


Chapter
7



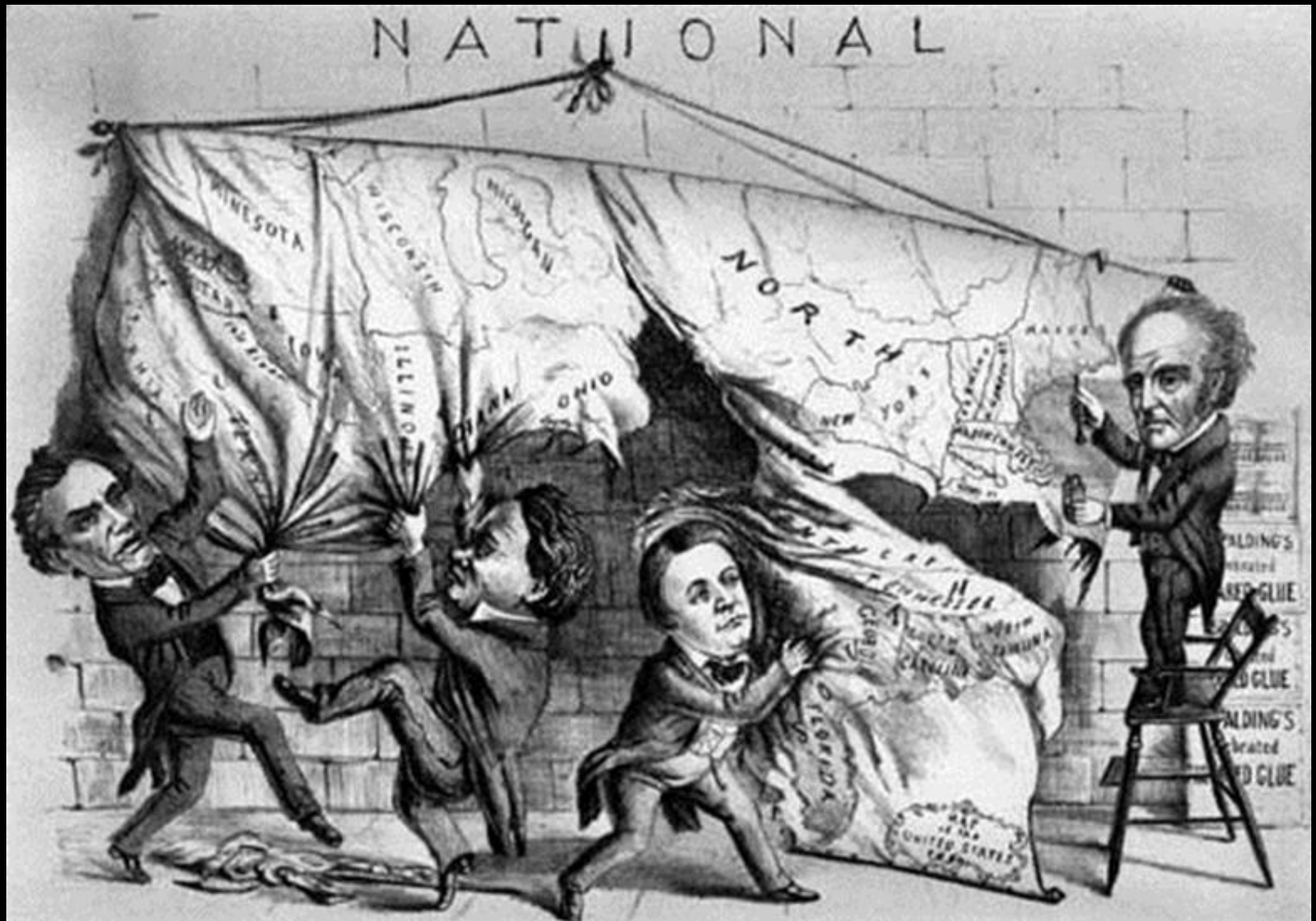
Political Parties

Political Parties



- What Parties Do for Democracy
- A Brief History of American Political Parties
- American Parties Today
- How Parties Raise and Spend Money
- Are the Political Parties Dying?

