As he took the presidential oath of office in 1913, Woodrow Wilson felt partisan pride in his Democratic party's newly won control of power in both houses of Congress and in the executive branch. To him, the election results meant ''a change in government . . . much more than the mere success of a party.” Indeed, Wilson declared, Democratic victory at the polls “means little except when the Nation is using that party for a large and definite purpose.”

Over fifty years later, in 1965, Lyndon Johnson spoke before Congress as a newly elected president. Having asked the electorate to approve his party program, he now asked a Democratic Congress to fulfill the presumed popular mandate for action toward a “Great Society.” By 1981, another president, Ronald Reagan, spoke in parallel language to another Congress in favor of an opposite ideology. Invoking the election returns, he urged a legislature of divided party control to enact a Republican program of reduced taxation and more limited government.

Each of these presidents succeeded in changing the course of American public policy. Each argued, at least implicitly, from a conception of the political party as a governing caucus. To each, a political party was predominantly an elite grouping of professional politicians who pursued a broad, collective program and won support by its instrumental appeals. Their common conception of democracy was that of autonomous leadership, controlled by an electorate whose participation was limited to judgments on the leaders’ collective programs.

The theory is attractive, its appeal demonstrated by its recurrence in American politics, including legislative programs by presidents and academic arguments by political scientists favoring “a more responsible two-party system.” Despite this appeal, problems associated with the concept are also recurrent; only infrequently do American political parties empirically behave as governing caucuses. That empirical record suggests limitations to this concept, found both in its underlying theory of democracy and in the environment of American politics.
A RECURRING MODEL

Party as governing caucus is evident in Burke's famous definition of the party as "a body of men united . . . upon some particular principle." The English statesman and philosopher argued against the dominant eighteenth-century belief that parties were selfish and even unpatriotic. Burke described parties more nobly. Instead of their intrigue, he portrayed their unity; instead of a search for personal reward, he saw an effort to achieve programs of public benefit. Burke's intellectual descendants have included many Americans; like him, they praised their party instead of apologizing for their partisanship.

In 1944, commemorating the founding of the Republican party, Wendell Willkie declared,

"One of the major functions of a political party is to give men of conviction a platform from which to argue their cause both within the party and outside it. . . . These leaders must convince the people, not that the party has been right in the past, but that it can be right, that it will be right in the future. A political party is an indispensable vehicle for men who offer themselves for office. Yet it is an equally indispensable vehicle for ideas and for the advocacy of principles."\(^2\)

A later Republican, Ronald Reagan, would agree, in his description of the 1984 presidential campaign: "America is presented with the clearest political choice of half a century. The distinctions between our two parties and the different philosophy of our political opponents are at the heart of this campaign and America's future."\(^3\)

Wilson's inaugural address is particularly noteworthy for its partisan character. The typical speech at this civic ritual emphasizes the unity of the nation, as in Jefferson's hopeful declaration, "We are all Federalists, we are all Republicans." Wilson, in contrast, began his masterful speech with a recitation of Democratic election victories and justified them with a new moral "vision of our life as a whole":

"With this vision we approach new affairs. . . . The scales of heedlessness have fallen from our eyes. We have made up our minds to square every process of our national life again with the standards we
so proudly set up at the beginning and have always carried at our hearts. Our work is a work of restoration.

A former professor of political science, Wilson was most precise in articulating the concept of party as a governing caucus. To Wilson, a political party drew its social purpose from its policy program. It should create appropriate institutions to achieve that program—in the American context, a programmatic caucus in Congress led by a populist president. It should draw the legitimacy for this program from election mandates, and it should be rejected when it strayed from these policy goals.

Wilson saw the political party as a means of achieving collective responsibility in a democracy. This collective character went far beyond the view of party as a “team of office seekers.” Indeed, Wilson was rather disdainful of professional politicians, a trait that would cause him trouble in his career. “I am not interested in men,” he admitted, even while campaigning for his own election as president. “I must frankly say, without apologies, that I am not interested in the candidates of the other parties, and I find it difficult to get interested in the candidate of my own party because the thing to be done is so much bigger than men.”

