

4/6/06 DRAFT: Nancy L. Rosenblum

**Storrs Lectures: ON THE SIDE OF THE ANGELS**

**Lecture #2:**

**“Partisanship and Independence:  
The Moral Distinctiveness of “Party ID””**

“On the Side of the Angels” from the musical *Fiorello* sounds my theme. All political partisans think they are on the side of the angels, and political Independents think no partisan is. Partisan voters are mistrusted as lackeys, dupes, or craven hacks, blind loyalists or rational calculators out for spoils. At moments of party polarization like this one, in contests over the nomination of a Supreme Court justice or the competence of FEMA, the barb “partisan” comes out of improbable mouths, a virtual reflex.<sup>1</sup> A Supreme Court opinion from last May refers to the “bitter partisanship that has already poisoned some of those bodies that once provided inspiring examples of courteous adversary debate and deliberation.”<sup>2</sup> It is no virtue to

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• *Fiorello* (Jerome Weidman and George Abbott; set 1914-45; opened 1959)

cultivate the disposition that your party is “on the side of the angels”. We recognize “partisan” as invective. Partisans’ undisputed moral superiors are “Independents”. Today I am going to take sides -- not between opposing partisans but between partisanship and Independence. I argue for the moral distinctiveness of partisanship as *the* political identity in representative democracy.<sup>3</sup>

We have seen that antipartyism has a distinguished, even brilliant pedigree. The canonical history of political thought is a record of relentless opposition to parties as “unscrupulous power groups” and of moral disdain for partisans as “little more than a Conspiracy of Self-Seekers”<sup>4</sup>, a record interrupted by rare, thoughtful moments of appreciation. Contemporary theorists do not appeal to these moments -- regulated rivalry or governing much less to philosophical expectations of party antagonism -- to assess the value of parties. These have been pretty much lost to view. Today, in stable democracies with established party systems, parties are seen as “convenient vehicles for conducting” elections,<sup>5</sup> mechanisms for “reducing the transaction costs” of democracy.<sup>6</sup> Acceptance of parties is pragmatic, unexuberant, unphilosophical, grudging. Post-party depression has its roots there.<sup>7</sup>

Democratic theorists do more than echo the glorious traditions of antipartyism; they are creative in their loathing. They had to be. Only after elections were open to most citizens, run as contests between parties, and said to “make the work of constitutional government far more democratic than the architects of the Constitution anticipated it would be”<sup>8</sup>, could parties be descried as “perverters of the democratic spirit.”<sup>9</sup> The charges are familiar. Parties are too responsive to powerful minorities, elites. They are insufficiently responsive to powerless minorities. Above all, parties are routinely unresponsive to majorities. Weber saw them as “purely organizations of job hunters, drafting their changing platforms according to the chances of vote-grabbing,”<sup>10</sup> Today’s estimate is unchanged: parties are a “conspiracy of career politicians as an occupational group”.<sup>11</sup> Parties are associated with personal and institutional corruption, with patronage and the policy equivalent of patronage. “As an extractive enterprise for the extortion of patronage and plunder from the government, the party acts with great precision”.<sup>12</sup> The main thing dividing dismal critics is whether they see parties as agents of corporate predators, captured by “special interests”, or as principals advancing their own sinister interests, extortionists involved in “elaborate influence-peddling scheme[s]”.<sup>13</sup> We see this family feud among

advocates of campaign finance reform. I call this uncertainty about the direction in which undue influence flows “the anxiety of influence”.

Naturally, the charge that parties pervert democracy extends to their relation to voters. The “party in the electorate” had its heyday in the era of machine politics and enthusiastic popular mobilization, with solidarity inscribed on the mastheads of the partisan press: “Democratic at all times and under all Circumstances” is the message of a paper in Wisconsin; “Republican in everything, independent in nothing”, the banner of one Chicago paper.<sup>14</sup> (I’ll turn to the virulent antipartisanship this provoked in a moment.) That day has passed and the current accusation is that parties strategically *depress* participation. They “activate” only certain voters (“the base”), so that nonvoting is an *effect* of what is misnamed mobilization, not its antithesis.<sup>15</sup>

Parties provoke political alienation and moral disgust in countless ways: from the visible cultivation of rich donors to lack of principle or program, from inattention to issues that matter to ordinary people to the raw meanness, of partisan discourse. When I began this project American parties were castigated for being centrist and indistinguishable; today they are extremist and polarized. In the sober words of a Stanford political scientist: “The bulk of the American citizenry is somewhat in the position of the

unfortunate citizens of some third-world countries who try to stay out of the cross fire whilst Maoist guerillas and right-wing death squads shoot at each other.”<sup>16</sup> Distaste is palpable and widespread. One third of survey respondents agree with the proposition “The truth is we probably don’t need political parties in America anymore”, and a third of voters prefers that “candidates run as individuals without party labels.”<sup>17</sup> (Echoing Supreme Court opinions proffering the view that “the function of an election in the United States is to choose an individual to hold public office, not to choose a political party to control the office.”<sup>18</sup>) In the arcane terms adopted by political science, parties “turn voters off”.<sup>19</sup>

My subject today is more circumscribed than post-party depression, however. It is *antipartisanship* specifically, narrowed further to partisanship and Independence among citizens in the U.S.. Antipartyism and antipartisanship are separable. We can concede the usefulness of political parties and still despise partisanship, just as we can appreciate partisanship in the general sense of advocacy and organization – “partisans of a cause” -- and despise parties as vehicles. My theme is antipartisanship, meaning opposition to *ordinary voters’* identification with a political party.

Progressives early in the 20<sup>th</sup> century set the basic terms of *antipartisanship* as they did for most elements of democratic criticism and

reform. Progressives glumly conceded that if we must have parties (and not all did), at least voters should be nonpartisan. They proselytized for “the divine right to bolt” from parties, and made “Independent” an honorific status. Their enthusiasm was rooted in the conviction that partisanship was degrading, and confidence that Independence was both a laudatory disposition and predictor of responsible political behavior. Independents were voters persuaded, partisans were voters bought. Independents were the hope for “good government” and “clean elections”. Feminists were vocal on this point. Frances Gilman described political parties as institutional expressions of “inextricable masculinity” and anticipated that once women were enfranchised “a flourishing democratic government [could] be carried on *without any parties at all*”.<sup>20</sup>

The Progressive faith in Independence is with us in force. “Independent” is comfortably ensconced alongside Democrat and Republican in everyday political talk. Few things are more touted than their political significance -- fuelled by incessant polling and media fixation on “swing voters”. Independents are the object of tender solicitude -- made vivid in the 2004 “town meeting” Presidential debate between George Bush and John Kerry to which only “undecideds” and Independents were invited. They can be forgiven the illusion of efficacy and a hint of smugness.<sup>21</sup>

One incarnation of this view is the 1996 California ballot initiative to change from closed party primaries in which only registered party members could select the candidate for the general election to a blanket primary in which any voter, including Independents and voters registered with another party, can vote. Officials from both major and minor parties opposed it, arguing that selecting candidates and defining positions are crucial party functions protected by the constitutional right of freedom of association. A legally mandated blanket primary would take decisions out of the hands of voters identified with the party, and “a candidacy determined by the votes of non-party members is arguably a fraudulent candidacy”.<sup>22</sup> Like many proposals for electoral change, this one was motivated by an intra-party dispute; disgruntled Republican moderates believed they would gain by it. The case has resonance because the selling point of the proposal was that it would increase participation by non-party-identified voters, wrest control from party leaders, *dilute the undue influence of party activists*, and ease the way for the election of “moderate problem solvers” over “party hard-liners”.<sup>23</sup> (The closed primary is a principal item in one political scientist’s account of the “undue degree of control over the political agenda” exerted by “various kinds of fanatics”.<sup>24</sup>) The California initiative identified partisanship (at least the partisans who vote in primaries) with extremism

and would commit primary elections to nonpartisans. The merits of the proposal, the motives of its sponsors, the implicit, contestable theory of representation behind the proposition, and its predicted consequences (“the revenge of the median voter”<sup>25</sup>) are less important here than the blatantly antipartisan terms in which the question was framed.<sup>26</sup> If it had not been struck down by the Supreme Court (*Democratic Party v. Jones*: 2000), electoral law would have publicly endorsed political “centrism” and officially encouraged nonpartisanship.

It is hardly surprising that political *philosophers* vaunt independence. Whether the aspirational perspective is subversive Socratic questioning, Humean impartiality, or a transcendent “view from nowhere” it is the antithesis of a partisan perspective. More interesting is that contemporary *democratic theorists* who describe their work as “nonideal theory” write – sometimes expressly -- as if we could have democracy without parties and partisanship. Philosophers may concede that “The clash of political beliefs, and of the interests and attitudes that are likely to influence them, are ...a normal condition of human life” while ruing that “much political debate betrays the marks of warfare...rallying the troops and intimidating the other side....”.<sup>27</sup> The objects of their affection include just about every institution for participation and representation except parties. Self-styled public interest

groups and social movements (typically Progressive, not conservative).

Direct democratic institutions like referenda.<sup>28</sup> Theorists of multiculturalism value self-organized identity groups and arrangements for guaranteed representation.<sup>29</sup> “Associative democracy” would devolve decision-making to “problem-solving” units like workplaces. And it is hard to find a democratic theorist of any stripe who does not look to the associations of “civil society” to cultivate civic virtue and engagement (no surprise that parties aren’t included in exhaustive catalogues of mediating groups.)<sup>30</sup>

Proponents of democratic deliberation are not just oblivious or averse toward parties as I suggested yesterday, they are typically *antipartisan* too. Disciplined reasoning should have a place of its own removed from conventional political arenas, elections and parties. Theorists favor (indeed initiate) specially created “mini-publics” -- Deliberative Polls, Citizens’ Juries -- chosen by lot to represent “*lay citizens* and nonpartisans”.<sup>31</sup> The normative idea is that decisions reached through voting on issues ranging from energy policy to electoral reform have authority only insofar as the antecedent process is in some strong sense deliberative. Deliberation lends decisions the moral force of preferences that survive examination and judgments refined by it. Partisanship is tainted by its causal origin

(unexamined, early family experiences) and partisans are impervious to argument.

Plainly, theorists don't connect the practice of democratic citizenship with partisanship, or the virtues of citizenship with the qualities of partisanship.

I will argue that partisanship is a distinctive political identity. (One formulation of my question: why, in this era of identity politics, is *this* identity ignominious?) Independence is a distinctive political identity, too -- at least for some, it is more than just an artifact of polling – a response of “no preference” to a survey. Plainly, the resonance of Independent is positive. Its antonym, after all, is dependence or subordination. The self-designation (capital “I”) and the adjectival description (small “i”) go hand in hand. My goal today is to chip away at the moral high ground claimed by Independents, and to provide partisanship with at least an iota of dignity. I will argue against the notion that an “intelligently and progressively democratic” system depends on the ability of its supporters to attain a nonpartisan spirit.<sup>32</sup> This seems to me exactly wrong.

## **2. Political Science and Party ID**

If parties are *the orphans* of political philosophy<sup>33</sup> they are *the darlings* of political science. The disjuncture between political science and political

theory is striking. Parties are built into the still-standard definition of democracy as government “chosen periodically by means of popular elections in which two or more parties compete for the votes of all adults.”<sup>34</sup> Contrast this definition from political theory: “Democracy is not simply a form of politics but a framework of social and institutional conditions that facilitates free discussion among equal citizens...”, or the even sharper contrast we find in definitions of democracy as “a way of life”.<sup>35</sup> I’ll concoct a conversation between political science and political theory, and exploit resources from both to outline my case for the moral distinctiveness of “party id”.

Political science deserves the first word. The academic discipline grew up studying parties and elections and its terms and concepts dominate the literature.<sup>36</sup> The phrase “party identification” (“party id” for short) is a standard item in their lexicon. Party id is neither a legal status nor official membership. It was conceived from the start as an individual’s cognitive and affective connection to a party, a matter of personal identification as a Republican or Democrat or partisan of a minor party. Party id is a stable predisposition, acquired early. It is strongly associated with the motivation to vote and a key predictor of the voter’s choice.<sup>37</sup> That explains its lasting interest for political scientists. Party id has been described as “arguably the

most successful explanatory construct in political science.”<sup>38</sup> (Small surprise that as political psychologists turn to neuroscience research, the first thing they test is the portion of the brain in Democrats and Republicans that respond to partisan cues. “Cold reasoning” sections of the cortex are quiet, it seems; “the process is almost entirely emotional and unconscious, with flares of activity in the brain’s pleasure centers when unwelcome information is being rejected”.<sup>39</sup>)

We can understand, then, why political scientists became preoccupied with the apparent waning of partisanship in the American electorate.<sup>40</sup> The numbers are rough and contested. In 2004 self-identified Independents amounted to an estimated 34% in the Presidential election.<sup>41</sup> In some states the figure is closer to 40 or 50 percent.<sup>42</sup> Assessing partisan trends is a tricky business, and political scientists scrupulously caution that the decline of party id can be exaggerated or misconstrued. They employ sophisticated rules for coding and interpreting survey responses, and in the spirit of scholasticism they invent ever more refined subcategories: strong and weak party identifiers; strong and weak party “leaners”; “pure” Independents and leaning Independents; Independent partisan supporters; unattached voters, and so on. I try to keep up.<sup>43</sup> The authors of *The Myth of the Independent Voter* observe that most Independents are actually “closet Democrats and

Republicans.”<sup>44</sup> The opposite conclusion has been drawn from the same facts: “Not that most declared independents are closet partisans but rather that many who nominally identify with a party are in fact behavioral independents.”<sup>45</sup>

[[Few things in social science are more astonishing than the patient, persistent quest for understanding, and tolerance for small gains. Analysts seem to agree on just two unremarkable points, both having to do with elections, and both testament to their disciplined abstinence. First, “candidates tend to fare better at the polls when their fellow partisans constitute a larger share of the electorate”.<sup>46</sup> They also agree on the unexceptional proposition that Independents pose strategic challenges. Parties and candidates (and political science consultants) must decide whether to frame issues in ways that reinforce partisanship or in ways that capture voters who have no party anchor.<sup>47</sup>]]

In 1876 Henry Adams described the Republican Party as “an army whose term of enlistment has expired...the field is full of stragglers.”<sup>48</sup> The military metaphor was more resonant after the civil war than today, but it still works. The phenomenon is not adequately captured by numbers. The data don’t reveal the hopeful spirit in which so many contemplate Independence, or the puzzlement of those for whom “the wonder rather is

that the majority still cling to the ruts”.<sup>49</sup> Or the fact that no democratic theorist advocates rounding up the stragglers.

