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# 20 / A Comparative Analysis of Party Organizations: The United States, Europe, and the World

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## The Study of Parties and Party Organization

There are major differences in the ways that scholars define a "political party." But according to Riggs's analysis of several different meanings, almost all scholars agree that, at a minimum, a party involves effort on behalf of a "group" or "organization" toward some objective (1973: 6). Although scholars may differ in their identification of the objectives of party activity, they seem united in defining a party in terms of coordinated human effort. Whether this coordinated human effort issues from a group or from an organization in their definitions appears to be due to a terminological rather than a conceptual difference. For our purposes, we will assume that all political parties are organizations with a political objective. Although my personal conceptualization of that political objective is not crucial to the analysis in this paper, I favor a broad conceptualization and define a political party as *an organization that pursues a goal of placing its avowed representatives in government positions*.

The components in this definition bear closer examination. A political party is defined first as an *organization*—implying recurring interactions among individuals with some division of labor and role differentiation. All organizations are acknowledged to have multiple goals; to qualify as a political party, an organization must have as one of its goals that of placing its avowed representatives in government position. The term "placing" should be interpreted broadly to include competing with other parties in the electoral process, restricting the activities of opposing parties, or subverting the political system and installing representatives in government positions by force. Finally, these individuals must be *avowed* representatives of the organization. This requirement eliminates interest groups from consideration as parties. Of course, if interest-group representatives seek office as interest group representatives, then the group does qualify as a party. In practical terms, the test is public identification of the representatives with the organization (party) name or label.

The organization of political parties has long held the attention of European scholars.

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Initially, this attention was centered on the distinctiveness of party organization as a social phenomenon. Such concern can be seen in the writings of Ostrogorski and Michels, both of whom stress the invidious consequences of party organization (1902 and 1915). More recently, with the valued acceptance of political parties in representative government, European scholars have turned to studying the differences in party organization, especially as they relate to the parties' roles in governing. Duverger can be cited as the main stimulus for contemporary concern with organizational concepts in parties research. The first paragraph of the first chapter of his classic work, *Political Parties*, emphasizes the importance of party organization:

it constitutes the general setting for the activity of members, the form imposed on their solidarity: it determines the machinery for the selection of leaders, and decides their powers. It often explains the strength and efficiency of certain parties, the weakness and inefficiency of others. (Duverger, 1963: 4)

Notwithstanding some notable exceptions (e.g., Wilson, 1962; Eldersveld, 1964; Schlesinger, 1965; Crotty, 1968), American scholars have not cultivated the study of party organization as intensively as their European counterparts. Hennessey, in his study of party organization, concludes: "In the most recent general treatments of American political parties, there seems to be little emphasis on the legal-structure aspects of organization, and even in recent editions of the more comprehensive parties-and-politics texts" (1968: 6). Wright agrees that "concern with party organization has been left largely the domain of non-American (mainly European) scholars" and holds that "the largely nonorganizational view of American parties, although understandable in the light of their underdeveloped organizational state, is a main deterrent to the comparative analysis of political parties . . ." (1971: v).

Several reasons can be cited for the neglect of party organization in American scholarship. The most pervasive factor, which has long colored the attitudes of most Americans toward party politics, is a fundamental distrust of political parties (Sindler, 1966: 4-5). Although they recognize the indispensability of political parties to democratic government, Americans have nonetheless been suspicious of parties acting as private organizations in pursuit of the public interest. This has led to the enactment of statutes in virtually every state that prescribe or limit the organization and activity of state parties (Childs, 1967; Crotty, 1974). In both public opinion and law, political parties in the United States are viewed as quasi-public institutions, and there is a general feeling that parties should be responsive to the electorate as a whole rather than to their limited clientele or membership. This view of parties contributes, Schlesinger contends, to the tendency for Americans to neglect party organization in comparison to the Europeans, for whom "the weight of the continental tradition is clearly on the side of parties as organizations to further the interests of their members, particularly in class or economic terms" (1965: 765-766).

Wright has interpreted the normative issue concerning the proper role of party in government in terms of two alternative models: the *Rational-Efficient* model and the *Party Democracy* model. The Rational-Efficient model, which tends to be employed by American social scientists, is summarized briefly by Wright as having "exclusively electoral functions" and being "pragmatically preoccupied with winning elections rather than with defining policy." The Party Democracy model, which is embraced most strongly by European social scientists, is viewed as "more policy-oriented, ideological, and concerned with defining policy in an internally democratic manner involving rank-and-file member participation" (1971: 7). Wright then states, "in the Party Democracy model, organization is

of crucial importance; in the Rational-Efficient model, organization is of much less importance" (ibid.: 39-40). Organization becomes important in the Rational-Efficient model only to the extent that it is related to the mobilization of voters at election time and to the winning of elections. In the Party Democracy model, however, members participate continually in party activities and, beyond campaigning, contribute to party policymaking. Party organization then becomes critical in providing for intraparty communications, procedures for reaching decisions, techniques for carrying out party policy, and recruitment of party leaders.

In recent years, the traditional American disinterest in the organization of parties has acquired a different hue: distinct antiorganizational sentiments have begun to enter evaluations of American parties. As Wilson reminds us, "the phrase 'New Left' came to mean, in part, a commitment to political change that would be free of the allegedly dehumanizing consequences of large organizations" (1973: 4). The dogma of "participatory democracy" stifled efforts to trace the organizational consequences of proposed "reforms." These reforms restricted the freedom of parties to determine their composition and their procedures for selecting party officeholders. In Wright's terms, reformers sought to pluck the "intraparty democracy" feature out of the Party Democracy model for transplant into the Rational-Efficient model, with little debate about compatibility and perhaps less about the possible consequences for American politics of further decentralization of power within the parties.