Individual politicians could be disregarded because as individuals they could never effect a national program, even if each legislator slavishly followed his local constituency. Similarly, disaggregated elections could never achieve true popular control: “There are so many cooks mixing their ingredients in the national broth that it seems hopeless, this theory of changing one cook at a time.” Meaning more than just elections, democracy to Wilson “consists essentially in the popular choice of and control over alternate groups of collectively responsible public officials,” and more pointedly, “representative government is government by majorities, and government by majorities is party government, which up to the present date is the only known means of self-government.”

Wilson sought means to institutionalize party government and turned first to Congress, in his day the dominant institution in the national government. Legislation there was controlled by the multiple and distinct subcommittees, unified only by the caucus of the party, convened “whenever, in critical seasons of doubt, it is necessary to assure itself of its own unity of purpose.”

To make Congress the vehicle of party government, he proposed to use the caucus, even though it was “a very ugly beast, and a very unmanage-
able one." Strong leadership was needed, for this caucus "will obey only the strong hand, and heed only the whip. To rail against him is no good. He must be taken sternly in hand, and be harnessed, whether he will or not in our service. Our search must be for the bit that will curb and subdue him."9

Few people, and even fewer political scientists, have the opportunity to put their speculative proposals into practice. Wilson used his opportunity to institutionalize the concept of party as governing caucus. In the first two years of his administration, the congressional Democratic caucus was transformed from an ugly beast to a docile carrier of legislative burdens, enacting major programs such as the Clayton Anti-Trust Act and the lowered Underwood-Simons tariff.

Wilson not only used the caucus but also acted as the leader of his party. Presidential leadership became for Wilson the means to overcome the institutional separation of powers. To focus public and political attention on his program, Wilson used innovative techniques such as press conferences and personal delivery of the State of the Union address, previously submitted in writing. To strengthen his claim to leadership, he called for nomination of the president through direct popular primaries.

In later years, Wilson turned from Congress to the presidency to provide party government. The president "cannot escape being the leader of his party except by incapacity and lack of personal force, because he is at once the choice of the party and of the nation," Wilson had written as a professor, foreshadowing both his own leadership and his own disability. Though disdainful of personalities, he argued for the force of the person of the president: "He can dominate his party by being spokesman for the real sentiment and purpose of the country, by giving direction to opinion, by giving the country at once the information and the statements of policy which will enable it to form its judgments alike of parties and of men."10 Through his actions and his rhetoric, the professor-cum-politician spurred a transformation of the presidency.11

Wilson's efforts have inspired other advocates of the model of party as governing caucus. In academic literature, the most notable has been the report of a Committee on Political Parties, presented to the American Political Science Association in 1950. Its program still constitutes the basic components of this model, requiring "first, that the parties are able to bring forth programs to which they commit themselves and, second, that the parties possess sufficient internal cohesion to carry out these programs."12
THE MODEL IN PRACTICE

I shall use this report, despite its age, to analyze the governing caucus model. Parties do affect government, yet they do not meet the full requirements of party as a governing caucus. To validate the governing caucus model, three conditions are necessary: Parties develop programs, they win election on the basis of these programs, and they then act to implement their promised programs.

Empirically, none of these three conditions is fully met in the United States. First, party leaders are not necessarily motivated to seek election primarily on the basis of policy programs. There is a basic conflict of goals between office seekers, who employ policy programs in their quest for power, and benefit seekers, who try to persuade these office seekers in their quest for particular programs. To the first group, policies are the instruments of electoral success; to the second they are the purpose of politics.\textsuperscript{13}

Congress provides a good example. National legislators have three goals: winning election, gaining influence in the Senate or House of Representatives, and achieving good public policy. Of these goals, the most important to most legislators is winning election. Given such practices as committee specialization and individual perquisites, Congress is designed to serve these electoral interests rather than policy goals. Contrary to the expectations of the governing caucus model, \textquote{\textquote{the enactment of party programs is electorally not very important to members. . . . What is important to each congressman, and vitally so, is that he be free to take positions that serve his interests.}}\textsuperscript{14}

This electoral focus does not mean that legislators are simply unprincipled, selfish feeders at the public trough. It is only a recognition of the reality that election comes first in time—and therefore first in priority. A legislator cannot achieve any policy goals unless he or she first gets elected and stays in office long enough to accumulate influence within the legislature. Congress obviously does deal with policy but not as a party governing caucus. Rather, policy questions become relevant as part of the broader electoral needs of the representatives.

