

Explaining the bipartisan system and the position of the third parties in the US

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ABSTRACT

Two political parties, the Democratic Party and the Republican Party, have dominated the United States' politics since the Civil War. The structure of the bipartisan system in the US is one of the most important and controversial issues. Hence, this paper aims to assess the Democratic and Republican parties and the position of the third parties as constituent elements of this structure. The main question raised and examined in this work is "how is the structure of the American bipartisan system and in what position is the third parties in this structure"? This is a descriptive-analytical study and investigates the question using the library method. The results of the paper indicate that in the two-party structure of the United States, the Democratic and Republican parties are the most active political parties in the country and the power is alternately circled between these two parties. Under such circumstances, it is obvious that a candidate nominated by a single party or from a party other than the two ruling parties can never stand a chance of becoming president, even if he/she can achieve considerable popular votes. The failure of individual and third-party candidates in the US presidential election is owing to the historical intellectual state of the parties' formation and the monopolistic approach of the two dominant parties, the role of money and financial resources in elections and electoral law in the US. The presidential election has led American society to become polarized and all social groups to circle around two distinct axes, despite the desire toward pluralism and centrism. By this phenomenon, it is impossible for any third party to enter the game of power and eventually send the president to the White House.

Keyword: American bipartisan system, Democratic Party, Republican Party, Third Party

Introduction

The United States is one of the countries in the world that includes a two-party system. At the time of signing the US Constitution, there was no party in the US and no popular vote-based political party in the world. However, the individuals' urgent need for winning political disputes led Americans to form parties eventually in the 1790s. The parties mediating between the government and the people have a special place in the political structure of the United States and influence a large part of the socio-political equations of

the country. Within most federal and state elections, parties participate with great power and affect the political system. Presidents and members of Congress are high-ranking party officials with executive and legislative responsibilities and shape the strategic goals of the government during their work. Thus, understanding the nature and functioning of the parties, especially the two major parties in the United States, is very important and facilitates the comprehension of the political performance and executive activities of the US government (Ghasemi, 2006: 111). Since the mid-nineteenth century, the Democratic and Republican parties have dominated the political scene, and one of the two parties has won all the presidential elections from 1854 so far. In fact, despite the freedom in the US, it has a two-party system in practice. Even in countries such as Britain and Germany with traditionally two main parties, other parties are active in the political arena, especially in elections. The criticism is raised for the US party system that there is no fair and free in its electoral system. According to the latest poll of Gallup, about half of Americans believe in the presence and role of a third party in the US presidential election. The figure rises to 74% among independent voters, who are in fact the most vital and important part of the electorate in the US election. It is indicated that if third-party candidates can use the media to present themselves to American voters, especially independent voters, they have a better chance of distressing the electoral equations. However, as shown in the same poll, only 3% of Americans will vote for the candidates of the independent parties. In this poll, the candidates of Green Party, pro-liberty, and pro-constitutional each received only one percent of the vote (1% for each party) ([Http://www. Gallup. com/ poll/ 157 427/ Americans](http://www.gallup.com/poll/157427/Americans)). The interpretation for these statistics will be in such a way that, although half of the American people believe in the presence of a third party in the United States, the third parties running in the US election will not have the success to enter the White House or have a strong presence in the US Congress. Therefore, the important question is how were the formation and ideology of the Democratic and Republican parties as the most important parties in the American bipartisan system, and what is the place of the third parties in the American bipartisan system? The present paper deals with this question.

Bipartisan system

In this system, two strong parties are dominant, while other parties also exist. However, in these countries, power is frequently turned between the two parties. Each of the parties links different but closely related tendencies within themselves in large formats. Basically, the two main political spectrums are divided into sub-tendencies in any society and are generally manifested in the form of various parties. Therefore, in developed and stable societies with two strong parties taking the power in turn, sub-tendencies are framed into two major conservative and progressive tendencies. Moreover, small tendencies also maintain within their position in the leading framework (Gafurie, 1999: 147).

If a bipartisan system is able to win 90% or of the votes higher in a parliamentary election, it is called a full-fledged system rather it is called a balanced system if it intermittently seizes the power. However, there is a third party in these regimes preventing one of the two major parties from gaining undisputed power, it is termed an imperfect bipartisan system. By such circumstances, the exercise of power and the possibility of a temporary government will be possible if one of the major parties coordinate with that third party. Another feature of the two-party system is that the degree of control, influence, and party affiliation is considerable over the candidates, as well as the appointment and division of government administrative positions (Gafurie, 1999: 147). The most common form of bipartisan system in the United Kingdom is composed of the two Conservative and the Labor parties, and it is comprised of both the Democratic and the Republican parties in the United States. It is worth noting that although the British system and the American system are seemingly similar in terms of being bipartisan, they vary in the skeleton and party politics. Just as the Russian system was different from Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy. The bipartisan political system has been imitated in some countries, it has not been nevertheless able to reflect the image portrayed by the two-party system of the US and Britain in the world.

