turn, defeated Adams in 1828 as the nation teetered on the edge of a new party politics.

The "new" party politics—and the modern political party—emerged in the 1830s. First, the nonparty politics of the Era of Good Feelings gave way to the two-party system that has prevailed ever since. Andrew Jackson took the frontier and agrarian wing of the Jeffersonians into what we now think of as the Democratic party. The National Republicans, whose candidate in 1832 was Henry Clay, merged with the Whigs, and bipartyism in the United States was born. Second, and just as important, the parties as political institutions began to change. The Jacksonian Democrats held the first national nominating convention in 1832—at which, appropriately, Jackson himself was nominated for a second term. (The Whig and Anti-Masonic parties had both held more limited conventions a year before.) The campaign for the presidency also became more "popular" as new campaign organizations and tactics brought the contest to more and more people. As a consequence, Jackson came to the White House for a second term with a popular mandate as the leader of a national political party. Larger numbers of citizens were voting than had ever voted before (see box).

At the same time, party organization in the states had a new burst of growth, and conventions increasingly replaced caucuses as the means of nominating candidates for state and local office. Before the middle of the century, therefore, party organization was developing throughout the nation, and the party convention became an increasingly common way of picking party candidates. Also, by 1840, the Whigs and the Democrats established themselves as the first truly national party system, one in which both parties were established and competitive in all the states.

Modern political parties—pretty much as we know them today—had thus arrived by the middle of the nineteenth century. They were,

Early Democratization of the Electoral System: A Foreigner's View

In 1831 the French nobleman Alexis de Tocqueville toured the United States with a commission from his government to study the prison system and the ulterior purpose of writing about democracy in America. His recommendations on prison reform have been long forgotten, but his study of democracy has come down to this day as a classic. In it, he showed considerable insight into the irresistible force behind the changes in voting rights through the first forty years of the American Republic:

> There is no more invariable rule in the history of society: the further electoral rights are extended, the greater is the need of extending them; for after each concession the strength of the democracy increases, and its demands increase with its strength. The ambition of those who are below the appointed rate is irritated in exact proportion to the great number of those who are above it. The exception at last becomes the rule, concession follows concession, and no stop can be made short of universal suffrage.
>
> At the present day the principle of the sovereignty of the people has acquired in the United States all the practical development that the imagination can conceive. It is unencumbered by those fictions that are thrown over it in other countries, and it appears in every possible form, according to the exigency of the occasion.
>
> Alexis de Tocqueville
> *Democracy in America*
> (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1945), p. 57

Although his imagination surely was limited by his experiences and his times, and he did not foresee later expansion of the principle of universal suffrage to blacks and women, de Tocqueville clearly appreciated that, like a snowball rolling downhill, the right to vote would be expanded in a democratic nation until it included everyone.

in fact, the first modern parties in western history, and their arrival reflected, above all, the early expansion of the electorate in the United States. The comparable development of parties in Great Britain did not occur until the 1870s, after further extension of the adult male electorate in the Reform Acts of 1832 and 1867.

Just as the parties were reaching their maturity, they and American politics received another massive infusion of voters from a new source: immigration from Europe. Hundreds of thousands of Europeans—the great majority from Ireland and Germany—came to the country before the Civil War. So many immigrated, in fact, that their very coming and their entry into American politics became a political issue. The newcomers found a ready home in the Democratic party; and a nativist third party, the American party (the so-called Know-Nothing party), sprang up in the 1850s. The tide of immigration was only temporarily halted by the Civil War. New nationalities came from 1870 on, in a virtually uninterrupted flow until Congress closed the door to mass immigration in the 1920s. Over five million arrived in the 1880s (one-tenth of the 1880 resident population), and nine million came between 1905 and 1914 (one-eighth of the 1900 resident population).

The political parties played an important role in assimilating these huge waves of immigrants. The American cities offered industrial jobs to the newcomers from abroad, and they settled heavily in them. It was there in the cities that a new party organization, the city "machine," developed in response to the immigrants' problems and vulnerabilities. The machines were more than impressively efficient party organizations. They were social service mechanisms that helped the new arrivals cope with a new country and with all the threats and adventures of urban, industrial society. They softened the hard edge of poverty, they smoothed the way with government and the law, and they taught the immigrants the ways and customs of their new life. Moreover, they were in many instances indistinguishable from the government of the city; theirs was the classic instance of "party government" in the American experience. They also were the vehicle by which the new urban working class won control of the cities away from the largely Anglo-Saxon, Protestant elites that had prevailed for so long. Thus, the parties again became an instrument of the aspirations of new citizens, just as they had been in the 1830s. In doing so, they achieved the high point of party power and influence in American history.

The American parties—simply as political organizations—thus reached their zenith, something of a "Golden Age" indeed, by the beginning of the twentieth century. Party organization now existed in all the states and localities; it positively flourished in the industrial cities. Parties achieved an all-time high in discipline in the Congress and in most state legislatures. They controlled campaigns for public office—they held rallies, did door-to-door canvassing, and got the voters to the polls. They controlled access to a great deal of public employment. They were an important source of information and guidance for a largely uneducated and often illiterate electorate. Indeed, they rode the crest of an extraordinarily vital American politics; the latter half of the nineteenth century, we often forget, featured the highest voter turnouts in the history of American presidential elections. The parties suited the needs and limitations of the new voters and the problems of mobilizing

majorities in the new and raw industrial society. If ever a time and a political organization were well matched, this was it.

To be sure, the democratic impetus was not spent by the turn of the century. The electorate continued to expand—with the enfranchisement of women, with the delayed securing of the vote for blacks, and with the lowering of the voting age to eighteen. The move to direct, popular elections and away from the indirection the Founding Fathers favored also continued its inexorable course with adoption of the Seventeenth Amendment which decreed the direct election of senators. Just as important for the parties, however, were the changes wrought in them in the name of the continuing commitment to egalitarianism and popular democracy. What was a "Golden Age" for parties in terms of their influence over the American political process was seen disparagingly by many as a "Gilded Age," in which party control of politics had bred rampant corruption and inefficiency in government. Fat, powerful, and even arrogant at the end of the nineteenth century, the parties fell under attack by the Progressive reformers and have never regained the exalted position they enjoyed in the three decades after the Civil War. The reformers enacted the direct primary to give the citizenry a voice in party nominations, and large numbers of state legislatures wrote laws to define and limit party organizations. The business of nominating a president was made more popular by the establishment of presidential primaries in the states, and activists within the parties reformed their national conventions. All in all, by the 1980s, Americans had a pair of parties and a party politics born and shaped in the triumph of the democratic ethos and its expectations.[8]

The reforms of the twentieth century were to some extent intended to diminish the power and position the parties had achieved by the end of the 1800s. To that extent, they succeeded. For these and a number of other reasons, the heyday of the American parties passed. The theme of the decline of the parties runs through all commentaries on the American parties these days, and it will certainly run through this one. Even so, the parties remain to a considerable extent what they were eighty or a hundred years ago: the preeminent political organizations of mass, popular democracy. They developed and grew with the expansion of the suffrage and the popularizing of electoral politics. They were and remain the invention by which large numbers of voters come together to control the selection of their representatives. They rose to prominence at a time when a new electorate of limited knowledge and

[8]For a spirited account of the development of American political parties from the disapproving normative perspective of a foreign observer in 1902, consult Moisei Ostrogorski, *Democracy and the Organization of Political Parties, Volume II: The United States* (Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor Books, Doubleday and Company, 1964). On the reform of the parties generally, see Austin Ranney, *Curing the Mischiefs of Faction* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975).

limited political sophistication needed the guidance of their symbols. Thus it was that the modern American political party was born and reached its time of glory in the nineteenth century. When one talks today of the decline of the parties, it is the standard of that Golden Age against which the decline is measured.

THE PARTY IN ITS ENVIRONMENT

It is the nature of a book on political parties to treat them more or less in isolation, to lift them from their context in the political system for special scrutiny. Yet, useful as isolation is, it may give the impression that the political parties are autonomous structures, moving without constraint within the political system. In a search for the parties alone, there is a danger of overlooking the many forces in their environment that shape both their form and their activities.

It is possible, on the other hand, to let analysis and logic run riot and to imagine a party environment that includes virtually every other structure and process in the political system and a great deal outside it. Despite the superficial truth that every social structure or process is related to every other one, however, some influences on the party clearly are more powerful and insistent than others. It will suffice to limit this discussion to them.

Electorates and Elections

As the preceding section indicates, the expansion of the American electorate shaped the very origin and development of the parties as political organizations. Furthermore, each new group of voters that enters the electorate challenges the parties to readjust their appeals. The parties must compete for the votes and support of new voters, and the necessity of doing so forces them to reconsider their strategies for building the coalitions that can win elections.

Similarly, the fortunes of the parties are also bound up with the nature of American elections. The move from indirect to direct elections transformed both the contesting of elections and the parties that contested them. Should we finally come to direct election of the American president, that change, too, would have its impact on the parties.

The election machinery in a state may indeed be thought of as an extensive regulation of the parties' chief political activity. At least, it is often difficult to determine where the regulation of the party ends and reform of electoral practices begins. Consider, for example, the direct primary. It is both a significant addition to the machinery of American electoral processes and a sharp regulation of the way a party selects the candidates who bear its label in an election. Even the relatively minor

differences in primary law from one state to another—such as differences in the form of the ballot or the time of the year in which the primary occurs—are not without their impact on the parties. In short, the collective electoral institutions of the nation and of the fifty states set a matrix of rules and boundaries within which the parties compete for public office.

The Political Institutions

Very little in the American political system escapes the influence of American federalism and the separation of powers. No single factor seems to affect the American legislative parties, for example, so much as the separation of the legislature from the executive. Among the party systems of the world, the legislative parties in parliamentary systems have the greatest discipline in voting and the strongest ties to the party organization. The institutions of the parliamentary form lead to the legislative party's cohesive support of (or opposition to) a cabinet drawn from one legislative party or the other. The political parties in American legislatures are under much less pressure to support or oppose a completely separate chief executive. One reason is that cabinet secretaries are not simultaneously legislative party leaders as they are in a parliamentary system. Another is that legislative defiance of the executive on key party issues does not threaten to bring down the entire government and force new elections. Support for and opposition to executive programs often cut sharply across party lines in the American system, to a degree rarely found in the parliamentary democracies.

The decentralization of American federalism also has left its imprint on the American parties. It has instilled in them local political loyalties and generations of local, often provincial, political traditions. It has spawned an awesome range and number of public offices to fill, creating an electoral politics that in size and diversity dwarfs that of all other political systems. By permitting local rewards, local traditions, even local patronage systems, it has sustained a whole set of semiautonomous local parties within the two parties. The establishment of these local centers of power has worked mightily against the development of strong permanent national party organs.

