Research Directions

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An invitation to reflect generally on past and prospective parties research is appealing to an old-timer. I acknowledge the risk of drawing so much on earlier writing that my essay will be of a kind that I scorned a few decades ago when my senior colleagues repeated themselves. The risk is unmistakable in my first section where I write about our discipline's historical concern with political parties (Epstein 1986, 9-39). An abbreviated account of that concern, however, provides the intellectual context for the research questions that I shall later suggest for new or additional scholarly inquiry. In raising those questions, I am less likely to repeat myself because most of them are on subjects with which I have dealt only tangentially.

I

The intellectual context within which we study parties in the United States includes an American institutional emphasis, a pro-party stance, an influential "responsible party" model, and a conceptualization that encourages consideration of "party-in-the-electorate" apart from party organizations. I shall discuss each in turn after a brief note about the origin of the American parties field.

Our profession's persistent interest in parties is now a century old and virtually coincidental with the emergence of American political science as a separate academic discipline. The beginning is usually dated from the extensive discussion in *The American Commonwealth*, the great work of a famous British visitor, James Bryce (1891). Until then, American scholars had paid little attention to parties. Formal constitutional and legal studies characterized what there was of political science before the 1890s, but the number of scholarly professionals was so small that it is unreasonable to speak of a wholesale neglect of parties. At any rate, soon after Bryce's work, several American political scientists made parties their special subject. In a few decades, the parties field became the first plainly political addition to a curriculum still dominated by formal governmental studies.

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Parties textbooks appeared, and so did research based chiefly on library sources but also occasionally on field observation.

Research works, like the parties courses, were Americanist rather then comparativist. Along with Congress, presidency, Supreme Court, and state and local government, parties (plus elections) were conceived as elements of American institutional study. An almost exclusively American approach is understandable. It sought to explain, often with a civics orientation, how the American political system worked, and it reflected the already advanced development of parties in the United States. In the late nineteenth and very early twentieth century, Bryce was not the only observer to be impressed with the massive importance of American parties compared with parties elsewhere. Ours were the first large modern parties, no doubt because the United States was the first nation to have a mass electorate which such parties were designed to mobilize. Not only did our turn-of-the-century parties structure the vote—fostering straight-ticket loyalty—but their organizational leaders, often outside of government office themselves, seemed to control nominations and to determine governmental decisions of those elected with party support. Power of this sort, associated with boss rule particularly in large cities, inspired academic as well as nonacademic reformers, and that too was distinctively American.

To recognize that parties specialists wrote and taught within an American frame of reference is not to assert that political scientists in this country knew nothing of parties elsewhere as they developed in the few decades before and after 1900. A few American scholars learned a great deal about European and particularly British parties in the early years of the twentieth century, both from research of their own and from studies by Europeans, but their knowledge belonged mainly to the field of foreign government and politics which was separated (as it still is to a large extent) from American government and politics. Foreign politics specialists seldom included American parties in their works despite their "comparative" label. Nor did our American parties specialists incorporate in their studies any large portion of what was known about foreign parties. References to British and other European parties did appear, even in fairly early American textbooks, but they were brief and unsystematic. As far as I know, American political scientists did not publish comparative parties books, including the United States along with other nations, until after the middle of the twentieth century. Even now, such works are few, as are parallel comparative parties courses.

Illustrating the Americanist character of the parties field is the career of our universally admired scholar, V.O. Key. On the four typed pages of his bibliography, 1931-1964, I see no book or article on parties outside of the United States. The only piece about another country is a two-page article

on Canadian federal grants, published before Key had begun to write extensively on parties. Appreciating Key's work as I do, and owing many of my research interests to his stimulus, I call attention to his exclusive concentration on American parties without depreciating it. Key's contributions are no less impressive because of that concentration. I would not even have noticed it except for an invitation, shortly after Key's death, to contribute to a volume related to his work, and specifically to write a chapter on the implications of that work for comparative studies. One would probably be struck by the same Americanist emphasis of most of our parties scholars in the first half of this century, and that is why Key seems to exemplify the field. No longer, however, is this so clear. In the last few decades, many American parties specialists, like American political scientists generally, have undertaken at least one research venture in a foreign country. Moreover, their scholarship even when confined to American subjects is much more likely than in Key's day to be presented along with studies of foreign parties, particularly on convention panels. However welcome these connections, they do not yet constitute anything like a submergence of the traditionally separate American specialization.