### **3. Independence: From Civic Ideal to Political Identity**

What explains these Independents? The current orthodoxy is that Independence is an expression of *antipartyism*. This is not convincing. It has little empirical support, for one thing, and in this respect mirrors another familiar claim, also poorly supported to my knowledge, that nonvoting is a response to disgust with parties.<sup>50</sup> Moreover, Independents are not alone in criticizing parties. Both partisans on the one hand and nonvoters on the other agree with many of the negatives I listed a moment ago. Certainly, Independence has little to do with the glorious traditions of antipartyism. As we’ve seen, one abhors parties as “unwholesome parts” that disfigure what should be a perfectly unified political community. The other tradition accepts political pluralism but abhors divisive parties that upset balance and enflame conflict. Independence today does not spring from some ideal of national unity transcending adversarial politics or anticipation of a classless, seamless, consensual society. Nor do Independents express fear that parties are fatally divisive, magnifiers or inventors of cleavages. They are as likely to describe parties as frustratingly indistinct, or to view them with an attitude of “dismissive neutrality”.<sup>51</sup> Some Independents do articulate criticisms of

parties. They may see current parties as creating the wrong kind of divisions – not those that in their individual judgment are politically important.<sup>52</sup>

Others, fundamentalist Independents, see party divisions as inherently too rigid to allow independent judgment to be exercised over time.<sup>53</sup>

Independence does lead to antiparty attitudes, then, but it cannot be explained by antipartyism. Independence is better understood as *antipartisanship*. Independence attests, first, that a person rejects being cast as a Democrat or Republican. A vote for a candidate is not to be taken as a sign of partisanship. (Hence the suggestion that some Independents are “closet partisans”, with its implication of covertness rooted in shame.) Beyond that, Independents have an affirmative self-image and strike a positive political pose. Let me pause on this point. Over 90% of survey respondents agree with the statement “The best rule in voting is to pick the best candidate, regardless of party label,”<sup>54</sup> a declaration testifying to the power of the negative stereotype of “blind partisanship”. But only some people elevate this profession of picking the best candidate regardless of party label into proud self-designation as Independent. A helpful analogy is the American Religious Identification Survey (2000). A large, amorphous group of respondents declare themselves “without faith”, but only a distinct sub-group professes that they are agnostics or atheists.<sup>55</sup> For them, and for

avowed political Independents, irreligion is a named identity. As in Lincoln Steffens' "I am a mugwump or independent."<sup>56</sup>

Plainly, Independence is an evocative term. The label itself is inviting. The decline of party identification is a general phenomenon in advanced democracies, but Independent does not appear to have a counterpart in other places.<sup>57</sup> Why is Independent antipartisanship a vaunted political identity here? The luster of Independence, its positive moral resonance, can be explained. It borrows from a broader civic ideal with deep roots in American political ideology, replanted in the soil of electoral politics. So a brief digression.

A principal element of the American civic ideal is social and economic self-reliance. Citizenship requires "men who have been accustomed to independence of action and that breadth of view which only the responsibility of directing their own affairs can produce."<sup>58</sup> This ideal is over-determined: it can be traced to both republicanism (reaching back to the Romans, or Machiavelli, or both via the English Whigs<sup>59</sup>) and to liberal individualism. There are also indigenous sources. Judith Shklar has shown that American citizenship is not only a matter of formal rights but also of civil standing and dignity, which are tied to self-reliance, the capacity to "care for and take responsibility for oneself, and to avoid becoming

needlessly dependent on others”.<sup>60</sup> The ideology of self-reliance was heightened in America in response to slavery, the ultimate domination. Slavery, made potent by racism, colored political perceptions and exalted self-reliance. It made disenfranchisement a mark of slavery, an insult as well as an injustice. Social distinctions, already flattened in America, collapsed into this one: dependence/independence and voting as the mark of civic status.<sup>61</sup> Citizens [must] “be independent persons in both their political and civil roles, who give and withdraw their votes from their representatives and political parties as they see fit, and who sell their labor but not themselves.”<sup>62</sup>

With the expansion of suffrage and creation of mass parties, voting became both *the* ritual act of citizenship and the one with potential political effect. And dependence became closely identified with *political* conduct specifically. *Partisanship* was seen as a form of abject subordination, rooted in dependence. In short, we find independence as a general civic ideal refocused and concentrated on Independence as antipartisanship.

There is no end of examples of this opposition between partisanship and the civic ideal of self-reliance. One dramatic case involves feminists and Mormons. With the backing of Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton, women in Utah were among the first to vote. The bill enfranchising

women in the territories was passed in part with the thought that Mormon women would use their political rights to overturn polygamy, which was reviled as abhorrent domestic despotism. But the women voted solidly for Mormon candidates. "I have often seen one solitary man driving into the city a whole wagon load of women of all ages and size", one observer reported. "They were going to the polls and their vote would be one."<sup>63</sup> Seventeen years later, feminists joined with anti-polygamy groups, and Congress disenfranchised Mormon women.

The Mormon case combined the economic dependence of women on men generally with polygamy and deference to the hierarchy of a church-based party; the perfect storm. The exemplary moment of opposition between independence and partisanship is the Progressive era. Progressives saw party machines as organized crime, selling protection, and partisanship as clientelism, ties based on favors.<sup>64</sup> Patronage created an entrenched system of dependence. The wealthy owed their fortunes to political connections, and the poor depended on connections for everything from jobs to funeral arrangements. (Which is why Jane Addams, the peerless reformer, had a moment of sympathy for ward bosses, who provide "protection and kindness".) Put unkindly, partisans are dependent, beholden. Progressive antipartisanship was heightened by the fact that many

urban party supporters were poor immigrants. One historian summed up:  
“The clientelist politics of the machines... appeared to be a plague, incubated  
in immigrant neighborhoods and infecting the entire body politic.”<sup>65</sup>

Partisanship created what Lincoln Steffens called “political slums”.

Steffens began his fabulous muckraking career thinking he would reveal people deceived and betrayed by party bosses, but his conclusion in *The Shame of the Cities* was bleaker. “The people are not innocent”, he wrote, and called his essay on Philadelphia, “Corrupt and Contented.” Dependence is both motivation for partisanship and its degrading effect. This account of partisanship in return for material favors has persisted. Justice Scalia dissented from a Supreme Court opinion (*Rutan*, 1990) that eliminated vestiges of patronage. He was simply being realistic in resisting this prohibition. If we have parties, we need partisanship to realize their use, and partisanship would fall off dangerously without favors, he wrote: “even the most enthusiastic supporter of a party’s program will shrink before such drudgery...”.<sup>66</sup> (Wrong)

Nothing as pointed as the exercise of patriarchal authority over women’s vote is at issue for Independents today, and bribery, bossism, patronage, and fraud –the sources of Progressive antipartisanship -- are episodic. After the 2000 presidential election “machine politics” refers to the

technology used to cast and tabulate votes, not Huey Long. One key element of the civic ideal of independence continues to snourish antipartisanship, though: the notion that “every man must answer for himself to his own individual conscience and judgment”.<sup>67</sup> Even without material or social subordination, Progressives cast partisans as ignorant and infantile, manipulated by party leaders. The “good people” are herded into parties and stupefied with convictions and a name, Republican or Democrat...”. Stupefied is key.<sup>68</sup> Historically, of course, deferring to those more educated and capable was thought to be compatible with judgment, and with election as selection. Hamilton’s Federalist #35 is a classic statement. Mechanics and manufacturers “know that the merchant is their natural patron and friend”, he wrote. Election is the exhibition of “great chords of sympathy”, and “their votes will fall upon those in whom they have most confidence”.<sup>69</sup> But with mass parties, a stereotype of the partisan was created: ignorant, inertial, deferring to party leaders who are not their moral betters but typically worse, and elections based on no defensible standard of selection at all.

Of course, any voter might exhibit poor judgment of character, policy, and competence or be “unduly influenced”.<sup>70</sup> <sup>71</sup> *Partisans* face the specific, additional accusation of sheer absence of judgment.<sup>72</sup> Partisan reasoning is skewed, set in some “deadly groove”. In Ostrogorski’s well-known account,

“the name of the party is its own justification in the eyes of millions of electors. They say, “I am a Democrat” or “I am a Republican” ....he will vote even for a yellow dog”.<sup>73</sup> “Faith in the independent voter was thus closely linked to an opposition of intellectuals to...parties as such...Since the thoughtless ones were the supporters of the corrupt party machines, then almost by definition the thinking members of society had to become independent.”<sup>74</sup> “Thoughtless” is the telling term. Lincoln Steffens was blunt: “I don’t see how any intelligent man can be a partisan.”<sup>75</sup>

A portrait of the Independent as antipartisan begins to emerge. Independence is more than a point of “no preference” on a survey of political attitudes, but narrower than the general civic ideal of self-reliance. It is a political identity whose core is contrastive: where the partisan is dependent, thoughtless, judgment-impaired if not seduced or bought, the Independent is a free agent, resistant to capture, the sober antithesis of the “true believer”. Hence Britisher James Bryce’s praise for “an exceptionally thoughtful and unprejudiced element in the population, an element which judges for itself, rejecting party dictation, and desires to cast its vote for the best man.”<sup>76</sup> Characterizations of Independents today are similarly flattering, adding the virtue of being well-informed to self-reliance. The Independent is a nimble “positive empiricist whose process of consideration of electoral

choices....requires the collection of relevant information from the election campaign...”<sup>77</sup> Which is why, in contrast to unreflective partisans, *their* vote is said to be a window into their minds. Here is another rosy portrait:

“millions of citizens are still voting, even if they are not relying on party cues or early-learned partisanship to the degree they once did... – producing *a deliberative public* that more closely approximates the classic democratic ideal. This development may be more likely because the new independents tend to be young, better educated, and *cognitively mobilized*.”<sup>78</sup>

“Cognitively mobilized” strikes the right contemporary chord. It gives Independence a cast a bit less moralistic than the 18<sup>th</sup> century “unbiased estimate of the public good”, with its emphasis on disinterestedness, and a bit more premium put on reasoning than Progressive preoccupation with corruption. The unruly passions of great parties and causes, of fervent beliefs and ideology overwhelming judgment is only one manifestation of disturbed partisan thinking.<sup>79</sup> The main charge is lack of incentive or integrity to trouble to come to what might be called a judgment about men and measures at all. Ferocious or inert, partisans are not “cognitively mobilized”.

Before attempting to rehabilitate partisanship, I want to question this image of Independents as “an exceptionally thoughtful and unprejudiced element in the population”, which returns me to political science. As one analyst remarks, “In the era before survey research, independence was the mark of the ideal citizen”.<sup>80</sup> It turns out that the positive valence of Independence does not stand up well to scrutiny.

#### **4. Partisanship in Political Science:**

Underlying the study of partisan voting trends is a debate about what partisanship is. In the classic study *The American Voter*, Campbell, Converse, Miller, and Stokes defined party id as “an enduring attachment” and “psychological orientation”. It is *not* a name for favorable political assessments of the programs or performance of a party.<sup>81</sup> In fact, partisan commitments shape political attitudes more than attitudes shape partisanship. In the authors’ inimitable words:

“Partisans are partisan because they think they are partisan. They are not necessarily partisan because they vote like a partisan, or think like a partisan, or register as a partisan, or because somebody else thinks they are a partisan. In a strict sense they are not even partisan because they like one party

more than another. Partisanship as party identification is entirely a matter of self-definition.”<sup>82</sup>

In a feat of industrial-scale production, political science revisionists contest the orthodoxy that partisan identification and issue voting “are best conceived as the opposite ends of a continuum”.<sup>83</sup> One formulation has it that party id is an expression of proximity between voters’ political attitudes and their perceptions of parties.<sup>84</sup> It is a short-hand or information-saving device for “congruence”. In another formulation, congruence takes a back seat to voters’ concern for competence, and partisanship is a sort of retrospective “running tally” based on voters’ assessments of party performance for their own welfare.<sup>85</sup> Revisionism’s overall appeal is to show that partisans “actually do reason about parties, candidates, and issues”.<sup>86</sup> They are absolved of the arbitrariness of “partisans are partisan because they think they are partisan.”

This is not spectacularly encouraging if only because assessments of the distribution of political information and the quality of political reasoning, though variable, are all grim.<sup>87</sup> We’ve witnessed a steady devolution from the model of the rational voter to the reasonable voter to the minimally “reasoning voter”, and we have followed fascinating demonstrations of how much the mind can do with how little, how “low information rationality”

operates. (If Churchill had known what social scientists now know, he might not have said that “the best argument against democracy is a five-minute conversation with the average voter”; he might have known just how much is compacted into support for a candidate because “He’s a good man”.<sup>88</sup>) Still, consider a few un-sanguine findings. Voting is vulnerable to scandals, gaffes, and short-term economic events. Elected officials are at the mercy of voters’ limited capacity to assign responsibility for political outcomes. Hence the title of a dour paper: “Blind Retrospection: Electoral Responses to Drought, Flu, and Shark Attacks”.<sup>89</sup> If they are not “rationally ignorant”<sup>90</sup> voters are something worse: “perversely resilient” to information and moved by “unenlightened self-interest”.<sup>91</sup>

The interesting piece is that if voters generally emerge as less than enlightened, Independents fare worse. “Far from being more attentive, interested, and informed, Independents tend as a group to have somewhat poorer knowledge of the issues, their image of the candidates is fainter, their interest in the campaign is less, their concern over the outcome is relatively slight”.<sup>92</sup> This forty year old assessment still holds. “Pure Independents” are the least interested in politics, the most politically ignorant, the lightest voters.<sup>93</sup> This is plausible. Partisans spend *more* not less time attending to politics. They have more hooks for taking in new information. They are

more motivated, take more interest in electoral competition and care more who wins. Even a presumably informed subgroup of Independents (as “leaning Independents” are said to be) do not appear to have or use more, different, or better information than partisans, to be more deliberative or “cognitively mobilized”. Independents are dependent on parties because they are reduced to choosing between courses arranged by others.<sup>94</sup> To the extent that they are relatively free to ignore partisan arguments and reference points in their own thinking, Independent’s considerations are more likely to be chaotic and ad hoc than more coherent.<sup>95</sup> Independence begins to lose some of its luster.

