SEVENTEENTH EDITION

PARTY POLITICS IN AMERICA

MARJORIE RANDON HERSHEY

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ROUTLEDGE

PARTY POLITICS IN AMERICA

The seventeenth edition of *Party Politics in America* continues the comprehensive and authoritative coverage of political parties for which it is known while expanding and updating the treatment of key related topics including interest groups and elections. Marjorie Hershey builds on the book's three-pronged coverage of party organization, party in the electorate, and party in government and integrates contemporary examples—such as campaign finance reform, party polarization, and social media—to bring to life the fascinating story of how parties shape our political system.

New to the seventeenth edition:

- Fully updated through the 2016 election, including changes in virtually all of the boxed materials, the chapter openings, and the data presented.
- Explores increasing partisan hostility, the status of voter ID laws and other efforts to affect voter turnout, young voters' attitudes and participation, and the role of big givers such as the energy billionaire Koch brothers in the 2016 campaigns.
- Critically examines the idea that super PACs are replacing, or can replace, the party organizations in running campaigns.
- New and expanded online Instructor's Resources, including author-written test banks, essay questions, relevant websites with correlated sample assignments, the book's appendix, and links to a collection of course syllabi.

Marjorie Randon Hershey is Professor of Political Science at Indiana University, USA.

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Foreword by

JOHN H. ALDRICH

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FOREWORD

Why should you be interested in studying political parties? The short answer is that virtually everything important in America's "great Experiment" in democracy is rooted in party politics. Political parties are at the core of American politics and make it what it is today—just as they have virtually from the Founding.

A slightly longer answer is that, today as I write this during the 2016 elections, the parties are newsworthy on two major fronts. They are, at one and the same time, the major structuring feature of the elections—indeed more so over this current generation than in generations preceding—and yet they are today as front and center for their own divisions, especially over this year's presidential nominations. The Democratic contest was surprisingly divided over Hillary Clinton, perhaps the central figure in Democratic party politics, and Bernie Sanders, an avowed socialist for much of his long political career. The Republican contest is perhaps best described as "shockingly" divided, as Donald Trump's rise to nomination as a total outsider (never having held office or even been a Republican until recent years) created chaos on the campaign trail and division within the established party leadership.

Why should you use this book to guide you in the search for understanding democratic politics in America? The short answer is that this book is the best guide you can have, and it has been the best guide in this search for quite a long time.

A longer answer for this question is that I first encountered this text at the same stage in my life you are in now: as an undergraduate, although in my case that was back in the 1960s. At that point, the book was authored by an up-and-coming scholar named Frank Sorauf.[1] Following on the heels of his important study of the effect of political parties on the Pennsylvania legislature,[2] *Party Politics in America* established him as arguably the leading scholar of political parties of his generation. In those days—less so today—it was common for a "textbook" (i.e., a book designed to be used in class) to do more than just tell you what others had written about its subject. Rather, books written for undergraduates were also designed to make a coherent argument about its subject matter—to engage you, the reader, intellectually. So it was then, and with this book, so it remains today.

In the sixth edition, published in 1988, Frank brought in Paul Allen Beck as coauthor. Paul took over the authorial duties beginning with that edition, and Marjorie Randon Hershey did so beginning with the ninth edition in 2001, leading to the book that you are about to read today. Each did so

with considerable respect for the substance and the perspective that characterized the previous editions. This has brought a high degree of intellectual continuity to *Party Politics in America*. Most of all, Sorauf, Beck, and Hershey very effectively use a three-part division in the discussion of political parties, considering the political party in its electoral, governing, and organizational roles. These three aspects of a party create a coherent system that (sometimes loosely, sometimes more tightly) provides a degree of integration to the diverse workings of any one political party.

When Sorauf first wrote, the three pieces were rather loosely integrated. Partisanship in the public, for example, was nearly as strongly held as today, but the party in government was deeply divided, especially the majority party, the Democrats (into North and South, or pro- and anti-civil rights), but also the minority Republican Party (into "Wall Street" and "Main Street," or urban vs. suburban, small town, and rural). Today, partisanship is as strong as always. Democratic officeholders, however, are much more strongly united than they were then, and so too are the Republicans, even if they are in some ways divided. They are divided not so much on ideology but on how best to defeat the Democrats in government and enact more conservative legislation than now possible. In addition, the party organizations are much stronger than they were then (and vastly better financed) making their ability to conduct highly partisan campaigns ever more effective.

Even with a highly polarized party system (as this great divide between Republicans and Democrats is called), there are serious strains among the various parts. What, for example, would you do if you were an adviser to the Republican Party faced with the following choice? Do you advise the Republican Speaker of the House, Paul Ryan (Wisc.), to follow the lead of many of your members and work with congressional Democrats to find a solution to our problems? Or do you follow the lead of the former Tea Party and currently House Freedom Caucus calls for holding tight to party positions, not compromising on principle to work with Democrats, expecting that a tough stand will yield electoral rewards in the future?

The second continuity is that Sorauf, Beck, and Hershey see the two major political parties together in the United States as a system. The two-party system has long played a central role in the evolution of American politics (see especially Chapter 7). Although this two-party system has important implications for political dynamics, they also see the two-party system as a part of the intermediary groups in society. By this, the authors mean that the parties serve as points of contact between the public and its government (see Figure 1.2, a figure that I believe has graced this book for all of its editions now).

The third continuity is that each author is a terrific scholar of political parties, and although these continuities have allowed this book to keep its unique intellectual stamp, the transition among authors has also allowed each to bring to the work his or her particular strengths. In the end, this has made the seventeenth edition of the book richer and stronger than ever

before. As I noted earlier, Frank Sorauf used his expertise to explain the role of the political party in government. Since then, he became one of the nation's leading experts on the role of money in politics and in later editions reflected that increasingly important but perennially controversial subject.[3] Paul Beck brought a distinguished career of scholarship, examining the role of political parties in the electorate and adding nicely to Frank's expertise about the governing role.[4] Paul is, like Frank and Marjorie Hershey, an expert on American politics. However, Paul is also, more than most of us who study American politics, genuinely knowledgeable about comparative politics.

Marjorie Randon Hershey, through her expertise, has made important contributions to one of the most difficult questions to study: How do candidates and their campaigns shape and how are they shaped by electoral forces?[5] This interaction links the two most important components of the party, elections and governance, into a more coherent whole. It has allowed her to bring clarity to what has become an increasingly confused portion of the field. Marjorie has also closely studied the role of gender in politics, a dimension of party politics that not only has been of long-standing importance from at least the granting of women's suffrage but has also become especially critical with the emergence and growth of the "gender gap."[6] Finally, she has made a long series of contributions to help us understand how to bring meaning to complex events.[7] One special feature of this book is the increased use of narratives from well-known and little-known party figures alike, narratives that serve to bring the subject matter to life.

Not only does each author add a unique and innovative understanding to political parties as they join the continuity of leading scholars who have shaped this book, but also each edition adds new life to the text by considering the politics of the time. This seventeenth edition is not an exception. Here, then, are some of the facets of particular relevance to contemporary politics that I find particularly worth considering (by you that is).

One issue that is critical to all who study American politics is the way that an understanding of politics matters in your life. This is your government, and the political parties are ways in which you can help shape what your government and elected officials do. This is one of the most important meanings of American political parties. They, and the government that they create, are the consequences of you and your political actions. So saying allows me to move more directly to the longer answer about the study of political parties themselves.

At the outset, I mentioned that you should want to study political parties because they are so important to virtually everything that happens in American politics and because political parties are so central to the workings of any democracy. Great, but you are probably asking, "So what questions should I keep in mind as I read this book? What questions will help me understand the material better?" Let me propose as guidelines three questions that are neither too specific nor too general. We are looking, that is, for questions somewhere in between "Are parties good?" on the one hand and

"What role did Boehner's violation of the informal 'Hastert Rule' play in his decision to resign as Speaker in late 2015?" on the other hand.

You are well aware that today politicians can appear magnanimous and statesmanlike if they say that they will be nonpartisan and if they call for Congress to "rise above" partisan politics to be bipartisan. Yet essentially every elected official is a partisan, and essentially every elected official chooses to act in a partisan way much of the time. Why do politicians today, you might ask, speak as if they are of two minds about political parties? Perhaps they actually are. Even if you dismiss this rhetoric as just words, it is the case that the public is of two minds about parties, too. This book, like virtually all written about American political parties, includes quotes from the Founding Fathers warning about the dangers of party and faction, often quoting such luminaries as John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, and James Madison. Yet these very same men not only worried about the dangers of party but were the founders and leaders of our first political parties. So the first question is, "Why are people—leaders and followers, founders and contemporary figures alike—both attracted to and repulsed by political parties?"

