Passions and Interests

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Passions and Interests: Political Party Concepts of American Democracy.
The regulation of these various and interfering interests forms the principal task of modern legislation, and involves the spirit of party and faction in the necessary and ordinary operations of the government.

—James Madison

Taking their cue from Madison, Americans have made the regulation of political parties one of the principal tasks of political legislation. In his theory this founding father distrusted parties, yet in his practice he organized the first modern party, the Jeffersonian Republicans. Following Madison, Americans are loyal to their particular parties but do not like them as institutions.

This contradictory attitude may itself account for the frequent concern for party reform, which, Ranney suggests, “has always seemed to many a welcome escape from dilemmas arising from the fundamental ambivalence that has always characterized the attitudes of most Americans toward political parties and political action.” Perhaps because voters do not like parties, the United States has devoted a lot of attention to their reform and even to their obliteration.

Reform, however, comprises a multitude of programs, improvements, and sins. Party reformers have favored both greater party control over nominations and leadership selection through direct, popular primaries; increasing financial resources of the parties and limiting their receipts and expenditures; strong party discipline on policy issues and legislative independence; centralized party authority and control at the local grass roots.

The reform programs have varied because they have been based implicitly on different models of political parties. Seeing parties from distinct viewpoints, observers have also evaluated them quite differently. When Edmund Burke, for example, praised political parties, he had in mind the Whigs of his day, who attempted to become a governing caucus, controlling the British House of Commons to achieve a governmental program. A century later, American middle-class mugwump reformers would condemn political parties, exemplified by the urban machine. The differing evaluations followed from the contrasting stances from which Burke and the mugwumps viewed the parties.
Table 8.1. Reform Perspectives of Party Concepts (illustrative method of selecting presidential nominees)

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Our discussion of party concepts may illuminate these differences in reform perspectives. In Table 8.1, these concepts are reclassified along two dichotomous dimensions, providing four perspectives on party reform. Both of these dimensions combine descriptions—what politics is said to be about—with normative statements—what politics ought to be.

The first (horizontal) dimension deals with the mobilization of the citizenry. Politics can be seen as individualist, where decisions are or should be made by relatively autonomous persons. Alternatively, politics can be structured toward common action and majoritarian decisions. Generally, reformers who fear parties and wish to restrict their power emphasize individualism, and those who favor party strengthening emphasize more power for democratic majorities.

The second (vertical) dimension is the familiar difference between collective and coalitional goals. Individualists may expect that disaggregated individuals can be brought together on behalf of a common public interest or may simply foresee dispersed coalitions. The difference is also evident among advocates of stronger political parties. Like Burke and Woodrow Wilson, they may look to the achievement of a broad program in the public interest, or, in contrast, they may seek reform only in order to make the parties more effective in promoting the diverse goals of their coalition members.

The combination of these two dimensions results in four perspectives on party reform, labeled in the table, and four quite different programs of specific changes. These different perspectives, illustratively, imply alternative methods for the selection of presidential candidates, as specified in the parentheses within each cell of the table.
From the progressive perspective, a party nominee should be chosen by a national primary open to all voters. Individuals would have direct personal input, leading to a collective national decision. This proposal is actually favored by most Americans in opinion polls.  

Another mode of individualist selection, commonly evident today, is through coalitions assembled to support a popular aspirant. Although these coalitions formally operate within a party structure, they are akin to non-partisan groups. “Rather than depending upon alliances with and commitments from state party organizations . . . candidates for the Presidency are increasingly obliged to mount their search for delegates by building their own personal organizations state by state.”

The party government perspective envisages majoritarian action toward the achievement of collective goals. The party’s presidential candidate would be selected by the membership, meeting in party caucuses or, alternatively, through a mass plebiscite, as used by the Liberal Democratic party of Great Britain. A focus on party efficiency implies presidential selection through bargaining among party representatives; this was the traditional method, conducted in “smoke-filled rooms” at the quadrennial party conventions.

