Parties and Democracy

- E.E. Schattschneider, "political parties created democracy and the modern democracy is unthinkable save in terms of parties."
- All democracies have political parties

American Antagonism

- James Madison, Federalist Paper # 10
  - Parties are divisive
  - Cure with separation of powers
- Public doubts
  - half see neither party solve nation’s problem
  - confuse the issues, create conflict, better elections without them
Definitions of Political Parties

• Ideological

• Functional

• Organizational

Functional Definitions

• Recruitment of candidates

• Contesting of elections

• Organization of the government

• Aggregating interests

• Representation

Organizational Definition

• Party Organization

• Party in Government

• Party in Electorate

Organizational Definition: Three Levels of American Political Party Organizations

National Party:
Chair, Headquarters
Committees
Convention

State Parties:
Chair, Headquarters
Committees & Convention

Local: County, Precinct and Ward Organizations
Officers and committees
Volunteer efforts
Party Organizations on the Web

Democrats
- National: http://www.democrats.org
- Arizona: www.azdem.org

Republicans
- National: www.rnc.org
- Arizona: www.azgop.org

See pages 309-312 in Hershey textbook for additional party websites

Organizational Definition:
Party in the Electorate

- “Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a Republican, a Democrat, an independent, or what?”
- Most stable, most influential attitude
- Affects participation levels
- Affects vote choice in elections

Organizational Definition:
Party in Government

- Congress
  - majority party all committee chairs
  - strategy and agenda along party lines
  - over half of votes along party lines


Source: Exit Polls
Example of Party Line Vote: Bill to increase minimum wage, 106th Congress

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Party in Government: Presidents

- Symbolic leader of party
- Nominate judges & officials from own party
- More support from members of own party in Congress

Weaknesses of American Parties

- Don’t control nominations - primaries
- Don’t control campaigns - candidates
- Undisciplined parties in government
- Decentralized party organization
- Public attachment psychological not legal or monetary
**Why Parties Weak**

- Separation of powers vs. parliament
- Federalism
- Political culture
  - Individualism
  - Vote for person
  - Conflict not legitimate
  - Non Sequitur, January 5 & 7, 2005

**Why Parties Weak: Progressive Reforms (1890s-1910s)**

- Primary elections
- Nonpartisan local elections
- City managers, weak councils, weak mayors
- Civil service replaces patronage
- Registration laws
- Initiatives, referenda, recall

**Summary**

- What are parties and why important to democracies
- What are the functions of parties
- The three components of the party
  - Party organization
  - Party in the electorate
  - Party in government
- Weakness of American parties