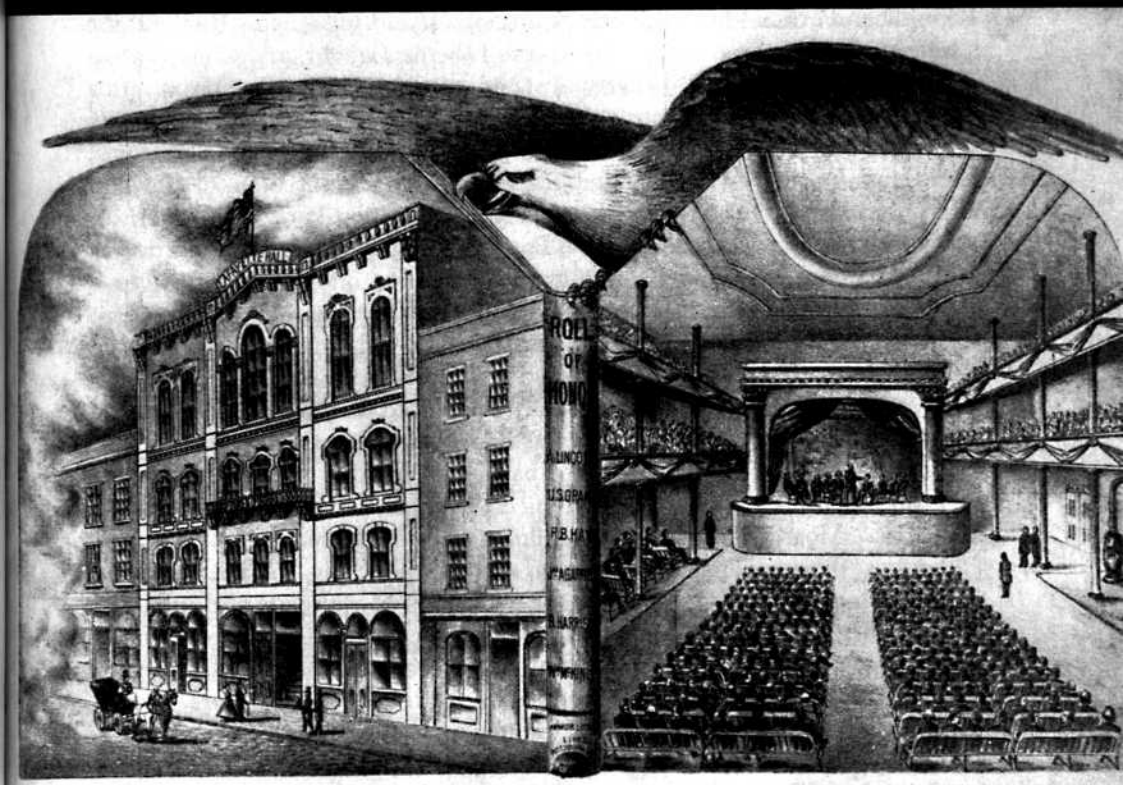
13. Composition and Structure of Parties



FIRST REPUBLICAN CONVENTION HELD AT LAFAYETTE HALL, PITTSBURG, PA. FEB. 22ª 1856.

Bettman Archive

PARTIES, as they shall be discussed here, are groups publicly organized to capture, through elections, the control of the government. Parties are the principal forms through which interest groups and factions wage political combat. Interest groups aim at acquiring special benefits from the government; factions are groups, not officially recognized, seeking to win political power. Government without parties is possible; but government without interest groups and factions is not. Many governments have prohibited people from organizing parties in opposition to them. The leaders of Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany tolerated no party save the Fascist or Nazi Party. The Soviet Union permits only the Communist Party. In such countries, the single party dominates the government, or, in a sense, actually *is* the government, and sees to it that no other group is allowed to seek power.

Weakness of American minor parties

In the United States only two great parties—the Democratic and the Republican Parties—have followings, resources, and influence. England for a time supported three great parties—the Liberal, Labour, and Conservative Parties—until the Liberal Party lost its major role in the years after 1920. On the European continent and elsewhere in the world of democracy, several major parties and some minor parties typify the political systems. The minor parties of the United States only rarely threaten to develop large proportions. The Socialist Party, the Prohibition Party, the American Party, the Independent Progressive Party—and in the past such parties as the Free Soilers, the Know-Nothings, the Populists, and the Progressives—engage merely in marginal skirmishes with the two great parties except upon occasion. The Republican Party is the only minor party in the United States that has ever succeeded in transforming itself into a major party. In 1948 all minor parties together achieved only 5.4 per cent of the ballots cast for President; in 1952 the figure was about 0.5 per cent, and in 1956 it was even less. The minor parties do not always run candidates; they do not run candidates for all offices; they do not get on the ballot in all States. Most of the time their influence is negligible.

Perhaps their major impact on politics is that they publicize certain issues such as alcoholism, government ownership of railroads and industry, race conflict, or a communist threat. They force these issues upon public attention, with the result that action upon some of them by the major parties is hastened. The issue sometimes finds its way in more or less reworked form into the disputes of the major parties. For example, a personal income tax to be levied by the federal government was advocated by several small American parties before the major parties incorporated such a demand in their platforms. A minor party also may convert itself into a faction of a major party, and then strive to capture that party from its dominant faction. For instance, supporters of the People's Party, which ran its own presidential candidate in 1892, in 1896 became the leading group in the Democratic Party and named their candidate for President, William Jennings Bryan, on the Democratic ticket. The remnants of the People's Party, whose convention in 1896 met after the Democratic convention, also nominated Bryan.

THE INTERNAL ORGANIZATION OF PARTIES

The two great American parties are organized in a very complicated manner. About the year 1800 neither the laws of the federal government nor those of the States said anything about parties. Each party developed its own organization; and since the States were and are important units of government, each party was organized a little differently in each State. Later on, every State enacted its own laws, partly legalizing the existing party organization and partly changing it to conform to the then current beliefs about better forms of organization. Afterward came new

changes in practice, then changes in laws, and still later more changes in both fields so that today each State has an elaborate and complex code of rules governing the way parties shall be organized. The national government has left practically all such legislation to the States, including the conduct of parties in the election of national officers. In this latter context, however, the national government has been concerned with the protection of the right of citizens to vote and in the honesty with which national elections are managed.