A second important element of our disciplinary history is a commitment to the importance of political parties in a democratic political system. Although some American political scientists outside the parties field have shared the familiar American public's disdain for parties, virtually all specialists in the relevant subject believe in the usefulness of parties. I say "virtually all" instead of "all" despite an inability to name any exception among American scholarly specialists; possibly, a few such specialists, unknown to me, might have agreed with the well-known anti-party views of an early foreign critic, Ostrogorski (1902). The usual scholarly commitment to parties became apparent in recent decades as worries mounted about their perceived weakening. Even early in the century, however, when parties looked so strong that political scientists, among others, wanted to limit their power, most parties specialists sought not to abolish them but to reform them and thus make them more effective democratic institutions. Usually the intention was to reform existing Republican and Democratic parties, but an occasional scholar who preferred a new third party was no less committed to the usefulness of party. Furthermore, usefulness implied desirability rather than merely the acceptance of a necessary evil.

Since I am discussing only specialized parties scholars, pro-partyism might be understood as flowing from the tendency of any group of specialists to identify with their subject matter. Certainly, scholars in our field resemble other specialists in stressing the importance of what they study—be it, for example, Congress or China—and even in presenting their subject in

a favorable light. Nevertheless, parties scholars seem distinctive in the persistence and the intensity, particularly in recent decades, of a belief in making our objects of study more effective political institutions. Consider the contrast to students of interest groups whose recognition of the importance of those groups does not lead them to advocate their strengthening. Indeed scholars studying both interest groups and parties, common in our profession well before our APSA section's formal linking of "Political Organizations and Parties," have often wanted to strengthen parties in order to counter what, in their view, was the too-effective pressure of narrow interests on individual legislators.

It is hard to find counterparts elsewhere in political science for anything like the advocacy of the famous report of the APSA's Committee on Political Parties (1950) or of the contemporary Committee for Party Renewal in which many parties specialists participate. We promote not just the study of parties but also parties themselves. To be sure, some students of Congress and of the presidency sometimes favor the enhancement of their institution's status, along with the study of it, but their advocacy is seldom as overt or urgent as is the pro-party position among us. This is not to say that all parties specialists adopt the same kind of pro-partyism. Many of us have long been critics of the APSA report, preferring more conventional American models to the far reaching proposals of the report. But even a preference for maintaining and perhaps strengthening traditional cadre parties is a pro-party position.

Nevertheless, the "responsible party" model, exemplified by the 1950 APSA report, has been the most influential brand of pro-partyism in political science. Indeed, it was so from the early days of academic concern with American parties. Ranney (1954) traces the responsible party formulation to Woodrow Wilson before and soon after 1900, and he treats the work of several American political scientists of the early decades of the twentieth century as centered about the doctrine of responsible party government. From this treatment, as well as from what we know of later work, it is clear that the doctrine took more than one form. Often, as with Woodrow Wilson, it came to be joined with strong presidential leadership. Sometimes, it included large roles for organized participating activists who would adopt policies, select candidates, and hold successful candidates to their policies. Other times, advocates were satisfied with policy making by elected leaders comprising a cadre rather than a mass party. In one way or another, what was sought was a party that could unite our separated legislative and executive branches behind a common program—or, as critics suggest, establish by party alone what the British achieve through a parliamentary system that helps produce a responsible party government. In my time, the foremost

proponent of this doctrine was unquestionably Schattschneider, whose well-known book (1942) more clearly states his views than does the report of the American Political Science Association (1950), whose committee he chaired. Like everyone else in the responsible party school, Schattschneider seems to assume the virtues of two-party competition since majority control is required for the exercise of party responsibility and such control is much less likely with multi-party contests. But multi-partyism has never been a widely considered option among American scholars, whatever their preference as between more responsible parties or our conventional parties. The option they faced in the United States was one-partyism, especially the old southern variety, and Key (1949) was typical in rejecting it as inferior to a competitive two-party structure.

Whereas the responsible party model, like the Americanist concentration and like pro-partyism, has been influential for a century, the fourth element of my intellectual history is a conceptualization that emerged less than fifty years ago. It is the three-fold separation of our subject: a party-in-the-electorate (identifiable party voters), a party-in-the-government (public office holders bearing a party label), and an extra-governmental party (organized activists and/or professional politicians). The terms became familiar from their use in leading textbooks, beginning with Key (1953, 181-182). Although Key sought only to clarify the different senses of party that he intended to discuss, the result was a conceptual framework within which our study of American parties has since developed. In particular, party-in-the-electorate became a largely separate and often dominating subject in the parties field.