- **Democratic Party**

In this section, it was attempted to assess the formation, background, and ideology of the Democratic Party.

- ✓ **Formation and background**

The Democratic Party was founded as the oldest party in the United States in the time of George Washington (1789-1797). From the beginning, the political conflict revolved around centralism (centralization) and decentralism (decentralization). Unlike Treasury Secretary, Alexander Hamilton, Secretary of State, Thomas Jefferson, argued that a strong central government violated citizens' rights and the power should be assigned to the state governments. "Jefferson wanted to restore democracy as the goal of the American Revolution, and he feared that the implicit powers of the central government would pave the way for a new form of dictatorship». (Frank L. Shouel, 1979:155). US policy toward European wars was also one of the subjects on which Jefferson and Hamilton disagreed. Unlike Hamilton calling for US support for Britain, Jefferson insisted that the United States should not have a biased position toward European countries. Furthermore, supporters of Jefferson's ideology reinforced the Republican revolutionaries against the French government, on the basis that "the Hamiltonians associated them with the French Republican with the title of Republicans-Democrats (Lehr Heather Wagner, 2007: 10). It was the title officially selected by Jefferson supporters in 1798.

The election of Jefferson in America's first competitive election in 1800 was a turning point in American history when the power was peacefully changed in the form of cohesive intellectual spectrums. The holes of intra-party differences appeared in the 1824 election providing a good opportunity for the two same-party fractions to line up against each other (Dale Anderson, 2007: 26- 27). Following Andrew Jackson's victory in the election, former President Adams, along with other previous federalists formed the "National Republican Party". In contrast, Jackson, with the support of the commonalities, restructured the structure of the Republican-Democratic Party and held the first party convention in US history. Jackson won the next round considering himself as a follower of Jefferson and a supporter of state governments. Within this period, the National Republicans adopted the title "Whig", and Jackson's supporters by forming a National Congress called themselves Democrats. During the Civil War of 1861-1865, the Democrats lost to Republican supporters and turned into a secondary political force for decades, but retained their presence in the US's politics. The industrial development of the northern states made numerous workers enter into social relations and be considered as an influential force against the northern industrialists and bankers and the southern landowners. The Democratic Party's view regarding the workers' issues led the party to gain significant influence and development among the working class. The party also attracted immigrant groups to the United States and established a foothold in the north in addition to consolidating its power in the southern states (Hamidi Nia, 2002: 520).

Ultimately, the Democrats were brought back to power by the general election of 1912 after half a century of Republican power. Democratic nominee "Woodrow Wilson" took the presidency with the slogan of improving living conditions and fighting big capitalists. The Democrats were defeated in the 1920 election owing to the declaration of congressional war against Germany during Wilson's second term of presidency and the United States' entry into World War I. With the Great Depression in the late 1920s, the people turned away from the Republican Party, and the Democratic nominee "Franklin Roosevelt" won the 1932 election with the New Deal plan. The Roosevelt era is one of the turning points in the success of the Democratic Party when the country survived the Great Depression and paved the way toward the emergence of the United States as a superpower after World War II. In 1945, Harry Truman succeeded Roosevelt and won the presidency by popular vote in the 1948 election. During Dwight Eisenhower's two-term presidency, Democrats failed to enter the White House until winning in the 1960 election. John. F. Kennedy was the first Roman Catholic who became president. Kennedy introduced a wide range of social programs to Congress, however, they were often rejected by conservative representatives of both Republicans and Democrats, so that some Democrats joined the Republican Party in protesting Kennedy's policies to end racial segregation in schools.

With the assassination of Kennedy in 1963, his deputy, Lyndon Johnson, assumed the presidency. He entered the election arena (1964) and could stay in the White House for another four years with the slogan of "Great Society" and the aim of eliminating poverty, hunger, and discrimination. Jimmy Carter was the next Democratic president winning in 1976. In the field of foreign policy, Carter succeeded in attracting Jewish groups inside the United States by holding the Camp David Conference and the peace between Egypt and Israel. On the other hand, he was severely defeated due to the hostage-taking of American

diplomats in Tehran. Hence, Democrats' failed to get to the White House in the 1980 presidential election. In 1992, Bill Clinton took over the leadership of the young, liberal democrats and could run the country for eight years until the end of the twentieth century. Thus, the twentieth century initiating with the sovereignty of the Republicans ended with the Democrats' power. The policies of Republican Bush in the first decade of the 21st century the American people to Democrats once again turned, hence, "Barack Obama" went to the White House in 2008.

✓ **Democrats' manifesto and policies**

The Democratic Party with big disagreements in regional and ideological issues has never been a homogeneous unit (Khodaverdi, 2004, 28).

