
Part Three: the political party in the electorate

- A. *Partisans* or *party identifiers* make up the core of the party in the electorate
 - 1. They normally vote for the party's candidates
 - 2. They are inclined to follow the party's lead on issues
 - B. Measures of party identification
 - 1. Attitudinal: self-identification in surveys
 - 2. Behavioral:
 - a. Party registration
 - b. Voting loyalty
 - (1) 3-point scale used by Gallup and many commercial pollers
 - (2) 7-point scale used by academic pollers, e.g., NES and NORC
 - c. Other forms of party activity and support, e.g., time and money
- I. Untitled introduction
- A. *Party identification*:
 - 1. A psychological attachment as a form of social identity
 - 2. A perceptual screen or filter used to simplify a complex political world
 - 3. A running tally of party performance used to make voting decisions
 - B. Party identification tells us more about most people's political perceptions and behavior than does any other single piece of information
- II. How people develop party identifications Box, p. 103
- A. Childhood influences
 - 1. Primary reference groups: family, peers, and school
 - 2. Secondary reference groups: race, ethnicity, region, place of residence (urban/rural), age, religion
 - 3. Basic process: indirect learning
 - B. Adult influences
 - 1. *Life-cycle effects*: influences common to all generations (e.g., work, marriage, retirement)
 - 2. *Period effects*: influences specific to a particular generation (e.g., major war or economic depression)
- III. Patterns of partisanship over time Figure 6.1, p. 105
- A. Stability: usually the case at both aggregate and individual level
 - B. Change:
 - 1. *Realignment*: periodic, large-scale shifts in partisan loyalties (1824, 1860, 1896, 1932) & perhaps 2004
 - 2. *Dealignment*: large-scale erosion of party loyalties & rise of independents (1968-2000)
 - C. Has there been a decline in partisanship?
 - 1. Possible causes
 - a. Increase in education levels
 - b. Increase in candidate independence of party leaders
 - c. Media criticism of partisanship
 - 2. Evidence is mixed Figure 6.2, p. 106
 - a. Strong partisans declined but rebounded
 - b. Pure independents rose then fell
 - c. Weak partisans have declined
 - d. Independent leaning toward both parties have increased
- IV. Party identification and political views
- A. Types of cues for political attitudes and behaviors
 - 1. *Long-term forces*: group and partisan cues
 - 2. *Short-term forces*: issue and candidate cues
 - B. Party identification acts as a long-term force that stabilizes the individual against the buffeting of short-term influences
 - C. However, larger sociodemographic changes (e.g., class restructuring) can change party identification
 - D. Partisanship as a two-way street: issues & candidates can impact party id
- V. Party identification and voting
- A. Party voting Figures 6.3 & 6.4, p. 109
 - 1. Strong partisans of either party are typically loyal at the 90% level

2. Weak partisan and independents are generally loyal at a lower level and far more volatile:
 - a. Democrats: dropped in 1968, 72, & 80 and have rebounded since
 - b. Republicans: dropped in 1964, rebounded until 1988-92, and then rebounded again in 2000-04
- B. Party versus candidates and issues (short-term forces)
- C. Partisanship as a two-way street: candidate & issue cues can change partisan identification (e.g., Southern white conservatives)

VI. Party identification and political activity Table 6.1, p. 112

- A. A party-in-the-electorate-based topology of elections
 1. Defections from party voting compared to conversions in party identification
 2. Election classification
 - a. Normal elections -- no major, enduring shift of voters into a party
 - (1) Maintaining - 1948, '64, '96
 - (2) Reinstating - 1960, '76, '92
 - (3) Deviating - 1952, '56, '72, '80, '84, 2000
 - b. Realigning -- a major, enduring shift of voters into a party
 - (1) 1860: from Whig party into Republican party
 - (2) 1896: formerly independent industrial labor into Republican party
 - (3) 1932: from Republican into Democratic party
 - c. Dealigning -- a major, enduring shift of voters into independent status
 - (1) Examples:
 - (a) 1824: from two wings of Democratic-Republican party into two new parties (note: while Walter Dean Burnham cites 1828, many other realignment scholars cite 1824)
 - (b) 1968: from both Democratic and Republican Parties to independent identification
 - (2) Causes
 - (a) Cross-cutting issues that do not align along a common cleavage line
 - (b) Dominance of both freedom v. order and freedom v. equality issues
 - (3) Consequences
 - (a) Vote switching across elections
 - (b) Split-ticket voting within elections
 - (c) Divided government

VII. Party identification and attitudes towards parties Figure 6.5, p. 113

VIII. The myth of the independent

- A. Attitudinal independents: pure independents are less informed, involved, & rational (Campbell, Converse, Miller, and Stokes, *The American Voter*, 1960)
- B. Behavioral independents: party-switchers can be informed, involved, & rational – if given meaningful choices by the parties (V. O. Key, Jr., *The Responsible Electorate*, 1963)
- C. Are independents a likely source of support for third-party candidates?

IX. Change in the impact of party id

- A. A more candidate-centered politics Box, p. 117
 1. The nature of the electorate and campaign strategy (up through 1964)
 - a. Electorate
 - (1) Little vote switching
 - (2) Little ticket-splitting
 - b. Strategy
 - (1) Use party appeals to mobilize own bloc
 - (2) Use issue and candidate appeals to win over independents and defectors from the other party's bloc
 2. Changing conditions (since 1968)
 - a. Cross-cutting issues
 - b. Volatile electorate
 - c. More emphasis on short-term cues (issue and candidate appeals)
 - d. *But*, party appeals are *still* important
- B. The continuing significance of party