PROGRESSIVE REFORM

These perspectives differ in their theoretical bases as well as in their policy implications. To some individuals, reform has meant limiting, even eliminating, political parties. Such was the thrust of the Progressive movement in the United States, which led to the most extensive constraints on American political parties.

The general purpose of these reforms was to remove impediments that allegedly obstructed voter control of government and public policy. Whenever possible, direct democracy was to replace institutions of representation. In place of legislative bills, citizens would initiate their own laws and decide on their passage through popular referendums. Officials would be kept on a short leash, subject to frequent election on a long ballot and to recall by a dissatisfied electorate.

As the most conspicuous barrier between the citizenry and the government, parties were a particular target of the Progressives. They were subject to detailed codes of conduct, their finances regulated, their patronage limited through civil service, and their structure prescribed by law. They were treated
not as private associations but as “public utilities,” to be regulated in the public interest. Along with the new powers of the initiative, referendum, and recall, the taming of political parties would allow the general public interest to escape corruption by special interests and political chicanery.

The most important and enduring Progressive influence on American political parties has been the direct primary, the selection of party nominees through public elections open either to all voters or to those who made a nominal, costless declaration. This Progressive reform was devised as a reaction to the strong urban machines of the day, a sort of “alternate universe.” Its origin is openly acknowledged in the rhetoric of its most prominent political patron, Robert LaFollette:

The direct primary will lower party responsibility. In its stead it establishes individual responsibility. It does lessen allegiance to party and increase individual independence, both as to the public official and as to the private citizen. It takes away the power of the party leader or boss and places the responsibility for control upon the individual.

Ostrogorski, the Progressives’ intellectual forefather, believed that enfeebling existing parties would free the individual citizen, and

will allow, and will even compel him to take a less passive part in the government, to discharge his civic duties in a more conscious way. . . . The citizen will be enabled and obliged to make up his mind on each of the great questions that will divide public opinion. By joining one of the parties which will be formed on this occasion, he will know exactly what he wants, what is the issue, to what he gives his adhesion, where he is going, and how far he will go.

Individual reflection would result, Progressives believed, in the realization of the common interest. In their optimism, they insisted that the true public interest could be located, under the proper circumstances. With Madison the theoretician, they argued that “the public good is disregarded in the conflicts of rival parties” as factions oppose “the permanent and aggregate interests of the community.” Unlike Madison’s theory and practice, their solution was not to set multiple factions against each other but to remove the impediments of parties and special interests. Debating public principles, right-thinking individuals would then do right.
The direct primary is the principal institutional cause of the American parties' incohesion, or in another view, their openness. It is that rare reform that accomplished its intended aim, the substitution of individualist political action for that of cohesive party majorities. The institutionalization of primaries has meant that "organizational leaders and activists often can do no more than exert influence over nominations. . . . It bolsters individual representation of a kind always encouraged by the electoral separation of legislative and executive branches. Elected officials are expected to respond to their constituencies and not merely to parties whose labels they carry." 9

The individualist focus of progressivism continues to the present and forms the theoretical basis of a series of decisions of the U.S. Supreme Court, dealing with another aspect of parties, political patronage. Virtually outlawing the use of patronage for appointive positions, the Court in 1990 prohibited party tests even in hirings and promotions. Although giving little attention to parties directly, Justice William Brennan asserted, with scant evidence, that "political parties are nurtured by other, less intrusive and equally effective means" and that they "have already survived the substantial decline in patronage employment practices in this century." 10

Speaking for a 5–4 majority, Brennan instead based his decision on the individualistic First Amendment, which bars the government "from wielding its power to interfere with its employees' freedom to believe and associate, or to not believe and not associate." Rewarding party workers, or assuring that loyalists staffed government jobs, was found to be insufficient grounds for patronage, which, according to the Court majority, "decidedly impairs the elective process by discouraging free political expression by public employees." 11