Theorists of deliberative democracy refuse to accept the laissez-faire claim that “Democracy was made for the people, not the people for democracy” and that preoccupation with popular ignorance is pedantic.<sup>96</sup> They are not content with accounts of democracy that are “competence insensitive”.<sup>97</sup> Deliberative experiments are designed to study how to achieve something more robust than “cognitive mobilization”, and theorists explore ways to improve decision-making by supplying ordinary voters with unbiased information and framing issues and policies in presumably impartial or balanced terms, in settings in which discussion is often mediated and designed to be non-conflictual. My objection is that deliberative

theorists pay surprisingly little attention to the question whether avoiding partisan orientations is possible or *desirable*; whether partisan perspectives and the “who” of partisanship should rather be identified, partisan positions and arguments well stated and set in sharper juxtaposition than occurs in the normal course of politics. One objective should be cultivating a tolerance for political conflict among people who generally see political argument as unnecessary and partisan conflict in particular as illegitimate.<sup>98</sup> There is a case in short for improving the quality of partisanship, not encouraging nonpartisanship.

I want to draw on one last bit of political science that bears on the comparison between partisans and Independents. Some recent scholarship has swung in pendulum fashion back to a more nuanced version of the original understanding of party id as affective identification and enduring attachment. Party id is less direct attachment to party than identification with other party supporters: as in “I am the sort of person who is a Republican”. Partisan self-conceptions more “closely resemble ethnic or religious self-conceptions than they do evaluations of political leaders, opinions about party platforms, or voter intentions.”<sup>99</sup> At the same time, attachment does not eclipse reflection. Partisans do absorb information and revise opinions and don’t reflexively view party leaders or programs in a positive light,

which is why (as your own personal experience doubtless confirms) “partisan hearts and minds” are not always in sync.<sup>100</sup> Constancy is a matter of identification with other partisans and, as I’ll argue, with a system of political conflict.

There is something to be gained by seeing partisanship as a form of political identity. It helps explain stability. Like other identities (the original analogy was to religion), party id entails “loyalty to particular people, the sense of being at home with these people, the richness of a received tradition, and the longing for generational continuity.”<sup>101</sup> Partisanship is about who “we” are, a mix of personal and political history, memories of political defeats and triumphs, and why “we” are on the side of the angels and deserve to govern. Although individuals may stop identifying as Democrat or Republican, they rarely *switch* party allegiance.<sup>102</sup> Similarly, Independence is not a “halfway house” from one party to another,<sup>103</sup> again not surprising if Independence is self-identification as antipartisan.

One difference between partisanship and Independence as political identities is also plain. Partisanship is identification with others in a political association. Even leaving aside the extent of any single partisans’ network or political activity, partisans know there is a “we” out there. They vote with allies, not as sole individuals. Independence in contrast is not identification

with others; its pose is self-reliance. Independents' self-definition is in contrast to a stereotype of partisanship, the partisan "we" is defined in opposition to concrete others, and opposition is their "red meat". Partisans deprecate the opposition's folly, injustice, incompetence, disregard for worthy interests, betrayal of common values, unfaithfulness to the constitution.<sup>104</sup> Without pronouncing grievances, pointing up dangers, arousing resentment, and naming enemies, it is unimaginable how [partisans] become agents with opinions, rallied for the contest.<sup>105</sup>

## **5. The Weightlessness of Independence**

This brings me to the final piece of my discussion of Independence and of identification as antipartisan. It is summed up in the thought that Independents are "not self-reliant, but weightless".<sup>106</sup> Independents are free from justification to any group.<sup>107</sup> They are as detached from one another as they are from parties. There is no "company of Independents", only earnest individuals (my students personify the type). If as Ignazio Silone says the crucial political judgment is "the choice of comrades", Independents do not make it.<sup>108</sup> Atomism is an overworked metaphor, but it best applies to Independents: atoms of the unorganized public bouncing off the structures of a party system.

Because political self-reliance is part of its appeal, it is well to dispose of two heroic representations of Independence. Independence evokes personal political freedom (‘the only obligation I have a right to assume...’.<sup>109</sup>) The Independent is not bravely Thoreauian. In the context of national parties’ support for slavery and the Mexican War, Transcendentalists insisted that it was a moral disgrace to associate with a party. Independence today is not conscientious, and we have no reason to think of them as constant at some deeper level, to assume that their judgments and votes are grounded in moral principle or enact ideological consistency. Independence lacks the drama of radical individualism and its global aversion to organization and membership. There is nothing here of Thoreau’s disparagement of voting as a sort of gaming in which character is not at stake.<sup>110</sup>

Nor is there warrant for casting Independents as Humean impartial observers, judicious umpires between parties, inclining victory to this side or that side “as they think the interests of the country demand”.<sup>111</sup> Or as Millians sensitive to “half-truths”, as if *they* bring appreciation of the limitations of each side and balanced information to bear, and take responsibility for providing corrective arguments for and against party positions. There is no reason to see Independents as centrists out to rectify

too much partisan extremism either – as if they are intent on inserting moderation into a political process in which it is too rare.

After all, antipartisanship is perfectly consistent with self-interested voting as well as public interest voting. Contemporary Independence does not fault partiality *per se* but *partisanship* specifically. In short, there is no reason to assume Independents are disinterested, guardian angels of representative democracy, especially motivated or equipped to judge what is in the nation's interest.

Have I focused on real life voters and not grappled with Independence as a regulative ideal? What if Independents *were* disinterested deliberators of the public interest or intrepid citizens presenting themselves as antidotes to partisan extremism? Or, what if Independence described actual voters in contexts contrived to suppress partisanship and provide balanced information and a process of reasoned decision-making? I do not think Independence stands up in any case, for reasons I am about to stress. Even the most admirable Independent in a hypothetically reformed system of full information and deliberation lacks the *moral distinctiveness* of party id.

For the moment, my point is that Independence is not an adequate democratic ideal because it is weightless. Ostrogorski reflected on the fact that Americans live “morally in the vagueness of space...as it were,

suspended in the air”, with no fixed groove.<sup>112</sup> He thought partisanship filled a portion of the moral void, meeting an emotional need. The “vagueness of space”, “suspended in the air” describes an existential condition. The insubstantiality of Independence that concerns me is political. Influence is not a defining purpose of Independence. Autonomy is. Or political self-expression: in disavowing party affiliation, the Independent demands to be “recognized as a unique individual who could express herself significantly in public and in private.”<sup>113</sup>

The corollary of freedom for Independents is unconcern with power. Despite claims for the salience of Independent voters in specific elections, Independents are not antipartisan because they imagine they will be more effective. They are not oriented to collective action. They are not sending a coordinated message, even if analysts are in the business of interpreting what their votes *meant*. On occasion nonpartisan voters (including but not restricted to Independents) may decide an election, but to say that they throw the election one way or the other is misleading because there is no “they” there. Simply, the vicissitudes of the votes of nonpartisans have that unplanned effect.<sup>114</sup> Nonvoters (80.4 million eligible adults in the 2004 presidential race<sup>115</sup>) have been wryly described as “the largest political party”. They are not a party, of course, and neither are Independents.

Nonetheless, a potential army of Independents is tempting to the political imagination of antipartisan thinkers. In his long campaign on behalf of proportional representation, Mill imagined “a personal merit ticket” made up of Independent men. Lincoln Steffens found independents “captious and irritating” but still imagined they could be the determining force in politics – if only they were dependably progressive.<sup>116</sup> (That is, partisan.) Critics of the major American parties periodically imagine organizing Independents in the service of de facto constitutional alteration, as Ted Lowi does when he commends a third party with the specific intent of “parliamentarizing the presidency”.<sup>117</sup> These are fantasies projected onto Independents, not the pose of Independents themselves. They are arguments for creating a new “Independent Party” not for more, permanent Independents. This is not surprising. As Schattschneider said, “the big game is the party game because in the last analysis there is no political substitute for victory in an election.”<sup>118</sup>

Independents do not assume responsibility *for* the institutions that organize elections and government or responsibility *to* other like-minded citizens. The Independent is politically unreliable, though political science does not portray this as querulousness or fickleness, in Henry Adams’ words “[a mask] for political vacillation, weakness, inconsistency of temperament,

or an excuse for self-indulgence.<sup>119</sup> This has been a longstanding worry for those who place hopes for democratic reform on them. Even Teddy Roosevelt warned against “the deification of independence”. The Independent “must try to accomplish things; he must not vote in the air”, he cautioned, otherwise Independence is a politics of “mere windy anarchy”.<sup>120</sup> Albert Stickney was an antiparty Progressive who nonetheless conceded: “Whichever army the citizen may join, or abandon, his right of desertion gives him no substantial control of either men or measures, and is far from being the right of free deliberate action that he has been commonly supposed to possess...”.<sup>121</sup> I’ll give the last word on this subject to Edmund Burke, who said it first: “In a connexion, the most inconsiderable man, by adding to the weight of the whole, has his value, and his use; out of it, the greatest talents are wholly unserviceable to the publick.” Though even Burke considered it perhaps, “to overstrain the principle” to make “neutrality in party a crime against the state”.<sup>122</sup>

It is appropriate, however, to strip Independence of unearned pride and to defend partisanship. Again, the common notion that an “intelligently and progressively democratic” system depends on the ability of its supporters to attain a nonpartisan spirit is exactly wrong.<sup>123</sup> So, let me make the positive case for the moral distinctiveness of party id.

## **6. Three Preliminary Articles in Defense of Partisanship**

In yesterday's lecture I identified three historical "moments of appreciation" of parties: Burke's regulated rivalry, Hegel's organization for governing, and the proto-Millian dynamic of opposition, his "serious conflict of opposing reasons". Political science details other reasons to value parties specific to democracy. Parties are instruments of collective responsibility that enhance representatives' accountability to voters.<sup>124</sup> ~~(Though this proposition is radically uncertain: contingent on voters' ability to assign responsibility for specific government actions;<sup>125</sup> evaluate the reasons given — reasons that may or may not be coherent or offered publicly at all; assess whether the consequences were predictable — consequences that may not emerge conveniently in sync with election cycles and that can be obfuscated by deceptive policy design;<sup>126</sup> and finally, vote representatives out of office.<sup>127</sup>)~~ There is the argument that interdependence among national, state, and local party organizations is the "political safeguard" of federalism.<sup>128</sup> And the proposition that only strong parties can resist capture by special interests.<sup>129</sup> <sup>130</sup> <sup>131</sup> Most basic, parties mobilize voters, losing parties in particular work to expand their support.

These systemic apologies for *parties* may be conceded without also conceding the value of partisanship in the electorate. I've already mentioned

the most important. Party id is demonstrably related to high levels of participation.<sup>132</sup> Party id makes voting habitual. It creates a unique kind of “interest” in participation. It creates a “we”. If we think that “the simple act of voting is the ground upon which the edifice of elective government rests ultimately,”<sup>133</sup> we might expect that when the percentage of nonvoters is high enough to raise the alarm of democratic failing, partisanship would look good.<sup>134</sup>

That said, my defense of partisanship takes a different tack, one rooted in the qualities that make it a unique political identity. I propose three preliminary articles in defense of partisanship, and end with one categorical reason for the moral distinctiveness of party id.<sup>135</sup>

The first preliminary article points to the *inclusive* character of party id in the U.S.. This is distinctive though not unique to partisanship here, given our two-party system of “catch-all parties”.<sup>136</sup> At its most basic, partisanship is identification with Democrats from Florida to California, made possible by the decline of party sectionalism, and with political competition at every level of government. Moreover, no other political identity is shared by so many segments of the population as measured by SES or religion.<sup>137</sup> “With few exceptions, each of the parties draws votes in significant numbers from every stratum of the population.”<sup>138</sup> (The exception today is African

American identification as Democrats beginning with the presidential election of 1964.<sup>139</sup> In the past few elections partisanship has also divided along religious lines, based not on sectarianism but stringency of observance as measured by patterns of church-going.<sup>140</sup>) Finally, without conceding that the major parties are either centrist or indistinct, they are internally heterogeneous ideologically as well as socially. Partisans cannot be found clumped tightly together on an ideological spectrum.<sup>141</sup>

This is not to say that partisans have an especially deep moral commitment to inclusiveness. Only that the disposition to tolerate, even welcome, diversity is characteristic of partisanship here. For partisans are ambitious to be in the majority.<sup>142</sup> And, importantly, not just for reasons of political necessity. Partisans want to win (but even in a winner-take-all system a plurality can suffice). They want to have their policies enacted (but other mechanisms work too). Rather, majority status and margin of victory just *is* a compelling claim. Partisans want the moral ascendancy that comes from earning the approval of “the great body of the people”. Tocqueville recognized that majoritarianism signified more than a procedural requirement for political victory when he wrote: “The parties have a great interest in determining the election in their favor, not so much to make their doctrines triumph with the aid of the president-elect as to show by his

election that those doctrines have acquired a majority”. He anticipated overeager appeals to a silent majority. “When they lack it among those who have voted, they place it among those who have abstained from voting, and when it still happens to escape them there, they find it among those who did not have the right to vote.”<sup>143</sup> The potential moral force of majoritarianism is its resonance with “the great body of the people”. It is said that “Human beings, if only to maintain a semblance of self-respect, have to be persuaded. Their consent must be sustained by opinions.”<sup>144</sup> Persuading a majority of the people is a triumph. If it cannot claim to be the voice of God, it is a majority on the side of the angels.