Political Parties and Elections, Illustration 1



What Parties Do for Democracy

What Parties Do For Democracy

- Organize the Competition
- Unify the Electorate
- Help Organize Government
- Translate Preferences into Policy
- Provide Loyal Opposition

What Parties Do for America

The Nomination of Candidates

- From the beginning, parties have been the mechanism by which candidates for public office are chosen.



What Parties Do for America

Party Systems

- Ours is a two-party system; most other democracies have a multiparty system.
- Although the United States has many minor parties, only the two major parties have much of a chance to win elections.
- Multiparty systems are almost always found in countries that have a parliamentary government, in contrast to our presidential system.

What Parties Do for America

Minor Parties: Persistence and Frustration

- Although we have a primarily two-party system in the United States, we also have minor parties, sometimes called *third parties*.
- Minor parties that are organized around an ideology usually persist over a longer time than those built around a particular leader.

TABLE

7-1 Minor Parties in the United States

Year	Party	Presidential Candidate	Percentage of Popular Vote Received	Electoral Votes
1832	Anti-Masonic	William Wirt	8	7
1856	American (Know-Nothing)	Millard Fillmore	22	8
1860	Democratic (Secessionist)	John C. Breckinridge	18	72
1860	Constitutional Union	John Bell	13	39
1892	People's (Populist)	James B. Weaver	9	22
1912	Bull Moose	Theodore Roosevelt	27	88
1912	Socialist	Eugene V. Debs	6	0
1924	Progressive	Robert M. La Follette	17	13
1948	States' Rights (Dixiecrat)	Strom Thurmond	2	39
1948	Progressive	Henry A. Wallace	2	0
1968	American Independent	George C. Wallace	14	46
1980	National Unity	John Anderson	7	0
1992	Independent	Ross Perot	19	0
1996	Reform	Ross Perot	8	0
2000	Reform	Pat Buchanan	0	0
2000	Green	Ralph Nader	3	0
2004	Reform	Ralph Nader	0	0
2008	Independent	Ralph Nader	0	0

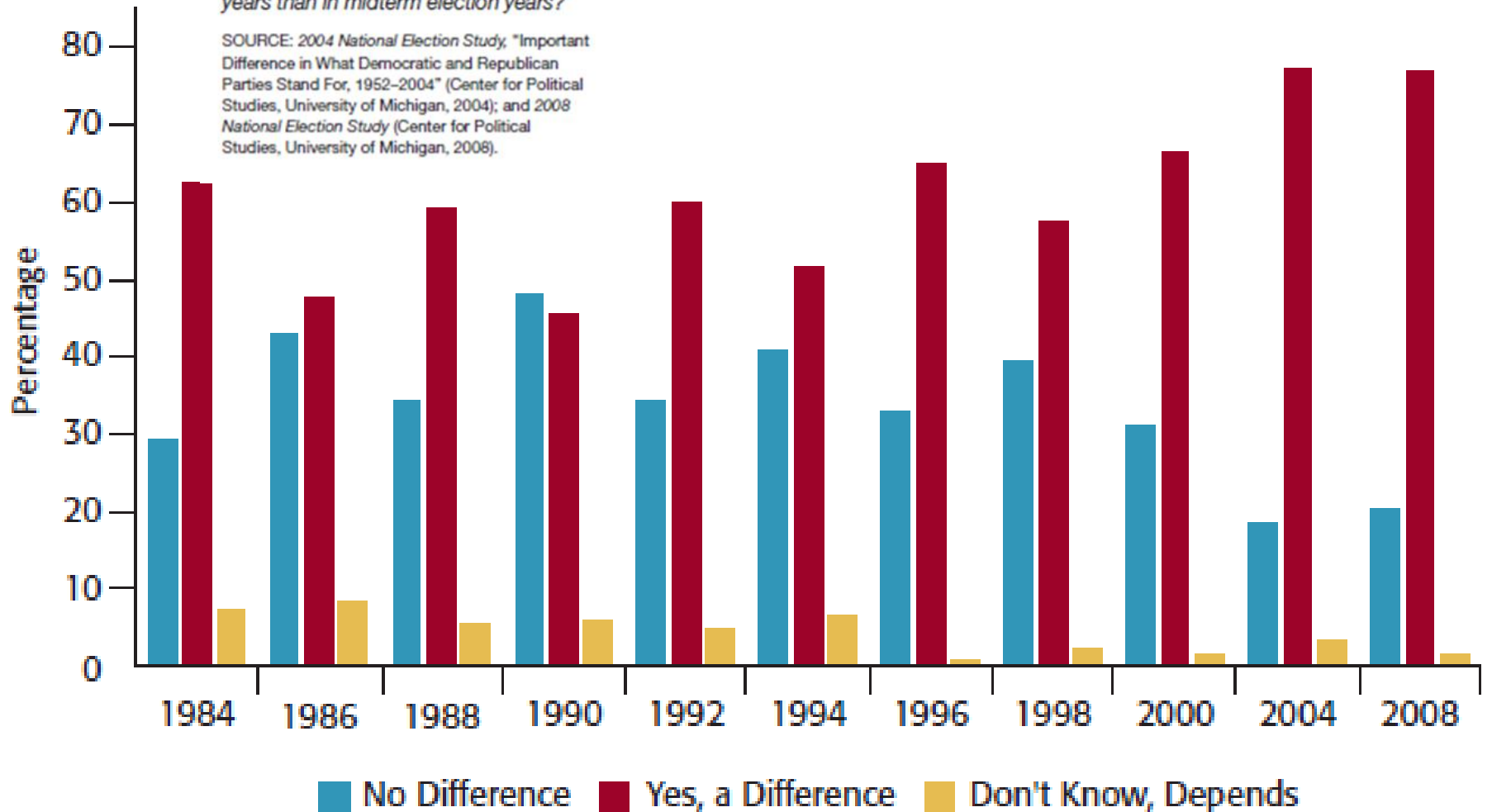
There are 538 electoral votes cast in a presidential election. ■ How does the percentage of popular vote received compare to the electoral votes received? How can you explain the difference in these numbers?