Legal regulation of American parties has occurred in three principal areas that can be treated separately below: (1) parties have been given a status as collective or corporate bodies or associations, and their membership rules have been controlled; (2) party organization has been prescribed in detail by the laws; and (3) party activities, especially electioneering, have been regulated.

Legal status of parties

Uncertain Legal Definitions of Party: In the first place, the very legal status of the political party is uncertain. At an early date, the party was considered a completely voluntary association of people who wished to pool their forces in political campaigns. As such, it was thought to be not subject to law. But at the present time the American parties labor under more detailed legal control than the parties of France or England, although not so much as the Communist Party in Soviet Russia. Unlike certain "inherent" or guaranteed rights that Americans are given by their federal and State constitutions, the right to form political parties is not protected explicitly by fundamental constitutional documents. The freedom of assembly guaranteed by the federal Constitution might very well guard the liberty of a party, however, should it ever need to defend its existence. Though practically all State constitutions mention political parties, and presumably thus encourage their existence, they do not assure them the right to exist. The federal Constitution does not even mention political parties. Some States have "abolished" the political party in certain local, "non-partisan" elections. Some States too have outlawed "subversive," "revolutionary," or "treasonable" parties, and the national government has outlawed the Communist Party. However, it would have to be an extreme emergency indeed that might bring the outlawing of the major political parties, for they are firmly embedded in tradition, practice, and belief. It is difficult to imagine American government without them. Certainly factionalism would not be stilled; and factionalism itself is even protected by the First Amendment to the Constitution, in its guarantee of the right of peaceful assembly.

Control of Party Membership: A party has two sometimes conflicting aims. First, it has reasons for enrolling every possible person in order to win elections; and in this drive it asks nothing but a vote from its "members." Second, and contrariwise, it has reasons for being exclusive, in order that its leaders can work their wills upon its activity and in order to keep the rather weak unity of belief found among its members from

being more diluted by non-believers. The States have cooperated with the parties respecting these aims, but also have controlled the aims. Party membership is defined by law: almost always a test is set up to determine who is a party member eligible to share in party proceedings, especially the party primary elections. The test is aimed at permitting only Republicans to take part in Republican proceedings and only Democrats in Democratic proceedings. The reason for the test is to help the party to stand for its principles by excluding people who do not share them. But the test is never strict and is often loose. Unlike many parties abroad and most minor parties at home, the major parties do not require payments of dues or any other strong test of party adherence. In some States, the party itself administers such tests; in others the government does. The party is never entirely free to limit its membership, and the amount of federal and State control of this freedom is increasing. At most, a person must prove that he has been of the party persuasion at some time in the past in order to have his claim of membership accepted at the time he is examined. At the least, in Washington State, any person may join in either party's proceedings at will, a situation in which of course there is no test at all. It is noteworthy, too, that a party cannot legally bar individuals from its proceedings on the ground of race; that is, it cannot make racial origins a test of membership. This right to participate in party nominations as well as in general elections is guaranteed persons of all races by the fact that all stages in the election of federal officers are governed by Congress (see Art. I, sec. 2 of the Constitution) and also by the Fifteenth Amendment, that forbids anyone from barring Negroes from the suffrage.

The party machinery

The party machinery must conform with State laws, whose requirements sometimes detract from the effectiveness of the organization. For example, the law in most States declares what kinds of party committees should be formed, how many of them there should be, and what their functions should be. Laws also define the ways in which parties should organize conventions and should elect delegates to the national presidential nominating conventions

The net result of the great body of laws governing parties is a loosely-knit national organization of forty-eight generally similar sections, but with the details from one section to another so varied as to encourage strong parties in some States and weak parties in others. For example, although in their main outlines the parties of California resemble those of New York and Michigan, the details of the laws—the small print, so to speak—weaken party organization in California and strengthen it in New York and Michigan. In general, the party organizations of the western States are thus rendered weaker than those of the East, despite certain overall similarities that can now be described.

The typical blueprint of party structure and organization in the American States shows a formidable array of committees at all levels. From the level of the nation down to that of the voting precinct, the picture seems

to represent an army; but only an insider will know that the lines of command do not go from top to bottom, nor from bottom to top, nor certainly sideways, but that they move in all directions. Yet the formal structure is well worth knowing, as it is presented in Figure 25.

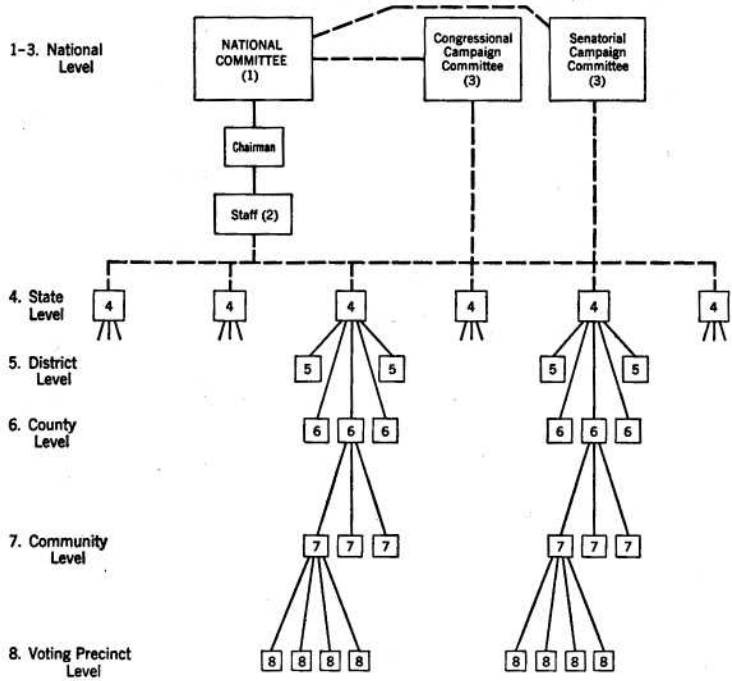


Figure 25. Structure of an American Major Party.