Policy programs are tied to elections in two different ways. First, politicians respond retrospectively. They interpret election results, often seeing their success as endorsements of their own programs and rejections of their opponents’ programs.\textsuperscript{15} They also try to read the tea leaves from other elections, interpreting the results, for example, as a mandate for lower taxes.
or evidence of a "new mood" among the public. Presidential popularity is particularly important since it has a direct effect on congressional elections; consequently, support for the president's program correlates closely with his standing among the electorate.  

Furthermore, politicians act prospectively, trying to anticipate the reactions and intentions of the electorate. Office seekers are often risk-taking entrepreneurs, attempting to find new "products" that will attract "buyers" in the electoral marketplace. Enterprising legislators have developed such programs as Medicare, tax simplification, and abortion restrictions, achieving both policy change and electoral success.

Policy, then, is important to politicians, but this importance does not validate the governing caucus model. Rather than constituting a collective and coherent program, these policy initiatives are typically unconnected and distinct from one another. Politicians react to election returns individualistically, even idiosyncratically. The innovations they propose reflect their own interests and their particular election strategies, not a common party program. To recall Wilson's metaphor, the result is not a national broth but a stew whose ingredients follow no fixed recipe nor assure any nutritional balance.

The achievement of a common party program will depend on the parties' electoral situation. When their candidates face widespread competition, they may have an incentive for mutual aid and cooperation; by "hanging together," candidates may avoid the electoral death of "hanging separately." By achieving a common legislative program, they may be able to present a better record to their constituents. By sharing funds and services, they may be able to wage better campaigns.

The spread of party competition in the United States has promoted some increased cooperation within the parties. Among state parties, there is some tendency for party organizations to become more developed as they become more competitive. On both the state and the national level, as legislators have felt more insecure, they have fostered collective electoral organizations.

Groups such as the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee, the Republican Senatorial Campaign Committee, and political action committees run by legislative leaders have now become major sources of money and technical resources for their fellow partisans. Increased party cohesion on programs is also evident in Congress, where roll-call voting shows a
higher degree of partisan unity than at any time since the end of World War II. The degree of party unity, however, is inherently limited by the basic electoral reality that congressional elections are held in disaggregated districts, where campaigns are centered on individual candidates, not on national parties.

Even when a party might develop a common program, the caucus model may not apply. To effect popular democratic control over policy, this model requires that the programs developed by the parties be distinct from one another, providing a choice for the electorate. Parties that are electorally sensitive, however, will not necessarily develop different programs, only popular programs. Indeed, when the wishes of the electorate are clear, party programs will be identical rather than conflicting if the parties act rationally in their own self-interest. Party differences will probably be the most distinct when there is no discernible popular preference for one or another policy. Paradoxically, the model therefore will be most evident when it is least relevant to democratic control.

These relationships between parties and the voters point to another set of problems in the caucus model: its unspoken assumptions about electoral behavior. For a governing caucus to achieve democratic legitimacy, it requires voter endorsement for its collective program. The extensive studies of voting (discussed further in chapter 7), however, show that a popular mandate is highly unlikely to exist.

A mandate first requires that voters make their choices on the basis of the programs advanced by parties. To be sure, there is considerable issue content to the popular vote, much more than was once believed. Although some votes are based only on traditional, issue-less loyalties and some are based on judgments of individual candidates, a substantial proportion is related to judgments of past and future programs advanced by the parties and their candidates. These judgments may not be specific in content, but they are still meaningful. As Fiorina puts it in discussing the issue basis of party loyalty, "By forming a long-term judgment about relatively stable leadership cadres that periodically compete for their votes, citizens appear to behave in a perfectly reasonable way."