Let me suggest two books that might give you additional ways to think about this question. One is Richard Hofstadter's *The Idea of a Party System: The Rise of Legitimate Opposition in the United States, 1780–1840* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1969). This book is a series of public lectures that Hofstadter gave in which he roots political parties deeply in the American democratic tradition, arguing that they represent the outward manifestation of a change in philosophic understanding of the relationship between citizens and leaders in this, the world's first practicing democracy. Another is Thomas E. Mann and Norman J. Ornstein, *It's Even Worse than It Looks: How the American Constitutional System Collided with the New Politics of Extremism* (New York: Basic Books, 2016). Mann and Ornstein are both political scientists who also worked at major think tanks (The Brookings Institution and the American Enterprise Institute, respectively) applying scholarship to practical politics. In this book, they have made one of the strongest cases for the dangers of hyper partisanship in politics in a partisan polarized era, adding a contemporary account of the classic question of the "idea of a party system."

This question of the purpose of parties in our democracy, both theoretical and practical, leads easily to a second major question that should be in your mind as you work through this book and your course: "How does the individual connect to the political party?" There are two aspects to this question. One is fairly direct—what do parties mean to the individual and how, if at all, has this changed over time? The great work that laid out this relationship in the modern era is *The American Voter* by Angus Campbell, Philip E. Converse, Warren E. Miller, and Donald E. Stokes (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1960). Many argue that this connection has changed fundamentally. At one extreme, Martin P. Wattenberg has written about the declining relevance of political parties to the voter, such as in his *The Decline*

of American Political Parties, 1952–1996 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998), using such striking evidence as a dramatic decline in the willingness or ability of citizens to say what they like or dislike about either of our two major political parties. Others disagree with Wattenberg. Larry Bartels, and in a completely different way, Green, Palmquist, and Schickler, for example, have shown that partisanship remains as influential in shaping the vote as ever.[8] It is certainly the case that today we hear people say, "The government, they …," and not "The government, we …" I suspect that few of us think that way. It is certainly common to hear politicians call for a tax cut by claiming that doing so will give the people back their money. Such a statement would not make sense if we thought of the government as being composed of us, ourselves, and thus thought of *our* taxes as using our money to work in *our* government, doing *our* bidding by enacting *our* preferences into legislation selected by *our* representatives whom *we* chose. The question can, however, be cast even more broadly, asking whether the people feel removed from social, cultural, economic, and political institutions, generally, with political parties and the government therefore only one more symptom of a larger ill. This is certainly a part of the concerns that motivated Robert D. Putnam in his *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000). Today that sometimes comes out in the sense that the debate among the politicians in Washington seems to be more about scoring points over the partisan opposition and less about working in the public's interest. This sense of remove peaked during the summer of 2011 in the debate over whether to raise the debt ceiling, in which the elected figures in each party appeared to put the country's economic recovery at risk merely to win their side of a policy dispute.[9]

The change from a trusting, supportive, identified public to one apparently dramatically less so is one of the great changes that took place in American politics over the past half century. A second great change is "polarization," a growing distance between the elected officials of the two parties. That is, compared with 50 years ago, today the Democrats are more liberal and consistently more so than Republicans, who in turn are much more conservative. Although this is not to say that there is anything close to an identical set of beliefs by the members of either party, there is a greater coherence of opinion and belief in, say, the congressional delegations of each party than in earlier times. Even more undeniable is a much clearer divergence between the policy interests and choices of the two parties in Washington than, say, 50 years ago. You might refer to *Polarized Politics: Congress and the President in a Partisan Era* (Washington, DC: CQ Press, 2000), edited by Jon R. Bond and Richard Fleisher, for a variety of fairly early indications of this fact. The question, then, is not whether there is greater polarization today; the question is whether this relative clarity of polarization matters. As usual, there are at least two ways to understand the question. One is simply to ask whether a more polarized Congress yields policies very different from

a less polarized one. The readings in Bond and Fleisher generally support that position. Others, for example Keith Krehbiel and David W. Brady and Craig Volden, argue that the Founders' creation of checks and balances makes polarization relatively ineffectual in shaping legislation due to vetoes, compromises necessary between the two chambers, and so on.[10] Even more generally, however, David R. Mayhew has argued that our system generates important legislation regardless of which party is in control or whether they share power under divided partisan control of government.[11] As you might expect, there has been considerable interest in the challenge that Mayhew, Krehbiel, and Brady and Volden have raised. One set of responses can be seen in the Bond and Fleisher volume, another can be found in *The Macro Polity*.[12]

However, this returns us to one of the original questions: Just how closely does the party in the electorate align with the party in government? On this, too, there is considerable disagreement. On the one hand, Alan Abramowitz argues that the partisan public follows only at a degree of lag the polarization of the partisan elite in Washington, while on the other hand, Morris Fiorina argues that the public remains primarily, even overwhelmingly, moderate, and sees the polarization in Washington, but does not follow it. There is, in his words, a "disconnect," presumably caused by political parties and their leaders.[13] And this, of course connects to politics today in a vast number of ways, such as those just discussed. But it also shapes many other aspects of politics: Will the new voter identification laws serve to reduce fraudulent voting or reduce, instead, voter turnout by minorities, young people, and the elderly?

More recently, scholarship has tended to focus on the negative consequences of partisan polarization. For example, Danielle Thomsen finds that polarization affects just who will run for Congress, tending to attract more polarized and discourage less polarizing and more moderate candidates from even trying.[14] Jamie Druckman et al. show how political polarization shapes public opinion in a more polarized way.[15] On the other hand, David Jones finds that polarization has led to a degree of increase in collective accountability of its congressional affiliates in elections.[16] And Gary Jacobson extends that line of argument, in a way, by showing how partisan polarization has also generated increasingly partisan polarization in the public in terms of their evaluations of the incumbent president.[17]

As you can see, we have now reached the point of recently published work. That is, we are asking questions that are motivating the work of scholars today and problems that are motivating the public and its leaders today. So, let's get on with it and turn to the book and the study of political parties themselves.

John H. Aldrich

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Notes

1 Frank Sorauf passed away on September 6, 2013. We miss him.
2 Frank J. Sorauf, *Party and Representation: Legislative Politics in Pennsylvania* (New York: Atherton Press, 1963).
3 See, for example, Frank J. Sorauf, *Money in American Elections* (Glenview, IL: Scott Foresman/Little, Brown College Division, 1988) or *Inside Campaign Finance: Myths and Realities* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1992).
4 He has written a great deal on this subject. One illustration that has long been one of my favorites is his "A Socialization Theory of Partisan Alignment," which was originally published in *The Politics of Future Citizens,* edited by Richard Niemi (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 1974, pp. 199–219) and reprinted in *Classics in Voting Behavior*, edited by Richard Niemi and Herbert Weisberg (Washington, DC: CQ Press, 1992).
5 See especially her books, *Running for Office: The Political Education of Campaigners* (Chatham, NJ: Chatham House, 1984) and *The Making of Campaign Strategy* (Lexington, MA: D.C. Heath-Lexington, 1974).
6 Especially interesting accounts of the ways the political parties reacted to female suffrage can be found in Anna L. Harvey, *Votes Without Leverage: Women in American Electoral Politics 1920–1970* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998) and J. Kevin Corder and Christina Wolbrecht, *Counting Women's Ballots: Female Voters from Suffrage through the New Deal* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016).
7 See, for example, "Constructing Explanations for the U.S. State Governors' Races: The Abortion Issue and the 1990 Gubernatorial Elections," *Political Communication* 17 (July–September 2000): 239–262; "The Meaning of a Mandate: Interpretations of 'Mandate' in 1984 Presidential Election Coverage," *Polity* (Winter 1995): 225–254; and "Support for Political Women: Sex Roles," in John C. Pierce and John L. Sullivan, eds., *The Electorate Reconsidered* (Beverly Hills, CA: Sage, 1980), pp. 179–198.
8 Larry M. Bartels, "Partisanship and Voting Behavior, 1952–1996," *American Journal of Political Science* 44 (2000): 35–50. Donald Green, Bradley Palmquist, and Eric Schickler, *Partisan Hearts and Minds: Political Parties and the Social Identities of Voters* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2002).
9 See the discussion of poll reports in the height of the debate over this concern (July 14, 2001) at http://people-press.org/2011/07/14/the-debt-ceiling-showdown-%E2%80%93-where-the-public-stands (accessed November 29, 2011).
10 Keith Krehbiel, *Pivotal Politics: A Theory of U.S. Lawmaking* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998); David W. Brady and Craig Volden, *Revolving Gridlock: Politics and Policy from Jimmy Carter to George W. Bush* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2006).
11 David R. Mayhew, *Divided We Govern: Party Control, Lawmaking and Investigations, 1946–1990* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1991) and *Partisan Balance: Why Political Parties Don't Kill the U.S. Constitutional System* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2011).
12 Robert S. Erikson, Michael B. MacKuen, and James A. Stimson, *The Macro Polity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).
13 Alan I. Abramowitz, *The Disappearing Center: Engaged Citizens, Polarization and American Democracy* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2010); Morris

P. Fiorina, *Culture War: The Myth of a Polarized America,* 3rd ed., with Samuel J. Abrams and Jeremy C. Pope (New York: Longman, 2011); and *Disconnect: The Breakdown of Representation in American Politics* with Samuel J. Abrams (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 2009).