Democrats have a liberal view toward the issue, it means that they consider ethics as a relative issue and argue that any attempt to govern the morality violates the clause of religious freedom in the constitution. Thus, the progressive philosophy of the Democratic Party is more attractive to non-Christians and young people. The Democratic Party calls for the active role of the federal government in building a better society and guaranteeing equality by supporting the implementation of special social programs for the poor and middle class. In this regard, most trade unions and minority groups support the Democratic Party. The party's security perspective is mainly concentrated on internal security. Thus, they have less willingness to militarily intervene in other countries compared to their Republican counterparts. Democrats are also supporters of environmental protection and gun control attracting women and city dwellers as well, who are more concerned regarding the country's internal security than others. Thus, most of the party's advocates are women, colored skins, immigrants, the middle and lower-middle class, youth, people with weak religious beliefs, and residents of metropolises and large towns.

While there is no obvious difference between Democrats and Republicans in the realm of ideology, meaning a set of values and beliefs to which political parties adhere, the two parties take different paths to achieve their aspirations and desires. The difference in the intellectual philosophy and social status of the two parties is the reason for this issue since the intellectual philosophy of each party in the social, economic, and security dimensions plays a key role in determining its social status. This has caused the formation of different views of Republicans and Democrats on domestic and foreign issues.

• **Republican Party**

Here, the formation, background, and ideology of the Republican Party are discussed.

✓ **Formation and background**

The United States was the only united in name in the 1850s with a huge influx of immigrants to the United States imposing many challenges in education, religion, taxation, and politics. Although various parties emerged in this direction such as the Whig (1834-54), the Liberty (1839-44), the Free Territory (1848-54), and America (1849-60) (J. Appleby, 2005), they could not provide an organized program to address these issues. In 1854 some Whigs and Democrats believing that the leaders of the Democratic Party had distorted Jefferson's ideals and violated the principles of the republic by supporting the exploitation system decided to form a new party unifying and considering the important issues of the nation. The founders of the newly formed party announced that they would continue Jefferson's path by selecting the name "Republican" adapted from the title of the Jefferson Supporters Association (Lehr Heather Wagner, op. Cit., Pp. 12-13).

Abraham Lincoln, the 16th President of the Republic of America, entered the White House in 1860 as the first Republican. Lincoln's victory initiated the 50-year political sovereignty of the Republican Party, just five years after its founding. Since then, 17 republicans have been in power, some of which were well-known and some were not well-known. Theodore Roosevelt, Herbert Hoover, Dwight D. Eisenhower, Richard Nixon, Ronald Reagan, George Herbert Walker Bush, and George W. Bush are prominent figures in the party.

Theodore Roosevelt became president in 1901. He continued his predecessor's path to turning the United States into a world power and won the Nobel Peace Prize for his efforts in resolving the Russia-Japan

dispute (White House, 2009, [http://www. Whitehouse. gov/about/presidents](http://www.Whitehouse.gov/about/presidents)). Herbert Hoover was another Republican who was elected in 1929. Seven months after Hoover's presidency, the stock market collapsed yielding a major recession. Hoover's unsuccessful economic policies led to the failure of the Republicans in the 1932 election. Ultimately, Dwight D. Eisenhower won the 1952 election after the four-term failure of Republicans in gaining the power in the White House. In foreign policy, Eisenhower worked hard to prevent the spread of communism in the West.

Despite the success of Eisenhower's policies, the Democrats won the next round of elections until Richard Nixon was elected in 1969. Nixon aiming to national reconciliation and foreign policy issues, eased some US-China-Soviet tensions, settled conflicts with North Vietnam, and ended the Indo-China conflicts, however, he was eventually disgraced by the Watergate incident and forced to resign. Ronald Reagan was another iconic figure who won in 1981. Ronald Reagan's victory in the early 1980s was, in fact, the victory of the right side of the Republican Party, which dominated conservatism deeply in the country. Reagan concentrating the necessity to restrain communism, increased the US defense budget by 35%, which led to the huge national debt. In Reagan's time, the title of the war against international terrorism was also emphasized, by concentrating the national security.

Reagan's policies to defeat the Soviet Union accomplished during the time of his successor, George Herbert Walker Bush. Ending the Cold War, George W. Bush came to the presidency, however, he could not renew his power due to poor internal management, despite winning the war against Iraq in 1991. After eight years of Democratic dominations, George W. Bush became president of the United States in 2000. With the events of September 11, 2001, Bush formed the Global Coalition Against Terrorism and invaded Iraq and Afghanistan. At the end of his reign, a huge economic crisis occurred as in the Hoover period (the late 1920s). Many experts blame Bush for the economic downturn and the deterioration of America's prestige on the world stage and refer to him as the party's weakness.

Overall, within the past century and a half (from 1860 to 2010), Republicans dominated the White House for nearly a century, while Democrats dominated Congress mainly. The mid-19th century was associated with Republican power, though in the first half of the 20th century, Democrats were more popular with the American people. Since the 1960s, the executive responsibility of the country has been alternately in the hands of these two parties.

