After reading this chapter, you should be able to do the following:

- Define political party and identify key players, how they function in the party, and how a political party is distinct from an interest group.
- Examine the history of political party development in the United States and explore the two waves of political reform that weakened party organization.
- Describe how American parties are organized and the impact of party structure on political processes in the United States.
- Understand the causes and effects of a two-party system.
- Define responsible party government and explain why parties in the United States have been successful or unsuccessful in fulfilling this governing doctrine.
- Define interest groups and understand the role each type of group plays in American politics.
- Describe the issues that affect how accurately and equally interest groups represent the concerns of all segments of American society.

**Perspective: How Centralized Can Political Parties Be?**

The American humorist Will Rogers once quipped, “I am not a member of an organized party. I am a Democrat.” Democratic and Republican Parties in the United States are loosely organized, evolving political groups that have no formal enrollment or membership process; those who wish to work for the party can just show up. Most importantly, no one person or office controls the entire organization. Chuck Schumer is the leader of Democrats in the United States.
DEFINING POLITICAL PARTIES AND INTEREST GROUPS

Political parties are found in almost all countries, democracies and non-democracies alike, although they may fulfill varying purposes, depending on the country. As we saw in this chapter’s “Perspective,” the Democratic and Republican parties of the United States and the Communist Party of China are very different organizations, but all three are political parties.

A political party is an organization comprising officeholders or would-be officeholders and activist supporters spread throughout the population, whose primary purpose is to put its members into government office. It can accomplish this purpose either by competing with other parties for government office in democratic elections (as in the United States) or by banning all other parties and appointing its own leaders to office (as in a non-democracy such as China).

Political parties should not be confused with interest groups. An interest group, similar to a party, is a group of people with shared policy goals; but while the primary purpose of a party is to help determine who holds political office, the primary goal of an interest group is to influence what policy choices those officeholders make. There are several distinct types of interest groups in the United States, and they fill an essential role in American politics. We will discuss these in more detail later in the chapter.

Senate and Nancy Pelosi leads Democrats in the House of Representatives, but neither leads the Democratic Party as a whole. In fact, they cannot even tell their own senators or representatives what to do but must negotiate—and sometimes even plead—with them and with state party leaders as well.

In contrast, Mao Zedong, the former chairman of China’s Communist Party, rejected all forms of negotiation and pleading. On May 16, 1966, he unleashed the “Cultural Revolution,” a decade of upheaval and violence within the party that he hoped would bring it back to its original revolutionary roots. Mao had headed the Communist Party since it began as a revolutionary movement in prewar China, and he had led it to national victory in 1949. Since then, the party had ruled China as a one-party state, allowing no political opposition. By the 1960s, though, Mao thought that many newer members of the party, those who had not shared in the long revolutionary struggle before 1949, were simply opportunists who saw that the only route to a good government job was through the party. Many were well-educated children of the middle class.

In an effort to bring the party back to its working-class roots, Mao’s Cultural Revolution mobilized large groups of young Chinese called “Red Guards” to terrorize landowners, intellectuals, and established leaders such as teachers, university presidents, and government officials. Hundreds of thousands were killed or committed suicide.

After Mao’s death in 1976, the Cultural Revolution ended and new leadership in the Party reversed many of Mao’s actions. The Party today still rules the state, allowing no organized political opposition, but it presides over a partially free-market economy that bears little resemblance to Mao’s socialist vision. It continues to be a tightly controlled, centralized organization, however. The Party is huge, with 90 million enrolled members as of the last National Party Congress. Becoming a member is not easy. Aspirants must first be recommended by an existing Party member and then pass a one-year probationary period; many who apply to join the Party are rejected.

No one person or group could direct an American political party as Mao did or as his successors have done. It is impossible to imagine an event such as the Cultural Revolution—organized violence orchestrated for the purpose of reshaping a party’s membership or ideology—taking place in the United States.
to attain office, but none involved appealing simultaneously to large numbers of people. You might be born into a hereditary office, you might be appointed, or you might actually buy the office. Once Britain and the United States became democracies, however, these positions were filled by election; this system required prospective officials to seek the votes of a thousand or more people. Politicians soon realized that organizing voters into a single, nationwide club—that is, a party—would help to mobilize them to support the party's candidates. It could also help to retain voters for the party, even as they moved from one place to another. A popular official could travel from place to place, helping to convince voters to choose other candidates from the same party, and eventually raise enough money to hire professional staff who could help with the job of organizing thousands of voters. And so, the political party was created.

But what kind of an organization is a political party? In many countries, political parties are formal organizations that people apply to join; if they are accepted, they pay dues to the party. Parties in many democracies are organized in this way. For example, the Conservative Party of Great Britain has 150,000 enrolled members, and unless you pay your dues, you cannot consider yourself a member—though you may, of course, vote for the party's candidates.2 (To get a sense of what being a member is like, see the “Picture Yourself” section in this chapter.)

In the United States, political parties are constructed more loosely. There is no single list of all the people who are members of either of the two main parties; in fact, it is hard to state exactly what set of people makes up the Democratic Party or the Republican Party. Does the Republican Party consist of all those in the United States who voted for the Republican presidential candidate in the last election? Or does it consist of all those who have registered to vote as Republicans? (A registration list might answer our question, except that almost half the states do not require a voter to designate a party when registering to vote.) Does the party consist only of Republican officeholders? What about the office that calls itself the Republican National Committee? There is no clear boundary to indicate which people belong to the party and which ones do not.

With loosely organized parties, politics plays out differently in the United States than in most other democracies. A tight, formal party organization can exert much more control over what its officials do than can the loosely organized American parties. In Argentina, for instance, party officials control who can be on the ballot for a congressional election, and they use this power to punish any members of Congress who vote differently from their party's position. Members who do this regularly are usually expelled from the party and taken off the ballot. As a result, members of Argentina's Congress are very obedient to party leaders.3

In the United States, candidates essentially make their own way to Congress. They get on the ballot by their own efforts, usually through a primary election, and although they then receive some help from their party in getting elected, they are in Congress primarily because of their own initiative and funds they have raised for themselves. As a result, party leaders in Congress have only limited power over what members do and they sometimes vote differently from how their leaders have asked them to vote.

PURPOSES OF A POLITICAL PARTY

One of the wonders of modern politics is that the political party, originally devised in order to help some officeholders attain and keep their jobs, has proved to be useful for many other purposes as well. Because it is an organization that uniquely combines government officials and a network of activists around the country, the political party has become the central organizing force linking the government to the people in almost all countries of the world—democracies and non-democracies alike. It has performed a variety of functions beyond its original role as a campaign machine, including campaigning, mobilization, recruitment and socialization of leaders, providing identity, and providing a channel for control. Through these functions, political parties have become the glue that holds modern politics together.
Part III: People and Politics

CAMPAIGNING  Obviously, parties are useful for their original purpose: to campaign and build support for the candidates of the party. They help to identify candidates, raise money to support their campaigns, share expertise on election law, provide policy research and advice on presenting issues, and conduct get-out-the-vote drives to bring their supporters to the polls.

MOBILIZATION  Because they join together leaders and a geographically dispersed membership, parties are an ideal tool for mobilization. Mobilization involves systematically energizing large numbers of people to act together in a demonstration, an election, or any other combined action. For example, when Syria came under intense international pressure in 2005 to withdraw its troops from the neighboring state of Lebanon, its allies in the Lebanese Hezbollah Party mobilized a demonstration of 500,000 supporters (out of the total Lebanese population of 3.7 million people!) to support Syria's role there. This example reveals the potential of parties to mobilize populations at critical moments in a nation's history.

American political parties are less united on political issues than many parties in other countries, so they do not often sponsor large, issue-oriented demonstrations. But they do mobilize their supporters at each election to get them to the polls.

RECRUITMENT AND SOCIALIZATION OF LEADERS  Recruitment—identifying promising young people and bringing them into positions of public leadership—is vital for any country. Once recruited, leaders and officials also need to be socialized into their political roles. Socialization is the process, discussed in Chapter 6, by which people learn political values and factual assumptions about politics. In addition to what most people learn, newly recruited future leaders need to acquire an additional body of lore, responsibilities, and leadership skills in order to perform well. Because a political party brings together within its organization both seasoned political leaders and young activists, it is well placed to seek out promising young people, give them experience at relatively small jobs, and gradually move those who do well to more important jobs, while imbuing them with the values that the political leadership wishes to encourage.

PROVIDING IDENTITY  For active members, the political party can become a vital, central part of their identity. Party identification (which we examined in Chapter 6 and will discuss later under “Party in the Electorate”) can be a strong feeling. As a source of identity, parties provide continuity and a political community in a political world that is otherwise quite fluid. If party connections are passed on from parents to children or if local party organizations continue their activity across generations, political continuity can extend even beyond a single lifetime.

The three maps of Tennessee in Figure 7.1 exemplify this tendency. At the time of the Civil War, the state was divided over the issue of secession. The shaded counties in Map A were most strongly opposed to secession, as indicated by the vote for the Constitutional Union candidate in 1860. Two areas of opposition stand out: eastern Tennessee, and a small pocket in the west. After the War, opposition to secession translated into support for the Republican Party, which had held the Union together. This made sense at the time, but the pattern continued to hold in...
election after election, long after the issues of the Civil War had receded into the depths of history. In Map B, we see that the areas in which Republican Richard Nixon ran most strongly in 1960 are approximately the same areas that opposed secession in 1860. And in Map C, we continue to see the same two main areas of strength in the vote for Republican Donald Trump in 2016, even though Trump was a very different kind of candidate than Republican candidates who had gone before him.

