

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### A. Writing Objectives

Third parties play an important role in democratic government, although third parties rarely win elections. They draw attention to issues that may be ignored by the majority parties. If the issue finds resonance with the voter, one or more of the major parties may adopt the issue into its own party platform. In addition, a third party may be used by the voter to cast a protest vote as if in a referendum on an important issue. Third parties also helps voter turnout by bringing more people to the polls.<sup>1</sup>

Third parties have tried from time to time to make headway against the United States Two-Party system. For the most part, it has been a losing cause. The system favors the dominant political organizations, which for more than a century have been the Democratic and Republican parties. Third party candidate never won the presidency. Only twice, since 1832 have third parties or independents won more than 20 percent of the popular vote in presidential election. Eight times, they have won 10 percent or more, most recently in 1992.<sup>2</sup>

Based on the fact above, this research aims to give clear explanation about the main strength of third parties in America's presidential election and also as an

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<sup>1</sup> Third party\_(United States), (accessed September 05, 2006); available from <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki>.

<sup>2</sup> John L. More, *Election A to Z, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed*, Washington DC, CQ Press, 2003, p. 475.

academic requisite in order to graduate from University of Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta.

## **B. Problem Background**

To the American voter, the two parties are as legitimate as any institution formally prescribed in the U.S Constitution. Children grow up learning about the president, the Congress, and the Democrats and Republicans. Most have never even heard about Libertymen, Greenbacks, or Prohibitionists. Voters are socialized into a two-party form that is constantly reinforced by the common portrayal of elections as contest between Democrats and Republicans.

A major party candidate wins nearly every election. The leaders of the two major parties organize both houses of the U.S Congress and all about one state legislature. For well over a century, the president has been either a Democrat or a Republican.

It is an extraordinary act for Americans to vote for a third party candidate. Loyalty to the two-party system is a central feature of their political being. To vote for a third party, citizen must repudiate much of what they have learned and grown to accept as appropriate political behavior, they must often endure ridicule and harassment from neighbors and friends, they must pay steep costs to gather information on more obscure candidate, and they must accept that their candidate has no hope of winning.

In recent years, a growing number of citizens have defected from the major parties to third party presidential candidates. During the election in the past two

decades, minor parties like those led by Theodore Roosevelt and George Wallace as well as independent efforts such as Ross Perot's 1992 presidential campaign have attracted more support at any time since the 1912s.<sup>3</sup>

#### Notable Third Party Presidential Candidates<sup>4</sup>

- James B. Weaver - He ran as the Populist candidate for US President in the 1892 elections, receiving over a million votes and 22 electoral votes.
- Eugene V. Debs - Running for US President as the Social Democratic Party candidate in the 1900 election, and the Socialist Party candidate in the 1904, 1908, 1912, and 1920 elections.
- Theodore Roosevelt - Ran as Bull Moose Candidate in 1912 and won 88 electoral votes.
- Robert M. La Follette, Sr. - Running in the 1924 US Presidential election, "Fighting Bob" LaFollette won almost five million votes, 16.6% of the popular vote, and 13 electoral votes from his home state of Wisconsin.
- John B. Anderson - Ran as an independent candidate in 1980 after dropping out of the Republican Primaries. He won 6.6% of the popular votes.
- Ross Perot - Running for President in the 1992 elections, Ross Perot captured nearly 20 million votes - 18.9% of the popular vote. He ran again in 1996, winning just over 8 million votes.

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<sup>3</sup> Steven J. Rosenstone, Roy L. Behr, and Edward H. Lazarus, *Third Parties in America: Citizen Respon to Major party failure, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed*, New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1996, p. 315.

<sup>4</sup> [Third\\_party\\_\(United\\_States\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Third_party_(United_States)), (accessed September 05, 2006); available from <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki>.

- Ralph Nader - His first major presidential campaign was the 2000 US election when as a Green, he won nearly 3 million votes. He is often accredited with being the defining factor in the final results of the 2000 elections. He also ran as a Green in the 1996 election and as an independent in the 2004 election.

Despite the two-party norm and the formidable hurdles that third parties confront, minor parties do manage to attract support in every election. As we have already seen, there is considerable variation in the level of third party voting. In some years, independent candidates are unable to lure even 1 percent of the electorate to their causes, whereas in other contest over 10 percent of the public abandons the major parties. The third parties always appear over time to time, they always join in every election.<sup>5</sup>

In every presidential election, some portion of the American electorate abandons the major parties to support their party alternatives. Minor parties have managed to capture over 5 percent of the popular vote in a third of the presidential elections since 1840, they have won over 10 percent of the vote in one out of five contest. Because of third party strength, 14 of the last 36 presidents (40 percent) have entered the White House without a popular vote majority. Through the years, third parties have controlled enough votes in the right states to have theoretically changed one-third of the Electoral College results.