SOURCE: C.Q. Press Voting and Elections Collection, 2010, <http://library.cqpress.com/elections/search.php>.

FIGURE 7-1 Difference in Perception of What the Parties Stand For, 1984–2008.

A National Election survey tracks responses to the question, "Do you think there are any important differences in what the Republicans and Democrats stand for?" ■ *Why would people be more likely to see differences between parties in presidential election years than in midterm election years?*

SOURCE: 2004 National Election Study, "Important Difference in What Democratic and Republican Parties Stand For, 1952–2004" (Center for Political Studies, University of Michigan, 2004); and 2008 National Election Study (Center for Political Studies, University of Michigan, 2008).



A Brief History of American Political Parties

- Political parties emerged largely out of practical necessity.
- In 1787, parties began to form as citizens debated the ratification of the U.S. Constitution.



A Brief History of American Political Parties

Realigning Elections

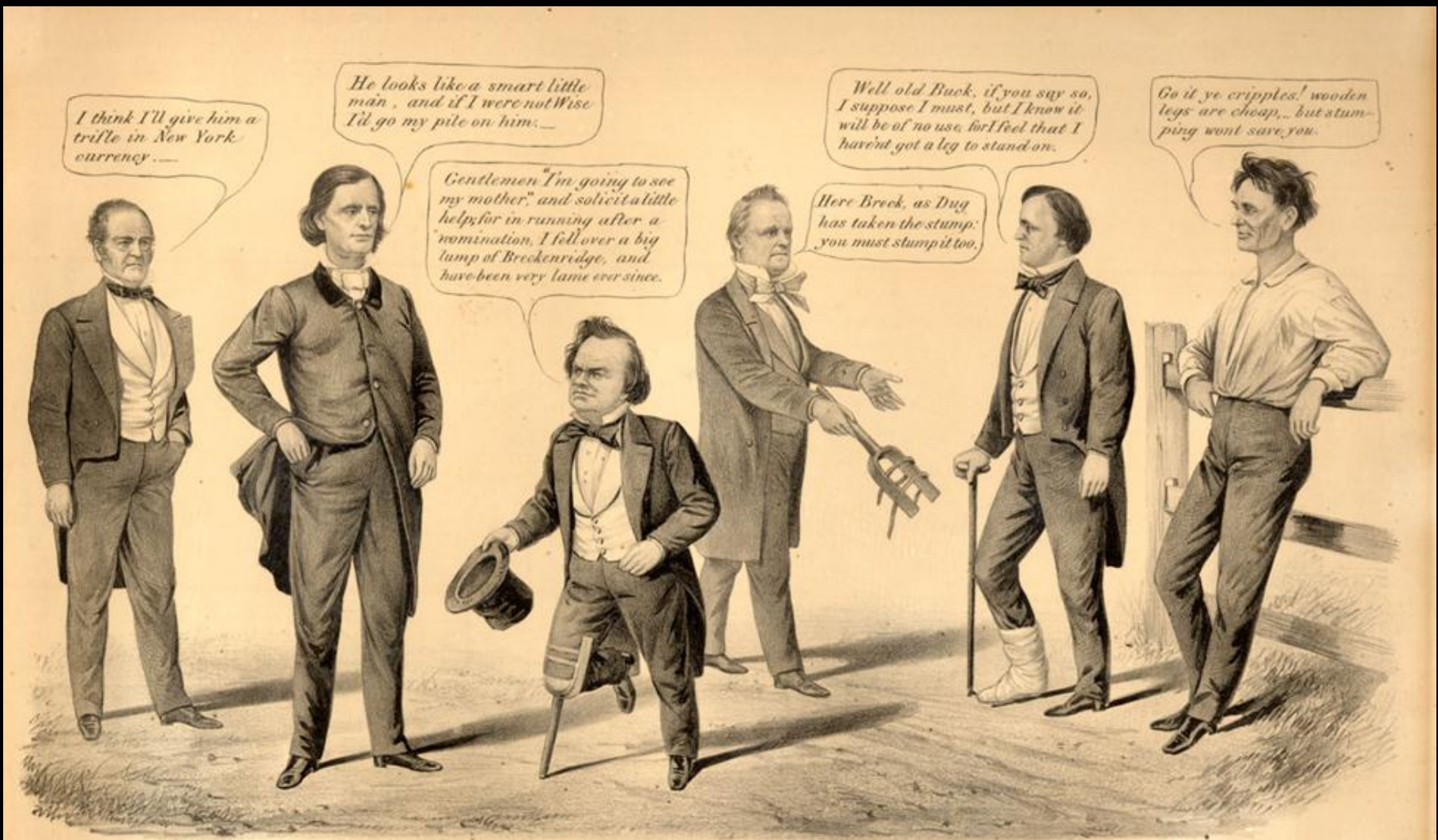
- 1824: Andrew Jackson and the Democrats
- 1860: The Civil War—the Rise of the Republicans
- 1896: A Party in Transition
- 1932: Franklin Roosevelt and the New Deal

A Brief History of American Political Parties

The Last Half Century