**PROVIDING A CHANNEL FOR CONTROL**  
Sam Rayburn, who was for many years the leader of the Democratic Party in the U.S. House of Representatives, used to caution new members, “To get along, go along.” In other words, to advance within the House hierarchy, obey orders.

Rayburn’s advice points to another characteristic of a party: It brings together a group of officeholders in an overarching organization, providing a means by which some of the officeholders can control what others do. In other words, the party does not exercise control directly but provides a channel within which control can be exercised. This function helps to make governmental decision making possible. The leaders of a party have many rewards and punishments at their disposal: nominations for various offices, support in passing favored legislation, and so on—or the withholding of such support. Leaders use these inducements to encourage obedience among lesser party figures in legislative votes and in campaign activity.

**THE DEVELOPMENT OF AMERICAN POLITICAL PARTIES**

As we have seen, the United States, as the first electoral democracy in the world, invented political parties. The process took only a few decades (see Figure 7.2), and by the late 1820s, these parties were well organized. The Democratic Party, which can trace its roots back to that time, is the oldest political party in the world.

**EARLY PARTY FORMATION**

The Founders did not envision political parties contesting elections. Indeed, they designed a system in which the president and senators would not be elected directly at all. An Electoral College of distinguished citizens selected by the states would choose the president, and each state’s legislature would appoint its senators. Although elections were to be held for members of the House of Representatives, the Founders expected that men of local standing and reputation would be elevated to the House of Representatives in a quiet, dignified fashion and not in hotly contested campaigns. George Washington, for instance, was unopposed in the presidential elections of 1789 and 1792.

However, after a few years, serious conflicts began to develop in the House. A Federalist group centering on Treasury Secretary Alexander Hamilton favored the creation of a centralized national bank to control the economy and was suspicious of extending the control of government to voters. A loosely knit group dubbed the “Anti-Federalists” crystallized around
Thomas Jefferson in opposition to Hamilton’s proposals. While Hamilton’s supporters often voted as he wished, they opposed him some of the time as well, and the same was true of Jefferson’s allies. Stability did not characterize either the Federalists or their opposition.

By the middle of the 1790s, the Anti-Federalists were losing steadily in Congress. They began to try to change the situation by getting more of their own sympathizers into Congress. Thomas Jefferson and James Madison vacationed in New York in 1791, ostensibly to conduct botanical studies. In fact, they are thought to have met with New Yorkers Aaron Burr and George Clinton to arrange an alliance in the Congress between opponents of Hamilton in the North and the planters of Virginia and others in the South.

Eventually, this alliance took the name Democratic-Republican Party. At about the same time, activist clubs supporting democratic policies began to form around the country, with the first two Democratic clubs forming in Philadelphia in 1793. Eventually, 40 to 50 Democratic clubs developed, an impressive number considering that only 65 congressional districts existed nationwide at the time.4 Between politicians seeking alliances and active citizens in the electorate, the first American political party was born.

**THE FIRST PARTY SYSTEM, 1800–1820**

The new party proved immediately successful, winning a majority of the seats in the House of Representatives in the election of 1800. The period between 1800 and 1820, marked by conflict between the Democratic-Republicans and the Federalists, is called the First Party System. Federalist power gradually declined, and it did not even offer a presidential candidate in the election of 1820. That election marked the start of the “Era of Good Feelings.” With the Federalists on the verge of disappearing, there was no opposition to the Democratic-Republican Party and thus no partisan conflict.

The Era of Good Feelings could not last, however. In a large society, there are simply too many sources of conflict to allow government to proceed for long without organized political conflict. In 1824, Senator Martin Van Buren of New York launched an ultimately successful effort to elect Andrew Jackson in the 1828 presidential election. To do this, Van Buren invented a new kind of party, focused on attracting and mobilizing mass support among voters. This was the Democratic Party, the oldest political party in the world today.

The rise of the Democratic party was made possible by a change in the way presidential electors were selected. Until 1820, electors were chosen by the legislature in about half the states, without the involvement of voters.

By 1828, this had shifted markedly, with voters choosing electors in almost all states (see Figure 7.3). Van Buren realized that a coordinated nationwide campaign could be very effective under

---

**First Party System**

The period from 1800 to 1820, which was marked by the appearance of the new Democratic-Republican Party and the gradual decline of their opponents, the Federalists.

**Era of Good Feelings**

A brief period centering on the election of 1820 when the Federalists were in sharp decline and there was no organized opposition to the dominant Democratic-Republican Party.
these circumstances. The new Democratic Party (actually a revamping of the old Democratic-Republican Party) raised money and established a network of newspapers around the country. It held campaign rallies and parades and introduced campaign paraphernalia—including hickory sticks, to play off of Jackson’s nickname, “Old Hickory.” Jackson won with 56 percent of the vote, gaining 178 of the 261 Electoral College votes.

THE SECOND PARTY SYSTEM, 1828–1854 Over the next decade, the Democratic Party expanded its reach. At the same time, the remnants of the old Federalist Party joined with Democratic-Republicans who opposed Jackson’s policies to form a rival party, the Whig Party. Thus was born the Second Party System, a system of party alliances and conflicts that characterized American politics from the early 1830s until just before the Civil War. The Whigs differed from the Democrats mainly in opposing extensions of the president’s authority and in pushing for policies to build up the nation’s infrastructure and support the development of manufacturing.

The Second Party System was also marked by an abundance of smaller parties, many of which were active for only a few elections. Americans experimented with a variety of policy-based parties, including the Anti-Masonic Party and the American Party (also known as the “Know-Nothing Party”), which opposed immigration. Many of these, including the Liberty Party and the Free Soil Party, represented early manifestations of the growing debate over slavery that would eventually tear the Second Party System apart.

150 YEARS OF DEMOCRATS AND REPUBLICANS

In 1854, a new anti-slavery party was formed: the Republican Party. It rapidly replaced the Whig Party as the main opposition to the Democratic Party, gaining power for the first time in 1860 with the election of Abraham Lincoln. This election ignited the Civil War. After the Civil War, the American party system settled into two main parties: the Democratic Party and the Republican Party. This two-party system continues today, although the parties have changed dramatically over the intervening century and a half.

THE GOLDEN AGE OF PARTIES, 1860–1900 Two characteristics defined the political period between 1860 and 1900: (1) a fairly close division between the Democratic and Republican parties and (2) intensely partisan voters lined up in well-organized, strong parties. It is for the latter of these characteristics that the period is often dubbed the “Golden Age” of parties.

The election of 1860, and the ensuing Civil War, resulted in a Republican North arrayed against a Democratic South. For about 40 years, voters primarily replayed the Civil War with each election. After the Civil War, or at least after the end of the Reconstruction period during which southern African Americans had been able to vote, the Democrats dominated the South and Republicans held a similar lock on the North. The Golden Age represented a period of intense partisanship and high voter turnout—perhaps a reflection of the passion of the Civil War. Between 1876 and 1892, although Republicans won most national elections, the parties were actually fairly evenly matched. During this period, the largest margin by which any presidential candidate won was only three percentage points.

At this time, local parties were well organized and active, and local party “bosses” with political machines wielded great power. In both rural areas and cities, local organizations of both parties established networks of supporters whom they rewarded with patronage—jobs on the public payroll given in return for their loyalty to the party. In large cities especially, party bosses took advantage of the immigrants arriving from Europe. These new Americans needed help getting along after they arrived. Parties helped immigrants get city jobs, gave them food when

FIGURE 7.3
Percentage of States Selecting Presidential Electors in the State Legislature

By 1828, almost all states held elections at which the voters (rather than the state legislature) chose the state’s presidential electors. How did this affect the development of political parties?

Whig Party A party active from 1830 to the verge of the Civil War; it opposed the extension of presidential power and supported development of transportation and infrastructure.

Second Party System The period from the early 1830s until just before the Civil War, which was marked by rivalry between the Democratic Party and the Whigs.

political machines Party organizations providing their supporters with benefits such as city jobs and other favors and, in return, controlling them politically.

patronage Financial rewards (especially public jobs) given to people in return for their political support.
times were especially hard, and provided other favors; in return, the party machine expected the new arrivals to vote for its candidates and organize their friends to vote for them.

**REPUBLICAN DOMINANCE AND PROGRESSIVE REFORM, 1900–1932** Two characteristics defined the political period between 1900 and 1932. After the election of 1896, the Republican Party enjoyed a long era of electoral dominance. They had held a slight edge in the close contests of the Golden Age, but from 1896 to 1928, the average margin of victory for Republicans in presidential elections rose to 15 percent. The only Democrat elected president during this period was Woodrow Wilson (1913–1921), whose victory in 1912 was made possible because the Republicans temporarily split into two parties. During this period, people’s economic status had little to do with whether they voted for the Republicans or the Democrats; instead, voters’ support for one party or the other was determined primarily by the region in which they lived.

The Republican Party dominated all states in the Northeast and Midwest; it faced a Democratic Party with primarily rural roots, considerable support in the West, and a strong base among white Southerners.

