Quadrant II – Transcript and Related Materials

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Notes:

Introduction

Two-party system is a condition or system in which two major parties dominate a political unit. It can also be described as a political system consisting chiefly of two major parties, more or less equal in strength. The two party systems is firmly rooted in American politics and has been since the first organized political movements emerged in the late 1700s.

The two-party system in the United States is now dominated by the Republicans and the Democrats. But through history the Federalists and the Democratic-Republicans, then the Democrats and the Whigs have represented opposing political ideologies and campaigned against each other for seats at the local, state and federal levels.

The contrasts between two-party and multiparty systems are often exaggerated. Within each major party in the United States, the Republicans and the Democrats, many factions are struggling for power. The presence of divergent interests under a single party canopy masks a process of struggle and compromise that under a multiparty system is out in the open The modern political party system in the U.S. is a two-party system dominated by the Democratic Party and the Republican Party.

These two parties have won every United States presidential election since 1852 and have controlled the United States Congress to some extent since at least

1856 A two-party systems is a party system where two major political parties dominate the political landscape.

At any point in time, one of the two parties typically holds a majority in the legislature and is usually referred to as the majority or governing party while the other is the minority or opposition party. Around the world, the term has different senses. For example, in the United States, the sense of two-party system describes an arrangement in which all or nearly all elected officials belong to one of the only two major parties, and third parties rarely win any seats in the legislature. In such arrangements, two-party systems are thought to result from various factors like winner-takes-all election rules.

Features of a Two Party System

Some historians have suggested that two party systems promote centrism and encourage political parties to find common positions which appeal to wide swaths of the electorate. It can lead to political stability failed verification which leads, in turn, to economic growth. Historian Patrick Allitt of the Teaching Company suggested that it is difficult to overestimate the long term economic benefits of political stability. There five major advantages of two-party system we highlighted; 1. Political information is much easier to understand: Although a two-party system limits the options of voters, it allows parties to present information in a convenient manner. Each party is able to represent their own broad political philosophy. As such, voters can better understand the views of a party regarding certain issues. 2. Balance is achieved because multiple interests and opinions are accommodated: Each party is comprised of organized groups and individual voters who all have a broad range of interests. As such, a party needs to be able to accommodate these interests when making political decisions. Including voter's interests also allows a party to receive continued support. 3. Political stability is achieved: Having only two parties doesn't encourage sudden shifts in political trends which can lead to government instability. Only with political stability can economic growth be achieved. With a two-party system, one political party gains a real majority in elections. This allows for stability as they have a common platform to adhere to. As a result, there is decisiveness in government. Then again, trends in the US show that having a two party system is actually disruptive. Democrats and Republicans are constantly bickering and they don't trust each other. 4. Governing them is much simpler: Two-party systems have been preferred over multi-party systems because they are not difficult to govern. This kind of system also discourages

radical minor parties and as such, the results are less unruliness and more harmony. Multiparty systems have resulted in hung parliaments in the past. One particular example is Italy which, since 2000, has had divisive politics. 5. There are fewer voting choices: Although some would consider this a disadvantage as having only two options is limiting, there are some who agree that being given two choices helps voters make a much better decision. Disadvantages of a Two Party System Michael Coblenz wrote —The two-part system is destroying America. Democrats and Republicans are in a death match and the American people are caught in the middle.‖ America is facing a slew of problems such as inequality and international terrorism but arguments between the two parties regarding these issues have brought government to a standstill. An issue cannot be tackled without the two parties being able to discuss them rationally. Now, the public is fed up with 80% expressing disapproval of Congress. In a 2015 Gallup poll, 60% of those who responded wanted new political parties. This is one of the reasons a lot of citizens are supporting candidates such as Senator Bernie Sanders and Donald Trump, both of whom are considered outsiders. Coblenz adds, —But what if the problem isn't the politicians, or the parties? What if the problem is the system? What if the problem is a system that makes every election a battle between a single Democrat and a single Republican? Maybe the solution isn't new people, or new parties. Maybe the solution is changing the way we elect people.‖ Matthew J. Dowd writes —The evolution of the 2016 election has show that the two major parties are going to have to deal with the disruption independents are forcing on the system. This cycle is likely to be an accelerator for the success of independents locally and at the state level – developments that can only be good for our democracy.‖ We highlighted four disadvantages of two-party system; 1. It brings government to a standstill: One only needs to look at America right now to see how the two-party system is failing. Democrats and Republicans cannot agree on certain issues and as such, can't discuss anything rationally. There are no clear solutions to problems and rather than help each other, parties decide to fight one another. America is facing a lot of issues right now, both complex and controversial. Yet, there seems that there aren't many solutions being thrown out there to get these issues fixed. The divide between Democrats and Republicans is so great that they can't even stay in one room to solve issues to help their country. 2. It offers limited options: Limited options when it comes to voting is seen as an advantage because the less options there are to choose from, the less confusing making a choice would be. However, having only two parties to pick from is also a

