

Political Parties and Ideology in a Diverse Society Part II



Political parties exist to secure responsible government and to execute the will of the people. From these great tasks both of the old parties have turned aside. Instead of instruments to promote the general welfare they have become the tools of corrupt interests, which use them impartially to serve their selfish purposes. Behind the ostensible government sits enthroned an invisible government owing no allegiance and acknowledging no responsibility to the people. To destroy this invisible government, to dissolve the unholy alliance between corrupt business and corrupt politics, is the first task of the statesmanship of the day.

Teddy Roosevelt

Basic Structure of US Political Parties



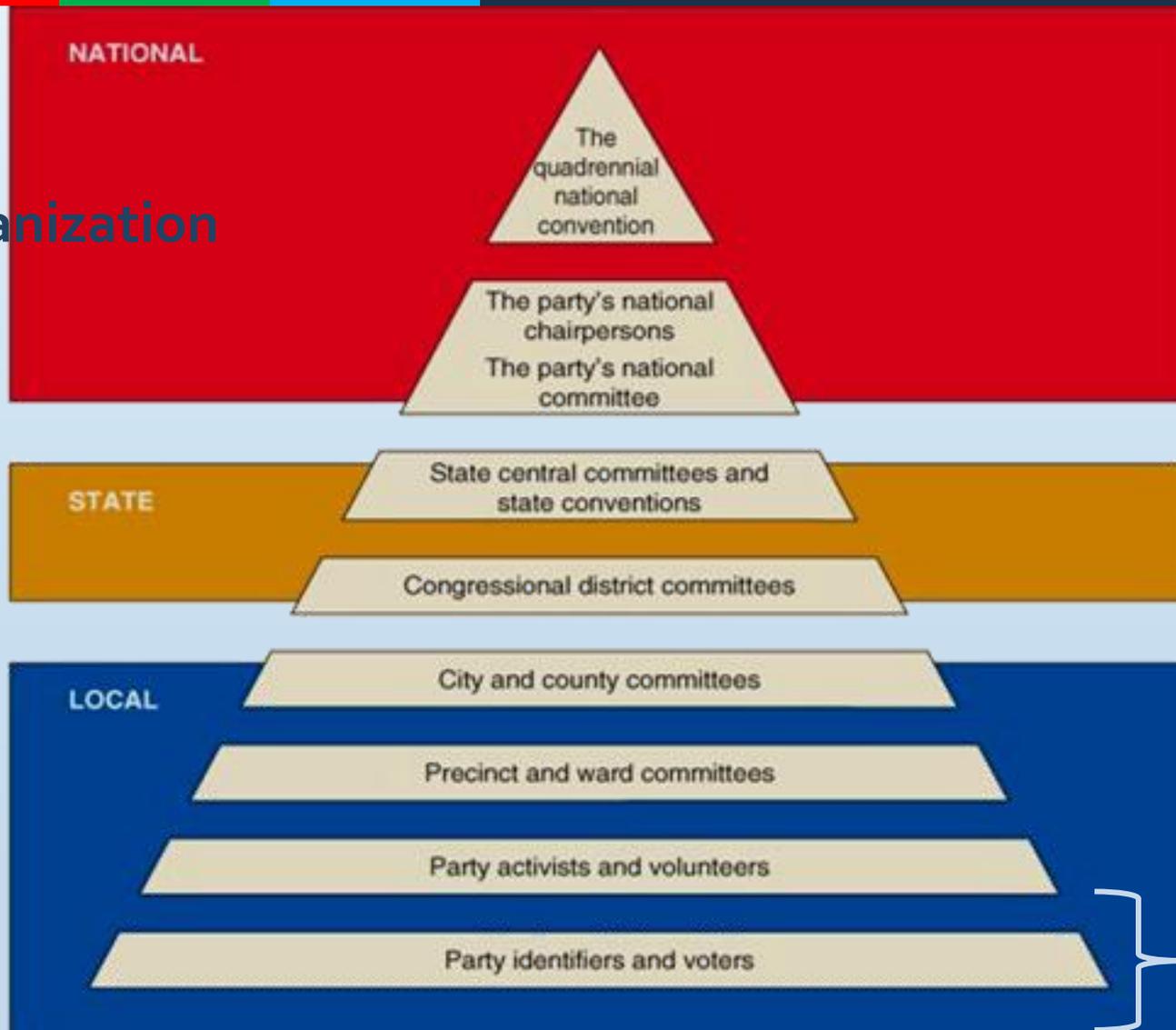
- Each party consist of three parts:
 - **party organization**
 - **temporary party organization**: caucus and convention system that begins with the primary election ... makes decisions for and elects officials of the party
 - **permanent party organization**: the party officials and committees that run the party between elections
 - **party in government**
 - **party in the electorate**