1. At the top of each party there is a National Committee composed of one man and one woman from each State, with a few additional members.

2. Working under its chairman is a headquarters staff.

3. Independent of both are found a committee to manage Senatorial elections and another to manage House elections. These are most active during midterm congressional elections.

4. Below these are forty-eight State Central or State Executive Committees that are created by State law and owe only voluntary allegiance to the national groups.

5. From each of these stem various district committees for congressional, judicial, and other elections.

6. Below these are the 3,049 county central committees, one for each county.

7. Below these are the ward, township, town, and city committees.

8. This whole tower reposes upon precinct committees or precinct captains, one in each of the approximately 154,000 precincts in the United States.

Beginning at the State level and moving down the diagram, one would have a different drawing for each State. Large cities have their own peculiar organizations very often, such as the famous Tammany Hall Democratic organization of New York City.

Special Machinery: Conventions: Even this complicated apparatus does not comprise all party machinery. Some States require the parties to summon nominating conventions for the election of certain party officials and the choice of candidates for certain public offices. The rules for these conventions are lengthy and detailed. Many additional offices are created if only for the special occasion. The presidential nominating convention itself is an exceedingly complex mechanism that reflects and takes into account the laws of the forty-eight States and the traditions and rules of the preceding conventions.

Informal and Associated Machinery: Furthermore, there are innumerable caucuses and shadow committees of an informal nature that cannot be ignored; they develop to avert the natural effects of the legally prescribed organization or to coordinate the many relations a party has with the interest groups, candidates' campaign committees, governmental agencies, personal cliques, and neighboring bodies. There are many examples of men who hold several offices. It would not be unusual, for instance, for an active party official to find himself a ward leader or committeeman, an alderman, the campaign manager of a State-wide campaign, a member of the county central committee, a member of the State central committee, a delegate to a national nominating convention, the chairman of the platform committee of the State party convention, and a member of the platform committee for the national presidential nominating convention. At the same time, he might be a member of the elections committee and of other committees of the city council, the attorney for several interest groups, a member of several informal cliques such as a "kitchen cabinet" and a "city hall gang"; and he may belong also to the American Legion, civic and business organizations, and a church.

He probably realizes full well his burdens and regrets his numerous and far-flung memberships, but there is little he can do about it; if he does not remain in all his posts, someone else will be able to take them over and obstruct his efforts. Any single post will give him only a small part of the power he needs to make his will felt beyond a very small area. In fact, for the party to be anything but a completely helpless mass of petty officers stumbling over one another, and for it to make and keep any large or useful promises to any or all interests in the locality or nation, it must have such active and office-ridden individuals. Some persons must reach out in all directions to give the mere elements of coordination, consistency, and movement to the political party. Far from being a concerted, driving machine aimed at the supreme goal of capturing the offices of the government—as a party often is in such centralized countries as Japan, France, England, Germany, Italy, and Turkey—the party in America is a floundering, awkward, pieced-together device with only the amount of unity that a few

dedicated men and women working informally and partly in the background can give it.

Location of Power in the Structure: Where the "real power" lies in this enormous structure is practically impossible to determine. The answer may well be "nowhere." Power is strewn throughout the structure; moreover, shifts of power occur constantly. Conditions vary from State to State, county to county, district to district, and even from precinct to precinct. In the same unit of the structure they vary from time to time. In Illinois the most powerful person in one county may be the chairman of the county central committee; in another the most powerful may be an elected State senator. In California, a large contributor to the party coffers may have the principal influence in one county, a newspaper editor in another, a county central committee chairman in yet another. Great sections of the country have no effective party organization, to the point where no precinct committeemen or captains exist and where no candidates appear to seek posts on the county central committees. Men will fight desperately to achieve ward leadership in Chicago; even murder has been used as a means toward this end; but in Oregon a similar post will go begging for candidates.

A sheriff may be the party power in an Indiana county; a probate court judge in a South Carolina county; a group of ranchers in a Colorado county; an oilman in a Texas county; a machine boss in a Tennessee county; a mining company manager in a Montana county. In one place or time, a single individual will draw power into his hands; in or at another, a close-knit group may share it; more commonly, a scattered and not very cohesive group of people will hold power to decide some, but not all, questions. A State boss is not unknown; city and county bosses are more common. Or, despite a voluminous set of laws and regulations, a State may be bereft of any effective formal party organization, and the fate of a party may be in the hands of a few businessmen.

The strength of the national party organization also varies fom time to time, but it is never very great. In the McKinley era, Marcus Alonzo Hanna of Cleveland had the reputation and some of the power of a national, Republican boss. Perhaps the early years of the New Deal of Franklin D. Roosevelt represented the period when national party leadership achieved its greatest dominance in this century. A vast number of jobs were available for distribution among the disciplined following of the Democratic Party; millions focused their beliefs in a new type of society and economy upon the White House, and lent their support to the national leadership. For a few years it appeared that the American party system might become truly national and centralized. Moreover, World War II fostered additional centralization of men, money, decisions, and attention at Washington. But the extraordinary structure and tradition of American politics finally halted the development. When Eisenhower was elected President in 1952, he was most reluctant to don the mantle of party leadership and to aggressively control the party and the government. Today

the party system in the United States is about as decentralized, uncoordinated, and variegated internally as it has been at any time during the century.

Regulation of party elections and campaigning

The role that parties play in elections is defined in both federal and State law. In most States the laws declare whether nominating conventions or direct primaries shall be used to select party candidates to run against the candidates of the opposing party; in some few States the issue is left to the discretion of party leaders. The form of the party ballot is regulated for party elections, and the ballots are printed at public expense. The administration and costs of elections of party officials, as well as of candidates for government office, are assumed by the State governments.

An important body of federal and State law controls and polices the conduct of campaigns. Bribery, tampering with the ballot-boxes, and many other practices, are forbidden in both party and general elections. Legislation also governs campaign expenditures. In September, 1956, Professor Alexander Heard estimated that campaign expenditures on all levels of politics amounted to $140 millions in 1952 and would amount to about $175 millions in 1956. Such heavy spending invites controls.

