

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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2016-10-17

### 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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**2016-10-18**

### **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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2016-10-20

## 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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## 2016-10-21

### 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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## 2016-10-24

### 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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2016-10-27

### 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”?
    - \* James Madison, Federalist Paper #10

- Warns against factions
- Corrupt lobbyists get a lot of attention by the media
- “Lobbying” seen as corporate influence on politics

### Iron Triangles

- **Iron Triangle** = a relationship formed between Congress, interest groups, and federal agencies(the Bureaucracy)
  - **Issue Network** = groups of entities that are connected through the effort to get a law passed
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## 2016-10-28

### What Makes an Interest Group Successful?

- **Free-Rider Problem** = people can benefit from activities of interest groups without supporting them
  - Unions face a similar problem with collective bargaining
  - The larger the group, the more significant this problem is
- Group Size
  - Smaller groups are easier to manage than large groups
  - Larger groups offer faster spread of information
    - \* *Propaganda*
  - **Consumer Advocacy Group** = an interest group composed of consumers that aims to shape policy that benefits said consumers
  - **Selective Benefits** = only giving certain benefits to members of the interest groups
    - \* Helps to curb the Free-Rider Problem
- Intensity
  - **Single-Issue Groups** = interest groups that organize behind one particular stance on one particular issue
    - \* Members can focus on their *unity*, rather than their differences
  - Emotionally charged subjects tend to unite like-minded people
    - \* Psychological advantage
  - More likely to act directly
    - \* Protests
    - \* Petitions

- Financial Backing
  - We live in a capitalist dystopia
  - If you want to reach people, you'll need money
    - \* Results in corporate speech being heard much more loudly than individual speech

### How Do Interest Groups Shape Policy?

- **Lobbying** = the process of hiring a person to go to Congress and affect policy-making
  - Lobbyists provide information to Congresspeople
  - Allows politicians to take credit for advancing that policy position
- **Electioneering** = direct influence on electoral process
  - **Political Action Committee(PAC)** = organizations funded by corporations and unions that donate to candidates directly
    - \* 527's and 501(c)3's are used to file donations as **independent expenditures**
      - **Independent Expenditure** = an expense that is eligible for write-off
      - Makes rich people's incomes *look* smaller(less tax), while being able to influence the political process

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## 2016-11-02

### Running for President

- **Presidential Primary** = election through which candidates for president are selected
  - **Caucus** = people gather in a room and vote with their feet, each candidate has a chance to convince the others
    - \* Like how Mongol societies voted with horse
    - \* Iowa is first caucus
  - **Primary** = simple ballot casting procedure that selects a candidate using the FPTP system
  - Criticism
    - \* Early caucuses and primaries get more attention
    - \* Later states are discouraged from participating if not a close race



- \* **Frontloading** = state holds a primary or caucus early to get all that *sweet, sweet* media attention
- **National Party Convention** = delegates allocated during primary season meet to vote for who the party's official candidate will be
  - Usually, primary winner is already known due to vote count
    - \* Doesn't stop media from making damned good use of all that footage of balloons falling
  - Serves to unite the party after a bitter primary season
  - Isn't as big a deal as it used to be
  - **McGovern Fraser Commission(1968)** = committee that wrote new set of rules for selecting delegates in the Democratic convention
    - \* Aimed at increasing representation for women and minorities
  - **Superdelegates** = delegates that are typically pledged to one candidate before primary season even begins
    - \* Serves the interest of the party
- **General Election** = actual election season between the major parties
  - Debates are held to give candidates opportunities to voice policy
  - Media speculation can sway voter turnout
  - **Electoral College** = system by which the general election happens
    - \* Each state legislature gets assigned a limited number of **electors**
      - State legislatures fill those spaces with people they like
    - \* Candidate who reaches **plurality** takes all of the electors for that state
      - **Plurality** = more than anyone else
      - This doesn't apply to Nebraska and Maine; they assign electors proportionally
    - \* Serves as insulating layer between the government and the people
    - \* Shifts focus towards "battle-ground" states and highly-populated states

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**2016-11-08**

## Campaign Finance

### Soft Money vs Hard Money

- **Federal Election Campaign Act of 1974**

- Created the **Federal Election Commission**
  - \* Deals with legislation regarding campaigning and campaign finance
- Provisions
  - \* Public financing of presidential elections = matching private donations
  - \* Placed limits on spending
  - \* Required disclosure
  - \* Placed limits on private contributions
- The result: **soft money**
  - \* **Soft money** = contributions directly to the party
    - Used for general party activities
    - Essentially unlimited
- **Hard money** = direct contributions to candidates
  - \* Generally well-regulated
- *Buckley v Valeo(1974)*
  - Supreme court rules that limiting expenditures of a candidate amounts to abridging free speech
  - Strikes down provision that limits an individuals ability to contribute directly to a candidate

## BCRA

- **Bipartisan Campaign Finance Reform Act(BCRA)**
  - Also known as the **McCain Feingold Act(2002)**
  - Sought to eliminate distinction between *soft* and *hard* money
  - Placed limits on contributions
    - \* \$2,000 limit for individuals
    - \* \$5,000 limit for PACs
  - Resulted in 527s and 501(c)3s
    - \* 527s
      - Independent organization
      - Can spend an unlimited amount of money
    - \* 501(c)3s
      - permits donors to remain anonymous
      - Intended primarily as religious institutions
      - Are only permitted to spend half of their funds on political activities

## The Role of Capital in Campaigns

- **Political Action Committees(PACs)**
    - A legal entity that is permitted to donate large amounts of capital to political campaigns
    - Created by a 1974 law
    - **Not** considered an interest group
    - Candidates who represent the rich get more funding
      - \* Capitalism is *garbage*
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2016-11-09

### Citizens United

- *Citizens United v FEC(2010)*
  - Supreme court case that ruled that 527s and 501(c)3 organizations are considered “persons” under constitutional law
  - “Corporations are people too”
  - Overturned 30 and 60 day limits on advertisements
- **SuperPACs** = organizations similar to PACs
  - Also known as “independent expenditure only committees”
    - \* *independent expenditure* means that money doesn’t go to the party; it funds advertising and the like itself
  - Not beholden to any particular candidate
    - \* Can give money as they please
  - Virtually unregulated