Another important development of this period was the rise of the Progressive movement, a loose collection of reformers who brought to an end the Golden Age. The Progressives’ goals were to make politics more open and issue-oriented by eliminating many of the ways that party machines had been able to reward their supporters. The rising middle class did not need help from the parties as poor immigrants had. They resented the domination of machines and thought (often with reason) that they were corrupt—that they used government money and public jobs to enrich themselves and get people to vote for them. Reform candidates challenged the older politicians, and machines gradually lost influence in American politics.

Progressives also worked to change the political rules that had allowed bosses to rule. Under Progressive influence, many states took the power to nominate candidates for office away from party officials and gave it to voters by adopting direct primaries—preliminary elections in which voters choose each party’s candidates for the general election. The Progressives also made it more difficult for machines to provide public jobs to their workers through new civil service laws, which required job-seekers to pass competitive examinations. (The civil service system is analyzed in detail in Chapter 13.) In the end, the party bosses did not have enough power over elections or enough rewards to offer their troops to maintain their dominance. As an indirect result of the reforms, not only the city bosses, but all party organizations became looser and more decentralized because they had fewer tools with which to reward or punish their members.

**THE NEW DEAL AND DEMOCRATIC DOMINANCE, 1932–1964** Throughout the period from 1900 to 1932, various smaller parties had tried to raise issues related to the problems of the poor, such as the right of workers to form unions and strike and income redistribution through taxation. None, however, were able to shake up the basic regional alignment of the two major parties or unseat the Republicans from power.

Then the disastrous Depression hit in 1929, with massive unemployment and bankruptcies across the country. Franklin Roosevelt and the Democrats swept the Republicans away and initiated a new era of Democratic dominance based on a new set of political alignments. With Roosevelt’s election in 1932, the parties reshaped themselves quickly into a business-oriented Republican Party with strong support from the upper middle class and lingering regional support in rural areas of the Northeast and Midwest and a labor-oriented Democratic Party that drew support from unions, liberals, and northern African Americans while maintaining a stronghold in the white South.
The new orientation of the two parties ushered in a period of Democratic dominance. Democratic candidates won six of the eight next presidential elections with an average margin of 5 percentage points. The transformation of the Democrats nationally into a liberal party during the New Deal created a basic tension within the organization. While the party increasingly emphasized extending rights to members of labor unions and other disadvantaged groups, its southern branch continued to defend a harsh system of segregation that denied rights to African Americans. For many years, the party existed as an uneasy coalition between these two very different impulses.

**REPUBLICAN RECOVERY, 1964–PRESENT** With the rise of the civil rights movement in the 1960s, it became impossible to hold the two incompatible parts of the Democratic Party together. Things came to a head when Democratic presidents John F. Kennedy (1961–1963) and Lyndon Johnson (1963–1968) developed laws in 1964 and 1965 to end racial segregation. With the signing of these laws, the South began a shift from the Democrats to the Republicans that reshaped electoral politics. Johnson is said to have told an aide, as he signed the 1964 bill, “We have lost the South for a generation.” He was right. From 1880 to 1960, the Democratic candidate for president had carried the South in every single election; from 1964 to the present, the Democratic candidate has lost the South in every election except when Southerner Jimmy Carter of Georgia ran in 1976. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 marks a rare moment when a single act changed the shape of the political landscape.

Absorbing the South brought more conservative voters into the Republican Party and pulled the party to the right. As a result, the party lost strength in many areas where its members had traditionally been more liberal, such as the Northeast and West Coast. The Democrats picked up the slack. In 1960, 57 Republicans and 55 Democrats were elected to the House of Representatives from the Northeast and the West Coast; by 2018, only 17 Republicans were elected, compared with 99 Democrats. In nationwide elections, however, these gains did not make up for the Democrats’ loss of their Southern bastion. From 1932 to 1960, Democrats had won 6 of 8 presidential elections. From 1964 to 2018, they won only 6 of 14.

**REFORMS WEAKEN THE PARTIES: ROUND TWO** We described earlier how the reforms of the Progressive movement ended the Golden Age of strong party organizations. In the 1970s, a second wave of reform further weakened party organizations. Prior to these reforms, only 14 states and the District of Columbia held primaries to select parties’ delegates to the national conventions. Those delegates would attend the convention with the intention of casting their ballots for the candidate they had supported in the primary campaign (see Chapter 8). In the other 36 states, delegates were chosen by the state party organizations. A broad movement in opposition to the Vietnam War had appealed to the Democratic Party to nominate Eugene McCarthy at its 1968 convention. McCarthy and Robert Kennedy (who was assassinated during the campaign) had energized large numbers of supporters in the primaries. McCarthy, however, lost to Hubert Humphrey, who had not run in a single primary that year. Humphrey was able to garner a majority of delegates, drawn from the states without primaries, on the strength of his connection to party officials.

In reaction to public outcry about this “back-room deal,” the Democratic Party set up the McGovern-Fraser Commission to recommend reform. The commission proposed rules that would lead to the selection of a broader and more diverse range of delegates, with a better representation of women, different age groups, and racial and ethnic minorities. Most states saw primary elections as the easiest way to comply with the new rules and moved quickly to adopt them, thereby taking away one of the remaining powers of many state party organizations.
At about the same time, Congress enacted the Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971, a reform that regulated party expenditures and limited state party activities in federal elections. The act caused state parties to concentrate more on state elections and to be less active in congressional and presidential elections. It also led to a proliferation of political action committees (PACs), which contribute funds to candidates independently of the parties, further lessening the parties’ influence over candidates. We discuss this act in more detail in Chapter 8.

Along with these reforms, technological changes during this period hurt the parties by making it possible for candidates to campaign more independently. In the Golden Age, candidates depended on their parties for large numbers of foot soldiers to distribute campaign literature, gather names of supporters, and get voters to the polls on Election Day. With new technologies, candidates could raise contributions and conduct their campaigns mainly through television advertisements and direct mailings, without depending on the party apparatus.

As party organizations became less important, candidates became more central to the campaigns, with their own personal campaign groups, their own money, and their own television advertisements and campaign flyers urging a vote for them specifically rather than for the party generally. With this increased emphasis on the characteristics of individual candidates, split-ticket voting, in which voters cast their ballot for a mix of Democratic and Republican candidates rather than voting for the candidates of only one party, increased markedly during the early 1970s (see Figure 8.6). None of this means that parties disappeared, but the cumulative effect of all of these changes was that state and city party organizations became less important in national politics than they had once been and that candidates at all levels did not need to depend as much on party organizations as they once had done.

**THE PARTIES TODAY**

What do the parties look like today? The answer to that question has two components: their core beliefs and their bases of support in the population. We can get a sense of their beliefs by examining the parties’ platforms during the 2016 election (see Table 7.1). In every presidential election year, each party holds a national convention at which it nominates candidates and

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Democratic Platform</th>
<th>Republican Platform</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Taxes</strong></td>
<td>Eliminate special tax breaks for large corporations. Add a special additional income tax on multimillionaires.</td>
<td>Reduce corporate taxes to make corporations more competitive internationally. In general, reduce all taxes to increase investment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Abortion</strong></td>
<td>Ensure access to safe and legal abortion.</td>
<td>Guarantee that “the unborn child has a fundamental right to life which cannot be infringed [upon].”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Same-sex marriage</strong></td>
<td>Go beyond legalizing same-sex marriage to provide further legal protections for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) Americans.</td>
<td>Seek to change the Supreme Court’s decisions legalizing same-sex marriage, either by amending the Constitution or changing the makeup of the Court.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Health care</strong></td>
<td>Build on the Affordable Care Act by extending Medicare to those over 55 years old. Expand Medicaid in all states.</td>
<td>Repeal the Affordable Care Act. Let states regulate insurance markets. Reduce costs of health care by limiting how much patients may sue doctors for.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Immigration</strong></td>
<td>Pass comprehensive immigration reform and the DREAM Act, which would allow young undocumented immigrants to stay in the country for college or military service. Protect families from threat of deportation.</td>
<td>Do not provide any form of amnesty for undocumented immigrants. Highest priority is to secure our borders and enforce immigration laws.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Energy</strong></td>
<td>Build a clean energy economy to fight climate change and provide jobs.</td>
<td>Climate change is far from the nation’s most pressing national security issue. Oppose any carbon tax. Coal is “an abundant, clean, affordable and reliable domestic energy resource.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
writes a platform laying out its positions on political issues. The platforms are long and comprehensive (the Democrats’ platform in 2016 was 45 pages long; the Republicans’ was 54 pages). In general, they show a Republican party that is supportive of business as a driver of the economy, favors conservative positions on social issues such as abortion and same-sex marriage, and is very concerned about immigration. They show a Democratic party that is concerned especially with economic equality and social services, favors promoting and defending social diversity, and is concerned with protecting the environment.

The parties’ members are deeply connected to their positions. Table 7.2 shows how different parts of the population voted in elections for the House of Representatives in 2018. The base support for the Republican Party includes men, whites, born-again Evangelical Christians, those with higher incomes, and the South and the Midwest. The Democrats’ base of support is the opposite.