Hence, election campaign expenditures have been limited and regulated with respect to both primary and general elections. The laws of most governments must take for granted, however, that the party is not accountable for funds spent in behalf of candidates of that same party who are in a contest for the party's nomination. Hence the individual candidate is the chief target of regulation in primary elections, whereas both candidates and parties come under the rules governing general elections.

Most States require a reporting of campaign expenditures by the candidates in both primary and general elections. Most also prohibit expenditures for certain purposes, such as employing excessive numbers of workers on election day. Most limit the expenditures of a candidate for office. Finally, most States ban financial contributions by corporations, and a few restrict those of labor unions as well.

Through several important laws, notably the Corrupt Practices Act of 1925 and the Hatch Acts of 1939 and 1940, the federal government has entered the field of campaign regulation. It requires reports of money spent by the candidates. It limits expenditures by candidates and parties in national elections. It forbids contributions by corporations and by labor unions to a campaign, and holds individual contributions to a maximum of $5,000 to any one candidate or political committee. Finally, it bars the solicitation of contributions from federal employees by other federal employees or by anyone on federal premises. Only the last of these types of control extends to primary elections, although there is little doubt now that the federal government could, if it wished, regulate expenditures in primary elections. A bill is presently before the Senate, with this aim in mind; the same bill would require a more nearly complete reporting

of funds, and also would increase the amount that a candidate is allowed to spend in his campaign.

Some experts believe that the federal government might as well have no laws at all; for the laws generally have proved only modestly effective. There are many ways of supporting a candidate for which the laws prescribe no reporting or accounting. Moreover, parties and candidates often are in such dire need that they are not above trickery. Hence laws can only partly stem the flow of money into elections. For example, although the limit set for expenditures by the National Committee of each party is $3 millions, it is estimated that the parties each spent from $30 to $60 millions in the 1952 presidential elections. The difference between the legal and the estimated actual figures was spent by dozens of special committees, State central committees, interest groups, and individuals. Too, the limitation on individual contributions is not very effectual. One person may contribute any amount not exceeding $5,000 to several committees; also, one person may contribute sums in the names of family members. After the elections of 1954, twelve persons, each from Delaware and each bearing the last name "du Pont," reported altogether twenty-one contributions to various political committees, each contribution amounting to $1,000 or more. Perhaps the only way to control both the total amount spent and the reporting of the total is to raise the allowable maximum greatly and to oblige all committees to report, under pain of fine and imprisonment. The above-mentioned bill contains such provisions.

In conclusion, it may be remarked that the difficulties of regulating party finances issue in part from the complexities of party organization. A great number of the problems confronting the American party system result from the baffling legal differences among the States. When one turns to the subject of the beliefs that the party leaders and party followers hold, he can see the same clutter and profusion of ideas. Hence one finds not only that party organization varies from State to State, but also that party beliefs are distinctive among the several States.

These varieties of beliefs are to be the next topic for discussion. However, before entering this discussion, it is well to consider the old riddle: Which came first, the chicken or the egg? It happens that the party system is afflicted by the same riddle. Although it is true that local complications of organization produce national parties composed of people of different ideas, is it not also true that people of different ideas prefer local organizations that are independent? The answer cannot be simple. Just as the hen lays the egg, but the egg yields the hen, so a host of different semi-independent organizations produce different beliefs, but different beliefs also yield semi-independent organizations and encourage differing laws everywhere.

THE PARTY FOLLOWING

Whereas the preceding section described the structure of the American major parties, it did not detail how many people belong to each party, or

what they believe in. It is the task of this section to respond to those questions.

The two-party shift over time

Whatever may be the theoretical merits of third or minor parties, the overwhelming majority of Americans affiliate with either the Republican or the Democratic Party. A two-party condition has persisted from the beginning of the republic and has produced, on the national level, a rather simple cycle of in-again, out-again party politics, especially since 1864. Figure 26 shows this pattern of shifting power. One party stays in control until it wins a certain amount of disfavor throughout the country; then the other party, acting as the champion of the discontented, takes office. However, owing to the separate elections of the President, the House, and the Senate, a given party sometimes controls one or two of these agencies but not all three. As Figure 26 reveals, the longest period of presidential control by a single party from 1856 on (that date being chosen because the 1856 presidential election was the first in which the present Republican and Democratic Parties confronted each other as the two major parties of the country) occurred between 1860 and 1884, with the Republicans in power. On the other hand, the longest period of supremacy of a party

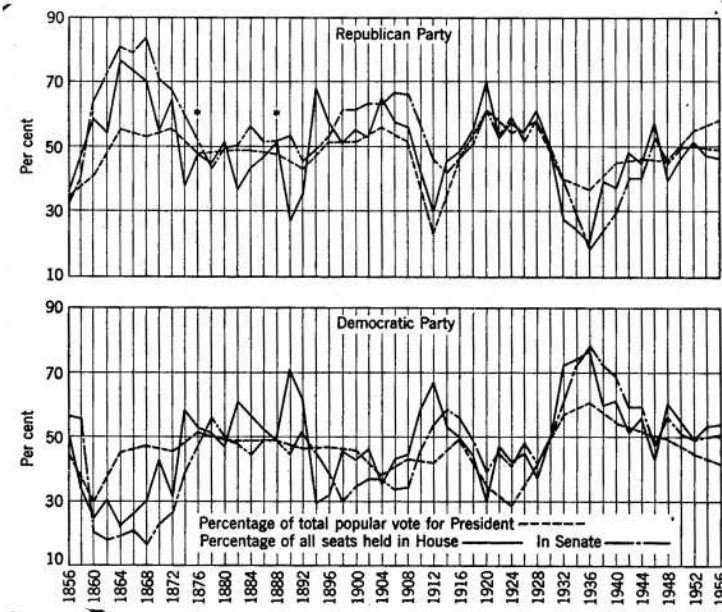


Figure 26. A Century of Two-Party Government. In 1876 and 1888, Republican candidates Hayes and Harrison were elected President by a majority in the Electoral College but received less popular votes than their Democratic opponents. Otherwise, throughout the century, the major party candidate with the greater number of votes was elected President.

in both the presidency and Congress occurred between 1896 and 1910, with the Republicans in power, and in the equally long period from 1932 until 1946, with the Democrats in power.

