

2016-10-14

Linkage Institutions

Big Ideas

- Media and its influence on politics
- Media role in public discourse and how it changes
- Media's role in changing majority opinion

What is a “Linkage Institution”?

- **Linkage Institution** = some organized body that connects subjects of the government with the government itself
 - Examples
 - Mass media
 - * Television
 - * Radio
 - Who the f&%# listens to *radio*?
 - * Newspapers
 - *Wat.*
 - * Internet publications
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The Development of Media

- Herbert Hoover(1929-1933)
 - Little to no media involvement in politics
- Franklin Delano Roosevelt(1933-1945)
 - Modern media becomes intertwined with politics
 - “Fireside chats”
 - * Press conferences twice per week
 - * Based on radio
 - * Press thought highly of FDR
 - Personality is FDR's greatest asset

- Uses media to help mental health of nation
 - * Morale booster
 - * Sympathizes with issues Americans face
 - 1960's see beginning of scornful media
 - Watergate scandal lampoons Nixon
 - Vietnam war creates sense of disillusionment with government
 - **Investigative journalism** = The use of in-depth study of a case to reveal the details of a particular subject
 - * Helps to reinforce negative view of government
 - * Media is seen as limiting force on government
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Media Coverage

- Media holds a lot of leverage in what gets airtime
- ↑Coverage = ↑Public engagement
- Can also affect tone
- **Policy Agenda** = the collection of issues the media brings into focus that the government can address
 - “spin” = a unique framing of a problem that leads people towards a certain view
 - **Political Capital** = reputation among other politicians and the public that can be expended for policy
 - * Almost like a currency

Practice FRQ

One of the most important ways the news media influence politics is through agenda setting. - a. Define policy agenda - b. Explain how the national news media engage in agenda setting - c. Explain the primary reason the president tends to have an advantage over Congress in gaining media attention

Answer

- a. **Policy agenda** is the collection of issues the media chooses to focus on through selective airing and tone.

- b. Media sources only have a limited amount of time they can expect their audience to consume their media. Through selectively choosing to give airtime to certain issues and putting a “spin” on their presentation, they can develop the issues that are prevalent in the common consciousness.
- c. Electoral elections get much higher voter turnout than do congressional elections; more people pay attention to the president. Additionally, the president is easier to tie into a narrative; individual intentions become clearer when they are directed by a single person as opposed to a body of elected officials.

Bias in the Media

- Two types of bias
 - **Ideological bias** = some media outlets exhibit a right-left lean
 - * CNN(Clinton News Network)
 - * Fox News
 - **Structural bias** = stories are chosen and presented in order to get good ratings—not necessarily to present the truth
 - * “If it bleeds, it leads.”
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Political Parties as Linkage Institutions

- **Political Party** = an organization that strives for maintaining political office
- Can be thought of as three parts
 - The electorate
 - The organization
 - Elected officials
- Actions
 - Nominate political candidates
 - Run and administer campaigns
 - Coordinate policy-making
- **Incumbent** = an official seeking re-election
- **Grassroots Mobilization** = a political movement organized with a bottom-up approach

- For example, an Anarchist revolution :D
 - **Ticket-Splitting** = in an election where multiple ballots are cast for different positions, the voter votes for different parties for each position
 - causes **divided government**
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Divided Government

- Caused by a number of factors
 - Development of social issues over last 4 decades
 - * Gay marriage
 - * Abortion
 - * Women's rights
 - * Civil rights

Emergence of Political Parties

- Political machines emerged in the early 1800's
 - Exchanged favors for votes
 - * Especially immigrants
- **Patronage** = elected officials giving benefits to loyal party supporters
 - Giving jobs to campaigners
- **Pendleton Civil Service Act** = an attempt to make civil service meritocratic
 - Hurt power of political machines
- Local parties have better organization than national parties
- **Primary**
 - An election orchestrated by a political party that selects a candidate
 - **Closed Primary** = only voters registered as that party can vote
 - **Open Primary** = independents and those registered as that party can vote
 - Inhibits parties from *choosing* the candidate they want
 - * Unless you're the DNC; in which case, *screw that lol*
- **Coalition** = a group of voters that share a common interest
 - Typically support one party over a period of time
 - Voting in blocks makes endorsements important for candidates

Party Eras

- **Party Era** = a period of time when one political party is dominant
 - Caused by coalitions growing and shrinking in size
 - **Critical Election** = an election that serves as boundaries between party eras
 - e.g. FDR in 1932
 - **Party Realignment** = new issue redraws coalition bounds, changing the political parties in the process
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Party Eras in History

- **New Deal Coalition** = 1932-1968
 - Voted consistently for Democratic party
 - Groups included
 - * Urban working class
 - * African Americans
 - * Catholics and Jews
 - * Lower-income families
 - * Southerners
- **Divided Government Coalition** = 1968-present
 - Presidential elections typically don't align with Congressional results
 - Caused by number of things
 - * Distrust in government
 - Vietnam war
 - Watergate scandal
 - Investigative journalism
 - * Social issues emerge
 - Abortion
 - **Dealignment** = party coalitions start to shift, many people disengage

Third Parties

- Can serve to spread messages into the popular consciousness
 - “Splinter”, “Economic Protest”, “Charismatic Leader”
 - Disenfranchised by our electoral system
 - First Past the Post/Single Member District voting
 - * Winner takes all, nothing for loser
 - * “Democracy is nothing more than mob rule, where 51% of the people may take away the rights of the other 49%.” – Jefferson
 - **Proportional Representation** = seats in Congress are distributed based on votes received by each party
 - **Coalition Government** = multiple parties come together to make policy
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What Are Interest Groups?

- **Interest Group** = a body of people who organize under similar policy goals
- *How is that different from a “political party”?*
 - Political parties offer candidates for president
 - Interest groups are **policy specialists**
 - * Means they write legislation on a very specific issue
 - Political parties are **policy generalists**
 - * Means they write legislation for broad purposes

Negative Perception of Interest Groups

- Generally, interest groups are seen as a negative influence on politics
- *Why?*
 - Framers of the constitution looked down on “factions”?
 - Corrupt lobbyists get a lot of attention by the media
 - “Lobbying” seen as corporate influence on politics