In this respect, party id *is* expansive and inclusiveness *does* become a conscious partisan value. Particular candidates may have short-term strategic interests (or safe seats) that allow them to activate only “the base”, the party’s most committed and intense supporters,<sup>145</sup> and particular sets of activists may advocate ideological homogeneity.<sup>146</sup> They would prefer to be a majority in a minority party than a minority in a majority party.<sup>147</sup> But ordinary partisans expect mobilization – exposing, educating, arousing as many as possible to support the party. Their horizon extends beyond a single election. Partisans aspire to inclusiveness.<sup>148</sup>

The second preliminary article in defense of party id is attachment to others in a group with responsibility for telling a comprehensive public story about the economic, social, and moral changes of the time,<sup>149</sup> and about national security.<sup>150</sup> This is not just a matter of being “forced in some measure to speak the language of general welfare,” though that constraint is real enough.<sup>151</sup> There is something more at stake here, a democratic obligation. Rawls says that to gain enough support to win office, parties must advance some conception of the public good,” adding: ideally we should not only offer arguments that one can ‘reasonably expect other reasonable people’ to accept but also that these should not be *ad hoc*,<sup>152</sup> marshaled willy-nilly as electoral strategy or changing circumstances dictate. We should situate them in what we consider the most reasonable and “complete” conception of political justice we can advance.<sup>153</sup>

This would be a forbidding standard were it not for parties. I believe this expectation underlies Burke’s admonition that a political position requires “not only that in his construction of these public acts...he conforms himself to the rules of fair, legal, and logical interpretation” but also that his construction is in harmony with a party”.<sup>154</sup> It is why normative accounts of agenda-setting that apply standards of completeness, coherence, and range of

alternatives are the theories most likely to acknowledge the importance of parties.<sup>155</sup>

Partisans may not be able to articulate reasons for each position and policy, and these reasons and positions are not the underlying cause of their identification and adherence, but the “we” is bound up with political ideas.<sup>156</sup> Reasons why we point the country in the right direction, the one required by justice, on the side of the angels. Reasons why they do not. Our evident concern for the public good; their manifest deviation. As it approaches a comprehensive account of what justice requires (and even when it does less) partisanship is aptly described as “patriotism of the second degree.”<sup>157</sup>

It would be foolish to say that party id *entails* a systematic conception of justice or even a completely coherent story of national direction spanning the economy, national security, social values, and character.<sup>158</sup> Often enough, partisans focus on a specific, sometimes ephemeral “issue” or event, and their party’s competence to identify and deal with it (in contrast to the untrustworthy, oblivious, incompetent opposition).<sup>159</sup> Or partisans pursue “special interests” and benefits. Nonetheless, partisans are not single-issue voters.<sup>160</sup> The partisan “we” covers a lot of ground. Partisans are sincere in proposing their allies as decision-makers for the nation as a whole across a

broad set of problems in terms that can appeal to an inclusive array of citizens; indeed, the existence of partisanship motivates these things.<sup>161</sup> Party id therefore differs from identification with other groups that seek political influence.

The alternatives to parties and partisanship all push in the opposite direction of contraction and concentration. I'll say the obvious. Supporters of interest and advocacy groups support specific policies or issues, often local and sectarian. This is as true of self-styled public interest groups as corporate lobbyists. Partisans do not hold to a single value as urgent, uniquely important, and take it to its limit but identify the party with a complex of concerns continuously balanced against one another. One reason why ordinary partisans are rarely extremists is that single-mindedness, the appeal of adhering to just one single idea that dominates all other issues and reasons, is not strong.<sup>162</sup>

Inclusiveness and a comprehensive account of what needs to be done are only possible if partisans demonstrate the disposition to compromise. My third preliminary article speaks to the disposition to compromise *with fellow partisans*.<sup>163</sup> I half-dissent from the view that political-minded citizens seek out like-minded networks and are rarely exposed to conflicting views. Half dissent because partisanship is about organizing not suppressing conflict,

which arises within parties. Intra-party conflicts rage over every aspect of campaigning, governing, and opposition. What interests and issues are the crucial lines of division? What candidate can appeal to the base without alienating the general electorate? What message is communicated by a certain position in the politics of the moment? What ideas or candidates fall outside the bounds and are unfaithful to “the soul of the party”?

Compromise entails a tolerance of small gains, getting less than we want in order to get something, settling for less in order to prevent even worse.

Compromise extends to tolerating the fact that measures we approve of are justified or “sold” in terms we don’t.

Partisans for a cause or group or policy exist within parties and compromise acknowledges and sustains the larger “we”.<sup>164</sup> In turn, compromise is possible because of the continuity and solidarity of partisanship.<sup>165</sup> Just as partisanship in government is the condition for more than ad hoc, uncoordinated political decisions, pure single cases of negotiation or barter, voters’ party id is the condition for a degree of coherence and continuity of “some conception of the public good.”<sup>166</sup>

Of course, some accommodations will be intolerable; partisans will refuse to vote for the party candidate, or bolt.<sup>167</sup> Infinite flexibility can be abject, humiliating evidence of pandering or raw opportunism. But learning

to act “in accordance with a script they don’t write themselves”<sup>168</sup> is the core of all political organizing, and it is just what Independents can’t abide. Unyielding commitment to principle or policy that disdains compromise is described even by fellow partisans as “extremist”. It is why some Republicans sensibly object: “I did not become a conservative in order to become a radical...”.<sup>169</sup> We are familiar with uncompromisingness: Purists “cant about principles”. “Practical acquaintance with the difficulties of the position” they assume eludes them. They pledge themselves to ignore facts. They do not find failure ignominious. They represent intransigence as a virtue. (A terrific metaphor has it: “He is not a receiver, he is a transmitter”.<sup>170</sup>) Unrelieved, self-righteous refusal to compromise excites moral aggression. It is an invitation to a cycle of charges of hypocrisy. It brings other dangers as well: cultivating distaste for politics, replicating the weightlessness of Independence, above all, forgetting the moral dimension of a compromising disposition, which is our ultimate protection against stupidity and cruelty. That activists can be extremist in this sense, not just in the “spatial” sense of taking positions off-center, underscores compromisingness as a moral disposition of ordinary partisans and unyieldingness its corruption. Partisans take on this responsibility: they give up purity, some elements of a vision of the public interest with the aim not

only of securing enough support to put plans into effect but also of preserving the “we”.

My three preliminary articles in defense of party id -- inclusiveness, comprehensiveness, and the disposition to compromise -- are consistent with standard democratic virtues: a semblance of mutual respect, minimal concern for the interests and opinions of others, provisionality, resolving disputes through discussion and (some will allow) negotiation.<sup>171</sup> But party id prods us to step outside the charmed circle of civic virtue. Partisanship adds solidarity and aggressiveness.<sup>172</sup> I quoted Teddy Roosevelt’s warning about the weightlessness of Independence. He gave less muted advice too: thoughtful men should not be too delicate and should “show them that one is able to give and to receive heavy punishment.” It is easy to disparage this as political bravado. True, “Greatness is made of sterner stuff than successfully facing the exigencies of the electoral cycle”.<sup>173</sup> But for ordinary citizens, partisanship brings the knocks of compromise and defeat. How not, given personal identification and the stakes?<sup>174</sup>

Inclusiveness, comprehensiveness, and the disposition to compromise do not characterize partisanship at every point in the political history of the major American parties. Perhaps I should retreat and say they are valuable only sometimes and even then within a particular party system. Certainly

these virtues have meaning only within the structural constraints of representative democracy. But I want to say more. Among political identities, only partisanship has this *potential* for inclusiveness, comprehensiveness and compromisingness. They set the contours for the best possible partisanship. They provide grounds for criticism of partisanship today.<sup>175</sup>

I call these preliminary articles in anticipation of one final categorical defense of partisanship. The heart of the moral distinctiveness of party id draws on the “moments of appreciation” of parties I discussed last time, so it should have a familiar ring.

### **7. “The Moral Distinctiveness of Party ID”**<sup>176</sup>

We learn from early moments of appreciation of parties what Schattschneider would later restate: a party system creates a system of conflict, gives it form and scope. Partisanship is identification with others in this system of political conflict, this regulated rivalry that defines representative democracy. What does that mean?

It means that partisans are not bent on mutual destruction. They do not represent the opposition as a public enemy. They do not look to liquidate or permanently disorganize the opposition even in victory. (Allowing that legislative redistricting is “one of the most conflictual forms of regular

politics in the United States short of violence.”<sup>177</sup>) Partisans don’t secede or revolt, subvert or withdraw in defeat. “Elections are not followed by waves of suicide.”<sup>178</sup> In other social and political contexts the term of power is not periodic and fixed by rules; the conflict is not iterative; the future may disappear from view.<sup>179</sup> Partisans keep the losing side alive, in public view, on the ready not just to alter a particular outcome but to have their party take responsibility for governing.<sup>180</sup> This has a resemblance to the general normative argument in favor of consent to a rule to be bound by a majority decision. But it is more specific and entails not just consent but personal identification with the bounds of regulated rivalry and government organized by parties.

With this, partisans recognize that their standing is partial and temporary. That is the categorical moral distinctiveness of party id: *partisans do not imagine that their party speaks for the whole*. However ardent and devoid of skepticism, there is that bit of reticence. Their party is just a part. Even in power, they are not the nation. Tocqueville observed that parties in America know, and everyone knows, that no party represents everyone, or even a permanent majority. “This results from the very fact of their existence”.<sup>181</sup> So partisanship is a commitment to the ineradicability of pluralism and disagreement, to regulated rivalry and to shifting responsibility for

government. That is, partisanship entails commitment to the provisional nature of political authority, its periodic recreation. We might think that the vicissitudes of fortune and the limits of human volition make this existentially true, a felt experience. Or we might say that all citizens in democracy, or at least all voters, have a part in this. They do, structurally. But partisans are expressly identified with it. They are the active intentional agents of what George Kateb has called the “radical chastening” of political authority.<sup>182</sup>

Why do partisans accept being just a part? For prudential reasons: the long-term view commends it; the prospect of being in the minority. There is the sheer excitement of opposition. Robert Penn Warren puts this colloquially in Willie Stark’s stump speech in *All the King’s Men*: “I don’t expect all of you to vote for me. My God, if all of you went and voted for Willie, what the hell would you find to argue about? There wouldn’t be anything left but the weather, and you can’t vote on that.” Additionally, as a form of identity politics, partisanship is defined in terms of “the other”. All that said, the moral distinctiveness of party id is that partisans do not think they could or should speak *for* the whole while still thinking they should speak *to* everyone. Partisanship is the political identity that does not see political pluralism and conflict as a bow to necessity, a pragmatic

recognition of the inevitability of political disagreement, a philosopher's glum concession to the ineradicable "circumstances of politics".

This is *not* because partisans are Millians attuned to "half truths" and the dynamic by which every position derives its utility from the deficiencies of the other (the claim that "Left *And* Right" are more apt to get it right.<sup>183</sup>) They are offering a satisfactory account of what needs to be done for the nation as a whole. They are on the side of the angels. They want the opposition to be defeated (or enlightened). But they do not want or expect the elimination of political lines of division. The only line opposing partisans would jointly erase is that between active and passive citizens – they want the rest of us to take sides. That some will be dead wrong and take sides against the angels is perfectly normal, and here "error has the same rights as truth".<sup>184</sup> As I argued last time, this is the discipline of partisans, not impartial observers, and is independent of whether or not we imagine that the lines of division mirror some fundamental dualism in human nature (Jefferson's conviction that "the terms whig and tory belong to natural as well as to civil history") or that the parties summed add up to some political or philosophically grounded whole.<sup>185</sup>

Creating lines of division is the achievement of partisanship, the heart of introducing a "power into the political world."<sup>186</sup> Great or

small, parties are not simply reflections of cleavages “there” in society any more than they adopt fully developed conceptions of justice that exist antecedent to political activity.<sup>187</sup> Democratic theory is particularly withholding when it comes to the creative facet of partisanship. Contemporary theorists prize the political inclusion of a “variety of perspectives” but pluralism per se, “according positions a hearing”, is not democratic politics. “The clash of political beliefs, and of the interests and attitudes that are likely to influence them,” which Rawls and other philosophers concede is “a normal condition of human life,”<sup>188</sup> do not spontaneously assume a form amenable to democratic debate and decision. Discordant values, opinions, issues, policies must be identified, selected, refined; it is not just a question of the range of opinions but of articulation.<sup>189</sup> Someone must create the lines of division over social aims, security, and justice.<sup>190</sup> Someone must organize Mill’s “serious conflict of opposing reasons”.<sup>191</sup> Party competition is constitutive, then; it creates a system of conflict.<sup>192</sup> It “stages the battle”. That is, partisans do. Attempting to capture this, Maurice Duverger used language that moves back and forth between metaphors of natural and artistic creation: parties crystallize, coagulate, synthesize, smooth down and mold. Creativity in politics is

rarely a subject of political theory, and then it is identified with founding moments; constitutional design; higher law-making; transformative social movements. Not with “normal politics”.<sup>193</sup>

Partisanship is the ordinary not (ordinarily) extraordinary locus of political creativity.<sup>194</sup> (And the agency, finally, of extraordinary change.)

## **7. Conclusion:**

For political scientists in the grip of electoral analysis and prediction, the significance of partisanship is plain. I have tried to work out its significance for political theory -- its value such that we can flip the common sense view that partisans support parties, which is true. In yesterday's lecture I advanced moments of appreciation of parties: regulated rivalry, governing, and a stripped down philosophical defense in which parties are deliberating agents and deliberative arenas.<sup>195</sup> Partisanship is necessary to realize the value of parties. We may not admire partisans, but democracy benefits from them. Today I flipped perspectives and offered a moment of appreciation for parties as “carriers” of partisanship. I have offered a defense of partisanship as a political identity set off from others. Inclusiveness, comprehensiveness, compromisingness are dispositions vital to political pluralism. The expectation that parties are always just parts and the task of shaping a system

of conflict make party id *the* morally distinctive political identity of representative democracy.

Why aren't political theorists busy connecting the practice of democratic citizenship with partisanship? Deliberation with party conflict? A decline of partisanship with less engagement and less deliberation? That is another story, explainable in part by the internal vicissitudes of academic theory and in part, of course, by events.

For if antipartisanship were simply of the moment, it might be forgiven just now, when provoked in part by the correlation between partisanship and religious observance, partisans seem to take being on the side of the angels literally. On this view, party officials and activists diverge from each element of the moral distinctiveness of party id: they (one or both parties) want to destroy the other as an effective and legitimate opposition; they view themselves as the nation, not a part; compromise even with fellow partisans is not in their repertoire; intransigence is a virtue that trumps getting the public business done. Without conceding these points, (and I don't), they don't apply to my ordinary partisans. Nor do they make my characterization an idealization, since the articles I have proposed are actual not just conceivable. In any case, extremism and polarization are not grounds for repressing, eliminating, or circumventing parties and

partisanship and prizing Independence. That *would* be a hopeless idealization, and a misguided abandonment of the distinctive political identity of representative democracy. What is needed is not more Independence but more and better partisanship.

I'll end with the simple thought that partiality and disagreement are inescapable and political groups organized in opposition to one another are irrepressible. But parties in representative democracy are not, and neither is partisanship. Between high minded disapproval on the one hand, and taking parties and partisanship for granted on the other, we are liable to lose sight of the achievement.