**TABLE 7.2**

*Party Support by Different Groups, 2018*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Percent Voted Democratic</th>
<th>Percent Voted Republican</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ethnicity</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic/Latino</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Family income</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than $30,000</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$30,000–$49,999</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$50,000–$99,999</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$100,000–$199,999</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$200,000 or more</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Religious right</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White Evangelical/Born-again Christians</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All others</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Region</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midwest</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Data compiled from CBS exit polls.*
Another important difference between the parties is that Republicans are more strictly ideological than Democrats, perhaps because of the importance of religion to party members and the party's emphasis on adherence to central principles. In a 2011 poll, 68 percent of Republicans said that they would rather have a representative in Congress who stuck to his or her principles, no matter what; only 32 percent wanted a representative who compromised to get things done; the numbers were exactly reversed for Democrats. In a 2018 poll, 54 percent of Democrats wanted their party to be more moderate, while 41 percent wanted it to be more liberal; the numbers were reversed for Republicans, with only 37 percent wanting their party to be more moderate and 57 percent wanting it to be more conservative.8

**ELECTORAL REALIGNMENTS AND PARTISAN CHANGE** We have reviewed in the preceding sections how parties have changed and developed in the United States since the founding of the country. Up to 1860, change often occurred by old parties dying out and new parties being founded. But since 1860, no new party has succeeded in displacing the Democratic and Republican parties. How, then, has change occurred? It has been made possible by the ability of the two parties to evolve and change internally over time. This capacity for change is one advantage of the loose organizational connection between the party organization and its members that we described earlier. A tightly organized party with close control by its leaders and a large, entrenched central staff might find it more difficult to absorb new policy directions and to respond to new sources of conflict.

An election that causes the parties to change significantly in response to new issues is called a **critical election**. As we saw in Figure 7.1, party support in different segments of the population and different parts of the country, such as in Tennessee, usually remains stable over time. American electoral politics since 1860 has been marked by long periods of such stability. After a long period of stability, however, a critical election may occur, during which major parts of the population switch their party support and a new period of stability ensues. The lasting change produced by a critical election is called an **electoral realignment**. We have described three such realignments: one that began with the election of 1896, ushering in decades of Republican dominance; the New Deal realignment of 1932 and 1936; and the realignment of the 1960s and 1970s, in which the South shifted to the Republicans and the Democrats strengthened their position in the Northeast.

It is a little misleading to call the changes that bring about realignment “critical elections,” because change has usually extended over more than one election. Critical elections have often been preceded by a series of abortive attempts at change by new third parties who have raised issues that eventually help to bring about the critical change. Also, the critical change itself may take more than a single election to occur. For instance, the shift of the South to the Republicans, which started in 1964, was only completed at the presidential level in the 1980s. And in the House of Representatives, where seats are slower to change because of personal and local ties, it was only in 1994 that the Republicans gained a majority of House seats in the South. The basic outline of this process is clear, however: Republican and Democratic support remains stable over a long period of time, even as new issues arise that are not consistent with the orientation of the two parties and pressure builds up for a change; finally, an election or series of elections occurs in which the two main parties reorient themselves along the new issue lines.

**THE STRUCTURE OF AMERICAN PARTIES**

Since American parties are not formal organizations with clearly drawn boundaries, we usually analyze them by looking at three broad groups of people who are loosely joined by their shared ideology and goals: the party in the electorate, the party organization, and the party in government. The **party in the electorate** consists of all citizens who have a tie to the party and participate in elections. To a large extent, these are simply citizens who identify with the party and vote for it, but the party in the electorate also includes activists who work to elect the party’s candidates. A party also needs a **party organization**, a formal structure of party officers and committees to conduct conventions, handle the legal paperwork of campaign laws, raise money, and perform other necessary functions. Finally, the **party in government** consists of a party’s elected officials.
in Congress, state legislatures, and executive offices such as governors or the president; these officials share common party ties and organize themselves along party lines.

These three parts exist independently of each other in the sense that they are not combined within a single organizational structure. Each part supports and influences the other two, however. The members of the party in government are only in government because the party in the electorate voted for them; and the party organization supports the party's elected officials and new candidates in elections.

Some other democracies such as Brazil have loosely organized parties, but most countries’ parties are clearly defined organizations, with formal membership, as we noted above. Compared with these other countries, the loose organization of American parties may have some advantages in that it allows them to be flexible and adapt to changing times and circumstances.

The three components of parties (party in the electorate, party organization, and party in government) are found in all countries that have political parties. Even if, as in most countries, membership in a party requires formal enrollment, the “party in the electorate” encompasses much more than the formal members. The United Kingdom’s Conservative Party receives millions of votes at each election, so its 160,000 enrolled members are only part of that electoral support. How the three components relate to each other varies widely. In China, for instance, where the Communist Party is the sole legal party, the “party in the electorate” is, in effect, a device to ensure support for the Communist regime; elections function not to choose between candidates, since there is only a single slate on the ballot, but rather as devices to stimulate praise and allegiance to the government. As for the other two components, in China, the party organization dominates the party in government. Under Mao Zedong in the 1960s and 1970s, the government did not even pass many laws; all policies of the state were simply enunciated by leaders in the party organization. Today, laws are indeed enacted by the party in government, but the driving force in shaping them is still the party organization.

In the United States, the three components are in a loose arrangement of mutual influence, with no one part dominating the others.

THE PARTY IN THE ELECTORATE

As Chapter 6 explained, most Americans identify with one of the two major parties, and this party identification is not casual. Once a person decides that he or she is a Democrat or a Republican, it is unusual for that identity to change. Party identification strongly affects which candidate people will vote for, and it colors how they view political issues.

As the parties became less influential in the 1960s and 1970s, the party in the electorate also decreased in size. The number of Americans identifying with one of the parties dropped steadily during that period, and the percentage of independents increased from about 20 percent in the early 1960s to about 40 percent in the mid-1970s. The number of party identifiers has remained stable at roughly 60 percent since then, however.

Another way to look at the party in the electorate is to note those who vote Democratic and those who vote Republican, as we did in Table 7.2. These are not exactly the same people as the Democratic and Republican party identifiers, since independents vote and identifiers may vote a split ticket or even desert their preferred party entirely in a given election. As we noted at the beginning of this chapter, the outlines of an American party are fairly blurred. We can think of the party in the electorate as either the party’s voters, its party identifiers, or some blend of the two.

Party identifiers and voters form the broad base of each party. As we see in Figure 7.4, for decades, there has almost always been a larger number of Democratic identifiers than Republican identifiers in the population. However, the Republicans generally turn out in larger numbers to vote, which may help to even out the electoral strength of the two parties.
Some party supporters do more for their party than vote. They contribute money to candidates, work in campaigns, wear campaign buttons, or put bumper stickers on their cars in an effort to convince their friends, neighbors, and family to vote for their favored candidate. They provide a significant source of campaign funds and do much of the campaign work. These activists’ opinions have a greater impact on the party’s leaders than those of supporters who merely vote for them. This is partly because activists are more likely to involve themselves in the nomination process by voting in primary elections or attending party nominating conventions—so politicians need to pay attention to them to get their support for nomination—and partly because the party needs activists to work enthusiastically during campaigns.

In any church, club, or other type of organization, those who are most active tend to believe most strongly in the group’s goals. This general rule holds true for political parties as well and has been observed to be true in many democracies around the world: Those who are most active in a political party usually adhere more strongly to its ideology than those who are less active. This means that most parties are controlled by members who are more unified ideologically than the general membership. American parties are no exception to this rule. For instance, a study in Utah of delegates to the state’s 2016 party conventions found that the delegates for the two parties were more divided ideologically than their parties’ voters in the state. Seventy-five percent of Democratic delegates (compared with 55 percent of Democratic voters) were strongly liberal, while 46 percent of Republican delegates (compared with 27 percent of Republican voters) were strongly conservative.10

FIGURE 7.4

Party Identification and Turnout

(a) Percent of Electorate Identifying as Democrats or Republicans

(b) Percent Voting

Identifiers for each party include independents who “lean” to that party.

THE PARTY ORGANIZATION

To mobilize the party’s supporters and to coordinate the efforts of activists, a party needs something beyond the personal commitment of its activists. It also needs a permanent organization. Today, each party is organized into three types of structures that—as befits our loosely organized parties—operate independently of each other: state and local party organizations, a national committee, and congressional campaign committees.

STATE AND LOCAL PARTY ORGANIZATIONS

Parties have an organization in each state, with a state party chairperson and a central committee that concerns itself primarily with helping candidates in statewide and state legislative races. Each state organization, in turn, is based on numerous local party organizations. Although their role varies from state to state, these state and local organizations are not like the machines of the old days. They generally do not try to determine who will be nominated for office but rather operate as a support structure for those who achieve nomination through their own efforts in primary elections or at state conventions. The work of state and local parties primarily involves fundraising, conducting issue research and polls for candidates, and organizing state nominating conventions in those states that use a convention. State and local organizations also provide the troops for grassroots campaigning in elections.
NATIONAL COMMITTEES Each party has a national committee that oversees the day-to-day business of the party, raises money to support candidates and to assist state party organizations, and organizes the national presidential nominating convention every four years. Organizing the convention is one of the most important things a national committee does. The national nominating convention is attended by several hundred delegates from around the country who have either been elected in their state’s primary election or chosen at a state convention. These delegates choose the party’s presidential and vice presidential candidate for that year and write a party platform that lays out the party’s principles and positions. The platform reflects the judgment of the convention’s delegates and is usually influenced strongly by the likely nominee. In keeping with the decentralized nature of American parties, however, it is not binding on any of the party’s candidates; many candidates will ignore important points of the platform if they disagree with them or think they would not work well politically in their races.

