

## **Outline Topic V**

### **PARTIES& INTEREST GROUPS**

**I. Democratic Elitists: Even if Elections are Imperfect in Providing Elite Accountability and Policy Mandates, Political Parties and Interest Groups pick up the slack.**

**A. Democratic Elitists believe that Political Parties and Interest Groups provide an Indirect Linkage between the Public and the Policy Process.**

## **B. Parties and Interest Group Functions**

- 1. Provide sense of identification and belonging**
- 2. Provide opportunities to participate albeit indirectly in politics**
- 3. Channel and organize political conflict into acceptable forum**
- 4. Give voice to public policy concerns**
- 5. Do so more effectively than individuals can do alone (i.e., strength in numbers – a thousand voices in unison are louder than 1000 disorganized voices)**

## **II. How Parties & Interest Groups Differ**

**A. Size – Parties tend to be larger; IGs Smaller**

**B. Diversity – Parties tend to be more diverse; IGs more homogenous  
(Parties are coalitions of interests)**

**C. Permanence – Parties tend to be more durable**

**D. Goals – Parties strictly Politics; IGs both political and not**

**E. Means – Parties achieve Goals by fighting/winning elections and capturing government  
IGs seek to influence policy maker after elections are over**

### III. Different Types of Interest Groups:

	<b>Small/Narrow</b>	<b>Large/Diverse</b>
<b>Primarily Non- Political</b>	<b>Bird Watching Club Fraternity/Sor ority Amer Pol Sci Assn</b>	<b>AFL/CIO AARP AAA  NAACP (?) NRA (?)</b>
<b>Primarily Political</b>	<b>STOP ERA MADD</b>	<b>PIRG (Nader) League of Women Voters  Democratic/ Republican Parties</b>

## **IV. Political Parties as Linkage Mechanisms – A Two Stage Process**

### **A. Interest Aggregation: Parties form coalitions of diverse but related interests**

**They combine different interests into a single, coherent political force**

### **B. Interest Articulation: Parties express (fight for) the interest of their members in the political/policy process**

- 1. They magnify the voice of individuals – 1000 people speaking as one are louder than 1000 people speaking separately**
- 2. They provide people with opportunities for indirect participation**

## **V. How do Parties Aggregate Interests? Elitist Theory**

- A. Develop Political Platforms and Take Stands on Issues so as to build support for the party and its candidates**
- B. Parties attract supporters like businesses attract customers (Anthony Downs, Economic Theory of Democracy)**

## **VI. How do Parties Articulate Interests? Elitist Theory**

- A. Nominating and Electing candidate for public office who share the parties issue beliefs.**
- B. Parties seek to win elections and take control of government in order to pass policies that reflect the interests of party members**

## **VII. Party Linkage Assumptions**

- A. Competitive Political Parties**
- B. Parties Offer Distinct Issue Positions**
- C. Voters Join Parties Based on Issue Calculations**
- D. Parties Control the Selection of Candidates for Office**
- E. Parties Select the Candidates Most Share the Party's Positions on the Issues**
- F. After the Election, Party Members in Office Vote Together in Support of the Party's Positions on Issues**
- G. Voters Change Parties if the Party Fails to Deliver on Its Promises**

## **IX: Parties In Practice**

### **A. Parties Aggregate People not Interests**

- 1. Public not issue oriented**
- 2. Most people's political beliefs are not constrained – not ideological**
- 3. People identify with parties because of Political Socialization**
- 4. Thus parties are coalitions of people but these coalitions are only very loosely linked by issues or policies.**

## **B. Parties Fight for Power not for Policy**

- 1. Parties do not control nomination process**
- 2. Increasing use of Political Primaries**
  - Closed Primaries**
  - Open Primaries**
  - Blanket Primaries**
- 3. Primaries are “do it yourself” nominations**

**C. Parties are not Disciplined After Elections – Party Voting is Low**

- 1. Party Platforms not binding on Elected Officials**
- 2. Office Holders Elected Individually based on Individual Campaigns – Not Responsible to Party in Any Way**
- 3. Parties Cannot Discipline Members – Few Rewards or Punishments**

**D. Voters Are Unable to Hold the Party Responsible**

## **X. IG Linkage Mechanism – 2 Stage Process**

**A. Interest Mobilization : IGs organize and energize individuals with common interests**

**B. Interest Articulation: IGs express (fight for) the interest of their members in the political process**

- 1. IGs use a ‘Post Electoral’ strategy – they do not attempt to elect their own members to office but to pressure elected and other government after elections**
- 2. They magnify individual influence – 1000 people speaking as one are louder than 1000 speaking separately**
- 3. They provide opportunities for indirect participation**

## **XI. Underlying Assumptions**

- A. People join IGs because of the political activities of the group**
- B. All Interests are equally represented by IGs**
- C. IGs faithfully represent the Interests of their members in the Political Process**
- D. All IGS have equal opportunities for political influence**
- E. The sum of Interest Group interests = the National Interest or the Interest of all**

## **XII Interest Groups In Practice**

- A. People join IGS for mixed reasons – social, professional, instrument and also, but not only, political.**
  - 1. Many IGS NOT political**
  
- B. Some Interests are Better Represented than others**
  - 1. IGS have upper class bias**
  - 2. Interest Groups are difficult to form**
  
- C. Interest Groups Do a Good Job representing the Central Interest of their members**
  - 1. The do not always faithfully represent the Rest of the Interests of their members**
  - 2. IGs leaders often have an upper class bias**

**D. Some Interest Groups Have more power resources than others**

- 1. Wealth**
- 2. Cohesion**
- 3. SMALL SIZE (Free Rider Problem)**
- 4. Leadership**
- 5. Social Acceptance of Goals**

**E. How Do Interest Groups Achieve Their Goals:**

- 1. Lobbying – an exchange process**
  - a. Provide substantive information**
  - b. Provide Political Information**
  - c. Exchange Favors**
  
- 2. Mobilization (Grass Roots Lobbying)**
  - a. Of Members**
  - b. Of Public Opinion**
  
- 3. Electioneering**
  - a. Money**
  - b. Endorsements**
  - c. Volunteers**
  
- 4. Bribery/ Coercion**
  - a. Strikes**
  - b. Boycotts**
  - c. Protests**

**F. The Sum Individual Interests Does NOT equal the Interest of All**

- 1. Not All Interests Represented by Groups**
- 2. Potential Groups Have difficulty forming**
- 3. Some Interests Groups Very Effective/ Others Not**
- 4. Interest Groups Represent Core Interests Well, but Peripheral Interests less well**
- 5. Interests Groups Better Represent smaller narrower interests and Do Not Represent Broad Interests Well (i.e., Consumers)**