Basic Structure of US Political Parties: Party Organization



Party Organization



Party
in the
Electorate

Basic Structure of US Political Parties: National Committees



- **National party committees** conduct the business of the parties during the four years between national conventions.
 - **DNC and RNC**
 - led by **chair of the national committee** (the party chair): prime spokesperson for party between elections
 - focus on aiding presidential campaigns and conducting general party-building activities
 - increasingly important as campaign service organizations
 - steady increase in number of employees
 - prep and run national conventions
 - **National Congressional Campaign Committees**
 - work primarily to maximize the number of seats held by their respective parties in Congress

Basic Structure of US Political Parties: State and Local Committees



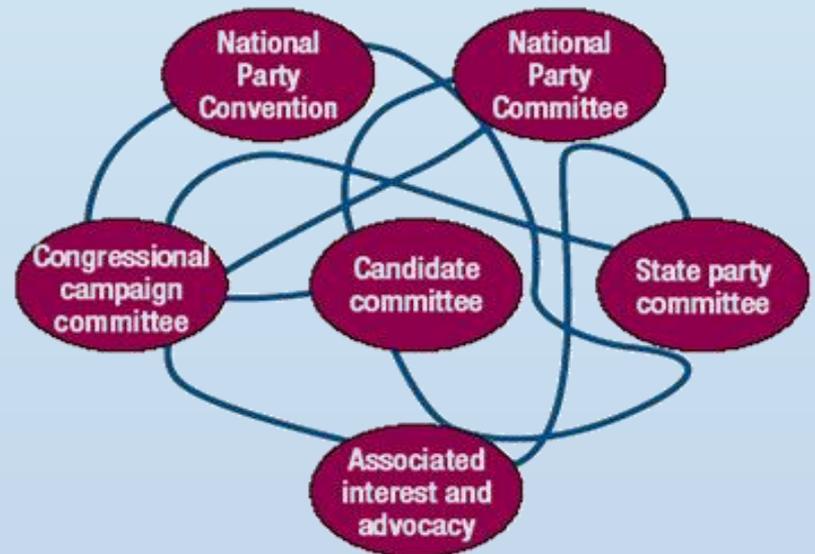
- **states and localities**
 - state party organizations and state conventions
 - precinct, ward, cities, counties, towns, villages and congressional districts
- associated interest and advocacy groups



Basic Structure of US Political Parties: The Party Organization



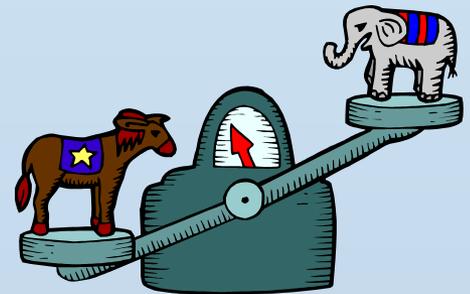
Party Organization: The graphic on the left shows a hypothetical organizational chart of the Democratic and Republican parties as if they were structured hierarchically like other organizations. The drawing on the right, which depicts our national parties as network organizations with neither central authority nor chain of command, is closer to reality. The ties between elements of the parties include money, ideology, sentiment and common interests.