Relatively recent social and technological changes constitute a final factor contributing to the neglect of party organization in the literature. Agranoff notes the new style of campaigning for election:

Party organization no longer has a near-monopoly on campaign communication. The candidate organization, the news event, the computer-generated letter, and most importantly the electronic media are the prevalent means of getting messages across in the modern campaign. The rise of the candidate volunteer and electronic media has enabled the candidate to bypass the party and appeal directly to the voters. (1972: 5)

Agranoff's point is echoed by Wilson:

No one can doubt the tendency of politicians today to build personal followings independent of party organization, to project an image directly to the voters without the mediating influence of legislative involvement or constituency service; and to defer to the perceptions, if not the judgments, of writers, pollsters, and intellectuals rather than of party leaders. (1973: 5)

Given Americans' traditional distrust of political parties and the recent vocalization of antiorganizational attitudes, the established party organizations fell easy prey to technological developments and began to dwindle in importance in the conduct of election campaigns. Wilson finds that "parties, as organizations, have become, if anything, weaker rather than stronger" and concludes that "parties are more important as labels than organizations."

Sometimes the right to use that label can be won by a candidate who participates in no organizational processes at all—as when a person wins a primary election by campaigning as an individual rather than as an organizational representative. (1973: 95)

The undeniable result of these developments is that American parties, particularly at the national level, play only a relatively minor role in the conduct of presidential campaigns. Witness the decidedly subordinate status of both national party organizations in the 1972 and 1976 presidential elections in particular.

If one reads the lesson of Watergate, as I do, to mean that the American national party organizations need *strengthening* rather than "reform," then students of American parties must pay closer attention to party organization and reexamine the organizational consequences of their numerous proposals to change party roles. "Organization," as Wilson argues, "provides continuity and predictability to social processes that would otherwise be episodic and uncertain" (1973: 7). National party organizations have different membership bases and clientele groups than ad hoc coalitions of nonparty professionals and pure mercenaries. As Agranoff says:

in the new modes of campaigning the party professional has given way to a different type of professional—the advertising and public relations man, the management specialist, the media specialist, the pollster—who performs services for candidates based on the skills he has acquired in non-political fields. (1972: 4)

The socialization of these key actors in a candidate organization differs considerably from the experiences of professional party leaders and officials, who often interact for years with their counterparts in the opposition party. Linked by a network of governmental and social contacts, professionals of opposing parties often develop mutual respect for one another and are more likely than the staff of candidate organizations to view the opposition as "competitors" than as "enemies." The demise of party organizations in the conduct of campaigns, therefore, is likely to be accompanied by a breakdown of constraints on permissible campaign activities, leading to an erosion of standards of fair competition that are so necessary to party politics in a democratic government.

The normative argument of this paper is that American scholars ought to study party organization more intensively than previously to acquire understanding and knowledge helpful to improving the functioning of political parties in U.S. politics, especially at the national level. In paying renewed attention to party organization, however, American scholars must not narrow their focus, as they have in the past, to parochial concerns with the details of American party structures and processes. They must become more broadly analytical, informing their study with party experiences in other countries. In short, the analysis of American parties should be couched in a comparative framework that can accommodate cross-national observations. A comparative orientation is certain to broaden our perspective and stimulate our thinking toward improving the function of parties in the American political system and devising institutional arrangements to serve that purpose.

### Comparative Analysis of Party Organization

This paper is intended to stimulate the study of American party organizations along such fresh lines of inquiry. The findings herein are drawn from the analysis of data from the International Comparative Political Parties Project (ICPP),<sup>1</sup> which includes 158 political parties operating from about 1950 to 1962 in fifty-three countries representing all major cultural-geographical regions of the world.<sup>2</sup> The Project scored the parties on nearly 100 variables, each of which served as an indicator of a broader concept in a framework that isolated twelve major concepts in the comparative analysis of political parties. No attempt

will be made here to explain the complex methodology of the ICPP Project or to discuss the conceptual framework in its entirety.<sup>3</sup> For the purposes of this analysis, it is sufficient to note that the twelve major concepts were divided into eight that pertained to a party's "external relations" with society and four that pertained to its "internal organization." Despite my belief that a complete analysis of political parties must ultimately consider concepts of "external relations" as well as concepts of "internal organization," my concern in this paper will be limited to only the four internal-organization concepts, which will be described below in detail.

Scholarly concern with party organization, even among European scholars, has not been characterized by conceptual order and clarity. Crotty notes that "party organizational analysis is not new," but he also points out that it is one of the most frustrating lines of inquiry in party research (1970: 281). One source of frustration lies in the hiatus between party research and the literature on organizational theory. Most party scholars have formulated their concepts of party organization without regard to the more general concepts in the organizational theory literature. Anderson's valuable review of concepts in organizational theory identifies six major dimensions of variation in organizational role structure, with special relevance to party research (1968). He labels these "autonomy," "goals," "formalization," "control," "consensus," and "involvement." The first two dimensions, "autonomy" and "goals," are treated in the ICPP conceptual framework as concepts dealing with a party's "external relations" with society. The remaining four dimensions that Anderson identifies appear to embrace, at a higher level of abstraction, most of the specific variables and measures that party scholars have advanced in their treatments of party organization. To facilitate the application of these concepts to the literature on parties I have translated Anderson's labels into terms that figure more prominently in writings about party organization. Thus, the conceptual framework of the ICPP Project seeks to analyze internal party organization according to four general concepts that match with Anderson's dimensions:

#### Degree of Organization

The degree of organization corresponds to Anderson's "formalization," which he broadly defines as structured patterns of interactions that are prescribed either by formal rules of procedure or by traditions and unwritten rules (1968: 398-399). The more formalized the organization, the more structured the behavior patterns. Because of the tendency within the literature on parties to equate "formal" structure with "legal" structure, I have adopted this broader label for the concept. It appears that differences in the degree of organization are what Duverger means in most of his frequent and diverse references to the structural "articulation" of a party (1963). By equating degree of organization to structural differentiation, similarities to Huntington's "complexity-simplicity" dimension of political institutions also emerge (1965: 399).

#### Centralization of Power

The concept of centralization of power relates to Anderson's "control" dimension, but specifically to the distribution of control rather than the volume or sources of control. In this sense, the concept is identical with Duverger's concept of "centralization," which,

along with decentralization," he says, "define the way in which power is distributed amongst the different levels of leadership" (1963: 52). There is some tendency within the party literature to confuse centralization with organization, or at least to neglect drawing clear distinctions between the two. Duverger cannot be blamed for this conceptual ambiguity, for he takes pains to distinguish between centralization and articulation. Nevertheless, discussions of party politics frequently equate strong party organization with centralization of power. In our analysis, however, the degree of organization of a party and the centralization of power within it are distinctly different concepts.

### Coherence

For Anderson, the counterpart dimension of coherence is "consensus," which he defines very broadly as "the degree of congruence in the cultural orientations of various individuals and groups comprising an organization." He then points out that party scholars are interested in the *issues* that obtain consensus, in the *level* of consensus obtained for different issues, and in the *distribution* of consensus across party organs (1968: 396-397). Under this conception, consensus deals primarily with attitudinal agreement among party members. My conceptualization of coherence is somewhat narrower, however, for I focus on the degree of congruence in the attitudes of party members only to the extent that the consensus is expressed in their *behavior*. Thus, coherence in the ICPP framework pertains to the extent of conflict and division among party members. Studies of party "cohesion" and "factionalism" within the party literature would be embraced by our concept of coherence.

### Involvement

Involvement pertains directly to Anderson's last dimension of variation in organizational role structure. Anderson does not define involvement but discusses it in terms of the amount and type of participation in the party (1968: 397-398). Duverger places great importance on the amount and type of participation and their relationship to the concept of party membership (1963: 90-132). The more severe the requirements for membership, he argues, the greater the involvement in party activities—ranging from the minimum psychological attachment common to supporters of American parties to the intense psychological and social attachments that characterize Communist Party members. Neumann incorporates similar distinctions in his classification of parties as providing *individual representation* or *social integration* (1956: 404-405). These concerns are incorporated in the ICPP definition of involvement as the degree of behavioral and motivational commitment to the party.

These four concepts have figured prominently in scholarly evaluations of American political parties. Although these studies usually consider at least implicit comparisons with parties in other Western democracies, unfortunately, neither the implicit nor the explicit evaluations of American parties with their European counterparts have been characterized by conceptual rigor, and rarely have they been supported by anything more than impressionistic evidence. Nevertheless, the literature frequently seeks to explain the spe-

cial character of American party politics in terms of the deviations of U.S. parties from European organizational norms.

Some examples of these evaluations of American national parties have been culled from the literature to illustrate the role of these concepts in scholarly analysis. Following these illustrations, the four concepts presented above will be incorporated into a set of explicit propositions concerning the comparison of American and European parties. The propositions will then be tested with data from the ICPP Project.

### On Degree of Organization

Most students of American parties evaluate the degree of party organization quite differently from Samuel Johnson, who states that "major party organization in the United States is more elaborate than in any other country of free politics. It is more consistent, more extensive, and more unified than anywhere else" (1974: 88). Contrary to Johnson, Duverger describes America as having "very weak party articulation" (1963: 45). Similarly, Greenstein contends that "observers are uniformly agreed that the farther one moves from local politics in the United States, the more difficult it is to find evidence of organized party activity" (1970: 43). The prevailing view of American party organization is clearly opposite to Johnson's and much closer to Sorau's blunt assessment of the situation:

We have every right to call the party organization by that name, but it is an inescapable fact that the parties, almost alone among our social institutions, have resisted the development of big, efficient, centralized organization.

Even by the standards of the parties of the other democracies, the American party organizations cut an unimpressive figure. . . . Instead of a continuity of relationships and of operations, the American party organization features only improvisatory, elusive, and sporadic structure and activities. And whereas the party organizations of the rest of the Western democracies have had a near permanent, highly professional leadership and large party bureaucracies, the American organizations have generally done without a professional bureaucracy or leadership cadre. (1972: 133)

### On Centralization of Power

It would be far more difficult to locate a discordant view of the centralization of power in American parties comparable to Johnson's deviant assessment of party organization, for extreme decentralization of power has often been cited as the major characteristic of the two major parties in the United States. More than 30 years ago, Schattschneider wrote:

Decentralization of power is by all odds the most important single characteristic of the American major party; more than anything else this trait distinguishes it from all others. Indeed, once this truth is understood, nearly everything else about American parties is greatly illuminated. (1942: 129)

Approximately 15 years later, Ranney and Kendall found that their analysis of leadership and discipline among the various levels of American parties warranted "at least one

firm conclusion: *American national parties are decentralized*" (1956: 264, emphasis in original). And recently, Keefe asserted, "There is no lively debate among political scientists concerning the dominant characteristic of American political parties. It is, pure and simple, their decentralization" (1972: 25).