Statutory Regulation

No other parties among the democracies of the world are so entangled in legal regulations as are the American parties. It was not always this way. Prior to the progressive reforms near the beginning of the twentieth century, American parties essentially were self-governing political organizations, virtually unrestrained by state or federal law in pursuit of their core activities. They nominated candidates for office by their own rules. The arrival of the direct primary in the early 1900s and recent reforms of the presidential nomination process at the behest of national party commissions but under the aegis of state laws have severely circumscribed this autonomy. Before the introduction of the Australian or secret ballot in the 1890s, the parties printed, distributed, and with a wary eye upon one another often even counted the ballots. The Australian ballot reform changed all of this, vesting the responsibility for running elections in government, where it has remained ever since. The parties even played an active role in the distribution of government jobs, a practice that has largely disappeared under successive waves of civil service reform and judicial intervention (some of which took place only in the past decade).

Both state and, to a still limited degree, federal laws govern the parties today—producing an almost bewildering fifty-state variety of political parties. The forms of their organization are prescribed by the states in endless, often finicky, detail. The statutes on party organization set up grandiose layers of party committees and often chart the details of who will compose them, when they will meet, and what their agenda will be. State law also defines the parties themselves, often by defining the right to place candidates on the ballot. A number of states also undertake to regulate the activities of parties; many, for example, regulate their finances, and most place at least some limits on their campaign practices. So severe can these regulations be, in fact, that in some states the parties have tried various strategies to evade the worst of the burdens. In recent years, the parties increasingly have been subjected to federal regulation—in campaign practices and finances as well as through federal proscriptions against certain state practices, especially involving primary and general elections.

The Political Culture

It is one thing to specify such tangibles in the parties' environment as regulatory statutes, electoral mechanisms, and even political institutions. It is quite another, however, to pin down so elusive a part of the party environment as the political culture. A nation's political culture is the all-enveloping network of the political norms, values, and expectations of its people. It is, in other words, the people's conglomerate view of what the political system is, what it should be, and what their place is in it.

The feeling that party politics is a compromising, somewhat dirty business has been a major and persistent component of the American political culture. Public opinion polls give evidence of that hostility toward partisan politics in recent years. A number of polls have found, for example, that American parents prefer that their sons and daughters not choose a full-time political career. In their estimation, politics as a vocation

compares unfavorably with even the semiskilled trades.[9] In the spring of 1975, the Gallup Poll asked a national sample of college students to rate the "honesty and ethical standards" of people in a number of vocations. Although only 2 percent rated college teachers and 5 percent rated medical doctors "low" or "very low," 53 percent gave those ratings to political officeholders. Only "advertising practitioners" scored below the officeholders, and then by only one percentage point.[10] (For another measure of the party's position in the American political culture, see the box.)

"The Politician Puzzle"

One measures the American political culture in all kinds of ways. Note the following bit of evidence about the status of the American politician from an article on logical puzzles and a master puzzler in the magazine of the Smithsonian Institution, the complex of galleries and museums in Washington, D.C. It would be hard to imagine such a riddle about doctors or bankers.

> A certain convention numbered 100 politicians. Each politician was either crooked or honest. We are given the following two facts:
>
> —At least one of the politicians was honest.
> —Given any two of the politicians, at least one of the two was crooked.
>
> Can it be determined from these two facts how many of the politicians were honest and how many of them were crooked?...A fairly common answer is '50 honest and 50 crooked.' Another rather frequent one is '51 honest and 49 crooked.' Both answers are wrong. Now let us see how to find the correct solution.
>
> We are given the information that at least one person is honest. Let us pick out any one honest person, whose name, say, is Frank. Now pick any of the remaining 99; call him John. By the second given condition, at least one of the two men—Frank, John—is crooked. Since Frank is not crooked, it must be John. Since John arbitrarily represents any of the remaining 99 men, then each of those 99 men must be crooked. So the answer is that one is honest and 99 are crooked.
>
> Ira Mothner, "The Puzzling and Paradoxical Worlds of Raymond Smullyan," *Smithsonian* 13 (June 1982).

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[9]See William C. Mitchell, "The Ambivalent Social Status of the American Politician," *Western Political Quarterly* 12 (1959): 683-99.

[10]*Minneapolis Tribune*, May 19, 1975.

A more systematic review of American attitudes toward the party system points similarly to a currently low level of popular support for the parties. Furthermore, this decline began before Watergate and thus reflects more basic, perhaps more enduring, causes. In 1973, for example, a national sample of adults was asked to pick among four possibilities in identifying which "part of the government" they most often trusted "to do what's right." The Congress and the Supreme Court were each chosen by more than 30 percent of the sample, and almost 24 percent chose the president. Only 1.3 percent chose the political parties. All in all, as Jack Dennis concludes, support for the American parties has dipped to "dangerously low levels."[11]

Suspicion of things partisan is only one element, however, in a multifaceted political culture that shapes the American parties. The views of Americans are relevant on such broad points as representative democracy itself. A Burkean view of representation, which holds that the representative ought to decide public questions on the basis of his or her own information and wisdom, certainly retards the development of party discipline in American legislatures. More detailed public attitudes govern even such matters as the incentives for party activity and the kinds of campaign tactics a party or candidate chooses. Indeed, the whole issue of what we consider fair or ethical campaigning is simply a reflection of the norms and expectations of large numbers of Americans.

The Nonpolitical Environment

Much of the parties' nonpolitical environment works on them through the elements of the political environment. Changes in levels of education, for example, affect the political culture, the skills of the electorate, and the levels of political information. Great jolts in the economy alter the structure of political issues and the goals of the electorate. Educational levels and socioeconomic status also seem related to elements of the political culture. The aforementioned Dennis study in Wisconsin suggests that less-educated Americans accept party loyalty and discipline more easily than the better educated do. Even general social values are quickly translated into political values. Acceptance of a Catholic candidate for the American presidency had to await changes in social attitudes about religion in general and about Catholicism in particular. A continuing liberalization of social attitudes may extend this acceptance to women and blacks as well.

Whether the impact of the nonpolitical environment is direct or indirect, however, may be beside the point. The impact is strong and often disruptive. The advent of a recession, for example, may have

[11]Jack Dennis, "Trends in Public Support for the American Party System," *British Journal of Political Science* 5 (1976): 187-230.

important repercussions on the parties. It may make raising money more difficult; it will certainly make patronage positions more attractive and perhaps even shift the incentives for recruiting the workers on whom the party organizations rely. It will also certainly define a very important issue for the electorate. If the crisis is especially severe, as was the Great Depression of the 1930s, it may even fracture and reorganize the pattern of enduring party loyalties.

What began in this chapter as a search for the distinctiveness of the parties has thus concluded by looking at how they became what they are. To be sure, it is important to have a firm grasp of what we mean when we refer to a political party—especially to understand its peculiar three-part nature: the party organization, the party in the electorate, and the party in government. The search for the parties, however, is, paradoxically, a search for more than the parties. It is incomplete without a grasp of the context, the environment, in which they are set and by which they are shaped.

2

THE AMERICAN TWO-PARTY SYSTEM

The most common party systems are those in which either one political party dominates political life or many parties compete with one another for control of government. One-party systems appear in such diverse places as the Soviet Union, where only the Communist party can contest elections, and Mexico, where the Partido Revolucionario Institucional (or PRI) has monopolized presidential, gubernatorial, and legislative elections for decades. By contrast, the European democracies typically harbor multiparty systems, in which three, four, or more parties compete with one another without any single party being able to win a majority of the votes.[1]

One-partyism and multipartyism certainly are not alien to the American experience. Some states or cities have had a long tradition of one-party hegemony which, if not as total as that characterizing the communist nations, nonetheless rivals the single-party control enjoyed by Mexico's PRI. In other areas, at certain times multipartyism has flourished. Minor or third parties and independent candidates have played important if transient roles in American politics. These varieties of multipartyism have become more prominent at the presidential level in recent years. George C. Wallace captured almost 10 million popular votes in 1968 on the American Independent party ticket and came within 26 electoral votes (or about 250,000 strategically concentrated popular votes) of throwing the entire election into the unpredictable hands of the House of Representatives. In 1980 John Anderson, running without any party label, won almost 6 million popular votes.

However colorful or captivating these incursions into two-party control may have been, we must not let them divert our attention from

[1]See Kenneth Janda, *Political Parties: A Cross-National Survey* (New York: Free Press, 1980), for a comprehensive survey of the world's party systems.

the routines of American politics. For most of our history in most elections, two parties—not one or many—have fought only one another for victory. Even the rapid rise of the Republican party from its founding in 1854 to become one of two major parties two years later, displacing the Whig party in the process, is the third party exception that proves the rule. First Democrat vs. Whig, and since 1856, Democrat vs. Republican, the United States has had a *two-party system*—a duopoly in national party competition.

The conventional terminology we use to describe party systems—one-party, two-party, multiparty—is based on two related major premises: that parties are primarily electoral organizations and that their electoral activities are carried out in direct competition with other electoral parties. The designation of a one-party, two-party, five-party, or any other multiparty system simply indicates the number of political parties able to compete for office with some prospect of success. This is the distinction between the competitive major parties and the noncompetitive minor parties. What we call the party system, therefore, is composed only of the electorally competitive parties.

For all its elegant simplicity (and to some extent because of it), this conventional classification of party systems has a number of significant shortcomings:

- It focuses solely on one dimension of the competition among political organizations. Consequently, it overlooks the possibility that minor parties compete ideologically or programmatically with major parties, even though they do not compete electorally.
- By focusing only on the political parties, it ignores the full range of competition among all kinds of political organizations. Even in the business of nominating candidates for public office, a party may face competition from a local interest group or political elite.
- By classifying parties exclusively by electoral competition, it ignores any differences in organization the parties may have and centers its measurement on the size of the party's electorate.
- Finally, it tends to ignore the implications of the word *system*. It overlooks the relationships and interactions one expects in any system and settles merely for the presence of competitive parties and their presumed competings in elections.

This concept of the party system is so ingrained in both everyday use and in the scholarly literature, however, that one has little choice but to work within its terms.[2]

[2]For a sophisticated critique of the traditional classification and analysis of party systems, see Giovanni Sartori, *Parties and Party Systems* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1976).

THE NATIONAL PARTY SYSTEM

The American party system is and has been a two-party system for the past 150 years. Beyond all subtle variations in competition, there is the inescapable, crucial fact that almost all partisan political conflict in the United States has been channeled through two major political parties. They rise and fall, they establish their seats of strength, they suffer their local weaknesses, but they endure. Perhaps even more remarkable is the fact that one does not easily find another democracy in which two parties have so long and so thoroughly dominated politics.

