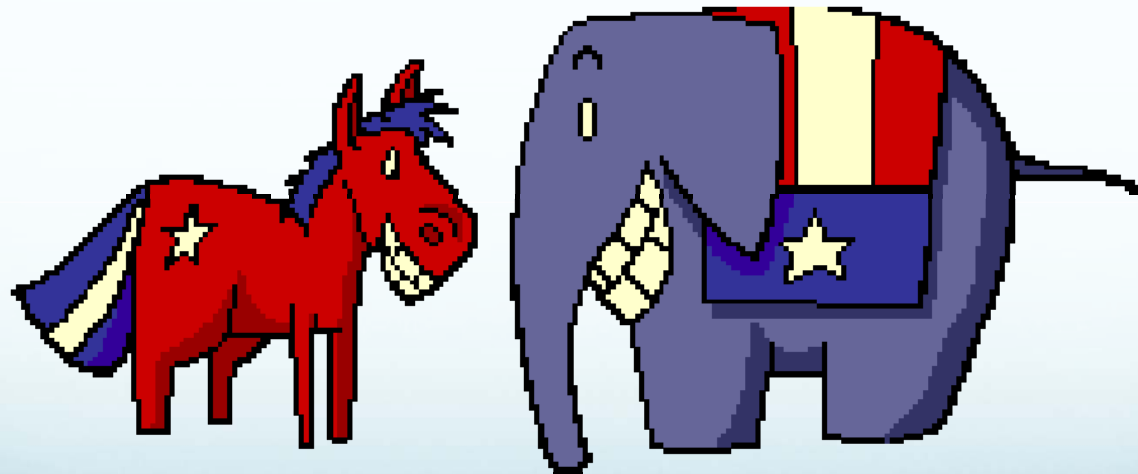


Development of American Political Parties

The Two-Party System



Linkage Institution

- Linkage institutions serve as the "bridge" between the public and government.
- Linkage institutions help ensure that public preferences are placed on the government's agenda.
- There are four main linkage institutions in US: parties, elections, interest groups, and the media.

Political parties play a key role in government and provide opportunities for citizens to participate in the political process.



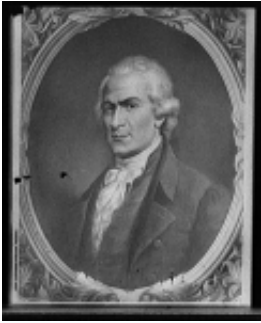
What Is a Political Party?

- A ***political party*** is a group of citizens who agree on major issues facing the nation. These groups work to create public policies that reflect their views.
- Parties choose, or **nominate**, people they want to elect to public office. These **candidates** campaign to get elected.

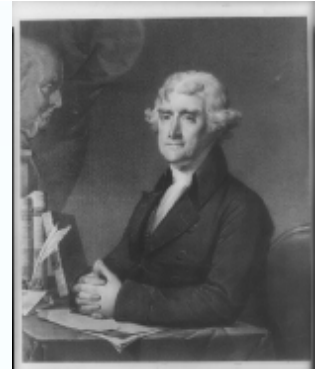
Parties in the US

- Any American citizen may join a political party regardless of age, but most members are eighteen or older.
- The United States has a **two-party system**.
- The **Republicans** emerged as a major party in 1860 with the election of Abraham Lincoln. The **Democratic Party** formed under Andrew Jackson twenty years earlier.





Hamilton vs. Jefferson



- Political parties first emerged when followers of **Alexander Hamilton** and **Thomas Jefferson** disagreed over major issues on the Constitution and government.
- Jefferson's group took the name **Democratic-Republicans**. Due to experience with Britain, they feared a powerful central government. They wanted the states to hold greater power.
- Hamilton championed a strong national government with a powerful **chief executive**. His followers called themselves **Federalists**, after those who supported the Constitution.



Jacksonian Democracy Reigns

- In 1828, the farmers and small business owners who made up Jefferson's party, calling themselves the **Democratic Party**, nominated **Andrew Jackson**. He stood for the common citizen, but looked out for southern and western interests.
- Those who did not support Jackson formed their own party called **Whigs**, after a Scottish political leader.
- Their real name was the **National Republican Party**.
- The Whigs and Democrats made up the two key parties in American politics for two decades.

The Two Major Parties Emerge

- In 1854 Whigs, former Free Soil Party members, and ex-Democrats formed the **Republican** Party to oppose the spread of slavery in US territories.
- The Whigs faded from American politics leaving the Democrats and Republicans in a two-party system that has dominated American politics ever since.

Agree or Disagree

- Political Parties are an essential part of the American political system.
- Joining a political party is the only way that a person can influence the government.
- Third Party candidates have no chance of winning an election

Third Parties

- Any party other than the two major parties can be called a “**Third party.**”
- No third party has ever gained control of the **White House**. Sometimes, third parties win seats in Congress or gain office in lower levels of government.
- When these smaller groups challenge the two major parties, they can change the outcome of elections.
- Their most important role is to **influence policy** on one or more issues.



Ralph Nader, Green
Party Candidate,
2000

Third Parties at the Turn of the Century

- In the late 1800s, the People's Party, or "**Populists**" became popular.
- They had the support of farmers and workers who called for better working conditions.
- They never succeeded in getting a national candidate into office, many of their ideas on workers' rights became laws in the 20th Century.