Studies of party voters would have probably burgeoned in the last several decades even if party-in-the-electorate were not conceived in the three-fold scheme; after all, such studies follow from the impressive growth of voting behavior research and of the quantitative methods used in that research. But the conceptualization may legitimize the use of the title *The Decline of American Political Parties, 1952-1980* (Wattenberg 1984) for a book exclusively concerned with the decline of party voting. That excellent book illustrates something else about work on party-in-the-electorate. Its author is a specialist in electoral behavior who analyzes survey data with the skill and sophistication characteristic of the Michigan school, where he was trained. Indeed, most research on party-in-the-electorate is by similarly trained scholars, from Michigan or elsewhere, and despite their occasional interest in other conceptions of parties, their main subject is voting behavior. Something parallel has occurred with respect to the study of party-in-the-government in that congressional parties tend to be subsumed under legislative behavior and to be studied by specialists primarily concerned with

that field. Consequently only the extra-governmental party organization is left to those who think of themselves primarily as parties specialists. Nothing, of course, prevents these residual parties specialists from also exploring party-in-the-electorate and party-in-the-government, and many do so from time to time.

It is hard for me to see anything inherently disadvantageous in the three-fold conceptualization, and I have used it ever since I began to study parties. But I take note of the strong dissent of a British critic, Alan Ware (1985, 3-12), who argues that the "unholy trinity" is a distinctively American device that encourages a concentration on party-in-the-electorate and a neglect of organizational interaction to help explain a phenomenon like the decline in party voting. Ware's criticism is worth our attention even if we attribute none of our research shortcomings to the three-fold conceptualization. We can acknowledge that the conceptualization is only in America since political scientists neither here nor elsewhere apply it to parties in other nations. And we might well think that American party organizations, relative to party voters, have been less thoroughly studied than their European counterparts. A simple reason for such a disparity, however, is that for the last half-century American party organizations looked much less substantial than their European counterparts, while as late as the 1960s American electoral parties remained very substantial by a comparative standard and certainly worth intensive inquiry with respect to any decline during the next few decades. Scholars concerned with electoral behavior have thus been dealing with the most salient aspect of American parties—their capacity to structure the vote. And, as noticed previously, these scholars devoted ample talents and facilities to the enterprise. The significance of their work is so fully established that its continuity can be assumed.

The problem, it seems to me, is also to encourage non-electoral research in the parties field. Much but not all of that research tends to be nonquantitative, drawing neither on surveys nor other sources of tabulatable data but rather on field observation along with documentary sources. In studying party organizations, in and out of government, no one doubts the need for field observation, including unstructured interviewing. Yet, as the preeminent observer of congressional behavior has remarked, "Observation-based research is a rarity in the *American Political Science Review*" (Fenno 1986, 14). One can say the same for most prestigious journals, where not only quantitative findings but also mathematical models and political philosophy appear more frequently than does field observation. Other publication outlets are available, it is true, and these include governmental institutes, some less well known journals, and books like the superb participant-observer account of congressional experience by David Price (1992).

II

My research questions, in the intellectual context that I have described, mainly concern party organizations rather than party-in-the-electorate. Deviations of another kind from our disciplinary tradition will also become evident, and they will be briefly summarized at the end of the essay. The questions, however, are not systematically compiled in order to break with, or to sustain, that tradition. Instead, they represent simply my own curiosity about subjects that occurred to me while recently reading and thinking about party politics and our scholarly literature. Several interests will probably seem idiosyncratic.

(1) How substantial is organized party membership in the United States? Do we now have at least in certain states and localities anything comparable to the regularized dues-paying memberships of British and many other European parties (and to the memberships of various nonparty political organizations in the U.S.), or do our party organizations remain so loosely structured and unbounded as to be classifiable merely as leadership cadre structures with electoral followers? In other words, do we have meaningful late twentieth-century organizations to replace the old machines whose fairly numerous operatives (precinct captains, for example) were patronage employees? Efforts to answer similar questions have certainly been made in recent decades, notably by Samuel Eldersveld in a major study of Detroit (1964) and in his subsequent studies but also by several other accomplished scholars interested both in the characteristics of party activists and in the effectiveness of the organizations in which they participate. It is also true that some of these studies received prestigious professional recognition, mostly however in the 1960s.