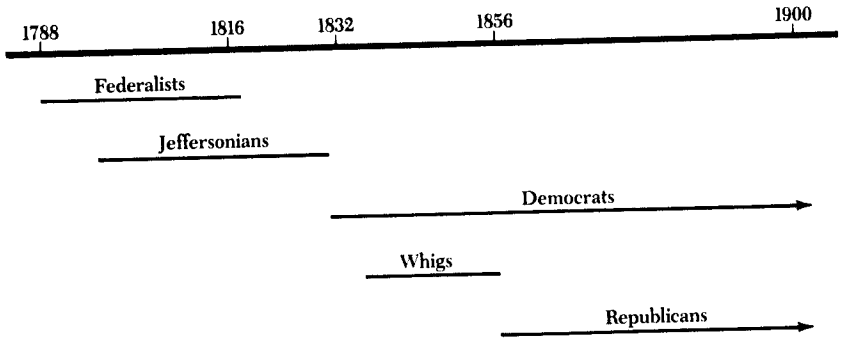
The Republic, though, has not always had a two-party system. The period before 1836 was one of instability in the party system. The Federalists established a short period of superiority during the presidency of George Washington but faded quickly with the rise and success of the Jeffersonian Republicans (see box). The Jeffersonians rode their success to a brief period of dominance that culminated in the nonparty (or one-party) politics of Monroe's two terms. As the caucus system crumbled in the 1820s, however, new national parties emerged, and by 1836 a stable two-partyism was established. For the more than 150 years since then, one party—the Democratic party—has sustained a place in the party system. In opposition, the Whigs survived until the 1850s and were replaced almost immediately by the infant Republican party. Both the Democratic and Republican parties were briefly divided by the events of the Civil War, but old party lines and labels survived the war and, indeed, survive to this day.

Thus, the two-party drama is long but its cast of characters short. In truth, it has not been quite so cut and dried. Minor parties have briefly pushed themselves into competitiveness but, significantly, never for two presidential elections in a row. The Democratic and Republican parties have also changed, of course, in their issues and appeals and in the coalitions that are their "parties in the electorate." All of those hedges, however, do not hide the fact that for more than 130 years, the Democratic and Republican parties have together been the American two-party system.

The longevity of the two major parties, exceptional in itself, is almost overshadowed by the closeness of their competition. Of the thirty presidential elections from 1868 through 1984, only six were decided by a spread of more than 20 percent of the popular vote of the two major parties; that is, in twenty-four of the elections, a shift of 10 percent of the vote or less would have given the other party's candidate the lead. Also, in only four of those thirty presidential elections did the winners receive more than 60 percent of the total popular vote: Warren G. Harding in 1920, Franklin Roosevelt in 1936, Lyndon Johnson in 1964, and Richard Nixon in 1972. Thirteen of the thirty elections were decided by a spread of less than 7 percent of the popular vote, and presidential elections

The American Major Parties

The list of the American major parties is short and select. In almost 200 years of history, only five political parties have achieved a competitive position in American national politics. Three lost it; the Democrats and Republicans maintain it to this day.



1. *The Federalists.* The party of the new Constitution and strong national government, it was the first American political party. Its support was rooted in the Northeast and the Atlantic seaboard, where it attracted the support of merchants, landowners, and established families of wealth and status. Limited by its narrow base of support, it quickly fell before the success of the Jeffersonians and the Virginia presidents.

2. *The Jeffersonians.* Opposed to the nationalism of the Federalists, it was a party of the small farmers, workers, and less privileged citizens who preferred the authority of the states. Like its founder, it shared many of the ideals of the French Revolution, especially the extension of the suffrage and the notion of direct popular self-government. (At various times it was known by such names as the Republican party and the Democratic-Republican party, both of which confuse it unnecessarily with contemporary parties.)

3. *The Democrats.* Growing out of the Jacksonian wing of the Jeffersonian party, it was initially Jackson's party and the first really broad-based, popular party in the United States. On behalf of a coalition of less-privileged voters, it opposed such commercial goals as national banking and high tariffs; it also welcomed the new immigrants and opposed nativist opposition to them.

4. *The Whigs.* This party, too, had roots in the old Jeffersonian party—in the Clay-Adams faction and in enmity to the Jacksonians. Opposed in its origins to the strong presidency of Jackson, its greatest leaders, Clay and Webster, were embodiments of legislative supremacy. For its short life, the Whig party was an unstable coalition of many interests, among them nativism, property, and the new business and commerce.

5. *The Republicans.* Born in 1854 as the great conflict approached, it was the party of northern opposition to slavery and its spread to the new territories. Therefore, it was also the party of the Union, the North, Lincoln, the freeing of the slaves, victory in the Civil War, and the imposition of Reconstruction. From the Whigs, it also inherited a concern for business, mercantile, and propertied interests.

have generally been so close that Dwight D. Eisenhower's 57.4 percent of the popular vote in 1956 was widely called a landslide. The shade over 61 percent with which Lyndon Johnson won in 1964 also set a new record for a president's percentage of the popular vote.[3] The 1960s also saw two of the closest presidential elections in American history. In 1960, John F. Kennedy polled only 0.2 percent of the popular vote more than Richard Nixon; Mr. Nixon, in turn, led the popular vote by only 0.7 percent in 1968.[4]

As close as the results of the presidential elections have been, the elections to Congress have been even closer. If we move to percentages of the two-party vote for ease of comparison, we quickly note the remarkable balance between the aggregate votes cast for Democratic

[3]The reader may be confused here about political record keeping. Note that this 61.1 percent vote for Lyndon Johnson was his percentage of the total popular vote. Other relevant records in presidential elections are the greatest electoral college vote—Ronald Reagan in 1984, with 525 votes—and the greatest percentage of the two-party vote—Calvin Coolidge in 1924, with 65.2 percent.

[4]A persuasive case can be made, in fact, that Nixon actually led Kennedy in the popular vote; the different conclusion depends on how one counts the votes cast for the unpledged electors in Alabama. For a statement of the problem, see Lawrence D. Longley and Alan G. Braun, *The Politics of Electoral College Reform*, 2nd ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1975), pp. 5-6.

and Republican candidates for the House of Representatives from all over the United States for over 50 years (Table 2.1). From 1932 through 1986, in none of the biennial elections to the House of Representatives was there a difference greater than seventeen percentage points in the division of the two-party vote. The median percentage spread between the candidates of the two parties for the House from 1932 through 1986 was 6.2; it was 10.7 for the presidential candidates in the same period. Perhaps even more telling, in every year except 1948, 1960, 1968, and 1976, the margin between congressional candidates was smaller than that between the presidential aspirants.

The fineness and persistence of party competition in national politics is apparent, therefore, in even the quickest survey of recent electoral history. Even more impressive, perhaps, is the resilience of the major parties. Although from time to time the parties have lapsed from closely matched competitiveness, in the long run they have shown a remarkable facility for restoring balance. The Democrats recovered quickly from their failures of the 1920s, and the Republicans confounded the pessimists by springing back from the Roosevelt victories of the 1930s. Also, despite the catastrophes of Watergate and the Nixon administration, the Republicans came back again in 1980 and 1984.

Is this aggregate record of winning and losing in national elections what we mean by a two-party system? Well, yes and no. It does express the vote support for national candidates running on national issues under national party labels. Indeed, the struggle for the presidency every four years is undoubtedly the one occasion on which we actually do have national parties and a national party system. On the other hand, such measures are only aggregates, and they obscure the possibility of one-partyism in various parts of the country. That is, statements about national competitiveness gloss over the issue of how unevenly the competitiveness is spread over the states and localities of the nation.

THE FIFTY AMERICAN PARTY SYSTEMS

All but obscured in the incredible closeness of both presidential elections and the aggregate vote for the House of Representatives is the one-partyism not apparent when one examines only national totals. It was not until 1964, for example, that Georgia cast its electoral votes for a Republican and Vermont voted for a Democrat for the first time since the Civil War. Also, although one may talk of the aggregate closeness of the biennial elections to the House, the aura of competitiveness vanishes if one looks at the individual races. Significant numbers of candidates win election to the House of Representatives with more than 60 percent of the total vote: in 1986, in fact, 79 percent of them did. In that year, 56 were elected without any competition whatsoever.

TABLE 2.1 *Percentage of Two-Party Vote Won by Republican Candidates for the Presidency and House of Representatives: 1932–86*

	Presidential Election		House Election	
Year	Percentage Republican	Percentage Spread between Republican and Democratic Candidates	Percentage Republican	Percentage Spread between Republican and Democratic Candidates
1932	40.9	-18.2	43.1	-13.8
1934			43.8	-12.4
1936	37.5	-25.0	41.5	-17.0
1938			49.2	-1.6
1940	45.0	-10.0	47.0	-6.0
1942			52.3	4.6
1944	46.2	-7.6	48.3	-3.4
1946			54.7	9.4
1948	47.7	-4.6	46.8	-6.4
1950			49.9	-0.2
1952	55.4	10.8	50.1	0.2
1954			47.5	-5.0
1956	57.8	15.6	49.0	-2.0
1958			43.9	-12.2
1960	49.9	-0.2	45.0	-10.0
1962			47.4	-5.2
1964	38.7	-22.6	42.5	-15.0
1966			48.7	-2.6
1968	50.4	0.8	49.1	-1.8
1970			45.6	-8.8
1972	61.8	23.6	47.3	-5.4
1974			43.0	-14.0
1976	48.9	-2.2	42.8	-14.4
1978			45.6	-8.8
1980	55.3	10.6	48.7	-2.6
1982			43.8	-12.4
1984	58.8	18.2	46.7	-5.5
1986			43.2	-11.1

Sources Data from 1932 through 1960 from Donald E. Stokes and Gudmund R. Iverson, "On the Existence of Forces Restoring Party Competition," *Public Opinion Quarterly* 26 (Summer 1962): 162. Data for 1962 through 1984 from *Statistical Abstract* (1986). Data for 1986 from *Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report*, November 15, 1986, p. 2896.

If we are to discuss the varying degrees of competitiveness of the fifty state party systems, however, the practical problem of defining *competitiveness* can be postponed no longer. Yet the measurement of competition is hardly straightforward. It requires resolution of several difficult issues. First, should present competitiveness be based on the quality of past competition or the possibilities of competitiveness in the near future? Scholars have almost uniformly chosen to base their measures on the past. Second, should we count vote totals and percentages or simply the offices won? Do we regard a party that averages 45 percent of the vote, but never wins office, any differently than one that averages around the 25 percent mark but occasionally is victorious? Third, which offices should be counted—president, governor, senator, statewide officials, state legislators? Singly or in what combination? A state may show strikingly different competitive patterns between its national and its state and local politics.

In categorizing the party systems of the American states, one can dismiss the possibility of multiparty systems. To be sure, there are a few examples of them in the American experience. In Minnesota, Wisconsin, and North Dakota in the 1930s and 1940s, remnants of the Progressive movement—the Progressive party in Wisconsin, the Farmer-Labor party in Minnesota, and the Non-Partisan League in North Dakota—competed with some success against the major parties. In these and a few other instances of statewide multipartyism in the recent American past, the period of multipartyism was brief and ended with a return to two-partyism.