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<sup>5</sup> Bambang Cipto, *Politik dan Pemerintahan Amerika*. Yogyakarta, Lingkaran, 2003, p. 57.

### Top Vote – Winning Third Parties, 1832 - 2000

Party	Election Year	Popular vote Candidate	Popular Vote (percent)	No. Electoral votes
Anti – Masonic	1832	William Wirt	7.8	7
Free Soil	1848	Martin Van Buren	10.1	0
American (“Know Nothing”)	1856	Millard Fillmore	21.5	8
Southern Democrats	1860	John C. Breckinridge	18.1	72
Constitutional Union	1860	John Bell	12.6	39
Populist	1892	James B. Weaver	8.5	22
Socialist	1912	Eugene V. Debs	6.0	0
Progressive (Bull Moose)	1912	Theodore Roosevelt	27.4	88
Progressive	1924	Robert M. La Follette	16.6	13
American Independent	1968	George C. Wallace	13.5	46
Independent	1980	John B. Anderson	6.6	0
Independent	1992	Ross Perot	18.9	0
Reform Party	1996	Ross Perot	8.4	0

*Source:* Michael Nelson, ed., *Congressional Quarterly's Guide to the Presidency*, 2d ed. (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly, 1996), 300; Daniel A. Mazmanian, *Third Parties in Presidential Elections* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings, 1974), 4-5; updated by the author.

At first, it may seem unlikely that any single explanation can account for more than a few burst on minor party activity. Third parties, after all, have represented nearly every political point of view, from the Communist Party on the left to the American Independent Party on the right. In some years, as in 1968, voters support a conservative party; at other times, like 1912, a progressive party captures their votes. Third parties have pushed for abolition (Liberty Party), Prohibition, Right to Life, States' Rights, even “Down with Lawyers.” The candidates have included three ex-presidents, two former vice-president,

governors, senator and congressmen, housewives, steelworker, university professors, a convict, and a comedian.

Once a third party attracts substantial backing, one or both of the major parties, anxious to win over those supporters, seize the minor party's ideas as their own. Observed historian John Hicks:<sup>6</sup>

Let a third party once demonstrate that votes are to be made by adopting a certain demand, then one or the other of the older parties can be trusted to absorb the new doctrine. Ultimately, if the demand has merit, it will probably be translated into law or practice by the major party that has taken it up .... The chronic supporter of third party tickets need not worry, therefore, when he is told, as he surely will be told, that he is "throwing away his vote." A glance through American history would seem to indicate that is kind of vote is after all probably the most powerful vote that has ever been cast.

In short, minor parties perform many of the same functions in American politics that parties and other political institutions more generally do: they "link people to government".<sup>7</sup> Third parties are one of many vehicles people use to express their concerns. Like the major parties, third parties aggregate citizens' preferences into a political force and try to influence what governmental leaders do.

In recent years, the United States seems to have entered another period of major party breakdown and third party strength. Whereas minor parties averaged only 6 percent of the presidential vote in the 1952 to 1964 elections, 5.1 percent of the electorate deserted the major parties between 1968 and 1980. At the same time, there has also been a significant increase in the number of presidential

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<sup>6</sup> Steven J. Rosenstone, Roy L. Behr, and Edward H. Lazarus, *Third Parties in America: Citizen Respon to Major party failure*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed, New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1996, p. 8.

<sup>7</sup> Giovanni Sartori, *Parties and Party System*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1976, p. 25.

candidates running. Prior to 1968, only once, in 1932, did as many as seven minor party candidates poll votes in more than one state. Between 1900 and 1964 only five candidates, on average, did so. However, in 1968, eight third party candidates attracted votes in more than one state, nine emerged in 1972, and eleven in both 1976 and 1980. Never before have so many third party presidential candidates run and polled votes; not since the 1920s has third party voting been, on average, as high as in recent years.

