### Activists

- How active is the American public
- Reasons for becoming an activist
- What are the characteristics of activists
- New model of party activists

### Overview

- American National Election Studies (NES)
  - [http://www.umich.edu/~nes](http://www.umich.edu/~nes)
  - The NES Guide to Public Opinion and Electoral Behavior

### Trends in Level of Activism

- American National Election Studies (NES)

### Reasons for Activism

- Tangible or material incentives
  - Patronage
  - Elective office seekers
  - Job contacts
- Social (Solidary) incentives
  - Meet new people
  - Sustain old friendships
  - Hobby
Reasons for Activism

- Policy advocates (Purposive)
  - Issue or ideology
  - Group advancement
- Family socialization
- Overall pattern
  - Multiple reasons
  - Policy most frequent
  - Reasons vary by time and locality

Recruitment of Activists

- Recruited by others
- Self recruitment

Characteristics of Activists

- Family history
- Higher social economic status
- Demographic traits linked to party
- More opinionated
- Slightly more extreme in opinions

New Party Activism

• Parties as networks of issue-oriented activists
• Reasons
  – Rise of cultural issues
  – Higher levels of education
  – Decline in patronage
  – Changes in party rules

New Party Activism

• Interest group involvement with parties
  – Recruitment of interest group members to be delegates
  – Recruitment of interest group members to be active in local party

New Party Activism

• Consequences
  – Increasing ideological polarization of parties
  – Ideologues less willing to compromise
  – Tension between activists and voters
  – Parties and candidates seen as too close to interest groups

Summary

• Activists small group of Americans
• Involved with parties for variety of reasons
• Dissimilar from other Americans
  – Background
  – Opinions
• New party activism centered on issues