14 Danielle M. Thomsen, "Ideological Moderates Won't Run: How Party Fit Matters for Partisan Polarization in Congress," *The Journal of Politics* 76, 3 (2014): 786–797.

15 James N. Druckman, Erik Peterson, and Rune Slothuus, "How Elite Partisan Polarization Affects Public Opinion Formation," *American Political Science Review* 107, 1 (2013): 57–79.

16 David R. Jones, "Partisan Polarization and Congressional Accountability in House Elections," *American Journal of Political Science* 54, 2 (2010): 323–337.

17 Gary C. Jacobson, "Partisan Polarization in Presidential Support: The Electoral Connection," *Congress & the Presidency: A Journal of Capital Studies* 30, 1 (2003).

PREFACE

Even the most gifted storyteller would have a hard time coming up with a more outlandish tale than that of the 2016 presidential election. The candidate who outraised his rivals by millions of dollars at the beginning of the primaries had quit in defeat three weeks later. The 2012 Republican presidential candidate called his party's 2016 nominee a phony and a fraud. The heartthrob candidate of most young voters was a rumpled, 73-year-old, self-proclaimed socialist from Vermont. And campaign debate focused not only on the economy and terrorism but also on the size of one candidate's hands as well as his aerodynamically implausible hairstyle.

That's why books about political parties produce new editions with every new election. Although geometry workbooks and Spanish texts may not become outdated quickly, books about American politics do. Consider these changes in only a two-year period: In 2012, Democratic president Barack Obama was handily returned to the White House, and an official Republican study committee acknowledged that voters saw the Republican party as narrow minded, out of touch, and full of "stuffy old white men." Yet, in the 2014 congressional elections, Republicans won their biggest majority in the U.S. House of Representatives since 1930. The job of this new edition of *Party Politics in America* is to explain how these rapid changes, and the drama of the 2016 elections, affect American politics and governance.

But the natural focus on the drama and unexpected results of Donald Trump's victory in 2016 should not obscure the important forces that remained constant. The two major parties continue to be closely balanced at the national level; the presidential popular vote divided 50–50. Even though the major-party presidential candidates' approval ratings were historically low, minor parties have not gained ground. The Democratic and Republican coalitions changed only at the margins in 2016, with non-college-educated white males a bit more prominent among Republican supporters and women a slightly bigger portion of the Democratic coalition. Party and ideological polarization reigns. And most worrisome, the harsh rhetoric and barely veiled calls to violence in the presidential race infused party identification with unprecedented hostility.

New to This Edition

Here are some of the new features of the seventeenth edition:

- Every chapter is updated to include material about the 2016 elections, including election results and campaign finance data incorporated immediately after the election.
- I've revamped Chapter 12 on campaign finance to cut through the complexity with diagrams and a chronological account.
- You'll find more discussion of the role of big givers to the 2016 campaigns, such as the Koch brothers and their many affiliated groups.
- How has the Donald Trump candidacy affected Republican Party organizations, its constituency, and its campaign techniques? Chapters 4, 7, and 11 offer answers.
- Chapters 5 (on political activists) and 8 (on party voter turnout activities) say more about young people's political attitudes and participation, including social media use in politics.
- Both parties are facing a rapidly changing population: many more Hispanic and Latino Americans and a growing group of distrustful twenty- and thirty-somethings. How can the Republicans, in particular, respond to this challenge without turning off their white, married, religious base? See Chapters 6–8 and 16.
- Partisanship has become infused with hostility toward the other side, at a fast-growing pace. What does this do to party politics among voters (see Chapters 6 and 15) and public officials (Chapters 13 and 14)?
- A lot of observers asked in 2016 why minor parties don't compete more effectively with the Republicans and Democrats. Chapters 1 and 2 remind us why two-party politics is so well entrenched in the U.S., even though it is not found in most other Western democracies.
- New and updated Instructor's Resources on the book's webpage (www.routledge.com/9781138683686) include test banks for each chapter with multiple-choice, short answer/identification, and essay questions; an annotated list of websites and correlated sample assignments; the book's appendix incorporating the 2016 election results; and links to a collection of syllabi (including my own).

This book, long known as the "gold standard" of political parties texts, has developed and adapted over a long time period, just as the American parties have. Frank J. Sorauf, a pioneer of modern political science, had the vision to create *Party Politics in America* in 1968, and Paul Allen Beck brought the book into the late 1980s and 1990s, with the intellectual mastery and comparative perspective that has marked his research on parties and voting behavior. Their goal for each new edition was to provide students with the clearest, most comprehensive and engaging understanding of political parties and partisanship, which in turn are key to understanding the workings of elections, public opinion, policy making, and leadership.

Features of This Text

This new edition continues that effort by adding new and updated versions of the features that were so well received in recent editions. The boxes titled "A Day in the Life" tell the personal stories of individuals whose experiences help to illustrate recent changes in the parties. Many of my students see political parties as remote, abstract, and a bit underhanded—something that might interest elderly people, but not teens and twenty-somethings. I hope these compelling stories—for instance, that of a Poli Sci major who spent his sophomore year running for a state legislative seat—can show readers why studying party politics is worth their time.

In other chapters, the feature titled "Which Would You Choose?" illustrates major debates about party politics in summary form: for example, whether encouraging greater voter turnout would help or harm American democracy (see Chapter 8). These mini-essays can provoke classroom debate on fundamental concerns about political parties.

Additional special feature boxes portray examples of "real politics" in action and are strategically distributed throughout the text.

As in previous editions, I've tried to make the reader's job easier by putting important terms in boldface and clearly defining them, emphasizing the vital points, and illustrating them with engaging examples. In addition, for instructors, I have written each chapter to stand alone, so that teachers can assign chapters in any order they choose without leaving their students puzzled because relevant concepts were explained elsewhere.

As elected officials know, good representatives need detailed information about what their constituents want. I've really appreciated hearing from instructors and students what they like about *Party Politics in America* and what they'd like to see changed. I'd like to hear from you as well. You can reach me at hershey@indiana.edu; I'll be happy to respond.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

It takes a village to create a book. I have received a great deal of help in researching, writing, and revising this volume: from my graduate and undergraduate students; present and former colleagues at Indiana University, particularly Ted Carmines and Bob Huckfeldt, Bill Bianco, Eileen Braman, Chris DeSante, Mike Ensley, Bernard Fraga, Matthew Hayes, Yanna Krupnikov, Elinor Ostrom, Leroy Rieselbach, John Williams, and Jerry Wright; and departmental staff members Amanda Campbell, Steve Flinn, Sharon Hughes, Sharon LaRoche, Chris McCann, Jan Peterson, James Russell, and Jessica Williams.

Austin Ranney, Leon Epstein, Jack Dennis, and Murray Edelman stimulated my interest in party politics and convinced me of the value of political science. Murray Edelman deserves special mention in that group, not only as a mentor and model for so many of us but also as a much-beloved friend. John Aldrich, one of the most insightful and systematic analysts of political parties, has been kind enough to write the Foreword to the book. I've learned so much as well from Bruce Oppenheimer, Paul Beck, Nate Birkhead, Tony Broh, Tom Carsey, Richard Fenno, Paul Herrnson, John Hibbing, Jennifer Hochschild, David Karol, Geoff Layman, Burdett Loomis, Michael Malbin, Seth Masket, Hans Noel, Kyle Saunders, Kay Schlozman, Brian Silver, Jim Stimson, and John Zaller. Many others provided valuable help with this edition, including Alan Abramowitz, Todd Bradley, Matt Fowler, Audrey Haynes, Scott McClurg, Chuck Prysby, Brad Warren, and Richard Winger.