✓ **The manifesto and policies of the Republicans**

The social philosophy of the Republican Party is based on traditionalism. In the social dimension, believing in the absoluteness of morality, they oppose issues such as same-sex marriage and abortion and consider the observance of these issues important to preserve the traditional values and the salvation of the country. This view attracts Christians and the elderly to the Republican Party. In the economic dimension, Republicans consider also the role of corporations and the private sector in meeting the people's needs more important than the role of the federal government, arguing that the federal government's primary role is to ensure fairness. In this party's perspective, the government cannot impose its views on people regarding money, freedom, and life. Considering the importance of individualism in the Republican Party's viewpoint, most people join the party to advance personal plans creating extremist views in the party. The party's opinions regarding tax cuts and government spending cuts also attracted the rich and affluent to the party. Although Republican opposition to slavery attracted many blacks to the party in the 19th century, racial minorities tended toward the Democratic Party after the Great Depression of 1929.

Republicans' security philosophy is concentrated on foreign security. The party concentrates on the external threats of the US and focuses on border security and illegal immigration. By this kind of approach to security issues, rural landowners and those most concerned about security threats from outside the borders are attracted to the Republican Party. In general, most party advocators are men, the educators, the upper class, and religious believers living in small towns, suburbs, and villages (William Keefe, 1998: 189).

The political culture originating from this social base affects both the attitudes and ideals as well as the way policies are implemented. Joe Freeman enumerates two fundamental differences in the political culture of the two parties. He believes that the two parties differ in both structure and attitude. The power structure is different in the Democratic and Republican parties in terms of both structure and attitude. The power

structure of the Democratic Party is down-up; hence, Democrats have a critical and corrector view of issues, even when they are in power. Conversely, the power structure in the Republican Party is up-down, so that Republicans, even when they are not in power, consider themselves insiders and accountable to the structure. Therefore, the structure of the Democratic Party is open and conciliatory. While the Republican Party has a closed and opposition-based structure. Republican leaders often develop their individual power and act independently, however, Democrats concentrate further on their group and party (Jo Freeman, 1986: 327- 356).

Another difference is the pluralistic or unitary type of the two parties' attitudes. Democrats do not represent a comprehensive concept of national interest. They believe that the demands of all groups should be taken into account, hence, pluralism is mainly the ideal of democrats. The followers of the Democratic Party are so diverse that no single judgment can be made about them. Republicans, on the other hand, see themselves as a whole. In fact, they have higher ideological cohesion and commitment than the Democrats (Dana H. Allin, 2003: 7- 16). Therefore, the two parties differ in terms of social status and political culture based on the type of government (strong and weak central government), structure (open and closed), attitude towards the opposition (conciliatory and confrontational) and members' opinions (pluralistic and unitary). Democrats generally follow the philosophy of liberalism, and Republicans often trace the conservatism philosophy. The Republican Party is largely a symbol of right-wing and affluent-related thinking, and the Democratic Party is a supporter of social groups and the underprivileged and middle class.

- **The position of third parties in the United States**

In the political culture of the US, all the political parties other from Democrat and Republican are considered as third parties. Even independent candidates claiming no affiliation to any political party are placed in the category of third parties. Within the Western political culture, the parties are groups with the ultimate goal of gaining power through elections and forming a government. However, this is not entirely true for third parties in the United States since such parties do not have a chance to win. In US elections, third parties are usually non-governmental organizations that their main purpose in participating in elections is to push the electoral issues for their own interests, not for power. In fact, the third parties are non-governmental organizations considering the participation in the election as the most influential way toward meeting their objectives despite the regular practices. Hence, the success rates of the third parties in the US election are measured on their effectiveness on the electoral issues, not on their victory or failure. Normally, there is a tangible closeness between third parties' positions to the positions of one of the Democratic or Republican parties so that absorbing even a few percent of the popular vote by these parties' candidates can disturb the major parties (Amelie, 2007).

Despite the claim of freedom in the United States, it includes a two-party system in operation. Even in countries like Germany and Britain with traditionally two main parties, the other parties are also active in the political scene, especially in elections. However, in the US, the election system acts as the support of the bipartisan system and decreases the third parties' chance of success.

The third parties originated since the early nineteenth century and attempted to challenge the monopoly of the two main parties. Although the third parties' candidates have been never able to victory in the election, they have been effective in the election results or their ideas have affected the admitted politics. The failure of third parties is owing to structural, legal, economic, and cultural barriers. The flexibility of the two major parties in the maximum absorption of the popular vote and their efforts to maintain the monopoly cause third parties have little chance of success.

The third major party emerged in the second decade of the 19th century. The party called the Anti-Masons appeared from West New York and was established in 1828 in New York. The aim of founding the party was to confront Masonic organizations and their secret rituals. Anti-Masonic Party won in the of Pennsylvania and Vermont governor election in 1831 and acquired 25 seats in the House of Representatives in 1832. This party's presidential candidate in 1832 won eight percent of the popular and received several votes from the electoral council.

The anti-Freemasonry party was more successful in state elections and declined from 1836. It was the first party holding a formal conference of party representatives in Baltimore where it selected its presidential

candidate and introduced the party program, which then was followed by the two main parties (Musavi and Javadi, 2013, 56-57).