### On Coherence

A recurring theme in writings about American political parties is that American parties are coalitions of various interest groups—Greeley refers to the American party as a "super-coalition" (1974: 172)—and that they serve to "aggregate" these diverse interests in the formulation of public policy (Epstein, 1967: 283). One of the manifestations of coalition politics, Lawson notes, is that "there are nearly as many disagreements within as between the two major parties, and this characteristic of our party system is especially marked in Congress" (1968: 156). The study by Turner and Schneier on party pressures in Congress draws some comparisons with European experiences and concludes:

In the past six to eight decades the major parties in most parliamentary systems have become increasingly more cohesive. American parties, in the same period, apparently have become less significant factors in shaping patterns of roll-call voting behavior. (1970: 37)

As Ozbudun points out, however, the degree of voting cohesion in legislatures is largely a function of systemic factors rather than party attributes (1970: 380). The existence of factions within a party, therefore, promises to be a better indicator of coherence than voting cohesion within the legislature. Most observers would concur with Madron and Chelf, who hold that "factions are a common occurrence in American political parties" (1974: 82). Few, however, venture more explicit comparative statements of factionalism across countries. One who does is Jupp, who believes that the United States demonstrates the conditions that encourage factionalism (1968: 49).

### On Involvement

In discussing the involvement of party members in politics in the United States, most scholars begin by recognizing that the term "membership" has no specific meaning. Bone says, "there are no accepted criteria of what constitutes party membership" (1971: 73), and Keefe states:

The simple fact is that, apart from primary voting in closed-primary states, membership in an American major party is of slight moment. In effect, anyone who considers himself a Democrat is a Democrat; anyone who considers himself a Republican is a Republican. (1972: 49)

For cross-national comparisons, therefore, assessments of involvement in American parties (and other nonmembership parties) must be made for other than party members. One strategy is to limit comparisons of involvement to party militants, whom Barnes defines as those who carry out party activities, regularly attend meetings, or hold formal party positions (1966: 351). The involvement of militants in party activity may be evaluated

according to the incentives that spur them in their activism. Clark and Wilson classify incentives as material, solidary, and purposive; this classification has had the most impact on assessing motivation for party workers or militants (1961).

Party militants motivated by purposive incentives would be most deeply and continuously involved in party activities between election campaigns. In a later work, moreover, Wilson argues that material and solidary incentives have declined in importance in the United States, leaving "purpose, principle, and ideology as a major source of incentives for party organizations" (1973: 96). Sorauf's review of the smattering of empirical studies on incentives in American parties also "points to the present dominance of the ideological or issue incentives. Put very simply, the desire to use the party as a means to achieve policy goals appears to be the major incentive attracting individuals to party work these days" (1972: 95-96). But these empirical studies of involvement in American parties have not been done in a comparative framework, leaving little firm basis for cross-national evaluations. Indeed, despite these research findings for American parties, there is a tendency among party scholars to characterize European party militants as being even more motivated by purpose incentives than their American counterparts. Epstein writes:

In the absence of large-scale patronage, but not necessarily because of only that absence, many European parties developed membership organizations based largely on nonmaterial incentives. These organizations of zealous faithful party adherents had other purposes too, but they have regularly been used to perform the same vote-getting task as the patronage machine. (1967: 111)

And Rossiter contrasts the coolness of American "attitudes toward political parties" with foreign examples:

Few Americans give to the Democrats or Republicans the deep and encompassing allegiance claimed by parties like the Socialists in Belgium and the Nationalists in South Africa. Even the loose-jointed Conservative and Labour parties of Britain look like armies of dedicated soldiers to the eye of an observer who has watched the ranks and files of the Republican and Democratic parties straggling across our political landscape. (1960: 25)

### Propositions to Be Tested

These evaluations of American political parties for degree of organization, centralization of power, coherence, and involvement give rise to the following propositions:

1. American parties tend to rate lower on *degree of organization* than do Western European parties.
2. American parties tend to rate lower on *centralization of power* than do Western European parties.
3. American parties tend to rate lower on *coherence* than do Western European parties.
4. American parties tend to rate lower on *involvement* than do Western European parties.

In these propositions, "American parties" refers only to the Democratic and Republican parties. No differentiation has been made between these parties in the propositions: it

is understood that the two U.S. parties are characterized on the national level by very similar internal organizations, although they are considered to be quite different in their external relations with society. The similarity of the Democratic and Republican parties on organizational attributes—and the unquestioning acceptance of this similarity by most American scholars—is itself a significant commentary on party politics in the United States. Discussions of party organization within most European countries, including Britain, must begin by identifying the particular party being described, for organization often varies significantly across parties within the same country. Because European parties display considerable variance in their internal organizations, the above propositions must involve comparisons of the Democrats and Republicans with the mean scores of European parties on these four concepts.

