What Are Parties?

- Parties are organized groups that attempt to influence government by electing their members to office.
- The constitutional system of federalism, separation of powers, and bicameralism makes it difficult for one party to gain complete control of the government.
- Still, parties are critical in making elections and government work.
Building campaign organizations requires collective action.
- Parties get their structure from the electoral process; in every district, there is a party unit.
- Smaller groups band together to find power within a major party.

A two-way street: Groups provide parties with resources and parties provide groups with influence over government.
Why Parties? Collective Choice in Government

• As permanent coalitions in policy-making processes, parties facilitate action.
  – As individual political actors sharing a label, members are incentivized to work together.
  – While there are disagreements among those actors, they have more in common than with the other party.

• Action would be unthinkable in Congress without parties
Why Parties? Dealing with the Problem of Ambition

• Unchecked ambition is a problem for the political system.
  – Parties channel ambition through a system of career advancement.
  – Parties allow for the internal resolution of conflict through primaries.
• Because party members share a “brand name,” conflict is effectively contained.
Clicker Question

Which of the following is NOT a reason that political parties form?

A. to deal with the problem of ambition
B. to check presidential power
C. to facilitate collective choice in government
D. to facilitate elections
Which of the following is NOT a reason that political parties form?

A. to deal with the problem of ambition
B. **to check presidential power**
C. to facilitate collective choice in government
D. to facilitate elections
Functions of Parties: Recruiting Candidates

- Candidates must be found to run for each of the thousands of elective offices at the national, state, and local levels.
- Finding candidates is not easy, as running for office and holding office is difficult.
- Finding good candidates who can raise the necessary money and who can appeal to the public is even harder.
Functions of Parties: Nominating Candidates

• Nomination is the process by which parties select their candidates to run for office.
• There are generally two ways to do this:
  – Convention: a meeting of party leaders to choose nominees
  – Primary: registered party members choose the nominee in an election
• Conventions tend to choose insiders, while primaries allow for more outsiders.
Nominating Processes

Results are reported to county board of elections and the secretary of state. Ballots are printed and election is administered at government expense.

**TRADITIONAL ROUTE**
- Convention or caucus: Delegates vote for candidates or party.
- Declaration for party’s support: informal designation is the result of a following among committee members and delegates.

**PRIMARY ROUTE**
- Primary election: Enrolled voters choose by secret ballot among two or more designated candidates.
- Formal designation: petition is filed, with a minimum number of signatures, as provided by law.

**INDEPENDENT ROUTE**
- Petition is filed, with a minimum number of signatures, as provided by law.
- Self-declaration or support by small “independent” party.
Types of Primaries

- Closed primary: an election in which only those voters who registered with the party a specified period before Election Day can participate.
- Open primary: an election in which voters can choose on Election Day itself which party’s primary to vote in.
- Closed primaries are preferable from the standpoint of party organizers.
Functions of Parties: Getting Out the Vote (GOTV)

• Parties:
  – Work to register voters
  – Persuade eligible voters to vote

• Parties used to perform these functions by themselves, but today, candidate organizations and outside organizations have significant GOTV operations.
Functions of Parties: Facilitating Electoral Choice

- Voters usually do not know much about the candidates for various offices, and they know less about “down-ballot” candidates.
- Parties provide a “brand name” that can help voters who know nothing about a candidate to make a semi-informed choice.
Functions of Parties: Influencing Government

• Parties build coalitions among aligned interests that develop policy platforms
  – Democrats are the liberal party, pushing for government intervention in the economy, less social regulation, and expansion of civil rights.
  – Republicans are the conservative party, pushing for laissez-faire economics and greater social regulation.
• Parties organize government.
Parties in Government

• Parties have a profound influence on the organization and day-to-day operations of Congress.
  – Majority chooses the Speaker of the House
  – Parties organize the committee system

• The president is the leader of his (or, potentially, her) party in government and works closely with congressional party leaders.
Parties in the Electorate

- Parties are made up of millions of rank-and-file members who “identify” with the party label.
- Once voters form an attachment to one party or the other, it tends to be persistent.
Americans’ Party Identification

The graph illustrates the percentage of people identifying themselves as Democrats, Republicans, or Independents over different presidential administrations from 1939 to 2009. The graph shows significant fluctuations over time, with notable peaks and troughs.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group Affiliations with Parties</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Democrats</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Poor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Urban</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Union members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• African American</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Jewish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Latina/o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Republicans</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Wealthy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Rural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Business community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Whites</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Protestants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Post-graduate degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Men</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Americans’ Party Identification

## Sexual Identity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Republican</th>
<th>Independent</th>
<th>Democrat</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Age

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Republican</th>
<th>Independent</th>
<th>Democrat</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18-29</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-49</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-64</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65 and over</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Race and Religion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Republican</th>
<th>Independent</th>
<th>Democrat</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White Evangelical Protestant</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White Mainline Protestant</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jewish</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unaffiliated</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Race or Ethnicity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Republican</th>
<th>Independent</th>
<th>Democrat</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White, non-Hispanic</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black, non-Hispanic</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education Level</th>
<th>Republican</th>
<th>Independent</th>
<th>Democrat</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High school graduate</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some college</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College graduate</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postgraduate degree</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Income