A mandate, however, implies not only voter concern for issues but a concern for the same issues and a majority endorsement of one party’s position on these dominant issues. These conditions rarely if ever apply, for even when voters are concerned with issues, they are concerned with
different issues. In 1988, for example, when asked to name the most impor­tant issue before the nation, only 12 percent agreed on the priority, the budget deficit, and even smaller proportions focused on other concerns.\textsuperscript{21}

At other times, there has been more agreement on the priority issues, but still less than a majority. The most notable case of agreement among voters came in 1968, when public attention focused on the Vietnam War. Yet even in this time of national agony, only 43 percent, less than a majority, named the war as the priority issue of the election. In more normal times, an issue mandate is still less likely. Analyzing these patterns, Kelley con­cludes that even recent landslide presidential elections, except that of 1964, cannot be considered policy mandates.\textsuperscript{22}

Mandates do not usually come from the voters but are defined by those voted into office. Yet definitions may vary, as those elected read the election returns differently. One representative may see her success as voter opposition to increased taxation while another interprets his victory as approval of legalized abortion. Politicians will be more likely to read the same meaning into elections when they share a common electoral fate, when they must hang together. Increased competition, however, does not assure this cooperation unless it also means increased competition for each individual candidate bearing the common party label. This condition does not apply in the contemporary Congress; incumbents are secure in their seats, with as many as 98 percent winning reelection.

Most of these legislators have little need either to gain support from the party or to provide much support to the party and its program. Even when not secure, legislators will not necessarily depend on their party but may actually find it more expedient to display their independence. Fenno’s com­ment on the individualism of contemporary campaigning applies as much to the congressional party as to the national legislature: “Members of Con­gress run \textit{for} Congress by running \textit{against} Congress. . . . In the short run, everybody plays and nearly everybody wins. Yet the institution bleeds from 435 separate cuts. In the long run, therefore, somebody may lose.”\textsuperscript{23}

\textbf{PARTIES IN GOVERNMENT}

In its third operational aspect, the governing caucus model assumes that the party will implement its common program after receiving a voter man­date. In studying the effect of parties on government policy, analysts tend
to apply the most exacting standards of the governing caucus model. They test whether parties take collective responsibility for a common program, for example, by examining legislative voting, gauging parties against an expected standard of total unanimity within each party and total difference between the parties. A more reasonable measure, however, might be whether parties show relative, rather than absolute, internal unity and external differences.

Judged on these criteria, parties clearly do affect legislative decisions. In congressional roll calls, partisanship is consistently the most important explanatory variable, and the impact of party on legislative behavior has increased in recent years. In 1990, half of the recorded votes found a majority of Democrats opposing a majority of Republicans, and the average legislator supported his or her party on more than three out of four instances of partisan roll calls.24

This difference is independent of the constituency pressures on members of Congress, as shown by an analysis of voting in both houses. Senators from the same state, sharing the same constituency but of different parties, vote quite differently. In the House, similarly, a change in party control of a seat also leads to a change in the representative’s behavior. On average, a Democrat from the same area as a Republican will be forty-two points higher on a one hundred-point scale of liberalism.25

Parties differ from each other, but do they make a difference? Do they fight each other vigorously only over trivial issues, or can they actually affect the course of government? Government, after all, cannot control much of human life; indeed, in the modern technological and interdependent world, it can be argued that governments cannot even control their own economies.

Examining British public policy, Richard Rose doubts that either parties or government itself has much effect. Rather than adversarial conflict between the parties, he found considerable consensus between them (before the onset of the Thatcher government). Although parties did enact their election manifestos, these pledges involved only a small portion of the business of government. In the end, governmental action was not decided by elected politicians—or even by bureaucrats—but was inevitably determined by uncontrollable forces in the economy and in the world.26 A similar argument has been made in regard to state government in the United States. The claim is that the level of governmental spending, a crucial index of party influence, depends not on political factors such as party competi-
tion but on such nonpolitical factors as the level of economic development. 27

Parties cannot control their environment totally; still, they can have considerable effect. Party platforms provide one indicator. Although platforms are often denigrated as only empty rhetoric, closer analysis shows that the election manifestos of American parties are appropriate documents for a governing caucus. Although there is a minor proportion of windy clichés, most of the platforms either deal with the past records of the competing parties or propose particular public policies.

