

## The Party Battle in the Political Development of the American Nation

1. An historical frame in terms of the party battle in presidential elections.
  - *Reform* & the growth in *regulation* of parties and elections ... almost none at the outset, now heavily regulated (mostly at the state level ... Constitution)
  - How both the *idea* of democracy and *attitudes* about it have changed over time
  - *Not* going to talk about the nature of American parties or of the party system (that comes later in the week)
  - Please interrupt with questions at any time
  
2. Overview of presidential elections
  - Cartoon ... *plus* electoral results (popular vote, winning percentage, turnout ... *NO* electoral college vote)
  - 1<sup>st</sup> Digression: the President is *not* elected by direct popular vote ... instead it is by the Electoral College ... Founders desire for a stronger executive, mistrust of democracy ... the 1800 election and reform ... the popular vote and the electoral vote have sometimes been in conflict (1876, 1888, 2000)
  - Electoral dynamics ... dates on the cartoon; bracketed elections on the table. These are periods of *most evident* change.
  - Theory of “critical elections” and “partisan realignment” (more about this in the session on parties and the party system)  
*Cyclical* character to presidential elections
  
3. Parties in pre-revolutionary America. Existed at state (legislative) and local levels ... no national government. Not broad-based ... not designed to mobilize voters ... shifting coalitions
  - The *republican ideal* was small government close to the people (local control, later states rights) The new 13 states were largely independent of one another ... joined in a loose confederation: Articles of Confederation ... central government had no independent executive ... no power to tax
  - The Constitution provided a stronger national government ... with clear powers to raise revenue and regulate commerce ... and an independent executive was central to this (though the role and power of the President has changed greatly over time)

- Madison Federalist #10 a clever argument ...  
An expanded republic better able to control the *effects* of “factions”  
... “republican” meant representative government, but “popular  
government” did not mean the People governed directly
4. The fear of factions reflected a fear of partisanship ... Washington. Parties emerge in 1790s over different understandings of what the Constitution meant ... and in particular how much power it gave to the national government vis-à-vis state governments. Hamilton v. Jefferson.
- The 1<sup>st</sup> party system:  
*Change:* new majority party ... Democratic- Republicans (Jefferson, Madison) displace  
the Federalists (Adams, Hamilton)  
*Dynamic:* 1796 (two parties, Adams wins) ... 1800 (Jefferson) ... 1804 (D-R win) ... and continue (Virginia Dynasty)  
*Democracy:* No change in idea  
*Reform:* Electoral College (Aaron Burr)
  - Three things to note about the 1<sup>st</sup> party system: (1) the electorate was limited to white men 21 years old who owned property ... a matter of *state law*, not national; (2) there was no established method for nominating candidates for President ... the congressional caucus (King Caucus) simply emerged; and (3) almost all of the electors in the Electoral College were chosen by state legislatures, *not* by direct vote of the people.
  - A one-party system, as Federalists disappear (War 1812) ... James Monroe and the Era of Good Feelings. The Office of Secretary of State became the stepping stone to presidency (Madison, then Monroe)
  - Changes after 1812: (1) geographic expansion ... *before 1812 election*, four new states ... KY, TN, OH, and LA. *By the 1820 election*, six new states had been added ... IN, IL, MO, AL, MI, ME; (2) constitutions of new states (a) radically reduced, or eliminated, property-holding requirement for the vote and (b) presidential electors were chosen by popular vote, *not* the state legislature; and (3) older states rather quickly fell into line with this new “western democracy” ... sprang from a social relationships within and between families that was of necessity more egalitarian.
  - Election of 1824 ... Congressional Caucus system broke down as four candidates competed for the presidency ... Jackson wins plurality of the popular vote, but no majority in Electoral College ... election to the House of Representatives ... Adams wins with support of Henry

Clay. Andrew Jackson angered ... a “corrupt bargain” that stole the presidency from him by disregarding the will of the people.

5. **2<sup>nd</sup> Party System: Jackson wins in 1828**
  - **Change:** New elite (south, west) capture the old party of Jefferson ... rename it “Democrat”
  - **Dynamic:** 1828 (Jackson wins) ... 1832 (reelected) ... 1836 (Van Buren)
  - **Democracy:** the People are sovereign ... the appeal is directly to the people ... mass popular campaign ... national campaign ... memorabilia ... costly ... negative  
“Populist” democracy (“western” democracy ... 1890s, “direct democracy” ...  
1960s, “participatory democracy”  
AND, third-party – Anti-Masonic Party (a party of protest)
  - **Reform:** two-party system institutionalized (Van Buren) Democrats & Whigs ... national conventions used to nominate candidates ... national party organizations formed to organize conventions ... state parties organized to mobilize the vote ... patronage system (people’s government).
  
