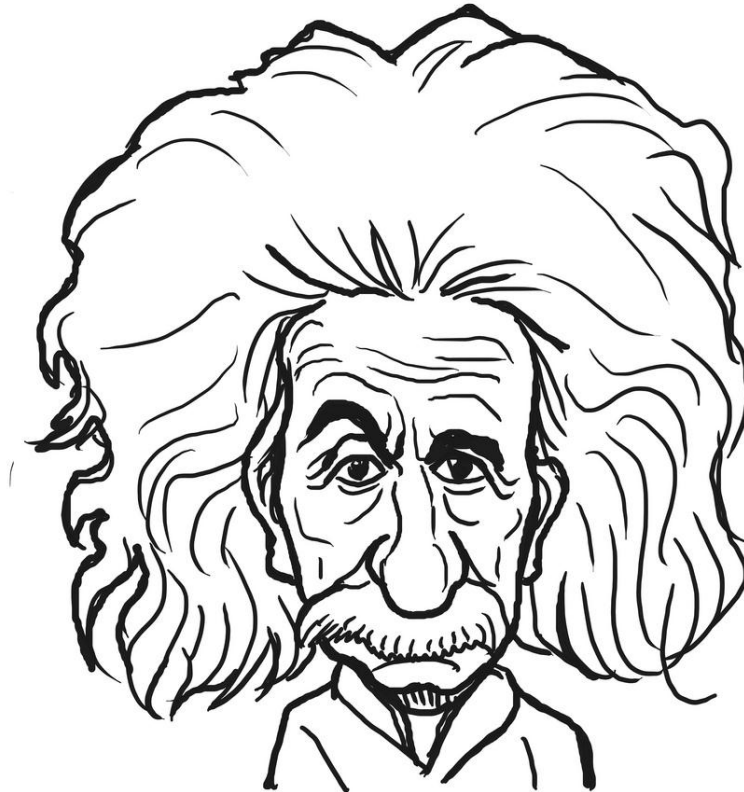


AP

U.S. Government & Politics

Quick Notes



UNIT 4

LINKAGE INSTITUTIONS: INTEREST GROUPS, POLITICAL PARTIES, AND MASS MEDIA

INTEREST GROUPS PAST AND PRESENT

An interest group is an organization of people who enter the political process to try to achieve their shared goals. Almost from the beginning, Americans have joined political groups. Today, about 2/3 of Americans belong to such groups. However, Americans historically have distrusted the motives and methods of interest groups. James Madison called interest groups and political parties factions, and he saw federalism and separation of powers as necessary to control their "evils." Since the number of interest groups and the people who participate in them have increased greatly over the past half century, they appear to be even more important today than they have been in the past.

WHAT WERE INTEREST GROUPS ACCORDING TO JAMES MADISON?

- Madison called interest groups "factions"
- Madison's dilemma: allowing people the liberty to form groups and express their views could destroy the hope for an orderly society
- Political factions were inevitable → need to control their effects
- Madison addressed the problem of establishing a stable constitutional system that at the same time would respect liberty in *The Federalist, No. 10* (freedom but limit factions)

WHAT ARE INTEREST GROUPS TODAY?

- Interest group (special interests – term used in a negative way): organization of people whose members share policy views on specific issues and attempt to influence public policy to their benefit
- Interest groups are protected under the 1st Amendment of the Constitution

HOW DO INTEREST GROUPS LINK CITIZENS TO GOVERNMENT?

- Linkage institution (along with elections, political parties, and mass media) – link citizens to government
 - Express their members' preferences to government policymakers
 - Convey government policy information to their members
 - Raise and spend money to gain access to policymakers

WHAT ARE THE FUNDAMENTAL GOALS OF INTEREST GROUPS?

- Influence public policy (change laws)
 - Get legislation passed to benefit their members
 - Successful because constituency is narrow, but the costs are spread broadly across the population
- Gain access to policymakers
- Support sympathetic policymakers

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN INTEREST GROUPS AND POLITICAL PARTIES?