### Popular and Electoral College Votes, 1968-2000

Election	Candidate	Party	Popular Votes	Electoral Votes
1968	Richard Nixon	R	31,785,480	301
	Hubert H. Humphrey	D	31,275,166	191
	George C. Wallace	AI	9,906,473	46
1972	Richard Nixon	R	47,169,911	520
	George McGovern	D	29,170,383	17
1976	Jimmy Carter	D	40,830,763	297
	Gerald R. Ford	R	39,147,793	240
1980	Ronald Reagan	R	43,904,153	489
	Jimmy Carter	D	35,483,883	49
	John B. Anderson	I	5,720,060	0
1984	Ronald Reagan	R	54,455,075	525
	Walter F. Mondale	D	37,577,185	13
1988	George Bush	R	48,886,097	426
	Michael S. Dukakis	D	41,809,074	111
1992	Bill Clinton	D	44,909,326	370
	George Bush	R	39,103,882	168
	Ross Perot	I	19,741,657	0
1996	Bill Clinton	D	47,402,357	379
	Bob Dole	R	39,198,755	159
	Ross Perot	RF	8,085,402	0
2000	George, W. Bush	R	50,455,156	271
	Al Gore	D	50,992,335	266
	Ralph Nader	G	2,882,738	0
	Pat Buchanan	RF	449,077	0

Source: *Presidential Election, 1789-2000* (Washington, D.C.: CQ Press, 2002), 148-156, 219-227

Note: R = Republican; D = Democratic; AI = American Independent; G = Green; I = Independent; RF = Reform

The impact of third parties on American politics extends far beyond their capacity to attract votes. Minor parties, historically, have been a source of important policy innovations. Women's suffrage, the graduated income tax, and the direct election of senators, to name a few, were all issues that third parties espoused first. As Fred Haynes has argued, third parties in the nineteenth century "were pioneers in the conversion of American politics from almost exclusive attention to the people".<sup>8</sup>

### **C. Research Question**

By giving illustration above, the main problem of analysis: What are the main strengths of third parties in America's presidential election?

### **D. Theoretical Framework**

Theory is guideline and a directive which can guide a research to be more empiric with showing facts and the relation that happened so that a problem can be answered. Theory is a form of pronouncement that answer the question 'why', means that theorize is an effort to give sense to the happened phenomena<sup>9</sup>. Theory develop a several concept become a related explanation. To make an explanation to the problem above, the writer use the theory as follow:

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<sup>8</sup> Fred E Haynes, *Third Party Movement Since the Civil War*, Iowa City, Iowa, 1916, p. 470.

<sup>9</sup> Mochtar Mas'oed, *Ilmu Hubungan Internasional: Disiplin dan Metodologi*, Jakarta, LP3ES, 1983



## **The Political Parties Concept**

In general, the function of political party can be defined as an effort to transform interest and demand become policy and gain control to government tools in order to implicate those policies.

Robert Michels define political party as one of the component of political infrastructure that its main function is to get and keep authority.<sup>10</sup> For that reason political party do an important activity that is participating in government sector, which means try to put their member to be a government official. In order to reach that purpose, political party must able to correlate input in form of demand and the dynamic of people support with the policy of party's output correctly if want a mechanism of party give a suitable goal. Because of that it needs a party's elite who have a capability to make a conversion to input become party' output such as programs and party's policies. If the leadership in parties is weak, the members will tend to separate them selves and form a contrary faction to gain influence.<sup>11</sup>

According to Angus Campbell, there are three main variables which influences the individual behavior in choose one political party. They are:

### **a. Identification to the party**

Psychologically, people choose one political party because of his loyalty to that party. Political practice by major parties in America sometimes different with the platform or their image in society. But, for some people often still have a traditional loyalty to the party because of the pasties' image. It often lost by dissatisfaction that make them move

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<sup>10</sup> Robert Michels, *Partai Politik: Kecenderungan Oligakhis dan Birokrasi*, Jakarta, CV.Rajawali, 1984, p. 92.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid, p. 93.

their choice immediately. Choices supported more by practice and pragmatic consideration in form of certain interest. This is influenced by the development of social condition such as: education, economic standard, social status that finally influence education and political awareness. Until now, identification to the party still becomes a big influence to American citizen to vote for one of two major parties.

b. Develop Issues

With this consideration, people choose the proper and capable party to rule the government. This is determined by develop issue. Furthermore, this development pushes the parties to be more perceptive. The party becomes more reformists and representative through bit by bit compromise to their ideology, as the result, the party loose their special ideology which substitute by across class-rational-religion-ethnic and interests.<sup>12</sup>

c. Orientation to Candidates

People choose a certain political party because of personal quality of candidate, this behavior divided in two parts:

1. Instrumental quality, where voters see the candidate capability in handling one problem.
2. Symbolic quality, where voters have a view about how the leader supposed to be, like honest, kind, etc.

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<sup>12</sup> Robert Michels, *Political Parties*, The Free Press of Glancoe, 1958, p.304-305, and Maurice Duverger, *Political Parties*, London, Muthuen, 1954, p. 17.