- Major shifts in party demographics have occurred in recent decades.
- Since 1953, divided government, with one party controlling Congress and the other the White House, has been in effect twice as long as united government.
- Elections during the past few decades have seen power change hands numerous times without any long-term shifts in the population in party allegiance.

Political Parties and Elections, Illustration 2



"TAKING THE STUMP" OR STEPHEN IN SEARCH OF HIS MOTHER.

American Parties Today

Parties as Institutions

- National Party Leadership
- Party Platforms
- Parties at the State and Local Levels



American Parties Today

Parties in Government

- Legislative Branch
- Executive Branch
- Judicial Branch
- State and Local Levels



American Parties Today

Parties in the Electorate

- Party Registration
- Party Activists
- Party Identification
- Partisan Dealignment?



TABLE

7-2 Party Identification, 1950s–2000s

Decade	Strong Democrat	Weak Democrat	Independent-Leaning Democrat	Independent	Independent-Leaning Republican	Weak Republican	Strong Republican	Other
1950*	23%	23%	8%	7%	7%	15%	13%	4%
1960	22	25	8	10	7	15	12	2
1970	17	24	12	14	10	14	9	2
1980	18	26	11	12	11	14	11	2
1990	18	19	13	10	12	15	13	1
2000†	18	16	16	10	12	13	14	2

* 1950s percentages based on years 1952, 1956, and 1958.