- Parties nominate candidates, contest elections, and seek to gain control over government.
 - *In contrast, interest groups seek to support public officials and influence government policies.*
- Parties have positions on a wide range of public issues.
 - *In contrast, interest groups focus only on specific issues that directly affect their members. As a result, interest groups are able to articulate specific policy positions.*
- Political parties are public organizations that are accountable to the voters.
 - *In contrast, interest groups are private organizations that are accountable to their members.*

WHY DO INTEREST GROUPS KEEP GROWING?

- Economic developments
- Government policies, whenever government creates an agency, it creates an entry point for interest groups – more groups needed to form in order to protect their stakes in these agency activities
- Diversity of population – countless social, racial, economic and geographic cleavages
- Diffusion of power in government. Political power shared by many → plenty of places in which a group can argue its case. The more places there are to influence policy, the more organizations there will be to exercise that influence.
- Weakness of political parties
- Interest groups tend to beget interest groups (when one is formed, another may be formed to counter it)
- Technology, e.g., computerized mailing lists to solicit funds, use of communications media and Internet

TYPES OF INTEREST GROUPS

TRADITIONAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goal: to promote economic interests of its members • Types: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Agricultural: Grange, American Farm Bureau Federation ○ Labor: AFL-CIO, UAW, and Teamsters. Recent Decline. ○ Business: Chamber of Commerce, National Association of Manufacturers ○ Professional: AMA, ABA
EQUALITY INTEREST	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goal: to protest the status of its members and to convince government to take remedial action • Examples: NAACP, NOW
SINGLE ISSUE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goal: to get government action on one overriding issue • Examples: Right to Life League, National Abortion Rights Action League, NRA, and MADD • Polarizing effect of these
PUBLIC INTEREST	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goal: to bring about good policy for society as a whole • Examples: Common Cause, Sierra Club
IDEOLOGICAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goal: to convince government to implement policies consistent with their philosophies • Examples: Christian Coalition, People for the American Way, Free Congress Foundation
GOVERNMENTAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goal: to represent the interests of government to other governments • Examples: National League of Cities, National Association of Governors

CHARACTERISTICS AND POWER OF INTEREST GROUPS

<p>WHAT FACTORS MAKE INTEREST GROUPS STRONG?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Size <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ More members = more money, more votes ○ More members also mean greater cross-pressure among members and possibly less focus ○ As size increases, free rider problem increases <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Free riders are people who benefit from the interest group without making any contribution ▪ Example: an elderly person will benefit from the group’s lobbying efforts whether or not he joins AARP ▪ I.G. try to prevent this by giving incentives for people to join the group • Spread <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Extent to which membership is concentrated or dispersed - is important • Organizational structure: centralized or decentralized <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ An organization with separation of powers tends to be less cohesive than a centralized, disciplined group • Leadership <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Leaders may either bring the various elements of a group together or sharpen their disunity • Resources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Money ○ Expertise ○ Reputation ○ Connections ○ Volunteers
---	---

<p>WHAT ARE EFFECTIVE TACTICS (TECHNIQUES) OF INTEREST GROUPS?</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Mass mailing (computerized and targeted) 2) Litigation – groups often take an issue to court if they are unsuccessful in gaining the support of Congress (used by NAACP, ACLU, NOW, etc.) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Amicus curiae</i> briefs – someone who is not a party to a case who offers information that bears on the case but that has not been solicited by any of the parties to assist a court 3) Use of mass media <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Independent expenditures ○ Issue advocacy 4) Boycotting 5) Electioneering – working for the success of a particular candidate, party, ticket, etc., in an election <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Funneling volunteers to campaigns ○ Encouraging members to vote ○ Campaign contributions ○ Endorsement of candidates ○ “Targeting” of unfriendly candidates ○ Issuing “report cards” to rate candidates 6) Initiative, referendum and recall at state and local levels 7) Lobbying – attempting to influence policymakers, often by supplying data to government officials and their staffs to convince these policymakers that their case is more deserving than another's
---	--

THE INFLUENCE OF LOBBYISTS

WHAT IS LOBBYING?

- Attempting to influence the decisions of policymakers
 - Interest group lobbying is generally most effective on narrow technical issues that are not well publicized (nobody has expertise on the issue except for the lobbyist)
-

WHO ARE LOBBYISTS AND WHAT DO THEY DO?

