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:

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<th>Primarily Non-Political</th>
<th>Small/Narrow</th>
<th>Large/Diverse</th>
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<td>Bird Watching Club</td>
<td>AFL/CIO</td>
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<td>Fraternity/Sorority</td>
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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
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)