While this greatly simplifies the task of classification by restricting attention to the relative strength of the two major parties, one final problem remains. Where do we draw the fine line between competitiveness and noncompetitiveness, between one- and two-party systems? There is an unavoidable arbitrariness to any classification, but if we are to describe party systems as "competitive" and "noncompetitive," we must draw the line somewhere. Drawing on the work of others, a group of scholars recently divided the fifty state party systems into four categories: one-party Democratic, modified one-party Democratic, modified one-party Republican, and two-party (see Table 2.2); no states fell into a one-party Republican category. The rankings are based on a composite index of (1) the popular vote for Democratic gubernatorial candidates, (2) percentages of seats held by Democrats in the state legislature, and (3) percentages of all gubernatorial and state legislative terms controlled by the Democrats. The resulting averages of these percentages yielded scores from 1.000 (complete Democratic success) to .000 (total Republican success); the scores are reported with the rankings in Table 2.2. The rankings are based wholly on state offices; they do not take into account the state's vote in presidential or senatorial elections. To some extent, therefore, they are isolated from the abnormal

TABLE 2.2 *The Fifty States Classified According to Degree of Interparty Competition: 1974–80*

One-Party Democratic	Modified One-Party Democratic	Two-Party	Modified One-Party Republican
Alabama (.9438)	South Carolina (.8034)	Montana (.6259)	North Dakota (.3374)
Georgia (.8849)	West Virginia (.8032)	Michigan (.6125)	
Louisiana (.8762)	Texas (.7993)	Ohio (.5916)	
Mississippi (.8673)	Massachusetts (.7916)	Washington (.5808)	
Arkansas (.8630)	Kentucky (.7907)	Alaska (.5771)	
North Carolina (.8555)	Oklahoma (.7841)	Pennsylvania (.5574)	
Maryland (.8509)	Nevada (.7593)	Delaware (.5490)	
Rhode Island (.8506)	Hawaii (.7547)	New York (.5390)	
	Florida (.7524)	Illinois (.5384)	
	Connecticut (.7336)	Nebraska (.5166)	
	New Jersey (.7330)	Maine (.5164)	
	Virginia (.7162)	Kansas (.4671)	
	New Mexico (.7113)	Utah (.4653)	
	California (.7081)	Iowa (.4539)	
	Oregon (.6954)	Arizona (.4482)	
	Missouri (.6932)	Colorado (.4429)	
	Minnesota (.6680)	Indiana (.4145)	
	Tennessee (.6648)	New Hampshire (.3916)	
	Wisconsin (.6634)	Idaho (.3898)	
		Wyoming (.3879)	
		Vermont (.3612)	
		South Dakota (.3512)	

Source John F. Bibby, Cornelius P. Cotter, James L. Gibson, and Robert J. Huckshorn, "Parties in State Politics," in Virginia Gray, Herbert Jacob, and Kenneth Vines (eds.), *Politics in the American States*, 4th ed. (Boston: Little, Brown, 1983), p. 66.

patterns of national politics that accompany presidential victories of the magnitude of Ronald Reagan's in 1984.[5]

These variations in two-party competition among the fifty states provide the raw material for explanations of how competition develops and is sustained. For the 1970-80 period, for example, the states exhibiting the greatest degree of competition have several distinctive characteristics. They have a more educated citizenry, stronger local party organizations, larger and more urbanized populations, and more widespread home ownership. That the southern states in general are less competitive may be attributed to some degree to their low standing on these characteristics.[6] Useful as they are, such indices again do not fully reveal the complexities of party competition. One rarely finds competitiveness evenly spread through the politics of any one state. In Arkansas in 1980, for example, Reagan and Carter ran almost dead even, yet three of the state's four congresspersons were elected without opposition. To concentrate on variations within state politics, gubernatorial elections generally reflect a more intense competitiveness than do elections to the state legislature. Of the governors serving in 1986, 74 percent were elected with less than 60 percent of the vote.[7] Yet the state legislatures that were elected in

[5]John F. Bibby, Cornelius P. Cotter, James L. Gibson, and Robert J. Huckshorn, "Parties in State Politics" (Chap. 3), in Virginia Gray, Herbert Jacob, and Kenneth Vines (eds.), *Politics in the American States*, 4th ed. (Boston: Little, Brown, 1983). Their work is based on the measurements of Austin Ranney, whose categories were, in turn, based on those of Richard Dawson and James Robinson, "Inter-Party Competition, Economic Variables, and Welfare Policies in the American States," *Journal of Politics* 25 (1963): 265-89. For other data and measures, see Paul T. David, *Party Strength in the United States, 1872-1970* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1972), updated with later data in the *Journal of Politics* for August 1974, May 1975, May 1976, and August 1978; Joseph A. Schlesinger, "A Two-Dimensional Scheme for Classifying the States According to Degree of Inter-Party Competition," *American Political Science Review* 49 (1955): 1120-28; David G. Pfeiffer, "The Measurement of Inter-Party Competition and Systemic Stability," *American Political Science Review* 61 (1967): 457-67; Mark Stern, "Measuring Interparty Competition: A Proposal and a Test of a Model," *Journal of Politics* 34 (1972): 889-904; and Harvey J. Tucker, "Interparty Competition in the American States: One More Time," *American Politics Quarterly* 10 (1982): 93-116. Despite the welter of measures and indices reported here, two scholars have found that there is a very high order of correlation among the results of the various measures. See Richard E. Zody and Norman R. Luttbeg, "An Evaluation of Various Measures of State Party Competition," *Western Political Quarterly* 21 (1968): 723-24.

[6]These were the results of a study relating the measure in Table 2.2 (but for the 1970-80 period) to various characteristics of the states. See Samuel C. Patterson and Gregory A. Caldeira, "The Etiology of Partisan Competition," *American Political Science Review* 78 (1984): 691-707. Studies of the factors conducive to competition also have been conducted in smaller units. See, for example, Charles M. Bonjean and Robert L. Lineberry, "The Urbanization-Party Competition Hypothesis: A Comparison of All United States Counties," *Journal of Politics* 32 (1970): 305-21.

[7]The data on the governors were drawn from *Congressional Quarterly's Guide to U.S. Elections* (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly, Inc., 1986), and *Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report*, November 8, 1986, pp. 2864-71.

the same period revealed a partisan composition that belied the competitiveness in the election of governors. In only 33 percent of the houses of the state legislatures in 1986 did the percentage of Democratic legislators fall between 40 and 59 percent. To be sure, some of the lack of partisan balance in the American legislatures may be a result of very skillful drawing of district lines. With all allowances made, however, the patterns of competitiveness suggested by these data are not the same patterns indicated by the data from gubernatorial elections of the period.

Thus, it is difficult to speak even of a *state* party system. On close inspection, each one is an aggregate of different competitive patterns. It is not at all unusual for a party—even one that wins most statewide elections—to have trouble filling its ticket in some local elections. Powerful officeholders can use a long term and the advantage of office to build a personal following independent of party strength. For the rest of their careers, they may insulate themselves from the normally competitive politics in their states. In fact, nothing dampens two-party competition more effectively than the power of incumbency exercised in a small and homogeneous constituency.

Beneath the surface of a national two-party system, then, noticeable pockets of one-party control have appeared in the states and localities. One-partyism has been particularly pronounced in the South, where over a century of Civil War memories sustained Democratic party dominance. Recent elections, though, have eroded the Democratic monopoly there, especially in presidential elections. Even the measure of competition based on state offices shows a trend toward more competition in these states. All eleven fell into the one-party Democratic category during the 1946-63 period using Table 2.2's definition of competition, but only six of these remained one-party Democratic in 1974-80, and each of the eleven states was less Democratic than before (see Table 2.2).[8]

THE CAUSES AND CONDITIONS OF TWO-PARTYISM

The rarity of the two-party system among the democracies and its dominance in American politics have stimulated a considerable explanatory effort. The question is an obvious one: Why should this one nation among so many others develop a two-party system? In the interests of an orderly attack on the problem, the most frequent explanations have been divided into four groups: institutional, dualist, cultural, and consensual.

[8]See Austin Ranney, "Parties in State Politics," in Herbert Jacob and Kenneth Vines (eds.), *Politics in the American States* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1965), pp. 63-67, for the 1946-63 figures.

Institutional Theories

By far the most widespread explanation of the two-party system, often called Duverger's law, associates it with electoral and governmental institutions. It argues that single-member, plurality electoral systems produce two-party systems and that multimember constituencies and proportional representation result in multipartyism. Plurality election in a single-member district means simply that one candidate is elected and that the winner is the person who receives the largest number of votes, even if it is not a majority. There are no rewards for the parties or candidates that run second, third, or fourth. In a system of proportional representation, on the other hand, legislators are elected on party slates in multimember districts in proportion to the strength of the vote for their parties. Thus, if a district sends five members to the parliament, the breakdown might be:

Party A	39% of vote	2 seats
Party B	36% of vote	2 seats
Party C	20% of vote	1 seat
Party D	5% of vote	—
	100% of vote	5 seats

Parties B and C, by contrast, would win no seats in the American electoral system. The American election system offers no reward of office to any but the plurality winner and, so the theory goes, thus discourages the chronic minority parties.[9]

Many of the institutional theorists also argue that the importance of the single executive in the American system strengthens the operation of Duverger's law. The American presidency and the governorships—the main prizes of American politics—fall only to parties that can win pluralities. On the contrary, a cabinet in a European nation may be formed by a coalition that includes representatives of minority parties; indeed, even the prize of the premiership may go to a small party. Giovanni Spadolini, the premier of Italy in the early 1980s, came from a party that held less than 3 percent of the parliamentary seats. In countries with a single national executive, the indivisible nature of the office favors the strongest competitors. Beyond the loss of the executive office, moreover, the minor party is denied the national leadership, the focus of the national campaign, and the national spokespersons that increasingly dominate the politics of the democracies. The necessity to contend for

[9]However, many states have had multimember districts for one or both houses of the state legislature. (As recently as 1955, 58 percent of all state legislative districts were multimember, but this number has declined in recent years. See Theodore J. Lowi, "Towards a More Responsible Three Party System," *PS* 16 (1983): 699-706.)

a national executive, in other words, works against local or regional parties, even those that may elect candidates in their own bailiwicks.[10]

Dualist Theories

The dualists maintain that an underlying duality of interest in the American society has sustained the American two-party system. V. O. Key suggested that the initial sectional tension between the eastern financial and commercial interests and the western frontiersmen stamped itself on the parties in their incipient stages and fostered a two-party competition. Later, the dualism shifted to the North-South conflict over the issue of slavery and the Civil War, and then to the present urban-rural and socioeconomic status divisions. A related line of argument points to a "natural dualism" within democratic institutions: party in power versus party out of power, government versus opposition, pro and anti the status quo, and even the ideological dualism of liberal and conservative. Thus, social and economic interests or the very processes of a democratic politics—or both—reduce the political contestants to two great camps, and that dualism gives rise to two political parties.[11]

Tendencies toward dualism even are apparent in multiparty systems, as the construction of governmental coalitions produces an inevitable dichotomy between government and opposition. In France, for example, the Socialists, Communists, and other parties of the left or the various parties of the right and center compete against one another initially but then coalesce along largely ideological lines to contest run-off elections or form a government. What distinguishes two-party from multiparty systems, in short, may be where this inherent tendency toward dualism is expressed.