In their platforms, the parties do not simply imitate one another or cleave to the middle of the road, as would be expected if they followed purely winning strategies. Parties emphasize different issues, playing to different constituencies. Although they show bipartisan agreement on some issues, the degree of conflict is greater. By 1980, according to Monroe, the parties disagreed on nearly one-half of the significant issues in their platforms and agreed on only one-seventh. 28 Even more important, the parties actually carry through on their promises, fulfilling between two-thirds and three-fourths of their specific pledges. It may be significant, however, that the trend is toward lessened platform fulfillment, an indication of lower party strength in the United States. 29

The more general effect of parties on government can be seen by examining patterns of governmental expenditures. In the American states, spending for such purposes as education is largely determined by the wealth of the state. When it comes to more politically controversial functions, such as welfare, party competition makes a difference. As the parties bid for votes, public spending increases. 30

Even as they compete, the parties present and effect different programs. Among the states, a higher level of public spending in relevant policy areas occurs when Democrats rather than Republicans predominate. 31 Comparing nations, when parties of the Left are in power, government policy is directed more toward stimulating employment; governments headed by parties of the Right emphasize the control of inflation. 32 Economic realities restrict some choices, but politics makes a difference.

Parties also specialize, as they appeal to different constituencies. Two researchers compared the emphasis given to different policy topics by the two major American parties with national expenditures in these areas from 1948 to 1985. They found strong relationships, supporting a model of party as governing caucus, and conclude, "Party government in the U.S. works
largely as mandate theories say it should, that is, responsively to electoral endorsements of party policy emphases.”

Even with their substantial impact on policy, parties cannot fully meet the tests of the governing caucus model because of basic constitutional features of American government. Madison correctly predicted the workings of that government when he assured his readers that the new system of government would diminish “the influence of factious leaders” and would guarantee that “a rage for paper money, for an abolition of debts, for an equal division of property, or for any other improper or wicked project will be less apt to pervade the whole body of the Union than a particular member of it.” The same Constitution that prevented enactment of the programs Madison feared also limits the ability of a party caucus to enact other legislation, whether “improper or wicked” or necessary and good.

Federalism and the system of national checks and balances were deliberately—and successfully—designed to make it difficult to achieve a common party program. To effect basic changes in policy, a party must do more than win a single election, whatever its program and however clear a national mandate. It must win the presidency and both houses of Congress; it must also carry separate elections for the governors and legislatures of the states. Even with these victories, it cannot be certain of the endorsement of judges or of the cooperation of administrators. Gaining control of these branches of government would require sustained success over a long period of time, to enable the party to place its loyalists throughout the judiciary and the bureaucracy.

The barriers faced by a governing caucus are particularly high on questions of foreign policy, the most vital issues facing the United States or any nation. This type of political party is legitimated by its majority support, but that warrant is insufficient for a governing party on these issues. Vital decisions affecting war and peace require a broader public consensus, and the Constitution adds the institutional necessity that the Senate ratify treaties by a two-thirds vote.

Woodrow Wilson’s own history illustrates the problem. When Wilson brought the League of Nations Treaty to the Senate after World War I, he attempted to implement the theory of party as a governing caucus. At first, Wilson took a nonpartisan approach, negotiating with Republican senators and seeking public support through a nationwide speaking tour. Then, as the issue moved to resolution, Wilson acted in keeping with his concept of the political party. He pressed for party loyalty in the Senate vote and saw
the forthcoming election as the opportunity to achieve a popular mandate for himself and for his party program. Writing to the Democrats' annual Jackson Day dinner, Wilson attempted to frame the 1920 election as "a great and solemn referendum, a referendum on the part the United States is to play in completing the settlements of the war."

Neither effort succeeded. The party split in the Senate and, as twenty Democrats followed Wilson's leadership and refused to compromise, the treaty was defeated by seven votes. The electorate, moreover, was not offered a clear choice in the presidential contest and did not vote primarily on the issue of the League of Nations. Wilson was faithful to his own theory of political parties. The reality demonstrated in this critical case, however, was that the party could not hold together, that voters would not provide a simple mandate, and that the institutions of American government were inhospitable to party rule. In the end, by following theory to its ultimate conclusion, the president "spelled disaster for ratification of the Treaty in any form. Wilson committed the supreme error of converting what had really not been a partisan issue, except in the parliamentary sense, into a hostage of party loyalty and politics."35

Party as governing caucus always has been problematic in the United States, and in contemporary times the difficulties have increased. The two-party system, potentially an instrument of majority rule, has been virtually transformed into a new separation of powers, as Republicans have come to dominate presidential elections (losing convincingly only once since the era of Franklin Roosevelt) and Democrats have come to dominate congressional elections (losing control of the House for only two years since 1948).