In dissent, Justice Antonin Scalia presented a fulsome endorsement of political parties generally and of patronage particularly. He began with the wry observation that the judicial ban on patronage "will be enforced by a corps of judges (the members of this Court included) who overwhelmingly owe their office to its violation. Something must be wrong here," declared Scalia, "and I suggest it is the Court." 12 More supportive of patronage than most political scientists, Scalia argued that it protects government from "the demands of small and cohesive interest groups," stimulates most of "the local political activity supporting parties," enforces party discipline and furthers party success, promotes the "social and political integration of excluded groups," and facilitates moderate and effective public policy. Without patronage, parties might survive, he warned, not as "the forges upon which many of the essential
compromises of American politics are hammered out” but as no more than “convenient vehicles for the conducting of national presidential elections.” His minority opinion is an articulate, but rare, official defense of parties against dominant progressive thought.

NONPARTISANSHIP

A second variety of reform, nonpartisanship, is even more hostile to political parties. Progressives usually accept parties as inevitable even if evil, but nonpartisan advocates seek to eliminate them completely. Agreeing with progressives that individual decisions should be foremost in politics, they are less certain that the process will result in a clearly collective policy.

The most common form of nonpartisanship is essentially an abandonment of politics in favor of expert, technical rule, its rhetorical premise being that “there is no Republican or Democratic way to clean the streets.” Policy questions can be resolved by objective standards and implemented by expert administrators. These views have been most evident in municipal government, resulting in nonpartisan elections and the establishment of city-manager governments in place of elected chief administrators in the vast majority of local jurisdictions.

A similar concept of government as impartial administration underlies legislation limiting partisan activity by civil servants or prohibiting major public officials from holding party offices. Such prohibitions actually violate the logic of Rutan in its emphasis on the individual political freedom of officeholders. Still, nonpartisanship has considerable support among American voters, with substantial proportions now close to a majority ready to abandon party labels even for state or national elections.

The emphasis of nonpartisanship on efficiency disguises but does not eliminate political conflict. In reality, there can be party differences even on apparently mundane administrative matters. Whose streets are cleaned, or whether money is spent on streets or on schools, or who controls the sanitation department are political questions, not matters of scientific determination. More generally, winners and losers are different under nonpartisanship, which tends—especially when combined with at-large electoral systems—to favor the interests of those with higher income and social status. In such circumstances, there is a “lessened responsiveness of cities to the enduring conflicts of political life.”
In practice, nonpartisanship substitutes a more personal politics for party competition. Ford predicts this development in his attack on such reforms, and his comments, although directed specifically at primaries, are even more apposite to nonpartisanship. These reforms would certainly transform politics, he argues, but not in the direction its proponents hoped. Instead, parties would change, in our terms, from bureaucracies to personal factions:

The direct primary may take advantage and opportunity from one set of politicians and confer them upon another set, but politicians there will always be so long as there is politics. The only thing that is open to control is the sort of politicians we shall have. . . . Its pretense of giving power to the people is a mockery. The reality is that it scrambles power among faction chiefs and their bands, while the people are despoiled and oppressed. . . . The practical effect will be to substitute for existing boss rule a far more corrupt, degraded and imperious sort of boss rule. 19

The overall effect of nonpartisan reform has been to shift responsibility for political action from coalitions assembled within parties to individual leaders. Under nonpartisanship, politics comes to resemble the "bastard feudalism" of the late Middle Ages, when personal allegiance to a powerful baron became the road to power, and the party becomes no more than "a political kingdom to be disputed by private armies owing their allegiance not to some local machine, but to a nationally puissant family or individual." 20

The nonpartisan variety of reform has also been evident in legislation on campaign finance, such as the 1974 federal election law. The basic thrust of this legislation has been to provide money for individual candidates rather than for parties. Federal funds subsidize the campaigns of presidential hopefuls and then pay all the expenses of those who capture the Republican and Democratic designations. The expectation, and the reality, is that most contributions will go to candidates and not to parties, and the parties themselves are restricted in the support they can give to candidates running under their banner.

