Two-Party System

<https://study.com/academy/lesson/the-two-party-system-definition-advantages-disadvantages.html#/lesson>

* Political parties are organized in groups that seek to gain power in the political system.
* There are three major types of party systems in the world:

-one-party

-two-party

-multi-party

* The U.S. has a two-party system, which means two parties dominate the government.
* Which 2 parties dominate the government? Republican & Democrat
* What are 2 other parties that exist in the U.S.? Green & Libertarian

4 major ways that the two-party system helps promote public good:

1. Help provide order: provide political information in an understandable and convenient manner.
2. Stable balance by allowing for varied interests & opinions
3. Discourages sudden shifts in political trends which can threaten government stability.
4. Encourage political participation.

3 disadvantages of the two-party system

1. Politicians can be easily influenced by money given to them by Special-Interest groups.
2. Politicking- boasting between political parties, seems more about who is winning public opinion polls and less about real issues.
3. Week organizational structure that involves only a small portion of the population. Disagreements within the party show a lack of unity. This leads to lower voter allegiance, interest in politics & voter turnout.

Third Parties

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gJTPPxF3xRI>

* Why could have 2016 been the year of the third-party candidate?

Both candidates for Republican & Democrat were viewed unfavorably.

Third party candidates:

Libertarian= Gary Johnson

Green= Jill Stein

Duverger’s law:

-Countries with winner-take-all elections, like the U.S., two major parties are bound to develop.

-Voters will desert the weakest party for more viable options.

-Overtime, weaker parties are squeezed out, leaving behind two major parties.

-Voters often vote against the candidate they don’t like versus the candidate who shares their views.

Institutional barriers:

-It’s difficult for 3rd party to get attention= less votes

-Debates increase national profile, but only Democrats & Republicans qualify.

-Candidates need 15% support in the polls to participate- 3rd parties often times aren’t included in the polls.

-They don’t have enough money:

-R/D have more sophisticated fundraising operations.

 -Need 5% of the votes of the last election in order to qualify for federal money.

* In what ways might a 3rd party candidate feel like they’ve won even if they fail to win the presidential election?

Gaining traction in the electorate, giving voice to their party’s core principles, influence the national conversation, raise awareness about candidate and beliefs.

* Why is voting for a minor or third-party candidate often considered a “wasted vote”?

Winner-all-system decreases the likely hood of a third-party candidate being pushed out. Supporting the major parties increases the likelihood that their candidate will win.

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| Election Year | 1912 | 1992/1996 | 2000 | 2016 |
| Third Party Candidate Name | Theodore Roosevelt | Ross Perot | Ralph Nader | Gary Johnson/Jill Stein |
| Party | Progressive | Independent/Reform | Green Party | Libertarian/Green Party |
| Which party (R or D) did the 3rd Party Candidate take votes from?  | Split Republican vote with Taft | Took votes from Republican Bush/Dole.  | Took votes from Democrat Al Gore | Mixed/both parties |
| Which party & candidate won the election? | Dem. Woodrow Wilson | Dem. Bill Clinton | Rep. George W. Bush | Rep. Donald Trump |