With these electoral developments, American government has become increasingly subject to institutional deadlock. "As each party has strengthened the institutions it commands," Ginsberg and Sheft er argue, "the constitutional separation of powers has been transformed into a system of dual sovereignty." The consequences include the inability of the government to achieve "political closure" and the weakening of the nation's administrative capabilities, making vital national issues difficult to resolve.36 Even when those problems are overcome, their resolution typically occurs outside of the normal political processes, through administrative and judicial decisions or through nonpartisan or bipartisan commissions. Their mechanisms provide scant support for the model of party as governing caucus.
PARTY AS CAUSE ADVOCATE

The governing caucus is an elite party, but it has a counterpart among mass parties, the party as cause advocate. This party is also concerned primarily with collective issues, and its appeal is the policy rewards it offers to its adherents. Attention focuses on enlisting popular endorsement of these policies, however, rather than on elite programs.

Ostrogorski argues for such parties. After condemning the normal organizations of his day, he urged parties that would have only mass, external relationships:

Party as a general contractor for the numerous and varied problems present and to come, awaiting solution, would give place to special organizations, limited to particular objects. It would cease to be a medley of groups and individuals united by a fictitious agreement, and would constitute an association, the homogeneity of which would be ensured by its single aim. Party holding its members, once they have joined it, in a vice-like grasp would give place to combinations forming and reforming spontaneously, according to the changing problems of life and the play of opinion.\(^{37}\)

Party as cause advocate already exists, to some extent. Even the major American parties can sometimes be described this way, for their leaders often define their roles as advocates of programs rather than as simply followers of public opinion and seekers after office.\(^{38}\) Splinter parties within the major parties are also often of this variety, constituting efforts “to win the party to more complete commitment to their views.”\(^{39}\) Such diverse dissidents as Van Buren’s 1848 Free Soilers, the southern Democratic “Dixiecrats” of 1948, the “Peace and Freedom” offshoot of liberal Democrats in the 1970s, and John Anderson’s Independent movement in 1980 were attempts to influence the policy programs of their own parties, rather than genuine efforts to build new, permanent parties.

Cause advocates face even more barriers to success than those encountered in a governing caucus party. Because of the restricted range of their policy concerns, they are less likely to be able to build majority coalitions. If it is difficult to obtain a mandate from the electorate on even large and
general issues, it is still more difficult on the specific issues of concern to cause groups.

Furthermore, the electorate's concerns change, sometimes rapidly. A party with a more general outlook may be able to adapt to these changes, incorporating new issues within its old framework or even shifting to new concerns, but a party based on a particular issue always risks becoming archaic. The Prohibition party provides an example. For fifty years, the issue of the regulation of alcohol was of great importance in American politics and eventually brought amendment of the Constitution. Today, after that "great experiment" has failed, the Prohibitionists continue to advocate their cause, but their party is completely dry.40

THE GOVERNING CAUCUS AND DEMOCRACY

The problems of the party as governing caucus go beyond the considerable practical hurdles it faces in the United States; it also has theoretical problems in relating party to democratic governance. The governing caucus model attempts to provide democratic legitimacy for a political party that involves very limited democratic participation. Essentially, the model focuses on leadership, which invites popular participation only to approve its program in a limited election and then expects the populace to do nothing more than applaud that leadership.

Burke made clear the distinction between leaders and followers in his famous speech to his electorate in Bristol. Voters could choose their representative, but they must defer to his superior judgment. Constituents could legitimately demand attention from their legislator, "but his unbiased opinion, his mature judgment, his enlightened conscience, he ought not to sacrifice to you, to any man, or to any set of men living, . . . [for] government and legislation are matters of reason and judgment, and not of inclination."41

Wilson similarly emphasized this central idea, consistently seeking means "to provide for concentrated leadership and power inside the official government structure."42 Effective democratic government, he argued, requires "coordinated power for leaders" and simplification for the electorate: "We must decrease the number and complexity of the things the voter is called upon to do; concentrate his attention upon a few men whom
he can make responsible, a few objects upon which he can easily center his purpose; make parties his instruments and not his masters by an utter simplification of the things he is expected to do.”