- A person who is employed by and acts for an organized interest group or corporation to try to influence policy decisions and positions in the executive branch (bureaucratic agency) and legislative branch (congressional committee)
 - Influence governmental decisions, especially legislation
 - Provide information to government (lobbyist = policy specialist, congressman = policy generalist)
 - Testify at hearings
 - Help write legislation
 - Revolving door – the employment cycle from government to interest group
 - Government employee to lobby the agency they came from is illegal – conflict of interest
 - Congress to lobbyist is legal (with a “cooling off” period)
 - Iron triangles (issue networks) are mutually supporting relationships among
 - Interest groups
 - Congressional committees and subcommittees
 - Government agencies
-

LOBBYISTS ARE GOOD FOR AMERICA?

- They provide useful information to government
- They provide a means of participation for people
- They provide a means of representation on the basis of interest rather than geography. A “third house of Congress.”
- 1st Amendment protection
- Lobbyists have always spent money. It’s more out in the open.
- As Madison points out in *Federalist* #10, the “remedy” of curing the evils of faction by eliminating their causes is worse than the disease. Potential loss of liberty is worse than the abuses of lobbyists.

LOBBYISTS ARE BAD FOR AMERICA?

- Rich and powerful interests are over represented
- Average and poor people are underrepresented
- By safeguarding liberty, equality is sacrificed
- Single-issue lobbies, especially, contribute to political polarization
- Lobbyists contribute even further to diffusion of power, making it even more difficult for government to get things done

POLITICAL ACTION COMMITTEES (PACs)

EXPLOSIVE GROWTH OF PACS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interest groups use PACs to raise and spend money on election campaigns • A PAC is a registered organization that donates money to campaigns and causes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ In 1974, only 600 PACs existed. Now: more than 4600. ○ Reason: Congressional legislation that had the intent of preventing a few wealthy campaign contributors from helping candidates "buy" elections. Instead, Cong. wanted to "open up" campaign contributions to the masses, as represented by PACs. ○ PACs even donate to candidates facing no opposition. Why? ○ Important to keep things in perspective: most congressional campaign money comes from <u>individual contributions</u>.
THE ROLE OF PACS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PACs link two techniques of influence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Giving money and other political aid to politicians ○ Persuading officeholders to act or vote "the right way" on issues
THE GROWTH OF PACS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The 1970s brought a near revolution in the role and influence of PACs, as the result of post-Watergate reforms, increasing the number of PACs from 150 to more than 4,000 today • Corporations make up the majority of all PACs
HOW PACS INVEST THEIR MONEY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Campaign Contributions – Factors influencing who gets PAC money: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <u>Incumbents</u> (Political party affiliation is of little importance.) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Incumbents win ▪ Incumbents have shown to support the PAC's positions ▪ Incumbents hold committee seats = more power ○ Winners ○ Those who share a similar philosophy ○ Those who are likely to grant access ○ Tightness of a race, and the likelihood that the money will help make a difference in the outcome ○ Whether or not a candidate holds a committee seat of special importance to the PAC ○ PAC money makes up a higher % of congressional campaign funds than presidential campaign funds • Voter education projects (mailings, fliers, commercials) • Independent expenditures • Through "bundling" contributions, PACs increase their clout with elected officials
DANGERS OF PACS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ethical concerns: does a contribution "buy" anything? • Special access of PACs that the average person lacks • Drives up the cost of campaigning • Over representation of those wealthy enough to have PAC representation • Under representation of those who lack such representation • Further incumbency advantage in elections
IN DEFENSE OF PACS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PACs provide a means of participation and representation for the average person • Without PACs, only the wealthy could afford to run for office • 1st Amendment's right to petition the government • Contributions are nonpartisan • No conclusive evidence that PACs change congressional votes. Contributions likely to make a difference in arcane, obscure issues with little public awareness more than in issues of major importance with much public awareness. • PACs provide political education • PACs diversify political funding. W/over 4600 PACs, many interests are represented.
THE VALUE OF PACS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Depends on the context in which money is given and received • Significant relationship exists between PACs giving money and receiving favorable treatment in congressional committees; still debatable on impact of contributions upon election outcomes • PACs can help friendly incumbents with soft money contributions (unlimited contributions that presumably go for "party-building" activities)