When we acknowledge the existence of diversity in organization among Western European parties, we begin to question the rationale for making comparisons between American and European parties. Granting the scholarly utility of such comparisons in principle, one might ask why limit the comparison to parties in Western Europe? Why not extend the analysis to include competitive parties in other parts of the world? One simple reason for this limitation in the past has been that obtaining appropriate data on non-European parties would probably be difficult. This concern seems justified given the lack of adequate information on European parties. The data from the ICPP Project does extend to other countries; it is therefore advantageous to extend the comparisons that follow to other competitive parties. This will be done by testing an analogous set of propositions comparing the American parties to competitive parties outside of Europe; i.e., Latin America, Africa, Asia, and the remaining Anglo-American countries. These propositions are as follows:

- 1'. American parties tend to rate lower on *degree of organization* than do non-European competitive parties.
- 2'. American parties tend to rate lower on *centralization of power* than do non-European competitive parties.
- 3'. American parties tend to rate lower on *coherence* than do non-European competitive parties.
- 4'. American parties tend to rate lower on *involvement* than do non-European competitive parties.

No attempt will be made to root these propositions in the party literature. They simply extrapolate the earlier evaluation of American parties into hypotheses to be tested with data on non-European competitive parties. "Competitive parties" are defined here as those for which "an orientation to open competition in the electoral process" plays either the *major role* in the party's overall strategy for placing its avowed representatives in government positions or is the *exclusive* strategy of the party (Janda, 1970).

Carrying the principle of comparative analysis further, one might ask why the comparisons of party organizations are limited to only *competitive* parties throughout the world. Hennessy comments:

Totalitarian political parties are very different from those typified by Anglo-American parties and centralist parties of western Europe, and it may be . . . that different theories and analyses may be required for two-party systems, multi-party systems, and several kinds of one-party systems. In any case, most of the scholarship by political scientists (as distinguished from political sociologists) has been done on nontotalitarian parties—for better or worse. (1968: 1)

It is my personal belief that the comparative analysis of political parties has been constrained in scope and capacity because of its customary limitation to competitive parties. Therefore, this paper will also refer to findings concerning the degree of organization, centralization of power, coherence, and involvement of noncompetitive parties throughout the world—including not only "totalitarian" parties (i.e., those that restrict competition from other parties) but also subversive parties (i.e., those that use force to achieve their goals).

There seems to be no established scholarly interest in systematic comparisons of American parties to an undifferentiated group of noncompetitive parties across the world; therefore, no formal propositions will be advanced to guide these comparisons. Likely to be of greater interest to scholars is the comparison of American parties to *all* other parties in the world, both competitive and noncompetitive. This approach would provide the broadest and most definitive touchstone for plumbing the special character of party politics in the United States. To formalize our comparison of the Democratic and Republican parties with the central tendencies of all other parties in the world, I propose these propositions:

- 1". American parties tend to rate lower on *degree of organization* than do other parties in the world.
- 2". American parties tend to rate lower on *centralization of power* than do other parties in the world.
- 3". American parties tend to rate lower on *coherence* than do other parties in the world.
- 4". American parties tend to rate lower on *involvement* than do other parties in the world.

Presentation of the propositions in this form, I believe, serves a heuristic purpose by keeping them comparable to the two previous sets. On a priori grounds, however, one might fashion quite different propositions when comparing the U.S. parties with all parties in the world rather than with only the more institutionalized parties of Western Europe. But since this comparison is subsidiary to the major purpose of this paper, I have opted for theoretical simplicity and consistency.

### Measuring Parties on Internal Organization Concepts

The 158 parties in the study were scored separately for the first and second "halves" of our 1950 to 1962 time period. The time divisions were usually 1950-1956 and 1957-1962, but they varied somewhat from country to country depending on peculiarities of national politics. The data reported in this analysis is drawn only from the 1957-1962 period, which reduces the total sample of parties to 147 because some parties did not exist in both halves of the period and failed to meet the minimum levels of strength and stability required for inclusion in the study.<sup>4</sup>

Each of the four concepts pertaining to the internal organization of political parties was operationalized by scoring the party on a set of indicators of the concept.<sup>5</sup> The four concepts and the indicators for each are as follows:

*Degree of organization* was indicated by six factors:

1. *Structural articulation*. Scored from 0 to 11, with high scores for numerous national organs with clear functional responsibilities.

2. *Intensiveness of organization.* Scored from 1 to 6, with high scores for smaller units of organization.

3. *Extensiveness of organization.* Scored from 0 to 6, with high scores for thorough coverage of the country.

4. *Frequency of local meetings.* Scored from 0 to 6, with high scores for meetings held monthly or more frequently.

5. *Maintaining records.* Scored from 0 to 16, with high scores for a publishing program, a research division, and accurate membership lists.

6. *Pervasiveness of organization.* Scored from 0 to 18, with high scores for penetrating many socioeconomic sectors and claiming many adherents within each.

*Centralization of power* was indicated by eight factors:

1. *Nationalization of structure.* Scored from 0 to 6, with high scores for a national committee dealing directly with local party organizations.

2. *Controlling communications.* Scored from 0 to 7, with high scores for the national-level control of influential media.

3. *Administering discipline.* Scored from 0 to 4, with high scores for discipline administered from the national level.

4. *Selecting parliamentary candidates.* Scored from 1 to 9, with high scores for selection by the national level.

5. *Allocating funds.* Scored from 0 to 6, with high scores for national-level collection and allocation.

6. *Selecting the national leader.* Scored from 0 to 8, with high scores for selection by predecessor.

7. *Policy formulation.* Scored from 0 to 7, with high scores for determination of policy by party leader.

8. *Leadership concentration.* Scored from 0 to 6, with high scores for fewest persons who could commit the party to action.

*Coherence* was indicated by four factors:

1. *Ideological factionalism.* Scored from 0 to 6, with high scores for large factions with some formal organization.