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<sup>1</sup> Judicial nominations are a key example of a framework designed for institutional, branch checking and balancing at least partly transformed into a framework in which parties do that work – depending on divided/unified government and on the cohesiveness and polarization of parties. That under present circumstances “partisan” is a term of abuse is ironic; this essay is an attempt to understand why it is an enduring invective.

<sup>2</sup> Stevens, dissenting *Clingman v. Beaver*, 544 U.S. (2005) at 13.

<sup>3</sup> Citizenship is the most important political identity but it is not exclusive to democracy. It would be possible to work out, though I have not, the way in which the defining characteristics I attribute to partisanship derive from democratic citizenship.

<sup>4</sup> Giovanni Sartori, *Parties and Party Systems* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976) at 77.

<sup>5</sup> Dissent in *Rutan et al v. Republican Party of Illinois* 497 U.S. 62 at 106.

<sup>6</sup> Since political leadership needs to be renewed, and since the ritual of democratic elections as currently understood require political parties, the state provides (or guarantees) parties: Richard S. Katz and Peter Mair, “Changing Models of Party Organization and Party Democracy: The Emergence of the Cartel Party”, *Party Politics* Vol. 1 no. 1 (1995): 5-28 at 22.

<sup>7</sup> My concern is parties and partisanship not democracy tout court. From the 19<sup>th</sup> century to the present there are several strains of antidemocratic thought based on the incapacity and irrationality of citizens, to which “elite democracy” is one response.

<sup>8</sup> Milkes at 3.

<sup>9</sup> Frank Sarouf, “Extra-Legal Political Parties in Wisconsin” *48 APSR* 692 (1954) at 692, discussing American attitudes toward parties.

<sup>10</sup> “Politics as a Vocation”, p. 108.

<sup>11</sup> John Dunn, “Situating Democratic Political Accountability” in Adam Przeworski, Susan C. Stokes, Bernard Manin, ed. *Democracy, Accountability, and Representation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999) , p. 336. Aldrich makes this point about contemporary parties but without the negativity: parties comprise office-seekers; those with the resources they need – benefit seekers; and activists: voters

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“are not part of the political party at all, even if they identify strongly with the party and consistently support its candidates”, p. 21.

<sup>12</sup> Schattschneider, *Party Government*, p. 134.

<sup>13</sup> John McCain – a scheme by which both parties conspire to stay in office by selling the country to the highest bidder. Cited in Kevin Phillips, *Wealth and Democracy* (New York: Broadway Books, 2002 ) at 325.

<sup>14</sup> Michael E. McGerr, *The Decline of Popular Politics: The American North, 1865-1928* (New York: Oxford, 1986) , p. 17.

<sup>15</sup> Disch at 111. The best recent discussion of turnout is Mark N. Franklin, *Voter Turnout and the Dynamics of Electoral Competition in Established Democracies since 1945* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004). His object is to rebut “civic virtue” and political disaffection explanations for low turnout. As the title says, he traces turnout in part to parties and the character of elections, but also to cohort demographics and whether young voters are habituated to voting. Frances Fox Piven and Richard A. Cloward in *Why Americans Still Don't Vote* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2000) at 24ff. “Parties themselves were important agents of electoral constriction” at 29. One calculation is the risk to incumbent officeholders of mobilizing voters who are not partisans. Steven E. Schier, *By Invitation Only: The Rise of Exclusive Politics in the United States* (University of Pittsburgh Press, 2000) at 7; 1. Alan Wolfe argues that the most compelling reason for parties is that they activate people so that they express their needs, and provide a vehicle for helping them obtain their needs (private communication). For a discussion of how critical habituation of young voters is, and the parties’ abandonment of mobilization of young voters, and the potentially dramatic consequences of mobilization on account of the “generational effect” see Franklin, p. 216.

<sup>16</sup> Fiorina, cited in Hacker and Pierson, p. 43

<sup>17</sup> Martin P. Wattenberg, *The Decline of American Political Parties: 1952-1992* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994) at 48; John Kenneth White and Philip John Davies, *Political Parties and the Collapse of the Old Orders* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1998) at 8. On revitalization see 71. Opinion polls suggest that confidence levels in political parties lie at the bottom of the scale, lower than any other secondary association. 42.6% of respondents express “very little” and only 3.8% “a great deal” of confidence in them No. 481 V. Hodgkinson, M. Weitzman, and the Gallop Organization, *Giving and Volunteering in the United States*, 1996 edition (Washington, D.C. Independent Sector, 1996). On depressing politics and information costs see John Dunn, *The Cunning of Unreason*, at 93. For a fuller discussion of contemporary antipartyism see Rosenblum, “Post-Party Depression”; “The Anxiety of Influence”, and “Correcting the System”.

<sup>18</sup> Cited in see Lisa Jane Disch, *The Tyranny of the Two Party System* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002) at 25-6. Ray La Raja and Sidney M. Milkis point out that in McConnell v. FEC “the Supreme Court’s majority scorned” parties; “political parties were blithely viewed as the mere creatures of candidates and special interests, not as collective organizations with a past and a future, 771-776 at 774.

<sup>19</sup> Morris Fiorina, “Extremist Voices” at 405. The non-policy aspect of public distaste is the theme of John R. Hibbing and Elizabeth Theiss-Morse, *Stealth Democracy: Americans’ Beliefs about how Government should Work*. Fiorina addresses the Hibbing Theiss-Morse thesis in “Parties, Participation, and Representation in America: Old Theories Face New Realities”, *Political Science: The State of the Discipline*, ed. Ira Katznelson and Helen V. Milner (New York: W.W. Norton, 2002): 511-541 at 538.

<sup>20</sup> Cited in Eldon Eisenach, *The Next Religious Establishment: National Identity and Political Theology in Post-Protestant America* (Rowman & Littlefield: New York, 2000) at 116. A powerful rebuttal to political disaffection is Mark Franklin, *Voter Turnout*...

<sup>21</sup> By illusion I do not mean that swing voters – Independents and weak partisans – do not decide certain elections – only that unlike partisanship that is not collective strategy or individual intent, a point to which I return. It is certainly the case that neither party (and the Democrats in particular today) can win national elections by mobilizing only their base. On one estimate, Democratic candidates must capture “upwards of 60% of the moderate vote”. William Galston and Elaine Kamarck, “The Politics of Polarization”, Third Way report, 2005 at :www.third-way.com. Note that by moderation they mean Independents and moderates.

<sup>22</sup> *Nader v. Schaffer* at 25.

<sup>23</sup> The initiative was instigated by Tom Campbell, loser in the Republican Senate primary to Christian right elements. “While political scientists may disagree on the question of whether the political system is benefited when parties are more or less distinct or polarized, it is apparent that the voters have sided with

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less partisanship in adopting Proposition 198”; District Court at 1302. In *Clingman v. Beaver*, the majority invoked Oklahoma’s asserted interest in “preserving the political parties as viable and identifiable interest groups, [and]insuring that the results of primary elections...accurately reflect the voting of the party members”, p. 2.

<sup>24</sup> Fiorina et al, *Culture Wars?*, p. 103; 107. Jacob S. Hacker and Paul Pierson, “*Off Center: The Republican Revolution and the Erosion of American Democracy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), p. 218.

<sup>25</sup> Samuel Issacharoff, “The Role of Political Parties in Partisan Competition”, 100 *Columbia Law Review* 3 at??? (2000). On the two sorts of choice embodied in closed and blanket primaries see Dennis F. Thompson, *Just Elections* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2002), pp. 87ff. For a discussion of the causal relation between state laws requiring party registration and voter party identification (and between open or blanket primaries and Independence) see Barry C. Burden and Steven Greene, “Party Attachments and State Election Laws”, *Political Research Quarterly* v. 53 no. 1 (Mar, 2000): 63-76.

<sup>26</sup> Bruce E. Cain and Elisabeth R. Gerber, “California’s Blanket Primary Experiment”, Independents were not particularly supportive of the measure, p. 47 and their conclusion that when it came to level of participation the change had modest or nonexistent effects, p. 344 in Cain and Gerber, *Voting and the Political Fault Line: California’s Experiment with the Blanket Primary* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002). They add to the considerations whether voters could understand the significance or consequences of this institutional change; even political scientists had divergent estimates of its effect.

<sup>27</sup> John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, revised edition, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999), 195-96; *JAF*, 118.

<sup>28</sup> Mary Follett was a perspicacious Progressive who warned that political machines and special interests knew how to control direct primaries, initiative and referenda.

<sup>29</sup> Why on its own terms is the politics of difference anti-partisan? For one thing, difference demands the politics of presence. The distinct perspective or voice must be preserved, not incorporated within an umbrella party, and not “captured”. Of course, the politics of difference might conduce to system of multiple parties and proportional representation. But characteristically, the politics of difference favors nonelectoral groups – advocacy groups and movements -- with presumptively stronger and more meaningful connections to supporters than political parties it is reasonable to think that the transformation from a politics of difference to the identity politics of partisanship is a loosening of the former.

<sup>30</sup> Nancy L. Rosenblum, “Political Parties as Membership Groups”, 100 *Columbia Law Review* 3 (April 2000): 813-844.

<sup>31</sup> Robert E. Goodin and John S. Dryzek, “Deliberative Impacts: The Macro-political Uptake of Mini-publics”, p. 5 (forthcoming in *Politics and Society*) on file with the author.

<sup>32</sup> Jesse Macy, *Political Parties in the United States 1846-1961* (New York: Arno Press, 1974) at 282.

<sup>33</sup> Schattschneider, *Party Government* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, & Winston, [1942] 1967), p. 10,

<sup>34</sup> Anthony Downs, *An Economic Theory of Democracy*, 1957 at 34. Still, the definition most commonly used by American social scientists is Schumpeter’s; see John Medearis, *Joseph Schumpeter’s Two Theories of Democracy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001), p. 2. I want to note that adoption of Schumpeter’s formal definition does not suggest that political scientists also adopt Schumpeter’s elite theory, which can be variously understood: as aristocratic or Tory democracy; as a wholesale distinction between the capacities of elites and the incapacity of the masses (the individual as infantile, primate, affective); or as a model of the rational behavior of politicians in certain structured electoral environments. Schumpeter’s own difficulty identifying an elite in democratic societies underscores the difficulties with this approach. To my mind, a similar problem plagues Manin’s account of democratic election as “aristocratic”. Confounding aristocracy, elite, and selection is misleading. Particularly so if we read Schumpeter to say that democracy is “acceptance of leadership” such that there is little distinction between a democratic process at work in an autocracy and an autocratic process at work in a democracy (Medearis makes this point at 129.).

<sup>35</sup> Cohen, “Procedure and Substance...” at 412. Tocqueville is probably the most important early voice for democracy as a way of life –as the spread of equality that transforms social life.

<sup>36</sup> Judith Shklar describes Alexander Hamilton as the first advocate of the scientific study of voters in “Alexander Hamilton and the Language of Political Science”, in Stanley Hoffman and Dennis F. Thompson, ed. *Redeeming American Political Thought* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998): “an informal, demystifying, scientific, and individualizing political science is built into the rituals of electoral

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politics and is in fact a part of their structure”, at 11. And, for political science to be a science, as it now is, it must make the understanding of the individual, elementary phenomena its primary goal, and that occurs only within the cultural context of democracy”, at 12. Shklar also cites Hamilton on the “alarming indifference discoverable in the exercise of so valuable a privilege” as voting, at p. 7.

<sup>37</sup> *The American Voter* (New York: Wiley and Sons, 1960). It is “antecedent to, distinct from, and influential on individual voting decisions.” *Myth* at 10.

<sup>38</sup> Green, Palmquist, and Schickler, *Partisan Hearts and Minds: Political Parties and the Social Identity of Voters* (New Haven: Yale, 2002) at 166.

<sup>39</sup> Joshua Freedman, “This is Your Brain on Politics”, *The New York Times*, January 18, 2005 at A 25; Benedict Carey, “A Shocker: Partisan Thought is Unconscious”, *New York Times*, January 24, 2006 at D1.

<sup>40</sup> Or, less vividly, “the no majority realignment” Ladd. Paul Allen Beck, “Changing American Party Coalitions” in John C. Green and Daniel M. Shea, ed., *The State of the Parties* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 1999), 28-49 at 39. There are fewer avowed partisans and their commitment to their party is less intense. The declining ability of party ID to structure elections is also central to discussions of split-ticket voting and the prolonged period of divided government from the mid 1950s to 2002. Samuel Popkin, *The Reasoning Voter* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1991) at 68 shows that parties tend to explain divided government in candidate-centered terms, ie. congressional incumbency and poor campaigners whereas political science sees the root cause of divided government as divided views about the parties: “people vote differently for Congress and President because they associate the two offices with different problems and issues, and they rate the GOP higher on issues with which the president deals.” Also Barry C. Burden, *Why Americans Split Their Tickets: Campaigns, Competition, and Divided Government* (forthcoming, University of Michigan Press). Burden refutes both the partisan decline thesis and its explanatory value for split-ticket voting and divided government.

<sup>41</sup> Independents are estimated to have increased to 33% in 1996 from 23% of voters in 1952. Center for Political Studies 1996 cited by Schier at 25. For lack of persuasive explanations for Independence, however it is coded and interpreted, see *Myth* at 167-8. See too Cheng-shan Frank Lieu and Laura Lucas, “The Political Independent: Cross-Pressures and the Rejection of Party Identification” APSA 2005, unpublished paper on file with the author, p. 2.

<sup>42</sup> National Election Survey. The National Annenberg Election Survey of 2004 just released party ID by state available at: [http://www.annenbergpublicpolicycenter.org/naes/2005\\_03\\_party-identification-by-state\\_02-15\\_pr.pdf](http://www.annenbergpublicpolicycenter.org/naes/2005_03_party-identification-by-state_02-15_pr.pdf). There are comparable trends in other advanced democracies, see Clarke and Stewart, p. 363.

<sup>43</sup> Recent evidence is that the growth in the “independent” category is mainly of the “leaning” variety. Luke Keele and James A. Stimson, “Polarization and Mass Response: The Growth of Independence in American Politics”, APSA 2005, unpublished paper on file with the author, p. 12. “For the reader who is keeping score, the picture is confused”, p. 22. Recent evidence also shows that more partisans are “strong partisans”. Strong partisan was the modal category in both 2000 and 2004 – marking the only times this has happened since the NES began measuring party identification in 1952. Donald Baumer and Howard Gold, “Party Images and Partisan Resurgence” APSA 2005, unpublished paper on file with the author. Morris Fiorina with Samuel Abrams and Jeremy Pope argues in *Culture War? The Myth of a Polarized America* (New York: Pearson/Longman: 2005) that variation in the importance of partisanship across elections must take account of the partisanship (extremist/centrist) of candidates, at 91.