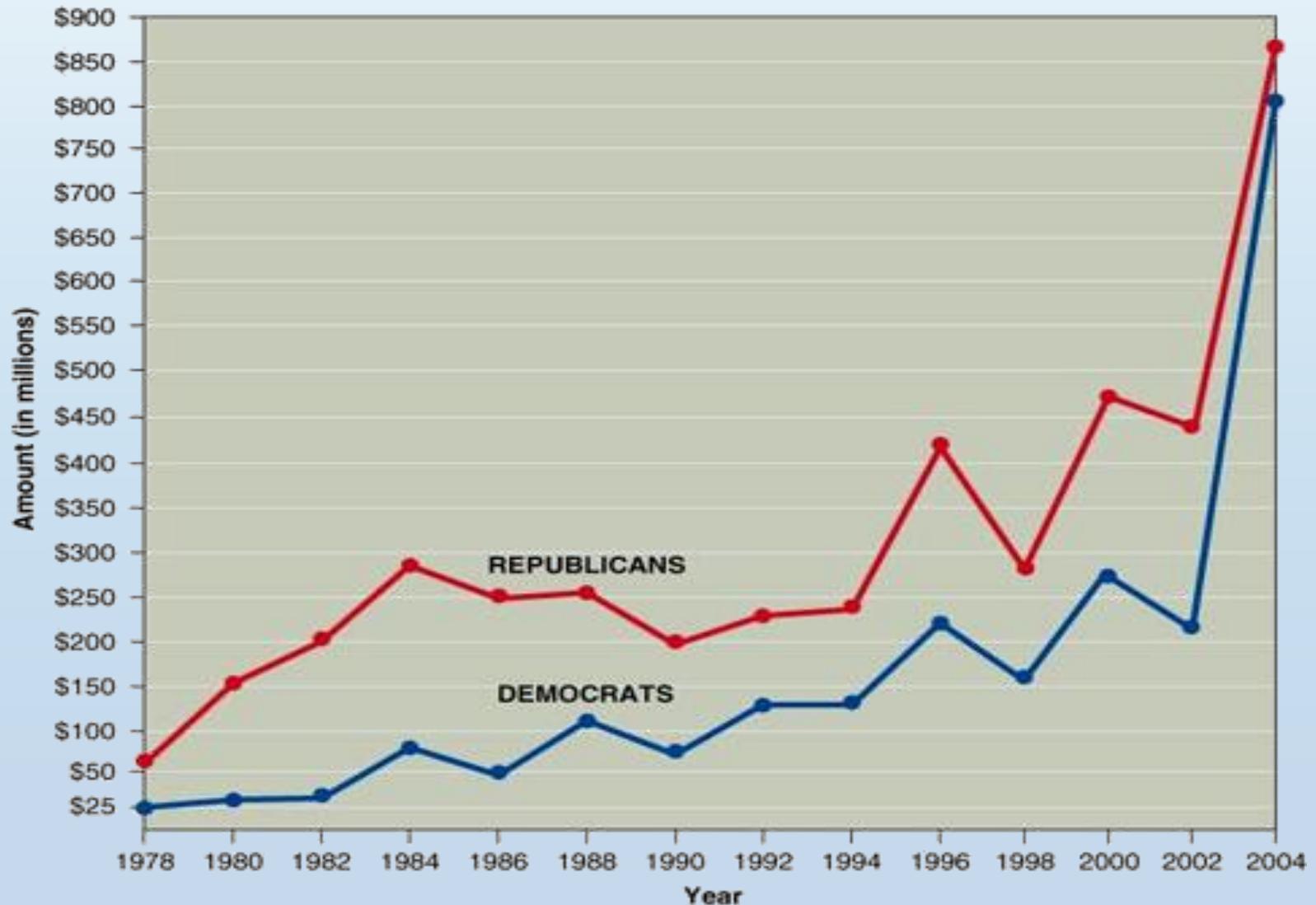
Basic Structure of US Political Parties: The Party Organization



- Modern **technological and communication strategies** have replaced the labor-intensive, person-to-person operations of early parties.
- Republicans tend to do better in fund-raising and campaign service.
 - reach donors and get information by a variety of methods
 - mail solicitation
 - interactive “Main Street” site
 - public opinion surveys
- Democrats have rallied in response.



Basic Structure of US Political Parties: Political Party Finances, 1978-2004



Basic Structure of US Political Parties: The Decline of Party Organizations



- Party organizations were at their strongest at the point when the Progressive movement began.
- The decline of American party organizations was largely a consequence of **deliberate public policies**.
 - elimination of party control of **patronage**: the power to control appointments to office or the right to privileges
 - elimination of party control of **nominations**
- **Communications revolution** lessened the need for traditional parties.
- **Technological developments** have diminished the need for party workers and party support.
 - Elections rely instead on technology and money.
- increase in **mobility**: social, economic and residential



Basic Structure of US Political Parties: The Revival of Party Organizations?



- **National committees** were always the weakest level of the party organizations.
 - active only during presidential elections
- Today, they are **active and well-financed**.
- **State and local parties** are active and well-financed as well.
- Yet, does this equal party organization revival?
 - much less control over their candidates
 - reluctance to punish officeholders who fail to toe the party line
 - contribute only a fraction of resources spent on electioneering



Basic Structure of US Political Parties: Party Conventions



- Party conventions **technically govern the two major parties.**
- Yet, party conventions...
 - meet only **once every four years**
 - **cannot dictate** to party candidates or other party organizations



Basic Structure of US Political Parties: Party Conventions



Comparing 2004 National Convention Delegates to Other Americans

	Delegates to Democratic National Convention	Democratic Voters	All Voters	Republican Voters	Delegates to Republican National Convention
Very or somewhat liberal	41	33	20	6	2
Very or somewhat conservative	3	19	35	56	60
Believe government should do more to solve national problems	79	48	42	35	7
Believe gay couples should be allowed to marry	45	36	26	11	3
Believe abortion should be generally available to those who want it	75	49	34	17	13
Believe that when it comes to regulating the environmental and safety practices of business, the federal government should do more	85	71	59	45	15
Believe that it is extremely important for the United States to work through the United Nations to solve international problems	79	66	49	31	7

*All numbers indicate the percentage of people agreeing with the statement.

Source: New York Times/CBS News polls. June 16–July 17, 2004, and August 3–23, 2004.