The margins between victory and defeat are often close, but the accepted majority principle takes no cognizance of that: "a miss is as good as a mile." In the 1954 congressional elections, for example, out of 435 House contests, ninety-four were won by less than five per cent, and eighty-eight more by from five to ten per cent. Of the remainder that were won by more than ten per cent, a large number of them were taken by southern Democrats in districts where Republican opposition is non-existent or at most token.

Pattern of party affiliations in the United States

The party affiliations of Americans help to explain why a large number of elections are close. Some Americans are very loyal to the party of their choice; others are not so faithful. Few are completely independent of party ties. During the presidential campaign of 1952, the Survey Research Center asked a representative sample of American adults about the strength of their party loyalty or the strength of their feelings of independence. People were then sorted according to their replies into seven grades of partisanship, ranging from Strong Democrats to Strong Republicans. Table 5

TABLE 5. PARTY AFFILIATIONS OF AMERICANS, BY REGION, 1952[1]

		REGION			
Party Identification	**Total Sample**	**Northeast**	**Midwest**	**South**	**Far West**
Strong Democrat (SD)	22%	18%	17%	31%	22%
Weak Democrat (WD)	25	18	25	32	24
Independent Democrat (ID)	10	13	9	8	10
Independent (Ind)	5	8	7	2	7
Independent Republican (IR)	7	9	8	5	6
Weak Republican (WR)	14	18	15	8	13
Strong Republican (SR)	13	14	18	6	16
None, minor party, or not ascertained	4	2	1	8	2
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Number of cases	1,614	390	580	440	446

[1] Campbell *et al.*, *The Voter Decides*, p. 93.

shows what party Americans say they belong to, if any, and how strongly they feel about their attachment. The percentages given for the whole nation are followed by separate percentages for the four major regions of the country.

A number of facts visible from the table bear emphasis:

1. The proportion of true independents is quite small (5%) by comparison with what is generally believed.

2. Only an insignificant number of people belong to third or minor parties.

TABLE 6. PARTY PREFERENCES VERSUS PRESIDENTIAL PREFERENCES OF VOTERS[1]

Presidential Preference of Voters	Party Affiliation						
	Strong Democrat	Weak Democrat	Independent Democrat	Independent	Independent Republican	Weak Republican	Strong Republican
Voted for:							
Eisenhower	12%	26%	28%	57%	73%	73%	91%
Stevenson	63	42	44	14	5	5	1
Did not vote	24	31	26	26	22	22	8
Other, or not ascertained	1	1	2	3	0	[2]	[2]
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

[1] Adapted from Campbell and others, *op. cit.*
[2] Less than one-half of one per cent.

3. Only about one out of three Americans is a staunch supporter of a political party.

4. Almost six out of ten Americans have some party tie, but will break it under what they regard as unusual circumstances.

5. Democrats outnumber the Republicans in the country as a whole (57%–34%) and in every region in the country too.

6. Outside the South, the West is the most Democratic region (it includes the eleven western States).

7. About one out of every five southerners is a Republican of some kind.

Changing party affiliations

These proportions can change. The historical record shows that the Democratic Party received a considerable number of its present adherents in the North during the 1930's and 1940's. Where registration figures are kept that indicate the party affiliation of the registrants, as in Pennsylvania and California, a steadily mounting Democratic registration can be noted. Under changed conditions a reverse trend might set in. Furthermore, an unusual occasion may send throngs of voters into the opposing camp, at least temporarily, and in some part to stay. This is what happened in 1952, as Table 6 shows. Dwight Eisenhower obtained the solid support of all kinds of Republicans and also deeply invaded the Democratic lists. As could be expected, his support among Strong Democrats was the least of all.

A substantial number of people split their tickets, too, even when they vote chiefly for one party. For instance, in 1952 and 1956 many who were Democratic and voted for the Republican candidate, Eisenhower, voted for Democrats in the contests for United States Senator, State Governor, and other offices. The extent of such split-ticket voting changes from one region of the country to another. The local tradition, the strength of party organization, and the order in which the names appear on the ballot, are three of the factors that make split-ticket voting more common in some places than in others. Thus, in 1952, according to a Survey Research

Center poll, 83% of the voters of the Northeast cast straight tickets, that is, voted for members of only one party. The corresponding figure in the Midwest was 66%, in the South, 79%, and in the Far West, 57%. The remainder split their votes among the candidates of both parties. Thus, along with a long-range shift in party affiliation and along with a temporary switch to the opposing party, there is to be found a considerable amount of split-ticket voting that breaks up the tendency to prefer the whole slate of one's party.

Extent of party tradition in individuals

The stronger the attachment to a party, of course, the less likely a complete change and the longer that change takes. A considerable part of the American public belongs to the party of its parents. Many vote as their fathers and grandfathers did. Long-standing habit blocks a switch of voting, even when a person's new ideas and preferences for a candidate may urge him to change.

It is a well-known fact that the southern States ordinarily have larger Democratic votes than the northern or western States. Indeed, over much of the South, the Republican Party scarcely exists as an organized force. However, many people do not know that, as individuals, southerners are almost as changeable as northerners in their voting. That is, the chances that in a presidential election a southerner will cast a vote different from his parents' votes are almost as great as the chances that a northerner will vote differently than his parents did. Table 7 shows this to have been true in 1952. Hence one should not assume that southerners as individuals are bound by tradition, nor that northerners vote freely without reference to the past.

Thus tradition is often misunderstood. In its pure sense, it is a habit and a nostalgia that works on a person to vote as his family has always voted. Sometimes a tradition-motivated person will explain his vote in

TABLE 7. TRADITIONAL VOTING: PARENTS AND THEIR CHILDREN'S VOTE IN 1952[1]

Per Cent of the Children of Two Democratic Parents Who in 1952 Voted:	South	North
(*a*) Democratic	59% (82)	55% (183)
(*b*) Republican	41% (57)	45% (149)
Total	100% (139)	100% (332)
Per Cent of the Children of Two Republican Parents Who in 1952 Voted:		
(*a*) Democratic	33% (13)	20% (56)
(*b*) Republican	67% (27)	80% (226)
Total	100% (40)	100% (282)

[1] From author's analysis of Survey Research Center materials.

