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

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

A. Stability: usually the case at both aggregate and individual level

B. Change:

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
      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
   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

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
      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

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
   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