Collective Action Principle:

Definition: The idea that all politics is collective action. Collective action is an action/thing taken/done by a group of people with a common goal or a group of people trying to reach an agreement.

Example 1 – Bargaining can only happen between two parties willing to meet

Example 2 – When a bill is passed in congress, it is the result of collective action

Question 1) Billy wants to save 15 dollars. To do this, he needs to put half of his allowance in a jar for 15 months. Is this an example of collective action? Why?

Question 2) Billy wants to make 15 dollars. His friend, Tom, also wants 15 dollars. Johnny has 30 dollars. Billy and Tom mug Johnny and split it evenly. Is this an example of collective action? Why?

Informal Bargaining:

Definition: “making a deal”

-nonbinding

-like minded parties

-based on trust and understanding

Example 1 – Neighbors who agree to switch off the responsibility for trimming a hedge that borders both of their yards each year

Example 2 – A teacher giving a student the opportunity to make up missed work with an extra credit assignment

Question 1) Billy and Bobby share a room. Billy splits the room in half by marking it with tape, and tells Bobby that they should each be responsible for their own side of the room. Is this informal Bargaining? Why?

Formal Bargaining:

Definition: “finding a settlement/common ground”

-can be binding

-mixed motives

-formal, rules

Example 1 – The Democrats and Republicans trying to reach an agreement in the Senate on a gun control bill

Example 2 – A drug deal

Question 1) Billy goes to the store to buy groceries for his mother. Billy brings 50$ of groceries to the cashier, but can only pay for 40$. Why can the cashier NOT let Billy take the other 10$ worth of groceries?

Collective Dilemmas and Bargaining Failures:

Definition: In which there is a cause or struggle, but the unwillingness of either party to make any sort of sacrifice to that cause or struggle makes both parties “lose”

Example 1 – Two farmers who both value a fence which is falling apart. To fix it would be to a cost more than either one of the farmers values the fence at, but if they split the cost of repairing the fence, they can both have the fence they value at a cost less than that. But say that one of the farmers does not consider this. He would probably not fix the fence, because he does not want to put resources worth more than what he values the thing he is trying to fix at. So he doesn’t, and neither does the other farmer, and the deal fails.

Example 2 – Prisoners Dilemma

Question 1) Billy doesn’t value his room enough to clean it, and neither does Bobby. How can Billy and Bobby get their room clean (they live in the same room)? How could they fail in cleaning their room?

Collective Action, Free Riders, Public Goods, and the Commons:

Definition:

Collective Action: The pooling of resources and the coordination of effort and activity by a group of people tp achieve common goals.

Example 1 – Factory workers unionizing

Example 2 – a rowing crew

We already covered this.

Free riding: enjoying the benefits of some good or action while letting others bear the costs

Example 1 – The farmers in the previous example, where if one did all the work to fix the fence, the other would be free riding

Example 2 – When one person labels the chem lab that everyone else uses

Question 1) Billy buys some food. Bobby eats some of that food. If Bobby is free riding, how can Billy punish Bobby to give him an incentive to pull his own weight?

Public good: a good that, first, may be enjoyed by anyone if it is provided and, second, may not be denied to anyone once it has been provided.

Example 1 – A mosquito free meadow

Example 2 – In the United States, restaurants or bars must supply tap water for free if a customer request it.

Question 1) Is denial of service at a restaurant the denial of a public good?

Commons: the idea that a common access facility, owned by no one because it is available to everyone, will be overutilized

Example 1 – A political party’s reputation

Example 2 – A really nice public restroom

Question 1) How do we avoid the Tragedy of the Commons in modern day America?