The Democratic National Committee, which has about 500 members in all, includes all state party chairs and vice-chairs, plus two hundred additional members who are either elected in primary elections or at state conventions and a variety of members representing affiliated groups. The Republican National Committee is smaller, with about 150 members. It is made up of two members—one man and one woman—from each state and territory, plus the state chair of any state that the Republicans carried in the preceding presidential election or that has a significant Republican presence in other ways. Both committees also employ staff to help in accomplishing the committees’ goals.

CONGRESSIONAL CAMPAIGN COMMITTEES Each party has a committee in the Senate and a committee in the House of Representatives whose purpose is to raise money for candidates for Senate or House seats and to recruit able candidates. These four congressional campaign committees consist of House members or senators, plus large staffs, but are not official committees of Congress (see Chapter 11). They raise money (the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee in the House raised over $100 million in 2018) and maintain field operations to help their parties’ candidates. They usually focus their support on candidates who have a chance to win and thereby increase the size of their party’s delegation in the Senate or House.

THE RESURRENCE OF NATIONAL PARTY ORGANIZATIONS Although the three national organizations for each party—the national committee and the two congressional campaign committees—operate independently of each other, all have thrived in recent years. State party organizations declined beginning in the 1960s as technological changes such as television advertising, polling, direct marketing, and Internet campaigning made candidates less dependent on them. But ironically, those same technological changes meant that national organizations were increasingly important to candidates. Candidates today need large sums of money as well as support and tutoring in the technical aspects of campaigning. The national organizations help to provide these. Figure 7.5 shows how the amount of money raised by national party committees has grown as the committees have become more central to campaigns.

Over the last 30 years, as shown in Figure 7.5, the six national committees have grown enormously, with combined budgets in 2016 of well over a billion dollars. During this period, they grew from small operations with a few staff members who worked out of rented offices to organizations with several hundred employees housed in their own dedicated buildings near the Capitol. In an earlier era, the state party organizations sent money to the national organizations to help keep them going, but now the flow has reversed, with the two parties’ national committees helping to subsidize the operations of the state party organizations.
As noted earlier in the chapter, parties provide leading government officials with a means of influencing, and often controlling, what other officials of their party do. The party in government provides the structure through which officials exercise this control. All of a party's elected officials share a common partisan identity, and they are tied together organizationally as well; to some extent at least, all of them rely on the party organization for help with their campaigns. They also share a common ideology. The party's structure enables them to work together and also allows their leaders to guide them in this collective effort. The party in government most clearly provides structure and coherence to policy making within each of the houses of Congress and in the relations of Congress with the president.

In most countries of the world, political parties operate even more strongly than in the United States to help government leaders control fellow officeholders of their party. In many authoritarian states such as China, of course, the party is essentially the same thing as the government, and promotion to higher office is simply controlled by the party's leaders. But even in most democracies, since parties are more tightly structured, the party is a more potent channel for control than in the United States.

**PARTIES IN CONGRESS** Members of both houses of Congress are organized by party and do much of their most important business through their party organizations. House members actually spend a considerable amount of their time working only with other members of their own party. Republicans are members of the House Republican Conference, and Democrats are members of the House Democratic Caucus. During meetings of these two groups, which happen at least once a week, party leaders communicate the party's positions on issues as well as the party's legislative strategy—and the rank-and-file members raise issues and push back if they disagree with their leaders.

The two parties in the Senate are organized into a Senate Republican Conference and a Senate Democratic Conference, with an internal structure similar to the Conference and Caucus in the House. In contrast with the House, however, individual senators have traditionally been more powerful in their own right than House members have been. If nothing else, each senator is one of 100, while each House member is one of 435. Party leaders in the Senate have to tolerate more defections from their ranks than leaders in the House do, and they also have to negotiate more often with members of the opposite party to get bills passed.

This stands in stark contrast to other countries. In Germany, for instance, individual members of the parliament can do little without the support of the party's leaders. They cannot introduce bills in the parliament, they cannot introduce amendments, and they cannot pose questions to the government except through their party. And when bills are voted on, they must almost always vote with their party. In fact, on many bills the members do not vote at all, but the party leader simply announces that the party's votes are cast for (or against) the bill. Such party discipline sounds strange to individualistic American ears, but it allows effective, focused decision making by the parties in the parliament.

**PRESIDENTS AND PARTIES** Presidents are recognized as the leader of their party nationally. A sitting president is the public face of his or her party, and the party's fortunes rise or fall with the popularity of the president. The president appoints the chair of the party's national committee...
and is invaluable to the party as a fundraiser. (For the party that does not hold the presidency, the national committee elects its chair.) In addition, presidents use their importance to their party to help them govern. Party ties are especially important in the president’s relations with Congress. President Donald Trump was able to use the Republican party structure to great advantage in his relations with Congress after he was elected in 2016. He was very popular with Republican party identifiers (the party in the electorate), so even though arguably most Republican members of Congress were opposed to large parts of his program, he was able to force them to support him. They feared that Republican voters would replace them if they did not do so.

**PARTIES IN STATE GOVERNMENT** Governmental structures in the states are similar to those of the national government—with a governor and a legislature rather than a president and Congress—but parties generally affect decision making even more strongly at the state level than they do nationally. In many states, the division of powers between the governor and the legislature is less strict than it is at the national level, so a governor can work more directly with the legislators of his or her party. For instance, governors in some states help to name the party leaders in the legislature and join in the regular meetings of their party’s legislators.

**THE TWO-PARTY SYSTEM**

Since 1864, the Democratic and Republican parties have had a virtual monopoly on elected office in the United States. In that period, every president has been either a Democrat or a Republican, and 99 percent of all members of the House of Representatives have belonged to one of these two parties. Many other parties have tried to enter government, but no other party has been able to establish itself as a serious contender for power on a continuing basis. The Greenback Party, Populists, Prohibition Party, Socialists, Progressives, and others, as well as independent candidates such as Ross Perot (who ran for president in 1992) have all tried, but none have been able to break the hold of the Republicans and Democrats.

The United States, in other words, has a two-party system in which two—and only two—parties are regular contenders for governmental office. Some countries are one-party systems where only a single party is allowed to nominate candidates for office. (China, whose politics we examined at the opening of this chapter, is an example of a one-party system.) Most other countries have multiparty systems in which three or more parties regularly contend for office.

---

**FIGURE 7.6**

*Party Systems of the World’s Democracies*

Source: Data compiled from the CIA World Factbook.

Note: A cutoff point always has to be set between two-party systems and multiparty systems. In this case, we have defined two-party systems to be electoral democracies in which the two largest parties hold at least 85 percent of the seats in the lower house of the congress or parliament.
with a significant chance of success (see Figure 7.6). Brazil, for instance, has seven major parties and many smaller parties that regularly win some seats in Congress. Twenty-seven different parties hold at least one seat in Brazil’s Congress.

Having a two-party system affects United States politics in at least two important ways. For one, compared with most multiparty countries, the range of policy options offered by parties in the United States is narrower. Neither of the two major parties in the United States has argued that the government should nationalize major industries, for instance, or that it should establish a national religion. Individuals within one of the parties may have argued for these or other radical proposals, but because each party must appeal to a broad range of people in order to be large enough to win in a two-party system, it cannot adopt a distinctively radical position and still gain the 50 percent of the votes it needs to win an election. In contrast, Norway, with its multiparty system, has a moderately socialist Labor Party; a more socialist Left Socialist Party; an environmentalist Green Party; an anti-immigrant, anti-tax Progress party; a free-enterprise Conservative Party; a Christian Party; and more—all with representation in the Norwegian parliament.

Secondly, the fact that each party in a two-party system must be large enough to include a range of differing opinions is probably one reason for the loose organization of American political parties. If a party is a “big tent,” it is harder for it to enforce uniform political views on its members or its candidates.

THE U.S. ELECTORAL SYSTEM AND THE TWO-PARTY SYSTEM

Why does the United States have a two-party system when most democracies in the world are multiparty systems? A diverse country such as the United States certainly would have a wide enough range of opinions to sustain a variety of parties, so there must be something that regularly forces American politics to fit into only two parties. That “something” is our winner-take-all system of elections, in which candidates run in a district (or a state, or the country as a whole), and the one candidate who does best in the district takes office.

We will look at the U.S. electoral system in detail in Chapter 8 and will also see that elections can be organized in other ways. For our purposes in this chapter, the important thing is to realize that winner-take-all systems, such as those in the United States, generally help large parties and hurt small ones, and for this reason, they have a strong tendency over time to produce two-party systems. To see why this would be so, consider congressional elections. Congressional elections pose a steep challenge for a small party, such as the Green Party. With the support (let us say) of no more than a tenth of the population, spread fairly evenly across the country, it is difficult for the Greens to win congressional seats. In a three-way race, even if the Democratic and Republican candidates were tied, the Green candidate would have to get over 33 percent of the vote to win, which would be more than three times its national average. An even higher percentage would be necessary if the two major parties were not tied.