Basic Structure of US Political Parties: The Party in Government

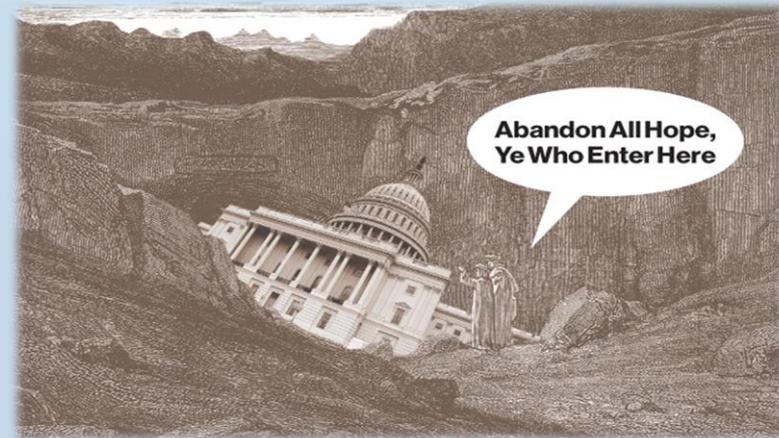


- **Congressional Parties**
 - ...select party **leaders** in the House and Senate and make committee appointments
 - **organize and operate Congress**
 - web of deputy and assistant **whips**: officials in a political party whose primary purpose is to ensure discipline in a legislature ... party's "enforcers," who typically offer inducements and threaten party members to ensure that they participate according to the official party policy
 - **Majority party** generally holds more power.
 - **party discipline**:
 - hurt by individualistic nature of US politics
 - but party voting has increased since the 1970s

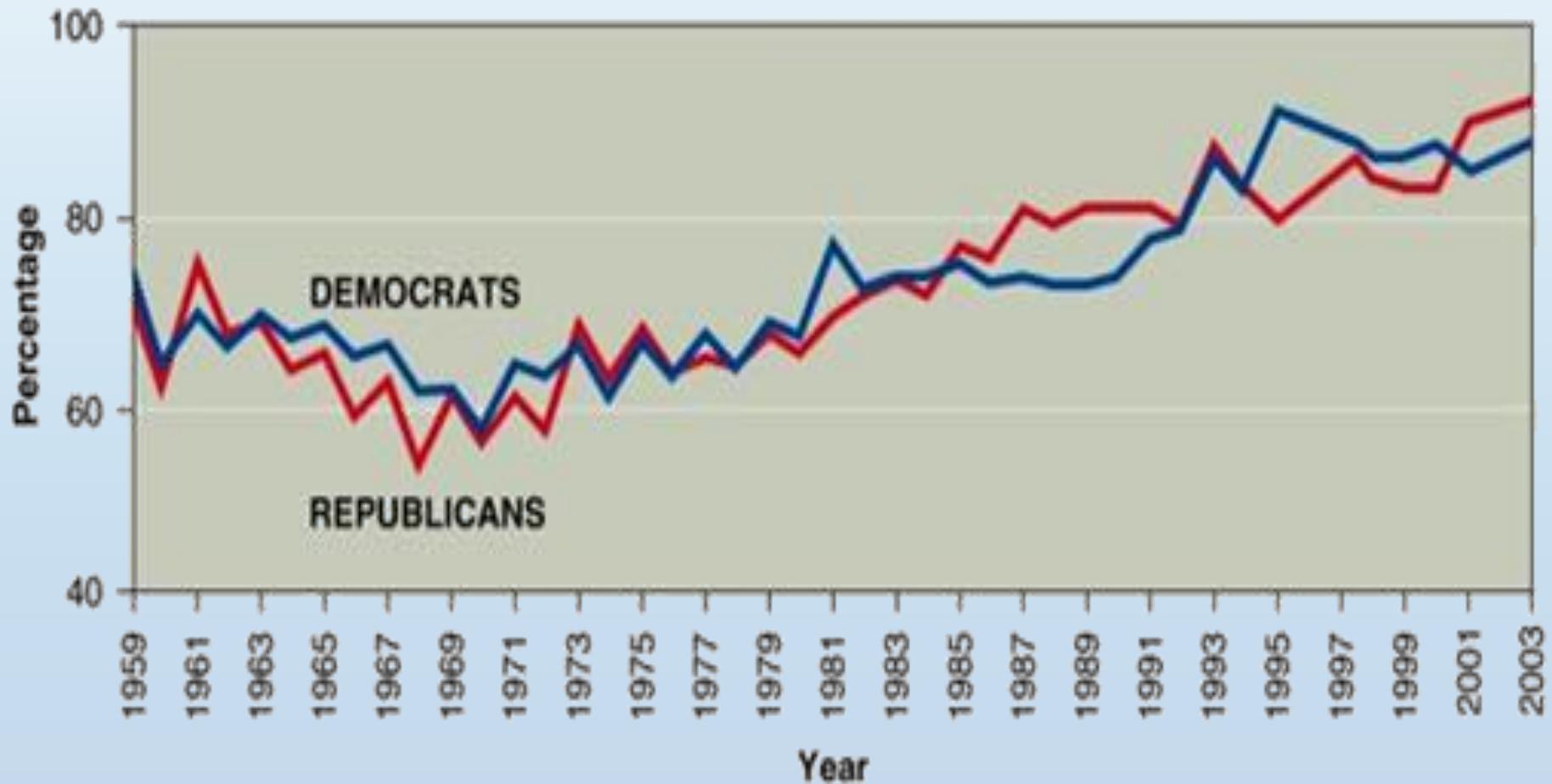
Basic Structure of US Political Parties: The Party in Government



