Political parties & party systems:

**Readings:**
- Caramani – Katz ch12 and Caramani ch 13
- Newton and van Deth – Ch 12

**Structure**

I. The definition and function of parties for democracy
II. Electoral systems and party systems
III. Parties in the mass public
IV. Parties as organizations
V. Parties in government
VI. Conclusions:
   - Strength of parties in government and yet weak organizations and partisan dealignment among citizens

**I: Definition of parties**

Core actors – but how do they differ from interest groups and social movements
- E.G. Chinese Communist Party, US Republicans, German Greens, ANC, Monster Raving Loony
- "A political party is an autonomous group of citizens having the purpose of making nominations and contesting elections in the hope of gaining control over governmental power through the capture of public offices and the organization of government." (Huckshorn)
- Objectives, methods, competition and autonomy

**Functions of parties**

V.O. Key (1964)
- Parties-in-the-electorate
  - Simplifying electoral choices for voters
  - Educating citizens
  - Generating partisan loyalties
  - Mobilizing citizens to participate
- Parties-as-organizations
  - Recruiting leaders for elected/appointed office
  - Training elites
  - Articulating interests
  - Aggregating interests
- Parties-in-government
  - Creating government majorities
  - Organizing government and the legislature
  - Implementing policy objectives
  - Organizing dissent
  - Ensuring responsibility for government actions
  - Fostering stability

**Functions of parties**

Richard Katz p299
- Coordination
- Campaigning
- Recruitment
- Representation
Types of party organizations

- Katz: p302 Table 12.1
- Caucus-cadre or elite parties
- Mass-branch parties
- Catch-all parties
- Cartel parties?
- Business firm parties? Eg Forza Italia

Types of party systems

1. Single-party party systems
   - Legal or constitutional bans on opposition parties
   - Eg. Communist party in USSR, China, Cuba

2. Predominant party systems
   - One large party for sustained period in government, multiple fragmented opposition parties

3. Two-party system
   - Periodic alternation in government and opposition, other minor parties exist in the electorate and legislature
   - Eg Australia, Brazil, Costa Rica, Spain, US

4. Moderate multi-party system
   - Several (4/5) parties, none approaching 50% of votes/seats, coalition governments
   - Eg Denmark, Germany

5. Fragmented multiparty system
   - Multiple parties (6+) in the legislature
   - Eg. Israel, Netherlands, Belgium

Pros and cons

- Two party system
  - Effective and stable government
  - Accountable and responsible party government
  - Alternation in power provides electoral choice

- Multiparty system
  - Representative of diverse interests
  - Maximizes continuity in government policies
  - Expands electoral choice

Why?

Role of electoral rules on party systems

Maurice Duverger (1954)

Mechanical effects of electoral systems
- Due to constitutional provisions, legal statutes or administrative regulations
- Ballot access, campaign access to media and funds, vote thresholds (legal and effective)

Psychological effects of electoral systems
- The strategic incentives facing candidates, parties and voters under electoral rules

Sequential process

Types of electoral systems

- Nation States
- Mixed
- Combined
- PR
- No direct elections

- Majority
- Plurality
- Independent
- STV
- Party List
- Closed
- Open
**Mechanical effects worldwide**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Electoral System</th>
<th>Mean N parl parties (1 seat)</th>
<th>Mean N of relevant parl parties (3%+ seats)</th>
<th>% Vote for party 1st</th>
<th>% Seats for party 1st</th>
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**ENPP by Electoral System**

Laakso and Taagepera 1979

Effective Number of Parliamentary Parties

- **Majoritarian**: USA, UK, Australia, Canada
- **Combined**: USA, UK, Australia, Canada
- **Independent**: Japan, Germany, Hungary, New Zealand, Russia, Ukraine
- **Proportional**: Spain, Poland, Romania, Czech Republic, Sweden, Norway, Netherlands, Denmark, Switzerland, Slovenia, Israel, Belgium, Peru

Proportionality

- **Majoritarian**
  - USA: 2.4
  - UK: 2.5
  - Australia: 2.9
  - Canada: 2.9
  - Combined: 3.3
- **Independent**
  - USA: 2.7
  - UK: 3.0
  - Australia: 3.4
  - Canada: 4.2
- **Proportional**
  - USA: 9.1
  - UK: 9.2
  - Australia: 9.4
  - Canada: 9.4
  - Combined: 9.5

II. Parties in the mass public

- Function of partisan identification
  - Cognitive short-cut or cue for evaluating new issues, policies, candidates, and leaders
- **Affective** orientation measured by direction and strength
  - "People associate themselves psychologically with one or other of the parties, and this identification has predictable relationships with their perceptions, evaluations and actions."
  - Campbell et al 1954.