2. *Issue factionalism.* Same as above.

3. *Leadership factionalism.* Same as above.

4. *Strategic or tactical factionalism.* Same as above.

*Involvement of party members* was indicated by five factors:

1. *Membership requirements.* Scored from 0 to 7, with high scores for severe requirements, e.g., payment of dues and probationary period.

2. *Membership participation.* Scored from 0 to 6, with high scores for most members being militants, i.e., active participants.

3. *Material incentives.* Scored from 0 to 4, with low scores for militants motivated by material incentives, e.g., money.

4. *Purposive incentives.* Scored from 0 to 4, with high scores for militants motivated by purposive incentives, e.g., policy.

5. *Doctrinism.* Scored from 0 to 3, with high scores for continued reference to a written body of party doctrine.

The scores assigned to the parties for each set of indicators were standardized and aggregated to form a single score for each concept, such that the mean values tend toward 0.<sup>6</sup> Thus, the *sign* of a party's score on each concept discloses whether it is above or below the average score and its *magnitude* reveals its deviation from the average value of 0.

### Comparisons Among the Parties

The data set includes twelve Western democratic countries that featured competitive party politics during the period 1957-1962. A total of forty-four political parties (including the Democrats and the Republicans) in these twelve countries qualified for inclusion in the study and are identified in Table 20-1, where they are listed in conjunction with their scores for each of the scales included in this analysis. Table 20-1, therefore, contains the basic data to be used in testing the propositions dealing with comparisons of American and Western European parties on characteristics of internal organization.

The total number of competitive parties in the study located outside of Western Europe is fifty-seven. Western Europe is, for this analysis, defined rather strictly on a geographical basis. Thus, the nine parties in Australia, Canada, and New Zealand are among the fifty-seven competitive parties representing twenty-three countries outside Western Europe. The remaining noncompetitive parties throughout the world total forty-six and represent thirty different countries, including one Western European nation, Portugal. Because the main focus of this paper is on the comparison of the American and Western European parties, space will not be taken to identify these other 103 parties outside our prime concern. Reference will be made to their scores only through summary statistics.

### Degree of Organization

Table 20-2 presents the summary statistics for the degree of organization for each group of parties in the analysis. The small standard deviation for the two U.S. party scores in this table, and in each of the subsequent ones, confirms the assumption, previously noted, that the Democratic and Republican parties are similar in their internal organization. Therefore, their scores have been averaged together and only the means will be used in testing the propositions. The data in Table 20-2 reveal that, in keeping with Proposition 1, American parties tend to score slightly lower on degree of organization than do European parties. But the difference between the two groups is not significant at the 0.05 level according to the t-test of differences between means—the test used in this paper for the level of significance and the model of evaluation for all references to statistical significance<sup>7</sup>—and thus the American parties should be regarded as similar to the European parties on degree of organization. Propositions 1' and 1'' are also unsupported by the data in Table 20-2. If anything, the American parties tend to be more structurally differentiated than both competitive parties outside Europe and all other parties combined, although these differences are also not statistically significant.

### Centralization of Power

The data in Table 20-3 lend powerful support to Proposition 2, for the American parties are strikingly less centralized than European parties and the difference is statistically

**Table 20-1** American and Western European Political Parties Scored for Degree of Organization, Centralization of Power, Coherence, and Involvement\*

ID#	Country and Party	Organization	Power	Coherence	Involvement
1	United States Democratic	.14	-1.37	-.80	-.77
2	United States Republican	.01	-1.41	-.73	-.77
11	British Labour	.32	.21	-.77	.20
12	British Conservative	.51	.41	.62	-.20
51	Irish Fianna Fail	-.47	.52	.88	-.69
52	Irish Fine Gael	-.38	-.05	.88	-.49
53	Irish Labour	-.45	.23	.88	-.10
101	Austrian Peoples	.64	-.41	-.72	-.43
102	Austrian Socialist	.59	.07	-.39	-.14
103	Austrian VDU-FPO	-1.18	-.30	-1.14	.34
111	French MRP	.79	-.42	.08	.55
112	French Radical Socialist	-.45	-.70	-.72	-.65
113	French SFIO	.15	-.14	-.65	.38
114	French Gaullist	-.67	.22	-.54	-.36
115	French Communist	.97	.34	.74	.95
121	West German CDU	1.10	.07	.22	-.02
122	West German SPD	1.15	-.27	-.29	1.35
123	West German FDP	.56	-.16	.11	.55
141	Greek Liberal	-2.70	.20	-1.81	-1.08
142	Greek EPEK	-2.27	-.18	.41	-1.08
143	Greek Rally-ERE	-1.53	.52	.45	-.67
145	Greek EDA	.52	.63	.61	.83
201	Danish Social Democrat	.84	.09	.91	.40
202	Danish Venstre	.35	.20	.15	.40
203	Danish Conservative	.64	.20	.88	.40
204	Danish RAD Venstre	.25	.29	.42	.40
221	Iceland Independence	-.17	.39	.84	-.77
222	Iceland Progressive	.18	.10	.70	-.68
223	Iceland Peoples Union	.59	.52	.14	.97
224	Iceland Social Democrat	-.42	.33	-.99	-.11
241	Swedish Social Democrat	.92	-.69	.23	-.17
242	Swedish Center	.49	-1.21	.55	.10
243	Swedish Liberal	-.26	-1.22	.44	.04
244	Swedish Conservative	-.24	-.99	.19	.20
261	Dutch Catholic Peoples	.58	-.46	-.41	.07
262	Dutch Labor	.95	-.39	-.36	.24
263	Dutch Liberal	.32	-.77	-.25	-.05
264	Dutch ARP	.79	-.21	.16	.09
265	Dutch CHU	.01	-.67	-.93	-.10
266	Dutch Communist	.57	.74	-.17	.78
271	Luxembourg Christian Social	-.29	-.34	.45	-.10
272	Luxembourg Socialist Labor	-.41	-.45	.14	.40
273	Luxembourg Democratic	.22	-.12	.35	-.34
274	Luxembourg Communist	.44	.45	.83	1.69