I was very fortunate to receive suggestions on this edition from a large group of talented people: Lawrence Bensky, California State University-East Bay; David Darmofal, University of South Carolina-Columbia; John Davis, University of Arkansas-Monticello; Michael Hagen, Temple University; Adam Lawrence, Millersville University; Geoff Peterson, University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire; Robert Postic, University of Findlay; Charles Prysby, University of North Carolina-Greensboro; Douglas Roscoe, University of Massachusetts-Dartmouth; Priscilla Southwell, University of Oregon. They and reviewers of previous editions have been central to my efforts to keep the book relevant to students' and instructors' changing needs. And it is a great pleasure to work with the people at Routledge: Jennifer Knerr, Ze'ev Sudry, Alison Daltroy, and the members of the production team.

Most of all, I am very grateful to my family: my husband, Howard, and our daughters, Katie, Lissa, Lani, and Hannah, and grandkiddos Chloe, Parker, Dae'yana, Talan, Jade, and Jack. Everything I do has been made possible by their love and support.

Marjorie Randon Hershey

PART ONE

Parties and Party Systems

On a day in June 2016, 49 people were shot dead in a gay nightclub in Orlando, Florida by a gunman who claimed allegiance to the Islamic State. Later that day, the Democratic president condemned easy access to firearms and hate-filled terrorists. His Republican opponent instead raised questions about the president's loyalties and his immigration policy.

Was this "politics as usual" in the face of unspeakable tragedy? Or was it evidence of a working two-party system, offering voters two alternative explanations for a major national challenge? Just as the two major parties have different answers to domestic terrorism, they also put forward contrasting policies on other matters that affect your life every day, from whether the beer or water you drink should be tested for contaminants to whether your housing should be powered by electricity from coal or from wind energy.

National, state, and local governments make decisions that bear on almost everything you do. Because these government decisions have such great impact, large numbers of groups have mobilized to try to influence the men and women in public office who will make them. In a democracy, the political party is one of the oldest and most powerful of these groups. Parties have a lot of competition, however. Organized interests such as the National Rifle Association and the Gay and Lesbian Victory Fund also work to get the government policies they want, as do pro-life groups and the National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws (NORML). Even organizations whose main purpose is nonpolitical, such as universities, Walmart, and Facebook, try to influence government decisions that affect them.

These groups serve as **intermediaries**—links between citizens and the people in government who make the decisions that affect our lives (Figure I.1). They raise issues that they want government to address. They tell people what government is doing. By bringing together people with shared interests, they amplify these people's voices in speaking to government. They keep an eye on one another as well as on the actions of public officials.

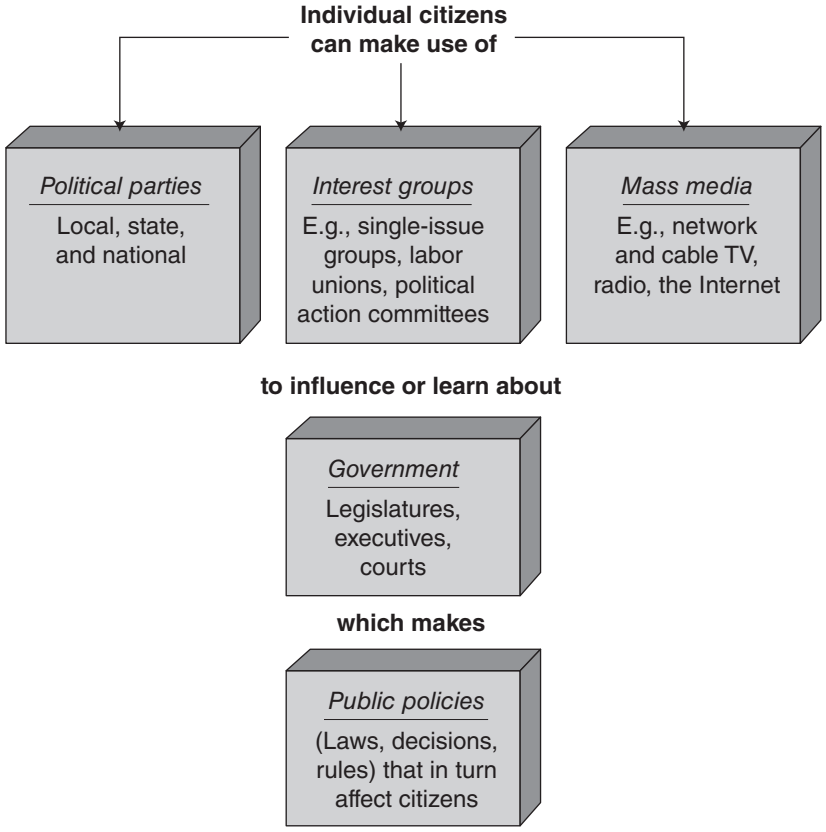

FIGURE I.1 Parties and Other Intermediaries Between Citizens and Government

Different intermediaries specialize in different political activities. Parties focus on nominating candidates, helping to elect them, and organizing those who win. Most organized interests represent narrower groups; they are not likely to win majority support so they try instead to influence the views of candidates who do win office—and of appointed officials, such as bureaucrats and judges. In other democracies, parties may behave differently. The American parties, for example, concentrate on election activities, whereas many parties in Europe have been more committed to keeping their elected officials faithful to the party's program.

Parties compete fiercely with one another. They also vie with interest groups for money, expertise, and volunteer help and then, with those resources in hand, for the support of individual citizens and elected officials. Parties must even fight for a major role in political campaigns; the American parties are not nearly as dominant in the business of campaigning as they were a century ago.

In spite of (or because of) their central role in government, parties provoke very mixed feelings. Large numbers of Americans claim to hate them. Leaders ranging from Washington and Madison to the Progressive movement to the present day have equated parties with "boss rule" and tried to reform or weaken them. This public hostility has led state legislatures to restrict what parties can do and how they can organize. Yet most Americans continue to consider themselves partisans, and parties have coped with these reforms over time by adapting their organizations and activities. The political parties of the 2010s would hardly be recognizable to politicians of a century ago, and the parties that we know today will probably change dramatically in the coming decades.

By the time you finish this book, you'll be able to explain how the American parties developed, the many ways they affect your life, and what they are capable of contributing to a democratic politics. What you read will challenge your ideas about whether political parties are essential to the survival of a democracy, whether they benefit you as a citizen, and how you intend to act as a mover of a representative political system.

CHAPTER 1

What Are Political Parties?

It was a harrowing campaign. During the 2016 election season, presidential candidates referred to one another as "the devil," "stupid," and "unhinged." A Republican Party office in North Carolina was firebombed. Staff members of the *Arizona Republic* were hit with death threats after the paper endorsed a Democratic presidential candidate for the first time in its history.

American politics is more polarized now than it has been in more than a century. On a 0-to-100 scale of favorability, two-thirds of Democrats in 2016 gave Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump a rating of *zero*, and 59 percent of Republicans assigned that dismal rating to Democrat Hillary Clinton. Substantial proportions even view the other party's policies as "so misguided that they threaten the nation's well-being," as you can see in Figure 1.1.[1]

This political polarization does not stem just from bad manners or the influence of "reality TV." It reflects the fact that although most Americans agree on such lofty goals as freedom and national security, we differ greatly on how to reach those goals. "The main reason it is so hard for Democrats and Republicans in Washington to cooperate," one analyst argues, "is … that they disagree profoundly about the major issues facing the country."[2] Not only in Congress but also in state legislatures and even in courtrooms, Democrats typically hold different views from Republicans about guns, same-sex marriage, taxes, immigration, and other issues. The gulf between the parties in government has grown so dramatically that the U.S. House elected in 2014 was the most polarized in American history, and the picture is not likely to change in 2017 and 2018.