- **unified government**: single party controls both houses of Congress and the presidency
 - can overcome fragmentation caused by separation of powers and checks and balances
- **divided government** often leads to **gridlock**: a situation in which there is difficulty passing laws in a legislature because the votes for and against a proposed law are evenly divided, or in which two legislative houses, or the executive branch and the legislature are controlled by different parties



Basic Structure of US Political Parties: Congressional Party Unity Scores

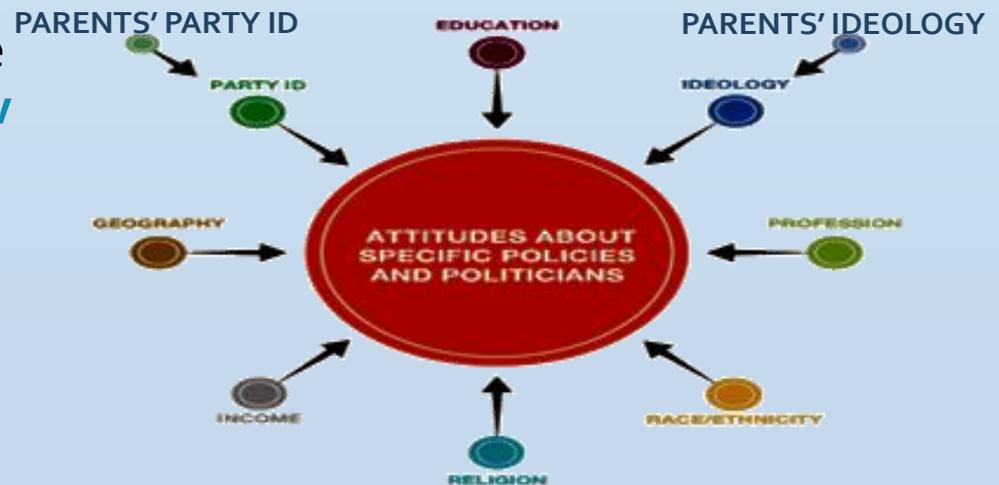


A party unity vote is defined as one where at least 50% of Democrats vote against at least 50% of Republicans.

Basic Structure of US Political Parties: Party in the Electorate



- **party identification**: the political party with which an individual identifies, that an individual most commonly supports (by voting or other means)
- Where does our party identification come from?
 - **parents**: Children's perception of parental values is a critically important determinant of party identification.
 - Marriage and other **aspects of adult life** can change one's party loyalty.
 - charismatic political personalities, cataclysmic events and maybe intense social issues
 - Social class is *not* an especially strong indicator of partisan choice.
- Party identification is one of the **most reliable indicators of how someone will vote**.