Much remains to be learned about those who financially support the recently developed state and national bureaucratic party headquarters staffs. Are these supporters, with their "contributing member" cards, merely checkbook (or credit card) participants, solicited by direct mail, or are they also party members in a more activist or organized sense? My own hypothesis is that we have a rough American party organizational counterpart to the dues-paying European model, and that its "membership" may well be larger though less regularized than that of parties elsewhere. Unbounded, or irregularly bounded, as it almost certainly is, American party membership is nevertheless drawn upon for representation at conventions and for campaign activity coordinated by a party as well as for campaign activity mounted by individual party candidates. Even loosely organized American party activists may influence policy positions, as delegates seem to have done at national party conventions. To what extent and how they do so is

a good example of a significant subject requiring field observation both of the process of delegate selection and of convention activity. Though no longer determining presidential nominations, except in a formal ratifying sense, national convention delegates remain important political participants. Moreover, activists generally, though also without the power to nominate candidates for nonpresidential as well as presidential office, may exert special influence in primary elections. The extent of such influence can be examined, as it already has been in several states where party conventions endorse candidates (Jewell 1984).

(2) Regarding the just mentioned absence of organizational control of party nominations as distinctively American prompts me to raise one of several historical questions: When and how did American party organizations lose control of nominations for nonpresidential offices? I separate the nonpresidential from presidential nominations since the process by which the latter became popularly determined is recent and already much studied. Moreover, removing presidential nominations from organizational control ought to be regarded as a belated (even if disputable) change to bring such nominations in line with established methods used to select party candidates for most other offices in the United States. Those methods, familiar here but not elsewhere, involve statutory requirements empowering unorganized voters to select candidates who will bear particular party labels. Almost every other democratic nation leaves the selection to party organizations which allocate the power to their leaders, to meetings of their members, to conventions of delegates representing those members, or to "primaries" conducted among organized members only. Incidentally, candidate selection is the comparative term for what we call party nomination.

In answering the question, it is insufficient to say that the loss of organizational control coincides with the introduction of the mandatory direct primary. In many states, party leaders, we suspect, continued to exert control or almost invariably decisive influence on nominations long after the establishment of primary elections. Perhaps some still do—that too, as noted already, is worth exploring. Looking in the other direction, backward from the twentieth-century primary, one would probably find that in many places candidate selection was often a much more open process than it has been in European parties.

Some historical accounts indicate that caucuses were not always dominated by bosses and that many professed party voters participated though neither duespaying members nor patronage jobholders. We know too of the early use of the word "primary" in some states to describe a local party-managed process of candidate selection by voters casting ballots over much of a day rather than only at a caucus. Caucuses themselves often seem to

have been called primaries. Whatever name was used, largely unorganized voters could, in principle, choose party candidates, as well as delegates to conventions that subsequently named candidates favored by those voters. Whether they actually did so in large numbers and in many places, or whether the practice was merely episodic, is worth examination. Insofar as the practice was widespread, it would point toward a view of the state-mandated direct primary not as a radical reform but as a kind of legal extension and regularization of American custom. Despite the considerable historical evidence of organizational control of nineteenth-century candidate selection, the open participation principle looks like a significant enough American idea to help account for the establishment of the direct primary as we know it today.

(3) A question closely related to the previous inquiry concerns the origin of the closed primary in which voters, in about half of our states, are required by law to enroll by party as a condition for casting primary ballots. Can we assume that party organizations viewed closed primaries as more favorable to their interests than open primaries, and then succeeded in imposing the preferred form when reluctantly accepting a primary of some kind? However likely that assumption, given the more limited electorate to be influenced in a closed primary, its validity ought to be examined in a state-by-state study of the adoption of direct-primary laws early in the twentieth century. I am curious about the origin of the very idea that the state should enroll party voters. After all, the enrollment is a substantial public service for what might well be considered private political organizations. Of course, any state-managed party primary, be it closed or open, is itself a public service.

