

Political Parties

How have political parties have changed over the last 100 years?

What are Political Parties?

What is the primary goal of political parties?

How do our parties compare with those in other democracies?

- Level of Centralization
 - In the U.S., parties are more decentralized
- Role of Primary Elections in Selecting Candidates
- Role of Ideology
 - Broad-based 2 Party System versus multi-party system
- Influence in the lives of citizens

History of Political Parties

I. 1st party system, 1800 – 1828

- Federalists vs *Anti-Federalists (Democratic-Republicans)

II. 2nd party system, 1828-1860

- Whigs vs *Democrats

History of Political Parties

III. 3rd system, 1860-1896

- *Republicans vs Democrats
 - Democratic Split into Northern and Southern wings
 - Rise of City “Bosses” and Urban Political Machines

History of Political Parties

IV. 1896-1932

- Rise of Progressive Party
- Progressive Party Aligns with Republicans

V. 1932 – 1968

- Democrats versus Republicans, with Democrats dominating
- Role of the Great Depression

Party Realignmentments

- A major shift from one party to another
- Generally tend to happen around a single issue or a set of issue that divides the electorate
- Tend to occur during times of major social or economic upheaval

Party Realignmentments

- Characteristics of a realignment:
 - one party must become the “dominant” party in the political system;
 - To be dominant means to control the Presidency, Congress and many of the state legislatures.

- Examples of a Realignment

Party Realignment

- What has happened since 1968?
 - Split-Level Realignment?
 - Republican President
 - Democratic Congress
 - De-alignment?
 - Declining support for all parties

Why do we have a 2 Party System?

- I. The use of single-member districts and the absence of proportional representation
- II. Federal and State election laws
- III. Parties try to accommodate “factions” before they split off.

Political Parties

- Strong Parties versus Weak Parties
- Characteristics of a Weak Party System
 - Candidate-Centered Campaigns
 - Split-Ticket Voting
 - Rise of the Independent Voter