In a presidential race, the odds are even starker. It’s possible to imagine the Greens building a few local pockets of strength in which they could get three, four, or five times their national average and win a few congressional districts. But in the national vote for president, winning with 10 percent would be impossible. The Greens would have to get at least 34 percent of the entire national vote, and even that number would work only if the Democratic and Republican candidates split the rest of the vote evenly. In this way, our winner-take-all electoral system punishes small parties and rewards large parties. As a result, over time, small parties disappear and a two-party system emerges.

THIRD PARTIES IN THE TWO-PARTY SYSTEM

Even with our basic two-party system, there have always been additional, smaller parties such as the Libertarian Party in American politics. They are commonly called third parties, even though they might more properly be called minor parties, since there are often four, five, or more parties running candidates in an election. In the 2016 presidential election, there were actually 29 candidates for president on the ballot in at least some states: Democrat Hillary Clinton and Republican Donald Trump, of course, but also candidates of significant parties such as Gary Johnson of the Libertarian Party (on the ballot in 48 states) and less significant ones such as Rod Silva of the
Nutrition Party (on the ballot in only 1 state). None of the other 27 candidates had much chance to win.

Not only are third parties handicapped by the winner-take-all electoral system, but they also face other barriers. Most states have special rules designed to limit “nuisance” candidacies; these rules generally require candidates of any party but the two major ones to gather large numbers of signatures before they can appear on the ballot. Also, public funding of campaigns, where it is available, is usually based on the size of the vote a party gained in the preceding election. Because their share of the vote is generally slight, third parties get only a small subsidy (if any) for their campaign, which hinders their ability to gain more votes—and more funds for the next cycle.

Despite all of these handicaps, however, third parties have been active throughout American history and have sometimes had a significant impact. Third parties come in many varieties, including three major types: offshoots from a major party, ideological or single-issue parties, and vehicles for independent candidates.

Some third parties arise when there is a split in a major party. Party splits can occur for a variety of reasons. In 1912, for instance, followers of Theodore Roosevelt left the Republican Party to form the Progressive Party, with Roosevelt as its presidential candidate. Roosevelt broke from the Republicans for personal reasons and also to pursue the goals of the Progressive movement. In 1948, southerners bolted from the Democratic Party and formed the States’ Rights Democratic Party, with Strom Thurmond as their candidate. Their break from the Democrats was made in an effort to try to maintain racial segregation in the South.

Some long-term third parties promote a single issue or a broad ideology. Especially in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, ideological parties such as the Populist Party and the Socialist Party ran candidates in a number of elections and enjoyed some success, at least at the congressional level. And single-issue parties such as the Free Silver party and the Prohibition Party likewise were stable fixtures for at least a period of time, with some successes. Enduring parties of this sort in contemporary politics include the Green Party and the Libertarian Party. The Green Party supports sustainable environmental policies, local involvement in politics and the economy, and social justice. The Libertarian Party supports limited government and individual freedom.

Since the middle of the twentieth century, the most prominent third parties have formed to serve the needs of independent candidates, who used them to get access to the national stage. In 1992, Ross Perot, a wealthy businessman, financed his own campaign and ran as an independent but with a national organization of supporters he called United We Stand America. With a platform that emphasized balancing the budget, he received 19 percent of the vote.

**THIRD PARTIES CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE**

Can third parties accomplish anything politically, beyond giving their candidates the thrill of the campaign? One effect of third parties, for which they draw criticism, is that they sometimes act as “spoilers,” drawing most of their supporters from one of the two major parties and causing that party to lose the election. In 1912, Theodore Roosevelt’s Progressive Party drew its voters mainly from the Republican Party and ensured the election of Democrat Woodrow Wilson (1913–1921). In the very close election of 2000, it is likely that Democrat Al Gore would have won instead of Republican George W. Bush (2001–2009) if Ralph Nader had not run as the Green Party’s candidate. Bush carried Florida by only 307 votes, while Nader got 97,488 votes in that state. Since Nader’s Green Party supporters were more likely to have voted Democratic than Republican were he not in the race, Gore would probably have carried Florida if Nader had not been on the ballot. And if Gore had carried Florida, he would have won the election.

More importantly, however, third parties have often been able to bring issues to national attention and force the two major parties to deal with them. Several times in American history,
third parties have successfully promoted an issue or an ideology, even if they themselves have not been able to gain office to implement their ideas. The Democratic and Republican parties are constantly evolving in their ideologies and policy positions, and third-party campaigns have often influenced that evolution.

The Populist Party, for instance, which received 9 percent of the national vote and carried five states in 1892 with its “free silver” program of inflationary policies to help farmers and debtors, succeeded in taking over the Democratic Party in 1896, and William Jennings Bryan, a Populist figure, was nominated for president by the Democrats. The Prohibition Party never achieved more than local success in electing candidates, but it did succeed in its goal of national prohibition when the Eighteenth Amendment to the Constitution, outlawing the sale and consumption of alcoholic beverages in the United States, was passed in 1919. (The policy proved unpopular, however, and was reversed by the Twenty-First Amendment in 1933.)

The Green Party today has seen its environmental concerns incorporated into many public policies, and the Libertarian Party’s concern for limited government has been adopted strongly by the Republican Party. Third-party efforts, then, are not necessarily in vain. They can lead to policy successes even if the third party rarely wins an election.

**RESPONSIBLE PARTY GOVERNMENT**

As we have seen, parties are formed with the purpose of helping to determine who holds office. There are two general views on how American parties might do this. One view is that because our two major parties are necessarily large, they therefore need to be broad and inclusive. The fact that a party, if it is to succeed in the United States, must win the support of at least half the population means that each will probably be a coalition of various interests. From this perspective, parties bring together diverse groups of interests and shape them into an organization capable of acting in government. Parties, in this view, are holding companies for evolving, changing groups of interests. To the extent that they have programs, the programs are a blend of the various interests that make up the party. A party that attains office should run the government by making compromises and putting together policies based on its supporters’ interests and the needs of the nation. In other words, parties should reflect and coordinate public opinion.

An alternative view is that a party should articulate a clear program, offer it to the electorate, and if it wins an election, put that program into effect. If it is out of office, it should offer an alternative program that it would put into effect if it could displace the governing party. In other words, parties should lead public opinion and offer the public distinct choices. This is the doctrine of responsible party government, under which parties should

1. present policies to the electorate,
2. carry them out if elected,
3. develop alternatives to the government’s policies when out of office, and
4. differ sufficiently between each other to offer voters a choice.

Though this doctrine necessarily entails distinctive parties in conflict with each other and the possibility of heightened tensions between the contending parties, it also can be attractive because it provides clear accountability. Before an election, voters consider parties offering two alternative programs. They choose one of the parties (with its program), and once in office, the party implements that program. If voters are pleased with the result, they keep the party in office. If not, they vote in the alternative party to implement its program.

In the United States, for many years, parties were more of the “holding companies” sort, but over the last few decades, as party unity has increased and the division between the Democrats and Republicans has widened, American parties appear to have evolved to become more similar to responsible parties. Although the parties are still rather broad and diverse, each party has developed a unified core of ideas that makes it distinguishable on the political party landscape. Each party in Congress is increasingly unified and more distinct from the other party in its voting on bills. The Contract with America, developed by House Republicans under the leadership of Newt Gingrich in the 1994 election, is an example of a strong attempt at making a party “responsible” in the sense used here. This Contract laid out a set
of 10 bills that Republicans promised to bring to a vote if they acquired a majority of the House in the election. They did win the election and did introduce the bills they had promised, though their bills largely failed in the Senate and did not become law. The Republicans controlled the Senate as well as the House, but they were not able to get all of their members to vote for the Contract bills.

Even though the parties have become more distinct from each other, however, it is not clear that the accountability that should in theory go with responsible parties has materialized. The parties do

Questions to Consider

1. What are some disadvantages of a tightly organized party? What are its advantages?
2. Why do you think British citizens pay money to join a party and work actively in it, when members of the House of Commons control most of what happens in the party and, therefore, ordinary members have little say over its decisions?
3. What sorts of incentives might draw people into joining a party such as this?
present competing programs, but our presidential system of government, with its divided powers and numerous checks and balances, makes it difficult for a victorious party to put its program into place after it has been elected. Parliamentary systems, which will be discussed in Chapter 12, do not have divided powers and checks and balances, so they can theoretically implement their campaign promises with little problem. If parties in such a system are responsible, they seem to work better and accomplish their function of accountability better than in presidential systems. This may be why parties in the United Kingdom, which has a parliamentary system, have long been responsible parties.

Another reason for the inability of parties in the United States to function well as responsible parties is that they are so decentralized that they do not offer a good vehicle for disciplining officials and making them unite behind the party’s policies. In 2017, the victorious Republicans—who in 2016 had achieved the presidency and control of both the House of Representatives and the Senate—endured a year of frustration as major parts of their program failed in Congress. President Trump’s two key campaign planks—repealing Obamacare and building a wall along the southern border—both failed to pass. The repeal of Obamacare failed when some Republican senators broke with the party leadership to vote against it. Similarly, in 2008 with Democratic control of both the House and Senate, Democratic President Barack Obama was unable to enact either immigration reform or a carbon tax to reduce global warming. With the parties in their current form, we may have gained the less pleasant part of responsible party government—heightened conflict and tension between the parties—without reaping the benefit of increased accountability.