Cultural Theories

This school of explanation in many ways smacks of the older, largely discredited national character theories. It maintains that the United States and Britain have nurtured two-party systems because of their "political maturity" or their "genius for government." More modestly, it attributes the two-party systems to the development of a political culture that accepts the necessity of compromise, the wisdom of short-term pragmatism, and the avoidance of unyielding dogmatism. Americans and

[10]The institutional theorists are best represented by Maurice Duverger, *Political Parties* (New York: Wiley, 1954); and E. E. Schattschneider, *Party Government* (New York: Rinehart, 1942). On Duverger's law, see William Riker, "The Two-Party System and Duverger's Law," *American Political Science Review* 76 (1982): 753-66.

[11]See, for example, V. O. Key, Jr., *Politics, Parties and Pressure Groups*, 5th ed. (New York: Crowell, 1964), pp. 229ff.; and Seymour Martin Lipset, Martin A. Trow, and James S. Coleman, *Union Democracy* (New York: Free Press, 1956), especially Part III.

Britons, in other words, are willing to make the kinds of compromises necessary to bring heterogeneous groups of voters into two political parties. Then, as they develop the dual parties, their political cultures also develop the attitudes and norms that endorse the two-party system as a desirable end in itself.[12]

Social Consensus Theories

Finally, the American two-party system has been explained in terms of a wide-sweeping American social consensus. Despite a diverse cultural heritage and society, Americans early achieved a consensus on the fundamentals that divide other societies. Virtually all Americans traditionally have accepted the prevailing social, economic, and political institutions. They accepted the Constitution and its governmental apparatus, a regulated but free-enterprise economy, and (perhaps to a lesser extent) American patterns of social class and status.

In the traditional multiparty countries such as France and Italy, substantial chunks of political opinion have favored radical changes in those and other basic institutions. They have supported programs of fundamental constitutional change, the socialization of the economy, or the disestablishment of the Church. Whether it is because Americans were spared feudalism and its rigid classes or because they have had an expanding economic and geographic frontier, they have escaped the division on fundamentals that racks the other democracies and gives rise to large numbers of irreconcilable political divisions. Since the matters that divide Americans are secondary, so the argument goes, the compromises necessary to bring them into one of two major parties are easier to make.[13]

In appraising these explanations of the American two-party system, one has to ask some searching questions. Are the factors proposed in these explanations *causes* of the two-party system, or are they *effects* of it? The chances are that they are, at least in part, effects. Certainly, two competitive parties will choose and perpetuate electoral systems that do not offer entrée to minor parties. They channel opinion into alternatives, reducing and forcing the system's complexities into their dual channels. The two-party system will also create, foster, and perpetuate the political values and attitudes that justify and protect itself. It will even foster some measure of social consensus by denying competitive opportunities to movements that challenge the great consensus of the status quo.

[12]See, for example, James C. Charlesworth, "Is Our Two-Party System Natural?" *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 259 (1948): 1-9.

[13]See Louis Hartz, *The Liberal Tradition in America* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and World, 1955).

Although these factors may be effects of the two-party system, they certainly are also causes. If they are, however, why has the two-party system been such a comparatively rare phenomenon? If single-member constituencies and plurality elections explain American two-partyism, why have they not produced a similar outcome in contemporary British politics? Moreover, American society is not the first to have an overriding duality of interests in its politics. The socioeconomic class division between "haves" and "have-nots" has appeared in many democracies without leading to a two-party system. The implication seems clear that no one of these theories alone can explain the virtual uniqueness of the American party system.

At the risk of fence straddling, one may venture to suggest that all four explanations illuminate the development of the American party system. Their unique combination has produced a unique two-party system. At the root of the explanation lies the basic, long-run American consensus on fundamental beliefs. Traditionally, no deep rifts over the kind of economy, society, or government we want have marked our politics. More than one European observer has remarked on the resulting nonideological character of American politics. Consensus has been fostered by American education and social assimilation and has been aided by two major parties inhospitable to challenges to that consensus. If the consensus has eroded to some extent in the last generation, it has done so well after the American two-party system was established and deeply entrenched and poses little threat to the party system.

Lacking cause for deep ideological divisions and disagreeing on few fundamentals, Americans were easily formed into two conglomerate, majority-seeking political parties. The institutions of American government—such as single-member constituencies, plurality elections, and the single executive—were free to exert their power to limit the parties to two without having to repulse countervailing pressures of social division. So, too, in the absence of deeply felt ideologies, a pragmatic opposition to the party in power was easily able to develop a dualism of the "ins" and the "outs." Moreover, once the two-party system was launched, its very existence fostered the values of moderation, compromise, and political pragmatism that ensure its perpetuation. It also created deep loyalties within the American public to one party or the other and attachments to the two-party system itself.

DEVIATIONS FROM TWO-PARTYISM

Pockets of One-Party Monopoly

To argue the existence of only two competitive parties is not to argue that their competitiveness is spread evenly over the country. There have been substantial statewide and local pockets of one-partyism in the United

States. The states of the Deep South have been the country's most celebrated area of one-party domination. Much the same could be said in the past of the rocklike Republicanism of Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont. Also, scattered throughout the country today are thousands of one-party cities, towns, and counties in which the city hall or county courthouse comes perilously close to being the property of one party. Parallel to the question of the causes of the two-party system, therefore, is the question of the causes of one-partyism within it.

One-partyism set within the context of broad, two-party competitiveness often reflects a "fault" in the distribution of the electorates of the competitive parties. Since the 1930s, the major American parties, especially in national elections, have divided the American electorate roughly along lines of socioeconomic status and issues—a point that will be developed later. Suffice it here to note that Democratic loyalties have been far more common among ethnic, racial, and religious minority groups, urban workers, and lower socioeconomic status (SES) groups in general. The Republicans, on the other hand, have drawn a disproportionate number of loyalists from higher status and rural groups.

Thus, one-partyism may result from a maldistribution of the characteristics that normally divide the parties. The local constituency may be too small to contain a perfect sample of SES characteristics and thus of competitive politics—hence the noncompetitiveness of the "safe" Democratic congressional districts of the older, lower-middle-class or black neighborhoods of the cities and the "safe" Republican districts of the more fashionable and spacious suburbs. In other words, the more heterogeneous are its people, the more likely the district is to foster competitiveness.

Alternatively, one-partyism may result from some potent local basis of party loyalty that overrides the SES dualism. In the classic one-partyism of the American South, regional loyalties long overrode the factors that were dividing Americans into two parties in most of the rest of the country. Reaction to the Republican party as the party of abolition, Lincoln, the Civil War, and the hated Reconstruction was so pervasive, even generations after the fact, that the impact of the SES division was greatly diluted. It was thus a one-partyism based on isolation from the factors that normally produced two-party competitiveness. Competitiveness also may reflect the influences of local personages, of powerful officeholders, of local traditions, or of local political conflict, such as that between a dominant industry and its disgruntled employees.

One may also look at these pockets of one-partyism another way. The American party system is made up of two electorally competitive parties, which is really to say that it is formed by two parties competing to enlist a majority of the American electorate. If these two parties were fully competitive in every constituency in the country, they would

approach a fifty-fifty division of the electorate. They must compete at various disadvantages, however; and frequently, in some area or locality, one party works at a disadvantage that it never manages to overcome. The result is the ability of the other party to maintain a one-party domination. The understanding of one-partyism, then, requires an understanding of the various kinds of competitive disadvantages a party may face.

The competitive disadvantages begin with stubborn party loyalties. Voters are not easily moved from their attachments to a party, even though the reasons for the original attachment have long passed. Also, a party trying to pull itself into competitiveness may find itself caught in a vicious circle of impotence. Its inability to win elections limits its ability to recruit resources, including manpower and attractive candidates for office, because as a chronic loser it offers so little chance of achieving political goals. It may even find itself without an effective appeal to the electorate. The Republican party in the South, for example, found for many years that the Democrats had preempted the salient political issues in that region.

Today, the would-be competitive party finds disadvantage taking another form: the formation of party loyalties along lines determined by national or statewide political debate. If the Democratic party is identified nationally with the aspirations of the poor and minority groups, its appeal in a homogeneous, affluent suburb may be limited. Thus, a nationalized politics may increasingly rob the local party organization of the chance to develop strength based on its own issues, personalities, and traditions. To the extent that party loyalties and identifications grow out of national politics, competitiveness (or the lack of it) may be out of the control of the local party organizations.

There are, to be sure, other sources of competitive disadvantage. The dominant party may shore up its supremacy by carefully calculated legislative districting, which is why parties are especially concerned with winning state legislative majorities in the second year of each decade when district lines are to be redrawn. Another common device for preserving majority party dominance was the malapportionment of legislative districts, a decades-long practice halted by the Supreme Court in the 1960s. In the past, southern Democrats also stifled competition by maintaining election laws that disenfranchised blacks and poor whites. In addition to these institutional buttresses to one-partyism, of course, powerful party organization and sedulous recruitment of political talent can maintain superiority. Finally, the normal processes of socialization and social conformity work to the disadvantage of a local party trying to become competitive. That force of conformity, a number of observers have argued, works especially against competitiveness in the closely knit, socially sensitive world of American suburbia.

The Third Parties

The major party hegemony is occasionally challenged. Periodically, a new minor party flashes onto the national scene, getting attention from both scholars and journalists out of proportion to its electoral impact. Only seven minor parties in all of American history have carried so much as a single state in a presidential election and only one (the Progressive party) has done so twice (see box). More important, perhaps, no minor party has come close to winning the presidency. The best minor party records so far were set in 1912 by Teddy Roosevelt and the Progressives, with 17 percent of the electoral vote and 27 percent of the popular vote. That candidacy was, in fact, the only minor party candidacy ever to run ahead of one of the major party candidates in either electoral or popular vote.

Between the peaks of third-party influence are the valleys. In 1964, for example, the leading minor party—the Socialist Labor party—attracted only 45,168 voters, and the minor parties altogether polled only one-fifth of one percent of the popular vote. After the George Wallace phenomenon of 1968—almost 10 million votes for Wallace alone—minor party strength ebbed once again. The total minor party vote for president was only 541,775 in 1984 (Table 2.3), or about 0.6 percent of the total popular vote for president. More telling, perhaps, was the independent, nonparty campaign of John Anderson in 1980, which drew more than four times the votes of the minor parties combined: 5,720,060.