Basic Structure of US Political Parties: The Parties in the Electorate

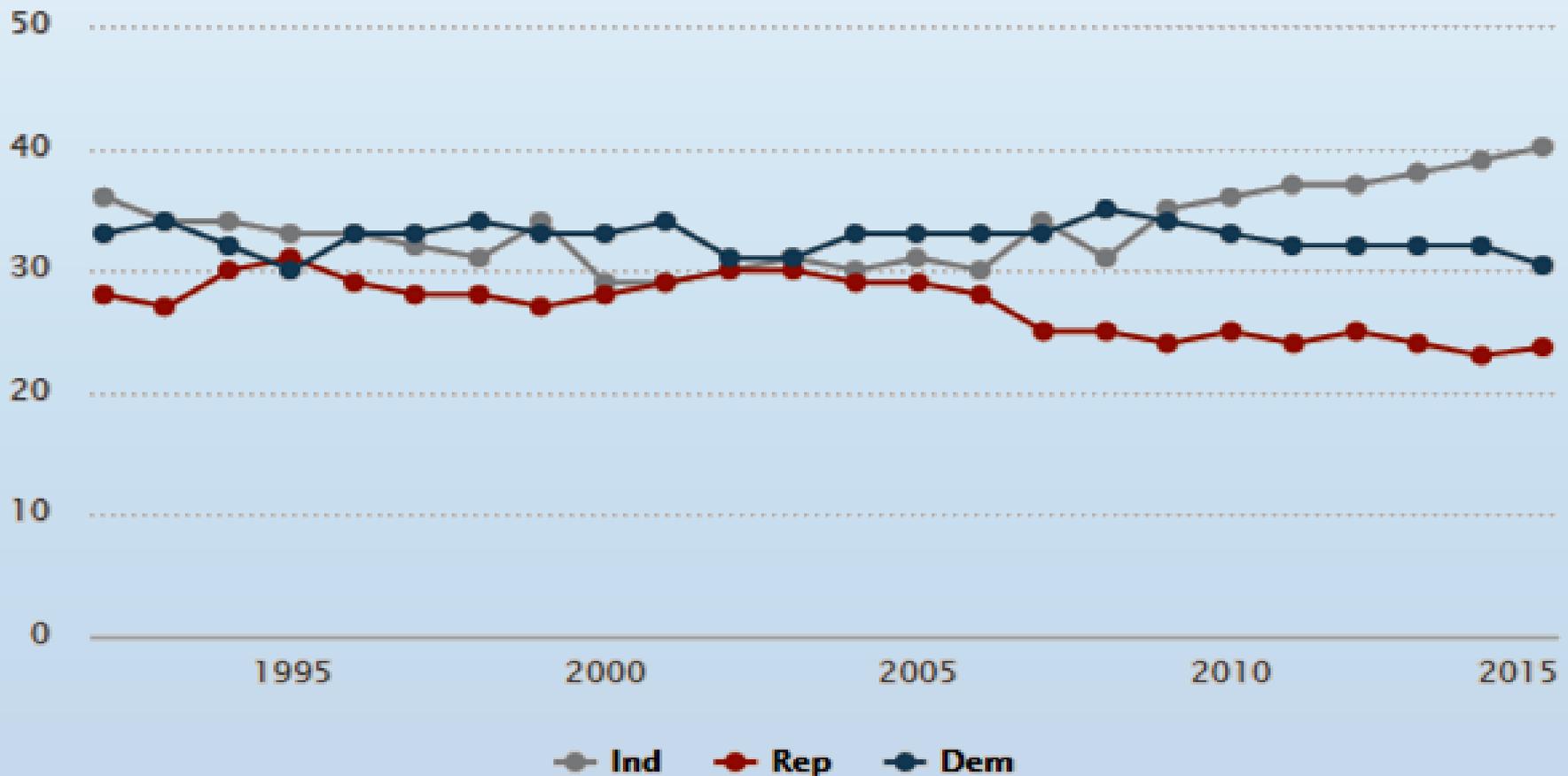


- **decline in party identification**: The number of political independents has continued to grow, as both parties have lost ground among the public. Independents now outnumber either Democrats or Republicans, with 40% of Americans choosing that label.
- **withdrawal from active participation** in politics among independents
- **intensified commitment and partisanship** among party identifiers and activists
 - 65% Republicans considered themselves “strong” partisans, up from 41% in 1998.
 - 62% Democrats considered themselves “strong” partisans, up from 45% in 1998.
- result: more volatile and conflict-ridden politics

Basic Structure of US Political Parties: Party in the Electorate



Do you consider yourself a Republican, Democrat, or independent?



Basic Structure of US Political Parties: The Parties in the Electorate



- The **gap** between Democrats and Republicans has **widened**, particularly when it comes to attitudes about the federal government.
- A clear majority of Republicans score highly on a series of questions about limited government. A majority of Democrats cluster on the other end of the scale.
- More than twice as many Democrats as Republicans say **regulation of business** is necessary to protect the public interest. Most Republicans say regulation does more harm than good.
- Republicans overwhelmingly say **people should take care of themselves**. Democrats overwhelmingly say **government should do everything possible** to improve living standards.
- Republicans see **deficit reduction** as more important than spending money in an **effort to create jobs**. Democrats believe the opposite.
- Both parties contain **deeply observant people** as well as many who seldom go to church or synagogue or mosque.

Basic Structure of US Political Parties: The Parties in the Electorate



- On some issues, partisan divisions have blocked action in Congress, but the **rank-and-file Republicans and Democrats are less divided**.
 - For example, almost half of Republicans and three-quarters of Democrats say they favor a policy that would allow illegal immigrants to apply for legal status.
 - And 60% of Republicans, along with almost 90% of Democrats, say the government should regulate the release of greenhouse gases from power plants, cars and factories to reduce global warming.
- Both parties share the fundamental beliefs of most Americans.
- Yet, their **ideological stances** are unique, and are **becoming more divergent**.
- In this sense, America's parties are becoming more "European."
 - parties narrower in focus and more ideological
 - parties have much tighter rein on the policies promoted by candidates and the voting by elected representatives



Core Party Supporters



- **Democrats**

- African-Americans, Jews, non-Cuban Hispanics
- secular beliefs
- postgraduate degrees
- union households
- ideological liberals
- west coast and northeast
- lower-income
- teachers
- government employees
- university towns and technology research centers



Core Party Supporters



- **Republicans**

- whites, especially in south and Rocky Mountain west
- conservative Christians, Evangelicals, Mormon
- highly religiously committed
- ideological conservatives
- rural areas
- very high incomes
- social conservatives