INTEREST GROUPS IN AMERICAN POLITICS

An interest group is a group of people who put forth a coordinated effort to influence the government’s policies. This purpose distinguishes it from a political party, which aims primarily to determine who will hold office in government. Although political parties often promote policies in order to get their candidates into office and interest groups often work to elect representatives who are sympathetic to their policy proposals, the difference is one of emphasis. Parties’ central concern is getting their candidates elected, while interest groups’ central concern is achieving their policy objectives. This difference in emphasis leads to differences in what they do politically. Interest groups emphasize two broad activities: organizing and mobilizing supporters and lobbying to persuade officials to enact a policy.

Organized interest groups are necessary for politics. Without them, the government might ignore the needs of many people. In the South Asian country of Bangladesh, for instance, citizens typically rely on a patron, who provides them with emergency help when needed and helps to intercede with the government on their behalf. In return, they offer their patron loyalty and support. The population consists of innumerable networks of this sort, which function in much the same way that big-city party machines did in the United States in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Bangladeshis’ reliance on these local networks makes it difficult to form national interest groups centered around a shared idea or occupation. As a result, interest groups are found almost solely among the one-quarter of the Bangladeshi population that live in large cities. These interest groups comprise mostly the urban elites who agitate to protect their own interests in government, leaving many other possible interests unrepresented. For instance, there is not a well-organized interest group for agriculture, even though Bangladesh is a predominantly agricultural country. As a result, the political elite live in a world of their own, where the problems of the country’s people rarely intrude. For instance, when a hurricane struck southwestern Bangladesh in June 2009, killing 200 people and leaving hundreds of thousands homeless, the prime minister never visited the site nor did the government do much to help those who were affected. With no political organizations representing the rural populations of southwestern Bangladesh, the government felt free to ignore the problem.

While interest groups perform a vital function, however, Americans have long been ambivalent about them. In 1787, James Madison wrote in The Federalist No. 10 that the ability of interests to organize is the essence of freedom—but he also complained of the “mischief of factions.” Today, people often refer to interest groups as pressure groups or special interests, reflecting the...
prevailing view that they are often too strident and that they pursue their own interests at the expense of the common good. Nonetheless, interest groups are a powerful force in the United States. They fall into one of several distinct types.

**CITIZEN GROUPS**

Citizen groups are membership organizations open to all who agree with the policy goals of the organization. Since members are brought together by a shared idea rather than by a material interest, citizen groups tend to be ideological and idealistic. Examples include the environmental group Clean Water Action, which works to keep water in drinking supplies and in the environment clean and safe; National Right to Life, which works to limit or eliminate abortion; UnidosUS, which works to further the interests of Hispanic Americans; and the National Rifle Association (NRA), which works to ensure that Americans may own guns with minimal restrictions.

**CORPORATIONS**

Corporations often operate directly in the political arena to help shape policy that will enhance their profits. Most large corporations have an official with a title such as “Vice President for Public Affairs,” who is responsible for coordinating the corporation’s relations with government and trying to influence how laws and regulations are written. Over 750 corporations maintain special offices in Washington, DC, to manage their relations with the government. Microsoft, for instance, has four vice presidents or assistant vice presidents in its home office who deal with government relations and a staff of 24 in a special office in Washington, DC. In 2018, it spent $7,180,000 on its lobbying efforts.

**LABOR UNIONS**

Most unions are active in elections and maintain political staff in Washington to represent them. Their goals are often broader than the goals of a corporation, embracing many issues such as health care, workplace safety, or tax policies that affect their members. Unions also lobby to protect and expand their ability to bargain collectively with employers. Over the last decade, unions around the country have been forced into great activity to defend themselves as Republican governors and legislatures have tried to pass a number of laws making it more difficult to unionize workers. In Missouri, for instance, unions organized a massive petition in 2018 to put a measure on the ballot overturning a “right to work” law that would have made it easier for workers to avoid joining a union. The law had been passed by the legislature and signed by the governor, but when the unions campaigned heavily against it in the election, voters defeated it by a 2 to 1 margin.

**TRADE, PROFESSIONAL, AND AGRICULTURAL ASSOCIATIONS**

Many organizations represent companies or individuals who provide a product or service. Trade associations are organizations of businesses who share the same trade, such as the Printing Industries of America or the National Automobile Dealers Association. There are also broader organizations that represent larger groups of businesses, such as the National Association of Manufacturers, which represents all manufacturing businesses, and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, which represents all businesses of any sort. Where individual corporations generally work to influence narrow regulatory or tax issues that will make a specific difference to them, trade associations lobby on broader issues such as general tax policies or trade policies that affect all their members.

Missouri labor unions organized demonstrations, including at the inauguration of the state’s new governor, to protest a “right to work” law passed in the state. They were ultimately successful in overturning the law via referendum.
Professional associations are organizations of members of a profession, such as the American Medical Association (AMA) or the National Society of Accountants. They may lobby for benefits for their members or on issues in which their members are experts by virtue of their profession. For instance, the AMA lobbies to increase Medicare reimbursements to doctors but also lobbies to influence how the government responds to epidemics. Even lobbyists are represented by a professional association, the National Institute for Lobbying and Ethics.

Agricultural associations are organizations either of farmers in general or of particular kinds of farmers, such as the Southern Peanut Growers. They tend to focus fairly narrowly on issues important to their members’ farming activities, such as trade policy, environmental regulations, and price supports.

OTHER GROUPS THAT LOBBY OFFICIALS

Some groups that do not represent a broad-based membership nonetheless maintain an active lobbying presence in Washington. Governmental and nonprofit institutions such as the armed forces, the Red Cross, and many universities maintain a lobbying presence to advance the interests of their offices. Also, foreign governments often hire Washington lobbying and public relations firms to represent their interests, set up contacts with members of Congress and the executive branch, and advise them on how to relate to the broader public.

SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

We have included social movements with interest groups here, but they are really a separate type of group, alongside parties and traditional interest groups. Social movements are informally organized, often temporary groups that spring up around an issue or an event. They have minimal structure and deal with politics outside of normal governmental decision making, usually emphasizing demonstrations rather than formal lobbying. Take a look at Figure 7.7 for one way to understand what a social movement is and how it compares to a political party or a traditional interest group. What defines social movements is not their goal, which is what distinguishes parties from interest groups, but their extremely loose organization.

Examples include the many groups in the civil rights movement of the 1960s, the Tea Party movement, Black Lives Matter, and local groups opposed to the construction of an airport or highway. A social movement is more a network of activists than an organization. Typically, it consists of a number of people who engage in political activities such as demonstrations more or less spontaneously, and it has a number of competing leaders rather than a single structure with one leader.

MOVEMENTS THAT HAVE MADE A MAJOR IMPACT

Social movements have often had a major impact on politics. The most famous example is the success of the civil rights movement in the 1960s in desegregating public facilities and gaining the right to vote for African Americans. Another important social movement in American politics is Gay Pride. Gay Pride parades started in commemoration of the Stonewall Riots in New York City in 1969 but have developed into an annual event in many cities around the country, raising the visibility of the gay community and promoting the cause of gay rights.

The feminist movement of the 1960s was another successful social movement. Many groups of women joined together to discuss common problems and define those problems as political (involving government policies or general practices in society) rather than as the personal fault of women. From these groups sprung a general, loosely coordinated campaign for changes in reproductive policy, workplace practices, and government regulations based on gender.
More recent is the Tea Party movement, which started in 2009 as a series of protests against taxes and the Obama administration’s health care bill. The Tea Party is not a party and, in fact, has no unified central leadership, but the core beliefs of its members suggest a distrust of elected officials and government. It is a strongly anti-elite movement of people who have historically felt scorned by what they view as the political and media elites.

The Black Lives Matter movement originated in 2013 with the hashtag #BlackLivesMatter after Trayvon Martin, a black teenager, was shot by a white neighbor who considered him suspicious. It is a loose movement of local groups of (mostly young) African Americans who speak out against violence and racism toward black people.

All of these movements have in common the fact that they were based on under-represented groups in society that did not have many political resources: African Americans, gays and lesbians, women in the 1960s, and nonpolitical, anti-elite members of the middle class. U.S. social movements typically are a last resort for the under-represented, but in poor countries such as Bangladesh or in non-democracies that do not have regular avenues for participation, they may be the main or only outlet available for most citizens. In 2011, for instance, after 23 years of dictatorial rule in Tunisia, a social movement arose that toppled the government and led to a new, democratic regime; from there, social movements spread to Egypt and the rest of the Middle East, though they found less success. In China, where organized opposition is illegal, thousands of loosely organized social movements arise to protest local issues each year. In Bangladesh, which as we have noted has few interest groups, the only recourse for students concerned about traffic safety in 2018 was to take to the streets in spontaneous demonstrations.

**INTEREST GROUP REPRESENTATION AND THE ORGANIZATION OF PUBLIC OPINION**

Interest groups are the part of the political system that can best represent public opinion and bring it to bear in an organized way on governmental authorities. Political parties cannot do this very well, because they are involved in trying to acquire governmental power for themselves. This quest for power—and the need to compete in a two-party system—compels parties to incorporate many compromises in their programs to appeal to the broadest spectrum of support. A party seeks to merge differences, but an interest group seeks to represent its members’ wishes clearly and precisely.