Leaders are informed; voters are fallible. Burke aristocratically feared that passions would distort popular judgment, as evidenced both by English opposition to the American Revolution and French support for their revolutionary Reign of Terror. Wilson was more confident that mass opinion, if it were properly led, could achieve “a new and cordial and easily attained understanding between those who govern and those who are governed.”

To both men, the relationship was not one between equal participants in a democratic polity; it was more akin to that of a teacher of passive but educable students. Burke engaged in political education as much as Wilson, who indeed did lecture, to his students and to his national constituency. Their classroom was not an example of progressive “learning by doing” but one in which students absorbed wisdom from their instructor. If dissatisfied, the students did not engage in argument but simply left the room to find a more acceptable teacher.

In the democracy of the governing caucus, leadership is responsible because it can be dismissed collectively by an electorate dissatisfied with its programs. That accessibility is limited, however. Because responsibility is collective, few direct ties exist between an individual leader and an individual voter; there is no person to deal directly with a voter’s unique needs, in the manner of a machine precinct leader. Relying largely on elections to control leaders, the governing caucus model provides sparse means for control between elections or on matters that do not arise in elections or on the vital details of public policies that go undefined in elections.

The emphasis on leadership stults democracy, limiting it by restricting involvement in the development of party programs. Those in the governing caucus develop programs—others only approve or disapprove. Such participation is shallow, but efforts to deepen popular participation create other problems.

In its call for strengthened parties, the 1950 Committee on Political Parties advocated both strong and centralized leadership and extensive popular participation in the writing of enforceable party programs. Adopting both goals, however, does not resolve the tensions between them. There is no logical assurance that leaders and other party members will share the same programmatic goals, unless we wrongly assume that all party memberships
are based on full knowledge and approval of leadership policies. In fact, the evidence consistently refutes this assumption. Repeated studies have shown that Democratic party leaders are considerably more liberal and Republicans considerably more conservative than their rank-and-file memberships. For example, in 1988, 51 percent of Democratic party convention delegates favored federal funding of abortions, but Democratic voters opposed it by nearly a two-to-one margin; among Republican convention delegates, 51 percent opposed the Equal Rights Amendment, but Republican voters favored the amendment by a seven-to-one margin.

Moreover, ordinary party loyalists, in general, tend to be like one another, but the leaders of their parties tend to disagree. This finding implies that if rank-and-file members participated fully in the formulation of party programs, these programs would be more similar to each other and would offer less choice to the general electorate. The result is a democratic paradox: full popular involvement in developing policy would translate into less meaningful popular choice; conversely, leadership domination over policy development would provide more meaningful choice.

Democracy is further stilted in the governing caucus model because that model relies heavily on programmatic appeals. Politics, after all, is a human relationship, involving affection as well as intellect. Government depends on the character of its leaders as well as on their arguments; voters, in choosing leaders, properly invoke their passions as well as their interests. In a vibrant democracy, parties will accept and channel these emotions, recognizing that loyalties to parties, and their voter support, go beyond reasoned appeals.

The governing caucus, however, is too much a matter of cold reasoning, as illustrated in the lives of its most prominent advocates. When Burke broke with his party over the French Revolution, he also felt it necessary to deny his emotions and loyalties. Policy disagreement inevitably meant personal estrangement: "There was a loss of friends—he knew the price of his conduct... their friendship was at an end." When Wilson saw the League of Nations repudiated by members of his party and the voters, he became embittered and felt abandoned.

Relying too much on their intellectual appeal, these brilliant men still lacked some essential traits of democratic leaders. As Max Weber taught, "Politics is a strong and slow boring of hard boards. It takes both passion and perspective... Only he has the calling for politics who is sure that he
shall not crumble when the world from his point of view is too stupid or too base for what he wants to offer.' Democracy requires more than a governing caucus; it needs parties that recognize and foster both personal passion and ideological perspective.