

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