challenge because it is impossible for one party to tackle all the interests of a particular segment of voters. Voters are individuals who have varied interests and will most likely disagree with one or more points a political party is campaigning for. 3. It promotes corruption: Politics is always linked with corruption no matter where you are in the world. Practices like patronage may be frowned upon but it's a common sight in the political sphere. Even the awarding of government contracts to party insiders is a practice rampant in two-party systems. Parties have also faced criticism particularly when it comes to funding. For instance, big contributors would want something in return for having gave a large portion of their fortune to a campaign. Let's say that candidate won the election; that particular candidate might find it difficult to say no to a contributor requesting for something seeing as they partly owe their election to them. 4. It ignores alternative voices: Twoparty systems that want to stay united usually ignore alternative options, especially radical ones. In a multi-party system, debate and diverse views are encouraged because coalitions are formed by stronger and weaker parties in order to achieve dominance. Third parties, on the other hand, are often ignored in two-party systems because of the winner-take-all voting mechanism where a losing candidate loses relevance even if they had a significant following. Brief Explanation of political parties in United States A political party is an organized body of like-minded people who work to elect candidates for public office who represent their values on matters of policy. In the U.S., home to a strong twoparty system, the major political parties are the Republicans and the Democrats. But there are many other smaller and less well organized political parties that also nominate candidates for public office; among the most prominent of these are the Green Party, the Libertarian Party, and the Constitution Party, all three of which have run candidates for president in modern elections. Still, only Republicans and Democrats have served in the White House since 1852. No third-party candidate has ever been elected to the White House in modern history, and very few have won seats in either the House of Representatives or the U.S. Senate.

The Role of a Political Party Political parties are neither corporations nor political-action committees, nor super PACs. Nor are they nonprofit groups or charitable organizations. In fact, political parties occupy a vague space in the U.S.— as semi-public organizations that have private interests (getting their candidate elected to office) but play important public roles. Those roles include running primaries in which voters nominate candidates for local, state and federal offices, and also hosting elected party members at presidential

nominating conventions every four years. In the U.S., the Republican National Committee and the Democratic National Committee are the semi-public organizations that manage the nation's two major political parties. Functions of Political Parties The primary functions of every political party are to recruit, evaluate, and nominate candidates for election at the local, state, and federal levels; to serve as opposition to the opposing political party; to draft and approve a party platform to which candidates typically must abide; and to raise large sums of money to support their candidates. The two major political parties in the U.S. raise millions of dollars each. Money they spend trying to get their nominees into office. Political Parties at the Local Level Political "party committees" operate in cities, suburbs, and rural areas to find people to run for offices such as mayor, municipal governing bodies, publicschool boards, and Legislature. They also evaluate candidates and offer endorsements, which serve as guidance to voters of that party. These local parties are made up of rank-and-file committee people who are, in many states, elected by voters in primaries. The local parties are, in many locations, authorized by states to provide election judges, observers and inspectors to work at polling places. Judges of elections explain voting procedures and use of voting equipment, provide ballots and monitor elections; inspectors keep an eye on the voting equipment to make sure it works properly; observers scrutinize how ballots are handled and counted to ensure accuracy. This is the fundamental public role of political parties.