

Study Outline

Chapter 9: Interest Groups

- I. Explaining proliferation: why interest groups are common in the United States
 - A. Many kinds of cleavage in the country
 - B. Constitution makes for many access points
 - C. Political parties are weak
- II. The birth of interest groups
 - A. Periods of rapid growth
 - 1. Since 1960, 70 percent have established an office in Washington, D.C.
 - 2. 1770s, independence groups
 - 3. 1830s and 1840s, religious, antislavery groups
 - 4. 1860s, craft unions
 - 5. 1880s and 1890s, business associations
 - 6. 1900s and 1910, most major lobbies of today
 - B. Factors explaining the rise of interest groups
 - 1. Broad economic developments create new interests
 - a. Farmers produce cash crops
 - b. Mass production industries begin
 - 2. Government policy itself
 - a. Created veterans' groups--wars
 - b. Encouraged formation of Farm Bureau
 - c. Launched Chamber of Commerce
 - d. Favored growth of unions
 - 3. Emergence of strong leaders, usually at certain times
 - 4. Expanding role of government
- III. Kinds of organizations
 - A. Institutional interests
 - 1. Defined: individuals or organizations representing other organizations
 - 2. Types
 - a. Businesses: example, General Motors
 - b. Trade or governmental associations
 - 3. Concerns--bread-and-butter issues of concern to their clients
 - a. Clearly defined, with homogeneous groups
 - b. Diffuse, with diversified groups
 - 4. Other interests--governments, foundations, universities
 - B. Membership interests
 - 1. Americans join some groups more frequently than people in other nations
 - a. Social, business, and so on, same rate as elsewhere
 - b. Unions, less likely to join
 - c. Religious or civic groups, more likely to join
 - d. Greater sense of efficacy and duty explains the tendency to join civic groups
 - 2. Most sympathizers do not join because
 - a. Individuals not that significant
 - b. Benefits flow to nonmembers too
 - C. Incentives to join
 - 1. Solidary incentives--pleasure, companionship (League of Women Voters, AARP, NAACP, Rotary, etc.)
 - 2. Material incentives--money, things, services (farm organizations, retired persons, etc.)
 - 3. Purpose of the organization itself--public-interest organizations
 - a. Ideological interest groups' appeal is controversial principles
 - b. Engage in research and bring lawsuits
 - D. Influence of the staff
 - 1. Staff has most influence if members joined for solidary or material benefits
 - 2. National Council of Churches and unions are examples
- IV. Interest groups and social movements
 - A. Social movement is a widely shared demand for change
 - B. Environmental movement

- C. Feminist movement: three kinds
 - 1. Solidary--LWV and others (widest support)
 - 2. Purposive--NOW, NARAL (strong position on divisive issues)
 - 3. Caucus--WEAL (material benefits)
 - D. Union movement; left over after social movement dies
 - V. Funds for interest groups
 - A. Foundation grants
 - 1. Ford Foundation and public-interest groups
 - 2. Scaife foundations and conservative groups
 - B. Federal grants and contracts
 - 1. National Alliance for Business and summer youth job programs
 - 2. Jesse Jackson's PUSH
 - C. Direct mail
 - 1. Unique to modern interest groups through use of computers
 - 2. Common Cause a classic example
 - 3. Techniques
 - a. Teaser
 - b. Emotional arousal
 - c. Celebrity endorsement
 - d. Personalization of letter
 - VI. Problem of bias
 - A. Reasons for belief in upper-class bias
 - 1. More affluent more likely to join
 - 2. Business or professional groups more numerous; better financed
 - B. Why these facts do not decide the issue
 - 1. Describe inputs but not outputs
 - 2. Business groups often divided among themselves
 - C. Important to ask what the bias is
 - 1. Many conflicts are within upper middle class
 - 2. Resource differentials are clues, not conclusions
 - VII. Activities of interest groups
 - A. Information
 - 1. Single most important tactic
 - a. Nonpolitical sources insufficient
 - b. Provide detailed, current information
 - 2. Most effective on narrow, technical issues
 - 3. Officials also need cues; ratings systems
 - 4. Dissemination of information and cues via fax
 - B. Public support: rise of new politics
 - 1. Outsider strategy replacing insider strategy
 - 2. New strategy leads to controversy that politicians dislike
 - 3. Key targets: the undecided
 - 4. Some groups attack their likely allies to embarrass them
 - 5. Legislators sometimes buck public opinion, unless issue important
 - 6. Some groups try for grassroots support
 - a. Saccharin issue
 - b. "Dirty Dozen" environmental polluters
 - 7. Few large, well-funded interests are all-powerful (e.g., NRA)
 - C. Money and PACs
 - 1. Money is least effective way to influence politicians
 - 2. Campaign finance reform law of 1973 had two effects
 - a. Restricted amount interest groups can give to candidates
 - b. Made it legal for corporations and unions to create PACs
 - 3. Rapid growth in PACs has not led to vote buying.
 - a. More money is available on all sides
 - b. Members of Congress take money but still decide how to vote
 - 4. Almost any organization can create a PAC.
 - a. More than half of all PACs sponsored by corporations
 - b. Recent increase in ideological PACs; one-third liberal, two-thirds conservative
 - 5. Ideological PACs raise more but spend less because of cost of raising money
 - 6. In 2000 unions and business organizations gave most

- 7. Incumbents get most PAC money
 - a. Business PACs split money between Democrats and Republicans
 - b. Democrats get most PAC money
 - 8. PAC contributions small
 - 9. No evidence PAC money influences votes in Congress
 - a. Most members vote their ideology
 - b. When issue of little concern to voters, slight correlation but may be misleading
 - c. PAC money may influence in other ways, such as access
 - d. PAC money most likely to influence on client politics
 - D. The revolving door
 - 1. Promise of future jobs to officials
 - 2. Few conspicuous examples of abuse
 - E. Trouble
 - 1. Disruption always part of American politics
 - 2. Used by groups of varying ideologies
 - 3. Better accepted since 1960s
 - 4. History of proper persons using disruption: suffrage, civil rights, antiwar movements
 - 5. Officials dread no-win situation
- VIII. Regulating interest groups
 - A. Protection by First Amendment
 - B. 1946 law accomplished little in requiring registration
 - C. 1995 lobby act enacted by Congress
 - 1. Broadens definition of a lobbyist
 - 2. Lobbyists must report twice annually
 - 3. Exempts grassroots organizations
 - 4. No enforcement organization created
 - D. Significant restraints prior to 1995 still in effect
 - 1. Tax code: threat of losing tax exempt status
 - 2. Campaign finance laws