INTRODUCTION TO POLITICAL PARTIES

In most democracies political parties are important institutions that link citizens to their government. The Constitution did not call for political parties, and the Founding Fathers at first did not intend to create them believing there were enough points of influence to make parties unnecessary. James Madison reflected in his famous *Federalist #10* that political factions are necessary evils to be controlled by federalism and separation of powers, but the founders still believed that political parties such as those that dominated British politics could and should be avoided at all costs. George Washington was elected president without party labels and in his farewell address warned against the "baneful effects of the spirit of the party". During the process for ratification of the Constitution, Federalists and Anti-Federalists conflicted over ideals concerning the proper role of government. This conflict resulted in the development of the first political parties: the Federalists and Jeffersonian Republicans, or Democratic-Republicans as they were later called.

Today, many Americans take pride in their status as independent voters, partly because they see parties as lacking vision for the country. Since many people think that each of the major parties only cares about defeating or humiliating the other, they avoid identification as a loyal Democrat or a staunch Republican. These negative attitudes toward parties are rooted in the roles that they play in American politics. Political parties have been losing power of many of their functions as more people are moving toward "independent" voters.

WHAT IS A POLITICAL PARTY?

A group of people seeking to control government by gaining office in elections and determining public policy

WHY A TWO-PARTY TRADITION IN AMERICA?

Although there have been numerous minor parties throughout its history, why has the United States maintained the two-party tradition?

- *Consensus of values* - It is easy to complain about petty bickering between Democrats and Republicans. Both parties believe in liberty, equality, and individualism. Neither advocates that the Constitution be discarded, and both accept the election process by conceding defeat to the winners. In many countries with multi-party systems, the range of beliefs is greater, and disagreements run deeper.
- *Historical influence* - The nation began with two political parties. During early American history politicians tended to take sides, starting with the debate over the Constitution, and continuing with the disagreements within George Washington's cabinet. The tendency has persisted throughout American history.
- *The winner-take-all electoral system* - The single most important reason for a two-party system is the winner-take-all or pluralist electoral system. This system contrasts to those with proportional representation where the percentage of votes for a party's candidates is directly applied as the percentage of representatives in the legislature. The winner in American elections is the one who receives the largest number of votes in each voting district. The winner does not need to have more than 50 percent, but only one vote more than his or her closest competitor. This process encourages parties to become larger, embracing more and more voters. So third parties have almost no hope of getting candidates into office, and their points of view tend to fall under the umbrella of one or both of the big parties.

WHAT ARE THE MAJOR FUNCTIONS OF POLITICAL PARTIES?

- 1) Provide cues for voters
 - Unify the electorate
 - Provide "loyal opposition"
 - Linking mechanism between people and government
 - Simplify decisions for voters: provide "shorthand" through which busy and uninterested voters can base a voting decision, use of "party lens" by voters.
- 2) Raise and spend campaign funds
 - Declining importance w/advent of "candidate-centered" campaigns
- 3) Support for candidates' campaigns
- 4) Register and mobilize voters and get-out-the-votes (get them to the polls)
- 5) Provide a platform of issues
 - However, few people check platforms, which in any case are often broadly-worded, i.e., like train platforms: "something to get on rather than something to stand on."
- 6) Recruit candidates for government office
- 7) Nominate candidates for government office
 - Previously: caucuses >> nominating conventions
 - Now: primary elections
 - With advent of primaries, nominating function now seriously lessened.
 - To win elections, parties must usually nominate moderate candidates who appeal to the vast center of the American electorate. Fringe elements squeezed out.
 - Criticism: To appeal to such a wide variety of party members, parties must avoid taking strong stands
- 8) Provide Patronage
- 9) Organize the competition by designating candidates to run under their label
 - A party's ability to organize the competition is influenced by how states organize their ballots or the type of elections they provide
 - The party column ballot makes it easier for voters to vote a straight ticket
 - The office block ballot makes it harder to cast a vote for all the candidates of a single party

DEALIGNMENT, REALIGNMENT, AND CRITICAL ELECTIONS

Dealignment is the process whereby a large portion of the electorate abandons its previous partisan affiliation without developing a new one to replace it. It is contrasted with realignment.

Realignment refers to sharp changes in issues, party leaders, the regional and demographic bases of power of the two parties, and structure or rules of the political system resulting in a new political power structure. Realignment elections are elections during periods of expanded suffrage and changes in the economy and society that prove to be turning points, redefining the agenda of politics and the alignment of voters within parties.