\*The values in the table are the parties' scale scores, reported to two decimal places, for each of the concepts. The scale scores on each dimension are developed from the items presented in the text. A more complete discussion of the scaling techniques used can be found in my *Comparative Political Parties: A Cross-National Survey* (New York: Free Press, forthcoming) and *Political Parties: Their Internal Organization and External Relations* (New York: Free Press, forthcoming).

**Table 20-2** Comparison of Parties on Degree of Organization

Party Grouping	Mean Value	Standard Deviation	(N)
United States	.075	.09	(2)
Western European competitive	.08	.84	(42)
Non-European competitive	-.37	.80	(54)
Noncompetitive	-.08	.80	(46)
All parties outside United States	-.14	.82	(142) <sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup>Three parties could not be scored on degree of organization.

**Table 20-3** Comparison of Parties on Centralization of Power

Party Grouping	Mean Value	Standard Deviation	(N)
United States	-1.39	.03	(2)
Western European competitive	-.08	.49	(42)
Non-European competitive	-.09	.81	(56)
Noncompetitive	.37	.62	(47)
All parties outside United States	.06	.70	(145)

significant at the 0.05 level. Note also that the European parties themselves tend to be below the world mean for centralization of power. As a group, the most centralized parties are the noncompetitive parties, reflected in the extremely high scores of the seven ruling Communist parties in our study. Of course, Propositions 2' and 2'' are also supported by these data, and the differences are even more striking when the U.S. parties are compared to all the parties combined.

### Coherence

Proposition 3, which states that American parties are less coherent than European parties, is also borne out by the data in Table 20-4, and the difference is again statistically significant. The same is true of Propositions 3' and 3''; American parties tend to rate lower on Coherence than competitive parties outside of Europe and lower than all the parties in the world taken as a group, but this last comparison is only marginally significant.

### Involvement

The tendency for activists to be less involved in American parties than in European parties, which is the thrust of Proposition 4, is supported by the data in Table 20-5 and the test for significance. Propositions 4' and 4'' are also supported, although the difference



Table 20-4 Comparison of Parties on Coherence

Party Grouping	Mean Value	Standard Deviation	(N)
United States	-.76	.05	(2)
Western European competitive	.07	.66	(42)
Non-European competitive	-.07	.83	(55)
Noncompetitive	-.06	.69	(43)
All parties outside United States	-.02	.74	(140) <sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup>Five parties could not be scored on coherence.

Table 20-5 Comparison of Parties on Involvement

Party Grouping	Mean Value	Standard Deviation	(N)
United States	-.77	.00	(2)
Western European competitive	.07	.60	(42)
Non-European competitive	-.16	.74	(55)
Noncompetitive	-.03	.88	(45)
All parties outside United States	-.05	.75	(142) <sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup>Three parties could not be scored on involvement.

in involvement between American and non-European competitive parties barely achieves significance and might fail under an alternative statistical model.

Our findings and the results of the statistical tests as they bear on our propositions are easily summarized. The proposition that characterizes the American parties as being low on degree of organization is not supported in any of its three variants. All of the other propositions are supported. American parties do tend to rate lower on centralization of power, coherence, and involvement than do competitive parties in Western Europe, than competitive parties outside of Europe, and parties worldwide that are not differentiated as to their goal orientation.

## Conclusions

The most striking finding of this analysis is, of course, its failure to demonstrate that American parties are lacking in degree of organization in comparison with Western European parties. Perhaps the fault lies either with my conceptualization of "organization" or my attempt to operationalize the concept through the selection of indicator variables. But a conceptualization of organization in terms of "structured behavior patterns" and "structural differentiation" seems to be in accord with the concept in the organizational theory literature, and many of my indicator variables have sprung directly from the party literature. I leave it to others to redefine and remeasure the parties in retesting the proposition. I believe that the discrepancy between the literature's evaluation of American parties and the finding of this study is more likely to be the result of notions of "organization" which involve judgments of the distribution of authority within a structure than structural differ-

entiation per se. In point of fact, American political parties do tend to have as much if not more in the way of formal structure than most other parties in the world, and the previously cited statement by Johnson on the elaborate nature of American party organization, although certainly extreme, appears to be more accurate than the prevailing wisdom in our textbooks.

The prevailing wisdom of our textbooks, however, is supported conclusively by the next most striking finding of this analysis. American parties are clearly less centralized than the European norm, and they are certainly among the most decentralized parties in the world. None of the Western European parties in the sample had a lower score on the centralization of power than did U.S. parties. Moreover, when the entire sample of the world's parties is considered, the American parties outrank only the Blancos and Colorados of Uruguay—which some scholars would contend are not parties but coalitions, or groupings of parties—and the Social Action Party of Chad, which terminated in 1962, at the end of our time period.