This works well if all parts of society are represented by well-organized groups, but the United States is something of a half-filled glass in this regard. Despite its well-developed interest group system, it does not always reflect American society accurately. The parts of society that are well represented by organized interest groups diverge from the overall society in various ways. First, interest groups tend to represent those who are financially well-off more than those who are not so well-off. Secondly, producer interests—those involved in making a product—are easier to organize than consumer interests—those who purchase the product. Accordingly, producers are more thoroughly organized than consumers. Finally, some groups enjoy other special advantages that make it easier for them to organize themselves and influence officials.

**ORGANIZATION OF THE WELL-OFF**

In general, interest groups tend to represent the concerns of those who are relatively well-off. Two-thirds of registered lobbyists represent either corporations or trade and professional groups, but even citizen groups have a tendency to overrepresent the well-off.

Because joining a citizen group is a voluntary act that is not based primarily on economic incentives, the sorts of people who tend to join citizen groups are the same as those who tend to volunteer or turn out to vote in elections: older, better-educated, more economically prosperous Americans. As a result, citizen groups tend to organize around issues that reflect the interests of such segments of society—issues such as the protection of historic buildings, the environment, and animals’ rights.
Another reason why the well-off are more strongly represented in the interest group universe is that those who enjoy greater financial comfort are likely to have acquired, either from their education or from their jobs, the sorts of organizational and technical skills that interest groups need. As a result, groups representing the well-off are more likely than others to be effectively organized. For all of these reasons, those in the society who are well-off are better represented than those who are not. There are relatively few interest groups seeking to help poor, rural Americans or other disadvantaged groups.

**PRODUCER INTERESTS AND CONSUMER INTERESTS**

Another distortion in the interest group universe is caused by the difference between producer interests and consumer interests. A producer interest is any group of people involved in making a product. Any product may involve a number of producer interests: a corporation, a trade union, and one or more professional organizations. Examples of producer interests are Microsoft Corporation, the United Auto Workers union, the AMA, and the National Farmers’ Union—any economic entity made up of those who produce something. A consumer interest is any group of people who use or purchase the producers’ goods or services. Most groups of consumers are not formally organized, but some examples include the American Automobile Association (AAA), the Center for Science in the Public Interest, and the Consumer Federation of America.

Note that the producer/consumer distinction differs from the well-off/less well-off distinction. Groups of consumers may be relatively well-off—those who buy cruise vacations, for instance, or upscale clothing—or they may be less well-off. And producer groups, while they include corporations and well-paid professionals, also include trade unions representing workers who are not so well-off.

Producer interests are always easier than consumer interests to organize due to the higher concentration of producer interests. To take one example, every family in the United States pays about $40 more for food each year because of import restrictions on sugar, which the powerful American Sugar Alliance of sugar growers defends. The higher cost of sugar shows up not only in candies and soft drinks but also influences the cost of many other food items containing sugar, such as mayonnaise and bread. Although the added expense for families is significant, it is not large enough that they will give up evenings and weekends to organize for a change in the restrictions. The nationwide total, however, comes to $1.9 billion—all of which goes to sugar cane and beet growers and sugar-processing plants. This is enough money to make a difference of 10 or 20 percent in the profits of the companies and the earnings of their workers, and that is something for which people will give up their evenings and weekends. Washington is saturated with letters, campaign contributions, and lobbying visits from the affected companies and their workers—but Washington hears almost nothing from the people who bear the extra costs. The producers’ strong organization supports the restrictions and faces very little organized opposition.

The bias of interest group activity toward producer groups pervades a wide range of policies—from regulations on telecommunications, finance, and other areas to product safety and the prices paid by consumers. This difference between producers and consumers is found in all countries, not only the United States. In a survey of German interest groups, for example, 61 percent of all interest groups consisted of corporate groups, unions, or professional associations. Only 3 percent represented other economic groups, mostly consumer groups.

**SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES AFFECTING GROUP ORGANIZATION**

A variety of special circumstances also make it easier to organize some groups than others, either by virtue of their location or personal characteristics.

**CONTIGUOUS RESIDENCE** It is easier to organize a group of people if they live close together and communicate with each other frequently than if they are spread throughout society and have only sporadic contact with each other. In the early days of the labor movement, the first groups to organize were groups such as lumberjacks (who lived together in lumber camps in the forest)
and miners (who lived together in company towns built near the mine). It was harder at that time to organize live-in servants, who by definition, lived separately from each other in the houses that they served. Today, contiguity continues to have its advantages: Church groups are relatively easy to organize, for instance, because they congregate once a week for worship services.

**AGE** Just as citizens under 30 tend not to vote as regularly as older citizens, they are also more difficult to organize in interest groups. This is due in part to the same reasons that make them less likely to vote. Younger citizens are often not as fully engaged with their role as citizens as they will be when they are older. Young people also typically do not have the same resources as older generations, either in terms of money or time. They may be transient, serving in the military or studying in a state or city that they do not regard as their long-term residence and thus are less likely to commit time and money to improving the local situation. As a result of all these factors, many students and other young people are not active in interest groups, and their needs tend to receive relatively little attention in public policies involving health care, transportation, and housing.  

**STRATEGIC LOCATION** Some groups are strategically located and thus important to elected officials. For instance, while there are only about 1.25 million Cuban Americans in the United States, most of them are concentrated in Florida. With Florida wielding 27 electoral votes and evenly divided politically, it is very difficult for a presidential candidate to win there without the Cuban American vote. So, Cuban Americans in the state get close attention from presidential candidates. This has helped Cuban American interest groups, such as the Cuban American National Foundation, to exert a strong influence on American policy toward Cuba.

**CONSEQUENCES FOR DEMOCRACY**

Parties matter to us because they are the most effective device available to bring together policy makers and politically concerned citizens throughout the country. If we want to address problems through government policy, political parties are indispensable to the effort.

Having only two parties seems to work satisfactorily for this purpose because our parties have proved themselves able to evolve in response to changing policy needs, especially with help from the periodic rise of third parties that push them to evolve.

The loose and decentralized structure of our parties, however, is another story. In combination with the division of our government into competing units that check and balance each other, the loose organization of our parties makes it difficult to address national policy issues. As Madison foresaw, compromise is required to bridge the divisions of government. But in an increasingly ideological, polarized party system, *compromise* has become a dirty word.

The parties’ contribution to policy making is therefore mixed. Compromise across the two parties is difficult because the parties are so polarized ideologically, but because of their loose internal structure and the division of powers in government, it is also difficult for either party acting alone to drive its proposals to become actual policy. Often, the end result is paralysis.

With our weak, stymied political parties, interest groups take on added importance in policy making. If political parties find it difficult to drive clear policy agendas, then government policy making comes to be influenced more by the push and pull of interest groups than it would be if there were clear party leadership. But as we have seen, the well-off get stronger and better representation from interest groups than the poor.

This combination of interest groups that represent the well-off, together with weak parties, leads to government policies that are biased in favor of the well-off. A study examining 2,000 policy proposals compared how responsive the government is to the poorest tenth of Americans and to the most well-off tenth. When the poorest and the most well-off diverge in their views on a policy, the government adopts the views of the well-off approximately half the time; it adopts the views of the poor only 2 percent of the time. The researchers found a similar result when comparing the well-off to those in the middle tenth of the population. It is hard to escape the conclusion that at least some of this disparity is due to the bias of the interest group universe toward those who are well off and the inability of parties to counterbalance this bias.
Critical Thinking Questions

1. Should American parties be more like coalitions of interests or should they act like responsible parties? Why?

2. What do you think American politics would be like if political parties were eliminated? (For example, a few cities in the United States have nonpartisan elections in which the candidates’ political party affiliations are not listed on the ballot.) Would elected officials view their responsibilities in the same way if we had no political parties? How might campaigns and elections change without political parties? Do you think the influence of special interests would decrease or increase? Explain your answer.

3. As illustrated in Figure 7.1, political parties provide structure and continuity to elections by establishing long-lasting identities among voters. Is the sort of continuity illustrated in the figure a good thing? Why or why not? What are its benefits and its drawbacks?

4. Given the increasing ideological unity of the two parties, could the two parties become so far apart ideologically that there would be an opening for a new, more moderate party that was situated somewhere between the other two? Consider the difficulties of breaking into the two-party system of the United States. What would need to happen to allow a new party to establish itself and become permanently competitive?

5. How could the universe of interest groups in the United States be made to represent the full population better than they now do?

Key Terms

- agricultural associations, 184
- citizen groups, 183
- congressional campaign committees, 175
- consumer interest, 186
- critical election, 172
- direct primaries, 168
- electoral realignment, 172
- Era of Good Feelings, 166
- First Party System, 166
- interest group, 162
- mobilization, 164
- multiparty systems, 177
- national committee, 175
- national nominating convention, 175
- party in government, 172
- party in the electorate, 172
- party organization, 172
- party platform, 175
- patronage, 167
- political machines, 167
- political party, 162
- producer interest, 186
- professional associations, 184
- Progressive movement, 168
- responsible party government, 180
- Second Party System, 167
- social movements, 184
- split-ticket voting, 170
- third parties, 178
- trade associations, 183
- two-party system, 177
- Whig Party, 167

SAGE edge

Visit edge.sagepub.com/maltese to help you accomplish your coursework goals in an easy-to-use learning environment.