† 2000s percentages based on years 2000, 2002, 2004, and 2008.

NOTE: Data may not sum to 100 percent because of averaging.

■ *How has the strength of party identification changed over time?*

SOURCE: *National Election Study* (Center for Political Studies, University of Michigan, 2004).

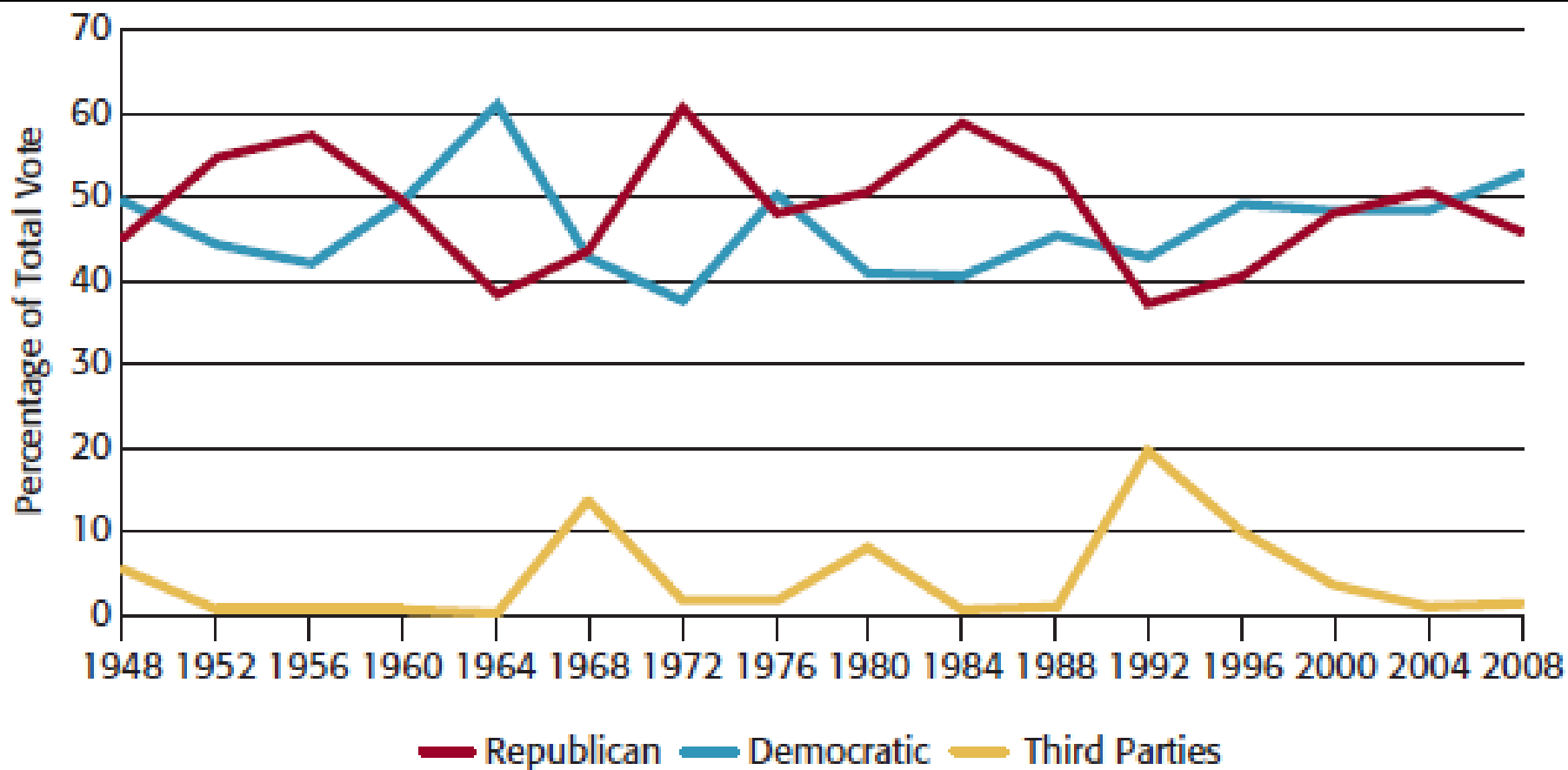


FIGURE 7-2 Presidential Vote by Party.