TABLE 8. SOCIAL CONDITIONS RELATED TO PARTY AFFILIATION, 1952

CONDITIONS	Party Affiliation (Per Cent)[1] SD	WD	ID	Ind	IR	WR	SR	Apoly	No. Cases
SEX:									
Men	24	23	11	7	7	13	13	1	814
Women	21	27	8	5	7	15	14	4	970
AGE:									
21–34	21	29	10	6	11	13	7	4	543
35–44	21	31	11	6	6	14	10	2	427
45–54	23	21	13	6	6	14	15	2	308
55 and over	24	18	7	6	5	14	22	3	481
RELIGION:									
Protestant	20	24	8	5	7	16	16	4	1,272
Catholic	29	27	12	7	7	10	8	[2]	386
RACE:									
White	21	25	10	6	10	12	14	2	1,607
Negro	31	22	10	4	5	7	5	17	169
AREA TYPE:									
Urban Metropolitan	25	24	11	7	5	15	12	1	295
Suburban Metropolitan	16	19	10	8	10	14	21	2	142
Cities over 50,000	25	22	14	6	8	9	12	4	297
Cities 2,500 to 50,000 (South)	31	37	4	1	3	8	6	10	142
Cities 2,500 to 50,000 (North)	15	21	9	7	9	19	19	1	244
Cities under 2,500 (South)	38	31	8	2	2	6	7	5	143
Cities under 2,500 (North)	15	21	9	7	8	18	18	3	211
Open Country (South)	30	32	2	2	4	11	8	11	122
Open Country (North)	8	28	12	7	10	20	14	1	154
EDUCATION:									
Grade School[3]	25	26	8	7	5	12	11	5	706
High School[4]	21	27	11	5	7	14	13	1	784
College[5]	16	18	13	3	12	17	21	—	261
OCCUPATION OF HEAD OF HOUSEHOLD:									
Professional and Managerial	17	24	11	7	8	14	18	1	381
Other White Collar	20	22	9	7	6	20	16	1	176
Skilled and Semi-skilled	23	28	12	6	6	13	10	1	527
Unskilled	30	23	7	4	5	10	7	14	207
Farm Operators	19	29	7	4	8	15	14	3	209

TABLE 8. SOCIAL CONDITIONS RELATED TO PARTY AFFILIATION, 1952 (*Continued*)

CONDITIONS	Party Affiliation (Per Cent)[1] SD	WD	ID	Ind	IR	WR	SR	Apoly	No. Cases
UNION MEMBER IN HOUSEHOLD:									
Yes	25	28	11	5	6	13	11	1	419
No	21	24	9	6	7	14	15	4	1,287
FAMILY INCOME:									
Under $2,000	27	23	7	4	5	10	14	10	350
$2,000–2,999	25	24	9	8	6	14	11	3	274
$3,000–3,999	22	29	9	5	8	14	12	2	397
$4,000–4,999	21	27	14	5	8	13	12	—	259
$5,000 or more	16	24	11	6	8	17	18	—	457
GENERATIONS IN AMERICA:[6]									
First	29	23	11	8	6	13	9	2	132
Second	19	26	10	8	6	14	15	1	408
Third	17	20	13	7	11	15	16	1	388
Fourth	25	28	7	4	5	14	13	4	726

[1] From author's analysis of Survey Research Center materials, with the assistance of Mr. Glenn West. Percentages have not been rounded out to total 100 per cent and hence in some cases equal 99 or 101.

[2] Less than one-half of one per cent.

[3] Those completing grade school, and those with some grade school.

[4] Those completing high school, those with some high school, those with some high school and some non-college special training, and those completing high school and some non-college studies.

[5] Those completing college, and those with some college.

[6] First generation includes persons born abroad; the second, persons one or both of whose parents were born abroad; the third, persons one or more of whose grandparents were born abroad; and the fourth, persons all of whose grandparents were born in the United States.

this manner: "All my ancestors all the way back have always voted Democratic and I felt like it would have made my poor daddy turn over in his grave if I voted any other way." Much of the traditional voting as shown by the chart may be quite different. If a son of a well-to-do family is himself well educated, well-to-do, of the same religion, and of the same social class as his parents, he may very well vote the same way as his parents without any feeling of habit or tradition; he simply has the same reasons as they for voting the way he does.

Forces determining the vote

Pure tradition is only one of a number of forces that may be working on a person to make him vote regularly for a certain party. There is no exact computation of the strength of these numerous forces impinging on the person to fix his party affiliation; however, political science has advanced enough to discover what these social forces are and how they influence people to have specific political opinions. Table 8 lists the major conditions

in which are found these forces that act upon a person's party attachment. It shows in detail in what segments of the population Republicans or Democrats are more likely to be found. For example, the table shows that younger people tend to include more Democrats than older people, as do people of grade-school education, by contrast with people of college education. The 1956 elections somewhat altered alignments, as each election does. Some Negroes, for example, changed to the Republicans.

THE PARTIES AS SEEN BY VOTERS AND LEADERS

How voters view the parties

From knowing the tendency of various groups to favor one party or the other, one might estimate the character of each of the two parties. The task would be made difficult, of course, by the obvious fact that none of the groups supports overwhelmingly either one or the other party. In some cases, barely over half a group prefers one party to the other. Evidently the people holding those traits are not unanimously convinced that one party alone stands for their specific interests. However, one might predict that since lower-income groups, for example, favor the Democrats more than upper-income groups do, for that reason the Democratic Party would have the reputation of being friendly to the "common man."

That, it so happens, is the case. The Democratic Party, which is liked and is disliked for many reasons, is credited by quite a few with being well-disposed to the "little fellow". In 1955, a Gallup poll of a sample of adult Americans asked the following question: "Suppose a young person, just turned twenty-one, asked you what the Republican party stands for today—what would you tell him?" (The same question was asked regarding the Democratic Party.) Table 9 shows what people said the two parties stand for.