Later, in the mid-nineteenth century, other parties emerged such as Free Land, Notoning, Green Back, and Populist. Each of these parties provides programs in response to a problem in society and the failure of US politics that was not so successful. However, it could affect the plans of the two main parties and even in some cases, their programs were implemented by the two main parties although all such parties were collapsed then.

In the twentieth century, several third parties and independent candidates tried to challenge the two-party system. These parties include the Progressive Party, the American Independent Party, the Green Party, and the Liberal Party.

Progressive Party emerged by the conflicts between progressive reformers and traditional conservatives in the Republican Party. Theodore Roosevelt, who could participate in the Republican Party, left the party and formed the Progressive Party. In 1912, receiving 27% of votes and 88 votes, he stood in the second place. This is the first time in American history when the third-party's candidate stood in the second place. However, the party did not succeed in the elections of 1914 and almost all the candidates were defeated. By Roosevelt's tendency for the conservative side and his return to the Republican Party in the elections of 1916, Progressive Party virtually disappeared. Among the plans of this party was further control over the company, the right of women to vote, and the selection of senators by the people (Mousavi and Javadi, 2013: 58).

The other party in the twentieth century was the American Independent Party of George Wallace. In the 1968 election in the US, he was the leading of the party entering the election as a third party. His supporters were mostly former Democrats and Lyndon Johnson's policy opponents. This party focused on race and nationalism. George Wallace won 46 electoral votes and 89.9 million of the public votes in the election (Farmani, 2008).

Liberal Party was established in 1971 supporting the individual freedoms and less government intervention in the market. They opposed US intervention in conflicts across the borders and supported free trades with all countries. The Green Party of the 1980s was active as well, as a third party in the United States. Greens emphasize environmentalism, participatory democracy, justice, and respect diversity, peace, and non-violence. Ralph Nither, representative of the Green Party participated in the presidential elections in 1996 and 2000 and could attract attention to himself and his party (Shojaie, 2007, 91). The role of independent candidates was also significant along with third parties. For example, in the 1992 elections held at the end of the first presidency of George H. W. Bush, Clinton was the Democratic candidate. Ross Perot participating independently in the election achieved more than 19 million votes (19%). However, Clinton gained more than 44 million votes (43%) and George HW Bush acquired 39 million votes (37%). Of course, Perot failed to gain electoral votes in the end since could be first in none of the states. Though, this was the best performance of a third party's candidate earning numerous votes. It should be noted that Perot was not a politician rather it was a wealthy businessman who used his wealth to reach this position. The number of Perot's votes played a key role in defeating George HW Bush and caused Clinton's victory in the election (Hushmand, 2016).

Thus, although leaders are rarely elected from small political parties to public office, they have a useful role in American politics. Small political parties normally raise issues neglected by the two major parties. A small party can inform and educate the people about such issues and help them to take action in this regard. In the 1990s, for instance, the Reform Party created the conditions for millions of Americans to express their dissatisfaction with election finance laws allowing the wealthy individuals and organizations to donate millions of dollars directly and indirectly to political candidates (Web, 2003, 97). Many Americans with any political opinion agree that such partnerships may lead to a disproportionate impact of these individuals and companies on the legislative process.

Why are the third parties marginalized?

In this section, the reasons for the marginalization of third parties are examined.

- **Americans' duality thinking**

By the US two-party system, the third parties have never been able to stand in the country. This is firstly rooted in the initial intellectual structures of the Americans. In this context, two theories were proposed by social scientists. The first theory known as the theory duality indicates that there is a duality of interests in American society assisting to maintain the two-party system. American society from its inception has been divided into two categories over various subjects including the Constitution and conflicts of interests between East and West, of the United States, the civil war between the north and south, the formation of the federation, and anti-federation parties. The second theory about cultural barriers in the path of third parties was the theory of social consensus. According to this theory, the "two-party system in America can be explained by public agreement on the social infrastructure in the country". Although the American Society was culturally heterogeneous, the Americans quickly agreed on other countries' divisive issues. For example, they accepted the constitution and state structure, economy, and to a lesser extent Americans' patterns of classification and social status (Mousavi and Javadi, 2013, 68-69). The American people were mobilized around two federal and anti-federal axes. The two main parties of the Democratic Party and the Republican Party are in fact descendants of two federalist and anti-federalist parties. Alexander Hamilton, young and energetic administration of Secretary of the Treasury of President George Washington was the founder of the first US political party. He accurately understood the soul of the time and the requirement of The US to found a dynamic and industrialized community. He considered four solutions to solve the problems of the country: 1) The United States should implement the structures of the mother country(Britain) to the new land. 2) The federal government should extend the area of influence in the states. In other words, he believed the rights of the states rather than the central government. 3) developing a dynamic community requires money and expanded trade as well as supporting domestic and foreign investors. 4) People are in two groups: an energetic, dynamic, and creative minority developing the industry and commerce and administrating the country, and a majority who do not have adequate time, energy, and talent for political affairs and assign them to businessmen. The first fraction in the United States focused on giving priority to the federal government and creating an aristocratic society or giving priority to the states and creating a centralized society. These fractions eventually appeared as a party. Federalist Party led by Hamilton called for stability and concentration of power in the hands of the federal government, while the Anti-Federalists tended to more freedom for states and citizens of the United States. By ending the presidency of George Washington in 1796 when the country still needed more stability and concentration, John Adams was elected as a Federalist president. However, in the post-presidential election period, in 1800, Thomas Jefferson founder of the non-federalist party won (which was called the Republican-Democrat party at that time). Republicans won as a result of their ability to rapidly expand Party organizations and creating the membership of the lower strata of society in every state. While the Federalists emphasized on influential and powerful people due to their elitist temperament (Amjad, 2007: 102-103). Americans are very conservative and would like to stay in the middle rather than tend to the left or right. This prevents the emergence of powerful parties, socialists, communists, and fascists in the US. The conflicts of two Republican and Federalist parties were not centered on ideological or economic issues. Federalist Party more tended o increase the power of the federal government, while the Republican Party was in favor of giving more freedom to the states. Today, two Republicans and Democrats both support capitalism. However, the former emphasizes tax cuts (especially for the wealthy people) and reducing the welfare for the poor and the later, on the contrary, seeks to increase taxes to develop welfare facilities for the poor people.