Third-party successes also can be found below the presidential level, but they are as rare as they are captivating. For every example of third-party success in local elections, such as the recent election of a socialist mayor in Burlington, Vermont, there are thousands of cases where the major parties have enjoyed unchallenged hegemony. The picture at the state level is even clearer. Of over one-thousand governors elected since 1875, only thirteen ran solely on a third-party ticket and another three (all since 1931) were independents. Third-party candidates have been more successful in running for Congress, but the impression gained at high tide when they have won more than ten seats (in 1878, 1880, 1890, 1898, 1912, 1934, and 1936) must be qualified by the low proportion of third-party seats even then and the paucity of third-party representatives in other years. It can be safely said that the Democratic

The Big Little Parties

To put the minor parties in some perspective, we need some point of calibration; that is, we need some measure by which we can compare their electoral strength to that of the major parties and by which we can separate the stronger and weaker minor parties. If we take as a measure the ability to draw at least 10 percent of the popular vote for president, only four parties qualify (numbers 2, 4, 5, and 7 below). If we choose as a more liberal but certainly modest test of strength the ability to carry one state—just one—in a presidential election, only seven minor parties in American history qualify:

1. *Anti-Masonic party.* 1832: 7 electoral votes; 8 percent of the popular vote. A party opposed to the alleged secret political influence of the Masons; later part of an anti-Jackson coalition that formed the Whig party.
2. *American (Know-Nothing) party.* 1856: 8 electoral votes; 22 percent of the popular vote. A nativist party opposed to open immigration and in favor of electing native-born Americans to public office.
3. *People's (Populist) party.* 1892: 22 electoral votes; 8 percent of the popular vote. An outgrowth of a movement of agrarian protest opposed to the economic power of bankers, railroads, and fuel industries and in favor of a graduated income tax, government regulation, and currency reform (especially free silver coinage).
4. *Progressive (Bull Moose) party.* 1912: 88 electoral votes; 27 percent of the popular vote. An offshoot of the Republican party, it favored liberal reforms such as expanded suffrage, improved working conditions, conservation of resources, and antimonopoly laws.
5. *Progressive party.* 1924: 13 electoral votes; 17 percent of the popular vote. A continuation of the 1912 Progressive tradition with the candidacy of a man who had been one of its founders and leaders (Robert La Follette).
6. *States Rights Democratic (Dixiecrat) party.* 1948: 39 electoral votes; 2 percent of the popular vote. A southern splinter of the Democratic party, it ran as *the* Democratic party in the South on a conservative, segregationist platform.
7. *American Independent party.* 1968: 46 electoral votes; 14 percent of the popular vote. The party of George Wallace; traditionalist, segregationist, and opposed to the authority of the national government.

TABLE 2.3 *Popular Votes Cast for Minor Parties in 1980 and 1984 Presidential Elections*

Parties: 1980[a]	Vote: 1980	Parties: 1984[a]	Vote: 1984
Libertarian	921,299	Libertarian	228, 314
Citizens	234,294	Citizens	72,200
Communist	45,023	Populist	66,336
American Independent	41,268	Independent Alliance	46,852
Socialist Workers	38,737	Communist	36,386
Right to Life	32,327	Socialist Workers	24,706
Peace and Freedom	18,116	Workers' World	17,985
Workers' World	13,300	American	13,161
Others and scattered	39,244	Workers' League	10,801
	1,383,608	Others and scattered	7,445
			524, 186

[a]John Anderson in 1980 and Lyndon LaRouche in 1984 ran as independents rather than party candidates and their totals (5,720,060 for Anderson and 78,807 for LaRouche) are not included in the table.

Source *Guide to U. S. Elections* (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly, Inc., 1986.)

and Republican parties have monopolized American electoral politics at all levels of competition.

The very looseness with which we customarily use the term *third party* to designate all minor parties may indicate that third place is as good (or bad) as last place in a two-party system. It would be a serious mistake, however, to treat the minor parties as indistinguishable. They differ in origin, purpose, and function, and American political history affords plentiful examples of their activities to illustrate those differences.[14]

Although it is true, first of all, that most minor parties are parties of *ideology and issue*, they differ in the scope of that commitment. The narrow, highly specific commitment of the Prohibition, Vegetarian, and Right to Life parties is apparent in their names. In the 1840s, the Liberty party and its successor, the Free Soil party, campaigned largely on the single issue of the abolition of slavery. At the other extremes are the

[14]The literature on American third parties is rich and varied. Among the best contributions are John D. Hicks, *The Populist Revolt* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1931); Richard Hofstadter, *The Age of Reform* (New York: Knopf, 1955); David A. Shannon, *The Socialist Party of America* (New York: Macmillan, 1955); K. M. Schmidt, *Henry A. Wallace: Quixotic Crusade 1948* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1960); George Thayer, *The Farther Shores of Politics* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1967); Marshall Frady, *Wallace* (New York: World, 1968); Daniel A. Mazmanian, *Third Parties in Presidential Elections* (Washington, D.C.: 1974); and Steven J. Rosenstone, Roy L. Behr, and Edward H. Lazarus, *Third Parties in America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984).

parties that have the broadest ideological commitments—the Marxist parties and the recent profusion of conservative parties. The Libertarian party, for example—the leading minor party in recent years—advocates a complete withdrawal of government from most of its present programs and responsibilities (see box). In the middle ground between specific issues and total ideologies, the examples are infinitely varied. The farmer-labor parties of economic protest—the Greenback, Populist, and Progressive parties—ran on an extensive program of government regulation of the economy (especially of economic bigness) and social welfare legislation. The Progressive party of 1948 combined a program of social reform and civil liberties with a foreign policy of friendship with the Soviet Union and reduction of Cold War tensions.

The minor parties differ, too, in their *origin*. Some were literally imported into the United States. Much of the early Socialist party strength

The Libertarian Alternative

Founded in 1972, the Libertarian party grew quickly to become the leading vote-getter among the minor parties in 1976, 1980, and 1984. The party has received its greatest support in "frontier" western states, winning in 1980 almost 12 percent of the popular vote in Alaska and over 2 percent of the vote in Arizona, Colorado, Montana, Oregon, and Wyoming. Its presidential candidate that year was a California lawyer, Edward E. Clark. Clark had run for governor of California in 1978 and had drawn more than 5 percent of the total vote. Some of his political views were reported in a *New York Times* account of one of his press conferences in early 1980:

> "Ultimately," the Libertarian said at a news conference here today, "we believe in the complete privatization of society," with a "vastly restricted" government and a corresponding huge reduction in the taxes that finance the Government.
>
> Mr. Clark told a questioner that eventually he advocated returning highway and street systems to private ownership, "the way they used to be" under Colonial toll-road practices.
>
> In foreign affairs, the Libertarian candidate advocates a "non-interventionist policy," letting other nations defend themselves, reducing defense expenditures substantially and withdrawing from the United Nations and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, while maintaining extensive social and cultural relations abroad.
>
> Warren Weaver, Jr., in *New York Times*, January 22, 1980.

in the United States came from the freethinkers and radicals who fled Europe after the failures of the revolutions of 1848. Socialist strength in cities such as Milwaukee, New York, and Cincinnati reflected the concentrations of liberal German immigrants there. Other parties—especially the Granger and Populist parties and their successors—were parties of indigenous social protest, born of social inequality and economic hardship in the marginal farmlands of America. Other minor parties began as splinters or factions of one of the major parties. The Gold Democrats of 1896, the Progressives (the Bull Moose party) of 1912, and the Dixiecrats of 1948 come to mind. So great were their objections to the platforms and candidates of their parent parties that the Progressives and Dixiecrats contested the presidential elections of 1912 and 1948 with their own slates and programs.

Recent presidential elections have seen the entry of a new variety of minor party. Found chiefly in the southern states, these have been dissident movements within the Democratic party that have refused to run as separate parties on the ballot. Instead, they have exploited two other strategies. In some instances, they have attempted to run their own candidate (rather than the one chosen by the party's national convention) as the official presidential candidate of the Democratic party in the state. The only four states that J. Strom Thurmond carried in 1948 for the Dixiecrats (Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi, and South Carolina) were those in which he, rather than Harry Truman, was the candidate of the Democratic party. George Wallace also captured the Alabama Democratic label in 1968, displacing Hubert Humphrey as the Democratic candidate in that state. In other cases, these party movements have run unpledged slates of presidential electors. In 1960, unpledged slates ran in Louisiana as a States Rights party and in Mississippi as the Democratic party (although there was another Democratic party ticket pledged to Kennedy). In 1964, another unpledged Democratic slate of electors ran in Alabama and prevented the Johnson-Humphrey ticket from appearing on the Alabama ballot.

Finally, the third parties differ in their *tactics*. For some, their mere existence is a protest against what they believe is the unqualified support of the status quo by the major parties. Operating as a political party also offers a reasonably effective educational opportunity. The publicity value of the ballot is good, and with it often goes mass media attention the party could not otherwise hope for. Indeed, many of these parties have freely accepted their electoral failures, for they have chosen, by their very nature, not to compromise ideological principles for electoral success. The Prohibition party, for example, has contested every presidential election since 1872 except 1980 with unflagging devotion to the cause of temperance but equally strong indifference to electoral success (it peaked in 1892 with little more than 2 percent of the popular vote).

Other minor parties, however, do have serious electoral ambitions. Often their goal is local, although today they find it difficult to control an American city as the Socialists did, or an entire state as the Progressives did. More realistically, today they may hope to hold a balance of power between the major parties in the manner of the Liberals in New York. In the 1965 mayoral election, for instance, John Lindsay's vote on the Republican ticket was less than that of his Democratic opponent; his vote reached the necessary plurality only with the addition of the votes he won in the Liberal party column. Or a party may, as did the Dixiecrats of 1948 and Wallace's American Independent party of 1968, play for the biggest stakes of all: the presidency. Both parties hoped that by carrying a number of states, most likely southern states, they might prevent the major party tickets from winning the necessary majority of votes in the electoral college, thus throwing the stalemated election into the House of Representatives. The Wallace effort of 1968 faltered because Richard Nixon carried an unexpected number of large states.

Recent elections have witnessed a significant change in third-party presidential politics: the appearance of independent presidential candidates, sometimes on third-party tickets created solely as their personal vehicles but just as often without even a nominal party label. George Wallace's American Independent party was dedicated to his own ambitions and had little more than the degree of organization required by the states for a place on the ballot. When he backed away from the party's leadership to contest for the Democratic presidential nomination in 1972, the party slipped into ineffectuality, finally disappearing in 1984. In a similar vein, Eugene McCarthy, a candidate for the Democratic nomination in 1968, later flirted with third-party and independent possibilities, eventually running as an independent in 1976. John Anderson unsuccessfully sought the Republican presidential nomination and then ran as an independent in 1980, but he declined to repeat his independent candidacy in 1984 in spite of guaranteed federal funding for his campaign. The common denominator in all these efforts, as well as Strom Thurmond's Dixiecrat candidacy in 1948, is that they were vehicles for a single candidate and thus were not devoted to fielding a party ticket or building a third-party organization. In this important respect, they differ from earlier third-party quests for the presidency, such as the emergence of the Republican party before the Civil War, the Populists several decades later, and even the Progressive campaigns of the second and third decades of the twentieth century—all of which were aimed at creating a new major party. These recent independent rather than truly third-party presidential bids may signal a transformation of the very nature of third-partyism in America.