Divisions Within Parties



- Parties are fractious coalitions of people who may converge on some core issues but whose worldviews, economic situations and attitudes on policy are far from uniform.
- Each party is bound together in opposition to the other but at the same time both continue to squabble internally.
- Democrats
 - liberals vs. centrists
- Republicans
 - small government vs. big government
 - libertarians vs. social conservatives
 - neoconservatives (neocons) vs. traditional Republicans

Divisions Within Parties: Republicans



- **Tea Party Republicans:** majority attend religious services weekly, more satisfied with direction party is going, favor confrontation over cooperation and compromise, almost all say people should take care of themselves and not look to government for help, majority prefer changing Medicare to a premium-support program for younger workers in which people would have the option to purchase their own health-care plans after retiring

Old-School Republicans (country-club Republicans): men make up about 60%, higher incomes and more formal education, less inclined to say GOP leaders are taking the party in the right direction, favor negotiation with the Democrats, almost all say people should take care of themselves and not look to government for help, more than 60% oppose changing Medicare, slim majority say same-sex marriages should be legal,

SOMETIMES I SIDE WITH THE COUNTRY-CLUB REPUBLICANS AND SOMETIMES WITH THE TEA PARTY. I'M PRETTY MUCH BIPARTISAN.

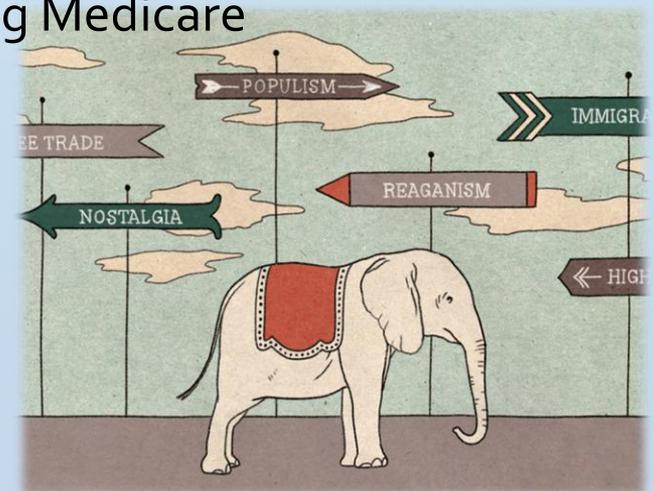


- **Religious Values Voters:** women make up a solid majority, majority attend religious services weekly, more satisfied with direction party is going, favor confrontation over cooperation and compromise, more than 60% oppose changing Medicare

Divisions Within Parties: Republicans



- **Pro-Government Republicans:** significant numbers of nonwhites, more than 66% have annual household incomes of less than \$50,000 and do not have college degrees, majority attend religious services weekly, less inclined to say GOP leaders are taking the party in the right direction, favor confrontation over cooperation and compromise, more than 60% oppose changing Medicare
- **Window Shoppers:** in many respects seem out of place in an increasingly conservative party, significant numbers of nonwhites, least likely to agree with other groups within the party on many issues, youngest group (40% are under age 30,) favor negotiation with the Democrats, more than 60% oppose changing Medicare



Divisions Within Parties: Democrats



- **Urban Liberal Democrats** (29%): the most traditionally liberal, nearly 73% white, 62% female and by far the most educated and highest income earners, majority live in urban areas, 92% believe there should be a high degree of separation between church and state, 85% advocate a larger federal government offering more in services, 85% feel strongly that gay marriage should be legal
- **God and Government Democrats** (34%): 67% nonwhite, concentrated in the south and far more apt than two of the five Republican groups to go to religious services at least once a week, sizable majority says the government should take special steps to protect America's religious heritage, sizeable majority advocate a larger federal government offering more in services, only 26% feel strongly that gay marriage should be legal



Divisions Within Parties: Democrats



- **Agnostic Left Democrats:** younger with 66% under 50 years old, more secular, believe there should be a high degree of separation between church and state, socially liberal, support abortion and gay marriage, sizeable majority advocate a larger federal government offering more in services but 79% said that people who do not “get ahead” in life have only themselves to blame
- **DIY Democrats:** smallest group (13%), sizable majority says the government should take special steps to protect America’s religious heritage, only about 33% advocate a larger federal government offering more in services, only 13% feel strongly that gay marriage should be legal, only half call themselves “strong Democrats” and one-third support the Tea Party, strong support for raising taxes on households making \$250,000 per year