From the table, one notes that many Americans view the Republican Party as the party of big business and the Democratic Party as the party of the lower income groups. Some say that the Republican Party is more concerned with peace, free enterprise, economy in government, and conservatism generally. Some say that the Democratic Party is more devoted to bringing prosperity and jobs to all. A very high proportion of the public confess that they cannot say what the parties stand for. A large yet minor fraction assert that the two parties stand for the same things.

The results of this poll are crude, of course. Actually it has been shown in other studies that almost everyone can give a more detailed description of the parties if pressed to do so. However, whether there are few or many details in the description, two elemental facts emerge: (1) people of one party disagree about what the people of the other party are like; and (2) people of one party disagree about what their own party is like.

Many people have strong notions about the nature of the other party. Staunch labor-union people on the Democratic side find it difficult to believe that many workers favor the Republicans. Some confirmed Republicans who are well-to-do are convinced that all Democrats come from "the

TABLE 9. THE PARTIES AS THE PUBLIC ~~SEES~~ SAW THEM[1] IN 1955

What Republicans Stand For[2]	
Big business, privileged few	19%
Avoid war	5
Conservative, more to right	5
Economy, pay-as-you-go	4
Higher standard of living	3
Honesty in government	2
Average man, common people	2
Higher tariffs	2
Free enterprise, capitalism	2
All others	12
Same as Democrats	9
Don't know	43
What Democrats Stand for	
Common man, labor, all the people	27%
Socialism, liberal, more to left	6
Better living conditions	4
Big spending	4
High farm prices; farm program	2
War	2
All others	13
Same as Republicans	9
Don't know	39

[1] From the American Institute of Public Opinion.

[2] Each table adds to more than 100% because some people named more than one trait. (Release of February 23, 1955.)

other side of the tracks," and are a trifle shocked when people of their own standing vote Democratic. In actuality, there are few great differences between the followers of the two parties (as one will recall from his reading of Table 8). The one-party South is an exception, in that it can be said that four out of five southerners are Democrats, but that only about half the northerners are.

What is just as striking is that people of the same party will see their own party in many different ways. Most people live in their own worlds and readily distort the worlds that others inhabit. A Chicago professional Democrat, a California liberal Democrat, and a southern conservative Democrat often think and behave as if the Democratic Party were composed entirely of people of their ilk.

One result of the belief of members of each party that people like themselves belong to it is that they will follow the party even when most other members of the party lead it along a disagreeable route. Thus it comes about that the American parties are quite varied internally, and yet can arouse a sense of unity among a great many people.

Agreement on issues among party followers

Up to this point it has been shown that the parties are composed of differing numbers of the various kinds of people. It has been disclosed that voters have different notions of what the parties mean and of who

belongs to each party. Now some evidence can be brought forward to show how members of both parties stand on some major issues of the day.

Differences of viewpoint are almost as common among members of the same party as between members of the two parties. To show this feature of the party system, Table 10 is introduced. Seven major issues of public policy in 1952 were selected. On each one, the Democratic Truman administration took a fairly clear position. Then, a sample of the American public was asked their opinion on these issues. Only those who said they had voted were included in making up the table. A person was scored as holding a Democratic, a Republican, or a neutral or uncertain position, as follows:

	Answer		
Question	**Democratic**	**Republican**	**Neutral or Uncertain**
1. Whether the attention of the government to social welfare activities was adequate	More legislation needed	Less activity desirable	Present Situation adequate, or other replies
2. Whether the Taft-Hartley Act should be repealed or revised	Yes, pro-labor	No, or yes, pro-management	Other replies
3. Whether the national government should take action against racial discrimination in employment	Yes	No	Other replies
4. Whether the U.S.A. has become too involved in foreign affairs	No	Yes	Other replies
5. Whether the American government is to blame for China's going communist	No	Yes	Other replies
6. Whether the American government was right to send troops to Korea	Yes	No	Other replies
7. What should be the American policy in Korea (October, 1952)	Keep trying for a peaceful settlement	Bomb Manchuria and other stronger steps or pull out of Korea	Other replies

As a whole, Table 10 shows that the Democratic voter was more likely than the Republican voter to cling to Truman's position. On the first two questions, over half the people of both parties had no clearly defined stand; and on two others (nos. 5 and 6) the neutrality amounted to a quarter or fifth of the total. On action against racial discrimination, Democratic voters held the "Democratic" position only slightly more often than Republican voters held it. Half the Republican voters agreed with the

TABLE 10. CONSISTENCY OF VOTERS ON PARTY AND ISSUES, 1952[1]
(in percentages)

Question Number	Vote in 1952	Support Democrat Position	Neutral, Uncertain	Oppose Democrat Position	Total
1. Government Activity	D	33	62	5	100
	R	19	50	31	100
2. Taft-Hartley	D	32	56	12	100
	R	9	55	36	100
3. FEPC	D	51	4	45	100
	R	40	6	54	100
4. Foreign Involvements	D	43	13	44	100
	R	28	7	65	100
5. China Policy	D	60	23	17	100
	R	38	24	38	100
6. Entry in Korean War	D	52	16	32	100
	R	34	20	46	100
7. Korean Policy	D	52	7	41	100
	R	36	8	56	100

Note: Number of cases in the sample: Democratic voters, 494; Republican voters, 687.

[1] Campbell, Angus, Gerald Gurin, and W. E. Miller, "Political Issues and the Vote: November, 1952," *American Political Science Review*, 46 (1953), 359–385. Also author's analysis of Survey Research Center materials.

majority of Democrats on China policy. Half the Democrats agreed with the majority of Republicans on foreign involvement.

Such qualifications to party agreement are easy to make from this table. A further qualification can be added: only the voters were considered (74% of the total sample); hence, since non-voters are generally less informed than voters, the extent of agreement in the whole population is less than shown here. A more striking fact can be learned from a few simple calculations. Issue no. 7, on what to do in Korea, may be used for illustration. The issue divides the followers, but not in an extreme manner. Yet only about 54% of the whole population took up positions on the issue that coincided with that attributed to their party.[1] (If any other position were attributed to their party, the proportion would be less.) The case with some of the other issues shows that individual deviation from party policy is even more common. For example, the governmental activity issue shows only a rough third of the population holding a position consistent with their "presumed" party position.