- **Media**

Campaign of third parties and independent candidates are less covered through media than the two main parties' candidates. Every successful campaign requires good media coverage since it helps candidates gain legitimacy and be recognized. Journalists tend to report the election as an event not paying more attention to the polls, the candidates' mistakes, and negative advertisements rather the policing issues. For this reason, top candidates are given more superior coverage and the media focus on the debate and national conventions of the two main parties' candidates.

Being loved by the people, influencing the hearts, and ultimately being selected have been important throughout the history of America and it has been doubled in the era of media and information. The emergence of media and information technology and information transfer in a short time all over the world, signify the matter of "conquering the hearts". The influence and power are incomprehensible without media and information technology, cannot spread even beyond the geographical area of a city. In fact, this is the media and information technology that produce a certain kind of awareness. In other words, no matter how good and attractive are the values of a presidential candidate, as long as others do know nothing about them no messages will not be transferred and the candidate can not convey the election slogans to the voters. Therefore, the most important issue in the election competitions is to spread the knowledge about a candidate's values and way of thinking (Saedie, 2010, 103).

In addition to the lack of media coverage or media's negative ads, third parties also suffer from a lack of elite support since it is essential to have elite and experienced party support to succeed. A small number of third parties can compete with the main parties since many third parties are short-lived and have little political support. For this reason, most of the third-party candidates are not usually strong and experienced. Unlike the leaders of major parties, the non-core parties' leaders are amateur in party politics and may do significant errors. Hence, the lack of strong political organizing and leadership is another factor influencing the failure of third parties (Mousavi and Javadi, 2013, 73). Because the main part of the US media is dominated by Democrats and Republicans, and Third Party candidates do not have enough media coverage, the people and especially independent voters vote to either the main parties in the final analysis and under the advertisement mass of the two major parties. As the ultimate analysis in this section, it can be concluded that due to the lack of media facilities for third parties, their messages have not been transmitted and their presence in the elections will become just a simple news item.

• Electoral laws

The Electoral Council system reinforces the two-party system. The presidential competition is composed of fifty-one separate elections in each state and the District of Columbia. In all states except Maine and Nebraska, the election follows the system "all votes for the winner". Therefore, if a candidate earns the relative majority of state votes but not necessarily a majority of the votes, he/she will earn all the votes in that state's electoral council, which is equal to the number of each state's representatives in Congress. Second and third candidates receiving fewer popular votes will not receive any votes from the Electoral Council. It is the detriment for the third parties since they are less likely to win the votes of the electoral council. The person must earn the majority of electoral council votes (270 votes) to win in the presidential election. It makes pressure for voters to merge into supporters of the two main parties' candidates. The condition of 270 votes also causes the third-party candidate to join the main party to be able to win the elections since he/she is less likely to obtain a majority in the Electoral Council's votes. If there is a strong third rival in an election, the possibility that none of the candidates gain a majority of votes of the electoral council is strengthened. If no one wins the majority of votes, the House of Representatives will announce the winner. Hence, they prefer to select one of the main candidates (Mousavi and Javadi, 2013: 61).

Before the start of the final competition in the presidential elections, there is an internal competition within the major parties to determine the end candidate of the party. This is the initial stage of selecting the end candidate. At this stage, some candidates of a party participate to form the intra-party fierce even hostile, and immoral competition within the party in the states. They are selected in different ways. Gathering the party leaders of the Congress is the first way to select the candidates where the decisions are made regarding the policies for selecting the candidates. In the 19th century, the party leaders confidentially selected the candidate for the US Senate, House of Representatives, states, and districts in rooms full of cigarette smoke.