The other major findings of the study, that American parties tend to feature less coherence and less involvement than do Western European parties and other parties throughout the world, conform largely as expected to most evaluations within the literature. Although these two concepts pertain to important aspects of party organization and aid in understanding the operation of the parties in American politics, they are perhaps of less relevance for those who seek to alter the function of the parties because they are not easily manipulable. Although some scholars argue for a realignment of the parties on issues and ideology such that more coherence among American parties would result, there is no clear procedure for forcing such a realignment. Similarly, there is no observable mechanism for instilling in party activists a greater degree of commitment to their work, which makes involvement an equally unwieldy variable for planned change.

The two aspects of party organization that afford the most opportunity for induced change are, of course, degree of organization and centralization of power. Because of our finding that American parties are not as deviant as claimed in the extent of their structural differentiation, there appears to be less capacity for change in American politics through further elaboration of party structure. Instead, the prime avenue for moving U.S. politics by means of its parties is through an increase in the centralization of power at the national level, which would tend to retard the ominous growth of personalized politics in both parties and return control to more broadly-based organizations of responsible professionals. Strengthening the national committees by designating them as the prime agencies for collecting and dispersing campaign funds, for example, would certainly deflate the role of personal candidate organizations in presidential elections. The desirability of this particular change ought to be the subject of careful analysis and informed debate. But the lessons from recent years should be clear. It is time to inquire whether American government and politics are best served by national political parties that are so extremely decentralized that they stand virtually alone among comparable institutions in Western Europe and throughout the world.

## NOTES

1. The ICPP Project was established with support from the National Science Foundation (grants GS-1418, GS-2533, and GS-27081). NSF support terminated in 1971. The Foreign Policy Research Center in Philadelphia also supported my work on the project while a Visiting Fellow in 1970-1971. The American Enterprise Institute in Washington, D.C., kindly sponsored my writing for one quarter in 1973.

2. The areas and countries represented in ICPP studies of political parties are as follows. *Anglo-American*: United States, Great Britain, Canada, Ireland, Rhodesia and Nyasaland Federation, and India; *West Central Europe*: Austria, France, Federal Republic of Germany, Greece, and Portugal; *Scandinavia and the Benelux Countries*: Denmark, Iceland, Sweden, Netherlands, and Luxembourg; *South America*: Ecuador, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, and Venezuela; *Central America and Caribbean*: Cuba, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, and Nicaragua; *Asia and the Far East*: Burma, Cambodia, Indonesia, North Korea, and Malaya; *Eastern Europe*: Albania, Bulgaria, German Democratic Republic, Hungary, and the U.S.S.R.; *Middle East and North Africa*: Sudan, Tunisia, Lebanon, Iran, and Turkey; *West Africa*: Dehomey Ghana, Guinea, Upper Volta, and Togo; *Central and East Africa*: Central African Republic, Chad, Congo-Brazzaville, Kenya, and Uganda.
3. The ICPP Project is thoroughly described in Janda (1968, 1969, 1970, and 1975). The data from the ICPP Project have been deposited with the Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research.
4. It was easier to specify minimum levels of strength and stability as requirements for inclusion in the project for legal parties than for illegal ones. Legal parties had to win at least 5 percent of the seats in the lower house of the legislature at least twice during our time period. For illegal parties, we accepted estimates of support by at least 10 percent of the population over a 5-year period. In certain cases, especially in Africa, we departed from these standards to include some parties but not to exclude any.
5. Reliabilities for all the scales were calculated with the use of Cronbach's *alpha* (Bohrnstedt, 1970). The reliabilities were 0.72 for the coherence scale, 0.78 for involvement, 0.82 for degree of organization, and 0.83 for centralization of power.
6. The mean scores did not actually equal zero due to the impact of missing data for some of the indicators. Parties were assigned scores for each concept based on the indicators for which they could be scored.
7. There is room for disagreement over the statistical test that would be the most appropriate for testing these propositions with these data. For example, the sampling units in this study were not parties but nations—or, if you will—party systems. This complicates matters because the sample is not strictly speaking a random sample of parties. By and large, I have ignored this distinction in the statistical tests, and I have also ignored the fact that the United States, Canada, and Great Britain were not drawn in the original sample but were added later. Furthermore, there is the issue of conceptualizing the populations that the parties represent under the t-test model. My interpretation, with which others might differ, is that the test is conducted to determine the probability that American parties and the counterpart party groupings constitute random samples from either the same population or ones with equal means. In applying the t-test, moreover, there is the problem of wide differences in sample variances and, for the American group, a very small sample size ( $N = 2$ ). Although the t-values were calculated with both separate estimates of the population variance and a pooled estimate, with the appropriate values chosen on the basis of a homogeneity of variance test, the very small sample size can produce inefficient variance estimates. Although a correction for degrees of freedom was employed for such instances (Blalock, 1960:175-176), the t-test is still thought to be somewhat unstable under the circumstances.

An alternative approach to evaluating the statistical significance of these comparisons would be to assess the position of the American parties in the probability distribution of parties for each of the groups to be compared. This would be done most accurately with reference to probability density functions generated for each distribution. Because the referent distributions did not depart dramatically from normality—all had kurtosis values under 1.0 and all but one had skewness values under .8—this approach was executed instead by calculating the deviations of each American party from the group mean in terms of the group standard deviation and estimating the probability of occurrence with reference to areas under the normal curve. When the joint probabilities for both parties were calculated, the results confirmed the t-test procedure in every instance. I have employed the t-test approach in the text because of its greater familiarity to most readers. I wish to thank Mark Levine for raising some issues in the statistical analysis, which caused me to probe further and place the analysis on firmer ground.

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