As a result, a shift from Democratic to Republican control of Congress and the White House can now lead to a major change in public policies, as is happening in 2017. In 2008 and 2009, the Democratic-majority House was the most liberal in the past three decades. Yet, just a year later, the Republican swing in the 2010 elections produced the most conservative House in that period.[3] These party conflicts may be painful to watch, and they contribute to the rock-bottom levels of public confidence in Congress.[4]

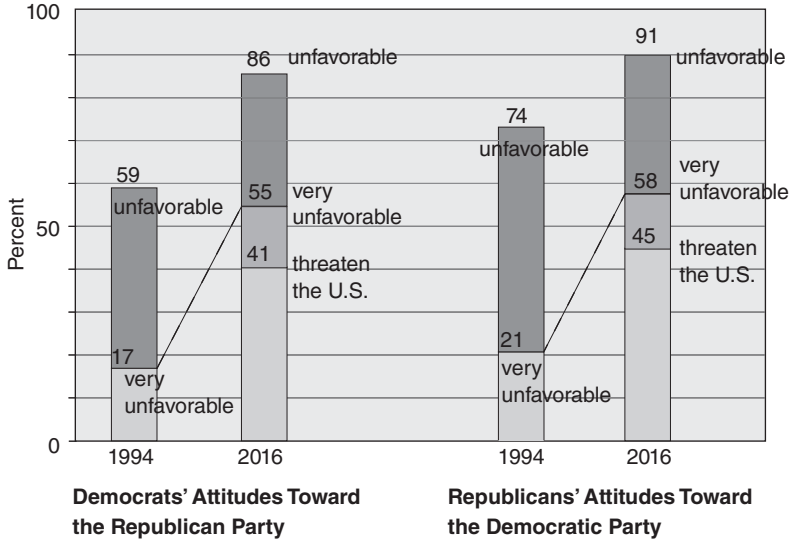

FIGURE 1.1 Partisans' Hostility Toward the Other Party, 1994 and 2016

Note: The question asked in 1994 and 2016 was, "Would you say your overall opinion of the Republican/Democratic Party is very favorable, mostly favorable, mostly unfavorable, or very unfavorable?" In 2016, the survey added, "And [if very unfavorable,] would you say the Republican/Democratic Party's policies are so misguided that they threaten the nation's well-being, or wouldn't you go that far?" Those who answered "mostly" or "very" unfavorable are categorized as "unfavorable."

Source: Adapted from Pew Research Center, "Partisanship and Political Animosity in 2016," June 23, 2016, at www.people-press.org/2016/06/22/partisanship-and-political-animosity-in-2016/ (accessed June 23, 2016).

However, they also help us to clarify our voting choices and hold elected officials accountable to the people. That benefits a democracy.

Hostility between the parties is not new. Nor is hostility toward the parties themselves. George Washington declared in his Farewell Address that "the spirit of party" was the "worst enemy" of popular government. Parties, he feared, would encourage people to pursue their narrow self-interest at other people's expense and cause jealousy, division, and revenge. Without parties, in his view, we'd be more likely to get noble and uncorrupted leaders who could speak for the nation as a whole. Washington's dream of a government "above parties" has long been widely shared. Then, if so many are disgusted by partisan conflict, why is the American political system still driven by partisan conflict? Why do we still have political parties?

The main reason is simply that political parties do necessary things for us that wouldn't get done otherwise. Most people are not very interested in politics, so how would they decide on a candidate without the guidance that

party labels provide? Will they spend hours researching the backgrounds and issue stands of dozens of candidates? Would you?

Without parties, how would Americans choose a president? In the absence of party primaries and caucuses, who would have the power to winnow the thousands of presidential wannabes to the very few who will run in the general election? Could members of Congress make that decision? Not in a system designed to separate legislative from executive powers. How about nomination by the nation's mayors and other elected officials, as happens in France? A new version of the television series *Survivor*?

Strong party organizations bring voters to the polls. Without political parties, would voter turnout, already lower in the United States than in most other industrialized democracies, drop even further? How would members of Congress elected as individuals, with no party loyalties to guide them, put together majorities to pass packages of legislation?

Who runs this political organization that is so needed and yet so distrusted? Does "the party" include only the politicians who share a party label when running for and holding public office? Does it also include activists who work on campaigns, citizens who vote for a party's candidates, or interest groups that share a party's aims? Or is a party any group that chooses to call itself a party, whether Democratic or Tea?

The Three Parts of Parties

Most scholars would agree that *a party is a group organized to nominate candidates, to try to win political power through elections, and to promote ideas about public policies*. For many analysts, the central figures in a political party are the candidates and elected officials who share a party's label. Anthony Downs, for example, sees a political party as "a coalition … seeking to control the governing apparatus by legal means … [through] duly constituted elections or legitimate influence."[5] Many parties in democratic nations, including the United States, began as groups of political leaders who organized to advance certain policies by winning elections.

Most observers, however, see the American parties as including more than just candidates and officeholders. As John Aldrich points out, parties are organizations—institutions with a life and a set of rules of their own, beyond that of their candidates.[6] Interested individuals can become active in political parties and help set their directions and strategies, just as one would do in a sports team or a student group. These activists and organizations are central parts of the party, too.

Some researchers urge us to define "party" even more broadly, to include other groups that ally with a party's elected officials and organization, such as interest groups and even media organizations. The Republican Party, then, would be seen as encompassing small business lobbies, conservative Christian groups, and media people such as Rush Limbaugh and Glenn Beck, whereas the Democratic Party's umbrella would cover labor unions,

environmental and feminist groups, and media outlets with a liberal slant. These groups are "policy demanders" who work in tandem with party organizations to achieve mutual aims.[7]

It is tempting to close our definition at this point and to view the American parties solely as teams of political specialists—elected officials, candidates, party leaders, activists, and organizations—who compete for power and then exercise it. That leaves the rest of the population on the outside of the parties, which many citizens may prefer. Yet this would ignore an important reality: Parties are rooted in the lives and feelings of citizens as well as candidates and political activists. Even though the American parties do not have formal, dues-paying "members," most voters develop such strong and enduring attachments to a particular party that they are willing to tell a pollster, "I'm a Democrat" or "I'm a Republican," and to develop strong negative feelings about the other party. And when writers refer to a "Democratic sweep" or a "Republican area," they see parties that include voters and other supporters as well as officeholders, office seekers, and activists.

The Progressive movement of the late 1800s and early 1900s, which promoted voter registration and the use of primary elections to nominate candidates, strengthened the case for including a citizen base in a definition of American parties. Voters in primary elections make the single most important decision for their party: who its candidates will be. In most other democracies, only the party leaders and activists have the power to make this choice.

Because American voters have the right to nominate the parties' candidates, the line that separates party leaders from followers in most other nations becomes blurred in the United States. American voters are not only consumers who choose among the parties' "products" (candidates) in the political marketplace but also managers who decide which products will be introduced in the first place. Making consumers into managers has transformed political parties, just as it would revolutionize the market economy. So it makes sense to include citizen-supporters as parts of the parties, because they are not just the targets of party activity but also hold the power to tell the party organization who its candidates will be.[8]

In short, the major American parties are composed of three interacting and overlapping parts. These are: the **party organization**, which includes party leaders and the activists who work for party causes and candidates; the **party in government**, composed of the men and women who run for and hold public office on the party's label; and the **party in the electorate**, or those citizens who express an attachment to the party (see Figure 1.2).[9] We explore each of these parts separately, keeping in mind that the character of the American parties is defined by the ways in which they intersect and overlap.[10]

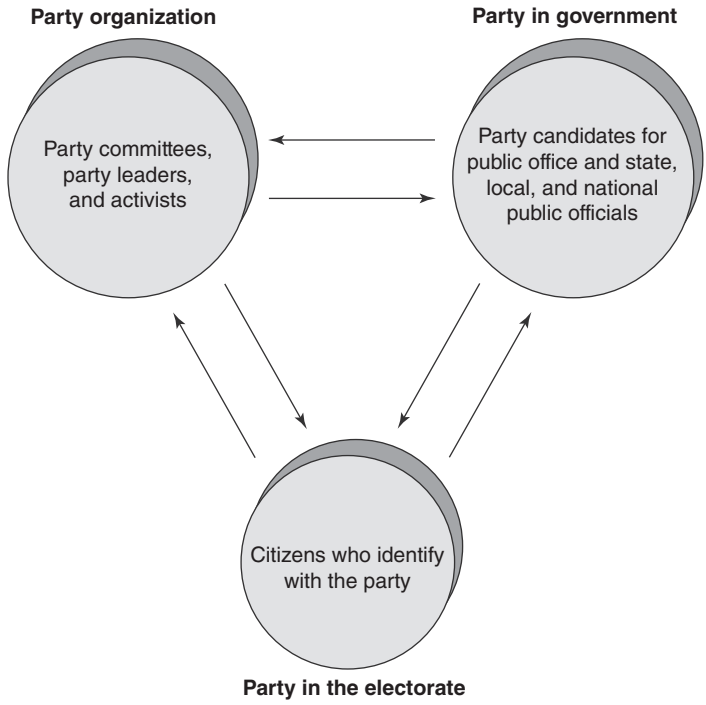

FIGURE 1.2 The Three Parts of American Political Parties

The Party Organization

Party organizations are made up of people who hold party jobs with titles—the national and state party chairs and other officers; the county, city, ward, and precinct leaders and committee people (see Chapters 3 and 4)—and other supporters who are devoted enough to volunteer their time, money, and skills to advancing the party's aims (see Chapter 5). These groups are charged with promoting *all* of the party's candidates and its stands on major issues, not just an individual candidate or two. Some party leaders or activists may be waiting for the right time to run for public office (and thus cross over into the party in government). Others have been pressed into service as candidates for Congress or city clerk when nobody else wanted the job.

