

#401 - United States: Democratic Party

Coder: Gibson (RH/RG altered codes and statements for 12.04 (from "1b" to "2") and 12.07 (from "1" to "2") on 3-16-96; RH and SSh corrected typos on 5-10-96).

Note 1: The American parties present a problem for our coding system since the "parliamentary" actors are the congressional members, and the greatest source of control over them is the president, if he/she comes from the same party, rather than any "extra-parliamentary" actors. To accommodate this situation the variable was interpreted in a broader sense to refer to the distribution of "governing vs. non-governing party power," rather than parliamentary vs. extra-parliamentary control. Thus, the following codes are based on combining the president and Congress as the "governing" wing of the party, which for purposes of comparison should be read as the "parliamentary" wing (Janda, 1980, supports this; his Var. 2.02 Government Leadership is coded in terms of which party held the presidency).

Note 2: Due to separation of powers the American parties operate as independent units within the institutions of government. Thus, at the national level there is a House party and a Senate party, each of which has its own extraparliamentary organization to help organize campaigns, raise funds, and formulate policy. The party in Congress, therefore, is not the equivalent of a parliamentary party in Europe (Kolodny & Katz, 1992:874). However, within both parties there is an official extra-parliamentary body charged with drawing up a party platform to which both House and Senate members are supposed to adhere. Also, methods in the two chambers for electing parliamentary leaders are the same, as are disciplinary techniques and rules on re-election. (For reference to different party wings, see Kolodny and Katz in Katz & Mair, 1992:874.)

12.01 Candidate Selection

1950-90:1

Katz & Mair's coding starts in 1960, but they report that for this year in non-presidential elections, all 50 states were using some form of primary, either closed (42), open (7), or blanket (1) (Katz and Mair, 1992:Table XIII.D.5.i).

Selection processes differ according to states, and can differ within states, according to the office being contended. "[T]he legal authority for devising nomination practices resides with the states..." therefore a wide array of methods can be used (Beck & Sorauf, 1992:234).

The majority of congressional legislators are elected now through the direct primary process, which makes the voters responsible for nominating the candidates. This is where "the party electorate, variously defined, chooses candidates to run for public office under the party label" (Beck & Sorauf, 1992:232). This has meant that "party leaders have less control over who will receive the party nomination" than in the other methods of candidate selection (ibid:234). Also, in primary elections, the candidates are self-selected, because neither the national nor state parties can bar candidates (Kolodny and Katz, 1992:874).

12.02 Parliamentary Leadership Selection

1950-90:1

The House and Senate have separate party caucuses, independent from each other that elect their own leaders and caucus committee chairs (Kolodny & Katz, 1992:874).

12.03 Conformation to Extraparliamentary Positions

1950-90:1a

"Today most candidates for Congress do not pay much attention to the national platform" (Patterson, 1990:281). With regard to the National Committee, elected to run day to day business, it has little to no power over the congressional party's policy decisions, "Although in theory the national parties are run by their Committees, neither the Democratic National Committee (DNC) nor the RNC has great power... they ratify decisions made by smaller core of party leaders" (Patterson, 1990:286). It seems almost as if the real competition for power is between the congressional party leaders and the president, if the party holds the White House. In terms of their relations with the extra-governmental organization, the president generally has more influence over the National Committee than the congressional party members.

12.04 Discipline of Parliamentary Representatives

1950-90:2

"Party discipline is virtually unknown... sanctions are almost never imposed on deviants." Each member has a "presumptive right" to reappointment to his/her committee positions; this does not depend on the member's record of loyalty to the party (Kolodny & Katz, 1992:874). Janda (1980:188) agrees: "The Democratic party has virtually no means to discipline those who deviate from party policy." Because there are no effective techniques in party rules for disciplining the party's members in Congress, the code of 2 is appropriate.

12.05 Rotation Rule/Tenure Limitation

1950-90:99

Representatives are required by law to go through renomination

for candidature in order to be re-elected.

12.06 Public Policy Positions

1950-90:5

The Charter of the Democratic Party of the United States, 1974, Article Two, Section 2, says "The National Convention shall be the highest authority of the Democratic Party, subject to the provisions of this Charter." According to Section 3, "The National Convention shall...adopt a platform..." From Article Three, Section 1: "The Democratic National Committee shall have general responsibility for... formulating and disseminating statements of Party policy" between Conventions. No references were found to the statutory rights of congressional members or the president to articulate party policy. Therefore, for purposes of consistency, the score of 5 should be assigned to this variable for the Democratic Party.

Note: It should be noted, however, that the party convention is generally considered to be completely ineffectual, and is de facto ignored as a source of policy cues for government actors. The literature makes this clear. The nominating convention has as its secondary role the drafting of the national platform, to which neither Congress nor the president is bound. The Convention also installs the National Committee which is officially in charge of party business until the next convention (Kolodny & Katz, 1992:873). So, while the party platform is drawn up by extraparliamentary actors, adherence to it is not required. It is considered to be the manifesto of the majority that year, not a statement of a continuing party philosophy. Therefore, the congressional party often ignores it (Beck & Sorauf, 1992:292-3). In fact, the presidential nominees even have a hand in the development of the platform itself, demanding the insertion of planks in the final document that they feel strongly about. The nominees can do this because they, as compared to state or national party organizations, have more control over delegates' loyalty (Patterson, 1990:279-81).