(4) Would American party organizations be materially strengthened if the state-mandated party primary were successfully challenged on constitutional grounds? Judicial invalidation of this almost century-old institution is remote, but the Supreme Court's language in recently extending First Amendment rights of political association to protect parties against certain state regulations encouraged the Libertarian party to challenge, so far unsuccessfully, the California law requiring it to nominate by primary rather than convention (*Lightfoot v. Eu* 1992). The most relevant precedent is the U.S. Supreme Court opinion against the application of Connecticut's closed primary law preventing Independents from voting in Republican primaries that the Republican party wanted to open to Independents (*Tashjian v. Republican Party of Connecticut* 1986). Support for this sort of challenge comes from many but not all pro-party political scientists on the ground that parties would benefit generally if treated as private associations subject to no special state legislation. Whether that would in fact be the case without the

mandatory party primary is uncertain enough, it seems to me, so that it should be critically examined.

Apart from imagining the consequences, at least a little research is feasible. Virginia's major parties have lately been nominating in conventions, as permitted under state law, and their experience should be relevant. So, for a different reason, is the experience of parties in Louisiana since that state adopted an election law eliminating strictly party primaries and substituting something like nonpartisan elections for state and congressional offices. As in nonpartisan elections, a first contest produces two leading vote-getters who then compete in a second contest (unless one wins office by receiving over 50 percent of the vote in the first contest). But unlike nonpartisan elections, Louisiana's procedure allows candidates to put their party labels on the ballot. Nothing prevents party organizations from endorsing and campaigning for such candidates. On the other hand, it is entirely possible that two Democrats or two Republicans will face each other in the second contest. Even apart from that result, the frequency of which can be readily learned, how does the Louisiana system affect parties? Does it encourage Independent candidacies, labelled as such on the ballot, or non-organizational Democrats or Republicans? Does organized party support become more or less important? These questions are plainly pertinent beyond Louisiana especially if state-mandated party primaries were to be invalidated on constitutional grounds. In that unlikely circumstance, Louisiana's system might become attractive in other states that wanted to retain a required primary method of nomination; like a strictly nonpartisan primary the Louisiana law is not subject to the judicial challenge now brought against a state-required *party* primary. Of course, states would have a less drastic option. They could leave to each party the decision whether to nominate in a state-run primary or in a convention, and thus effectively maintain primaries where they are so well established, as in my state, that major parties would not risk the opprobrium associated with a shift to conventions.

(5) Would the deinstitutionalization of major parties, as implied by the previously discussed judicial invalidation of mandatory primaries or by other legal steps to privatize parties, encourage third parties? Inquiry on this matter is more speculative than empirical, but historical study is of some relevance. The greater durability of two-partyism in the United States than elsewhere may be partly explained by statutory institutionalization early in this century. The direct primary facilitates the entry of protest movements in existing parties and the capture of their nominations by protest candidates. A separate party looks like a tougher route to electoral success even though ballot access problems have lately been lessened by judicial decisions. We do, in fact, have third or minor parties on our ballots. Those in New York

state have been unusual in their success over a few decades, and their experience is worth studying in light of New York's unusual statutory provisions allowing candidates to be nominated by more than one party. Viewing such provisions as advantageous, a third party in one of the many states prohibiting multi-party nominations tried, but failed, in *Swamp v. Kennedy* (1991), to obtain judicial invalidation of the prohibition (effectively a prohibition against cross-filing in a primary).

(6) What is the role of party organizations in general election campaigns and how has it changed? Perhaps this question cannot be completely separated from my earlier one about organizational influences on candidate selection since candidate-centered primary campaigns may lead to candidate-centered general election campaigns. But that suggests a greater causal impact of the direct primary than is supported by historical evidence. American general election campaigns even before direct primaries seem to have been much more candidate centered than campaigns in other nations. Yet we do assume that parties managed those campaigns, and also many campaigns in the first decades after direct primaries, in a way that is now almost entirely unknown. In particular, it is widely believed that parties rather than candidates supplied the canvassers to get out the vote in an era when personal contacts loomed larger in campaigns than they do in an age of electronic communication. And we also believe that even when large amounts of cash were needed that party organizations raised and spent most of the cash until recent decades when individual candidates and their committees became the principal fund-raisers and spenders. A substantial shift on this score can be documented from late twentieth-century records, but it may be less monumental than it seems.