Another method is to form the selection conventions aimed to select more open and more democratic candidates, however, believing in the democratic nature of the convention proved that this is nothing just a false imagination. Party leaders were able to arrange Convention to turn it into a counterfeit tool of the oligarchy in the hands of professional politicians. Due to the failure of the selective conventions, the preliminary election method was considered to select intra-party candidates. It was a stage of rebellion

against the party leaders aimed to remove the oligarchic control of the party machine (Golamie, 2012). Since third party candidates have less chance of victory in the national elections, those tend to challenge the organization and leading of the main parties are encouraged to act through the inter-party paths. This helped the institutionalization of the political dominance of Democrats and Republicans. Moreover, these preliminary elections weakened extraneous parties since they attract the people's attention toward competitions inside the two main parties.

Furthermore, the US electoral system derived from the US Constitution was designed in such a way that an individual or a party will be the absolute winner and loser, and there is no possibility of forming any coalition or alliance with the individual or third party. Within this system, known as the Electoral College, if any individual or party wins the general election in a state by a very small difference, he/ she will acquire the whole electoral votes of that state, moreover, the Electoral College representatives ultimately appointing the president can also be selected based on these electoral votes. On the other hand, given the US electoral system, this practice will have the chance to emerge differently in the congressional elections. Based on the US Election Law, each state is divided into different areas and districts. The division is based on the population living in the area so that one representative is considered for every 600,000 people, and that district can only send one representative to the House of Representatives (Deheshyar, 2000: 19). It is clear, therefore, that any representative receiving the majority of the votes will enter Congress as the representative of that district.

The election debates are one of the most obvious manifestations of the unfairness in the US presidential race. These "debates" were first held in 1960 between two candidates of the Democratic and the Republican parties. From then on, these debates were not held for three terms between 1964 and 1972, until the 1976 presidential election initiated with a series of such debates continuing so far. Since 1960, when the first electoral debate between the Democratic and Republican candidates took place (<https://www.debates.org/index.php>), until 1984, these debates did not have a special supportive and were only performed by one of the television channels. Of course, it is clear that the goals and interests of the managers of such networks were given priority. Considering the impact and importance of holding such debates on the voters, and given the tremendous power of the media in shaping these decisions, the party elites decided to hold the debates themselves. In this regard, the leaders of Democratic Party and the Republican Party, jointly established a commission called the "Electoral Debate Commission" in 1987, which is a non-governmental and private institution (<https://www.debates.org/index.php>) holding the debates in line with the interests of the two major parties.

Regarding the conduct of such debates, the remarkable strange and, of course, unfair point is that the representatives of the Third Party were participated in the debates only in two terms since taking place the debates in 1960. In 1992, Ross Perot, the Independent Reform Party candidate could participate in the debates with George W. H. Bush and Bill Clinton. Participating in the debates helped him and according to the polls, Perot's support increased to more than 19% on election day, which was only 7% before the debate (<https://www.opendebates.org/the-issue/1992.html>, What Happened, 2007: 12-20). By creating a remarkably large surprise, he could win the votes of a large number of independents and lead to the defeat of George W. H. Bush. This victory was heavy for both the Democratic and Republican parties that in the next election, in 1996, Perot was not allowed to participate (<https://www.opendebates.org/the-issue/1996.html>). As a commission with a private and non-governmental entity, it easily allowed the presence or absence of an independent candidate, and the uninvited candidate was not legally able to take any action against this commission. The issue, which was highly unjust and unfair, was opposed by independent candidates, although they had no legal authority to reach their right. The strong opposing on this issue by public opinions and independent candidates made the commission to make a law called the 15% law to soften the previous law. According to this law, a candidate can participate in electoral debates if he/she has obtained at least 15% of the popular votes in the polls prior to initiating the debates. Considering the elections experience and statistics and polls, in almost all periods, the independent candidates always got less than 15% of the votes, and the enactment of this law indicated the immediate elimination of all third party candidates (<https://www.opendebates.org/the-issue/2004.html>). Given these facts, as well as the importance of such debates and their live broadcast on television, it can be declared that the most unfair

atmosphere was developed against the candidates of the third and independent parties, and the arena for the third party candidate was narrowed to run in the elections.

- **Financial inability of third parties to meet the high costs of elections**

The major economic obstacle for third parties is the lack of financial resources. Given the staggering costs in the US election competitions, it can be stated that money is the main and determining factor. Considering the private mass media in America and the staggering advertisement costs, a candidate can win who has almost unlimited financial backing with supporters spending millions of dollars in this regard. By the wealthy supporters, Republicans always spend much more money than the Democrats in elections. Although money is a necessary condition in the US for victory in every election, it is not necessarily sufficient condition since it has been occasionally noticed that a party or a person with less spending has failed. However, independent candidates have definitely less chance to compete with two other parties given the enormous costs of elections.

