

Political Parties

- Defined
 - Broad organizations
 - Goal = win elective office; control the institutions of gov't
 - Different from interest groups

- American parties
 - Small national orgs w/ smaller state/local affiliates
 - National & state political figures give leadership
 - Some citizens support pps financially
 - Many more identify w/ pps; support at polls

- The Framers
 - Viewed parties with disdain
 - Parties = factions
 - Framers would be divided at times
 - Framers view of modern parties

- Party Systems

- Relationships between pps of particular country at a given moment in time
- vary from country to country
- Characteristics of party system
- Dynamics depend on legal/cultural factors
- Parties in Republic
 - Note: pps not essential
 - PPs = easier for citizens to participate in politics
 - PPs contribute to Republic by:
- American Party System
 - Two-party system
 - Why two parties?
 - Third Parties
- Weakness of American PPs
 - Two majors are weak compared to pps in other countries
 - Weakness stems from:

- American parties tend to be “decentralized”

- Weak two-party system means American pps seek middle of the road appearance

- Party structure
 - Reps & Dems organized similarly

 - Both committees are major operations

- Party Activities
 - American pps exist to contest/win elections

 - Most work done by candidates & campaigns

 - Party contributions: