

Political Parties

3 Headed Monster

- Party as an Organization
 - Fund raising
 - Recruiting members, candidates
- Party in the Electorate
 - Voters have "party loyalty" (or lack thereof)
- Party in Government
 - Congress organized along party lines
 - Cooperation and competition

Parties are good?

- Pro:
 - Organize issues
 - Simplifying elections
 - Orchestrate government
- Con:
 - Confuse responsibility
 - Oppress viewpoints

Big Theories

- One Good Theory:
 - Duverger's Law
- One Pretty Good Theory:
 - Re-alignment theory

Duverger's Law

- Single-member, simple-plurality: one winner per district
- Duverger's Law: single member district systems tend to have 2 parties
- Contrast with Proportional Representation in multi-member districts

It's different in a PR system!

- Parties list candidates
- Get seats in proportion to votes
- Allows more small parties
- Ex: Hungary has 70 registered parties and 6 have significant seats in the legislature

True Facts

- Porn Star "Cicciolina" was elected to Italian Parliament on Radical Party List

- Later created own "Party of Love"

Other Peculiar Facts

- Parliamentary immunity for sex shows
- Spied for Communist Russia
- Later Parliament in Hungary

Re-alignment Theory

- Party Alignment: issue stances of 2 major parties
- Re-alignments used to happen every 32-36 years during "critical elections"
- After 1968, what happened?
 - De-alignment
 - Bungled Republican re-alignment

Tell me about the olden days, Daddy

- Early parties were "aristocratic"
- 1828—parties became "mass based"
 - Conventions
 - Spoils system (machine politics)
 - Can I buy you a vote?

Then they took a horrible beating

- Secret ballot
- Civil service reform
- Nonpartisan city governments
- Political primaries

And then "candidate centered" campaigns began

- Candidates appeal to public/media, not party leaders
- Winning candidates don't owe party
- Declining party membership levels
- Rise of "political independence"

Just when you thought the Party was over!

- Rising professionalism of national party offices after 1980
- Soft money
- Increasing party cohesion in Congress through 1980s-1990s

Congress is organized along party lines

- Members on floor are divided party
- Standing Committee seats are divided among parties

- Custom: seats are "roughly proportional"
- Majority party can control chair in every committee

Tumultuous Times: Parties and Committees

- Originally used select committees (early 1800s)
- Standing committee system adopted gradually

Tyrant!

- Joseph "Boss" Cannon, Speaker 1903-1909
- Speaker could assign committee chairs
- Cannon revoked committee chairs from members who "got on his bad side"

Famous Revolt of 1910

- Members grew disgusted with Cannon's power
- Parties adopted a seniority system to choose committee chairs, took power from Speaker
- Seniority was used within parties

Famous Revolution of the 1970s

- Seniority problem: out-of-mainstream old farts controlled committees
- Seniority rule abolished
 - Party caucus can vote on chairs
- Subcommittee explosion (& Subcommittee Bill of Rights)
- End result: fragmental