Based on the history of presidential elections in the United States, it is indicated that candidates with more money had more chances to enter the White House. In fact, the United States Presidential story is tied with money than declaring the operational programs. In the US, presidential candidates spend hundreds of millions of dollars for an election campaign in a nation with over 100 million voters (Hosseini, 2013:150).

Due to the limitations created by the campaign to supply the campaigns' expenses if non-core parties reject the public funds can act well since the limitations of the law will not be imposed for them in this way. Moreover, third party and independent candidates must spend a high expense to have access to the ballot. Furthermore, these candidates must spend a huge deal of time and money to obtain financial supports because they do not possess a structured system and the expertise of the major parties, moreover, because of the low chance of victory, fewer people tend to invest in their electoral campaign. Today, the candidates mainly utilize modern electoral technologies and hire expert consultants to have a successful competition, which is also high-cost. Firms providing consultation for the candidates to receive millions of dollars. Therefore, without a huge budget, the third parties can not do extensive advertising and remain unknown. However, investigating the campaign expenses and election results, it is indicated that the amount spent by a candidate can influence the outcomes and high inequality in funding can hurt the secondary candidates (Mousavi and Javadi, 2013: 67-68).

In recent years, Ross Perot, the Reform Party nominee paid \$ 60 million in initial enrollment alone, relying on his legendary wealth to be able to register his name on the candidates' lists in all 50 states (<https://www.fec.gov/public/fe2000/2000presge.htm>). Most third-party candidates do not have such high financial capacity, for example, the Green Party candidate in the 2000 elections could only enroll in 44 states. This unfair practice and restriction in the 2004 election worsened the situation for the Green Party candidate so that he could enroll in only 27 states. The same occurred for Ralph Nieder, who ran as an independent candidate in the 2004 and 2008 US presidential elections. In the 2004 election, Nieder enrolled for only 34, moreover, in 2008 he could insert the name his state in the final list. The US Constitutional Party was also shortlisted in the 2004 presidential election in only 42 states (<https://www.fec.gov/public/fe2004/2004pres.Pdf>).

Since the ballot access law is directly rooted in the financial ability of an independent candidate, it can be argued that it is one of the most unjust laws within the US electoral system ([Http://hlrecord.org/p=10575](http://hlrecord.org/p=10575)). Obviously, since the elders of each state generally belong to one of the two major parties, the possibility of collecting their signatures and obtaining approvals has always been challenging.

It can be indicated that there is always a common factor in all the above cases, which are considered as obstacles to the success of the third parties. This common factor is access to finance. From access to the ballots to the lack of access to independent candidates to the media, they are all rooted in financial issues, demonstrating that money is a key factor in US election campaigns. Given the private nature of the mass media in the US and the staggering advertisement costs, a candidate can win an election campaign who possesses almost unlimited financial support and supporters spending millions of dollars. Republicans always spend more on elections than Democrats as a result of their wealthy supporters. Although money is a prerequisite for victory in any election in the US, it is not necessarily a sufficient condition since the party

or individual spending less money failed frequently. It is assumed that the independent candidates have a much lower chance of competing with the other two parties given the staggering cost of the elections. Based on the history of the US presidential race, the more money a candidate has, the better his/her chances to enter the White House.

Conclusion

In the political arena of the United States today, there are two powerful and wider parties, the Democrats and the Republicans taking the power in turns, especially in the executive sector. Each of these two parties has its own political, social, and economic characteristics attracting the positive opinion of some Americans. The two parties have a lot in common although they have also differences. In Republican campaign slogans, they demand a tax exemption for capitalists, while Democrats call for a tax exemption for all. Or in the foreign field, Republicans rely on the hardware approach, whereas Democrats favor the software approach. Although in the realm of ideology, which indicates a set of values and beliefs to which political parties adhere, there is no obvious difference between Democrats and Republicans, the two parties take different paths to achieve their goals and desires. A reason in this regard is the difference in the intellectual philosophy and social status of the two parties because the intellectual philosophy of each party in the social, economic, and security dimensions plays a key role in determining its social status. This has led to the creation of various sights of Republicans and Democrats on domestic and foreign issues.

The US has a two-party system, however, it does not indicate non-authorization of the other parties rather it is rooted in its historical process of federalism and electoral system. Since the emergence of America, two parties of the Federalist and non-Federalist were opposing. Federalist Party in favor of increasing the powers of the federal government to the states. On the contrary, non-Federalists were representatives of social groups in favor of increasing the powers of the states against the federal government. At present, the Democratic Party is in favor of increasing the powers of the federal government and believes in providing facilities to citizens all over the United States. In the Democratic Party attitude, the states have no right to deprive the social group of the social right by the freedom to act. However, the Republican Party can be attributed to non-federalist intellectual survivors who support the greater freedom of the States. Third parties have never acquired certain success in the history of the United States. In all these years, numerous parties have emerged that none of them could succeed and dissolved after a period. The US electoral system is the most important reason for the failure of third parties with the situation now and in all these years, never let the minor parties and independent candidates to succeed.

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