The law does provide some limited support for parties, since the cost of their national conventions is paid by the government and larger personal contributions are allowed to parties than to individual candidates. Moreover, the national parties have found loopholes in the law that magnify their
financial impact. Still, the basic thrust of the finance laws has been to emphasize personal politics rather than partisan politics.\textsuperscript{21}

This individualist character was underlined by the Supreme Court when it reviewed the federal election finance laws.\textsuperscript{22} Candidates could not be restricted in spending their own money, nor could interest groups supporting a candidate if they operated "independently." Given the high costs of politics, the Court declared, "A restriction on the amount of money a person or group can spend on political communication during a campaign necessarily reduces the quantity of expression" and therefore unconstitutionally establishes "substantial . . . restraints on the quantity and diversity of political speech."\textsuperscript{23}

Turning from contributions to expenditures, the Court ruled that candidates could not be compelled to limit their spending, even though such limitations might make an election contest more equal. A ceiling on expenditures could only be accomplished if voluntarily accepted by a candidate in exchange for federal funds. In contrast, limits on political party spending were not challenged.

The logical inference from the Court's decision is that corruption is a selective disease. Parties are so liable to infection that they must be quarantined. Individual candidates, on the other hand, can be immunized. They can spend freely, or they can be bribed by governmental election funds to restrict their expenditures, all without risk to the health of the electoral process. As long as contributions from any one donor are limited, they will not cause an epidemic of political illness. In the nonpartisan diagnosis, parties carry disease, but money itself is free of germs.

\textbf{PARTY GOVERNMENT}

The most debated reforms, at least among academics, have been those directed toward achieving party government. In the United States, the most prominent of these proposals, dating from 1950, is based on the governing caucus model, as discussed in chapter 3.\textsuperscript{24} Other models share its perspective in seeking to make parties the vehicles of cohesive majorities promoting a common policy program.

To achieve some approximation of party government, its advocates have urged greater emphasis on policy declarations within the party, tighter party discipline in Congress, and greater membership involvement. The party
government model is supported by large proportions of party leaders. Its advocates include a majority of Republican national convention delegates, national committee members, and county chairs and about one-third of the corresponding Democratic groups.\footnote{25}

Many of the specific changes urged by these advocates have been achieved in the forty years of American intellectual discussion of the party government model. The parties show considerable ideological agreement now among their activists and increased coherence in congressional voting, and this trend toward greater programmatic unity is mirrored among their mass voting supporters. The Democratic party for a time also experimented with midterm conferences, devoted to the elaboration of party programs.

Within Congress, active party caucuses now debate party programs, the traditional seniority system has been modified, and a modicum of discipline has been applied to assure loyalty to party programs by committee chairs. The parties’ membership bases also have been broadened. Tens of millions of individuals now participate in choosing the party’s presidential nominee, millions contribute money, tens of thousands come to open party caucuses.

However, party government does not exist today in the United States. Major policy innovations do occur but not because one of the parties develops a program, receives popular endorsement for its proposal, and then enacts its platform. Instead, the nation now has a “kind of government by ad-hoc coalition that has left many politicians in both parties confused about when to clash and when to cooperate,” resulting in “a muddling of the traditional distinctions between Democrats and Republicans.”\footnote{26}

The difficulties in achieving party government are partly institutional, rooted in the Constitution. The separation of powers, federalism, fixed terms of election, and the ultimate dependence of legislators on constituency approval have always deterred realization of the party government model. These fundamental limits have been reinforced by what John White calls “the allure of divided government,” the voters’ preference for opposing party control of the presidency and the Congress. No longer an aberration, partisan division has become characteristic of American politics.\footnote{27}

A deeper problem with the party government model is theoretical, for its advocates have been unclear in their ultimate aims. There is some truth in the criticism that these advocates have really hoped that the American system of separated institutions might be replaced by a Westminster, British-style parliamentary system.\footnote{28} Some party government advocates have urged this change, some have championed partial steps toward this goal,
such as coterminous terms for Congress and the president, and some have expressed "admiration" for British-style government though admitting it is not feasible in the United States. Without a clear objective, the case for party government has weakened intellectually.

