

Party Organizations

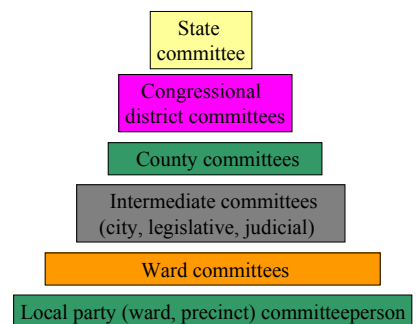
Overview

- Basic definition & characteristics
- Three levels of party organization
 - Local
 - State
 - National
- Historical changes in party organizations

Party Organization Basic Characteristics

- Loose confederation of local, state and national committees and officers
- increasing organizational strength in recent decades
- but weak in comparison to parties in other countries

State and Local Organization



Source: Hershey, Figure 3.1

Local Party

- Precinct, ward, township
 - elected committee persons
 - 100,000 slots per party
 - volunteers
- Caucuses
 - open meeting, a few for presidential nomination
- committee meetings of elected members

Activity of Local Party

- Depends on initiative of volunteers
- Voter registration
- Get-out-the-vote drives
- Minor aid to candidates
- Most active around elections

State Parties

- Traditionally weakest link
- State regulations since 1890s
 - *Eu v. San Francisco County Democrats* (1989)
- Revitalization since 1980s
 - Money from national organization
 - Soft money ban
- Services for candidates
- State conventions, state party platform

National Party

- National convention
- National committee and chair
- National headquarters
- Auxiliaries
- Congressional campaign committees

National Convention

- Ultimate authority
- Only once every four years
- Officially nominates president and vice president
- Ratifies party platform
- Ratifies changes in party rules

Republican National Committee

- National Committeeman from each state
- National Committeewoman from each state
- State Party Chair from each state
- Plus Washington, D.C. and territories
- N = 165 people

Source: Paul Allen Beck and Marjorie Randon Hershey, *Party Politics in America*, 9th edition, New York: Longman, 2001, Table 4.1.

Democratic National Committee

- Party Chair and Vice Chair from each state
- Other state members based on population
- Representatives from Congress, state and local governments
- Representatives of various groups, such as Young Democrats
- N = 440

Source: Paul Allen Beck and Marjorie Randon Hershey, *Party Politics in America*, 9th edition, New York: Longman, 2001, Table 4.1.

National Chairperson

- Technically elected by national committee
 - Winning party is presidential choice
 - Losing party is rebuilder
- Duties
 - Party spokesperson
 - Chief administrator
 - Strategy and changes
 - Support or opposition to presidential programs

Presidential Control of National Party

Source: *Newsweek*
December 10, 2001, p. 8

Current National Chairs

DNC Chair

Howard Dean
(since Feb. 2005)

RNC Chair

Ken Mehlman
(since Jan. 2005)
Previous Bush
campaign manager

Activities at National Headquarters

- Campaign division
- Finance division
- Communication division
- Research division
- Compliance
- Marketing

Congressional Campaign Committees

- DCCC - Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee
- NRCC - National Republican Congressional Committee
- DSCC - Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee
- NRSC - National Republican Senatorial Committee

Changing Nature of Parties

- Service Party Path
 - Republicans 1960s, Democrats 1980s
 - Build state/local party
 - Services to candidates
- Procedural Reform Path
 - Democrats 1960s
 - Nationalization of rules, especially for presidential nominations

Party Machines

- Urban machines
- 1870s-1940s
- 75% of largest cities
- Bosses party positions and in later period mayors
- State-level machines
- 1870s-1910s
- Mostly in Northeast
 - PA,NY,RI,MD,WV,VA,ND,CT
- Bosses usually senators

Mayor Richard J. Daley
Chicago, 1951 - 1976

Machine Strength

- Trade votes for benefits
 - Jobs - patronage
 - Assistance - food to legal aid
 - Government contracts
- Gave political power to working class and new immigrant groups
- Unified government

Machine Problems

- Corruption & bribery
- Made government more expensive
- Government benefits to select few
- Integrity of government and vote
- Became conservative and not open to newer urban groups

Decline of Political Machines

- Progressive reforms - civil service, voter registration, primaries
- Requirements for competitive bids
- Government social welfare programs - 1930
- Change in core constituency

Summary

- Legal entities of political parties
- One for each level of government
- Stronger but still weak
- Change in structure over time