The Republicans Split

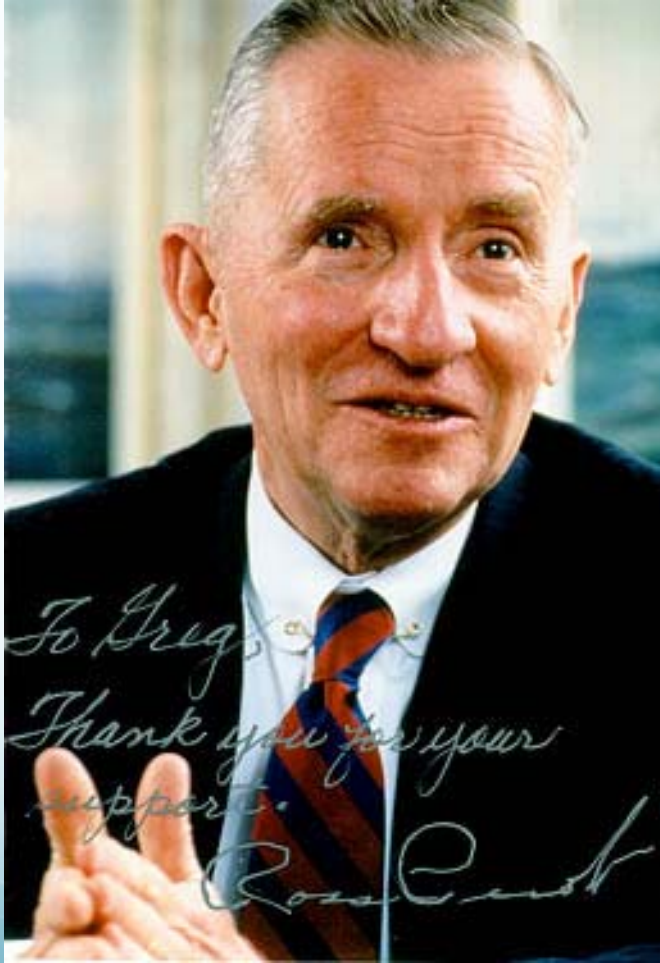
- Former Republican President Theodore Roosevelt left the Republican Party and was nominated by the **Progressive Party**.
- It was nicknamed the “Bull Moose Party” because TR said he was “fit as a Bull Moose”.
- TR split the 1912 Republican vote, allowing Democrat Woodrow Wilson to defeat President William H. Taft.



Ideological Third Parties

- An **ideology** is a body of ideas put forth by a person or group.
- Minor third parties are often formed to support a specific issue. These rise and fall over time.
- Ideological parties want to change society in major ways.
- The **Socialist** and **Communist** Parties want to **nationalize** major industries. The **Green** Party calls for companies to respect the environment.

Cult of Personality



- Some third parties form from the efforts of famous people.
- If they cannot gain support from one of the major parties, they form their own.
- H. Ross Perot's **Reform Party** was a force in the 1992 and 1996 elections. This party also placed pro wrestler Jesse Ventura in the governor's mansion in Minnesota.
- These parties usually fade after their candidate is defeated.

The Odds Are Against Them

- It is difficult for third parties candidates to raise enough money to compete with the major parties.
- Only one candidate can win in a given district. Usually the winner is either Democratic or Republican.
- Third-party candidates must show they have support by getting voter **signatures** to even be placed on the ballot for national office.

American Politics Today

- **Democrats** usually feel that the federal government has a responsibility to help the poor through government **intervention**.
- Democrats are generally seen as **liberal**.
- **Republicans** hold the view that leaving the economy alone will allow for growth, giving people greater ability to help themselves. They believe in less **regulation**.
- Republicans are viewed as being **conservative**.

Parties Move Towards The Center

- A **platform** is a statement that puts forth the party's positions on issues. Each individual issue is called a **plank**.
- Both parties want votes. As a result, parties become more **moderate** in their platforms, moving away from extreme positions.
- The American people generally agree about many issues. This unity forces the two parties toward the center of the political spectrum.



Following The Party Line

- A one-party system cannot exist in a **democracy**. There is no choice of candidates in the elections.
- Opposition parties are usually banned.
- Communist China, Cuba, and North Korea operate under one-party systems. One-party systems may be based on other ideologies such as religion.
- **Iran's** Islamic Republican Party has established a Muslim state.
- This type of religion-based government is called a **theocracy**.

•Communist Party Congress, China



Functions of Political Parties

- Recruit and nominate candidates – give training & info to run for office
- Contest election- “wage war” in the general election
- Form governments- organized along party lines
 - Government appointments in executive & judiciary branches
 - Leaders & members of Congressional committees
- Coordinate policy across different branches of Government
- Educate and Mobilize voters – get out the vote drives
- Provides accountability- unintended side effect (act as a watchdog)

McGovern-Fraser Commission (1970)

- Democratic Party established the Commission on Party Structure and Delegate Selection
- The Commission was created to investigate and make recommendations for the reform of primary elections within the U.S.
- State legislators used to have the responsibility for selecting delegates to each party's nominating conventions.
- The Commission overhauled the rules, and opened up the process of selecting delegates to public participation and voting, thereby including more women, youth and minority delegates.