<sup>44</sup> *Myth* at 2; 4. And, “what is to be explained is not a pattern of belief, behavior, or commitment. What is to be explained is a questionnaire response” at 200. See too Steven Greene, “The Psychological Sources of Partisan-Leaning Independence”, *American Politics Quarterly*, Vol. 28 no. 4 (October 2000): 511-537 at 511. Other scholars point out that the distribution of partisanship in 1996 looks much as it did in 1972, and that the proportion of the voting public identified with the two major parties was roughly the same as well. Green, Palmquist, and Schickler at 14.

<sup>44</sup> They conclude that as long as Independents behave like partisans, it doesn’t matter what we call them; *Myth*, cited in Greene at 513.

<sup>45</sup> A. James Reichley, “The Future of the American Two-Party System After 1994” in John C. Green and Daniel M. Shea, ed., *The State of the Parties* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 1996) 11-24 at 11.

<sup>46</sup> *Partisan Hearts and Minds* at 85.

- <sup>47</sup> Fitting this description is Samuel Popkin, *The Reasoning Voter*, subtitled “Communication and Persuasion in Presidential Campaigns.” Byron E. Shafer and William J.M. Claggett, *The Two Majorities: The Issue Context of Modern American Politics* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995) .
- <sup>48</sup> Henry Adams, “The ‘Independents’ in the Canvass”, *North American Review* 123 (October, 1876): 426-467) at 426.
- <sup>49</sup> Adams at 428.
- <sup>50</sup> The “intractability and psychological roots” of lack of confidence in the electoral system is such that it is unlikely to be repaired by campaign finance reform, cf. Nathaniel Persily and Kelli Lammie, “Perceptions of Corruption and Campaign Finance: When Public Opinion Determines Constitutional Law, 153 *U. Pa. L. Rev.* 119: 173 (2004). On consequential evaluations of parties see Steven J. Rosenstone and John Mark Hansen, *Mobilization, Participation, and Democracy in America* (New York: Macmillan, 1993 at 151ff.
- <sup>51</sup> This is less trenchant than antipartyism,. Wattenberg for example attributes neutrality to voters’ perception that that parties are irrelevant for solving problems and are inconsequential for government outcomes, at 88-9. Wattenberg, at ix. Of course, indifference to a major institution implies a negative evaluation, however elusive; the link is implicit in Wattenberg’s “decision to title his studies of declining voter loyalty as portraits of declining political parties rather than declining political partisanship; John Frenreis at 389. Frenreis de-links at 390-1.
- <sup>52</sup> Indeed no real or imaginable partisan slice of the political universe is worthy of identification.
- <sup>53</sup> I am grateful to Dennis Thompson for suggesting this point.
- <sup>54</sup> Diana Owen and Jack Dennis, “Anti-partyism in the USA and support for Ross Perot”, 29 *European Journal of Political Research* (April 1996): 383-400 at 389. “I always vote for the person who I think is best, regardless of what party they belong to cited in John Kenneth White, “Reviving the Political Parties: What Must be Done?” in John K. White and John C. Green, ed., *The Politics of Ideas: Intellectual Challenges to the Party After 1992* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield ???): 4-27 at 5.
- <sup>55</sup> The non-believer population numbers 29.4 million or 14% of Americans, up from 8% in 1990. (Interestingly, the “no religion” cohort has one of the highest percentage of “independent” political identity – 43%.) “Survey Indicates More Americans Without Faith” [www.atheists.org/flash.line/atheist4.htm](http://www.atheists.org/flash.line/atheist4.htm) posted ovember 22, 2001.
- <sup>56</sup> Lincoln Steffens, *Letters* Vol. I 1889-1919 (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1938) at 106. Mugwump is slang for the Republicans who in 1884 deserted their party nominee, James G. Blaine, to vote for the Democratic nominee, Grover Cleveland.
- <sup>57</sup> Clarke and Stewart, in Skocpol, Theda and Morris Fiorina, eds. 1999. *Civic Engagement in American Democracy*. Washington, D.C. and New York: Brookings Institution Press and the Russell Sage Foundation: 395-425 p. 368.
- <sup>58</sup> Cited in Michael Sandel, *Democracy’s Discontent: America in Search of a Public Philosophy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press , 1996) at 273.
- <sup>59</sup> For a refutation of the “imaginary” yeoman “independence” re. voting – susceptibility of those with taxable property to bribery, see Edmund S. Morgan, *Inventing the People* (New York: Norton, 1988), Morgan, pp. 158ff. GET AND USE
- <sup>60</sup> William Galston, *Liberal Purposes*, p. 222.
- <sup>61</sup> On extension of the suffrage top-down rather than pleas from the bottom see Morgan, 169ff. See 176ff for a discussion of elections as the playful inversion of deference, a “carnival”.
- <sup>62</sup> Judith N. Shklar, *American Citizenship: The Quest for Inclusion* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991) at 68; 66.
- <sup>63</sup> Cited in Carol Weisbrod, *The Boundaries of Utopia* (New York: Pantheon, 1980) at 24. See too Sarah Song, “Majority Norms, Multiculturalism, and Gender Equality” (unpublished paper on file with the author.)
- <sup>64</sup> McCormick at 209. Some distributive politics are not divisive but universalistic; see Kenneth Shepsle and Barry Weingast, “Political Preferences for the Pork Barrel”, *American Journal of Political Science*, vol. 25 no. 1 (February 1981): 96-111.
- <sup>65</sup> Alexander Keyssar, *The Right to Vote* (New York: Basic Books, 2000) at 121.
- <sup>66</sup> 497 U.S. 62 (1990) at 105, 103. Scalia did not observe or did not have confidence in activists, “amateur democrats”. He had another positive word to say for patronage: “Patronage..has been a powerful means of achieving the social and political integration of excluded groups. By supporting and ultimately dominating a particular party machine, racial and ethnic minorities – on the basis of their politics rather than their race

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or ethnicity – acquired the patronage awards the machine had power to confer. The abolition of patronage...prevents groups that have only recently obtained political power, especially blacks, from following this path to economic and social advancement” at 108.

<sup>67</sup>James Albert Woodburn, *Political Parties and Party Problems in the United States* (New York: Putnam, 1924) at 527.

<sup>68</sup>Henry Adams at 427.

<sup>69</sup>Hamilton, Federalist #35, *The Federalist* (New York: Modern Library, ???) at 214. Bernard Manin has argued that election is by its nature “aristocratic”. This did not always mean Madison’s refining and enlarging public views; or Jefferson’s fear that simple distance and inaccessibility would CREATE a political aristocracy. Rather than an elite (with common ties and characteristics), Manin argues that candidacies and selection build in some sort of “standing out on the part of elected officials, though the criteria are culturally relative and changeable: social status, wealth, personality and superiority over contenders. This falls short of the ordinary understanding of “aristocratic”, of course; he applies it to any election in contrast to random lot. *The Principles of Representative Government* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

<sup>70</sup>Excluded from universal suffrage are the demented, children, and controversially, criminals. Progressive antipartisanship and its contemporary counterparts are clearly distinguishable from elite theory in which all voters -- the masses -- are inherently manipulable, emotionally arousable, even delusive, and without the capacity for political judgment – an army of children waiting to be led.

<sup>71</sup>We have learned a lot about the social networks that insulate individuals from exposure to conflicting political views, and about political conformity or avoidance as the price of social harmony. See for example the empirical and experimental work by Diana Mutz in *Hearing the Other Side* (Cambridge University Press, forthcoming). This work is particularly good on the social forces that create homogeneous networks. Commenting on the tension between the conditions that encourage political participation and face to face exposure to conflicting political views (which she calls deliberation), Mutz writes: “We want the democratic citizen to be enthusiastically politically active and strongly partisan, yet not to be surrounded by like-minded others”, p. 125; I take exception to the reference to appreciation of “strongly partisan” here – the predominant desire is for citizens to be participatory but Independent.

<sup>72</sup>Independence here refers to a common democratic ideology and not to the conditions of independence proposed by social scientists and sometimes defined as noncommunication. The issue here is not the intelligence of democracy -- which is an answer to individual competence -- but the dependence/subordination of partisan voters.

<sup>73</sup>M. I. Ostrogorski, *Democracy and the Party System in the United States* (New York: Arno Press, 1974) at 216-17.

<sup>74</sup>Howard Penniman, *The American Political Process* (NJ: Van Nostrand, 1962) at 38 cited in Bruce Keith, David Magleby, Candice Nelson, Elizabeth Orr, Mark Westlye and Raymond Wolfinger, *The Myth of the Independent Voter* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992) at 38-39.

<sup>75</sup>Steffens, *Autobiography* at 136.

<sup>76</sup>Bryce, *The American Commonwealth* (London: MacMillan, 1889) at 321.

<sup>77</sup>This and other speculative characteristics are in Jack Dennis, “Political Independence in America, Part I: On Being an Independent Partisan Supporter”, *British Journal of Political Science*, vol. 18 no. 1 (January, 1988): 77-109.

<sup>78</sup>Dalton, McAllister, and Wattenberg at 60. This stereotype of partisanship suggests why so many of my students proudly declare themselves “Independent”. To which we can add one more encouragement. The sources of party id are not well understood, but early “socialization” in the family is thought to be most influential. Political participation as an enactment of inherited identity is liable to be seen as an acute personal failing by those young people for whom independence is a global psychological goal. If party id is *given*, like social identity, then Independence is not the original position, and declarations of Independence are seen as thoughtful and personally meaningful. This dynamic may produce different outcomes as parents are increasingly nonpartisan, and do not pass on partisanship, or are Independent and pass on that pose.

<sup>79</sup>For standard passion vs. reason attacks on partisanship see Federalist \$49 and 50.

<sup>80</sup>*Myth* at 24.

<sup>81</sup>“The decisions of the American electorate appear almost wholly free of ideological coloration”, cited in *Partisan Hearts and Minds* at 214.

<sup>82</sup>Cited in *Partisan Hearts and Minds* at 26.

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<sup>83</sup> Sartori at 329.

<sup>84</sup> On the difference between preference and attitudes using psychological literature see Larry C. Bartels, "Democracy with Attitudes", unpublished paper on file with the author. Attitudes do not have the global coherence or consistency of preferences as defined by democratic theory. Most important, attitudes are context dependent and susceptible to "framing". The characteristics of attitudes and implication for democracy is critical, on this view; they cannot play the role of preferences required by preference-based theories of democracy. The article cites the literature questioning whether voters have preferences, whether they have the properties of global coherence and consistency required by these theories, and whether they are consistently associated with objective states in the world, or inherently dependent on how we talk about relevant alternatives, p. 6.

<sup>85</sup> Morris P. Fiorina, *Retrospective Voting in American National Elections* (New Haven: Yale, 1981). Or on prospective expectations of party competence in securing benefits, based on past performance. Christopher Achen, "Social Psychology, Demographic Variables, and Linear Regression: Breaking the Iron Triangle in Voting Research", *Political Behavior* 14: 194-211 (1992). Or prospective performance based on "good types" ie. sharing issue preferences, integrity, skilled, see James Fearon, "Electoral Accountability and the Control of Politicians: Selecting Good Types versus Sanctioning Poor Performance" in Przeworski et al, pp. 55-97. Jane Mansbridge has pointed out the significance of these accounts for orthodox notions of accountability. The retrospective view is not backward looking, as accountability is normally conceived; it encourages "entrepreneurial" representatives who must anticipate voters' reactions; instead of predicting voters' future preferences representatives will try to discern interests; a premium is put on communication and the quality of education in the process as a whole, including the functioning of parties and media, in "Rethinking Representation", *APSR* Vol. 97 no. 4 (November 2003): 515-528 at 516ff.

<sup>86</sup> For a discussion of limited information and a good survey of the field see Samuel L. Popkin, *The Reasoning Voter*. at 7; 43. Revisionist conclusions are not necessarily sanguine, though. If party id is volatile and changes with issues, then it adds little to our understanding. And if it is stable, it is attributed to cognitive defenses against discordant information. Partisanship "is not merely a running tally of political assessments, but a pervasive dynamic force shaping citizens' perceptions of, and reactions to, the political world." Bartels, "Beyond the Running Tally" at 138.

<sup>87</sup> An interesting question is the assessment voters make of their own level of knowledge. Ackerman argues that the normal voter "is under no illusions about the quality of reflection that lies behind her ballot", and that "voting decisions do not measure up to their own standards of deliberateness" at 241ff.

<sup>88</sup> James Fearon, "Electoral Accountability and the Control of Politicians: Selecting Good Types versus Sanctioning Poor Performance", in Adam Przeworski, Bernard Manin, and Susan C. Stokes, *Democracy, Accountability, and Representation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

<sup>89</sup> Christopher H. Achen and Larry M. Bartels, APSA Boston, August, 2002 at 6. For a review of the literature on the limitations of voter ignorance normatively and empirically see William Galston, "Political Knowledge, Political Engagement, and Civic Education", *Annual Review of Political Science* (2001): 217-34. Knowledge helps citizens understand their interests as individuals and members of groups; increases the consistency of views across issues and across time; enables them to understand political events and integrate new information into an existing framework, among other effects including increased trust and promoting participation p. 223.

<sup>90</sup> For a discussion of this idea in Downsian democratic theory and correctives of the sort discussed in Rosenblum, "Correcting the System", see Thomas Christiano, *The Rule of the Many*, pp. 108ff.

<sup>91</sup> Bartels "Homer Simpson Gets a Tax Cut"?

<sup>92</sup> Angus Campbell, Philip Converse, Warren Miller, and Donald Stokes, *The American Voter* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1960) at 143ff.

<sup>93</sup> *Myth* at 166-7; 41-55.

<sup>94</sup> James Albert Woodburn, *Political Parties and Party Problems in the United States* (New York: Putnam, 1924) at 521.

<sup>95</sup> See Shafer and Claggett at 185 ff.. Or more likely to be moved by attraction or aversion to candidates on the basis of personality and direct communication.