Classical literature

- First campaign surveys by the Columbia school in Erie county in 1940s – Paul Lazarsfeld et al.
- 1948 first U.S. national election surveys (NES) ; The Michigan school
- Campbell, Converse, Miller and Stokes *The American Voter* (1960)
- Philip Converse 1964 'The nature of beliefs systems'.
"The electorate is almost completely unable to judge the rationality of government actions; knowing little of the particular politics and what has led to them, the mass electorate is not able to appraise its goals or the appropriateness of the means chosen to secure these goals." Campbell et al. p543.

Evidence?

[Party identification] "Do you usually think of yourself as close to any particular political party?" (A3004)
[Direction] If ‘yes’, "Which party is that?" [A3005_1]
[Strength] "Do you feel very close to this [party/party block], somewhat close, or not very close?" (A3012)

The American Voter: Conclusions

Low levels of cognitive knowledge and civic engagement in American electorate
- Most Americans unable to name their elected member of Congress
- Most unfamiliar with government institutions
- Most do not understand the policy process
- Irrational voter
Yet Americans cast a ballot due to the cognitive shortcut of affective party identification

Does party id anchor voters elsewhere?

Britain – Butler and Stokes (1972)
- Many 'non-attitudes' with unstable opinions over time and little consistency among issues
France – Converse and Dupeaux (1963)
- Less interest than the US
Almond and Verba (1963)
- 5 nation study - few discussed politics frequently or read about government
Stouffer (1955)
- Support for democracy as an ideal but not in practice eg social tolerance, freedom

Dealignment

Widespread evidence of weakening partisan identification since 1950s & 1960s.
Why?
Russ Dalton: Due to societal modernization
- Improved educational levels
- Growth of mass media
- Fragmentation of interest groups
- Long-term and steady process
- Lead to new forms of democratic politics such as expansion of direct democracy, expanding use of the courts, greater public consultation
Alternative explanations

- Or due to ‘top down’ shifts in party strategies
  - Schmidt and Holmberg - *Citizens & the State*
  - Cross-national variations in dealignment
  - ‘Catch-all’ (Kirchheimer) or ‘bridging’ parties
    - Party strategies generate weaker party links to capture broad coalition of floating voters
    - Esp. true in majoritarian electoral systems

Russell Dalton and Marty Wattenberg
*Parties without partisans* (OUP 2000)

Regress year on party id in 19 OECD nations
- Partisan attachment weakened in 17
  - Sig. fall (.10 level) in 13
  - Weaker by age and education (political sophistication)
  - Not concentrated among those dissatisfied with government performance

Consequences

1. Greater electoral volatility
2. Growth in party fragmentation (ENPP)
3. Growth in split-ticket voting
4. Later timing in voting decisions
5. Move towards candidate-centered politics (leader v. party)
6. Decline in party-based campaign participation

% with a party ID by nation

% Party id by type of society

% Party id by type of party
Maurice Duverger – Ideal types
- Mass-branch eg German SDP, Norwegian Labour
- Caucus-cadre
- Milieus
- Is mass-branch still functional today?
- Mair: Decline in mass membership

Katz and Mair
- The cartel party – fall in mass membership but increased public subsidies for party finance and staffing
- Do members matter?

III. Parties as organizations

Characteristics of partisans

Attitudes of partisans

Party Membership

Official membership figures: Mair & Biezen

Trends in older democracies

Official membership figures: Mair & Biezen

Trends in Newer Democracies

WVS 1990-2001 – Recorded membership
IV: Party-in-government

- Persistence (or even strengthening) of party cohesion in legislative voting
- Only parties can organize parliaments and government, control bureaucracy and administer public policies
- Parties-in-government persist unchanged but with weaker links to members and voters

Conclusions

- Parties have declining legitimacy, mixed patterns as organizations, yet persistent strength in government
- Implications for representative democracy?
- Implications for your project research?