Based on this graph, what share of the vote do third parties generally get? How many elections since 1952 have been exceptions to this?

SOURCE: Stanley and Niemi, *Vital Statistics on American Politics 2009-2010*, pp. 20-21.

TABLE

7-3 Voting Behavior of Partisans and Independents, 1992-2008

Percent Voting for Democratic Presidential Candidate					
	1992	1996	2000	2004	2008
Strong Democrats	94%	96%	97%	98%	95%
Weak Democrats	69	84	85	85	86
Independent-Leaning Democrats	70	74	78	88	91
Pure Independents	41	39	45	58	55
Independent-Leaning Republicans	11	23	14	15	18
Weak Republicans	14	21	16	11	12
Strong Republicans	3	4	2	3	4

Percent Voting for Democratic House Candidate							
	1994	1996	1998	2000	2002	2004	2008
Strong Democrats	90%	88%	83%	89%	92%	91%	92%
Weak Democrats	72	72	63	73	69	86	84
Independent-Leaning Democrats	66	72	65	73	68	80	83
Pure Independents	51	42	46	52	38	57	43
Independent-Leaning Republicans	25	20	25	26	28	34	21
Weak Republicans	22	20	27	17	27	17	22
Strong Republicans	8	3	8	12	8	10	7

■ *In years that were good for Democrats in congressional elections, like 2004 and 2008, what support did they have that they didn't in weaker elections, like 1994 and 1998?*

SOURCE: National Election Study Cumulative File (Center for Political Studies, University of Michigan, 2005); and 2008 National Election Study (Center for Political Studies, University of Michigan, 2008).

How Parties Raise and Spend Money

How Parties Raise and Spend Money

- Political parties rely on contributions from individuals and interest groups to fund their activities.
- Because of the close connection, political parties have with office holders, the courts have long permitted regulation of the source and amount of money people and groups can contribute to parties, as well as the amount parties can spend with or contribute to candidates.

How Parties Raise and Spend Money

Party Expenditures

- Party committees are permitted to make contributions to candidates and can also spend a limited amount of money in what are called “coordinated expenditures.”
- Compared to other countries, the United States has less public funding of political parties and candidates.

TABLE
7-4 Independent Expenditures by Party Committee, 1996–2008

	1996	1998	2000	2002	2004	2006	2008
DNC	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$120,333,466	-\$23,104	\$1,104,113
DSCC	1,386,022	1,329,000	133,000	0	18,725,520	42,627,470	73,028,432
DCCC	0	0	1,933,246	1,187,649	36,923,726	64,141,248	81,641,424
RNC	0	0	0	500,000	18,268,870	14,022,675	53,459,386
NRSC	9,734,445	216,874	267,600	0	19,383,692	19,159,901	110,866,286
NRCC	0	0	548,800	1,321,880	47,254,064	82,059,161	30,971,545

NOTE: There was no independent spending by party committees before 1996. When party committees could spend soft money (1996–2002), they spent less in independent expenditures; when BCRA banned soft money in 2002, independent expenditures rose.

■ *Based on the data in this table, which election marked a substantial change in the amount of money spent independently by party committees? How did the spending between Democratic and Republican committees compare in 2008?*

SOURCE: Federal Election Commission, "Party Financial Activity Summarized for the 2004 Election Cycle," press release, March 2, 2005, www.fec.gov/press/press2005/20050302party/Party2004final.html; and David B. Magleby and Kelly D. Patterson, eds., *War Games: Issues and Resources in the Battle for Control of Congress*, monograph (Center for the Study of Elections and Democracy, 2007), p. 47.

Are the Political Parties Dying?