The Party in Government

The party in government consists of the candidates for public office and those who hold office, whether elected or appointed, who share a party label (see Chapters 13 and 14). The major figures here are presidents, governors, judges, Congress members, state legislators, bureaucrats, mayors, and other local officials who hold the same party affiliation.

Members of the party in government do not always cooperate smoothly with people in the party organization.[11] They often work together to meet shared goals, but they may have different priorities in reaching those goals. A senator, for example, may be trying to raise as much campaign money as possible, because she believes that a landslide victory will improve her chances of running for president later. At the same time, the party organization's leaders may be hoping that some of her campaign contributors will fund other, more vulnerable party candidates instead, so the party can get or keep a majority in Congress.

These two parts of the parties also contend for leadership of the party as a whole. When reporters want to get a "Republican view" on an issue such as immigration, they will often interview a source in the White House, if the president is a Republican, or a Republican leader in Congress; these members of the party in government are often assumed to speak for the party. Leaders of the party's organization, such as the Florida state Republican Party chair, might want to put a different spin on the issue. But presidents and congressional party leaders do not have to clear their pronouncements with the party organization, nor can they be controlled by it. These tensions and the competition for scarce resources show why it is helpful to treat the party organization and the party in government as separate parts of the party.

The Party in the Electorate

The party in the electorate consists of the women and men who *see themselves* as Democrats or Republicans: citizens who feel some degree of loyalty to the party, even if they have never set foot in the party's headquarters or met its candidates. We call them **partisans** or **party identifiers**. As you'll see in Chapter 6, the great majority of Americans consider themselves partisans. Many of these partisans declared themselves to be a Democrat or Republican when they registered to vote; more than half of the states require citizens to register by party. Others see themselves as partisans even if they never cast a ballot.

Partisans usually support their party's candidates and issue stands, but nothing forces them to do so. In general elections, they may vote for one of their party's candidates and reject another; in primaries, they may decide to saddle the party with a candidate that the organization can't stand. However, they are vitally important as the core of the party's electoral support. Without this reliable base, the party would have to work much harder to win and keep power.

This relationship between the party organization and the party in government, on the one hand, and the electoral party, on the other, is one of the most striking characteristics of the major American parties. Other political organizations—interest groups such as teachers' unions and oil companies—try to attract public support, but these supporters remain outside the group's organization. In contrast, in the American parties, the

party in the electorate is not just an external target to be mobilized. In addition to its power to choose the parties' candidates by voting in primaries, in many states the electoral party selects local *party* officials, such as precinct committee leaders. Thus, the major American party is an open, inclusive, permeable organization. The extent to which citizens can affect the choice of its leaders and candidates sets it apart from parties in most other democracies.

What Parties Do

Political parties in every democracy engage in three sets of activities to at least some degree. They select candidates and contest elections; they try to educate citizens about issues important to the party; and they work to influence government to provide certain policies and other benefits.[12] Parties and party systems differ in the degree to which they emphasize each of these activities, but no party can completely ignore any of them.

Elect Candidates

Parties often seem completely absorbed by their efforts to elect candidates. Parties are goal-oriented, and in American politics, achieving goals depends on winning elections. The need to elect candidates links the three parts of the parties. Party leaders and activists committed to a particular elected official join with other members of the party in government and with party identifiers to return that official to office.[13]

Educate (or Propagandize) Citizens

Parties also try to teach or propagandize citizens. (If you like their message, you might call it "voter education." If not, it may sound like propaganda.) They work to focus voter attention on the issues that bind the party together and downplay issues that might split their adherents. The Democrats and Republicans do not promote all-inclusive ideologies like those of a fundamentalist Islamic party. They do, however, represent the beliefs and interests of the groups that identify with and support them. In this sense, the Republicans are usually linked with business and conservatives, and Democrats are often seen as the party of labor and the disadvantaged.

Govern

Almost all American national and state elected officials run for office as either Democrats or Republicans, and their partisanship affects every aspect of the way government works. The legislatures of 49 states[14] and the U.S. Congress are organized along party lines. Although some issues may divide a party, there has been an impressive amount of party discipline in legislative

voting in recent decades. In executive branches, presidents and governors usually choose cabinet officers and agency heads of their own party. Even the courts show evidence of the guiding hand of partisanship, though in more subtle ways.

Extended Party Networks

The American parties do not have a monopoly on educating citizens, working to elect candidates, or governing. Interest groups such as the NRA, other organizations such as churches and corporations, and media organizations ranging from networks to bloggers try to affect at least one of these goals. Sometimes parties compete with these groups, as occurred in 2016 when many Republican partisans supported Donald Trump for president but big Republican funders such as the Koch brothers did not. In many local elections, groups backing or opposing a new sports stadium or a referendum on school tax rates try to influence primaries or urge candidates to run. Parties also cooperate with other like-minded political and non-political organizations to achieve particular policy aims, to the point where (as noted on page 6) some observers view these groups as part of the party itself. At the least, parties often maintain long-lasting alliances with non-party groups and some media outlets. Civil rights groups work closely with the Democratic Party and gun rights groups with the Republicans, even though the groups in this "party network" may disagree at times on candidates or preferred tactics.

Because the American parties' activities center on electing candidates, the party in government dominates the party to a degree unusual among Western democracies. In parties more strongly committed to educating citizens about the party's ideology—European Marxist parties, for instance—party organizations are more likely to be able to dictate to the legislative parties, telling them what to emphasize and holding them accountable for their votes.

The Effects of Party Activity

How do these party activities affect American politics? Parties help people make sense of the complexities of politics. Most of us don't pay much attention to government. Parties simplify issues and elections for us; thus, people can make sensible choices in politics even when they don't have a lot of political information, by using their party attachment as a guide for evaluating candidates and issues. By making it easier for citizens to form political judgments, parties ease the way for people to become politically active. They educate Americans by transmitting political information and values to large numbers of current and future voters.

The American parties also help aggregate and organize political power. They put together individuals and groups into blocs that are powerful

enough to govern. So in the political world as well as within the individual, parties help to focus political loyalties on a small number of alternatives and then to build support for them. Parties also provide an organized opposition. That is not a popular role to play; the behavior of a constant adversary may seem like that of a sore loser. But an organized opposition is vital to a democracy because it has a natural incentive—its own ambition—to serve as a watchdog on a powerful government. Few of us would be willing to devote the time and effort to play this important role on our own.

Because they are so focused on contesting elections, the parties dominate the recruitment of political leaders. Large numbers of legislators, political executives, and even judges entered public service through party activity. Because they are constants in the election process, parties help to make changes in government leadership more routine and orderly. In nations where parties are not stable from one election to the next, leadership changes can be much more disruptive.

Finally, the parties are capable of bridging the separation of powers in order to get things done (though they may not always choose to do so). The U.S. government was designed to fragment political power, so that no single group could gain enough of it to become a tyrant. The division between the national government and the states, multiplied by the separation of powers at each level, does an impressive job of fragmenting power. The challenge is to make these fragmented units work together to solve problems. Democrats in Congress have a motive to work with a Democratic president—their shared desire for their party to win, in order to achieve their shared goals—to pass legislation their party favors. So do Republicans. Thus, the two major national parties can provide a basis for cooperation within a government marked by decentralization and division.

How Do Parties Differ from Other Political Groups?