6. **The 3<sup>rd</sup> Party System: the Civil War. The two-party system broke down in the 1850s ... could not resolve the debate over slavery ... Whigs split ... new party emerged.**
  - **Change:** A new majority party (Republicans) ... conscience Whigs, Free Soilers ... Republicans form a 3<sup>rd</sup> party in 1856 ... four candidates in 1860 ... Lincoln wins.
  - **Dynamic:** 1860 (Lincoln) ... 1864 (reelected) ... 1868 (Grant) ... Republicans continue as new majority (party of the North, of Union army, and of English and German ethnics)
  - **Democracy:** Lincoln defined: government “of”, “by”, and “for” the People. Strong party democracy ... bosses ... “machines” ... patronage ... Lincoln a product of this. Industrial growth (money in 1896) ... centralization (community) ... “new” immigration (jobs) ... urbanization (corruption)
  - **Reform:** 1880s - Civil Service (Garfield assassination) & Ballot Law.
  
  - Two-party competition very close as southern states return to Union. 1886, Hayes (Tilden) ... 1888, Harrison (minority vote) ... Congress changes party hands regularly.
  
  - Both parties “laissez-faire” in philosophy ... GOP for business ... Democrats for South

7. **4<sup>th</sup> Party System: Progressives. Middle-class reformers ... college educated ... “second founding”**
- *Change:* New elite captures existing party (Republicans).
  - *Dynamic:* 1900 (McKinley assassinated, TR) ... 1904 (TR reelected) ... 1908 (Taft wins)
  - *Democracy:* “Direct citizen” democracy ... populist democracy triumphs over the ideal of representative democracy. A “mixed” system ... direct democracy at state/local level, party/convention system for President
  - *Reform:* Direct primary ... initiative and referendum ... recall ... direct election of U.S. Senators ... regulation of money and lobbying ... votes for women.
  - **ALSO, beyond elections - role of national government & of President. A “second founding”?**
  - **In 1912, the Republican party split ... strong 3<sup>rd</sup> party, the Progressive party (TR) ... Democrat Wilson wins presidency ... reelected in 1916 (“New Freedom”) After World War I, Republicans regain control ... the Old Guard now restored (TR dead) ... Progressives out.**
8. **5<sup>th</sup> Party System: the New Deal ... Great Depression.**
- *Change:* New majority party ... Democrats (urban North has triumphed over South within party).
  - *Dynamic:* 1928, Smith – the “happy warrior” (loses, but) ... 1932, FDR wins ... 1936, reelected in biggest landslide in history.
  - *Democracy:* Continuation of mixed system ... direct democracy at state/local level ... party/convention for President
  - *Reform:* No significant electoral reforms. FDR remakes the Democratic party (urban, unions, ethnics, women, blacks) ... and recasts the debate over the role of government (New Deal)
  - **The New Deal Coalition continues dominant through 1940s, 1950s, and into 1960s ... and continues to influence how Democrats think of themselves and their party**
9. **6<sup>th</sup> Party System: the Sixties**
- *Change:* New elite captures existing party (the Democrats) ... movement politics (civil rights, anti-war, women, environmental) share with unions ... the party bosses and machines are gone (Chicago)

- ***Dynamic:*** 1964, LBJ landslide ... 1968, Nixon wins ... 1972, Nixon reelected ... Southern strategy ... new conservatism ... leads to Reagan in 1980
- ***Democracy:*** participatory democracy triumphs ... parties lose hold on electorate ... the rise of the independent voter
- ***Reform:*** Democratic party nominating process ... campaign finance
- **Great Society programs split New Deal coalition: Civil Rights Acts 1964, 1965, Housing Act 1968 ... Vietnam ... environmentalism ... the rights-revolution ... role of women ... prayer in school. New conservatism organizes against these changes ... against a libertine culture of drugs, free sex, and rejection of God (and the flag).**
- **Conservatism triumphant ... 1980, Reagan ... 1984, reelected ... 1988, Bush I. The Clinton interlude ... now Bush II, ideological, neo-conservatism.**

**10. Change the focus from past to present ... but still look at present in the frame of the past.**

- **The Great Divide in 20<sup>th</sup> Century presidential politics (handout)**
- **Population Movement & the Electoral College vote (handout)**
- **George W. Bush & the Question of partisan realignment (essay)**