In political system where more than one political party, to rule the government, political party must have the majority chairs in parliament. Political parties have a different charm in every part of society, according to their social experience and historical background. In order to win in general election, parties must have a high level of concentration in using resources.<sup>13</sup>

Meanwhile, why people choose one political parties according to Mark N. Hagopian is caused by some factors, such as:

1. The Ideology of Political Party

Ideology as a basic struggle for the party which determine the party's quality, direction and purposes, have a big role to catch and collect support. Whether it is self justification from elite or mass deception by the party's leader, that image can be used as a tool to fight and win the election.

2. Advantages that might be reached by group for their vote
3. Developing issues at that time (Nature of Times)
4. Individual tradition in election (No issue content)

In relation between voters and parties, Downs express his assumption as follow:

- a. The party tries to gain vote as much as possible in general election. In this model, political party is directed in willingness to get vote as much as possible in general election. As the consequence, they have to adjust

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<sup>13</sup> Robert Dahl, in Miriam Budiarmo, ed., *Partisipasi dan Partai Politik*, Jakarta, Gramedia, 1981, pp. 108-131.

their policy with request and willingness from voters than issues some program that is in contradiction with people interest.

- b. Spectrum of party's ideology move appropriate with voter desire. This assumption is used to recognize that party forced by past and desire to adjust with current condition in order to be more rational in their voters' eyes. The party not freely to adopt their own policy, members and tradition tend to reject a radical change. In the end, these conditions make them lose their voters.
- c. Party uses ideology to mobilize mass. Political issue becoming very complex and there exist many ways to solve it. Voters just a very little desire to get that issue and policy. Ideology used as a base of policy making to help voters decide their choice. For Downs, ideology makes voter more rational in decide their choice. So, the function of here ideology as a tool in supporting voters find out how their desire and interest can be fulfill by one party in general election.

Political participation in America is different with political participation in new democratic countries. Political participation in America have many kinds of form that give society to choose the most suitable participation according to their willingness. Government have no authority to push them. So, if the number of people who follow the general election is low, it doesn't mean that America is not a democratic country, but it caused by the variation of political participation in America, such as: voting, contacting official, Protest, community activities, etc.

This condition, give an easier way to political parties in America in socializing issue and political idea and also collecting mass and support.

In explaining this thesis, the writer focused on two major point of the theory, they are develop issues and orientation to candidate because the writer think that that is the most suitable in describing the real condition in presidential election in America.

#### **E. Hypothesis**

The main strength of Third party voting are:

1. Third parties are able to adjust the dissatisfaction with both the Republican and Democrats, with publicizing important issues that the major parties have ignored,
2. Third Parties have candidates who present a viable alternative to the major party nominees.

#### **F. Range of Research**

It is important to limit the time in which the research held. It help preventing the subject from being expanded. The range of this research is focused from 1912 to 2004.

#### **G. Method of Research**

The writer uses a qualitative method of research, a common and simply one. Thus, to take account of the method, all of the matter will collect from secondary

sources such as library research, internet media, and couple of journals, several books, newspaper, and some periodicals.

## **H. System of Writing**

Title: "The Strength of Third Parties in America's Presidential Election"

### **Chapter I Introduction**

- A. Writing Objective
- B. Problem Background
- C. Research Question
- D. Theoretical Framework
- E. Hypothesis
- F. Range of Research
- G. Method of research
- H. System of Writing

### **Chapter II American Political System**

- A. Two-Party System
- B. Party Functions
  - B.1. Contest Election
  - B.2. Organize Public Opinion
  - B.3. Coalition of Different Interest
- C. Electoral Behavior
- D. Election System
  - D.1. Single District Member
  - D.2. Winner Takes All
  - D.3. Electoral College

### Chapter III Third Party

- A. Comparison Multiparty System
- B. The Role of Third Parties In American Politics
- C. The Future of Third Parties in America
- D. Third parties in past presidential elections
- E. Current Largest U.S. Third Parties

### Chapter IV The Strength of Third Parties in America's Presidential Election

- A. Third Parties Standing on International Issues
- B. Issue Unresponded
  - B.1. Neglected Preferences
  - B.2. Neglected Issues
- C. Economic Performance
  - C.1. Agricultural Adversity
  - C.2. Economic Adversity
- D. The Rise of Candidate – Centered Politics
- E. Unacceptable Major Party Candidates
- F. Attractive Third Party Alternative
  - F.1. Personal Appeal
  - F.2. Nationally Prestigious Candidate