The extent to which party members differ from one another in their beliefs can be shown in one other manner. A more severe critic may say:

[1] The reader can make the calculations himself by determining the numbers contained in the 52% and 56% figures, and then, after adding them, computing what percentage the total (642) is of the total population sample (1181).

"One swallow doesn't make a summer, nor one issue a party ideology. How many people hold to one, two, or more of the seven 'Democratic' positions, and how many hold to one or more of the 'Republican' positions?" To answer his question is not impossible. Table 11 has been developed for the purpose. Four of the previous questions can be used: nos. 1, 2, 4, and 5. Depending upon how he answered these questions, a person might score in any one of five different ways. In Table 11, each letter indicates an answer to one of the questions, "D" representing a Democratic answer; "R" a Republican answer; and "?" a neutral stand. Each set of four symbols illustrates a combination of responses that would place a person in a specific category (A to E). The arrangement of the letters is not related to the order of the four questions.

TABLE 11. EXTENT OF A DEMOCRATIC OR REPUBLICAN IDEOLOGY, 1952[1]

A	B	C	D	E
Democratic, no Conflict	Democratic with Conflict	No Party Dominating	Republican with Conflict	Republican, no Conflict
DDDD	DDDR	DDRR	RRRD	RRRR
DDD?	DDR?	DR??	RRD?	RRR?
DD??		????		RR??
D???				R???
Number of Cases in Each Category				
357	252	391	268	346
Percentage of Total Population in Each Category				
22%	16%	24%	17%	21%

[1] Campbell *et al.*, *The Voter Decides*, p. 123.

These figures show that over half the American people probably do not hold to a party line, or hold to it only in part. They disagree either wholly or in part with one party's position. (It should be noted, too, that even some part of the consistent Democratic or Republican issue-supporters in the categories A and E did not "know" whether their position *was* a party position; and some were, in fact, voting for a candidate of the party opposing their issue stand.) A portion of the remaining half who were "consistent" took neutral or uncertain positions on some issues. The two major American parties certainly have not succeeded in aligning people into two antagonistic ideological camps. Perhaps one should presume that no issue is a party issue so far as the whole public is concerned.

Lack of unified belief among leaders

Just as the party rank and file do not have firm and homogeneous political convictions, so too the leaders lack unity of belief. The leaders, however, are more aware than the rank and file that they are split within the same party. Deep chasms of attitude differences separate leaders of the same party. The left wing of the Republican Party is as far left as the left wing of the Democratic Party, and the right wing of the Republican

Party is no farther right than the right wing of the Democratic Party. There is again, as with the party followings, some difference of degree, giving an aura of "liberalism" to the Democratic Party leadership and one of "conservatism" to the Republican leadership. In addition, when the leaders of a given party have to campaign together or work in a legislature together, they subdue some of their differences; under those circumstances it often appears that the leaders of the party have more in common than they actually do have.

A glance at the record of the Eighty-third Congress will illustrate some of these points. There were 407 roll-call votes in all during that Congress, which met in 1953 and 1954. By the calculations of the *Congressional Quarterly,* President Eisenhower had taken a clear position on 198 of them. Each congressman's votes were compared with the President's stand on the issue and the total percentage of his agreement with the President on all issues was computed. Then the average of the percentages for all Democratic congressmen was calculated, as well as that for the Republicans. It was discovered that in the Senate the Republican score for cooperating with Eisenhower was 73%; in the House, 71%; and in both chambers together, 72%. By contrast, the Democratic composite cooperation-with-Eisenhower score on the 198 issues was 38% in the Senate, 44% in the House, and 43% in both houses together. The Republicans thus voted with the President in seven out of every ten cases, the Democrats in four out of every ten. Obviously the Republicans in Congress supported Eisenhower more than the Democrats did.

Yet the Democratic support was by no means negligible. Neither party could make a blanket statement of full support or full opposition to the President. Moreover, it would be politically risky to accuse the opposition party of stiff-necked obstructionism, as several new figures can show. In 164 of the 198 cases, the vote was concurrent with Eisenhower's wishes. However, eighty-seven times in the Senate and thirty-four times in the House, the measures would have failed without some Democratic assistance because, although the Republican Party possessed slender majorities in both houses, some Republicans were absent or antagonistic on the roll-calls. Only in sixteen cases in the Senate and twenty-seven in the House was Democratic support not needed for carrying the measure. In some areas of public policy, the amount of overlapping between the parties was even greater. For example, in all, fifty-four votes were cast in the Senate of the Eighty-third Congress on questions of foreign policy. In 72% of these cases (thirty-nine out of fifty-four), a majority of Republicans voting agreed with a majority of Democrats voting. Foreign policy voting could therefore be termed bipartisan.

Confronted by the myriad differences and complexities of the American party system, the bemused citizen may feel that no statement about it can be true. This is not the case. One must only bear in mind: (1) that only vague general statements can be used to describe its vast, rambling organization; and (2) that only statements of degree can be made with respect to the people who compose each party and to the issues they

stand for. Although the whole of the next chapter is devoted to a description of the functions performed by these organizations and people, it may be well to say in advance that the same kind of situation prevails with respect to party functions: parties perform a number of tasks, but do so in an erratic fashion.

QUESTIONS AND PROBLEMS

1. Summarize the victories and the failures of the major parties since the Civil War; do likewise with the minor parties.
2. Explain what is meant by this statement: "The American political party has on paper the structure and rules of a disciplined army; but it behaves like a rabble."
3. In what major respects are the American political parties regulated by law?
4. Describe the pattern of party affiliations among Americans.
5. List the major forces working to determine the way Americans vote. Give an example of how each worked in 1952.
6. What are the major reasons for which people like and dislike the two major parties?
7. Show both how Democratic voters stand together on some issues and how they overlap with Republicans or disagree sharply among themselves on other issues.
8. Do you think that the party leaders agree among themselves *more* or *less* than the party's rank and file? Explain your answer.