Their variety is endless, but what have the minor parties contributed to American politics? For better or for worse, they have influenced, perhaps even altered, the courses of a few presidential elections. By

threatening—about once a generation—to deadlock the electoral college, they probably have kept alive movements to reform it. Beyond their role as potential electoral spoiler, however, can they count any significant accomplishments? The answer, to be candid, is that they have not assumed the importance that all the attention lavished on them suggests.

One line of argument has maintained persistently that the minor parties' early adoption of unpopular programs ultimately has forced the major parties to adopt them. Its proponents point to the platforms of the Socialist party in the years before the 1930s. The issue is whether or not the Socialists' advocacy for twenty or thirty years of such measures as a minimum wage had anything to do with their enactment in the 1930s. Unfortunately, there is no way of testing what might have happened had there been no Socialist party. The evidence suggests, however, that the major parties grasp new programs and proposals in their "time of ripeness"—when large numbers of Americans have done so and when such a course is therefore politically useful to the parties. In their earlier, maturing time, new issues need not depend on minor parties for their advocacy. Interest groups, the mass media, influential individuals, and factions within the major parties may perform the propagandizing role, often more effectively than a minor party. More than one commentator has noted that the cause of prohibition in the United States was served far more effectively by interest groups such as the Anti-Saloon League than by the Prohibition party.

In view of their limited impact on American politics, then, why do some voters nonetheless find a third-party alternative attractive? The immediate answer to this question is that few voters have supported third-party candidates under even the most auspicious of circumstances. In only three presidential elections (1856, 1860, and 1912) has the third-party total exceeded 20 percent of the popular vote, and only the first was a situation in which voters were consciously supporting a third party. In most years, third parties have failed to poll more than 5 percent of the popular vote. They labor under a number of constraints on their electoral potential, not the least of which is the self-fulfilling prophecy of many voters that a vote for a third party is wasted.[15]

Yet some voters do end up casting a third-party ballot. A recent investigation of third-party presidential voting from 1840 to 1980 explains their behavior as the result of major party failures "to do what the electorate expects of them—reflect the issue preferences of voters, manage the economy, select attractive and acceptable candidates, and build voter loyalty to the parties and the political system."[16] What this

[15]Evidence of the effects of voter skepticism about their chances is the fact that almost all third-party presidential candidates in this century have received less support on election day than they had exhibited in public opinion polls prior to the election. Rosenstone, Behr, and Lazarus, *Third Parties in America*, p. 41.

[16]*Ibid.*, p. 162.

suggests is that the power of the American two-party system embraces its alternatives, permitting their development only when the major parties are failing. The most common niche for third parties, in fact, may be in the period of transition from one party alignment system to the next, just before a realignment takes place.[17]

Nonpartisan Local Elections

One of the crowning achievements of the Progressive movement was to restrict party competition in local elections by removing party labels from most local ballots. Roughly three-quarters of American towns and cities now conduct their local elections on a nonpartisan basis. Therefore, the American political system contains many local islands of nonpartisanship, which form another deviation from the prevailing two-party system.

While this reform certainly has made local politics less ostensibly partisan, by itself it probably has not removed partisan influences where parties are already strong. British politics, for example, remains highly partisan despite a nonpartisan ballot, and the nonpartisan ballot in Chicago did not prevent the development of a powerful political party machine there. The resourceful local party organization still can carry out its candidate selection and election functions in the presence of a nonpartisan ballot, even if the task of communicating party endorsements to voters is more difficult. But, along with other antiparty measures, nonpartisanship probably has contributed to the erosion of local party strength.

What makes it difficult to assess the effects of nonpartisanship is the tendency for it to have been adopted under conditions that favor nonpartisanship in elections to begin with. This reform took root more commonly in cities and towns with weak parties and for offices in which the traditional American aversion to party practices is most pronounced. Most large northeastern cities, where strong party machines were the most visible targets of the progressives, by contrast, were able to resist the reforms and retain partisan local elections to this day.

Beyond the obvious changes in the role of parties, what are the consequences of nonpartisanship for local politics? Many political scientists believe that a move to nonpartisan elections shifts the balance of power among contending partisan forces in a pro-Republican direction rather than rendering politics any less partisan or more highminded. Without obvious party labels for candidates, other cues become important to the voter. The greater resources and community visibility typically

[17]This point is developed more fully in Paul Allen Beck, "The Electoral Cycle and Patterns of American Politics," *British Journal of Political Science* 9 (1979): 129-56. The period of party decay preceding a realignment is usually termed a "dealignment."

enjoyed by higher status, and usually Republican, candidates can provide important advantages under these circumstances.[18]

WHITHER THE AMERICAN TWO-PARTY SYSTEM?

There are signs that the two-party hegemony is becoming more complete, even as the voter loyalties to the major parties have been weakening. Third-party deviations from the major party duopoly are less common today than ever before. One-partyism in the states and localities is receding with the integration of the South into the mainstream of American politics and the weakening of urban machines. Only the continuation of nonpartisan elections in local politics and the recent appearance of independent presidential candidates prevent competition between the Democratic and Republican parties from being "the only game in town."

It is ironic that third parties are doing less well at a time in which the traditional barriers to their access to the ballot are being challenged. The post-World War II movement toward stiffer state requirements for third parties to qualify for the ballot is being reversed through court action. With Supreme Court intervention, George Wallace gained access to his fiftieth state ballot in the 1968 presidential election and set the legal precedent for subsequent candidates to overcome state attempts to restrict places on the ballot to candidates of the major parties (see box). John Anderson in 1980 spent a good deal of his time and money in assuring that his name would be before the American voters as an independent (see box). These actions should pave the way for a relaxation of the severe restrictions many states have imposed on ballot access for non-major-party candidates, but it may take considerable time and effort before court rulings on particular cases produce a more open electoral process throughout the nation.

In some ways, the financial barriers to challenges from outside the two major parties are less imposing as well. The Wallace campaign astounded experts by raising and spending some $7 million, by far the largest sum ever spent by a minor party campaign in American history. This achievement demonstrated that a nationwide third-party campaign could attract substantial financial backing. Public funding of presidential campaigns adds another possibility by opening the public treasury to candidates outside the major-party mainstream. John Anderson was the first "outside" candidate to receive federal financing. By polling more than 5 percent of the popular vote as an independent, he qualified for over $4 million in public funds. This money was dispersed to him after the election, but his vote total made him eligible for public funding in the next election—an opportunity he passed up by choosing not to run. A future third-party candidate, or an independent like Anderson, could guarantee a financial base for subsequent campaigns by garnering

[18]For a careful review of the evidence on the partisan effects of nonpartisan elections and a demurrer from the conventional view that they favor GOP candidates, see Susan Welch and Timothy Bledsoe, "The Partisan Consequences of Nonpartisan Elections and the Changing Nature of Urban Politics," *American Journal of Political Science* 30 (1986): 128–39.

Gaining Access to the Ballot: A Tale of Three Candidates

George Wallace, 1968

George Wallace's lawyers stood before the United States Supreme Court in early October of 1968 to plead that the Court strike down Ohio's election law and permit Wallace's name to be printed on the Ohio ballot as a presidential candidate. It was a scene awash in irony, for Wallace had often excoriated the Court for infringing on states' rights and now his attorneys were asking the Court to overturn an action traditionally within a state's prerogative. The Ohio law required that a new party collect by early February a number of signatures equal to 15 percent of the votes cast in the last statewide election. To gain a place on the ballot under this law, Wallace would have needed 433,000 signatures very early in his campaign. He sued instead. The Ohio law had been passed, the state argued in its defense, for a legitimate purpose—to preserve the existing two-party system and to make sure small pluralities would not win elections. By a vote of six to three, the Court disagreed. It ruled that the Ohio law violated the equal protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment in restricting the rights of voting and association of supporters of minor parties.[19]

John Anderson, 1980

A substantial part of John Anderson's independent campaign for the presidency in 1980 also involved prodigious efforts to gain a position on each of fifty state ballots. Petitions with large numbers of signatures were required in most states, and formal legal action was necessary in at least ten. The Anderson cam-

(Continued on next page)

[19]The case was *Williams v. Rhodes*, 393 U.S. 23 (1968).

paign in many states was built around the drive to gain access to the ballot in the hope that these activities would gain attention and help to create a strong organization. Unfortunately, the ballot access campaign spent $2.5 million and left little money for advertising. Instead of an August million-dollar advertising campaign planned for Anderson by David Garth, the campaign was almost that amount in debt by then. Anderson also faced a second hurdle. Some states imposed early filing deadlines on nonparty, independent candidates. Ohio was one of them, and Anderson, like Wallace before him, took the state to court. The issue finally was resolved in Anderson's favor in 1983 when the Supreme Court ruled that Ohio and other states could not discriminate against independent candidates seeking a place on the presidential ballot by imposing early deadlines.[20]

Adlai Stevenson III, 1986

Six years later, the Democratic nominee for governor in Illinois, Adlai Stevenson, faced a dilemma of a different sort. Nominated along with him in the party primaries as his running mates for lieutenant governor and secretary of state were disciples of Lyndon LaRouche, not regular Democrats. Finding them unacceptable, Stevenson unsuccessfully sought to have the party nominations stripped from them. Then he rejected his party's nomination to run as an independent. By Illinois law, however, independents have to file before the party primaries, and the courts ruled that Stevenson therefore could not qualify for the ballot as an independent. Ultimately, Stevenson ran at the head of his own third-party ticket. To satisfy Illinois law, this ticket had to have a full slate of candidates. Stevenson chose as his third-party running mates for lieutenant governor and secretary of state the two party-endorsed candidates who had been upset in the primaries, then added token candidates to fill out the remainder of the slate.

a similar share of the popular vote. Offsetting the advantages of this new campaign finance environment, though, is the enormous cost of modern campaigns, which probably restricts the advantages to only a few highly visible third-party or independent candidates.

[20]This account of Anderson's efforts to gain access to the ballot draws upon Jack W. Germond and Jules Witcover, *Blue Smoke and Mirrors: How Reagan Won and Why Carter Lost the Election of 1980* (New York: Viking, 1981), pp. 236–37. The Supreme Court case was *Anderson v. Celebrezze* 460 U.S. 780 (1983).

George Wallace also solved—if only in part—the problem of a minor party's becoming a national party. Almost all the effective minor party activity of the past century has been intensely local. Each of the minor parties has been concentrated in one state or region or in a city or two. Socialists came from Germany in the middle of the nineteenth century and established Socialist enclaves in cities such as New York, Milwaukee, and Cincinnati. Regional agricultural depressions gave rise to Populism and other similar movements of the plains and prairies. Traditionally, third parties have fed on local loyalties, interests, and appeals, but those appeals increasingly have lost out in a mobile society that receives the same political messages via the same radio and television networks, the same magazines, and the same press services and syndicated columnists. Thus, minor parties have found it hard to become national parties. But, the access to a nationalized media that money can buy, coupled with the 1980 precedent for opening the televised debates to serious candidates beyond the major party nominees, give minor parties or independent candidates a real opportunity to reach a national audience of voters. Of course only the rare candidate without major party ties will be able to exploit these opportunities.