Furthermore the advocates of party government are uncertain of their basic concept of party. The classic report of the American Political Science Association, for example, urged a programmatic emphasis characteristic of a governing caucus, active local parties reminiscent of an ideological community, and party centralization more akin to a party bureaucracy. Efforts toward party government are particularly confused in regard to the roles of the mass membership and of the mass electorate within the party.

The critical arguments among those taking the party government perspective are implicitly based on different theories of representation, best analyzed by Pitkin. Party leadership has very different meanings, depending on the basis of power within the party. In a theory of "descriptive representation," leaders are expected to be no more than a mirror of party members, simply reflecting their descriptive characteristics or their candidate preferences. Such representation is more suitable to the progressive or the nonpartisan perspectives on party reform.

In more vigorous modes of representation, leaders will also act on behalf of party members, either as accountable agents of rank-and-file views or as trustees authorized to function in their place. These different concepts of representation are closely related to the different concepts of party and lead to different proposals for party change.

Seeing the party as a social movement implies descriptive representation, based on the party's mass support. This premise leads to demographic quotas within party bodies, with power allocated among such groups as women, racial minorities, or young people in proportion to their numbers in the electorate. The same premise underlies proportional representation of candidate preferences in the national conventions.

Seeing the party as an ideological community implies representation as agency, with leaders obligated to support the distinctive policy program of the party. This aim can be accomplished best through open party assemblies that will attract issue enthusiasts. Seeing the party as a governing caucus implies representation as authorization, permitting discretion in policy choices by leaders. This goal leads to enhanced power for those in formal positions of party and public office.

Recent party reforms have demonstrated these conceptual confusions
and uncertain aims. In the same documents, reformers have favored both greater power for the party center and more power for local party caucuses, both greater control over leadership by party activists and selection of leadership in primaries open to all voters who effortlessly ask for the party’s nominating ballot, both representation within the party for designated demographic groups and representation on the basis of candidate preferences.  

As Ranney recounted the debates in the first Democratic party reform commission, “We contended that requiring representation of biological characteristics was at odds with the commission’s other objectives of open access and representation of preferences. The party could provide for a fair fight or it could provide for a guaranteed result, we said, but it could not provide for both.” Indeed, the only consistency in these reform programs has been hostility to state party groups, if not to all regular organizations. Party government reform is difficult enough to achieve in American conditions; it will be impossible without theoretical clarity and without attention to the parties themselves.

**PARTY EFFICIENCY**

A fourth group of party reformers seeks to make the parties stronger and more efficient electoral competitors. Their doctrine could be termed one of party responsibility, in two senses: The parties should be responsible for their own internal affairs; given such autonomy, they can be held responsible by the electorate for their conduct of government. These changes would make parties more akin to our models of the party bureaucracy and the office-seeking team.

Although the terms are often confused, party responsibility reform is less ambitious than party government reform since it does not insist that the parties have coherent policy programs or pursue collective goals. The party is seen as a coalition, often self-interested, but one that can still be an instrument for popular control through the electorate’s judgements on its past record and future promises. In this perspective, a party’s most important contribution is in “establishing accountability to the enduring values of a democratic society in elites that gain power in systems of mass persuasion.”

Reform toward party efficiency has first taken a route toward deregula-
tion, or removing legal restrictions on the parties. As we have seen, control of parties was part of the Progressive movement. This effort was supplemented by court decisions, which upheld legislative restrictions and added judicial limits on the conduct of party primaries. Recent landmark decisions by the U.S. Supreme Court have reversed the course of regulation.