Fragmentary evidence suggests that even in the nineteenth century certain American elections were sufficiently candidate-centered to foster individual campaigns and individual fund-raising to support those campaigns. Specifically, a biography of President James Garfield contains an account of how during Garfield's long career in the House of Representatives, 1863-1880, he used a personal organization and a devoted local manager to promote his candidacy and especially to secure Republican renomination in his Ohio district. Promotion included publicity and the mobilization of voters to support Garfield at county meetings electing delegates to the district Republican nominating convention. Money was definitely required, and on one occasion Garfield himself promised to raise it (Peskin 1978, 375-376, 382). Historical inquiry might reveal other instances of the Garfield-type campaign. If frequent, though not universal, the practice would help explain why contemporary American campaigns, including their fund-raising, are so much more candidate-centered than are

campaigns in European democracies. The latter, we know, remain party managed despite their increased dependence on the same mass-media political communication that dominate our campaigns. Hence, in comparative perspective, the substitution of expensive advertising for personal contacts cannot alone account for American candidate-centered campaigns. The difference from the European pattern must instead flow from a long-standing, pre-television tendency to conduct candidate-centered campaigns.

A more obvious way in which we overstate the significance of the shift in campaigns from party to candidate is to depreciate the roles of contemporary party organizations. Their roles are probably not dominant as those of the old machines were supposed to have been, but in some instances they have developed new activities in response to late twentieth-century politics (Crotty 1986, Pomper 1980). It would be useful to learn more about the extent to which party organizations supply services to candidates who, in seeking offices below the state-wide level, do not find it economical to buy such services on their own. And it would also be useful to learn more about how party organizations, particularly at the state level, coordinate individual campaigns and otherwise participate in them. Also, we need studies of the effectiveness of state and local parties in using the massive amounts of soft money contributed to presidential and some other campaigns in order to foster voter registration and turnout.

(7) In addition to the conventional extra-governmental party organizations considered above, what are the roles of the recently expanded campaign committees of legislative parties? Both in Congress and in state legislatures, party campaign committees have become major fund raisers, spenders, and contributors to candidates. Already the subject of a few excellent studies (Herrnson 1988, Gierzynski 1992), these activities continue to develop so as to justify further research. It is important to ask whether legislative campaign committees are replacing conventional extra-governmental party organizations by raising funds beyond the capacity of those organizations, and, if so, how satisfactorily they substitute for the mass membership activist parties that many political scientists favor. Office-holder parties, which legislative campaign committees surely are, have not been the favorites of many pro-party scholars. Yet they may now be the most effective American party organizations. And they may work with extra-governmental activist organizations despite an often perceived clash between the electoral motivations of office holders and the ideological commitments of activists.

(8) Is the responsible party model viable in light of the frequency of divided government in our time? Perhaps the question is less compelling since the 1992 elections produced a Democratic president along with

continuing Democratic majorities in both houses of Congress. But we cannot be confident that unified government, Democratic or Republican, has become a long-run replacement for the divided government that prevailed in twenty of the previous twenty-four years. Thus, the question remains relevant if less urgent than it was at the start of the Bush Administration when James Sundquist (1988-89) raised it and answered negatively. Divided government is no mere aberration in our system; it exists over long periods in many states as well as in Washington. Furthermore, divided government at the national level appears, in a careful and sophisticated study by David Mayhew (1991), to be about as productive of policy output as unified government. Similar studies of state policy outputs could be undertaken. Should the results resemble Mayhew's, however, they would not fully persuade advocates of responsible-party government whose case rests partly on the importance of collective accountability for policies—including accountability for more sustainable budgetary policies than divided national government produced in the 1980s.

Nevertheless, whatever our preferences, the frequency of divided government demands a perspective different from that which treated majority party cohesion as a virtue because of its capacity to support an executive of the same party. Perhaps cohesion would then be no virtue, on the ground that cross-party legislative coalitions had become necessary. But, contrarily, it could be argued that a cohesive majority legislative party, even if bearing a different label from the executive's, would be useful since its leadership could then effectively bargain with the executive.

III

In the briefest of summaries, I want to stress the limited extent to which my illustrative questions point our research in new directions. Even the greater attention that I suggest for party organizations is not a signal for diminishing the rightly prestigious scholarship on party-in-the-electorate. It reflects only a desire to stimulate field observation as well as survey research. Similarly, in urging explicitly comparative dimensions for our inquiries, I want to modify a strictly Americanist tradition without abandoning the practically useful national specialization. And, while I add new doubts about the relevance of the responsible party model, I retain a less rigorous and broader pro-party commitment in my intellectual baggage. Being aware of that commitment is important especially in formulating research proposals that seek to evaluate the impact of changes in the legal and institutional rules affecting parties. When we ask, for example, about campaign finance regulation as about suggested judicial invalidation of state-imposed direct primaries, we want to learn whether it's good for the parties.

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