

Woll Summaries

Federalist 10

James Madison

1787

- Factions are opposed to the national interest
- Principal cause of factions is the uneven distribution of property
- Secondary cause is the inevitable diversity of group opinions
- Government must be designed to control factions
 - Causes of factions cannot be controlled without the loss of liberty
 - Therefore effects must be controlled
- Republic is better than a pure democracy at controlling the effects of factions
 - Pure democracy more subject to demagogues
 - Republic can be much larger than a pure democracy
 - The larger the republic the better because factions will be more diluted
 - Factions will be concentrated in the states not the nation
 - Federalism
 - Pluralism

Party Government

E.E. Schattschneider

1942

- Constitution contains provisions that support and nourish development of political parties
- Constitution is pro party and anti party
 - Pro - Individual liberties
 - Anti - Separation of Powers, Checks and Balances, and Federalism
- Law of imperfect political mobilization of interests
 - Group memberships overlap
 - Impossible for any one individual to be mobilized totally in a political sense by any one group because of overlapping memberships
- Parties are not the threat Madison envisioned because of the system he helped create

Toward a More Responsible Two-Party System

Report of the Committee on Political Parties

American Political Science Association

1950

- Parties are required in a large republic to provide the electorate with a proper range of choice
- Parties don't always produce good rational public policy
- Nevertheless the choices provided by the two party system are valuable to the American voter
- The party system that is needed must be democratic, responsible and effective, accountable to the public
- An effective party system requires that the parties are able to bring forth programs to which they commit themselves and that the parties possess sufficient internal cohesion to carry out these programs.
- Such a degree of unity within the parties cannot be brought about without party procedures that give a large body of people an opportunity to share in the development of the party program.
- The fundamental requirement of accountability is a two party system in which the opposition party acts as the critic of the party in power, developing, defining and presenting the policy alternatives which are necessary for a true choice in reaching public decisions.
- Decline of parties produces four dangers to the system
 - Inadequacy of the party system to sustain well considered programs and provide broad public support for them may lead to grave consequences in an explosive era
 - In compensating for this inadequacy the public may go too far in shifting excessive responsibility to the President
 - The nation may eventually witness the disintegration of the two parties.
 - Decline of two parties may encourage success of extremist parties

A Theory of Critical Elections

V.O. Key, Jr.

1955

- Critical elections are those which demonstrate long term realignment of political loyalties.
- Changes are accommodated through the electoral process.
- Shifts in party loyalty take place at the state and local level first
- Critical elections occur infrequently.

Divided We Govern

David R. Mayhew

1993

- Divided government works as well as unified government
- Many disagree saying it causes gridlock
 - They say strengthened parties are the answer
 - Unity between legislative and executive
- Mayhew says the history of postwar U.S. shows it doesn't make a difference whether we have divide or unified government
- He makes five central claims to support his thesis
 - The argument that divided government produces worse laws is dubious.
 - Ideological and budgetary coherence in policymaking is not necessarily affected by divided government.
 - Increased congressional micromanagement of executive affairs bears no correlation to periods of divided government.
 - The conduct and coordination of foreign policy is not damaged by divided government.
 - The argument that the country's lower income strata are not well served under divided party control is not necessarily true.

Democratic Practice and Democratic Theory

Bernard R. Berelson, Paul F. Lazarsfeld, and William N. McPhee

1954

- Classical requirements for a citizen in a democracy
 - Interest, discussion, motivation, knowledge, principle and rationality
- Individual voters seem unable to satisfy the requirements for a democratic system of government as outlined by political theorists.
- The system of democratic government does meet certain requirements for a political organization.
- This depends on some people being apathetic and not participating in the process.
- Apathy shows satisfaction with the current system and makes it more stable.
- Mass participation would indicate dissatisfaction with the system and a desire for change leading to instability.

The Responsible Electorate

V.O. Key, Jr.

1966

- Voice of the people is an echo
- Studies of voting behavior are not flattering to voters
- Politicians believe the studies and treat voters accordingly
- However, voters are not fools
 - They act as rationally as can be expected given the alternatives and information available.
- Recent studies show an electorate moved by concern about central and relevant questions of public policy, of governmental performance, and of executive personality