Primaries came before the Court in challenges to the exclusion of blacks from southern Democratic parties during the era of legal segregation. For some years, the Court concentrated on the connections between party action and state action. At first, it found racial exclusion from primaries unconstitutional, because the parties were acting as "the organs of the State itself, the repositories of official power" and therefore were subject to the restraints of the Fourteenth Amendment. 35

State laws regulating primaries were then amended to leave participation in primaries and racial discrimination to the discretion of the parties themselves. The Court briefly accepted this legal maneuver. Recognizing the party as a private association the Court underlined "the right of the party to exist, to define its membership, and to adopt such policies as to it shall seem wise." 36

Soon after, the Court shifted ground. No longer viewing parties as state agencies, it still found the "white primary" unconstitutional under the Fifteenth Amendment, the guarantee of racial equality in elections. Because primaries are an intrinsic element in the electoral process, wrote the Court, they are subject to the constitutional "right to participate in the choice of elected officials without restriction by any state because of race." Moreover, a state cannot even permit "a private organization to practice racial discrimination in the election. Constitutional rights would be of little value if they could be thus indirectly denied." 37

As Kester summarizes, these decisions provide "no support for any loose generalizations that action by a political party is 'state action' . . . but rather [focus] on identifying what is an 'election' in which article I and the fifteenth amendment confer a federal constitutional right to vote." 38 Ultimately, this series of cases, although preventing racial discrimination in a public election, left parties considerable freedom in other, nonracial, respects.

These associational rights of political parties have recently won strong endorsement from the Court. As the parties changed their nominating procedures in the 1970s, a series of court cases increased their power, even in opposition to state law. The parties were allowed to set their own convention
rules, to unseat delegates who had been duly elected under state statutes, and contrary to state law, to mandate either the selection of delegates in closed caucuses or to open their primaries to self-declared Independents. 39

The most expansive Court endorsement of party freedom came in 1989 in a successful challenge to California’s detailed legislation on political parties. The Court struck down the state’s ban on party endorsement of candidates in primaries and overturned extensive state regulation that “limits a political party’s discretion in how to organize itself, conduct its affairs, and select its leaders.” These regulations were found to “violate the free speech and associational rights of political parties and their members guaranteed by the First and Fourteenth Amendments.” 40

The second aspect of party efficiency reform is to strengthen the parties directly, a process of party renewal to make them more efficient bureaucracies and more capable office-seeking teams. The national parties have become well-developed institutions, symbolized by the construction of permanent headquarters in Washington. 41 Using their now considerable funds, the parties also provide extensive services to candidates. In the Democratic party, the nominating process has been repeatedly “re-reformed” to increase the role of party leaders and elected officials. 42

Recent amendments to the federal campaign-finance laws are modest steps in this strengthening process allowing larger contributions to parties than to candidates, freeing state parties to spend money on behalf of federal candidates, and increasing the federal subsidy to parties implicit in payment of the cost of national nominating conventions. The parties have also increased their financial impact. The national party committees now receive legally unlimited but controversial “soft money” contributions for their organizational or noncampaign activities. 43 They also act as conduits for contributions by political action committees, which they “bundle” together and then forward to favored candidates.

Further steps toward greater party efficiency were suggested by a self-appointed Commission on National Elections, in preparation for the 1988 presidential election. On the premise that election reform “should begin by seeking to strengthen the role of the political parties,” the group urged that parties become more central in the national contest, particularly by taking over the management of televised debates between the presidential candidates, replacing the previous sponsors, the nonpartisan League of Women Voters. 44

Although the national parties did sponsor one of the two television
debates in 1988, the action was itself controversial and provided little reason to believe that further steps toward strengthened parties would gain wide support. Indeed the commission itself, though favorable to stronger parties, shied away from more thoroughgoing proposals, such as redirecting campaign contributions from candidates to parties, direct subsidies to the parties, or restrictions on presidential primaries.

