Ch. 5: Party Activists

0. Untitled introduction;

- A. Definition: party activists
 - 1. People who work within the party organization
 - 2. Party activists can be
 - a. Paid professional staff (relatively few in number)
 - b. Unpaid amateurs (both skilled and unskilled)
- B. With goals of their own, either type of activist can advance or retard the party organization's basic goals:
 - 1. Mobilize the *party in the electorate*
 - 2. Get the party in government to put the party's platform into law

I. What draws people into party activity?

- A. Material incentives -- "spoils" (tangible rewards)
 - 1. Patronage:
 - a. Definition: preferential distribution of *appointed* government jobs (in exchange for partisan support)
 - b. USSC has strictly limited patronage by ruling that politically-based hiring, promoting, and firing of government employees can now be used only for policy-making positions e.g., top-level executive and legislative staff positions
 - c. Other factors in decline
 - (1) Civil service
 - (2) Collective bargaining public employee unions
 - (3) Candidate-centered politics
 - (4) Issue-activist politics
 - 2. Elected government jobs
 - 3. Preferments:
 - a. Definition: preferential distribution of government services, contracts, or law enforcement (in exchange for partisan support)
 - b. Importance: now arguably more important that patronage
 - c. Heavily used to court support from all classes & interests in society:
 - (1) Economic groups: business, labor, consumer groups
 - (2) Non-economic groups: religious, ethnic, racial, gender, regional, etc.
 - d. Limiting factors:
 - (1) Competitive & sealed bidding
 - (2) Conflict of interest statutes
 - (3) Privatization
 - (4) "Sunshine" and "sunset" laws
- B. Non-material incentives (intangible rewards)
 - 1. Solidary (social/psychological) needs
 - 2. Purposive (ideological) goals (that are not individually self-serving)
- C. Mixed incentives Box, p. 89
 - 1. Across individuals
 - 2. Across time

D. Professionals and amateurs Table 5.1, p. 91 & Box, p. 92

- 1. Style: pragmatic v. purist
- 2. Incentives: material v. purposive
- 3. Loyalty/orientation: party v. policy or candidate
- 4. Nominating criteria: electability v. principle
- 5. Decision structure: hierarchical v. democratic
- 6. Candidate support: automatic v. conditional
- 7. Recruitment: within v. without
- 8. SES level: middle v. high
- II. How do parties recruit activists?
 - A. Finding volunteers: is anybody home?
 - B. Means, motive, and opportunity
- III. What kinds of people become party activists?
 - A. People from "political families"
 - B. Better educated and wealthier than average
 - C. Different agendas
 - D. More extreme views
- IV. Party activists and democracy
 - A. The problem of representation
 - B. Amateurs and pressure for internal party democracy
 - C. Activists and party strength limits on strong parties
 - 1. External controls
 - a. Indirect
 - (1) Social pluralism
 - (2) Electoral market discipline
 - b. Direct statutory controls
 - 2. Internal controls
 - a. Values
 - b. Bottom-up selection of leaders
 - c. Factional competition
 - d. Independence of officeholders