A "**critical**" election usually serves as the basis for realignment.

FIRST PARTY SYSTEM (1788-1824)

Federalists vs. Democrat-Republicans: Election of 1800 – Thomas Jefferson

This election completed the turnover of power from the Federalist Party, embodied in Alexander Hamilton, to Thomas Jefferson and his Democratic-Republican Party.

SECOND PARTY SYSTEM (1824-1860)

Democrats vs. Whigs: Election of 1828 – Andrew Jackson

This election redefined the party system in the United States. The Democratic-Republicans split into two parties, later renamed as the Democratic Party and the Whig Party.

THIRD PARTY SYSTEM (1860-1896)

Democrats vs. Republicans: Election of 1860 – Abraham Lincoln

After the Whigs collapsed after 1852, party alignments were in turmoil, with several third parties, such as the Know Nothings and the Opposition Party. The system stabilized in 1858 and the presidential election marked the ascendance of the Republican Party.

FOURTH PARTY SYSTEM (1896-1932)

Democrats vs. Republicans: Election of 1896 – William McKinley

The old Civil-War-Era issues faded away. Funding from office holders was replaced by outside fund raising from business in 1896 — a major shift in political history. McKinley's tactics in beating William Jennings Bryan marked a sea change in the evolution of the modern campaigning. McKinley raised a huge amount of money from business interests. Bryan invented the modern technique of campaigning heavily in closely contested states. McKinley forged a coalition in which businessmen, professionals, skilled factory workers and prosperous farmers were heavily represented; he was strongest in the Northeast, Upper Midwest, and Pacific Coast states.

FIFTH PARTY SYSTEM (1932-1968)

Democrats vs. Republicans: Election of 1932 – Franklin D. Roosevelt

The crash of 1929 and the miseries of the Great Depression under Herbert Hoover represented an entirely new phenomenon in American politics. There is no doubt Democrats vehemently attacked Hoover for 50 years. Roosevelt's legacy still defines the Democratic Party; he forged an enduring New Deal Coalition of big city machines, the White South, intellectuals, labor unions, Catholics, Jews, and Westerners. In 1936, African-Americans were added to the coalition (African-Americans had previously been denied the vote or voted Republican).

SIXTH PARTY SYSTEM? (1968-PRESENT) – Era of Divided Government

Democrats vs. Republicans: Election of 1968 – Richard Nixon

Beginning in the 1950s and especially since 1968 the American political system has undergone a prolonged period where divided government has been the norm. Divided government is always a possibility in a system where the president and members of Congress are chosen separately. Since 1968 divided government has more frequent for a longer period of time than ever before in American history. The changes in the American party system since the 1950s and 1960s do not fit the historical realignment pattern. Some scholars have concluded that the election of 1968 turned out to be a critical election which ushered in a new party system in which divided government rather than the dominance of one party was the norm. Some call these changes the "no majority realignment" or the "era of divided government."

POLITICAL PARTIES AND THEIR ORGANIZATION

THREE COMPONENTS OF PARTIES

Party-in-Government

Party leaders occupy positions in:

- Presidency
- Congress
- State governors
- State legislatures
- Local governments (though sometimes these are nonpartisan positions)

Party-in-Electorate

- Registered Democrats
- Democratic identifiers/leaners
- Registered Republicans
- Republican identifiers/leaners

Party Organizations

Parties are decentralized along federal lines

- National level
 - National Convention. Highest authority
 - National Committee. When convention not in session
 - National Chairperson
 - Congressional Campaign Committees (for House seats)
 - Senate Campaign Committees
- State Committee
- Local Committees: city, ward, precinct levels
- Neither DNC or RNC can "punish" state/local committees if they stray from the party line – again, parties are decentralized

STRUCTURE AND ORGANIZATION OF POLITICAL PARTIES

A political party must have an effective organization to accomplish its goals. Both of the major parties are organized in much the same manner. Both parties are highly decentralized, or fragmented. The people at the top of the party organizations do not have a lot of power over those at the lower levels. Instead, the parties have strong grass roots, or state and/or local control over important decisions. The party of the president is normally more solidly united than the opposition. The president is automatically considered the party leader, while the opposition is often without a single strong leader. Usually one or more members of Congress are seen as the opposition leaders.