<sup>96</sup> Schattschneider, *Semi-Sovereign People*, p. 135. I shouldn't neglect critical accounts of political education by party leadership and the quality of communication even with their own partisan supporters. To say nothing of media effects, including news as "a cynical and sometimes arbitrary filter intruding itself between politicians and the public", in Bartels, "Campaign Quality" at 16. . On representatives and

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communication in particular see Jane Mansbridge, "Rethinking Representation" *APSR* 97 no. 4 (November 2003): 515-528. For a review of the political science literature on the kind and limits of information and the limited effects of new information on electoral campaigns, see Dennis F. Thompson, "Two Concepts of Corruption: Making Campaigns Safe for Democracy", *George Washington Law Review* vol 73 no. 5/6 (August 2005): 1036-69 especially 1050ff.

<sup>97</sup> The phrase is Helene Landemore's in a dissertation in progress, "Democratic Intelligence".

<sup>98</sup> Hibbing and Thiess-Morse (pp. 134ff).

<sup>99</sup> *Partisan Hearts and Minds* at 52; 204. This challenges Aldrich's notion that there is no longer a party in the electorate because the party is an ever-more distant object "out there", pp. 167ff.

<sup>100</sup> *Partisan Hearts and Minds* at 133-4; 137. Independence as political identity provides a caution about the difficulty of creating partisans. If we take the idea of identification as a partisan seriously, it may not be in the capacity of parties to increase either the number of voters who avow party id or the intensity of partisanship. At least not by the ordinary political activities party leaders use to mobilize voters in the course of election campaigns. Cultivating partisans is a different business. Party id rooted in stereotypes of the sort of people who are Democrats and Republicans is not malleable, and the party's ability to alter these perceptions is limited.

<sup>101</sup> Michael Walzer, *Passion and Politics*, p. 12.

<sup>102</sup> Green, Palmquist, and Schickler point out that party switching from Democrat to Republican and vice versa is rare; the rate increases if one adds in switches to and from Independence, "creating the misleading impression that party attachments in the United States are subject to frequent change" at 167. This has been challenged. Galston and Kamarck note that 38% of self-identified Republicans and 22% of Democrats report that they once thought of themselves as partisans of the other party, at 50. A timely example of this is African-American partisans; political scientists ask whether weakening Democratic partisan identification among these voters is a signal of future party realignment see Jeffrey Graynaviski and Melissa Harris Lacewell, "Shifting Alliances: Are black voters ready to rethink allegiance to the Democratic Party?", APSA 2005, unpublished paper on file with the author. They use as counterparts the realignment of Southern white voters in the 1960s and of Catholics during the 1980s; this illustrates the questionable assumption of a direct translation of social identity to partisan identity. The large-scale, long-term exception is the switch from Democrat to Republican of southern conservative voters, "cross-party replacement" from the 1970s to 2000.

<sup>103</sup> Clarke and Stewart, p. 371.

<sup>104</sup> Some analyses of negative attack ads emphasize that they "selectively [depress] turnout" and generate distrust in the process. But their function, or their functional equivalent, for partisans is clear. Cited in Lijphart, p. 10. Political science also indicates that negative ads can be informative; the main complaint is against misleading and manipulative ads that candidates and parties are unable to respond to quickly and effectively, cf. Thompson, "Two Concepts of Corruption" at 1059ff. For a nuanced analysis of the literature on effects of negative advertising see Larry M. Bartels, "Campaign Quality: Standards for Evaluation, Benchmarks for Reform" in *Campaign Reform: Insights and Evidence*, ed. Larry M. Bartels and Lynn Vavreck (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2000): 1-61 at 10ff and 54. . On the other side, Roderick Hart's textual analysis of speeches presents evidence of lack of definition. He observes "low insistence" scores as a feature of campaign rhetoric: "That quality produces the openness many find so frustrating in politics – the sudden renegotiations of just-completed compacts, the unsteady search for something agreeable to say, the impertinent amalgamations and transmogrifications". "Low insistence" scores mean that politicians negotiate the intellectual terrain moment by moment." They suggest a "difficult pluralism", not distinct party identity. Hart at 114. He observes that the convention acceptance speech is long, cautious, and busy with the practical, concrete, and numerical: Clinton's speech "reads like a political road map, with each sentence identifying the pressure group likely to be offended by the idea it embraces." Hart at 147.

<sup>105</sup> Walzer, *Politics and Passion*, p. 93.

<sup>106</sup> Alan Wolfe, "The Tyranny of the Undecided Voter", *The New York Times*, Sunday, October 22, 2000, WK15.

<sup>107</sup> The "real temptation...created wherever a few thousand voters become detached from the regular parties and are placed in a condition to be manipulated and thrown from one party to the other", has been a worry. Jesse Macy, *Political Parties in the United States 1846-1961* (New York: Arno Press, 1974) at 170.

<sup>108</sup> Cited in Walzer, p. 128.

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- <sup>109</sup> Nancy L. Rosenblum, *Thoreau's Political Writings* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).
- <sup>110</sup> Henry David Thoreau, "Resistance to Civil Government" in Nancy L. Rosenblum, *Political Writings* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).
- <sup>111</sup> Woodburn at 521.
- <sup>112</sup> Ostrogorski at 409; 411.
- <sup>113</sup> Shklar, *American Citizenship* at 60.
- <sup>114</sup> Stevens' dissent in *Clingman v. Beaver* opposes restrictions on primary voting: "limiting the opportunities of independent-minded voters to associate in the electoral arena to enhance their political effectiveness as a group..." at 14. Independent legislators may also have "swing" power, though they are usually de facto members of one party.
- <sup>115</sup> 60.3% of the voting eligible population voted, the most since 1980. United States Elections Project at George Mason University: <http://elections.gmu.edu>
- <sup>116</sup> Steffens, *Letters* at 108.
- <sup>117</sup> That is, increasing the probability that presidential elections would be settled in the House of Representatives, making Congress the President's primary constituency. Lowi at 10ff. For a Madisonian critique of parliamentary systems as camouflaging divisions and enabling "tyranny by factional majority" see Ackerman, pp. 255ff.
- <sup>118</sup> *Semi-Sovereign People*, p. 58.
- <sup>119</sup> Henry Adams on Independents in the 1872 campaign at 429.
- <sup>120</sup> Theodore Roosevelt, *American Ideals* (New York: Putnam, 1907) at 39; 59-60.
- <sup>121</sup> Stickney at 32-3.
- <sup>122</sup> Burke, "Appeal" at 52. "Thoughts on the Cause of Present Discontents" in Gunn at 201-2.
- <sup>123</sup> Jesse Macy at 282.
- <sup>124</sup> Fiorina is one of many who defends parties as blunt but irreplaceable instruments of democratic accountability in "The Decline of Collective Responsibility in American Politics", *Daedalus*, vol. 109 no. 3 (Summer, 1980): 25-45 at 27. A Progressive theme was alternative mechanisms of popular accountability and sanctioning, a subject taken up today by "republican" theorists among others, cf. Pettit; McCormick; See Rosenblum, "Correcting the System", unpublished ms.
- <sup>125</sup> Separation of powers is one factor. Another is divided government, which exacerbates the problem of legislative and executive branches contesting to take credit or lay blame. Parties without cohesion make collective responsibility difficult too. Unified government with ideologically defined parties satisfies the conditions of "responsible party government". Against collective responsibility is the argument that there is "a causal relation between 'nonresponsible' parties and government stability", that is, cross-sectional and non-ideological parties, see Gerald M. Pomper, "Toward a More Responsible Two-Party System? What, Again?", *Journal of Politics* vol. 33 no. 4 (November, 1971): 916-940 at 918. This is a fairly common claim: Broad-based parties "supply an essential coherence and flexibility to the American political scene," Justice Powell, 450 U.S. 107 at 133
- <sup>126</sup> For a discussion of recent Republican policies designed to avoid accountability see Jacob S. Hacker and Paul Pierson, *Off Center: The Republican Revolution and the Erosion of American Democracy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), p. 12ff.; 157ff.
- <sup>127</sup> For the incarnation of these difficulties see Federalist #50, pp. 332-4. GET AND USE.
- <sup>128</sup> Larry D. Kramer, "Putting the Politics Back into the Political Safeguards of Federalism", *Columbia Law Review* 100 (1): 215-293, at 278-9. On the "successive waves of reform [that] maimed and nearly killed this system" see 280ff.
- <sup>129</sup> Schattschneider, GET.
- <sup>130</sup> An additional argument that I will call systemic is that parties and partisan participation is the most egalitarian form of participation; more so, on most theorists' views, if funding is public and private contributions and expenditures are severely curtailed.
- <sup>131</sup> There is forming majorities capable of taking action. Aldrich, p. 9.
- <sup>132</sup> Recent work by Mark Franklin argues that party id does not generate high turnout but prevents turnout from falling as much as it might in a low-turnout election, p. 164-5. When there are good reasons for voting, party id becomes less important: its importance depends on the character of elections. The principal forces for participation are whether individuals are habitual voters (determined by whether they voted in the first three elections for which they were eligible; like party id the decision to vote is established early, ie. socialization; young voters are harder to mobilize, p. 27) and whether elections are seen as important and

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competitive (close races likely to result in policy changes; party polarization). Franklin eliminates as significant causes of higher or lower turnout compulsory voting, proportional systems, measures to simplify the act of voting and lower its costs (registration; absentee ballots, weekend voting). Lowering the voter age was counterproductive, p. 213. More generally, Franklin argues for aggregate rather than individual level explanations for voter turnout. Among the arguments in this work is an additional challenge to the presumed “paradox of voting”: arguments based on individual decision-making have failed to take into account the character of the election as an independent variable. Voting has some characteristics of a collective act. Both motivated even if their vote is not necessary for victory to give their candidate a mandate. And the message of the extent to which a losing candidate has support within the electorate, p. 41-2. Uncertainty about whether all members of the coalition will vote means voting could determine an election, p. 49. They are neither misinformed nor irrational in thinking their vote has a value substantially greater than zero, p. 56. Where there is no uncertainty and outcome foregone conclusion, will not vote. Franklin also argues against the voter disaffection explanation of low turnout as well as declining civic virtue. Turnout is not something about the way people approach elections but something about how elections appear to people – their estimate of the character of an election, p. 215. In *Voter Turnout and the Dynamics of Electoral Competition in Established Democracies Since 1945* (Cambridge University Press, 2004).

<sup>133</sup> Judith Shklar, *American Citizenship: The Quest for Inclusion* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991), p. 25.

<sup>134</sup> Mutz argues that social scientists want all citizens to be partisans for participatory and cognitive reasons. I can't evaluate that judgment, but it does not hold for political theorists, who would like all citizens to be independents albeit with the interest and motivation of partisans; Mutz, p. 129. She is right that social scientists do NOT want partisan extremism, p. 136. For evidence that electoral turnout has not declined since 1972 once the figures used are not voting age population but voting eligible population see Michael P. McDonald and Samuel L. Popkin, “The Myth of the Vanishing Voter” 95 *APSR* no. 4 (December, 2001): 963-974.

<sup>135</sup> I do not argue that partisans are better citizens; the elements of good citizenship go beyond partisanship. I do argue that partisanship is the distinctive political identity of representative democracy. These articles hold for partisans in office. I discuss an ethic of partisan representation, including the article of compromisingness, in “Centrism and Extremism in American Party Politics”. That is not my subject here.

<sup>136</sup> Two-partyism is a *synonym* for the United States political system Disch, p. 63. Disch points out that political science analyses of American two-partyism, chiefly Duverger's “law” and Anthony Downs' propositions about rational voting, have given the idea authority, p. 63.

<sup>137</sup> In the United States, any group of people who have virtually the same views on political questions, the same political loyalties and identifications, is certain to be a *minority*.” So “to win national elections, even to win influence over national policies, every group must participate somehow in the politics of coalition building.” Any aggregate large enough to constitute a majority of voters is necessarily heterogeneous, with views coinciding on some questions but diverging on others. This is not to deny that each major party has the dependable support of specific segments of the population – loyalists or groups “captured” by a party because they have nowhere else to go. It is to say that “with few exceptions, each of the parties draws votes in significant numbers from every stratum of the population.” Dahl at 455; 226.

<sup>138</sup> For recent work on the decline of cleavage politics and voting in established democracies (owing to individual mobility and declining importance of face to face communication) see Franklin, p. 21. Dahl at 226. Analysts agree that the parties are less class based than they were historically. The standard view of Ramney and Kendall is “The great accomplishment of the American party system has been that it created agreement in the face of great diversity. By their cross-sectional and non-ideological character, the parties were able to encompass all groups, or at least some of every group”, cited in Gerald M. Pomper, “Toward a More Responsible Two-Party System? What, Again?”, *Journal of Politics* vol. 33 no. 4 (November, 1971): 916-940 at 918. On class and partisanship in the U.S. today see for example Larry M. Bartels, “What's the Matter with *What's the Matter with Kansas?*” suggesting that the partisan divide along class lines, insofar as it is not sectional, is within the white “working class”, with the lower economic strata dependably Democratic and that the party's losses have been concentrated in the middle- and upper-income segments of that group, p. 10-11.

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<sup>139</sup> In 1964 party id shifted from 59% of African Americans in 1960 to 86%, p. 1. For the suggestion that this may be weakening at the time when partisan id overall may be strengthening see Grynaviski and Lacewell, p. 9.

<sup>140</sup> See Russell Muirhead, Nancy L. Rosenblum, Daniel Schlozman, and Francis Shen, "Religion in the 2004 Presidential Election", in Larry J. Sabato, ed., *Divided States of America: The Slash and Burn Politics of the 2004 Election* (2005). This interpretation of polarization, propounded by James Q. Wilson in "Polarization in America: Religion and Polarization", The Tanner Lectures at Harvard University, 2005 is contested. Among the reasons: it depends on self-reporting of church attendance ie. the possibility that conservative Republicans say they go to church. Moreover, the quality of church-going in actual churches varies widely, for social and cultural more than doctrinal reasons.