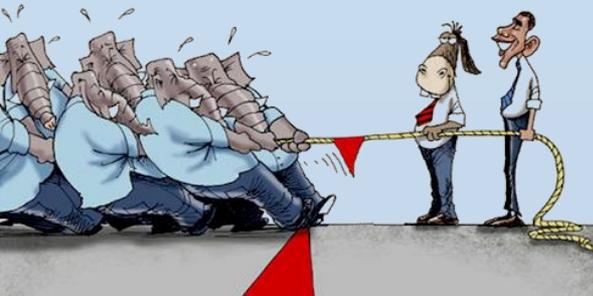
Presidential Party



- **party of the president**
 - captures the public imagination
 - shapes the electorate's opinion of the two parties
 - perceptions of the incumbent president determine how citizen's perceive the parties
 - some presidents more party-oriented
 - George W. Bush considered pro-party
 - Eisenhower non-partisan president ... hurt his party

D.C. Tug-of-War

Garth Jones
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Parties and the Judiciary

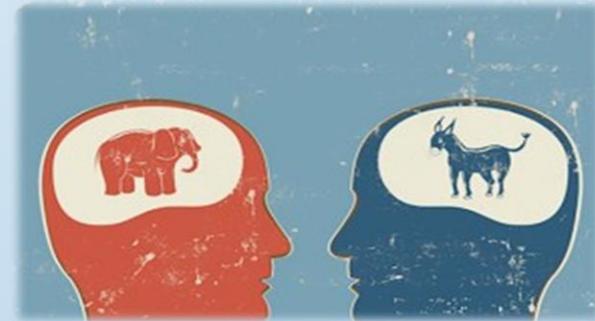


- ...viewed as above-politics and nonpartisan
- Judges are **products of their party identification.**
- Presidents choose judicial candidates from the ranks of their party.
 - Many have had long careers as loyal party workers or legislators.

Parties and State Governments



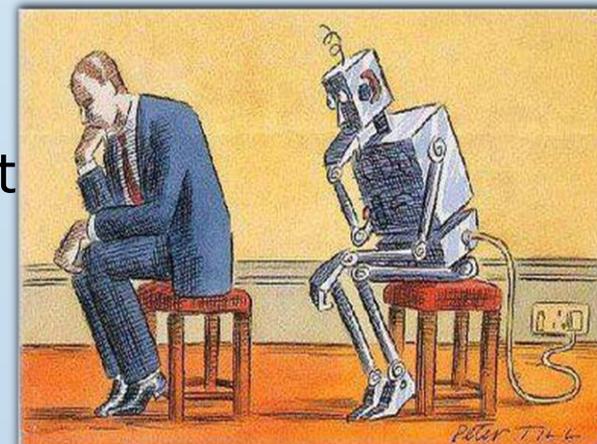
- The major national parties are the **dominant political forces** in all 50 states.
 - Minor parties have emerged but all have faded.
- Parties and **Governors**
 - usually have **more influence** on party organizations and legislators
 - **more patronage** positions than president
 - **line-item veto**
- Parties and **State Legislators**
 - nearly **split evenly** between the two parties
 - Parties have **greater legislative influence at the state level** than at the national level.
 - Party leaders have **more authority and power**.
 - State legislators depend on state and local parties for **election assistance** more than members of Congress.



How Parties Contribute to Democratic Politics



- What do parties offer that make them valuable to democratic government?
 - organize and operate the government
 - focus responsibility for government action
 - develop issues and educate the public
 - synthesize interests
 - recruit and develop government talent
 - simplify electoral system



***"I don't want a nation of thinkers.
I want a nation of workers."***

—John D. Rockefeller
Created the General Education Board (GEB) in 1903
to dispense Rockefeller funds to education

How Parties Detract from Democratic Politics



- What do parties do that detracts from democratic government?
 - capture governments and dictate what they do
 - confuse responsibility
 - suppress issues
 - divide society
 - recruit candidates for the wrong reasons
 - oversimplify the electoral system



The Bottom Line



- Are parties good or bad for democracy?
 - safest answer: They're both.
- What would our system be like without parties?
 - Reformers may want radical change, but they may not think fully of the consequences of such change.
- Still, we must think critically about the actions of parties and their influence in undermining representation.



How Strong Are American Political Parties Today?



- In the 1970s, books were written about the decline and possible death of American political parties.
- In the 1980s, the tune changed.
- How did this happen?
- Perhaps it lies in the conception of political parties.
- **party in the electorate**
 - had declined between 1964 and 1974
 - closet partisans
 - Today, number of partisans declining but ticket-splitting and party defection rates are down.
- **party in government** stronger than ever
- What about **party organizations**?



Parties vs. Interest Groups



- theory: The **power of interest groups is negatively correlated with the power of parties**. (Assumes two-party politics rather than multi-party politics ... In the latter, parties often act more like interest groups.)
- two premises:
 - Parties have incentives to synthesize narrow interests in order to make the **broad appeals** necessary to win elections.
 - Strong parties can provide **electoral resources** and **deliver the vote**, freeing their candidates from dependence on interest-group resources and insulating them from reprisals.
- When parties do not fill the **political vacuum**, then groups or some other influence will.
- **alternative to party domination**: interest group influence, *not* popular influence



Continued in
Political Parties and Ideology in a
Diverse Society Part III