National Convention

The national convention serves as the party's national voice. Party delegates meet in the summer of every fourth year to select the party's candidates for president and vice president. They are also responsible for writing and adopting the party's platform.

National Committee

The national committee manages the political party's business between conventions. They are responsible for selecting the convention site, establishing the rules of the convention, publishing and distributing party literature, and helping the party raise campaign contributions.

National Chairperson

The party's national committee, with the consent of the party's presidential nominee, elects the national chairperson. The chairperson is responsible for directing the work of the national committee from their national headquarters in Washington, D.C. The chairperson is involved in fundraising, recruiting new party members, encouraging unity within the party, and helping the party's presidential nominee win election.

Congressional Campaign Committee

Each party has a committee in the House of Representatives and Senate that works to ensure the election or reelection of the party's candidates by raising funds and determining how much money and support each candidate will receive. The committee often works to defeat an opposition party member who appears weak and might be open to defeat.

State and Local Organization

State law largely determines state and local party organization. Differences exist from state to state; however, state and local parties are structured in much the same way as the national party organization. Local party organizations are still very important in political campaigns because they provide the foot soldiers that hand out party literature, call on citizens to register and to come to the polls on election day.

MINOR (THIRD) PARTIES

Although the Republican and Democratic parties have dominated the political scene, there have been minor, or third, parties throughout U.S. history. Minor parties usually have great difficulty in getting candidates elected to office, although they have been more successful at the state and local levels. A few minor party candidates have been elected to Congress, but no minor party candidate has ever been elected president. Minor parties have been instrumental in providing important reforms that have been adopted by the major parties. Success rather than failure often brings an end to minor parties, as the major parties often adopt popular reforms or ideas, especially if they appeal to the voters.

Probably the most influential third party in American history was the Populist Party of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries that first represented the interests of farmers, but was responsible for wide-ranging democratic reforms. The fate of the Populists was the same as for most other third parties: their goals adopted by a major party, deferring to the "winner-take-all, or pluralist system, that supports a two party system.

In 1992 Ross Perot, a billionaire Texas businessman, tried to defy the two party system by running for president as an independent without the support of a political party. In the election, he gained 19% of the vote, but did not capture a single electoral vote. In 1996, he again entered the race, but also announced the birth of a third party that fizzled when he received less than half as many votes as he did in 1992. In 2000 Ralph Nader ran for the Green Party, but he won only about 3% of the vote. In 2004 Nader ran as an independent, and the Green Party fielded their own candidates for office, but neither managed to garner many votes.

Third parties have almost certainly affected election outcomes, most obviously in 1912, when Theodore Roosevelt ran for the Progressive Party, splitting the Republican vote and throwing the election to Democrat Woodrow Wilson. Many Democrats believe that Al Gore would have won the election of 2000 had Ralph Nader not run. Likewise, some Republicans claim that Ross Perot was responsible for George H. Bush's loss of the election of 1992.

Types	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ideological - those based on a particular set of social, political, or economic beliefs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Communist Party, Libertarian Party • Single issue - parties that concentrate on a single public policy matter <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Free Soil opposed the spread of slavery ◦ Right to Life opposes abortion • Candidate-centered party - those usually formed around a strong personality; may disappear when that leader steps aside <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Teddy Roosevelt's Bull Moose Party ◦ George Wallace's American Independent Party ◦ Ross Perot's Reform Party
Contributions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raise issues that other parties must address, and often incorporate into their own party platforms. "Champions not of lost causes, but of causes yet to be won" (e.g., Populist Party: direct election of senators, income tax, etc.). • Voice for the fringe elements in society • Safety valve for discontent in society
Effects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rarely win elections • Influence the outcome of presidential elections (e.g., 1968, 1992, 2000) - "spoiler role"
Obstacles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two-party tradition (because of single-member legislative districts) • Single-member, winner-take-all, plurality district system for <i>congressional</i> seats, as opposed to the multi-member, proportional system that is common in other countries • Electoral College's winner-take-all system: Perot won 19% of the vote in 1992, but had zero electoral votes. • Getting candidates on the ballot <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Democrat and Republican candidates are automatically placed on state ballots ◦ Minor party candidates must persuade registered voters to sign petitions in order to have their names placed on the ballot. • Money; media coverage; exclusion from TV debates