The proliferation of third party and independent presidential candidates in recent years is a stark contrast to the demise of third-party candidates in other contests. Third-party and independent members of Congress, quite common in the early years of the two-party system, have been rare throughout the twentieth century, but never so rare as in recent years (Figure 2.1). Not since 1952 has a U.S. Representative or a governor been elected solely on a third-party ticket, and only one U.S. Senator was elected as a true third-party candidate—James Buckley of New York, who ran for reelection as a Republican. Moreover, during this same period, major-party candidates have completely dominated the state legislatures. Unlike the situation in earlier times, there are presently no local enclaves of considerable minor party strength anywhere in the United States. Independent candidates have been relatively more successful, but their very independence prevents them from presenting any pervasive challenge to the two-party system.

What, then, can we predict for minor parties in American politics? There will continue to be a few local third parties that reflect special local conditions, especially quirks in local election laws. The classic instance, of course, is that of the New York minor parties—the Liberals, the Conservatives, and the Right to Life party. They exist because they can nominate the candidates of a major party to run under their party labels. New York election law thus makes them important brokers in New York elections. For national impact, however, minor parties generally will ride the coattails of a well-known, charismatic candidate. That appears to be the lesson of George Wallace and John Anderson.

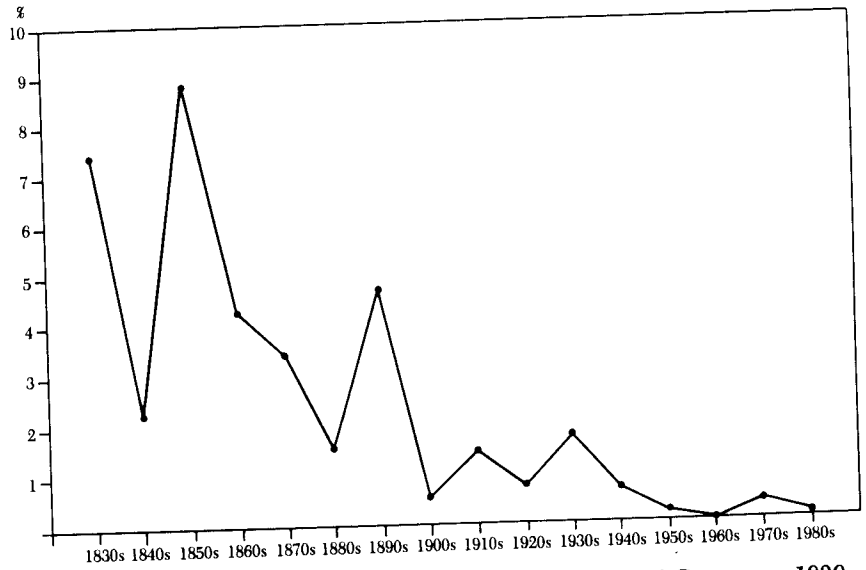


FIGURE 2.1 *Third-Party and Independent Members of Congress: 1830s–1980s*

Note Figures are percentages of third party and independent Senators and Representatives during each decade. 1980s figures are through 1988.

Source Joseph A. Schlesinger, "On the Theory of Party Organization," *Journal of Politics* 46 (1984): 370. Data for 1980s from the *Statistical Abstract of the United States* (1987).

It also appears to be the lesson of attempts to found racial and ethnic parties.[21]

Not only does the two-party system seem to be less threatened by true minor parties, but there are signs of a second general trend in the American party system: the increasing competitiveness between the major parties. No regions of the country, and very few states, can be thought of as wholly one-party areas. In no state from 1974 to 1985, for example, did one party win all of the contests for senator, governor, and president. And in only Hawaii, Indiana, and Oregon did a single party monopolize all but one of these offices. Yet of these three, only Hawaii comes close to being a true one-party state. The states also are more competitive now than they were in the 1946–63 period in contests for the state

[21]On the black parties, see Hanes Walton, Jr., *Black Political Parties: A Historical and Political Analysis* (New York: Free Press, 1972). More generally, on black politics in the South, see David Campbell and Joe R. Feagin, "Black Politics in the South: A Descriptive Analysis," *Journal of Politics* 37 (1975): 129–59. For an account of the early Texas successes of La Raza Unida, see Neal R. Peirce, *The Megastates of America* (New York: Norton, 1972), pp. 558–63.

legislature and governor (Table 2.2). Leading the way toward a better balance between the major parties are the traditionally one-party southern states, all of which were more competitive than in the earlier period. The South has experienced even more GOP success in recent presidential elections. In fact, it may now be more favorable to Republicans than to Democrats at the presidential level.

To take the longer view, presidents increasingly have been winning with popular vote percentages that vary less and less from one state to another. Figure 2.2 indicates that the standard deviations from the national average of the presidential popular vote in the states have been diminishing in this century. In other words, presidents are no longer carrying some states by fat margins while losing others in a similarly lopsided way. As the overwhelming votes of the one-party states are eliminated, presidential candidates tend to amass more nearly uniform

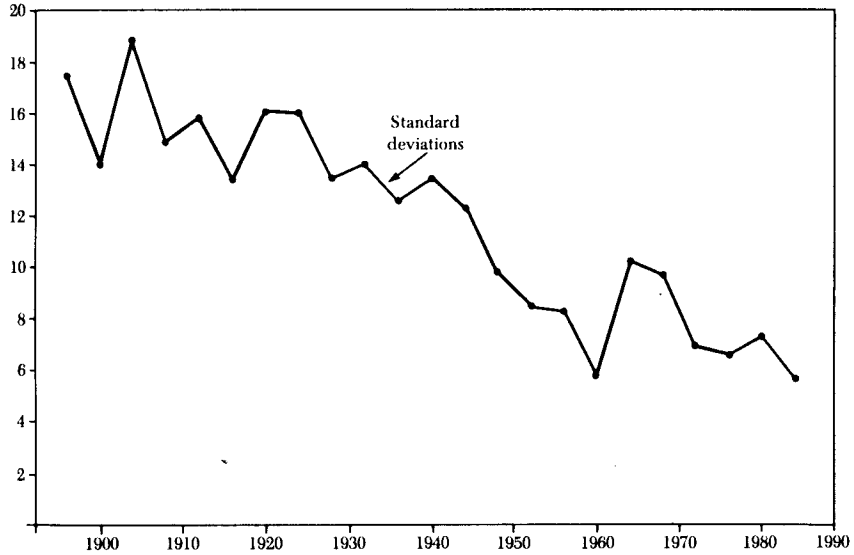


FIGURE 2.2 *The Growth of National Two-Party Competiveness: Standard Deviations of the Presidential Popular Vote in the States: 1896–1984*

Note The standard deviation measures the amount of dispersal of items around the average. It discriminates, therefore, among dispersals in the following three series: 3, 6, 9; 4, 6, 8; and 5, 6, 7. Even though the means and medians of each series are identical (6), the standard deviations decline in the order in which the three series are listed. The data on which the calculations are based are the percentages of the total vote in each state won by the winning candidate.

vote percentages all across the country. Competitiveness, then, is spreading increasingly across the fifty states.[22]

This spread of major party competitiveness reflects the same nationalization of life and politics in the United States that threatens local minor parties. It is increasingly difficult for one major party to maintain its dominance on the basis of appeals and traditions quite different from those in the rest of the country—as, for example, the Democrats did in the South from 1875 to 1950. Furthermore, the social and economic conditions that support one-partyism are disappearing. Fading especially are the political monopolies of powerful groups that once dominated the politics of a single state from a base in cotton, copper, oil, silver, or organized labor. As Americans move about the country, as industry comes to formerly agrarian states, as more and varied people move to the urban centers, each state increasingly becomes a microcosm of the diversity of life and interest that undergirds the national competition between the two parties. National mass media and national political leaders also bring the symbols and dialectics of Democratic-Republican conflict to all corners of the country. Thus, the party electorates are increasingly recruited by the appeals of national candidates and issues—regardless of whatever special appeals the local party organization makes. The shifting of important state contests away from presidential election years, now extended to about three-quarters of the states, can mute the influence of national forces to some degree, but it is only a small counterweight to their inexorable power.

State party organizations and leaders cannot hold out against the political issues and images that engulf the rest of the country. They cannot easily set up their own competitive subsystem. As a result, a creeping competitiveness accompanies the end of one-partyism at the state level. First, the states become competitive in national elections; then the old one-party ties and fears slowly break down, and competition seeps down to local elections. Pennsylvania, for example, became competitive in presidential politics in the 1930s after forty years of domination by the GOP; by the 1950s and 1960s, the state was competitive in state and

[22]The oft-noted decrease in marginal or competitive seats in both Congress and the state legislatures at first glance appears to be moving against this trend. However, that so many legislative seats are "safe" for the incumbent but not for a party suggests that the decline in marginal seats is only an eddy, sustained by the power of incumbency, against the stronger current toward greater competitiveness. The seminal study of marginality is David Mayhew, "Congressional Elections: The Case of the Vanishing Marginals," *Polity* 6 (1974): 295-317. For evidence that recent declines in congressional competition continue a trend since the 1890s, see James C. Garand and Donald A. Gross, "Changes in the Vote Margins for Congressional Candidates: A Specification of Historical Trends," *American Political Science Review* 78 (1984): 17-30. For a similar view of competition in state legislative races, see David Ray and John Havick, "A Longitudinal Analysis of Party Competition in State Legislative Elections," *American Journal of Political Science* 25 (1981): 119-28.

local politics. Beginning in the 1960s, the same process was under way in a number of southern states.

Ironically, the increasing degree of two-party competition may create a set of vexing problems for the American parties. By reducing pockets of one-party strength, the new competitiveness threatens a source of stability in the party system. When a party holds noncompetitive strongholds of its own, it can survive even a catastrophic national loss through victories and continued officeholding in its own areas of strength. Without those one-party strongholds to fall back on, a losing party in the future may find its loss more sweeping and devastating. Furthermore, the spread of two-party competitiveness expands the scope of party competition and thus makes extra demands on the resources the parties must employ. When one-party areas could be written off in a presidential campaign and election, the area of political combat was reduced. Now the parties must mobilize and organize more resources than ever, for a presidential campaign must be fought in fifty rather than in thirty states.

Nevertheless, the reign of the existing parties and, more generally, of the American two-party system seems secure. The parties' support may not be what it was, but their resilience is still remarkable. Talk of the imminent decline of the Republicans after Watergate and the losses of 1974 and 1976 was silenced by the party's resurgence in the 1978 and 1980 elections. Similar talk of Democratic decline in the 1980s must be tempered by recognition of the party's continuing strength in Congress and the state houses, not to mention a Republican party without Ronald Reagan at the top of the ticket after 1984. Changes in the parties and in their appeals, it appears, will have to take place within the party system we have known for more than a century.