Nevertheless, on the whole, congressional members are reported by Laver & Hunt (1993) to be the dominant force. In their scoring of both parties on the variable of influence on policy, activists occupy a lesser status than "leaders" (i.e. government ministers/president and cabinet), and "leaders" are less important than legislators (particularly for the Democrats) (Laver & Hunt, 1993:U.S. Table 3).

Janda (1980) agrees that a party policy is really non-existent for the American parties, but he still cites the convention as responsible for major policy positions since they must approve of the policy statement for it to be considered legitimate (for a code of 5 on his variable). He reports a change in code after 1956 on this variable, and although he is not interested in policy formulation from our perspective, the change reported does have implications for the degree of extraparliamentary control

that is exercised. It seems to have become more stringent in 1956 when the DNC was "beefed up" with the addition of the Democratic Advisory Council (DAC). The code goes from a "5" to a "6." A "6" means that the individual party bodies could take stands on issues without requiring ratification by other party organizations. The DAC did take its own stands upon issues, although congressional members refused to serve on it. It was terminated in 1961, when presidential policy came to dominate party policy (Janda, 1980:188, Var. 9.05).

12.07 Primary Leader of the Party

1950-90:2

The debate here seems to focus on who leads the party when it doesn't hold the presidency. When it does, then the president dominates. However, when it doesn't, the chair of the National Committee assumes greater power, as do the leaders of the party in Congress. If the national chair is more important than congressional leaders when the party is "out" of the White House, then this variable should be coded as a "2" for those years when the party controls the presidency, and as a "3" when it does not. Here is what the literature so far says about the national chair: The national chair is the leader of the extra-parliamentary organization; he/she hires the national committee staff; and when the party is "out" of the presidency the national chair assumes a leadership role (Kolodny & Katz, 1992:874). However, the national chair and party staff are essentially transient; they seek to aspire to an independent consultancy role and the selection of the chair is controlled by the presidential nominee (Kolodny & Katz, 1992:873). So, "while the national chair is a party leader, he is in no sense the leader" (ibid:874; italics omitted). Given that congressional members do not seem to adhere any more closely to what the extra-parliamentary group leader says when they do not hold the presidency, then it can be argued that the congressional leaders (and thus the parliamentary party), rather than extra-parliamentary actors, do in fact "lead" the party in terms of policy decisions.

The real party leader comes from within the governing branch of the party; however he/she changes according to whether or not the party holds the White House. If the party has the presidency, then that individual is the effective leader; if not, then the leading party member in Congress is identified as the party leader. Often this can lead to a situation of multiple leaders. Var.9.08 in Janda (1980:188) shows this for the Democrats, when it is reported that out of the White House they had a number of different spokespersons from the "governing" wing. Though the presidents and/or congressional leaders are clearly the source of primary leadership for the party, de facto, we have found nothing to indicate that this is made "official" in party statutes. Hence a code of 2 is appropriate.

Addendum: Presidential Nominating procedure

There is no specific reference (yet found) in the literature to when the majority of states switched to using the primary election system. However, Beck & Sorauf (1992), when talking about the presidential nomination, say that 1968 marked the turning point, and show that after the 1976 election a majority of the states were using this method for presidential candidate selection. If we take 1976 as marking the introduction of the primary system as the dominant method of candidate selection, then pre-1976 we have the caucus system, followed by the nominating convention which has nominated candidates for the presidency since the 1830s. Each of these latter methods (and particularly the caucus) placed more control in the hands of the party organization.

[Note: The specific details are that in 38 of the 50 states, statewide officials were nominated through the direct primary system exclusively (Beck & Sorauf, 1992:234). In two of the fifty states there are primaries for the two major parties and conventions for the minor parties. In two states the state parties can choose a nominating convention or a primary. In one state there is a convention if no candidate wins more than 35% of the vote. In four states conventions produce a shortlist which is then used to determine who can be put on the ballot (Beck & Sorauf, *ibid*)].

Beck & Sorauf (1992:244) also go on to discuss the informal means by which parties can play some part in the selection process, such as through putting more resources at the disposal of the favored candidate.

#402 - United States: Republican Party

Coder: Gibson (On 3-16-96, RH and RG changed a number of codes and

descriptions: from "1b" to "1a" on 12.03, from "1b" to "2" on 12.04, from "1" to "5" on 12.06, and from "1" to "2" on 12.07; typos corrected by RH and SSh on 5-13-96)

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1950-90:5

As is the case for the Democrats, the Republican party's main policy statement -- for public consumption purposes -- is the national party platform adopted every four years at the presidential nominating convention. The platform is adopted in advance of nominating the presidential candidate, though in instances when an incumbent president is the likely nominee, the president may exercise influence over the contents of the platform. As Janda (1980:192-3) notes, though, various interest groups within the party work for adoption of their own positions in the platform, and may threaten to withhold support of the nominee if their wishes are ignored. In spite of the possibility of some presidential influence in such cases, the document should still be seen as essentially an extraparliamentary party document. When an incumbent president is not the likely nominee, the latter is even more clearly the case. Janda (193) notes that a Republican committee on program and progress was formed in 1959, though its importance was not seen as substantial. Hence, even if members of Congress were involved in that committee (which is not clear), the platform -- basically an organization document -- would still have to be used as the basis for coding this variable. A "5" seems appropriate.

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Though the presidents and/or congressional leaders are clearly the source of primary leadership for the party, de facto, we have found nothing to indicate that this is made "official" in party statutes. Hence a code of 2 is appropriate.

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