AMERICAN PARTIES TODAY

INTO THE NEW CENTURY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A divided nation (Red States vs. Blue States) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Areas of party strength <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ South: Republican strength (very conservative) ▪ Great Plains: Republican strength ▪ Rocky Mountains: Republican strength ▪ West Coast: Democratic strength ▪ New England: Democratic strength ▪ Swing (Battleground) states • Democrats attracted Hispanics, African-Americans, union members, etc. • GOP did well with white males, religious conservatives, higher income voters • Differences over tax cuts, social issues, privatization of Social Security
PARTY IDENTIFICATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informal and subjective affiliation with a political party that most people acquire in childhood, a standing preference for one party over another • Seven categories of party identification <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Strong Democrats ○ Weak Democrats ○ Independent-leaning Democrats ○ Pure Independents ○ Independent-leaning Republicans ○ Weak Republicans ○ Strong Republicans • Party identification is the single best predictor of how people will vote
PARTY PLATFORMS AND DIFFERENCES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Party platform - the official statement of party policy - is ambiguous by design • Party platform positions rarely help elect a presidential candidate, but can hurt a candidate • Differences at the national level between the two major parties were very sharp just before the Civil War and again during the New Deal • Both major parties typically have been moderate, support a strong defense, a stable Social Security system, and economic growth
PARTY SYSTEMS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • United States' electoral two-party system versus multiparty systems • United States' winner-take-all system versus proportional representation in multiparty systems • United States' two-party system tends to create centrist parties versus influence of extremists in multiparty systems • Two-party systems lead to stable governments versus multiparty systems make governments unstable (coalitions form and collapse)

THE NOMINATION OF CANDIDATES

THE DIRECT PRIMARY WHAT AND WHY?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To involve more voters and reduce the power of the bosses to pick party nominees, states adopted the direct primary, in which people could vote for the party’s nominees for office. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ By 1920, direct primaries were the norm for some offices in almost all states. ○ Direct primary reduces the power of political parties. ○ Direct primary = people vote directly for the party’s nominee. ○ Direct primary is the typical method of picking party candidates. ○ Primaries vary significantly from state to state. They differ in terms of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ who may run in a primary and how one qualifies for the ballot; ▪ whether the party organization can or does endorse candidates before the primary; ▪ who may vote in a party’s primary—that is, whether a voter must register with a party in order to vote; ▪ how many votes are needed for nomination—a plurality, a majority, or some other number determined by party rule or state law.
TYPES OF PRIMARIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open primaries <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Any voter, regardless of party, can participate in whichever primary he or she chooses (must state which party you are going to vote for) ○ Permits crossover voting—Republicans and Independents helping determine who the Democratic nominee will be, and vice versa. • Closed primaries <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Only persons already registered in that party may participate. • Blanket primaries <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ All voters could vote for any candidate, regardless of party. ○ Permitted voters to vote for a candidate of one party for one office and for a candidate from another party for another office <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Not permitted under either closed or open primaries ○ In 2000, the Supreme Court held that California’s blanket primary violated the free association rights of political parties
CAUCUSES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local caucuses choose delegates to attend regional meetings, which in turn select delegates to state and national conventions, where they nominate party candidates for offices • The Iowa presidential caucuses >> first important test of potential presidential nominees

THE INFLUENCE OF THE MEDIA

Any study of linkage institutions would be incomplete without a consideration of the role that mass media plays in the American political system. Political parties and interest groups serve as important links between citizens and government, but an increasingly important component is mass media that provides information, and also shapes, fosters, or censors it. Mass media has become such an integral part of the political system that it is sometimes called "**the fourth branch**" of government, and it both reflects and influences public opinion. The media link public opinion and the government, and the influence of the mass media on politics is enormous.

