

# Government 30

## Lecture 11

### Parties and the Electoral Landscape #2

March 13, 2006

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## Announcements

Paper topics posted last Wednesday, due this Friday, 5PM.

Midterm examination: one week from this Weds: March 22.

Consists of concept IDs, mainly. Will require preparation, but not immense time constraints. Will distribute "superset" of concepts in advance.

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## What are Parties?

### Parties are **Coalitions**

Parties are coalitions because no one group can dominate in electoral politics without combining alongside other groups to form a viable campaign organization.

Two forms of support:

**Core:** Regular party supporters ("die-hards"). Will always support, but may not turn out.

**Variable:** "Middle-of-the roaders." May or may not turn out, may or may not support.

Republicans: (1) economic conservatives, (2) social conservatives  
Democrats: (1) economic liberals, (2) "New Dems"

**Party alignments:** parties very rarely are reducible to single issue dimension or cleavage. Party leaders must pay attention to "core" and "variable" elements of coalition.

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## A Brief History of American Political Parties

### A. Federalist Period: the rule of elites (1800-1829)

- parties = local notables
- pres electors chosen by st legs

### B. Jacksonian Period (1829-1860)

- "To the victors go the spoils."
- prez electors chosen by the people
- nominating system – CAUCUS

### C. Civil War Period & Gilded Age (1860-1896)

- sectional politics and tariff
- N/S alignment

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## A Brief History of American Political Parties

### D. Progressive/Reform Period (1896-1932)

- direct democracy (senators [17th Am], referenda, primaries)
- merit reform

### E. New Deal (1932 -- ?)

- Democratic dominance – N & S coalition
- benefits thru fed govt, not party
- Hatch Act ('39)

### F. NOW...Second Republican Era?? Unclear

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## Aldrich: Why Parties?

Although dependent on voters, a creation of politicians.

- (1) Office-seekers
- (2) Benefit-seekers
- (3) VOTERS not necessary.

"Path-dependence": Can have politics w/o parties, but once they're created they never disappear.

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## Why Two Parties?

- (a) HISTORY -- early two-party division remains
- (b) ECONOMIC, GEOGRAPHICAL DIVISIONS
- (c) lack of ethnic, racial, religious parties
- (d) INSTITUTIONS -- "DUVERGER'S LAW"
  - Plurality rule v proportional representation
  - Single-member districts
  - Sincere v. strategic voting -- strategic voting can eliminate 3rd parties (e.g., Gore/Kerry urging Green voters to vote Democratic).

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## Duverger's Portrait of Parties

Look at parties' internal organization: even in a democracy, can become oligarchic. This also supports "Duvergerian equilibria" (stable 2-party system).

"The development of vertical linking and the watertight compartments which are the result restrict the freedom of action of the base and increase the sphere of influence of the apex; they make possible a close regimentation of the party members that can prevent any move towards independence of the center and can preserve strict orthodoxy. Discipline among members is tightened both by these material means and by an even greater effort of propaganda and persuasion which leads them to venerate the Party and its leaders and to believe in their infallibility: the critical attitude gives way to an attitude of adoration" (S&W, 193).

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## Duverger's Portrait of Parties: A Portrait of American Polarization?

"Parliamentary representatives themselves are compelled to an obedience which transforms them into voting machines controlled by the leaders of the party. Thus there arise closed, disciplined, mechanized bodies, monolithic parties whose organization outwardly resembles that of an army, but whose methods of regimentation are infinitely more adaptable and efficient, being based on a training of minds rather than bodies. They require of their members closer adherence; they provide complete and final philosophies of the universe. Zeal, faith, enthusiasm and intolerance are the rule in these modern churches: party struggles turn into religious wars" (S&W, 193).

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## Decline of Parties (Why?)

A. More multifaceted society -- fewer 2-issue divides to rent into one group or another.

B. Decline of machines, urban and rural networks

C. Decline of associationalism

D. Technology --

1. the professionalization of politics

2. the dominance of individualistic campaign strategies in elections

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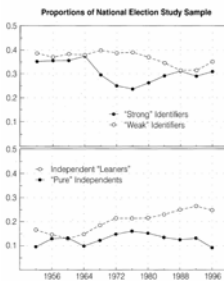
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## Party Resurgence? Yes and No.

FIGURE 1 The Distribution of Party Identification, 1952-1996



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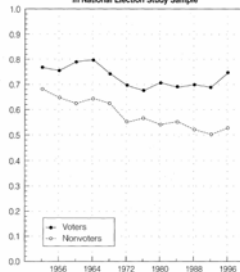
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## Party Resurgence? Yes and No.

Proportions of (Strong or Weak) Identifiers in National Election Study Sample



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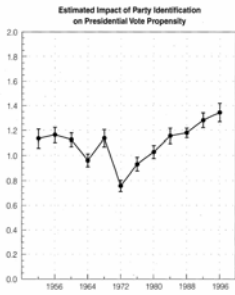
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## Party Resurgence? Yes and No.

**Figure 3** Partisan Voting in Presidential Elections



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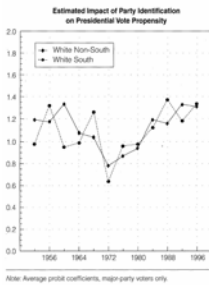
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## Party Resurgence? Yes and No.

**Figure 4** Partisan Voting in Presidential Elections, White Southerners and White Non-Southerners



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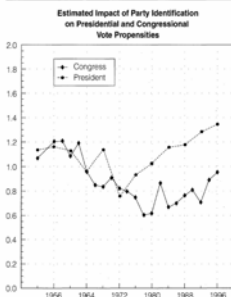
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## Party Resurgence? Yes and No.

**Figure 5** Partisan Voting in Presidential and Congressional Elections



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