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income Level</th>
<th>Republican</th>
<th>Independent</th>
<th>Democrat</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than $20,000</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$20,000-$29,999</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$30,000-$49,999</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$50,000-$74,999</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than $75,000</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Ideology

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ideology</th>
<th>Republican</th>
<th>Independent</th>
<th>Democrat</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conservative</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Legend: Republican, Independent, Democrat
Parties as Institutions

- National convention: nominates presidential candidate, sets party platform
- National committee – Raises money, enhances the party’s image, or brand name
- Congressional campaign committees: recruit candidates, raise money, provide services
- State and local organizations: register voters, recruit candidates, raise money
Party Organization

- National convention
- State convention
- Local conventions and caucuses (county, district, precinct)
- National committee
- State committees
- Local committees
- Party voters and activists (primary elections, caucuses)
Parties as Candidate Service Providers

• Parties provide services to candidate organizations:
  – money
  – voter lists and engage in GOTV
  – campaign advice
  – coordinate expenditures

• Parties supplement and support candidate campaigns.
Clicker Question

All of the following are the “spheres” in which parties operate EXCEPT for parties

A. in government.
B. as cities.
C. as institutions.
D. in the electorate.
Clicker Question

All of the following are the “spheres” in which parties operate EXCEPT for parties

A. in government.
B. **as cities**.
C. as institutions.
D. in the electorate.
Party Systems

• A party system is the constellation of parties that are important at any given moment.

• It can be thought of as a state of equilibrium in which the two major parties compete with stable coalitions for a period of time.
Party Systems

• Why two parties?
  – Winner-take-all elections
  – No ideological room for more than two
  – Legal barriers to third parties

• Realignment punctuates the movements between party systems.
Party Systems
The First Party System

• Federalists
  – Washington, Hamilton, Adams
  – Northeasterners, mercantile and business interests

• Democratic-Republicans
  – Jefferson, Madison
  – Southerners, agrarian interests

• The Federalists disappeared after the War of 1812.
The Second Party System: Birth of Mass Mobilization

• Democrats
  – Jackson, Van Buren
  – Stronger in the South and the West
  – Opposed national bank and tariffs

• Whigs
  – Harrison, Tyler
  – Stronger in the Northeast
  – National bank, tariffs, internal improvements
The Third Party System: 1860–1896

- Republicans
  - Lincoln, Grant
  - Strong in the North and in cities
  - Support national power, commercial interests

- Democrats
  - Cleveland
  - Strong in the South and the Midwest
  - Opposed tariffs, supported rural interests

- Party Machines as a Strategic Innovation
The Fourth Party System: 1896–1932

• Republicans
  – McKinley, Theodore Roosevelt, Hoover
  – Strong in the Northeast and the Far West
  – National power and business interests

• Democrats
  – Wilson
  – Strong in the South and the Midwest
  – A rural, minority party

- **Democrats**
  - FDR, Truman, JFK, LBJ
  - Solid South, plus African Americans, Union members, Catholics, and Jews

- **Republicans**
  - Eisenhower
  - Yankee New England and the Midwest
  - Business interests, Protestants
The Sixth Party System

- The 1960s split the New Deal Coalition
  - Southern whites left the party over civil rights.
  - Catholics and religious conservatives moved to the right.
- Both parties became more ideologically homogeneous and more evenly matched in national elections.
Third Parties

• Third parties emerge and disappear just as quickly throughout these party systems.

• Various barriers:
  – No ideological room for third parties
  – Legal advantages for the two major parties
  – Existing party identification
Few Votes for Third Parties

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CANDIDATE</th>
<th>PARTY</th>
<th>VOTE TOTAL</th>
<th>PERCENT OF VOTE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Barack Obama</td>
<td>Democrat</td>
<td>65,907,213</td>
<td>51.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mitt Romney</td>
<td>Republican</td>
<td>60,931,767</td>
<td>47.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gary Johnson</td>
<td>Libertarian</td>
<td>1,275,804</td>
<td>0.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jill Stein</td>
<td>Green</td>
<td>469,501</td>
<td>0.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virgil Goode</td>
<td>Constitution</td>
<td>122,001</td>
<td>0.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roseanne Barr</td>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>67,278</td>
<td>0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rocky Anderson</td>
<td>Justice Party</td>
<td>43,111</td>
<td>0.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tom Hoefling</td>
<td>America’s Party</td>
<td>40,586</td>
<td>0.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richard Duncan</td>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>12,557</td>
<td>0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td></td>
<td>217,669</td>
<td>0.17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Parties and Democracy

• Parties help make democracy work.
• They allow for BOTH
  – Popular participation
  – Collective action
• They provide
  – Voting cues
  – Organization in government
  – Logistical support for campaigns
Clicker Question: Review

Which of the following groups is most likely to support the Democratic nominee for president in 2012?

A. White, evangelical Protestants
B. Union members
C. Wealthy bankers
D. Rural voters
Which of the following groups is most likely to support the Democratic nominee for president in 2012?

A. White, evangelical Protestant
B. **Union members**
C. Wealthy bankers
D. Rural voters
Parties and Democracy

• The three “spheres” are parties
  – in the electorate
  – As institutions
  – In government
• In what ways are parties stronger or weaker in these various spheres than they were 100 years ago?