We have seen that parties have a lot of competition as intermediaries between citizens and government. *All* political organizations, not just parties, try to educate at least some citizens and mobilize their supporters either to win public office or to influence those who do win. Both parties maintain close working relationships with a variety of organized interests, research groups, and media outlets with shared concerns. How do parties differ from these other political organizations?

Parties Are Paramount in Elections

Above all, a party can be distinguished from other political organizations by its role in structuring elections. In most elections, candidates are listed on the ballot as “Democrat” or “Republican”; they are not listed as “NRA

member" or "LGBTQ rights activist." It is the major parties that normally recruit the election clerks and the poll watchers, not the AARP. The parties are paramount among political groups in contesting elections.

They Have a Full-Time Commitment to Political Activity

The major American parties are fully committed to political activity; it is their sole reason for existing. Interest groups and other political organizations, in contrast, move frequently from political to nonpolitical activities and back again. A teachers' union, for example, exists mainly for the purpose of collective bargaining for better pay and working conditions. It may turn to political action to oppose unfriendly candidates or to lobby Congress against antiunion legislation, but its interests are rooted in the workplace. Parties live entirely in the political world.

They Mobilize Large Numbers

An interest group, such as an organization that wants to legalize the carrying of concealed weapons on college campuses, does not need millions of supporters to persuade Congress to pass a bill; it may be able to succeed with only a few strategists and a well-mobilized clientele. However, because winning elections is so vital to parties' goals, parties must mobilize an enormous range of supporters to win large numbers of races. The result is that in a system such as that of the United States, a major party cannot afford to represent only a narrow range of concerns.

They Endure

The American parties are unusually stable and long-lived. Most business, environmental, and single-issue groups are mere juveniles by comparison. Both major American parties can trace their histories for more than 150 years, and many of the major parties in other Western democracies also have impressive life spans. This remarkable endurance adds to their value for voters. The parties are there as points of reference election after election and candidate after candidate, giving continuity to the choices Americans face and the issues they debate.

They Serve as Political Symbols

Finally, political parties differ from other political organizations in the extent to which they operate as symbols, or emotion-laden objects of loyalty. For tens of millions of Americans, the party label is a social identity, like that of an ethnic or religious group. It is the chief cue for their decisions

Is the Tea Party a Party?

During the Great Recession in 2009, President Obama proposed to help homeowners who were about to default on their mortgage payments. CNBC correspondent Rick Santelli protested that this would force responsible people to pay their "loser" neighbors' mortgages. He called for a new "tea party," similar to the American colonists' protest against British rule by throwing highly taxed British tea into Boston Harbor. Conservative talk radio hosts urged their listeners to call Congress members demanding a repeal of the Affordable Care Act (so-called "Obamacare"). By 2011, polls showed that about one in five Americans—mainly older, white, Republican conservatives—supported the Tea Party movement. Prominent Republicans such as Marco Rubio championed its cause. Tea Partyers focused much of their anger on President Obama and government-funded social services to people they defined as "undeserving," including younger people and undocumented immigrants, though they didn't object to Social Security and Medicare, programs that benefited older people including many Tea Partyers. Tea Party-backed conservatives defeated several mainstream Republican incumbents in 2010 Republican primaries. By 2016, however, the tea was growing cold. Obama's reelection astonished and dismayed many Tea Party activists, and public approval of the Tea Party had dropped.

If the Tea Party has some national leaders, local supporters, and a deeply felt issue, then is it a political party? Not yet. Most Tea Partyers continue to identify as Republicans, though many have criticized Republican congressional leaders for not doing enough to shrink government. Political parties differ from other political organizations in that only the party has the power to nominate candidates. In 2016, the "Tea Party" label was rarely on the ballot; the two major parties have long made it difficult for any group except Democrats and Republicans to get ballot access for their party labels and candidates. Thus, Tea Party activists had to educate their followers as to which Republican candidates favored the group's principles. So, although the Tea Party's colorful and angry protests have grabbed a lot of media attention, the group has functioned more as a movement within the Republican Party—distinctive mainly by its refusal to compromise—than as a party in its own right. To grow into a political party, the movement's adherents would need to do the intensive work of achieving ballot access and running candidates from the local to the national level, developing more of an organizational structure, and agreeing on a platform.

Sources: See Juraj Medzihorsky, Levente Littvay, and Erin K. Jenne, "Has the Tea Party Era Radicalized the Republican Party?" *PS: Political Science and Politics* 47 (2014): 806–812, and Amy Fried and Douglas B. Harris, "The Strategic Promotion of Distrust in Government in the Tea Party Age," *The Forum* 13 (2015): 417–443.

about candidates or issues; it relates their values to the real choices made in American politics.

Remember that the differences between parties and other political organizations are differences of degree. Interest groups do become involved in elections, and the larger organized interests serve as political symbols, too. Groups such as the Sierra Club can recruit candidates, promote their endorsed candidates to their members and friends, and get their supporters to the polls on Election Day. Other groups may do the same (see box "Is the Tea Party a Party?" on page 14). Interest groups also promote issue positions, try to influence officeholders, and give money to campaigns. But candidates are listed on the ballot as representatives of a party, not of an interest group.

In some respects, the major parties have more in common with some of the larger interest groups, such as the NRA and the AARP, than they do with minor or third parties. Most minor parties are electoral organizations in name only. Most of their candidates are in no danger of needing a victory speech on election night. They may have few or no local organizations. Their membership base may be just as narrow as that of most interest groups. However, minor parties may qualify to be listed on the ballot, and their candidates can receive public funding where it is available and where they can meet the criteria for it. In these ways (and sometimes *only* in these ways), they can be more like the major parties than the large interest groups.

How the American Parties Developed

The world's first political parties were created in the United States. For more than 200 years, the development of the American parties has been closely interrelated with the expansion of popular democracy. At times during their history, the party in government, then the party organizations, and then both the parties in government and in the electorate have taken the dominant role within the parties.[15]

The Founding of American Parties

Although the founders of the American government hated the thought of factions, they nevertheless began taking sides soon after the new government was formed, because they disagreed on big issues. The dominant group, led by the ambitious young treasury secretary Alexander Hamilton, believed that the nation's economic survival required centralized (federal government) control over the economy, especially by the executive branch. These **Federalists** pushed for a central banking system and high tariffs (taxes on imported goods) to protect newly developing American industries and to help fund the federal government (see box "The American Major Parties" on page 17).

Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, and others objected. They felt that Hamilton's proposals made the federal government too powerful and

threatened states' rights. Each group gathered in meetings, called "caucuses," to plan how to get their ideas adopted. During the 1790s, these alignments took a more enduring form. Their differences, as is the case now, were both principled and personal; as historian David McCullough reports, the animosity between Hamilton and Jefferson "had reached the point where they could hardly bear to be in the same room. Each was certain the other was a dangerous man intent on dominating the government."[16]

These early parties, then, were formed largely "from the top" by people in government. They focused at first on issues that concerned the national leaders who formed them—not surprisingly at a time when most Americans played only an indirect role in politics. At this time, in almost every state the vote was restricted to free men who could meet property-owning or taxpaying requirements. Even these relatively small numbers of voters had limited power, as the writers of the Constitution intended. The president was chosen not directly by the voters, but indirectly by the Electoral College. U.S. Senators were selected not by the voters but by the state legislatures. Only members of the House of Representatives were selected by direct popular vote. This cautious start for democratic self-government produced very limited political parties.