MASS MEDIA AS LINKAGE INSTITUTION

- The mass media are means of communication, such as newspapers, radio, television, and the internet, that can reach large, widely dispersed audiences
- The mass media connect people to their government officials by interviewing citizens, presenting poll results, and covering protests
- Media called "fourth estate" or "fourth branch"
 - Mass media vs. news media (part of mass media that stresses news)
 - Mass media - messages often simplified, stereotyped, predictable
 - Characteristics:
 - More interactive
 - More emphasis on entertainment – "infotainment"
 - Personalized
 - Emotional
 - Informal

TELEVISION

- The 1960 presidential debate between Senator John F. Kennedy and Vice President Richard Nixon marked a watershed event when television replaced newspapers and radio as America's principal source of political news.
- Most people now get their news from television
 - Focus is more on image and appearance
 - Communication is through "sound bites" (something quick and easy to remember); No in-depth analysis
 - 30-second commercials influence elections; 10 seconds for "sound bites"
- Use of television as electronic throne of President
 - President can now bypass journalists' annoying questions and go right to the people with a speech
 - Decline of press conferences
 - White House manipulation of television with photo opportunities and sound bites.

RADIO

- FDR was the first president to take advantage of radio – fireside chats
- Talk radio has been a major growth medium in the last decade (Rush Limbaugh, Glenn Beck) – talk show hosts have begun to play a prominent and controversial role in discussing political issues

NEWSPAPERS

- Newspaper circulation rates continue to decline because of television and the internet
- Concern about "revolving door" in journalism: former govt. leaders who become journalists → reporting is tainted

THE INTERNET

- Becoming a key source of information for the American public
- Especially popular with people under 30

THE MEDIA AND PUBLIC OPINION

DOES THE MEDIA INFLUENCE PUBLIC OPINION?

YES

- Media help set national agenda
 - Agenda setting focuses public attention on certain aspects of American politics and ignores others
 - Influences what issues people think are important or not important
 - Stories that are likely to receive high ratings
 - Media can force politicians to confront issues that they might not have otherwise addressed
- Television “personalizes” elections
- Media stress short-term elements of elections at expense of long-term elements (e.g., party affiliation)
- Those who “consume” media in turn influence others
- Politicians frame issues; Influence the “spin” the media will give to their issues
- Rise of advocacy journalism/adversarial journalism rather than a mere reporting of the news

NO

- Mass public pays little attention to the news (e.g., surveys showing how little people know about current affairs)
- Selective attention: many focus in on media sources they already agree with
- Selective exposure: screening out those messages that do not conform to their own biases
- Selective perception: many perceive news in the way they want to view it – they see what they want and filter out the rest
- Media are only one source of influence – political socialization suggests importance of family, schools, peers, and other influences

THE MEDIA AND ELECTIONS

SYMBIOTIC RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN GOV'T AND THE PRESS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Journalists need politicians to inform and entertain their audiences • Politicians need journalists for media exposure
ROLES OF MEDIA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gatekeeper <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Influence which subjects are of national importance, i.e. help to set national agenda. They make us believe what is important >> government has to address those issues. • Scorekeeper <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Keep track of, and help make, political reputations, e.g., importance attached to Iowa caucuses and New Hampshire primary. Media follows day-to-day campaign activities, but emphasis on horse race element of elections at expense of issues. • Watchdog <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Scrutinize people, places and events (e.g., Watergate). "Comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable."
MEDIA INFLUENCES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide forum for building candidate images. • Provide means for politicians to get public attention, e.g., McCarthy, Nixon's role on House committee on Un-American Activities). • Act as linking mechanism between govt. and people: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ In the past: People → Parties → Government ○ Now: People → Media → Government • Contribute to higher cost of campaigning. • Contribute to candidate-centered campaigns. • Increase the role of campaign consultants. • White House manipulation of media: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Photo opportunities ○ Sound bites ○ Spin control ○ Staged events
THE MEDIA AND VOTER CHOICE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information about candidates <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What voters know about candidates is based largely on media coverage ○ The images voters require from the media tend to be more stylistic than issue oriented ○ Journalists are more likely to comment on the "horse race" (who's leading in the polls) • Negative advertising-widespread perception among consultants is that it works; idea of vote suppression • Information about issues <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ignoring charges of the opposition is no longer done, as candidates trade charges and countercharges ○ Advertising is the most important source of information in referendum elections ○ Negative ads may reduce turnout • Decision making <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Newspapers and television seem to have more influence in determining the outcome of primaries than of general elections ○ The mass media are more likely to influence undecided voters