<sup>141</sup> Along the dual dimensions of social liberalism/conservatism and economic liberalism/conservatism, the major parties have even been described as "coalitions of enemies", Miller, Gary and Norman Schofield. 2003. "Activists and Partisan Realignment in the United States." *American Political Science Review* 97:2 (May): 245-260 at 249. This is still true, though a process of polarization even in the electorate has been noted: "In the 1960s Republican activists were about 20% more conservative than independent voter. By 2002...they were almost 40% more conservative", in Hacker and Pierson, p. 27. Increasingly liberals and conservatives line up with Democrats and Republicans, Galston and Kamarck 3; 46 (In 1976 liberals outnumbered conservatives in the Democratic Party by less than 2 to 1; now it is almost 4 to 1; a conservative majority dominates the Republican Party). With the closer alignment of ideology and partisanship, party id is increasingly a predictor of the vote. Galston and Kamarck at 46: "Democrats are more likely to support the Democratic presidential nominee than they were thirty years ago, and Republicans to support Republicans". Galston and Kamarck also report that the New Democrats who emerged as a distinct ideological grouping in the 1990s (the authors' affiliation) has "all but disappeared" and Liberals have grown to form the single largest group within the core Democratic coalition, at 56. Even Galston and Kamarck emphasize internal heterogeneity, at 56. I interpret the source of the following comment as political distaste not analysis: "The inclusive character of parties does not seem to describe well the current Republican party, or at least the currently most vocal wing of the party". (Thompson, private communication). The clause is significant. It suggests, rightly, that there are partisans within parties.

<sup>142</sup> For a discussion of turn-out in terms of voters not as individuals divorced from any social context that would give the vote meaning other than its unitary contribution see Franklin, p. 202-3. Potential voters are not atomized by members of social networks, most importantly, of *potentially winning electoral coalitions*, who believe their coalition will win if every member voted. The argument depends on members of an electorate seeing themselves this way, p. 203. Franklin looks at social networks generally not partisanship. Majority status and margin of victory matter, p. 208.

<sup>143</sup> *Democracy in America* I, 2, ch. 6; Mansfield p. 230.

<sup>144</sup> Morgan, p. 13,

<sup>145</sup> "The first line of support, the leading source of money, the wellspring of ideological purity", Hacker and Pierson, p. 110.

<sup>146</sup> James MacGregor Burns makes the standard case: "No major party can cater to the demands of any extremist group because to do so would antagonize the great "middle groups" that hold the political balance of power...The majority party – and the opposition that hopes to supplant it – must be competitive; if either one forsakes victory in order to stick to principle...it threatens the whole mechanism of majority rule." Cited in Lipset, *The Politics of Unreason: Right-Wing Extremism in America, 1790-1966* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978) at 503.

<sup>147</sup> Galston and Kamarck, p. 10.

<sup>148</sup> Why is inclusive partisan identity good? It smoothes fixed cleavages, counters arrant polarization. It extends to moderates. It reflects the democratic interest in preferring to be a majority party than a minority in a majority party who is "right" and looks ahead to the third preliminary article: compromisingness. This is not to say that democracy does not require partial and particularist political groups. Some of the most enduring inequalities of influence are tied to cultural and racial differences, and at present particular attention is paid to involuntary cultural groups, where disadvantage attaches to membership per se. Collective empowerment demands political association that operates outside parties. Though ultimately collective goals must be pursued in partisan fashion, as factions within parties.

<sup>149</sup> Schattschneider, *Party Government*, p. 98

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<sup>150</sup> I don't mean to say that partisanship is a matter of a compelling "narrative" where narrative is used as a term of art, but coherent positions on important problems and national direction.

<sup>151</sup> L. Laurence Moore, *Selling God: American Religion in the Marketplace of Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994) at 82. I mean to distinguish this from "framing", which I take to refer to phrases and metaphors that trigger favorable associations and attract votes. Though it may be that situational framing and narratives constituting party identity run together.

<sup>152</sup> *TJ*, 195; *PRR*, 585.

<sup>153</sup> *PRR*, 576, 578, 581. For a full discussion of Rawls on parties, see Muirhead and Rosenblum, "Political Liberalism vs. "The Great Game of Politics", forthcoming, *Perspectives on Politics* (March, 2006). I'll add, a story that has a degree of continuity over time – more continuity than we would expect from individuals on their own or as members of particularist groups with shifting involvements. These three articles hold, perhaps even more strongly, for partisans in office – representatives. I discuss an ethic of partisan representation, including the article of compromisingness, in "Centrism and Extremism in American Party Politics". That is not my subject here.

<sup>154</sup> Burke, "Appeal" at 52.

<sup>155</sup> Beitz, *Political Equality*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989) p. 176-7. Beitz is one of the few theorists who thinks that under the right institutional conditions parties might "face incentives to compete on the basis of substantive programmatic commitments" and thus "contribute more to a fruitful process of public political deliberation than the parties that hold themselves aloof from such commitments", p. 184.

<sup>156</sup> For a detailed case study see Carmine and Stimson, *Issue Evolution*, "The ultimate evidence of an issue evolution, however, is not to be found in the halls of Congress, the behavior of party activists, or even the ideological orientations of the electorate. It is to be found in the link between issues and citizens' partisan identifications", p. 138.

<sup>157</sup> Ostrogorski at 408.

<sup>158</sup> This is less stringent than Robert Goodin's justification for parties: providing a "ratio" for laws, where this comprehensive ration is the defining characteristic of law in contrast to coercion. This different from the accountability argument advanced by responsible party government advocates. "The Philosophical Foundation of Party Democracy" unpublished paper at 17.

<sup>159</sup> On this see Carmines and Stimson; one example they use of fleeting issue/event is Kennedy's nomination to the presidency and the polarization of the electorate on the religious issue, p. 140.

<sup>160</sup> I believe this point is consistent with John Petrocik's interesting argument about campaigns, which explains voting in terms of "issue ownership" – "framing a vote choice as a decision to be made in terms of problems facing the country that he is better able to 'handle' than his opponent". My argument is about partisanship generally, not restricted to campaigns. But it is consistent with Petrocik's insofar as he says that reputation for "handling" issues is tied to a "history of attention, initiative, and innovation toward these problems", perceptions of a party's issue competence change very slowly if they change at all, and partisans consistently cast their party as "more competent" across a range of problems not specific issues. Petrocik is interested in voting theory and campaign effects on "median voters", not partisanship per se. I am unclear about Petrocik's causal argument: whether voters' concerns identify the salient problems for a campaign or parties do. I am also unconvinced that as a general matter, party constituency ownership of an issue is long-term because of the social basis of partisanship, at 827. "Issue Ownership in Presidential Elections, with a 1980 Case Study", *American Journal of Political Science* vol. 40 no. 3 1996: 825-50 at 826.

<sup>161</sup> Ackerman's criteria for "higher law-making": signaling "we are not mere politicians", depth of involvement; breadth (numbers count) and so on apply to partisanship – in place of dichotomy, degree seems more appropriate, p. 274ff. On 282ff Ackerman acknowledges the role of parties in movement and transformative politics. He speaks of "movement-cum party".

<sup>162</sup> "Centrism and Extremism in American Party Politics", unpublished ms.

<sup>163</sup> Again, my concern here is ordinary partisan voters, not representatives. Compromisingness is a necessary disposition there, too, both within and between parties and even under conditions of unified government. Compromise within and between parties says nothing about the degree of discipline party leadership can exert or partisan representatives must accept. Or about prior homogeneity of opinion among partisan officials. "But parties are not just correlates of policy agreement; they are also, to some extent, causes", Daryl J. Levinson and Richard H. Pildes, "Separation of Parties, not Powers", unpublished essay, p. 43.

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<sup>164</sup> Thompson asks whether Independents don't have to compromise, perhaps even more. My point is that forced to choose a party candidate, Independents may have to compromise with *themselves*, partisans compromise with others. So partisan compromise also differs from that of Independents who must compromise all the time, with different groups over time. Their compromise is not guided by identification, aimed at sustaining an association, or moved by considerations of the group's effectiveness.

<sup>165</sup> Supporters who trust candidates and officials and officials who trust partisans to support decisions that entail compromise and costs, and to turn out. For example, if partisan officials act in accord with the interests of voters in the district, their constituency, rather than what partisan supporters would wish; if officials' views of the effectiveness of policies change, and so on.

<sup>166</sup> See Charles Beitz, *Political Equality*, p. 176ff.; Christiano, *The Rule of the Many*, p. 169 ff. Though Christiano, an advocate of PR, also insists on party choice as a ranking of ends, a more onerous demand: "the choice of aims model requires that citizens choose a schedule of trade-offs between all the ends that they have", p. 198; Christiano assigns this to parties whose packages of aims and trade-offs should be clear, p. 199. See Bernard Manin, "Legitimacy" in Manin ed., p. 357.

<sup>167</sup> For a discussion both historical and analytic of the parameters of justifiable compromise see Dennis Thompson, "Mill in Parliament: When Should a Philosopher Compromise?", forthcoming, ed. Nadia Urbinati and Alex Zakaras, *John Stuart Mill's Political Thought: A Bicentennial Re-Assessment*.

<sup>168</sup> Walzer, p. 92; 93.

<sup>169</sup> Norman Podhoretz, cited in The New York Times, "When the Left Turns Right, It leaves the Middle Muddled", September 16, 2000

<sup>170</sup> Hofstadter cited in Rosenblum, *Membership and Morals*, at 276.

<sup>171</sup> For a full catalogue see William Galston, *Liberal Purposes* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), p. 227.

<sup>172</sup> Ostrogorski at 279.

<sup>173</sup> Alan Wolfe, *Return to Greatness* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), p. 5.

<sup>174</sup> As Republican strategist (Richard Viguerie) put it: "The goal of a list...is not merely to get money, or to win a single campaign, but to maintain an active constituency for the exertion of power." John Gertner, "The Very, Very Personal Is the Political", The New York Times Magazine, February 15, 2004: 42- 47 at 46.

<sup>175</sup> As regards inclusiveness, for example, the particular problem of minorities within parties; the way in which third parties are disadvantaged, reducing the leverage of partisans within parties, and so on.

<sup>176</sup> I am patently indebted to the important work by George Kateb, "The Moral Distinctiveness of Representative Democracy" in *The Inner Ocean* (Ithaca: Cornell, 1992).

<sup>177</sup> Andrew Gelman and Gary King, "Enhancing Democracy Through Legislative Redistricting", APSR (vol. 88 no. 3), September, 1994: 541-559) at 541.

<sup>178</sup> Schattschneider, *Party Government*, p. 91.

<sup>179</sup> Or extends indefinitely as it does for revolutionary and utopian actors.

<sup>180</sup> Recall Tocqueville, "it is true that they do not have...the right to make law; but they have the power to attack the one that exists and to formulate in advance the one that should exist." Mansfield at 181-2; I,2.4.

<sup>181</sup> Mansfield ed. at 185; I.2.4

<sup>182</sup> Kateb, p. 37.

<sup>183</sup> Russell Muirhead, "Left And Right: A Defense of Partisanship", unpublished paper.

<sup>184</sup> Veit Bader "Religious Pluralism: Secularism or Priority for Democracy?", Political Theory Vol. 27 no. 5 October, 1999) pp. 597-634 at 617.

<sup>185</sup> Indeed, when partisans invoke foundational identity, it is typically incantation and sign of the failure of political creativity. Today, for example, both Democrats and Republicans juxtapose populism to arrogant elitism and both claim to be on the side of ordinary people, on the side of the angels. John R. Hibbing and Elizabeth Theiss-Morse, *Stealth Democracy: Americans' Beliefs about how Government should Work* (Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 53 point out what history amply shows: that liberalism and populism have a weak relationship.

<sup>186</sup> Even "objective" social divisions are open to interpretation; certainly the relation between social cleavage and political preference or interest. The closeness or distance of a party from the ideological or policy positions of salient groups is a political decision.

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“Power” in Tocqueville: Mansfield at 171; I, 2.2. Nothing in this denies that other political associations – interest and advocacy groups, social movements -- have a part in representation or in creating the lines of division that, finally, parties must bring to government.

<sup>187</sup> I like to think this great activity of partisanship lies behind the German Constitution, which gives parties constitutional status and protection on grounds that “the political parties participate in the forming of the political will of the people”.

<sup>188</sup> *Theory of Justice*, 196.

<sup>189</sup> Even PR systems exclude groups and positions – more or less depending on the threshold of votes needed to win seats.

<sup>190</sup> Someone must precipitate shifts in the public’s thinking about what needs to be done, reshape the contending coalitions of groups and interests, and so on. See Everett Carl Ladd, “1996 Vote: The “No Majority” Realignment Continues”, *Political Science Quarterly* 112 no. 1 (Spring 1997): 1-28 at 4.

<sup>191</sup> Partisans “bring the counter-argument into sharper relief”. Manin at 226., and Manin, “Deliberation Across the Aisle”, p. 8. Political scientists more than democratic theorists have attended to institutional design and rules that inhibit or encourage specific forms of conflict and deliberation.

<sup>192</sup> Lowi in *Romance* at 5.

<sup>193</sup> See for example Bruce Ackerman, *We the People* (Cambridge, Ma: Harvard University Press, 1991). The focus of the argument is on two avenues of constitutional amendment. One element of this account is the distinction between decisions by the people (higher lawmaking) and decisions by government. During normal politics “nobody represents the People in an unproblematic way”. Of course, no one argues that representation is unproblematic, but Ackerman’s point is that representation is not the key; “they can only be represented by “stand-ins””, p. 263. More generally, no “public interest” grouping is powerful enough to force its agenda to the center of political concern, to make it’s the critical question; lack of political salience, p. 270. Normal politics is elite dialogue, p. 20. Ackerman’s criteria for “higher law-making”: signaling “we are not mere politicians”, depth of involvement; breadth (numbers count) and so on apply to partisanship – in place of dichotomy, degree seems more appropriate, p. 274ff. On 282ff Ackerman acknowledges the role of parties in movement and transformative politics. He speaks of “movement-cum party”. “Mobilized deliberation” appears to be tied to partisan elections, though Ackerman is not explicit, p. 285ff. Political science, in contrast, has excellent work on political creativity in connection with parties, among them Edward Carmines and James Stimson, *Issue Evolution* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989). “The ultimate evidence of an issue evolution...is not to be found in the halls of Congress, the behavior of party activists, or even the ideological orientations of the electorate. It is to be found in the link between issues and citizens’ partisan identifications.”, p. 138.

<sup>194</sup> On partisan agents of “issue evolution”, typically partisan activists, see Edward G. Carmines and James A. Stimson, *Issue Evolution: Race and the Transformation of American Politics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), pp. 89ff.

<sup>195</sup> I have emphasized these, along with political creativity, over the orthodox standards: representativeness, accountability, and choice.