The same reluctance is evident in congressional debates on amendment of campaign-finance statutes. Although there is widespread agreement that present laws carry the potential for corruption, proposed revisions have centered on limiting the financial impact of political action committees and restrictions on “soft money.” The emphasis has been on aiding individual congressional candidates rather than on increasing the parties’ role.

Support of the parties would require either major relaxation of the limits on party contributions or direct public subsidies. Each course has its proponents, but Democrats would probably benefit more from public subsidies and Republicans from greater party autonomy in campaign finance. The partisan conflict has led to stalemate, not party renewal.

Such hesitancy illustrates the obstacles challenging even marginal steps toward party renewal. Timid change, however, will not alter fundamental problems. The current deficiencies of American parties, Reiter convincingly argues, result from long-term trends and hostilities, originating in Progressive legislation and the direct primary and then reinforced by irreversible innovations in technology and campaign methods. Recent changes in party rules and legislation have probably magnified the effects of these more fundamental causes, as some contend. Other commentators dispute this conclusion, seeing the parties as recently strengthened through mobilization of new groups and organizational development.

To the extent that party flaccidity is due to deliberate design or to unintended consequences of rules and legislation, these effects can be reversed by new party and legislative decisions. Such actions are already under way, as we have seen in judicial decisions, finance legislation, and modification of national nominating procedures. The character of American parties, however, ultimately depends on the values Americans apply to politics.

PARTY REFORM AND DEMOCRATIC VALUES

Strong or weak parties reflect not so much the nation’s view of parties alone but its more basic attitudes toward politics and government. In reforming
parties, we must first ask what we expect from government. The answers will probably lead us to emphasize one or another of the perspectives on party reform.

In setting reform goals for government, we could make a fundamental choice for rapid and programmatically coherent action. Reform would then be viewed from the perspective of party government. Alternatively, we may prefer consensual action, slower but more consistent over time. In this case, the individualist programs of the progressive or the nonpartisan perspectives are more appropriate. The party efficiency perspective, depending on circumstances, permits both alternatives.

We must also ask what we expect for ourselves and from others. If we want to maximize our individual preferences, parties may be a hindrance; individuals can express their particular ideas better when they are less constrained by the opinions and pressures of others. If the facts of modern life make self-sufficiency impossible, we may still strive for personal influence through individual contacts with officials or in the unmediated politics of direct democracy. These are the goals of reform from the progressive and nonpartisan perspectives.

These political values may be psychologically satisfying to each individual but at the same time frustrating because little effective action can be achieved. From the reform perspectives of party government and party efficiency, the force of majoritarian action can unite individuals into effective combinations. Coalitional or collective goals then replace personal access to government, as increased power is bought in the coin of individual preferences. Substituting for the Anti-Federalists' "rough fellowship of the deliberative community," these parties "draw us toward public goals even when interest and ideology pull in opposite directions." 48

These conflicts in values are congenital to Americans, who live under a Constitution designed to create a government both strong and trammeled. In the debate on party reform, these same ambivalences are evident. Americans want parties to offer distinctive choices, yet they disdain partisan conflict. They cherish their individual expression yet seek effective collective action from their partisan officials. They want to divorce government from politics but demand that parties take a stand and act on the issues.

Americans view parties both ambiguously and ambivalently. Sometimes they are evaluated and accepted as instruments of democracy but are also criticized and regulated when they become too efficient in their pursuit of power. At other times they are expected to be expressive models of internal
democracy, and then they are disparaged when they fall short of this standard. Especially troublesome is the possible conflict between these goals, the possibility that parties can be either efficient or democratic but not both. The nation has been loath to agree with Schattschneider that “democracy is not to be found in the parties but between the parties.”

To explore these questions more fully, we must relate parties to more general democratic theory. As the review of perspectives on party reform suggests, democratic goals are not necessarily consistent; indeed, they may be inherently contradictory but still attractive. To understand American democracy, we will need to join in Whitman’s American boast,

Do I contradict myself?
Very well then I contradict myself,
(I am large, I contain multitudes.)