Because Jefferson's supporters were in the minority in Congress, their main hope of passing legislation was to elect more Jeffersonians. They collaborated with like-minded "discussion clubs" formed in local communities to oppose Federalist officeholders. Sympathizers at the grassroots level joined in "committees of correspondence" between national and local leaders. Each side established one or more newspapers to propagandize for its cause. As early as the middle of the 1790s, less than ten years after the Constitution was adopted, almost all national politicians had aligned with either the Jeffersonian **Democratic-Republicans** (often called just Republicans) or Hamilton's Federalists, and these incipient parties had taken sides on the major issues facing the new government.[17]

The more elitist Federalists could not keep up, however, either in grassroots organizing or in winning elections. The Federalist candidate for president, John Adams, was defeated by Jefferson in 1800, and the Federalists faded into history during the next two decades. In short, the pressures for democratization were already powerful enough by the early 1800s to cripple an infant party whose leaders in the government could not adapt to the need to organize a mass electorate. Yet the Federalists gave a historic gift to American democracy. They accepted Adams's defeat in 1800 and handed control of the presidency to their Jeffersonian rivals.[18]

The Democratic-Republicans, who were the party of farming interests, the less-privileged, the South (including its wealthy landowners), and the frontier, then held a one-party monopoly for almost 20 years. They dominated American politics so thoroughly by the time of James Monroe's election in 1816 that the absence of party conflict was called the "Era of Good Feelings." Despite the decline of one party and the rise of another,

The American Major Parties

There have been only five major political parties in more than two centuries of American history:

1. **The Federalist Party, 1788–1816.** The champion of the new Constitution and strong national (federal) government, it was the first American political institution to resemble a political party, although it was not a full-fledged party. Its strength was rooted in New England and the Atlantic Seaboard, where it attracted the support of bankers, shopkeepers, manufacturers, landowners, and other established families of wealth and status. Limited by its narrow electoral base, compared with that of the Democratic-Republicans, it soon faded.
2. **The Democratic-Republican (Jeffersonian) Party, 1800–1832.** Many of its leaders had been strong proponents of the Constitution but opposed the extreme nationalism of the Federalists. It was a party of small farmers, workers, and less-privileged citizens, plus southern planters, who preferred the authority of the state governments to that of the national government. Like its leader, Thomas Jefferson, it shared many of the ideals of the French Revolution, especially the extension of the right to vote and the notion of direct popular self-government.
3. **The Democratic Party, 1832–Present.** Growing out of the Andrew Jackson wing of the Democratic-Republicans, it was the first really broad-based, popular party in the United States. On behalf of a coalition of less-privileged voters, it opposed such business-friendly policies as national banking and high tariffs. It also welcomed new immigrants (and sought their votes) and opposed nativist (anti-immigrant) sentiment.
4. **The Whig Party, 1834–1856.** This party, too, had roots in the old Democratic-Republican Party, but in a faction that opposed the Jacksonians. Its greatest leaders, Henry Clay and Daniel Webster, stood for legislative supremacy and protested the strong presidency of Andrew Jackson. For its short life, the Whig Party was an unstable coalition of many interests, among them nativism, property, and business and commerce.
5. **The Republican Party, 1854–Present.** The Republicans first formed to oppose slavery. As the Civil War approached, the new party came to stand for the Union, the North, Lincoln, the freeing of slaves, victory in the Civil War, and the imposition of Reconstruction on the South. From the Whigs it also inherited a concern for business and industrial expansion.

however, the nature of party politics did not change much during this period. It was a time when government and politics were the business of an elite group of well-known, well-established men, and the parties reflected the politics of the time. Without party competition, leaders felt no need to organize more fully at the grassroots, so the parties' further development was stalled.

American politics began to change markedly in the 1820s. By then, most states had eliminated the requirement that only landowners could vote. The suffrage was extended to all white males, at least in state and federal elections. The growing push for democratization also led state and local governments to make more and more public officials popularly elected rather than appointed.[19]

Another big change at this time affected the election of a president. The framers of the Constitution had crafted an unusual selection process; they specified that each state, in a manner selected by its legislature, would choose a number of presidential voters (electors) equal to the size of its congressional delegation. Collectively called the Electoral College, these electors would meet in the state to cast their votes for president. The candidate who received a majority of the states' electoral votes became president. If no candidate won a majority, the president was to be selected by the House of Representatives, with each state casting one vote.

This Electoral College was an ingenious invention. By leaving the choice of electors to the state legislatures, the framers avoided having to set uniform election methods and voting requirements. Even if the framers themselves had agreed on these rules, some states might have objected to federal control over them. (The most explosive question was, of course, whether and how to count slaves in a state's population.) Requiring electors to meet simultaneously in their respective states helped prevent a conspiracy among electors from different states to put forward their own choice for president. At first, states used a variety of methods for choosing presidential electors. By the 1820s, popular election had become the most common method.[20]

This growing enthusiasm for popular control also raised doubts about whether the party's congressional caucus should have the power to *nominate* presidential candidates for the Electoral College to consider. Some criticized caucus nominations as the actions of a small and self-appointed elite. The congressional party caucus was losing its role as the major force within the parties as the nation entered a new phase of party politics.

A National Two-Party System Emerges

The Era of Good Feelings gave way to a two-party system that has prevailed ever since. The Democratic-Republicans had developed factions that chose divorce rather than reconciliation. Andrew Jackson led the frontier and agrarian wing of the Democratic-Republicans, the inheritors of the Jeffersonian tradition, into what is now called the **Democratic Party**.

Another faction of the old Democratic-Republicans who had promoted Adams for president in 1824 and 1828 later merged with the **Whigs** (an old English term referring to those who opposed the dominance of the king, by whom they meant Jackson). That created two-party politics in the United States.

Just as important, the parties developed a much bigger nationwide grassroots (citizen) base. Larger numbers of citizens were now eligible to vote, so the presidential campaigns became more concerned with reaching out to the public. New campaign organizations and tactics brought the contest to many more people. As the opposition to the Jacksonians formed, presidential elections became more competitive, and voter turnout increased. Party organization in the states and localities also expanded, with the help of improved roads and communications. Candidates for state and local office were increasingly nominated by conventions of state and local leaders, rather than by the narrower legislative caucuses. By 1840, the Whigs and the Democrats were established in the first truly national party system and were competitive in all the states.

During the 1840s and 1850s, both parties worked to keep the bitter issue of slavery off the political agenda because it threatened to break apart both parties' supporting coalitions. Finally, the Whigs fractured on the issue and then collapsed. Antislavery activists created the **Republican Party** to demand that slavery be abolished. The Republicans then adopted the Whigs' commitment to protect American businesses with high tariffs and taxes to subsidize industrial development: roads, railroads, and settlement of the frontier. The party organized widely, except in the South and the Border States, which were Democratic strongholds, and won the presidency in 1860. To a great extent, the party system and the nation broke into North and South.

In short, modern political parties similar to those we know today, with their characteristic organizational structures, bases of loyal voters, and lasting alliances among governmental leaders, had developed by the mid-1800s.[21] The American parties grew hand in hand with the early expansion of voting rights in the United States. Comparable parties did not develop in Great Britain until the 1870s, after laws were passed to give more adult males the right to vote.

The Golden Age of the Parties

As the parties were developing, they received another massive infusion of voters from a new source: European immigrants. Hundreds of thousands of Europeans immigrated to the United States before the Civil War. The newcomers were welcomed by the Democratic Party, which sought their votes. However, their large numbers worried others. An anti-immigrant minor party, the American Party (the so-called Know-Nothing Party), sprang up in response in the 1850s.

The tide of immigration was halted only temporarily by the Civil War. After the war ended, new nationalities came in an almost constant flow from 1870 until Congress closed the door to mass immigration in the 1920s. More than five million immigrants arrived in the 1880s (equal to one-tenth of the 1880 resident population). Ten million more 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 newcomers gravitated toward the big cities where industrial jobs were available. A new kind of party organization developed in these cities, called the urban "machine," to respond to the immigrants' needs. These party machines were like social service systems that helped the new arrivals cope with the challenges of an urban industrial society. They softened the hard edge of poverty by helping needy families with food and funds, smoothed the way with government and the police, and taught immigrants the customs of their new home—all in exchange for the immigrants' votes for the party's candidates at election time. With those votes, a party machine could gain and keep control over the city's government. The machines were the means by which the new urban working class won control of the cities from the largely Anglo-Saxon, Protestant elites who had governed for so long.

The period of the late 1800s and the early 1900s was the "golden age" of the American parties: the high point of their power. Party organizations, now the dominant segment of the party, existed in all the states and localities and flourished in the industrial cities. Party discipline reached a record high in Congress and most state legislatures. Parties ran the candidates' campaigns for public office; they held rallies and torchlight parades, canvassed door to door, and brought voters to the polls. They controlled access to many government jobs ranging from sewer inspectors to members of the U.S. Senate. They were an important source of information and guidance for a largely uneducated and often illiterate electorate. As a result, the highest voter turnouts in American presidential history were recorded during the latter half of the 1800s. The parties suited the needs and limitations of the new voters and met the need for creating majorities in the rapidly industrializing nation.[22]

The Progressive Reforms and Beyond

The drive to democratize American politics continued into the 1900s. Passage of the Seventeenth Amendment gave voters, rather than state legislatures, the right to elect U.S. senators. Women and then blacks finally gained the right to vote. As popular democracy expanded, a movement arose that would impose major changes on the parties.

The period that parties saw as their "golden age" did not seem so golden to groups of reformers. To Progressive crusaders, party control of politics had led to rampant corruption and inefficient government. Because many