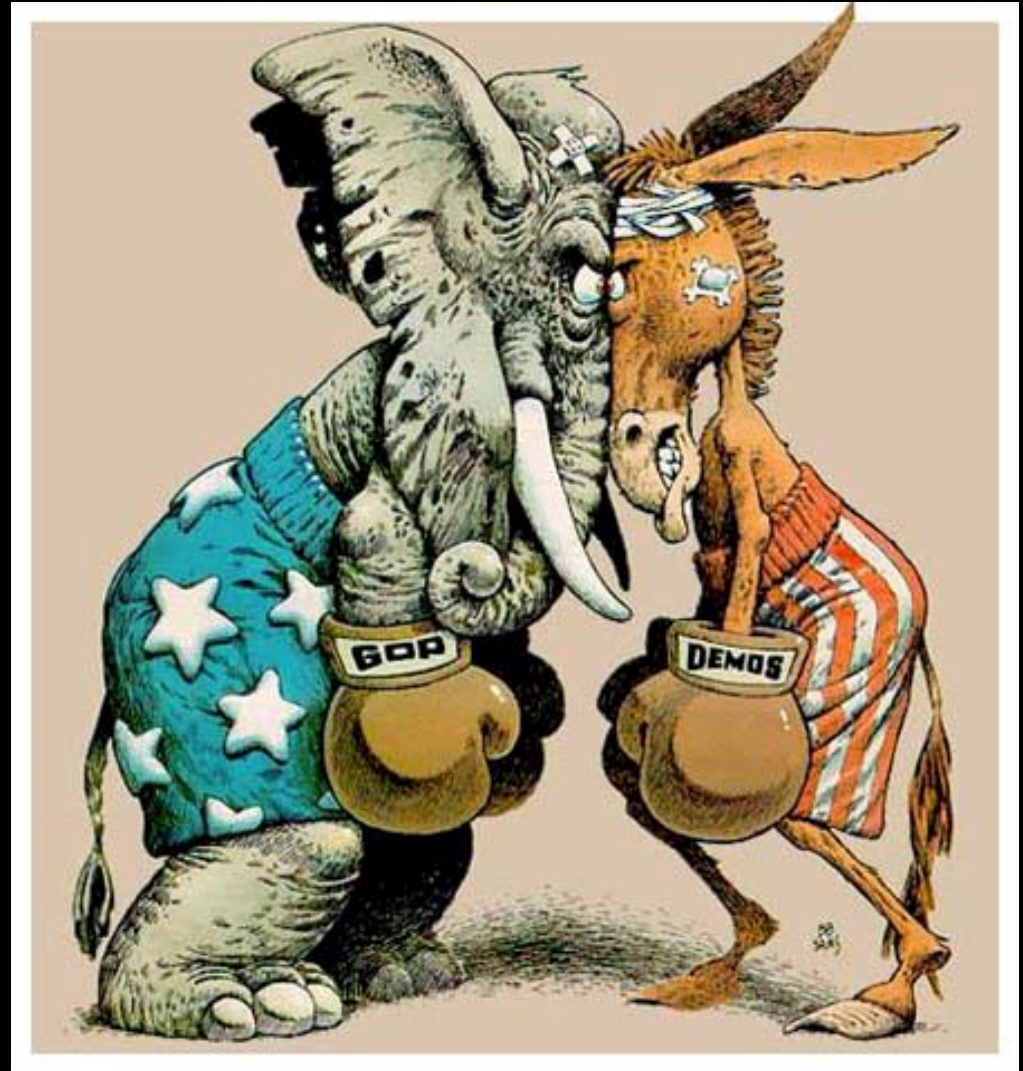
Are the Political Parties Dying?

- Critics of the U.S. party system make three allegations against it.
- Some analysts fear that parties are in severe decline or even mortally ill.
- Legislation limiting the viability and functions of parties was bad enough, say the party pessimists, but parties suffer from additional problems.

Are Political Parties Dying?

Are the Political Parties Dying (cont.)

- Reform Among the Democrats
- Reform Among the Republicans



Are Political Parties Dying?

Continued Importance of Parties

- Political parties are vital to the functioning of democracy.
- Parties are just as important in organizing the government.
- Parties also provide an important way for citizens to influence government.